

The Creative Citizen

Citizenship Building in the Boston Area



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The Creative Citizen: Citizenship Building in the Boston Area

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To Lino and Joana

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Summary

The current work explores the significance of *citizenship* in the contemporary world, suggesting a new approach to its realization, where artistic practice and the development of cultural awareness combine to produce the *creative citizen*. This research uses case studies from three Boston metropolitan area neighborhoods in Massachusetts, USA, to reflect on arts and culture as platforms to re-address citizenship at the community level.

The case situated in Jamaica Plain is focused on the work done by the community organization *Spontaneous Celebrations*. In this example, the organization is focused on the development of inter-ethnic and face-to-face connections as platforms of artistic inclusion. Artistic appropriation of urban space allows sites to develop multicultural, multi-social, and intergenerational capacities, repositioning social networks within the community.

In the case of the ArtsUnion project, in Union Square, the focus is on the creation of a local identity associated with an Arts District dynamic. The promotion of interchange between different community groups creates conditions for ethnic juxtaposition and acknowledgement of differences. The socially and culturally diverse communities produce a variety of community groups where different cultural resources are mobilized through the work of various citizen groups, working together as partners in the preparation and presentation of arts related community events.

In *Villa Victoria*, the community dynamic is based on physical space appropriation and on a territorial effort to re-establish and reinforce cultural identity. This housing project provides a social context characterized by an historical definition of a delimited urban space as the context for the promotion of Puerto Rican cultural identity. The *Villa Victoria* community stems from an extensive history of grassroots collaborative work and individual self-help relationships, and arts and culture represent a means to promote social awareness and build a specific cultural landscape.

The relationship between urban public space, community, and culture is understood as a platform that may offer new strategies for urban space revivification, and specific strategies of civic engagement and leadership in these communities provide impetus for the development of creative citizenships.

Resumo

O presente trabalho pretende reflectir sobre a *cidadania* na sociedade contemporânea, sugerindo uma nova abordagem a este conceito, na qual a prática artística e a importância crescente da diversidade cultural dos contextos urbanos contemporâneos são os elementos essenciais para a criação de *cidadãos criativos*. Este estudo centra-se em estudos de caso da área Metropolitana de Boston (Estado do Massachussets, EUA) com o objectivo de abordar a cultura e a prática artística como plataformas para re-equacionar a cidadania ao nível comunitário.

O estudo de caso situado em Jamaica Plain centra-se na organização comunitária Spontaneous Celebrations. Neste exemplo específico, é tomado em linha de conta o desenvolvimento de relacionamentos presenciais e inter-étnicos como plataformas de inclusão pela prática artística. Quando a apropriação artística acontece nos espaços urbanos, estes locais podem vir a oferecer condições para o desenvolvimento de relações multiculturais, multisociais e inter-geracionais, reposicionando assim as redes sociais na comunidade e promovendo uma refuncionalização cultural desses espaços urbanos.

No caso específico do projecto ArtsUnion, em Union Square, o foco encontra-se na criação de uma identidade local associada a uma dinâmica de criação de um distrito artístico. A promoção de encontros entre diferentes grupos comunitários pode oferecer condições para uma juxtaposição étnica e para um reconhecimento das diferenças. A diferenciação social e cultural das comunidade promove a criação de agregados comunitários onde os diferentes recursos culturais são mobilizados por grupos de cidadãos, parceiros na preparação e apresentação conjunta de eventos artísticos.

No que diz respeito à comunidade *Villa Victoria*, situada em South End, a dinâmica baseia-se numa apropriação do espaço físico, num esforço territorial para o reforço de uma identidade cultural e num historial de trabalho colaborativo ao nível comunitário e de relações inter-individuais de entre-ajuda. A prática artística e a actividade cultural contribuem para a consciencialização social e para a criação de uma paisagem cultural específica.

A relação entre espaço público urbano, comunidade e cultura é entendida como uma plataforma que pode oferecer novas estratégias para a revivificação do espaço urbano e para criação de cidadanias criativas, que incluem o desenvolvimento nestas comunidades de estratégias específicas de envolvimento cívico e de criação de lideranças.

Résumé

Ce travail a l'objectif de réfléchir à propos de la citoyenneté dans la société contemporaine, en proposant un nouvel abordage au concept, qui intègre la pratique artistique et l'importance croissante d'une diversité culturelle des contextes urbains contemporains, éléments essentielles pour la création de citoyens créatifs. La recherche ici présentée est centrée à des exemples de la zone Métropolitaine de Boston (Massachusetts, États Unis de L'Amérique) avec le propos d'aborder la culture et la pratique artistique comme plateformes pour entendre la citoyenneté au niveau communautaire.

L'exemple situé à Jamaica Plain est centré sur l'organisation communautaire Spontaneous Celebrations. De l'importance est apporté à des relations face à face et entre les différents ethnies comme plateformes d'inclusion à travers de la pratique artistique. Quand l'appropriation artistique s'exprime aux espaces urbaines, ils peuvent offrir des conditions pour le développement de relations multiculturelles, multi-sociales et entre générations, en reformulant les filets sociales et en promouvant les usages culturelles des espaces urbaines.

En ce qui concerne le projet ArtsUnion, à Union Square, de l'importance est attribué à la création d'une identité culturelle associé à une dynamique de création d'un district artistique. La promotion de rencontres entre les différents groupes communautaires peut offrir des conditions pour une juxtaposition ethnique et pour une reconnaissance des différences. La différenciation sociale et culturelle des communautés origine la création des groupes communautaires où les différentes ressources culturelles sont mobilisées para les groupes de citoyens, partenaires dans la préparation et présentation des événements artistiques.

À South End, la communauté *Villa Victoria* est caractérisée par une dynamique sociale d'appropriation de l'espace physique, par un renforcement l'identité culturelle et par un historial de travail collaboratif au niveau communautaire et au niveau des relations de solidarité interindividuelles. La pratique artistique et l'activité culturelle contribuent pour la prise de conscience sociale et pour la création d'un paysage culturel spécifique.

La relation entre espace publique urbaine, communauté et culture est envisagée comme un moyen qui peut offrir nouveaux stratégies pour la revivification de l'espace urbaine et pour la création de citoyennetés créatives, qui intègrent la promotion des stratégies particulières d'engagement civique et de création de leaders communautaires.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The nature of the human relationships presents one of the most fundamental challenges to the social sciences' theoretical and practical analysis. Human relationships in a social context are oriented by compromise between individuals, including a set of legally ordained rights and duties for citizens, groups, and communities. However, the course of human life in societies depends less on what is legally established and more on the common and diverse processes of human interaction. This study examines the contexts of social processes that shape the relationships between individuals, groups, and communities, highlighting how they influence the concept of citizenship, and the possible contributions they can offer to democratic practices in the contemporary world. New types of citizenship, such as *cultural citizenship* (Stevenson, 2007), *multicultural citizenship* (Kymlicka, 2000), or *differentiated citizenship* (Young, 1990 and 1995) have recently fueled the challenge to identify new frameworks in which to understand citizenship. Theoretical debates in the area share the common feature of trying to go beyond the ideas of T. H. Marshall and his theoretical debates around legal, political, and social rights. The current work aims to reframe the significance of citizenship in the contemporary world, suggesting a new approach that devotes increased attention to individual relationships within communities of practice. Central to this reframing proposal is the suggestion that artistic and cultural related projects may offer innovative channels to rethink citizenship and suggest new venues to enhance democratic practice in contemporary urban societies.

The research focuses on three case studies from three metropolitan Boston area neighborhoods – Jamaica Plain, Union Square, and *Villa Victoria* (in the South End), in Massachusetts, USA, where specific artistic and cultural related projects are analyzed from two different perspectives. The first reflects on the potential of arts and culture to be effective platforms in promoting civic participation. The other examines how urban public spaces can influence the nature of cultural interventions. More specifically, it explores how, in urban public space, community and culture are interdependent variables that can offer new strategies for community-building initiatives and revitalization of urban spaces, making us consider possible new formats of citizenship building. In the three urban neighbourhoods analyzed, the research examines how community and place, when appropriated through arts and cultural-based initiatives, propose new venues for democratic practice, and offer new ingredients for the creation of *creative citizens* at the community level.

Chapter 2 focuses on a theoretical contextualization of the concept of citizenship, relating it to the existence of divisions in the contemporary world, specifically in cities, and questions the efficiency of the current institutional approaches to deal with these divisions. In addition, the different approaches to citizenship in the United States and Europe are highlighted and a new cultural approach to understand citizenship, in relation to urban space, is presented.

Chapter 3 presents the social and cultural contexts of the city of Boston, clarifying the reasons for choosing this urban area. Moreover, the case studies under analysis define the different types of communities that are being created in the studied neighborhoods.

In the fourth chapter, the analysis identifies different types of cultural intervention in urban space. Using three domains of analysis, *political community in public space*, *urban culturalization*, and *community project identification*, different approaches to cultural intervention in urban space are characterized in the three urban neighborhoods. Three types of urban sites are identified: *political*, where protest and concerted action take place; *juxtaposed*, where the encounter and acknowledgement of difference occurs; and *enclosed places*, which focuses on the reproduction of a specific cultural identity. In addition, we identify three types of *space culturalization*: *organic*, where space is understood as multidimensional; *sectorial*, where differentiated initiatives are separately organized; and *embedded culturalization*, where space replicates a specific culture. Furthermore, from the relationship between urban identity and urban community projects, we categorize the case studies as being dedicated to projects of *environmental awareness*, creation of an *Arts District*, and *anti-street violence*.

Chapter 5 focuses on the processes of citizenship building, analyzing which approaches were taken in each community, and which efforts were the most successful.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the concept of *creative citizenship* and to its operationalization. This operationalization is based on the successful practices observed in the case studies. The citizenship building strategies identified include the development of civic engagement and leadership in these communities. The overarching goal of this study is to contribute to the enrichment of the *citizenship framework of analysis* in the contemporary world, through the identification of effective citizenship building strategies.

The section presented under *Ex Cursus* integrates the methodology used during the process of field research, which result from an articulation between *grounded analysis methodology*, *mining analysis methodology*, and *visual analysis methodology*. This

methodological approach was developed using collected materials; specifically in-depth recorded interviews, video documentation, audio documentation, field notes, photographs, supporting materials, and local newspaper articles. The organization and analysis of these field work materials contributed to the category framework used in this study.

Chapter 2. Contextualization

2.1. Framing Citizenship in the Contemporary World

2.1.1. The Citizen, the City and Social Divisions

One of the striking features of the contemporary world is the existence of social divisions often lead to conflicts between groups. This study examines the social and psychological conditions of the contemporary citizen in urban western societies with diverse populations. Some basic characteristics of this citizen are individuality and a focus on self-development, which promote an independent character and a loss of contact with the public domain. The end result can be alienation from others and society at large, and an increase in social divisions. In addition to this challenge, a lack of cultural awareness and the creation of social and cultural enclaves can fracture coherent identities. Richard Sennett in his book *The Fall of Public Man – On the Social Psychology of Capitalism*, refers to this state of affairs as follows:

Western Societies are moving from something like an other-directed condition to an inner-directed condition (...). Intimate vision is induced in proportion as the public domain is abandoned as empty. (...) It is the generation born after World War II which has turned inward (...) it is in this same generation that most of the physical destruction of the public domain has occurred (Sennett, 1977: 5-16).

During the last century, there has been mounting concern that cities, in their evolution, are failing to meet our social expectations, with the reduction of the public space (Fortuna, 2006 and 2008) cited as evidence. A significant consequence of the decline of the public space is that the nature of the relationships between different social groups in contemporary urban settings very often results in group isolation, intolerant behaviors, and divisions. The nature of these divisions warrants analysis, taking into account the question of urban diversity, which authors of urban anthropology have recently explored through an ethnographic approach to urban life (Costa and Cordeiro, 1999; Costa and Cordeiro, 2003; Cordeiro and Baptista *et al*, 2003; Frugóli, 2007; Cordeiro, 2008; Cordeiro and Vidal, 2008; Costa, 2008). The scope of analysis around the theme of cultural diversity and difference suggests the need to consider possible strategies to overcome those divisions, implement intercultural dialogue, work towards emancipation and social change in urban communities, and contribute to the reconciliation of the individual with the different other.

This study explores the hypothesis that specific artistic and cultural practices may cultivate a deeper experience of citizenship, one that is capable of vaulting social and cultural divisions. The fundamental question is whether social interchange, promoted through a joint collaboration in cultural or artistic events, can reframe and expand the idea of citizenship in the contemporary city, resulting in richer sense of community and a heightened tolerance for difference. This research examines practices that reframe citizenship with encouraging outcomes as well as those with less positive results.

However, before discussing the mechanics of this study, it is important to present some historical features of Western urbanism to gain better insight into urban social life and community as we experience them today. Urban settings have a long history of economic and social factors of development. Nineteenth century capitalism was associated with the classical factory town, as found in most European countries. In the twentieth century, the rise of the Fordist mass production gave birth to the large industrial metropolis. During the late twentieth century, the ideal of ‘community’ was ideologically explored during the famous United Kingdom Community Development Projects of the 1970s, a large action research initiative, which combined research and social action in neighborhood areas of social deprivation. This experiment assumed a radical position against government action (Loney, 1983). Later, with the realization that the types of urban issues that arose could not be adequately addressed at the local level, different ideological stances arose, contrasting social work or community development traditions, with political action traditions. Then, during the eighties, with the rise of managerialism and the focus on market solutions, the politics of neo-liberalism rejected the ideals of the society of connections and commitments, expressed by the community development projects, and replaced them with moralized idea of community working towards social consensus. Recently, in tandem with a new style of urbanization that some authors call the *post-industrial society* (Bell, 1973), the *flexible accumulation* (Harvey, 1987), or *post-Fordism* (Albetsen, 1988), has come the *third way* thinking (Giddens, 1998), which, in the European Union (EU), has given a new boost to localism as one of the main variables in the promotion of regional vitality. According to Ash Amin, “(...) the local has been re-imagined as the cause, consequence, and remedy of social and spatial inequality” (Amin, 2005: 614). This local emphasis brings a new ethic of social capital creation, community cohesion, community participation and a spatially circumscribed society of commitments. A local-oriented analysis,

with a focus on socially and culturally differentiated groups, encourages us to re-address problems at a local level. However, it also requires a permanent dialogue with global social forces that influence local based-issues, to avoid reducing the analysis of local social problems to a set of local causes.

The “new economy” of *post-Fordism* is directly associated with what authors in the seventies called the “new class” (Gouldner, 1979) and what is currently referred to as the “creative class” (Florida, 2002). According to Richard Florida, contemporary societies are no longer driven primarily by economic forces. In the recent decades, with the decline of physical constraints “[...] creativity has become the principal driving force in the growth and development of cities, regions, and nations” (Florida, 2005: 1). According to this author, we are currently experiencing the effects of the era of the three Ts: *technology* (scientific development to serve human lives), *talent* (human capital to create, invent and transform), and *tolerance* (openness to social diversity). Florida argues, “To attract creative people, generate innovation, and stimulate economic development, a place must have all three” (Florida, 2005: 37). To Florida’s theoretical analysis, we can add the contemporary analyses of other authors like Greg Richards and J. Wilson, and Jan Verwijnen and Pannu Lehtovuori, who have been analyzing the impact of creativity on the urban and regional development of cities, as well as on their governance (Richards and Wilson, 2007 and 2009; Verwijnen and Lehtovuori *et al*, 1999; Costa *et al*, 2006), and other researchers who have been questioning how creativity might influence urban policy (Scott, 2006). In these authors’ theoretical analyses, creativity is increasingly seen as an essential component of the contemporary world because of the myriad possibilities it offers to overcome communication and social divisions in multicultural social contexts. One of the main components of creativity is the interchange between diverse systems of symbols, through which thinking occurs. By their nature, these systems are open creative systems. According to Howard Gardner, through the use of these symbols, the human mind may create, revise, transform and recreate products, systems, and even completely new structures of meaning (Gardner, 1999). When dealing with differentiated cultural contexts, ventures that are based on the arts may provide the symbols necessary to create and share diverse social narratives.

The case study examples presented here emerge, on one hand, in the context of the *third way* thinking and its critics (Amin, 2005), and on the other hand, under the recent reflections about the social function of the *creative class*. With social divisions connected to economic

growth in many urban settings, we consider scenarios where creativity, when associated with citizenship practices, may offer innovative strategies to address social divisions that lead to disenfranchised communities and persistent community isolation. Our intention is to promote a process of exploration that expands our concept of citizenship as we analyze it from the vantage point of arts-oriented creativity.

Before going into the details of the current work's analytical framework, it is important to specify the meaning of some important concepts. First, the terms *community* and *culture*, essential concepts in this analysis, need to be clarified¹. Zygmunt Bauman defines community in the following terms: “[...] community stands for the kind of world which is not, regrettably, available to us – but which we would dearly wish to inhabit and which we hope to repossess [...] so we feverishly seek the roads that may bring us there” (Bauman, 2001: 3). The focus of this study is the creation of *community*, using three different case studies to animate the processes and methodologies underlying conclusions of this research. However, in the search for *community*, questions arise about how groups can negotiate difference, what types of communities are desired, and how citizenship in these differentiated societies may be adapted to the different social contexts. In addition, the intention is to offer a new context for analyzing community and local political efforts of community intervention, based on the assumption that the local-social cannot be spatially restricted if its intention is to work against divisions, isolation, and intolerance. The term *community participation*, understood as direct involvement of people to solve their own problems, is one of the main variables in the definition of *active citizenship*, understood as individual acknowledgement of community responsibilities. Neither can be used to generate conformity, control, or social consensus, all of which are antithetical to the creation of innovative formats of citizenship building. “A public arena deliberately engineered for community consensus is not an arena of active citizenship, but an arena of a fragile and forced consensus that glosses over real and irreconcilable divisions” (Amin, 2005: 627). Moreover, any kind of local political attempt at community mobilization needs to consider

¹ The term *community* is derived from the Latin *communitas* (meaning the same), which is in turn derived from *communis*, which means "common, public, shared by all or many". *Communis* comes from a combination of the Latin prefix *con-* (which means *together*) and the word *munis* (which has to do with performing services). In this context, community represents a group of individuals that share common interests and aim at building together more integrated neighborhoods through specific initiatives that redefine the role, and consequently the identity, of a specific neighborhood within a larger city.

different sectors of the society as active participants at the cultural, generational, economic and political level in order to transcend what an elite of activists and defenders normally consider the *common good*. The concept of *common good* itself should be reexamined, and subjected to negotiation between different groups in segmented societies, to avoid bias toward the ideals of a specific group. In fact, the concept of “*common good*” routinely excludes working class people, ethnic minority groups, young people, disabled people, and various political activists. Therefore, it is important to achieve, through structured dialogue, a fuller understanding of *common good* and then employ joint strategies between different groups of people to address it.

The terms *community* and *community participation*, point to the need to clarify the idea of *community building*, as the first two concepts fold into the third one. In this study, *community building* entails the social engagement of people by enabling and supporting their participation in the institutions of community life as a way to implement democracy (Tocqueville and Bradley, 1960; Warren, 2001). As many authors contend, people need to be strongly connected to their communities in order to be integrated as members of society (Warren, 2001; Etzioni, 1995). Others have even called attention to the community building aspect of participation in the arts (Matarasso, 1997). In the case studies analyzed here, we reflect on the potential impact of the arts on communities by analyzing how artistic activities may promote the involvement of people in local initiatives, contributing to the development of reflective and participative behaviors and innovative approaches to the concept of citizenship. Furthermore, we reflect on how the appropriation of urban public spaces through artistic and cultural endeavors happens, discussing how the process of civic participation occurs in public sites, where cultural resources—like historical and landscape heritage, cultural traditions, artistic expressions, ethnic businesses—may become active variables in reframing the idea of citizenship. Finally, we connect citizenship to the cultural revivification of a community’s urban spaces (Charre, 1992; Miles, 1997).

The term *culture* is understood here using a more anthropological definition². It refers to the social and cultural background of an ethnic community and the way in which that may generate and influence expressive manifestations in community settings, thus providing a framework to structure social relationships and practices in multicultural (and often disparate) urban settings. When we refer to the arts, we emphasize the expressive character of the arts and

² From the Latin *cultura* stemming from *colere*, meaning to cultivate, is used in this context as from an anthropological point of view.

the potential to cross borders of language, religion and political affiliation. Viewed as such, arts may be key mechanisms to support strategies for community civic engagement and diverse approaches to urban space revitalization. Of course, the different cultural representations within a community must be acknowledged if the goal is to promote an active citizenship capable of integrating both local and global influences that are common in the contemporary urban metropolis. In fact, one of the central elements of these types of urban contexts is the existence of difference as a feature of its globalized identity. The type of solidarity that recognizes difference is what some authors, like Marion Young, call *differentiated solidarity* (Young, 2002: 222). As a norm, *differentiated solidarity* should orient our daily relations with others, with whom we need not express a mutual identification or affinity in order to express attitudes of mutual respect and inclusion. This approach can have significant bearing on the creation of tolerant and multicultural societies by remaining receptive to suggestions from the media, opinion makers, and politicians for new activity spaces to create affiliations among differentiated urban groups and individuals. New activity formats, which may include urban festivals, youth participation events, and innovative methodologies of intervention, can promote the more active relationship of the individual with the public domain as a prologue to citizenship. An interesting aspect of this approach to citizenship is its potential to facilitate the long-term creation of an ethic of tolerance towards diversity and difference, one that recognizes cultural difference as essential to the reinterpretation of “social justice” (Rawls, 1971). The recognition of cultural difference and the development of cultural awareness are two positive interventions aimed at the prevention of division, intolerance and racist attitudes in ever more differentiated societies.

Thus, it seems that there is a current need to reframe the concept of citizenship, based on the potential of civil society to construct new models of engagement. Paul Clarke’s approach is useful for this purpose. His definition of *deep citizenship* includes every autonomous action that generates empowerment and freedom to the citizen self, therefore transforming him into a deep citizen (Clarke, 1996) in effective connection with his social surroundings. Viewed thusly, citizenship must be included in the analysis of social intervention in the public realm, as other authors like Lynn Lofland have also contended (Lofland, 1973 and 1998). Following this same line of thought, the public sphere may present the context that could reinvigorate the concept of citizenship, by supporting civic endeavors in which the individual can examine and express personal and social identity.

In this study, citizenship is framed in direct relation with, on the one hand, the urban space and, on the other hand, artistic and cultural endeavors that take place in various urban sites. *Public space* is identified as a range of social locations including streets, parks, ponds, plazas, or squares (Lefebvre, 2003; Low and Smith, 2006; Lofland, 1998) which are appropriated for cultural and artistic events (Sabate *et al.*, 2004). In the last twenty years, there has been considerable literature on how the public sphere and the production of urban spaces can be effective mediators of social inclusion (Fraser, 1990; Habermas, 1991; Lefebvre, 1991; Cheah and Robbins *et al.*, 1998; Lofland, 1973 and 1998; Bell and Jayne, 2004; Low and Smith, 2006; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003; Engel and Hebbert *et al.*, 2006). These authors have contributed a range of conceptual reflections that help us reconsider our analytical framework in relation to the potential of urban public space and the impact of individual action. Several questions have emerged that form the nucleus of this study. How do we relate to urban spaces? How are they reframing social interaction? What role might they play in the reconciliation of the individual with urban natural environments? How might space in urban settings influence urban identities? How might urban environments be revitalized if different cultural and social groups reconceptualize their relationship to urban public space.

In general, we tend to understand the origins of the city in a conventional way, based on economic and progressive ideas of development. Our approach is to understand the city from a cultural perspective. Likewise, in his interpretative studies of the city, Jame Mellaart suggests that reason for the existence of Catal Huyuk in Anatolia (an ancient Neolithic settlement) was primarily cultural, which left its imprint on the civic life. According to Murray Bookchin, citing some of Mellaart's work: "If the remains of Çatal Huyut suggest anything, however, it is that early cities formed to meet cultural rather than strictly economic or defensive needs" (Bookchin and Bookchin, 1995). This research explores the symbolic origin and nature of the city as a space particularly relevant for cultural activities and civic involvement.

It is illuminating to contrast the citizen of early times with the contemporary *citizen*. Our concept of citizenship today, with its characteristics of civic engagement and social empowerment, derives from what this ancient community in Anatolia understood as group attributes of the family or the clan and their social actions. The idea of empowerment, one of the key components of citizenship, involves a process of social awareness and capacity-building that increases the participation and direct involvement of individuals and groups. The increase in

their participation, according to John Andersen and Birte Siim, may change opportunity structure in an inclusive way (Andersen and Siim, 2004).

A new approach to development is needed, one that eschews an exclusivist economic perspective, and instead, capitalizes on the cultural assets of people and urban sites, and promotes relationships between individuals based on social affinities. It is at the intersection of cultural/artistic resources, and urban spaces that exciting possibilities emerge. Urban spaces in the contemporary city are often socially, economically and culturally dissonant. With their multicultural characteristics, these sites are experiencing symbolic and physical divisions between the different ethnic communities, which increasingly populate urban public space. When social conflicts between different groups are rampant, the idea of citizenship, translated into active and tolerant intervention in the urban environment, is put at risk. The way ethnicities interact in the common space is frequently a source of conflict and division, begetting an urgent need to for innovative strategies of creative intervention. This study tries to identify tools based on artistic and cultural creativity that may generate creative approaches to issues of social conflict and division and help differentiated community groups create spaces of inter-ethnic dialogue. Specific artistic and cultural endeavors are presented as strategies to enhance new formats for the citizen to become creatively engaged in civil society, resulting, ideally, in diminished social divisions and exclusion.

There are three important precepts to consider for this analysis. First of all, it is important to consider social exclusion from various perspectives beyond that of deprivation from economic goods and social benefits. The present work's intents are to contribute to the debate on contemporary citizenship by addressing the needs of groups and individuals attempting to develop a resistance against what Anne Phillips refers to as "the negation of people's cultural specificity and voice" (Phillips, 2004)³, since social exclusion is also about deprivation of cultural identity. On the other hand, this research hopes to draw attention to the urgent need to understand the role of constructed identity in contemporary citizenship, in its multiple types and degrees of cultural identification and hybrid formats.

Secondly, civic practice can be encouraged as people begin to learn how they can contribute to the public life (Smith, 2001; 2003) and devise strategies of interaction across social

³ By cultural specificity we mean people's sense of belonging to a cultural tradition, an ethnic life style and the consequent modes of cultural and artistic expression that communities and individuals try to cultivate, specially in multicultural urban settings.

divisions. Civic practice is actually making a comeback of sorts within recent sociological and political theory. According to Jens Ulrich, after the theoretical focus on the state in the 1970s, on the market in the 1980s, the 1990s focused on civil society as a basis for the contemporary needs of democratization (Ulrich, 2004). Still, despite technological and economic developments of the contemporary world, many issues remain unsettled in the area of social and cultural divisions, which are more accentuated in urban regions. This research explores possible ways to bridge culturally and socially divided groups, focusing on the importance of civic practices directly related to participation in cultural and artistic activities.

Urban citizenship has access to multiple sites where social processes of civic activity may be developed. Therefore, it is impossible to detach the concept of urban citizenship from its civic component. To do so can lead to a deceptive understanding of citizenship as a purely hierarchical process which is centered on a relationship between an individual-voter and a political candidate. We agree with Irene Bloemraad and with her reflections about the direct relationship between social mobilization, social ties, and citizenship. According to this author, participation in the civil society through community organizations generates mobilization centered on community social issues (Bloemraad, 2006). There are myriad organizations - non-profit and for-profit - from religious congregations, businesses associations, social clubs, cultural and artistic organizations that, on a day to day level, encourage community bonds and contribute to building a sense of belonging in the community (Eberly, 1998)⁴. Therefore, the seeds of urban citizenship can be sown in soil nourished by civic and communitarian political resources, as well as culturally and artistic related organizations that help build interpersonal and social skills. Consequently, the concept of citizenship, enhanced through its social and civic components, can endow individuals with a sense of belonging to a community with the capacity to breach divisions between different groups.

Finally, it is important to make clear that we do not intend to adopt the communitarian approach to citizenship, which argues that community is something prior to political order and immune to the global variables that influence modern society (Tönnies, 1957; Isin and Turner, 2002). Instead, we maintain a conceptualization of *community* that we recognize as better adapted to the contemporary dynamics of urban communities. Community is understood here as

⁴ About the issue of participation in public life as the essence of the civic bond see Rousseau, 1968; Arendt, 1998; Barber, 1984; Skinner, 1978 and Pocock, 1995

an ongoing relational concept in constant process of reformulation. Nevertheless, the question persists: how are community and citizenship seen in a cosmopolitan and modern society? According to Michel Maffesoli, the contemporary diversity brings the new age of the tribes, an emotional community, defined by an aesthetic and emotional orientation. The close proximity of diverse cultures in urban-metropolitan spaces invites what he calls “the vitality and creativity of action” (Maffesoli, 1996). In fact, the present research reflects on how, in contemporary settings, individuals can experience multiple cultural affiliations. In order to identify how a specific type of citizenship - the *creative citizenship* - may offer strategies designed to resolve social divisions, it is important to acknowledge that the old determinants of community identity (individual solidarity and mutual cooperation in a closed environment) have faded. Instead, we are witnessing a culturalized determination of identity, where everyday experiences, traditional cultures, social environments and lifestyles herald the need to reevaluate how we think about citizens and their role in a diversified society

This research examines a new type of democratic community, one that is better equipped to deal with social division, generated by the intersection of affirmative action in the public space and the use of artistic and cultural initiatives as tools to promote community interrelation and participation. Carefully constructed arts initiatives may offer citizens the possibility of building a new mental model, which includes promoting consideration of divergent views and new strategies of action drawn from the dialogue between individuals and groups with diverse perspectives. By their very nature, arts and culture may introduce methodological innovation to the theoretical and practical discussion on dealing with difference, and specifically cultural difference, in the urban contexts under study. Richard Sennett in his book *Respect in a World of Inequality* corroborates this view when he refers to the performing arts as integrating collaborative elements, essential to generate mutual respect (Sennett, 2003). Artistic activities that include collaboration of culturally differentiated groups may create a sense of equality that, ideally, inspire the individual to reflect on the divisions of the social world with greater insight and imagination. However, it could also be such an ephemeral moment that, after the collaborative activity is over, there is no discernable lasting effect. Strategies to ensure that there is a more meaningful impact will be examined later in the case studies discussion.

With this approach to citizenship we are not endorsing a “decentralized democracy” (Sennett, 1999: 283) as defined by Richard Sennett, with no universal consideration of rights and

obligations, where difference is justification for democratic rules. In this study, it is argued instead that there is more to contemporary citizenship in a democratic context than just an assemblage of rights and obligations, and a need for a more expansive notion of citizenship is advocated. In fact, the citizen of the contemporary world embodies a range of characteristics that span the ability to relate, at different levels, with a culturally different other, to the capacity to actively reflect on and participate in projects of social interest. These abilities are a critical factor in the heightened potential of individuals to break through traditional cultural boundaries.

What we refer to here as *creative citizenship* requires the creation of *cultural knowledgeable communities* that will focus their development on cultural factors, on the recognition of difference, and on the motivation for individual and group participation. The *creative citizen*, living in this type of community, is considered to be a producer of political knowledge, expressivity and culture. First and foremost, the individual is a knowledge creator who is constantly reflecting on local surroundings and accepting responsibility for the state of the local society. This individual may also be the architect of initiatives of social intervention for the betterment of the community. The expressive character of this individual requires an authentic self and group identity if the goal is the development of more effective tools of dialogue with different groups. Finally, the *creative citizen* develops a cultural awareness of the ethnic, political, religious and social composition of the contemporary society and is sensitive to the rights of all groups.

By fostering this awareness, the initiatives included in the case studies focus on the development of strong identities that, bolstered with cultural resources, can create spaces for creative inter-relation between sectors of society previously separated by social and ethnic schisms. Can we envision cultural exchange activities as innovative platforms for the recognition of specific groups` identities and for the acknowledgement of difference? The working hypothesis is that the key to effective dialogue between different social groups can be found at the intersection of knowledge, expressivity, and culture. This intersection may produce the preconditions for the development of creative initiatives in alternative spaces, designed to deal with difference and conflict. However, we should not ignore the possible negative role that culture can play on the accentuation of differences inside the community. We have seen this dynamic in many urban contexts, and need to be aware of the potential of cultural difference to build resistance and intolerant behaviors towards other cultural groups.

Still, the potential of creativity to bridge cultural chasms is widely accepted. Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini state that creativity involves basic procedures like thinking a problem afresh, a certain degree of experimentation and originality, and the capacity to look at situations with flexibility (Landry and Bianchini, 1995). Furthermore, when Landry investigates urban creativity in the city in his book *The Creative City – a Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, he connects the creative component of cities with their growth and identifies the characteristics of urban activists, which he asserts have the ability to listen, reflect and learn, the ability to communicate across diversity, and the capacity to work with distinct cultural environments (Landry, 2000). We believe that the *creative citizen* relies on the same elements that define the “creative city” (Landry, 2000: 3): knowledge, free expression, and culture, all of which are essential to promote effective platforms to work against divisions. The promotion of spaces that combine knowledge production, expressivity, and the appreciation of cultural variety represent the adaptability of this approach to different social realities where cultural and social differences can create an antagonistic environment.

Starting from the basic concepts of community, culture, and the arts, this study addresses role of arts, civic engagement, and urban revitalization, as the three main categories to consider when analyzing the case studies presented and, specifically, the types of communities that can be created.

2.1.2. The Citizen in a Community of Practice

The concept of citizenship has been analyzed from different perspectives throughout the history. From the way citizenship was understood by T.H. Marshall until today, the concept and its practices have been undergoing many transformations in the western world. T.H. Marshall understands its relation to individual rights. The concept was challenged for the first time by a perspective that, beyond economic inequalities, there is a fundamental human equality associated with full membership to a community (Marshall, 1965). Thus, the inequality of the social class system may be accepted, provided the equality of citizenship is also recognized. However, this perspective may not be comprehensive enough to address the issue of citizenship in the contemporary world, where cultural differences and economic inequality are the main perpetrators of divisions, intolerance, and lack of inter-group communication. T.H. Marshall suggested the division of citizenship into three areas as it evolved from ancient societies to a more differentiated modern world: civic qualities (with its formation period in the 18th century),

political qualities (developed in the 19th century) and social rights (created in the 20th century). Civic qualities include the rights necessary for individual freedom (liberty, freedom of speech, thought and faith, and the right to justice). The political element includes the right to exercise political power, and the social element was understood by T.H. Marshall as the right to economic welfare, security, and access to social institutions that sustain civilized life in society, including education and social services. In fact, the defense of *citizenship* as a response to the basic human need of membership is still relevant in contemporary society. Membership was the original source of social rights (Marshall, 1965), and its practice extended *citizenship* to the area of common culture and common experience of people in communities. This study intends to draw from this perspective, exploring the components of citizenship in a community of practice, where the citizen, either individually or in a group, is the creator of a public space of reflection, action and social change. Therefore, the intention here is to frame citizenship as a cultural practice and not only as a right, envisioning it as a collective, ethnic and individual endeavor (Pais and Blass *et al*, 2004; Pais, 2006).

T.H. Marshall's purview of citizenship in relation to individual rights, however, is not broad enough to encompass its role in a community of practice. There are expanded views of citizenship in the *civic republican tradition* and from the works of Alexis de Tocqueville (Tocqueville, 1966) and many other authors across the centuries like Machiavelli, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and more recently Hannah Arendt (1958, 1963) and Benjamin Barber (1984, 1998a, 1998b), who reflect on citizenship from the point of view of civic participation. The *civic republican tradition* combines the involvement of the citizenry in public affairs with power sharing to prevent an autocratic government. The works of Alexis de Tocqueville analyze the dynamic of associations of American society as the main characteristic of civic life in the 19th century (Tocqueville, 1966). Likewise, Aristotle was one of the early proponents of the citizen's civic involvement in public life, believing that the citizen, thought of as a product of education, should have an active role in ruling the civic life in order to become publicly active in its political destiny (Heater, 1999). This perspective touches on the relationship between the individual and society and between private self-interests and the public good. Aristotle thought that this type of voluntary involvement was a way of generating social responsibility. Cicero, influenced by the Stoic tradition, followed Aristotle's principle of the duty to participate in the public life, stating that the conscious involvement in public work is, in fact, part of the nature of

man as a social animal (Heater, 1999). Machiavelli spoke about *civic spirit*, which, associated with civic virtue, defines citizenship. Machiavelli's idea of 'virtue' was not a matter of moral character, but of what is best for the utilitarian needs of the country.

Finally, Rousseau brought to the discussion of the citizenship his reflections on how to reconcile subjugation to government and the right to individual liberty, defending education and the obedience to the general will as premises for the virtuous citizen. Derek Heater effectively summarized the main contributions of these authors, saying that the good citizen must lead an active life, take positive interest in public affairs and be committed to the public good (Heater, 1999). This study expands on those criteria by examining how citizenship can also be experienced and transmitted in new and innovative ways in communities.

It is our intention to analyze how to promote the civic participation of contemporary America in European social contexts as a tool to mitigate social divisions. To face this challenge, we attempt to define citizenship beyond an array of rights and duties and investigate how to build a network of intermediate institutions, between the individual and the state, which may generate creative platforms for individual and multi-group engagement. The analysis of the field work emphasizes the ways that these intermediate institutions contribute to a vigorous community life, which is an historical feature of American society, and help establish a solid network that, together with the new social movements, can stimulate citizenship in the United States (Bellah, 1985).

However, in order to have a more complete perspective on contemporary citizenship, we need to focus on transformations that might occur in the individual as a citizen. Arts and cultural related initiatives have the potential to generate positive experiences at individual and group levels that can supplant self-centered, antisocial attitudes. May they also be successful tools to repair social and cultural divisions between groups, which often result for a lack of sense of common belonging and need of inter-group connection? According to Robert Bellah, one of the main features of the North American society is its differentiated social composition, where different social worlds live their own self-interested lives, without interpenetrating other culturally different social groups. In his own words:

(...) many metropolitan Americans (...) thus consider that responsibility is fulfilled when they love those compatible neighbors they have surrounded themselves with, fellow

members of their own lifestyle enclave, while letting the rest of the world go its chaotic, mysterious way (Bellah, 1985: 179).

The issue here goes beyond how to promote civic engagement, exploring more deeply how to foster civic engagements that lead to the establishment of social networks between different social groups. Many contemporary western societies are experiencing a need to revive civic ideals to create a sense of community in an increasingly diverse social landscape. However it is not the intention of this study to simplify the concept of *community* as one based on a communitarian ideal, but to promote an understanding of how the citizen might actively influence local and global trends of democratic practice.

Furthermore, in this research, citizenship is framed through its cultural dimension, which argues for its inclusion in the contemporary trends created by the new social movements, such as civil rights, of the 60s and the Post-World War II period. The politics of citizenship and the politicization of everyday life in communities are both diminished when the cultural dynamic is neglected. Understanding citizenship within a broader context shifts our attention towards the question of democratic rights and the civic participation of minorities and other types of excluded communities (women; religious, disability and environmental groups; homosexuals and ethnic minorities). This emerging *cultural dimension* of citizenship is borne of new social movements connected to community identity issues, which have sought to dismantle the hegemony of dominant cultures (Stevenson, 2001). Our view on the contemporary citizenship finds significance in this dimension, and we can identify the keys to community building in the case studies where *knowledge*, *expressivity* and *culture* contribute to the process of building of *cultural knowledgeable communities* and *creative citizens*, both adapted to the cultural features of the contemporary world.

In fact, the contemporary construction of identity depends directly on different formats of citizenship associated with different social movements, such as *ecology*, *immigrant rights*, *ethnicity*, and *immigration*. These initiatives share a global struggle against social exclusion, social discrimination, and environmental degradation, produced by the neoliberal system, with its emphasis on economic development. Authors like Boaventura de Sousa Santos refer to these new social movements as a specific type of resilient cosmopolitanism which promulgates resistance, and is traditionally organized against the global localisms and local globalism (Santos, 2006). In

the social contexts under analysis, the multiple social affiliations of the different groups contribute to a richer conceptualization of the term *creative citizenship* (Chapter 6). This concept relies on the interfusion of a vast array of resilient and cosmopolitan characteristics that support the social life styles of the urban metropolis, and which are represented here by the case studies analyzed.

One question comes to mind: how to reconcile a universal concept like citizenship with the desire to accommodate group difference? Maybe citizenship has to be understood in relation to specific social and cultural contexts and therefore requires a degree of adaptability. Furthermore, Isin Engin and Patricia Wood, citing Irish Young, assert that democracy requires group policies to be heard in public forum (Isin and Wood, 1999). Taken together, we have the basis of *creative citizenship*, which draws its energy from the social contexts presented in the case studies, where artistic and cultural practices are catalysts for social integration of marginalized groups.

In sum, citizenship is approached in our analysis is as a process that involves the social and self-formation of the individual and the group into active participants in the organization of their communities. This suggests that the type of democracy that evolves is contingent of the development of institutions and organizations dedicated to promoting processes of participatory democracy in urban settings. Furthermore, this study will propose a concept of citizenship in active engagement with the various urban social contexts that have cultivated the contemporary human mind.

2.1.3. Citizenship in North-American and European Contexts

The historical origins of citizenship in the United States informs the way American people understand and practice citizenship, and contributes to a new analytical framework. In the United States, practices of citizenship are derived from ancient Greek ideals⁵, specifically the philosophical ideas of Plato, Sophocles and Aristotle (Ricci, 2004a and 2004b; Heater, 1990). From these influences, the foundation of citizenship, as it is understood by Americans, is civic participation. This is an essential tenet of citizenship, which requires citizens to be prepared, morally and civically, to exercise their sovereignty. Social responsibility is therefore required to

⁵ The Greek ideals defend, in general, that man is the measure of all things so that the focus of political discussion and social action is on man and on its power to actively intervene in public life.

fulfill an integrated definition of citizenship. According to David Ricci, citizens are responsible for their governance and if something goes wrong, all must assume some responsibility. In this context, the idea of individualism, promoted throughout the centuries by American culture, is interwoven with the idea of community, stressing that each individual should exercise independence and self-reliance while protecting the common good of the society, the neighborhood or the group. Therefore individual goals and society goals should at some point coalesce. The challenge then becomes how to reconcile individual interests with society goals. A dynamic of social reflection that includes dialogue and negotiation between the two entities plays an essential role in the creation of civic minded individuals. According to David Ricci, citizenship in the American tradition is divided into three types of action. Citizenship I refers to the legal status of a person, Citizenship II includes the right of political participation, and Citizenship III entails active, virtuous behavior towards society (Ricci, 2004a). The last type of citizenship is the one that most interests us most as we explore methods of engagement that confront some of the biggest challenges of the contemporary world, as previously discussed: understanding how to promote relations with socially and culturally different groups and how to reconcile individual and society interests.

The difference in the ways in which citizenship is understood in the United States and in Western European is broadly accepted. “(...) when the existing order of things appears unequal to its challenges, Americans have often sought new visions (...) not through political parties, as in many European societies, but in the forms of social movements” (Bellah, 1985: 212). Historically, the exercise of citizenship depends not only on institutional action, but also on individual action, with an emphasis on the common good. In a contemporary world rife with open conflicts, it is clear that a better rapport among culturally and socially different groups needs to be cultivated. The ability of individual and groups to relate, communicate and act together are essential skills for effective citizenship. One potential arena in which to develop these skills is in cultural and artistic endeavors where diverse individuals work together toward a common goal. In fact, these types of experience, which can break down longstanding barriers, may potentially reframe the paradigms of citizenship and democracy in the contemporary world.

In the United States, citizenship is connected to civic responsibilities and includes the obligation of each individual to actively participate in the dynamics and governance of public life. According to David Ricci, government officials and citizens share responsibility for the

quality of public life (Ricci, 2004b), which creates a direct link between citizenship and public service. The European context is much more dependent on governmental politics and state support, superseding citizens' rights and duties to participate and contribute to discussions, reflections and even policies. In European urban contexts, we have been witnessing the chasm between individual goals and the socially accepted constraints of communities. In general, European individuals rarely exhibit identification with social issues of common concern and consequently, lack involvement and accountability in defining strategies to solve those issues. According to Murray Bookchin, one of the main characteristics of the European citizen at the turn of the twenty first century is a loss of identity and agency in everyday life (Bookchin and Bookchin, 1995). This is a good starting point to investigate a fuller experience of citizenship, highlighting the importance of reconnecting communities to urban space through democratic means.

Along this same line of thought, Joseph Tussman and David Shelbourne argue that citizens should take advantage of participation rights and, in fact, are obligated to contribute actively in their local communities (Tussman, 1960; Shelbourne, 1994). Citizenship has different orientations in Europe and in the United States because the government in the United States elevates the role of the individual, whereas many other western countries created governments designed to promote national solidarity. According to Michael Walzer, the United States is not a literal 'nation of nationalities' or a 'social union of social unions', the parts are individual men and women. The United States is an association of citizens (Walzer, 1992). Is there a correlation between the American perspective of citizenship and the framework we are adopting to analyze citizenship practices in the case studies? The possibility of this relationship requires a review of the core principles that underlie the civic approach and the political thought that uphold it as the basis of a political community in the United States.

A vital component of the American civic approach to citizenship is education, which the ancient Greeks understood as an essential tool to promote membership into a community. Education, it posited, prepares the individual to think constructively about public life and to stimulate active community participation. Apart from the influence they exerted on the legal and reflective aspects of citizenship, the ancient Greeks, particularly Aristotle, recognized the overriding importance of citizen participation in the city's public life, with a purpose of serving a collective goal. Citizenship is attached to practice as citizen is a man who shares in the

administration of justice and in the holding of office (Aristotle and Simpson, 1997), rather than merely possession of a right. This conceptualization of the citizen forms the template used in the case studies to help us understand citizenship as a practice of civic urban integration. Stoics (like Cicero and Marcus Aurelius) contribute to this perspective of citizenship by adding the elements of duty and responsibility to work towards a common good.

The American examples analyzed in this study may provide inspiration for a European reflection on the potential integrative function of citizenship, one that acknowledges the individual as an active contributor to a civic approach intent on reducing social inequality.

2.2. Place, Culture and the Public Realm: New Venues to Understand Citizenship

Cities offer various spaces in the public realm where urban identity is constructed. In this view, culture has a profound affect on urban identity and can be positive influence in the public sphere. The revival of interest in urban public space and the importance of culture on urban transformation has been a topic of extensive study by many authors (Shields, 1999; Le Galès, 1999; Amin, 1999; Zukin, 1982, 1996a and 1996b.) In some cases, the cultural attributes of a city become branding tools to attract the outside world by using the city's cultural characteristics to market a new image and identity. (Costa, 2002; Evans, 2003; Ferreira, 2005).

In this research, we contextualize the culture-place relationship in cities to explore how people interact with the urban environment in ways that transform collective behaviors into meaningful experiences with the places they inhabit. A new approach to the way citizens relate to their city is beginning to emerge, whether it is from the 'making the city' perspective, the 'using the city' perspective' or the 'consuming the city' perspective, as various authors propose when analyzing the different integration strategies (Fortuna and Leite, 2009). Along this same line of analysis, we wish to reexamine the possible relationship between place and culture drawn from the *urban culturalist perspective* (Borer, 2006). This perspective is based on the assumption that we cannot understand the importance of *culture* on the dynamics of place if we continue to look at *culture* as dependent on external forces such as the economy or the political system. Authors like Claude Fisher contend that, when dealing with urban culture and identity issues, one has to approach culture as an autonomous and analytical concept, apart from economics and politics (Fischer, 1975, 1976 and 1995). The way people make sense of the world and its symbolic and material products cannot be understood as a secondary field of analysis or simply a

consequence of globalized processes that affect the way people build identities and construct meaning. We will use some of the findings in the case studies to advance some theoretical assumptions associated with the public realm and to recognize how the relationship between space and culture may express itself.

The literature on urban sociology has a long tradition of analyzing the ways that individuals relate to the public realm. In his essay *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, George Simmel conflated the public and the civil, giving rise to the issue of impersonal rationality in civil society (Simmel, [1903] 1995). The overarching theory defended by Simmel is that when people are faced with diversity in the public arena, they become indifferent in order to deflect face-to-face interaction. Likewise, Louis Wirth understood the size, density and heterogeneity of city life as ingredients that foster a form of alienation or anomie (Wirth, 1938). Furthermore, in the Chicago School, Ernest Burgess ([1925]1969) and Robert Park ([1925]1969) considered the city as a plantlike organism, existing in a balanced ecology. In the seventies this narrative was superseded by a Marxist urban analysis, as Manuel Castells (Castells, 1977), David Harvey (Harvey, 1972) and Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 2003) developed a political economic approach to the city. More recently, authors like Michael Borer (Borer, 2006), along with Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1972) and J. Baudrillard (Baudrillard, 1998) have called attention to cities as spaces of cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, difference, fragmentation and complexity, thus changing the focus and shifting it from the economic sphere to the cultural and symbolic arena.

All of these authors have been influenced by an *urban culturalist perspective*, which highlights the relationship between spatial and cultural factors in the city. In this research, the empirical observations of cultural expression, directly associated with the groups' religion, language, life style, and artistic events, revealed a specific relationship with the spatial context where they occurred. Authors such as Charles Smith, Charles Landry, Franco Bianchini, G. Evans and E. Foord, suggest that if the cultural aspects of places and communities are correctly mobilized, culture may be understood as a new resource that may maximize the potential of local areas and neighborhoods as well as whole cities (Smith, 1998; Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Evans and Foord, 2003). Using this research as an analytical foundation, we will reflect on the role the citizen can play in the creation of innovative approaches that promote relationships between space, culture and the revivification of urban environments.

Our study explores the way culturally differentiated citizens create social meaning in their relationships to various urban environments and the communities that they inhabit. There are two vectors through which we analyze the urban communities under study. One is the *resilience through civic governance* and the other is the *urban revivification vector*. Both provide relevant perspectives on outcomes of human interaction through cultural practices, with a view toward fostering communities' social integration.

In the current cultural practices, examination of interaction in the public realm during a cultural event suggests that a new type of inter-personal appropriation of public space may be created. May a relationship of cooperation and creativity in the public space effectively change the impersonal character often associated with urban environments? Some authors view the public realm as a political space for free speech (Arendt, 1998), while other focus on its role as a space of communicative interaction (Habermas, 1984). The works of Erving Goffman (Goffman, 1959), Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1973) and Richard Sennett (Sennett, 2003) address the issue of how individuals relate and communicate with others who are socially and culturally different from them. According to Richard Sennett, the theory of role playing and the *teatro* of public life⁶ encourages a dynamism in public spaces that enhances public life by stimulating citizens to engage more easily with the issue of difference (Sennett, 2003). Is the creation of spaces that promote engagement with others an essential strategy to deal with difference? Can the public sphere offer unique conditions to potentially enhance the interactions between different groups? The overriding question is how to create a public space that is both political and tolerant, where people can interact positively with others who are unlike them. As Malcolm Miles reflected on the concept of "open city" in his essays (Miles, 2000; 2003 and 2004), we also question how to build spaces for negotiations between different groups and how cultural projects may offer specific strategies that may work against indifference, isolation and lack of interchange. The cases analyzed in this research question this issue and demonstrate efforts to address it.

The analysis of human interaction across social, economic and cultural differences requires an impartial and focused understanding of culture in its relationship to place, as well as an anthropological based approach to urban life (Hannerz, 1980). The case studies in this research call attention to the importance of examining the relationship between culture and urban

⁶ This theory defends that other people can act information so that it becomes believable, moving and arousing to other people. It defends the self-dramatization as a way of creating public life.

space by presenting community participation, intercultural dialogue, and artistic creativity as potent catalysts for urban revivification (Fig. 1). These categories offer the analytical tools to build connections between different structures of meaning in socially and culturally differentiated urban groups.

There are two important areas that we must be careful not to ignore in this analytical effort. First, it is important to consider the opportunities that projects of urban cultural regeneration may have to offer. In this context, culture may represent a new resource for the growth of economic activity (Porter, 1996), new lifestyles (associated to the generation of new jobs), innovative formats of development (Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Landry, 2000; Florida, 2005), and culturally mixed communities that promote cosmopolitan lifestyles (Worpole and Greenhalgh, 1999). In fact, this need to bring strangers together is one of the strategies, described by authors like Iris Young, that can lead to what she calls an “acknowledgement of unassimilated otherness” (Young, 1990) and which Leonie Sandercock develops in her theories of multicultural urban differentiation (Sandercock, 1998). How can this relationship with difference elicit a respectful acknowledgment of the other and a co-operation in joint actions of civic intervention in the urban public life? What if the cultural changes that the cosmopolitan world is experiencing today are simply offering us the possibility of co-habitation without having to develop an effort of

interrelation? The communication and promotion of dialogue with others during artistic endeavors may provide a means to achieve understanding of difference and develop a mutual acknowledgement of necessary compromises in the social world. However, the understanding of the public space as a “space of difference” is essential for the adoption of effective strategies to deal with that difference, strategies which are not based on the promotion of social cohesion, but on the negotiation of directed actions between the different partners. In fact, authors like C.

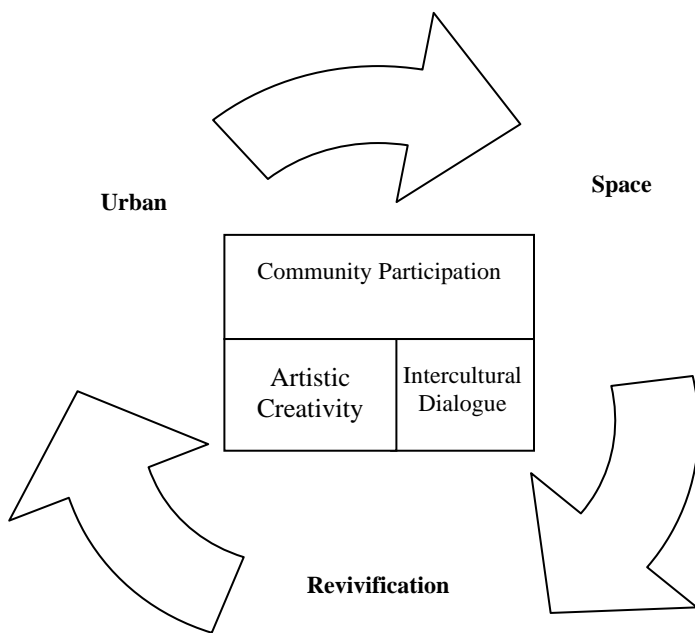


Fig. 1. Urban Space Revivification

Mouffe suggest that democracy in the public sphere is based on difference and open contestation rather than homogeneity or consensus (Mouffe, 1992). In order to be able to understand and cope with that difference, we may need to develop innovative formats of communication that offer new paradigms of human interrelation and inter-group dialogue.

The challenge of human interrelation and inter-group dialogue in highly differentiated urban settings is one of the most complex issues in the contemporary world. In fact, projects of urban cultural regeneration usually tend to ignore the issue of social and cultural divisions. Critical literature has even raised the possibility of detrimental effects on urban groups, questioning if urban cultural revivification has sufficiently grappled with the issue of cultural diversity and renegotiation of identities of minority groups (Evans, 2001; Smith, 1996).

One of the consequences of ignoring cultural diversity in projects of urban renewal is the risk of culturally driven consumption, based on a place's ethnic uniqueness and the impact that consumption might have on urban communities, potentially transforming them in segregated enclaves for tourists. (Evans and Foord, 2003). When considering culture in the urban space we need to be aware of this dialectic approach: a culturally based approach to the city is both a means to acknowledge difference and a strategy to generate tighter cultural affiliation of groups within communities, which can lead to problems of segregation. However, in this specific context of analysis, we accept cultural differentiation of communities as a first step in developing a new approach to citizenship and to the urban space as a space of democratization.

2.2.1. Citizenship in Culturalized Urban Communities

The potential role of citizenship and social diversity is of considerable importance to modern society. The adverse effect of globalization on contemporary societies includes accentuated inequality and social exclusion, mainly in urban regions. Authors like John Urry discuss an array of possible new citizenships in an ever more differentiated world, and offer reflections on how to manage difference in a globalized world where global concerns merge with growing social divisions (Urry, 1999). The expanding impact of global forces urban residents suggests that the concept of citizenship needs to be readdressed from both global and culturally situated perspectives.

This study proposes that, in contemporary times, the evolution of citizenship needs to regard issues of inter-cultural understanding with an educational sensibility. The events and projects presented here for analysis integrate urban cultural and artistic expressions that are

indispensable tools to elevate our understanding of *creative citizenship* as a vehicle to integrate dimensions of political knowledge (ability to produce knowledge associated with local social issues), expressivity (ability to build self and group identity) and cultural awareness (ability to perceive the culturally and socially differentiated composition of society). To promote progressive approaches to urban spaces that accommodate multicultural perspectives and lifestyles, we must attend to social processes that incorporate efforts of civic participation from different sectors of society. Organized activities, such as multicultural festivals and parades, neighborhood festivals, and other cultural events that utilize urban spaces may serve as informal learning and knowledge building venues for disenfranchised communities⁷.

The case studies underscore the diversity of contemporary city, highlighting the cultural aspects of urban contexts, which exist side by side with a homogeneous urban space, characterized by corporate enterprises, distribution, industrial networks and government administration buildings. Efforts of civic resilience in building *communities of heart* (Bookchin and Bookchin, 1995) are established in the course of bringing the cultural aspect of cities to the forefront. These communities are the beneficiaries of civic initiatives which aim to nurture public concerns. This contradicts Bookchin's theory that cities of the past differ from the present ones, as the ones from the past promoted a sense of ideological, spiritual and intellectual commitment to its surrounding, as opposed to present ones, interested mainly in economic development. In Bookchin's words:

We have virtually no equivalent in the modern city of the Near Eastern sense of civic spirituality, the Greek feeling of political affiliation, the medieval endearment to communal fraternity, and the Renaissance love of urban pageantry that infused the otherwise disparate citizenry of the past (Bookchin and Bookchin, 1995: 19).

In fact, we are actually witnessing a renewed civic movement, stirred by the revitalization of urban cultures and the upsurge of a civic sense of belonging. This movement is based on the

⁷ The methodology used in this analysis, presented in detail in the chapter *Ex Cursus*, employed mainly a qualitative and multidimensional approach using a variety of media and written materials. These materials were analysed using a methodology based on *grounded analysis methodology*, *mining analysis methodology* and *visual analysis methodology*. Their combination resulted in a *transversal analysis methodology*, which informed the development of the *themes and dimensions framework*, a structural component that contributed to the theoretical framework of this research.

development of *cultural knowledgeable communities*, which are endowed with consideration of both cultural and artistic assets⁸. In sum, what is suggested is a reformulation of the concept of citizenship, one that comprises the potential of arts and culture to reframe how citizens are living in the contemporary city. Of particular interest is the issue of why models of integration of segregated and/or culturally differentiated groups and communities are focused on formal laws regulating citizenship and neglect to examine the efficacy of outreach strategies for mobilization of these marginalized sectors. How, then, can the democratic system work more effectively for multicultural communities, where inclusive citizenship is understood in the context of cultural diversity (Vandenberg, 2000)? We hope to inspire reflection on possible formats for more inclusive citizenship, using the same line of thought of Andrew Vandenberg.

By focusing on community-building initiatives using the arts and culture, and considering strategies of civic engagement in the urban public space, we also hope to highlight the cultural and artistic processes that have been influencing these communities' social development. In doing so, the intention is to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dialectics of place, citizenship and community building that arise as a result of cultural and artistic events organized in these various arenas. When creating social networks at the community level, implementing artistic and cultural practices may work as privilege strategies, adopted not only to build an identity of place, but also to reclaim creative uses of the urban space by developing a cultural allocation of urban sites (Bianchini, 1991 and 1993; Landry and Anglo-German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society, 1996; Landry, 2000; Florida, 2005). Many urban communities originated from organized civic movements. Social movements may in turn encourage projects of urban revivification and contribute to a better social integration of communities in the urban space.

The urban American context offers countless examples of how communities showcase creative expression in the public sphere. One of them is the community mural movement (popularized in the 1970's) that is still dominant in many neighborhoods throughout the country (Miles, 1997). Through social use, public spaces may then be transformed into cultural landscapes (Alanen and Melnick, 2000; Sabaté *et al.*, 2004) associated with specific social and/or cultural activities, events or communities (or groups of communities), and consequently play a

⁸ Cultural assets are religious and ethnic traditions, life styles, customs, languages and beliefs that are part of a way of life of a community. Artistic assets refer to every kind of artistic activity developed by the community, either as part of an artistic redevelopment project or as part of a grassroots mobilization towards a specific civic endeavor.

symbolic role (Meinig and Jackson, 1979) in the broader context of urban space. Furthermore, the public spaces under analysis are understood as examples of the plasticity of the urban space, as analyzed by authors like N. Fernando, K. Dovey and K. Polakit, in their conceptualization of urban space as *open-ended space* (Fernando, 2007) or *loose-space* (Frank and Stevens, 2007). These types of spaces are open to a variety of commercial, political, cultural and social activities and have the potential to create lively urban interchange. Urban sites that use artistic practices to develop opportunities for various social and cultural related events tend to attract other social and economic related practices. The common characteristics of *open-ended urban spaces* (Fernando, 2007) are their diversity, the adaptability to different uses, and the capacity to provide multi-sensory experiences.

So how can *open-ended urban spaces* (Fernando, 2007) be the mediators of socio-cultural differences in multicultural cities? To face the challenges of urban multiculturalism, it is important to study the purpose and significance that urban spaces can acquire when artistic events become part of their identity. In the artistic/cultural use of urban spaces, sites become characterized by the fluidity of functions and meanings. Therefore, any place can be transformed into an *open-ended* (Fernando, 2007) or *loose-space* if has the opportunity to display plastic/adaptable characteristics (Frank and Stevens, 2007), and has the capacity to be a symbolic site—through its cultural, artistic, historic and environmental resources—when a specific identity emerges.

From a sociological standpoint, it is interesting to understand how the process of symbolic appropriation of urban spaces occurs and how different factors and dynamics ultimately influence the types of relationships ethnic communities have with the public space. As advocated in this study, urban space can become a pivotal component in the process of building social capital networks and defining the processes of social integration. In this context of analysis, arts and culture, in their relation to urban public space, have become essential tools that offer new strategies to promote social integration (Castells, 1983 and 1997; Harvey, 2001). Through the analysis of the different types of communities that reconstruct urban spaces using specific projects of cultural intervention (Kabakov and Fondazione Antonio Ratti, 2001), we will present some community-based initiatives which adopt specific strategies to reconceptualize urban spaces, and propose new methodologies to address the social integration of marginalized communities.

Chapter 3. Case Studies Presentation and Characterization

3.1. Presenting the Urban Context: the City of Boston

The urban cultural and artistic transformation that the city of Boston (Massachusetts, USA) (Fig. 2) has been undergoing in the last two decades is illustrative of the contemporary influence of arts and culture in the revitalization of urban social space. According to the New England Council's 2004 report, the creative industries (applied arts, visual and performing arts, publishing, the media, museums and heritage sites, fine arts schools, and independent artists, writers, and performers) accounted for 2.3% of all employment, or 157,000 jobs in New England. More than half (82,000) of those jobs were in Massachusetts, where they represented 2.6% of all employment (Fig. 3)⁹.



Fig. 2. The state of Massachusetts on the East coast of the United States.

Source: www.resortvacationstogo.com/images/maps/map_u...

⁹ New England Council, 2004.

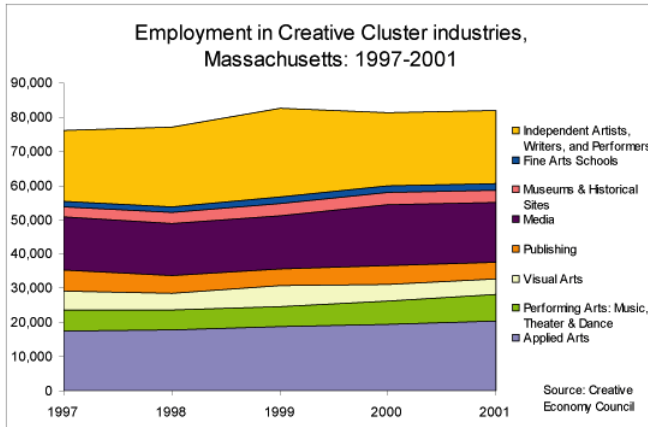


Fig. 3. Employment in Creative Cluster industries, Massachusetts: 1997-2001
Source: Boston Indicators Project, 2004f

Boston holds third place in the *Creativity Index* ranking¹⁰ (Florida, 2002), behind San Francisco and Austin, also ranking 6th in the size of the creative class, 12th in innovation, and 41st in diversity (The Boston Indicators Project, 2004f). Notably, Richard Florida found a correlation between open-mindedness, innovation, the high-tech industry, the presence of a large “creative class,” and population growth, which, in Boston, translates into an interesting demographic mix for analyses of creative cities.

Other factors also contribute to Boston’s appeal as a research model for this study. The number of arts organizations can tell us a lot about a city’s cultural dynamism, the opportunities for self-expression, and artistic creativity, as well, and are signs of a strong civic mobilization at the local level. According to the Boston Indicators Project, between 1992 and 1999, the number of arts and culture nonprofit organizations per capita grew 73% in metropolitan Boston, faster than in any other region of comparable size (Boston Indicators Project, 2004d). This evidence of cultural vitality reflects a growing diversity of the population. The evolution of social change in the ethnically diverse local communities is facilitated by these local organizations, which help preserve traditional values and identities. Boston’s cultural organizations and institutions, which act at the community level, rely on public, private, and philanthropic contributions, are often catalysts for both economic growth and a robust civic cultural life. The most recent research data from the Boston Foundation Report reveal that the Greater Boston area was second only to New

¹⁰ The Creativity Index is a composite of four equally-weighted factors: the proportion of the workforce composed of members of the Creative Class, a measure of high-tech industry growth, innovation (patents per capita) and diversity (gay population relative to overall population in a community).

York in per capita contributions to the arts, among 10 comparable metropolitan areas in the US (Boston Foundation, 1999)¹¹.

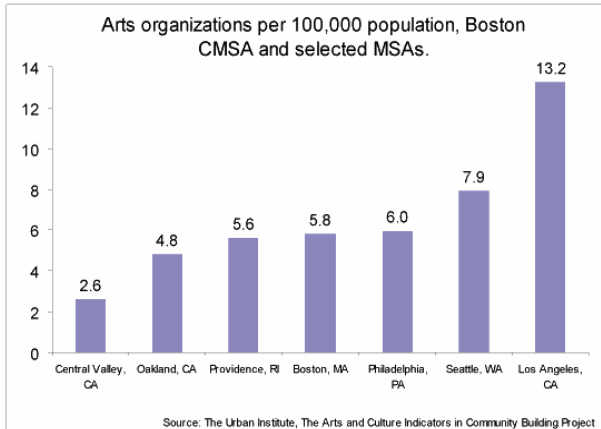


Fig. 4. Arts Organizations in Boston

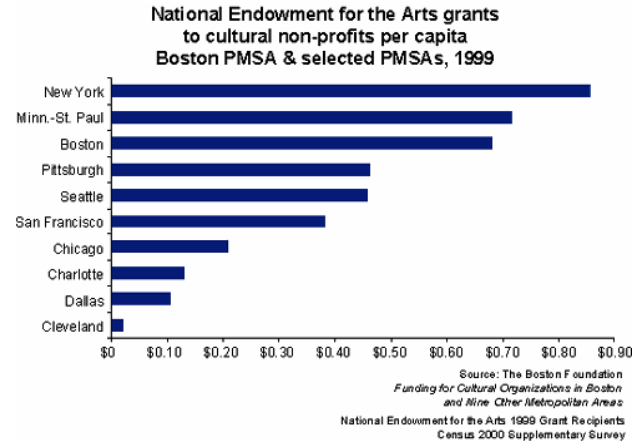


Fig. 5. Funding for cultural non-profits in Boston

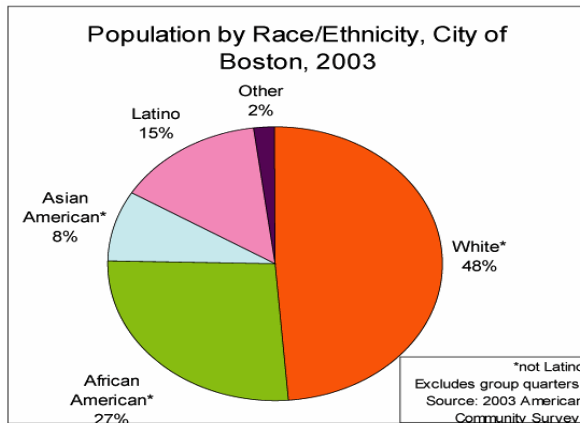


Fig. 6. Population by Race/Ethnicity in Boston

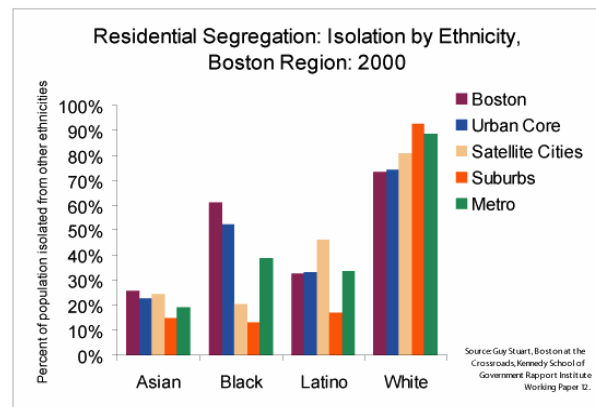


Fig. 7. Residential Segregation in Boston Region

In the urban context of Boston, the existence of a flourishing civic cultural life and a high level of ethnic diversity, make this area a particularly interesting location in which to develop the field work. Associated with issues of ethnic diversity are issues of segregation and, in particular, residential segregation (Fig. 7). Ethnic isolation in residential urban settings, which may result in

¹¹ However, in 2002, the state-funded Massachusetts Cultural Council’s fiscal 2003 budget was reduced by 62%, which forced an equivalent reduction in state investment at the local level and therefore in small- and mid-sized cultural non-profits (The Boston Indicators Project, 2004c).

the development of ethnic enclaves, is a prominent characteristic of Boston¹². In these contexts, communities have been trying to deal with the issue of cultural division, understood as physical, symbolic, and politic urban separation. These efforts provide some interesting approaches on ways to bring diverse groups together.

This study presents three examples of how organizations and community groups at the local level deal with cultural divides. The first example, situated in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood, showcases the work of a community-based organization, *Spontaneous Celebrations*. The second one, in *Villa Victoria*/South End, focuses on the community-based agency *Inquilinos Boricuas En Accion* (IBA). The third one, in Somerville, a municipality adjacent to Boston, features the *ArtsUnion* project, which draws together a variety of sponsors, including local government institutions, a non-profit business association, various non-profit organizations, and a non-profit public-private partnership, to launch a cultural-economic development project that plans to transform the area into an Arts District.

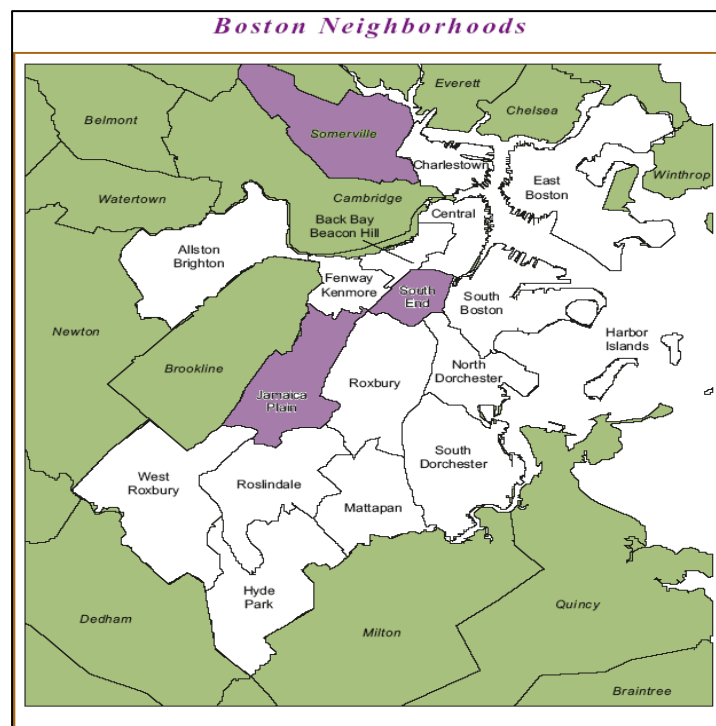


Fig. 8. Jamaica Plain, South End and Somerville
Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority

¹² According to data from 2000, the most isolated group is whites living in Boston's suburbs: on average, they live on blocks that are more than 90% white. On average, whites living in *cities* resided on blocks that were 70% white. In the city of Boston, African Americans reside on blocks that are on average 60% African-American (Boston Indicators Project, 2004g).

In to a recent report on the city, the Boston Indicators Project states on its website that “As Boston continues to become more ethnically diverse and culturally vibrant, creative organizations are building audience participation in diverse communities” (The Boston Indicators Project, 2004a). In fact, artistic and cultural initiatives have an influence on demographics, economic, social and political development, and ethnic diversity. In the past two decades, Boston has been experiencing a cultural renaissance.. According to the Boston Indicators Project (2004), the city had the highest rate (78%) of Greater Bostonians attending a performing arts event in 2002, among 10 metropolitan areas studied. Furthermore, Greater Boston is home to more cultural organizations per capita - many of them cutting-edge community-based organizations with vibrant expressions of cultural diversity - than the major metropolitan areas of Chicago, New York and San Francisco. Between 1992 and 1999 there was a 73% increase in the number of arts organizations established in Boston. Additionally, participation in outdoor festivals and community celebrations is at record number.

3.2. Community Profiles

3.2.1. Jamaica Plain: Activism and the Natural Environment

The way that cities relate to their natural environment has always been problematic. Currently, contemporary cities are increasingly an amalgamation of buildings, services, and commercial areas, and, in the bustle of urban activity, natural urban environments are often disregarded. When we speak of civic participation, we cannot ignore the importance of public support in the promotion of spaces of dialogue and social intervention. But there is more to add to this democratizing character of the public space. The urban natural environments - parks, community gardens, lakes and rivers - may represent, as public spaces, a platform to stimulate processes of active citizenship, while also yielding added value in the promotion of a city’s attractions, and contributing to the globalized awareness of environmental issues. From this standpoint, *Spontaneous Celebrations* has been working to strengthen the association between active citizenship and urban natural environment.

Jamaica Plain started as a fertile and appealing space for farmers and seasonal residents in the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth century, it became a more industrialized area, where textile mills, print shops, foundries, stone yards, and breweries were built. As the agricultural focus began to fade, immigrant workers moved into the area and a more socially, culturally, and

economically diverse population took root. Perhaps more than any other Boston neighborhood, Jamaica Plain is divided into smaller localities with active neighborhood organizations and clear identities.



Fig. 9. Jamaica Pond
Source: The Heart of the City Project



Fig. 10. Centre Street commercial area

In terms of ethnic diversity, according to the Boston Indicators Project, 23,5% of residents of Jamaica Plain are Hispanic (Dominican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Mexican), 49,8% are White (European descendent), and 16,7% are African-American (The Boston Indicators Project, 2004i). In this neighborhood, the total percentage of minorities rose in the eighties from 41% to 51%, and remained at this level through the year 2000. There is also a significant lesbian, gay, and transgender community, which endows the neighborhood with a more tolerant and liberal orientation. Another important aspect of the neighborhood profile is the tremendous amount of open space resources: in 1997, Jamaica Plain had the third highest percentage of tree cover of all Boston neighborhoods, with more than 1,250 acres of open space.

	1990		2000		% change
	#	%	#	%	
POPULATION					
Total Population	41,193	100.0%	38,196	100.0%	-7.3%
% of Boston Population		7.2%		6.5%	
Race & Ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic					
White	20,626	50.1%	19,030	49.8%	-7.7%
Black or Afr American	7,655	18.6%	6,390	16.7%	-16.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2,036	4.9%	2,485	6.5%	22.1%
Native American	121	0.3%	100	0.3%	-17.4%
Some other race	183	0.4%	180	0.5%	-1.6%
Two or more races	na	na	1,053	2.8%	na
Hispanic	10,571	25.7%	8,958	23.5%	-15.3%
Age					
< 5	2,958	7.2%	1,931	5.1%	-34.7%
5-9	2,380	5.8%	2,077	5.4%	-12.7%
10-14	2,052	5.0%	1,912	5.0%	-6.8%
15-19	2,615	6.3%	1,966	5.1%	-24.8%
20-24	4,534	11.0%	4,536	11.9%	0.0%
25-34	10,117	24.6%	8,406	22.0%	-16.9%
35-44	6,572	16.0%	6,227	16.3%	-5.2%
45-54	3,195	7.8%	4,587	12.0%	43.6%
55-64	2,352	5.7%	2,589	6.8%	10.1%
65-79	2,898	7.0%	2,712	7.1%	-6.4%
80+	1,524	3.7%	1,253	3.3%	-17.8%

Table 1. Jamaica Plain General Demographics
Source: Boston Indicators Project, 2004i.

This neighborhood has always been known for its vibrant arts community. *Spontaneous Celebration*, which stages several arts-oriented events in Jamaica Plan, is a community and arts-based organization with more than thirty years of experience in social intervention and community organizing through arts and culture. Consistent with its grassroots principles, it combines artistic expression and open-air festivals, with extensive community mobilization and committed social engagement with social issues such as street violence, racial discrimination, environmental issues, and global terrorism. The bottom-up work of this non-profit organization is a prime example of how it is possible to empower community residents, with empowerment represented here by people engaging as active participants in cultural events. One of the main strategies to promote public involvement in community events is to use urban public green spaces as settings for festivals, neighborhood parades, and musical rehearsals, so that passersby can be automatically integrated in the activity, either as spectators or as active participants. By

bringing the festivity to public arena of the park, the garden, the street, and the lake, are we not only making it accessible to everyone, but also reconfiguring urban identity, inquiring about its possible connections with the natural urban environments?

On the other hand, by developing cultural events and activities, like music and dance sessions in community centers and schools in the area, the organization aims to create a network of local social actors, willing to use the arts in interaction with various cultural and ethnic traditions, as a way to work against ethnic and racial discrimination and promote a sense of belonging in urban spaces. To this end, *Spontaneous Celebrations* organizes a variety of festivals and celebratory cultural events in the communities of Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and Greater Boston. The main focus of the community arts work is the preparation for these events, providing a platform for promoting community participation through the acquisition of artistic skills (which include arts and crafts, costume making, dance, junk percussion, theater and stilt walking). Examples of events organized include *Wake Up the Earth Festival*, a unique, thirty year neighborhood tradition, which draws over 10,000 people of all ages, ethnic and social backgrounds, and blends traditions of *May Day*, *Earth Day*, *International Worker's Day* and *Cinco de Mayo*. Community involvement in the different organizational committees in workshop organization and in preparation during the day of the event, is substantial. Another example is the *Jamaica Pond Lantern Parade*, a spiritual gathering that has become an annual tradition since the 80s, reflecting the dedication of the people to the spirit of nature, welcoming autumn, and making wishes for peace. Its goal is to unite people around crafts and other visual arts, preparing handmade lanterns for the day of the event. Other events, like *Tropical Fiesta*, promote environment awareness, and in this case, the need to protect the rain forest. *Spontaneous Celebrations'* cultural center is transformed into a rain forest through intensive visual arts workshops (with families, children, and youth) that reproduce, in decorative elements, the rain forest environment.

3.2.2. Jamaica Plain: The Community Festival Arts example in a *Connected Community*

The cultural and artistic dynamics advanced by the work of *Spontaneous Celebrations* emphasize strategies to promote sociability at the community level. Artistic activities and other cultural related events are designed to create spaces of inter-ethnic and inter-generational encounters, developing new connections between community members. The intention is to foster

inter-neighborhood relationships that vault cultural barriers. Connections such as these support the development of *connected communities*, where inter-group efforts gain traction, and where civic participation results in the establishment of a network of civic minded individuals, all committed to the common good.

As stated by one of the founders of *Spontaneous Celebrations*:

Right now we work with a lot of non-profit groups (...). We would go, for example, to Urban Edge ... they're an organization that works on housing and development in Roxbury. We are on the edge of Jamaica Plain, so we really serve a lot of community people from that area. They are mostly people of color" (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, December 16, 2004).

Inter-ethnic socialization is also enhanced because Jamaica Plain's community center lies at the intersection of three distinct ethnic communities: African-American, European-White, and Latin, with low, high, and middle-class income levels, respectively. Artistic activities are designed to encourage socialization between different social groups, as they can create places of reciprocity, which, in turn, can nurture the development of concerted community interventions. One community organizer explained how *Spontaneous Celebrations*' building became the object of community goodwill: "We fixed it up with just donated labor, volunteer work from people who wanted to build the project, people from the community who wanted to help, who donated their time, like plumbers and electricians" (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, December 12, 2004). This voluntary reciprocity is key to building *connected communities* within urban spaces. Arts and culture in these communities are closely tied to individual sociability and the creation of neighbor-to-neighbor and family-to-family connections. The artistic activity creates a space to boost creativity and a platform to develop community social links and community involvement in the organization's initiatives. However, the geographic proximity between different ethnicities can also provoke conflicts and, on occasion, violence. Therefore, strategies of social intervention in these types of culturally diverse communities require sensitive and thoughtful approaches

3.2.3. Villa Victoria/South End: a Minority Housing Complex in a Gentrified Neighborhood

One of the most complex social issues that underscores the contemporary metropolis is the divisions that result from everyday cohabitation, in the same neighborhood, of socially, economically, and culturally different groups. In multicultural societies with constant migration fluxes, the urban context itself can be subjected to ongoing economic, physical, and historical transformations. The South End is an example of an inner city area where several minority housing complexes co-exist side by side with an affluent community. A brief history of this neighborhood will help us better understand the context that explains the current sociological mix.

The South End was built on filled tidal flats during the mid-1800s. The neighborhood was designed to attract the wealthy merchant class, with large Victorian townhouses surrounding park squares. However, the neighborhood's status as a wealthy neighborhood was relatively short and, by the close of the nineteenth century, the South End was known as a transitional community, attracting recent immigrants (Irish, Lebanese, Jewish, African-American, and Greek) and diverse working class families, in search of better economic and social conditions. By the close of the nineteenth century, the South End became a tenement district, first attracting new immigrants and, in the 1940s, single gay men. As the decades progressed, more buildings became tenements and by the 1960s, absentee landlordism rose steeply and the neighborhood became one of the poorest of the city. In the 1950s, the neighborhood became the focus of an urban renewal campaign, and affordable housing complexes were built. At the same time that young professionals, attracted by the centrality of the South End's Victorian residential district, and its liberal lifestyle¹³, moved into the area, ethnic minorities, especially Hispanics of different nationalities, started to move into the housing complexes. *Villa Victoria* is one of these housing complexes, along with other mainly Latino housing complexes, like *Cathedral* and *Lower Lenix*. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the neighborhood is the stratification of income levels (a concentration of the wealthy and the poor), as well as the ethnic diversity, due to a large number of subsidized low-income housing units.

¹³ The South End is also known as a gay, artistic, and cultural neighborhood, with a flourishing artistic life as the number of art galleries grows.



Fig. 11. Union Park and Shawmut Av.
Source: Wikipedia



Fig. 12. Union Park and Tremont Street

The South End demography (data from 2000) reflects a population that is 45.3% White, 22.7% African American, and 16.9% Hispanic, with a representative youth population (between 25-34) of 26.1% (The Boston Indicators Project, 2004b).

	1990		2000		% change
	#	%	#	%	
POPULATION					
Total Population	28,891	100.0%	28,239	100.0%	-2.3%
% of Boston Population		5.0%		4.8%	
Race & Ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic					
White	11,397	39.4%	12,780	45.3%	12.1%
Black or Afr American	9,163	31.7%	6,422	22.7%	-29.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3,465	12.0%	3,358	11.9%	-3.1%
Native American	117	0.4%	94	0.3%	-19.7%
Some other race	113	0.4%	117	0.4%	3.5%
Two or more races	na	na	695	2.5%	na
Hispanic	4,635	16.0%	4,773	16.9%	3.0%
Age					
< 5	1,602	5.5%	1,209	4.3%	-24.5%
5-9	1,348	4.7%	1,190	4.2%	-11.7%
10-14	1,268	4.4%	1,126	4.0%	-11.2%
15-19	1,548	5.4%	1,180	4.2%	-23.8%
20-24	3,292	11.4%	2,676	9.5%	-18.7%
25-34	7,882	27.3%	7,381	26.1%	-6.4%
35-44	4,835	16.7%	5,389	19.1%	11.5%
45-54	2,810	9.7%	3,412	12.1%	21.4%
55-64	1,914	6.6%	2,319	8.2%	21.2%
65-79	1,848	6.4%	1,871	6.6%	1.2%
80+	547	1.9%	486	1.7%	-11.2%

Table 2. South End general demographics
Source: Boston Indicators Project, 2004h.

The *Villa Victoria* community, our context of analysis, is located in the heart of the South End. *Villa Victoria* is a 435 unit housing project of 3,000 primarily Latino residents. It represents a mainly low income community, where 80% of the people live at or below the national poverty level, 52% of the people are 21 years of age or younger, 72% are Latinos, and 77% of households are headed by women (The Boston Indicators Project, 2004b). As a minority community, its localization within a mainly white, upwardly middle class community makes it an enclave along with other housing complexes distributed throughout the South End. *Villa Victoria* is managed by the community building agency *Inquilinos Boricuas En Acción (IBA)*. This agency is dedicated to the economic, social, and cultural development of this community through its social and cultural services. Much of its work concerns the management of conflict

caused by territorialism and urban rivalry, using strategies of social, economic, and cultural integration.

Since its beginnings, *Villa Victoria* has had a deep commitment to artistic and cultural practices in socially integrated communities. The promotion of Latino culture, through many arts-related programs and events, is part of *Villa Victoria's* mission. One example is the arts component of the *Cacique Youth Learning Center* for Teens, which is deeply rooted in this community. The community arts program attempts to reach out to youth at risk in *Villa Victoria* and surrounding communities, focusing on a variety of artistic and educational activities, like Latin percussion, banner painting, Hip Hop, spoken word, martial arts, theatre, dance, and community education. The key objective is to involve youth from different ethnic communities in order to create spaces of connection for the prevention of isolation and intolerant behaviors. Other arts related initiatives and venues have been developed in the community as well. *IBA's* arts initiatives started in the 1970s with the *Areyto* program, which included a small theater company, the street theater company *Virazon*, a choral group, an arts curriculum for middle and high school students, and the design of a ceramic tile community mural, which resides today in *Plaza Betances* at *Villa Victoria*.

In the 1980s, arts-based innovation in the community took a leap forward when a century-old church was transformed into a performance center, the *Jorge Hernandez Cultural Center* (JHCC), which became a Latino cultural landmark serving all of Boston. Currently, this cultural center is open to cultural events organized by *IBA* and the *Villa Victoria* community, providing a performance, exhibition and learning space for community artists. The cultural center, in concert with *IBA*, conducts outreach to an ethnically mixed audience through the promotion of Latino culture. It has established productive partnerships with other arts related institutions in Boston, like the *Berkley Performance Center*, the *Boston Symphony Orchestra* and the *Handle and Hayden Society*. One of the benefits of having a performance center was that, in the late 80s, *IBA* could launch a performing arts series, *Café Teatro*, to introduce renowned Latin American artists (in areas of Latin Jazz and traditional Latin American music) to the American public. Adjacent to the JHCC, *IBA* repurposed an historic church parish house into a community arts center, *Center for Latino Arts (CLA)*, a multifunctional community arts complex that includes a gallery, a dance studio, and a visual arts studio. As with the *JHCC*, the main goals of *CLA* are to nurture Latino arts and artists, offer affordable arts education for at-risk youth, work

as an incubator for artists and arts organizations, offer spaces for rehearsals and exhibitions, and develop opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration between Latinos and other ethnic populations. Presently, *CLA* hosts two main Latino cultural and artistic programs - *El Bembe* and *Café Teatro*. The combination of the performance and community cultural centers provides support and visibility for Latino culture and artists, while serving as a venue for the promotion of the *Villa Victoria* community in the region. But what, in fact, is the impact that this center has been having on the local community? Who profits from the clear emphasis on the promotion of the Latino culture?

3.2.4. *Villa Victoria/South End: a Grassroots Movement Example in a Community of Enclave*

A *community of enclave* is characterized by physical confinement to a particular urban setting and an ethnic community with a history of cultural resistance and space-appropriation. In *Villa Victoria*, artistic and cultural initiatives have been ensuring the very survival of the community, emphasizing the uniqueness of its traditions and way of life.

However, the *community of enclave* struggles with the ability to support cultural revitalization and re-adaptation while the space itself is changing ethnically. This need to constantly readjust is articulated in the comments of one of the Puerto Rican community leaders: “You have changes in the festival and cultural activities in *Villa Victoria*, the community is changing, leadership is changing, the residence is changing and the community becomes more multicultural, they [the Puerto Ricans from *Villa Victoria*] start to accept people from other cultures (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, February 10, 2006).” Is the capacity of adaptation to a changing ethnic context an essential feature of a community of enclave in order to ensure the survival of its own identity?

The revitalization process included in the case began in the 1960s as an historical grassroots immigrant movement to rehabilitate a specific area of the South End neighborhood: *Villa Victoria*. This Puerto Rican enclave sprang from the community’s resistance to Boston’s Urban Renewal Program in the 1960s. When asked to vacate Boston site *Parcel 19*, now *Villa Victoria*, the residents instead threw themselves into revitalizing their neighborhood. As explained by one community member, “It is an amazing story of community organizing and activism (...) The city wanted to put up parking lots and shopping malls in the whole area... and

people started saying ‘we are going to stay and fight for it’ and they organized themselves”(C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, June 30, 2005).

Residents organized a plan that included a collaborative community effort to offer social, cultural, and artistic services to the community in order to develop a culturally sustainable Puerto Rican identity. In an era of globalization, this kind of mobilization represents an effort where artistic and cultural activities can represent a powerful tool to preserve immigrant references and cultural traditions.

Instead of being razed, *Parcel 19* became the site where bottom-up social, economic, and cultural development took place and continues today. The revitalization project included efforts of cultural appropriation of the urban public space and strategies to enhance Puerto Rican cultural identity and traditions. In order to face the challenges related to cultural survival as well as those stemming from the successful effort to build a strong cultural identity, these grassroots social movements are using both protective and resistance strategies, where place and culture are intimately related. *Festival Bétances*, the popular annual festival that celebrates Puerto Rican values and traditions, mainly through artistic events, represents the most visible and successful expression of the cultural vitality of *Villa Victoria*.

The overriding question, however, is if the *Villa Victoria* strategy of cultural resistance will continue to succeed in a multicultural social context more concerned with creating platforms of dialogue between the different ethnicities than the maintenance of culturally protected enclaves. Currently, it seems that the process of citizenship building is focused on inter-group communication and committed action, rather than about strictly defined borders which inhibit intercultural dialog.

3.2.5. Union Square/Somerville: An Historic and Commercial Urban Space

A common issue of many urban areas is the difficulty of establishing a unique identity. Somerville was, in the past, an industrial center in Greater Boston and, apart from its recent residential and commercial growth spurt, has had to cope with the fact that some of the neighborhoods remained nondescript and became, as it is the case of Union Square, simply a main entrance venue to the center of Boston. The challenge for *ArtsUnion* was how to deploy the ethnic, cultural, artistic, historical and economical resources of the area to transform the indistinct “non place”(Augé, 1995), into a lively commercial, historical, ethnic, and artistic neighborhood.

Somerville was a site of intense industrial activity in the eighteenth century during the American Revolution, especially in specific sites like the Mystic River, Ten Hills Farm, and the Powder House, where the British marched and sailed. Fortifications were built on Winter and Prospect Hills to keep watch over Boston during the siege, which lasted until 1776, when the British soldiers evacuated Boston. On January 1, 1776, one of the earliest American flags was raised on Prospect Hill, just above Union Square. The name *Union Square* originates from the time the square used as a recruitment site for the Union Army in the American Civil War. Prospect Hill's Castle, dating from 1902, had great strategic importance in the Revolutionary War because of its height and location, and is today a popular monument.

Somerville was founded in 1842 and established as a city in 1872, becoming a residential and “street car suburb” of Boston (Sammarco, 1997). The Middlesex Canal, built in the beginning of this same century, spurred the development and tremendous growth of the town in the last decades of the nineteenth century, providing easy accessibility to Somerville from Boston. Furthermore, its picturesque hills made it a popular area of residence during this time. The new town began to flourish and schools, churches, municipal buildings, and new streets were built. According to Sammarco, by 1872, the city of Somerville had experienced three decades of intense growth (*idem*).

Throughout the twentieth century until today, the population of this area has steadily risen, with increased religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity, due to an influx of immigrants who have contributed to its urban cultural dynamism. Somerville is today the most densely populated city in New England¹⁴, a heterogeneous mix of blue collar Irish-American and Italian families, as well as smaller groups of Brazilians, Haitians, El Salvadorians, South Koreans, and Indians. According to the US Census 2000, the demographics are: 71% Whites, 13% African-American, and 7% Asian. Because of its affordability and proximity to several universities, Somerville also includes a large student population.

¹⁴ As of the 2000 Census, the city had a total population of 77,478 with only slightly over 4 square miles.



Fig. 13. Davis Square, Somerville;
photo: Claudia Carvalho

General Characteristics	Number *	Somerville %*	U.S. %*
Total population	77,478	100	100
Male	37,730	48.7	49.10
Female	39,748	51.3	50.90
Median age (years)	31.1	X	35.3
Under 5 years	3,500	4.5	6.80
18 years and over	65,983	85.2	74.30
65 years and over	8,099	10.5	12.40
One race	73,721	95.2	97.60
White	59,635	77	75.10
Black or African American	5,035	6.5	12.30
American Indian and Alaska Native	171	0.2	0.90
Asian	4,990	6.4	3.60
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	50	0.1	0.10
Some other race	3,840	5	5.50
Two or more races	3,757	4.8	2.40
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	6,786	8.8	12.50

Table 3. Somerville General Demographics, 2000
Source: <http://www.somervillema.gov/About.cfm?page=35>

Union Square is Somerville’s oldest commercial district, combining traditional neighborhood stores with ethnic restaurants. The area was often referred to as *Liberty Pole*

Square (idem), after a flagpole was erected after the American Revolution. The Square was then named for the union of United States. Today, Union Square Plaza is characterized by a network of high-traffic streets that are a common feature of urban space in the Boston area. It is situated on the edge of a busy main entrance to Boston, so it accommodates a huge flux of people, traffic, and goods. It also contains renovated warehouses and factories which house artists priced out of Boston. However, the Square is underserved as a place of interchange and interaction among its community members because it is mainly seen as a conduit for people in and out of the city.

Union Square is currently a site looking for its identity. The distinctive characteristics of the Square are its ethnic diversity, the proliferation of various ethnic businesses, an active artistic community (organized in corporations, and associations of artists in condominiums studios and lofts), the historical legacy of Union Square as a commercial and industrial district, and the considerable amount of architecture from the Civil War period. The current attractions of Union Square include the historical context and role as the oldest commercial center in the city. The Square's assets offer the perfect context for a communitarian effort of cultural revitalization.

The object of study in Union Square is the *ArtsUnion* project, designed to promote the cultural and economic development of the area. This initiative's chief goal is the creation of new economic opportunities for local artists, and the strengthening of the regional identity of the area, by designating Union Square as an *arts district*. The project includes an assortment of cultural activities which include open air performances in different urban public spaces, local products markets, ethnic markets, historical tours, public space exhibitions and community meetings with *ArtsUnion* partners. These initiatives seek to mobilize artists, residents, local vendors, local stores, associations, and political personalities for a social, cultural, and economic mobilization effort designed to realize the dormant potential of Union Square. Is the pattern of activities through time sufficient for the successful implementation of an Arts District? Is cultural diversity an essential element of *ArtsUnion* project, as if so, will it to ensure that the Arts District reflects the ethnic diversity of Union Square? Is the local cultural dynamic of *ArtsUnion* a reflection of the social, cultural and economic local diversity or is it, rather, an imposed and selected cultural sample, chosen by the creative local elite? These are some of the more salient questions that arise from this initiative.

3.2.6. Union Square: an Arts District example in a *Clustered Community*

The *ArtsUnion* project has an interesting juxtaposition of economic and civic minded cultural efforts throughout the urban site. Individuals and community groups associate themselves with various civic oriented endeavors in different locales of an extensive urban area. They create localized and specific community-building initiatives that build connections between distinct community actors, such as businesses, artists, community organizations, and residents. We refer to communities with this profile as *clustered communities*, where groups of individuals emerge throughout the neighborhood, developing networks of civic affiliation grounded on the site's cultural resources.

ArtsUnion portrays a cultural revitalization project that was created by the Somerville Arts Council and groups of mostly white, middle class activists from Somerville. The project strives to create a new urban experience for the Union Square area, one that draws upon its significant artistic and cultural resources. A range of community-based partners, such as businesses, artistic cooperatives, artists, community based organizations, and local government institutions, are all contributing to this revitalization of Union Square. The goal is to create spaces where different immigrant artists can mingle and thrive. Public spaces in Union Square (such as the Plaza, business windows and walls, parks and streets) are envisioned by *ArtsUnion*, as possible mediators of urban renewal by acting as platforms of ethnic interchange.

Union Square local businesses, organizations, and residents, conscious of the lack of any sense of place in the Square, base their economic and social growth on urban regeneration initiatives such as this. An identity of place is being built through the designation of the area as an *artistic quarter*, featuring consumption, leisure, and arts activities (Zukin, 1996a).

The project was designed to boost the cultural and economic development of Union Square using streets, squares, coffee-shops, gardens, bridges - all places that were designed for one purpose, but are now appropriated serve an arts related purpose. *ArtsUnion* addresses some of the main issues related to the appropriation of space in Union Square by bringing together different ethnic communities.

The three case studies represent three snapshots of urban neighborhoods that display different approaches to public space, community, and culture. As such, they can be taken as three proposals on how urban sites may be socially and culturally revitalized.

In the *Spontaneous Celebrations* example, ethnic diversity is critical to the neighborhood cultural dynamic. Likewise, the strategy of using urban natural environments, is also key for the

greatest cultural impact of the initiatives and for the creation of political awareness about the role of the natural urban sites in the reconfiguration of urban identity.

In the *Villa Victoria* example, the project's territory is a crucial element of urban cultural identity. In fact, the Puerto Rican community places its cultural survival on territorial and enclosed community mobilization. The productions of cultural events at *Villa Victoria* attempt to rectify the lack of cultural integration of this minority into a greater context that is growing in multicultural diversity.

Finally, *Union Square* combines aspects from both examples mentioned above. It is an ethnically diverse but territorially enclosed Boston area municipality. It contains vibrant cultural groups, a large community of artists, a commercial sector, and the ethnic communities, all of which do not necessarily join in concerted efforts, but are involved in compartmented interventions. The *ArtsUnion* project represents an effort to blend all these resources into a community effort that recognizes both the need to reconfigure the relationship that diverse individuals have with the urban space, and to share different perspectives on the issues that are part of the neighborhood daily life. All three examples approach the issue of citizenship in the contemporary world by exploring, with more or less success, the different possible articulations between cultural identity, creative behavior and social and political awareness.

Chapter 4. Urban Revivification: the Culturalization of Urban Space

*Cities reflect a great fear of exposure,
and are constructed instead to protect our inner selves
from the threat of social contact and from difference
(Watson and Bridge, 2003)*

4.1. Urban Revivification in Jamaica Plain, Union Square and *Villa Victoria*

The three cases studies suggest some strategies of urban revivification including the creation of culturalized environments, the development of urban-space based projects of intervention, and the development of a political community. From the space appropriation of the community festivals in Jamaica Plain, to the clustered space intervention of community partners in the Union Square area, and the cultural organization of the *Villa Victoria* community with its Puerto Rican Street names and its readapted *Casitas*, we witness different perspectives on the urban revivification of public space. To tackle the relationship between place and culture in the three urban neighborhoods, we have identified three domains of analysis to classify the type of cultural intervention in the urban space: 1) Political Community and Public Space; 2) Urban Culturalization; 3) Urban Identity and Community-Project Identification.

What follows is the study of the relationship between place and culture, through the analysis of the processes and strategies used in the three communities under study, towards the creation of *loose-space* (Frank and Stevens, 2007), which address the way people use the city's environments to foster inter-personal relationships, collective beliefs, and cultural practices. In the urban communities under study, people create *loose-space* (Frank and Stevens, 2007) by developing unintended or alternative activities in the design or program of these spaces. Urban sites are appropriated, meaning that "(...) they use the physical features of their surroundings when they think they are helpful and overcome or ignore them when they are constraining" (Frank and Stevens, 2007). The urban public spaces may become then both a venue for social connection through the arts, and for the community's physical, social and cultural appropriation. How can cultural appropriation of public space, seen in these case studies, provide a way to build a plastic space that may promote dialogue and efforts to bridge group differences? How may the public space facilitate democratization by becoming an arena of citizen participation?

4.2. Building a Political Community in Public Space

One of the main criticisms addressed in the literature about the role that cultural projects can play in revivification of urban communities concerns what little the projects have done historically to reflect and support the cultural diversity of local human and natural landscapes. Normally, revivification projects focus more on increased tourism, with the celebration of great artistic and architectural features that, according to some authors, sell a specific ideology

associated with the western world (Evans, 2001), independently of the possible contribution of local communities. In the cases under study, it was observed that the more successful attempts included the integration of local cultural knowledge and diversity with cultural revivification projects. However, different degrees of success were attained, as we will see in the analysis of the interactions between political community, local cultural diversity, and urban space. The basic question is how well does cultural revivification honor local cultural diversity? In fact one of the most prominent characteristics of the locations under analysis is the array of experiences, practices, and histories of cultural expression of different social and ethnic groups. However, these ethnicities do not normally have a role in shaping the urban environment in which they live. The experiences documented contain different levels of success in efforts to intervene in the locations in order to integrate local cultural diversity into part of the urban residential environment.

4.2.1. Jamaica Plain and *Spontaneous Celebrations*

In Jamaica Plain, the construction of civic and political culture is done using two different strategies: the acknowledgement of local social and cultural diversity (in terms of immigrant culture and local social partners) and the creation of political sites through civic participation. Through a strategy of cultural appropriation used by *Spontaneous Celebrations*, various public spaces like parks, gardens, lakes, and streets are used to promote platforms of interrelation between people from different cultural backgrounds. They work as basic intermediaries for the establishment of civic relationships based on local knowledge and diversity. These neighborhoods, surrounded by abundant natural environments, represent a great resource for developing events and activities that tap into the cultural and ethnic diversity of the area to promote initiatives that incorporate collaborative organizing and civic engagement. Open-air festivals, like *Wake Up the Earth* and *Lantern Parade*, are examples of how the South West Corridor Park and the Jamaica Pond, respectively, are used to amplify an urban culture of multicultural tolerance through artistic expression, which ultimately leads to the establishment of social relationships. As an example, the cyclic festivity, *Wake Up the Earth*, takes place in the streets of Jamaica Plain and all along the South West Corridor Park. The celebration occurs in the streets of the neighborhood and any citizen may take part in the activities that are spread throughout the South West Corridor Park and adjacent streets. Is this event weakening the barriers between spectator and participant and directly influencing their relationship with the

urban space? Is the public space here being used as platform to increase the quantity and the quality of human interactions? Since this was a family-oriented festival, people from different ages could be observed socializing in various sites, as they encountered different types of cultural and artistic expressions during the preparations and then during the day of the event. The neighborhood park becomes the venue for gatherings, musical performances, dance traditions, community theatre, youth artistic activities, local vendor's tables, social intervention parades, and children's activities. From this context, we can examine the role of place in promoting opportunities for inter-cultural encounters and producing perceptions about the need to change attitudes related to the preservation of environmental resources.

From the organization's beginnings in the seventies to the first efforts in the eighties to involve different cultures in communitarian work and in artistic activities (Fig.14 and 15), to the contemporary trends of *Spontaneous Celebrations* activities, such as the *Wake Up the Earh Festival* (Figs. 16 and 17), there has been a constant objective to bring people from different cultures¹⁵ into the organization. Instead of reproducing the ethnic isolation of some communities, this attempt to integrate different cultural and social sectors of the local community makes us reflect on the possible role of urban space as a mediator of dialogue between different groups. May the public realm be understood in a different manner: as both place of expression, and development of civic and political capacity, and as a site of dialogue to organize joint interventions?

¹⁵ From the beginning I wanted to bring people who would represent the different cultures in our community, and so I went looking for them. I found Betsaida Gutierrez, Clementina Acebo, Felicity Oyola and the Pabon brothers from the Latino community; the Paige Academy from Roxbury also joined forces with us, representing the African American community (...) most of the original members of the groups are still involved. (*Spontaneous Celebrations*, 1999).

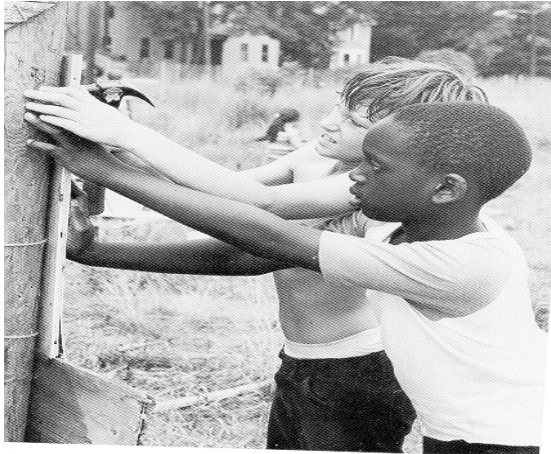


Fig. 14. Hut Building, *Spontaneous Celebration's*



Fig. 15. Wake Up the Earth Festival



Fig. 16. Parade at *Wake Up the Earth Festival*
Photo: Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 17. Participants *Wake Up the Earth*
Photo: courtesy *Spontaneous Celebrations* archive

Moreover, rallies, parades, festivals, and community gatherings use the urban public space to engage residents in local issues. During the full year of informal gatherings, workshops, dinner parties, and official meetings to prepare for the festival, youth, community families, children, and cultural and social local promoters call attention to some of the social issues that are part of the day-to-day life in communities. At *Wake Up the Earth Festival*, these issues are brought to the public space through a rally and a parade where people perform short sketches inspired by those issues, or simply prepare signs that they display to all during the parade and rally. The public space assumes the features of a political arena. As stated by one community organizer:

The [Wute] Festival itself only lasts basically seven hours after hundreds and hundreds of countless hours of preparation (...) many people and organizations in the community come together to work on the festival (...) the Festival is again to bring together people in the community, to have a celebration of positivity and nutrition, nutrition in all levels of...not just food but spiritual, psychological, social, intellectual, artistic, musical...It's a way...I know that everyone who leaves the Festival feels really nurtured by it and feels really happy (...) (Carvalho, C, video interview, 17 February, 2005).

The political component of the activities, associated with the biggest event organized by *Spontaneous Celebrations* – the *Wake Up the Earth Festival* (Wute), involves various community organizations sharing opinions and initiatives related to local and/or global issues. As the community members are given the opportunity to express themselves, networks of civic minded individuals and collaborative endeavors emerge. Diverse sectors of the local society, such as local businesses, coalitions, and neighborhood residents, intervene in the festival through the parade. According to the *Wute* parade coordinator:

(...) the Boston Fair Trade Coalition wants to get out word about their and our fair trade policy and get people interested in acting locally to change it. They want a booth, sell crafts and be in parade (...) [I have] suggested that they get in touch with Equal Exchange because by selling kits for kids, money would go to their non-profits and maybe Equal Exchange would be willing to double up on that experience (Carvalho, C, video community meeting, 18 April, 2005).



Fig. 18. The grassroots-media campaign Billionaires for Bush in the Wute Parade¹⁶
Photos: Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 19. Residents in the Wute parade protesting the use of pesticides in the South West Corridor Park¹⁷

The creation of a diverse network of activism that expresses itself in the parade is associated with the artistic and cultural components of the festival, and acknowledge the importance of relating the cultural expression of a community to its social environment. In order to achieve cross-cultural participation from the community, the organization had to start by understanding the social issues that characterized people's lives and integrate them into elements of the festival. These issues were often related to ways that reorganization of the public space influenced people's lives. In fact, the first *Wake Up the Earth Festival* took place after the founders of the festival were apprised of the social issues that affected the community at that time. In addition, *Wute* was created as a community celebration of the diversity of a neighborhood in which people had been involved for some time in interventions for the improvement of the urban space. As stated by one of the founders of *Spontaneous Celebrations*:

People from the community said: "What do you mean a highway is going right through our community? (...)So, I got involved (...) I came up with this idea that... of groups

¹⁶ Billionaires for Bush is a do-it-yourself grassroots media campaign using humor and street theater to expose politicians who support corporate interests at the expense of everyday Americans. The idea is to expose and reframe the economic issues that affect people's lives.

¹⁷ The South West Corridor Park is where most of the activities of *Wake Up the Earth* take place and is considered one of the most important green areas of Boston, with 27 of its 52 acres situated in the heart of the city. The Park includes tennis courts, basketball courts, expansive open areas, fountains, three community gardens, sitting areas, and paved biking and walking paths.

working on different aspects of community teams...like you have the group advocating for affordable housing, there was the food coop, there was the South West Corridor Coalition, there was the group that we called the farm, which had started urban gardens on the vacant lots (...) there was a sort of green house and there was some land next to it covered with garbage. And that's where we had our first *Wake Up the Earth Festival* (Carvalho, C., semi-structured interview, December 16, 2004).

Cultural intervention in the urban space includes two strategies to promote the construction of a local culture of civic commitment. One is the development of an anthropological view of local ethnic and social diversity. The other is the creation of an agenda of political intervention in the public space, based on a grounded knowledge of the local experience. In these two trends, it is possible to identify how urban space is understood as *loose space* (Frank and Stevens, 2007) where groups of people appropriate urban sites, and use cultural and artistic initiatives as means to enable inter-group communication and give visibility to the political issues of multicultural communities.

4.2.2. Union Square and *ArtsUnion*

Our second context of analysis, Union Square, reveals another strategy pertaining to civic minded efforts of cultural appropriation of the public space. For many years, this urban area has attracted the creative class, providing a creative ambiance and a place with a strong cultural dynamic. Artistic events and other culturally related initiatives, like family gatherings, local tours, crafts, and vendors markets are an opportunity for the different organizational agents to showcase, in the public arena, how diverse community actors work together and relate to each other. In this case, the urban spaces are understood here as *juxtaposed places*, where different urban cultural interventions happen side by side throughout the urban site, offering spaces of encounter between different groups.

At the initiatives developed during the *ArtsUnion* project, spaces of encounter where different ethnicities, age groups, social behaviors and cultural traditions could be observed sharing the same space. The existence of communities from nationalities, such as Brazil, Korea, India, and Portugal, makes it possible for artists to experience vivid cultural diversity. Different ethnic groups coexist side by side, often without speaking the same language, to engage in joint

projects of urban intervention, creating the *juxtaposed* feature of the urban space. In this project, the joint engagement is between different sectors of the society like businesses (the Somerville Chamber of Commerce), local government institutions (the Somerville Arts Council), artists cooperatives (Brickbottom Artists Association), non-profit organizations (Washington Street Art Center, Somerville Open Studios), volunteer organizations (ArtSomerville), and a public-private partnership (Union Square Main Streets), which together have been developing a learning agenda that includes the joint production and presentation of community projects. Artists, the Somerville Arts Council, and community residents were involved in the preparation and presentation of the event *From the Old to the New*, a dance performance that included a learning class for the audience. Can this effort of joint learning be enough to open new pathways of intercultural dialogue? May the artistic practice in itself congregate the basic tools to equalize different groups and initiate the process of joint development of creative knowledge and open dialogue? There is certainly a great need for initiatives that gather different groups that seldom have the opportunity to interrelate. However, sporadic gatherings of culturally diverse groups in urban spaces are not enough to produce a significant ongoing dialogue. It is, however, a strategic starting point to call attention to the importance of inter-group and intercultural dialogue, which is greatly needed in a society where people, particularly youth, are never given the opportunity to encounter and negotiate cultural and social difference in the public arena (Watson, 2006; Sennett, 1977; Bauman, 2001). However, other initiatives that offer second-generation immigrant youth collaborative intercultural learning experiences, designed by a coalition of different cultural groups, may be an effective strategy to promote enhanced social relationships in multicultural societies. Although failing to engineer lasting cultural initiatives between different ethnicities, *ArtsUnion* was more interested in the promotion of encounters between different groups, which used urban space to experience and appreciate the presence of the different other. Ideally, these encounters might pave the way for future opportunities for culturally different groups to collaborate on joint projects and, in the long-term, to enlarge the sphere of socialization. The end result could be a transformation of the city into a culturally minded entity, where dialogue, communication, and concerted action can lead to the reformulation of citizenship.



Fig. 20. Arts Union event “From the Old to the New”
Photo: Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 21. Arts Union Event “Bhangra Bash”
Photo: Arts Union

The local newspapers made extensive reference to the multicultural character of the events presented by *ArtsUnion*, and to the traditions of the Square immigrants whose traditions are subjected to contemporary influences entailing a constant process of re-adaptation. “[these traditions, Malian and Haitian] will alternate performance pieces so as to highlight the historical and ongoing exchanges that these traditions experience”(Padgaonkar, 2005). All residents can experience contact with different cultures, satisfying their curiosity about their immigrant neighbors’ lifestyles. In the Indian event *Bhangra Bash*, “Close to 300 people showed up to celebrate Indian culture, dance, music and watch a Bollywood music video presentation on a big screen in the middle of the city’s Union Square”(Padgaonkar, 2005). Although the public space of Union Square served to disseminate these traditions, calling attention to the need to integrate them into the strategies of urban appropriation, it didn’t mediate the inter-cultural dialogue so much in need between the different groups of local immigrants, particularly the Indians, Brazilians, Haitian and Koreans. In fact, after the event was over, each group went back to their own communities and continued to live in relative isolation. But the question here goes further: What if these ethnic groups voluntarily wish to maintain their own closed communities, with their own lifestyles and traditions? What if inter-cultural dialogue is not an issue of interest for them? Are we currently taking the risk of perpetuating isolated cultural clusters in the contemporary multicultural city? Do we plan to respond to this risk by trying to impose our own western-European need to foster multiculturalism? Or, on the contrary, do we need to

reformulate our westernized conceptions of inter-cultural dialogue? It seems that from what has been said, any effort done at neighborhood level to culturally appropriate urban space with the intention to promote inter-cultural dialogue and action, cannot be done without the creation of a common understanding between the local agents involved, of the common values that structure people's wellbeing in their communities. If accomplished successfully, it is more likely that cultural and artistic projects of joint intervention can speak meaningfully to people's interests and motivations.

The Union Square area, "the poor stepsister of other areas of Somerville" (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, October 4, 2005), as a local policy maker calls it, tends to be overlooked as a site for vibrant socio-cultural intervention. It is therefore important to emphasize the significance of artistic events that have taken place in the *ArtsUnion* project context. These efforts have been able to inform community members about different local cultural traditions and the different approaches to community building in this area. In the case of the performances in the open air urban space, Brazilians and Africans tend to use the Plaza as a performance space and for cultural and social interaction with the public (Fig. 20). The audience and the artists blend together and often become interconnected as if one was an extension of the other. The audience interacts with the artists before and during the performance, so that the space for socialization is enlarged and acquires multiple formats, including conversation, interchange of dance and singing, and greater understanding of the artistic experience. Thus, in the Union Square Plaza, the use of this public realm for performances creates a space to cultivate multicultural awareness and the exchange of artistic learning experiences. Are these efforts consistent enough to make us think constructively about intercultural dialogue? As has been suggested before, the possibility of inter-cultural socialization in the public space represents the first step towards the shaping of a tolerant and active urban environment, by inculcating more positive perceptions about cultural differences and their importance in urban settings.

The differentiated cultural appropriations of physical spaces such as street-facing business windows, sidewalks, and plazas, suggest the capacity of urban spaces to propagate local culture. Scattered efforts show that various urban spaces are also starting to be utilized as meeting grounds that lead to collaborative relationships between different social and cultural agents. Can the boundaries between different communities fade through the overlap of strategies of socialization and culturalization of urban places? In fact, if projects of this type assume a

consistency over time and if they continue to attract culturally differentiated individuals, it is expected that they will create a culture of differentiated acceptance, something cannot happen where communication across cultural boundaries is sporadic, at best.

Union Square is also a site where collaboration among local businesses is common (i.e. in cafes and restaurants, banks, and in the visibility of visual artists who showcase art in the businesses' windows). Within these initiatives, it becomes interesting to note the attempt to reframe the role of the artist in the local community, including the local businesses, in the lives of immigrants, and in the community at large. The *Windows Art Exhibit* represents an effort of communication with these social worlds, using art exhibits on the storefronts as channels of mediation and repurposing of urban spaces.



Fig. 22. Windows Art Project, Union Square
Photo: Claudia Carvalho

Arts Union partnerships are based on artistic and economic resources, highlighting the increasing revenues that may result from using the arts as a tool to spark economic development. Furthermore, through these public installations, visual artists become more recognized as intimately connected with the urban public space. The *Street Furniture Project*, in which public artists are hired to design and make items such as benches (Figs. 23 and 24), trash receptacles, and community kiosks, further reinforces the valuable connection between Union Square streetscapes and local artists, contributing to the creation of a new image for the Square.



Fig.23

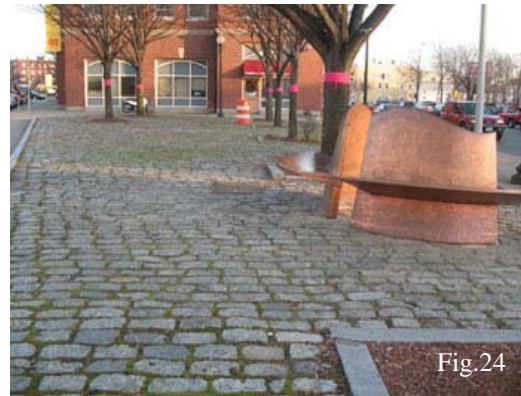


Fig.24

Figs. 23 and 24. Benches in Union Square
Photos: SAC

However, is the new image that is being created by functional public art objects reflecting the cultural diversity of the neighborhood? The question concerns the role of immigrant cultures in shaping this image. If the relationship between art and economy designed to create a plan of urban revivification does nothing to integrate immigrant and other ethnic experiences into the dialogue, it may reproduce cultural isolation and an exclusionary strategy of urban resurgence. Is it socially sustainable to create divisions between those who possess knowledge capital to define neighborhood revivification efforts and those for whom the revivification is imposed (the immigrant residents and other ethnic cultures, in this case) who generally do not identify with these projects? If the wish is to develop projects of cultural integration that express the cultural identities of a specific neighborhood, it is suggested that local cultural and ethnic input is essential, so that cultural revivification projects may speak to the full spectrum of diversity of the neighborhood.

4.2.3. *Villa Victoria and Inquilinos Boricuas En Accion*

The organization of the urban space in *Villa Victoria* is done in an informal way as a strategy to stimulate the development of door-to-door and neighbor-to-neighbor relationships that happen in an enclosed urban area. Consequently, this type of *enclosed place* is the context of the creation of a familial community where mutual help and trust dictate behavioral norms. During the *Festival Betances*, the residents of *Villa Victoria* prepare food, which is shared freely with everyone. It is an opportunity to showcase the cultural traditions from Puerto Rico while also alerting the community to local issues, like street violence and rivalry with other housing complexes of the area. The creation of space for socialization enables communication between different groups within the same ethnic community, in this case, the Latin community, and the circumscribed interval of time offered by the occasion of the festivity, works like a cathartic moment in which everyday concerns are forgotten and cultural traditions prevail. As Michel Bakhtin expresses it when describing the ‘Carnival’ time or the time of the feast “(...) this time becomes a place to work out (...) a new mode of interrelationship between individuals, counterposed to the all-powerful sociohierarchical relationships of non-carnival life” (Bahktin, 1987: 177).

Along with the wave of violence that affected the South End during the summer of 2006 (and which is still active today), directly affecting *Villa Victoria*, this community faces another formidable challenge. The old model of Puerto Rican cultural reproduction is losing traction, and a new strategy of cultural survival needs to be created. The multicultural ascension in contemporary urban communities has created an urgent imperative to co-exist with cultural difference. The result is that isolated cultural enclaves like the *Villa Victoria* are experiencing new challenges to identity affirmation, which requires a constant process of negotiation. Isolation is not an effective survival tactic in increasingly diverse urban contexts. It is through dialogue and efforts of joint intercultural urban intervention that immigrant and other ethnic groups may find their place in the contemporary urban city. The need to maintain cultural pride needs to be reconciled with the need for open exchange with other cultures and meanings.



Figs. 25 and 26. *Villa* residents sharing food at festival *Betances*
Photos: Claudia Carvalho

The *Festival Betances* initiative gathers a majority of the residents in the preparation and production of the day of the event, thus promoting civic relations in the public realm. However, the essence of the event is Puerto Rican, and, in effect, the festival is cultural reproduction in another context, of the same type of celebrations that they had in Puerto Rico. Thus, the question arises about what, if any, positive impact the event brings to this urban space and to the city as a whole? It does in fact communicate a culturally strong community, but it fails to provide innovative ideas about possible strategies for cross-cultural communication and dialogue between economically, socially, and ethnically differentiated groups. Enclosed places such as *Villa Victoria* are experiencing growing difficulty in the acceptance of a changing urban context where the survival of a specific cultural identity requires continuous communication and negotiation with other culturally differentiated groups. The challenge that *Villa Victoria* is facing today is directly related to its eventual orientation in a culturally differentiated urban environment.

4.3. Urban Culturalization

4.3.1. Jamaica Plain and *Spontaneous Celebrations*

Spontaneous Celebrations is focused on promotion of a sustainable and integrated strategy to involve the organization and the community at large in the production of cultural events and other initiatives in the urban space. The main goal is to gather efforts of community agents and individuals to bring the initiatives to life. This concerted effort is one of the strategies that the organization uses to secure the success, in terms of community participation, in its events. All of the human resources: staff members, volunteers, and other interested people in the

neighborhood, are focused on making each event happen. This type of civic mobilization creates an *organic culturalization of space*, which occurs when participants from different sectors of the community work together. In fact, as a result from this spontaneous participation of community members, *Spontaneous Celebrations* created an organizational structure (Fig. 28), based on the principles of openness, transparency and inclusiveness for mutual cooperation. Each circle oversees an important element of the organization and may include not only staff members, but anyone from the community who wishes to participate. In order to maintain coordination, each circle is represented by a point person who shares the decisions made in its own circle in monthly meetings with the point people from other circles.

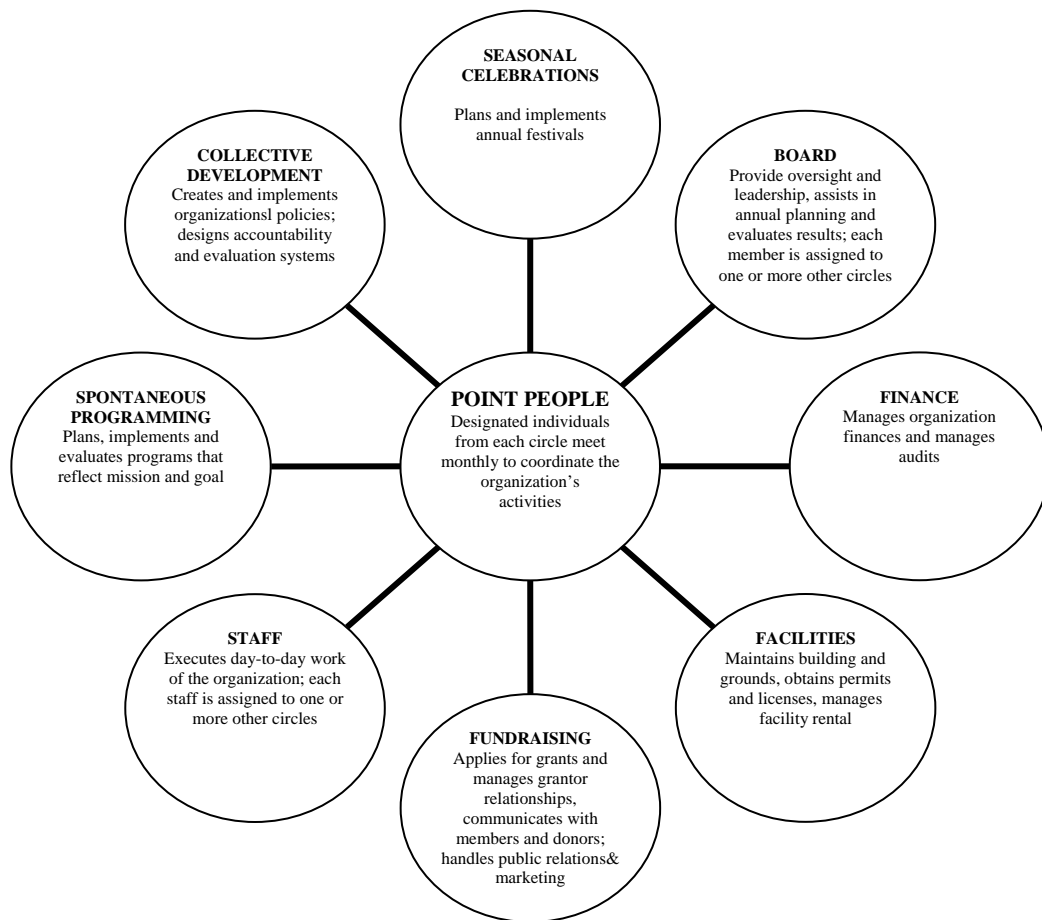


Fig. 27. The Circles – *Spontaneous Celebrations*' organizational model

The strength of these events results from a concerted effort from different sectors of the community to converge to organize and participate in the preparation workshops, in the community meetings, and in the event production. The socialization resulting from the work in

the *Spontaneous Celebration* building, the workshops in the park, and the preparation of decorations in the yard, creates an intrinsic relationship with the urban spaces, as these sites become spaces of organization, production, education, learning, and celebration. The public space is explored in its multidimensional capacities. This multidimensional, and consequently organic, appropriation of space, might have interesting effects on the construction of identity for the individuals involved, most of them immigrants, who are ethnically differentiated in their traditions, religions, languages, and lifestyles.

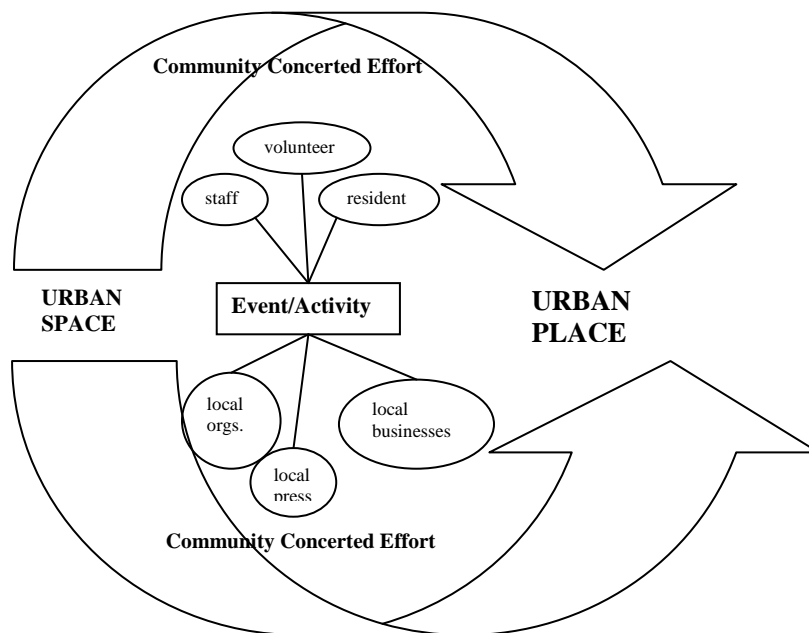


Fig. 28. Organic Culturalization of Space

4.3.2. Union Square and ArtsUnion Project

The culturalization of space in Union Square is influenced by the diffuse localization of the different resources, as well as by their variety. Networks of civic-minded artistic efforts emerge around the urban space, creating spatially open artistic and cultural interventions, in opposition to parallel endeavors that the artistic community does for itself.

Each spatial intervention results from the effort of a group of institutions. Each group, with its system of mobilization of community agents, organizes events/activities in a specific

area of the urban space. This strategy of *sectorial culturalization of space* helps identify the policies of community outreach adapted to each group of civic agents. It also provides the simultaneous organization of outdoor events in different areas of the urban space. Essentially, it is a network of civic minded individuals that intervene in the public arena in accordance with their knowledge background and their specific interests for mobilization. This kind of intervention may work well in certain urban environments that are characterized by highly diverse social, cultural, political, and economic groups, precisely the context where establishing a concerted intervention can be most challenging. The *sectorial culturalization of space* can be exemplified by the various *ArtsUnion* initiatives like the *Windows Art Project (WAP)*, the *Crafts and Farmers Market*, the *ArtsUnion Performances*, and the *Union Square Art Tour (USAT)*. These initiatives are organized by different sectors of the local community and implemented in different areas of Union Square. For example, the *Arts Union Tour* is a joint effort of local artists, businesses, local galleries, and local government members who connect stores and local galleries in an artistic tour of local visual arts talent. In this case, specific synergies of intervention in the public space were created between seemingly isolated local agents. This type of space appropriation raises questions about its impact on the area's revivification. The existence of a strategy of space appropriation that involves different groups expresses the civic capacity of the community to act locally over the public space. It also builds collaboration between the different partners, where common agreement on the type of cultural appropriation secures benefits for each of the different groups. However, a sustainable process of urban cultural appropriation requires both a consistency over time and a continuous identification of the groups with the implemented projects, so as to ensure the creation of a spatial identity associated with *sectorial* cultural appropriation. It will be a while before the true local impact of *ArtsUnion* and the success of the *Arts District* as a long-term goal, can be evaluated. For now, it should be enough to identify the innovative methodologies of civic organization and mobilization of local agents that are utilized, for future reference.

4.3.3. *Villa Victoria and Inquilinos Boricuas En Accion*

In the *Villa Victoria* case, the spatial organization of the area preceded the Puerto Rican culturalization of life in this community. The culturalization (through the promotion of the Puerto Rican Culture) of urban space was developed after the appropriation of the area by the Puerto Ricans. First, as a result of the fight against the urban renewal project, a small community inspired in the Puerto Rican villages, was built (Fig. 32). After that, the culturalization of the urban space began, celebrating the Puerto Rican victory, with the creation of a community mural where the history of Puerto Rico was represented (Fig. 33). This transformation of the urban environment gave origin to a Puerto Rican life style and an *Embedded Culturalization of Space* in the community daily life, where Puerto Rican cultural traditions are reproduced by the features of the urban space itself. The cultural events organized by the community elements confirm an identity of place, strongly associated with the promotion of cultural traditions, like music, dance and traditional games (Figs. 34 and 35).



Fig. 32. *Casitas* in *Villa Victoria*



Fig. 33. Artistic mural in the *Villa*

Photos: Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 34. *Festival Betances* 2005



Fig. 35. *Festival Betances* 2005 - parade

Villa Victoria's history of building a community through an effort of cultural resilience has definitely contributed to the development of a specific *cultural landscape* (Alanen and Melnick, 2000); Alanen and Melnick, 2000), characterized by a combination of, on one hand, the role and value that culture has given to the community and, on the other hand, the *Villa* spaces, identified here as *loose-space* (Frank and Stevens, 2007) or plastic spaces, where cultural interventions re-functionalize and re-adapt their common uses. The growth of this Puerto Rican landscape has occurred in three different phases. First, through the appropriation of a physical space, building a neighborhood of readapted *casitas* (a type of architecture predominant in Puerto Rico), characterized by brightly colored houses, ample *verandas* and vegetable gardens. Secondly, socially, through providing to the residents a group of services that range from school and pre-school programs, to after school and technological programs; and finally, culturally, by offering community arts programs and the maintenance of a cultural center and a gallery, open to the community with events on a regular basis.

Place as a dimension had an influence on the origins of the *Villa* as a community, allowing for the creation of a sense of place for the Puerto Rican and Latino cultures. What is implicated here is the man's sense of belonging and the relation with his surroundings (Rasmussen, 1962; Relph, 1976). This connection between the individual and his environs presupposes inter-dependency with the broader culture and with place as a spatial and temporal phenomenon. In the *Villa*, what started as an attempt to create a space for social integration is now being influenced by a process of establishing door-to-door dividers between groups of white upwardly middle class and Latinos, communities that tend to operate in social and cultural isolation.

In addition, while struggling for an urban space in which to live and flourish, this Puerto Rican community was also reviving and recreating their culture and their social networks in an American urban setting. The development of an environment for the creation of a Latino culture within a confined urban area produces to some extent a feeling of an *enclave*, both culturally and socially speaking. The relationship with the surrounding neighborhood of the South End is tense as the *Villa* residents tend to be stereotyped. As one activist and policymaker stated:

(...) there's isolation because the bigger community— including universities, colleges, businesses, residences—don't know anything about it [Villa Victoria] (...) The South End

community knows it's there, but doesn't feel it's welcome. So they walk around it and not through it. And what they know of it reinforces stereotypes. They say they're poor, uneducated, loud, dirty, they're criminal (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, February 10, 2006).

In a space where low and high income communities coexist, establishing symbolic and physical boundaries is a direct consequence of the lack of communication, as the barriers of language, religion and other traditional cultural practices are still shaping neighborhood social behaviors.

In terms of cultural appropriation of public space in *Villa Victoria*, a delimited cultural and ethnic landscape has been reinvented through strategies of cultural resistance and through the reproduction and emphasis on divides, based on cultural, social and economic differences. By developing typical Puerto Rican landmarks, with a distinctive cultural identity in the city, this community has created a new cultural identity. The annual *Festival Bétances*, the *Jorge Hernandez* Cultural Center and the community Gallery of *La Casa de La Cultura* (Center for Latino Arts) all showcase traditions, rituals, music and dances and have contributed to the survival of the Puerto Rican culture in a predominantly gentrified Boston neighborhood.

This community of enclave also expresses its cultural identity spatially through choosing Puerto Rican names to denominate the streets, such as *Aguadilla* Street and *San José*, and integrating examples of Puerto Rican architecture in the urban space. This *Embedded Culturalization of Space* transforms the community into a specific cultural landscape, which, apart from the effort to adapt to a continuous urban multicultural context, is still reproducing the borders that express structural community divisions.



Fig. 36. *Villa Victoria* houses
Photo: Claudia Carvalho

Villa Victoria represents an urban space where a community social movement has been promoting the development of a cultural and artistic dynamic, responsible for the transmission of the history, traditions and the cultural identities of the people who inhabit the space. By building delimited spaces of action and promoting a culture based on pride, the *Villa* develops few connections with other communities, regardless of whether its residents are predominately Hispanics, White or Black. Self-sufficiency in terms of social relations, cultural interconnections and social services fosters the creation of negative stereotypes in relation to the *Villa*. These two variables: space delimitation and social self-sufficiency contribute to the creation of a confined and resilient civic network.

Places can also be revitalized and re-appropriated by efforts of community resistance and resilience, as is the case of *Villa Victoria*. Whether physical and/or symbolic, people within these communities tend to establish close relationships in their day-to-day activities and during the preparation of cultural events. By reproducing periodic and seasonally-based annual events (like *Festival Betances*) in a particular urban space, communities tend to appropriate that space far beyond the duration of the specific event. They endeavor to claim the place by physically marking it, using cultural or artistic icons, as it is the example of the artistic mural in the *Villa* (Fig. 34) or by promoting artistic and social interventions to happen in that urban site, outside the regular or artistic event that the community most identifies with. In *Villa Victoria*, urban spaces like parks and gardens are used as places for rehearsing and for youth gatherings, as occurs during preparations for *Festival Betances* or in regular cultural programming.

Consequently, the relationship and mutual influence between urban public spaces and communities becomes more complex as it is established in different levels, transforming these spaces into community-supported places where different community stories can be regenerated. Urban public spaces, which at first lacked any cultural intervention by the community itself, are now transformed into places for the celebration of cultural identity.

4.4. Urban Identity and Community-Project Identification

Beginning in the mid-fifties, literature on urban psychology directed its focus on unique dimensions of the urban lifestyle, suggesting theoretical explanations for how the apparent impersonal milieu of the city could be a catalyst for individual social identification (Stone, 1954). The analysis in this section explores the ways that artistic and cultural practices, when directly related to social issues of individuals, groups, and communities, may become a means for individual and group identification in communities that experience socio-cultural divisions. In fact, the reflection over the mediated character of arts and culture on the negotiation of social issues needs to be highlighted in this context, because it leads organically to a broader context in which identity building is examined as a process of engagement in everyday social issues. This, in turn, is directly related to communities' identification with urban places.

Linking identities to places requires a deep knowledge of the binding relationships between local agents and how they may be connected to the larger community. This happens when specific local relationships have crucial importance for the construction of the *social self* (Cooley, 1964) in individuals. These types of relationships are extremely valuable in ethnically diverse communities with high levels of immigrant exclusion, and perpetuate associations built on strong cultural identities. As Peter Marcuse explains: "Public places, like parks and streets and squares and plazas, seem to offer less and less opportunity for different people to meet people unlike themselves, to mix, to express themselves in a public arena" (Marcuse, 2003: 270). Fostering artistic activities in everyday places, in conjunction with the diverse cultural traditions found in these sites, completes the missing part of the *social self* (idem) that is often the cause of cultural and social isolation, as well as the consequent intolerant and xenophobic behaviors in the urban arena where one community meets another. In fact, the issue of differentiated interaction is one of the main factors affecting the character of the relationship between the individual and the public realm. How, then, might the creative component of cultural activity in the public arena reframe the nature of human interaction between culturally different groups? What options could rectify division, fragmentation, and polarization?

Authors like John Irwin, Claude Fisher, and Gregory Stone, following the approach of Erving Goffman (Goffman, 1963), propose that the participation in leisure, recreational, and entertainment activities at urban sites is one effective way of creating affinities and emotional attachment to places and fostering the involvement in the communities' collective expression

(Irwin, 1977; Fischer, 1975 and 1976; Stone, 1954). However, it appears that a deeper understanding of other cultures is necessary to break down social and cultural barriers. It is also essential to understand and respect the origin and character of each division, and recognize that, in community arts intervention projects, identity building in urban neighborhoods depends on the shared meanings that those projects create with communities' and individuals' social issues. In the context on this work, we will focus on the development of this identification processes.

The three case studies under analysis present different platforms to create shared meanings and develop a personal and social identification with the urban context. When they succeed, they then become active agents in building an urban identity, which is always associated with *a project for the community*. In these examples, communities define who they are by engaging in artistic and cultural activities that promote identification with projects of intervention, most of which specifically address social and political issues affecting the urban revivification processes.

4.4.1. Jamaica Plain, Villa Victoria, and Union Square

In Jamaica Plain, the primary objective of the organized activities and events is to foster awareness of environmental issues while reconnecting people in the community with each other, using local natural resources as a common denominator. It is not coincidental that two of the biggest *Spontaneous Celebrations* outdoor events take place in natural urban environments. One of the political goals of *Wake Up the Earth Festival* is to call attention to the use of pesticides in South West Corridor Park. During the parade, people call attention to this problem with posters. (Figs. 37 and 38). The *Lantern Parade*, by attracting people to the Jamaica Plain Pond, seeks to build a strong relationship between urban residents and the pond by evoking spiritual connections between the individual and the natural environment.

This beautiful autumn evening ceremony [the Lantern Parade] has become an annual tradition in our community (...) it reflects our dedication to the spirit of the pond, to the beauty and peace of our planet and to the unity of its people (The Jamaica Pond Project and *Spontaneous Celebrations*, 1998).

Lantern Parade also includes workshops on lantern making, developing people's creative skills in spaces that encourage inter-cultural and inter-generational interaction. In the workshop hosted

by *Spontaneous Celebrations* and community members, youth and adults of all ages create handmade lanterns from recycled soda bottles, decorated with colorful tissue paper. Likewise, the *Tropical Fiesta* event represents an effort to call attention to the dwindling rain forest, reinforcing community commitment to its survival. Artists, children, and adults from the community work with the *Spontaneous Celebrations* staff to build a replica of a rainforest in the community room of the arts center (*Spontaneous Celebrations*, 2004). The intention is to mobilize the different sectors of the community to become agents for the survival of natural environments.

The focus on the relationship between the individual and the natural environment reframes the way we commonly think about the spatial and social organization of urban spaces and makes us reconsider possible connections between buildings and natural urban spaces. The strategic approach, used by *Spontaneous Celebrations*, which considers the natural urban environments as integral parts of communities' processes of identity building, guides us towards the reflection of the urban citizen's relationship with natural environments. Contemporary urban residents cannot ignore their fundamental relationship with nature, and identification with environmental initiatives, as well as enlightened urban policies, are needed for sustainable urban development.



Fig. 37 and 38. *Wake Up the Earth* parade posters, protesting against the use of pesticides
Photos: Claudia Carvalho

In Union Square, the main mid-term goal is to create an *Arts District* in the Union Square area. The idea behind the *ArtsUnion* initiative is to implement a rezoning process where artists and the arts become main agents in the creation of an *Arts District* in Union Square.

[Within the District] the focus of the Arts Council effort has been to protect existing arts-related uses in the Square, and to provide incentives for new arts-related uses and other active uses”, as stated by the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (The Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development and Somerville Arts Council, 2006).

The *ArtsUnion* initiative is serving this goal as a strategy to reinforce the value of the arts community, attracting internal and external attention, and endowing Union Square with political importance as a culturally significant urban area.

One essential question comes to mind: in an area characterized by cultural diversity of immigrant populations, what is the role of this immigrant community in the definition of a rezoning process that envisions artistic practice as the driving force behind social and economic development? We have witnessed, in other urban areas, the effects of similar *Arts District* related interventions on the dislocation of immigrant populations, which in face of the valorization of the urban space may need to migrate to peripheral areas to find more affordable housing. By reflecting on the gentrification process related to *Arts District* initiatives that are happening all over the United States, Mark Vallen assesses the *Arts District* intervention *ArtWave* in Los Angeles, and calls attention to the risk of losing an existing local artistic community when an area is subsumed by corporate culture and gentrification (Mark Vallen, n.d.). In fact, professional artistic groups are the ones that first benefit from these kinds of intervention. What about the local artists and other informal community artists? When an *Arts District* initiative is developed for a specific sector of the community (like the professional and well established artistic communities) it is not framed as a social process, but rather, is imposed upon a community, resulting in a circuit of art galleries, municipal theaters and auditoriums. However, an initiative in collaboration with businesses and local immigrant populations and ethnic groups can avert the ill effects of gentrification, which increases housing costs and pushes away the creative sector of the community (the very population that made the area attractive), as well as the working class, younger residents, and ethnic minorities. Additionally, local ethnic groups and more community-oriented artistic projects are in jeopardy of losing territorial significance. So far, the *ArtsUnion* project, has been successful in attracting the business community and local cultural capital to integrate events in a participatory manner. However, the vibrant and extremely diverse ethnic

community is still quite detached from the project. The multicultural performances that have been happening in Union Square don't seem to motivate the ethnic community to actively participate in the project. The impact is limited to creating a space of sociability and spectatorship for the duration of the event.

In the case of the *Villa Victoria* one of the main social issues that affects the Sound End in general, and the affordable housing complexes such as *Villa Victoria* in particular, is urban street violence, especially youth violence. Consequently, the quality of neighborhood life has been affected. According to the local newspaper:

Citywide the murder rate is up and seemingly out of control (...) From a crime-fighting point of view [and according to the police department] we have identified hot spots, and they just happen to be all public housing developments. So you've got Villa Victoria, (...) and you got those areas there with a lot of young kids, young teenagers and young adults, and there's feuds (Orchard, 2006a).

This violence results from the fact that an *enclosed place* like *Villa Victoria* has gestated forms of segregation with strong repercussions on the youth lifestyle. A community enclave is based on divisions by ethnicity and lifestyle, related with immigrant status, and is voluntary, individually determined, and non-exclusionary (Marcuse, 2003). In fact, recent literature on gated communities reveals the direct links between the process of gating and the process of residential segregation (Flint, 2004; Caldeira, 2000). The interesting aspect about *Villa Victoria* is that the community has to cope with two apparent irreconcilable processes: the fact that it has been, for years, a physical enclave and the more recent experience of openness to other ethnic groups in order to secure the survival of the Puerto Rican legacy in that area of Boston. Given the vulnerability of the large youth population, community outreach efforts are made to engage youth in the struggle against violence. The *Villa Victoria* project, developed by the community agency *Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion (IBA)*, is strongly identified with anti-violence initiatives, developing a year-long program for local youth (which includes percussion, lyrics/poetry workshops, dance and visual arts), as well as specific initiatives that bring art and entertainment to the urban public space. As we can see documented in the local news, the creation of stereotypes that identify youth with street violence are often the inspiration of many of the

artistic interventions that take place in the *Villa* urban space. *IBA* has created a series of events, which include outdoor movie nights, religious services, games and music, and spoken word performances designed to keep youth away from street violence (Orchard, 2006b). In this example, urban public space is again subjected to cultural and artistic appropriation, utilizing its multifunctional character to respond to social and political needs.

The following table is a summary of the strategies that articulate the relationship between place and culture in Jamaica Plain, Union Square and *Villa Victoria*.

Culture/Place	Jamaica Plain	Union Square	Villa Victoria
Political community	Political Places Places of protest and concerted action	Juxtaposed Places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of encounter between different groups • Acknowledgement of difference 	Enclosed Places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of joint organization between different people within the same ethnic group • Reproduction of Puerto Rican culture and lifestyle
Urban Culturalization	Organic Culturalization of Space Space as multidimensional	Sectarian Culturalization of Space Space as an assemblage of differentiated initiatives	Embedded Culturalization of Space Space as reproductive of Puerto Rican culture
Urban Identity and Community-Project Identification	Environmental Awareness Project	Arts District Project	Anti-street Violence Project

Table 5. Relation between Place and Culture in the three Case Studies

Chapter 5. Citizenship Building in Urban Communities

As we have explained in Chapter 1, it is our intention to reframe the concept of citizenship, addressing its relationship to the way artistic and cultural practices are explored in specific urban settings. The goal is to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and tools that we, as contemporary citizens, may use today in dealing with increasingly global and diverse social contexts. These tools require the identification of innovative codes of communication and revamped formats of social integration that envision the contemporary citizen as an active participant in a relationship with the surrounding community.

The contemporary urban context is characterized by its global nature and its history of production of cultural products. A symbolic economy of signs and images has been formed, the most visible evidence of which is the sheer number of knowledge products that come out of conferences, meetings, exhibitions, workshops, open air events, and various cultural knowledge related urban events (Lash and Urry, 1994). But beyond this global production of knowledge products, there are other artistic and cultural related initiatives, produced by local community based groups, which include common citizens in the production and implementation of cultural and artistic activities and events. Our attention is focused on this range of non-professional groups, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants, youth, and semi-skilled workers who are not associated with the formal system of cultural and artistic production, but who may develop other types of cultural and artistic objects, which can have a positive impact in redefining citizenship at the community level. The main argument that we wish to advance is that the organizations and initiatives represented by the three case studies under analysis have been developing strategies of translation and communication between the owners of the cultural capital and the *common* urban resident, creating new approaches to understanding the urban citizen and offering new possibilities of reflection about innovative formats of citizenship in the contemporary world.

5.1. Collective Experience, Civic Engagement and Citizenship Building

When analyzing strategies of citizenship building in urban settings at the level of local communities, we approach the concept of citizenship from the perspective that civic participation can be developed by common individuals and community groups. This type of civic participation is the result of communities becoming proactive in *community building*. There is no unified definition of *community building*, neither in the practice field, nor among those who study urban sociology. It is an overused phrase and often retrofitted to the circumstance at hand. In the

context of this work, a perspective emerges from firsthand accounts of applied interventions in Boston urban communities where *community building* entails a practice of engaging people in social life by enabling their participation in the institutions of community life (Tocqueville and Bradley, 1960). In much the same manner as *community building*, *community* has been assigned multiple meanings. In his book, *The Careless Society*, John McKnight offers a framework of community, its intended purpose, and how it develops. McKnight's interpretation was taken from Alexis de Tocqueville after he visited the United States in 1831. He describes *community* as small groups of common citizens voluntarily coming together to form organizations that solve problems (McKnight, 1995). Alexis de Tocqueville described three features that characterized how these groups functioned. First, the groups decided they had the power to identify the problem. Second, they had power to determine how to solve the problem. Third, they decided they would be key participants in solving their problems (Tocqueville, 1966).

Modern day American communities are still organized around Tocqueville's basic framework, and yet they are broader in their inclusion of geographic location, role identity, commonality, culture, ethnicity, and so on. The basic component of community is still *people*. However people sharing a common experience may include other variables that influence their actions, such as the differentiated geography of urban space, cultural and ethnic differentiation, and the different social issues that characterize a specific location. In fact, the meaning of *community* in contemporary urban settings requires a revised perception of the relationship between city and community, unlike that of the last century, when the city and the industrial metropolis were represented as archetypes of the anti-community (Fortuna, 2008).

In the United States, *community's* roots began in the settlement houses of the late nineteenth century and can be traced through the twentieth century in a number of neighborhood-based efforts, including the fight against juvenile delinquency in the 1950s, the War on Poverty in the 1960s, and the community development corporation movement of the last 30 years (Connell, 1995). Settlement houses were dwellings in poor and marginalized urban environments where service providers lived among poor people, in order to deliver help and service to them and observe how they lived. *Community building*, in its descriptive form, is a continuous process of innovative activities, actions, and practices, performed by individuals, groups, and stakeholders within a community. The main goal is to develop, strengthen, and change infrastructural, economic, and human conditions for positive change. It operates on a micro to

macro level and includes grassroots organization, leadership development, empowerment, education, social networking, social and human service, practice, theory, policy and systemic change, public will, citizenship participation, and civic engagement. The history of community building is directly related to the theoretical and practical contributions for *community studies* of American tradition and research. The first scientific and objective study on small town life that used a grounded analysis approach is Robert Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd's *Middletown. A study in American Culture* (Lynd and Lynd, 1929). Other studies of small communities and urban neighborhoods followed, such as *The Social Life of a Modern Community, Yankee City Series* (Warner and Lunt, 1941), *Street Corner Society* (Whyte, 1943 and 1955), *Small Town in Mass Society* (Vidich and Bensman, 1958), and *Crestwood Heights* (Seeley *et al*, 1956). These studies were all devoted to researching the concepts of *community* and neighborhood practices and their meaning in an ever more urbanized society, where the practices and concerns of communities are often disregarded and the individualization of relationships structures daily lives.

In an increasingly individualized society, where relationships are often transitory, innovative community building practices assume characteristics and actions that can connect people on multiple levels and facilitate the development of human relationships in urban settings. For example, working to improve neighborhoods by cleaning local vacant lots to create neighborhood parks or community gardens is as important a contribution to the community as is building new affordable housing for families and children. Whether working to develop safety patrols or neighborhood civic associations, the notion of *what makes the community better* is imbedded in *community building* and its intended purpose. Neighbors working together for a betterment of social conditions, both individually and collectively, propel the life of a community. Asking the question “*What makes the community better?*” is analogous to Tocqueville’s assessment of community members’ diagnosis of their own community problems. The identification of ways to solve community problems within reach, and active participation in the solution of those problems, follows the framework that he identified as features of community. One of the most important components of community building is leadership and the building of a leadership culture is an essential part of individual and group participation. Thus, it becomes important to refer to different types of community leadership in order to better identify and recognize possible innovative formats of group and individual participation.

Through the creation of community leaders, *social capital*, resulting from people forming formal and informal networks organized around common issues, may be developed and becomes a safety net that supports their basic needs in community. Various forms of *community leadership* are at the core of this process. *Grassroots leadership* is the most common form of *community leadership* and is thought of as people working on basic community needs, alongside the residents of that community, and often led by the community's indigenous people. This form of leadership usually has formal and informal knowledge of the community. People are mobilized through a process of stimulating activity in communities to address neighborhood concerns. Mobilizing efforts lead to centralizing and communicating the issues to people in a manner that gains their attention and interest. Advocating or lobbying those issues becomes critical to the process, and includes listening to and observing reactions from constituents. Negotiating and resolving conflicts are equally important, as they address dynamics that can advance or destroy initiatives.

Collective leadership is another form of community leadership. Many actions and voices join collectively to change community issues, often organized around a shared vision and group responsibility. This form of leadership is democratic in nature and operates at the community level in various forms. It can be found, for example, in civic associations, neighborhood watch groups, and housing associations, and it is found among groups of people who share a common purpose. It is not limited to communities and often crosses organizational and institutional levels. Collective leadership is thought of as people with established relationships, using their individual, collective, and community assets and institutions to identify and preserve their historical knowledge, and work toward common goals (Farrow, 2003). An example of collective leadership and community capital can be found in neighborhoods where youth organize mural painting projects for the sides of buildings. This activity can be done to accomplish multiple goals. It might occur as a result of restoring life to a vacant or run-down building in order to project the identity of that community. Or, it might serve to capture the identity of the community from the wisdom of elders, through the eyes of youth. Either way, it is preserving and/or telling a story about a community's history.

A third aspect of community leadership is *collaborative leadership*. This form of leadership is established in partnerships, mostly external to the community. Joint ventures to affect neighborhood conditions are often at the core of collaborative leadership. This type of

leadership tends to be long term (although it can be short term as well). An example of implemented collaborative leadership would entail partnering with a local hospital and environmental impact group to develop strategies that reduce the incidence of asthma related to neighborhood conditions, while at the same time using data from research produced by academic partners to eliminate those conditions. Finally, *successive leadership*, also referred to as *emerging leadership*, focuses on a group of community members who are in training or preparing to take on community leadership. This is usually associated with youth leadership or people who have not been in traditional leadership roles. This form of leadership can be found in communities and institutions, as is the case of two of the examples presented here (*Spontaneous Celebrations* and *Villa Victoria*), where there is a common concern about the sustainability of the organizations. Therefore, the younger generations are trained to be future leaders in the organization.

In sum, *community leadership* requires a willingness to work together around common issues in an effort to effect change. It also requires an ability to be attentive to issues and listen well, both in action and language, to the people who are most affected by the issues. Clarifying roles and building trust and accountability are important requirements for leadership. Finally, developing the capacity to acquire additional skills and capabilities is an essential component of leadership. This process is commonly referred to as *leadership development*. Community leadership can generate great resources at the community level, empowering people to take on greater civic challenges both inside and outside their community. Working towards democracy and public systems change often results from community leadership movements and is commonly known as civic engagement.

In this research, the term *community building* is analyzed through the lens of artistic/cultural practices, drawing from examples of leadership in the Boston area urban communities of Jamaica Plain, *Villa Victoria*/South End, and Union Square/Somerville. In order to understand the importance of looking to community building efforts through this particular lens, we will first describe *community building* by positing it as an umbrella term. This will invite the concepts of *citizenship building*, *civic engagement*, and *leadership development* into the examination of the multiple ways through which these phenomena exist independently, as well as in concert with each other, and in relation to their respective contexts. In the cases presented, two distinct community building frameworks appear, where the concept of *citizenship* is approached in

different manners: one in which the organizing structure creates community leaders and the other in which community leaders create the organizing structure.

The concept of *citizenship* surfaces as an intrinsic component to community building efforts. When the community building efforts are characterized by artistic and cultural practices, as they are in the case studies, cross-cultural and intergenerational spaces are considered critical factors that lead to citizenship development. Therefore, an analysis of the different formats of citizenship is important to understand the socially integrative potential of artistic and cultural endeavors. We start from the assumption that community mobilization, the fostering of social capital at the community level and the creation of learning experiences, specifically for young people but also for the community at large, may provide us with innovative approaches to reframe the way we commonly think about the contemporary urban citizen. As the notion of *community building* proves itself to be interpretable in a number of different ways, so do the concepts of artistic and cultural practices. It is important to note that artistic and cultural practices are multifold, and can manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including community cultural celebrations, festivals, neighborhood gatherings, outdoor and indoor performances, arts education after-school programs, youth leadership arts programs, and arts related workshops. These cultural and artistic manifestations appropriate urban and public space in different ways, offering a variety of perspectives on the city as a space of possible innovation in the field of community participation and active citizenship.

The very concept of the city is imprecise, depending on how we imagine it and from which perspective we wish to look into its social contexts. There are many conceptualizations about the city and the better we reconcile apparent contradictory approaches to the city space, trying to comprehend their mutual influences, the better we will grasp the inherent complexity of urban processes. In an era where the economy and technological innovation seem to preoccupy politicians concerned about urban development, the dimensions of participation of people and their involvement as active citizens assume growing importance, particularly when values of individualism and intolerance towards cultural difference prevail. In this context, focusing on citizenship building strategies, understood from the point of view of active participation, represents a possible corrective response occurring in the city space. Exploring its possibilities in the development processes of urban communities may reveal to us new venues of democratization. Furthermore, the development of active citizens in urban communities may

alter the way we look at the concept of *community* in the present time, yielding new insights into the relationship between city and community. It seems that the challenge today is to articulate the diversity, and apparent tension, of contemporary urban life, where individualistic behaviors in a mainly economic driven society seem to co-exist with an increasingly culturally differentiated and relationally complex society. This articulation process requires new methodological approaches that can suggest strategies to mediate and articulate culturally different visions of how the relational processes are happening in urban space and how they might be advanced. Therefore, the fundamental question is how to take advantage of the collective experience of diverse individuals in the community in order to strengthen the link between the city and its inhabitants.

Clearly, we cannot ignore the importance that economic and technological development assume in the evolution of urban space. However, this same urban space is also subjected to more complex realities, and the cultural component of social life is frequently devalued. The great urban centers are often those characterized by significant social and cultural dysfunctions, such as marginalization, lack of cultural awareness, intolerant behaviors, and other social tensions that result from lack communication and understanding. Authors such as Saskia Sassen, Jane Jacobs, and Ulrich Bech call attention to this state of affairs, warning that without innovative strategies of community social intervention that enhance the patterns of social relationships and generate possibilities of cultural intermediation, we will witness the creation of isolated urban spaces (Sassen, 1994; Jacobs, 1961 and Beck *et al.*, 1994). The communities under study present distinct examples of how artistic and cultural initiatives can be platforms of communication and intermediation between diverse social groups, according to their ethnic origin, generation, lifestyle, and socio-economic background. The creation of spaces of encounter call attention to the need for reflective politics where creativity can energize innovative strategies, and tackle community issues like social divisions and intolerant behaviors.

Community problem solving involves internal and external forces as well as a concerted society effort to continuously reflect upon its own development. This type of behavior requires a change of mentality in individuals who continue to rely on traditional institutions to solve new social issues. The challenge now is for each individual and each community of individuals to assume responsibility for the state of affairs and to reinvent the formats of social action. Individuals are required to choose between risk opportunities (Beck, 1994) without necessarily

having clear insight into the ultimate outcome of their actions, but with the certainty that their actions may produce some positive change, or at least bring to the forefront the discussion of new ideas.

Before going into empirical examples of how this collective action may be play out, there is a need to reflect upon the possible significance of *community* today, understood as an essential concept for this study.

5.2. Redefining Community

In contemporary society, there has been a current emphasis on local analyses and politics of social intervention based on the work of community organizations and local development institutions. Observations of this trend in the United States and United Kingdom (but also in many European countries) have been corroborated in the literature highlighting a new communitarian perspective (Etzioni, 1993 and 1995; Glendon, 1991; Bellah, 1985). Nevertheless, there is a great amount of literature criticizing what some authors call an outdated understanding of *community*, from the neo-Marxist and regulationist view (Rotkin, 1977; Katznelson, 1981; Wohlfahrt, 2003; Peck, 2001) to the critics of the communitarian perspective as a parochial understanding of community (Young, 1990; Sennett, 1970; Mouffe, 1992). Some of these authors provide useful warnings about how *community* can be as oppressive as individualism can be alienating. Taking into account these theoretical reflections, contemporary community intervention projects need to realize that their success is based on maintaining an equilibrium between local based knowledge and more globalized influences, while stressing the importance of a multicultural awareness.

The initiatives analyzed, although sometimes burdened with a more ideological understanding of community (like the parochial and communitarian views), try to present some alternatives based on the idea of community-based initiatives as one of the better vehicles for progressive social change, one that can promote democratic practice in communities. They combine the need to exercise civic governance over social misfortune, the openness to new possibilities for more inclusive local social policies that acknowledge social and cultural difference, and the need to include government (state) support through various programs and initiatives, in order to transform community practices into sustainable endeavors. In some cases, the absence of state related institutions in these projects tends to postpone the social impact of

some of these initiatives. The ones that did invest in the development of this relationship, like the *ArtsUnion* project, deliver positive effects for neighborhoods. One indisputable fact is that communities cannot be viewed in isolation from other local and global actors. The ones that do so pay a high price in terms of their ability to expand and contribute to the rethinking of community and democratic practice. As we intend to advocate a need to return to local processes, we also want to contribute to the reinterpretation of democratic practice (Fung and Wright, 2003), approaching the concept of *creative citizenship* as a tool to conceptually reframe the local community. However, the identification of new approaches to citizenship at the local level is the first step to consider in the long process of broader political transformation. The bigger challenge of producing an alternative social vision of community and citizenship requires a paradigmatic shift in the understanding of citizenship building and democratic practice. J. DeFilippis *et al* suggest that “an alternative vision would see local alternatives as a base to extend political work, as a base for mobilization with an alternative social vision, and as a place to connect with wider social and political movements” (DeFilippis *et al*, 2006: 684).

The contemporary understanding of community that we propose here needs to follow some guidelines, some of which are identified in the field work case studies and others identified as missing elements, essential in our conceptualization of innovative community intervention programs, and ways to develop a comprehensive understanding of *creative citizenship*. First of all, the understanding of *community* needs to expand the current boundaries of the local to one that works towards social change in conjunction with external efforts and as an often oppositional force to dominant ideologies. Secondly, it appears that the work of social intervention at the community level cannot be done in isolation from local power institutions, as there is a need to create consistent partnerships in order to survive and influence public policies. Authors like J. DeFilippis *et al* call attention for the “(...) importance of not de-responsibilizing the state while at the same time understanding the threat of state and corporate incorporation” (DeFilippis *et al*, 2006). Finally, local work should not be based on the principles of social cohesion, nor on the pursuit of the *common good*, but instead recognize the potential of conflict and difference to influence initiatives of inter-cultural dialogue and redefine traditional views of the local citizen.

Since the United States, and specifically the Boston area, were chosen for the field work, it should be emphasized that one of the most important characteristics of community civic life in

the United States is what Alexis de Tocqueville identified as community participation, where *community* is identified as small groups of common citizens voluntarily coming together to form organizations that solve problems (McKnight, 1995). Community participation is the tendency to join and participate in voluntary associations, and is one of the most distinguished elements of America's unique democratic heritage. According to this author, nothing within the community life deserves more attention. In fact, the art of association is considered the first law of democracy (Eberly, 1998). Nevertheless, there is a current tendency in American society towards a process of individual emancipation that could be at odds with the search for the common interests of communities. Throughout this study we were aware of the role played by artistic and cultural activities in the tension between individualism and the search for the multiple identifications that characterize multicultural and social diverse urban communities.

It seems, then, of extreme importance to refer to what has been the main theoretical basis for the term *community* and reflect on its potential significance today in urban settings. In order to be able to do that we need to reconsider how the local-social, and consequently *community*, can be re-conceptualized through an alternative designation of *community* that is trans-locally connected. This critical effort appears to be essential for understanding the meaning of this term in its possible relationships with urban places. As stated by Ash Amin: "The restoration of community is seen to be the mainstay of local economic and political regeneration, once again without critical assessment of what community really means and without serious analysis of the drivers of change and renewal beyond community" (Amin 2005: 619).

The term has been appropriated by the *third way* thinking, influenced by authors like Anthony Giddens, A. Etzioni and Robert Putnam, and has influenced European Union policies for the promotion of the social inclusion of marginalized communities. Its philosophy is based on the assumption that the local is the cause, consequence, and remedy of social and spatial inequality (Etzioni, 1993 and 1995; Giddens, 1998; Putnam, 1995). Community organization and, consequently, the analysis of the importance of the local, became recognized as distinct scientific areas in the 1920s and 1930s, with its earliest conceptions influenced by the Chicago School (Rothman, 1974). In the post-World War II period, the field went through further expansion, with scientific influence on the areas of planning, grassroots organizing, political mobilization, and local development (Fisher, 1999; Rothman, 1999; Spergel, 1999 and DeFilippis *et al.*, 2006). Throughout this evolution, there have been multiple uncertainties about

the boundaries of the concept. J. Rothman presents in his book *Three Models of Community Organization Practice: Strategies of Community Organization* (Rothman, 1974), a paradigm of his three main approaches to community intervention, that entail *social planning*, *community organization*, and *community development*.

Social planning perceives communities as functional sub-units and addresses community intervention as a technical process of problem-solving, focused on a specific social challenge. Inspired by the labor and civil rights movements, the community organizing tradition addresses social intervention as a politicized process of organizing for demands based on resources, recognition, and broader social change. According to Robert Fisher, defining community as a political actor endows this approach to community intervention with direct applications of innovative formats of democratic citizenship and the building of social movements (Fisher, 1994). Its political character has repeatedly transcended the localized origins of this tradition, contributing to mobilization efforts inspired by various local, national, and transnational issues, such as the environment and labor campaigns. In Jamaica Plain, one of the case studies under analysis, the context of action of festivals and other community events and celebrations is identified with this political factor, transforming the organization into an agent of local intervention. The creation of spaces for different minority groups to express their political positions is still one of the main challenges of the sometimes oppressive political actions that assume a one sided opinion about how local issues should be handled.

5.3. Civic Engagement and Urban Space Culturalization

The sense of indifference, alienation, and anomie that authors like Georg Simmel and Louis Wirth observed during their twentieth century urban research (Simmel, [1903] 1995; Wirth, 1938) was reexamined by Richard Sennett, who called attention to the way this conceptualization of urban life changed the relationship of the individual with the public realm, encouraging a retreat into private life (Sennett, 1977). In fact, there has been a significant amount of literature in urban studies concerned with the end of public space (Sorkin, 1992; Mitchell, 1995). One of the main theoretical assumptions derived from this research is the hypothesis that the promotion of artistic and cultural related activities in urban public spaces may have a positive effect over this loss of the public realm. Can the strategies to revivify the city represent efforts of culturalization of the public realm? Might this type of participation and engagement represent an alternative to the new shopping centers and atria in the reconfiguration of the public area? In the same vein as Richard Sennett, Jane Jacobs identified the importance of mixed activities in the streets as a way to promote movement and encounter (Jacobs, 1961).

In order for mixed encounters to happen, different types of initiatives, promoted by *ArtsUnion*, *Spontaneous Celebration's* Festivals, and the *Villa* urban interventions, were created in the everyday spaces of the city (streets, parks, plazas) in association with different social and cultural groups. Thus, if group differentiation is a prerequisite for the stimulation of the public realm, direct involvement of minorities and immigrants becomes an important feature of democratic practice and citizenship participation¹⁸. However, the development of interventionist strategies requires the existence of a civic order principle, which suggests that the social life is organized around outcome of the individual as a citizen. This citizen, by belonging to a community of rights and duties, is now more than a member of a community. The term *community* implies that the social connection between human beings is based on kinship, habituation resulting from daily experience, shared customs and/or traditions, and common interests. The civic bond results, then, from this shared sense of belonging. According to David Selbourne, community historically precedes civic order, and a *sense of community* constitutes a powerful tool of civic consciousness to maintain the civic bond (Selbourne, 2001).

¹⁸ Nancy Fraser studies how the difference groups constitute different public realms and called attention for the need to balance a politics of representation and recognition of these groups (Fraser, 1990).

In the case of *Spontaneous Celebrations*, a variety of urban spaces were used to stage artistic and cultural events, with the goal of building cultural identities of the sites by mobilizing the community to organize and attend these events. This was also the case of the community outreach done through the *ArtsUnion* project in Union Square. Every endeavor to mobilize citizens for cultural intervention in the urban site culminated in a series of public events such as the *Street Furniture Project*, the *Windows Art Project*, the *Union Square Art Tour*, the *Crafts and Farmers Markets*, or the *ArtsUnion* open air performances. Each of these events resulted from the collaboration between the local municipality and different groups of urban agents that became civic intermediaries in the organization and in the presentation of the initiatives¹⁹. Likewise, in *Villa Victoria*, civic engagement is simultaneously promoted by a focus on the social issues of concern to the residents, along with the creation of a strong Puerto Rican cultural identity. On occasion, there are even cases where community initiatives combine intervention in the public space while raising awareness of local social issues like street violence, with the promotion of Puerto Rican culture and lifestyles.

In an effort to curb escalating violence (...) IBA has proposed a series of events to take place at O'Day Park (...) [activities include] outdoor movie nights to attract families; host intergenerational 'family days' where people can play games like dominoes and bingo (...) (Orchard, 2006b).

These strategies use the urban space as a context of intervention to promote social reconnection in order to think collectively about issues that affect the local community. The civic order principle is understood and analyzed alongside strategies of cultural revivification of urban spaces, as civic engagement is fostered through a re-conceptualization of the relationship between the individual/citizen and the urban space that s/he inhabits.

The unconventional use of appropriated space can promote meaningful face-to-face interaction during the preparation and realization of artistic events. Community actors, like neighbors, local businesses, and artists, are encouraged to intervene as active participants in the production and preparation of the events. In the *Wake Up the Earth Festival*, youth are

¹⁹ "The Somerville Arts Council (...) created ArtsUnion, in partnership with ArtSomerville, Brickbottom Artists Association, Washington Street Art Center, the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission, Somerville Open Studios and Union Square Main Streets" (Somerville Arts Council, n.d.).

responsible for many tasks and acquire substantial production and organizational skills. As stated by one community organizer:

This festival represents a platform to learn about the world of business and performance production. There's a kid who is going help to set up the electronics and hire the groups for the pop stage (...). It really is a great exercise for a lot of people to learn about how the world works by setting up an event (C. Carvalho, semi-structured video interview, 17 February, 2005).

In this case, the civic bond results from a joint community interest in organizing and producing the festival, which is understood as a tool to build Jamaica Plain's identity. People from the community are urged to meet in advance and take the lead in organizing an event like the *Wake Up the Earth Festival*. When community meetings (Fig. 39) and festival preparations (Fig. 40) take place, community members participate in the committees that oversee children's activities, volunteers, performances, and all of the different venues at the event²⁰.



Fig. 39. *Spontaneous Celebrations'* community meeting
Photos: Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 40. *Wake Up the Earth Festival* preparations: costume Making

Through cross-collaborative work, networks of interconnection start to develop between community members, encouraging more personal and less formal relationships. The liaisons are based on horizontality and conflict resolution is based on interpersonal agreement. This

²⁰ With the *Wake Up the Earth Festival* happening in May, the community meetings begin in January and different people take responsibility for the different committees (Vendors, Entertainment, Children's activities, Site Set Up, Parade, Volunteers). There is a coordinator in each committee who is responsible for gathering people from the community to help on each committee (C. Carvalho, community meetings documentation March, 24; April, 11-25; May, 02-09, 2005 and February, 08; April, 12; May, 02, 2006).

orientation for consensus is the result of the bottom-up social dynamic that has been developed by this organization, and it has been part of the neighborhood for more than three decades. Timely issues, like the use of pesticides in public parks, are brought up as festival themes in order “(...) to mobilize and unite thousands of Jamaica Plain residents in the cause to have a pesticide free community” (C. Carvalho, community meeting, May 2, 2005)

In *Spontaneous Celebrations*' context of action, civic networks are created by promoting social capital at the neighborhood level. The work is based on two different types of strategies that show a holistic approach to the concept of community. The first strategy is related to the urgent need to create spaces of socialization, not only for the youth, but also for people of different ages. According to one community organizer who has been working with *Spontaneous Celebrations*:

Wake Up the Earth Festival is basically an expression about what this community is all about, which is bringing people together to share musical and artistic experiences (...) Festival for me is really the preparation for it because many people in the community come together to work on the Festival (...) for several months (Carvalho, C., semi-structured interview, 17 February, 2005).

In a society where socialization increasing means online and media based relationships, it is extremely valuable to offer places for face-to-face and collaborative community participation and interaction. These are essential ingredients for civic participation and innovative strategies of citizenship building at the community level. The second strategy focuses on the value of the place's ethnic diversity, concentrating all organizing efforts on building culturally-based local knowledge by developing opportunities for collaborative inter-ethnic and inter-generational work. This type of knowledge requires an understanding of the traditions and social behaviors of the different cultures that inhabit the same neighborhood and the encouragement to use the public arena as a place for dynamic cultural interchange. As a festival coordinator in *Spontaneous Celebrations* states: “(...) many events at *Spontaneous* are organized by community members. Part of their mission is to build a sense of community that crosses borders of age, race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation” (C. Carvalho, community meeting, May 2, 2005). Artistic

and cultural events may represent, then, a good opportunity to develop cultural interconnections between the different ethnic groups residing in the same locale.

In the case of the *ArtsUnion* project, the idea is to reach out to different arts-related partners, in order to create a civic network of involved citizens and organizations. As stated by one of the main *ArtsUnion* coordinators:

The main objective of the project is to try to get better publicity for Union Square, try to get more people down to square to learn about cultural and historical aspects of the Square and also to get [partners and residents] engaged in the activities (C. Carvalho, community meeting, 22 March, 2005).

Each of the various activities included in the *ArtsUnion* project: crafts and farmers markets (Fig. 42), outdoor performances (Fig. 43), window art exhibitions (Fig. 44), public art efforts, and historic tours, express the civic dynamics of the neighborhood and contribute to building social capital at the community level. Collective clustered endeavors develop each initiative. For example, outdoor performances result from the collaboration between local producers, the Somerville Arts Council (SAC), and local artists. As stated by one of the producers of an *ArtsUnion* performance event: “We have worked in collaboration since the beginning: SAC, myself and the West African artists” (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, October 8, 2005). Beyond the positive effect of strengthening civic relations during the preparations and duration of the initiative, what, if any, are the long-term effects on the development of other types of collective endeavors? Is there an escalating effect, generated by these artistic endeavors, on the neighborhoods’ involvement in civic culture? This will no doubt depend on the continued existence of these types of initiatives over the years, as well as a capacity for re-adaptation to the neighborhood social and cultural changes.



Fig. 41. Farmers Market
Photo Fig. 42: SAC



Fig. 42. *Event From the Old World to the New Event*
Photos Figs. 42 and 43: Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 43. *Windows Art Project*

The need to provide outreach to different ethnic and immigrant communities, allowing them to experience the potential of Union Square, creates networks of collaboration between local performers, immigrant artists, and community-based groups. As stated by one of the *ArtsUnion* local organizers:

In the outreach that we did for participation in the *ArtsUnion* event, we got this Latino best player, we got this guy who is Brazilian and works at an insurance company, we got this woman who works in a New Asia restaurant who brought a Chinese group of dancers! So we (...) had to coordinate a lot of people in the community (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, 4 October, 2005).

The outdoor performances are designed to reproduce the traditions from the diverse ethnic populations within Union Square, which are mainly Haitian, Indian and Brazilian. Therefore, strategies to create social capital are based on cultural outreach efforts within the surrounding community.

In the case of *Villa Victoria*, strong ties among civically-involved individuals are promoted, where individual self-help relationships (Williams, 2005) are developed between the residents. Community residents collaborate with the community agency *Inquilinos Boricuas en Action (IBA)* to organize community events like *Festival Betances* and other neighborhood events, such as domino tournaments, weddings, and artistic opportunities for the youth (like *Critical Breakdown* or *Youth Truth*). According to an *IBA*'s staff person:

(...) the community participation is pretty much committees from residents working hand in hand with IBA (...) *Festival Betances* is planned months in advance, and we pretty much make a call to the board and to the residents to try to form committees. So there's people working on every different task (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, June 30, 2005).

These dynamics develop from a partnership between IBA and *Villa Victoria* residents. They are the result of several months of collaborative work and involve many community meetings, thereby increasing ties between people in the area. By strengthening these social relationships, a civic network is created, based on a culture of pride and cultural resilience. Typical Puerto Rican activities are organized through which the community celebrates its cultural identity with the South End neighborhood and the greater Boston area. During the festival, where Puerto Rican food is prepared by the *Villa Victoria* residents, traditional celebrations co-exist with the urban Hip-Hop, as a younger generation of residents develops urban lifestyles associated with contemporary music, dance, and spoken word.



Fig. 44



Fig. 45

Figs. 44 and 45. Youth participation at Festival Bétances
Photo: Claudia Carvalho

5.4. Civic Engagement and Cultural Identity

Afterschool artistic and culturally-oriented programs, and other types of cultural and arts related community events, provide support for the cultural strengths of ethnic communities, offering opportunities for the promotion of active community participation. Cultural identity is constantly negotiated in the public realm, offering opportunities that may favor the experience of collective practice and civic participation. Specifically, among children and youth, where the processes of identity negotiation is still nascent, and where the experience of a collective endeavor may generate profound changes in the way children and youth see and are seen by other groups, it is extremely important not to neglect their cultural backgrounds. Artistic and cultural related programs may be a way of supporting cultural strengths.

It is argued that in Boston, Latino children are failing in the school system because the schools provide little support for the cultural traditions and lifestyles that those children bring with them (Uriarte, 1992). Instead of recognizing the cultural diversity of Latino youth as an important contribution to the education system, schools treat it as a disruption or as a burden on already strained resources. The same can be said about other communities like African-Americans, Koreans, Indians or Brazilians. The fact that their families feel culturally detached from the communities in which they reside, means that many of these youth and children, as well as their families, feel culturally detached from the educational system. Cultural identification seems to be the first channel that provides communities' social integration. The tendency of Latinos is to firstly identify themselves culturally and only then in racial terms (Uriarte, 1992). Eventually, some of these children try to reconnect to their community ties through different kinds of after-school culturally-related programs or other local events that outreach to different ethnic communities. It becomes, therefore, of extreme importance to promote possible social networks to help build strong cultural identities. The case studies being analyzed offer insights into how community-based organizations can serve as the main agents working on this reconnection to the cultural and creative roots of ethnic communities. This work of cultural reconnection it is not about how to create alternatives to school curriculum, but rather, it represents an effort of non-formal education to initiate learning through doing, representing the core approach of the proposed activities.

Such is the case of *Spontaneous Celebrations'* cultural celebrations and afterschool programs, of the *IBA Cacique Youth Learning Center* (through the *Cacique Youth Arts*), and

even of the open air events of the *ArtsUnion* project, in their efforts to create a sense of local identification for ethnic communities. These efforts represent an opportunity to counterbalance the sense of alienation that both youth and their families experience towards the education system, and towards society in general. In fact, the patterns of social integration of the different ethnic communities in urban settings cannot only depend on what the official and standardized school curriculums may have to offer on these matters. They also need to be supplemented with civil society initiatives and programs that can address social integration using alternative methodologies. It is important that these civil society efforts include communication with local schools and other afterschool arts related initiatives, to agree on complementary strategies for dealing with cultural differentiation, and to share best practices.

Community based organizations often struggle to increase participation of different ethnic communities in their programs and events. This effort can collide with communities that isolate themselves from both other communities and other social networks²¹. May social networks, constructed through community based and arts related activities, excel in building strong cultural communities, by revitalizing cultural traditions, and opening spaces of connection with other communities? As it was observed during the field work in these communities, there are some examples of people with different social and cultural backgrounds working together on community arts events like festivals, cultural celebrations, and informal gatherings. Thus, participation in different types of arts related tasks toward a common goal appears to be a good way to bring diverse people together. However, it is not enough to merely create opportunities for inter-group communication. It also requires sustained participation of different cultures over time, to create cultural identification and contribute to a more successful social integration of ethnic minorities.

From the examples presented above, it becomes easier to understand, on the one hand, the extreme importance of artistic and cultural activities in fostering community participation and expressive learning experiences for youth, children and families. On the other hand, it is equally important to create awareness about various local and international social issues as both a strategy to outreach different participants and as a method to integrate the organization into the

²¹ In response to conditions of exclusion, alienation, and isolation, Latinos have specifically worked on building a strong, but separate community (Uriarte, 1992) where the cultural aspect is addressed as a tool to promote cultural resistance.

neighborhood at large. In both contexts, expressive arts activities attempt to unite culturally differentiated groups, hoping to create more inclusive and integrated communities.

As is the case in *Villa Victoria*, youth in Jamaica Plain struggle to build affirmative youth identities in the community at large. The social context expressed by the type of ethnic population coming to *Spontaneous Celebrations'* cultural center, is manifested by the effort of the organization to serve as an intersection point between Latinos, African-Americans, and European descendents. However, issues of cultural affirmation still arise between these three groups. Accordingly, social issues like youth violence, sexism, racism, and the existence of negative stereotypes about the roles of youth in communities can be used as themes in the development cultural and artistic programs. The community celebrations in which these youth normally participate try to include different cultural traditions, as well as contemporary art forms, to address social issues of great concern to the personal lives of people in their communities. In *Villa Victoria*, the existence of various community housing development complexes throughout the neighborhood creates the need to bring together youth from different Latino groups to deal with common concerns, as well as with issues of rivalry among them. In Jamaica Plain, *Spontaneous Celebrations* recognizes both divisions and connections of a divided ethnic community, where the physical space is shared by African Americans, Latinos, and European descendent populations. The awareness of these social conditions informs the type of strategies to organize neighborhood celebrations and other community arts programs, which become direct expressions of the communities' social and cultural profiles.

The community strategies used in Jamaica Plain and *Villa Victoria* attempt to engage youth in thinking, organizing, and presenting a day of activities in the community festivals. Strategic plans are developed, oriented toward mentoring youth to be community leaders of these events, by offering them venues of cultural expression through artistic practices like spoken word, dancing, and singing. These same practices channel expression to specific everyday struggles. In the *2006 Wake Up the Earth Festival*, the *Beantown Society* youth participate in the festival's parade, using stilts and dressing with t-shirts advertising their program *Don't Wait Till We're Dead* (Fig. 48), in an effort to create awareness about youth dying in the streets and reaffirming positive aspects of youth. The success of the initiative depends on its integration in the festival as a channel of expression of a social issue. Is the political component an essential feature for a successful integration of youth groups in these types of community arts activities? Or conversely,

would it be enough to engage them in artistic activities that address their personal concerns? Another kinds of strategies that use expressive artistic skills to communicate and reflect on personal and social struggles are the *Hip Hop Lyrics/Poetry workshops*. The principles behind these efforts are to give youth a space to reflect on difficult problems (by asking questions and deeply analyzing social causes and implications) and then work on the creative expression of these ideas through *Open Mic performances* (Fig. 47). In this case, artistic creativity is used as a channel to communicate youth issues to the world, reflecting the importance of building strong youth identities to deal with community social issues.



Fig. 46. Youth in an Open-MIC performance at *Festival Betances* **Fig. 47.** Youth Rally in 2006 *Wake Up the Earth Festival*
Photos: Claudia Carvalho

In order to prepare for the Open Mic performance at *Festival Betances*, *Villa Victoria* and *South End* youth engage in a deep examination of the lyrics and poetry they have produced, through two hour workshops facilitated by professional MCs and poets. Workshops start with inspirational quotes, lyrics, or images, and an introduction of each week's community education topic. Then, youth start writing poetry and lyrics to beats, followed by sharing/feedback sessions, and directed writing exercises. Besides individual performance, group collaborations are also encouraged, resulting in collaborative creations and performances. The artistic activity represented here is both the mediator for producing social reflection, and the driving force of the workshop process. A social space is thus created to address social issues, alter emotional states, and foster youth identity through a process of cultural affirmation.

A similar process of social reflection was used in the re-creation of the traditional play *Romeo and Juliet* in the Community Education Workshops with youth. The *Cacique* youth used their own social issues related to rivalry between youth in the South End to adapt the play to their own universe. “It’s really a reflection of the teens’ own lives on the streets of Boston (...) It’s a love story between two people who are on opposite sides of the neighborhood conflict (...) it comes from real life experiences and losses” (Orchard, 2006c). A space was created for youth to speak about their frustrations and experiences as young people living in a complex metropolitan area. Topics ranged from police harassment to youth violence, drugs, and the need for more jobs. The idea was to build a learning agenda around each topic based on a deeper understanding of the social and personal contexts, present factual events, and devise constructive strategies to approach these issues. The main purpose was also to channel these learning experiences, which included thoughts and feelings, into multidisciplinary arts activities, understood as methods to educate others and create social awareness about youth struggles. As has been suggested earlier, this non-formal learning agenda of activities may represent a complementary set of initiatives that should be included in the educational curriculum of youth, in order to ensure a more complete systemic approach to youth education, where non-formal learning is understood as an essential component in youth education and youth citizenship.

Youth program strategies and processes may also acquire a more holistic approach to the strategies of the organization in which they are integrated. Such is the case of the *Beantown Society* Youth Program, whose main purpose is to develop a *youth leadership model* which expresses the direct mission of the organization: to develop strategies based on artistic and cultural practices, and to build a more integrated community where youth and children are active participants and leaders. Some of the organization’s most challenging issues are also the ones that inform the design of youth workshops and programs: How do you reach ethnically diverse populations using artistic and cultural events? How do you develop a horizontal organizational structure in which different sectors of the community have an active role in the strategic thinking of the organization? The youth program is focused on teaching festival arts techniques to youth, developing individual mentoring activities in the areas of expressive arts that integrate the festival arts curriculum: visual arts, costume-making, stilt walking, dancing and drumming. The mentored youth will then teach these skills to other youth and create a troupe of festival arts workers and community leaders. Behind this effort is a vision of the long-term sustainability of

the organization. The mentored youth are integrated into the different organizational committees²², and oriented to become the future generation of community leaders. Skills related to organizational management, artistic techniques, and the capacity to relate to seemingly irreconcilable social and cultural groups, represent some of the key abilities we need to develop in our young citizens. From the analysis of these youth programs, it seems that the use of non-formal arts related curricula as channels for youth leadership might be a promising approach to citizenship building at the community level.

²² Each overseeing an important element of the organization, mainly “Collective Development”, “Seasonal Celebrations”, “Organizational Programming”, “Staff”, “Fundraising”, “Facilities”, “Finance” and “Board”.

Chapter 6. Creative Citizenship

The case studies propose an alternative perspective on citizenship, where civic participation, communication, and intercultural dialogue contribute to the evolution of the individual into a *creative citizen*. The creative citizen is the generator of *political knowledge*, *expressivity*, and *cultural awareness*, which favor the creation of *cultural knowledgeable communities*. This individual is a political knowledge creator, constantly reflecting on surroundings and assuming responsibility for the welfare of the local society. Furthermore, this individual may also be an agent of social intervention initiatives that advance the goals of the community. The *political knowledge* dimension also includes the development of personal and social capacities related to the artistic field, and the possibility of generating community participation in the organization of cultural and artistic initiatives. The dimension of *expressivity* is associated with the expressive character of the individual and is manifested through building an authentic self and group identity that enables the development of more effective tools of dialogue with different groups. Communication is anchored in the capacity to be expressive. Finally, the component of *cultural awareness* understands the individual as a developer of cultural perception in terms of the ethnic, political, religious, and generational composition of contemporary society. By integrating the components of *political knowledge*, *expressivity*, and *cultural awareness*, the creative citizen, as presented in these case studies, may create spaces for inter-relation between sectors of society that are often separated by cultural divisions that lead to social exclusion. The working hypothesis is that the initiatives these in the case studies that activate and articulate *political knowledge*, *expressivity*, and *cultural awareness* may be better prepared to produce effective strategies of dialogue between different social groups that can minimize division and intolerant behaviors.

Creative Citizenship categories and dimensions were created based on the field work, specifically, on the visual and written documentation and the semi-structured interviews analysis of the three case studies. Table 6 summarizes the definitions given to each category.

Category	Dimensions	Definition
Political Knowledge	Social reflection and critical rationality	Promotion of a critical attitude in relation to the local issues that affect residents and the community at large
	Capacitating for Action	Development of personal and social capacities related to event organizing, production and specific techniques of the artistic celebration
	Community Participation	Generation of individual and group mobilization as active promoter in the organization of artistic and cultural events
Expressivity	Political intervention and project oriented work	Incentive to local efforts of intervention, such as rallies, community meetings, locally based projects, that may affect the political agenda (related to residential, environmental, migration issues, etc.) of communities' cultural life
	Identity formation	Creation of individual and group identifications both through the use of artistic activities and through the acknowledgment of local, immigrant and other ethnic cultural traditions
	Communication	Promotion of dialogue among social groups from different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and generations
Cultural Awareness	Ethnic composition	Ability to perceive and understand the social and cultural composition of the neighborhoods in terms of their ethnic composition, political (critical attitude) preference, religious orientation, and generational sense of belonging
		Political preference
		Religious orientation
		Generation belonging

Table 6. Creative Citizenship - Categories and Dimensions

The following sections present an analysis of how *political knowledge*, *expressivity*, and *cultural awareness* are expressed in each case study. The main goal is to identify if and how the *creative citizen* manifests itself in each cultural initiative and/or if it fails to do so. The idea is to offer an analytical overview of how specific artistic and cultural practices are more or less successful in facing social and cultural divisions and may offer innovative models to address these issues. However, a critical analysis is suggested in order to understand why some initiatives

are less effective in dealing with community isolation, intolerant behaviors, and divisions. We wish to analyze the types of approaches used in arts related initiatives²² to produce more comprehensive strategies of dialogue between different social groups, and also identify the methodological strategies behind the implementation of artistic and cultural programs.

6.1. Methodological Logic for Implementation of Artistic and Cultural Programs

The intent is to not only describe what is happening in the communities, but to examine how methodological processes used with communities in innovative ways might actually be adapted to other social contexts. Because community based practices are clearly context driven, it is important to extract the logic behind successful community building practices and explore various applications to different contexts.

The following section will examine the frameworks and the social contexts within which communities and organizations can implement artistic and cultural programs and practices. In communities with a highly developed organizational structure, such as *Villa Victoria*, organizations can facilitate the process of people organizing themselves. In contrast, communities like Jamaica Plain, which has strong community leaders but a less developed organizational infrastructure, can successfully organize their community as well. Although both types of communities use different methodologies, they share the same logic of implementation.

The general logic behind the organization of artistic and cultural practices and programs in these communities is shown in Figure 48. This model begins with the general context that frames the community. This structure creates a starting point for establishing community interest, considered here as a preliminary requisite goal, and is a process that entails identifying stakeholders that span ethnic, racial, class, age, and other social divisions. After various groups within the community commit to the success of the program or event, a strategic plan can be created and subsequently managed through the identification of processes that are involved in organizing the community effectively. Defining these processes leads the initiative to the formulation of executable activities. This entire process can be applied to a variety of different communities, and adapted according to their respective strengths and resources, replicating lessons rather than activities.

²² About the importance of learning through the arts, see Heath and Seop, 1998 and Heath and Smith, 1999(a,b,c, and d) and Illeris, 2005.

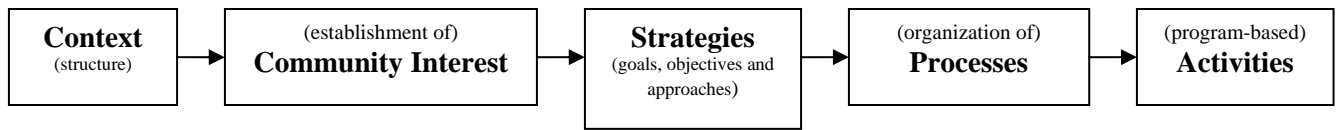


Fig. 48. Methodological Logic for implementation of artistic and cultural programs

6.2. Citizenship and Cultural Identity

Because *Villa Victoria* is strictly confined to a particular urban setting and ethnic community with a story of resistance and space appropriation, it represents an example of a *community of enclave*. Arts and culture have been, on one hand, ensuring the survival of the community, emphasizing the uniqueness of its way of life, traditions, and space allocation. On the other hand, the vitality of a *community of enclave* also depends on building the capacity for cultural revitalization and re-adaptation within an ethnically changing context.

Since its beginnings, *Villa Victoria* has had a deep commitment to artistic and cultural practices, understood as a strategy to build more socially integrated communities. This strategy manifested itself in the promotion of Puerto Rican and Latino culture, and through the development of arts-related programs and events. The arts component of the *Cacique Youth Learning Center for Teens* is one example, and there are other arts related initiatives and venues that developed in the community and are promoted by *Inquilinos Boricuas En Accion (IBA)*. *IBA*'s arts agenda was launched in the 1970s with the *Areyto* program, which comprised a small theater company directed by Myrna Vasquez, the street theater company *Virazon*, a choral group, an arts curriculum for middle and high school students, and the design of a ceramic tile community mural which currently resides in *Plaza Betances* at *Villa Victoria*. In the 1980s, arts-driven innovation in the community continued with the transformation of a century-old church into a performance center, becoming the *Jorge Hernandez Cultural Center (JHCC)*.

Currently, the *JHCC* is open to cultural events organized by *IBA* and the *Villa Victoria* community, and includes performance, exhibition, and learning spaces for community artists. This cultural venue represents a strategy of outreach to an ethnically mixed audience through the promotion of Latino culture. Another arm of the outreach seeks out partnerships with other arts related institutions in Boston, like the Berklee Performance Center, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the Handle and Hayden Society. In the late 1980s, the addition of a performance center enabled *IBA* to launch a performing arts series, *Café Teatro*, which aimed to introduce

renowned Latin American artists (in areas like Latin Jazz and Traditional Latin American music) to the American public. Adjacent to the *JHCC*, *IBA* created the community arts center in the historic church parish house. The Center for Latino Arts (CLA) became a multifunctional community arts complex that includes a gallery, a dance studio, and a visual arts studio. As with *JHCC*, the main goals of CLA are to promote Latino arts and artists, offer affordable arts education for at-risk youth²³, work as an incubator for artists and arts organizations, offer spaces of rehearsal and exhibition, and develop opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration between Latinos and other ethnic populations. Currently, CLA hosts two main cultural and artistic programs - *El Bembe* and *Café Teatro* – as platforms for Latino culture and artistic expressions. The expanded venues for performance, and the community cultural center, not only support Latino culture and artists, they also raise the artistic profile of the *Villa Victoria* community in the neighborhood.

Through the process of creating performance opportunities, learning experiences, and spaces for cultural affirmation for youth engaged in artistic practices, *IBA*, in partnership with *Villa Victoria* residents, has been able to address social issues that are part of the lives of young people. Of particular importance are issues around ethnicity and race and how they influence youth relationships in urban settings, exacerbate situations of urban rivalry between different housing complexes in the South End (including *Villa Victoria*), and generate street and youth violence. According to a Boston security specialist, street violence is territorially based: “It’s all territorial (...) Whether it’s Mandela [Homes housing complex] or Castle Square [housing complex] or whatever [*Villa Victoria*] ... that’s their borders, so to speak, and that’s where they live”(Orchard, 2006a). When urban rivalry infects the daily lives of youth residents, the need for cultural identity affirmation grows stronger, and a healthy outlet exists in the artistic practices of the community members.

6.2.1. Villa Victoria’s Youth Arts Program

The *Cacique* Youth Learning Center (CYLC) at *Villa Victoria* provides low-income youth with resources, skills, and support, to enable them to succeed in school and in their personal lives. *Cacique* emphasizes project-based, experiential, and interdisciplinary learning to help youth develop their abilities to think critically, solve problems creatively, resolve conflicts,

²³ For a discussion of youth arts and education see Brody, 2001 and Marshall, 2006. For research findings on the impact of arts education on youth at risk, see Institute for Community Development and the Arts (1998), Maggie and Miller, 1997, National Endowment for the Arts, 1998 and Russel *et al*, 2002.

excel in school, and become civically engaged. The program includes activities supporting community celebrations, art projects, dance performances, festivals, and other arts and cultural events. Below, some of these activities are highlighted, illustrating how artistic and cultural practices can be designed for youth mobilization and social change.

The *Cacique* Youth Arts Program aims to build community power through the arts and includes a series of arts activities dedicated to preserving local history and developing artistic talent and sensibility, cultural awareness, and venues for youth expression. The program celebrates cultural traditions as well as contemporary art forms, in an effort to provide learning experiences and life-skills development that can be applied to personal lives, home, community, and schools. The program provides twenty multicultural *Villa Victoria* youth, ages 14-18, with a comprehensive and holistic arts program that integrates leadership and life skills development into the goal of completing two major public arts projects in *Villa Victoria*: a Rotating Mural Project and a Recycled Lamppost Banner Art Project. Program activities include:

- **Latin Percussion Workshop – *Cacique* Latin Percussion Troupe:** This workshop provides instruction on a variety of Latin percussion traditions and instruments, while teaching diverse techniques and styles. Youth receive special tutoring and lesson follow-up, access to Berklee College of Music events, including workshops and concerts, as well as performance opportunities.

- **The Banner Painting/Mural Project:** Large scale collaborative paintings are featured as banners through out the community; youth and community engage in critical dialogue on issues relevant to youth in the *Villa Victoria* and South End communities, and work together on how to translate their ideas into potent images. They simultaneously learn basic drawing and painting techniques.

- **Rhythmik Reflectionz Project – Rhythmik Reflectionz Crew:** An intensive lyrics/poetry workshop series which encourages youth to use Hip Hop and spoken word as vehicles for in-depth critical thinking about the world around them, and to help them experience lyrics and poetry on a deeper level.

- **Community Education Workshops:** Developed in conjunction with youth peer leaders, participants process their experiences as young people growing up in Boston today. By speaking constructively about each topic, the workshops offer a space to break down frustration and rage into strategies for personal and collective action. The method used is based upon

reformulating questions, moving from the "why me?" into historical-based conversations about "why us?" The intention is to promote a greater sense of unity and help eradicate territorialism and rivalry, which are major contributors to youth violence.

Figs.49 and 50. Youth at *Festival Betances*; photos: Claudia Carvalho



• ***Festival Betances:*** This community festival, organized annually by residents of *Villa Victoria* and the Board and Staff of *Inquilinos of Boricuas En Acción (IBA)*, draws participants

from the Youth Arts Program, and usually brings 5,000 South End residents together around food, dance, music, and locally made crafts. One of the main events of the festival is *Youth Day* (at O'Day Park), an event planned, organized, and produced by IBA's *Cacique* Youth Program, and youth from South End-Lower Roxbury, featuring artistic performances, basketball tournaments, food, face painting, and special educational and recreational activities offered by local museums and other youth organizations.

• **Theater Workshop - *Cacique* Theater Troupe:** The basic objective is to encourage youth experimentation in the arts and, at the same time, help them reflect on social issues that characterize the communities in which they live. Those who suffer social marginalization can learn to transform their own language into artistic language, and use it as a method of reflection, communication, and social change. The idea is to ease the passive role of the *spectator* into the active role of the *subject*, someone who can become a possible catalyst for change. The underlying effort is to develop new ways of communication through the artistic language of theater, creating innovative cross-cultural and cross-economic spaces of relationship.

• **Creating Local Social Networks to Promote Youth Arts Education**

Local partnerships with high-level arts education institutions are also tools that can enhance youth artistic skills and provide them with innovative resources in the artistic field. Emerson College and *IBA* have established a three-year partnership to teach a multidisciplinary

arts course in *Villa Victoria* entitled, "*Moving Out, Moving In: A Multidisciplinary Exploration of the Immigrant Experience.*" During the course of the project, Emerson College students worked with three groups of twenty residents - children, adolescents, young adults, twenty mature adults, and the elderly - in various art projects related to visual arts, theater, music and dance. The objective was to explore the study of ethno genesis, in this case, the process of *becoming American*. The project, developed in collaboration with the Center for Latino Arts and IBA's youth development program, and the *Cacique* Youth Learning Center, was designed to strengthen the connection between the artistic practice as a unique tool to promote social reflection, and the development of tools to cope with the challenges of contemporary urban society. The work focused on the questions that arise when one leaves one's own country and moves into another, and on the deeper question of the psychosocial journey of moving out and into one's self, one's culture, and one's community. Artistic projects are tailored to generate reflection about the place of immigrant cultures. In all of these processes, issues related to the social integration of immigrant groups reveal the contradictory nature of the situation, where the enforcement of one's identity is often at odds with the need to survive socially in a new cultural context, where cultural differentiation is a reality, and where the question of identity formation becomes a negotiated process.

In sum, all these initiatives involve a joint effort of learning together about each topic, but also provide the opportunity to channel thoughts and feelings into multidisciplinary art. The goal is to empower youth to think critically and creatively about what *making a difference in social contexts* means to each of them, then to write it, rhyme it, drum it, dance it, and paint it, thereby inspiring and educating others as well.

6.2.2. Technology of Methodology Applied to *Villa Victoria*

As discussed earlier, a *community of enclave* like *Villa Victoria*, depends on circumscribed urban space, and stems from a process of cultural resistance. Cultural identity issues continually arise in the context of an upwardly middle class neighborhood, such as the South End. While *Villa Victoria* is struggling to preserve its cultural identity as a Puerto Rican community, it is also confronted with issues related with the integration of immigrant and other ethnic communities into urban spaces. Throughout the years, *Villa Victoria* has become increasingly multicultural, including immigrants from other Latino countries (besides Puerto Rico) in its housing complex. However, some sectors of this community are still resistant to

reframe their concepts of cultural survival within a changing ethnic context. Processes of cultural isolation happen both inside *Villa Victoria* and in its relation to the surrounding South End neighborhood, as this community tends to develop both social divisions within their groups of community members and in relationship to other ethnic communities that live outside of the *Villa Victoria* community.

When community members work on social change issues within geographic boundaries, significant progress may be realized in that area. For example, the 1968 establishment of the *Villa Victoria* housing complex was a result of community leadership and civic engagement efforts, based on the specific goal of cultural survival of a Puerto Rican community in the United States. Residents of the region organized and decided they would not become victims of urban renewal, and let others dictate their future. Rather, they would organize and participate in city government so that the residents could collectively decide how renewal would occur. Communities' individual and collective voices and actions can influence institutions and people with authority over their community and support the interests that hold communities together²⁴.

A community like *Villa Victoria*, dealing with issues of social divisions with the outside neighborhood and within sectors of the community, is developing innovative social intervention strategies in the community to reconcile the imperative for cultural survival with the need to live productively in a multicultural society. Issues related to youth social integration reflect this dual tension between social relations inside and outside the community. Youth programs attend to these issues using expressive arts activities, neighborhood celebrations, and project-based learning initiatives. These are used to fulfill specific short-term objectives using long-term strategies that involve processes related to personal learning and the development of skills, such as critical thinking and creative problem solving, scholastic success, and social participation in community activities.

There are three basic strategies of intervention in the *Villa Victoria* community: the development of expressive arts initiatives, the promotion of project-based learning activities that relate directly to the *Villa Victoria* social context, and the promotion of cultural awareness about

²⁴ Civic engagement and effective citizenship are community assets that involve developing people's strengths and visions for change. By collectively exercising their public will (taking what they have done in their community and moving outside of their communities to change political and public systems) groups can: change the conditions of their immediate environments; help citizens understand how to effectively participate in democracy; actively participate in democracy; affect public policy through systemic change. The importance of civic engagement holds promise for developing community transformation and building sustainable and multicultural neighborhood participation. To read more about the impact of multicultural approaches in communities, see Kuster, 2005.

Puerto Rican culture (including life styles, food, architecture, and living space). The first strategy of action compiles an array of artistic programs (including theater, painting, dancing, music, and singing) that offer an interdisciplinary approach to different types of arts activities. Students experience activities that foster artistic talent and sensibility, both towards the art they are creating, and the social world they live in. Due to the urgent need to nurture youth into the role of participatory citizens in their communities, these youth programs develop leadership skills and promote conflict resolution initiatives through community based workshops or more socially engaged arts programs, like the *Rhythmik Reflectionz* project and the theatre workshops. Activities related to cultural awareness include community celebrations like *Festival Betances*, which reflect the resilience of the Puerto Rican culture, while creating a space for cultural expression of youth. The planning of all-day activities (during *Youth Day*) in the festival has two important objectives: the exposure of youth to project-based experiences and the artistic development of Latino youth culture.

Youth programs in *Villa Victoria* are organized through the *Cacique* Youth Learning Center (CYLC), which is one of the educational arms of *Inquilinos Boricuas En Accion (IBA)*, enlisted to improve the literacy and the education levels of the *Villa* community. The *Cacique* program represents a coordinated effort that combines social learning, creative arts activities, and life skills development. CYLC supports a curriculum focused on academic mentoring (career awareness and school tutoring); health, safety and recreation awareness (non-violence education and substance abuse prevention); arts and culture promotion (organization of community based celebrations and arts-based workshops); civic involvement (community organizing), and technology education. To satisfy this curriculum, the program has developed different venues: The *Cacique* Afterschool Program, The *Cacique* Youth Learning Center for Teens (Teen Center), The *Cacique* 4-H Peer Leadership Training, The *Cacique* Summer Internship Program, The Girls' MAC (Making A Change) Project and the Arts and Technology Project-based Learning Programs.

In *Villa Victoria*, some of the most trenchant issues for the community are related to cultural re-adaptation of immigrant communities, considering the adaptive character of an immigrant community towards an increasingly multicultural context, and the need to revive Puerto Rican cultural traditions and lifestyles. Therefore, fostering social networks with the surrounding communities through the promotion of arts activities and youth arts education,

seems to serve strategies of cultural awareness both inside and outside of *Villa Victoria*. Additionally, specific arts activities and arts projects like the community mural art, the Latin percussion projects, and the community *Festival Betances*, engage the community in the struggle for its cultural survival as a Latin minority in a gentrified neighborhood. The development of community activities, like the *Rhythmik Reflectionz Project*, which uses theatre as an instrument of social reflection, and the Community Education Workshops, promote reflection about daily youth struggles, in particular the issue of youth violence and the direct consequences related to urban rivalries.²⁵ Social awareness is therefore also a means to build people's identification with the public spaces that they inhabit. This effort is mainly done with the youth through educational programs described previously.

Social housing communities like *Villa Victoria* generate enclaves of human groups that are spatially connected to a specific urban territory. Consequently, youth gangs, and the concomitant street violence, are fueling urban conflicts related to territorialism and rivalry between members of the same ethnic group. Youth street violence is a growing reality in many neighborhood areas, and *Villa Victoria* is no exception. In order to eradicate this problem, places of social interaction are closely connected with the outdoor leisure places. These sites work simultaneously as places to develop cultural dynamics and as places of community socialization. This type of cultural and social use of urban spaces does not have an immediate effect over the territorial related issues that affect this community. It does, however, offer optimal conditions for the different rival groups to create new symbolic identifications with urban sites, where the component of inter-group encounter plays an essential role.

The table below summarizes the strategy of action of *Villa Victoria*'s youth programs and community initiatives, focusing on the community's most serious challenges, short-term objectives, long-term goals, strategies of social intervention, as well as the activities and programs that pursue those objectives.

²⁵ About issues related to youth and their impact on urban spaces, see Robinson, 2000.

Table 7. Villa Victoria's Strategy of Action

ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	SOCIAL INTERVENTION STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	LONG TERM GOAL
How to stimulate cultural re-adaptation within an ethnic changing context?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think critically • Solve problems creatively • Excel in school • Promote civic engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create cultural awareness • Promote conflict resolution initiatives • Social networking • Interdisciplinary learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting Local Social Networks to support Youth Arts Education 	Create a more socially, culturally and economically integrated community
How to promote cultural survival of minorities?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create cultural awareness • Foster artistic talent and sensibility • Social networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public Art Projects (Mural Project and A Recycled Lamppost Banner Art Project) - Latin Percussion Workshop - <i>Festival Betances</i> - Promoting Local Social Networks to support Youth Arts Education 	
How to prevent youth street violence and rivalry?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop leadership skills • Promote conflict resolution initiatives • Project-based and experiential learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Banner Painting/Mural Project - Rhythmik Reflectionz Project - Community Education Workshops - <i>Festival Betances</i> - Social Reflection through theater 	
How to create awareness about health issues?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop life skills • Foster artistic talent and sensibility • Interdisciplinary learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Education Workshops - Rhythmik Reflectionz Project - Social Reflection through theater 	
How to develop healthy relationships between youth?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Banner Painting/Mural Project - Rhythmik Reflectionz Project - Latin percussion workshops - Community Education Workshops - <i>Festival Betances</i> - Social Reflection through theater 	

6.3. Citizenship and Inter-Group Learning

6.3.1. *Spontaneous Celebrations'* Youth Program Description

One of the main goals of *Spontaneous Celebrations'* organization is to promote creative learning through interaction with diverse cultural traditions, in particular the environmental, economic, and agrarian traditions of many folk festivals. The assumption underlying the work of social action is that the involvement of many different groups (racial, ethnic, religious, generational, political, level of income) is an effective way to increase cross-cultural communication and build a shared sense of belonging, in order to work toward the elimination of bigotry and racism. The youth programs represent one of the venues that the organization uses to work towards the achievement of these objectives.



Fig. 51. *Spontaneous Celebrations'* Youth Program parade
Photos: Femke Rosenbaum and Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 52. Youth in 2006 *Wake Up the Earth Festival's*

Festival Arts and Community Change Youth Programs serve middle school students and have been in existence for seven years. Their main objective is to teach city youth festival arts activities and techniques. As one organization mentor explains, “We call ourselves a festival arts organization. And the program that we do with the young people is Festival Arts (...) they are learning...they had a guy doing cartooning with them, (...) a performing artist from Mexico doing stilt walking, making performances and costumes” (Carvalho, C., semi-structured interview, December 16, 2004). The mission of the Festival Arts Program is to engage middle school-aged young people as active members of their community by empowering them (mentoring each student with the training and support needed to excel in the art of their choice) as artists, performers, and as active leaders, both within the organization and in society at large.

In fact, the creation of *Spontaneous Celebrations'* new organizational model, *The Circles*, reflects the need to create specialized knowledge in the field of festival arts by creating a specific committee, named *Seasonal Celebrations*, to plan and implement festivals. This strategy strengthens the relationship between art and the creation of specialized knowledge, making *Spontaneous Celebrations* unique in its field, and creating a group of young people that may lead the organization in the future.

The fundamental issue behind this venture is to how to transfer this specialized knowledge to the society at large, and how to build that platform of communication in order to develop these types of artistic capacities in other social groups. In fact, the means to transfer knowledge are less explored and may represent a determining factor for artistic dynamism in communities. Associating this type of knowledge only with specific groups may be a accentuate divisions and knowledge based hierarchies. In fact, cultivating capabilities in youth groups and exploring their ability to transfer knowledge to other youth groups in the community may be an efficient strategy to prevent future social stratification and division. This practice of knowledge transfer might possibly lead to innovative approaches for citizenship building at the community level.

Spontaneous Celebrations' board meetings are highlighted by the active participation of youth. Two elements of the youth group, now in high school, have joined the organization's Board of Directors and have been acquiring more responsibilities in event organization and production. The 2006 *Wake Up the Earth Festival* was dedicated to the theme of youth violence, and also included a Youth Stage, planned and organized by the youth themselves:

Youth members have launched an anti-violence initiative called 'Don't Wait Till We're Dead' and helped plan the 28th *Wake Up the Earth Festival* (...) themed 'Peace in the Hood, Peace in the Streets, Youth United', the Festival will run a Youth Stage featuring young rappers, singers, and dancers, as well as a youth violence speak-out during the festival (Cherecwich, 2006).



Fig. 53. Youth stage announcement in 2006 *Wake Up the Earth* 2006 poster
 Photos: Claudia Carvalho

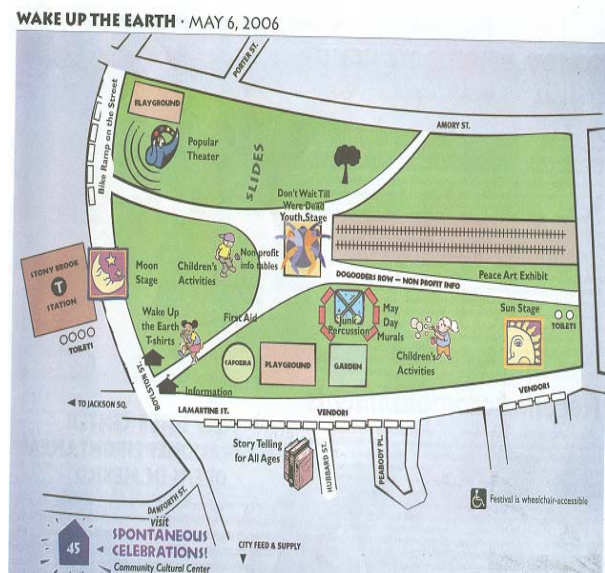


Fig. 54. Youth stage location in *Wake Up the Earth* site map

The young people of the Festival Arts program are actively involved in the creation of four annual community festivals, taking place in different urban natural landscapes and community spaces: *Tropical Fiesta* (at the Community Center), *Wake Up the Earth* (South West Corridor Park), *Lantern Parade* (Jamaica Pond), and *First Night Boston Parade* (Boston streets). The youths' intention is to create festival arts activities that serve as self-expression as well as a representation of their visions of social justice. The articulation between the components of social reflection and political intervention provides a strong ideological feature to these events.

Through active participation in the creation of annual festivals, youth gain an experiential understanding of what it takes to be an active participant in community activities, working behind the scenes for weeks in advance, and taking leadership roles during the festivals. In addition, youth also learn other creative skills like dancing, drumming, stilt walking and cooking. In the field of drumming, it is important to mention the program *Music Fundamentals with Junk Percussion*, which represents a new extension of the Festival Arts Program. In this program, *Spontaneous Celebrations* is collaborating with Urban Edge to offer percussion classes to young people from the *Bromley Heath* and *Academy Homes* housing projects. Focusing on Samba, Calypso, Afro-Cuban, Hip Hop, Reggae, and West African rhythms, students have the

opportunity to play both traditional and homemade instruments. Classes are offered at the *Spontaneous Celebrations'* community center and sites across the city. In order to emphasize awareness about different cultural traditions and the importance of paying attention to environmental issues, students are introduced to traditional musical instruments from different cultures and attend workshops on how to build these instruments from recycled materials. The founder of this program, Richard Goldstein, elaborates on the importance of this work: "I'm on a mission to equip young people with music fundamentals by giving them bucket drums, bells, and shakers (...) junk percussion uses everyday household items to play Afro-Latin beats" (*Spontaneous Celebrations*, 2006). Youth are both exposed to an artistic learning environment in the field of music and are offered the possibility of learning about different cultural traditions through the direct manipulation of materials, traditional songs, and music. Three aspects that assume great importance when we speak about creative citizenship are included in this initiative: arts education, cultural awareness, and political knowledge.

Fig. 55. Rehearsal for *Wake Up the Earth Festival*



Photos: Claudia Carvalho

Fig. 56. Junk percussion workshop at *Academy Homes*



The main initiatives that constitute *Spontaneous' Celebrations'* youth program are described below:

The *Beantown Society* is a youth focused program with the mission to unite youth in Boston across race, class, culture, and neighborhood, and the main goal of ending youth violence and initiate positive change in the community, by keeping youth out of the streets. As one of the youth program coordinators explains:

(...) the program really has a lot of different pieces and it's a program that we call 'By Youth, For Youth'. So really whatever they wanna do, they do (...) I never lead anything in the program (...) But when the day starts till the day ends they are the ones leading it, facilitating it, worrying about the time. (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, October 11, 2005). People in this program (...) believe in changing youth's oppression, neglect, rejection, and depression, into youth power (Beantown Society, n.d.).

The program is focused on social reflection and corresponding local interventions to address youth issues. Workshops, projects, and events based on youth interests are offered (topics include racism, immigration, sexism, friendship, etc.). There is also space for youth to express themselves through painting, dance, theatre, and music, receive one-on-one support, and develop leadership skills in their community. The focus of the work is on developing a *youth leadership model*, run by an eight-person youth leadership team plus three community youth workers, who mentor the youth leaders involved in the program. Most importantly, they learn what it is like to be a part of a community and what strategies they can use, as youth leaders, to improve social conditions in their neighborhood. One of their most important events is the *Talent Show*, a night where Boston youth display a variety of creative and artistic talents, from dance, music, and theater. One of the *Beantown Society's* campaigns is *Don't Wait Till We're Dead*. The idea is to counter the negative stereotypes of young people by asking the city to recognize the positive contributions that youth are making to their community. Additionally, in the summer of 2006, one of the youth members inaugurated *The Beantown College Scholarship Fund* to support the first generation of high school graduates.

This program has been successful in sparking artistic creativity and creating social awareness about youth issues. However, there are difficulties in accessing other non-Latino immigrant and ethnic communities. In fact, cross-cultural dialogue and joint cross-cultural collaboration seem to be hard goals to achieve, even in an organization with more than thirty years of grounded work experience. As an organizational leader explains, "I think in our youth programs its almost all Latino (...) we just had a conversation with everyone saying lets bring more white people, and more black folks in the program coz its like 90% Latino" (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, October 11, 2005).

This situation creates a fairly homogeneous group of community leaders and fails to achieve intercultural dialogue among youth. In fact, the problem starts with the educational system where middle class and upper class white youth go to private schools or to the suburbs. Consequently, inner city schools and the community at large are essentially segregated.

(...) Schools end up being almost all students of color and really segregated and the community eventually becomes segregated because if you're not building relationships and friendships with ... across class or across race, then that's really where you stay, versus if you have relationships then you're gonna be going to different parts of the neighborhood where different people live (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, October 11, 2005).

In order to achieve structural transformations in the community, it becomes essential to work towards the creation of diverse and multicultural communities, which depend on a sustainable initiative for multicultural education, done in a joint collaboration between local schools and community based organizations.

La Piñata – the Latin American Family Cultural Network is an intergenerational arts and language program, created by a native Mexican community cultural worker and educator. The group is focused on folkloric performances involving young people, ages 7-17, who learn songs, dances, and traditions from Latin American cultures, including indigenous Aztec and Mayan, in addition to “contemporary Latin American music, dance, drama, visual arts, folklore and stories” (La Piñata. n.d.). During school vacations, they work with teens to form a Brazilian Samba Band, which performs annually at the *First Night Parade* and in other *Spontaneous Celebrations* festivals across the city. A popular *La Piñata* event is Mexico's *Day of the Dead* (Fig. 57), a traditional Mexican ritual of remembrance for those who have died, with music, dance, and active participation of the community. The creative component of the artistic practice is associated, on one hand, with the arts education of children and youth and, on the other hand, with the creation of cultural awareness about Latin American culture, particularly Brazilian, Peruvian, Cuban, Puerto Rican and Mexican. With the second generation of immigrants from South American countries, it becomes important to question how to approach the cultural integration of different ethnic groups into American contexts. The dissemination of creative

immigrant traditions represents an essential element for safeguarding cultural identity in communities. However, while it is essential to draw attention to the cultural traditions of immigrants, it is also important to seek out strategies that promote intercultural dialogue with other immigrant cultures.

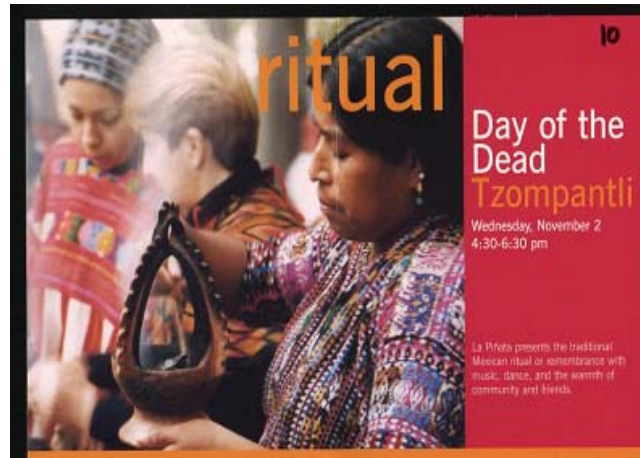


Fig. 57. *Day of the Dead Event*
Photo: *Spontaneous Celebrations*

In *Spontaneous Celebrations'* events, space can be understood as a setting for ethnic and generational interchange. In the connection between this organization and the surrounding resident communities, places best situated for social connection through artistic and cultural events and activities were identified, and the act of preparing for these events began the process of bringing people together. According to one of the organizers, "(...) what also makes our events and festivals different is that we have the preparations before and that is how we involve all the community, including people from different generations in preparing the events" (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, December 16, 2004).

In addition, cultural and artistic events and projects provide opportunities to work on community social issues, like youth street violence, as these themes can be discussed and integrated into the artistic work. A *Spontaneous Celebrations* program coordinator, describing the surprising depth of youth involvement, said "Their goal was to create a project of change in the community and what they ended up deciding was to actually create a program for themselves to keep youth off the streets (...) and talk about preventing violence" (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, October 11, 2005). Interestingly, preventing youth violence in Jamaica Plain is one of the main goals of *Spontaneous Celebrations'* work.

The organization has created ample opportunities for social interaction among young people, bringing them inside the organization through youth leadership programs or integrating them into the open-air celebrations. Youth become engaged through the organization of their own set of events in the year-round program of community celebrations. As described by one of the youth organizers:

There is a youth program inside the organization led by youth staff members, it's *Beantown Society*, and it's a program *of youth by youth* (...) when the day starts until the day ends they are the ones leading it, facilitating it and worrying about the time (...) plus they are going to be organized in small groups to implement projects of change in the community (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, October 11, 2005).

6.3.2. Technology of Methodology Applied to Jamaica Plain

Community celebrations and festivals may also be a strategy to bring about change in the community by providing a springboard for more cohesive cultural endeavors and for more inclusive community socialization among children, youth, and adults. In fact, one of the more significant outcomes of developing urban spaces for community celebration is the creation of a space that cultivates ethnic acceptance and a more multicultural sense of belonging. As a parallel strategic intervention, *Spontaneous Celebrations* frequently engages in civic parades that are designed to call attention to various immigrant social issues. In these contexts, the political component of the creative citizen is brought to the forefront, not only on issues related to multicultural acceptance, but also the need to restore the humanitarian values of solidarity and human rights.



Fig. 58. *Spontaneous Celebrations* at the Boston immigrant rally
Photo: *Spontaneous Celebrations*

Spontaneous Celebrations promotes interaction between distinct ethnic, economic, and social groups by mobilizing people using social issues, such as the environment, as a call to action. One example is the effort to promote awareness about other cultures' natural landscapes. Each year, during the *Tropical Fiesta* event, *Spontaneous Celebrations'* community center is decorated using natural *leit motives* from Latino countries in an effort to recreate these countries' natural environments. Collaborative work centered on painting, the construction of collage, drawing, crafts, and performances of plays and typical dances from particular Latino countries, are some of the activities that aim to bring different people from the community together in a joint effort of artistic creation.



Fig.59. Tropical Fiesta decorations
Photos: *Spontaneous Celebrations*, Claudia Carvalho



Fig. 60. Family working on *Tropical Fiesta* decorations

Furthermore, working toward increased knowledge and appreciation of the natural environments in urban space may represent a good opportunity for creating awareness about the need to preserve and reconstruct urban sites as places of inter-ethnic and inter-generational socialization. The close relationship with urban public places like parks, gardens, and lakes may occur as members of the community come to identify themselves with the urban spaces that they inhabit, not only by appropriating them for individual (Altman and Low, 1992), social, cultural, artistic, and economic activities, but also by connecting them to the social and political issues that affect urban public places. By calling attention to relevant local issues using artistic practices as agents of mediation, community members facilitate social awareness. Cultural and artistic events occurring in Jamaica Plain's outdoor public spaces may draw communal attention to *global* social issues (such as the war in Iraq) as well as *local* social conflicts, (like the introduction of controversial bio-labs in a nearby neighborhood), or even somewhat broader localized concerns (like the spread of pesticides in South West Corridor Park). The commitment to promote and educate through the arts is driven by a strong awareness of the social controversies in the surrounding and global communities. In this festival, the dimensions of cultural and social awareness mix together in a structured and organized effort where community residents unite with the collective goal to improve the living conditions of the different neighborhood groups. And, concurrently, these community events also serve as an excellent opportunity for multicultural recognition and celebration. As one of the organization's founders explains:

The idea [of *Wake Up the Earth Festival*] is to get one day where everybody gets together, where all the different organizations in the community interrelate and showcase their social concerns ... just put aside your own thing and just kind of celebrate Spring and celebrate each others traditions from the different cultures, like the Africans, Latinos and Europeans. So, from the start it was a very multicultural event (C. Carvalho, semi-structured interview, December 16, 2004).

Spontaneous Celebrations' work develops around a social context where different types of social and ethnic groups seek to develop spaces for social relations in urban spaces. These communities are *communities of relation* where interethnic, intergenerational, and inter-

neighborhood relationships are fostered among community members. Strategies to promote community interchange through artistic and cultural activities establish a space for inclusive social relationships and the development of civic engagement initiatives. As described earlier, *Spontaneous Celebrations* represents the organizational structure physically situated at the intersection of an African-American community, a Latino Community, and a European descendent community. Within an increasingly gentrified neighborhood, the methods used by this organization represent efforts to acknowledge the social diversity of the area.

Therefore, one of the critical roles of the organization is to create of spaces of connection between these different communities, using artistic and cultural events and celebrations, in its multiple ways of relating to the natural urban environments of the city. The goal behind the organizational context of action develops around three main interests. One is to use expressive arts activities to initiate joint learning experiences with different social groups in the community. The other aims to redefine city spaces, especially the natural environments, as unique settings where different ethnic groups feel comfortable crossing boundaries. An appreciation of urban green spaces, and an awareness of environmental issues, is another objective of this process. The third is related to establishing direct involvement with local social issues, using community arts-based projects²⁶ to channel social change in the community.

Strategies of intervention in this organization are defined around three main topics: the development of creative learning experiences for different social groups, the importance of awareness about different immigrant traditions, and the effort to undertake, as one of the most important driving forces of the organization, a comprehensive youth program that reflects both the objectives and long-term goals. The idea behind the use of arts in communities stems from an acknowledgement of the unique potential of alternative methods of learning, and viewed as a response to the general lack of creative processes in schools to channel better learning among students. In fact, the original creation of *Spontaneous Celebrations'* cultural center focused on offering afterschool programs based on arts activities as indispensable tools to improve learning in school. The organization works like a *second school* where children and teens (as well as anyone in the community) may develop alternative strategies for learning about the world using expressive arts activities like visual arts, dancing, singing, performing, and drumming.

²⁶ About the importance of community arts projects, see Davis, 1983; Mattingly, 2001 and Wright et al, 2006.

The youth program at *Spontaneous Celebrations' Beantown Society* reflects the main strategic goals of the organization. As described earlier, youth are offered learning tools on the different festival arts techniques, which range from creating costumes and giant puppets to decorating spaces, from stilt walking to making drumming instruments from recycled materials. This strategy simultaneously aims to build cross-cultural communication and to open a possible space of promotion of immigrant cultural traditions. Furthermore, youth are stimulated to create their own activities, based the relevant issues in their lives. These activities, ideally, will encourage youth to cross social, cultural and economic boundaries between social groups. The efforts are also designed to change the youth image in the community by displaying creative talent and promoting social engaged campaigns about youth issues like youth violence, developing mentoring and leadership models in order to improve social conditions in the local communities, and promote educational development. In sum, the philosophy of the organization is reflected in this youth program. The ideals of creative learning through the arts, cross-cultural collaboration, revivification of cultural traditions, and the importance of social justice are represented as the foundations of the youth program.

Spontaneous Celebrations youth programs are organized in both an informal and formal ways. The driving force of the programs, as well as of the whole organization, is to develop community learning about festival arts techniques. Part of the youth program is organized around the promotion of this skill. However, a more formal organizational strategy is behind the youth activities. Two main institutionalized programs engage middle school and high school youth in expressive arts activities, the revival of cultural traditions, and the challenge of social change: the *Beantown Society* program, and the intergenerational arts and language program, *La Piñata*, from Latin American Family Cultural Network.

Spontaneous Celebrations activities are developed with two main concerns. In a divided neighborhood, the need to establish cross-cultural and cross-social communication is expressed through the effort of promoting community organized cultural celebrations (and other types of cultural expressive arts programs like *La Piñata*) throughout the year. Notably, these celebrations include youth among the main organizing leaders teaching the festival arts technique. Secondly, the establishment of spaces of connection between different social groups (including ethnic, religious, political and inter-generational) promotes stronger connections with a variety of social issues which are part of community life. Workshops, events, and projects

based on social issues (mainly youth issues) and youth community campaigns, engage the audience and participants, and develop awareness about community problems, with the ultimate intention to identify solutions. At the same time, seasonal community celebrations promote a direct involvement in community issues, such as environmental justice (the use of pesticides in the South West Corridor Park and the construction of the bio-terror lab in a residential area). Artistic activities are used as the main strategy, both to establish platforms of communication and create social awareness that may result in positive social change.

The table below presents a summary of the relationship between the activities and programs developed by *Spontaneous Celebrations* and the objectives and social intervention strategies that address urgent community social issues.

Table 8. Jamaica Plain’s Strategy of Action

ISSUES	OBJECTIVES	SOCIAL INTERVENTION STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	LONG TERM GOAL
How to develop cultural expression of minorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unite and empower people for positive change through the arts 	Creative Learning Youth Advocacy Cultural Revivification	Festival Arts – community celebrations	Eradicate Racism Build the future of the organization based on youth leaders
How to prevent youth street violence?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Build cross-cultural communication •Promote environmental awareness 	
How to promote immigrant integration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Revive environmental, economic and agrarian traditions of many folk festivals 	Cultural Revivification Creative Learning	<i>La Pinata</i> Festival Arts	
How to develop healthy relationships among youth?			Creative Learning Youth Advocacy	

6.4. Creative Citizenship Assessment in the Three Case Studies

The case studies propose an alternative perspective on citizenship, where civic participation, communication, and intercultural dialogue steer the transformation of the individual into a *creative citizen*. The *creative citizen* is the generator of *political knowledge*, *expressivity*, and *cultural awareness*, which favor the creation of *cultural knowledgeable communities*. On one hand, he is a political knowledge creator because he is constantly reflecting on his surroundings and, as directly responsible for the state of his local society, he may also be the driving force behind social intervention initiatives that strengthen the community. The *political knowledge* dimension also includes the development of artistic capacities, and the ability to generate community participation in the organization of cultural and artistic initiatives. The dimension of *expressivity* is associated with the communicative character of the individual and is manifested through building an authentic self and group identity that enables the development of more effective tools of dialogue with different groups. Communication is anchored in the capacity to be expressive. Finally, the component of *cultural awareness* has the individual attuned to cultural dynamics, such as the ethnic, political, religious and generational composition of contemporary society. By integrating the components of *political knowledge*, *expressivity* and *cultural awareness*, the *creative citizen* in these case studies may create spaces for interrelation between sectors of society that are often separated, and agents of division and social exclusion. The working hypothesis is that the initiatives in these case studies that exemplify *political knowledge*, *expressivity* and *cultural awareness* may be better prepared to produce effective strategies of dialogue between different social groups, thus decreasing the risk of divisions and intolerant behaviors.

Creative Citizenship categories and dimensions were created based on the field work, specifically on the visual and written documentation and the semi-structured interviews analysis of the three case studies. The following tables summarize how *creative citizenship* was assessed in the three case studies, reflecting on the more and less successful aspects of each initiative, and calling attention to the most significant findings that have emerged throughout the research process. By addressing the three dimensions of *creative citizenship*, the analysis evaluates how effectively different events and activities explore the *political*, the *expressive*, and the *cultural* dimensions of the model. In the intersection between each dimension and each event/activity,

there is a reflection about missing factors (RAMF), which help us develop a critical analysis about how well that specific dimension of *creative citizenship* is expressed.

In the *Spontaneous Celebrations/Jamaica Plain* case study, *Wake Up the Earth Festival* seems to have the most obvious success in the creation of spaces for building *creative citizens*. The program, *Beantown Society*, as well as the *Tropical Fiesta* events, also appear to be utilizing good strategies to build creative citizenship, with the only shortcoming being the difficulty developing cross-cultural interactions with differentiated groups. In the *Villa Victoria/South End* case study, the *Cacique Youth Arts Program* represents a good example in the development of creative youth citizenship strategies, although the issues of youth violence and urban rivalry still need to be addressed with more specific, problem-oriented initiatives. Possible strategies to prevent youth violence and territorial rivalry may be able to use the arts as a good launch pad to develop effective campaigns for youth, families, and the community at large. Finally, the *ArtsUnion/Somerville* case study, the most recent community project, seems to be developing successful targeted strategies to build a *Union Square Arts District*. However, it still needs to identify strategies to address the lack of inter-ethnic dialogue and improve community awareness of the importance of neighborhood projects that are also an expression of the local cultural and social diversity.

Case Study: Spontaneous Celebrations/Jamaica Plain

Activity/ Creative Citizenship Dimensions	Political Knowledge	Expressivity	Cultural Awareness
Festival Arts – Youth Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulates creative learning by teaching the Festival Arts techniques to youth. • By developing individual and groups abilities in specific artistic techniques, prepares youth as organizers of the main community celebrations. • Reflection about Missing Factors (RAMF): How to dissociate the social reflexive and political character from an ideological discourse? How to create spaces of local political intervention within the Festival Arts Programs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth group development in the field of Festival Arts offers conditions to create specialized knowledge inside the organization. • RAMF: How to define a strategy of communication of specialized knowledge to other social groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative learning of Festival Arts techniques works mainly acknowledge cultural and religious traditions of Latinos, especially Caribbean and Mexican, combined with the celebratory influences of the Brazilian culture. • RAMF: How to address political differentiation by means of acknowledging the different perspectives of an issue? How to create platforms of dialogue with other immigrant and ethnic cultures, particularly African-American?
Beantown Society – Youth Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program had its origins in the reflection about social issues on the youth community. <i>Beantown Society</i> is a project of social change to address youth violence. • As a program done by youth for youth, offers space to create community leaders (projects include expression, leadership learning and mentoring). • Events and activities resulted from this program: <i>Talent Show, Don't Wait Until We're Dead</i>, org of a Youth Stage in <i>Wake Up the Earth Festival</i> • Most of these events/activities have a strong interventionist objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares youth as leaders, activists, and artists, offering space inside the organization for the development of a youth field of action, which may influence long-term organizational goals. • Is designed to unite youth in Boston through the creation of platforms of communication across race, class, culture and neighborhood, but the group members are mostly from a Latino origin, from low-income families, and from the surrounding neighborhoods. • RAMF: How to create platforms of communication with other ethnic, high-income families and Boston 	<p>Acknowledges only in theory the differentiation of the neighborhoods as it creates a culturally homogeneous youth group in practice</p> <p>RAMF: How to acknowledge ethnic, political and religious differentiation?</p>

		central neighborhoods?	
La Pinata -Latin American Family Cultural Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrichment of youth through singing, dancing and creative learning from traditions of Latin American cultures. • RAMF: How to promote social reflection, community participation in event organizing and political intervention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a strong youth groups identity through the creative learning of cultural traditions from their countries of origin. • RAMF: How to communicate with other cultural groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAMF: How to acknowledge ethnic, political and religious differentiation?
Music FUNDamentals with Junk Percussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops environmental awareness by using recycled materials to build musical instruments. • Instruction of youth in music skills. • RAMF: How to promote community participation in event organizing and political intervention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a strong group identity based on drumming. • Promotes interrelation between youth of different ages and ethnic origins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAMF: How to acknowledge political differentiation?
First Night Parade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth are involved for months in advance, applying the Festival Arts techniques they've learned to prepare costumes, dances, and songs for the Parade. • Mentored youth and youth leaders, in a joint effort with the <i>Music FUNDamentals with Junk Percussion's</i> class to rehearse their participation in the event. • RAMF: How to promote social reflection and local political intervention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The months of joint preparation for the event create a strong group identity. • RAMF: How to communicate with different groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event, as it includes different arts related organizations in Boston, reconciles ethnic and generational differentiation. • RAMF: How to acknowledge political and religious differentiation?
Jamaica Pond Lantern Parade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instigates environmental awareness by using recycled soda bottles to make hand made lanterns. • Develops individual crafts skills by involving community individuals in the making of lanterns. • The community, in a joint effort with the organization, produces the event. • Missing: How to promote local political intervention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The months of joint preparation for the event promote a personal and group identification with the final product. • The process of event preparation promotes the creation of platforms of communication between different generations, and well as with local businesses. • Missing: How to create communication between different ethnicities and levels of income? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges generational differentiation and the reinvention of a community cultural tradition by combining Japanese and Dutch traditions. • Missing: How to address political and religious differentiation?

<p>Tropical Fiesta</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes environmental awareness about the rain forest, as the <i>Fiesta</i> site is transformed in a rain forest model through the hand-made construction of a scenario that covers the ceiling, the walls and the ground • The community workshops of preparations for the Fiesta decorations develop individual craft skills • <i>Beantown Society</i> is one of the main active participants in the Fiesta Organization • By combining environmental awareness with artistic practice, creates a political event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months of joint preparation for the event foster group identification. • Offers platforms of inter-generational communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses generational differentiation. • Missing: How to promote the acknowledgement of ethnic, political and religious differentiation?
<p>Wake Up the Earth Festival</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific initiatives within the festival (Youth Stage and Parade) appeal to various local, national and international issues and use the tool of the artistic practice (singing, dancing, playing music) for outreach to a vast audience. • The several months of Festival preparations to promote the development of the community's skills in the field of the arts (preparing costumes and performances), event organizing (a different team of people from the community is responsible every year for the Festival), event production, event maintenance, and event evaluation; civic capacity is tested through outreach to community volunteers • The Festival is itself a political event as it communicates, through its various activities local, national and international political issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an historical festival in the neighborhood, it is a constitutive feature of the neighborhood identity and also of <i>Spontaneous Celebrations'</i> identity. • The Festival organization, production, and maintenance, are the result of the joint collaboration between different groups from different generations and ethnicities. Also during the event, these different groups interrelate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic and generational differentiation is acknowledged during the event preparation and during the day of the event.

Table 9. Creative Citizenship Assessment: Case-study *Spontaneous Celebrations*

Case Study: *Villa Victoria*/South End

Activity/ Creative Citizen Dimensions	Political Knowledge	Expressivity	Cultural Awareness
<i>Festival Betances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes reflection about youth social issues through artistic performances prepared by youth, where youth social issues are addressed during the performance. • RAMF: How to foster projects of local political intervention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates Puerto Rican culture and reinforces Puerto Rican identity, presenting cultural traditions (songs, dances, popular games, costumes, food). • RAMF: How to reinforce cultural identity and promote inter-cultural dialogue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforces generational cultural preferences with artistic activities focusing on youth, elders and small children. • RAMF: Are urban enclaves compromising cultural and political differentiation?
<i>Cacique Youth Arts Program</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The artistic programs <i>Banner Painting/Mural Project</i>, <i>Rhythmik Reflectionz Crew</i>, <i>Community Education Workshops</i>, and the <i>Cacique Theater workshop</i> develop artistic skills, organizational skills, and promote social reflection on personal and social issues. • Projects of local political intervention are large scale collaborative paintings featured in the public plaza. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds an urban youth identity through self and social reflection • Entails efforts of outreach to different youth groups in the community. • RAMF: Is the prevention of youth violence through arts related programs an effective strategy to address youth rivalry? 	RAMF: Are enclaves' survival dependent on the acknowledgement of cultural and political differentiation?
Promotion of Local Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops artistic and interpersonal youth capacities through contact with high-level arts education institutions, fostering reflection on contemporary issues. • Artistic events that result from partnership may be considered local political intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances the communication between groups with different degrees of education and different socio-economic levels (the <i>Villa Victoria</i> youth, the young adults from the arts education schools and the elderly residents of <i>Villa Victoria</i>.) • RAMF: How is group identity affected by the interaction between different social groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforces generational intersections through contact between adolescents, young adults, and the elderly through joint arts projects. • Missing: How is cultural differentiation addressed in initiatives that promote contact between generations?

Table 10. Creative Citizenship Assessment: Case-Study *Villa Victoria*

Case Study: *ArtsUnion*/Somerville

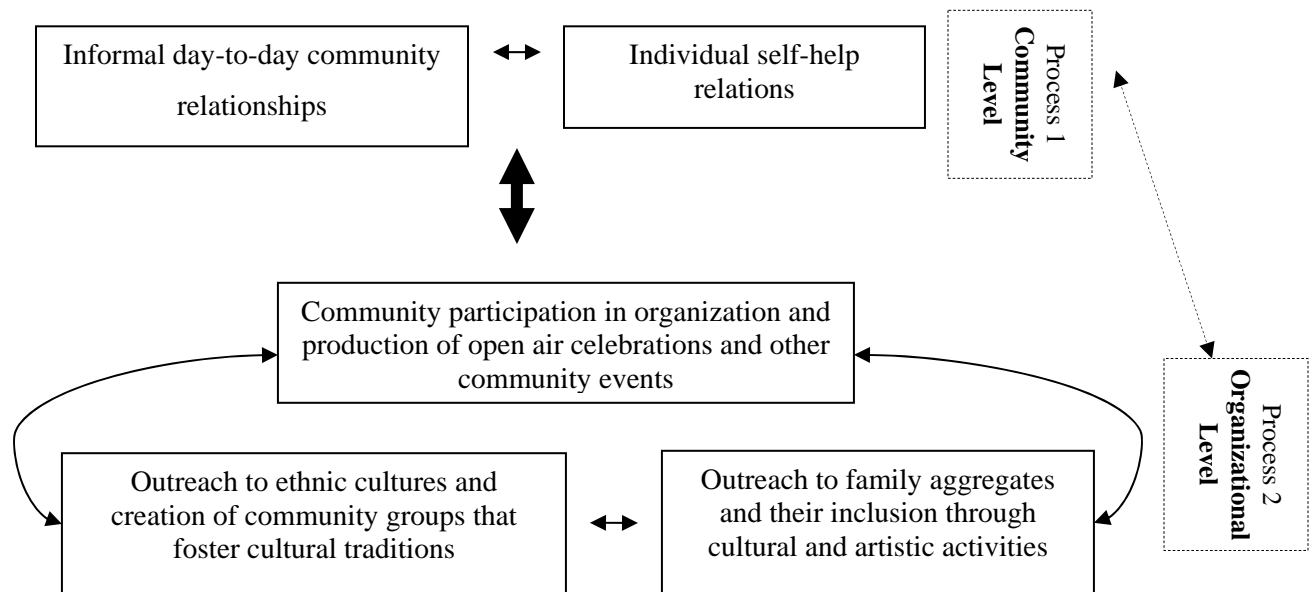
Activity/ Creative Citizen Dimensions	Political Knowledge	Expressivity	Cultural Awareness
<i>ArtsUnion</i> Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event is a joint collaboration between community groups, including local government institutions, non-profit organizations, public-private partnerships, businesses, artists cooperatives, and volunteer organizations. • The creation of an Arts District, as one of the main goals of <i>ArtsUnion</i>, aims to develop a re-zoning process that reflects the social landscape of the area, integrating businesses, artists, and local residents; it is also a political project in order to resurrect the image of Union Square. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to build a new Square identity. • Results from a local partnership of various social sectors of society; expands dialogue and the development of concerted intervention. • Acknowledges inter-group communication. <p>RAMF: How to promote intercultural and intergenerational concerted action?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes Indian, Brazilian, Haitian, Malian and West-African performers . • Acknowledges different life-styles by supporting initiatives like the <i>Transportation X-Roads</i>, that promote environmental awareness and the use of alternative means of transportation in urban settings. • Develops innovative urban tools of dialogue focused on the arts: exhibitions, public art, performances, ethnic markets. <p>RAMF: Is <i>ArtsUnion</i> able to express local diversity without including different ethnic groups in its organizing team?</p>

Table 11. Creative Citizenship Assessment: Case-Study *ArtsUnion*/Somerville

6.5. Patterns of Citizenship Building in the Three Case Studies

The interdependent variables of urban space, community, and arts and culture, produce unique patterns of citizenship building in the three urban neighborhoods. In the Jamaica Plain case study, the work of *Spontaneous Celebrations* is focused on the creation of a *community of practice*. A community of practice is a web of social relationships in a locale that integrates as many community members as possible through joint efforts to enhance local society. Every community member is understood to be a potential agent and active citizen. Consequently, the generation of innovative approaches to the concept of citizenship requires the development of a strategy of action both at the organizational and the community levels. Both levels operate simultaneously and are interdependent. A network of social support is then created between community members through day-to-day relationships. Artistic activities are, on one hand, the tool for outreach to community members, involving different community groups (immigrants and other ethnic groups, families, children, and youth) in the organization of activities. On the other hand, arts represent a tool to share with the society at large to address social inequalities.

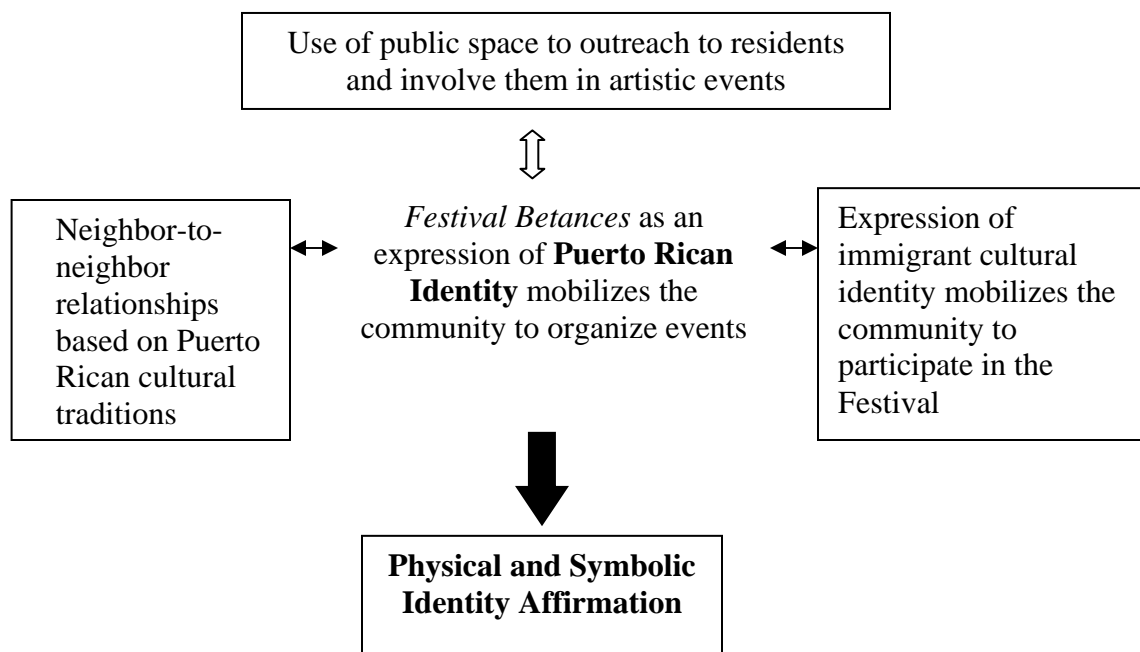
Fig. 61. Jamaica Plain: Creative Citizenship in a Community of Practice



In the *Villa Victoria* case study, citizenship is directly related to the appropriation of a physical space in the city as a strategy of cultural resistance to reinforce Puerto Rican cultural identity. Over the years, the survival of this immigrant cultural identity has been dependent on

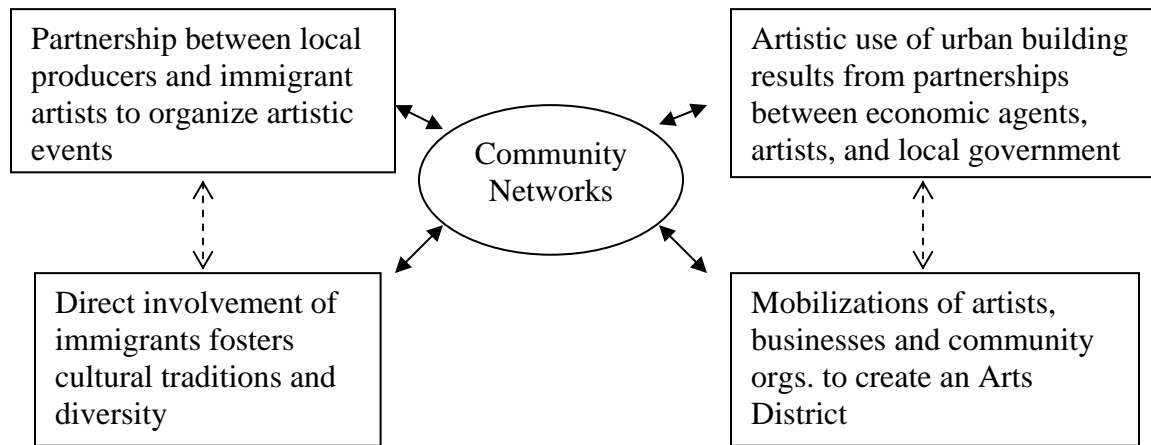
how well this Puerto Rican community exercises influence over both the physical space and the symbolic space of the city. Thus, the most important component of the expression of citizenship in this social context is its direct relation with identity formation. The main tool used to reinforce immigrant cultural identity is the arts event, *Festival Betances*, which mobilizes residents through many forms of community participation. The festival also highlights Puerto Rican culture and fosters neighbor-to-neighbor sociability. In this example, citizenship expresses itself in the direct relation of the public space with the mobilization of immigrant cultural traditions.

Fig. 62. *Villa Victoria*: Creative Citizenship and Cultural Identity



In *ArtsUnion/Somerville*, the creation of strong ties with local community agents is essential to get to know the field of work and to create synergies with the different social groups (businesses, ethnic communities, artists, community organizers). The creation of community networks that can elicit community participation sets the process of citizenship in motion. The establishment of these community networks includes ethnographic field work focused on attracting diverse community members. A far-reaching campaign of community socialization is necessary to become better acquainted with the social context and to identify allies for the social intervention projects.

Fig. 63. ArtsUnion/Somerville: Creative Citizenship and Community Networks



Different examples of how citizenship can be innovative can be found in the three case studies. Each case study corresponds to a different stage in the maturation process of citizenship building, leading to the next phase in the process of knowledge production at the community level. The first phase identifies the main community actors in the local context and the kinds of associations possible, to take advantage of all local synergies. After the acquisition of thorough knowledge of the social context, the next phase includes the process of building a community identity in relation to others. This process includes the differentiation in relationships to other people and groups. Finally, the mature exercise of citizenship involves the creation of a *community of practice*, as exemplified by the Jamaica Plain case study.

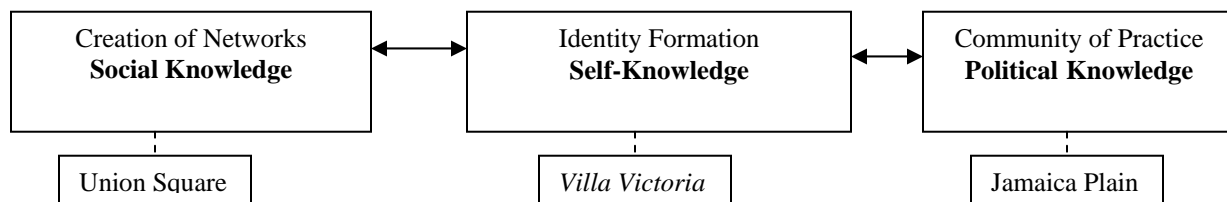


Fig. 64. Citizenship Building and Knowledge Building in the Case Studies

6.6. Conclusions on Citizenship Building through Arts and Culture

Insights have been offered on strategies that use artistic and cultural practices to create more socially integrated communities. The figure presented below summarizes the paradigmatic

approach behind the case studies analyzed, showcasing how civic engagement and leadership processes work together to promote *creative citizenship*.

The overarching goal behind the work is a better practical understanding of what it could mean to be a *creative citizen* in contemporary urban settings. The innovative quality of the work in these communities represents various ways that artistic and cultural practices can contribute to creative strategies of civic engagement and leadership. Seven venues were identified in which artistic and cultural practices stimulate the promotion of more socially integrated communities: project based experiential learning; inter-group connections through the arts; mentoring arts related programs; social reflection and positive social change through arts activities; creation of organizational leaders; creative learning experiences through the arts; and leadership models. These venues were then categorized in terms of their impact on personal development, organizational development, and inter-group connection, in the society at large. Personal development includes individual or small-group engagement through creative arts learning experiences, and achieving excellence in a particular expressive arts activity. The impact on organizational development can be easily identified through the development of leadership models that both empower interpersonal relationships and contribute to the survival of these organizations in the future. Finally, dialogue between different cultural, political, and religious sectors of the society can be achieved through socially engaged community projects, artistic activities that generate social reflections, and community celebrations that integrate socially diverse participants.

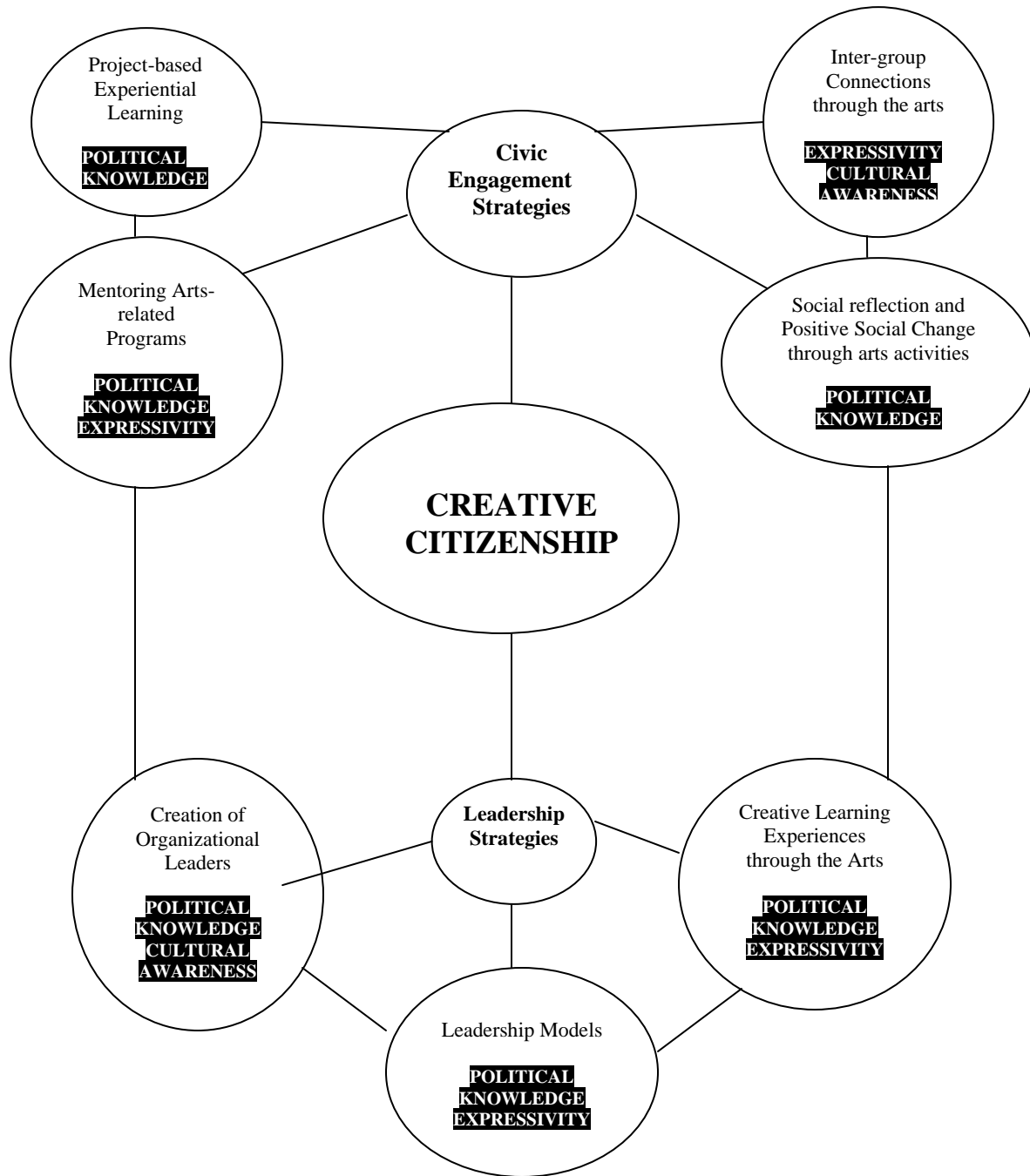


Fig. 65. Creative Citizenship Building Strategies

The examples given in this paper open venues for further exploration of different forms that innovation in communities may take. A theme that seems to be surfacing in communities, and with those who work with them, is how to gain new perspectives, ideas, and innovative practices. The answer appears to be found in concentrating efforts around designing toward the

periphery rather than toward the mean. This means creating paradigm-shifting methods that work *outside of the box*. Instead of standard programming and *doing what has always been done*, alternative methods of organizing can breathe new life in communities.

In the cases presented and analyzed, initiatives offer innovative strategies to deal with community struggles like youth violence, urban rivalry, and racial and ethnic divisions. Innovation presents itself in different ways in these cases, helping disadvantaged communities connect knowledge and experience to active participation in the development of new methods of cultural revivification. Furthermore, innovation also envisions the artistic practice as an indispensable learning tool in promoting self-empowerment for the promotion of creative citizens. Artistic creativity represents the innovative, driving force that nourishes community cultural development. The development of the *creative citizen* is a long process that includes both the development of civic engagement and leadership efforts, and the establishment of a direct relationship with the urban space. Individual participation through artistic practices and the culturalization of public space are the processes that helped us define the framework to rethink citizenship. This framework addresses the contemporary urban citizen from a cultural point of view where political knowledge, expressivity, and cultural awareness, are the salient attributes.

7. Conclusion

The framework proposed in this work originates from a new vision of social development, one that veers from an exclusivist economist perspective, and instead places emphasis on relationships between individuals based on social affinities. The principal focus is on the cultural assets of people and urban sites, and a new theoretical understanding of citizenship is proposed, based on two theoretical starting points. The first, supported by several contemporary authors, envisions creativity as one of the driving forces of the contemporary world. The second goes against the traditional and formal understanding of citizenship as an assemblage of rights and obligations. Instead, it advocates an idea of citizenship that embraces creativity and social engagement as tools to navigate increasingly complex and culturally differentiated urban societies. Citizenship, in these contexts, needs to integrate the dimensions of individual and group civic participation, of social reflection and engagement in local political issues, and of acknowledgement of communities' cultural differentiation.

Additionally, the analysis of the case studies addresses the positive influence of artistic and cultural initiatives in promoting the local involvement of people, contributing to the development of reflective and participatory behaviors among citizens, and contributing to the proposed reframing of the concept of citizenship. Examples of appropriation of urban public spaces through artistic and cultural endeavors are presented, with a focus on how cultural resources may provide new possibilities for the individual's expression of identity and citizenship, in society and in relationship with others.

The contemporary urban condition is expressed in key aspects of the everyday lives in neighborhoods. It affects social relationships in the urban space, undermining cross-cultural interconnections and impeding immigrants' social integration in urban territories. As a response to this social crisis of the contemporary city, strategies of resilience and *civic governance* are portrayed, as well as culturally based civic empowerment efforts at the community level. These responses revitalize local knowledge-based communities by employing artistic expression and cultural traditions as tools for affirmative action, as well as essential components in the reframing of citizenship.

From the analysis of the case studies, specific features of these urban communities were identified as essential components of this framework.

Spontaneous Celebrations' context of action in Jamaica Plain is part of what was categorized as a *political place*. This model is based on the promotion of inter-ethnic and face-to-

face connections, as means to develop social spaces of artistic inclusion. The existence of a variety of outdoor urban spaces, and their use as sites to promote cultural and artistic civic events, cultivates of a stronger connection between the communities and the sites, developing an *organic culturalization of space*. Consequently, efforts to promote environmental and social awareness can be undertaken, as well as endeavors to envision urban spaces as places of socialization between different groups, regardless of ethnic heritage, level of income, and social status. Urban spaces, when appropriated by artistic events, can experience a cultural revitalization that supports multicultural, multi-social, and intergenerational relationships, and a strengthening of social networks within the community.

Union Square, presented as an example of a *juxtaposed place*, stimulates encounters between different groups, creating conditions for ethnic juxtaposition, and acknowledgement of differences between different groups. The existence of socially and culturally diverse communities, the adaptable functionality of the buildings, and the location of Union Square as a site of intersection, contribute to the proliferation of community groups, which create a *sectorial culturalization of space*. These sub-networks of collaboration depend on social connections between different cultural resources (whether ethnic, artistic, or historic), and on the broad, area-wide distribution of the resources. Given the desegregated identity of this area, civic networks can increasingly be supported by a variety of citizen groups, working together as partners. A new identity of place can develop, with artistic and cultural attractions of the area driving community development.

Villa Victoria is an example of an *enclosed place*, with dynamics that are based on physical space appropriation and a territorial effort to re-establish and reinforce cultural identity. By defining a delimited urban space as the context for the development of a very specific cultural tradition (in this case Puerto Rican), issues of social and cultural segregation arise. The urban space inadvertently discourages inter-ethnic relationships from developing while encouraging the promotion of Puerto Rican cultural pride. The *embedded culturalization of space* consists of a physical space allotment, which enables the survival of the community-building initiative as space of Puerto Rican culture. As the development of *Villa Victoria* is based on an extensive history of grassroots collaborative work and individual self-help relationships, arts and culture represent a means to promote social awareness and build a specific cultural landscape.

We have tried to show how these different urban public spaces, in three distinct Boston metropolitan area neighborhoods, present different types of *cultural knowledgeable communities*. The site where each community is located, and the type of outreach in which its members participate, significantly influenced each community's profile.

Finally, the concept of *creative citizenship*, identified as being created from these *cultural knowledgeable communities*, was based on the effective practices observed in the case studies. The citizenship building strategies identified include civic engagement (project-based experiential learning, inter-group connection through the arts, social reflection and social change through the arts, and mentoring arts related programs) and leadership (creative learning experiences through the arts, leadership models, and creation of organizational leaders) in these communities.

The processes of reconstruction and deconstruction of urban social space, influenced by social processes such as de-industrialization, the post-Fordist condition, and the expanding reach of gentrification, give rise to a contemporary urban condition. Artistic activities and cultural expressions operate as catalysts, generating responses to the new urban order. Some of these responses are manifested as continued social processes of civic resistance. This research suggests some approaches that may help understand the potential behind arts and culture to impact contemporary urban settings, promoting them as more socially integrated sites where the *creative citizen* may have an essential role in building democracy.

8. *Excursus* - Strategy and Methodology

The challenge that confronts many researchers when they decide to initiate field work is related with choosing the best methodology to help answer the questions and reflections that integrate the research theoretical framework. In addition, when faced with the complex social realities that is revealed in front of their eyes during the field work process, researchers often feel the need to reformulate their strategies and adopt new ones, frequent times more complex and differentiated in their methods than the previous one, so that the complexity of social reality may be grasped.

The field work here presented started with a three month exploratory phase, integrating a series of exploratory interviews to privilege informants in the city of Boston (local governors, community activists, directors of community arts projects and academics) and specialized readings on the cultural and artistic dynamics of the city. The criteria used to choose the three examples analyzed was based on, first, the emphasis done by the project to the revitalization of the urban space and second, the importance given within the initiative to strategies of civic engagement of residents. During this exploratory phase, it was of crucial importance the logistic, technical and academic support given by the Center for Reflective Community Practice (now Community Innovators Lab, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in the person of Professor Cesar McDowell and all the people that integrated his group, in facilitating the first contact with Boston neighbourhoods, specific community arts intervention projects and their leaders.

Fieldwork in the three urban neighborhoods took place between January 2005 and June 2007. The project has collected data related to local arts events, preparations for neighbourhood initiatives, various organizations' community outreach programs, community meetings and overall cultural and artistic activities. The methodology employed was primarily qualitative and multidimensional and has generated a variety of media, audio and written materials. Specifically, in-depth tape-recorded interviews, video interviews, community video sessions, community-grounded field notes and neighbourhood and community photographs were generated. Interviews were collected based on a purposive sampling technique. The characteristics of the individuals were used as the basis of selection, in order to express the diversity of people involved in the community projects. The form of sampling used in this research was "theoretical sampling", as continual sampling, collection and analysis of data informed the next stage of sample design until theoretical saturation was achieved. This study tries to highlight what kind of communities' people are creating in these areas through the analysis of photographs, field notes and selected interviews from community gatherings, open air cultural events and neighborhood revitalization efforts.

The three neighborhoods chosen as part of this study represent geographically different urban contexts of the Boston area (Chapter 3). Consequently, they offer a broad perspective on the influence of arts and culture in urban spaces, offering various ways to analyze the relationship between cultural projects and community involvement through the arts.

8.1. Methodologies to Frame a Strategy of Field Work Analysis

The methodological approach adopted in this research took into account the use of multiple sources of information, namely audio, visual and written materials. Therefore, Grounded Analysis Methodology, Mining Analysis Methodology and Visual Analysis Methodology were considered and applied to the material that was collected during the field work. In the next few pages, it is presented the description of each type of methodology used.

8.1.1. Grounded Analysis Methodology (GAM)

One of the methodologies used in this study relies on the Grounded Theory approach. The main concern is to develop a theory without a commitment to specific data, lines of research and theoretical schools of thought. GAM supports that a researcher using this approach will generate a substantive and formal theory from data drawn from the phenomena that is being studied, so as to see reflected on his/her analysis the grounded knowledge that is so many times an inherent part of the social dynamics of society.

This method of qualitative research, focused on the generation of theory based on data collected, was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their book *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. It represents a grounded effort of systematically analyzing data (often sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph) from an interview, field note or other document, extensively coding the data and developing constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Other authors, like Juliet M. Corbin in collaboration with Anselm Strauss have also explored this methodology of analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 1998).

How to generate Grounded Analysis Methodology?

Audio materials include in-depth interviews to all kinds of community participants in the events, from community activists, to artists, community residents, organizational executive members, organizational directors, community partners, volunteers, local businesses and youth. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed with the main goal of generating a grounded theory analysis. This type of analysis was used with in-depth

interviews, field notes, newspaper articles and supporting materials. After collecting the data, the focus was to organize the many ideas which had emerged from the analysis.

In order to discover, verify and formulate a grounded theory there are several main procedures that need to be followed with the main objective of developing a densely and tightly theory developed from the ground.

Description of General Procedure (Strauss, 1987)

The first step includes the transcription of all the interviews and community meetings, and the organization of newspaper articles, field notes and supporting materials. Secondly, we developed a coding process, which included the identification of general themes and subsequent sub-themes within the transcription and also by the combination between the transcribed information and the general themes. Finally, we created an extensive process of categorization of the selected information.

After this coding process, the focus was on generating tentative articulations between the constructed categories/dimensions and the formulation of hypothesis and relations between hypothesis. Specific social theories regarding specific issues emanate grounded on that specific reality from where data had been extracted. It also seemed important to connect these grounded theories with the main thesis inquiry questions, trying to establish possible articulations. These articulations were used to verify the veracity of the hypothesis formulated in the research questions. An example of how the grounded analysis methodology was generated may be given through a description of the procedures in the case of an interview, a newspaper article, the supporting materials and the field notes.

The first step (after the transcription process in the case of an interview) was to associated codes/thematic dimensions to each set of two or three lines transcribed. This procedure of attributing codes to each set of the material is repeated in other material types like newspaper articles, supporting materials and field notes. After having gathered a consistent group of field work materials coded, it is already possible to determine a group of main concepts that is derived from the main empirical indicators identified in the field work materials. In this specific case, the main themes identified were *Creative Citizenship, Resilience through Civic Governance, Urban Revivification, Multicultural Dialogue, Creativity and Identity* (Fig. 68). After this first step of grounded analysis procedure, every other empirical indicator identified in all the other field work materials was grouped around one or more of these main concepts. In order to be able to specify the main concepts and simplify the grouping procedures of the empirical indicators, dimensions were given to the main concepts. In fact, after having generated a group of main concepts from the field work

materials, a continuous process of analysis is developed through the constant dialogue between the Themes' Framework and the coding process of empirical materials, one completing the other and contributing for a more and more consistent framework of analysis.

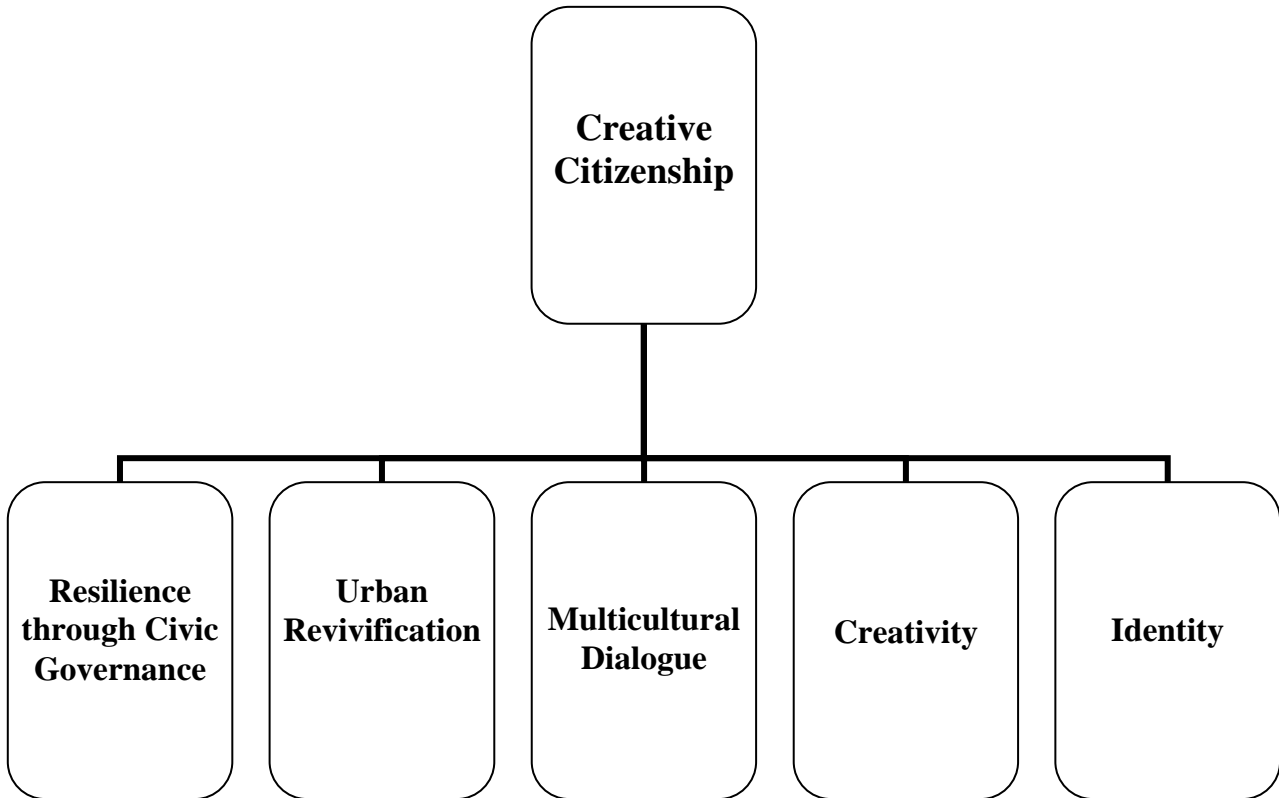


Fig. 66 Themes' Framework

Specific Procedures to generate a Grounded Theory Approach

The Themes' Framework directs the conceptual coding of a set of empirical indicators (data, behavioural actions and events, observed or described in documents and in the words of interviewees and informants). The main themes are then derived from these indicators. Indicators are examined comparatively, coded and named as indicators of a class of events, called *coded dimension*. Furthermore, indicators are constantly compared with emergent dimensions that will feed the main themes in order to achieve conceptual specification. The Themes' Framework is the basis of grounded theory and directs the conceptual coding of a set of empirical indicators, the data related to actions, events observed and described in interviews, documents and field notes. These indicators in constant comparison with each other are the base to define the *main themes*.

Data collection includes the generation of materials through interviewing, observations, videotape production, the generation of taped proceedings of meetings, the collection of supporting materials and newspaper articles, and field notes production. Analysis of all this information began six months after the field work started and the collected data that followed started to become informed by analytical questions and hypotheses about dimensions and their relationships. After a certain point, data collection was guided through the theory, leading to search for specific types of data.

Coding involves not only the discovering and naming of dimensions, either *sociological constructs* or *in vivo codes*²⁷, but also the codification of associated sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions were either reflected in the same text lines or in other places within the same piece of material (interview, field note, supporting material). Different types of coding were used through out the analysis, namely: *open coding* (microscopic coding of the data in order to achieve an extensive theoretical and grounded coverage²⁸), *axial coding* (intense analysis done around one dimension at a time, in terms of the paradigm items presented below) and *selective coding* (coding systematically for the core concept). At the end, a *coding paradigm* was built representing the researcher's process of thinking. It was based on the following interrelated elements:

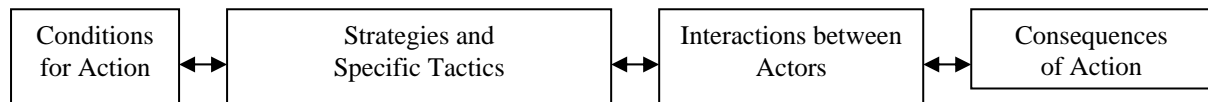


Fig. 67 Coding Paradigm Structure

The generation of a group of core themes and dimensions results from an effort behind the grounded theory analysis to generate (directly from the analysis of data) a new theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior and for social processes within a specific social context. The generation of this theory occurs around a core group of integrated themes and dimensions, which manifests itself under different conditions through out the analysis and by various interrelations with other sub-dimensions. This group of integrated themes and dimensions represents the main concern or problem for the people in the setting. The core themes presented in figure 68 were built based on the centrality of the codes, the fact that

²⁷ Codes taken from or derived directly from the language used by the actors in the field.

²⁸ Unrestricted coding of the data, scrutinizing the field material very closely in order to produce concepts to fit the data.

they appear frequently in the data, the direct relation between them and the evident implications for a more general theory.

Theoretical sampling implicates that data is collected based on analytical grounds and on the researchers' decision on what data to collect and where to find it. The decision is controlled by the emerging theory and the question is related to which people, activities, and events should the researcher focus on in terms of data collection. Theoretical saturation is achieved when there is no need for additional analysis of a category as it contributes no more to build upon the theory. That was the case of the grounded theory generated, which achieved a level of consistency and maturation and more analysis wouldn't have brought anything new to the research process. The integration of the theory was done when building the evolving theory and having to decide which dimensions and distinctions are most important to build the core dimensions that will support all the process of grounded theory approach. Finally, the generation of theoretical memos was a process of keeping theoretical ideas continually evolving and organized in order to help generate new ideas and new theoretical relations. This writing included putting down theoretical questions, hypotheses, codes, relations between codes and dimensions, in order to keep track of coding results and build a consistent grounded theory.

8.1.2. Mining Analysis Methodology (MAM)

This methodology was focused on the inquiry questions, used as an instrument to orient the analysis. Instead of starting from the fieldwork materials and formulating a grounded theory based on that specific data, the mining methodology was focused on the questions and searched for answers to those questions in the fieldwork materials.

Description of General Procedure

It is important to make reference here to the two main research questions. One of them is related with the processes of revivification of urban spaces. *How can arts and culture promote social, economic and cultural revivification of urban spaces?* Another one refers to the identification of strategies of civic engagement through the promotion of artistic and cultural events. *How can arts and culture foster civic engagement, what is unique about that type of engagement and what kind of citizenship results from it?* After naming the inquiry questions, attention should be paid to the identification of specific data that gives tentative answers to these questions. Following this procedure, the data identified should be codified using the codification process described above. This methodology is mainly used with certain recorded interviews, field notes, newspapers and supporting materials, as these materials can offer clustered groups of answers to specific aspects of the inquiry questions.

8.1.3. Visual Analysis Methodology (VAM)

Video and photography have become increasingly important in ethnographic field work. In fact, the importance of this type of materials is growing in the field of qualitative research as they often represent the unsaid part of the reality, the one that is unseen through the formal and informal dialogues with interviewees and privileged informants. On the other hand, they also create awareness about the social contexts of the specific empirical realities that are being studied, giving us valuable clues and possible interpretations that may justify behaviours, actions and discourses. In addition, images may confront us with specific information that contradicts the information given by other sources of empirical data, like interviews and written materials. In this case, a certain degree of inquisitive attitude is needed in order to be able to consolidate a theoretical analysis that, in the end, consists more on a set of reflective interrogations than a group of certainties about a social reality. In this specific research, the visual collection effort represented a big part of the field work, contributing, as cultural texts and expressions of individual and social interactions, to highlight the extreme centrality of subjectivity to the production of knowledge (Pink, 2001). Therefore, it becomes of extreme importance to understand the processes through which images are created in order to grasp their contribution to produce ethnographic knowledge.

The first literature on the analysis of the visual (Collier and Collier, 1986; Prosser, 1996) proposes prescriptive frameworks that objectify and tend to generalize the contribution of visual analysis. For the specific case of this research, it was important to understand the need to develop field work to collect visual materials, understanding them as serving the aims of the research. Therefore, they add an important value to the work as they explored two main components that are essential to the visual work: adaptability and reflexivity. The question here is how important is that images generate a unique type of knowledge, the ethnographic knowledge. Consequently, specific methodologies should be developed to create this type of knowledge; having in mind that image is, as the written word, a meaningful vehicle for producing social knowledge.

Theoretical Approaches to Visual Research

There has always been a lot of controversy about the importance, usefulness and purposes of visual research. From the 1960s to the early 1980s, authors like Hockings, Collier and Rollwagen (Hockings, 1975; Collier and Collier, 1986; Rollwagen, 1988) believed that visual methods as a data collection strategy was too subjective, biased and very specific of a particular situation (not open to much generalization). One of the most important pieces of work from this period was Collier's *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research*

Method (1986). The authors propose a systematic method of observation, based on consistent, realistic and methodical approaches to the field through images. On the contrary, J. Clifford suggests in the book *Writing Culture* that all visual ethnographic effort is a constructed narrative as it cannot represent a complete account of the reality (Clifford, 1986). His ideas helped to open the doors for a more reflective visual representation of ethnography. It was then the ideas of *specificity*, *personal experience* and *subjectivity* that gave value to the ethnographic work. This generated a process of rethinking of the methodological implications of using visual materials in the context of a qualitative research.

The concept of social reflection started to be connected with the use of visual methodologies, as it is the example of the ethnographic film style of David and Judith MacDougall (Loizos, 1993). It is a fact that the 90s brought an intentional departure from the scientific-realistic paradigm of interpreting visual materials. The works of E. Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography* (Edwards, 1992), and Marcus Banks, *Rethinking Visual Anthropology* (Banks, 2001) were essential for this paradigm rupture as they acknowledge the need to understand visual methodologies in its particular way, as both complementary of written materials and offering refreshing understandings of social reality, based on an evaluation of social context and meaning. The works of John Berger in *Seventh Man* (Berger, 1975) and *Another Way of Telling* (Berger and Mohr, 1995) have contributed to highlight the knowledge building capacity of the word-image collaboration. John Berger in these books illustrates the documentary technique of photography and treats the theory of photography understanding it as an instrument to document and understand intimately the lived experiences of their subjects. It is true that the image reveals information about people's lives that would be impossible to obtain via other means, as so well is attested by Berger's work in *Seventh Man*, where renewed interest was brought to the isolated rural communities, that migrant worker had left behind (Berger, 1975). Apart from the unquestionable documenting power of the image, it becomes obvious from these authors' studies, as well from the studies of Sarah Pink, that the use of the image in the analysis of the social world cannot be used alone, but always in constant articulation with other types of methodologies, like interviews and other written and audio documentation, that have words as the main instrument of analysis. In fact, the articulation between varieties of sources of information promotes a more complete and profound understanding of the social reality, giving the researcher the possibility of interaction between different points of view. A more reflective analysis is then possible as a result of the sometimes contradictory nature of the information, collected through either written or visual documents. MacDougall suggests even to rethink the

principles that underlie fieldwork based on image collection, advocating that visual research should develop alternative objectives and methodologies (MacDougall, 1997). In fact, authors like E. Chaplin, D. MacDougall, E. Edwards and H. Morphy and M. Banks engage in the analysis of the visual as a medium through which new types of knowledge and reflexions about the social world may be created (Chaplin, 1994; MacDougall, 1997; Edwards, 1992; Morphy and Banks, 1997; Banks and Morphy, 1997). It is based on the ideas proposed by these authors that the analysis of visual materials in this research was performed.

In sum, visual analysis and documentary exploration of images should reject a closed reading approach to the image, one that presumes that the meaning of a photograph inheres within the image itself (Banks, 2001 and Pink, 2001). For Marcus Banks and Sarah Pink, the analysis of an image should be based on three main criteria: the content, the context and the meaning. The content refers to the fact that the images are event-specific representations. The context refers to the social conditions that sustained the production of the image, namely why was the photograph taken? By whom? When? Under which circumstances? The meaning refers to the social meaning invested in the picture, that is to say, who are the people represented? What are they doing? What kind of social interaction is taking place? Why are they acting that way? What is the meaning of their actions?

As an example, we may analyze Fig. 70 in terms of its content, context and meaning. This image represents the audience of a youth artistic event that integrated *Festival Bétances*, in one of the selected communities. In here, people gather on a small amphitheatre in *Villa Victoria* public space to attend youth performing. In terms of its context, we may say that the photograph was taken, in July 2005, by the researcher, who was acting as a common audience member, in order to grasp the type of audience that comes to *Festival Bétances*, reflecting that the public is mainly from Puerto Rican or Latin origin, fact that emphasizes the working hypothesis that this community event takes place in a closed ethnic context. Finally, this photo reveals that the people are watching a youth performance from the *IBA Cacique Youth Center*. By attending a performance in a city public venue, they are celebrating that specific place as their territory where their cultural traditions are shared with family, neighbours and friends and where the youth group is showcasing their results from an entire year of work.



Fig. 68. Youth Performance at Festival Bétances, *Villa Victoria*
Photo: Claudia Carvalho

This methodology is based on the important premise that the analysis of these specific visual materials (photographs of events and videotaped preparations of events) should explore the relationship between those visual materials and other types of data, focusing on different research experiences. Visual materials represent an additional point of view about social reality, presenting contradictions and contributing for the formulations of new reflections about a given social context. The analysis was both based on the diverse social meanings that can be invested in these materials and the visual content that they represent. These different meanings are, not only influenced by how (in what social conditions) and why the researcher recorded/captured that particular social process and/or sequence of activities, but also by the ways people structured and experience the reality of those activities.

Organizing and Analysing Visual Materials: Photographs and Video Tapes

There is no set of method for organizing photographs. The one that was chosen here is a reflective one, which redefines the content of the archive as a group of individual images with situated meanings, suggesting that connections between images are constructed throughout the research process. Here are the directives that were used in this work to organize images:

- the process of ordering photographs acknowledged the difference between the researcher's personal and academic ways of ordering images and the orders by which local people construct their worlds visually;

- local knowledge intersects with the analytical organization of the photographs (ordering the visual was not always only based on chronology but also on the degree of importance given from local participants and the researcher to each material);

- ways of categorizing images were developed based on the arbitrary nature of interconnected meanings;

- when categorizing the visual material, the ethnographic materials were linked to other types of knowledge (materials)²⁹ and aspects of the context (reality that is being analyzed and context of image production) are included;

- categorizing images in this way offered the possibility of intersecting both the researcher's and the participants' representations of the reality and also specific aspects of the social context from where the image is extracted;

- the focus of the analysis was on how the content of the image was given meanings and themes relevant to the research. One image may have different meanings that can then be organized in a web of cross-referenced themes, relating them with a range of other visual and printed materials (field notes, supporting materials, newspaper articles).

In what relates to video footage, some of the elements described above to organize photographs were also used, namely the inter-subjectivity between the video maker and the informants in terms of the different meanings invested in the material, the importance of the local interpretation of images and the need to relate video footage with other types of research materials. Nevertheless, one particularity was taken into account: video footage (verbal dialogue and interviews) was transcribed and logged in detail in order to map visual and verbal knowledge and make it more accessible.

Both photographs and video tapes were organized and coded through HyperRESEARCH (Qualitative Analysis Tool, version 2.7), a software to analyze qualitative data. This program allowed the coding, categorization and retrieve of visual, audio and written text.

Photographs and video tapes were analyzed taking into account a reflexive approach, based not on the effort to translate visual data into verbal knowledge, but also on the effort to explore the relationships between the visual and other types of knowledge, for example field diaries, newspaper articles and in-depth interviews. The idea behind the analysis of the visual was to go beyond its illustrative function, rather understanding it as another plane of

²⁹ Visual methods are rarely used in isolation from other methods (Pink, 2001).

representation and creating a different type of knowledge about the social reality. According to Sarah Pink, “The idea that subjective experience can be translated into objective knowledge is itself problematic for reflexive ethnography. Therefore an analysis through which visual data becomes written academic knowledge has little relevance” (Pink, 2001).

On the other hand, the process of analysis of visual materials was not isolated from other stages of the research as the theory building process, the field work and the writing process. The ethnographic work was part of an integrated process of finding relationships between field work materials and theories in order to sustain the main thesis arguments. The analysis resulted from a combination between relationships and meanings given to photographs during their collection, specific field notes materials related with the documented situations and a more objective content analysis, later invested in the same images.

Description of General Procedure

Photographs and video tapes were analyzed based on three different criteria: content, meaning and context. Furthermore, extensive attention was given to the codification process as it is understood by Marcus Banks (Banks, 2001) and Sarah Pink (Pink, 2001). Attributing codes means to identify the main themes and dimensions in different parts of the material according to their content (description of what is happening), the social meanings of the recorded/captured reality and the context of image production. This codifying system accounts for new meanings invested through out the analysis process, as well as for establishing connections between the themes and dimensions of different research materials.

This analysis implicated critically evaluating the significance of the specific social situation, elaborating on what are the implications of such a circumstance. There is a strong relationship between the context in which images are produced and their visual content. Nevertheless it is important to highlight that it is impossible to record social processes and relationships in their totality. Therefore, attention was paid to the context in which images were produced to understand those limitations. The analysis based on context implicates taking into account that when images are moved from one context to the other, their meanings are transformed (Morphy and Banks, 1997). Analysing through context implicates then a description of which were the conditions that permitted the visual documentation, an overview of the contextual antecedents that justify the specificity of the social circumstances captured and the conditions in which these images are seen when later analyzed by the researcher.

Shifting the object of analysis from the image itself to the context has several implications. First, contextual information also provides knowledge about the activities, individuals and relationships represented. Second, it gives the reader the contextual perspective through which the visual was analysed (as there is no whole view of a culture, but only partial perspectives). Third, analysis in these cases would never be of complete authentic record. Fourth, the main goal of the context analysis (understood as context of image production) is to analyze reflexively how visual content is informed by the subjectivities of the individuals involved and the situations they are living in.

Each visual material was labelled according to the following model: Case study number/media type number/type of event/date/place. The second phase was to develop a general contextual summary to each considered piece of material, investing an ethnographic meaning to the material and drawing other resources of knowledge about a specific social reality. As the image alone reveals nothing, it was given social meaning through the consideration of social context and relationships of production.

8.1.4 Transversal Analysis Methodology

Considering the application of these three different methodologies to the data gathered through out the field work, we needed a transversal analysis that could connect the analyzed data and draw reflective intersections that may contribute for the construction of a theoretical framework. From the combination between the Grounded Analysis Methodology, the Visual Analysis Methodology and the Mining Analysis Methodology, done to specific types of materials, resulted a Transversal Analysis (Fig. 69), which includes a more complete understanding of the social reality, as analyzed data included written, audio and visual materials. Figure 71 showcases the relation between the methodological approaches and the field work. The final result is a type of methodology with a transversal character, as it aggregates comprehensive sociological understanding that results from three different types of methodological procedures: the Grounded Analysis Methodology, the Visual Analysis Methodology and the Mining Analysis Methodology.

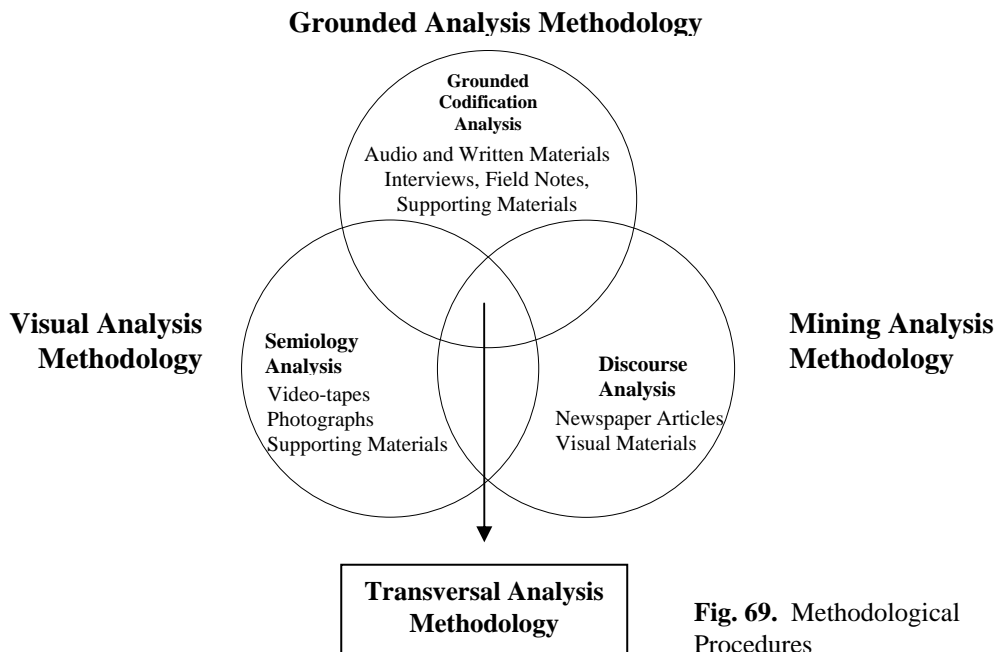


Fig. 69. Methodological Procedures

Description of General Procedure

It was understood that the main factor of connection between the three different analyses was the codification process, specifically the categorization. Consequently, it was designed a Themes' Framework, based on the analysis of the data. This framework was analyzed according to each piece of research materials, within the six types of research materials gathered: photographs, audio-recorded interviews, video-recorded activities, newspapers, field notes and supporting materials. Importance was given to the fact that the same hierarchy (in terms of order of analysis of each research material) was maintained, considering each category through each research material in the following order: audio recorded interviews, video recorded activities, photographs, field notes, newspapers and supporting materials. Starting at the highest level of abstraction in terms of the category frame work, it is permitted the evaluation of the quality of the information and the consequent decision to proceed further down the category hierarchy.

As an example, lets consider category x and the research material *photographs* (associated with the VAM). To which photographs is X aggregated to? Secondly, let's consider the context and content associated with each photograph and extract detailed information from it. Considering a written material as example 2, like a transcribed interview (which implicates a different type of analysis – GAM) we are here identifying themes, the

action systems and related dimensions. The objective here is the same: to identify as much information as possible about each dimensions in order to start to write one to two page reports on each dimension.

In planning this study, six themes were identified as integrating the framework through which to organize and analyze the material, as follows *Creative Citizenship*, *Resilience through Civic Governance*, *Urban Revivification*, *Multicultural Dialogue*, *Creativity* and *Identity*. Each of these themes was, through out the field work, divided in dimensions that resulted from a concrete analysis of the social processes in each case study and in each neighbourhood, transforming the Themes' Framework in Fig. 66 in a more complex diagram (Fig. 70) that attests the specificity of the empirical work and the case studies.

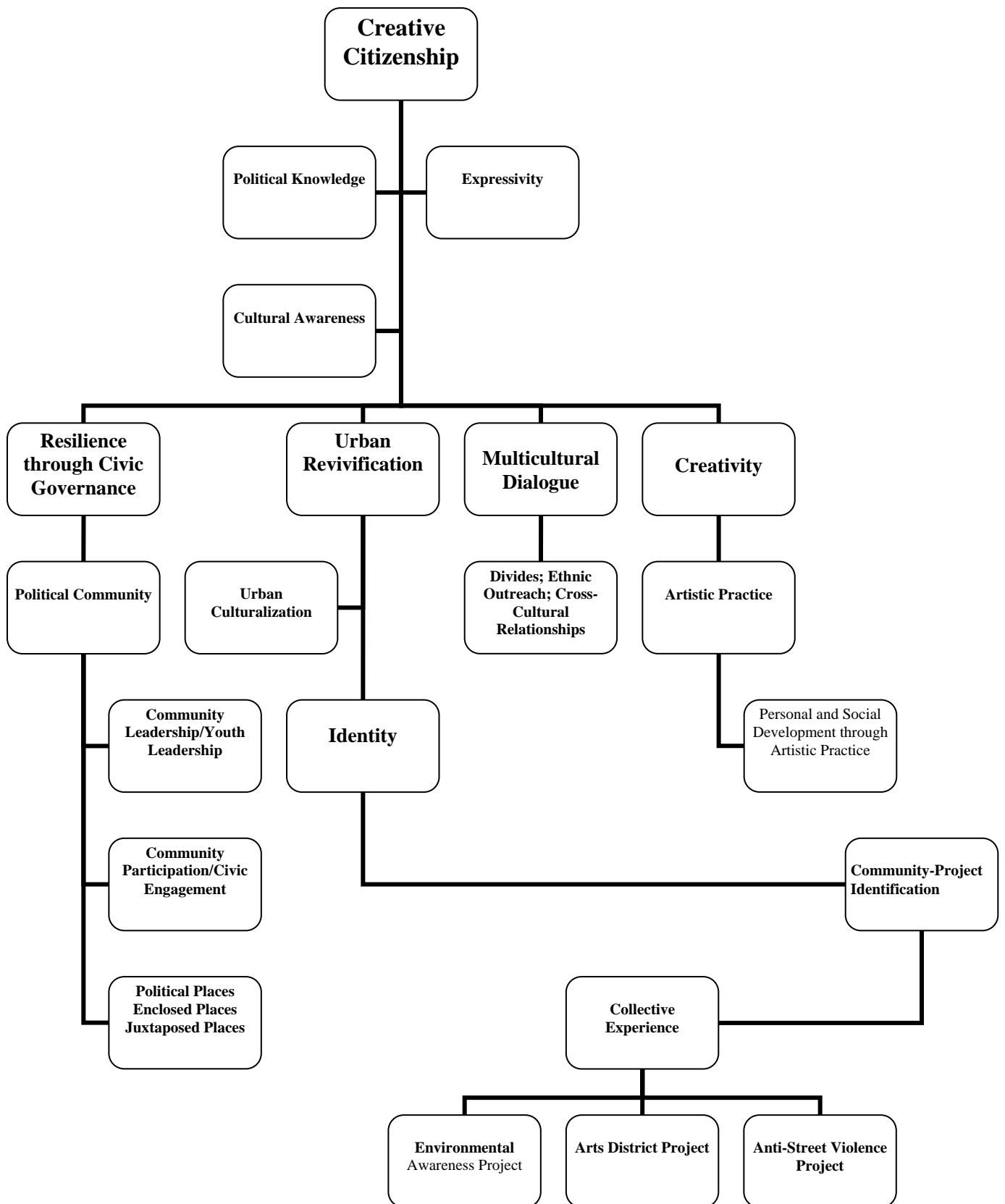


Fig. 70. Themes and Dimensions Framework

- By *Creative Citizenship* we comprehend a membership in a political community (city or neighborhood) with the right to political participation, human expressivity and cultural interaction; a person having such a type of action is a potential creative citizen. Citizens work towards the betterment of one's community through participation, volunteer work, and efforts to improve life for all citizens. Citizenship is the political right of an individual within a society but is also an every day practice that includes an inquisitive attitude, reflection and action.

- *Resilience through Civic Governance* refers to efforts from residents in urban communities to generate innovative policies and engaged procedures to replace centralized policies. It requires the understanding and assimilation of citizenship as a practice and not only as a legal right. Political community is understood as a community of practice engaged in creating strategies of social intervention at the local level in order to call attention to local issues and promote the site's cultural identity.

- By *Urban Revivification* we understand a process of renovation of a space and/or the re-adaptations of the common uses of a space, giving it a new identity, attracting different types of population and creating renewed economic, social and cultural dynamics.

- *Multicultural Dialogue* refers to the management of cultural diversity in a multiethnic society, officially stressing mutual respect and tolerance for cultural differences within a neighborhood.

- *Creativity* is understood as a tool used in artistic and culturally related activities based on the capacity to express feelings, states of mind, opinions and visions of the world and to work on an abstract level of thinking.

- *Identity* refers to a group of qualities that an individual, a group, a city, a region, a country identify with. Based on those qualities, individuals build their profile to present to themselves and to the world.

The table bellow showcases a detailed overview of the main themes, their action systems, and dimensions, giving an example for each theme of a community expression, taken from the neighborhoods under study.

Themes	Action system	Dimensions		Community Expressions (examples)
Creative Citizenship	Community Practice	Political Knowledge		Creation of a network to promote Latino culture
		Cultural Awareness		
		Expressivity		
Resilience through Civic Governance	Political Practice	Political Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Leadership/Youth Leadership - Community Participation/Civic Engagement - Political Places - Enclosed Places - Juxtaposed Places 	Organization of a rally against the use of pesticides in a local park
	Social Action			Organization of a community Festival
Urban Revivification	Urban Social, Cultural and Economic Intervention	Urban Culturalization		Presentation of artistic events in open air urban spaces
Multicultural Dialogue	Human Connection	Divides		The organization of artistic oriented workshops and the outreach to different ethnic groups in the community stimulates dialogues between cultures
		Ethnic Outreach		
		Cross-Cultural Relationships		
Creativity	Human Development	Personal and Social Development through Artistic Practice		Experience of the artistic activity of building costumes for a Festival
Identity	Self and Group Development/ Collective Experience	Community-Project Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental Awareness Project - Arts District Project - Anti-Street Violence Project 	Organization of ethnic festivals to promote immigrant and ethnic identities

Table 12 . Overview of Themes, Action Systems, Dimensions and Community Expressions

8.2. Methodologies Applied to Specific Types of Data

8.2.1. Semiology in the Analysis of Supporting Materials

There seems to be a current need in the contemporary times for Semiology, the science of interpreting signs, as the mass society is full of messages through images, gestures, musical sounds, objects and the associations of all these. They all represent systems of signification that can provide us with a different social perspective on the social world and elucidate us on the political meaning of certain actions. Semiology draws upon the work of many authors like Roman Jakobson (1937), Ferdinand de Saussure (1959), Roland Barthes (1964) and Judith Williamson (1984), among others. As an example, in Williamson's book *Decoding Advertisements* (Williamson, 1984), images are decoded according to their meaning. The most important tool in Semiology is the sign and the fact that it stands for something other than itself, helping the analyst to explain the social and cultural context where that image was produced. Semiology analysis is directly related with the construction of politicized thinking about a social context as to legitimate ways of thinking and strategies to reflect people's interests.

In this study, the Semiology analysis of certain video-tapes, photographs and supporting materials (like posters, brochures and cards), collected in the context of the three case studies, was concerned with the social effects of meaning and how that meaning could help us reflect on the role of ideologies and hidden group interests behind specific initiatives. The first step on the Semiology analysis was to identify the signs of an image and then to recognize to which systems of meaning and codes they refer to in the society in general. A specific image can be understood by a specific audience only because they are familiar with certain social codes that are related to the image's signs. The codes give meaning to the sign in the image and relate it with the society at large.

8.2.2. Discourse Analysis

Using the visual as a method to collect information is creating a specific kind of discourse, as certain things will become visible in a particular way and others will remain hidden. This process creates certain systems of meaning associated with this specific discourse and a certain type of world as we understand it through the visual. Michel Foucault's work has produced two methodological emphases for discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972), one more focused on institutional practices and the other centered on the notion of discourse in articulation with various types of visual images and verbal texts (Rose, 2001). In this study we focused our attention on the latter methodological emphases, exploring how images construct specific views of the social world and how they can be

articulated with supporting materials created at the community level like flyers, posters, programs, newsletters, community publications, cards, proposals and working papers documents.

Some of the images collected in this study were analyzed (many times in articulation with the supporting materials) in order to grasp their iconological or intrinsic meaning, which may reveal a specific group behavior, a specific community, political period or nation. After familiarization with the data, key themes were identified and related with other sources that relate to the same code or theme. And then the question was asked: how were these key themes and relations constructing social meaning about a specific reality? The discourse analysis used on this research was used in order to generate critical reflections on the research practice and interrogate taken-for-granted meanings associated with the cases studies and also to create a web of communication between different types of data.

8.3. Data Organization

8.3.1. Types of Materials Generated per Case Study

The list presented below shows an overview of the different types of materials generated through out the field work, from January 2005 until June 2007. The materials generated range from documental, textual, visual and audio materials. The strategy used to generate these materials was to have as many points of view as possible about the cultural and artistic processes that were happening in the three Boston area neighborhoods considered.

In what concerns audio materials, they range from in depth-recorded interviews to community events to various stakeholders and community agents, namely community activists, artists, residents, organizations' directors, community partners/organizations, volunteers, local businesses, producers and youth. Video materials incorporate two types of materials: interviews (to artists, community partners, volunteers, youth and organizations' directors) and event documentation (community and neighborhood celebrations, youth events, event preparations, community meetings, community outreach sessions, event evaluation meetings and organizations' Board meetings). Photographs represent another type of visual material which complemented the video documentation of events, providing more information about events and *Villa Victoria*, Jamaica Plain and Union Square urban contexts.

A general effort for documental gathering of materials has been done in parallel to the audio and visual documentation of the case studies. Those include field notes, newspapers and supporting materials. Field notes were mainly gathered when the researcher assumed the

role of a participant observer in various community meetings, events and event preparations. Newspaper collection resulted on the compilation of news from the *Villa Victoria*, Jamaica Plain and Union Square neighborhoods from March 2005 until June 2007. The idea behind this documentation is to build a more comprehensive understanding of the social, political and cultural dynamics of the referred neighborhoods. Finally, Supporting Materials include Brochures, Flyers, Posters, Newsletters, Programs, Community Publications, Reports, Working Papers, Cards, Proposals and Posters that illustrate the cultural and social dynamics of the organizations and institutions behind the events and also their frames of action. What follows is a quantitative and qualitative list of the field work materials collected for this research.

Case Study Villa Victoria (South End, Boston)

- **In-depth recorded interviews:** 23
(community activists, artists, *Villa* residents, members of IBA Executive Committee, Group of IBA directors)
- **Audiovisual Documentation** (event type and number of DVC per event)
 - *Festival Bétances* and preparations: 6
 - Event *Reinado Festival Bétances*: 2
 - *Critical Breakdown* (Youth Event): 1
 - Cacique Youth Program – Youth Arts: 1
- **Field Notes** (February 2005 – April 2006): 10 field notes sessions
(cultural events, community workshops, in-depth interviews, community outreach sessions, community meetings)
- **Photographs**
(cultural events, activities, urban places that include photographic documentation)
 - *Critical Breakdown*
 - *Festival Betances 2005*
 - *Reinado Festival Bétances*
 - *Villa* public spaces
- **Newspapers**
The *South End News* (collected since March 2006)
- **Supporting Materials**
 - **Brochures** (*Festival Betances*, South End neighborhood activities, *Villa Victoria* Activities, IBA)
 - **Flyers** (IBA and *Villa Victoria* Events)
 - **Posters** (IBA and *Villa Victoria* Events)
 - **Programs, Newsletters, Community Publications** (IBA, *Villa Victoria* events)
 - **Cards** (IBA and *Villa Victoria* Events)

Case Study Union Square (Somerville, Boston area)

- **In-depth recorded interviews: 33**
(Directory members Somerville Arts Council, *Arts Union* project community partners, Artists, Meetings to prepare for *Arts Union*, Volunteers, Local businesses, *Arts Union* producers, Somerville Community Organizers)
- **Videotaped interviews: 4**
(*Arts Union* community partners)
- **Audiovisual Documentation** (event type and number of DVC per event)
 - *Arts Union* events – 8
 - Somerville historical tour – 2
 - Preparation meetings for events – 2
- **Field Notes** (February 2005 – April 2006): 27 field notes sessions
(cultural events, community workshops, in-depth interviews, community outreach sessions, community meetings)
- **Photographs**
(cultural events, activities, urban places that include photographic documentation)
 - *Arts Union* Events
 - Union Square Public Spaces
- **Newspapers**
The *Somerville Journal*, the *Boston Globe*, *Somerville News*, *Metro* (collected since July 2005)
- **Supporting Materials**
 - **Brochures** (*Arts Union*, Somerville Community Organizations, Somerville neighborhood)
 - **Flyers** (*Arts Union*, community orgs)
 - **Programs and Newsletters** (*Arts Union*, Somerville Community Organizations, Somerville Arts Council)
 - **Reports, Proposals, Working Papers** (*Arts Union*)
 - **Cards** (*Arts Union*, Community Organizations, Artists)

Case Study Jamaica Plain (Boston)

- **In-depth recorded interviews: 32**
 - Directory members Spontaneous Celebrations
 - Artists
 - Community activists
 - Spontaneous Celebrations community partners
 - Meetings to prepare for Spontaneous Celebrations events
 - Volunteers
 - Youth involved in Spontaneous Celebrations activities
 - Local Businesses
- **Videotaped interviews: 8**

(Spontaneous Celebrations Directory members, Artists, Spontaneous Celebrations community partners, Volunteers, youth involved in Spontaneous Celebrations activities)

- **Audiovisual Documentation** (event type and number of DVC per event)
 - Community meetings to prepare for *Wake Up the Earth Festival 2005* – 13
 - *Wake Up the Earth Festival 2005* preparations – 5
 - *Wake Up the Earth Festival 2005* evaluation – 1
 - Meetings with Spontaneous Celebrations partners – 7
 - Spontaneous Celebrations Annual meeting and Board meeting – 4
 - *Tropical Fiesta 2005* preparations – 1
 - *Tropical Fiesta 2005* – 2
 - Spontaneous Celebrations community outreach sessions – 3
 - Youth meetings (youth involved in Spontaneous Celebrations activities) - 1
 - *Wake Up the Earth Festival 2005* – 2
 - *Lantern Parade* - 2
 - *Lantern Parade* preparations – 1
 - *Wake Up the Earth Festival 2006* – 1
 - Other Celebrations (*JP/Rox Arts Partnership* celebration, *Day of the Dead event*, *First Night Parade event*) – 5

- **Field Notes** (February 2005 – April 2006): 35 field note sessions
(cultural events, community workshops, in-depth interviews, community outreach sessions, community meetings)

- **Photographs**
(cultural events, activities, urban places that include photographic documentation)
 - *Wake Up the Earth Festival 2005*
 - *First Night Parade event* preparations (2005)
 - Celebration party for *JP/Rox Arts Partnership*
 - Spontaneous Celebrations Annual Meeting
 - Spontaneous Celebrations community outreach sessions
 - *Lantern Parade*

- **Newspapers**
JP Gazette (collected since March 2005)

- **Supporting Materials**
 - **Brochures and Flyers** (Spontaneous Celebrations programs and events)
 - **Posters** (Spontaneous Celebrations programs and events)
 - **Programs and Newsletters** (Spontaneous Celebrations)
 - **Reports** (Spontaneous Celebrations)
 - **Cards** (Spontaneous Celebrations programs and events)

8.3.2. Material organization and storage³⁰

Audio and Video materials were collected in Micro-cassette (MC) and Digital Video Cassette (DVC). Specific labels were created to help storage and organize these media documentation. The labeling was created based on a code that included the following dimensions: Case Study, Media type, Type of event, Event place, Event date, Number of tapes. Each MC and DVC was then assigned a number according to the date when it was generated. Both of them were storage in a locked compartment.

Photographs were both collected in digital and paper formats and storage in digital formats. The labelling for these materials was the same as the one used for the Audio and Video materials including the following dimensions: Case Study, Media type, Type of event, Event place, Event date and Number of tapes.

Newspapers were gathered through a period of two years and thematic articles were collected based on the themes presented above. These articles were organized in binders and labelled according to the following model: Case study, Type of material, Theme (master code), Newspaper, Article date and number of pages.

Supporting materials were gathered and organized in binders according to each Case Study. Labels were also created based on the following items: Case Study, Media Type, Type of material, Date. The organization and codification of these materials is mainly focused on their relation to each event and/or case study that they refer to.

Field Notes were gathered in note books from February 2005 until April 2006. They include the subjective perceptions of the researcher about cultural events, community workshops, in-depth interviews, community outreach sessions and community meetings. They were organized using the following label: Case Study, Media Type, Type of Event, Event Place and Date.

³⁰ A date base was built as an inventory of all the materials collected in the field work, using File Maker Pro software.

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