CITIZENSHIP AND THE ARTISTIC PRACTICE: ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND THEIR SOCIAL ROLE

Claudia Carvalho

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal

Abstract: This article 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, Massachusetts, neighbourhoods to reflect on arts and culture as platforms to re-address citizenship at the community level. In this context, the relationship between urban public space, community, and culture is understood as a platform that may offer new strategies for urban space revivification, while specific strategies of civic engagement and leadership in these communities provide impetus for the development of creative citizenship. In turn, this appropriation of creative citizenship provides personal and collective avenues for developing and advancing attachments to place, intercultural dialogue, and local development and sustainability.

Resumo: Este artigo explora o significado de *cidadania* no mundo contemporâneo, sugerindo uma nova abordagem à sua realização, em que a prática artística e o desenvolvimento da consciencialização cultural se combinam para produzir o *cidadão criativo*. Esta pesquisa usa estudos de caso de três bairros de Boston, Massachusetts, para refletir nas artes e na cultura como plataformas para repensar a cidadania ao nível da comunidade. Neste contexto, a relação entre o espaço público urbano, a comunidade e a cultura é vista como uma plataforma que pode oferecer novas estratégias para a reanimação do espaço urbano, enquanto algumas estratégias de envolvimento cívico e liderança nessas comunidades impulsionam o desenvolvimento de cidadanias criativas. Esta apropriação de cidadania criativa, por seu lado, fornece vias pessoais e coletivas para desenvolver e promover as ligações ao lugar, o diálogo intercultural, o desenvolvimento e a sustentabilidade locais.

Introduction

New types of citizenship, such as *cultural citizenship* (Duxbury, 2008; Stevenson, 2007), *multicultural citizenship* (Kymlicka, 2000), or *differentiated citizenship* (Young, 1990, 1995) have fuelled the challenge to identify new frameworks

in which to understand this concept. 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 (Marshall, 1950). Focussing on the contexts of social processes that shape relationships between individuals, groups, and communities, influencing the concept of citizenship and contributing to democratic practices in the contemporary world, this paper aims to reframe the significance of citizenship in the contemporary world. The overarching goal is a better practical understanding of what it could mean to be a *creative citizen* in contemporary urban settings, promoting a process of exploration that expands the concept of citizenship through analyzing it from the vantage point of arts-oriented creativity.

The paper suggests a new approach that devotes more attention to individual relationships within communities of practice and gives specific attention to work conducted with communities of youth that have few opportunities and are experiencing episodes of street violence. Artistic and culture-related projects may offer innovative channels to rethink citizenship (in relation to civic participation) and suggest new venues to enhance democratic practice in contemporary urban societies, giving youth an enhanced role in building an active voice in urban communities. The research aims to identify tools based on artistic and cultural activities 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 of civic engagement, resulting ideally in diminished social divisions and exclusion. Can we envision cultural exchange activities as innovative platforms for the recognition of specific groups` identities and for the acknowledgement of difference?

Developments in three metropolitan Boston area neighbourhoods are analyzed – Jamaica Plain, Union Square, and Villa Victoria (in the city's South End). In these three urban neighbourhoods, I examine how community and place, when appropriated through arts and culture-based initiatives, propose new venues for democratic practice and offer new ingredients for the creation of *creative citizens/citizenship* at the community level. The research investigates: What is the potential of arts and culture to be effective platforms in promoting civic participation and citizenship, specifically among youth, but also among other community members? What are the connections between artistic and cultural interventions and the urban public spaces in which they are held? How can community and culture activities offer new strategies for community-building

initiatives and revitalization of urban spaces, enabling us to consider possible new formats of citizenship building?

The paper begins by presenting a theoretical frame for this investigation, then outlines the overall methodology of the study and briefly sketches out the urban contexts and key neighbourhood agents and activities examined. It discusses the key findings and insights emerging from the study's contextualized comparisons and analyses. In closing, it reflects on processes and patterns of *culturalizing* citizenship, civic engagement, and urban space.

Framing citizenship: The creation of *cultural knowledgeable communities*
Re-socializing the citizen
One of the striking features of the contemporary world is the existence of social divisions, which often lead to conflicts between groups of citizens. The *citizen* has been characterized as an individual, with a focus on self-development, which promotes an independent character and a loss of contact with the public domain (Sennett, 1977: 5-16). The end result can be alienation from others and society at large, and an increase in social divisions. A significant consequence of this view, coupled with the decline of shared public space in contemporary urban settings, is that the nature of the processes of relationships among different social groups often results in group isolation, intolerant behaviors, and divisions. The nature of these divisions warrants analysis that takes into account the question of *urban diversity*, which scholars of urban anthropology have explored through an ethnographic approach to urban life (Costa and Cordeiro, 1999, 2003; Cordeiro et al., 2003; Frugóli, 2007; Cordeiro, 2008; Cordeiro and Vidal, 2008; Costa, 2008). The scope of analysis around the themes of cultural diversity and difference in urban communities suggests the need to consider possible strategies to overcome those divisions, implement intercultural dialogue, work toward emancipation and social change, and contribute to the reconciliation of the individual with the different other.

In order to counter the current dissolution of the public realm, as analyzed by authors like John Clarke (2004), direct involvement of minorities and immigrants becomes an important feature of democratic practice and citizenship participation.[1] However, the development of interventionist strategies requires the existence of a civic order principle, which suggests that social life is organized around and is an outcome of the individual as a citizen. This citizen, by belonging to a community of rights and duties, is more than a member of a community. The civic bond results from a shared sense of belonging. According

to David Selbourne (2001), community historically precedes civic order, and a *sense of community* constitutes a powerful tool of civic consciousness to maintain the civic bond.

There is a need to reframe the concept of citizenship to one based on the potential of civil society to construct new models of engagement. On one hand, citizenship must be included in the analysis of social interventions of civil society in the public realm (Lofland, 1973, 1998). The public sphere may present the context that could reinvigorate the concept of citizenship through civic endeavors in which the individual can examine and express personal and social identity. On the other hand, a new approach to civil society is needed 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. Further, this reframing must also incorporate the physical urban space in which socio-cultural life occurs.

Re-territorializing/re-grounding community practices

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 (1977), 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. In the same vein, Jane Jacobs (1961) identified the importance of mixed activities in the streets as a way to promote movement and encounter. More recently, there has been a significant amount of literature in urban studies concerned with the end of public space (e.g., Sorkin, 1992; Mitchell, 1995).

A second layer must be added to this 're-territorialization' of public space. Urban spaces in the contemporary city are often socially, economically, and culturally dissonant. With their multicultural characteristics, these sites reflect and articulate the symbolic and physical divisions between different ethnic communities living in and using the urban public space. The ways different ethnicities interact in common space can be a source of conflict and division. When social conflicts between different groups are rampant, the idea of citizenship is put at risk and there is a need for innovative and creative intervention strategies.

One of the main insights derived from the research noted above is the hypothesis that the promotion of artistic and culture-related activities in urban public spaces may have a positive effect over the loss of the public realm.

Can strategies to revivify the city represent efforts to culturalize the public realm? Might this type of participation and engagement represent an alternative to new shopping centers and atria in the reconfiguration of public areas?

Adding artistic and cultural practices

This paper 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 case studies presented here emerge, on one hand, in the context of *third way* thinking and its critics (Amin, 2005) and, on the other hand, within recent reflections about the social function of the 'creative class'. Creativity, when associated with citizenship practices, may offer innovative strategies to address social divisions that lead to disenfranchised communities and persistent community isolation. At the intersection of cultural/artistic resources and urban spaces, exciting possibilities may emerge.

A new type of democratic community can be generated by the intersection of affirmative action in the public space and the use of artistic and cultural initiatives. Carefully constructed arts initiatives may offer citizens the possibility of building a new mental model that promotes the consideration of divergent views and new strategies of action drawn from dialogue among 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 urban contexts. Richard Sennett, in *Respect in a World of Inequality* (2003), corroborates this view when he refers to the performing arts as integrating collaborative elements, which are essential to generate mutual respect. Artistic activities that include collaboration of culturally differentiated groups may create a sense of equality that, ideally, inspires the individual to reflect on the divisions of the social world with greater insight and imagination.

The generation of *creative citizenship* requires the creation of *cultural knowledgeable communities,* defined as communities that congregate political knowledge, expressivity and cultural awareness components. This type of community focusses its development on nurturing cultural factors, recognizing difference, and motivating individual and group involvement.

The *creative citizen,* living in this type of community, is a producer of political knowledge, expressivity, and cultural awareness (see Table 1; Carvalho, 2010). First and foremost, he or she is a political knowledge creator because s/he is directly responsible for the state of his local society and may also be the driving

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
	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
Expressivity	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 neighbourhoods in terms of their ethnic composition, political (critical attitude) preference, religious orientation, and generational sense of belonging
	Political preference	
	Religious orientation	
	Generation belonging	

Table 1. Creative citizenship: Categories and dimensions

force behind social intervention and civic engagement initiatives that strengthen the community. In this context, *political knowledge* includes the ability to generate community participation in the organization of cultural and artistic initiatives. The *expressive* character of this individual requires the development of artistic capacities and an authentic self and group identity in order to develop more effective tools of dialogue with different groups. Finally, the individual's *cultural awareness* means s/he is attuned to the differentiated cultural composition of contemporary society. Altogether, the *creative citizen* is an active agent creating spaces for interrelations between sectors of society that are often separated and socially excluded.

We cannot ignore the possible negative role that culture can play through accentuating differences inside the community, and the potential of cultural difference to build resistance and intolerant behaviours toward other cultural groups. This dynamic is seen in many urban contexts. However, the focus here is on the potential of creative activity to bridge cultural chasms. The key to effective dialogue between different social groups can be found at the intersection of knowledge, expressivity, and culture – the structural components of creative citizenship. This intersection can produce the preconditions for the development of creative initiatives in alternative spaces, initiatives designed to deal with difference and conflict. The initiatives in the case studies examined here focus on the development of strong identities that, bolstered with cultural resources, can create spaces for *creative* interrelations between sectors of society previously separated by social and ethnic schisms.

As Charles Landry and Franco Bianchini (1995) state, 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. Furthermore, when Landry investigates urban creativity in the city in *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (2000), 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 within distinct cultural environments. Thus, 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 can be adapted to different social realities where cultural and social differences can create an antagonistic environment.

Methodology

The study began with an initial three-month phase that included a series of exploratory interviews with privileged 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. Three neighbourhoods were then selected as case studies based on the community projects' emphasis on revitalizing the urban space and on the importance given to strategies of civic engagement of residents within the initiatives. Fieldwork took place between January 2005 and June 2007.

The project 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 generated a variety of photographs, videos, audio, and written materials including: in-depth audio-recorded interviews and video interviews with community leaders, residents, artists, and citizens in general; videos from community cultural events and public gatherings; community-grounded fieldnotes; and neighbourhood and community photographs. The materials generated were combined with published newspaper articles and other existent supporting materials, generating profiles for the urban neighbourhoods and offering specific approaches to understand citizenship in these areas. 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 directly and indirectly in the community projects. Interview scripts were open--ended and reflected a balance between individual biographies and individual connections with the specific project.

Since analysis involved multiple sources and types of information, multiple methodological approaches were used: grounded analysis, where theory was drawn from the phenomenon being studied; mining analysis, focusing on the research questions and searching for answers to those questions in the fieldwork materials; and visual analysis, generating ethnographic knowledge from videos, photographs, and other images. Overall, the analysis focused on illuminating what kind of communities citizens are creating in these areas, and how.

The three neighbourhoods chosen for the study represent geographically different urban contexts of the Boston area. Consequently, they offer a broad perspective on the influence of the arts and culture in urban spaces, offering different ways to analyze the relationship between cultural projects and community involvement through the arts.

The urban context: The Boston metropolitan area

Over the last two decades, the city of Boston (Massachussetts, U.S.A.) has undergone an urban cultural and artistic transformation, a 'cultural renaissance' reflected in the contemporary influence of arts and culture in the revitalization of urban social space. The number of arts organizations has grown significantly, reflecting the city's cultural dynamism, opportunities for self-expression, and artistic creativity. Despite the need for greater efficiency in tight economic times, the number of nonprofit arts organization in Greater Boston has steadily increased in recent years. Almost 600 new arts nonprofits registered with the IRS between 2000 and 2011 (The Boston Indicators Report, 2012). Innovative organizations founded or revived in recent decades have largely triumphed over fiscal challenges and become best-practice models since the Great Recession. Many have deepened and broadened their impact as central to the fabric of Boston's community. These include such resources as the Strand Theater, Villa Victoria Center for the Arts, Hibernian Hall, Design Studio 4 Social Intervention, the Dorchester Community Center for the Visual Arts (DotArt), The Theatre Offensive, Project Hip-Hop, and the Urbano Project.

The region's multitude of ethnic-specific grocery stores and restaurants, and its multicultural celebrations and spectacles express Greater Boston's growing racial/ethnic diversity and enliven daily life. The recent influx of immigrants has greatly expanded the region's range of cultural offerings – from Taiko drumming and Cambodian puppetry to Greek, African, and Latin dancing. The cultural vitality of the city reflects its growing population diversity and strong civic mobilization at the local level. The evolution of social change in the ethnically diverse local communities is facilitated by these local organizations, which help preserve traditional values and identities as well as create new connections. Boston's cultural organizations and institutions are catalysts for both economic growth and a robust civic cultural life. As Jackson and Herranz (2002) argue, community building is linked to the importance of participation, with participation spanning a wide array of ways in which people (adults and children) engage in arts, culture, and creative expression.

But ethnic diversity is also associated with issues of segregation and, in particular, residential segregation in the city. Ethnic isolation in residential urban settings, which may result in the development of ethnic enclaves, is a prominent characteristic of Boston.[2] In these contexts, communities have been trying to deal with the issue of cultural division, understood as physical, symbolic, and political urban separation.

Community and organizational profiles
Jamaica Plain: Activism and the natural environment

The way cities relate to their natural environment is often problematic. 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 residents' awareness of environmental issues. From this perspective, the community arts organization Spontaneous Celebrations (in Jamaica Plain) has been working to strengthen the association between active citizenship and the urban natural environments in Jamaica Plain.

The Jamaica Plain neighbourhood has always been known for its vibrant arts community. An example of this is the cultural organization Spontaneous Celebrations, which stages several arts-oriented events in the neighbourhood. Spontaneous Celebrations is a community and arts-based organization with more than 30 years of experience in social intervention and community organizing through arts and cultural activities. Consistent with its grassroots principles, it combines artistic expression and open-air festivals with extensive community mobilization and committed social engagement, highlighting social issues such as youth street violence, racial discrimination (especially among youth), environmental issues, and global terrorism. The bottom-up work of this non-profit organization is a good example of how it is possible to empower community residents (with empowerment represented here by people engaging as active participants in cultural events), focusing special attention here on the continuous work of leadership building among participants of the Spontaneous Celebrations' youth group, Beantown Society. One of the main strategies to promote public involvement in community events is to use urban public green spaces as settings for festivals, neighbourhood parades, and musical rehearsals so that passersby can be easily integrated in the activity, either as spectators or as active participants. By bringing the festivity to the public arena of the park, the garden, the street, and the lake, the events are not only made accessible to everyone but also may reconfigure urban identity and inquire about its possible connections with the natural urban environments. This reflection oriented the analysis of this case.

Villa Victoria/South End: A minority housing complex in a gentrified neighbourhood
One of the most complex social issues that underscores the contemporary metropolis is the divisions that result from everyday cohabitation, in the same neighbourhood, 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. One of these housing complexes is situated in the Villa Victoria community, which deals with permanent issues related with difference, conflict, and integration.

Since its beginnings, the community-based agency *Inquilinos Borícuas en Acción* (IBA – Borícusa[3] Tenants in Action), situated in the Villa Victoria community, has had a deep commitment to artistic and cultural practices in socially integrating communities through the Villa Victoria Center for the Arts. The promotion of Latino culture through many arts-related programs and events is part of Villa Victoria's mission. For example, the arts component of the Cacique Youth Learning Center for Teens 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 and prevent isolation and intolerant behaviours.

In the 1980s, arts-based innovation in the community took a leap forward when a century-old church was transformed into a performance centre, the Jorge Hernandez Cultural Center (JHCC), which became a Latino cultural landmark serving all of Boston. Today, the cultural centre is open to cultural events organized by IBA and the Villa Victoria community, providing a performance, exhibition, and learning space for community artists. The IBA cultural centre conducts outreach to an ethnically mixed audience through the promotion of Latino culture. One of the benefits of having a performance centre was that in the late 1980s IBA could launch a performing arts series, *Café Teatro*, to introduce renowned Latin American artists (in the 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, the Center for Latino Arts (CLA), a multifunctional community arts complex. As with the JHCC, the main goals of CLA are to nurture Latino

arts and artists, offer affordable arts education for at-risk youth, serve as an incubator for artists and arts organizations, provide spaces for rehearsals and exhibitions, and develop opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration between Latinos and other ethnic populations. The combination of the performance and community cultural centre provides support and visibility for Latino culture and artists, while also serving as a venue for the promotion of the Villa Victoria community in the region.

Union Square/Somerville: An historic and commercial urban space

A common issue of many urban areas is difficulty in establishing a specific identity. Somerville was, in the past, an industrial centre in Greater Boston and, apart from its recent residential and commercial growth spurt, has had to cope with the fact that some of the neighbourhoods have remained nondescript and have become, as in the case of Union Square, simply an entranceway to the centre of Boston. The challenge for the neighbourhood's ArtsUnion project was how to deploy the ethnic, cultural, artistic, historical, and economic resources of the area to transform the indistinct *non place* (Augé, 1995) into a lively commercial, historic, ethnically diverse, and artistic neighbourhood.

In Union Square, the ArtsUnion project is designed to promote the cultural and economic development of the area. The initiative's primary goal is to create new economic opportunities for local artists and strengthen 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 product markets, ethnic markets, historic tours, public space exhibitions, and community meetings among 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. Some of the more salient questions that arise from this initiative are: Is a pattern of activities over time sufficient for the successful implementation of an Arts District? Is cultural diversity an essential element of ArtsUnion project? If so, will the initiative ensure that the Arts District reflects the ethnic diversity of Union Square? Is the local cultural dynamic of ArtsUnion a reflection of local social, cultural, and economic local diversity or is it, rather, an imposed and selected cultural sample, chosen by the local creative elite?

Citizenship, civic engagement, and urban space culturalization
Culturalized public space as context of intervention
The connections between artistic and cultural interventions and urban public spaces transform them into culturalized urban environments. This transformation occurs through the organization of street celebrations that involve residents in the community in various artistic performances initiatives (e.g., ArtsUnion Festival and Wake Up the Earth Festival) and/or intend to celebrate the articulation of different cultural traditions (e.g., Jamaica Pond Lantern Parade). Arts and culture also have the potential to be effective platforms in promoting civic participation and citizenship, specifically among youth, but also among other community members.

In order for mixed encounters to happen, different types of initiatives – such as those promoted by ArtsUnion (like the ArtsUnion street performance festival that takes place during the summer months), Spontaneous Celebrations' festivals (like the Wake Up the Earth, which takes place every year in May, or Lantern Parade, in October), and the Villa Victoria urban interventions (like Festival Bétances, which takes place in July) – were created in the everyday spaces of the city (e.g., streets, parks, plazas) in direct articulation with and for different social and cultural groups, many of them youth arts education groups, but also the community at large (e.g., in the case of the Wake Up the Earth Festival and Festival Bétances). Local residents (which include both immigrants and locally born people) and youth groups involve themselves in all stages of event organization, becoming producers and evaluators of the initiatives in collaboration with organizational staff.

In the case of Spontaneous Celebrations, a variety of urban spaces were used to stage artistic and cultural events, with the goal of building the cultural identities of the sites by mobilizing the community to organize and attend these events. This was specially the case of the youth arts intervention projects, which mobilize dozens of youth in the organization and presentation of youth arts public projects like the 'Youth Stage' in the Wake Up the Earth Festival or the presence of Beantown Society at the Immigrant Rally, which took place in 2005. 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 a collaboration between

the local municipality and different groups of urban agents that became civic intermediaries in the organization and presentation of the initiatives. Likewise, in Villa Victoria, civic engagement is simultaneously promoted by a focus on the social issues of concern to the residents and the creation of a strong Puerto Rican cultural identity. On occasion, there are even cases where community initiatives combine interventions in the public space with raising awareness of local social issues like street violence among youth gangs and the issue of the survival of Puerto Rican culture in an ever more multicultural urban context. For example, journalist Chris Orchard (2006) reported:

> In an effort to curb escalating violence [specially among youth gangs] ... 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 ...

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 must be 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 neighbours, 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, in Jamaica Plain, youth are responsible for many tasks and acquire substantial production and organizational skills, and they develop a sense of belonging that is reproduced in their relations as part of the organizational structure of Spontaneous Celebrations. As one community organizer stated,

> 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. (Semi--structured video interview, February 17, 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. This is also the case with the Beantown Society, which has organized itself as a group to create specific activities in the Festival Bétances, including the thematic contextualization of the festival among the theme of 'non-violence in Boston streets'. When community meetings (Figure 1) and festival preparations (Figure 2) take place, community members participate in the committees that oversee children's activities, volunteers, performances, and all of the different venues at the event.

Figure 1.   Beantown Society Group community meeting. Photo: C. Carvalho.

Figure 2.   Preparations for Festival Bétances. Photo: C. Carvalho.

Building civic networks

In Spontaneous Celebrations' context of action, civic networks are created by promoting social capital at the neighbourhood level. The work is based on two different types of strategies that show a holistic approach to the concept of community. The first strategy relates 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. (Semi-structured interview, February 17, 2005)

In a society where socialization increasingly 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 to create 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 intergenerational work. This type of knowledge requires an understanding of the traditions and social behaviours of the different cultures that inhabit the same neighbourhood and encouragement to use the public arena as a place for dynamic cultural interchange. Artistic and cultural events may represent a good opportunity to develop cultural interconnections between different ethnic groups residing in the same locale.

Along these same lines, the ArtsUnion project aims to reach out to different arts-related partners in order to create a civic network of involved citizens and organizations. As one of the main ArtsUnion coordinators stated:

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

Each of the various activities included in the ArtsUnion project – crafts and farmers markets (Figure 3), outdoor performances (Figure 4), window art exhibitions (Figure 5), public art efforts, and historic tours – express the civic

dynamics of the neighbourhood and contribute to building social capital at the community level. Collective clustered endeavours develop each initiative. For example, outdoor performances result from the collaboration between local producers, the Somerville Arts Council (SAC), and local artists. As one of the producers of an ArtsUnion performance event stated, "We have worked in collaboration since the beginning: SAC, myself and the West African artists" (semi-structured interview, October 8, 2005).

Figures 3, 4, and 5. ArtsUnion project activities include crafts and farmers markets, outdoor performances, and window art exhibitions. Photos: C. Carvalho.

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 endeavours? Is there an escalating effect, generated by these artistic endeavors, on the neighbourhoods' 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 neighbourhood social and cultural changes.

The need to provide outreach to different ethnic and immigrant communities, allowing them to experience the potential of Union Square, creates networks of collaboration among 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 beat 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. (Semi-structured interview, October 4, 2005)

The outdoor performances are designed to reproduce 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 with the surrounding community.

In the case of Villa Victoria, strong ties among civically involved individuals are promoted and 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 Bétances and other neighbourhood events, such as domino tournaments, weddings, and artistic opportunities for youth, like *Critical Breakdown* or *Youth Truth*, where youth had the opportunity to share their reflective thinking with their peers and work on artistic creation pieces based on that reflection. According to an *IBA* staff person:

> The community participation is pretty much committees from residents working hand in hand with *IBA* ... *Festival Bétances* 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 are people working on every different task. (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 communities. 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 neighbourhood and the greater Boston area. During

Figures 6 and 7. Youth participation at Festival Bétances. Photo: C. Carvalho.

the festival, where Puerto Rican food is prepared by the Villa Victoria residents, traditional celebrations co-exist with urban Hip-Hop, as a younger generation of residents develops activities which express urban lifestyles associated with contemporary music, dance, and spoken word.

Concluding reflections: Patterns of citizenship-building in the three case studies

All three cases offer insights on strategies that use artistic and cultural practices to create more socially integrated communities. 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. These examples open pathways for further exploration of the different forms that socio-cultural innovation in communities may take, and on what citizenship may represent in practice at the community level.

The three case studies illustrate different ways citizenship can be innovatively practiced. Each corresponds to a different stage in the maturation process of citizenship building, each leading to the next phase in the process of knowledge production at the community level. The first phase, here identified with the ArtsUnion/Somerville example, focuses on identifying 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 and the reinforcement of that identity, both in physical and symbolic space, as represented here by the example of Villa Victoria. This process includes differentiation in relation 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, which goes beyond differentiation to collective actions involving ethnically and socially diverse communities, which interact in order to build a shared, place-based community identity. The interdependent variables of urban space, community, arts, and culture produce unique patterns of citizenship building in the three urban neighbourhoods.

In the ArtsUnion/Somerville case, the creation of strong ties with local community agents is essential to get to know the field of work and to create synergies among different social groups (businesses, ethnic communities, artists, community organizers, etc.). The creation of local networks that can elicit community participation sets the process of citizenship in motion. The establishment of these community networks includes locally based efforts

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.

In the Villa Victoria case, 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 highlights Puerto Rican culture and fosters neighbour-to-neighbour sociability. In this situation, citizenship expresses itself in the direct relation of the public space with the mobilization of immigrant cultural traditions.

In the Jamaica Plain situation, the work of Spontaneous Celebrations is focused on the creation of a *community of practice*. In this case, 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. In this way, 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 (youth, immigrants, families, and children) in the organization of activities. On the other hand, arts also represent a tool to share with society at large to address social inequalities.

A theme that seems to be surfacing in local communities, and with those who work with them, is how to gain new perspectives, ideas, and innovative practices related to citizenship building and community intervention through the arts. 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 into communities.

The case studies presented here indicate three different approaches on how that can be done. The Jamaica Plain case study presents an holistic view of how community participation may represent an aggregation strategy between different community sectors, which have been working throughout the years in joint articulation toward a common end. In the case of Sommerville's *ArtsUnion* event, the cultural initiative is in itself a reason that interrelates differentiated agents and communities in a pluralized and diversified urban zone, commercially, spatially, and culturally. Villa Victoria is an example of a self-sufficient culturally resistant community, where citizenship and the civic bond reproduce an enclosed cultural identity in an ever more multicultural urban space.

In these cases, artistic 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 the three situations to help disadvantaged communities connect knowledge and experience to actively participate in the development of new methods of cultural revivification and citizenship building. Further, they also envision and embody artistic practice as an indispensable learning tool in promoting self-empowerment for the development of creative citizens. Artistic creativity represents the driving force that nourishes community cultural development and creates new opportunities and possibilities. 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 civic participation through artistic practices and the culturalization of public space are processes that help 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.

Notes

1. Further, Nancy Fraser (1990) studied how the different groups constitute different public realms and called attention to the need to balance a politics of representation and recognition of these groups.
2. 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 (The Boston Indicators Project, 2004).
3. *Borícuas* means 'from Puerto Rico'.

References

Amin, A. (2005). Local community on trial. *Economy and Society, 34*(4), 612-633.

Augé, M. (1995). *Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity.* London and New York: Verso.

Carvalho, C. (2010). The creative citizen: Citizenship building in the Boston area. Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Economics, University of Coimbra, Portugal.

Clark, J. (2004). Dissolving the public realm? The logic and limits of neo-liberalism. *Journal of Social Policy*, *33*(1), 27-48.

Cordeiro, G. (2008). *A cidade e a rua: uma aproximação etnográfica à vida urbana.* Lisboa: CIES-ISCTE.

Cordeiro, G., & Vidal, F. (2008). *A rua. Espaço. Tempo. Sociabilidade.* Lisboa: Livros Horizonte.

Cordeiro, G., Baptista, L.V., et al. (2003). *Etnografias urbanas.* Oeiras: Celta.

Costa, A. (2008). *Sociedade de bairro: Dinâmicas sociais da identidade cultural.* Lisboa: Celta.

Costa, A., & Cordeiro, G. (1999). Bairros: contexto e interacção. In G. Velho (ed.), *Antropologia urbana: Cultura e sociedade no Brasil e em Portugal* (pp. 58-79). Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Jahar Editora.

Costa, A., & Cordeiro, G. (2003). Lugar, identidad y 'sociedades de barrio' en Lisboa. *Zainak, Cuademos de Antropologia-Etnografia*, no. 24, 763-785.

Duxbury, Nancy (2008). Cultural citizenship and community indicator projects: Approaches and challenges in the local/municipal context. *UNESCO Observatory Refereed E-Journal, Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts, 1*(2).

Frugóli, H. (2007). *Sociabilidade urbana.* Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editores.

Jackson, M.R., & Herranz, J. (2002). *Culture counts in communities: A framework for measurement.* Boston: The Urban Institute.

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Kymlicka, W., & Norman, W. (2000). *Citizenship in diverse societies.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Landry, C. (2000). *The creative city: A toolkit for urban innovators.* London: Earthscan.

Landry, C., & Bianchini, F. (1995). *The creative city.* London: Demos.

Lofland, L.H. (1973). *A world of strangers: Order and action in urban public space.* New York: Basic Books.

Lofland, L.H. (1998). *The public realm: Exploring the city's quintessential social territory.* Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Marshall, T.H. (1950). *Citizenship and social class, and other essays.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mitchell, D. (1995). The end of public space? People's Pak, definitions of the public and democracy. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *85*, 108-133.

Orchard, Chris. (2006, June 6). IBA proposes summer of outdoor events at O'Day Park. *South End News*.

Selbourne, D. (2001). *The principle of duty: An essay on the foundations of the civic order.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Sennett, R. (1977). *The fall of public man.* New York: Knopf.

Sennett, R. (2003). Reflections on the public realm. In S. Watson & G. Bridge (eds.), *A companion to the city* (pp. 380-387). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Simmel, G. ([1903] 1995). Metropolis and mental life. In P. Kazinizs (ed.), *Metropolis: Centre and symbol of our times* (pp. 30-45). Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Sorkin, M. (1992). *Variations of a theme park: The new American city and the end of public space.* New York: Hill and Wong.

Stevenson, N. (2007). Cultural citizenship: Questions of consumerism, consumption and policy. In T. Edwards (ed.), *Cultural theory: Classical and contemporary positions* (pp. 255-274). London: Sage.

The Boston Foundation. (2012). Trends and challenges. In *The Boston indicators report, 2012.* Retrieved from: www.bostonindicators.org/indicators/~/link.aspx?_id=3585 BB6A22334CB2B2DBCC7FF47DB7FB&_z=z (June 2012).

The Boston Indicators Project. (2004). Degree of residential segregation in Boston and Metro Boston. Retrieved from: www.tbf.org/indicators2004/civichealth/indicators. asp?id=2416 (June 2009).

Williams, C.C. (2005). Cultivating community self-help in deprived urban neighbourhoods. *City and Community, 4*(2), 171-188.

Wirth, L. (1938). Urbanism as a way of life. *American Journal of Sociology, 44*(1), 1-24.

Young, I. (1995). Polity and group difference: A critique of the ideal of universal citizenship. In R. Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing citizenship.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Young, I.M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.