Participatory Decision-Making Models in the Context of Environmental Justice: Are They Working?

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Abstract

An underlying principle in decision-making processes around the allocation and access to natural resources is environmental justice: "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2009). While much of the current literature on environmental justice centres on the distribution of environmental hazards, such as pollution, there is little examination of the distribution of environmental benefits, such as natural resources. As these resources decrease as a consequence of global climate change the development of models regulating the fair distribution of environmental benefits will become even more pressing. Increasingly, models that include a participatory component are implemented within the environmental management field. The hope is that fair distribution is more likely by providing multiple stakeholders with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process.

This paper examines a participatory decision-making model related to the environmental benefit of green space – that is, grass, shrubbery, trees and parks – in neighbourhoods. While there is ample literature on the health and well-being benefits of green space, there has been little work to tie these benefits to the work and aims of environmental justice. The research we present is a case study of the decision making processes in the revitalization and redevelopment of Canada's oldest public housing neighbourhood, Regent Park. Begun in 2002, the revitalization process has included a unique community consultation process which claims to gather resident input on what changes they would like to see in their neighbourhood. Using focus groups with residents and qualitative interviews with staff involved in the consultation process as well as document reviews, the authors are examining to what degree this model of participation has been successful. The model is examined in regard to Arnstein's "ladder of participation" (1969), the three dimensions of social power described by Culley and Hugley (2008), and through Rich, Edelstein, Hallman, and Wandersman's (1995) discussion of empowerment in the context of communities facing environmental injustice. Implications for participatory decision-making processes in the context of global climate will be discussed.

Introduction

In the context of increasing concerns over global climate change, allocation and access to environmental resources reflects an important human dimension: participation and power. In the face of decreasing natural resources, decision-making processes that concern these diminishing resources are becoming an increasingly significant issue. This paper examines decision-making models around environmental resources within the framework of environmental justice. Using the case study of the Regent Park revitalization in Toronto, Canada, decision-making models are discussed by their levels of participation, their sharing of social power, and their implications for the environmental justice movement.

Global Climate Change as an Issue of Environmental Justice

In determining the underlying causes of the current environmental crisis, researchers increasingly point to the link between environmental degradation and other societal issues such as social injustices, declining citizen participation and the trend toward individualism (Hossay, 2006; Riemer, in press; Speth, 2008). It is also apparent that the impact of global climate change does not affect all citizens equally but, in fact, will amplify pre-existing inequalities. In reviewing the data gathered by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), its chair, Rejendra K. Pauchauri, came to conclusion that "it's the poorest of the poor in the world, and this includes poor people even in the prosperous societies, who are going to be the worst hit. […] People who are poor are least-equipped to be able to adapt to the impact of climate change, and therefore in some sense this does become a global responsibility in my view." (2007, quoted in Kanter & Revkin, 2007). In the 1980's and 90's, a person in the developing world was 25 times more likely to be affected by a climate-related disaster than a person in a developed country based on an estimate by the World Bank; so far in this decade that figure has doubled to at least

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50 times (World Bank, 2008). In addition, the exploitation and pollution of our natural environment and the resulting climate change has led to a significant reduction in important natural resources such as fish, agricultural land, forest, and water. For example, half the urban population in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean suffers from one or more diseases associated with inadequate water and sanitation. Worldwide, approximately 1.7 million people die annually as a result of inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). It is predicted that by 2025 at least 3.5 billion people will live in areas that do not have enough water to meet their needs (Hossay, 2006). As resources get scarcer the competition for those resources will intensify with the foreseeable result that those countries and citizens with the least political, financial, and military power will be among the losers. Thus, global climate change is ultimately an issue of environmental justice.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as

> the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2009)

Using this definition, this conception of justice refers to two distinct aspects: both the end result (treatment) and the process (involvement) of all people at every step of decision-making around environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Much of the focus of the environmental justice movement, however, has focused on outcomes. While citizen participation has increasingly become a value for decision making in environmental management (Rich, Edelstein, Hallman & Wandersman, 1995; Bouwen & Tallieu, 2004), the actual citizen involvement often results in no more than tokenism because issues of social power are neglected, as we will argue in this paper. Further, the focus on the tangible outcomes of decision-making processes around environmental

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laws and policies has primarily been concerned with environmental hazards, such as pollution. While the distribution of harm is of great concern, especially in that these harms are by and large distributed disproportionately, this focus neglects to examine the distribution of environmental benefits, such as natural resources. In this paper we will review models and examples of citizen participation and community engagement and discuss their application to the distribution of natural resources such as green space. We believe that this discussion has clear implication for governance in the context of global climate change as the competition for diminishing natural resources will intensify and pre-existing inequalities will amplify unless true democratic structures of citizen participation are implemented.

Decision-Making Models

Using the EPA's definition of environmental justice, the concept refers to two distinct forms of equity: outcome and process equity (Greenburg, 1993). Outcome equity involves the balanced spatial and temporal distribution of benefits and burdens. Process equity involves the application of equitable environmental health, legal, economic, and political criteria to environmental policy (Ibid.). Process equity, in particular, highlights the mechanisms through which environmental injustice occurs.

Given the central importance of process in the allocation and access to natural resources, a review of participatory decision-making models will provide some important insights into issues of process equity. Arnstein's "ladder of participation" (1969) offers a helpful general typology for differentiating among different kinds of participation and community engagement models. Cully and Hughley's (2008) three-dimensional framework of social power is used to discuss critical issues of power that are often neglected in the context of citizen participation. Finally, the concept of empowerment (Rappaport, 1981; Rich, Edelstein, Hallman, Wandersman,

1995) will shed additional light on how true participatory processes can be established in the context of environmental decision making.

Types of Community Engagement and Participation. Community engagement is a concept understood in multiple ways under multiple names, for example, "civic engagement", or "political participation" (Bracht & Tsouro, 1990). Elementally, the concept centres on the notion of public participation, where individuals are engaged in direct opportunities in social or political activities that should ideally involve proportional decision making (International Association for Public Participation, 2007). In reviewing the many different typologies of community engagement described in the literature, Arnstein's (1969) "ladder of participation" appears to be one of the most established and commonly used typologies (Green & Kreuter, 1999) and also one that is relevant to examining participation and power in decision-making processes around environmental resources.

Arnstein's "ladder of participation" examines typologies of community engagement (see Figure 1) and distinguishes between three levels: non participation, tokenism, and citizen power. The most important distinction in this conception is between the middle, tokenism, and top levels, citizen power. Tokenism refers to actions such as informing and consultation, distinguished from citizen power which involves partnership, delegated power and citizen control (Cornwall, 2008).

Social Power. The level of participation citizens have in public decision making processes is closely related to how much social power they have in a given situation, an issue that is often overlooked (Culley & Hughey, 2007; Rich, Edelstein, Hallman, & Wandersman, 1995; Speer, 2008; William, 1999). In the context of this paper, social power refers to the level of control and agency an individual, group, or institution has over the process and outcome of the

decision making and the implementation of the decision. Building on the work of Luke (1974), Dahl (1969), and Bachrach and Baratz (1962), Culley and colleagues found that a three-dimensional model of social power is well suited to examine issues of social power in the context of citizen participation (Culley & Angelique, in press; Culley & Hughey, 2007). The three dimensions are: 1) superior bargaining resources, 2) control of participation and debate, and 3) shaping interests. Superior bargaining resources refers to the ability of the more powerful agent to use tangible and intangible resources, such as money and political influence, in the negotiation of key issues to exert control. For example, large global companies are much better positioned to lobby for their causes than a small group of citizens. Control of participation and debate refers to the ability of the more powerful agent to determine the topics up for debate or discussion, as well as who is involved in the process. The agenda for meetings, for example, are frequently set by one group (e.g., the state agency) without the involvement of other stakeholders providing the organizing group with a clear advantage in the negotiating process. And, meetings are often scheduled during times (e.g., in the middle of a working day) that are difficult for citizens who volunteer their time. Finally, shaping interests involves the more powerful agent's control and dissemination of myths and ideology to influence and constrict the thoughts, desires and interests of the relatively powerless agent. For example, the media campaign of the nuclear industry convincing the general public that nuclear energy is a "green" energy source has significantly weakened the position of those opposing nuclear power plants (Culley and Angelique, in press).

Empowerment

Empowerment is a mechanism through which individuals and communities gain mastery over their affairs (Rappaport, 1981). Rich and colleagues (1995) present an understanding of citizen participation as a process in which empowerment may arise for both individuals and

communities. In examining a case study of community opposition to the siting of an environmentally impactful facility, Rich and colleagues discuss the barriers to citizen participation even when formal decision-making processes have been opened to community participation. In the case study example cited, while the citizens were given the right to participate in adjudicatory hearings under intervener status, there were several consequent barriers to their full inclusion in the hearing process. The citizens were limited in their ability to make proper input as they had no knowledge of the appropriate terminology of procedures, the issues in the hearings were framed so as to be addressed by technical experts, leaving the citizens with no input on the formal issues at question.

The authors argue that the empowerment or disempowerment of a community facing environmental hazards is shaped by the interaction of two factors: 1) the community's capacity of response to the problem, determined by individual characteristics and social institutions, and 2) the capacity of formal institutions to involve citizens in decision-making processes. The first factor refers to individual psychological resources such as self-esteem, intellectual resources such as education, and a supportive surrounding culture that allows collective solutions. The second factor refers to the mechanisms of governments and corporations to consult citizens. In the following we will examine a case study of citizen participation in more detail illustrating the theoretical principles and factors described above.

Case Study: The Revitalization of Regent Park

Known to many as "the largest, most notoriously ill-planned public housing development in Canada" (Meagher & Boston, 2003, p.5), Regent Park's 2100 rent-geared-to-income units span a radius of 69 acres in the east end of downtown Toronto, Canada. The public housing neighbourhood is home to over 7000 people, 60% of whom are New Canadians, resulting in

eight major language or ethno-cultural communities being represented (Ibid). The changes

undergoing in this diverse neighbourhood involve tearing down and rebuilding each building and

adding new units, phase by phase, the redesign of green space, the addition of social

infrastructure (e.g., an aquatics centre and new community centre), and the incorporation of

market units.

The revitalization will not only drastically alter the physical environment, but also the

social environment. A significant change to Regent Park will also surround its socio-economic

make-up: the revitalization includes the addition of market units, transforming it from a public

housing only neighbourhood to a mixed income neighbourhood. Alongside these significant

changes to what was Canada's largest public housing neighbourhood has been the unique

community consultation model developed by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation

(TCHC) and Public Interest Strategy and Communications. Public Interest, an organization that

develops outreach and engagement strategies, policy and research, and communication and

social marketing for public sector and non-profit organizations, developed a model especially for

the Regent Park community given its social and political history and diverse population. This

community consultation model was reviewed in detail as a viable model for participatory

decision-making in general and around issues of environmental justice specifically.

Methods. A case study method was chosen to examine the community consultation

model used by TCHC during the beginning stages of the revitalization of the Regent Park

development. The research addressed six areas of concern: resident consultation, resident

priorities for revitalization, uses for green space, the benefits of green space, the process or

catalyst for revitalization, and the significance of revitalization. The research questions relevant

to the current discussion were: 1) What are the power dynamics involved in the revitalization of

Regent Park? What has been the community consultation process? Has that process accurately represented the residents? 2) How is the history of Regent Park, pre- and post-revitalization, an issue of environmental justice?

The data for this case study was compiled from four different sources: a review of archival data, observation, interviews with staff members of organizations involved in the revitalization, and focus groups with residents of Regent Park. The archival data served to historically, politically, economically, and socially contextualize the experiences of the community of Regent Park, as well as explore the catalysts for revitalization in broader ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The observation of community meetings and of the behaviour of residents in the neighbourhood examined the social climate of the neighbourhood, as well as provided primary data on the consultation process. Finally, the interviews with staff members and focus groups with residents of Regent Park provided a community-based account of the consultation process, the priorities of residents in the revitalization, and provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the role of the consultation in the context of environmental changes to the neighbourhood.

The archival data reviewed consisted of media on Regent Park – dating back to its inception in 1948 – census data from Statistics Canada, and neighbourhood studies conducted by TCHC prior to the revitalization. All sources of data were publicly available. The media on Regent Park have been sought from major Canadian news corporations, documentaries from the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), as well as independent and community-based reports and films, for example the Toronto chapter of the Independent Media Center (IMC, a.k.a. Indymedia) and Regent Park Focus. The neighbourhood studies conducted by the TCHC have been accessed through the public TCHC website for Regent Park, and included: a community engagement

study, an urban planning and design study, a planning approvals study, a sustainability study, an architecture study, a social development plan, and a financial plan.

The observations made as part of the case study were from two sources: a community update meeting and several instances of walking around Regent Park and the larger Cabbagetown neighbourhood. The open meeting attended was intended primarily for the residents to receive information and ask questions about the next phase in the revitalization, Phase II. The meeting was held in the largest room in the community centre and conducted in English, with seven community animators acting as translators interspersed throughout the room speaking the seven main languages (other than English) of the community. The meeting lasted no longer than two hours, and was led by TCHC's CEO, Derek Ballantyne, who presented Phase II of the revitalization as it pertained to residents.

Eight interviews were conducted with staff members from organizations serving Regent Park. The participants were a mix of senior-level and lower-level staff from the following organizations: Regent Park Community Health Centre (RPCHC), the Toronto Christian Resource Centre (TCRC), Dixon Hall, Regent Park Focus (Focus), and the Regent Park Community Centre.

Two focus groups with residents of Regent Park were conducted. The first focus group contained four residents, three female and one male, all of whom were English-speaking Canadians of Western-European descent – one of the eight major ethno-cultural groups in Regent Park (Meagher & Boston, 2003) – and all had lived in the neighbourhood for over a decade. The second focus group contained five residents, all of whom were women of colour, had lived in the neighbourhood for at least five years, and were also New Canadians. Many of the participants in this focus group were also Bengali. Two of the five participants of this focus

group were two of the 28 community animators employed by TCHC to help facilitate the community consultation process. Identified in the Community Engagement Study (Meagher & Boston, 2003), community animators were Regent Park residents from the eight major ethno-cultural groups hired because of their social networks within the community, as well as the languages they spoke and thus the ethno-cultural groups they could connect with.

Decision-Making in Regent Park: Community Consultation Model

The Regent Park revitalization plan was launched in 2002, and ratified by city authorities in 2003 (Purdy, 2005). In the words of the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), the Regent Park Revitalization Study, presented in December 2002 to residents, "had incorporated a strong community engagement process to ensure that tenants were able to shape its content" (Revitalization Study and Action Plan, (n.d.), para. 2). More than 2,000 residents, community agencies and financial, design and planning experts contributed to the plan. From this study, TCHC staff, with input from residents and other stakeholders, created an Action Plan for the revitalization that embodies the consultation's recommendations.

The community engagement process in the consultation and in planning for the revitalization were summarized in a Community Engagement Team Report. The engagement of residents began with TCHC and its consultants taking the approach of hiring individuals from the major ethnocultural and demographic communities within Regent Park. These individuals were employed as community animators and were involved in certain facets of the project, "from process design to materials development" (Meagher & Boston, 2003, p. 5), although they were not involved in the final decision-making processes around the implementation of the redevelopment and revitalization. Community animators, who were already situated within the social network of the neighbourhood and of their respective communities, nurtured networks to

transmit information and facilitate community feedback. The Community Engagement Team

Report states that this approach won the trust of the residents (Meagher & Boston, 2003).

The consultation process involved an environmental scan and three rounds of

consultation, where each round became increasingly focused on specific issues amongst residents

concerning land-use planning and how they would be affected. Each round of consultation had

its results posted for public review in the form of a public meeting, which also sought input for

the following phase of consultation. All meetings and communications during this project were

conducted in eight languages, with actively offered aid by the community animators to residents

accessing information.

The result of the engagement process was a list of priorities from the community. These

priorities included: the location of and functions of green space, the size of local streets, the

speed and volume of traffic, access to parking, access to public services, access to community

space, access to controlled communal space, access to community space within residential

buildings, distribution of commercial properties, distribution of subsidized and market units, and

the location of high-rise buildings (Meagher & Boston, 2003, p. 51).   From this list it is clear

that issues of space is the most prominent and clear theme in the list. The residents of Regent

Park themselves have identified the role of natural and built spaces on their lives and on their

community.

Access to Green Space as an Environmental Justice Issue. In the definition of

environmental justice above, the "meaningful involvement" of all people (process) is given

similar priority as their "fair treatment" (outcome) – that is distributive justice – which has

historically been the main focus for the environmental justice movement (Gosine &

Teelucksingh, 2008). The environmental justice movement primarily fought cases of

environmental pollution that unequally affected certain communities or population groups, such as the fact that waste sites are much more likely be found in neighbourhoods of low income and African American citizens (Bullard, Mohai, Saha, & Wright, 2007). However, distributive justice is also relevant for unequal distributions of environmental benefits. For example, multiple benefits have been identified for citizens' access to green space, something that is often unevenly distributed (Kuo, 2001; Kearney, 2006; Mitchell & Popham, 2007) Green space in a neighbourhood, for example, affects individuals' attention restoration (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan, 1995) and stress reduction (Ulrich, 1979; 1984; 1986; Ulrich, Dimberg & Driver, 1991), and this individual-level replenishment has important implications for low-income communities, such as Regent Park. On a community level, these individual processes of attention restoration are shown as invaluable in restoring psychological resources, such as attention, in order to address larger life stressors that are a direct result of poverty (Kuo, 2001). Coupled with the findings that public green space has a significant effect on individual and community well-being in low-income neighbourhoods in particular – in contrast to their negligible effects in mid- and high-income neighbourhoods, typically characterized by notable amounts of private green space (Mitchell & Popham, 2007) – the residents of Regent Park, by virtue of being low-income, have a unique opportunity to actualize these benefits to health and well-being.

Analysis of the Community Consultation Model

Even though this community consultation model has a more significant citizen participation component than many other examples found in the literature, it is still a process wrought with power dynamics with important implications for the representation of citizen interests. An analysis of this model using the theoretical frameworks introduced earlier will illustrate that. Using Arnstein's ladder as a framework, the participation level of the residents of

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Regent Park cannot be classified as citizen power but instead falls under tokenism. While the citizen were involved by being consulted for their priorities for redevelopment and revitalization, and also being updated on the phases of revitalization, they were not true partners in the decision-making process. In order for the residents to be true partners in this process, they would have needed to have a clear role in the final decision-making around what will be implemented in the revitalization – a role that only TCHC holds. These power dynamics can be further illustrated using Culley and Hughley's (2008) framework of social power.

Using Culley and Hughley's (2008) theoretical framework of social power, the community consultation process of Regent Park can be analyzed along three dimensions: superior bargaining resources, control of participation and debate, and shaping interests. The first dimension, superior bargaining resources, is generally understood

> as the use of superior resources (by A: the relatively powerful) to reward or punish behavior of those with fewer resources (B: the relatively powerless). Because (A) has superior resources (e.g., money, property, authority), (A) is able to prevail in the negotiation of key issues—via the exercise of control over resources which are used to overtly coerce (B) to do what (A) wants. (Culley & Hughley, 2008, p.101)

In the case of Regent Park, it is clear that TCHC as the owner, landlord, and rent subsidizer is in a relatively powerful position in contrast to residents. This can be seen in the fact that TCHC has been the formal catalyst and conductor of the revitalization. The changes to the neighbourhood are neither initiated, decided, nor implemented by residents. Instead, residents are being consulted following the rules established by TCHC. If residents and community staff were genuinely given shared power in the revitalization, there would be a clearer distribution of responsibilities and resources in order to involve all stakeholder groups in the neighbourhood changes. Apart from the employment of residents to perform particular tasks assigned to them by multiple hierarchies of supervisors, the residents have no tangible control over the

revitalization process that is occurring in their neighbourhood. The only power afforded to them is their voice and the promise that their voice would be incorporated into TCHC's plans through the community consultation. This is why Arnstein classifies consultation models as tokenism.

The second dimension of social power, control of participation and debate, is "understood as the ability to determine who participates and what is debated in decision making about key issues" (Culley & Hughley, 2008, p.101). From the surveys sent to residents, to the community meetings to present the new phases of development, the community consultation process is a concrete form of participation and debate. The outcome of the process is found in the Public Interest Community Engagement Study (Meagher & Boston, 2003) and the phases of development planned by TCHC. The community consultation process was ultimately the product of TCHC and Public Interest who have collaborated to produce a model that was intended to gather information through a means deemed appropriate and most conducive to the community's participation. However, it was still a process overseen by the most powerful stakeholder: the owner, landlord, and rent subsidizer of the neighbourhood. While TCHC did indeed ask residents for their priorities, and their use of community animators to conduct group discussions and door to door surveys appears effective in engaging resident participation, ultimately their decisions on what to include in the new plan are clear indicators of what they considered important in the revitalization. One example of this power dynamic is in the fate of the community gardens that existed in Regent Park prior to the revitalization. The gardens were identified by residents and community staff as a benefit in the residents' lives as well as a priority in the design of the neighbourhood. But as of Phase II there are no clear commitments from TCHC on providing space for them at ground level. As a benefit to both the individual and

the community, the community gardens should be considered a critical resource that is being lost in Regent Park contrary to the desires of many residents.

The third and final dimension of social power, shaping interest, concerns the ability of the relatively powerful to control and disseminate myths and ideology used to influence and constrict the thoughts, desires and interests of the relatively powerless (Culley & Hughley, 2008, p.101). Broadly, this dimension illuminates the influence of the history of the neighbourhood and its social climate has on the community consultation process. According to several community staff who were also long-time residents, undeveloped promises for maintenance, more recreational facilities, and social infrastructure have been provided the community in the past and have all resulted in disappointment. The climate therefore during the appropriation of the neighbourhood by TCHC in 2002 was that of scepticism, grounded in a history of no physical changes in Regent Park and a deteriorating sense of safety (Meagher & Boston, 2003). In 2002, a renewed promise of redevelopment and revitalization was offered by TCHC. As new owners of the development, TCHC were afforded the opportunity to work on building a new relationship with the residents.

Finally, using Rich and colleagues (1995) articulation of two broad factors that result in the empowerment or disempowerment of a community facing issues of environmental injustice, the community consultation model in Regent Park reflects the importance of the interaction of individual characteristics, the immediate culture, and the mechanisms for participation by the formal institution of TCHC. The first factor, the community's capacity to respond to the problem, illuminates the presence of both the residents' psychological and intellectual resources, as well as the culture's openness to collective decision-making. In the Community Engagement Team Report (Meagher & Boston, 2003), the community engagement team stated that the

creation of a unique consultation model with the residents of Regent Park was in large part due to a long-standing climate of distrust towards the housing authority, and that the involvement of community animators as frontline consultants in this process has overcome this concern. The community consultation model then reflects the ability of the residents to be empowered and involved in the changes in their environment because of the immediate culture's understanding of the climate of the residents, as well as the immediate culture's desire to be collectively consulted.

The second factor, the capacity of formal institutions to involve citizens in decision-making processes, also reflects the empowerment of the Regent Park residents in their consultation. As discussed earlier using Culley and Hughley's (2008) second dimension of social power, control of participation and debate, TCHC as the formal institution involved has clearly worked to empower residents by their decision to create a thorough community consultation process. This mechanism has facilitated the opportunity for residents to become involved in one aspect of the decision-making process around the revitalization of the neighbourhood, and, combined with individual characteristics and the surrounding culture, the consultation process has appropriately been tailored to the way in which residents are able to participate – i.e., through the use of community animators who are both connected residents and members of the eight distinct ethno-cultural communities that make up the neighbourhood.

According to the case study, the community of Regent Park has been uniquely involved in its own revitalization, however, the involvement did not go beyond consultation. Through the tailored consultation model created by TCHC and Public Interest, the residents have participated in a sensitive means of consultation. The employment of residents from all major ethno-cultural groups as community animators in particular has, in part, overcome concerns about a climate of

distrust amongst residents. In addition, according to residents who have participated on both sides of the consultation, the process undertaken by community animators has facilitated the opportunity for residents to participate in a relaxed and culturally appropriate way. TCHC's design process for the community consultation did appear consistent with its mandate to operate with the needs of residents in mind.

Even with the uniquely designed consultation process, the relative social power of residents involves more than being consulted for their needs and priorities. Social power, in this instance, would mean the involvement of residents at every stage and in every major aspect of conceptualizing, planning, and implementing the revitalization. TCHC ultimately has shared some of its power with residents by engaging them in an intensive multi-year consultation process, however, it has not overcome the clear discrepancies in social power between the two stakeholder groups. As renters living on low-income, residents of Regent Park are subject to an inexorable hierarchy of landlord over tenant and it is a power dynamic that yields tangible consequences in the form of control of maintenance, landscape, design and infrastructure in one's neighbourhood. The community consultation process has given some of that control to residents, though the final say in the implementation of the revitalization belongs to TCHC.

Conclusion

As environmental resources become more and more scarce, the ensuing competition over these resources will amplify social, political, and financial power both within and across countries, making global climate change a clear issue of environmental justice. Environmental justice concerns these issues of power and participation, and in emphasizing and critically examining the process equity around environmental resources and hazards, power and participation can be truly shared amongst all stakeholders. Arnstein's "ladder of participation" (1969), Culley and

Hughley's (2008) three dimensions of social power, and Rich and colleagues' (1995) exploration

of the role of empowerment in citizen participation have provided different facets by which to

analyze participation in environmental decision-making. The case study presented on the

community consultation model used in the Regent Park revitalization has shown both the

potentials as well as the barriers to citizen participation in the distribution of green space as an

issue of environmental justice. Ultimately, even this well intended community consultation

model has not reflected true citizen power and has neglected issues of social power. The

consequence, therefore, is a lack of true citizen empowerment, and with that a lack of power to

enforce citizen interests, such as community gardens. In the case study presented, citizen

interests have been only considered insofar as they do not interfere with the interests of the group
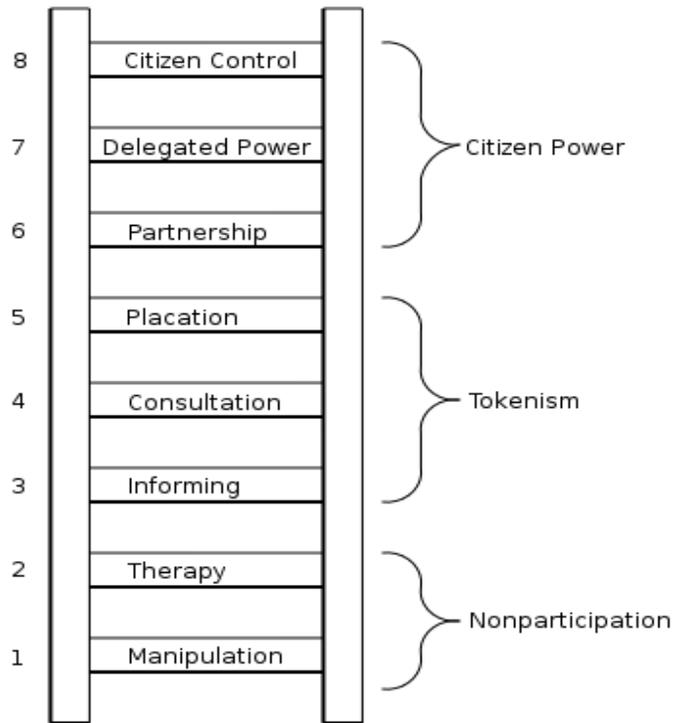
in power.

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Figure 1: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

8	Citizen Control	
7	Delegated Power	Citizen Power
6	Partnership	
5	Placation	
4	Consultation	Tokenism
3	Informing	
2	Therapy	Nonparticipation
1	Manipulation	

(Arnstein, 1969)