Not-for-Profit Visions of the Public Good: Activism and Democracy in North Carolina

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Schemes to turn government services over to for-profit contractors are extremely popular among today's politicians. Perhaps it makes sense for the government to hire contractors to build roads, but educating children and providing other such public services is not the same as building roads. Do we really want to encourage for-profit versions of public services? Activist based groups of the kind I describe in this paper offer not-for-profit alternatives to privatization and raise important issues about how local democracy is changing.

When my colleagues and I began envisioning the "North Carolina Project" some eight years ago, we were concerned about local democracy. We wanted to know how government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," was faring in the midst of the global-scale economic and political changes of the last few decades. We knew that corporate globalization was creating both opportunities and problems for communities and people all across the state. How were people reacting to these challenges and how were their responses reshaping democracy? Long time residents of Chatham County, for example, were faced with accepting (or not) increased flows of workers from Mexico and Central America. Or, to take another example, residents of Durham were grappling with problems created by the transformations of the city's economy from manufacturing to one of selling consumer services. We wanted to understand how these transformations and the changing roles of the federal, state and local governments in administering government services were affecting the functioning of local democracy. Accordingly, we set out to learn about local visions of the common good, who was shaping them, and whose interests they served and whose

they ignored.

In this paper, I describe what we learned about the activist citizens and groups that were struggling to respond to the challenges of the economic and social transformations going on around them. I include some description of the kind of activist groups that we found, the way that the opportunities for activism have shifted, and the crucial importance of activist groups in today's experimentation with democracy.

Activism Today

Influenced by images from the civil rights protests, student movements, and anti-war protests of the 1960s and 1970s, we planned to locate activist groups by studying local conflicts that erupted into public places and in the media. We expected telling controversies to surface at town council and school board meetings. Those who voiced dissent would be the activists that we would learn more about. We also knew that there were significant segments of the population who stood to be affected by decisions of the county commissioners, for example, yet, for a variety of reasons, never voiced dissent or even tried to get their issues on the table. Parts of the research design involved finding these people and learning what kept them from directing their concerns to the board members and other officials who were making such decisions. We also wanted to know where these absent citizens directed their discontent if not to public venues.

Our research in 1997 and 1998 caused us to shift our image of activism. Our original thoughts about where to look for challenges to neoliberal thought and its for-profit visions of the public good turned out to be too limited. We had not taken sufficient account of the changing role of the government in providing public services. Nor had we recognized the extent to which the boundaries between government and business and between government and civic organizations were becoming blurred.

Over the past thirty years, the federal, state and local governments have handed over more of

their work and the funds to pay for it to private businesses and to non-profit governmental organizations. As a result, a number of activist groups have become partners with the state in the delivery of public services. Some, though not the ones we studied, have successfully competed for fairly large projects such as welfare to work programs. Others, including the ones described below, took advantage of more circumscribed collaborations with the government and of small sources of funding from the government, foundations, and private donors to develop projects to serve the public. In place of a popular image of activists as organizing protests in opposition to the state, the more accurate view is that of activists organizing service projects sometimes in partnership with the state. It is not so much that activists no longer protest the rules, policies and actions of government officials and agencies, for some do. It is that there are more openings for civic groups to design and create programs and projects for the public.

Before turning to particular groups in our study, I need to include an explanation of the names of the groups. Following normal anthropological practices of research reporting, we use pseudonyms to refer to individual activists, to the activist groups and, in the case of the group I describe first, we even give a pseudonym to the town in which the group has its headquarters. Also, when describing group activities and goals, I use the past tense. The past tense is meant as a reminder that our research was done in 1997 and 1998; these groups are dynamic and likely to have changed over the years since we studied them.

Not-for-Profit Visions of the Public Good: The Concerned Citizens of Thornton

Founded in 1978, the Concerned Citizens of Thornton provides a good example (see Appendix I for summary descriptions of the activists groups referred to in this paper) of an activist group that provided public services.

The Concerned Citizens of Thornton or CCT grew out of the 1970s civil rights efforts of African Americans in the area to desegregate Halifax Country Schools and to gain access to

decision making about the education of their children. (See Appendix II for information about our choice of research sites. Population figures and a map of the state are included. Appendix II: Five North Carolina Research Sites.) By the time of our study, some twenty years after its founding, CCT provided a range of community services including a health clinic, health education, maintenance of important historic buildings, organization of events recounting African American history in the area, and support for a seniors' and youth groups. In addition to providing these services, its activities involved participating in and organizing environmental justice and black land loss activities across the state and country, and interviewing politicians vying for local, state and federal offices. CCT did stage protests, against the hog factories moving into the area, but not the kind of civil disobedience protests of the civil rights movement that had earlier landed some of its members in jail. A good amount of effort went into locating and maintaining relationships with public and private universities that supplied some medical and other expertise and in securing small grants and donations. In addition to many lifelong residents of Thornton, the group included people who had returned to the area after going away to college or urban areas for work and a few newcomers. Through the organizing activities of some of the members of CCT, CCT was connected to several larger scale social movements, primarily the environmental justice movement.

Activist Groups and the Public Services and Projects They Offer

Not surprisingly, activism in the different areas of North Carolina we studied reflected opportunities and challenges particular to the local places, to the history of the areas, and the social position of the members of the groups.   These groups offered activities and projects that were fine-tuned to particular places and particular populations. Unlike the businesses that governments have increasingly turned to in the last thirty odd years, activist groups get into supplying public services not because they are oriented to making profits for individual gain, but rather because they are dedicated to advancing social goals.

A couple of vignettes from the Concerned Citizens of Thornton can help to give a flavor of the sort of social goals activist groups favored and of their special relationships to the local areas they served. During the period of our research, an article about Thornton appeared in the Sunday Journal of the News & Observer, a major state newspaper published in Raleigh. The article portrayed Halifax County as a place time had left behind. Entitled, "Still Here," the article described Thornton, which "…like the rest of northeastern North Carolina, is nothing like the upscale Triangle. It has an agricultural heritage that stretches back to ante-bellum days, when large plantations were everywhere. Many of the people who are still here are the descendants of slaves and are still trying to make their living off the land."

Focusing on a woman who, coincidentally happened to be a member of the Concerned Citizens of Thornton, the newspaper's story used the woman as a symbol of Thornton's tenacity. The reader learns from the article that the people persevered through slavery; then, an unusually long history of tenant farming; next, a respite in the form of a New Deal Program that helped them buy land. Most recently, because of discrimination by the USDA's loan programs and lack of business savvy, there was the loss of the New Deal farms. Even while portraying the woman as an icon of perseverance in an outmoded place, the newspaper account allowed other information to seep through. She was described as a "woman who walks with a cane now and speaks with a rasp but is fiercely committed to community activism and public education." About the Concerned Citizens of Thornton, the woman was quoted as saying:

A lot of them [members of the Concerned Citizens of Thornton] came here, they didn't know anything about standing up, telling how they felt about something. Now most everybody here can stand up and talk. And then by them telling about their situations, that's helped make it. Because if anything comes up, everybody can know it and we can work on that particular thing. Instead of trying to do it yourself, everybody can turn out and try to help with that

situation.

Another of CCT's social goals was evident in its ideas about relationships with public and private partners and donors. CCT insisted that these relationships be symmetrical and not ones in which CCT was asked to play the role of the passive recipient of the largesse of a magnanimous donor. While the CCT clinic benefited from the medical expertise supplied to it from East Carolina and Duke Universities, for example, CCT described the university personnel as participating in "CCT's Intern Learning Program." As stated in the booklet celebrating the tenth year of the clinic in 1997, the Intern Learning Program was shaped by the following percepts:

- Many of our interns are by chance Caucasian or from other European descent. They have had little or no experience in the real world of poverty, racism, the bureaucratic maze and the political nature of health care distribution in the U.S.

- We find that their intense training and education in their chosen fields of study tends to isolate them even more. Ours is a social change movement….What we try to do is move our interns out of the nest of privilege and the isolation of university towers. Interns are required to live in local homes in the community. They must feel and experience, if only for a short time, what it is like to live without enough food, heat and without indoor bathroom facilities, and to experience other difficulties and personal struggles of the people they will be working with.

Considering CCT as a generator of projects for the public good and comparing it to business-oriented providers, we see a different overarching motivation. While neoliberal rhetoric urges us to adjust publicly funded services so companies can make money from them, CCT makes a virtue of providing services in a manner that creates active, knowledgeable citizens and strives for the respect for all people regardless of race or class.

The Bases of Activist Visions of Desirable Futures

Stepping back from the particular case of the Concerned Citizens of Thornton in North Carolina,

one sees that CCT is only one of a wide variety of activists and civic groups that are both working for social change and stepping in to provide public projects and public services. Taking a broad, inclusive view of what constitutes activism, there is at present, a tremendous range of groups, proposals, and venues and a wide array of bases for action.[i] A week or so after being sworn into the office of President, George W. Bush made headlines by promising to give billion of dollars to "faith-based" groups that deliver social services such as drug and alcohol abuse treatment and counseling for prison inmates. Faith-based groups are only one alternative to CCT and other activist groups. Another competitor with faith-based and other activist groups are those referred to as "hate-based." Among the latter's activities is the creation of virtual public fora on the WEB where white supremacists and homophobes air their views and imagine futures where their enemies are eradicated.[ii] Considering the groups described in this paper, the basis of their goals and visions could be described as predominantly "place/community-based" or predominantly "movement-based" or somewhere in-between.[iii]

Movement Based Groups: Citizens Unite

A group in Watauga County, which we call Citizens Unite, is an example of a group that was more "movement-based" than "place-based." It began in 1997 when the residents of a neighborhood in the vicinity of Boone heard of plans for an asphalt plant in their valley. Most of the members of Citizens Unite had moved into the area from other parts of the state and the country. They valued the beauty of the area and were fearful of the health consequences of the plant. Tutored by several environmentalist groups they broadened their vision to encompass clean air in Watauga County as a whole. Their activities involved contacting city and state officials, mobilizing people of the area to attend public hearings, protesting and speaking out against the plant and lax state regulations on fugitive emissions. They came to see themselves as watchdogs with the responsibility of monitoring businesses and government to make sure air quality was maintained in

the area. Some began to identify themselves as environmentalists.

In contrast to Citizens Unite, the more "place-based" groups focused on serving, and often

protecting, the local community and its ties to the history and geography of the area. They drew

their strength and motivation from concern for their community as a place with a particular past,

such as the Concerned Citizens of Thornton's emphasis on the area's history as a New Deal

"resettlement" community. The futures such groups envisioned had to do with the place and with

the people there who related to one another as neighbors, members of the same community, friends,

and relatives. "Movement-based" goals, on the other hand, reflect a vision of social change

desirable not just for the local place, but also for the larger region, the country, perhaps the world.

At the other end of the continuum from movement-based groups, a second group we studied, in

Watauga, was predominantly place/community-based. As described in Appendix II, we chose

Watauga as a study site because of the accelerating reorientation of the area to tourism, leisure

activity, education and other consumption oriented activities. Among other concerns, the group I

turn to next, the Laurel Valley Preservation and Development, Incorporated, was trying to prevent

their community from being over run by vacationers and tourists.

Place/Community Based Groups: Laurel Valley Preservation and Development, Inc.

LVPD had its roots in the Valley's earlier struggles against the relocation of its post office and

school. Its goals were to steer the changes taking place in the area so as to preserve and revitalize

community institutions and to prevent Laurel Valley from losing its identity and the memory of its

history.   Their activities involved gaining control of the beautiful, old Works Project

Administration stone building that had housed the high school until the 1960s, creating community

space in the building, creating a museum for a famous local musician, renting out space to small

businesses that would employ local people and organizing heritage and music festivals. Members

of the group also worked to set up a community council with standing to intervene in development

projects slated for the area. The membership included a mix of lifelong residents, newcomers, and former residents who had returned to the area after going away to college and working for long periods usually in urban areas. Most were middle class. Reflecting the relatively homogenous population of the area, the group was white.

The Laurel Valley Preservation and Development organization stood out from the others in that it clearly rejected inclusion in a social movement network. A university-based program wanted the group to become active in a regional network dedicated to "sustainable development," for example, and approached the LVPD leaders. But, they judged affiliation with outside groups to be an invitation to local suspicion, so the leaders declined.[iv]

The distinction of "place-based" versus "movement-based" groups is useful only to a degree. Most groups combine elements of both. The Concerned Citizens of Thornton, for example, was fiercely dedicated to place and to the local black community it served while, at the same time, participating in broad scale social movements. The group was active in building a statewide environmental justice network and in organizing regional activities to secure relief from the effects of USDA's discriminatory treatment of black farmers especially during Reagan's term in office.

Mixing For-profit with Non-profit Visions: The Broughton Road Improvement Association

So far, I have treated activist based groups as though they different from profit based groups, but, in fact, the reorganization of government has produced partnerships that draw profit-based and non-profit-based groups together. Broughton Road Improvement Association was a place/community-based group that became involved in such an arrangement. As with the group in Halifax County, the Broughton Road Improvement Association was trying to make up for years of neglect by the government and disdain from those local whites who commanded greater economic and social capital. At one point it teamed up with the city of Fayetteville and a public-private partnership with a local developer in order to procure subsidized housing. The arrangement ended

up pitting the activist vision of the public good against profit-based versions.

The activities of the Broughton Road Improvement Association included changing the zoning of parts of the neighborhood, learning which statutes and ordinances were not being enforced, inveigling the city to enforce them in order to end drug dealing and prostitution and close down nightclubs in the area, working with Habitat for Humanity in efforts to replace dilapidated housing stock, attending town council meetings and calling on city officials to complete unfinished city projects they deemed dangerous. Even though its members viewed the city as the source of much of their trouble, they were convinced to join with the city and a private developer in proposing projects for subsidized housing to HUD, a federal agency. In order to be able to receive federal and other sources of funding, the Broughton Road Improvement Association officially became a non-profit organization and was eventually put forward by the city as a model Community Development Corporation to be emulated by other community groups. Meanwhile, some suspected that the not-for-profit motives of the group had become mixed together with the goals of making a profit thus compromising the Association.

Some of the members and other activists who commented on the group were wary of the business interests that they thought dominated in the partnership with the city. In their eyes the project was more likely to further the plans of the developers than help the people who lived in the community. The developers, the story went, wanted to upgrade this residential section near downtown so they could build expensive houses that would sell to those with money, likely whites. At least in the suspicions of these commentators, the public-private partnership was dominated by business motives and would not only not help residents of the Broughton Road areas, but result in the alienation of some sections of the neighborhood to outsiders.

In a related case, activists in Watauga and other western counties were similarly faced with opportunities to work in partnership with business interests. Around the same time as the rest of our

studies, a large network of cooperating business, environmental, and cultural heritage interests

formed in response to a federal initiative called the American Heritage Rivers Program. Together

they procured designation of one of the area's rivers, the New River, as an American Heritage

River. The federal initiative heavily encouraged the formation of "multi-stakeholder" partnerships

to develop projects up and down the river (Guldbrandsen and Holland in press). In general, such

partnerships provide activists with the opportunity to step in, undertake projects for the public good

and encourage social change, in the case the American Heritage Rivers Program--

environmentalism, but they create a context in which activist goals are vulnerable to being

overwhelmed by profit-making goals.[v]

Democracy and Activist-based Groups

In order to summarize findings from our research, the North Carolina project team uses the

shorthand phrase, "government by proxy." Neoliberal prescriptions urge the government to act,

wherever possible, as a broker rather than as a provider of services and projects.   From the

neoliberal perspective, businesses are the ideal stand-ins, substitutes, or proxies for government

agencies as suppliers of public services. However, non-profit, non-governmental groups are

acceptable, too, especially when profit making would be difficult. These government-by-proxy

arrangements hand over public services either to profit-based businesses or to place/community-

based or movement based groups.

The North Carolina Project team also uses the metaphor of "subletting democracy." When

public services are provided by proxies, whether profit-based, activist-based, or some mixture of the

two, questions of public input arise. Who is responsible for seeing that all citizens have input into

decisions about the allocation and design of public services? Who is responsible for seeing that all

citizens have access to services? In the examples given above, activist-based groups undertook,

with larger and smaller amounts of government support[vi], the goals of provide health,

environmental protection and other services that the government was not providing. Others

undertook the goals of revitalizing and refurbishing their communities; others, preventing changes

related to globalization from culturally and physically destroying their collective identity and way

of life. These groups and their achievements are impressive, but, if groups like them and if

businesses are to substitute for government, we have to ask questions about how "government by

proxy" changes the shape of democracy.

 Nonini's paper and others have brought out problems with profit-based government substitutes.

While activist based groups clearly allow for public services to be shaped by visions other than the

pursuit of profit, they, as do the profit-based alternatives, raise issues of democracy. For one, these

groups, their projects, and their efforts are voluntary. Who joins is up to the group. How decisions

are made is up to the group. Who has input into the public projects they envision is up to the group.

The part of the population they serve is up to the group. Consider the last activist based group that I

will describe, Durham Inner Village:

Serving Particular Populations: Durham Inner Village

In essence, Durham Inner Village undertook to redesign a large section of downtown Durham.

Their vision included a public park surrounded by upscale commercial establishments and, around

that, a residential area. In the past, the city government might have originated the project as a part

of an urban revitalization effort. Instead, Durham Inner Village--a non-profit, non-governmental

organization, drew support from government and private sources and other non-profit, non-

government organizations. It received help from a public-private partnership established by the city

to provide advice and technical support for economic development projects and it lobbied city

officials to instigate a bond referendum for the park. It attempted to interest private developers and

another non-profit group, Habitat for Humanity, in the project.

If the city government, and not a non-governmental group, had undertaken the project, the plan

would have been more vulnerable to public scrutiny. It is possible; indeed likely, that there would

have been extensive and perhaps acrimonious debate about whether the public interest would best

be served by some other project. Durham has a well-organized black community, which often

speaks out in favor of the interests of low-income African Americans living in the city. It is

possible that one or more of the black political organizations in Durham would have been more

concerned about bringing in jobs for lower income people than about building a mixed residential

commercial area that would likely be occupied and frequented by wealthier whites.[vii]

At the time of our study, Durham Inner Village was mostly composed of white professional

males. To their credit, they put a good amount of effort into securing diverse input into a vision for

the area of the city they wanted to revitalize. And, they made efforts diversify their membership.

The point to be made here is not that they were relatively unsuccessful at diversification, but rather

that their efforts were completely voluntary. Every activist-based group I have described reflected

the social location of most of its members. The groups tended to envision projects that served

people most familiar to and usually most like them. Moreover, most reflected, at least to some

degree, a place-based orientation. A lot of the strengths and achievements of these groups came

from being place-based and from building projects to meet the needs and desires of people holding

certain class and race positions.

It is also instructive to note that although every group discussed above possessed particular

resources and connections that opened possibilities, the path for Durham Inner Village appeared

easier than that for the other groups. Because of their class background and social position as

whites, the members of Durham Inner Village had a higher likelihood of having members with

professional skills and a higher likelihood of being able to lobby successfully government officials

than say the Broughton Road Improvement Association. Equal access to public services and to

participating in the design of public services is unlikely because the playing field for the

development of activist-based groups is not level.

Changing Forms of Citizenship: Limits on New Forms of Local Democracy

Commentators have pointed out that neoliberal thinking reshapes ideas of citizenship. In neoliberal prescriptions, the job of the citizen is to make informed market choices among the array of schools, health care and other services provided by businesses in contract with the government. The job of the citizen is not to elect good politicians and officials who then see to the public good by designing good educational and health programs. The job of the citizen is to make good consumer choices among the available services so that efficient (as measured by their profits) programs survive and inefficient ones are weeded out. While electing government officials who will work to ensure a climate favorable to business is deemed important, citizenship is first and foremost exercised through choice in the market place. In neoliberal thought, in other words, citizens' input as consumers is just as important, if not more important, than their input as voters or participants in discussions about the common good.

If we consider cases where activist-based groups, in contrast to profit-based groups, stand in for government, we see a different sort of citizen.[viii] To the extent that activist-based groups are successful in establishing public projects and providing public services, their members have the opportunity to experience a kind of participatory democracy. The members of CCT and the other groups just described are engaged in a hands-on provision of and decision-making about public services that is distinctive from participating in electoral politics as a voter or as a lone citizen lobbying a government official. While the form of government by proxy emphasized by neoliberal thought emphasizes the consumer citizen, activist-based government by proxy emphasizes the activist citizen.

There are many questions to ask considering the possibilities for democracy in the government by proxy system that has developed over the past couple of decade. A major question concerns how

many US Americans have the resources to be proper consumer citizens, or, if we consider the

activist alternative, how many people have the resources necessary to be effective activist citizens?

Determining the number of people involved in or served by an activist based group is a research

task that has begun relatively recently. Our research gives only a hint at an answer. After

concluding the ethnographic research where the researchers lived in the sites, we conducted a

survey in Chatham County.[ix] We asked the respondents whether they belonged to a variety of local

groups.

Are you a member of any LOCAL organizations that work on the following issues?

a) Christian Right Issues………………………………..19 (7.9%)

b) Civil Rights Issues……………………………………18 (7.5%)

c) Environmental Issue ……………………………………44 (18.2%)

d) Issues supported by militias or survivalist groups………1 (.4 %)

e) Social justice issues …………………………………...28 (11.6%)

f) Women's Issues………………………………..……27 (11.2%)

Since we have not yet analyzed the survey results in order to ascertain how many people belong

to at least one of these local groups, I will limit my remarks to that with the highest number,

environmental groups. Eighteen percent of the people who filled in our questionnaire indicated that

they belonged to such a group. Other surveys with more inclusive samples provide figures between

3% and 9% with the 9% figure being the most recent (Dunlap 2000, Kempton et al., in press).

Considering that environmentalism is only one kind of activist interest, it is likely that members of

activist-based groups do constitute a significant minority of the population. Yet, it is also likely that

there is very large number of people who are not participants in such groups and thus less likely to

benefit from such groups.

Consider, for example, that there was, at the time of our research, only limited activist-based

attention to the Latino community in Silver City in Chatham County. Despite the many problems

facing Latinos who had newly settled in the area, no activist-based group had yet arisen to address

their needs. [x] Developing successful activist-based groups is no easy matter. Generally under

funded, such groups have to rely on volunteered expertise to do the myriad tasks necessary for a

successful community group from locating sources of funding, writing proposals, preparing

applications and reports required for 501(c)3 status, lobbying government officials, mobilizing

enough support labor, locating and forming alliances with other groups that can supply doctors for

health clinics, to organizing, leading and inspiring members of the group. The intersection of

activism and government reorganization has opened up new possibilities for democratic

participation. At least, it has created new opportunities for those who have the skills, resources--

especially time, and accessible group with which to share efforts. But not everyone has the time

and energy or possibility to be involved in these activist-based pockets of participatory democracy.

Conclusions

When Bush created a White Office to hand out money to faith-based groups and when he

proposed legislation to allow religion-based charities to compete equally with secular organizations

for government grants, many commentators were critical. Those taking the perspective of the

religious groups feared the competition would inflame religious rivalries and lead religious groups

to become dependent on government money. Those concerned about the service recipients

predicted that clients could suffer religious discrimination and/or exposure to religious

indoctrination. In the reported words of the executive director of the American Jewish Congress,

"What it does is interject religion in the affairs of government and government into the affairs of

religion."[xi] These critical questions need to be directed to all of the organizations to which the

government is subletting democracy and to this form of government reorganization as a whole.

Government by proxy, whether the government's stand-in is a profit-based business, a faith

based group, or an activist-based group, raises profound questions about contemporary democracy. Business values and motives—expressed in neoliberal arguments and proscriptions--are being further interjected into government's efforts to provide for the common good. Activist values and motives, both conservative and not, are also, though backed by many fewer resources, being interjected into government services as well, and now, with Bush's blessing, faith-based groups have been given a new position vis-à-vis the state. Just as the boundaries between the government and corporations and between the government and civil society have become more blurred, those between religion and government are likely to do the same.

These experiments with government by proxy are profoundly changing the ground rules for local democracy and creating alternative forms citizenship. We do not know how this experiment will turn out. In the case of activist-based groups, government by proxy arrangements has enabled pockets of participatory democracy to develop. At the very least, place/community-based groups and movement-based groups of the type I have described do offer alternatives to for-profit visions of the public good, supply public services, and generate pockets of participatory democracy. But, there are no guarantees that all segments of the population will end up with access to an activist based group. And, what, we must ask, will happen in the long run? Bush's move to legitimate faith-based groups directs more funding toward these groups. Will there be equal new sources of funding for non-faith based, activist groups like the ones I have described? And, what of profit-based groups? Will they gain even more advantage in the competition for resources?

Government by proxy is an experiment not only with the provision of public services, but also with the rights of all citizens to determine what constitutes the public good. It is an experiment with who gets to have input into decision making about local public resources. At a more abstract level, it is a struggle over what constitutes the public good and how to achieve it. If we are to have government by proxy, then citizens, at the least, need to understand the changed rules for local

democracy and recalculate the importance of becoming involved in activist groups.

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**Appendix I: Activist Groups' Not-for-Profit Visions of the Public Good**

Group	Acronym	County	Founded	Place/Community Based?	Movement Based?	501(c)3?
Concerned Citizens of Thornton	CCT	Halifax	1978	Yes	Yes	Yes
Goals: well being of community members, informed active citizens, respect for CCT and for low-income, Black citizens of the area from politicians and partners, maintenance of community identity and historical memory, mutual support groups, environmental justice and prevention of black land loss						
Citizens Unite	CU	Watauga	1997	Relatively, no	Yes	Yes
Goals: protection of environmental quality of the area, especially air quality, from irresponsible businesses						
Laurel Valley Preservation & Dev., Inc.	LVPD	Watauga	1996	Yes	No	Yes
Goals: protection of the area from cultural dislocation, strengthen community identity and historical memory, defend community from inappropriate economic development, encourage development compatible with the area						
Broughton Road Improvement Association	BRIA	Cumberland	1988	Yes	Somewhat	Yes
Goals: overcome neglect from local government, fight for resources for the neighborhood, increase the respect due the neighborhood						
Durham Inner Village	DIV	Durham	Early 90s	Yes	Somewhat	Yes
Goals: revitalize a section of downtown Durham so as to encourage more sociability and make the area more attractive						

Appendix II: Five North Carolina Research Sites

Our five research sites were widely dispersed across the state. We choose sites largely on the basis of their dominant orientation to the economic opportunities and challenges of the last few decades and on the basis of their racial composition.

Two of our sites were in areas of the state that have long been organized around agricultural production and the manufacture of textile and furniture and other durable goods.[xii] In both Halifax County in the eastern part of the state and Chatham County in the central part, agribusiness—poultry processing and other intensive livestock operations—was becoming more important and drawing Latino laborers mainly from Mexico and Central America. Two other sites were in areas that have come to stress providing services for consumption and use in the knowledge industries such as high tech medical treatment, education, computer software, information technology, recreation, and retirement pursuits. In both Watauga County, which lies in the mountainous western part of the state and in Durham and the rest of the area called Research Triangle in the central part of the state, "production" economies and their associated ways of life are disappearing. In Watauga, farming and small factories have declined, while the branch of the university there, second home and retirement communities, tourism and sports have increased. In Durham, the cigarette industry has left leaving its factories and warehouses empty and Durham has dubbed itself "The City of Medicine." The fifth site, Fayetteville and Cumberland County in general, continues to be strongly affected by the presence of Ft. Bragg, a large military base.

Fieldwork Sites

Legend:
- 🟧 Landscapes of Consumption
- 🟦 Landscapes of Production
- 🟥 Landscape of the State
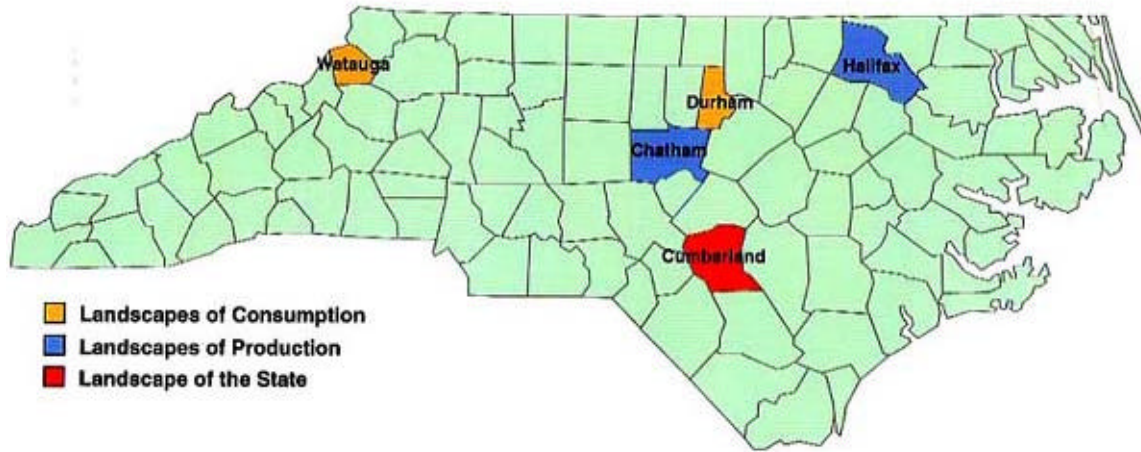
Race and ethnic composition was another important consideration in choosing sites: Halifax, in the so-called "Black belt" counties of North Carolina, has the highest percentage of African Americans and other non-whites of the five sites. Watauga, at the opposite end of the state, has the lowest with less than 3%.

Table 1: Total Population, Total White Population and Total Black Population by County: July 1998

County	Total Population	Total White	Total Black	Percent Black
Chatham	45,581	34,629	10,606	23.3%
Cumberlan	284,224	179,971	89,306	31.4%
Durham	202,311	120,442	75,671	37.4%
Halifax	56,313	25,985	28,192	50.1%
Watauga	40,904	39,655	907	2.2%

Source: Modified from "Population Estimates for Counties by Race, and Hispanic Origin[xiii]: July 1, 1998," Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/country/crh/crhnc98.txt

Spanish-speaking immigrants have been settling in many different parts of the state. In 1998, out of the five sites, the census figures show the highest concentration of Latinos to be in Durham County and Chatham County to have the least. Nonetheless, because of their high employment in poultry processing plants there, the Latino population of Siler City, the town in Chatham County where one of

the project researchers lived for his year of study, was estimated to constitute 38 to 50 percent

of the population.

Table 2: Total Population and Hispanic Population by County for the Five Research Sites: July 1998

County	Total Population	Total Hispanic	Percent Hispanic
Chatham	45,581	1,247	2.7%
Cumberland	284,224	24,769	8.7%
Durham	202,311	4,118	2.0%
Halifax	56,313	397	0.7%
Watauga	40,904	588	1.4%

Source: Modified from "Population Estimates for Counties by Race, and Hispanic Origin: July 1, 1998," Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/country/crh/crhnc98.txt

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[i] Craig Calhoun, a historical sociologist, considers the last half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the present century to be a very active period somewhat like the early nineteenth century. In the beginning of the 19th century, communitarianism, temperance, and various lifestyle movements attracted hundreds of thousands of adherents both in Europe and America. In Calhoun's estimation, the latter part of the twentieth century from the 1960s on has likewise been an especially fertile period for social movements (Calhoun 1993).

[ii] In a talk at UNC-CH, Morris Dees, the head of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights organization of long duration, said that as of 2001, 450 hate sites exist on the WEB. In 1995, there was one.

[iii] Especially considering the increasing importance of the government in creating opportunities for and constraints on non-governmental organizations, a broad definition of activism is warranted. In our view, individuals and groups that are expending effort to draw others into their perspective and to expand the social, legal and material infrastructure for enacting their visions of a desirable future, whether they be left or right, count as activists.

[iv] Social scientists have argued about whether "place-based" activism versus "movement activism" has any significance for more broad scale social change. (See, for example, Harvey (1996), Chapter 1, and his concept of "militant particularism." Willis (2001) offers interesting points on the same issues by analyzing a discussion he had with a British worker about shop floor practices.)

[v] These arrangements raise serious questions about the shaping of activist goals for social change by such intersections between activism and the work of the government.

[vi] All of these groups obtained 501(c)3 status. As long as they maintain this status, they do not have to pay taxes on private donations, foundation support or government grants.

[vii] In the last twenty or so years, Durham has accommodated to the changes accompanying globalization, e.g., the loss of its cigarette making industry, by developing itself around selling services such as medical care. The shift from a center of tobacco products and relatively high paying wages for blue collar workers to a center of medical research and care and high wages for professionals has made it more difficult for non-professionals to find decent paying work. Instead, their opportunities are in low-paying service jobs such as servers at fast food restaurants.

[viii] There are, of course, many additional issues regarding citizenship. Despite the neoliberal focus on consumer citizens, other forms of citizenship still matter. Legally citizenship is based on nationality yet corporate globalization results in flows of labor into the United States from abroad. These workers, unable to obtain citizenship, must pay taxes even though they cannot vote. Often they are afraid of deportation and so will not present themselves at government agencies or at service centers developed by public-private partnerships. Not surprisingly, they often lack the resources necessary to establish non-profit organizations that will serve their interests. Misunderstanding the forces that have recruited workers from other countries, older residents sometimes blame these workers for disrupting their hometowns. They do not direct their hostility at the businesses that bring in these workers yet disavow responsibility for the housing, schooling, and health services they need. Instead, the hostility of long-time residents is aimed at these "non-citizens."

[ix] The sample was drawn randomly from a list of registered voters. Of the 600 surveys sent out, 245 were returned. Because of a variety of factors, the sample is skewed toward those who are wealthier, white, and, of course, registered as voters.

[x] See Chapter 3 of our book, Subletting Democracy: Public Interests and Private Politics in a Neoliberal Age, which describes a task force that was formed in Siler City to address Latino problems. The task force, which was largely made up of long time residents, addressed the problems that Latinos were perceived to be causing fr the town instead of the problems that Latino newcomers faced in their new lives. Although at the time of our study, Latino activism was largely absent from Siler City, it was taking place in other parts of the state. For example, Fink and Dunn (199x) describe the role of immigrants from Central America in organizing a strike in a poultry factory in the western part of the state.

[xi] The News and Observer, Tuesday, January 30, 2001, page 7A.

xii The exodus of textile and furniture factories off shore, especially the textile factories, had already affected the industry profiles of the state by the time of our study.

xiii The census categories reflect particular ideas about race and ethnicity or region of the world and how they intersect. For example, "Total Hispanic" is a larger number than "White Hispanic" but "African-American" is not presented separately; there is simply a column for "Total Black."