Community development and the politics for social welfare

Community Development and the Politics for Social Welfare: Rethinking Redistribution and Recognition Struggles in the United States

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Abstract
In this article, we explore the philosophical conflict between, on the one hand, a community development politics centered on forming race and gender neutral alliances to promote pragmatic economic advance, and on the other, one focused on recognising the perspectives and practices of people of colour, women and other groups who are often excluded from grassroots movements. Using the United States as an example, we argue that a politics for social welfare is essential to create a movement in opposition to the devastating impacts of neoliberalism. Defending and reconstructing the American welfare state requires a politics which articulates 1) a theory of justice, 2) an understanding of the nature of social reforms, 3) a critical analysis of the state and 4) an appreciation of the limits of the welfare state in the context of the political economy of advanced capitalism. We conclude with a set of questions which we believe practitioners, activists and scholars should address if are to win victories while fostering the inclusion, leadership and participation of those groups who have been systematically marginalised in community development politics.

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Introduction

For this 50th Anniversary edition of the *Community Development Journal,* we are revisiting a key dilemma that troubles the theory and practice of community development in the United States and beyond. Understanding the most effective strategies and tactics to advance the social justice claims of different groups is hotly contested and disputes often focus on the efficacy of redistribution versus recognition struggles (Young 1990; Fraser 1997; Hobson, 2003). In community development there is a communicative and practical disconnection between those activists advocating pragmatic politics focused on winning tangible redistributive victories linked to jobs, housing and education and those activists advancing recognition politics who seek to take action on the variety of ways in which respect, status and privilege are unequally available to different social groups (Alinsky, 1971; Boyte, 1980; DeFilippis, Fisher, and Shragge, 2009;

Emejulu, 2015). These debates do not have to be constructed as binary opposites since redistributive struggles are often predicated on the misrecognition and erasure of groups based on their race, class, gender and sexuality in public life. Nevertheless, when we reflect on the contemporary failures of left-wing politics in the United States—in spite of some important but partial reforms under the Obama administration after 2009—we see progressive activists disunited because of the familiar disputes between redistribution and recognition struggles. This disunity is rooted in competing understandings of the goals, strategies and priorities of community development.

For example, a central feature of American community development is the enduring appeal of populist politics. Populism, in the US context, is a movement which emerged from late 19th century agrarian traditions which focuses on combating the power of elites and restoring direct rule and power to ordinary people (Kazin, 1998). Populism, as a political phenomenon, can be seen across the political spectrum in the U.S. and has been pulled to both the left and the right at different moments in American history. While left-wing populism focuses on reining in corporate excess and the extremes of power and money in the political system, right-wing populism has tended to be associated with anti-intellectual, anti-immigrant and anti-government traditions. Both populist traditions have been reactivated in response to the 2008 economic crisis. Examples of right-wing populism include the Tea Party in the US, the Front National in France, the United Kingdom Independence Party in Britain and the Swedish Democrats in Sweden. Examples of left-wing populism can be seen in the presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders in the US, Jeremy Corbyn's successful leadership bid for the Labour Party in Britain and widespread support for Podemos in Spain and the 2015 election of Syriza-led governments in Greece.

For some political actors in community development, left-wing populism is the rational and pragmatic choice for policymakers and grassroots activists wanting to advance equality and social justice (Boyte 1980; Scanlon 2001). Given the entrenched everyday and institutionalised racism and sexism in American society some left-wing populists argue that actions derived from explicitly anti-

racist and/or feminist politics are doomed to failure as these positions fracture rather than unite social movements for equality and justice (Gitlin 1995; Scanlon 2001). Proponents of left-wing populism, who seek to unite different interest groups under the banner of economic justice for all, argue that it is the logical choice for those serious about advancing social justice. A focus on economic justice—which explicitly eschews the politics of race and gender—has the ability to sidestep the controversies surrounding identity politics and focus instead on a core issue that the vast majority of Americans experience: economic inequality (Stiglitz 2013). This argument is compelling particularly when assessing the success of progressive populist movements for increasing the minimum wage at the city, state and federal levels. These movements, such as the Fight for $15 campaign for a $15 dollar minimum wage, have won widespread support precisely because they are presented as 'race and gender free' propositions to policymakers and the American public. Advocates of left-wing populism strategically focus on 'fairness in pay' as a backdoor means of addressing racial and gender inequalities since increases in the minimum wage disproportionately benefit people of colour and women (and women of colour in particular) because these groups are typically over-concentrated in low-skilled, low waged employment. In these uncertain economic times, a populist message has captured the zeitgeist and helped to shape party politics and policymaking in ways that seem to perpetually elude anti-racist and feminist campaigners.

However, when we look more closely at the politics of left-wing populism, deeply problematic practices are evident. Both left-wing and right-wing populist politics actively exclude discussions of race and gender, making it extremely difficult for activists to make social justice claims that advance perspectives linked to race, class, gender, sexuality and disability (Emejulu, 2011, 2015; Pride and Morrison 2015). At the expense of people of colour and women (and women of colour in particular) populist politics secures legitimacy by silencing the voices and experiences of those in the most precarious social and economic positions. Thus there is a serious question here about the ethics of adopting an exclusionary politics in the very name of those groups populist activists seek to support. Surely it is better to focus on the political education of grassroots activists so that

feminist, anti-racist and class politics can be interwoven into the very fabric of progressive political action. Understanding and addressing interlocking experiences of oppression linked to race, class, gender, sexuality and disability is a central concern of an intersectional politics (Combahee River Collective 1976; Crenshaw 1991; Yuval Davis, 2006; Bilge 2013).

For example, the #BlackLivesMatters movement is an important riposte to the de-raced and de-gendered left-wing populist agenda. The movement was founded in 2012 by three Black Queer women—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi—in the wake of the murder of Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood security guard, George Zimmerman, who was subsequently acquitted of criminal charges at a closely watched trial. #BlackLivesMatters seeks to dismantle anti-Black racism that systematically terrorizes and marginalises Black women and men (Garza 2014). This movement takes an explicitly intersectional approach whereby 'Black Lives' are defined to highlight how the dynamics of race, class, gender and sexuality operate in America—and in so called 'progressive movements'—to oppress Black people. #BlackLivesMatters embodies, rather than sets aside, an intersectional politics to help build a mass movement for Black liberation and social justice. As the protests against the extra-judicial killings of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Aiyanna Stanley-Jones, Freddie Gray, Rekia Boyd and Sandra Bland demonstrate, marginalised groups continue to be organised and mobilized for action by explicitly and intentionally using the language of race and gender—and can win popular public support and concessions from state actors. Interestingly, the #BlackLivesMatters movement also operates as a direct challenge to white progressives (and populists) to join the movement for Black liberation by taking seriously anti-Black racism. Thus #BlackLivesMatters seeks to build interracial coalitions but on the terms that Black activists prioritise—rather than those that will be 'palatable' to the American public. This is a very different and important alternative strategy and politics to coalition building for social justice.

Given these ongoing debates within contemporary politics, how might we move beyond these conflicts between redistribution and recognition? How might we

begin to refocus efforts on addressing disparities in income, wealth *and respect* between different social groups? In this article, we argue that a 'politics for social welfare' can be constructed and advanced to unite different types of left-wing activists for both redistribution and recognition struggles. By 'politics for social welfare' we mean analyses and practices that defend and support the expansion of the universal redistributive features of the welfare state, whilst simultaneously engaging in struggles for the recognition, respect and equal participation of marginalized groups in the American polity. We argue that community development is an embodiment of social democratic ideals of egalitarianism, fairness and justice and activists and practitioners in America can renew their politics and perhaps overcome their internal disputes by arguing for, rather than running away from, the solidarity politics of social welfare. By 'community development' we mean a 'political and social process of education and action to achieve self-determination and social justice for marginalised groups' (Emejulu 2015: 3).

In a context where individualism and inequality are often portrayed as a 'common sense' part of American life, advancing a politics for social welfare is no small endeavor. Indeed, that governing has virtually ground to a halt in Congress and that the majority of the American public think government is broken is a major obstacle to a politics for social welfare. However, attempting to practice politics on the terms set by neoliberalism and anti-government partisans is not working for progressives and those in the most precarious economic circumstances. A renewed politics that seeks to reclaim the idea of social welfare and the recognition of marginalised groups is crucial at this moment of neoliberal hegemony and state violence.

 The article next provides a short overview of both the formation of the American welfare state in the early 20th century and its retrenchment in order to understand the on-going tensions between a redistribution and recognition politics. We will then move on to discuss the constitutive elements of a politics for social welfare and how it might be practiced in contemporary American community development. We conclude with a set of questions which we believe

practitioners, activists and scholars should address if we are to win victories while fostering the inclusion, leadership and participation of those groups who have been systematically marginalised in community development politics.

The American Way of Social Welfare: Piecemeal, Incremental and Inadequate

Social welfare advocates in the US have long lamented the inadequacy of their welfare state, particularly in comparison to those of Western Europe. Social policies and programmes in the US generally lack both the depth of coverage (i.e., adequacy) needed to ensure the well-being of individuals and the breadth (i.e., universal eligibility) necessary to extend social protection to all residents (O'Connor, 1998; Katz, 1989). What is more, fewer mandates exist which require employers to provide benefits such as paid vacation, paid time off for illness and/or disability and parental leave. Esping-Andersen (2013) describes these differences as reflecting three competing traditions among welfare states, distinguishing liberal, social democratic, and corporatist models. The US, lacking the social democratic and social solidaristic traditions found in much of Europe, Esping-Andersen argues, developed along liberal lines, favoring a minimalist approach which focuses more on means tested social welfare than upon universal programmes. However, we think Esping-Andersen unnecessarily downplays the role of institutionalised racism in the shaping of the American welfare state. As has been well documented, Americans lack strong social solidarity in relation to social welfare because a toxic blend of individualism and white supremacy work to undermine the construction of a universal and comprehensive social protection system in order to avoid providing a social safety net for African Americans and other minority groups (Katz, 1986; O'Connor, 1998; Soss, 2000; Katznelson, 2014).

American welfare state formation and expansion occurred during three historical periods spanning about sixty years in response to destabilizing economic contractions in the mid-19th century. By the early 20th century, these crises partly produced and were amplified by foundational changes to American society: growing income and wealth inequalities, widespread political

corruption, high levels of immigration and urbanization and the development of an unregulated industrial workplace (Katz, 1986). In response to the disruptions generated by these social and economic transformations, institutional actors conceived of and constructed a limited interventionist state that could regulate market fluctuations and reduce absolute poverty in order to stifle social unrest, popular protests and maintain political and economic order.

The first important moment of American welfare state formation was during the Progressive Era (1890-1920). During this period, the administrations of both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson developed federal and state policies to reduce social inequalities and protect vulnerable populations (Katz, 1986; Skocpol, 1992; McGerr, 2003). Further welfare state expansion occurred with the passage and implementation of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programmes (1930-1944), which were in response to the Great Depression. Using Keynesian approaches of counter-cyclical state spending, the architects of the New Deal spurred consumer demand, expanded federal powers to include the regulation of the banking industry, recognised collective bargaining rights for trade unions and created systems of retirement security, income maintenance, unemployment benefits and workers compensation. The New Deal provided access to economic rights for a large number of white American workers and the unemployed, but systematically excluded a large percentage of African American citizens in order to placate racist white Southern Democrats and ensure the passage of the New Deal reforms in Congress (Katz, 1986; Quadagno, 1994).

During the third period for American welfare state expansion, Lyndon Johnson's administration implemented the Great Society programmes (1963-1968) which aimed to expand Roosevelt's New Deal reforms. This era was distinguished by efforts to tackle persistent poverty during an era of sustained economic growth and implement reforms in response to the Civil Rights Movement. Key programmes include the creation of Medicare and Medicaid, Head Start, Job Corp and VISTA, Community Action Programs and expanded food stamp eligibility as well as the passage of the Voting and Civil Rights Acts. Johnson's War on Poverty focused on providing educational and social service benefits to the poor, but also

attempted to include them, via community action agencies, in the process of developing and administering social services under the famous mantra of 'maximum feasible participation' (Moynihan, 1969; Marris and Rein, 1972).

Eli Zaretsky (2013) argues that while bureaucratic solutions could have been engineered solely by policy elites, the American welfare state was not simply a technocratic and managerial response to economic crises and social unrest. At each stage of its development, the welfare state was also the product of political protest by left-wing activists. The Progressive Era was shaped by a diverse group of social reformers that included feminists, birth control advocates, temperance activists, union leaders, social workers, public health advocates, populist farmers, and others. The New Deal was influenced by the demands of socialists, early civil rights campaigners and trade unionists. The Great Society would not have occurred without the theoretical and pragmatic work undertaken by Civil Rights, New Left, and Black trade union activists who had laid the groundwork for racial justice claims since early in the 20th century.

By the mid-1970s, America's experiments with Keynesianism and social welfare were starting to falter. First, the debilitating recession caused by the oil embargo in the Persian Gulf brought to an abrupt end the unprecedented economic growth America had experienced since 1945. In a context of a shrinking economic pie, many Americans balked at paying higher taxes on social welfare programmes (Diamond, 1995; Katz, 2008). Second, the incipient New Right movement, which was incubated in Barry Goldwater's failed 1964 presidential campaign, was growing in strength and gave voice to the so-called 'silent majority' of white Americans opposed to the social and cultural changes of the Civil Rights, New Left and feminist movements and interventionist federal initiatives such as addressing de facto residential and school segregation (Fisher, 1992; Diamond, 1995; Emejulu, 2015). Finally, the 'New Deal coalition' was starting to fracture. Since the 1930s an uneasy alliance of trade unionists, socialists, civil rights activists, social reformers and conservative Democrats had comprised the voting bloc for the Democratic Party. By the late 1960s, disagreements about the pace and direction of meaningful social change—

particularly in relation to the state's role in addressing institutionalised racism in American society—split the coalition.   This was seen in debates about issues such as affirmative action, school desegregation, and the availability of welfare benefits, the last of which was being increasingly racialised (Piven and Cloward, 1978).

These complex economic, social and political changes helped to usher Ronald Reagan into power in 1980, who, in turn, put his Administration to work to undermine popular public support for social welfare. For Reagan and the broader New Right movement, dismantling many of the New Deal and Great Society reforms was justified in the name of individual freedom and personal responsibility. Thus key apparatuses of the War on Poverty were abolished. Federal funding and support to community development projects were dramatically cut or withdrawn completely (Block et al., 1987; O'Connor, 1998). It is important to note that specific funding streams for radical social welfare work were deliberately targeted by the Reagan administration for defunding. This was especially the case for feminist and anti-racist community organising projects (Fisher, 1993). Racially coded attacks were also used to disparage welfare recipients which further undermined popular support for the social welfare state.

From 1992, Bill Clinton, pursuing the neoliberal policy platform of the 'New Democrats', continued the assault on social welfare through the privatisation of many of social programmes and went further than Reagan by 'ending welfare as we know it' (Weaver, 2000). The passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act ended welfare as an entitlement programme and placed a five-year lifetime limit on the receipt of federal welfare payments (Soss, 2000; Katz 2008). These harsh reforms under Clinton represent a toxic mix of neoliberal restructuring of the social welfare state and the racist justifications for cutting entitlements.

The 2008 economic crisis and the subsequent Great Recession have continued to erode the social security of low and moderate income Americans, especially

9

African Americans and Latinos, and particularly in states with liberal welfare models. The recession was fueled by the deregulation of the financial services industry, the banks' wide-spread use of supposedly 'risk free' financial instruments such as 'credit default swaps' and the inevitable bursting of the subprime mortgage bubble (Blinder, 2013; Roubini, 2011). In addition to the impacts of the recession on employment, savings, and property values, conservative policymakers have used the crisis as an opportunity to advance austerity measures designed to further roll back the welfare state. For example, conservative politicians at the state and federal level argue that social welfare further contributes to the economic crisis by the federal state overspending on benefits. These politicians argue for cuts to unemployment insurance, the dramatic reductions of benefits in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and the abolition of compulsory health insurance, otherwise known as Obamacare. European states, too, are engaged in these struggles over austerity programmes, which pose a direct threat to the European social model (Busch, Hermann, Hinrichs, & Schulten, 2013).

The idea of social welfare has been partially relegitimised through the passage of Barack Obama's landmark legislation, the 2010 Affordable Care Act, which, among other provisions, extends basic healthcare coverage to 100 million Americans. This Act, however, is still being challenged in the courts. In the most recent Supreme Court case, *King v Burwell,* the Justices upheld the funding mechanism for the federal subsidy that makes healthcare affordable for approximately 7 million Americans. That the expansion of basic healthcare is the subject of impassioned popular and policy debate demonstrates the on-going contestations about an activist welfare state and the idea of social welfare and social solidarity in America.

Since the 1980s, progressive movements have been scattered and disorganised. Important movements exist relating to a myriad of particular causes but a multi-issue, multi-constituent alliance similar to that of the New Deal coalition continues to elude the American left. However, we do not ascribe the rolling back of the social welfare state to the disorganised left—that is the central project of

neoliberalism. While the dismantling of the American welfare state can be traced to neoliberal politics, it is also important to note neoliberalism is not totalizing: progressives have been able to defend some social programmes, in particular Social Security (the state pension) and Medicare (federally subsidised health care for adults over the age of 65), which are extremely popular among the public.

To provide effective opposition to the neoliberal agenda, and in order to address widening social and economic inequalities in American society, the left must renew its politics. We contend that the best way to unite the disparate groups of the left and re-engage the American public in meaningful debates about equality, fairness and the common good is to advance a politics *for* social welfare. We do not think we are overstating the case about the disunited left. For example, the recent skirmishes between supporters of the left-wing populist Democratic presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders, and Black Lives Matter activists—in which the Black Lives Matters protestors disrupted a Sanders event and criticized his platform for not addressing racial justice issues—demonstrate that we cannot take for granted that those advancing left-wing populist politics and those supporters of recognition struggles will naturally and unproblematically develop political solidarity for collective action (Florido 10/8/15). Uniting the left to rebuild the welfare state will require a politics that transcends such divisions, and there are signs that by working through such disagreements, an intersectional left can emerge that has the potential to reshape debates in the United States.

We will now turn to discuss the constituent elements of a politics for social welfare and the implications this kind of politics might have for community development.

The politics for social welfare

As activist-scholars, we are deeply concerned with trying to build a new coalition to disrupt neoliberal hegemony and advance the social citizenship rights of the most marginalised. This requires a politics that promotes universality in social welfare programmes, while also pursuing the expansion of human rights and protections for those who have been historically excluded from economic, political, and social institutions. We refer to this as a 'politics for social welfare'— ideas and practices that defend and support the expansion of the universal redistributive features of the welfare state, whilst simultaneously engaging in struggles for the recognition and inclusion of marginalized groups. We argue that a politics that can encompass both redistribution and recognition struggles has the best chance of uniting, mobilizing and sustaining the unruly left.

We contend that a politics for social welfare has four constituent elements: a theory of justice; an understanding of the history of social reforms; an analysis of the state; and an appreciation of its own limitations. We will discuss each of these in turn.

A theory of justice
The starting point for a politics for social welfare is conceiving of both liberty *and* equality. In contemporary American politics, the focus of public debates is typically concentrated on individual freedom and negative rights—the right not be interfered with by the state (through taxes, regulations and social programmes) or by other citizens (Diamond 2000). Indeed, much of the recent debate about the Affordable Care Act centres on the legitimacy and authority of the state to compel private individuals to have healthcare insurance. American life is deeply unequal and this inequality is justified on the basis of preserving maximum individual liberty. As T.H. Marshall (1950) and Amartya Sen (2001) argue, individual freedom is dependent on equality and social rights. In order for individuals to live lives they have reason to value and to participate fully in democratic public life, they must have access to social welfare in the form of affordable and high quality housing, education and healthcare. Indeed as Ben-Ishai (2012) persuasively argues, social welfare 'fosters autonomy' by securing individuals' social rights. It is through their experiences of social welfare service

delivery that individuals and groups learn how to articulate redistribution and recognition claims and further advance their social citizenship. The 'big lie' of neoliberalism is that social welfare undermines individual liberty and fosters dependency (Harvey 2007; Hall, Massey and Rustin 2013). Quite the opposite is true: social welfare that addresses institutionalised inequalities is what makes individual liberty possible and meaningful and it activates rather than undermines citizenship. Freedom from the fear of economic marginalization provides the material basis that makes progressive political and social action possible.

None of this should be new to left campaigners but this fundamental argument defending social welfare is not being made consistently and unapologetically. The triumph of neoliberalism is not just in its ruinous economic practices but the ways in which it has captured the discourse about justice. Many on the US left appear to be embarrassed to talk about social welfare for fear of being labeled 'enemies of liberty' or aligning ourselves with mythical 'welfare queens', who are generally portrayed as poor Black women (Hancock 2007). Evidence of this can be seen in the shift to the right of many social democratic parties on both sides of the Atlantic in order to capture swing voters and the 'centre ground' in politics (Emejulu 2015). By not defending social welfare, the left is robbing itself of the language of justice and the ability to form effective coalitions for progressive action. The left cannot speak to itself, of itself or to the wider public until it can (re)learn that social welfare—which embodies ideals of egalitarianism and solidarity—is at the heart of justice. Interestingly, in the left-wing populist campaigns of Podemos, Syriza, Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn, we are starting to see a renewed commitment to social welfare.

Understanding the limited but necessary nature of social reforms
As we have demonstrated above, organised pressure from social movements that disrupt the social and economic order is how change is made and how concessions in the form of institutional reforms are won. Reforms are not bequeathed by technocrats but are conceded by institutional actors after defeats (Tilly and Tarrow, 2006; Tarrow, 2011). The history of social reforms in the

United States shows us that seeking voluntary concessions from the state typically does not work and operating on the terms that the state sets is oftentimes ineffective. Returning to the example of the Black Lives Matter movement, key activists, Brittany Packnett, Johnetta Elzie, DeRay McKesson and Samuel Singyangwe, have developed Campaign Zero, a twelve-point policy proposal to stop police brutality and extra-judicial police killings (http://www.joincampaignzero.org). Through Campaign Zero, activists have been able to influence the policy positions of three Democrat candidates seeking their party's presidential nomination: Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley. Organised movements must seek to capture and harness state power and state institutions to win reforms for social justice. It remains to be seen whether the activists behind Campaign Zero can enact their ambitious and important policy agenda.

An analysis of the state in the context of US capitalism
In order to effectively win reforms, a politics for social welfare must have an analysis of the state and state action. Left campaigners must hold two contradictory ideas about the state in mind simultaneously. From the rise of the carceral state—the institutionalised surveillance, over-policing, mass incarceration and state sanctioned violence—which controls the lives of many African Americans and Latinos, to the thicket of legislation at the state and local levels that regulates women's bodies and reproductive decision-making, the local and national state is a coercive force for many marginalised groups and must be transformed (Bumiller, 2008; Alexander, 2012). Further, the state in capitalist political economies must be understood as an institution that promotes the reproduction of capitalism and unequal social relations by delegitimising the demands of labour by holding down wages and benefits in order to allow for higher levels of capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005). However, the state, at the local, state and federal levels must undertake various actions to maintain the legitimacy of the social order (O'Connor, 2001). This leads us to the second of contradictory idea of the state: that the state can also, in a deeply flawed and piecemeal fashion, further the cause of social justice through the expansion of social reforms. Thus space exists for activists to wrest important concessions

from state actors, who must at times concede to these demands in order to maintain the legitimacy of the dominant social order.

An example of engaging in such analysis of the state to inform a politics for social welfare can be seen in the work of the St. Louis, Missouri based organization Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment (MORE). MORE grounds its political work in an analysis of the ways in which state and corporate power impact Missouri's citizens, with a simultaneous focus on taking collective action to combat racial injustice and economic inequality (for further details see: http://www.organizemo.org). MORE is currently running multiple social justice campaigns, including a demand that the city of St. Louis allow non-monetized ways for defendants in local courts to pay court fines and costs. The organization refers to this work as their Solidarity Economy campaign. This organizing is particularly salient due to recent findings that Missouri municipalities derive a significant amount of their fiscal stability on criminal fines and court costs extracted predominantly from residents of colour. In light of the recent rebellion in nearby Ferguson (sparked by the killing of Michael Brown by Darren Wilson), MORE's struggle is a concrete example of having a complex understanding of the state and developing a politics for social welfare that links redistribution and recognition.

As we have argued above, the state is deeply problematic, but it is the job of left campaigners, using the politics for social welfare, to make it work better for the most marginalised. As Emejulu (2013: 159) argues, 'regardless of how the state in advanced capitalist countries is seen or experienced, it is important to bear in mind that it is not a monolith of either control or protection'. Abandoning the state to the right will further shrink the social welfare state and expand the repressive apparatuses of the state. As the work of MORE shows us, a politics for social welfare seeks to reclaim the state and bring the state back into our conceptions about the nature of justice and how the state can preserve and expand social citizenship.

An appreciation of the limitations of a politics for social welfare

The very premise of a politics for social welfare will be unpalatable for those wanting more revolutionary changes. Whilst we are sympathetic to this, we are concerned with how to deal with the actually existing politics as they stand in America today. A politics for social welfare is not an end point but a first step to opening up dialogue between groups about the good society and social solidarity. A politics for social welfare means we are forced to confront the realities of who is disproportionately poor and who is most likely to be subject to the coercive powers of the state. This politics also forces us to consider what kinds of meaningful reforms are necessary in order for people to live the kinds of lives they have reason to value. In so doing, we think a politics for social welfare places intersectional inequalities—disadvantages derived from the interactions of particular categories of difference and social positonality—as a central component of left politics. In this way, the left can undertake redistribution struggles whilst simultaneously addressing the misrecognition and invisibility that many groups experience in everyday life.

Community development as the politics for social welfare?
Given the above discussion, what is the relationship between community development and a politics for social welfare? We think community development is uniquely positioned (but not essentially constituted) to be an incubator of a politics for social welfare because of the space that community development creates, its potential practices in relation to participatory democracy and its ability to support the political education of local people. We will discuss each of these in turn.

Space: Learning social citizenship
What is most important about community development, we argue, is the ability for different types of people to come together and create a space to articulate and take action on the issues that are important to them. In the US, where individualism in an important part of social and political life, a community development process that fosters social solidarity and collective action is a critical and dissenting space whereby local people learn or reaffirm the politics and practices for social citizenship. Community development can be a space

where citizens learn how to make complex political claims and organise collectively to advance both redistribution and recognition social justice struggles. Such community development spaces do not happen by accident. Critical community development spaces must be intentionally designed to encourage debate, develop community leadership, strategise action and endure inevitable defeats (Gaventa 2006; Cornwall 2008; Eversole, 2010). A community development process that creates this kind of space with and for citizens can help to advance a politics for social welfare

Practices: Participatory democracy

We think critical community development spaces are most likely to flourish when they are designed as incubators for participatory democracy. The ability to articulate needs, demands and problems, to learn how undertake deliberative dialogue and consensus-based decision-making and how to use collective power fosters the sort of environment in which individuals can experience themselves, sometimes for the first time, as being active agents exerting control over their lives (Polletta 2002; Ransby, 2003; Emejulu 2015). The practices of participatory democracy in community development spaces can offer citizens a sense of agency and efficacy and can lead to them demanding similar recognition in workplaces, in encounters with the state and in other private and public spaces of life.

Purpose: Political education

Community development is not a neutral activity. It can be deployed in a myriad of ways to advance the various agendas of the state, the market, the non-profit sector or different kinds of citizens. Whilst we do not believe that there is one 'true' form of community development, we do think that some types of community development are better than others because they seek to treat community development as a pedagogical process of learning for democracy and dissenting citizenship (hooks 2003; Shaw 2008; Learning for Democracy Group 2008). For community development to effectively contribute to democratic public life, it must be designed as an educational endeavor in which people learn about themselves, the nature of power and the social world. This kind of political

education, which is cultivated in democratic spaces and is geared to developing citizenship practices for social solidarity and collective action, is how community development might embody a politics for social welfare.

However, we acknowledge that thinking about community development in this way is a challenging prospect. A politics for social welfare generates a range of dilemmas for community development. For instance, left-wing populists argue that a politics for social welfare must engage in a kind of majoritarian strategy whereby a given community development process attracts a broader base of participants beyond women and people of color to include white working class men and women (Scanlon 2001; Atlas 2010). Given that most Americans live highly segregated lives, trying to find a way to bring different kinds of groups together is a worthy goal for community development. In contrast, those concerned with recognition struggles are focused on how women and people of colour (and women of colour in particular), who are too often sidelined in grassroots politics, can articulate and take action on their complex social justice claims with and alongside other groups. Again, redistribution and recognition are not binary opposites, but they are often practised as such in grassroots politics. The challenge for community development in operationalising a politics for social welfare is puzzling out where and how to begin and with whom, in struggles for social justice.

This dispute should not be minimized as it cuts to the heart of our entire discussion about democracy, justice and citizenship. We cannot resolve this dispute in the abstract but what we can do is offer a few questions that we think activists, practitioners and scholars can consider for further action.

- What is the process by which we identify and name particular social problems? Whose interpretations of social problems get privileged and whose get silenced?

- When we identify social problems, how are particular groups constructed as either agents of change or problems to be solved?

- How might a community group build strategic alliances in order to understand an issue or problem from different perspectives? What is to be gained, and whose interests might be challenged, by undertaking such a process?

- What role does self-interest play as a motivation for political participation and what is its relationship to solidarity across categories of difference?

We think these questions represent the sort of inquiry and exploration that will be useful to activists, practitioners and scholars. A successful politics for social welfare is an educational process that increases participants' understanding and appreciation of the common struggles they share and the distinct oppressions that particular groups experience.

Conclusions

In this article we have attempted to explore some the challenges of community development theory and practice in the United States at this uncertain political and economic moment. We argued that community development constantly battles with an unresolved tension between redistribution and recognition struggles for social justice. By outlining a politics for social welfare, we sought to offer a strategy for progressive activists to confront these tensions and seek to resolve them through critical community development processes. By embracing a politics for social welfare, activists can stand up and work for egalitarianism, social solidarity and social citizenship. By practicing a politics for social welfare, it may be possible to address America's rapidly rising levels of economic inequality whilst simultaneously confronting the injustices of misrecognition and disrespect that many groups must also negotiate. Locating a politics for social welfare in community development offers the opportunity for activists and practitioners to work at the grassroots and engage with the contradictions of the state and the competing and complex social justice claims of different groups. This is not an easy or straightforward process. However, it is essential for the renewal of left politics in America.

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