August 2020

A Case Study of Citizen Participatory Planning Within the City of Milwaukee: the Choice Neighborhood Initiative

Stephanie Lynn Harling
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

A CASE STUDY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING WITHIN THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE: THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

by

Stephanie Harling

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

in Urban Studies

at

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

August 2020

ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING WITHIN THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE: THE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

by

Stephanie Harling
The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, 2020
Under the Supervision of Professor Joel Rast

In September of 2016, the City of Milwaukee won a grant from HUD to designate Westlawn Housing as a Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) redevelopment project. This designation came with a $30,000,000.00 grant to rebuild the Westlawn public housing project on the City's far northwest side.

The focus of this research was to examine the citizen participation planning process for the implementation of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative. The two goals of this research were to determine if the participation was authentic. Furthermore. to examine if the relationship between the citizens and the existing power structure changed to that of deferring critical decision making to the citizens impacted by CNI.

Arnstein's planning theory: *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* was the benchmark used for my qualitative research. Participants in the CNI planning process were interviewed and participant observation was used to draw my conclusions. The data collected showed that the participation did not meet Arnstein's measurement of authentic citizen participation and nor was there a transfer of

power from HACM and the City of Milwaukee to the citizens.

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1. Introduction.

For this project, I researched the process of participatory planning within the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) for the rebuilding of Westlawn Gardens and the required community improvements. The objective of my research was to analyze whether citizen participation meaningfully influences decision making and a transfer of power from various entities. Those entities included Housing and Urban Development, City of Milwaukee, Housing Authority of City of Milwaukee, the Choice Neighborhood steering committee and the local NGO's to the community in the critical community improvement aspect of the CNI.

I build this research within the framework of the literature review examining authentic participation and the transfer of power within participatory planning models. I then relate this scholarship to the research to the participatory planning conducted with the CNI. The intent of this research is not to negate the successes the City of Milwaukee has experienced in the construction of the Westlawn redevelopment, however there are important questions to be asked about the broader community impact of this massive redevelopment. The research question I answer is: "Does the CNI model work in the context of gaining meaningful stakeholder participation resulting in the transference of power?" A follow up question to be considered is, "How do citizens within the Choice Neighborhood view power and is a total transfer of power desired?"

In the context of my research the elements in the transfer of power include stakeholder input on the allocation of resources and budgets, the level of influence on decision making, and the power to design the future of their own communities. This

future can include the ability to direct business recruitment, make new development decisions and address quality of life issues to include economic restructuring, green space, recreation, and safety.

Civil society is a shared space that allows citizens to co-exist as individuals without oppression from government or the private market. It is the shared space of collective action among families, churches and communities that can influence economic producers and consumers. It is through collective action that we prioritize societal needs over the needs of the private market and government agenda (Barber, 1998).

Social scientists vary in their perspectives of what constitutes meaningful participation. For some scholars it is limited to procedural democracy such as voting and choosing government representation. Expounding on these institutional procedures, there is another view that it is defined as a civic duty when citizens, civic organizations and administrations determine community values and morals. Meaningful citizen participation takes the form of defending those community values (Roberts, 2004). For the purpose of my research, I am using a broader definition of meaningful participation based on Arnstein's theory of citizen participation to include the transfer of power, the ability to direct resources, and influence policy.

> "It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the politics and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled benefits of the affluent society." (Roberts, 2004, p. 319).

2. Background.

2.1 Havenwoods Economic Development Corporation (HEDC)

The CNI boundaries overlap with what has come to be known as the Havenwoods Community. The lead NGO, Havenwoods Economic Development Corporation has been engaged with the Havenwoods community for 20 years. This engagement includes a multi-disciplined approach to neighborhood revitalization to include business recruitment, workforce development, crime prevention initiatives, resident engagement and improving housing. The Board of Directors of HEDC consists of residents, clergy, business owners, and partner NGOs.

As a researcher I come to this research as a participant in the CNI from the early stages of the grant application through the implementation as we see it today. As the Executive Director of HEDC, I bring to the study a long history with the Westlawn community and City of Milwaukee public housing. Over the years I established long standing relationships with HACM staff, and Westlawn residents creating positive and negative experiences of my own. Additionally I have an affinity for the residents of the surrounding Havenwoods community. Some researchers say that full immersion is the best way to research a subject; move into the organization and be part of the culture that created the experience (Atieno, 2009). Immersing oneself into the research through participative observation allows for a deeper understanding of what is happening with the subjects being interviewed. Therefore my involvement shapes my research.

HEDC was a proponent to the rebuilding of the Westlawn Housing development and came to the table in full support of what the City of Milwaukee and HACM were

attempting to accomplish. However, as the founding Executive Director I also came to the table with some expectations of being able to bring resident voices, needs and desires to the table in a very grassroots way. The philosophy of the HEDC organization is to build a sustainable community by empowering stakeholders to make decisions about the future of their community and then give them the tools they need to carry out their plans. It is through this lens that we as an organization define authentic participation and the transfer of power. To operationalize authentic participation HEDC facilitates neighborhood planning with residents where needs and wants are identified by stakeholders and the stakeholders work together toward those goals. The role of HEDC is to remove barriers, look for resources on their behalf and then provide technical assistance for stakeholders to realize their goals.

To operationalize a transfer of power, HEDC leads from behind as stakeholders form committees to allocate resources accordingly, plan their own events and make their own decisions on how to positively impact their community. Examples of this transfer of power can be found in our Neighborhood Improvement Districts, Business Improvement Districts, our event planning committees and our youth work crew committees to name a few. In all of these examples a need was communicated by stakeholders, mechanisms were put into place, resources were allocated and plans were governed by stakeholders. Consistent with the accounts depicted by the interviewees it became apparent that after the grant award was received, the HEDC organization's role had diminished significantly by HACM. HEDC, being the lead community development organization and often the voice of the community was not asked to be on the steering committee initially. However, for reasons unknown to HEDC, we were asked to be a part of the steering committee

later into the planning process. It should be noted that as a partnering agency HACM afforded us the opportunity to successfully access funding to assist in outreach for CNI. However, the partnership became very strained when we as an organization realized that there was a severe difference in philosophy on how to engage residents on participatory planning. As the participatory planning process commenced it became apparent that HEDC's perspective on authentic participation and the transfer of power was not aligned with that of the City of Milwaukee and HACM. This misalignment will be discussed further in the Participant Observations section of this thesis.

2.2 Westlawn Housing.

The Westlawn public housing project is the largest low-income public housing project in the State of Wisconsin, housing 700 families in a barracks-style development. It is located on the City of Milwaukee's far northwest side on the southern edge of what is known as the Havenwoods Community. This region of the City of Milwaukee is a community annexed on to the City of Milwaukee in the mid-20th century and resembles an aging and outer ring Milwaukee suburb. The Westlawn housing development is owned and managed by a quasi- public/private nonprofit housing agency known as the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM). HACM owns and/or manages all of the public housing developments in Milwaukee.

In 2011, the City of Milwaukee Alderman Joe Davis, Sr., led a walk through the housing project accompanied by community residents, the lead community organization Havenwoods Economic Development Corporation, city department heads and law enforcement. The walk resulted in the findings of significant code violations and poor living conditions within the development. Resulting from this community walk was the

creation of a resident steering committee to advocate for the rehabilitation of the Westlawn housing project. Within days of residents forming a steering committee on this issue, HACM and the City of Milwaukee determined that funding would be solicited to rebuild the housing development. In 2012, HACM was awarded Low-Income Housing Tax Credits making it possible to finance the demolition and reconstruction of the first half of the Westlawn housing project (Phase I). They completed this new development in 2014. Phase I of the reconstruction included mixed use multi-family senior housing, single family homes and townhouses. Phase I was celebrated as an award-winning development for its transformation from an aged and distressed community into a vibrant, mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhood. Recognized for the project's innovative approach to building an environmentally and socially sustainable community, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the American Planning Association (APA) awarded HACM with the HUD Secretary's Opportunity & Empowerment Award, one of the highest recognitions in the planning profession. Additionally, Phase I received the highest-ranking certification from the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for its sustainable design. It is important to note that while the first phase of the Westlawn reconstruction was recognized for its environmental sustainability and construction design, there were no requirements for stakeholder participation in planning the new development. Low-Income Tax Credit programs do not require stakeholder participatory planning. This is an important distinction because it results in a development with little citizen input and potentially imposes the will and desire of the housing developer on tenants. There is also the potential to displace tenants without consideration to those with housing

barriers such as disabilities and low incomes, making it difficult to return to the new development.

On the heels of the successful construction of Phase I, HUD awarded HACM a $30 million Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant on September 28, 2015. The CNI is a housing and urban renewal grant program that requires the completion of comprehensive and critical community improvements in low-income communities across the United States. It is designed to support a locally-driven, comprehensive strategy to transform public housing developments into mixed-income housing. HUD designated the Westlawn housing project and the surrounding neighborhood as Milwaukee's first CNI community. Westlawn was slated to transform into an inclusive community of opportunity with quality housing, schools, businesses, services, and amenities where people would want to live, learn, work, shop, and play. Milwaukee was one of five applicants to be awarded the competitive grant.

(Milwaukee Choice Neighborhood, https://www.hacm.org/about-us/initiatives/milwaukee-s- choice-neighborhood).

2.3 HOPE VI Program.

To understand the significance of CNI, it is important to know the past shortcomings in public housing development. The CNI program was designed to expand on the former HUD HOPE VI program. The HOPE VI program provided funds to renovate or demolish existing public housing and replace it with mixed-income housing. Much of the criticism of the HOPE VI project centered on the relocation of poor citizens in the name of urban renewal and gentrification.

> "Most seriously, there is substantial evidence that the original residents of HOPE VI projects have not

> always benefited from redevelopment, even in some sites that were otherwise successful. This can be partly attributed to a lack of meaningful resident participation in planning and insufficient attention to relocation strategies and services." (Urban institute, 2004, p. 3).

Historically, planning ideals were about the physical improvements of a city. The approach to urban revitalization had been focused on the physical structure, land use and transit (Davidoff, 1965).

The inspiration behind changing the HOPE VI paradigm to the CNI model rests in the assertion by housing developers, nonprofits and policymakers that there is a need to go beyond the limited scope of brick and mortar projects particularly in new housing construction. Via congressional testimony in 2011, stakeholders in various US cities testified for a comprehensive approach to public housing development.

> "The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is designed to build on the success of HOPE VI by extending program eligibility to assisted housing and requiring all grantees to develop plans for integrated resident supports, such as access to high-quality educational opportunities for children, transportation, employment, healthcare, and job readiness skills." (US Congressional Hearing, Public Testimony; Maria Maio 2012).

This congressional testimony provided by stakeholders is relevant because it asserts that community revitalization requires more than new construction and that human capital must be developed simultaneously to achieve a sustainable community. According to research findings by the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution completed in 2004, while HOPE VI was designed to improve the lives of citizens in public housing, only small numbers of these citizens returned to the newly reconstructed housing leaving few to benefit from the program. The General Accounting Office (GAO)

found that the number of returning residents were below 50% particularly in those developments that were transformed to mixed income housing.

> "HOPE VI implementation has also encountered significant challenges. Some HOPE VI projects have been stalled by ineffective implementation on the part of the housing authority of conflict with city government. In others, developments were simply rehabilitated or rebuilt in the same distressed communities, with little thought to innovative design, effective services, or neighborhood revitalization." (Urban Institute, 2004, p. 3).

The relocation struggles with HOPE VI were partially due to the barriers to relocation that citizens of public housing experienced. Those barriers included physical disabilities, mental health issues, and economic instability. There were also people that chose to remain in their relocations and not uproot their families to return back to their original homes. The HOPE VI program did not provide adequate support services to address those relocation barriers (Urban Institute, 2004).

2.4 The Choice Neighborhood Initiative.

The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was created to transform blighted and impoverished communities into revitalized mixed-income neighborhoods. Their model to do this is to use 60-80% of the funding to rebuild distressed public housing. The redevelopment includes mixed- income housing available at market rate prices combined with building affordable and subsidized public housing. CNI also seeks to provide supportive services to the people within the CNI boundaries. Secondarily, the initiative aims to improve the neighborhoods surrounding the public housing site by improving access to quality

services, high-quality public schools and early education programs, public assets, public transportation, and jobs (Urban Strategies, 2015).

The CNI model leverages public and private dollars to support locally driven strategies that address struggling neighborhoods with distressed public and/or HUD housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. Local leaders, residents, and stakeholders, such as public housing authorities, cities, schools, police, business owners, nonprofits, and private developers, come together to create and implement a plan that revitalizes distressed public housing and addresses the challenges in the surrounding neighborhood. The CNI model consists of the following core objectives:

1. Housing: Replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood;
2. People: Improve outcomes of households living in the target housing related to employment and income, health, and children's education; and
3. Neighborhood: Create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community.

HUD offers two types of grants. Eligible applicants for the CNI funding can apply for either a Planning Grant or an Implementation Grant. Those that are awarded a Planning Grant can go on to apply for an Implementation Grant to complete the development project.

2.5 CNI Planning Grants.

Citizen participation is often determined by public policy, and it is that public

policy that determines how agency and citizens will interact (Creighton, 2005). The CNI is an example of said public policy determining how citizen participation will take place. The grant model is designed to encourage citizen participation in the planning process to transform a community. There are two types of CNI planning grants:

Planning Grants are two-year grants that assist communities with severely distressed public or HUD-assisted housing in developing a successful neighborhood transformation plan and building the support necessary for implementation. Planning and Action Grants pair planning with action. The goal is to build a self-sustaining neighborhood, attract more engagement and resources, and help convince skeptical stakeholders that positive change is possible.

2.6 CNI Implementation Grants.

The Implementation Grant is designed to serve cities that have undergone significant comprehensive planning and are considered ready to implement the transformational activities identified in their respective comprehensive plans. More specifically, Milwaukee's CNI Implementation Plan was created by a city planner within Milwaukee's Department of City Development using planning documents from previous planning efforts for the Havenwoods and Westlawn housing project. The Implementation Grant does not require stakeholder participatory planning prior to implementing the transformative activities. However, it does require stakeholder participation with regard to implementation. Thus, the distinction between Planning and Implementation grants will be a relevant factor as my research explores the planning process within the context of HACM's decision to utilize an Implementation Grant for the redevelopment of the Westlawn housing project.

3. Problem Statement.

As mandated by HUD, every CNI grantee must employ a method of citizen participation and/or citizen engagement. The goal is to conduct a locally led revitalization reflective of the community and its values. Resident participation in planning is a requirement of the CNI grant; however, the method and degree of that participation isleft to the grantees' discretion. I contend that the implementation of Milwaukee's Choice Neighborhood Initiative did not measure up to the ideal outlined by HUD. Regarding citizen participation, HUD provides this directive: "Residents should be involved in the planning and implementation for the transformation of their community" (Urban Strategies, 2015). This fairly broad and vague mandate was identified in the early progress evaluation as an opportunity for improvement (Urban Strategies, 2015). In an effort to provide guidance to the CNI designated agencies, HUD released intermittent best practice guides for resident engagement. One HUD publication describes citizen participation as:

> "This guide focuses particularly on civic participation, which we define as community members working together to influence and make important decisions that impact their neighborhood, their city and their lives. Civic participation can take many forms, from active involvement and leadership in community forums, meetings and planning processes, to advocacy for policy positions, to roles in decision-making bodies.
> Meaningful and long-lasting civic participation in a neighborhood setting usually requires some form of supportive infrastructure, such as organizational supports that help empower citizens to exert influence and make decisions."
> (www.hud.gov/sites/documents/CNPROMISINGPRACTICEGUIDE.PDF, Brief #3)

The problems to be addressed center around but are not limited to issues of legitimacy, authenticity and representation. The first problem is the vague directives by

HUD on citizen participation, leaving much to interpretation with little accountability for process and authenticity. When referring to authenticity I'm using the definition offered in the literature review by Chaskin & Garg as authentic participation must be representative of those impacted by decisions made where sustainability is achieved when decisions made are influenced by those most affected. (Chaskin & Garg, 1997).

A second problem with Milwaukee's CNI participatory planning model is the timing in which resident input was solicited. As an observing participant, it was clear from the documentation and in the public presentations provided that the plan for the Critical Community Improvements portion of the initiative had been formulated prior to obtaining resident involvement. This is evidenced by a binder that was presented to individual residents that were key leaders in the community. This binder is mentioned in one of the interviews conducted. The binder was the official CNI Implementation plan that laid out in great detail, the Community Improvement Plan. This binder had illustrations that showed the budget allocations and the priorities of the CNI plan. None of which the key resident recalled discussing. This binder was created prior to stakeholder meetings being held.

A second example of documented decisions being made prior to the timing of stakeholder meetings is the controversy around a summer splash pad being installed in the Westlawn Gardens with the Critical Community Improvement funds. Residents in the surrounding community to Westlawn felt that the splash pad should be located in the McGovern public park within the CNI community. However, HACM placed it in the designs for the Westlawn Gardens complex during the architectural design phase of the development, offering no options for community discussion.

The crux of the Critical Community Improvement plan was based primarily on public participation illustrated in previous planning documents such as the federally mandated comprehensive plan and the Havenwoods neighborhood plan. Both of these plans were over 15 years old and, by all standards, outdated

Residents that attended a meeting were asked to respond to the plan presented and soon realized that they were not part of the decision-making process. Instead, they were asked to participate in an exercise that gathered data about their needs and desires for a plan that had a budget allocated for strategies pre-determined to include improved retail, stabilizing housing, improved transportation and improved amenities.

It is true that the residents for many years wanted to attract better retail and fix up blighted housing. However, the Critical Community Improvement plan addressed the retail corridor by establishing a micro loan program and awarding $1,000,000.00 to the local CDFI, Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) to administer a micro loan program. It should also be noted that this $1,000.000.00 award was not accomplished through a competitive procurement process. WWBIC was given the allocation without community input. The obstacle here is that the private retail commercial shopping center owners did not ask for a loan product and as a result are currently not using the loan product.

The residential improvements that the community supported had to be pulled from the plan due to deed restrictions by HUD.

A third problem is the representation and legitimacy of the CNI steering committee. This committee was not representative of the community. There were forty committee members and only four of those members were from the community.

(https://www.hacm.org/about-us/initiatives/milwaukee-s-choice-neighborhood).

4. Why is this Topic Relevant?

The existing scholarship examines the need for citizen participation through a variety of lenses. There are convictions held by some scholars that citizen participation is an ethical and pragmatic issue, ethical in the sense that citizens should be allowed to determine the policies that affect their lives and pragmatic in the sense that citizen participation is needed to promote long-term sustainability (Chaskin & Garg, 1997). The need for citizen participation is steeped in the belief that participation is a core value of democracy (Chaskin & Garg, 1997). To achieve a strong democracy, we must be participative and self-governed by citizens as opposed to only representative government on behalf of the citizenry (Barber, 1984).

Citizens must have control over decisions made on their behalf. This is an ethical imperative that the rights and responsibilities of citizens impacted by policies be taken seriously (Barber, 1984). Decentralizing decision making will better promote sustainable change. A grassroots approach to policy making is more likely to address the root causes of the problems as opposed to addressing the symptoms of the social ill. Citizen participation can bring about long-term institutional change and a more effective delivery of services (Kramer, 1969). In an effort to impact how policies are determined and services delivered, after the 1940's planning institutions began to reform their methods and theories of planning to include citizen input. (Fung, 2010). Degrees of this planning reform can be found in the CNI case study I will be presenting in my research.

The CNI in Westlawn is the first designation for the City of Milwaukee and is in the third year of a five-year implementation plan as of 2020. Because this is Milwaukee's

first CNI grant, there has not been an external review of its stakeholder engagement methods and there is limited scholarship on the CNI in general. On a national level, there has been an early stages evaluation of five other Choice Neighborhood cities prepared by the Urban Institute and commissioned by HUD. The early evaluation revealed challenges and shortcomings in gaining citizen participation (Urban Institute, 2015). These findings were released to the public prior to the commencement of Milwaukee's CNI. The relevance here is that CNI cities may not be learning from other cities in the implementation of this initiative and have failed to anticipate and pivot based on challenges identified in other cities. Below is a finding of the evaluation as it pertains to resident engagement in planning:

> "Grantees in all five Choice neighborhoods struggled to engage residents from the surrounding neighborhood in Choice activities and plans, particularly if neighborhood residents did not share a common identity or no active community partner engaged with the Choice team. Data from the baseline household survey indicate that residents of the target development had attended a meeting about redevelopment in the previous 2 years and were far more likely than residents from the surrounding neighborhood to attend a meeting or report that they "strongly agree" that they have a say in plans for how the new development will look." (Urban Strategies, 2015, p. 43).

A case study conducted by the Department of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee speaks to the relevance of gaining citizen participation in low income housing developments. The study examined how low income housing nonprofits "operated with blind spots to local and organizational politics of race without sufficient collaboration with the Harambee Community". (Bonds, Kenny and Wolfe, 2015, p. 1064) These scholars make the argument in their case study that the Habitat for Humanity

initiative was working on *behalf* of a community rather than working *with* them. The findings in this case study found that the project was viewed as complete and successful in its bricks- and- mortar. However resident voices declared that the work was not done. There was much more to be done with regard to community and economic development that was not addressed in the Habitat for Housing initiative. More specifically, it was concluded that the large nonprofits failed to involve the local residents to gain insight on needs and desires of the community. (Bonds, Kenny and Wolfe, 2015, p. 1064). This is a dynamic similar to the CNI model.

I contend that without policy changes in how the CNI engages residents, millions of dollars will be allocated to improve neighborhoods without authentic community input or leadership, thereby squandering opportunities and threatening neighborhood sustainability. This research could also be applied to other urban renewal programs and their need to obtain authentic stakeholder participation. HACM intends to use the CNI to fund the revitalization of future public housing projects. The agency continues to apply for and has been granted CNI designations for other low-income Milwaukee neighborhoods to be launched over the course of the next four years.

I assert that within the framework of my research, the main thread running through all of these renewal programs is the lack of power that stakeholders have over their destiny to remain in their homes and to determine the future of their neighborhoods. This lack of citizen influence is a factor among urban renewal programs of the middle 20th century, the Hope VI program and more recently, the CNI. The dynamic of resident powerlessness can be found in all three of these renewal programs often referred to in the 20th century as “negro removal” programs. In the middle 20th

century, large tracts of slums were removed to make way for new business development with the anticipation that it would attract middle-income residents making the neighborhood economically viable. This came at the cost of pushing African Americans out and into undesirable neighborhoods through gentrification and sometimes utilizing eminent domain (Hyra, 2012).

Similarly, the HOPE VI program was created to use the redevelopment of public housing to revitalize inner city neighborhoods that were home to primarily African American residents. HOPE VI was also critiqued for policy decisions to relocate a racial subgroup to attract new investment and profits to central city neighborhoods. The policy of relocation with the HOPE VI implementation made it an extension of the past urban renewal programs (Goetz, 2011). According to a study done by the Urban Institute in 2004, the lack of relocation support services and stakeholder input with the HOPE VI program resulted in the creation of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative. The Choice Neighborhood Initiative was created to transform distressed communities while attracting new commercial investment and mixed income residents to the transformed community. To accomplish this, relocation of public housing tenants was required. The connection among all of these programs to which the degree stakeholders are empowered by the policy makers to determine the future of their own homes and communities.

To answer the shortcomings of past federally funded urban renewal programs, the Choice Neighborhood Initiative requires proof of stakeholder participatory planning prior to the release of a portion of the awarded funds. I assert that because some degree of participatory planning and stakeholder leadership is a requirement of the CNI

program, it is appropriate to examine the degree of meaningful stakeholder participation within the parameters of the CNI.

5. Literature Review.

This literature review will offer a variety of perspectives on what authentic citizen participation looks like and its relationship to the transference of power. In the models presented, there is much discussion on the merits of moving power from the hierarchy to the grassroots level. Each scholar uses the terms hierarchy and power structure generically without naming specific players in the power structure. For the purposes of my research when referring to the power structure within CNI, it could include but is not limited to HACM, City of Milwaukee, and HEDC.

The objective of this literature review is to examine theories and perspectives on what constitutes authentic stakeholder participation in community planning. This review examines tokenism, the transference of power, and shared decision making. The theories of citizen participation I will be highlighting offer extensive research on the topic of authentic citizen participation. Sheri Arnstein provides the framework on this topic with her Ladder of Citizen Participation Model. Tritter & McCallum offer the Snakes and Ladders theory, an updated version of Arnstein's model by adding lateral rungs to give equal importance to experts in the participation process. Xavier Sousa Briggs uses Arnstein's model to reinforce the importance of citizen participation but shifts the priority from the complete transference of power to shared decision making between citizens and government.

5.1 The Need for Meaningful Citizen Participation.

The existing scholarship examines the need for citizen participation through a

variety of lenses. There are convictions held by some scholars that citizen participation is an ethical and pragmatic issue, ethical in that citizens should be allowed to determine the policies that affect their lives and pragmatic in that citizen participation is needed to promote long term sustainability (Chaskin & Garg, 1997). The need for citizen participation is steeped in the belief that participation is a core value of democracy. (Chaskin, Garg 1997). To achieve a strong democracy, we must be participative and self-governed by citizens as opposed to only representative government on behalf of the citizenry (Barber, 1984). These scholars speak of the rights of citizens to participate.

However, there is literature that speaks to the responsibilities of citizens to intervene on injustices. The sentiment that the responsibility of citizen participation is a moral obligation dates back to the 18th century. These responsibilities are laid out in *The Social Contract* written by JJ Rousseau in 1762. Rousseau calls for citizens to monitor and intervene in governance as a necessity to maintaining a democratic society (Rousseau, 1762).

5.2 Meaningful Citizen Participation Defined.

Meaningful citizen participation is a form of localized governance fosters legitimacy, is representative of those impacted by decisions made and has long-term viability (Chaskin & Garg, 1997).

In stakeholder interviews conducted by doctoral students attending the University of Akron, Ohio, residents, administrators and activists shared their definitions of authentic participation as needing to have ongoing involvement and having an impact on the outcomes and decisions made. More specifically to Milwaukee's CNI planning process, I look to the formation of the steering committee and potential subcommittees

as evidence of what could be identified as long term involvement. However, as expressed in the participant interviews these committee structures were not optimized and convened infrequently.

Perspectives of meaningful citizen participation can vary among stakeholder groups. Elected officials view participation as communication through their office. Government staff views effective participation as citizens with the capacity and education to advocate for staff agendas and view effective participation as a form of democracy allowing for interactive decision making (Berner, 2011). These perspectives are representative of a 21st century planning model. However, policies of the early to mid-20th century were urban planning models that eliminated blighted neighborhoods without regard for citizen input.

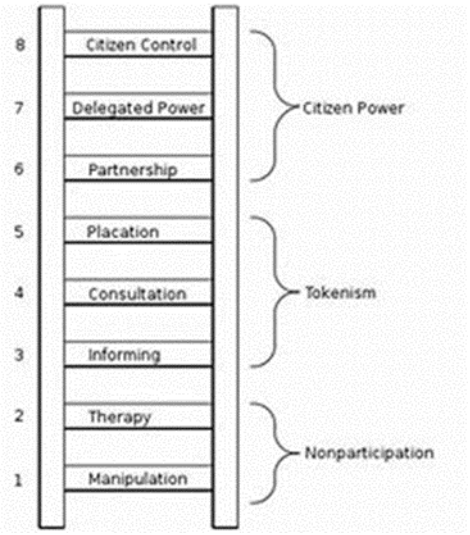
In 1930s and 1940s, the planning institutions were under attack against a national economic planning and urban renewal model that focused on the clearing of blighted buildings in urban America. In a democratic society with the power to achieve the common aims of its citizens (Fung, 2010), the critique of this national planning model was on the lack of freedom of citizen participation in planning their own communities. As a result of these urban renewal programs coined as “negro removal” policies, a community backlash rose up and urban planning scholars introduced more inclusive models of urban renewal processes.

5.3 Theories and Models of Citizen Participation.

The *liberal* meaning of empowerment can be traced back to the 1960s when resident participatory planning was championed as a way to empower residents of public housing. (Peterman 1996).

Creating a government plan became viewed as a denial of freedom by citizens. (Davidoff, 1965) The concept of creating a democratic planning process began surfacing post World War II. As opposition rose against decisions made by local public agencies in housing urban renewal programs in the early 1960s, anti-establishment planners and poor minorities connected through social movements. As a result, planners began looking for ways to assist these poor communities by pushing back against the traditional planning process. (Davidoff, 1965). In 1969, planning continued to evolve, moving the needle from participation outcomes to the ultimate outcome of a transfer of power over one's own community. I begin with Sheri Arnstein's theory demonstrating this paradigm shift to empowering citizens to plan their own communities through participatory planning.

5.3.1 Arnstein's Model: "A Ladder of Citizen Participation".



Arnstein argues that, when the disadvantaged play a larger role in planning their communities, a more just redistribution results. By influencing social reforms, the disadvantaged can share in the wealth of resources that the affluent enjoy. (Fainstein, 2010). With the objective to empower disenfranchised citizens, Arnstein developed and illustrated a citizen participation model in the 1969 publication "A Ladder of Citizen Participation". The Arnstein model was designed to implement federally funded urban renewal programs and is based on the ideal of a transference of power from government to citizens.

Born out of an era of unrest and the desire of the powerless to acquire power over their own communities, the Arnstein model was developed to localize the decision-

making process in the neighborhood redevelopment initiatives brought forth via three federal programs: Urban Renewal, Model Cities and Anti-Poverty. Understanding that a transference of power from government authority to residents in this way can have negative outcomes such as opportunism, inefficiencies and division, Arnstein contends that community control is needed to ensure that policies made would benefit the disadvantaged. (Fainstein, 2010).

Arnstein operationalized community control in her creation of Ladder of Citizen Participation model. The ladder illustration shows three levels of participation: nonparticipation, degrees of tokenism, and degrees of citizen power. (Arnstein, 1969)

5.3.1.1 Non-Participation Level.

At the non-participation level, Arnstein describes participation as limited to manipulation and therapy by the powerful as they provide social services and reinforce citizen's perceived need for government assistance. The real objective of the non-participation level is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs but to enable power holders to educate or cure the participants (Arnstein, 1969).

Arnstein notes examples of manipulation by the power structure in the middle 20th century for American cities included in urban renewal initiatives that required the showing of grassroots participation to push renewal projects forward and win public support. The examples that Arnstein provides depicting the power structure include government, elected officials, and community agencies, and experts (Arnstein, 1969).

Manipulation was apparent within Citizen Action Committees viewed as rubber stamp committees formed for the purposes of information gathering and garnering

public support (Arnstein, 1969). Within the category of non-participation, the desire of the power structure at the Therapy rung is to cure the social ills of the individual as opposed to addressing the institutional structures that created the ills, such as racism. The Therapy rung also serves to distract citizens from the controversial issues that could improve their own quality of life. Arnstein cites the example of public housing organizations used to organize neighborhood clean-ups and crime watch as a method of distracting residents from their own powerlessness (Arnstein, 1969).

5.3.1.2 Tokenism.

According to Arnsein's theory, the rungs in the Tokenism category inhibit the transfer of power. They are: Informing, Consultation and Placation. Arnstein concedes that informing can be the first step in empowering. Informing citizens of their options and responsibilities can build capacity and the social capital needed to transfer power to citizens. However, this action can hinder that transfer of power if the communication is one way. If the communication flows only from the powerful to the powerless, it leaves no room for negotiation between the two factions. This can take on the role of regulating citizen decision making (Arnstein, 1969).

Typical methods of Consultation of citizens include surveying, neighborhood meetings and public hearings. These methods are facilitated without assurances of change or increased influence of citizens. Success is often measured by the number of citizens that participate in meetings and surveys. (Arnstein, 1969). *"*When powerholders restrict the input of citizens' ideas solely to this level, participation remains just a window-dressing ritual. People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions*."* (Arnstein, 1969, p. 219). Arnstein provided this example when making a practical

application of the Consultation rung:

> “A classic misuse of the Consultation rung occurred at a New Haven, Connecticut community meeting held to consult citizens on a proposed Model Cities grant. James V. Cunningham, in an unpublished report to the Ford Foundation, described the crowd as large and mostly hostile. In New Haven Connecticut, members of the Hill Parents Association took issue with their lack of participation in designing their own Model Cities grant.” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 220)
>
> “Members of The Hill Parents Association demanded to know why residents had not participated in drawing up the proposal. CAA director Spitz explained that it was merely a proposal for seeking Federal planning funds- that once funds were obtained, residents would be deeply involved.” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 220)
>
> “An outside observer present at the meeting described the process in this way: Spitz and Mel Adams ran the meeting on their own. No representatives of a Hill group moderated or even sat on the stage. Spitz told the 300 residents that this huge meeting was a form of participation in planning. To prove this, since there was a lot of dissatisfaction in the audience, he called for a 'vote' on each component of the proposal. The vote took this form: Can I see the hands of all those in favor of a health clinic? All those opposed?' It was a little like asking who favors motherhood." (Arnstein, 1969, p. 220).

This example of Consultation used as participatory planning demonstrates how Tokenism is used to create the illusion of shared decision making to placate the audience.

It is on the Placation rung where a limited transfer of power can be realized, however it remains under the category of Tokenism. “An example of placation strategy is to place a few hand-picked, worthy poor on boards of Community Action Agencies or on public bodies like the board of education, police commission, or housing authority. If they are not accountable to a constituency in the community and if the traditional power

elite hold the majority of seats, the have-nots can be easily outvoted and outfoxed." (Arnstein, 1969, p. 220).

This placation strategy, sometimes coined as the "creaming process," creates citizen organizing committees that exclude the poorest and most disadvantaged from influence. Instead the strategy is to recruit upwardly mobile minorities that have escaped poverty but live close enough to poverty that they can speak to the struggle. It gives the appearance of citizen empowerment. (Kramer, 1969)

There is agreement among some scholars that the power constraints of Tokenism hinder authentic participation, from this perspective, Tokenism is viewed as a way to regulate the decision-making power of citizens. Tokenism is a collection of modes of regulating citizens and is less of a solution to a problem than a strategy that enables government and constrains citizenship. Power doesn't need to be held by the State; power does not need to be held through the actions of influential intermediaries; nor does it need to be coerced. Rather it should be achieved by building self-sufficient and politically active citizens. (Cruikshank, 1999). If participation stops at needs assessment, service evaluation, and meeting the psychological need to be heard, the impact might be a stronger bond between the City and its citizens, but it does not address the power differential. Without the power and means for citizens to improve their own situation, participatory planning is simply a token and voices continue to be ignored and/or repressed (Jonsson, etal, 2007). Scholars such as Tritter & McCallum take a more complex view of what authentic participation can look like. They disagree with the concept that power is the only means of authentic citizen participation as noted in the quote below:

> "User engagement and empowerment are complex phenomena through which individuals formulate meanings and actions that reflect their desired degree of participation in individual and societal decision-making processes. Rather than rely, as Arnstein does, on models of participation constrained by a specific conceptualization of activism, we conclude that user involvement requires dynamic structures and processes legitimized by both participants and non-participants." (Tritter & McCallum, 2006, p. 157)

The relevance of Tritter & McCallum's view on user engagement speaks to the importance of acknowledging all levels of participation. Understanding the competing life priorities of citizens and the time limitations of citizen action, Tritter & McCallum assert that all levels of participation should be encouraged and valued in the decision-making process.

5.3.1.3 Transference of Power and Degrees of Citizen Power.

The transfer of power is a citizen right and responsibility. It occurs when knowledge and rights merge into political influence. Local knowledge is born from the belief that local people know what they need and understand the politics of their community. They are capable of prioritizing, identifying needs and creating opportunities within their own communities. (Chaskin & Garg, 1997).

The top two rungs of Arnstein's participation ladder are about localizing power. To deem the planning process fully participatory and impactful, this top section is where power is transferred to citizens to make their own policies and manage the projects with little external influence. (Arnstein, 1969).

The transference of power begins with citizen partnership that allows for negotiation with the power structure. This transference of power becomes more pronounced in rungs 7 and 8.

Delegated Power includes more citizens in the power structure to have decision making powers. Citizen control transfers full managerial power to the citizens or the have- nots. (Arnstein, 1969) As communities seek to control their own schools, plan their communities and influence policy, there can be a transfer of power from government to non-government organizations. Arnstein viewed this transfer of management to non-government organizations as an example of what citizen power can look like. (Arnstein, 1969).

Building on this concept of transference of power to non-government organizations, there is scholarship that views this transfer of power as a decentralized method of decision making. Social scientists agree that these non-government organizations have been viewed as important actors in citizen empowerment carving out new spaces for civic engagement and connecting citizens to the power structure. “Operating in the spaces between formal governmental structures and the citizenry, these activities emphasize the growing importance of civil society as a place for public deliberation and problem solving.” (Fischer, 2006, p. 19)

Arnstein views the transfer of power to citizens as the ultimate goal. However, there are scholars that assert that the ultimate goal should be deliberative democracy in shared decision making. This shared decision making should flow back and forth between citizens and the power structure that is in force at any given time. Tritter & McCallum (2006) refer to this shared decision making as horizontal relationships that occur between participants and public sector institutions. Arnstein’s model is solely vertical, focusing primarily on citizen power. However, more than one ladder is needed to show the horizontal relationships between citizens and government and/or non-

participants. (Tritter & McCallum, 2006).

Scholars agree that reforms in citizen participation seek to deepen the abilities of ordinary citizens to effectively participate in the shaping of programs and policies relevant to their own lives (Fischer, 2006). There are social scientists that negate Arnstein's view on the need for absolute power and place the importance on problem solving through shared decision making. Looking through this lens of shared decision making, influence is still desired, but there is less emphasis on the transfer of power from government to citizen as there is on the outcome. The emphasis is placed on collective action and the politics of civic participation. It is this problem solving through shared dialogue between the hierarchy and the citizens that makes the complete transference of citizen power not as significant. (Fung & Wright, 2001) Furthermore, the hierarchy has the potential to be radically democratic in their reliance on the participation and capacities of ordinary people, deliberative because they institute reason-based decision making, and empowered since they attempt to tie action to discussion. (Fung & Wright, 2001).

The desired outcome to tie action to discussion is an argument also made by political theorist Benjamin Barber. He makes a similar argument for collective action through community planning in his book *Strong Democracy; Participating Politics for a New Age.* He theorizes that citizen participation and collective action cannot take place in what he terms as a liberal democracy. Barber cites that liberal democracy is born from a desire for individual power and glory seeking. He asserts that a strong democracy brings people together through dialogue and collective action. Whereas a liberal democracy keeps citizens apart for the advancement of private interests, Barber (1984)

argues that, to possess a strong democracy, meaningful citizen participation is required (Barber, 1984). In contrast with Arnstein's theory that a complete transfer of power is what determines authentic participation, Barber states that this transfer of power can lead to individual power grabbing and glory seeking in a liberal democracy. Barber's argument against liberal democracy conflicts with Arnstein's desired outcome for a complete transfer of power as it opens the door for opportunism and division.

5.3.2 Snakes & Ladders Theory.

While Arnstein's model provided the framework for future theories of citizen participation, scholars Tritter & McCollum answer Arnstein's model with a critique of the ladder theory's simplicity. Authors Jonathan Tritter and Alison McCallum (2006) agree with Arnstein on the need for the transfer of power to citizens. However, they offer a critique of Arnstein's model, asserting that it is too limited in scope. Arnstein addresses tokenism but oversimplifies the process and methods used to illicit citizen involvement. Ignoring process can negate the transference of power by creating a tyranny of the majority. By disregarding categories of participation, the model empowers some and not others. The result can lead to power inequities (Tritter & McCallum, 2006).

Arnstein asserts that citizen participation is citizen power. (Arnstein, 1969). Tritter & McCallum argue that user engagement and empowerment are complex phenomena through which individuals formulate meanings and actions that reflect their desired degree of participation in individual and societal decision-making processes. Rather than rely as Arnstein does on models of participation limited by a specific view of activism, user involvement requires structures and processes that are evolving and legitimized by citizens engaging at various degrees. Tritter & McCollum identify three

critiques of Arnstein's theory. The critiques include 1) missing rungs in the model, 2) the model's adverse effects referred to as snakes, and 3) the singular focus and outcome of power offered in Arnstein's model without considering process as an outcome. The missing rung critique identifies Arnstein's failure to differentiate between process, type of participant and outcome. In failing to do this Tritter & McCallum contend that:

> "Arnstein is vague about the methods adopted to involve users and sees no relationship between the aims of an involvement exercise, users who participate and the methods adopted to involve them." (Tritter & McCallum, 2006 p. 162)

The second critique referred to as the "snakes" of the ladder stems from the lack of inclusivity and the failure to identify the different levels of involvement, leading to what Tritter & McCallum refer to as the "tyrannical majority" in decision making. By disregarding the types of participation, the model empowers some and not others. The result is power inequities. The third criticism of the Arnstein model is that it fails to identify the horizontal relationships that occur between participants and public sector institutions. Arnstein's model is solely vertical, focusing primarily on citizen power. They contend that more than one ladder is needed to show the horizontal relationships between citizens and government and/or non-participants. (Tritter & McCallum, 2006).

> "One adaptation of Arnstein's model would be to incorporate different ladders for the different types of user involvement. Arnstein's approach concentrates on vertical approaches – the relationship between public sector organizations and the individuals being served - and fails to consider horizontal accountability. The responsiveness that communities require of local groups and public authorities require from governance mechanisms is often horizontal rather than vertical." (Tritter, J. Q., & McCallum, A., 2006, p.163).

5.3.3 Wilcox Ladder Theory.

Researcher David Wilcox refers to Arnstein's theory as the framework for his own theory. Wilcox' ladder compresses the Arnstein model to five rungs: Information, Consultation, Shared Decision Making, Acting Together and Supporting. Maintaining decision making power and citizen action as an outcome, there is no mention of the transfer of power to citizens in the Wilcox model. The first two rungs of the Wilcox model re similar to that of Arnstein in that information is needed, but not enough for empowering participants. The second Consultation rung allows for limited feedback but doesn't necessarily provide avenues for citizen action. The third rung is about consensus building to move forward in community action, identifying areas for agreement, and not a transfer of power. It isn't until the fourth and fifth rungs of the Wilcox model where shared action and control are discussed but without any indication of a complete transfer of decision making power to the citizens. The final fifth rung cites supported independence as the final outcome. It is the fifth rung where citizen empowerment is inferred through the outcome of control and independence. (Wilcox, 1994).

5.3.4 Briggs' Collective Problem Solving Theory.

There are scholars that view citizen participation as a form of problem solving through democracy. In viewing authentic participation through the lens of democracy, while influence is still desired, there is less emphasis on the transfer of power from government to citizen as is the outcome. Briggs' critique of Arnstein's theory is her alignment of legitimacy with community vs. government or the powerless vs. the powerful. Briggs cites the risk of a tyranny from below and a parochial decision making

when all of the power is transferred to the grassroots level. That complete transfer of power leads to ritual participation as opposed to meaningful participation. Briggs asserts that ritual participation can cause disconnect between the mandate to act and capacity. This speaks to a potential lack of human and social capital in terms of knowledge and capacity within the grass roots movement. (Briggs, 2008).

The idea that the complete transference of power to citizens is not the ultimate outcome is the basic idea of Brigg's theory. The emphasis is placed on collective action and the politics of civic participation. Briggs offers this view in his examination of the relationship between democracy and civic engagement.

> "The theory and practice of what makes democracy work necessarily include the study of problem solving in action and of the collective capacity to problem-solve— not only to deliberate about the world and set directions for government, but to change the state of the world through collective action, not only to devise and decide but to do ." (Briggs, 2008, p. 8)

Briggs examines three views of democracy and civic engagement: contest, deliberation and problem solving. The traditional theory of civic engagement views it as a contest among interest groups to gain influence. Briggs asserts that it is the rules of engagement among the participants that make this process democratic. In the contest view, civic action is a strategic process driven by self-interest, competing objectives, and a divvying up of resources. This resource allocation leads to the desire to influence the allocation of tangible resources such as money, land or natural resources. (Briggs, 2008). Within the confines of this traditional theory of democracy, civic engagement becomes a strategy toward a shared goal rather than engagement being the outcome in itself. (Briggs, 2008).

Briggs second view of democracy is deliberation.

Briggs asserts that deliberation allows for meaningful dialogue, aimed at a broader understanding of various interests and civic life. This differs from the Contest view in that it is less about competing influences and more about creating a broader political influence through dialogue and collective action. While dialogue and broader understanding is the ideal, Briggs notes that there are doubters among scholars on the practicality of deliberation in its purest form.

> "Sometimes by design, sometimes not, deliberation can amount to collective fiddling while Rome burns." Furthermore, some powerful learning is not in real-time, face-to- face sessions or gatherings of a well-defined group but takes the form of shifts in the "distributed" sets of beliefs of members of a change-oriented coalition or larger public. Finally, deliberation in practice can become one more tool for the best organized and informed to dominate the civic agenda while putting a legitimating mask on things." (Shapiro, 2003, p. 20)

The third tradition is problem solving through collective action which moves democracy from governing to governance. This collective action theory is a hybrid of Briggs' theory of Pluralism and the Control elite as it calls for government, business elite and citizens. This broader scope allows for the competitive influencers and thorough dialogue (Judd and Stone 2006).

Briggs' theory of deliberation fails to move beyond Arnstein's Tokenism rung in that there is a broader scope of participants, but Briggs offers no evidence of a definitive change in the status quo or a transference of power in his deliberation theory. It is not until Briggs introduces collective problem solving that the potential of shared decision making is introduced. The contest and deliberative theories acknowledge the influence of the urban regime and its place in a democratic society. However, in the

collective problem solving theory, Briggs continues to acknowledge that the urban regime is still in place.

Brigg's Collective Problem Solving theory fits into Arnstein's Citizen Power level, but doesn't move past the Partnership rung. Meaning that it reaches only as far as forming partnerships amongst participants of many viewpoints and agendas to work toward a common interest with shared decision making. Briggs contends that "civic capacity" is what enables some communities to succeed. Briggs offers six lessons in civic engagement and capacity. In brief they are:

Lesson 1: History is not a curse. A history of disenfranchisement and mistrust does not have to dictate future civic capacity. History can be the common bond that brings stakeholders together working toward a common goal.

Lesson 2: Civic capacity is important for implementing change beyond forging and supporting a shared agenda of change, and it need not take the form of a governing regime. In this lesson Briggs contends that effective civic capacity lies somewhere between the heavy handed government regime and the completely independent coalition working toward change without the involvement of the government regime (Briggs, 2008).

Lesson 3: Civil society intermediaries can be vital cultivators and deployers of civic capacity yet go unrecognized and undervalued. "The third lesson is that an important and largely unrecognized role of the "third factor". The nongovernmental (NGO) or civil-society organizations in community life is that of intermediary, broker, or go-between." (Briggs, 2008). Briggs contends that the NGO serves many important

roles to include but not limited to that of coalition builder, advocate, bridge builder, building civic capacity via knowledge building and policy enforcement.

Lesson 4: Combining learning and bargaining is an ongoing not one-time requirement, for which formal as well as informal civic space matters. In order to redistribute power, it is necessary to develop long-term and durable institutions that can carry on and transfer capacity from one project to another. NGO's and/or civic organizations can provide these institutions and can facilitate the important consensus building that needs to happen to build capacity (Briggs, 2008).

Lesson 5: Multiple forms of accountability are needed to connect "top-down" and "bottom-up" contributions to public problem solving. Accountability amongst all institutions involved helps to move citizen participation beyond just process and planning. Meaningful mechanisms of accountability have to cross agency boundaries to promote democracy and development.

Lesson 6: Broad calls for "participation" aside, either the grassroots or the grass-tops can initiate or lead, and the lead can shift over time. Leadership at any given time can be top led or bottom led. Briggs contends that both can achieve a democratic result if attention is paid to the agendas of participants regardless of who is leading the action. However, while still recognizing the need for citizen participation, the dynamic of "tyranny from below" is one that can halt development due to parochial attitudes or the rituals of powerful vs. powerless, making grass roots participationless meaningful (Briggs, 2008).

5.3.5 Fung's Theory of Democratized Participation.

Fung applies his theory in his book *Empowered Participation. Reinventing Urban Democracy.* Similar to Arnstein's work in the Model Cities reform, the inspiration behind Fung's research is that of reforming troubled government agencies by inviting

participatory democracy into the policy making of these troubled agencies with the goal to deliver services in a fair, effective and equitable manner. Citing the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Public School System as examples of successful democratized participation, Fung points out that decentralization allows for tailored solutions to citizen needs which can be achieved with deliberative citizen participation (Fung, 2004).

Unlike Arnstein's model, Fung provides an example that supports sustaining the power of the existing hierarchy while inviting the local opportunity to provide input. Fung provides the example of the Chicago Police Department's the top-down and bottom-up approach to democratized problem solving as a mode of community policing. Thisbottom-up, top-down accountability model allows for local community groups and beat cops to tailor solutions to the specific needs and challenges of the communities they serve. This is accomplished through agency meetings between authorities and local community groups to identify solutions to crime in their respective communities. This example speaks to the critique of Arnstein's theory not addressing the complexities of capacity building in citizen control. Local communities may not have the capacity and knowledge base needed to manage these issue on their own, a certain amount of discretion for the beat cops is allowed with monitoring from the local community in conjunction with the top-down hierarchy to ensure the proper procedures are exercised (Fung, 2004). This type of democratized problem solving makes way for what is coined as the new governance, shifting from the older models of being governed.

In summary, citizen participation is viewed by scholars as necessary to achieve real policy reform. However, contrary to Arnstein's assertion that the final outcome

should be the complete transference of power to citizens, there is a diverging view that the desired outcome is less about the transference of power and more about a shared democratic decision-making approach between the citizens and the hierarchy.

The scholarship is showing that there has been an evolution of citizen participation and the transfer of power. Society has seen urban planning models progress from a heavy-handed government with little consideration for citizen input in urban renewal to a civil rights uprising seeking a complete transference of power from government to citizens. Opportunism, division, lack of knowledge and lack of capacity were issues that sometimes presented itself with a complete transference of power. Those issues are perhaps what brings us to the planning models of today. It is the ideal of a shared decision-making model allowing for citizen influence while at the same time welcoming expertise to help guide the decision making process. I plan to use the following research method to examine the degree of shared decision making among residents within Milwaukee's CNI.

6. Methodology.

6.1 Case Study Research

The research method I am employing is a qualitative case study. My rationale for using this research approach is to focus my research on a small population of people, their experiences and the meaning from which they derive from these experiences (Maxwell, 2013). This method helps to inform and create a better understanding of the topic through interviews and sharing observations. (Glaser & Strauss, 1999).

The qualitative approach allows for the inclusion of my own observations and inductive reasoning in my methodology. Qualitative research allows me to focus in on

language, perceptions, and feelings of inclusion and power. It would be difficult to capture these elements of my research in a quantitative study. This methodology will allow me to gain the participants' perspective while understanding how they interpret the meaning of their experience. A quantitative analysis could have measured the number of residents that returned to Westlawn, the demographic shifts of the population, the number of participants and number of community meetings conducted. However, those statistics would fail to give me the depth of understanding that I am seeking about a transfer of power and authenticity of participation. I used a multi-disciplined research approach for this study. The research methods employed were:

1. Case Study Research
2. Review of existing research.
3. Participant Observation
4. Qualitative and open-ended (audio-recorded) interviews with 10 residents and five CNI collaborators.

6.2 Literature Review.

The literature review provided a framework for how the meaning of authentic citizen participation has evolved from a demand for absolute power transfer down to the grassroots level, to that of a more collaborative shared decision making process. I began the research by reviewing literature from books, research journals, and informational articles. The literature discussed various theories and models of meaningful participatory planning, the transfer of power, and democratized decision making.

6.3 Participant Observation.

The reason for utilizing participant observation stems from personal experience in observing the process of bringing the CNI to Milwaukee. HEDC was involved in the

beginning to assist with the grant submission to HUD, participating in site visits for the final round and the grant award. It is through this process that I observed what I would consider numerous missed opportunities to affect positive change to an economically disadvantaged community with the CNI. As the Executive Director of Havenwoods Economic Development Corporation (HEDC), I am immersed in the CNI and its implementation. HEDC is the lead nonprofit and non-government organization that has been working to revitalize and sustain the Havenwoods community since 2001. The Havenwoods community includes Westlawn Gardens and the CNI geographic boundaries. Due to the depth of my involvement in the Havenwoods community, the planning process and subsequently the implementation of the CNI community improvement plan, my research has the potential to be rich with institutional knowledge regarding the community. More specifically I have the trust of hundreds of citizens impacted by CNI, where I have gained an awareness of the expressed needs and desires of the community. I also have access to the planning and implementation documents for CNI from the grant application to the grant award and finally the implementation plan.

7. Data Collection.

The principal data sources for this primary research are interview results from three groups: 1.) Westlawn residents, 2.) Havenwoods residents residing in the CNI boundary but not within Westlawn 3.) CNI steering committee Members. As a result of my position with HEDC I have been able to build a degree of trust and credibility among citizens in Havenwoods. For this reason, I have access to citizens, CNI steering committee members and long-standing partner organizations directly affected by the

CNI. I interviewed 15 subjects that were intimately involved in the CNI planning process.

7.1 Interview Questions.

Interview questions have been approved by the Institution Research Bureau (IRB). The interviewees are anonymous to protect the vulnerable and encourage depth and openness in responses. I surveyed 15 individuals representing three subgroups that participated in the CNI planning. It should be noted that a representative from HACM was approached and invited to provide their thoughts and insights on this research topic.

The first subgroup were Westlawn residents relocated out of Westlawn to allow for the new construction. All but one of the Westlawn residents interviewed are currently considered low income and receive housing subsidy. Westlawn residents were chosen to interview for a number of reasons. This is the group that is most severely impacted by the redevelopment of Westlawn as it required relocation and policy changes for tenants of the new development. Based on the fact that this is a low income housing project with a significant elderly and disabled population, the Westlawn residents could be considered the most vulnerable of stakeholders connected to the CNI.

The second subgroup included Havenwoods citizens from the surrounding community that do not reside in Westlawn housing. This is a diverse group of citizens ranging in incomes from low-moderate, are homeowners and have been active in their community as evidenced in community meeting attendance, block watch leadership or the Neighborhood Improvement District. This group of stakeholders are significant in this process due to their partnership with the lead community organization HEDC. They have been involved with building social capital, have gained knowledge and have built

their capacity to positively impact their community. They serve on neighborhood committees, as board members, and lead block clubs. These roles are important to this research because they demonstrate the capacity needed to accept a transference of power.

The third group of participants interviewed were members of the steering committee for the CNI planning and implementation. Members of the entire steering committee included representatives from various city wide organizations, residents and neighborhood organizations working within the CNI boundaries. There were 40 steering committee members listed on the CNI website with four of the committee members being from the neighborhood. The data collected from this group will be relevant to the need for representation and legitimacy in authentic citizen participation as discussed in the literature review.

The interview questions were semi-structured to provide a baseline. However, I did allow more questions to emerge and change as I became more familiar with the subject matter and the conversations became more in-depth (Atieno, 2009). Interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

8. Data Analysis.

Qualitative research focuses on values, relationships and processes that are not always quantifiable (Maxwell, 2013). A qualitative study allowed me to gain knowledge of the subjects' personal experience, the meaning they attach to it and how they interpret their experience in this participatory planning effort (Atieno, 2009). My research is less concerned with the quantitative data, as this research requires a deeper understanding of a personal experience and the dimensions of power and inclusion in

that experience (Almeida, Fernando & Faria, Daniel & Queirós, André, 2017).

My analysis is seeking to recognize patterns in the data to link to my theory that citizen participation was predominantly tokenism and decision-making power was not transferred to the community. Because I have spent years observing resident engagement and behaviors there is an element of inductive reasoning that will shift to deductive reasoning through qualitative analysis through an in-depth interview. The audio recordings assist in analyzing the transcripts for inflection, pauses and hesitations. I begin the analysis using open coding to identify initial core themes. I first looked for themes among those in the subgroups. Then I completed axial coding to identify core concepts that transcend all of the subgroups and regroup the open coding. The mechanics of the coding are typed transcripts that are color coded to identify the themes and subcategories discovered in the data collected. Some of the themes I looked for in the interviews included themes of trust, power, impact, shared decision making and satisfaction. I looked for connections between the themes and the existing scholarship. The literature I used to inform this topic centers on experiences of empowerment and shared decision making. As I analyzed the interview data, I broke down the identified themes further into categories that indicated evidence of tokenism. The categories included references such as “not being heard”, decisions being made prior to community meetings, insincerity of the administration and having no control in the process. All of these categories are aligned with tokenism described in the literature review.

The outcomes of this research method are to: 1.) Test the assertion that the current CNI model engages in tokenism and it does not require or elicit authentic

resident engagement and the transference of power to citizens. 2.) Influence the allocation of resources for community outreach 3.) Encourage the inclusion of grass roots organizations in the initial planning and contract to conduct authentic citizen planning. 4.) Encourage a new approach by which CNI grantees elicit meaningful civic engagement in community engagement efforts. The potential implications of this study will be to shape policy within the CNI both federally and on the local level.

9. Evaluation of Methodology.

The rigors of social science research are difficult to capture as the experiences, values, perceptions and environments can influence how we draw meaning from one's personal experiences (Fraser, 1995). To capture these experiences the subject selection for the research interviews was purposeful and strategic. Being purposeful in my selection allows the sample to be representative of the community.

By choosing subjects that belong to one subgroup such as Westlawn residents it allowed for a higher level of confidence that the conclusions drawn are typical of the population represented (Maxwell, 2003). The responses collected from subjects that share similarities allow me to determine the viability of authentic citizen participation and the transference of power.

While this type of in-depth interviewing contributes to the viability of the information gathered, it does present the first liability in this study which is reliability. Due to the small sample size there are limitations to the reliability of the conclusions.

A second limitation is that due to a global pandemic and a "stay at home" order all of my interviews were done via telephone. The inability to be in the same physical space to read non-verbal cues in a small way lessened the depth of the interviews.

10. Findings.

The main themes that emerged from the interviews were perceptions of meaningless citizen participation and powerlessness. These two main themes transcended all three of the stakeholder groups interviewed. However, there are nuanced differences in how the members of each group interpreted power and authenticity.

HACM reported in the Westlawn Transformation Plan that 50 meetings were held over a course of several years to inform and receive feedback from stakeholders. They also contended that the methods of outreach included direct mail to all Westlawn residents, elected officials, community organizations and local businesses

(https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cityDCD/planning/plans/West/pdfs/Westlawn_Transformation_Plan_CNI2018-11-01op.pdf).

It should be noted that the Westlawn redevelopment began prior to the Choice Neighborhood Initiative with the tear down and re-development of Phase I (east end of the development). This is an important distinction because some of the respondents referred back to their participation in Phase I that occurred in 2012, when speaking of the outcomes of CNI or Phase II in 2016.

To examine if authentic citizen participation occurred with the CNI planning process, I first determined how respondents defined meaningful citizen participation. When asked what they thought about meaningful citizen participation, most of their definitions stopped at the benefit of receiving information. They expressed gratitude in being invited to provide feedback on what was being presented to them. It was as if

they were conditioned to expect nothing more than being fed information. It was not until we started discussing shared decision making and a transference of power did they begin to go more in-depth about how they would have preferred to be engaged. In the beginning of the interviews this resident of 40 years is representative of the perspectives shared by many on meaningful participation:

> “I would receive the information via email and both of the meetings that they were having, and find out information that’s going on in the area and our neighborhood and be able to have some input into what's going to happen.”

It was common as the interviews progressed and we went more in-depth, the perspective of meaningful participation from residents evolved to a less passive view on participation. The same resident pivoted from defining meaningful participation as just being fed information to pushing an issue in a less passive way:

> “I think we should have a great voice in what is going on with CNI. And what is occurring along with working with our elected leadership. When it is occurring with our elected leadership like our Aldermen, our Mayor or Havenwoods, well, you know, we only can do so much. We can voice opinions on what we'd like to see happen. We continue to press the issue and put pressure on the situation”.

10.1 Interview Findings.

10.1.1 Authentic Citizen Participation.

The findings from the interviews conducted with Westlawn residents were reliable. The theme of a lack of authenticity in citizen participation came out in all five interviews. Initially all of the participants shared stories of feeling very excited not only about the rebuilding of their housing but that they would be invited to plan for the redevelopment. Residents shared these thoughts about being a part of the planning:

> "We were glad because some of the things we were hearing regarding the redevelopment. We wanted it to happen. A lot of residents were happy and I was happy because we were going to tear down the old and put up new."
>
> "I think initially, I felt so honored. A lot of times you always see the same people around the table. So it's always the same ideas. So I felt honored to be a part of the committee but at the same time disappointed because people always hear what I have to say."

The Westlawn residents interviewed shared the perception that after the plan was approved by HUD and the resource allocations were determined, communication slowed significantly and meeting invitations ceased. Residents felt that they were used to get the grant and the plan approved. They also expressed feelings of being exploited and leveraged to gain positive press and additional funding for HACM. "I think that we were just here as residents to give us applause when they want to win awards. They want good publicity."

As the planning process continued, the participants interviewed shared what they referred to as "things suddenly falling apart." Falling apart in their view was that after the grant was finalized and the kick off celebration had occurred, there was very little sharing of information or shared decision making happening. Furthermore, the needs and desires that they did express fell off the plan due to limited resources. Because of the lack of updates and the perception of not being heard, there were sentiments of mistrust in the process expressed by the residents. Residents acknowledge that there were several meetings held as long ago as 2012 when the redevelopment of Westlawn had just been announced. It is in these meetings that

residents had been asked what they wanted to see in the new development. One resident felt like they were sold “false dreams”.

Westlawn residents provided feedback but now feel as though their needs and desires went ignored. An example provided of needs not being met was due to the number of children that have asthma in the community, it was asked that there not be carpeting put into the units. However, according to the residents interviewed carpeting was installed as a way to keep costs down. Other requests not met were the desire for basements in all of the units to allow for storage.

In the end, the participants interviewed had indicated that they had all attended at least one planning meeting. Most of the interviewees, indicated that if they were made aware of meetings they would attend them to have their voices heard. However, the participants indicated that much of the plan was determined prior to any meetings being held.Prior to realizing that the plan was pre-determined with little will for alterations by HACM and the City of Milwaukee, the residents saw the meetings as authentic because they were being informed and were invited to give feedback. When there was a realization that there was a plan already in place, feelings of powerlessness had set in with the residents interviewed.

Involving citizens in the early stages of planning can be a determinant to the success of a policy or program. (Bingham, 2006). The ability to influence how CNI would be implemented was something that the respondents felt would have been very important.

They expressed a feeling of powerlessness throughout this process giving examples such as not sharing in decisions about project budgets, contractor selection

and improving the surrounding community. All of the Westlawn respondents indicated that shared decision making did not happen but they would have wanted influence in the CNI planning. When asked about the ability to influence how resources were allocated, these were some of the comments from the respondents:

> "At the end of the day, we live here, this is our community and we're the ones that have to live with it all."

> "We didn't have a say in how the money was supposed to be used. But they were saying that some was going to go for improving Havenwoods, some to the 4th District (MPD) and a portion to fix up Silver Spring Drive. And so then after we got the money, I can't say, because like I said, I don't know where it's going and how it's being distributed. Because we all would ask them and they come up with some kind of excuse. They would always say it was talked about at the last meeting. I figured I just missed the meeting."

> "Uh, so I would say for me, my memory of it was this is what the budget was, and this is what it is. That was my memory. And then when I pushed back on a few things that I didn't agree with, then I was told the meeting about this, this that any other happened in this year. I don't recall being invited to those meetings."

Consistent with the residents of Westlawn interviewed, there was a theme among Havenwoods residents of not being heard during the CNI planning and being asked to just go through the motions of engagement. The respondents within this subgroup unanimously determined that the citizen participation process was not meaningful in that they felt the plans for the CNI were pre-determined by the City of Milwaukee and HACM. This left little opportunity for influencing the outcome. Much of the process as told by the respondents was a system of top down communication and information sharing. This is what a Havenwoods resident had to say about the experience

participating in a process that is perceived as pre-determined:

> “I remember being at a presentation where they showed us a large full color bound document that outlines all the things that they're doing. And I also remember being a little bit surprised at that point that some of the things that were talked about, at least initially weren't there….. if you're gonna actually take the feedback that happens from the residents then use it. Otherwise, you get decisions made already and you're going through the motions of getting feedback. As if that's just a step that you're trying to get past. Even though you already know what you want to do.”

There was a lack of trust expressed in the process and HACM as an agency. Respondents were quick to acknowledge that the HACM staff were fine to work with, but had distrust in the HACM, the City government bureaucracy, and the legitimacy of the process. One resident expressed this sentiment in this way:

> “As time went on, I began to distrust it more. Although there were certain individuals on the planning committee namely the lead HACM coordinator who did a lot of outreach to people, and he certainly did try to involve the community on his part, but it never worked out. I don't know. It just became I don't even know what the word is I'm trying to look for. It's like it was too much. Where the city just made all the decisions, we have the money, this is what we want to do. And not asking anybody.”

This issue of legitimacy came through during the steering committee interviews. All of the respondents from the steering committee questioned the legitimacy in the planning process due to the lack of community representation on the committee. Here is what two steering committee members had to say about the lack of representation on the steering committee:

> “I would have utilized some of the resources that we have within the community and making sure that they

were on board now. I know that this may seem bias but I feel that HEDC does a great job of making sure that we have a great pulse on the community. I just didn't feel that there was enough resident engagement. You know, for this to be successful. I feel they had one or two residents that were a part of this. But those residents didn't really speak for everyone. They didn't speak for the single moms. They didn't speak for the new home owners. They didn't speak for any of those people. So I was a bit disappointed by that."

"I don't necessarily think that they (residents) felt equity in voice or maybe even prepared to engage in some of the conversations that were taking place. If I recall, I think while they were four community members, I think only two of them were regular members. And they unengaged."

10.1.2 Transfer of Power.

To obtain perspectives on a transfer of power I asked the question about how Westlawn residents would have liked to see citizen participation conducted. Three out of the 5 respondents from Westlawn were able to convey how they would have operationalized the participation process. The preference they described was a transference of power. Respondents wanted to see Westlawn residents and Havenwoods residents form committees that would help to create the CNI plan. They indicated the desire to help plan how the units would be built, the housing project amenities and what critical community improvements should be identified.

One resident referenced an example of the transference of power what happened in a New Orleans community where residents were at the table making decisions on how their community would be re-built. The respondent cited decisions made about new construction or rehabilitation of properties, volunteers helping to construct houses and the ability to influence how monies would be spent.

A second resident referred to the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) as a planning model that could have been utilized for CNI. This was a model that HEDC had shared with residents. HEDC attempted to make residents aware of what their power could look like by sharing the DSNI documentary. The DSNI was a grass roots community redevelopment initiative in Boston, MA that was community driven with a complete transference of power to the citizens.

The documentary was shared with residents to help raise awareness of how to build community from the grass roots. This is how one of the respondents reacted to the lack of shared decision-making:

> "It could have been better because decisions residents would have made might have been to make a bedroom smaller, instead of closets, build basements or maybe not have basements. There's all these different decisions on how things look on how things face the neighborhood integrated into the neighborhood or not integrate into the neighborhood. Yes, residents should have had a say so on all of that. Westlawn residents should have had a say in how it should look. The residents surrounding Westlawn also. I felt the entire CNI neighborhood should have gotten some kind of say so and then it should have been ranked in tiers of who gets the most say so."

Perhaps the most impactful demonstration of powerlessness was the relocation process that was employed to prepare for the demolition and rebuild of Westlawn. Based on the responses from the residents interviewed, this relocation process set the tone for the entire redevelopment of Westlawn as it pertains to creating a mistrust and a lack of cooperation among the Westlawn residents.

Respondents confirmed that they were invited to provide feedback on the

relocation plan for Westlawn. They had come to an agreement with HACM on the relocation policies and process. However, when the relocation began, residents interviewed felt as though the policies agreed upon began to change as funding streams were changing. According to respondents, when it came time to meet with the relocation case managers, options that they thought they had were changed. Residents were presented with three options: 1. Remain in public housing, 2. Go to scattered sites or 3. Go to the private market and take rent assistance. The language changed from having three options to depending on income for some, to having only one option for relocation. One resident expressed sentiments of distrust, pointing out that when HACM had these large meetings with residents, nothing was put in writing, making it difficult to push back. One responded said:

> "They'll say whatever they want to residents, they won't put none of that in writing. But when they talk to you one on one boy do they want you to sign away your life and make very difficult decisions on the spot without having much time to think about it."

One resident referred to HACM's relocation process as a "flipping of the script" leaving them somewhat powerless in the decision on where to live. The relocation process for this resident resulted in leaving Westlawn and choosing the private market option with rent assistance. The relocation housing was owned by a slum lord with rent assistance from HACM. This is how this resident described the relocation process:

> "When I first left Westlawn, I was sick, I had breathing problems and I think it was some of the molding stuff in the household. I moved into a single family unit. I had a landlord, and he was a slumlord. So when I moved out of there (Westlawn), I feel real hurt because you know, I've been there for a while, or what have you, but I know that we were supposed to make this big improvement. So I had to pick up my sadness because I wouldn't see the

> people and the friends and the residents the way I used to, because we had to relocate. Because of the landlord. I was paying more for We-Energy bills then I was paying for rent because he was a slumlord. He didn't do anything. And that's a hurt feeling. I brought it up to housing and asked how they can just let some of these houses that be rent assistance? How do you all let us suffer like that? Because it doesn't make any sense."

The national trend for urban renewal and addressing poverty in public housing is referred to as "income mixing and social inclusion" (Chaskin and Joseph, 2015, p. 217). The objective is to relocate public housing tenants to higher income neighborhoods that provide a level of functionality with less crime, better schools, and access to economic opportunity. At the same time, re-building the existing housing into a newly constructed and mixed income community providing economic diversity. This strategy is coined as "dispersal and development." This is a strategy also employed by the CNI with Westlawn residents. Chaskin and Joseph assert that the sustainability of the mixed income development places priority on private markets over social goals. This results in public housing tenants being physically relocated to more functional neighborhoods while they remain socially and economically isolated (Chaskin and Joseph, 2015). My findings in these interviews with Westlawn residents support this assertion. Three of the respondents expressed feelings of social and economic isolation as they relocated to their private market housing in better neighborhoods.

The sense of powerlessness did not end with Westlawn residents. Interview respondents indicated that after a presentation of the implementation plan from City planning staff it became apparent that they would have little power over where resources would be allocated. When asked if they had any influence on resource

allocation all of the respondents indicated that they were told that the budget was already approved by HUD and could not be changed. One resident leader indicated that feedback was solicited about how funds would be allocated, but it became clear when reviewing the plan that the feedback provided was not considered for the plan. “I had no power in what was to happen in my own community”.

When the participants were asked about the transfer of power to the grassroots level there was some dissension among them. There was a contingent that felt that citizens should be at the table making the decisions from the start. The sentiment was that this was their community, they would have to live with results and they should be able to determine where community improvement dollars are spent. Taking a step further, some of the participants went into detail explaining exactly how they would operationalize a grassroots approach to community development. Suggestions made to achieve authentic participation were to set up resident committees to work on park improvement projects, retail improvements, litter and so on. There were others that felt that a complete transfer of power wasn’t necessary to achieve the outcomes needed.

One responded suggested a very pragmatic approach to transferring power:

> “An organization I'm familiar with, just because it's being a part of it right now, is the way that I would do it. So I suppose it could look something like that. But with the caveat that if that power was transferred to the residents, like a resident board or something like that would be the one making the decisions. But these are things that absolutely need an essential employee so to speak. So there's no way that citizens, volunteers, board members can do the work, even with time, resources, gifts, abilities, whatever, to actually get stuff done. So if it would be a situation like that, I could see that working if there was a decision making representative group of residents who were directing an employee or more than one employee, whatever, to actually get stuff done, I

> could see that working. And that might be a way to really get the decision making into the hands of residents. But to just leave it to the residents, volunteering their time to actually get things done. I think that is unrealistic and a recipe for disaster. It could also lead to residents grabbing power and acting in their own self-interest."

Not all of the Havenwoods residents interviewed were interested in obtaining power and some expressed discomfort with the use of the term power. One resident felt like the power belonged to agency. Such as police and fire departments, politicians and organizations like HEDC. Rather than find power in decision making, this resident seeks the power in numbers to work together to build community. "Without people coming out to work with you, you have no power, it's just you, by yourself."

The findings from the Steering committee members and a transference of power aligned with those of the Havenwoods residents and the Westlawn residents. Expressions like "no influence over budget", "lack of communication", "pre-determined plan", "exploited", and "only informational", were prevalent throughout all of the steering committee interview responses. Respondents all felt as though they were invited to the table to be presented to by members of HACM and the Department of City Development. They were to absorb information with little opportunity to challenge or influence. Here's what one member had to say:

> "I think I was a vocal part of the steering committee. But not necessarily an impactful one or one that had much of a voice for many of the discussions. And so, while I think that I was able to put items into the application that were important for not only the organization but also for the residents of the organization. But I felt like my impact was not much beyond that."

10.2 Participant Observation.

Before I begin discussing my personal observations of the CNI, it's important to

share my observations about the Havenwoods community and why it is an appropriate neighborhood for this research. As the community organizer for two decades, I have come to observe a culture of self-sufficiency as it pertains to maintaining their own community. This culture provided a foundation for HEDC to build upon and is considered an asset. I have seen residents embrace the technical assistance and the advocacy HEDC has offered with the goal of building a sustainable community.

To build this sustainable community, residents would have to take ownership of their neighborhood to live safely, improve perceptions and attract new investment to the neighborhood. They demonstrated a capacity and a will to influence how their communities would thrive. This was accomplished through the establishment of block clubs, building their own community gardens, developing their own resources via a Neighborhood Improvement District and serving on committees for special projects and special events in the community. These examples of capacity and authentic participation are exactly why the Havenwoods community is appropriate for this study. It's important to recognize that the community was poised for a transference of power from CNI to the grassroots level.

Many of the findings outlined today align with my observations throughout the CNI process. I was able to observe most of the community meetings. The meetings I could not attend, were attended by HEDC staff. The format of the meetings were primarily a presentation of pre-determined plans and then time allotted for break out groups, questions and feedback. Citizens were happy to provide feedback but the participation process ended there. Citizens were asked to react to the implementation plan and then try to fit their needs and desires into the existing plan.

The kick off meeting possessed a positive feeling of excitement among participants about potentially planning community improvements. There were three presenting agencies, the City of Milwaukee planning department, HACM and HEDC. It was held at a public park and had between 60 and 80 participants. The meeting was to introduce community members to the CNI and the implementation plan.

Of those three agencies there were no African American presenters and only HEDC had a history of working inthe community prior to CNI.

I was able to sit in the audience and observe reactions from the residents. Some of the residents reacted with cynicism noting that they had “been down this road before” when the City meets with them and tells them what’s going to happen. This cynicism, in my observation was warranted as I watched their desires be put on paper without any input on altering the pre-determined plan or on allocating resources to pay for the improvements they wanted to see. The remainder of the community meetings followed a similar format with basic ideas and options being presented to the community to choose. The community would react with feedback and the CNI agency partners would document the feedback. In short, residents were asked to react to the choices that HACM and the City of Milwaukee made for them. Residents were not asked to lead any of the improvement initiatives nor were there community discussions had about how allocations would be made for the suggested improvements.

One example of this dynamic of reacting to the choices provided, is the proposal to improve public spaces. The participants were given a slide showing four public spaces. Of those public spaces they were to choose which spaces they wanted to see improvements. Then they were told that the improvements made would be in the way of

updated signs and creative place making using the new signs as art installations. However, residents repeatedly stated in prior meetings that they wanted improvements made to the existing amenities such as the lagoon at McGovern Park and programming for families. If the participating were authentic, the participants would have chosen the public spaces and then determined which improvements would be made as opposed to reacting to options put forth by those that do not live in the community.

The last observation to share is my experience with the steering committee. I was aware of two steering committee meetings and attended one. The steering committee meeting I attended was very controlled by the lead agencies. It was a theater style presentation for 40 committee members. Most of the input from steering committee members provided at this meeting was limited to introductions and expressing their experiences in community development. My observations align with the results from the steering committee interviews. My interpretation of the experience was that of having little influence on the implementation plan, the budget or who would be invited to participate in the planning. Like others, I had a loud and sometimes disruptive voice but in the end was powerless to change the trajectory of the plan and the planning process.

11. Conclusions.

There are two questions I set out to answer in this research. The first is: “Does the CNI model work in the context of gaining meaningful stakeholder participation? The second question is: Was there a transfer of power?”

The qualitative data dictates that citizen participation process did not make it beyond Arnstein’s Non-participation level. The objective of the Non-participation level is

not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable power holders to educate or cure the participants (Arnstein, 1969). Overwhelmingly, the respondents described a process where they spent much of their participation in a top-down communication. They described a degree of manipulation as they were asked to share their desires for community improvement only to learn that a plan was pre-determined for their community. The second rung of the Non-participation category is the Therapy rung. The Therapy rung is designed to cure residents of the pathologies that are deemed harmful to them. This type of therapeutic participation was also implemented by CNI as one of their first initiatives was to provide a resource directory for residents that need access to services for employment, mental health, food pantries, childcare, etc. These are all good things to provide, but the participation did not go further than offering cures for their perceived societal ills.

Residents that were interviewed did not express a desire for complete power. Many of them recognized that they needed experts in the room to assist with decision making. This is not aligned with Arnstein's desire for a total transference of power.

The research results show that stakeholders interviewed are more likely to embrace the Snakes and Ladders theory. The CNI planning model relies heavily on the expertise of city planners, local lenders, economic development professionals within city government and consultants. The data collected in the interviews conducted show an appreciation and in some cases a need expressed by residents forthis expertise.

Those interviewed expressed the desire to influence decisions for their own community, but understood that they couldn't do it alone, giving a nod to the experts in the room. Residents recognized in the interviews that their individual time and

resources were not such that would allow for a vertical transfer of power as illustrated in Arnstein's model. But they were clear about wanting to be part of the conversation and influence the decisions made from the beginning of the planning process through completion. The results of the data collected conclude that residents did not feel that there was a transfer or power nor was there a shared power with HACM or the City of Milwaukee.

These results beg the question: Would meaningful participation had made CNI a bigger success? I concede that the bricks-and-mortar aspect of Westlawn Gardens would have been viewed as a success regardless of meaningful citizen participation as indicated in this interviewee's response:

> "HACM is very good at building buildings. I think they did that efficiently and well. They're good people. I don't think there were bad people among any of them. Quality housing is critical and important with celebration around the erection of these houses. In terms it created help or changed lives I didn't have much faith in what was occurring."

Meaningful participation would have had a more positive impact on the Critical Community Improvements section of the grant with increased transparency in the budgeting process and a transference of power to residents to influence decisions. Respondents indicated that they would have liked to share in those decisions and worked to make the improvements they desired. Participants of the interviews conducted indicated a desire to influence in a shared decision making arrangement.

An example of what could have made a difference, is to not choose options for residents to choose from, but rather let the residents make their own choices from the beginning. An example is when residents were asked to choose what place making elements they want to spend the CNI dollars on and where those elements should be

installed. Instead the question should have been: Are there public spaces that you want to improve and how do you want to improve them?

Another example of what could have been a true transfer of power is to allow residents to re-allocate grant dollars not spent. The original CNI community improvement budget allowed for foreclosure assistance, home rehabilitation grants, a grocery store build out and a million dollar small business loan fund. The foreclosure, home rehab grants and the grocery store didn't happen but there was no re-convening of the residents to discuss how those funds would be re-allocated. Additionally, the loan fund to date has spent down less than 20% of the fund in loans. There has been no discussion about how those unused CNI dollars will be re-allocated. Those re-allocations add up to over 1.7 million dollars in Critical Community Improvements that residents have no influence over. This is an example of missed opportunities for neighborhood revitalization when citizens are not there to share in the crucial financial decisions that affect their community.

The last question I want to address is: How could CNI have been better for the surrounding community? The CNI in the Havenwoods community was Milwaukee's first CNI grant. Sometimes when you're the first there is a learning curve and being the first doesn't necessarily translate to being the best. That being said there are some measures that could have been taken to better impact the community with CNI.

The implementation plan for the CNI was designed by a city planner. There was no consultation had with the local NGO or the Business Improvement District to discuss feasibility of the implementation plan. Instead, large amounts of dollars were allocated to economic development initiatives that were set out to either fail or be very difficult to

succeed. Had a consultation been had among those grass roots organizations, challenges could have been identified and a better plan could have been developed. An example of this miscalculation is the million dollar loan fund and the CNI façade grant program. The Façade Grant program is a generous matching grant program that in some cases reached up to $50,000.00 in grant money for a single project. It has been a challenge to inspire property owners to use the grant money as it would require their own private investment. HEDC had a history of encouraging façade improvements and providing incentives for better retail with little success. A consultation about why these programs were not successful could have helped formulate a program that might have been easier to implement.

Two of the survey respondents proposed a solution to issues stated above. They proposed that HUD separate the Critical Community Improvements grant from the housing construction grant and invite NGOs to apply for the overall community improvement piece of CNI. The rationale is that organizations working in neighborhoods having longstanding relationships with residents and businesses would be more effective in gaining citizen participation than a housing authority with little to no community organizing experience. I would like to see HUD require that the Critical Community Improvements section of the CNI grant be led by the local NGO.

12. Opportunities for Future Research.

12.1 The Negative Effects of Housing Relocation.

Public housing relocation barriers revealed themselves during the course of my research. Interview respondents spoke of the loss they felt when relocating. Respondents expressed regret over the loss of community they felt when relocated.

They called attention to the loss of institutional knowledge that was removed from the community. There was no one left to teach the others coming up how to live as a community.

This issue went beyond the scope of my research, however, the despair and hurt that was expressed in my interviews as it relates to relocation is worth further research. There's an opportunity here to explore the loss of social and human capital in the relocation of public housing residents. The research question that could be explored is: Can social and human capital be re-built after public housing is demolished and redeveloped?

12.2 Comparative Case Study of CNI Cities.

Further research should be done in terms of an in-depth and independent case study among the various CNI cities. There are some cities that have adopted a model of full inclusion and empowerment for residents and some that have not. Research could be conducted on the success of each city making a correlation between those that go beyond Tokenism and those that do not.

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14. Appendices

Appendix A:
Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Westlawn Residents

1. What role did you play in planning the new Choice Neighborhood?
2. Did you attend any neighborhood meetings about redeveloping Westlawn or the Choice Neighborhood Initiative? If not, why?
3. What does it mean to you to as a citizen to influence decisions made in your community?
4. How do you feel about being given the power to control how your community is developed?
5. What do you think that power should look like?
6. What impact did you have on how resources were allocated in your community?
7. In what way did you feel empowered through this planning process?
8. What would you change in how you were engaged in the planning process?
9. What about the planning process did you trust? Distrust?
10. How empowered do you feel in improving your housing and/or community?
11. How has the Choice Neighborhood Initiative improved your quality of life?
12. How much decision making power did you have on the budget for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative?
13. How do you think this process could have been better?
14. What pleased you about the Choice Neighborhood Initiative?
15. What displeased you?
16. Please describe your experience in the relocation process during the rebuilding of Westlawn.
17. Will you be returning to Westlawn to live? If not, why not?

Interview Questions for Havenwoods Community Members (non-Westlawn)

1. What role did you play in planning the new Choice Neighborhood?
2. What does it mean to you to as a citizen to influence decisions made in your community?
3. What role do you think residents should play in planning of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative?
4. Did you attend any neighborhood meetings about the Community Improvements that the Choice Neighborhood Initiative proposed? If not. Why not?
5. How do you feel about being given the power to control how your community is developed?
6. What do you think that power should look like?
7. What impact did you have on how resources were allocated in your community?
8. In what way did you feel empowered through this planning process?
9. What would you change in how you were engaged in the planning process?

10. What about the planning process did you trust? Distrust?
11. How empowered did you as a resident feel in improving your community?
12. How much decision making power did you have on the budget for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative?
13. How do you think this process could have been better?
14. What pleased you about the Choice Neighborhood Initiative?
15. What displeased you?

Interview Questions for steering committee Members

1. How did you as an individual influence the planning process for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative?
2. What impact did you have on how resources were allocated in your community?
3. In what way did you feel empowered through this planning process?
4. What would you change in how you were engaged in the planning process?
5. What about the planning process did you trust? Distrust?
6. How much decision making power did you have on the budget for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative?
7. How was your committee representative of the community it was serving?
8. How familiar were you with the surrounding businesses prior to being selected for the committee?
9. How familiar were you with the residents of Westlawn and the surrounding Havenwoods community prior to being selected for your committee?
10. How did you engage with the Westlawn community and the Havenwoods community prior to being selected for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative committee?
11. How do you currently engage with the Westlawn community and the Havenwoods community?
12. How many planning meetings did you attend in the community and/or with the steering committee?
13. What tools and information were you provided to help you make informed decisions about the redevelopment of the Choice Neighborhood.

Appendix B:
CNI Boundary MAP with Land Uses

Choice Neighborhood Land-Use Map

Appendix C:
Westlawn Gardens before and after images

Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee