



Justice et injustices spatiales, Nanterre 2008

Spatializing Counter-Hegemonies: Community Benefits Agreements, Equity Planning, and Changing Social Justices in the United States

La Spatialisation des Contre Hégémonies: Les Avantages Communautaires dans les Accords, l'Équité, l'Aménagement et le Changement des Justices Sociales aux Etats-Unis

KARJANEN David, Assistant Professor, Institute for Global Studies and American Studies, University of Minnesota, 104 Scott Hall, 72 Pleasant St. Minneapolis, MN 55455 USA

The current period of neo-liberal globalization has dramatically affected the nature and content of spaces. Drawing on the work of David Harvey, Neil Smith, and others, this paper examines the rise of municipal capitalism—a neo-liberal model of using public resources for private sector development—across the United States since the 1980s. This growth model has accelerated the uneven development of capitalism, reproducing class relations and spatial inequalities, while at the same time opening up and creating new areas for capitalist elites to accumulate—notably developers, real estate, finance, and service industry (hotels, bars, etc). These processes have accelerated under the guise of “community development” and “redevelopment” while critics have argued that this amounts to nothing more than gentrification, displacement, and exploitation. Counter-hegemonic efforts, however, are being developed—the paper describes these movements as “spatial justice” movements—arguing for smart growth/job-residence co-location, environmental mitigation, mixed/affordable housing etc. The most notable of these is the rise of Community Benefits Agreements and other “high road” economic development efforts. I theorize that the rise of this counter-hegemonic model represents a shift in the ways that organized labor, community groups, and equity planners are re-orienting the political and ideological struggle over social justice along the lines of “spatial justice,” and, in turn, are ultimately attempting to re-orient the relationship between capital and labor in a post-industrial economy.