

SCOTT VANDEHEY

Civics in the Suburbs

Where NIMBYism reflects community

A new approach to citizen activism is steadily gaining strength among suburban communities. It is not tied to city, state, or nation, but to neighborhood and community. It is not based on strict legalities, but on property rights of individual homeowners and the perceived rights of communities to chart their own futures. This trend, melding NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) with communal well-being, is playing out in suburban communities throughout the United States. A case in point, and the subject of my ethnographic study, is Rancho Peñasquitos, in San Diego.

In recent years, political anthropologists have turned their attention to the practice and meanings of citizenship. Looking at its performance and institutions with a cross-cultural perspective has led to a number of key insights. Our understanding of citizenship has moved beyond a simple legal status granting a set of rights to members, and toward an understanding of it as a flexible, irregular, and sometimes contradictory status that is not applied evenly, but is instead tied to social norms of inclusion and exclusion.¹ It is also clear that citizenship has become decoupled from national and other seemingly clear-cut political memberships.²

The experience of citizenship in Rancho Peñasquitos is an illuminating example. Its suburban nature allows us to see how a large number of middle-class Americans experience, practice, and conceive of their own citizenship. Everyday activities combine to construct a local formulation that informs and alters citizenship on a larger scale. Residents of Rancho Peñasquitos illustrate a strong sense of community involvement and pride, which provides the foundation for their sense of citizenship. What might be referred to as NIMBY is, in fact, a local manifestation of civically minded behavior when seen through the lens of suburban citizenship. I studied the community from 2006 through 2009 and observed the unfolding of this process.

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A sign lining Rancho Peñasquitos Boulevard marking the boundary of the community.

The community

Rancho Peñasquitos is a suburban community located approximately 15 miles north of downtown San Diego.³ The majority of residents are middle class, college-educated, nuclear families living in free-standing, single-family homes. The community lies within the city limits and, therefore, residents are legally citizens of San Diego. Nonetheless, the residents of Rancho Peñasquitos do not feel particularly connected to the larger urban center of San Diego.⁴ Instead, they primarily identify with members of their local community and have developed a sense of citizenship surrounding that membership.

In many ways, the community is representative of suburban areas throughout the South and West that are incorporated within the city limits of a large urban area. The identity of the suburban community as its own entity, rather than as part of a larger municipal jurisdiction, is an important phenomenon.

In the past, suburban residents, such as those living in Rancho Peñasquitos, have often been criticized for being lackluster citizens. Withdrawn from a larger public sphere and turned inward to focus on private interests, suburbanites are seen as uncommitted to a sense of communal citizenship.⁵ Many scholars, however, have documented high levels of civic participation within suburban communities.⁶ This article attempts to integrate both sets of literature. Focusing on the suburban community of Rancho Peñasquitos, I argue that far from being poor citizens,

suburban residents demonstrate a unique form of citizenship that, while inward-focused, has profound effects on the larger political landscape.⁷ This suburban citizenship springs from a tension and uneasy synthesis between two differing conceptions of citizenship, one based on active civic engagement and the other conceived as a set of rights.⁸

The first fight

The igniting spark for citizen activism in Rancho Peñasquitos was the 2006–2007 fight against the installation of high-tension electrical lines through the community. Behind the proposal, known as the Sunrise Powerlink, was the San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E). From the outset, community members voiced their opposition, and the movement quickly accelerated from there.

During a public meeting, a member of the Rancho Peñasquitos Town Council exclaimed, “I don’t mean to sound NIMBY, but I don’t want those power lines ruining our community!” With that, the battle lines were drawn. It was a warm Southern Californian summer evening, and the woman’s comments echoed a growing sentiment throughout the community that the neighborhood was under threat from outside forces and needed to respond to stop the planned project. Later that summer, more than 500 community members packed the small local library to vocally protest the power line project. Over the next few months, pressure built even more as community members organized. A public awareness campaign was launched to bring the issue to the attention of the neighborhood as a whole. Individuals expressed their discontent at a series of public meetings, and official challenges were made by members of the community to the California Public Utilities Commission.

Although the power lines were planned to run over 120 miles, these suburban citizens specifically focused their attention on their local community of Rancho Peñasquitos. The residents recognized that this was where their power lay.

Finally, in response to the public outpouring, the utility company agreed to reroute the proposed lines outside of the community. This concession eliminated opposition from community members, who considered themselves successful in averting a dangerous threat to their neighborhood.

The battle lines were drawn.

The residents of Rancho Peñasquitos fought to protect what they saw as the rights of every resident of their community, including the ability to live in a safe, healthy, and clean environment in which to raise children; maintenance of property value through preservation of an idealized suburban lifestyle; and the ability to control what happens within the boundaries of the community. The overhead high-tension power lines were perceived as a threat to their well-being, and they organized as suburban citizens to protect those rights. They could have organized around their individual streets, or they could have attempted to gain support from the entire city, county, or state. These options were not chosen, however, which signifies that Rancho Peñasquitos residents felt as if they shared a common identity, set of interests, and claims to rights.

Criteria for membership

What constitutes citizenship in a suburban community? In the case of Rancho Peñasquitos, it was very specific. Living in the community was the first necessary step toward being recognized as a citizen of the community. Residency provided a sense of belonging among neighbors and a sense of assurance that all had the community's best interest in mind.⁹ One of the main components of this common identity was the recognition of shared values and beliefs that were gained largely through residency. A community member once expressed, "I feel safe here. I know all the people are like me, and I certainly wouldn't want anything to change."

As residents recognized themselves as members of the Rancho Peñasquitos community, their individual values became manifested as shared community values.¹⁰ These shared values went unquestioned and, in turn, formed the basis for suburban-rights claims—the essence of suburban citizenship. Homeownership expanded on the effects living in the community produced.¹¹ Owning a home in Rancho Peñasquitos is a significant investment, and homeowners

want to keep their investment as safe as possible. Safeguarding property value meant protecting the home and surrounding community from perceived damage and threat. Most often, these perceived threats came in the form of challenge to the safety, health, and cleanliness of the community. Members of the community were initially drawn to protest the high-tension power lines in response to what they saw as a threat to their health and unspoiled neighborhood—threats that were heightened through homeownership and the risk they placed on home value.

Membership in the community required clear designation of who was and was not a member. The residents of Rancho Peñasquitos drew very distinct boundaries between insiders and outsiders.¹² This sense of distinctiveness and boundedness allowed residents to feel connected to each other through a shared set of values, and it served as a basis for a sense of citizenship in Rancho Peñasquitos. The rights-claims, made possible through the acceptance of a shared sense of values and identity, were therefore only available and valid to residents of the community. This is a clear manifestation of the communal style of citizenship. The suburban citizenship in Rancho Peñasquitos was not, however, a communal style of citizenship singularly. While aspects of the communal model were clearly evident, so too were elements of the individual model of citizenship; and focus on individual rights was also clearly manifest here. These two models of citizenship existed in constant tension with one another and continually informed the practice of citizenship within the suburb.¹³

The second fight

In 2006, shortly before I began my study, residents of Rancho Peñasquitos discovered that a developer planned to eliminate the community's golf course and use the acreage to build hundreds of new homes. This threat from the outside hit residents hard, bringing into question the very existence of the community and all it valued.

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In 1966, Irving J. Kahn, the original developer of the area, built a golf course and recreation center first and later started building the suburban residential community around the recreational features. The golf course was open to the public, but the recreation center was reserved for homeowners and guests. These features were used as a selling point to draw potential homebuyers to the neighborhood. It was a successful marketing strategy, as the golf course reflected various aspects of the suburban ideal: separation from the city, open space, cleanliness, a connection to nature, and a safe environment, among others. The golf course became central to community ownership of the suburban lifestyle.

When people purchased a home in Rancho Peñasquitos, therefore, they were sold more than a piece of land with a house built on it. They also bought into a suburban lifestyle, and throughout the area's history, developers consciously exploited this image to draw potential homebuyers. Many of the advertisements focused less on the house itself and more on the atmosphere, lifestyle, and conveniences of the surrounding neighborhood. Because residents bought the ability to live according to an idealized suburban imagery, they felt as if they owned the aspects of the community that allowed it to harmonize with this ideal. In *Building Suburbia*, Dolores Hayden describes this as the "triple dream": ownership of a single-family home, a rural setting, and genuine neighborly sociability.¹⁴

For these reasons, the golf course was more than just a golf course. It was a symbol of the values of the community, and a feature that residents felt *defined* Rancho Peñasquitos. The golf course was figuratively the foundation upon which the community was built.

Any proposed building in Rancho Peñasquitos must first be approved by the San Diego City Council, which usually follows the recommendations of the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board. The proposed new development's builder met in private with members of the Planning Board in early 2006 to discuss the likelihood of developing the golf course into a few hundred homes. As the president of the board recounted, the meeting ended with the members of the local Planning Board informing the developers that the plan

"would not fly," that the proposal would be in violation of the Rancho Peñasquitos Community Plan, which specifically cited the golf course as a valuable feature of the community. Opposition by the community was predicted and, therefore, the local Planning Board had decided to act in accordance with the Community Plan and oppose any proposal that sought to remove the golf course. They went on to say that in order for the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board to approve the project, at the bare minimum the Community Plan would need to be changed. To do so, however, would require significant community support and approval by both the Planning Board and the San Diego City Council.

Despite the negative feedback, the developers were undaunted. Over the next few months, they met with local community members in small, informal sessions. These meetings were designed as informational conferences in which residents could learn about the proposed development and the developers could learn about the concerns of residents living in the area. Instead of alleviating community members' concerns, these meetings with corporate outsiders only exacerbated them. For many, the meetings were the first they had heard about development plans and potential sale of the golf course, and the news caught them off-guard. A community homeowner who became involved in fighting the development explained, "One day we got these flyers on the door announcing a *workshop* to discuss redevelopment of the golf course. I couldn't believe what I was reading. I was shocked. I asked some neighbors and they were just as clueless as I was." Talk began to circulate through the neighborhood, and soon thereafter, in 2007, the Peñasquitos Response Group (PRG) was formed by local residents to oppose the development plans.¹⁵

Although originally a small group of neighbors, the PRG grew to have a significant impact. The group made it a goal to ensure its voice was heard by the Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board. They attended every meeting and often spoke, presenting themselves as protectors and representatives of the entire community. For example, one group member publicly stated, "I just want to make sure you guys [the Planning Board members] are thinking about us. Sometimes it seems like you just make decisions without thinking how it will affect everyone else." To increase its clout on the local Planning Board, a member of the PRG ran for a Board position. The group publicized the election and

The golf course was more
than just a golf course.

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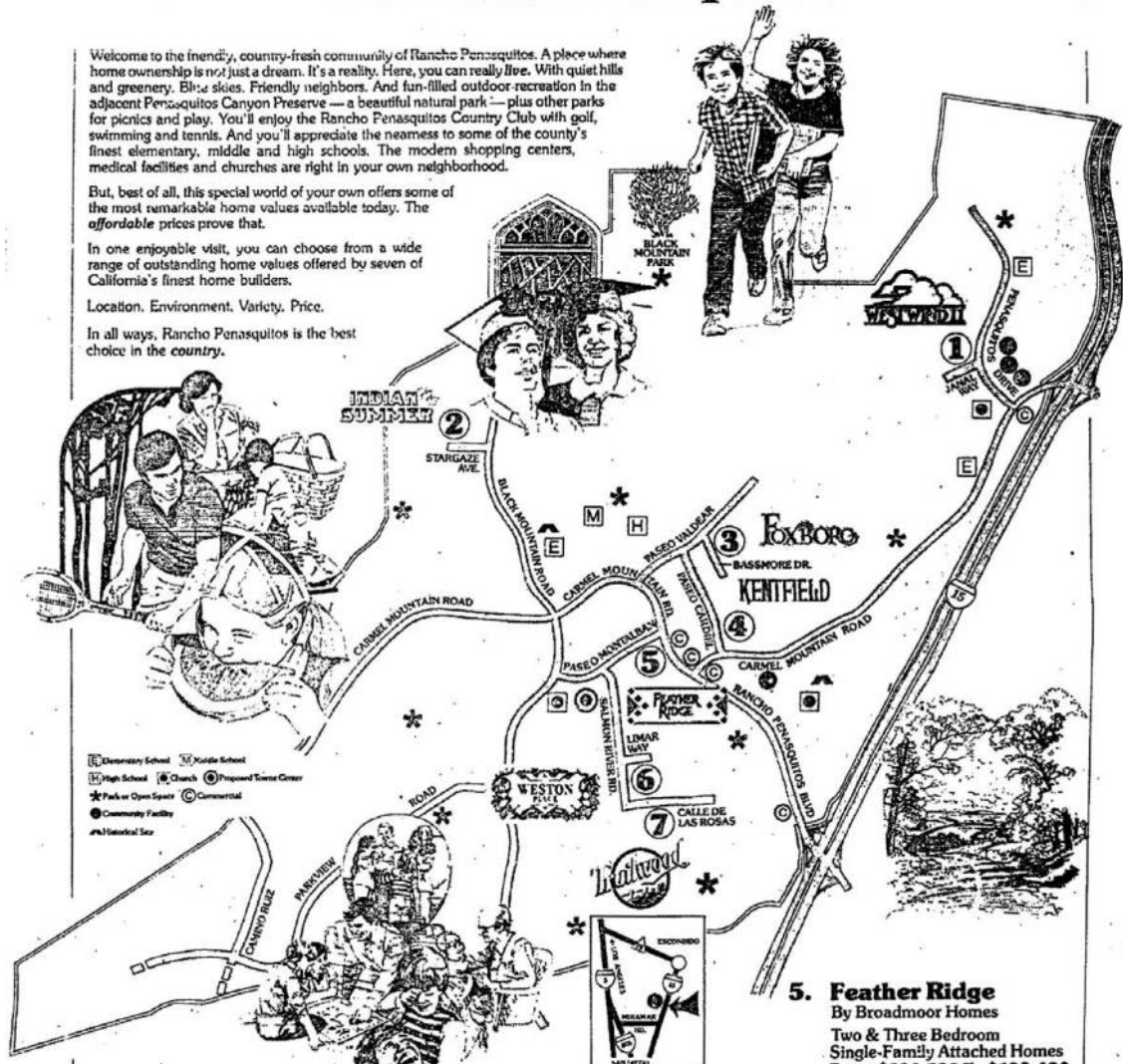
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made sure residents knew its candidate was against development of the golf course. The election drew more votes than had ever been cast in any previous Rancho Peñasquitos Planning Board election, and the PRG candidate won with more votes than any other candidate had ever received in the history of the Board.

Following the election, the developer formally petitioned the Board to consider its development plan. The entire June 2007 meeting was dedicated to the topic, and community turnout was massive. More than 300 local residents were present to listen to the proposal, and over 50 took time to speak out vocally against the redevelopment of the golf course. Many residents made speeches and presented numerous arguments opposing development. Some raised concerns over traffic and safety issues. One resident complained, “I just moved here from Mira Mesa [a nearby community to the south] because Mira Mesa got really bad with traffic. I don’t want to see the same thing here. My house is actually worth something now. If you put more traffic on these roads it means the value of my house will go down.” Most speakers made specific reference to the golf course being a central aspect of the community and that the community “would not be the same” without it. Many referred to the golf course as a “community asset.” For example, a middle-aged woman who had lived in the community for over fourteen years summed up the connection between the golf course, open space, the idealized suburban lifestyle, and purchasing a house when she said, “People here care about their neighborhood and property value. We moved here because of the golf course. We bought our house because of the golf course and the open space it provides. I am concerned that our property values will go down if this plan goes forward.” Her comments were met with wild applause. In a few brief sentences, she had summed up and justified a majority of the concerns felt by most of the residents of Rancho Peñasquitos. In so doing, she made a rights-claim that was recognized as legitimate by the audience through an appeal to both individual citizenship—through homeownership—and communal citizenship—by referencing a shared lifestyle.

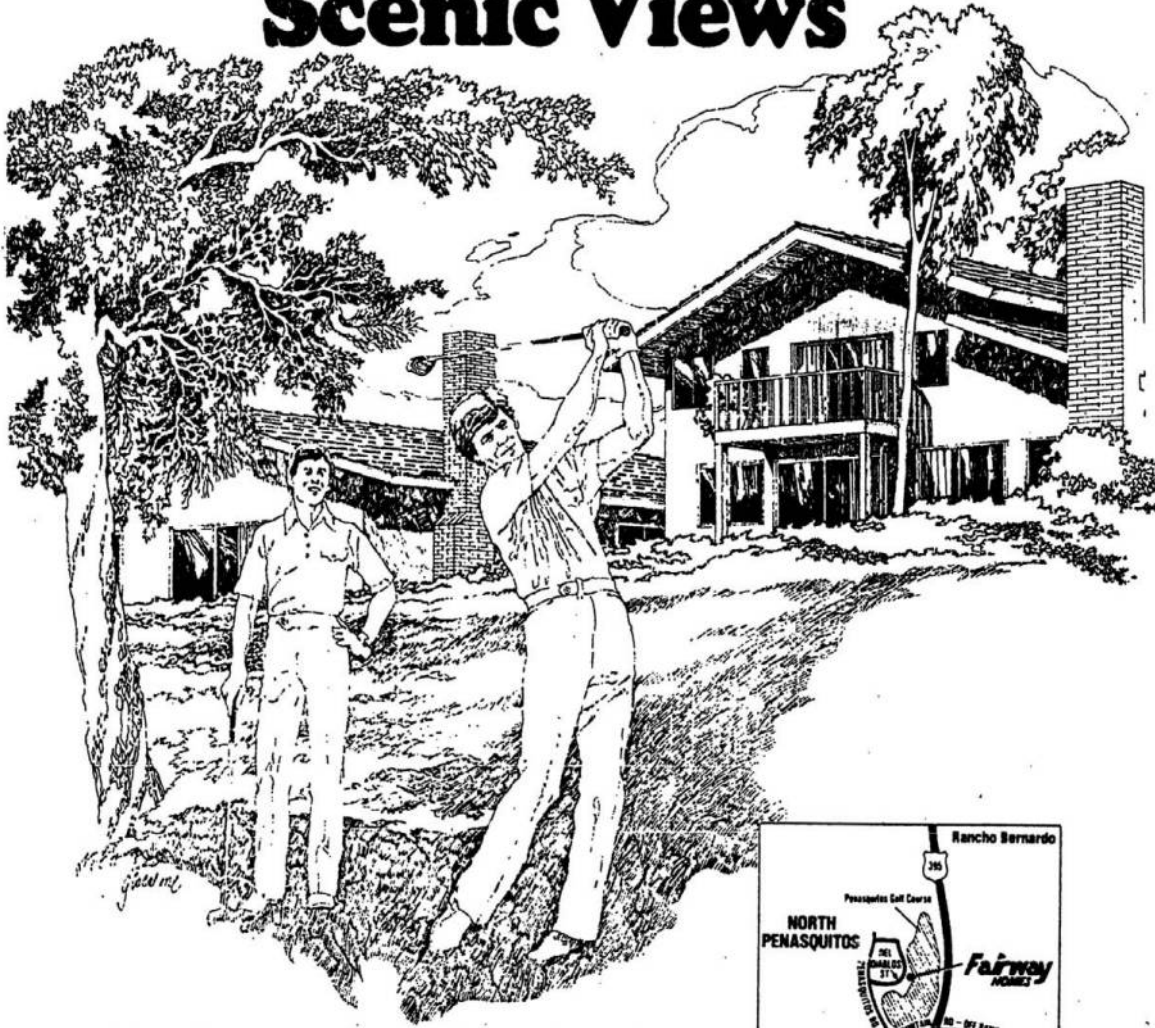
More than fifty people spoke that night. A twenty-seven-year resident of the community explained that she had been raised in Rancho Peñasquitos as a child, and when she moved out of her parents’ house, she and her husband bought a house of their own in the community. She spoke

in opposition to the planned development, but her comments seemed oddly misdirected. Her main comment was, “I love my PQ [Peñasquitos]! Who doesn’t love our PQ?” This statement did not appear to observers to be an argument opposing development, but the audience erupted in applause, shouts of approval, and whistles. After hearing many other individuals speak, it became apparent that the power of her statements relied on two unspoken assumptions that were quite obvious to the residents in attendance. First, residents loved Rancho Peñasquitos just the way it was. Any modification that might change the neighborhood was therefore a dangerous and unacceptable proposition. Second, the golf course was an essential part of the identity of the community. Without the golf course, the neighborhood would not be the same and, furthermore, would not reflect the cherished suburban ideal to which individuals felt entitled as a right. A few days after the meeting, I asked the woman why she thought her statement was so moving. She responded, “We all love living here. That’s why we live here, because we love it. We don’t want anything changed. We love it just the way it is. Why would you want to change something so perfect? I couldn’t even imagine living here if things changed—especially if they took away the golf course.” I followed up by asking if she frequently used the golf course. “Oh no,” she replied, “I don’t golf, but it just wouldn’t be PQ without it. It would just feel different—strange—you know?”

Calls for preserving the community were not the only arguments made that evening. Other residents made angry accusations concerning the motives of the developers. Residents claimed the developers were focused on “outside interests.” It was feared that “outsiders” might enter the neighborhood, disregard the wants, desires, and rights of the community and tear up what was considered a community asset without care for those who lived next door. The developers themselves were seen as outsiders with no legitimate rights in the community. This was exemplified by a resident who said, “We can’t trust these guys. They just want to make money and leave. They are not part of our

**We can’t trust these guys.
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community and don't respect it. They are not interested in our community, just the size of their own pocketbooks." The residents of Rancho Peñasquitos expressed their suburban citizenship by claiming a perceived right to maintain control over their community.

The meeting lasted over four hours. The Board decided to take no action on the proposal and rejected the option to begin the process to make changes to the Community Plan, which essentially derailed the proposed development. The 300 residents in attendance were largely present because of the organizing and informational efforts of the PRG. As of this writing, the proposal to develop the golf course has faltered. No further activity materialized and plans have not progressed. The efforts of the PRG made pursuing the development plans more costly and time-consuming, and with the downturned housing market the costs more than likely outweigh the potential profits. The PRG remains vigilant, however. The chairperson of the group told me, "We haven't stopped fighting. We know they'll be back, and we'll be ready." Even after the immediate threat had passed, the PRG continued to meet monthly, attend local Planning Board meetings, and maintain a presence on the Board.

Residents of Rancho Peñasquitos bought homes, a way of life, and a community, all of which correspond to an idealized suburban lifestyle. Any change to the neighborhood that might alter the relationship between the community and the suburban lifestyle was seen as a threat to a fundamental set of rights—consumer rights. This set of rights was primarily based on an individual model of citizenship. If the community was changed in such a way as to call into question its relationship with the ideal lifestyle, then the purchases made by the homeowners in the community would seem fraudulent. Homeowners saw themselves as not only having a right to protect their investments, but also a right to possess what they paid for. When issues arose that violated the suburban ideals of the community, residents felt as if their purchase were being invalidated and they fought to protect what they saw as their right. This demonstrated a successful melding of the two models of citizenship. The right to live in a suburban neighborhood was, in homeowners' minds, clearly purchased from the original developers, and when it was challenged, residents protested loudly by making claims to an idealized suburban lifestyle. Often times, as the failed golf course

development and rerouting of the proposed power lines illustrate, these claims are validated, and demonstrate the force and effectiveness behind suburban forms of citizenship

The applause that peppered the evening signaled the communal support for the individualized claim. Through an appeal to both models of citizenship, residents created a coherent system of community and individual rights-claims. Individually, each model would have been less effective. Under the individual model of citizenship, homeowners did not have a right to tell the owner of the golf course what can and cannot be done with the property. Likewise, the communal model also has limited effectiveness on its own. The golf course was owned by a large international corporation with very little tie to the community (which was one of the complaints by residents). Under a communal formulation of citizenship, the owner of the course was not bound by the same community-based values and concerns that the residents were. Together, however, both forms of citizenship worked in concert to create a sense of community-based rights that bound all members of the neighborhood to the shared community values that were expressed as individual rights based on homeownership. This represents an important recognition regarding how suburban residents see themselves as citizens. The home purchase created a sense of individual rights-bearing consumers. Among these perceived rights was the ability to live in a certain community according to a specific set of values and ideals. This sense of shared community values and concerns provided the basis for the communal aspect of suburban citizenship justified through a concept of individually held rights. The purchase of a home in this suburban community, therefore, established a suburban citizenship based on both communal and individual models of citizenship, centered around a suburban community of shared values and concerns.

Rights are claims made against others that are recognized as legitimate and enforceable. They are central to a functioning system of citizenship, as they provide the basis around which the benefits of citizenship function. The golf course symbolized to residents a rural and open space and a peaceful and safe distance from the city. As one community member announced during the Planning Board meeting, "If you take it [the golf course] from us, you're taking away our beautiful open space. Filling it with houses,

no matter how nice looking they are, cannot compete.” He went on to explain that the sloping hills and canyons are not “real” space and the golf course is all that is left and so must be preserved. Destruction of the golf course would not only have removed a central component of the community, it would have also flagrantly violated a sense of entitlement to this lifestyle by removing a symbolic connection to the country. In their opposition to golf course development and construction of high-tension power lines, the residents of Rancho Peñasquitos made claims on an idealized suburban lifestyle as a right. These rights-claims were tenuous, however, and rested on a series of related claims and written documents intended to provide legitimacy.

Written “contracts”

To supplement their rights-claims, suburban citizens in Rancho Peñasquitos often turned to written documents as a form of legitimacy. As discussed, the local Planning Board based most of its decisions on the Rancho Peñasquitos Community Plan, which was used to justify decisions aimed at preserving the idealized image of the suburban community. Similarly, Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) were attached to the deeds of homes in the community and were often used to make claims against other homeowners. Both documents melded individual and communal models of citizenship. The documents served as contracts in the individual model and attempted to contractualize the community standards of the communal model. Neither document was legally binding, and yet citizens of Rancho Peñasquitos often turned to them to provide a sense of legitimacy for their claims, and did so with some level of success.¹⁶

The Rancho Peñasquitos Community Plan, drafted in 1978 as a general guide for use by the local Planning Board in making decisions, outlined the desired use and nature of the community. At monthly meetings, the Planning Board attempted to follow the guidelines set forth in the Community Plan *but was under no obligation to do so*. That did not stop them, however, from using the Community Plan to justify their decisions. In this manner, the Community Plan functioned as a rights-claim resource. As the golf course development example demonstrates, the Community Plan made the decision to block development appear to be completely justified and supported by a bureaucratic assembly

that seemed unbiased and unwavering. In actuality, however, the local Planning Board could have voted in any way it liked. Although the Community Plan was not binding, it did provide a convenient way to make opinions supporting community interests seem legitimate, unavoidable, and authoritative. By doing so, the Community Plan melded a community-based strategy of citizenship into an individual rights-based performance of citizenship. The use of the Community Plan turned claims based on community ideals into legitimate rights. These rights-claims were supported by structural forces, including the local Planning Board and the San Diego City Council. Community members and groups, such as the PRG, realized the strength of the Community Plan and specifically used it to support their rights-claims. The PRG’s website referred to the Community Plan as a “contract.” This usage implied that the Community Plan had a legal standing, which it did not have. By referring to the Community Plan as a contract, the citizens of Rancho Peñasquitos asserted their community values as legitimate individual-style rights and demanded that they be respected by those outside of the community. Codes, covenants, and restrictions, which are attached to every property in Rancho Peñasquitos, also serve as a resource to provide legitimacy to rights claimed by suburban citizens.¹⁷ CC&Rs are, in part, limitations placed on property and homeowners concerning what can, cannot, and must be done to the property and house. In many cases, CC&Rs also create organizations called Homeowner Associations, which are responsible for enforcing the CC&Rs and managing any common property in the neighborhood. CC&Rs were originally implemented by developers as a way to protect property values of the neighborhoods they were developing.¹⁸ Without a set of CC&Rs, once developers had sold a house, they were at the mercy of the new homeowners to maintain their property. If the new homeowners trashed the house, it would reflect poorly on the remaining homes yet to be sold in the area and potentially lower the value at which they could be sold. The solution to the problem was to attach rules, or CC&Rs, to the deed. These codes, covenants, and restrictions would be signed at the time of deed transfer and regulate the behavior of homeowners. This protected surrounding property values. Once the homes were sold, the developer had no use for the CC&Rs, but they still remain attached to the deeds. Although well beyond their original intended use, CC&Rs were still used by residents against each other, and



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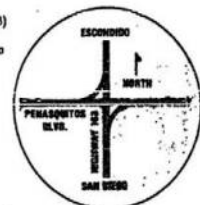
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CC&Rs were still used by residents against each other.

this illustrates another important legitimizing force behind suburban citizenship.

CC&Rs regulated many things about an individual property. An excerpt from a set of CC&Rs written for a Rancho Peñasquitos home built in 1985 serves as an example:

- Each lot shall be used for single-family residential purposes only, and no building or buildings shall be erected, constructed, altered or maintained on any Lot other than one (1) detached single-family dwelling
- No second-hand materials shall be used in the construction of any building or other structure . . . and all buildings shall be painted or stained with at least two (2) coats upon completion
- All trees, hedges, and other plant materials shall be trimmed by the owner of the Lot . . . so that the same always have a well maintained appearance
- There shall be no outside radio or television dish or antennae
- No outside clothes drying shall be permitted on any Lot
- No rubbish, brush, weeds, undergrowth or debris of any kind or character shall ever be placed or permitted to accumulate upon any Lot, or any portion thereof
- Nothing shall be done on any Lot which is or may become a nuisance to the other Lot owners
- No automobile, truck, boat or other equipment may be dismantled, repaired or serviced on any Lot

These eight excerpts are a sample of the types of rules found in a standard set of CC&Rs from Rancho Peñasquitos and many other suburban areas across the country. They reflect a deep-seated idealized suburban lifestyle and illustrate the importance it plays in maintaining property values. Additionally, CC&Rs provided a sense that homeowners were buying as much a lifestyle as they were a house. In theory, residents were bound by CC&Rs, as were their

neighbors. CC&Rs illustrate suburban residents endeavoring to rule themselves and each other in a communal style of citizenship, while attempting to preserve an individual conception of property rights.

Once again, the strategy of using community standards for individual-style rights-claims becomes evident. A straight individual formulation of citizenship would seem to allow a property owner to do whatever he or she wanted with his or her property as long as it did not interfere with the rights of others. The paradox, however, is that one's actions in the suburban context may inadvertently harm another. The combination of individual-style and communal-style citizenships is an attempt to circumvent this dilemma by creating a common set of values in a binding individual-rights manner. CC&Rs are one example of just such a strategy. They're an attempt to maintain individual property values by forcing people not to infringe upon others through a set of community standards. They are simultaneously individual and communal manifestations of citizenship.

This dual nature leads to the success of the CC&R strategy as well as the problems inherent in it. Because they are both individual and communal, the CC&Rs cannot fulfill the goals of either model of citizenship with complete success. This tension was reflected through suburban residents' feelings regarding them.

The CC&Rs in Rancho Peñasquitos contain a stipulation for the creation of a Homeowners Association.¹⁹ The Homeowners Association (HOA) was made up of members of the community who were elected to their positions by fellow homeowners. One of the main purposes of the HOA is to oversee compliance with the CC&Rs. For many decades, CC&Rs were enforced nationwide without challenge. HOAs regularly placed fines on homeowners found to be in violation of CC&Rs and, in some flagrant cases, HOAs were able to put liens on the property until the fines were paid and the violations rectified. Over the course of the last decade, however, CC&Rs have become less well-received in the courts, and are often overturned.²⁰

This history demonstrates the tension inherent in the dual model of citizenship being employed in the suburbs. Suburban citizens are attempting to do two seemingly incompatible things at the same time. They want to preserve their sense of community and make sure their neighbors do too. This is the communal model of citizenship at work.

Simultaneously, however, suburban citizens attempt to preserve their individual investments and liberties. This is an individual style of citizenship at play. When the two models work toward the same goals, suburban citizenship forms a coherent and stable framework from which to make legitimate claims upon both community insiders and outsiders. When, however, the two models work across one another, the system breaks down and the claims made by suburban citizens fall on deaf ears. HOAs, therefore, have lost much of their enforcement capacity. In response to this shift in the mid-1990s, the Homeowners Association in Rancho Peñasquitos transitioned to the Rancho Peñasquitos Town Council. Along with this alteration came a change in the focus of the group. CC&Rs were no longer a major concern, as the Town Council did not want to be dragged into a court battle that they would probably lose. Rather, the Town Council became an organization dedicated to the promotion of community values and spirit.

Despite the shift in the HOA's goals, the CC&Rs were still used, if not by the Town Council, by the residents themselves. Almost everyone I spoke to in the community felt that their CC&Rs were good and beneficial. Some residents felt that the CC&Rs were largely useless because they were not enforced, but would have liked to have seen some way for the CC&Rs to be implemented, and felt frustrated that they were not. A very small minority of the residents I spoke to felt the CC&Rs were negative and impinged upon personal freedoms. Additionally, almost half of the individuals reported either asking a neighbor to abide by the CC&Rs or being asked to follow the CC&Rs themselves. Moreover, almost all of my respondents reported making a significant effort to follow the CC&Rs. For nonenforceable rules, a significant proportion of suburban residents in Rancho Peñasquitos subjected themselves and others to the influence of the CC&Rs. A typical resident's response went: "I think they are good. I don't want to live next to a house that someone has painted pink and the yard looks like crap." Another common sentiment was expressed by a different resident: "The CC&Rs are all well and good, but there is no HOA in existence to enforce them. There needs to be an organization to report violations to . . . that can take action." This resident expressed a common view. When violations of the CC&Rs were reported to the Town Council, the Council took no authoritative action; instead, they attempted to mediate a solution. If mediation proved hopeless, the

Council recommended that the complainant find a local law or ordinance that was being violated and report the situation to the San Diego police. This practice was so common that the Town Council had a list of "useful" city ordinances posted on its website for quick reference by residents. This situation reflects the tensions in play between individual and communal aspects of suburban citizenship. When the CC&Rs were beneficial to both individuals and the community simultaneously, they were powerful tools upon which to base rights-claims. When, however, individual interests and community interests did not line up, the claims based on CC&Rs lost their legitimacy and residents turned to other nonlocal forms of citizenship.

Communal practices: walking the dog

The previous examples of citizenship in Rancho Peñasquitos have focused on public and organized groups fighting for preservation of their perceived rights. Not all acts of suburban citizenship, however, are as public or organized. Many acts of citizenship occur at an individual, everyday level, as suburban residents live their day-to-day lives. To demonstrate this point, I turn to two additional illustrations of citizenship in Rancho Peñasquitos: dog walking and yard maintenance. These two activities served as conspicuous performances of citizenship and simultaneously formed individuals as proper citizens while demonstrating the legitimacy of suburban right-claims to others.

Walking a dog is a daily ritual for many residents of Rancho Peñasquitos. Two times a day, people emerged from their homes trailing after a dog or two. The first wave began in the morning before residents left for work, between 6:00 A.M. and 7:00 A.M. The second occurred in the evening, after residents returned home from work, between 6:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M. Dog walkers were usually adult and were just as often male as female. Most dog walking was done alone, but it was not completely uncommon to see a couple walking their dogs together. Routes taken by dog walkers varied; some preferred to stick to the sidewalks around their home, while others headed for the few small, undeveloped areas in the community, where they let their dog off-leash—in violation of city ordinance—to run free for a few minutes. This small infraction was deemed acceptable since it was done in undeveloped, "natural" land. One area was so popular it was unofficially known as the "Dog Park."

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Advertisement for homes in Rancho Peñasquitos. Originally published in The San Diego Union, March 1, 1970.

Unleashed dogs present a threat to the suburban ideal lifestyle. Dogs without a leash can be unpredictable, might wander into someone else's property, might attack other people's pets, and so on. In order to conform to the suburban ideal of privacy and safety, dogs must be leashed. For

the most part, residents in Rancho Peñasquitos followed the leash rule without issue. The few undeveloped spaces, however, did not seem to be part of the neighborhood. Conceptually, they were set apart from the rest of the community. Weeds grew unkempt; there was no irrigation or

I never once saw evidence of dog poop, even after specifically looking for it.

landscaping. The undeveloped areas did not fit the model for the rest of Rancho Peñasquitos. In these places, therefore, it was acceptable for a dog to be off its leash.

Officially, the “Dog Park” was an easement owned by the City of San Diego. However, in 2007 the local Parks and Recreation Board received permission from the City to turn the area into an official park for unleashed dogs. This was achieved not by votes, public outcry, or organized campaigning, but rather through the day-to-day practice of many dog owners. Shared values of communal citizenship again meshed with the individual-style rights of homeowners in another effective demonstration of suburban citizenship. The transformation of the unofficial dog park into an official city-owned and operated dog park was the result of individual residents acting in accordance with a shared sense of values that led to a clear outcome.

There was another way that dog walking had the potential to violate an ideal suburban setting. It was customary in Rancho Peñasquitos for the owner to pick up canine solid waste in a plastic baggie and deposit it in a garbage receptacle—usually back at the dog owner’s residence. If all of the dogs were walked without their owners picking up after them, it would have led to a messy situation. The environment would have been littered with dog droppings, and it would not have been safe to walk down the sidewalk without carefully choosing where one stepped. In order to maintain the suburban ideal and homeowners’ rights to live according to the ideal, dog owners took the duty upon themselves to pick up the messes made by their dogs. Although unappealing, this practice was almost universal among dog walkers in the community. Upon walking the same sidewalks and over the “Dog Park,” I never once saw evidence of dog poop, even after specifically looking for it. It is clear that dog owners took great care to clean up. This conspicuous performance of a duty protects the rights of the entire community, including the dog walker, to live in a safe and clean environment. It also marks the dog walker as a valuable member of the community.

Dog walkers in Rancho Peñasquitos adopted an interesting sign to alleviate fears and show that they intended to

dutifully uphold the perceived rights of their fellow suburban citizens. Every dog walker I observed displayed a plastic baggie in clear sight at all times. The baggies were usually held in a hip-pocket with a tail end sticking out far enough to be easily visible. Alternatively, the baggies were held balled up in the non-leash hand, but always with a visible corner sticking out. The conspicuous display of baggies was in a large sense unnecessary, but served as a clear signal to other residents that droppings would be disposed of in a manner that conformed to suburban rights-claims, thereby illustrating that the dog walker was a responsible citizen who dutifully protected the rights of fellow residents.

Communal practices: maintaining the lawn

Another way that residents demonstrated their care of the neighborhood ideal was through lawn maintenance. In *Lawn People*, Paul Robbins discusses how lawns play an integral part in shaping identity, as they are seen as a reflection of the homeowner.²¹ A well-kept lawn, in their eyes, symbolizes an upright and moral individual. An attractive outside landscape is an essential part of conforming to community values. Lawns and other vegetation allowed for the illusion of open space and highlighted the opposition suburban residents felt toward urban areas. Such vegetation, however, needed care to keep it from becoming overgrown. Those residents who failed to keep their landscaping up to standards were typically labeled “renters,” whether that label was appropriate or not. The term signaled that the residents of a property were not interested in the community, did not share the same commitment to the community values as homeowners, and further, were not considered true members of the community. On occasion, members of the Rancho Peñasquitos Town Council walked or drove through the community looking for unkempt lawns. They contacted the owners of properties they felt were not up to standard, and asked them to improve their landscaping. By doing so, residents ruled themselves and each other according to the communal-style of citizenship.

I need to keep the yard up. If I don't the whole neighborhood will go to hell.

Most residents did not need to be notified by the Town Council concerning their landscaping. On weekends it was common to see homeowners out in the front of their houses mowing lawns, pruning bushes, or pulling weeds. Even when homeowners felt that they did not have the time to maintain their own yards, lawn maintenance was a large enough concern that they willingly paid others to do it for them. Gardeners were a regular sight throughout the community. Large white pickup trucks with metal racks holding rakes, shovels, and other lawn tools dotted the suburban streets throughout Rancho Peñasquitos every workday. Just as often, however, residents picked up local migrant laborers to maintain their yards. The migrant workers were conceptually excluded from the community, yet they nonetheless played an active and integral part in its maintenance and re-creation (in both senses of the word).

This exclusion provides a key insight into the logic of suburban citizenship. All citizenships are exclusionary in one way or another. Migrant workers who live next to, sometimes in, the community are not recognized as members. Race and ethnicity are undeniable factors in the exclusion, and many scholars have documented the way race has been used to structure the suburbs.²² Race and ethnicity, however, are not the only issues here. Many Hispanic residents live in Rancho Peñasquitos and are fully included. The key difference is middle-class status and homeownership. If one had a yard to keep up, he or she was eligible for inclusion. Otherwise, the person would be labeled as an outsider.

Additionally, the grass that fronts most homes in the neighborhood was kept green with a regular supply of water from sprinklers. In the warm Southern California summers, grass did not stay green long without frequent irrigation. A significant amount of effort and finances was spent in maintaining an acceptable suburban landscape. A homeowner in the community expressed one evening, “I hate having to take care of the damn lawn. It’s such a waste of time and money. I have much better things to be doing, but I need to keep the yard up. If I don’t the whole neighborhood will go to hell.” Even though he resented the effort, he

routinely performed his own landscaping and yard work. He even felt a sense of responsibility to the entire neighborhood. He felt that if his landscaping grew unkempt it would have signaled others to do the same, and then property values would have decreased for everyone, including himself. In terms of yard upkeep, the dual model of citizenship made manifest in the suburbs works well. Residents ruled themselves and each other, while reaping the individual rewards of home value and community belonging.

As Wesley Hohfeld points out in *Fundamental Legal Conceptions*, rights and duties exist in a relationship with each other.²³ When one individual has a right, other people have a duty to protect that right. The citizens of Rancho Peñasquitos felt that it was their right to live according to an idealized vision of a suburban community. Therefore, it became the duty of everyone else in the community to uphold the suburban ideals for themselves and their fellow citizens. These duties came in many forms, most of which were not explicitly recognized as duties at all. Rather, they were understood to be how “normal” community members behaved. In other words, to be a normal member of the community one should feel obligated to uphold the suburban community’s standards, thereby duty-bound to endorse the rights of others. Landscaping and properly walking one’s dog were just two small examples of the performance of the duties of suburban citizenship in Rancho Peñasquitos. When the rights and duties correspond with each other, suburban citizenship based on both an individual and communal model of citizenship works quite powerfully and effectively.

NIMBYism Revisited

Residents in Rancho Peñasquitos shared experiences, values, and concerns that focused attention around the neighborhood itself. Their inward-oriented focus of suburban citizenship is not unique; many suburban communities demonstrate this trend and have been criticized for acting in self-interested ways that are opposed to the larger public good.²⁴ The sentiment in Rancho Peñasquitos was no



Banner hung from light poles throughout Rancho Peñasquitos. Note the "PQ" abbreviation.

different. The term “NIMBY” (Not In My Back Yard) has come to be used pejoratively in describing the exercising of individual rights. In essence, it refers to the opposition offered to any development that might lower property values, no matter how necessary or desirable that development might be for the greater metropolitan area. I do not see NIMBYism, or any other suburban value, as positive or negative. Rather, I see it as an attempt to protect a perceived ideal way of life and assert local control over outside forces. It is a central aspect of suburban citizenship. The resistance to the Sunrise Powerlink project and the fight against development of the golf course are perfect illustrations of NIMBY at work. Despite the potential benefits to the larger San Diego community, these proposed projects threatened the lifestyle in Rancho Peñasquitos. Community residents stood up in opposition to the projects in order to protect what they saw as their right to live according to the suburban ideal and not have that right impinged upon. We could label this behavior as simple NIMBYism and discount it as selfish homeowners acting to preserve their own self-interests. This criticism recognizes the individual-style citizenship, which is informing suburban behavior, but misses the dual nature of suburban citizenship. NIMBYism is not just about selfish political action. It is also about working to maintain the values and goals of a community. When viewed from the inside, an activity that could be labeled as NIMBY can also be seen as a fight to preserve what is perceived as the rights of the community residents—the communal aspect of citizenship.

Residents of Rancho Peñasquitos made rights-claims to live according to an ideal suburban lifestyle, which were often in opposition to rights-claims made by those outside of the community. San Diego Gas & Electric’s Sunrise Powerlink proposal was a perfect example. The utility company has held right-of-way privileges for the proposed power line route since before the community of Rancho Peñasquitos was built, but when it attempted to exercise its right-of-way, residents objected vehemently. In this instance, the residents used their rights as suburban citizens as a counter-claim against SDG&E’s use of the land. The relationship between suburban citizens in Rancho Peñasquitos and SDG&E led to a question of legitimacy of

right-claims. The fact that the citizens were successful in forcing SDG&E to give up its right illustrates the power of suburban forms of citizenship.

The conflict between suburban residents acting as citizens of their own communities and outside interests has also come to be called NIMBYism. On countless occasions residents of Rancho Peñasquitos say things like, “I’m not NIMBY, but . . .” Other variations include, “I don’t mean to sound NIMBY, however . . .”; “I know how this sounds, but . . .”; “I don’t care if this sounds like a knee-jerk NIMBY response . . .” After these introductory comments, the speakers routinely continued with what could be called a NIMBY statement. Residents’ sense of suburban subjectivities overrode other, more distant concerns or identities. By making such statements, residents of Rancho Peñasquitos consciously chose to act according to their sense of suburban citizenship rather than whatever larger, more inclusive citizenships may have been in play. When they did so, they were labeled as NIMBY by nonresidents from outside the community and seen as self-interested, noncivic individuals. As I have argued, however, the NIMBY response is not simply a matter of private self-interest. Neither is NIMBYism a noncivic action. NIMBYism is, rather, a matter of communal interest and is inherently civic-minded, when seen through the lens of suburban citizenship.

Although Rancho Peñasquitos is no longer threatened by high-tension power lines or development of the golf course, a sense of suburban citizenship remains strong. The big and frightening issues may have been dealt with for the time being, but mundane day-to-day issues are ever present and are often addressed on the local community level. Lack of school funding, decreased library hours, a series of home burglaries—these and similar problems continue to confront residents. Community members respond by organizing local groups, fundraising, and volunteering, all centered around the neighborhood. In many ways, this makes Rancho Peñasquitos no different than many other suburban communities throughout the country. What we are seeing is the power and influence wielded by individuals banding together under a common set of values and ideals to solve local problems, both large and small. **B**

Notes

- ¹ James Holston and Theresa Caldeira, "Democracy, Law, and Violence: Disjunctions of Brazilian Citizenship," in *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America*, F. Aguero and J. Stark, eds., (Miami: North-South Center, 1998), pp. 263–96, discuss the ways in which the practice, implementation, and meaning of citizenship is unevenly spread across Brazilian society. Gal and Kligman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative Historical Essay*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), illustrate that men and women have a different relationship to citizenship in Central Europe. For other such discussions of the irregular and unbalanced execution of citizenship, see Susan Bibler Coutin, *Legalizing Moves: Salvadoran Immigrants' Struggle for U.S. Residency* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Bill Maurer, *Recharting the Caribbean: Land, Law, and Citizenship in the British Virgin Islands* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Charles L. Briggs, *Stories in Times of Cholera: The Transnational Circulation of Bacteria and Racial Stigmata in a Venezuelan Epidemic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Caroline Humphrey, *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies After Socialism* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).
- ² See James Holston, "Urban Citizenship and Globalization," *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*, Allen J. Scott, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 325–348; James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Evelina Dagnino, "Citizenship in Latin America: An Introduction," *Latin American Perspectives* (2003), 30(2): 3–17; Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); and Aihwa Ong, *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, The New America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).
- ³ The definition of "suburb" necessitates some discussion. A common trend has been to focus on political jurisdictions when attempting to delimit a suburb. In this definition, suburbs are defined as independent municipalities outside of, but contiguous to, larger cities. For examples, see Mark Baldassare, "Suburban Communities," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1992, 18:475–494; Sylvia Fava, "Beyond Suburbia," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1975, 422:10–24; Kevin Fitzpatrick and John Logau, "The Aging of the Suburbs, 1960–1980," *American Sociological Review*, 1985, 50:106–117; Douglas Masey and Nancy Denton, "Suburbanization and Segregation in U.S. Metropolitan Areas," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 1988, 94(3):592–626; Mark Schneider, "Income Homogeneity and the Size of Suburban Government," *The Journal of Politics*, 1987, 49(1):36–53; Mark Schneider and Thomas Phelan, "Black Suburbanization in the 1980s," *Demography*, 1993, 30(2):269–279; John Logan and Mark Schneider, "The Stratification of Metropolitan Suburbs, 1960–1970," *American Sociological Review*, 1981, 46(2):175–186; and M.P. Baumgartner, *The Moral Order of a Suburb* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), among many others. I feel the restriction of "suburb" to a relationship between municipalities is limiting. Much of what is suburban is not dependent upon city limits. Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) and Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987) have proposed social function as a way to define suburban spaces. Suburbs in this line of thinking are economically and culturally dependent, largely residential communities that rely on a larger, more diverse (demographically and economically) urban core. This way of looking at the suburbs takes into account the experience of the suburbs and seems to better reflect how many residents themselves feel. It also accounts for the more recent suburbanization of the Sun Belt South and West in which cities are increasingly sprawling and "suburban" in nature. Rancho Peñasquitos, for example, would not be considered suburban according to the former definition as it within the city limits of San Diego. The latter definition, however, would include the community as suburban and is the tradition this study follows. By doing so, I hope to show that the way citizenship is conceived is not fully reliant upon jurisdictional boundaries, but is rather dependent on a set of shared values and concerns at a community level. This discussion also moves our understanding of citizenship away from a formal status and toward a more flexible and irregular status.
- ⁴ Even though Rancho Peñasquitos is technically part of the city of San Diego and, therefore, receives services, infrastructure, and other benefits from the city, residents see themselves as set apart and understand their relationship in oppositional terms. Often "the city" is seen as corrupt, wasteful, and inherently pitted against the interests of the community. In many ways, a sense of suburban citizenship is formulated and directed against a larger sense of community. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), also describes this phenomenon in the case of Los Angeles.
- ⁵ Bennett Berger, *Working-Class Suburbs: A Study of Auto Workers in Suburbia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), concludes that suburbanites are not politically active and are inclined to avoid their neighbors. Constance Perin, *Everything in its Place: Social Order and Land Use in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), argues that the physical and built environment of the suburbs creates an atmosphere of withdrawal and privacy that is in direct opposition to the creation and functioning of a healthy civic sphere. Jackson,

Crabgrass Frontier, asserts that the suburbs have led to a weakened sense of metropolitan community and a privatization of social life. Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, also sees the suburbs as an environment that promotes social isolation, which leads to civic withdrawal. Baumgartner, *The Moral Order of a Suburb*, concludes that suburban residents have no significant connections with their neighbors, and, therefore, have no significant issues to fight about. McKenzie, *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), argues that the nature of many suburban Home Owners Associations decreases the amount of involvement members have in civic activity. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), argues that over the past quarter century civic involvement has significantly declined in the United States in general, and in the suburbs specifically.

- ⁶ Becky M. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), finds significant community involvement in a working class suburb of the 1950s and 1960s. Sylvie Murray, *The Progressive Housewife: Community Activism in Suburban Queens, 1945–1965*, (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), documents significant levels of community activism in post-war suburban Queens. John D. Dorst, *The Written Suburb: An American Site, an Ethnographic Dilemma* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), describes suburban residents outside of Philadelphia actively involved in the creation of a sense of community in their neighborhood. John Horton, *The Politics of Diversity: Immigration, Resistance, and Change in Monterrey Park, California* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), documents a large political mobilization in Monterrey Park, California, as various suburban groups contend against one another for political power. Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), reminds us that the act of living in the suburbs can sometimes be a civic act in itself. For many blacks, living in the suburbs was a civic act in itself. Just as blacks had to fight their way into the suburbs, many white suburban residents fought to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*, documents strong civic and political activity in numerous suburban neighborhoods surrounding Los Angeles during the 1970s and 1980s. Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), describes a very civically active group of suburbanites in Orange County, California, using their strong social networks to recruit members and spur activity for the Republican Party.
- ⁷ Following recent trends in citizenship studies (see note 2) Staeheli and Clarke, “The New Politics of Citizenship: Structuring Participation by Household, Work and Identity,” *Urban*

Geography (2003) 24(2):103–126, argue that suburban residents display a form of citizenship based around local and private interests. Murray, *The Progressive Housewife*, also suggests that suburban residents develop a practice of citizenship around their middle class and suburban status. Mary Corbin Sies, “Paradise Retained: An Analysis of Persistence in Planned, Exclusive Suburbs, 1880–1980,” *Planning Perspectives*, (1997) 12:165–191, supports this discussion by pointing out the strategies suburban residents use to maintain local control within their communities. This study seeks to supplement the literature by suggesting that civic activity centered around preserving suburban livelihoods is a full-fledged expression of citizenship.

- ⁸ This distinction draws from Walzer’s, “Citizenship,” in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, Terence Ball, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 211–219, discussion of “Greek” and “Roman” conceptions of citizenship. Following Walzer, the Greek citizen, based on Classical Athenian democracy, is an individual who both rules and is ruled. In other words, the Greek citizen is one who makes the law and is bound by it. In the Greek model, citizenship is an office of responsibility to be proudly assumed and actively employed. Here, citizenship might be measured by active participation in civic activities. Citizenship is based on membership in a community and is focused around protecting the community from any potential threats. The Roman conception of citizenship, as defined by Walzer, differs from the Greek/communal model in its basic conception of rights. The Roman citizen is an individual who is protected by law and recognized as bearing a set of rights. Citizenship, in this version, is a status, or set of rights, to be passively enjoyed by each individual. Citizenship in the Roman model does not require active participation in any form of community no matter how conceived. Instead, citizenship and the rights that go along with it are largely a private matter. Rather than label these models as “Greek” and “Roman,” I have chosen to refer to them more descriptively as “communal” and “individual.”
- ⁹ Sies (1997) makes a similar point in her study of why the suburban model of residence has persisted over time.
- ¹⁰ Low (2004) documents similar sentiments among suburban residents in gated communities.
- ¹¹ Many scholars of the suburbs have noted the importance of homeownership to both suburban identities and political activities. Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven*, documents how the home and property represents an economic safety net and can serve as a rallying point for community activism. Davis, *City of Quartz*, also illustrates that private interests in the value of one’s home can lead to political activism. Arnold Hirsch, “Less than Plessy,” in *The New Suburban History*, Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 33–56; Robert O. Self, “Prelude to the Tax Revolt,” in *The New Suburban History*, Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, eds.

- (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 144–160, and David M.P. Freund, “Marketing the Fee Market,” in *The New Suburban History*, Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 11–32 (2006), also see homeownership as constituting a certain style of political identity aimed at preserving ownership and class standing. Drawing from these studies, this paper illustrates how the identities stemming from suburban homeownership can formulate a broader sense of political identity at the neighborhood level.
- ¹² This is similar to situations described by Self, “Prelude to the Tax Revolt,” and others in which shared suburban values can coalesce around distinctions made between insiders (those holding the same values and interests) and outsiders (those not sharing the same values and/or interests). Self in particular describes large corporations as the “outsiders,” while Low focuses more on social “outsiders,” such as people of lower socioeconomic standing. Both types of “outsiders” are at play here.
- ¹³ While seemingly at odds with each other, Jean Cohen, “Changing Paradigms of Citizenship and the Exclusiveness of the Demos,” in *International Sociology*, (1999), 14(3):245–268, suggests that both conceptions of citizenship tend to exist in tension with each other in many modern societies. Dissimilar as they may be, both of these understandings of citizenship play a central role in contemporary suburban citizenship.
- ¹⁴ Delores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000* (New York: Vintage, 2003).
- ¹⁵ In order to protect the anonymity of study participants, the names of all individuals have been omitted and many groups are referred to by pseudonym.
- ¹⁶ CC&Rs are legal contracts, but many stipulations have been overturned or greatly weakened in courts across the country. (See note 20.) Similarly, the Rancho Peñasquitos Community Plan is a set of guidelines, but not necessarily a document that must be followed.
- ¹⁷ Because Rancho Peñasquitos was built up over a number of decades and by a number of developers, there are also a number of differing CC&Rs. I recognize that the specifics are important, but in order to keep the discussion contained, my discussion here makes a number of broad generalizations regarding the CC&Rs of the community. I feel this is justified because many of the residents themselves have opted to combine Homeowners Associations into one umbrella group. I describe this in the main article.
- ¹⁸ McKenzie, *Privatopia*, describes this history in regards to the nearby community of Rancho Bernardo. He argues that CC&Rs and Homeowner Associations have created a form of private government in many suburban neighborhoods. This is true,

although in many cases (see note 20) the power of Homeowners Associations has been challenged. Regardless, the principles behind the CC&Rs and Homeowners Association provide a resource upon which a suburban citizenship can be built, private or not.

- ¹⁹ Over the past twenty years many of the Homeowner Associations within Rancho Peñasquitos have merged to form the Rancho Peñasquitos Town Council. The Town Council currently serves as the umbrella Homeowners Association for the entire community.
- ²⁰ For example, in 2001 the Colorado Court of Appeals denied an HOA the ability to add new restrictions to its CC&Rs in *West v. Evergreen Highland Association*. In 1998 the California Court of Appeals in *Cunningham v. Fountain Valley Chateau Blanc Homeowner’s Association* decided that an HOA cannot enforce provisions of CC&Rs against private homeowners unless those provisions reasonably ensure the safety of other homes in the area. The Supreme Court of North Carolina, in a 2003 decision regarding *Wise v. Harrington Grove Community Association*, decided that the HOA could not fine a homeowner for nonapproved architectural changes to his home. The Supreme Court of Virginia decided that the HOA cannot enforce parking rules codified in CC&Rs in the 2000 case *Sully Station II Community Association v. Dye*, et al. In the 2005 case *Caribay Inc. v. Ross*, the Sixth Circuit Court of Florida rejected the HOA’s claim that a homeowner must remove windows that were not approved. The Florida Court of Appeals twice decided that HOAs do not have the power to enforce residency limits on a property in *Durnbach v. Holley* (2002) and *Baldwin v. Nature’s Hideaway* (1993). The Sacramento Third District Court of Appeals decided in 2004 that the HOA could not limit the animals acceptable as pets in *Elebiaris v. Auburn Woods*. These are but a few of the examples in recent years of HOAs and CC&Rs being successfully challenged in courts across the United States.
- ²¹ Paul Robbins, *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007).
- ²² See Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*; Bruce Haynes, *Red Lines, Black Spaces: The Politics of Race and Space in a Black Middle-Class Suburb* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); and Andrew Weise, *Places of Their Own*, for a discussion of how race has affected suburban development.
- ²³ Wesley Hohfeld, *Fundamental Legal Conceptions*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1964).
- ²⁴ For example, see Davis, *City of Quartz*; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*; Fishman, *Bourgeoisie Utopias*; and J. Eric Oliver, *Democracy in Suburbia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).