COLLABORATION IN COMMUNITIES OF DIFFERENCE

A Thesis
by
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ABSTRACT
COLLABORATION IN COMMUNITIES OF DIFFERENCE
(May 2010)
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While there is considerable research devoted to methods of collaboration and participation in the community development literature, few have taken up the analytical project of discovering where collaboration exists in a community situation prior to the influence of outside interests attempting to promote collaborative methods. Likewise, few have assessed how this collaboration, should it exist, can be enriched by sustainability practices. I propose that collaboration exists in communities through a process that incorporates difference and builds community resilience. I investigate the possibility of achieving community resilience through collaboration at the scale of individuals, associations, and institutions (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). I examine the communication processes that facilitate and underlie this collaboration in community response, recovery, and resilience to disaster. Data from ethnographic research in community recovery to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana are analyzed. Drawing from planning, community development, disaster, and political philosophy literatures, this research assesses the ongoing implementation of recovery and sustainability efforts at the grass roots. I also reflexively privilege local contexts by carrying out what I consider to be a first step in community collaborative research: the inclusion of qualitative data sets as indicators of wellbeing. The methods of sustainability practitioners, community builders, and natural hazards analysts meld in specific disaster contexts, informing a theory of collaboration as a process that is built upon difference and a willingness to communicate the value of this difference in light of a specific need. Finally, utilizing Charlotte Davies' reflexive ethnographic methodology (1998), I apply the insights from my Louisiana analysis to community assessment and community building practices in my hometown of Boone, North Carolina.

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Key Terms and Acronyms

It was in reference to Marx's shifting and jarring use of words that Vilfredo Pareto (1902) first described "…words like bats: one can see in them both birds and mice" (cited in Ollman 1971:3). To follow Marx a step further, it is helpful to understand words as concepts according to social relations (Ollman 1971:15). Definitions thus become dependent upon context and circumstance, and definitions are understood to be changing. Though the literature review beginning on page six attempts a more in-depth discussion of terms and the various bird-and-mouse manifestations assumed, a brief outline and explanation of key terms was deemed appropriate from the outset to avoid, if I might further complicate Pareto's metaphor, flying blind.

Asset – Though the term is criticized in much social science, asset in the context of this thesis is not a reference to capitalist value or commodification of social phenomena that is deemed beneficial within a given community wishing to achieve a form of economic development. Asset is used herein in a very general sense to refer to beneficial components. Honesty, in this framework, might be considered an asset, though it lacks a monetary value. Recent Appalachian scholarship has suggested the commons and the processes that build the commons as a conceptual alternative to the assets and social capital approach (Bartlett and Boyer 2009:135). Though the benefits of such a conceptual shift are considered in the conclusion of the thesis, the term asset has been retained to maintain a viable synthesis with existing planning literature and the community building proponents within this literature, wherein the term assets is recommended over needs-based policy, which is seen to lead toward fatalistic and top-down orientations to community development work.

Association – Kretzmann and McKnight define an association as "a group of citizens working together" (1993:109). This general definition is useful, but it needs clarifying. For one, to use the

word citizens rather than individuals is to infer that the individuals are engaged in public matters. Associations as such mustn't necessarily be driven to achieve politically, though they could be. Associations as such are engaged in public matters.

Collaboration – I define collaboration very basically as working together on a periodic basis. This differs from cooperation that could be understood as simply working side by side.

Community – "Community does not *need* defining, and this is precisely why scholars need to pay attention to it" (Creed 2006:4). This quote from Gerald Creed speaks to the danger of a term as appealing and ambiguous as community. In this thesis I am working toward an understanding of community based primarily on communication among individuals, kin, and neighborhood networks that organizes a collaborative, shared experience. While this shared experience could be cultural such as an orchestration or theatre performance, I herein ground this collaboration in early modernist and late modernist theories of community organized around hazards, and only then begin to work toward a description of "traditional" community collaborating in ritual and commons. Not all the communities discussed in this thesis have geographic limiters.

Community Building – "Normally, communities do not construct themselves, they evolve" (Oliver-Smith 2005:55). While community building sometimes refers to active propagation or cultivation of networks of support and shared interest in groups of people, more often in this thesis community building refers to uncovering those situations and environments in which these processes are already occurring.

Conventional – Through out this thesis I refer to "conventional" indices and "conventional" methods. I am referring in general to conservative scientific tendencies toward reductive, quantitative measurement with assertions of objectivity. For further clarification regarding what makes this science conservative or "conventional," see Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

Difference – I define difference by the distinguishing features of individuals, contributing to human diversity, relevant to this thesis through the assertion that diversity builds resilience. I chose to use the

term difference over the term diversity because difference emphasizes the need for more than consensus in deliberative processes. Also, the term diversity may lead with too much strength toward an ecological adaptation of the communication theory under development, which I desire, but cannot yet claim to have accomplished.

Individual – My definition for individuals is not different form Kretzmann and McKnight: a single person (1993:13).

Institution – Throughout this thesis I refer to Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) three scales or forms of community: institutional, associational, and individual. I haven taken the liberty of designing exaggerated distinctions for these forms, based less on the type of organization and more on the size of the organization. I have done this to provide a jargon for my conclusions regarding large-scale organizations, which I here call institutions. My decision to alter the Kretzmann and McKnight framework is largely in regard to their definition of institution: "more formal…complex and multidimensional…Institutions are themselves a collection of assets" (171). Kretzmann and McKnight are focused on local institutions, of which they include parks, schools, hospitals, and social service agencies. For the purposes of my thesis, institution refers to attempts to organize a great complexity, a grand scale of management, in which non-personal bureaucratic policies potentially define the local situation. A park might be considered a local institution within my framework, if its primary purpose is organizing and facilitating other community associations. If a park is directly run primarily by volunteers and claims few if any ties with local government, much less state government, I would consider this park an association for the present analysis.

Reflexivity – "In its most transparent guise, [reflexivity] expresses researchers' awareness of their necessary connection to the research situation and hence their effects on it" (Davies 1998). Ulrich Beck believes reflexivity is the process that explains "the unremarkable prefix 'post.' It is the key word of our times…it hints at a 'beyond' which it cannot name…*Past plus post* – that is the basic recipe with which we confront a reality that is out of joint" (1992:9). Thus, in my thesis, the reflexive

process that first finds a home in the sociological critique of science now extends to all participants in a society of co-production and participation.

Resilience – In this thesis, resilience is considered a specific praxis for achieving sustainability, based upon diversity, flexibility, and persistence. This term is prevalent in the disaster and hazards research literature, where it is generally considered the institutional and cultural ability of a community to "bounce back" from a disaster situation. For a more in-depth discussion of the term see Gunderson and Pritchard's *Resilience and the Behavior of Large-Scale Systems* (2002).

Sustainability – I define sustainability as a movement composed of (sometimes contradictory) methods toward the ongoing goal for humanity of intergenerational wellbeing. An as yet unarticulated balance of political, social, economic, environmental, and cultural human and non-human systems is an assumed prerequisite of this ongoing goal. The literature review will discuss distinct methods within the movement.

CRIP – Charlotte Regional Indicators Project (2007)

GIS – Geographic/Graphic Information Systems/Science

NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association

NOI – New Orleans Index (2009)

OEP – Office of Emergency Preparedness

PAR – Participatory Action Research

RIEEE – Research Institute for Environment Energy and Economics

SIs – Sustainability Indicators

WHO – World Health Organization

Preface

It is easy to misunderstand community. It is easy to misinterpret the rituals that build community. It is not easy to recover the potential of these rituals once misunderstood, once dismantled. I remember being a young boy in Catholic school, at mass every Wednesday. I remember the worn feel of the oak pews, the cold dustiness of the linoleum floor, and watching the line of people coming forward to receive communion. We kindergarteners sat in the front and weren't yet allowed to receive communion. I wanted badly to be a part of it. Then, one day, while kneeling, which kindergarteners did while everyone went to the front for communion, I noticed there on the linoleum between my kneeler and the oak pew in front of me, a small wafer. I looked up and saw the wafers being passed from the priest to each person in line. As best as I could tell they were identical. Quickly I grabbed up the wafer and put it in my mouth. It was sweet as sugar! Suddenly, I understood why so many people would gather for this small thing. Suddenly, I understood why I should joyously await two years from now, when I would receive my first communion in the second grade. I did not know I had actually found and tasted a type of candy called a NECCO® wafer, which is round just like communion and about the same size. It wasn't until second grade that I realized how different that candy tasted from the starchy, bland wafer that is used in the communion ceremony. I was ruined for this ritual. For me it had become about taste. I'd partaken from outside the community, and I'd misinterpreted the event. Can a kindergartener be expected to know that ritual is more than that which is perceived or consumed – that ritual is not simply a representative force, that meaning is a subtle and powerful creative force?

Introduction to Related Research

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-masse
(Walt Whitman)

While there is considerable research devoted to methods of collaboration and participation in the community development literature, few have taken up the analytical project of discovering where collaboration exists in a community situation prior to the influence of outside interests promoting collaborative methods. Likewise, few have assessed how this collaboration, should it exist, can be enriched by sustainability practices. I propose that collaboration exists in communities through a process that incorporates difference and builds community resilience. I investigate the possibility of achieving community resilience through collaboration at the scale of individuals, associations, and institutions (J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993). I examine the communication processes that facilitate and underlay this collaboration in community response, recovery, and resilience to disaster. Data from ethnographic research in community recovery to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana are analyzed. Drawing from planning, community development, disaster, and political philosophy literatures, this research addresses the ongoing implementation of sustainability and resilience practices in the work of assessing quality of life, community resilience, and sustainability.

Political and social theories have for centuries described the intimate linking of communication and community (David Depew and John Durham Peters 2001), but collaboration is not often emphasized as a phenomenon capable of best describing this intimate link. Ulrich Beck (1992) and John Dewey (1927) both developed theories to describe the process by which communities organize around hazards. These theories benefit from application to specific consequential events. Some planning literature attempts to distinguish between communication and collaboration (J. Burger et al.

2009), but little has been written concerning the actual on-site occurrences of collaboration prior to the imposition of a researcher or a large-scale collaborative endeavor, or questioning the very possibility of collaboration.

The community development literature argues for the value and necessity of collaboration and offers ethnographic data in support of its claims (J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993), and the hazards literature makes strong claims for the need for sustainable communities and community participation in mitigation processes (D. S. Mileti 1999; John Pine 2009). However, the indices applied to assess the success of these mitigation processes and the health of recovering communities rarely incorporates sustainability methodology.

At least some proponents of the disaster research community are aware of this disparity, and accordingly call for interdisciplinary scholarship that works at "the real-world problems entailed in linking hazards and sustainability" (D. S. Mileti 1999:14). This thesis means to answer that call. Drawing from these different literatures, I develop the links between sustainability, hazards, public perception of risk, and the possibility of community resilience. Once established, these literatures contribute to a framework for my analysis of collaboration in communities as a process that does exist, and is based on the diverse assets available within a community, exchanged and utilized through local communication.

Natural hazards research and community building praxis both call for participation from non-experts, but there are important distinctions and similarities between these fields that warrant a comparison of their participatory research processes. The present movement in natural hazards means to instill resilience to hazards through a purportedly ethical form of social design that affects "a fundamental shift in the character of how the nation's citizens, communities, governments, and businesses conduct themselves in relation to the natural environment they occupy" (D. S. Mileti 1999:vii). Community building means to engage people in a way that empowers their existing resources and

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develops a self-supporting network of collaboration (Maureen Hart 1999; J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993).

The natural hazards approach, generally speaking, is more of a top-down approach to engagement than the community-building approach. This distinction is significant because both approaches fall under the many methods of the sustainability movement. This distinction is of greater significance as the ethnographic analysis that follows reveals the differences that occur not in the literature and theory of a movement but in actual assessment practices. Within the context of the specific disaster recovery scenarios discussed herein, community building and disaster recovery at times become the same process. Still, scale must remain a primary consideration for the potential to effectively engage in participatory processes, such that the ability of institutions to productively engage individuals is questioned. The data reveal that somewhere between the scale of institutional assessment practices and the scale of associational community building the emphasis on participation and its accompanying engagement methodology undergoes an interpretive shift. This collaboration research thus contributes to the study of scale in community planning, hazards research, and sustainability.

Indices of community well being, resilience and/or sustainability are a major component of planning and policy initiatives, used for the generation of bench marks, assessments of vulnerability, and/or quality of life (Gavin Smith 2009:229). While it is common for these indices to orient themselves toward sustainability (R. Phillips 2003), it is less common to see the adoption of methods time-tested within the sustainability movement.

Introduction to the Thesis Research

My research acknowledges the difficulties inherent in the task of assessing community health and sustainability. I highlight some of the difficulties of achieving collaboration between associations engaged in community building and some of the problems perceived in institutions performing indicator analysis. I suggest that the greater inclusion of qualitative information toward the further development of local context is an appropriate first step.

My ethnographic analysis is a combined review of how both local associations engaged in community building in New Orleans and Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) local government officials throughout Louisiana described the state of affairs in August 2009, four years after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The information offered is reflexive, qualitative, and personal. It is oriented toward community-scaled sustainability. On one level, this research attempts to bring local qualitative data to the stage of state and federal level indicator data. On another level, it questions the effectiveness of state and federal level attempts to engage in sustainability oriented participatory methods. The interviewed practitioners offer multiple perspectives on community building, nearly all of which are future-oriented and results-oriented. They are reinventing their organizations, going from recovery to resilience. The analysis is framed within the context of their local experience and also theoretically informed. Their stories are viable data for analysis of small-scale sustainability efforts, commenting on the economic reality of these community organizations, their varying impacts on the community, as well as personal reflections on community-level change. These stories work as data that substantiate my claim for collaboration in communities of difference and also provide a narrative of recovery and resilience for the Gulf Coast.

The methods of sustainability practitioners, community builders, and natural hazards analysts meld in specific disaster contexts, informing a theory of collaboration as a process that is built upon

difference and a willingness to communicate the value of this difference in light of a specific need. Furthermore, in the course of this ethnographic analysis, a theory of community is inferred, if not described, based on the collaboration sought out in my research of disaster recovery and resilience-building processes. Lastly, aligning my research with a reflexive ethnographic method (C. A. Davies 1998), I apply the insights derived from my analysis to community assessment and community building practices in my hometown of Boone, North Carolina. Boone happens to be the head quarters for the burgeoning evangelical disaster relief organization Samaritan's Purse. This local, personal context provides a canvas for my reflections on disaster, hope, religion, and how we orient as individuals in a world that is mostly not human.

Sustainability Indicator Literature Review

This past August 2009 the Brookings Institution in collaboration with the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center released the fourth anniversary edition of the New Orleans Index:

> Residents and leaders are eager to get beyond "disaster recovery" to implement bold plans for creating a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous city and region. Locally, key moves are creating the foundation for transformation to meet residents' long-term aspirations…With strong partnerships, local leadership, and leveraged assets, New Orleans could emerge as a model of resilience for metro areas recovering from natural catastrophes or major economic shocks, such as those triggered by this recession (Brookings 2009).

This statement early in the New Orleans Index describes something of a contrast between the report's stated mission, which is to track disaster recovery, and a city that is eager to build and think of its future not in terms of recovery, but in terms of sustainability. Recent scholarship on sustainability and resilience suggest that a quantitative report based primarily on federal level census-type data and a profit growth model may fail to accurately represent the situation on the ground (Kenneth Meter 2007:185). These critics reject economic growth models but are often proponents of personal and communal growth (R. E. Young and J. Habermas 1990:12). Social infrastructure is considered a prerequisite to economic development (Helen Matthews Lewis 2009:70). More to the point, these critics assert that a reductive quantitative report may fail to take advantage of one of the primary resilience-building components of indicator studies; namely, the fact that if these studies are conducted in a participatory manner, in collaboration with local community organizers, the study itself becomes a resilience builder (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008; J. Gadrey and F. Jany-Catrice 2006; G. P. Green and A. Haines 2002; M. Holden 2008; J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993; R. Phillips 2003).

I collected ethnographic data while assessing the engagement methodology of a proposed community resilience index funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA),

which focused on disaster recovery and community resilience to natural hazards. I also collected ethnographic data in consideration of the New Orleans Index and its newly stated interest in sustainability.

Thus I begin the literature review with a section on indicators and indicator approaches to sustainability. I supplement the specific concerns and claims of this indicator literature with examples from current indices including Sustainable Seattle, Charlotte Regional Indicators Project (CRIP), and the New Orleans Index. I have structured this section of the literature review by emphasizing conceptualizations of quality of life, sustainability, and community within the indicator literature. According to *The Community Indicators Handbook,* quality of life, sustainability, and community are fundamental concerns (along with performance evaluation) for the bulk of indicator projects (R. Phillips 2003:4).

Maureen Hart's *Guide to Sustainability Indicators* (1999) is more of a field manual than a movement manifesto. It offers examples of sustainability indicators distinct from conventional indicators, and emphasizes the economic-environmental-cultural integration required for this type of indicator formation. The guide includes helpful lists of indicators, existing indices, and data resources. Simple bullet points and cartoon illustrations throughout the text connect it with a genre of community organizing literature meant for wide dissemination.

Rhonda Phillips' *Community Indicators* (2003) is a publication of the American Planning Association. The book maintains an emphasis on participation and the benefits of sustainability while operating within a primarily quantitative and expert-oriented planning framework. It reviews a number of existing indices that in one way or another accomplish more than conventional indicators.

Sustainability Indicators: A Scientific Assessment, is a product of the International Council on Science (Hak, Moldan, & Dahl 2007). It offers in-depth and varied quantitative and qualitative methods for indicators of sustainability. It is expert-oriented and rich with systems thinking.

Though Simon Bell and Stephen Morse's *Sustainability Indicators: Measuring the Immeasurable?* (2008) does propose a method, especially in its conclusion, I chose it primarily as an example of the sustainability literatures efforts to continue a reflexive project of scientific devaluation, to emphasize subjectivity, to flirt with a debilitating form of anti-realism (C. Norris 1997:117).

There is a subtle but pervasive schism in the indicator literature. Certain theorists demand the inclusion of qualitative data, opposing the continued reliance upon quantitative data by new and ongoing indices. Recent research suggests that "the availability of quantitative information caused a neglect of issues for which quantitative indicators were not available" (Jasper Grosskurth and Jan Rotmans 2007:178). Quantitative indicators often fail on a basic level by assuming that more is better and that the highest quality of life occurs in those localities with the most resources (R. Phillips 2003). The question becomes how can quality of life be described, much less assessed, through standardized evaluations of quantitative indicators collected by non-local agencies. To this end the literature doubts the objectivity claims of conventional indicator studies, affirming that any assessment of quality of life is always political (R. Phillips 2003).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined quality of life as "An Individual's perception of their position in life, in the context of the culture and values in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008). It appears endless spatial and temporal contexts must be accounted for if the WHO definition is to guide assessment of quality of life. Sustainability practitioners justify qualitative research with the assertion that "until the fundamental but intangible dimensions of society have adequate indicators they will be invisible for assessment purposes" (Jasper Grosskurth and Jan Rotmans 2007:173). Yet, how can a study possibly account within an indicator project (and its time and funding constraints) for a community's many "ethics, norms, values, and spirituality" (Jasper Grosskurth and Jan Rotmans 2007:178)?

Whether such an assessment can be anything but an ideal is beyond the scope of this paper. The potential to offer a more holistic assessment of quality of life *is* considered characteristic of

sustainability indicators (SIs) and a major distinction from conventional quantitative indicator meth-

ods. If SIs can articulate the interconnected quality of economic, environmental, and societal events

they can potentially begin to inform a community of its own underlying integrative processes

(Maureen Hart 1999).

Consider that the CRIP takes a simple measure of number of jobs as an indicator of business

health, even though it prefaces this simple measurement with an interest in more integrated analysis:

> These jobs vary tremendously in wages, ranging from minimum-wage retail positions
> to high-paid professional jobs. Our ability to understand this growth in the service
> sector would benefit from breaking out the low-income service jobs from the higher
> paying ones (CRIP 2007:24,134).

This would be a move toward a sustainable indicator but the CRIP does not attempt it, and

the perceptive reader is left to question the very possibility, considering the numerous discrepancies

between proposed methodology and actual practice. In contrast, as a general business indicator of

sustainability, Hart suggests measuring the number of parents with satisfactory daycare arrangements.

Quality of life can more accurately be assessed through an increase not just in complexity, which

might simply include compounding indicator upon indicator, but through an increase in integrative

complexity, more closely resembling the interrelated nature of the human environment.

Democratic method in the SI literature commonly details participation and stakeholder proc-

esses. Methods of SI formation can be linked with the larger sustainability movement by way of a

common interest in equity through inclusion.

> When Sustainable Seattle produced its first indicator report, 'Indicators of Sustain-
> able Community' in 1993, the work was ground-breaking because of its participatory
> nature. The work resulted in an "Excellence in Indicators Best Practice" award from
> the United Nations" (B-Sustainable 2009).

It is necessary to establish a clearer conception of what makes a method participatory, and

then to articulate more clearly how this methodology might influence considerations of risk manage-

ment and a community's collaborative endeavors.

Historically, Participatory Action Research (PAR) builds from revolutionary movements but also from a general effort to connect research with community development (Marja Liisa Swantz 2008:31). The roots of this method should be understood as containing within its substructure the goal of breaking strict allegiance to positivist science and also the goal of shaping research as an agent of social change (Marja Liisa Swantz 2008:32). In its most vivid manifestation, PAR is the elimination of such categories as expert, and an understanding of the inherent learning potential of all participants, including those participants charged with organizational and leadership roles (Marja Liisa Swantz 2008:38). Political implications for such a method, as may be expected, include researchers serving as intermediaries between communities and non-local authorities, but also include a general increase in the visibility and relative importance of oppressed peoples, a lessening of the abuses attached to bureaucratic self-interests, and thus, an overall increase in justice (Marja Liisa Swantz 2008:36,37). Indeed, on one level, it can be said that PAR work is justice work. Furthermore, PAR is situation-specific and practical. It involves a deep trust in the process of communication, a desire to build consensus while celebrating diversity, and a commitment to the time that is required if one is to slowly adapt a general method to the specific knowledge and needs of a community (Marja Liisa Swantz 2008:43,45). It is therefore a creative and reflexive project, dedicated to knowledge building and relationship building. PAR should not be thought of as simply an effective way to try and arrange group meetings or build consensus.

There are at least two general approaches to participation within the SI literature. The first believes "the choice is not one that should be made in sustainability assessment but one that should be delegated to democratic processes;" the second emphasizes the empowering potential of SIs to both inform and engage communities in participatory processes (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008; Jasper Grosskurth and Jan Rotmans 2007:183). The numerous opinions of the potential and quality of expert-oriented democratic methods has initiated an epistemological debate concerning SIs' power as a knowledge producer (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008:205).

This epistemological debate contributes momentum to criticisms based on subjectivity and general opposition to conventional reductive and objective knowledge claims, which is characteristic of critiques of conventional indicators. Conventional objectivity claims include:

> The Index provided members of the media, key decision makers, nonprofit and private sector groups, and researchers with an independent, fact-based, one-stop resource to monitor and evaluate… (Brookings 2009).

And also,

> The Indicators Project will provide objective, reliable, and relevant data that measure the region's annual progress on a wide range of indicators that impact the region's quality of life (CRIP 2007:4-6).

As the WHO orients quality of life to an individualist context-driven perspective, as the democratic tendencies of the planning literature make claims and varied attempts for inclusivity, practitioners of sustainability choose between attempting to reflexively integrate a community engagement process within their science, or outlining the need for support from such a community engagement process, which they judge to be necessary but beyond the scope of their specific method. In either case, the subjective and normative nature of the practice is linked to the need for participation: "…subjectively derived measures of sustainability are useful if the subjectivity is explicitly accepted and declared at the outset and if the method for deriving the measures is available to a range of stakeholders" (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008:131).

CRIP claims to base its model on the experience of the ground-breaking index from Sustainable Seattle, but the emphasis on participation, which is shown above to be the aspect of Seattle's method that garnered the United Nation's praise, becomes de-emphasized in the methodology of CRIP. Sustainable Seattle clearly explains: "For indicators to be useful, they must be developed with the active participation of those that will use and learn from them. In a sustainable community, participation extends to include everyone" (B-Sustainable 2009). CRIP has a different method:

> The first set of indicators had to be not only objective, reliable and relevant, they also had to be cost-effective to compile and likely to remain so in the future. This

placed a premium on indicators for which federally- or state-mandated and collected data is readily available over indicators for which local governments or other multiple organizations are the only sources... (2007:6).

This begs the important question: *Can an index work toward sustainability with data that lacks a local context?* The SI literature answers this question with a resounding no. Yet, there is disagreement as to what constitutes local data.

Reference to sustainability is so common within the indicator literature that some credit the movement with the development of community indicators, though the actual methods of the movement are adopted by these indices to varying degrees (R. Phillips 2003). Specifically, context and culture-oriented perspectives that contribute to a dynamic understanding of systems help to define sustainability as a movement. This assertion for the importance of culturally informed contexts within sustainability is acknowledged to varying degrees within the SI literature. Each team of SI practitioners offers its own definition for sustainability. Indeed, it is not uncommon for a single team to offer multiple definitions for the term. A brief comparison of these definitions reveals a few of the numerous approaches to sustainability within the SI literature.

A broad application of systems theory often frames an orientation to sustainability that emphasizes temporality: "The characteristic of the system that we are most interested in is its ability to sustain itself in the long run in a desired state or on a desired trajectory. A system with that ability is sustainable" (Jasper Grosskurth and Jan Rotmans 2007:177). Systems thinkers also admit, "The representation and evaluation of a system are intrinsically subjective, normative, ambiguous, uncertain, and incomplete" (Jasper Grosskurth and Jan Rotmans 2007:178). Within such a scientific systems approach to sustainability, there is an effort to describe the ongoing process-oriented nature of this temporally based achievement. Thus, sustainability is not only a goal but also "a characteristic of a dynamic human-environmental system able to maintain a functional productive state indefinitely" (Arthur Lyon Dahl 2007:164).

Some practitioners and theorists within the SI literature choose to avoid something so precise as a definition. Some assert only that sustainability does not mean sustainable growth (Maureen Hart 1999). Others take a still more general, narrative approach to the issue: "The situation appears to be that at the end of the 20th century a word was decided upon to conjure up the desirable outcome of social and political endeavors" (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008:195). Some frameworks are more anthropocentric than others, and the varying orientations to the term contribute to and perhaps help explain its wide appeal and adoption by otherwise conventional indices.

This same wide and varying adoption of the term sets up the epistemological dialectic within the literature:

> We are not satisfied that narrow approaches to sustainability (such as SIs conceived in reductionistic frameworks) can work without reducing complexity, excluding valid and legitimate worldviews and reducing the area of concern to one that no longer represent the key issues of sustainability (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008:147).

The result of this dialectic, presently, seems to be a method divorced from its theory (Brookings 2009; CRIP 2007). More recently, a new praxis develops around indicators as a tool not for assessment but for engagement (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008; J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993).

Among other things, this new method means to empower communities, but SI practitioners differ in their definition of community and seldom make such formal distinctions as Creed's "three component meanings: a group of people, a quality of relationship (usually with a positive normative value), and a place/location" (2006:4). Some SI theorists and practitioners attempt to define community as a built environment, a sense of safety and familiarity, and a balance of mutually interdependent elements (S. Bell and S. Morse 2008). Others are guilty of falling for what Raymond Williams (1976) has called "a warmly persuasive word" (cited in Gerald Creed 2006:5). Occasionally books devoted entirely to community indicators fail to offer any definition (R. Phillips 2003). An ambivalent author might formally define community in terms of geography, but then everywhere else in the text refer to community as the shared interactions of people (Maureen Hart 1999). The review that

follows refers to specific conceptual orientations to community developing around risks and hazards,

which help this thesis avoid a non-specified idealized version of the term.

Introduction to the Theoretical Literature

I have selected from the theoretical literature with the aim of developing a framework specific to my thesis, based on theoretical and methodological approaches to *communication, collaboration,* and *community*. I mean to develop a specific approach to these three concepts. It is only within this framework that I attempt to provide empirical support for my hypothesis with ethnographic data, and lay a foundation for continued research on community, communication and sustainability through the present focus on occurrences of collaboration in disaster response and resilience building.

If I seek the collaborative processes that occur within communities of difference, I must define what a community is for the purpose of my analysis, and I must define the communication methods used in the collaborative processes I perceive. I then might also describe a less visible but equally vital component of the process: the hope or belief in the possibility of a deep communication that builds community. This agenda requires both realist and idealist elements.

Sustainability as a movement and as a practice must be theoretically informed. What is the actual consequence I predict for my theoretical orientation to sustainability? At least, it means an integrated sense of the world and our roles in it through a focus on interrelation and the unfathomable complexity of association. Therein, if we cannot act with total knowledge, we must at least act with care.

The WHO definition of quality of life, with its individualized context and inferred specificity, may seem especially problematic for those of us interested in actually supporting sustainability in our communities. Some relief lies in a deep understanding of the individualized experience, the individualized context as a reality based entirely upon association. John Dewey's *The Public and its Problems* (1927) clarifies the distinction between socially produced individualized context and what

has been termed individualism. He does this by orienting the public to shared consequences. Since Dewey, many scholars have attempted to describe a similar situation (D. W. Ehrenfeld 1978:107,108).

This focus on collaboration does not simply satisfy my interests in ecological adaptations of secular humanist doctrines with democratic leanings. The theoretical elevation and methodological adoption of participatory techniques (to varying effect) within policy and planning initiatives makes collaboration a timely topic. Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1992) describes the reflexivity within the sciences that leads to these participatory processes. The public becomes co-producers, to varying efficacy, of public policy and assessments of well being, all within a frame-work of risk and disaster.

Beck and Dewey, though writing from opposite ends of the modernist lineage, describe simi-lar social processes that lead to knowledge formation. Beck sometimes sees reflexivity causing a de-centralized and dismantled public of individuals, much like the individualism that Dewey dismisses (U. Beck 1992:2). Dewey, some sixty years prior to Beck, finds hope in this democratization of power, this decentralizing tendency both in science and politics to develop communicative processes of consensus.

A significance of my understanding of collaboration as it relates to this thesis is that it is not directly involved in communicating toward consensus. In such a way my work can be distinguished from that of Dewey, as well as much of the communication literature of the second half of the twen-tieth century (J. Habermas and M. Cooke 1998). The collaboration I see occurring is not necessarily peaceful or positive, though it can be. It is not a utopian democratic notion or solution to the decon-struction of a self-critical science or politics. "The goal of communicative ethics is not consensus but mutual critique" (M. A. Hinsdale et al. 1995:248). Mutual critique means that when people come together to discuss what is important, in both formal and informal situations, it is not simply agree-ment but more often difference, disagreement, and criticism that can be seen as a constructive delib-

erative process. I assert that mutual critique is a form of collaboration, observable, describable, and its consequences able to be discussed. The ethnographic data presents mutual critique primarily in the form of reflective engagement practices between myself, as a curious individual and representative of certain institutional interests, and local community practitioners.

I interpret Beck's text to correspond with the development of sustainability science.

During the 1990s, the International Council for Science (ICSU) initiated studies of science and technology for sustainable development. There were, increasingly, calls for a science of sustainability predicated on recognition of the fundamental link between science and economy while remaining free from political bias of the sort seen, for example, when North-South issues are raised in debate over sustainable development (H. Komiyama and K. Takeuchi 2006:2).

I mean to show with the assistance of Beck's analysis that sustainability as a movement and sustainability science as part of its methods are intimately linked to communication of risk and disaster. Beck's reflexive modernization attempts to accommodate both modernist and post-modernist concepts of human indeterminacy, which is a significant endeavor when dealing with participatory knowledge production and assessment of such value-laden terms as *quality of life*. In this way reflexive modernization can be understood to lack "a desire to find 'foundations' to which one might cling, frameworks beyond which one must not stray," in favor of a reflexive dialectic of continuous appraisal, continuous invention, continuous communication (Richard Rorty 1979:315).

This sets the general context for my thesis and the claims I make regarding sustainability in relation to the collaboration and communication that occurs within communities recovering and responding to disaster. As human interactions with the environment increase vulnerability, and as risk becomes more pervasive, the issues communicated become intergenerational and global (Ulrich Beck 2000; D. S. Mileti 1999:33). Sustainability takes this intergenerational and local-to-global discussion as its own.

These two texts provide a foundation for more in-depth discussions of communication's relation to community. For example, Gregory Shepherd's theory of community as the achievement of

interpersonal communication adapts Dewey's polemic (John Dewey 1927; Gregory Shepherd and Eric Rothenbuhler 2001). Dewey claims that face-to-face relations generate a community of interests and a sharing of values, but not a political organization (John Dewey 1927:39). Shepherd's theory must then either admit that interpersonal communication has consequences beyond the parties directly involved or that there are many types of communities, and only some are political. In either case Shepherd's theory is refined by a close application of Dewey's quest for a Great Community.

This Great Community is founded upon communication (John Dewey 1927). Philosophers and theorists, especially Jürgen Habermas, have taken up this emphasis on communication as a means to the democratic goals of the modernist project (J. Habermas et al. 2006). A primary relevance of Beck's text is its description of reflexivity as the condition prompting the participatory democratic processes that set the stage for this communication agenda and its abuses. In a sense, the combination of theories that underlay my thesis is a pragmatic orientation to social science and politics, and a reflexive modernist framework toward knowledge production and disaster.

Science, for instance, is founded on its critical approach to the world. Yet science has historically failed to apply the critical lens to its own methods of knowledge production (Roy Bhaskar 1989; Thomas Kuhn 1962). Beck's approach to reflexive modernity, oriented to risk assessment and risk production, is uniquely suited to sustainability science and its project of building community resilience (Y. Kajikawa et al. 2007:225). Whether in reference to a belief system based in science, religion, technology, economy, or elsewhere, reflexivity engenders a methodology that can operate in a pluralist public (Thomas Englund et al. 2008:34). Here co-production of risk and risk assessment are everyday affairs. This pluralist public forms around the consequences of scientific and industrial development that defy simple spatial or temporal description. Thus a global public, a global community, begins to appear (U. Beck 1992:2).

For both Dewey and Beck, social organization occurs around circumstances that may have been caused by a few, but which affect a great many. Dewey calls these circumstances conse-

quences. Beck calls them risks. Increasingly, there is a social science literature that calls them hazards. All three refer to potentially disastrous scenarios and recognize the interrelated nature of vulnerability and resilience in regard to disaster. Pine defines a hazard as "a potential harm which threatens our social, economic, and natural capital on a community, region, or country scale" (2009:3). Pine also points out that "hazards evolve from interactions," and thus that interdependence and "the interrelatedness of their social, cultural, and natural assets determines the robustness of their assets to deal with disasters" (2009:3,154).

As much as Dewey is aligned with communication and consequence, he is still more emphatic about action, and how philosophy can inform action in the real world (John Dewey 1929; J. Habermas et al. 2006:132). A public is concerned with those consequences which affect others beyond those immediately concerned (John Dewey 1927:12). The public exists within the act of perception of such far reaching consequences; "its organization into a state is affected by establishing special agencies to care for and regulate these consequences" (John Dewey 1927:39). This is a transition toward institutionalization. Dewey's framework accounts for positive and negative consequences, while Beck is more oriented toward the negative, toward risk. Dewey does in the course of his book acknowledge the unknowable nature of these consequences, the seeming futility of a public meaning to control them:

> …the disparity between the results of institutionalized revolution and the conscious intentions of those engaged in it is a remarkable case of the extant to which indirect consequences of conjoint activity outweigh, beyond possibility of reckoning, the results directly contemplated (John Dewey 1927:107).

My review of these two theoretical frameworks acknowledges that public organization toward knowledge and risk can be both empowering to and debilitating for community resilience and sustainability. The theme is a nexus of change. Of the many forms of change that occur in these collaborative processes, the change most emphasized by these theorists and within the sustainability and disaster research literature, are changes of habit and opinion. Thus sustainability becomes personal,

ethical, and, according to many, a matter of persuasion. This is another justification for tying issues of

communication (and rhetoric) to community building for resilience and sustainability.

Brief History of the Literature

Dewey's vision of the Great Community is dependent upon communication. It is a vision that remains unclear. We can read the theory and hope, yet we are unclear what we are hoping for. The theory describes an individual that is socially co-produced, in relation with other individuals. This, too, is a situation that may be difficult for some to imagine in reference to one's actual day-to-day life, especially considering the constantly changing circumstances of a society, its economies, and technological advancements. Yet, also it can be said that despite these changes the effort to describe a socialized individual is an historic and ongoing endeavor. From Aristotle, to Hegel, to George Herbert Mead, to Dewey and the Chicago School, with many voices in between, community continues to be defined in terms of individuals interacting upon common concerns. These concerns were once based on substantial institutions and geographic boundaries. Now we see these concerns based on unperceived risks and consequences, and less often on geographic boundaries. As the institutional and geographic limitations that at one time defined communities pass away, communication becomes a more readily acceptable foundation upon which community might be built. Accordingly, communication becomes a reflexive process and a source of self-identity for a community; "communication becomes community grown self-conscious" (David Depew and John Durham Peters 2001:19).

Dewey both denies the importance of the question of the individual versus the collective and makes a point of distinguishing between the individual and the mode of thinking that is termed individualism. Shepherd delves deeper into the historical religiosity of individualism:

> The notion that salvation is a matter of individual faith, that relationships with God are "personal," was part of an extra-religious reformation that was gathering momentum in modernity, having to do with the prioritization of individual experience and consciousness (2001:26).

Shepherd suggests a political history as well:

> In such individualization, how do we then commune, but through transference, Locke's society of individuals (1690); communication is understood as "transmission between separate entities (2001:26).

Thus Shepherd begins the process of theoretically distinguishing his notion of community built on communication between interrelated individuals from a previous notion of community built upon communication between separate individuals. In the past, the individual was capable independently and communication was a matter of transference. For Shepherd, the individual is capable only inter-dependently and communication is a matter of transcendence. Boyer called transcendence the "radical liberation from dilemmas of social existence" (Jefferson Boyer 1990:145). While this is similar to Shepherd so far as it emphasizes the beneficial nature of the transcendence concept, Shepherd's tran-scendence is in a deep sense an immersion rather than a liberation. While Boyer takes up a Marxist dialectic to transcend "existential oppositions," Shepherd is interested only in transcending the seem-ing separation between individuals involved in communication; while Boyer reaches synthesis of con-tradictions, Shepherd seeks to describe a hope in people (Jefferson Boyer 1990:145; Gregory Shepherd 2006:30). Historically, Shepherd situates his project after modernity, after industrialization:

> (Only W)hen community must be accomplished while individuals, by definition un-common, continue to reign, but where truth is indeterminate, does communication's task seem overburdened by the need to be divine" (2001:31).

He realizes the complexity of the project, and, more importantly, he realizes now more than ever the need to believe in the possibility of a solution. It would be difficult to call his transcendence concept sociological or theological. I believe Shepherd might call it pragmatic.

Communication in the Literature

In assessments of risk, Beck sees scientists communicating more than the analysis of quantitative data. When a community index claims to assess quality of life or sustainability while also describing a process of selection of indicators based solely on economy, what does this index really communicate? If Beck is correct, and "the opportunities of scientific cognitive practice for influence and direction lie in its *scope for selection,"* then one might deduce from said index that sustainability is assessable as an economic reality, or even that sustainability is an economic reality (1992:70). Yet, "(d)eterminations of risk…straddle the distinction between objective and value dimensions" (1992:176). The subtle communication of quantitative and reductive orientation to risk is, within Beck's framework, both a side effect of social science, and a social science neglecting the reality of latent and unknown side effects in risk production (1992:175).

As science, through reflexivity, becomes more aware and critical of its tendency for reductive analysis, "*the publicly transmitted criticism of the previous development becomes the motor of expansion"* (U. Beck 1992:161). As both a reaction to specific environmental, economic, and socio-cultural events, and in reaction to the publicly transmitted criticism of science, sustainability science emerges as a collection of methods within the movement attempting to communicate and raise public awareness of risk-based scenarios. This sustainability science is reflexive from the time of its inception. It is aware that science, through techno-economic advances, has caused much of the risk; "neither visible nor tangible to the lay public, threats that will not even take their toll in the lifespan of the affected individuals…threats *that require the sensory organs of science"* (U. Beck 1992:162). Hazards analysts in sustainability science recognize the importance of the public in its methods of assessment and its results (John Pine 2009:161). The communication occurring is not simple dissemination of findings but a two-way deliberative process of knowledge formation. Social scientists,

as well as the political and commercial interests hiring social scientists, acknowledge that "*the pro-duction (or mobilization) of belief* becomes a central source of social enforcement of validity claims" (U. Beck 1992:169). There are useful and harmful applications of this mobilization. The acknow-ledgement of a public's role in knowledge production also means the public in some instances may be viewed as containing not just symptoms of the risks or vulnerabilities, but also the public may be studied as the cause of these risks (U. Beck 1992:175; Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:46).

The literature thus begins to describe a communication of social responsibility, a moral en-gagement, between sustainability practitioners and the public they wish to influence. Dewey main-tains a positive appraisal of the nascent public's morality, insisting that it is the ignorant and not the ignoble that have allowed industry and its science sovereignty over our future:

> (Industrialization's) inventions have made their way insidiously; and because of some immediate convenience. If their effects, their long-run consequences, in altering habits of behavior had been foreseen, it is safe to say that most of them would have been destroyed as wicked (1927:58).

Beck expresses less hope in the public. In short, Beck describes a modern situation in which com-munication is manipulated in order to affect public appraisal of risk, and Dewey emphasizes a mod-ern situation in which communication of risk would contribute positively to the elimination of risk.

According to Dewey, a close examination of communication processes between science and the public reveal that science is often mistaken for knowledge. Dewey asserts that science only be-comes knowledge in application (1927:163). Science is a method which may result in knowledge gained, but does not necessarily. Such a distinction places Dewey before the reflexive modernization of science described by Beck, but clearly aware of the critique of scientific results that needed to oc-cur. For the public to recognize that science does not by definition have validity or social virtue is a first step toward this critique. This recognition begins to shift the communication process from one-way dissemination to two-way coproduction. Which leads us to Dewey's second point:

> Application *in* life would signify that science was absorbed and distributed; that it was the instrumentality of that common understanding and thorough communication

which is the precondition of the existence of a genuine and effective public (1927:174).

The thorough communication described by Dewey suggests the development of an environment hospitable to Beck's reflexive science. If feedback constantly informs and cocreates assessment of risk, and thus assessment of wellbeing, sustainability science may be more capable of "developmental variants that do not close off the future, but transform the modernization process itself into a *learning process*, in which the reviseability of decisions makes possible the revocation of side effects discovered later" (U. Beck 1992:178). Both thinkers are describing a constant renewal of what is deemed most appropriate, which becomes possible as communication develops into a more dynamic process, perhaps similar to the transcendence described by Shepherd (Gregory Shepherd 2006). Risk is lessened as "they have a different outcome in the degree which knowledge of consequences is equitably distributed" (John Dewey 1927:156). This theoretical conclusion is an ideal, never to be attained in perfection, but it is conceived with effect in its perfected state. Dewey admits, "The creation of adequately flexible and responsive political and legal machinery has so far been beyond the wit of man" (1927:31). The idealism behind the theory does not alter the premise that improved two-way communication capabilities will improve identification of risk. Indeed, Dewey places his hope in this ideal: "Till the Great Society is converted into a Great Community, the Public will remain in eclipse. Communication can alone create a great community. Our Babel is not of tongues but of the signs and symbols without which shared experience is impossible" (1927:142). It is not incidental that more recent definitions of communication maintain the orientation to symbolic production and shared ontology proposed by Dewey (James W. Carey 1989:23).

Dewey's "culture of democracy," the shared experience, the urgent message, resides in the very character of the people receiving and transmitting these signs and symbols (Cornel West 1989:103). How does the movement communicate for this change? Dennis Mileti, a foundational voice in disaster research, calls for a fundamental shift in our orientation to the natural environment (1999). John Ehrenfeld, Director of the Society for Industrial Ecology, calls for subversive strategies

to awaken people's ability to act with knowledge of consequences (2008). Early in the last century, Dewey described a similar project under the pragmatist concept of *habit* (Charles S. Peirce 1940:257). Such a project is aligned with current efforts to communicate in such a way as to affect people's deep orientation and experience; that is, epistemology and ontology. Such efforts do well to consider that habits are socially produced and also that "habits of opinion are the toughest of all habits" (John Dewey 1927:161,162).

Efforts to affect people in such a way are seen throughout the media and especially in advertising. Even before television, Dewey saw politicians advertising similarly:

> We seem to be approaching a state of government by hired promoters of opinion called publicity agents. But the more serious enemy is deeply concealed in hidden entrenchments…the smoothest control of political conduct is by control of opinion. As long as interests of pecuniary profit are powerful, and a public has not located and identified itself, those who have this interest will have an unresisted motive for tampering with the springs of political action (John Dewey 1927:169,182).

The popular media is one of Dewey's springs of political action. Similarly, Beck warns that developing communication is not enough, so long as private interests might collaborate with science and media to ends that build personal rather than social wellbeing (1992:157). A difficult but important question arises at this point: Where and when is it *not* ethically questionable to attempt to change the morals and values of a community? In the words of Don Boyer, "perhaps when we meet the coopted enemy and it is us!"

Consensus is another problematic goal for communication, so long as experts decide when consensus is achieved, so long as experts collaborate with private interests motivated by profit (John Gaventa 1993:26). My own hesitation to accept consensus as a goal of communication is not rooted in a belief that agreement is unimportant. On a general level, agreement must be reached. Consensus is important on the general level, but then it is the availability of diverse approaches to the general consensus that builds the potential for success beyond the consensus moment. Where consensus is attempted in specificity, the literature suggests that stakeholders are left out, or the situation under

debate is "reduced" in its specificity until it is general enough to achieve consensus. Thus one might seek to build diversity, plurality, and representation, at least as eagerly as one seeks consensus. Nancy Love attempts to account for this necessary diversity within communicative rationality, which she terms the formation of a "heterogeneous public" (1995:62).

Dewey makes clear that communication is a solution because, unlike a traditional Cartesian epistemology, he asserts that "knowledge is a function of association and communication" (1927:158).

> The only possible solution: the perfecting of the means and ways of communication of meanings so that genuinely shared interests in the consequences of interdependent activities may inform desire and effort and thereby direct action (1927:155).

Beck asserts that reflexive modernity leads to the co-production of knowledge, and thus the co-production of our assessment of risk and wellbeing. Community develops around these concerns for things larger than individual experience, for consequences faced by more than the producers of the risk. The communication processes that build representation of these risks and assessments of well-being in part determine the quality of the community.

> The highest and most difficult kind of inquiry and a subtle, delicate, vivid and re-sponsive art of communication must take possession of the physical machinery of transmission and circulation and breathe life into it" (John Dewey 1927:184).

Both theorists see that communities have organized around risks that they cannot perceive, or at least, are difficult to connect with a single origin. This spatial and temporal disorientation leaves a great deal unknown, a great deal to be discussed within a community. Thus knowledge pro-duction within a community organized around risks is important. Assessment of risk is an assess-ment of wellbeing.

How then might this idealism find application? Should application toward the ideal be limited to certain scales? While community-level efforts are often interested in amplifying the voice of the community, institutional efforts are often concerned with information availability, diverse conduits

for information from experts and non-experts, which is considered "a vital precondition for exercising one's role as a citizen in a democracy" (Teresa Harrison et al. 2001:202). While this institutional emphasis on information is timely considering the technologies we live with, whether or not this information, this "technical" information, is vital to a citizen's democratic abilities remains questionable. Indeed, technical knowledge sometimes seems to get in the way of citizens' efforts to exercise their rights and work within the system. One example of this situation involves a polluted creek, a concerned citizen, and a government agent that will not report the spill because the creek is not "on his map."(John Gaventa 1993).

Collaboration in the Literature

To dwell, as this report insinuated earlier, on the difficulty of accommodating individual contexts toward an assessment of quality of life, is to refuse to give up the problem of the relation of individuals to associations. This problem, "sometimes posed as the relation of *the* individual to society – is a meaningless one. We might as well make a problem out of the relation of the letters of an alphabet to the alphabet" (John Dewey 1927:69) This false dialectic, according to Dewey, assumes that the alternative to deliberative acts of individuals are acts of the public. But the true alternative to deliberative acts of individuals is impulsive and unreflective acts of individuals (John Dewey 1927:18). For Dewey, it is always individual acts that occur within a community. Furthermore, and to the point entirely, these individuals are neither static nor objectified individuals; it is relations, associations, and interdependencies experienced and cultivated by and describing individuals. Thus, in assessments of community wellbeing, relationships, associations, and interdependencies, which I have in this thesis termed *collaboration*, must be considered through record and analysis of actual occurrences. These records, these narratives, display the vivid experience of community and the process of building community by individuals. These collaborations are the product of community, and they are the stuff of community. They result from successful communicative processes, despite ideological differences. Measures of community resilience require analysis of these collaborative processes. Ethnography serves as a viable method for assessment of these collaborative processes within the community setting.

The sustainability movement, though relatively young as a modernist project, has experienced a great deal of cooption from private interests. Green becomes an end in itself, rather than signifying a relationship to the environment that looks to the environment for information as to how best to act with the environment. Consensus becomes an end in itself, rather than signifying the on-

going process of collective self-evaluation through social communication and reflexivity. Beck implies that *progress* as a normalized orientation to society lies beneath these cooption processes:

> …in order to be able to understand this legitimating power of the consensus on progress, it is necessary to recollect a by now almost forgotten connection, that of the *relationship of social and political culture to techno-economic development* (1992:200).

Forced to operate with such deep unspoken consensus toward progress, it seems even communities organized toward sustainability must build progress into their narrative (Robert Kemper and Julie Adkins 2005:77). In severe cases, communities organize around sustainability concerns but then reduce these concerns until they lie in accordance with the progress paradigm. Processes of sustainability indicator formation are not without this tendency.

This progress paradigm creates risks for society (Jurgen Habermas et al. 2004:36). I can imagine a community of rats that continues to eat poisoned food because of their orientation to food rather than that which food supports. Yet Dewey offers hope for human communities when he defines reflexivity as a distinctly human trait: "the notice of the effects of connected action forces men to reflect upon the connection itself" (1927:24). This human tendency to reflect contains the potential to break habit, to rework old paradigms, to react to the modernist consequences that define the sustainability movement with something more and different than those tactics for self-preservation cultivated in or prior to the industrial revolution. Also, this ability to reflect gives us a ground from which to move forward, when subjectivity might otherwise make the community cause seem hopeless (H. Putnam and J. Conant 1990:113). Rigid democracy gives way to a humanist project that means to imbibe communities with a relational understanding of human and nonhuman phenomena.

What then is the proposed value of studying the collaborative processes I witness in these relational community contexts? I hope to learn a little more about how we can live better together (Richard Carp 2001:74; Johan Galtung and Graeme MacQueen 2008:17). According to Beck, within the successful development of democracy "the official decision-making authority of political institu-

tions is necessarily *de*centralized," and power is transferred to social movements and citizen groups, "in which citizens are able to utilize all the media of public and legal control and consultation for the protection of their interests and rights" (1992:191,185). As decision-making becomes less centralized, the transfer of power to the public threatens the social interests that in many ways prompted the democratic project. So long as individuals lack a sense of collective association or the need for collective well being, deliberative democratic tendencies will provide a questionable degree of social well-being, and may in fact engender the very sort of privatized abuses of power that democracy meant to counter (Dorothy Holland et al. 2007).

Neither democracy nor democratic participatory processes within social science research and community planning are solutions to political abuse without somehow also instilling or uncovering a sense of communality within the empowered. Here is the connection between the relational concept of community discussed above and the participatory processes that the social sciences mean to promote in the name of inclusivity and democracy. I believe Dewey to be circling around a similar notion:

> …the distinction between facts which condition human activity and facts which are conditioned by human activity. In the degree which we ignore this difference, social science becomes pseudo-science" (1927:7).

Democracy and its democratic processes are at the whim of human activity, no matter how we may feel changed by democracy. We may very well be facing a situation in which the individual has not developed on par with the democratic methods available to empower individuals to collective well-being; yet another example of risk generated from technologies (in this case communicative democratic technologies) haphazardly understood.

According to Beck, "Bureaucracy research is being replaced by theories that emphasize consultation, interaction, negotiation, network…" (1992:199). My research indirectly questions whether these theories also attempt to describe a moral or an ethic suited to the goal that inspires the method. Or should the collaborative method forever be at the mercy of the free market? "Sciences transformed

into *self-service* shops for financially well endowed customers in need of arguments" (U. Beck 1992:173). Dewey goes so far as to say that collaboration between industry and the public, in which the opinion of the public was effectively shaped, led to the fallacies "that the new industrial regime would produce just and for the most part only the consequences consciously forecast and aimed at" and "that the wants and efforts characteristic of it were functions of "natural" human beings" (1927:106). Beck suggests that democratization is falsely "conceived in terms of the industrial age, evoking bureaucratization and centralization" (1992:229).

To question the use and value of collaboration changes the method of achievement: "Political facts are not outside human desire and judgment. Change men's estimate of the *value* of existing political agencies and forms, and the latter change more or less" (John Dewey 1927:6). Dewey sees not just the well-intentioned social science but also profit-oriented organizations "affected with public interest" and engaging in collaborative processes. He asserts that "the forms of associated action characteristic of the present economic order are so massive and extensive that they determine the most significant constituents of the public and the residence of power" (1927:107). If this is still the case, then I must consider within my analysis of collaborative community processes how economic and techno-scientific systems justify their actions and form collaborations and communities all their own, intent on receiving legitimate status from the public through some type of consensus process. Beck continues to refer to progress moving through these processes, "*revolution under the cloak of normality*…the devil of economy must sprinkle himself with the holy water of public morality and put on a halo of concern for society and nature" (1992:186).

Thus participatory approaches to research, if taken out of their historic grounded community context and local formation, may come to closely resemble the privatization of community interests that occurs under neo-liberal ideology (C. Wong 2006:31). Well-intentioned planners may view participatory processes as a way to satisfy both institutional and associational concerns, when in fact they are simply failing to perceive the difference between the privatization desired by institutions and the

true participation (as in the development of their own method) required of the community. For Dewey and Beck, a solution exists not in widespread application of participatory methods, but in the human ability to reflect and be critical:

> Enabling self-criticism in all its forms is not some sort of danger, but probably the *only way* that the mistakes that would sooner or later destroy our world can be detected in advance"(U. Beck 1992:234).

Participatory processes that include a reflexive component, such as the ethnographic assessments of collaborative processes I conducted in Louisiana in 2009, insure that the method continues to come from the source, and to move in the direction of sustainability and community resilience, rather than becoming an end in itself, a nearly formless abstraction applicable to any agenda. It accomplishes this through an emphasis and devotion to the stories of the local community. These collaborative processes occur across numerous scales. My analysis must acknowledge the potential of dynamic conceptualizations of collaboration across scales, such as *panarchy*. "The panarchy model transforms hierarchies from fixed static structures to dynamic adaptive entities (L. H. Gunderson and Lowell Pritchard 2002:15). A similar notion is *adhocracy*, in which "power over different decisions is decentralized in uneven ways and devolved to the relevant source of expertise to deal with the issue at hand" (J. Sayer and B. Campbell 2003:233). To think less in terms of top down or bottom up and more in terms of potential resilience is a potent idea, assuming an institution is capable at such a grand scale to be a *dynamic adaptive entity*.

This reflexive approach at times seems unrealistic when faced with the need for large-scale coordinated efforts, such as the initial response to a disaster. Another daunting aspect of reflexive theory is that its bright beam shines in all directions, so that even reflexive theory could be considered, through the addition of another "layer" of reflexivity, as a method still not reflexive enough. Yes, reflexivity can forever be reapplied, and perhaps forever to different results. In accordance with a general pragmatism and Occam's razor, it is the explanation derived from the application and its consequences, its potential for good, which should decide what is appropriate in a reflexive method.

Despite these theoretical difficulties, and the abuses of collaboration that occur, both Dewey and Beck feel that participation by the public is the best solution to undesirable social risks and consequences: "Public discussion of modernization risks *is* the route for the transformation of mistakes into opportunities for expansion under the conditions of reflexive scientization" (U. Beck 1992:161). The skeptical nature of science unravels its own authority; the inclusive nature of democracy unravels its center, and risks, along with wellbeing, are based "*not* on *intra*scientific but on *overall social definitions and relationships*" (U. Beck 1992:160). Yet complexity and difficulty increase proportionate to the number of people involved in the decision, the greater the collective choice (T. Princen 2005:27). Even ideals must account for scale.

With complexity looming over plurality, it makes sense to begin the process, at least theoretically, on much smaller scales. On the interpersonal scale, to acknowledge the inevitability of relationship is to begin to take responsibility for the quality and consequence of the relationship. The transcendence Shepherd seeks is a realization of relationship, "the simultaneous experience of self and other…people-in-relation, as in transcendence of individuality into something more, even as self-sense is maintained…knowing of the other, even as the other's particularity is overcome" (2001:32). Bruno Latour suggests that such a theory, based on transcendence, risks becoming an "impossible dream," but I believe Shepherd has hit on the very sort of shift in orientation required to pursue Latour's collective (B. Latour 2004:89,46).

In many ways collaboration is based on what community members can give to each other, their assets, their potential, their offerings. There is very little pooling of resources without adequate trust. A community devastated by natural or socio-economic disaster may have few resources besides a developed network of trust (Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:48). Needs-based assessments of these communities may overlook the trust resource. "It is usually the case that the depth and extant of associational life in any community is vastly underestimated. This is particularly true of lower income communities" (J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993:6). Two very important considerations can be ex-

tracted from Kretzmann and McKnight's work in this area. First, a failure to account for this community resource is a failure to develop an accurate picture of the local community context in terms of resilience or vulnerability. Second, this neglect makes it impossible to make adaptive use of these existing trust networks and the local associations that work to maintain them. "The associations involved in such a way, be they religious, cultural, athletic, or otherwise can in fact be stretched beyond their original purposes and intentions to become full contributors to the development process" (J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993:6). In a sense, this is exactly what the ethnographic method I exhibit in this report attempts to do. This is the method I propose for supplementing existing quantitative indices of resilience and wellbeing. Neither the members of the Episcopal Missions in New Orleans nor the Office of Emergency Preparedness officials located throughout the state of Louisiana are by their position obligated to meet with curious researchers of society intent on better understanding collaborative community processes. Engaging these community members in such a way takes advantage of existing associations by stretching their capacity to support my own reflexive community research agenda.

Community in the Literature

To focus this ethnographic method on communities organized around disaster, around great risk and consequence, is to ensure, based on the theoretical terms outlined thus far, that the communities observed will be political communities, and that the collaboration processes will involve a distribution of resources from multiple communities (John Pine 2009:2). Thus, we establish, at least theoretically, a way of defining communities of difference and collaborative processes within these communities of difference. To this theoretical method Dewey adds one complication; it must not be assumed that a political community is invested in wellbeing or socially useful consequences (1927:15). Furthermore, political communities forming around significant risks can potentially is the be conservative to a debilitating degree and without optimism (Claus Offe 1984:68).

Democratic processes do not simply build political communities. Political communities, so far as they embrace the concept of a socially produced individual, become a foundation for key democratic goals. Equality without community becomes a trend toward sameness, similar to the potential homogony I perceive in participatory processes that overemphasize consensus. Liberty without community becomes a severing of ties, a social deconstruction nearing anarchy (John Dewey 1927:151). Furthermore, taken out of a specific community context, these democratic ideals become hopeless abstractions, vulnerable to cooption by undemocratic interests.

Shepherd's work is unique in its idealism, which he calls pragmatic idealism: "…an underlying faith in some possibility, is often important to the realization of that possibility" (2001:26). Theoretically, such a claim establishes the importance of possibility, of hope, in the shared construction of knowledge. These subtle but deep components of knowledge production often go unnoticed in assessments of communities. For Shepherd, we simply must believe in the possibility of real communication if we have any hope of establishing great communities. Rather than argue in a sequence that

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says communication occurs and then there must be individuals that are socially oriented to use this communication properly, Shepherd abbreviates the process, declaring that communication, and thus community, cannot even occur until there are individuals who are socially oriented.

This social-orientation can be a component of community engagement methods that otherwise maintain something of a capitalist orientation to the process:

> If a community development process is to be asset-based and internally focused, then it will be in very important ways "relationship driven." Thus, one of the central challenges for asset-based community developers is to constantly build and rebuild the relationships between and among local residents, local associations and local institutions (J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993:9).

Kretzmann and McKnight's social orientation within a capitalist framework may well serve the present needs of planners wanting to build social "capital" in their local communities, yet it seems questionable how well a large institution can engage in local relationship building without association-level intermediaries, and perhaps even charismatic leaders. I am suggesting that institutions are often problematic in terms of scale. Based on the ethnographic data in this thesis, when institutions attempt to apply an impersonal model to local situations (even under the heading of participatory processes), it is problematic. The neo-liberal brand of globalization assumes such a degree of nonlocality within institutional dealings that it is worthwhile to assign a nonlocal character to those organizations that are large and complicated enough to maintain strong ties to the global system and that reduce local context to general and primarily quantitative data.

If the scale factor, by which I define institution, is ignored and institution is simply a collection of local associations, then institutional community may be most obvious and most easily accounted for. But it is difficult to surmise the degree to which these institutions are invested in the wellbeing of a community, or for that matter what exactly is a given institution's notion of wellbeing. One place to look is whether or not a given institution has established "mechanisms that allow communities to influence and even control some aspects of the institution's relationships with its local neighborhood" (J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993:8). Thus, institutions engaged in community as-

sessment must analyze their own degree of engagement as an indicator of their contribution to community wellbeing through collaborative strategies.

To summarize, the literature describes a process by which communities organize around risks and consequences, such as those prevalent in disaster scenarios. The resilience of these communities is partially located in successful communication, which leads to collaborative resilience strategies. The ethnography that follows supports this literature but also describes a shift in the forms of collaboration, away from organization around risk and toward organization around culture and celebratory rituals of culture.

Method

The following study, then, may be difficult to place on the ordinary academic map (Kai Erikson 1976:13).

My analysis is based on ethnographic research of Gulf Coast communities responding to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. My data are composed of two different associational focuses. First I recorded a series of open-ended interviews with local Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) officials from Calcasieu, Beauregard, and Vermillion parishes, Louisiana. These interviews were conducted by John Pine, with my assistance, and were meant to surmise the engagement potential of a proposed community resilience index for Louisiana that required the participation of local stakeholders. Second, I recorded a series of open-ended interviews with full-time personnel and former personnel of two different Episcopal community missions and one Methodist community mission in New Orleans. I began this research with an interest in a comparative study of different religious responses to disaster, with a focus on Samaritan's Purse, an evangelical disaster relief organization based in my hometown of Boone, North Carolina. I soon realized I needed to isolate and research specific components of community recovery and community resilience before I could attempt an in-depth analysis of Samaritan's Purse.

It is typical for ethnographic research to begin with a "specified set of questions and general set of enquiry that allows both a sharpening of the questions and a gradual development of a theoretical explanation as a part of the ongoing interplay between theorizing and collecting data" (C. A. Davies 1998:31). For the most part, I tried to limit my explanation and instead provide reflection that I felt would contribute to a generalized understanding of the ethnographic data. My presentation of the interview material, my primary data, is composed of extensive use of direct quotations, transcribed from digital recordings. I have edited and selected from the text to present the material I felt

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was most pertinent to my thesis. I cannot avoid the "constructed nature of the ethnographic meta-narrative" (C. A. Davies 1998:220). I do, however, feel this method retains something of the power of the stories being told.

Working with local government and local Episcopal mission efforts enabled me to better illustrate the on-the-ground situation, in which secular and religious associations were often engaged in collaborative, community-specific partnerships for recovery. I was able to move beyond the popular controversy ignited by former president George W. Bush's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. I was able to hear how the communities that exhibited resilience were those focused on recovery and the potential of different community associations to contribute to recovery. I was also able to document the situation four years after Hurricane Katrina, as many community associations faced a crisis of funding. Those turning toward collaboration and existing local resources reveal themselves to be the more resilient community associations.

Though not substantial to this thesis, my data also include participant observation in disaster recovery and rebuilding, occurring between February 2009 and December 2009. I participated as a brush clearer, running skid steers and chainsaws in the Samaritan's Purse disaster recovery effort in Paducah, Kentucky, and also as a roof framer in the lower Ninth Ward for Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative. As a Samaritan's Purse volunteer, I was urged to apply for a full-time paid position on the recovery crew. As a volunteer at Jericho Road, I was invited into the home of a respected Episcopal academic and minister to Tulane's medical students, where I spent much of the next week discussing disaster, environmental awareness, and the role of faith and religion in disaster processes. I spent the day working and talking with practitioners and the night writing field notes in a journal. This reflexive approach helped me to continuously refine the question I really sought to answer while contemplating my disaster recovery experiences (C. A. Davies 1998). This approach led to my deeper curiosity and hypothesis concerning the existence of collaboration within communities as a process based in diversity.

The Episcopal missions and local OEPs are viable associations in which to examine community organizers' personal orientation to and methods for collaboration toward recovery and resilience. The Episcopal Missions are a religious organization running in many ways on a secular model. The OEPs are a form of local government that often trusts local religious groups to deliver services and distribute resources. By shifting my focus away from the intensely evangelical missions, away from the controversy of former president George W Bush's faith-based initiatives, and away from the ambiguity of institutional-scale initiatives, I was able to document on-the-ground instances of collaboration between secular and religious associations engaged in recovery. This seemed a healthy and pragmatic place to begin my research.

This is an ethnographic study of collaboration within communities. My method can be called reflexive because I do consider the possible benefits and harms of my study, and I do attempt to apply my findings from this regional research to my hometown. I use the data provided by the interviews I recorded and my personal field notes to contemplate and contribute to the existing methods for assessing community resilience and sustainability, and also to contemplate and contribute to the theories that are informing these methods. While I mean to share the stories of real practitioners of community building and community planning, my method allows me to also consider the larger social consequences of their stories, and the still larger shared social frameworks that in part dictate these very same consequences. This method is aligned with Livesay, Boyer, and Harding's (1984) work on the importance of beginning with perceptions and then moving to structures when conducting social impact assessments.

The inclusion of qualitative data provides a richer local context for analysis of community well-being. The data are offered as supplements to existing quantitative studies, such as the New Orleans Index, which has recently stated an interest in long-term sustainability assessment. To this end, the preceding literature review may resemble something of an apologetic for qualitative data in

sustainability research, but my primary objective in the review is to develop a broader context for the personal stories and reflections shared within the interviews.

The stories and opinions of four OEP officials were collected during two separate interviews, one in Vermillion Parish and one in Calcasieu Parish. The stories and opinions of key organizers from Jericho Road Housing Initiative, St. Anne's Medical Mission and Luke's House Clinic (a Methodist mission), were collected over the course of a week spent in New Orleans. In each case, I requested and received permission to record the interview, explained the open-ended method I was attempting, and asked the interviewee to simply share that which they felt was most important to convey about their experience in the recovery and community building process. This method might be thought of as an abbreviated attempt at case method research – abbreviated in light of the time and resource constraints of a masters degree-level research project – influenced by the grounded theory of Glaser (1967) and extended case method examples from Boyer (1990). As the interview conversations developed I would occasionally ask follow up questions. This style seemed to provide the interviewee with the "space" to speak with personality, emotion, and a level of reflection that offered a rich personal context and experience of the disaster and the role of community in the recovery process. A few informal interviews occurred while working disaster recovery with other volunteers. No notes were taken and nothing was recorded in these informal interviews, and other volunteers were made aware that I was both volunteering and researching the volunteer process for a thesis project. Approximately twelve informal interviews occurred. No identities have been recorded or revealed from these informal interviews. I took notes on these informal interviews in the evening, from memory.

Introduction to the Ethnography

Many of the practitioners of community building that I interviewed in Post-Katrina not only felt called to this work, but also were informed and changed by the work. They speak with the optimism of people who have seen the potential that lay dormant in disaster. They speak with the realist assumption that the organization that responded to the disaster cannot be the organization that continues to build community once the disaster has passed, without a serious reflexive transformation based on the shift in resources and the changing needs of the community. The big question is what momentum is left from the initial response, and how best can this momentum be transformed into a permanent community role. As reflexive practitioners, they seek an answer to this question not just in applications for funding and community surveys, but also in their own experience as community members since and in some cases even prior to Hurricane Katrina.

Furthermore, though the Brookings report released this year speaks to the transition from recovery to resilience (Brookings 2009), it should not be assumed that the qualitative data methodology exhibited in this report is limited to long-term mitigation applications. It is helpful and sustainability-oriented to think of immediate recovery as a resilience-building opportunity. Such an orientation is articulated by a qualitative assessment of collaboration in recovery processes, as they are described and collected ethnographically. I have organized excerpts from the ethnographic data by the same three primary concerns of *communication*, *collaboration*, and *community*.

Communication in the Ethnography

Communication is not always successful, despite an otherwise successful community-building project. Upon arrival in New Orleans, I spent the first afternoon speaking with the staff of Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative.

> Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative of New Orleans is a neighborhood-based nonprofit homebuilder that provides families with healthy and energy-efficient affordable housing opportunities. We partner with neighborhood residents, organizations and businesses to create and maintain a thriving community (Jericho_Road 2009).

I interviewed Brad Powers, executive director for Jericho Road, at the headquarters of Jericho Road, located in a traditional home just behind Christ Church Cathedral, just off of St. Charles and the trolley line that runs into Central City. Christ Church was the first non-Roman Catholic Church in the entire Louisiana Purchase territory and is currently the seat of the Bishop of Louisiana. It was early afternoon, in the middle of a workday. Brad is a lawyer and community organizer working "for housing, health care, education, and legal representation for those in need" (Jericho_Road 2009). He discussed the challenge of how to communicate the benefit of green building technologies, and the distinctions between communicating these benefits to diverse interests, from local and national funding sources to individual homeowners:

> We're trying to build affordable homes. We're trying to adopt universal design techniques, especially since its multigenerational living here. We use traditional neighborhood design, we don't experiment with new designs on the poor, and we try to make our houses greener, again there's a wash word, but right now our goal is to have an energy star house. The next two we're about to build are going to be energy star certified. Which of course means code in California about two years ago but for us it's a great leap forward. We've brought in foam. We've tried to do some leapfrog technologies.
>   I would say coming with our model and trying to reach our board and we have funding nationally and locally, so the green is a good hook. Nationally, we have to do it. But locally its, "Well, whatever, great, I don't know what you're talking about." And you know I personally want to do it and our board is open to it when I

tell them, especially when we sell energy efficiency. You know, I think my growing up in the environmental movement was a Mother Earth sort of thing, you know, and now, now you're talking the affordable home context, and it costs a lot of money to use energy, and so we can talk about carbon footprint and other things. Our goal is that we can produce much more efficient homes and appliances that will reduce and so consume a lesser percent of a family's income so a low-income family has more money for food, schooling, medication, and the kids. So there's a great moral element to the energy saving; not just buying a new plasma TV, but a quality of life issue.

If you're in Seattle or New York, you know, we had great architects come down, green is sexy, you want to show off that your green, so you wear it on your sleeve. But here we have to hide it so people can't see it. You can't be green. You don't want triangular windows that are oriented at some certain way. It's the whole, "I don't know what that is and I don't like it. I want that traditional house." So our green stuff is hidden. Just an interesting observation we finally made. We have to build green in a way that doesn't appear green, not that our clients don't appreciate the benefits they just haven't been talked to about it. You know I grew up with the Native American crying and the owl saying don't pollute. Those messages aren't used anymore, and should be used here because like I said, people still litter here. It's not uncommon to see stuff thrown out of cars here.

I think it's something that we need to improve upon. Make it Right[1] is here and they're trying to do it. You can't miss that they're building green, cause they're not building traditional homes. I would think as a short fall for us, we're not doing as good a job as we could to sell it. Its also that we were formed, and its interesting, through, not rural paternalism, but, its very practical, I mean, like, what things can you do to a house to make it green that can't be defeated. Like, a programmable thermostat is great, but I've been informed that very few people use them. So filters, well you can *not* change your filter if you're in the city, but if you have a really sweet efficient ac system, you can't defeat its efficiency. You can run it all the time, but I can't stop that. So looking at things that can't be defeated. Super insulation, no one's going to rip insulation out of the house, low-e windows; certain things that we can do that don't require participation. And you know that's just a storyboard and then you grow and you begin to talk about it (Personal Interview, August 2009).

While green building does contribute to resilience (Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:52), Brad acknowledged that their green building efforts in some regard lacked an educational or participatory dimension. In the terms of my thesis, they lacked the necessary communication to develop a more involved collaborative partnership between the homebuilders and the homeowners. Jericho Road was addressing this situation through neighborhood association initiatives, community dinners, and various focus groups. The organization acknowledged that resilience is built through engagement, and without engagement there is only the partial solution of top-down implementation of green technologies that can't be defeated.

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[1] See http://www.makeitrightnola.org/ for information on this organization

It is common within community engagement literature for participation to be explained as a process by which academics ensure the participation of community stakeholders; this ethnography suggests that academics should facilitate local management in its own abilities to ensure participation within its community and develop communication (Todd Kelshaw 2006). Basically, such a method trusts in local management and assists in its vital roles. When this multi-level collaboration is successful, an increase in resilience is expected. The following excerpt from an interview with an OEP official exemplifies the loss of resilience that can occur when existing community collaboration fails through broken communication:

> At the time Hurricane Katrina hit we had a really good shelter plan….after Hurricane Lilly they had really refined it and they knew what everybody was going to do. But again southeast Louisiana didn't follow the plan. They were supposed to tell people to go north and there was a whole system for them on that and the local officials just didn't do it (Interview by John Pine, August 2009).

Because the collaborative network broke down, the state came in and took over, and communication was further neglected until community resilience was lost:

> We ended up with twenty-five thousand people here…the state set up a special needs shelter in Cameron of all places. Two miles from the beach they had a special needs shelter set up; forty-six thousand bed-ridden people. So then Hurricane Rita comes along and the whole shelter thing becomes a major nightmare...So the state forms their own shelter management team and they turn it over to DSS. DSS goes out and writes this huge shelter plan…but guess what, they didn't do one word of consultation with the shelter task force…all the northeast Louisiana people. So we had thousands of shelter spaces available by parish agreement, well then the state comes back and says okay we're going to take all this over. So they go out and start searching for shelters. Well guess what, there are none. Because now the state's telling the parish we want you to open a shelter and the parish is saying screw you I'm not going to have all those people from who knows where showing up in my parish. So all of a sudden those eighty thousand or a hundred thousand spaces they had just vanished over night. And the state still has not figured out what happened to the shelters. Right now they had at the start of hurricane season they had like fifteen thousand spaces available, and they needed over a hundred thousand (Interview by John Pine, August 2009).

Better communication might have saved some of the community resilience that existed prior to the state neglecting pre-existing local relationships of trust and mutual understanding. Any organization meaning to facilitate healthy, resilient local management practices must honor existing trusts and lo-

cal methods for building trust (E. Wilson and D. Koester 2008). Among the many methods proposed to build healthy comanagement relationships, the most prominent and perhaps most effective include creative adaptation of existing methods for communication (J. Burger et al. 2009). Furthermore, while creative adaptation of communication technologies is one method for moving from recovery to resilience, uncovering existing community resources is another method, which this thesis terms collaboration.

Collaboration in the Ethnography

Holly Heine is director of operations and communications for Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative. Holly was the first person I interviewed in New Orleans. We sat on the front porch of the Jericho Road house. She celebrated the progress that had been made in the city toward recovery. She hoped to see still more progress. Yet, she also described a sense of loss; something of the closeness of the early recovery was gone. This feeling motivated a renewed dedication to her community and her cause, especially evident in regard to her take on volunteer coordination, and how volunteer work changes as time passes and the disaster becomes a thing of the past. In terms of this thesis, a collaborative endeavor such as volunteer coordination must be reflexively informed if its communication methods are to remain effective:

> It's definitely about learning how to serve the people that you're here to serve. But now there has to be a mixture, there has to be, especially after a period of time, when the disaster is getting further and further away. Early on it was very easy for us to get a volunteer group and tell them, (")You have to come self-sufficient. I mean I don't even have cots for you yet. I can give you a floor. I can tell you where the YMCA is to take a shower. I can arrange some work sights for you. You got to bring tools(")…But eventually I got a list of restaurants close to the housing space that I could give them, or maybe it's a Walgreens that is open by that space. So that with each housing space they could have a list of resources and not be constantly calling me. But the further away you get from the storm, the more that's expected and if you really are asking people to come down here and help you, you need to help them too, right? What's our opportunity and what's our responsibility to the people that are coming down here? We know our responsibility to the people that we're serving but to the people that are coming down here, we really need to be giving them more than just a (")here's you're hammer, and you figure out your own experience.(") We need to be helping them to process (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Holly made clear that developing the experience of the volunteer was a necessary component, not just so they could continue to attract volunteers to the project, but as a support measure for people going through intense and potentially life changing experiences. Holly had to develop numerous strategies for maintaining a healthy collaboration with her volunteers and also to build a collabora-

tive relationship between her volunteers and the local community being served. The local community resource she sees is the potential for New Orleans to be marketed as a viable location for community outreach training and mission experiences. Rather than rely on the outside resources of volunteers, she suggested a shift to emphasizing this community resource to attract outsiders, to have something to offer them. Theoretically, where this collaboration between volunteers and communities fails, a new process of recovery commences; where this collaboration is successful resilience is built:

> We were most concerned about the people that were our long term help, the people that we called our interns, who would be here for three months, six months, maybe a year. We tried to set up these group sessions, to offer them the spiritual care that we could, and even some counseling services if needed, and it just never worked. I really think that we didn't think of this soon enough. I think that there was a disconnect between what's happening here and what's happening out on the ground.
>
> (The neighborhood is) right here behind this block and it's lower income poor black working families pretty much. Part of our challenge is engaging the people in the community. They want to help and they want change but what you see is low income black families and then you have these middle to high income white people to do the work and leave, and, where's the connection, you know? So that's part of our work, we're not just sending volunteers in there to do stuff.
>
> Trying to start here, raising up the community to understand the power that they can have. They can be just as powerful and have a say about what happens as the community across the street in the garden district do, they just have to come together and do it. Then they can say what they want the volunteers to do in their community and make an effort to engage and form a relationship. I can tell you that there is a community that is crazy thriving between some of the volunteers around the country and some of the groups that got helped here. St. Luke's Episcopal Church here in New Orleans is predominantly black and from Honduras. They are Spanish-speaking and all but one of their parishioners was flooded, so they had a high need. They didn't have a priest at the time. One of the things we did was partner churches from around the country with churches in this diocese, and so with some of the churches that got partnered with them, they on their own forged this relationship that, theres no severing it. It's almost four years later and these groups are still coming here. They're staying here and working in those parishioners' homes, working on the church, having a hand in helping them find a priest or inviting the parishioners up north to go to their church and have a weekend of rest and they'll have a big reception for them. They have just really become their own community in this way that I never imagined possible, and they are completely different people, completely different (Personal Interview, August 2009).

It is difficult to say whether these people were organizing and building this expanded notion of community around a shared ideology (their faith), a shared place (this nation, or Earth), or if they are coming together around the present need and not around some more specific commonality, as com-

munity might conventionally be conceived (Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:54). Regardless of similarities, Holly described real differences between these groups, differences in culture and language. But these differences did little to inhibit a collaborative spirit that built community.

St. Anna's Episcopal Church houses another important mission effort that means to collaborate in moving beyond the recovery stage:

> St Anna's Medical Mission is a mobile unit that rotates through designated neighborhoods in and around New Orleans providing holistic healthcare through a volunteer doctor, nurse, social worker and non-medical volunteers, both from in the city and out-of-state. It was founded with the goal of being responsive to the evolving needs of New Orleanians and an important link to rebuilding access to quality healthcare (St._Anna's 2009).

Diana Meyers, a registered nurse, runs the medical mission under the title Community Wellness Director. I met with Diana at her office, located in the house next door to St. Anna's church. Diana discussed the inception of her mobile mission, the challenges and benefits of collaboration, and the importance of communication in community medical missions:

> Way out in St. Bernard, we were with another unit in a desolate parking lot. The other unit would give away things and that would attract people to come. You know people don't stop for mental care. They'll stop for other things they need, but they're not going to stop for the healthcare (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Diana said that delivering this kind of healthcare support is about more than blood pressure checks or depression screenings. She knows these efforts build community along lines of trust and dependability, which she aptly identifies as contributing to the success of collaborative partners as well, such that trust built by one community organization is trust achieved to some degree for its entire network of collaborators.

> Medical homes are a better way and it's not going to happen overnight and it's going to take a lot of work so we feel like we are going to be a big part of that. While we have an in to the communities we start earning the people's trust. If we show up every week or we tell them we're not going to be there next week but you show up the following week they start to realize they can trust us. We are going to be there for them. So that way if we tell them something about, going over to another clinic and having something tested, hopefully that trust will roll over as far as getting there and trusting the people that are there as well (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Community resilience could be defined through Diana's narrative as a network of trust established through the long-term commitment and collaboration of associations and individuals within a community. What makes an organization such as Diana's capable of providing one type of medical care *and* building trust? It is built into their very notion of healthcare. Trust is prerequisite to community health, and this method is supported in the theory (Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:52; P. Reason and H. Bradbury 2008). Granted, Diana is the first to admit that the care they offer is basic in many ways, but their network with other clinics and organizations enables them to provide more than just the medical services of their own organization (J Kretzmann and J McKnight 1993). Diana elaborated on the importance of collaboration and networks of organizers within community building processes:

> We started learning that it's better for us to be around other organizations that are doing something rather than just being stuck in the middle of a street somewhere. We'd go out two to five days a week, we started June fourth doing blood pressure and diabetes screenings, depression screenings with psychiatry from Tulane, and we started to get psychiatrists and counselors here so we could provide counseling as well as the depression screenings. We partnered with a lot of other organizations in the city who also do non-profit healthcare type of stuff, which I think is a big asset, this support from other organizations. You got to connect with the other networks. If we don't, we don't keep up with what's happening. We need to make sure that if we send somebody somewhere that that place is still doing that particular service, or if it's full, or what's happening. We need to keep communication open between us so we can help each other. If they're facing something at their location and they need our help with something, we can do that. If we have a patient we need to get in today, they can usually accommodate that in a clinic and help us out. That's one of the things I think the whole city learned after Katrina. It used to be, before Katrina, "This is my organization, or this is my family, get away get away." After Katrina it was, "How can I help you? How can you help me? Let's work together." It's started to wane a little bit. But every once in a while I see a little glimmer that it's starting to come back. In relation to the poor it starts to come back. And I think it's extremely important in any community to help the poor, to keep everybody healthy (Personal Interview, August 2009).

By focusing on a qualitative assessment of collaboration processes in community building, there are many benefits to community resilience research. One such benefit is a more accurate appraisal of funding among community associations. Conventional assessments of funds fail to document the competition for funds amongst organizations that otherwise mean to similarly help the community. Focusing on partnership and collaboration might help to alleviate some of the strain created by the

perceived lack of resources. Emphasis on communication can break down barriers between similarly well-intentioned organizations working in a common field, and lead to healthy co-management strategies for communities, and collaboration throughout helps to insure that the indicators and the environment are understood as holistically as possible, without an overemphasis on the economical, the environmental or the social (C. E. Haque et al. 2002). Collaboration potentially balances organizational responsibilities and makes more resources accessible to those in need.

While Luke's House is a Methodist mission, it was deemed a relevant organization and part of the same network of community organizers within New Orleans based on its frequent mention in interviews with Episcopal community organizers:

> Providing the only completely free clinic and clothing closet in the city, Luke's House was opened in November 2007 in response to the critical health care needs of the post-Katrina New Orleans community and its growing numbers of uninsured and underserved residents. A joint project of the Rayne Memorial and Mt. Zion United Methodist Churches… it is open at 4:30 pm each Tuesday to serve the homeless with food, shelter, clothing, psychological and spiritual counseling, hygiene items, coffee and refreshment. Doctors and nurses arrive at 6 pm and see patients until 8 pm (Lukes House 2009).

Jiselle Bock was the founding Executive Director for Luke's House. I interviewed her at a coffee shop near Tulane, where she is currently a medical student. Jiselle's community-building philosophy involved resilience through the utilization of existing resources and volunteers. In short, collaboration is the method for resilience, and that collaboration always involves local resources:

> You know where people are, I mean you could ask them where they were going to spend the night, and they had a few places in mind, but it may have been under a shelter, or under a bush, or in an abandoned house. That was the thing that always worried me the most, these people sleeping in abandoned houses with all that mold. At least with the (Salvation Army) voucher, for eight dollars it bought a hot dinner, hot shower, a clean bed with sheets, and a breakfast at the Salvation Army. It was such a joy to give those out to people because they knew what they were getting and they were so thankful to get that, but it was only Tuesday nights that we gave that out at the clinic. It wasn't that we could give them out every night. I think they had enough, where, if a doctor said, "Okay, this person here has a medical condition. They need a few more vouchers. They should be in a hospital rehabilitating somewhere. Sleeping on the street is going to make their health deteriorate." We could make that work. We would work with the Salvation Army and they worked with us so it was a good partnership (Personal Interview, August 2009).

The ethnographic data suggests that the degree to which such a collaborative spirit is on-going in New Orleans is one measurement of the degree to which the city's organizations have responded to the disaster with resilient mitigation efforts, with acknowledgement of interdependence, rather than a return to "each for one's own." Similarly, in terms of funding, so long as associations are dependent upon disaster/recovery resources from churches in other communities and/or the federal government, the disaster's end may mean the program's end. Conversely, programs built upon the existing re-sources of the community, which used disaster funds to get things started, not to fund operations, be-come resilient organizations for their communities. Diana spoke about this issue with funding, and the degree to which she felt comfortable working with volunteer resources when organizing sensitive health services:

> The other churches that started out helping us, many of them still help us, but not as much. Partly because it's four years later. But they still try to keep in touch with us. They still try to send us something if they can. We try to send newsletters out to let them know what's happening with the medical mission. They still come down. They'll stop by and see us, just to check in and touch base. It's kind of made a lot of friendships and connections between the churches in all parts of the country. Finan-cially however, it's a big problem. Because the churches can't support us the way they usually did, we have to get money from other sources. We've gotten grants and some donations, which kept us going. We've collaborated with a group called Reach Nola and that is a bunch of nonprofits and community groups, so they've been able to bid some very large grants that get split among all of the partners. So that's a good thing. You know it's three to four years after and we're starting to see what we're go-ing to do next and we're starting to come up with some good ideas about how to stay alive and how to stay afloat. Do we need to change something that we're doing do we need to stop something that we started that's too expensive? The counseling part of what we do is very expensive because these people work on contract, the majority of our budget is in our payroll. But if you can't pay the counselors who work with the clients then you won't give any of the clients what they need. So you have to look at the needs of the clients and you have to look at the counselors, to keep trying to find ways to get the money to keep this going. Our goal is to stay here, change with the needs of our communities. If we always keep our community's needs in mind we can keep changing and getting better (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Though funding is a vital component in the type of community oriented medical missions in which Diana works, though collaboration could build a bigger volunteer base, there are challenges to this approach, such as how best to insure a consistent level of care with a constantly shifting volunteer

base:

> Some suggest we need to work with more volunteers, and therefore cut our expenses, but one of the issues I see with that here in the city, cause I know at Volunteers of America, a fully volunteered clinic, they do lots of work and they do full clinic offerings five days a week with volunteers. But for one, you lose a little bit of the consistency because everybody does everything a little different, you have a harder time keeping people up to date with the way you do things, patient ordering, stuff like that. The city I think is devoid of a lot of their healthcare professionals. They're short staffed, and people that are working healthcare are overworked and they don't have time to volunteer. A lot of these clinics use retired physicians or retired semi-retired nurses. They're not so available. The ones that retired did so because of Katrina and left. So that volunteer base is not here. That is something that we're looking at however, for the future, building our volunteer base and decreasing our overhead (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Funding was a key issue in community resilience early in the recovery process as well. An early example of a need for local context despite the presence of funds developed around an individual assistance program following hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. This program involved individual homeowners applying for financial assistance in repairing or rebuilding their home directly with a federally sponsored program run by the state. Relief failed to take into account local conditions and character. An OEP official explains:

> Even though I got some money from it, I didn't particularly agree with the Road Home program. What they did is they took your traditional (pause), when you have a disaster like a hurricane they set aside a certain measured value as the hazard mitigation fund. All Louisiana did was take the hazard mitigation fund and instead of running it through traditional hazard mitigation programs they took the money and gave it to individuals, and I don't think it was money well spent. We're talking about billions of dollars that could have gone to hardening infrastructure and building new infrastructure and stuff like that so all that money that went to the road home was pissed away (Interview by John Pine, August 2009).

When the big government works around local community management, the result may not be less bureaucracy, just less informed bureaucracy. It was suggested by more than one OEP that the Road Home was really about short-term political gain. This type of politics resulted in decisions made and resources expended without a developed local context. A loss of trust between local management (the OEP) and the state ensued.

Community in the Ethnography

Just a month before Hurricane Katrina, Holly was in the process of closing down a small private

business, and looking to increase her devotion and service to others:

> I can say that for me personally, the natural disaster that we experienced really pro-
> vided an opportunity for people. I was in business and in the process of closing that
> down and actually looking for some opportunities in more of a helping field, and
> looking, applying for volunteer coordinator positions. I do think for me it was years
> leading up to a point of realizing more than just personal off time, I needed to be do-
> ing something full time that felt helpful to another human being. That's part of my
> faith for me. It's part of what I felt that God was calling me to do with my life (Per-
> sonal Interview, August 2009).

Though Holly's narrative has obvious religious connotations, her description of the calling also helps

clarify the collaborative space shared by both religious and secular calls to community service work.

> A lot of people think if you feel a strong calling to help others that it might mean to
> go get a collar. But I didn't do that. Really it (the storm) was an answer for me, at the
> time. I love that I have never done anything so fulfilling in all of my life. It's like the
> best and the worst actually. I felt like that storm provided so much opportunity; there
> was so much sadness. But maybe because of my faith and maybe because of being
> surrounded by people of faith, and also because so many people during the storm re-
> turned to their faith, cause it was all they had, what came was opportunity instead of
> total misery.
>   When I do have my moment in church when I'm feeling a connection, it's
> usually about this community that's together for the same reason. We are here be-
> cause we love and adore this being, entity, this thing somewhere that provides for us
> and loves us and makes this world a great place and makes us all want to do better
> things. That's what gets me is that sort of communal, this neighbor, we're just like the
> person next to us. I felt that after the storm, not in church. I felt that when I drove
> around in the city and there are still no traffic lights but everybody's stopping the
> way they should. You could walk around and not feel unsafe, it was that way. I think
> everybody was in the same boat, and I think people were so, even in the misery of so
> much loss, they were so thankful to have whatever they had, their lives, their brother,
> their wife, whatever it was (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Holly is describing a sense of community in which shared values generate shared experience.

For her, the same sense of community that occurs in the best moments of her worship experience oc-

curred similarly just after the storm. This heightened sense of community is commonly witnessed at

the grass-roots level of disaster recovery (Kai Erikson 1976:201; Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:59). It is this sense of community that organizers such as Holly desperately want to maintain, as communities leave the recovery stage and enter a period of rebuilding or redefinition. An important question that arises from Holly's sense of community that's together for the same reason is how much of a shared reason, a shared purpose or ideology, is required in the formation of community, and how much can community develop in the presence of deep ideological difference? If Holly felt community outside the ideological community of her church, in the larger context of New Orleans, what was the shared reason that built community then? If it was need, or desire to assist, then we must ask after the initial need if these smaller communities get on with their lives, or do they redefine their lives and their community in expansive ways that build resilience, reducing loss and the level of damage in future hazards and disasters?

> It was a real transition for me, things coming back together. I remember at St Paul's Episcopal Church here in town, their church and school were completely flooded, like ten feet of water and they had to be gutted, and it ended up we were using it like a warehouse space for our gutting crews and supplies. I remember when they finally rebuilt that space there was this new dedication and when I went and I'm sure I've never said this to anyone, except maybe my husband, because it doesn't sound very nice, but I remember when I went, just, being sad, that it was back to normal. Because things were changing, going back to normal and there was, like I said, there had been that unified feeling and that, "we're going to get through this together," feeling. Everybody did everything they could together, and now we live in a big world again. Not completely, I do feel things have changed, but I remember wishing I could be happier. Why wasn't I happy? (Holly Heine, Personal Interview, August 2009).

Holly describes the community she saw organize around the recovery needs of New Orleans, and she describes the loss of some of this community as the recovery process wanes. It is interesting to consider if Diana, engaged in a less conventional community setting, detects any more staying power, any greater degree of resilience as the recovery funds lessen. Diana was working as a nurse when Katrina hit. Her hospital was flooded, and rather than leave to find work in Texas or stay with family in another part of the country, as many did, she saw the opportunity to fill a need, provide a service, and build community "on wheels."

That's another thing, it's an RV. It's been converted, but the front of the RV still has a sofa. It's got a little kitchenette, it's got a little kitchen table, so a lot of people are happy to sit in it. They say, "I like this, I could live in this." People didn't feel threatened by the medical part. They felt like they could come and talk. And be relaxed and say whatever was on their mind, which especially in the beginning but even now, is a precious item on the health side of things. That's what they need. A place to go where they feel comfortable enough to tell their story, so they can picture it, and embrace it, and move on (Personal Interview, August 2009).

While Holly saw community developing across the country and across cultural divides, Diana established a mobile community organized around delivery of basic healthcare, and the understanding that offering community and social support is a basic healthcare need. Thus, community became less about the stability of the community "place," and more about the flexibility of the community "accessibility." Jiselle also supplied an interesting commentary for conceptualization of community. Her community praxis is rooted in a global context, and more destitute situations than New Orleans:

I came down to do my master's in public health in 2005, and I moved down to the city two days before Katrina hit. I had no idea what was coming. I was not tuned into the news or anything. I did some work with Louisiana Public Health Institute, driving all over Louisiana interviewing people about their access to care after the hurricane. After Katrina and Rita, they were going all the way out to Texas, and so that was a way to kind of get to know Louisiana and get to know the area better. Then I went with Hank (husband) for six months in Armenia to do economic development in the former Soviet Union. He did some consulting, basic small business consulting helping local small entrepreneurs, developing a better system. We were close to the Turkish border and it had been hit by an earthquake in the late 1980s. It had destroyed sixty percent of the buildings in the city and it was the second largest city and so we were there twenty years later and the city was still destroyed. Most young people were leaving. Brain drain; educated people were getting out of there. Armenia has two million people living in Armenia and seven million living in a diaspora. So it's such a poor country and it's so small and it's land locked and it's caught in the middle of an ethnic class war that's been going on forever. Hank did the consulting and I worked with an international Catholic humanitarian organization that had been there since the fall of the Soviet Union or just afterwards with relief services. And they'd set up a primary care clinic to serve the population and I got to build my skills running a small clinic, using what I've learned in public health, to really put it in practice, and also a lot with similar things with disaster recovery. Because here this is twenty years later, post earthquake, post fall of the Soviet Union, entire economic political collapse of the country, postwar; this is a country that has been completely stripped of resources. They have nothing, and how are they operating? How are they using international funds, donors and what are they doing to set up programs, how are they going to make them sustainable? (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Jiselle applied this global experience to her work in New Orleans. This local-global experiential exchange describes community builders engaged in local communities but informed by a developing sense of a global community (U. Beck 1992; Ulrich Beck 2000).

> I had worked in medical ministry. I got involved in medicine through ministry, and what's so funny is that I didn't even know that the group where I was volunteering was a medical ministry. I just knew that it was a great place where people loved to come and everybody had such great spirit.
>
> I worked with them and then I worked in Armenia with this free clinic and they were really struggling with this idea of long term funding and where they were going to get the money from. They would just ask people to make donations because people were so appreciative of the care and they wanted to give tribute, but I don't think they even raised fifty dollars in a year, these people were really, really poor. But they were true survivors, growing their own vegetables, canning their own food.
>
> So then after being in Armenia for six months we came back to New Orleans, six months post-Katrina and it was a huge difference, in just seeing the city coming along in its recovery, especially after being in a country that had devastation twenty years ago and seen such a slow, slow change, it was really exciting to come back to New Orleans and see progress after six months. I thought, "Okay, New Orleans is going to be fine, we're going to make it. There's plenty here and there's plenty being done" (Jiselle Bock, Personal Interview, August 2009).

Jiselle's optimism should not be undervalued. OEP officials in Vermillion, Calcasieu, and Beauregard parishes shared in common the belief that the primary determining factor in long term community recovery and resilience was not resources, but attitude. Resilience was described as a combination of self-reliance and willingness to contribute.

Dick Gremillion has run the Calcasieu Parish OEP since June 1996. Calcasieu is considered by many to have one of the finest track records of disaster recovery in the state of Louisiana. Dick claimed that the attitude within the community was the number one factor in his community's recovery process. He defined this attitude in opposition to the type of mindset that "waits around" for federal government aide. He spoke proudly of the local community contribution to clearing the roadways and public spaces of debris after each storm. He described the public responding with an interest not in FEMA but in chainsaws.

Vermillion Parish OEP, under the guidance of Becky Broussard since 2007, was for some fifty years prior, in fact since the office's inception, under the watch of a veritable icon of emergency

management known locally as General Bob. We met with Becky and General Bob. Like Dick from

Calcasieu, General Bob had great confidence in his own community's ability to prepare and recover

from disaster, but he also saw inappropriate levels of outside management hindering the local resil-

ience process:

> It's pure bureaucracy that's fooling up everything. You have people making deci-
> sions that don't know what the circumstances are on the ground…After Andrew we
> had cows and dead animals all over coming up. We took the backhoe. We took a
> shotgun. Shot them, got the gas out of them, got them in a hole, put some kerosene on
> them, lighted them, spread lime on them and shut the hole back up. You know what
> we had to do for Rita? Pick them up, send them north at a cost of about five thousand
> dollars a cow to haul them there to burn them…
> So I ask the guy, "Okay, so you're requiring us to do this. What are you go-
> ing to do with the alligators, muskrats, and the murex?"
> He said, "Well that's not part of the program."
> I says, "Well what are you accomplishing? You're leaving more disease than
> you're hauling off!"
> He couldn't answer. (Interviewed by John Pine, August 2009)

The disposal program described by General Bob hardly seems sustainable, despite the obvious envi-

ronmental impetus for its application. Without an informed local context, the top down environmental

strategy is viewed as a failure. Without the open communication that precedes real collaboration be-

tween institution-level government and association-level local government, resilience is not built but

dismantled. Communication strategies more aware of scale and intention could lead in the above

situation to a more reasonable response strategy, and may also reveal existing community resources

that could contribute to the recovery, effectively turning the situation from disaster to mere crises.

For Jiselle, finding and utilizing existing resources, being flexible, and trusting in the people

that donate their time are key to organizations such as Luke's House surviving beyond the Katrina

recovery funding.

> I talked to some of the nurses, and they said you know you can do just about anything
> with PVC pipe and I said that's an idea. I searched around online, came up with
> some plans, and then basically went and bought the PVC and built a prototype and
> went to the board and said all right, this is my idea, I'll sew the curtains myself, I'll
> build them, its going to cost this much. It would have been like five thousand dollars
> just for the screens, privacy screens. I'm cheap, there's a better way. I think we spent
> five hundred dollars on all the supplies for getting it set up. We ordered portable

massage tables for the patients because they can sustain a heavy weight better than a regular table and they can fold up and go in the closet. And then we could also use it, cause one of the ideas was to develop the clinic to be not a mobile clinic, but a move-able clinic, so if we wanted to open up at another church, if they wanted to sponsor a clinic night we could take all the supplies and open it up in another church.

It's really not that difficult to provide basic care, and you can do it in a church, and you can build your exam rooms from Home Depot. The curtains were sheets that had been donated from a hotel. You can get so much stuff donated if you ask, and it's not a ridiculous thing to ask for either. Like "Hey, do you have any clean white sheets that I could use to build an exam room?" People have that kind of stuff around. I think, same thing with medical stuff. You can get a lot of the basic medical equipment from stuff that doctors have or don't need or are willing to donate, and people really want, especially retired doctors, there are plenty of retired doctors that are still board certified and able to see patients. We bought malpractice insurance. Free clinics in general are extremely low risk for a lot of reasons. First, the biggest risk of a law suit for the physician is because a patient didn't feel like you cared or spent enough time with them, so free clinics in general don't have that sort of context. One, patients feel valued. Two, they're not rushing, there's less risk for people to make mistakes, and three they're not really doing anything risky. I think the riskiest thing that can happen is if you miss something serious. I think mistakes can happen but there's such a low chance in that setting, where physicians are able to take their time and the relationship is good with the patient. There are plenty of doctors that make mistakes and patients don't sue them. There's been plenty of research done and the number one determining factor is patient physician relationship (Personal Interview, August 2009).

In her approach to volunteers, and in her informed stance on risk and patient care and effective ways to administer basic care, Jiselle was eager to uncover preexisting resources that were misused or underappreciated in some way. And she saw a humanistic benefit, an increase in the holistic quality of the care provided, once her organization tapped into these community resources. Collaboration is thus part of a process for establishing dialogue and the capacity for community participation (M. Lloyd-Smith 2009).

Consider again Brad's developing strategy for communication and collaboration in his community. When his organization attempted a more collaborative approach within their community the lack of communication around the issues was felt more deeply. It is within acknowledgement of these communicative deficiencies that Brad's organization renewed its orientation to community and began to engage directly in participatory processes so they might consider their work a greater success:

There's a brown field here, four blocks from here. It sits in the middle of our very low wealth neighborhood. And we've been dedicated to clean that up. We spent

about seventy grand on the science on it; previously it was all wrong, just classic corruption. It took a year for the EPA to even talk to us. We got a grant, but then the city has never transferred a brown field in its history to a third party. So we're trying to be the first to do that. That's just the thing I sold my board on. This is just the middle of where we are and it's toxic. So we can't ignore it and that's what's been happening. It's tough that New Orleans is dictated a lot by mythology, so people at the brown field in city and state and federal want us to do it, but someone will call the city and they'll pass them on to us…that's a problem, cause we were looking at doing housing and now we're looking more to do just a park. And they get angry, "Oh your just trying to put poor people in homes on toxic soil." And, well, you should be angry, but you shouldn't be angry at me. You should be angry that there's still toxic soil in your neighborhood. That's the point (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Brad's organization is engaged in meaningful and worthwhile community building. The brown field case is an example of something that needed to happen, around which a community still needed to be organized. How is this done? While there are clear method studies (M. A. Hinsdale et al. 1995:76), perhaps lessons from other organizers in Brad's community can best describe the community building process that must occur there and then. For instance, Diana's medical mission is not simply providing a clinic:

So when the other unit left, we decided to move, and so we started to tell people, and you can imagine, we didn't expect people to come every week, necessarily, but they did. They did because we were there, they needed somebody to talk to and we would listen. For some of them it was the only social contact they probably had all week, especially in the early days, and they're out there with nothing. It was their lifeline. So we moved (when the partner that gave away things moved), after telling people we were moving, and after a few weeks, we started to see the same people, they'd figured out where we'd moved. I think people appreciate what we're trying to do (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Diana described a growing community with a level of resilience. When Diana's medical mission moved on, that might have meant the end of the community she had built in the previous location. However, based on the nature of the experience she provided, the community responded and continued to grow. Additionally, St. Anna's has a community-building event every Wednesday:

Originally, the idea was to combine several outreach opportunities under one roof. A healing mass started the evening – for the soul; followed by a supper – for the body; while professional first rate local musicians played – for the spirit; finally, medical services are delivered at the same time including health screenings; HIV/AIDS screening; and stress relief ministries (St._Anna's 2009).

This type of program is not just social. On a deeper level, it participates in building local community identity, increasing diversity, and promoting collaboration and other productive communicative processes between contexts (Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:70). Diana described it:

> You have some that come for health care, some that are music lovers. Some people from the neighborhood come every week. Some come strictly for acupuncture, some come strictly for massage or Reiki, some come for music and dinner (Personal Interview, August 2009)

This physical space, and the events occurring there, arguably build the type of resilience needed for Brad's organization to overcome the community opinion issues surrounding the brown field. Jericho Road's community dinners and neighborhood circles are clear efforts in this direction. The transition from collaborative endeavors based on hazards to collaborative endeavors based on culture signifies the transition from recovery to resilience. A main difference Jericho Road's efforts and the Wednesday night program at St. Anna's is the degree of collaboration involved in the event. "Music to Medicine," the St. Anna's program, builds community on numerous scales. Thus the community impacted is growing and the potential for collaboration increases, and thus the community grows, and so on:

> Interestingly this became a main stopping waypoint for visiting mission groups and so we were able to thank them and to tell our story in a very unique context. Today this mission, largely unchanged, is now "on the road." The Music to Medicine Ministry now visits All Souls Church in the Lower Ninth Ward on the Second Wednesday of each month; it also visits Grace Episcopal Church in Mid-City on the fourth Wednesday of each month. We are working to find yet another partner help share the joy, resources, and music. Since starting well over three hundred checks have been issued to local musicians; over three thousand people have been medically treated; two thousand plates of food are served each year (St._Anna's 2009).

The existence of collaboration in a city as motley as New Orleans is an indicator of community resilience. Programs such as Music to Medicine bring together people from all over the country and people of all walks of life. Moreover, it is an especially vivid resilience indicator, considering the potential for this collaborative endeavor to promote still more collaboration. This community builds more community.

OEP directors emphasized that resilience resides in the collective abilities of the community, not just its leadership or management organizations, and that this ability, or "attitude," is neither easily promoted nor conventionally appraised. The specific local context, along with its spatial and temporal components, in which indicators monitor resilience, is best understood in terms of the collaborative efforts of diverse organizations on multiple scales.

The process of developing resilience indicators provides a means for engaging local OEP directors in communicating an appropriate local context for assessing the recovery processes. Including a means for articulating the local context for community recovery acknowledges that communities differ in many ways and these differences shape their unique recovery experience. It is through assistance, education, and mutual learning, for the formation of local context and adaptable communication and collaboration processes, that outside groups meaning to support local recovery and resilience can best serve a community (E. Wilson and D. Koester 2008). Religious associations cannot provide such a diverse nation with all its social needs (Robert Kemper and Julie Adkins 2005:75). Large and small-scale roles, both secular and religious, must be built into every plan, and collaboration must be encouraged through a focus on when and where different efforts are most appropriate. The OEP discussed sheltering and the benefits of healthy collaboration with religious groups:

> What we had found is faith-based is really good for short periods of time. If this had been something where everybody left and then three, four days later they go back home, everything would have been great. Now when you start looking at, well, we might be talking weeks and months, that presents another issue for them. One, there's a financial issue. Two, they're usually in a place at the church, a gym or a family center, or something like that that has other uses that they can't use now because these people are there. So really faith-based at their location is not a viable long-term sheltering option, from the observations that we have here. From an assistance standpoint, being able to supply personnel, some monies, some supplies, we have agencies like the Baptist ministers, Catholic charities things like that. I think they are good at helping to support government run shelters (Interview by John Pine, August 2009).

How local OEP directors can best navigate between immediate-needs "boots on the ground" organizations and multi-year "long haul" recovery organizations is a qualitative indicator of resilience. The local government's degree of successful collaboration with ideologically distinct organizations is a

measurement of resilience. Small-scale, faith-based organizations with low-level monetary resources but high-level volunteer resources are deemed especially suited for supporting short-term disaster response and immediate recovery. Accordingly these organizations typically have timelines and procedures that do not indicate interest or capabilities for long-term mitigation strategies. Large-scale government programs with multiple step application procedures and timelines that encompass many years are suited to long-term disaster recovery and mitigation efforts. The OEP described another situation where collaboration between local government and local religious associations facilitated the recovery process:

> One thing interesting that happened here with the non-profits, there was a lady that showed up here, I think she was with Second Heart Food Pantry. She arranged it for us instead of setting up these pods where people drive through and pick up cases of MREs (meal ready-to-eat). We didn't even set up a pod for Ike. Jane managed to, cause she pointed out to us, if you send this stuff over to the church, people are not going to show up to get supplies for camping, its just going to be people that really need it, and she was right. We probably handed out a fraction of the commodities that we normally would have…So, relying on the faith-based community…Right. We just gave them the resources to do it. She worked through the normal places that handed out. You know the food pantries already existing…I can tell you, we had pods for Rita, and people were lined up for miles and the socio-economic groups that were represented there would have surprised you. People driving up in Cadillac Escalades loading up the back of their truck with MREs. We didn't have that problem with Ike (Interview by John Pine, August 2009).

The OEP's successful collaboration with local faith-based food pantries in their distribution of disaster-relief rations benefited from local organization and also local knowledge of the public. It is an example of immediate need met by small-scale organization, in collaboration with resources (MREs) supplied by large-scale federal support services. This collaboration between organizations was made possible primarily by the local management of the OEP and their ability to communicate and utilize the assets of these diverse groups.

How then are the lines drawn between secular and religious efforts toward resilience? What lines should be drawn? These questions are situational and challenging. Jiselle, for instance, is an optimistic community organizer developing collaboration and community resilience at the secular and religious level. Despite her optimism she also is an experienced medical missions organizer and a

doctor in training, which gives her a well-rounded perspective on medical missions. She cannot avoid

the contradiction inherent in the real benefit of community programs that develop, so it seems, in the

wake of failed government programs, where she would like to see real success (R. J. Wineburg 2007).

She achieves something of an understanding here, presuming there will always be a component of

holistic care and prevention that a secular organization will have trouble providing, or for that matter,

a religious organization that runs on a secular model:

> I'm always torn, because I got the medical side of me, which says, you know, if we
> had a medical system that functioned well that took care of people the way they
> needed then we wouldn't need the medical mission, but at the same time, even if we
> had a well functioning medical care system it would be lacking so many of the things
> that our mission brought; that individual attention, and that spirit and having people
> there to listen to you and to minister to you if that's what you want, its available.
> Think about the hospital or even your regular doctor, if you think about go-
> ing to see your doctor, its fairly impersonal, and to some degree that's part of the
> field, it comes with the territory. I think of how they want us to train and how they
> want us to keep this distance but it was different at our clinic because I think the doc-
> tors felt they could take their time. That was one of the things. Even the doctors who
> were coming out from their residence and the doctors who were coming from this
> kind of cold medical system would come to the clinic and they would take such a big
> breath and relax and they could do medicine the way they wanted to do medicine,
> take the time If they needed to take forty five minutes with a patient, they can. There
> is no time pressure on them, they are able to give as complete a care as they need to
> with a patient. Rather than having to meet a quota, ten minutes per patient or what-
> ever. And that's just one part of the volunteers, cause then you have people who are
> offering you a snack, or seeing if you needed clothes (Personal Interview, August
> 2009).

Taken from another perspective, Brad is hopeful that religious support of sustainability, which he sees

as a primarily secular movement, will further its cause:

> I think my read on sustainable development, and maybe it's more from the general
> press is that certainly you had traditional theologies that pushed social justice for
> many years in the country, and then secondary groups like green peace and other
> groups that pushed secular environmental issues, and people in those groups may or
> may not have been part of faith communities, but the efforts were secular certainly.
> I'm forty-three and for the last thirty years we've (religious organizations in
> the US) had the issues of homosexuality and abortion, and that's about it. It's a tragic
> waste of energy and time. Not that those aren't complicated and interesting topics but
> no one is listening to each other, and if you wanted to reduce (pause) you know, what
> I think is a lot of recent popular press in the evangelical movement more recently has
> pushed passed that, deciding that those aren't the only things our faith says, and its
> much broader than insular political issues. I think that's a positive, I think ultimately
> they'll reach more people than green peace, or the resource defense council. I think

those groups are needed on the technical side and science etc. so hopefully that will continue to grow and there will be a merger, and not such a disrespect and dismissal from both sides. In terms of sustainable development, and I'm not sure what that term means, I think the sustainable ethic comes form the secular direction. I think with the millennium development goals we start to see it more articulated through a church, the reduction of poverty and these kinds of issues (Personal Interview, August 2009).

Might sustainability be a shared concern around which both secular and religious groups can organize and collaborate toward resilience? I believe this ethnography is proof that the possibility is there. For Brad and for myself, the hope is there as well.

Improved communication results in an improved understanding of the capabilities of each group involved in the recovery and resilience building process, and thus an improved capacity for choosing which organization can best help in which recovery processes. It is understandable that local leaders and organizers may be so eager for participatory processes that collaboration comes to be viewed as a more refined process than communication (J. Burger et al. 2009). The interviews with OEP directors suggest that collaboration should be viewed as a positive result of successful communication. The desired outcome is an appropriate implementation of recovery strategies that foster community resilience through the development of associations with functional economic and cultural community outreach strategies.

Discussion & Conclusion

In assessments of communities meaning to collaborate through communicative processes to achieve resilience or sustainability, such as the New Orleans Index, much can be derived from a close examination of the different community interests engaged in this coproduction of knowledge of risk. A great disparity between stated inclusivity and actual inclusion of local-level participation in the assessment process could simply be a case of reliance on data that is available and inexpensive. However, to submit one's stated primary goal of qualitative, long-term well-being to limitations based on a specific index's short timeframe and quantitative data is to do more than compromise. It is to allow the very paradigm that potentially breeds a lack of resilience, namely shortsighted profit-driven thinking, to guide the results of a study meaning to counter this paradigm. In this way,

> (r)eason comes into play only to find justification for the opinion which has been adopted, instead of to analyze human behavior with respect to its consequences and to frame politics accordingly (John Dewey 1927:21).

How similar is this response from our planners and leaders to the response of scientists who mean to counter the risks produced by their science with more haphazard science? Such questions are too large for this small study, but the literature poses at least one troublesome suggestion based on this method of community assessment: If a community can (but not must) be defined by organization around such consequences, and if a community truly means to organize toward resilience and sustainability, then an index within that community that is oriented toward gross national product and other growth models, despite sustainability claims, is not representative of that community's concerns, and thus must be considered a tool of some other community. The other frequently encountered possibility claims that implementation and support of a growth model economy can lead to sustainability.

In response to the growth model claim, Beck distinguishes between industrialization and modernization. This nineteenth century myth "has continued to dominate thought and action in science, politics, and everyday life to this day" (U. Beck 1992:153). Along the lines of such a myth, a community achieves the benefits of modernity – equal rights, democracy, etc. – through the industrialization process.[2] The logic of such questionable wisdom is to assume that sustainability should be equated with a sort of eco-capitalism, and can be achieved through a further increase in industry. I can imagine such a community following its goal of sustainability deeper and deeper as it sinks by its own industrial iron weight into the oceanic depths, ignoring its own need for breath, following down and down until there is no chance of returning to the surface. The weight to which I refer is not industry, but an orientation to industry that requires constant economic growth. If an industry were focused instead on zero waste, or the well-being of its laborers, or the opportunities this industry provided for personal growth, certainly the image conjured would be less dramatic, if not all together reversed. The implied economic shift is social, and means that individuals go from a selfish interest in the accumulation of personal wealth to a selfish but also selfless interest in cultivating healthy and useful relationships.

Despite the distinction between the individual and Individualism established by Dewey's dialectic, an underlying sense of identity lost, at all times threatens the value of a socially-oriented economy. One hears the term *socially defined* and begins to imagine a colony of ants or a hive of bees. Suddenly there is the risk of losing personality, diversity, and difference. Gregory Shepherd's theory begins to delve more deeply into the individualized experience of communication as it relates to community. The relevance of Shepherd's theoretical project is two-fold in terms of my thesis. First, in his description of the individualized experience there is less of a tendency to imagine the colony of ants because of the importance he places on personal belief. Second, he begins to describe communication as a specific type of relational experience. Communication becomes the achievement of a deep

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[2] For a related examination of Marx's dialectic of productive forces, see Camatte's *This World We Must Leave and Other Essays* (1995).

awareness of an interdependent state. I believe this second point, in future research, may enable a humanism that accounts also for the non-human in a relational way, similar to the relational experience it describes for human communicative encounters. I predict that the application of a more relational framework to humanism will highlight its more useful formulations (D. W. Ehrenfeld 1978).

One sees the relevance of these insights and theories in consideration of the New Orleans Index and the CRIP, in which participatory processes are elevated in the literature, but are subordinate to the normalized cause of progress in actual methods. In this way participatory processes themselves become a potential risk, with unknown consequences in their intended and unintended applications. Within the normalized cause of progress participation is perceived as a quantifiable representative democratic process involving the identification of "key stake holders," a process that can be evoked from above. The tradition of participatory processes, as I tried to briefly outline, lies in opposition to top-down management strategies. To make participation a top-down strategy is to achieve the co-option of a people's movement. Therefore one must be working, and participating in one's own community to avoid this; thinking local does not simply mean working on a small scale, but working within one's specific local scale. In a world that is globalized and often doubts the existence of local communities this means the first step is to identify and cultivate a personal relationship within one's own community.

Collaboration is evident in the ethnographic data I have presented. When the OEP works with local religious groups to distribute relief rations, this is collaboration. This collaboration is made possible in part by a developed local context, a knowledge of local support and trust that is continually communicated and evaluated in the community's response to needs, both immediate and long term. St. Anna's Wednesday night program of worship, music, and medicine is an integrated event that accomplishes that cultivation of relationships through culture, and its many community-building rituals. Brad's difficulty in organizing the local community for an appropriate mitigation of the brown field is an example of collaboration at work and in need of improvement, in

need of meaningful shared experiences, which might begin to reestablish a unique identity for that community, which can facilitate organizing around such needs as the brown field mitigation.

The deeper I delve into this project, into a search for collaborative processes at work, I see it is a shared experience, much like a collective story telling, that I really seek (Anthony Oliver-Smith 2005:56). I see that what I really mean to uncover through analysis of these democratic and scientific processes is a sense of ritual, for it is ritual, in the form of communion, in the form of storytelling as a shared communicative process that signifies the community shift from recovery to resilience. There is no question a great deal of information can be derived from measurement and instrumentation – from, as Beck describes, the tool of the trade whence came the hazards. Yet, this is not the whole picture. The belief in the value of people and their perception, a belief in the value of their stories, is the first and most important step to the appropriate use of ethnographic and qualitative data into our methods of assessing sustainability and quality of life. Furthermore, while I have little doubt that planning and policy will come to incorporate more qualitative and ethnographic data into its assessment practices, this incorporation should be careful to avoid the "monologic" ethnography of positivist social science, in which community members are presented as "finished entities" (Gregory Reck 1993). The value of the qualitative data is utterly lost if the method of collection and dissemination is the simple positivist and reductive method of the quantitative data it means to supplement.

It is a first step only, wherein scientific assessments come to reflect the culture of the community being assessed, if by no other trait than mutual acknowledgement of the importance of story. It is, presently, a step recognized within the literature, but without the requisite application in the method. It is inconvenient and uncomfortable to shift one's ontological and epistemological foundation. The belief in the potential, in the possibility, of a positive consequence, a sustainable world, is the goal of the pragmatic idealism described by Shepherd, which begins, like this thesis, with communication. Orienting community work around communication suggests the importance of process thinking. It is not always the indicators themselves, but the process of developing resilience measures

and the emphasis on communication that most immediately affects the resilience of the community (P. McAlpine and A. Birnie 2005:245).

What lessons might I take from this research? For one, we cannot predict the results of collaborative processes. These processes compound both positive and negative consequences. There is the potential for an individual's orientation to community to be informed by participation in community wellbeing interests. This participation is deemed collaboration, and, when successful, it builds resilience. Community building gives community room *to grow*. Not only does the physical community come together and become strengthened, but the conceptual bounds of the community are expanded, to include non-locals, and non-local forms of community, such as in the collaboration of Anglo-American northerners and Honduran-American southerners in Holly's description of ongoing cross-country relationships, and Diana's realization that community doesn't necessarily need an immovable space but does need a persistent commitment to listening to the community. Without well-developed communication processes, there is not participation but only interaction; interdependence is there but only passively experienced (John Dewey 1927:152).

According to my analysis of indicator research and community engagement methods, organizing around collectively experienced consequences can generate a desire in individuals to communicate toward a shared social reality. In times of disaster this desire is a seed of the recovery process. This seed of recovery can grow into resilience if a community can successfully transition from the recovery process into a renewed sense of culture, wherein community rituals strengthen and build relationships. Outside of disaster, celebrations of community build community, and these celebrations are indicators of resilience and well-being.

Summary

I have contributed to a framework for community indicator formation based on assets but also risk and vulnerability. I constructed this framework from an application of the literature toward a specific understanding of the concepts of *communication, collaboration,* and *community*. This application of the literature describes an interrelated process-orientation to these three concepts, in which communication as an interrelated action enables collaboration between otherwise distinct individuals, which creates community based on shared needs, mutual support, and also the culture that reinforces this communicative process. Building community is less a structured process and more a positive outcome of human interaction. Within this framework I provided and analyzed ethnographic data to support my hypothesis that collaboration does exist in communities of difference.

I have laid a foundation for future scholarship concerning community, communication, and sustainability. I have laid a foundation for an ecologically informed pragmatism. I have emphasized reflexivity as a methodological component that prompts deliberative democratic processes, with both positive and negative consequences. I have argued for ethnography as one method for collecting this qualitative data.

In the following postscript I begin the reflexive process of applying lessons from one of the worst disasters in our nation's history to community building in my hometown of Boone, North Carolina. My primary suggestion from this process is that local institutions meaning to promote healthy community should identify, respect, and support local sources of culture and especially ritual, both secular and religious. Institutional programs meaning to assess community resilience or well-being should take account of cultural strongholds and newly forming centers of culture as key indicators of wellbeing.

Postscript

Fieldwork for Future Research

Deuteronomy, with a striking insistence, keeps warning against the danger of forgetting: "Only take heed, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your hearts all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children" (Paul Ricœur 1995:289)

When I first conceived this section of the thesis, I assumed it would be appropriate here, in the context of Boone, to focus singularly on Samaritan's Purse and to begin to describe my adventures on the road as a disaster recovery volunteer. I have since decided that doing this would mean I was more concerned with the ethnographic project, with the potential for a stimulating narrative, than I was with the lessons I learned the preceding months in Louisiana. It took some half a year of processing and contemplating for me to be able to articulate the real lesson, the lesson worthy of application in my hometown.

The lesson does not require tales of Samaritan's Purse employees sneaking cigars, or the homeless and road-ragged angels following the organization from one disaster to another, or the volunteers that would gather in the parking lot after hours to sneak cigarettes and tell jokes on Catholics and other "non-Christians." I think this is the gossip most of us want to hear. This type of information fuels our urge to judge before we contemplate, which gives us a false sense of having accomplished something. If I were interested in telling a story with wacky characters and questionable ethics, I'd still be writing novels and short stories. My interest in ethnography is not its similarity to fiction. Rather, it is an interest in a direct process of engagement and communication, and as a vessel for stories worth telling that may otherwise go untold. Furthermore, my interest in ethnography is not in "stories *about* storytelling" but "storytelling itself" (Gregory Reck 1993:68). In the present study, the stories and insights of the community organizers and local government representatives is of primary

importance. For this reason, I did not overburden the text with my own experience, my own descriptions. Rather, I let my reflexivity guide my organization of the material without "getting in the way" of the material. I do not claim to have managed a groundbreaking approach to community and narrative. However, my openness and my interest in community and story and how these phenomena relate have shaped the primary lesson learned. It is a lesson in the effect of scale and institutionalization upon ritual. In this case, the lesson most worth learning appears to be the fact that there are fewer and fewer living vessels for stories, and there are fewer and fewer stories, and community crumbles atop memories turned to dreams turned to ashen tales in history books.

I have learned from my research of religious associations and community building that a community grows up from small beginnings. All the collaboration in difference that I witnessed occurred at the level of local government, community associations such as local churches, and committed individuals. A study of an institution such as Samaritan's Purse, while arguably useful and definitely interesting, will not likely support community but rather only document its absence. One may question how different this study on Episcopal missions is from the initially proposed expose on Samaritan's Purse. For one, in the context of the American South, the Episcopal Church "stands not only for itself but also for other non-evangelical religious, such as Quakers, Moravians, Roman Catholics, and Primitive Baptists who with others have resisted evangelical hegemony" (Corrie Norman and Don Armentrout 2005:306). Also, Samaritan's Purse is an organization that is committed primarily to international relief, while the specific Episcopal mission efforts I studied were local initiatives. This issue of scale, of the size of the effort and the effect it means to have, is of primary importance to the methodological conclusions I've drawn form my study, such as the importance of the associational scale in bridging individual and institutional efforts. Presently I am as wary of a state university and its economic democratic progress ideology as I am of a centralized national religious movement and its fundamental religious progress ideology. It is almost as if scale alone makes the large-scale organization blind to such small delicacies as local culture forming community.

When a community begins or becomes part of a social movement, cultural expressions begin to flower. People write songs and poems and create rituals. From the start, community members used many ceremonies, rituals, and symbols – religious and civil – in their organizing activities (M. A. Hinsdale et al. 1995:103).

A natural hazards specialist heads Appalachian State University's new Research Institute. I think the ethnography presented in this thesis reveals that many lessons from hazards research are applicable to community building here in the High Country. Taking social and economic theories and models that were formulated in non-Appalachian contexts and applying them to Appalachia is an ongoing project (Helen Matthews Lewis et al. 1978:22). To begin to grasp the potential of the institute to collaborate with the local communities of Appalachia requires a review of the region's relevant history.

The asset-based approach to community building is in one sense a response to both the Appalachian poverty model and the Appalachian colonialism model, best described in their similarities and differences by Helen Lewis (1978). Though it is a gross over-simplification to say this and no more, both models are oriented towards the devastation and fatalism of a severely abused region (Helen Matthews Lewis et al. 1978). An asset-based approach resists the temptation to generalize the experience of local communities through large-scale economic structural analysis. The asset-based approach is a development model that manages to include social and cultural factors not just as characteristics of a community that were lost in the economic abuse of industrial malpractice, but as powerful builders of community, including the economic community. This is not a semantic value of the asset-based model:

It gives us the confidence to begin the process of dislocation – identifying alternative economic activities, events, and experiences that have been "domesticated, symbolized, or integrated" within a dominant capitalocentric discourse of economy and giving them space to fully "exist" (Gibson-Graham 2006:57).

Lewis's approach to community and culture is aligned with a consequence and risk orientation to community organizing, in which "a set of normative patterns emerge…through a group's coping with its environment" (Helen Matthews Lewis et al. 1978:13). But Lewis's approach to community describes a process that goes from this organization around consequence and risk to organization around

intrinsic value, celebration, and cultural expression. Those communities exhibiting resilience in Appalachia will have measureable cultural resources.

Also of special relevance to the present study is Lewis's description of institutionalization and industrialization as "processes of the total economic political system" in which local communities in Appalachia "were structurally alienated" (Helen Matthews Lewis et al. 1978:15). This structural alienation did involve a shift in values and ways of living, in which many of the colonized come to more closely resemble the colonizers (Helen Matthews Lewis et al. 1978:16). Recognizing the damage of this sort of hegemonic colonial force contributes to a method for community building that must be especially sensitive of efforts to change local value structures, even sustainability-oriented efforts such as those described by Mileti (1999) or Ehrenfeld (2008).

The first concern of asset-based development must be not to change the community but to identify and nourish that which is most valuable in the community. Thus Lewis's Twelve-Step Recovery Program for communities begins with "understand your history – share memories" (2009:74) Even efforts from anthropologists and sociologists to record the stories of the local communities can become forces of colonialism (Helen Matthews Lewis et al. 1978:24). The difficulty of this situation and the sensitivity needed in community engagement cannot be overemphasized, thus the need for a highly reflexive praxis.

For instance, Lewis distinguishes between poverty-model methods that mean to change the values of the poor, and colonialism-model methods that mean to change the structure of society (1978:25). Yet, changing societal structures, if done successfully, entails changing the values of people. There is no way around this ethical reality. Engagement means change, even if you only mean to promote a deeper interest in a community's own stories, in their ability to organize without you; engagement still means change, and it is still the change occurring within individuals that takes root. The appropriate response is not to attempt a method that avoids this ethical difficulty, but to develop a method that is especially aware and sensitive to the consequences of this ethical difficulty.

Batteau indirectly describes engagement-as-change in his analysis of Appalachia's "mythical lineages and historical realities" (1990:1). This analysis is especially relevant because it focuses on narrative. Granted, narrative could simply mean the sort of sensationalizing of marginalized cultures that Lewis refers to in her critique of colonialist ethnography. It could mean narratives that describe a need and thus a justification for political reform (Allen Batteau 1990:16). Or it could mean a shared experience, a lived moment, a community-building ritual such as the shifts from recovery to resilience I have identified in St Anna's Wednesday night program, and the nascent community-event efforts of Jericho Road.

Batteau claims that *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* (1963) was the narrative that "focused attention of progressive thinkers and political leaders upon the plight of the Appalachians…it is today responsible for the resonant image of Appalachia held by the American public" (1990:4). Batteau appears to be describing both a political and social consequence for the narrative. The political effect had a great deal to do with promoting the social effect. This is different than the type of narrative I am interested in. Story as ritual is not political in its aim, though it certainly will have political consequences. For Batteau, nature is a concept, a projected notion of the narrative, rather than a component of the experience that precedes the narrative. Batteau suggests that this externalization of nature is something of an American (meaning US citizen) archetype. Might we also then assume that American orientation to story is political, external, secular, rather than ritualistic and sacred, considering the religious, social, and political history that led to the founding of our nation and the development of individualism and secularism? Batteau's analysis seems to confirm this speculation, as he connects the narrative building to the Puritan's internal struggle: "The wilderness without mirrors the wilderness within" (1990:5). In the context of institutional community engagements, I am hesitant to take such a huge theoretical leap, if for no other reason than I cannot make many clear distinctions between secular and religious activities at the scale of institutions described in this thesis.

Of course, just because a narrative is *not* political, does not make it ritual. Anna Peterson discusses narratives in terms of religion and both political religious narratives and narratives that might be ritual. Peterson admits "narratives not only describe our lives but also shape them" (2001:18). According to Peterson, religious ethics are especially effective in their narrative forms, and people develop their values and priorities from lived experience, "synthesized in narrative form" (2001:17). Peterson's concept of religious narrative is important in regard to my developing concept of community as well: "The stories of individuals' lives are always embedded within the stories of their communities (2001:18).

Appalachian State University's Sustainable Development Program has for some time recognized the value of story and the spoken word in community building practices. The studies in Cove Creek and Shawneehaw, which were immensely participatory, required researches to spend extensive time in the community, "porch settin'" and passing time, engaging in this ritual of the community. Undoubtedly this recognition of the local culture and its own existing method for organization contributed to the success of these studies and the ongoing events that were spawned, such as the Sugar Grove Music Festival, which continues to celebrate and invigorate community through culture (Lesley Bartlett and Jefferson Boyer 2009; Jefferson Boyer 2000).

To attempt to build community only at the level of large-scale institutions, be it Samaritan's Purse or the Research Institute for Environment Energy and Economics (RIEEE), is to neglect much of what remains unique to Appalachian culture. An effort must be made to distinguish between local manifestations of culture and centralized institutional culture. McCauley (1995) makes such a distinction between American Protestantism and Appalachian Mountain religion. Accordingly, a primary distinction is an orientation toward individualism on the part of American Protestants and an orientation toward communities of worship within Appalachian Mountain religions. A second distinction is an institutional organization on the part of American Protestantism and an experiential orientation on

the part of Appalachian Mountain religions. The American Protestant tradition identifies with a text while Appalachian mountain religion is an oral tradition (D. V. McCauley 1995).

Furthermore, within the history of the region, colonialist-type conversion efforts followed the periods of politic reform in the Appalachians: "With the ascendency of a 'works righteousness' mentality, a pernicious form of judgmentalism and even a virulent form of nativism manifested themselves among the many who were now feverishly working their way into God's kingdom by changing the world according to their perception of God's plan of salvation" (D. V. McCauley 1995:22). Along these lines, the presence of an organization such as Samaritan's Purse, and its affiliate evangelical fundamentalists, is not especially Appalachian, but rather part of a tradition of centralization and institutionalization that goes back at least to the beginning of the eighteenth century and the General Association of Virginia (D. V. McCauley 1995:203). Evangelicals are documented as coming into the Appalachian region, deeming the "mountain people to have too much religion and not enough intelligence," and working to assimilate mountain people into the national culture of accumulation and consumption (D. V. McCauley 1995:12). McCauley has detailed how even "into the 1980s, mountain religion was blamed for keeping mountain people in an arrested state of alienation and powerlessness" (1995:32).

Compare this historical situation described by McCauley to a statement from Franklin Graham's autobiography:

> From the refugee camps we traveled to the subcontinent of India, with its hundreds of millions of people locked in the darkness of Hinduism. It was an unbelievable eye-opener for me to see how pagan religion blinds and enslaves people…These people were bound by Satan's power (1995:138,139).

Compare Graham's ethnocentrism to the words of an Appalachian mountain religion elder in Pike County Kentucky:

> …in spite of the devil and all his hosts, the sheep is going to be carried home to glory when Jesus comes again. It's not just us Old Baptists either. It's not just one certain denomination, but they're scattered over every tongue and nation of this earth, and

many of them sheep don't have their names on no book down here on earth, but their name is written in heaven (L. Jones 1999:19).

Furthermore, Graham's story is in stark contrast to popular interpretation of the Good Samaritan parable, which involves difference and inclusivity, and even how someone from a different belief system can exhibit a greater moral good than someone from one's own value system, that "one can define only the subject of love, not the object" (Raymond Brown 1997:245). In my own reading, I can find no way to interpret the story as a parable about evangelizing or conversion. Yet, the Samaritan's Purse international relief organization makes just such an assertion:

> *Go and do likewise,* Christ commanded after explaining the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. So we do. Samaritan's Purse travels the world's highways looking for victims along the way. We are quick to bandage the wounds we see, but like the Samaritan, we don't stop there. In addition to meeting immediate, emergency needs, we help these victims recover and get back on their feet. No matter where we go or what we do, we offer more than help. We offer hope. To suffering people in a broken world, we share the news of the only One who can bring true peace—Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace (Samaritan's Purse 2010).

The question a more in-depth analysis would begin to ask is whether or not a move from recovery to resilience can be chartered along fundamentalist or proselytizing grounds, or whether a truly resilient evocation of culture requires the locally based culture of that community. While Graham above implies that there is a holistic quality to their support method, elsewhere he explains the method in more commodified terms:

> I personally believe that when we respond as Christians to wars, famines, natural disasters, and other tragedies with food, medicine, and clothing, we earn a hearing for Christ…We have earned their respect. I want to take advantage of such opportunities to do everything I can to clearly, convincingly present Jesus Christ and His claims.
>   Some people who hear this object: "That's not fair, Franklin. You shouldn't take advantage of people when they're hungry or cold – in their weakness!"
>   I answer that I would never take advantage of them for personal gain. But you better believe I will take advantage of each and every opportunity to reach them with the gospel message that can save them from the flames of hell.
>   If we provide suffering people with food and medicine and then walk away what have we really done for them?(1995:187)

Though a good-natured person may assume Graham means to build peace in Christ, "two factors seem to predispose for violence when built into the very nucleus of the system of religious faith…The *first dimension* is to be a *Chosen People*…The *second dimension* is *aggressive missionarism*" (Johan Galtung and Graeme MacQueen 2008:59).

> I needed two thousand tracts in Arabic to send to Saudi Arabia…instead of two hundred thousand, we had nearly a million…Soon we began contacting churches and telling them our plan. "Let's nuke them with tracts," I said (F. Graham 1995:237).

The question here is not whether or not relief organizations evangelize; they are clear in their efforts to do so. The question is how different is this religious missionarism from secular efforts to impart a belief system from their own institutional perspective? Indeed, many see in this simple distinction, between secular and religious, the greatest ideological battle of all time:

> The American Christian Right's international concerns are, first and foremost, focused on what they perceive to be the construction of a "new world order" (NWO). This new world order has several characteristics. According to the Protestant Right (PR), the NWO is animated by a small number of overlapping philosophies that include socialism, feminism, and environmentalism. The PR uses the term "globalism" as a catchphrase to encompass all of these elements. From the PR perspective, leading the drive to extend the NWO are several key organizations, including the United Nations, the European Union, and the World Trade Organization. According to the Protestant Right, this NWO has been established by globalists for a specific reason: to engage in battle with Christ's forces, now and as the Second Coming approaches, in an (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt to thwart the inevitable reign of Christ on earth. In this sense, the NWO is both an enemy to the PR and necessary…for this reason the PR is both fascinated and repelled by the NWO and its component parts (D. Buss and D. Herman 2003:20).

In other words, the similarity between religious and secular institutions is embodied in the dialectic that has developed. Some postmodern thinkers suggest that this opposition no longer has meaning, that "faith, no longer modeled on the Platonic image of the motionless God, absorbs these dualisms without recognizing in them any reasons for conflict" (R. Rorty et al. 2005:2). This sounds peaceable, until one considers the implications for culture, "which no longer stems from the assumption of a heredity but from an ever new self-description culminating in an existential self-creation that replaces the ideal of handed-down knowledge" (R. Rorty et al. 2005:3). This "existential self-creation"

seems far less liberating in consideration of right-wing media-based manipulations of the "self-description," so that the poor vote rich and a subsistence farmer proudly portrays the banner of the "Bush-Cheney Farm and Ranch Team" (Jefferson Boyer 2007; D Sutton 2005). Suddenly Rorty, Vattimo, and Zabala's postmodern thought describes not just the death of God, but also the death of traditional community. The institution speaks directly to the individual, and the local community is endangered. Those of us not willing to give up these crucial ties to the past are faced with returning to the tension between the large scale and the local, and even between the religious and the secular. It exists not only in their opposing adherence to a single all encompassing ideology, but also their promotion of that ideology through top-down strategies of colonization and manipulation. In this way structural violence truly is the violence of our era (Jefferson Boyer 2007; D Sutton 2005).

Perhaps no technology has been as severely criticized for this tendency toward top-down governance and misrepresentation as Geographic/Graphic Information Systems/Science (GIS). I chose Qualitative GIS (QGIS) as a foundation for my local study here in Boone because, despite this criticism, I believed it showed potential as an exemplary method of sustainability science. The history of its method and theory follows with the overall development of both the sustainability movement and environmental justice. The methodology of the science is especially participatory and eager to get the technology in the hands of non-experts. The theory attempts a transcendence of the realist debate over reductive and normative empirical research (Nadine Schuurman and Agnieszka Leszczynski 2006). It is a tool that has managed to achieve results in multiple settings and time frames, and shows the potential to exhibit dynamic spatial temporal interactions (measure ongoing change). Lastly, it has been used in disaster situations to facilitate the communication of user-generated content in open networks, which speaks to its potential in disaster but also in deliberative endeavors.

It was within the context of disaster recovery research that I first encountered creative applications of GIS for social science (Andrew Curtis et al. 2007). I soon learned of the wealth of qualitative applications of GIS in environmental justice, ethics, natural and social science, economic studies,

and participatory research endeavors, such that it became clear QGIS was a viable method for sustainability science.

The qualitative component in QGIS is not an abhorrence of numbers but an emphasis on lived experience (Mei-Po Kwan and Guoxiang Ding 2008). Its theory supports a pragmatic methodology based on appropriateness and potential consequence (M. Cope and S. Elwood 2009). Lastly, it is the community, the local scale, and the citizens that comprise this individual and associational level of organization, that are of special interest to QGIS practitioners (Meg Merrick 2001). Elwood is quick to point out, since community organizations *are* adopting this technology, it is especially important to consider how the use of the technology affects the larger goal of democracy and democratic decision processes (Sarah Elwood 2006). And so the QGIS community asserts that knowledge production is a political process, and QGIS is a knowledge producer, thus QGIS is always a political process (Kevin Ramsey 2008). This praxis fit well with my already established theoretical base in communication and reflexivity. While many see training, outreach, and technology grants as the method for a "people's GIS," I believe we may yet see the open-source movement provide more middle-level programs that are free or cheap and easy to use, and that also integrate seamlessly with the higher-end complicated "expert" software. Such advancement in the software, much like the function of a well-working association, could greatly facilitate collaborative efforts between institutions meaning to incorporate GIS and their mountain communities.

To summarize then, based on my research of recovery and resilience in Louisiana, I developed a pilot study in my hometown of Boone, North Carolina, to attempt an integrative methodology from what I had learned of asset-based community development, QGIS, and the formation of sustainability indicators. Based on the orientation to collaboration between religious and secular groups that I had established in New Orleans, I proposed to engage local church leadership here in Boone in a reflexive identification of local assets that might contribute to the university's community resilience

index efforts and also help forge collaborative partnerships between the university and the local church associations.

I began the design of my method with the RIEEE in mind. What would be a method the RIEEE could use? What method could gather a great deal of data quickly, and what method could be repeated each year, or even, ideally, after relationships were established, once a month? This survey had no direct ties with my interest in Samaritan's Purse, but rather, attempted to mobilize local church leaders as representatives of Boone's associational community for collaboration with the proposed assessment agenda of the RIEEE. The survey was composed of three requests: "Please give your own general definition of community," "Please give your own general definition of what makes a program or organization an asset to the community," and finally "List ten especially valuable assets to this community, briefly explaining the rationale for your selections."

Only seven completed surveys were recovered. A number of churches were never reached. This seemed to be the case especially of the independent non-denominational churches, where there was often no one there until the worship service. In general volunteers did not want to attend worship service in order to drop the survey off. The inaccessibility of the smaller neighborhood churches speaks to the difficulty of discerning the local context from the larger accessibility and visual presence of institutional churches that always have someone available and are engaged on their own in outreach. What is left of a local context, specific to the region, that is not representative of a non-locality-specific institutional context, will also be that which is most difficult to find. Since the non-denominational tradition in Appalachia is composed primarily of non-paid pastors who work other jobs during the week, they have very little time for this type of collaboration.

These lessons learned within the context of my pilot study speak also to the greater problems common to institutional assessments. The method I used was impersonal and the timeline was short. The data that was returned to me came from the more urban churches, members of large-scale national church organizations. I am not suggesting that this failure cannot be overcome. It will require

long-term positions devoted to relationship building if an institution such as the RIEEE means to do more than assess the most non-local of our local assets. Sensitive community practitioners should hold these long-term positions if the institute is going to avoid reinforcing an institutional, non-local framework for community and community building. Based in rationale and results, and often neglecting the fact that this in itself is a value system, these institutions are in danger of destroying what is left of local value systems based on ritual and history and the memory of the place. "A lingering memory connected with place may serve as an effective catalyst – perhaps even *more* effective than an institution with formal goals and structures – to bring about change" (M. A. Hinsdale et al. 1995:253).

This analysis unintentionally flirts with a form of what is currently called libertarianism, but I do not suggest that each individual should solve his or her own problems. This report suggests that community and associations of community require individuals in relation, not institutions of a scale that prohibits the recognition of relations at the individual level. The whole mess is far beyond my intellectual capacity, to be certain. But it seems the problem we're really facing is not so different from the early years of industrialization, when so few people realized the extant of the irreversible damage being done to our natural resources. Except now it is not industrialization but a consumerist globalism and neo-colonialist profiteers that are causing irreparable damage to our communities and their cultures. The fact that we are losing culture and not trees might explain the intensely humanist character of the response. It may play out that no level of recycling can prompt a return of the memories, skills, and methods that are being lost.

From the secular well-intentioned educational institution we get an emphasis on building trust and establishing relationships and empowering communities to learn better methods for themselves, and from the religious well-intentioned missions institution we get a similar method: "An effort is first made to get to know and understand people in that community, and sincerely to listen to and

learn from them…At the right time people could be invited to participate in the story of the gospel" (World Council of Churches 2005).

If we then assume that the majority of churches I was able to reach for my short and mismanaged study were churches that represent the institution of church, then my study of local church leadership here in Boone might critically be deemed a study of church leadership anywhere, or perhaps more aptly put, *nowhere*. Those local non-denominational churches that still exist seem especially hesitant to engage at all with an institution such as ASU, so similar in its organizational structure to the mainline Protestant and Southern Baptist evangelical organizations that have in the past threatened the very existence of a local church. Likewise, the independent church is interested in collaboration, but only at the associational level. This associational level includes both the work of its mutually supporting individual members and the fellowship built between independent churches by the careful scheduling of services (D. V. McCauley 1995:69). They by definition avoid institutional collaboration (D. V. McCauley 1995:63).

Based on my discussions with local officials and service organizations working in disaster recovery, I can identify the following factors as relevant to the efforts of organizations engaged in community building and planning: solidarity within the community understood and promoted across scales, and assessment as a holistic practice. These factors are not exhaustive nor posed as solutions in method, except within the specific context of the communities of the interviewees. Thus the process by which we can reflect on factors critical to recovery processes in these cases resembles in part the methodological work of this thesis. The stories of these officials and organizers, both successes and failures, build upon a participatory method of qualitative data collection, such that reflection upon the stories as well as general trends identified can inform assessment practices and engagement practices.

Community health has a great deal to do with the sense of solidarity cultivated by the community prior to the disaster. This solidarity is often built upon a network of trust and a history of

place. A community with no solidarity will have difficulty organizing for recovery. A community with great solidarity will have already organized to build resilience against many of the perceived risks. An organization such as an institute or state-level management office can take this first factor, the ability to relate, to build relationships, as both an assessable quality of the community and also as a primary component of their own engagement methodology.

Though I have no clear conclusions currently, what I am circling around as a future research agenda is this tracking down first of local-level community rituals, and second a tracking down of the historical period in which story became recorded and impersonal and religion became individual. At the level of institution, an acknowledgment of the real link between community cultures and community economies means such research agendas may receive institutional support. While individualism and text-based fundamentalism both seem related, at least historically, to the centralizing institutionalization of these cultural components made possible by increased communication technologies, there is no way to tell how institutional support may help community recover and then build resilience against the less helpful components of its own instructional structure, especially in regard to collaborative efforts. Any institution that acknowledges the importance of local socio-economic traditions such as local storytelling, local entertainment, and local food cultivation, can be seen at least as a potential collaborative partner for associations and individuals invested in community building.

John Cobb locates a similar historical cultural shift that is also an environmental and economic shift. He describes a historical shift from ritual to labor and a secularization of Christianity occurring with the development of technologies (John Cobb 2000:498). Cobb describes a tension developing with ecology concerning the way in which technology transforms natural things into artificial things (John Cobb 2000:499). I would rather avoid the problems of the term *natural*. I see the tension existing in the intention of the transformation, the reason for the change event. Through ritual, things are transformed as well, but how different is the intention in ritual from that guiding the transformations that occur in most technologies today? Cobb's focus on technology and labor results in his

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claim that Christians promote environmental awareness even while supporting more entrenched policies that degrade the earth (John Cobb 2000:501). This claim speaks to Beck and Dewey's insistence on the impact of underlying paradigms of *progress* and *profit* affecting even the best intentions. It speaks to Franklin Graham's interest in heavy equipment, planes, and even guns, "If there's a machine that makes noise, goes fast, and blows smoke, I want to have one" (F. Graham 1995:60). And it speaks to the aggressive evangelization that occurred in the Appalachian range and still occurs elsewhere, in which the accumulation of the church was equated with God's blessing (D. V. McCauley 1995). Cobb goes so far as to point out the World Bank's commitment to eliminate poverty, but only while pursuing economic growth. Cobb considers this progress paradigm to be a habitual anthropocentric pattern of thinking and feeling; "…instead of making the relief of poverty incidental to growth, growth should be incidental to the relief of poverty" (John Cobb 2000: 505).

Cobb's approach reminds me of a lecture given by Wendell Berry, which integrates the foundational role of community into popular conceptions of economy and development. Like Cobb, Berry means to remind us of the close connection between economy and culture. Covering outmigration, commercial media, and local knowledge lost, Berry discusses the foundational role of stories and memories for the growth of healthy communities. "It must build soil, and build that memory of itself – in lore and story and song – which will be its culture. And these two kinds of accumulation, of local soil and local culture, are intimately related" (Wendell Berry 1990:154). In such a way Berry begins an account of the economic importance of community. In this account, community health is built on co-dependence, which is built on trust, which is built on memory, which is built on stories shared through living.

> If they do not know each other's stories, how can they know whether or not to trust each other? People who do not trust each other do not help each other, and moreover they fear each other. And this is our predicament now. Because of a general distrust and suspicion, we not only lose one another's help and companionship, but we are all living in jeopardy of being sued (Wendell Berry 1990:158).

By way of socio-economic changes within the rural areas, the pattern of story sharing, and the story collecting over generations that went with it, disappears, along with the memory of the place. Thus, community becomes difficult to discern in a culture that has no local basis. In times passed, people in rural areas may have been poor in many things but not in company and stories, and this way of living built a deep knowledge of the place over time:

> (T)he pattern of reminding that can survive only in the living human community in its place. It is this pattern that is the life of the local culture, and that brings it usefully or pleasurably to mind. Apart from local landmarks and occasions, the local culture may be the subject of curiosity or study, but it is also dead (Wendell Berry 1990:157).

Furthermore there is a vital and practical component to these stories, which over time build a manner of living, a sort of manual of methods, for living within the means of the place.

How little difference is there between the secular model of the liberal state university in its worst expressions, and all the ideology it carries with it, and the religious model of a national centralized church in its worst expressions, and all the ideology it carries with it? "In ritual studies, the 'embodied attitudes' of rituals are more important than the distinctions of 'sacred' or 'profane,' which are sometimes used to distinguish religious from secular rituals" (M. A. Hinsdale et al. 1995:252). I am not attempting to distinguish religious from secular rituals. I am considering an increase in scale that prohibits or at least makes problematic the community-building potential of ritual. For one, scale alone suggests that these institutions will often begin with a structural rather than a perceptual orientation to a given community and thus explicitly or implicitly sidesteps the process of developing a local context (J Livesay et al. 1984). Confusion as to the value of these institutions can arise when individuals or specific associations within the institution have community-level roles. These local roles are primary not secondary to the institution.

Within the secular transition of American Christians, winning souls became a science. Rational decision and free will displaced grace, and a carefully managed and controlled environment was cultivated where individuals were encouraged to make "a decision for Christ" (D. V. McCauley

1995: 14). This same secular orientation to religion and abhorrence of experiential emotional religion can be seen in a recent statement from the World Council of Churches (WCC):

> Through processes of globalization, the values of **post-modernity**, rooted in Western cultures, are spreading rapidly across the globe. The very identities of people are in danger of being diluted or weakened in the melting pot of the powerfully tempting and attractive monoculture and its new set of values. The very notion of nationhood itself is severely challenged. Individualism is preferred to life in community. Traditional values which formerly were lived as public values are today being privatized. Even religion is treated as merely a private matter. Personal experience takes the place of reason, knowledge and understanding. Images are preferred to words and have a greater impact on people in terms of advertising, promoting or conveying "truths" and goods. The importance of the present moment is emphasized; the past and future do not really matter. People are persuaded to believe that they are masters of their own lives and are therefore free to pick and choose what suits themselves (2005).

Notice, this statement does not only warn against non-rational orientations to religion. It also warns against the dangers of the individual and the dangers of an overemphasis on the present moment. One can read into this an assertion of a specific sovereign claim. The rationale for one's behavior comes from the community of believers (the institution). The history motivating one's behavior comes from the community of believers (the institution). The goals of one's behavior come from the community of believers (the institution). Such statements as this show the all-encompassing and utterly non-specific methods of institutional dogma, in which the WCC desperately addresses and disconnects from all social ails at once through a renouncement of an oppositional secular doctrine rather than addressing these social ails through a deep meditation on the ways we live in the world.

Thus, I began to think that the real barrier to communication between secular and religious institutions is not what they have different from one another but that which they share in common. This is undoubtedly a bitter pill for the liberal professor of a state institution to swallow. Within the state university I have experienced an all-pervading bias against and judgment of fundamentalist groups. Within the fundamentalist groups I have experienced an all-pervading bias against secular state universities. The ideology of these institutions is so consuming that it does not matter the specifics. Whatever the concern, it can be assimilated into the institution's ideology: "Knowledge is valid

only if it is formalized, if it is emptied of content. Absolute knowledge is tautology realized; it is dead form deployed over all knowledge. Science is its systemization; epistemology is its redundancy" (J. Camatte 1996:45). All difference is constantly converted into sameness. I see this in pervasive economic frameworks for social and political issues: "The simple pursuit of economic efficiency may lead, in the long term, to better lives for the average person" (J. Sayer and B. Campbell 2003:17). And I see this in the way all economic or environmental issues are easily made subordinate within a larger fundamentalist doctrine:

> Sustainable growth is not necessarily attached to the physical needs that we have. They are legitimate and valuable. We need water, we need oxygen, we need to be able to have food, shelter and clothing. But being able to wake up in the morning, and have somebody take a tree off of my house and put a blue tarp on my roof or be able to provide them with a glass of water or an MRE. Good things, and necessary for life on this planet, no one can deny that. But those things do not promote sustainable growth. Sustainable growth can only be birthed out of, when I wake up in the morning, whether I wake up in a hammock or a very comfortable bed in an air conditioned house, or if I wake up having slept in a trench, or a cave, sustainable growth is when I wake up in the morning and I am actually driven and inspired by the spiritual part of my existence (Personal Interview, anonymous minister on the Gulf Coast, August 2008).

In such a way, text is used to substantiate a claim for ideological sovereignty. As long as attempts for community collaboration occur between institutions with sovereign (or fundamental) ideological interests, I believe their success will be doubtful. It is not enough to create a space, to build a round table. One must also support the difference and diversity that is most helpful and capable, and only the sameness that has organized the community at that moment, be it a need (risk) or occasion (ritual). This is profoundly different than supporting the difference that is easiest in the name of consensus and the sameness that wins people over to one's pre-existing ideology, separate from and superseding the immediate concern around which the community is formed. This subtle but forcible ideology might concern profits or prophets and there's a fair chance it will concern both.

I choose not to give up my hope, my faith, in the ability of education, public education, as a community stronghold in the classroom. I believe it can reach out myriad strands of curiosity and listening in such a way that a community's stories are told and heard, and memory returns, not because

a community has been studied by its academics, but because its academics have chosen to take part in community: its shared stories and tales, its shared faiths and visions.

It is easy to misunderstand a ritual. It is easy to look for the results, the value gained, even in a peaceable and curious way, but this does not bring one any closer to the ritual. Berry believes our country's rural areas contain much of what is left of a tradition of shared story, yet also he describes the process by which these areas come more and more to represent and resemble the institutional and commercial character of its colonizers, such as we saw described in Batteau and Lewis. I begin to imagine a situation where the community experienced in urban areas, such as New Orleans during times of disaster, is similar to the old community nourished on stories and shared experiences outside of disaster scenarios. We may be witnessing the last sparks of this great tradition of knowledge and community resilience as the tradition is consumed in the indiscriminate fires of progress and profit, or perhaps lessons might be taken on how to protect what is left of this community tradition in its non-disaster manifestation. Just as Helen Lewis saw the peaceful protest in porch settin', I see today a similar opportunity by way of intentional efforts to share personal stories, to make time for each other's stories, and to listen. Just as Berry finds his intimate link in the local soil and the local culture, I too have made a similar conclusion in my analysis of indicators of community resilience. The single most important assessment I can suggest, regardless of environmental, ethical, or economic orientation to the issue of community wellbeing, is an assessment of our community's access to locally grown food and to a diverse range of cultural programs through community centers and community events. These community assets are based in a deep ritualistic history. Traditions of storytelling and traditions of food cultivation have been a part of countless cultures and their rituals. It seems the institutionalization and rationalization of processes has endangered these traditions, as well as the local and general knowledge it contributes to how we live.

As I go forward with this research, I will have to somehow discern scale from ideology. It is easy to confuse the issues of scale and ideology. Often, large scales seem to assume a static ideology.

All of this appears to be breaking down in a pluralist globalism, foreseen by Dewey and described by Beck. A return to community where an individual can be heard without amplification may be a return to the roots of community organizing, to soap boxes and the type of communication that requires not only mobile phones or the Internet but also face-to-face relationships. Maybe after such a conceptual return this emphasis on relationship can be established for large scales and more complex concerns.

I wonder whether or not institutions should be concerned with individual values, such as Mileti (1999), Eherenfeld (2008), and many others within the sustainability movement suggest. Will this not further push the movement into the same institutionalized and rationalized paradigm of control and hegemony? Is there an alternative? It seems to me institutions can only offer resources to community centers, and allow those community centers to develop responses to their own needs. Still, I am pursuing a career in education. I have attended a number of state universities. My continued faith in education lay in teachers' abilities to create communities within classrooms, classrooms free of dogma and institutional rigidity, where stories can be told and shared. Some may doubt the potential both for ASU and for an institute such as the RIEEE to build truly sustainable community initiatives for Appalachia. They argue that institutions are the very things that dismantle community. Well then let the leaders of institutions become members of their communities. Let them begin with Helen Lewis' first step and learn the history and share the memories, not from books but from neighbors. Let these leaders respectfully wait their turn to take part as members in the rituals and celebrations that shape and support the community. Should an institute in Appalachia desire to accomplish the impossible, let it begin with the unbelievable.

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Biographical Sketch

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