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PROTEUS

A JOURNAL OF IDEAS

Building and Strengthening
Communities and Social Networks



SHIPPENSBURG
UNIVERSITY

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An ancient Greek sea divinity, herdsman of seals, Proteus could be elusive by changing his form at will appearing as a lion, a serpent, a boar, water, or a tall tree. However when those who caught him succeeded in holding him fast, Proteus assumed his proper shape of an old man and told the truth.

PROTEUS

A JOURNAL OF IDEAS

VOLUME 27 SPRING 2011 NUMBER 1

**BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING
COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS**

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Watch for our Call for Papers on H-Net and in the Chronicle of Higher Education among other places in the Summer of 2011.

Upcoming Theme:

The Human Body

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 EDITOR'S NOTES:
 BUILDING COMMUNITIES

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We become human only in the company of other beings. And this involves both opening our hearts and giving voice to our deepest convictions.... Community involvement, in other words, is the mirror that best reflects our individual choices, our strengths and weaknesses, our accomplishments and failures. It allows our lives to count for something.
(Paul Rogat Loeb)

Growing up, I had the luxury of living on a cul-de-sac, in a neighborhood where all the kids played together at the elementary school playground up the street. Archie and David lived to our right, and their dad taught us how to extract honey from a bee hive. Heather and Ryan lived down the street, and sometimes, when we were feeling less than generous, Heather and I told Archie that the playground was for “girls only.” Amy and her younger sister Rachel lived behind us, in a house we accessed through a path tightly covered by trees. When Halloween rolled around, we would gather in front of my house, and our parents would take pictures before herding us down the street and around our “circle.” This circle defined the boundaries of my childhood, created a safety net of familiar faces, and solidified the rituals of the neighborhood.

Of course, our circle wasn't perfect; our neighbors had their share of troubles. My parents knew who drank too much, who was out of work, and whose marriage was in trouble. And our friends knew when we were having trouble too. I remember helping with a neighbor's yardwork, and hearing my sisters fighting across the street. Embarrassed, I handed her the rake, and walked home. Hearing Mrs. Englert's “tsk, tsk” as I walked home, I vowed never to help her again. But that summer, when my mom had to take on extra shifts as a nurse at the hospital, I began spending more and more time on the Englert porch, asking questions about boys and listening to Mrs. Englert describe the skin-tight leather pants she had when she was dating. When we had to move away, I was sad to leave Heather, Amy, and Archie, but I didn't know what I was going to do without Mrs. Englert.

Now, as an adult, I rarely know or see my neighbors very much. It seems as if everyone's busy schedule keeps them occupied during the work week, and the (often)

overscheduled weekend. In the house I now live in with my own family, I wave as I bring in my garbage, or as I run down the driveway in the rain to get my mail, but so far, in this newly established neighborhood, I haven't established the traditions I remember from my childhood.

While the issue of neighborhood friendliness may seem like a trifling issue to some, waving to a neighbor—or listening to your neighbor's daughter describe her first kiss—can be translated into a measurable form of capital, termed “social capital.” In his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*, Robert Putnam defines social capital as “the connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called ‘civic virtue’” (2000, 19). Moreover, Putnam argues that modern society no longer values social capital, and that our schools, jobs, and neighborhoods have suffered. In his words, “trustworthiness lubricates social life” (21), and so when we don't know our neighbors, community leaders, teachers, or police officers, then we have lost more than a friendly wave “hello”—we have lost the strongest bond in our social fabric, a bond that, once unraveled, isolates us from each other and leaves us without the resources to solve the problems facing our communities. Putnam argues that “bridging” social capital accrues when people reach out to meet someone new and create connections where none existed before. This type of connection can often lead to new job opportunities, new friendships, and ultimately, more resources at the disposal of the community as a whole. Indeed, a feeling of generalized reciprocity—the idea that good deeds are rewarded, and that your neighbors would watch your house when you are out of town—can be the missing link in solving larger problems facing the global economy.

For example, a recent issue of *Customer Relationship Management* featured a review of John Jantsch's new book, *The Referral Engine*, in which Jantsch argues that a smart business should start using its own customers to build a strong advertising campaign, a sort of "bridging" activity for smart shoppers (Martinez 2010). At first glance, this seems like a pretty sneaky way to make your customers do your work for you, but it is motivated by the premise that consumers need to work together in order to achieve a common goal. Moreover, it is clear that Jantsch has hit on something big; this technique has caught fire with the new website, Groupon.com. At this innovative site, a daily sale is advertised, usually at half off the normal price. Yesterday's sale offered tickets for a comedy show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for \$5 instead of the regular \$10. The trick is this: the sale price only takes effect if enough people buy the tickets. Thus, it is in the customer's benefit to share this deal with friends and encourage them to buy. In the end, the business makes a profit, and the buyers enjoy a deep discount. Today, there is a sale on spa services, and at last count, eighty of my neighbors bought manicures at half off.

While it is encouraging to see social capital working to bond potential customers, social capital is more than simply a tool to create more business; it can also motivate communities to save their natural resources. For example, February's edition of *Nature* featured an article illustrating how social capital might be the missing link in creating stronger co-managed fisheries. In this article, the authors identify community-based "co-managed" fisheries as a useful strategy to create ownership within the community for the fishery, and the most effective means for establishing a responsible fishing ethic. They argue that stronger social capital leads to better management of local fisheries, and that strong community leadership might be the most important asset in the fight to preserve and manage the world's fisheries (Gutierrez, Hilborn and Defeo 2011, 388). Their case demonstrates that community cohesion can inspire a more ethical relationship with the world's natural resources—a pretty powerful argument for waving to your neighbor the next time you bring down the garbage.

When I teach Putnam's book in my service-learning-focused writing classes, students are quick to defend their own forms of social capital. Putnam argues that "kids today just aren't joiners," but my students say that while they may not join a bowling league, they do join Facebook. They argue that the connections they make on these social networking sites provide them with tangible social capital. The most recent Presidential election made that social capital visible when there was a groundswell of young people involved in the election; that spirit of connectivity caused critics like Putnam to rescind their

disgust with the younger generations. Jared Cohen argues that the connections made via technology form a kind of "dorm room diplomacy," and in effect create the most cutting-edge form of social capital (2008). The question is: can students—and all of us—translate that technological connection into change that will have a sustained impact on our day-to-day lives.

This issue of *Proteus* focuses on the importance of social capital and how we build these networks of reciprocity within neighborhoods, between classroom and community, and, finally, between citizens and their government. In my view, taking a service-learning approach to classroom instruction is the first step toward helping students understand their role as citizens. Two articles in this issue substantiate this view, as Sean Cornell and Veronica Woodlief's "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue: Lessons Learned During a Service-Learning Experience in the Gulf Coast" and Spoma Jovanovic, Dan DeGooyer, Jr., and David Reno's "News Talks: Critical Service-Learning for Social Change" demonstrate how service-learning and outreach programs engage students in the world around them and set the stage for social and political involvement. Chad Kimmel and Nicola Mann describe the next level of engagement. Kimmel's "Trading Time for Time Dollars: The Potential of Time Banking as a Community Building Tool" and Mann's "From Pathways to Portals: Getting to the Root of a Public Housing Community" document social capital at its most powerful. If we don't have the neighborhoods we cherished in our childhoods, then we must forge these new connections through technology and use the artistic tools at our command to create new bonds between neighbors. In the end, it is our ability to connect with our neighbors—on both large and small scales—that paves the way toward a modern community defined by its ethical nature and its generous vision of reciprocity.

Last month, my husband and I met a couple who was thinking about building a house in our neighborhood. John and Melanie came by unannounced, but we showed them around and told them how happy we were with our house and our builder. Soon after their visit, Melanie friended me on Facebook, and I started learning more about her long days as a nurse and mother. Despite the chemistry I felt when we met, I wasn't sure how close we would become. We may talk through Facebook, I thought, but maybe we'll never do more than wave when we see each other around the neighborhood. Then, just this week, we received an invitation in the mail to their daughter's birthday party. It was pink and purple, with white scalloped edges, and it felt like the beginning of a real friendship.

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EDITOR'S NOTES: EXPLORING SOCIAL NETWORKS

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A roommate from my sophomore year in college dropped out of school at the end of that year, and I hadn't heard from or of him since. A study partner I had a class with the semester before had followed the same quick path to anonymity in my life, and was relegated to the same category of "I wonder where they are now," which crops up in my thoughts far less than I should admit. Finally, a former student whom I also had not thought about in five years, along with these other two strangers, wrote on the same day with an invitation to once again be my "friend," though not in the sense of the word as I had come to define it; rather, they invited me to be a friend on Facebook, a social networking site that I had heard of but figured was little more than a fad for students of mine. Perhaps it was the serendipity of this confluence of invitations from these once-important people that convinced me that I should look into this mode of communicating on the web. I once figured Facebook was simply glorified e-mail, but after attending panels at the National Communication Association's annual conference discussing its growing relevance and after witnessing its ubiquitous appearance in all the latest editions of our introductory course textbooks, I knew it was probably time to explore the phenomenon a little more closely. As a latecomer (it was already 2008) I was soon linked. Several hundred "friends" and several thousand posts later, I am now linked IN. Three years ago I was a relatively private person who enjoyed technological advances that actually *reduced* communication, such as paying for my gasoline with a credit card at the pump. Since then I have become a virtual denizen of dozens of regularly interacting social communities. Of course, I am not alone, and I am also not the only one asking (much as the Talking Heads' song did decades before 99,066 people "liked" them on Facebook as of this printing), "how did I get here?"

While the term "social network" has long been utilized in fields such as sociology, biology, and human communication to describe interdependence among individuals and organizations, today it is almost inexorably connected to technological media, and specifically social media such as Facebook, Linked-In, and Twitter. Ask any college or university student to define social networking and the answers will revolve around the medium rather than the concept. Moreover, their understanding of the history of social networking will likely be confined to semi-fictional accounts of the founding of internet conglomerates, such

as featured in the film *The Social Network*. As telephone landlines and mailboxes on porches become relics of personal interaction, relegated to formal communication that will likely soon disappear altogether, the nature of the way we communicate has already changed dramatically. We maintain the communities within which we interact differently, and this change is already fodder for discussion on television talk shows, self-help books, and in classrooms. "Moderation," "caution," and "education" are the keywords that have become popularized when handling our quickly changing realities, but as we discover the impact of modern social networks on the broader communities we engage, we realize that there is much more to understanding the problems and promises that they bring than simply learning how to change privacy settings or profile pictures.

The advantages that social networking brings are many. Primarily, they allow people to reconnect old relationships that have been thought to be lost, mainly because it is so easy to do. Writing a letter or picking up a telephone take time and effort, after all (and in my generation, "long distance" meant "expensive"). It wasn't long ago that we used to look at our high school yearbooks and mull the notes scribbled such as "I'll always remember you" or "remember our chemistry class?" only to think, "I wish you had written your LAST name" and "I took chemistry?" But now, by searching through particular communities on a social network, such as your graduating class, you can renew the relationships that helped to develop the person that you are today. Modern social networks are also designed to help you to build new relationships, and, with the precipitous increase of available modes of communication now available, enrich the ties with friends and family with whom you have maintained connections all along.

Another advantage to our new communities is the ability to creatively express ourselves like never before. The myriad channels involving media once deemed complicated are now commonplace. Just twenty years ago we longed to express ourselves to friends and significant others through our own writing and other peoples' art (remember creating "mix tapes" on cassette replete with artwork cases to impress someone?), but today we have all become desktop publishers and masters of photography, video, and audio. We express our thoughts as they occur and share them simultaneously with the hundreds or even thousands of people that we consider to be our closest "friends." In this way, proponents argue that social

networks build community through common interests, and not only with people that we know, but also in an ever-expanding global community. While this is a boon to the communication model that analyzes our social reality from the standpoint of our ability to reduce the uncertainties in the world around us, the potential for improved educational opportunity (once thought of as unattainable by those traditionally affected by low income or a lack of local resources) is also becoming universal. Online social networks have become more common than pen and paper at the turn of the previous century.

Not to be lost in this shuffle of our social communities is the potential for information-sharing, and its potential impact on worldwide current events. The next time you change your status to read “I hate Mondays,” think for a moment about recent widespread bans on social networks in Iran and Egypt due to the perceived threats to leadership there. As developers work to circumvent government censorship of internet capabilities, we all become educated about their effects on global politics as well as the economy. These roots in the cultural divide become even more evident as we explore the concepts elucidated further in this issue of *Proteus*, particularly in Christopher Eby’s article, “Google in China: Finding Creative Solutions to Cultural Differences,” and we further develop an awareness for their potential in Saayan Chattopadhyay’s exploration, “Online Activism for a Heterogeneous Time: The Pink Chaddi Campaign and the Social Media in India.” The more specific we become in defining and expressing our communities via social networking, whether they involve social movements across the globe or a local school board race, the more benefits we experience. Through a growing awareness of decoded realities across various organizations—be they medical, corporate, religious, etc—we better understand the definition of community altogether. For further consideration, I encourage you to take a moment to explore the illustrations and explanations of Jay Liebowitz in this issue that explicate such network analysis through mapping significant interactions.

Clearly the potential for community-building via modern social-networking is limitless in our current scope. However, we also need to understand that changing the way we communicate often comes at the expense of traditional modes of message-sharing. Critics particularly note that the media used in contemporary networks encourage less face-to-face time, which in turn lessens interpersonal skills including perception, listening, and nonverbal communication. The language we use in common interaction has also evolved quickly into abbreviations and sloppily crafted notes rather than completed thoughts and well designed phraseology. Although we spend increasing amounts of time online, and indeed, our youth is acculturated to view this as a primary means of communication, it does little to prepare us for intimate

relationships, or even effective job interviews. As Xin-An Lu points out in his article, “Social Networking & Virtual Community,” featured in this issue, “Our face-to-face and computer-based identities and social networks are increasingly merging.” Skills such as appropriate self-disclosure, accurate identity-sharing, and the redefining of labels in our understanding of developing relationships (what is a “friend,” anyway?) are all areas where the evolution of our understanding of community will quickly and inevitably redefine the ways that we share meaning. This is notable particularly across social networks, generations, and cultures; as we become globally closer we risk interpersonal decay. In addition to the common concerns of predators, false identity, and cyber-bullying that flood news articles, we need to consider some of the more inherent dangers with the shifting of our communities, identities, and dialogues. In particular, how do they affect our relationships with those that we see every day? While it is humorous to picture, I recall sitting in the lobby of a convention hotel recently communicating via social network—*with the other people in the lobby*. While we may be shocked at some of the practices of today, such as our students texting or checking tweets in class, they really are little more than technological advances of the same notes we used to pass back and forth a decade or two ago. The question is whether we will still be able to write the notes or have the discussions after school with the same alacrity we had to learn in previous generations. After all, it is also much easier to text my spouse if she is upstairs rather than force myself to actually climb out of the recliner to go and ask her that simple question that is on my mind.

Ultimately, the utility of modern networks and their affects on communication are up to us. The great potential that becomes evident is highlighted in this issue of *Proteus*, and I hope that you enjoy their application to our theme of building communities and strengthening social networks as much as I have. It may not seem that important to renew the friendships that we forgot from the 1980’s, or to really make good on our promise to “remain friends” by doing so (at least in name) with your ex-boyfriend from so long ago, but these are ramifications of human curiosity and the changes brought to us that are available from networks that we shall navigate from now on. Larger issues, such as being able to separate our professional and personal networks will become more paramount as we move on. Likewise, remaining engaged and active in our local communities and causes while avoiding the “slackitivism” of standing up simply by joining an interest group online will be a challenge that faces us. As we become members of countless communities via modern social networking, our perceptions of what that means and what our roles will be need to remain central as we develop the communication skills and awareness to fit our changing world.

NEWS TALKS: CRITICAL SERVICE-LEARNING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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Campus-community research partnerships are growing as institutions of higher learning recommit themselves to fostering civic engagement among university students, most often through service-learning and community-based research programs. We rally behind the philosophical contention that colleges and universities have an obligation to model and promote democracy not only among tuition-paying and scholarship-funded students, but also with surrounding community constituencies. Moreover, we argue that community-based work ought to target collaborative relationships with under-resourced populations to develop immediate and long-term benefits for those in the community who are the least able to access the fruits of our democracy.

We detail the process and results of one campus-community partnership in Greensboro, North Carolina that began with the free delivery of the local daily newspaper to low-income residents as a way to encourage civic deliberation and action. Here, we first provide the context for our study by reviewing the often under-utilized critical approach to service-learning programs on college campuses before detailing how newspapers and political action in America offer an impetus for social change. We then describe our specific research project’s philosophical grounding in dialogue and feminist ethics, which emphasize the importance of stories in establishing and maintaining communities. After this contextual discussion we describe our research program’s mixed methods and findings before concluding with lessons learned to bolster community engagement.

Spoma Jovanovic is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her research focuses on community projects that explore how ethics in communication influences the outcomes of initiatives for social change.

Dan DeGooyer, Jr. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Emmanuel College, in Boston, MA. His research focuses on the aesthetics of communication in group, organizational, and community contexts.

David Reno is the Operations Director at Norfolk, Virginia’s *Virginian-Pilot*. David’s experience of working with children who had no educational resources at home is the impetus for this critical service-learning project.

Critical Service-Learning

Many, if not most, service-learning programs today are designed for students to “help” in the community by tutoring children, cleaning up streams, and serving food to the homeless, to name a few common experiences (Eyler and Giles 1999). These more familiar service-learning programs can be meaningful, to a point. Students may feel empowered by their experiences to assist others in need. They may also recognize their own biases and discomfort in such situations. As such, students in these typical service-learning courses explore the interpersonal and cultural dimensions of community life.

However, students’ consideration of political features is less likely in many of these courses (Artz 2001). For instance, when we ask in our classes why people are economically disadvantaged, a more political and critical stance encourages us to ask further questions such as what financial resources are being devoted to low-income schools, or what percentage of a city budget is allocated for affordable housing compared to economic incentives for corporate expansion. Critical service-learning programs that position students to seek deeper understandings of political influences, to question the systemic and structural causes of social injustice, and to dialogically engage community members are far less common in course design, despite how vital such approaches are (Colby et al. 2007; Cushman 1999).

Faculty and community partners need to intentionally design service-learning courses to foster a social justice

sensibility in students if such a sensibility is the desired outcome (Wang and Jackson 2005). Exposing students to marginalized communities is a necessary first step, but insufficient by itself to teach students the many ways in which society is structured so that certain populations are unable to fully access community resources. Critical service-learning courses thus introduce students to local political concerns that frequently require cooperative solution by citizens, government officials, and businesses (Jovanovic 2003). Academic study linked to community action works best, we argue, when each strengthens the other through rigorous study and critical reflection that calls attention not only to the personal role of responsibility in society, but also to the need for collective action and deliberation (Westheimer and Kahne 2004). In other words, as students gain an understanding of community needs from participation with and advocacy for underserved populations, they are primed to initiate social change efforts (Frey 2009; Porter et al. 2008). Such experiences allow students, faculty, and community agencies to work together to reclaim the democratic impulse for wide participation with benefits for all (Wang and Jackson 2005).

Newspapers and Political Action in America

As sites for citizen mobilization, newspapers provide summaries, updates, depth, and resources that enable people to effectively participate in political projects (Scheufel et al. 2000). Alexis de Tocqueville (1945/1981) recognized the enduring value of newspapers to uphold democratic systems by publishing news that brings people together in public association. As the United States of America has progressed from Tocqueville's nineteenth century observations to a technologically-based twenty-first century society, our media tastes have expanded. Blogs, vlogs, tweets, web sites, radio, television, cable, satellite, and other mass-mediated forms of communication have joined newspapers as information access points. Newspapers compete with these other sources, immersed in a battle for reader attention that increasingly abandons news for entertainment (Gunaratne 1998). For those who still value the news media, newspapers provide essential information for citizens to involve themselves in the public sphere (Mindich 2005). When coupled with vibrant discussions featuring personal narratives, a vital deliberative democracy emerges. The act of engaging the newspaper, through reading and discussing the news, what we term "news talks," offers a practical structure for ensuing subsequent social action (McLeod et al. 1999).

Much of this newspaper reading and public conversation, however, is structured to benefit those already privileged. For-profit newspaper companies generally operate and select stories to meet the functional needs of commercial interests and local elites (Cranberg 1997). A large part of the news centers on the political structures and economic needs that occupy middle class America's time. As a result, the life, reflections, and understandings of low-income populations are less likely to be the basis of news stories.

For low-income populations then, there are fewer obvious benefits of reading the newspaper than for middle-class readers. Middle-class newspaper readers generally profit in multiple ways including increased attachment to the community (McLeod et al. 1999), increased associational membership (Rothenbuhler et al. 1996), and a rise in volunteerism (Sampson 1991). All of these outcomes are indicators of civic participation and thus central to promoting social capital and a democratic citizenry. But low-income populations may not see their concerns and stories routinely reflected in newspaper articles; and even if articles are appealing to them, they may not be able to afford the paper, and worse yet, they may not have access because of advertising and marketing policies that discourage distribution to this "fringe" population (Cranberg 1997). Providing free daily newspapers to low-income residents counters conventional newspaper corporation practices, but, even more importantly, brings these residents into community life. Talking about news furthers the impulse to engage in everyday community activities, resulting in shared narratives that include ideas and actions for local improvement projects, care for area children, and mobilization for policy changes (Gans 2003; Rappaport 2000).

Discussing matters of civic importance puts our views and understanding of the world in front of others for their scrutiny, resulting in robust dialogue that enables varying analyses to come forth. In that democratic practice of public deliberation, values are vetted, decisions made, and subsequent actions are planned (Bloch-Schulman & Jovanovic 2010). For low-income residents, the situation is more complicated, for they are all too often denied the opportunity to adequately express their stories—anywhere—as a result of structural forces. Thus, introducing the newspaper to their daily lives to inspire collective thought, narratives, and action contributes to our community and society.

Low-Income Residents in a Middle Class-Based Society

Our research project fit into a larger plan for the city's low-income housing projects. In a strategic report completed prior to the commencement of our research, residents and staff with the local housing authority noted the presence of a shared narrative highlighting a "pervasive sense of negativity and powerlessness" in their communities (Easterling 2004, 11). Two ideas emerged that not only were ranked among the most important to residents, but also were central to our weekly conversations on newspaper topics: first, the need for residents to adopt more positive attitudes and accept more responsibility for their lives; second, the desire for residents to participate in more community activities.

It is noteworthy that these two central ideas in the strategic report put the onus of responsibility on individuals to be and do more—a position rightly critiqued as reflecting an imperial world view that privileges economic growth, competition, and individual achievement above community and mutually affirming relationships (Korten 2006).

The unrelenting social narrative that beckons the poor to "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" fails to recognize the systemic conditions that ensure the perpetuation of a stratified society. We point to the declining value of the minimum wage in real dollars since 1968 as one example (see Greensboro Minimum Wage Campaign) and the "absolute shortage" of affordable housing for extremely low-income people as another (see National Low Income Housing Coalition).

In our critical service-learning endeavor, we questioned this dominant narrative of blaming people for their misfortune. Instead, we sought to forge collaborations with the local newspaper and the housing agency in our city to work with people described as clinging to the bottom rung of the proverbial community ladder in an effort to demonstrate that their stories offered the potential for rich dialogue in a diverse setting that could facilitate mutual learning (Dennis 2007).

To ensure the success of our project, we sought the guidance of the low-income community's residents' council, a leadership team organized much like a neighborhood association board. Well before our program of newspaper delivery and weekly discussions began, in-person and phone meetings took place to determine the best method for introducing this campus-community research partnership to the low-income community. We honored the vital role of the residents' council in shaping the program to mobilize their neighbors (Portney and Berry 1997). We relied on the advice of our predominantly African American community partners to shape and manage the program.

Dialogue and Feminist Ethics: Community Stories as Research

The guiding principles of our critical service-learning research were based in dialogic theory that explores the intersection of ethics and politics in communication and that identifies this intersection as what drives our actions, interactions, and decision making (Bakhtin 1993; Buber 1955; Levinas 1961/1998). Bakhtin suggests that "the self" and "other" are forever distinct, yet linked by communicative action: "Life knows two value-centers that are fundamentally and essentially different, yet are correlated with each other: myself and the other; and it is around these centers that all of the concrete moments of Being are distributed and arranged" (1993, 74). This connection, says Bakhtin, presumes discourse to be active, oriented toward the other, and the basis of relationship-building as well as narrative construction. Non-discursive features play an important part in Bakhtin's understanding of dialogue. For him, dialogic communication embodies the words we use *and* the tone of our voice, our expression, and perhaps most vitally, our desire to be with the other as story-telling beings.

As it is for Bakhtin, the presence of one before another is vital for a dialogic relationship according to Emmanuel Levinas (1961/1998). He reminds us that our communication begins with our exposure and vulnerability in approaching and responding to another. This view of communication moves discourse away from acts of trans-

mission of knowledge or feelings, to an ethical encounter and outlook that regards the other as always worthy of dignity and respect (Levinas 1961/1998).

Buber (1955) insists that we owe one another our commitment to engage deeply on matters of central importance. He invokes the metaphor of the "narrow ridge" to suggest that though we may possess differing views, we ought to be able to hold on to our values at the same time we consider the position of others, teetering on this narrow ridge that both separates and binds us in constructing community narratives (Arnett 1986).

In relying on dialogue as a frame for this broad work and finding inspiration from Bakhtin, Levinas, and Buber, we assumed that talk between people at our community site would be "a fluctuating, unpredictable, multivocal process in which uncertainty infuses encounters between people and what they mean and become" (Wood 2004, xvi). In dialogue, we reach for maximizing authenticity, collaboration, and appreciation for the differences among us (Stewart et al. 2004). Concurring with Cooks and Scharrer (2006), we believe that learning is a community endeavor, socially constructed through the interactions between student and community partner residents.

Dialogic theory, focusing on the communicative aspects of interaction, dovetails with our understanding of feminist ethics that conceives the person as always in relation with others (Gilligan 1982; Manning 1992; Noddings 1984). Feminist ethics aims at creating a better place to live by recognizing our interconnectedness and by paying attention to relations of power. This relational caring is political because ethics is understood as "fundamentally concerned with the recognition of otherness—as central to the realms of both politics and everyday life" (Parkiss 1999, 378). Jabri (2004) specifically draws our attention to how abstract systems, such as community government and politics, have implications for our everyday actions. This connection of ethics and politics can potentially drive social policy to ultimately "examine and change the systems and discourses within which we function" (Lincoln and Cannella 2009, 279).

The goal of feminist ethical policy is to engender creative social policy that meets the needs of women's particular narratives (Dizuinzio and Young 1997), rather than neutral, or male-biased, social policy. We reflected with our students on questions of structural inequalities that limited the possibilities for meaningful work or community engagement for the women living in low-income housing. Further, we understood feminist ethics, like critical service-learning, as a means by which to question the material, historical, and social circumstances shaping our dominant narratives. That is, feminism unabashedly works toward moving beyond talk to transforming unequal relations into equal ones (hooks 1989). Thus, feminist ethics serves as foundational support for the assertion that newspaper distribution should become an issue of social policy.

Dialogic and feminist ethics are thus concerned with the social, ethical, and political dimensions of our lives that honor the unique contributions of individuals by way of

their standpoints, histories, values, hopes, and challenges. At the same time, dialogic and feminist ethics assert that our public discourses need to be examined, challenged, and critiqued in order to address the persistence of poverty and social disparities. That is, where suffering occurs and inequitable conditions exist, this philosophical base instructs us to ask questions of why that is so, and further, to act creatively to abolish social injustice (Swartz 2006). It is from this concern for the welfare of low-income residents in our community that our project was conceived and the research developed. To be effective and coherent to the philosophical suppositions of dialogic and feminist ethics, we strove to situate these service-learning and research activities in collaborative, participatory, critical, and democratic methods.

Methods

Undergraduate students were introduced on the first day of class to their overarching assignment. Reading the daily newspaper and talking weekly about the issues reported on those pages were the mechanism by which students and low-income residents were to engage in conversation, propose action, and assert a collective voice for change. In doing so, students would be exposed to the narratives of low-income housing residents as a way to gain first-hand knowledge in how people understand and accept each other, work through differences, and collaborate to address community issues.

The class project was an important dimension of a transparently planned curriculum in which students would be called upon to recognize the political and economic stakes of their involvement. Experienced students from the previous semester's pilot program served as mentors to new students (Mitchell 2008). Together, we discussed the potential of the project to ignite the civic passion among students and low-income residents. From day one, we wanted to provide adequate detail and vision about the project so that students could make sure their calendars, as well as their hearts and minds, would allow for full participation. To measure the impact of the program, the students and faculty advisors steeped their work in more traditional classroom instruction by reading a variety of journal articles and texts that probed the dynamics of community building, the features and functions of narratives, and critical engagement and pedagogy. We also read the newspaper together, a first time experience for many college students. Finally, our course introduced students to the structural and policy-making entities in the community (for example, networks of relationships and bases of power) through a requirement to participate in city council meetings to gain a familiarity with community concerns and the leadership responses to them.

The participating students closely reflected the demographics of the college campus of more than 18,000 students. Two thirds were female, 20% were African American, and 75% held at least one job in addition to attending school. The participating low-income residents' profile at the 236-unit housing complex was somewhat different:

87% female, 96% African American, 57% unemployed, and only 37% with some education beyond high school. The median age of the adults was 33.5 years old and the median household income was \$6,137 to support the average household size of 3.5 people. Of note is that 33% of the residents had incomes of less than \$3,000 per year.

Data Collection. Our methodology involved using multiple data sets including: seventy two pre- and post-surveys of the low-income housing members' newspaper readership habits; narrative analysis of forty five students' accounts of weekly civic newspaper conversations; and, transcripts of interviews and focus groups with low-income residents and students regarding the program's results. Survey questions were designed by the project's team leaders, including university faculty, newspaper representatives, and housing project residents. Undergraduate and graduate student teams administered the surveys. Narrative accounts were collected from students who attended the weekly newspaper conversations, the core component of the service-learning and research activity. The accounts not only detailed the experiences of the students, but also linked those experiences to classroom instruction and readings on social capital, cultural identity, and deliberative democracy. In preparation for the weekly gatherings, students distributed flyers door-to-door each week, organized ice-breaker activities, researched and implemented arts-related projects using the newspaper for time spent with the children, and determined a flexible agenda for newspaper discussions with the adults. Toward the conclusion of the program, focus groups were organized to query residents and students about their thoughts, critiques, and suggestions about the weekly sessions we had crafted.

Surveys. The surveys were designed to probe for newspaper readership habits, community knowledge, community involvement, patterns of communication with public and housing officials, and demographic information (please refer to our survey in appendix A). Student teams were trained in survey collection methods, and informed of the background and details of the housing project and low-income communities more broadly. This training and background information is recognized as essential so students can validly and reliably collect data as well as understand the history, challenges, and opportunities of their community partner (Mitchell 2008). Upon conclusion of the training, forty five students and two faculty fanned out in the community, walking door-to-door, to administer the surveys.

Weekly discussions. At Thursday night meetings, news talks were planned for adults. Games and crafts were organized for children. More than 120 individuals participated over the fourteen-week program, ages five to sixty five, many of them returning weekly.

On average, forty seven people filled the community center each week to discuss issues in the news. We learned from the residents' council president that "door prizes" were necessary to attract residents to the events, so our participating newspaper partner provided weekly fifty dol-

lar grocery cards and several ten dollar phone cards for this purpose. Funding from a local community foundation paid for food and drinks. After large posters at the housing community's entrances failed to attract large numbers of participants in the early weeks of the program, we found that taking student-produced flyers to the residents in their homes was a crucial outreach mechanism to boost meeting attendance. Student visibility in the community was an additional and important feature of the door-to-door campaign. Their presence served to open not only actual doors, but also the metaphorical doors into the lives of the residents who shared stories and experiences through these informal interactions.

Interviews and focus groups. Audio and video tape recordings of the voices and stories of twenty two participants were transcribed and analyzed for additional qualitative insight into community concerns and newspaper reading habits. The focus groups were organized as the only instance where the students and low-income housing residents were separated.

Data Analysis. We employed a mixed-methods approach to analyzing the data by identifying emergent themes in the discourse from narratives, focus group transcripts and video interviews, as well as interpreting the statistical data collected. After initial readings of the data, faculty used the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967) of tacking back and forth between data sets to lift up the recurring significant patterns and themes. Our research team crosschecked assumptions, observations, and implications following established protocols of qualitative inquiry.

Throughout our research process we questioned power differences in how we as researchers positioned ourselves, how we managed our privilege in being able to visit and then leave the site of our study, and in how we represented the residents' voices in our research (Mitchell 2008). We sought residents' input in determining the design of our research program and invited residents to voice their concerns, thoughts, and requests for changes to the design and process.

With a focus on societal power relations, we hoped to contribute to the ideal of an expanded role of citizens in relation to the media (Christians and Nordenstreng 2004). This approach moves us in the direction of a social policy wherein newspapers are accountable to all sectors of the community, not just beholden to the advertisers or economic drivers who generally set the agenda for news consumption (Gans 2003).

Findings

Our semester-long program was designed around the weekly meetings with the public housing residents held at their community center in addition to the twice-weekly class meetings with students held on campus. Students and low-income residents gathered Thursday evenings to talk about such current issues as the war in Iraq, AIDS, unemployment, teen violence, social security, racial ten-

sions, and neighborhood needs. Together, they forged new bonds through informal socializing, built greater community understanding as they ate dinner together, and crafted ideas that generated some needed community changes. In class, students reflected on the previous week's news talks and explored ways to deepen their understanding of the low-income population and social issues they were facing. Those discussions, in turn, led to more newspaper reading, research, and brainstorming about the communicative means by which to engage in yet more meaningful ways with residents.

The housing project residents welcomed the students into their community center, and also hosted other community organizations, local elected government representatives, and the newspaper's editorial page editor. In this manner, a broader community partnership was collaboratively created and designed to increase opportunities for sharing stories and community organizing.

Low-Income Community Member Outcomes: Using News as a Bridge to Foster Education and Community Building.

Prior to the introduction of the newspaper to this community, less than 5% of the residents were regular subscribers, though 21% reported reading the newspaper regularly by purchasing the paper from a news box or reading one provided by a family member living elsewhere. After six months of free delivery, the weekday newspaper readership jumped to 71% and the weekend readership reached 94%. This finding is most important as the increased newspaper readership habit reflects a crucial behavioral change, seen as a first step in boosting civic involvement.

To determine how participants understood the specific value of newspaper readership, we probed for what residents believed was worthwhile in the newspaper. For instance, at the beginning of our research, none of the residents identified the educational value of the newspaper as a primary benefit. Six months later that changed markedly. One in eight respondents (13%) reported that the newspaper's educational value to their children was the most highly rated benefit of receiving the newspaper.

A graduate student involved in the research program was particularly encouraged about how news information could so positively impact the education of future generations as she shared a story she had almost forgotten:

Because the resident's [preschool age] children were not yet old enough to read the newspaper, I almost skipped this question on the survey. However, I mentioned it briefly and she commented that her older daughter *does* like to look at the comics' page even though she can't read. This struck me personally, because my father taught me how to read using the Sunday comics.

The student was reminded by the resident that children from low-income families labeled "at risk" and considered indifferent to school are indeed interested and capable of learning given adequate resources. The student learned

that systemic inequalities—in this case, the lack of reading materials in low-income families—demonstrate how the effects of poverty cross generational lines.

We believed from the onset of our program that once low-income residents were given regular access to the daily newspaper, their community interest and participation levels would rise (Fleming et al. 2005). In fact, we did note modest increases, particularly in the efforts of community members to assert a collective voice to city officials who attended some of the weekly meetings. The community members saw the realization of material outcomes after they spoke out, including upgrades in playground equipment, new outdoor food preparation equipment, and the continuing availability of the newspaper.¹

One resident explained the value of the newspaper and weekly discussion circles this way: “I look forward to every week coming and having these different sessions ‘cause it gives you something positive to do.” Ed expressed his deep appreciation for having a reason to assemble that makes a difference in the quality of his life by noting, “I’m glad you all is doing this, this here. It’s helping a whole lot, I mean it really is. It’s helping a *whole* lot.”

Our research illustrates an opportunity to counter the increasingly common phenomenon to withdraw socially, rather than actively engage others as Robert Putnam (2000) has noted in his studies of declining social capital. We believe that weekly discussions where community members shared their stories, coupled with newspaper reading, may be an important step to introducing people to the work and rewards of dialogic communal engagement and other outwardly focused activities. Everyone, from residents to housing staff and elected officials expressed surprise and appreciation at seeing so much interaction with the university students. Bringing residents together in their own neighborhood was a noted achievement. Although our work was situated within a low-income community and among college students, we believe the program’s potential to ignite civic passion may be applied to nearly any demographic group.

Student Outcomes: Stories of Community Engagement

For students, this project showcased how a classroom’s curriculum can inform community conversations to be “mutually informative, appropriately demanding, and responsive to community needs” (Cushman 2002, 50). In other words, the benefits of a critical service-learning experience like this one provided the opportunity for extended discussions of contentious issues where students and residents remained in conversation, rather than stalling, giving up or walking away (Ngan-Ling Chow et al. 2003). Participants listened attentively to one another as they put forth their own views in what we assessed to be productive and ethical dialogue (Johannesen 2002). As one student said, “I often found myself utilizing my skills as a good listener to *really* concentrate...and not so much interjecting my personal opinions.”

Multiple voices, including those of community members, their children, community administrators, students, and faculty, were articulated and heard in an interwoven narrative that reflects the feminist concern of interconnected lives (Noddings 1984; Wood 2003). A student summed up the value of forging connections when her story concluded with the insight, “To establish commonality with the other is to recognize kinship, and therefore obligation.”

Another student lamented how ubiquitous the negative stereotyping is of low-income and poor people:

I was taught that people who don’t have money are bad people because they don’t use their resources to their advantage to get ahead in the world and make something of themselves...[I learned that] really understanding why people are in poverty is the key to solving the problem.

This student indicated that the time she spent listening to what the residents had to say about their situations and the community more generally was one of her best learning outcomes and a testimony to the power of stories to give deep meaning to otherwise abstract social concerns (Rappaport 2000).

Our safety precautions and research gathering guidelines were extensive. Yet, despite our best efforts and detailed protocol to ready students for their service-learning encounters, we were not, and perhaps could not be, fully prepared for the spontaneous fear and learning that erupted once students were out of the classroom and on-site for the first time. Some students, visibly shaking, echoed the sage advice their parents had given them as children. “Stay away from poor neighborhoods. You just don’t want to know what happens behind those closed doors.” These fears were real, as were the drug-dealing activity, drive-by shootings, and other criminal actions that circulate in low-income housing projects. We as faculty turned to dialogue and the feminist ethical precepts of authenticity, care, and reverence to guide us in our conversations and actions to model the research principles of our program for social change. Importantly, we stayed *with* our students inside and outside the classroom so that we could respond in the moment to what would arise.

The fear that is at the heart of a societal narrative prejudiced against poor people was evident among the students as they began this project. That fear, however, gave way to wonder by the end of the first day of survey data collection. Once students met the people they had previously only heard or read about, their engrained fears were allayed. Students reported being introduced to extended family members who graced framed photographs near the front doors of the homes they visited. Students watched children get their hair braided or nails painted as parents and grandparents happily answered survey questions. What was initially deemed a scary encounter, turned into a genuine moment of meeting as students’ stereotyped narratives were replaced with positive experiences as this student explained: “My experience began

before we surveyed the residents. It began in the gutter with my thoughts and I left it up to the community to dig themselves out of it. After they proved me wrong, I felt bad about my preconceived notions.”

Upon reflection, most students likewise reported confronting biases they had not previously been aware they had, mirroring research results from a different three-year study of more than 2,000 students on how service-learning enhances academic outcomes. Those researchers found, “At times there was initial fear of the unknown, but repeatedly students reported the compassion, the passion, and the empathy they developed as they learned others are ‘just like me’” (Prentice and Robinson 2010, 13). Further, the students reported overwhelmingly (99%) that the service-learning experience was an important way to put communication theories into practice to create social change for the benefit of the community.

Community Outcomes: Narratives of Collaboration and Understanding

Collaboration was also an essential dimension of student/low-income community member discussion groups (Stewart et al. 2004). Group members came together, in one instance, to write letters to the editor of the newspaper on health-care costs and after-school needs for children, which were later published and then prominently displayed in the community center as a source of great pride.

Further, the students and low-income community members were continually confronted with the need to reconsider their own views. For example, students one night were shocked then absorbed by the story of one community member living with HIV/AIDS, who despite her own challenges is an advocate for public education reform. Another evening proved sobering when movie tickets were offered to but rejected by adolescents we had come to know. The movie tickets were appreciated. However, without accessible bus transportation to get residents to the theatre, the tickets were deemed worthless. That insight allowed the students to expand their knowledge once again into issues of public transportation routes, which they recognized as inadequate for these low-income families.

Another instance of collaboration and understanding was the newspaper company’s decision to hire a community resident to deliver newspapers daily to each household. This act provided one resident a sustained income for nearly six months. In recognizing this need and meeting it, those individuals at the newspaper who provided this funding acknowledged this inequality. Additionally, as students learned of this hire they recognized that particular economic choices impact specific people in our communities. We highlight this funding for its small but powerful illustration of recognizing economic inequalities and acting toward social justice in concrete instances.

A consistent feature of these shared stories was the recognition by students of the pronounced difference of resources available to some sectors of the community. For instance, grocery stores, banks, social service agencies, and other common businesses are not within walking distance

for the residents who are for the most part without the use of cars. Relying on public transportation is reasonable, yet difficult. Bus transportation is limited—routes running every thirty or sixty minutes—and for residents who use the bus, they must stand as they wait at most bus stops, since more than 90% are without benches or shelters. In turn, this prompted a process of questioning individual and communal obligations to address such inequities. Although talking about what it requires to ameliorate injustice is not always the same as securing change, we uphold the view that talk creates our realities and is an important form of action itself that transforms views, sets agendas, and sometimes, if not always, also secures material change (Del Gandio 2008).

A vital dimension of the weekly discussions then was the openness of community members and students to engage each other’s stories, even if they were uncomfortable or challenging (Ngan-Ling Chow et al. 2003). The people in our program came to know how their conversational partners were the proverbial “others” to be respected for their distinct stories and experiences (Bakhtin 1993; Parkiss 1999).

Lessons Learned and Conclusions

Providing access to the news as a gateway to political engagement, we argue, is a moral obligation of communities to their most vulnerable populations and should become part of social policy (Jabri 2004), one that specifically addresses social inequality for women who fill so many of the homes in our low income communities (Dizuinzio and Young 1997). It is within this context that conversations emerged before, during, and after the project with local and regional newspaper employees about that possibility. We know of no other similar program in the country that has not only focused on building community relationships through use of the newspaper but has also advocated for public policy change for greater newspaper distribution to vulnerable populations.

This research used newspapers as a vehicle to probe matters of politics and voice, dialogic and feminist ethics, community and participation, and cross-cultural story sharing as a form of critical service-learning in order to advocate for civic engagement and social change in a low-income community among residents and local university students. In Greensboro, like many other communities, the challenges of diversity show themselves in the political arena. There, decisions are made regarding the adequate and fair distribution of resources. From our news talks, we learned lessons we believe are relevant to others considering similar critical service-learning programs.

First, even though low-income community members reported low political engagement (in the previous year, only 10% reported contacting an elected official and 6% attended a political rally), their actual behavior demonstrated more active community participation. Community members wrote letters to the editor of the local paper and requested (and received) new grills and playgrounds. The participation in our project, in sheer numbers, indicated

a robust engagement reflecting an incipient and emerging political activism. One possible explanation we considered for why residents may have underreported their involvement was that they are so often disciplined and directed to follow orders in the systems of social services. The requirement to comply with what residents may view as arbitrary rules may make them more attuned to bureaucratic structures than individual accomplishment. Another and perhaps more likely reason for the discrepancy, we concluded, is attributable to differing definitions of political action. Identifying political action as voting, protesting, and petition-gathering does not recognize the importance of talk, the ability to articulate one's views, and the everyday stories and actions that contribute to a community's well-being dependent on an informed and reflective understanding of political choices and actions.

In understanding what prompted the activity we recorded, it could be argued we were witness to a Hawthorne effect (Kraut and McConahay 1973) that suggests our interest in residents provoked their positive changes to impress our research team. In fact, we find this explanation less than insightful as it discounts low-income members' stories of their own agency and self-knowledge, negating their worth, dignity, and respect (Levinas 1961/1998). Also, while there remains agreement that a Hawthorne effect identifies the performance of compliance, there is little agreement among researchers of what actually causes the Hawthorne effect (Kraut and McConahay 1973). Instead we view low-income members' actions as recognition of their voices, speaking toward the budding political engagement that emerges when people share their hearts and stories with one another; this is both a premise and a promise for long-term democratic participation.

Our second lesson was to note the necessity of transparency in communicating the assumptions and goals of a critical service-learning program to inspire political engagement. Offering clear course expectations was beneficial for students. We made visible that we would be probing the structural, political, ethical, and democratic demands of civic engagement as a member of society. The course emphasis on stories, dialogue, and public participation informed students that we would learn about an issue through academic literature, daily newspaper reading, and engaging diverse others in authentic discussion to address the need for social change (Stewart et al. 2004).

Third, students and low-income community partners are well suited to teach and learn together through storytelling and critical inquiry. Communication for understanding occurred across different cultural and ethnic groups in what Putnam (2000) terms "bridging" social capital. The net result was not just tolerance of different views, but a sincere appreciation by the students for the structural challenges facing low-income residents and an equally sincere appreciation by the low-income residents for the meaningful opportunities for engagement that college students were afforded through higher education (Dennis 2007). James, a community member with young children of his own, encouraged the college students to

continue their studies and to look behind the stigma and stereotypes that defined him and others. With other low-income community members, James spoke with hope as he put his faith in the college students to talk with city officials to find and then share information with the residents about after-school programs for children, summer youth employment, and adult job training opportunities.

While Putnam's (2000) work is encouraging for citizens and leaders who want to build strong communities, scholars may want to focus more closely on the *quality* of interaction. Putnam notes the importance of the quantity of interactions, but we recognized that meaningful relationships would emerge not from shallow conversations no matter how plentiful, but instead through storytelling and dialogic encounters, where ideas could flow freely in an environment of respect, authenticity, and openness (Bakhtin 1993).

As the stories unfolded in our program, we witnessed a greater appreciation for and enactment of what the newspaper has to offer a community by way of prompting deliberation within families and between different social groups. For instance, one resident explained, "I got my 10 year-old son, you know, I'm trying to get him into the habit, he's always trying to grab and read the sports, I tell him you can read them sports, but you also going to read something else too." College students likewise got into the routine of reading the newspaper. One student noted the benefit of doing so:

As college students, we know very little about the community compared to other citizens. . . . I now have a new outlook on community involvement [and] . . . it has become a habit of mine to read at least the headlines of newspaper articles. I am now interested in what goes on in my local area, not just the university.

Students learned from and with our community partners to speak competently about issues of poverty and its effect on housing opportunities, employment opportunities, health care, and education—all matters that impact the daily lives of low-income community members. Also, the experience allowed students to apply their academic knowledge to the "complex real-world situations and problems" they encountered (Prentice and Robinson 2010).

The rapport between Jill, a Southern raised, traditional age, white student, and Sylvia, a middle-age Southern-raised Black woman illustrates this learning well. Jill discussed in class one day that she did not fully understand how people ended up in public housing until she met Sylvia and heard the story of this public housing resident who at age forty was supporting two children and an elderly mother. Sylvia had worked full time, but eventually quit her job to care for her mother. The student learned that though Sylvia was highly educated with a solid work history, she was unable to hold onto a job in the face of her mother's illness. This situation, in turn, led to a discussion of what social services exist in the United States to help people in such situations, and what alternative forms of health care exist in other countries to mitigate the situation in

which Sylvia found herself. This student's reflection and participation in a larger discussion about social inequality demonstrates the lesson of recognizing structural inequality for members in our critical service-learning project and relocating blame away from the "poor" person.

The fourth lesson was our acknowledgement as faculty of the necessity for close coordination with our community partners and students. In our case, we benefited from first launching a pilot program with residents in a smaller low-income community. Our missteps there, and there were several, allowed us to see gaps in our understanding of cultural differences. Faculty and students alike learned from the pilot project and made adjustments to the design of our study to more dialogically engage low-income community members from beginning to end. The cooperative learning endeavor meant that student insights served at least three main functions. First, the students reflected in speech and writing assignments how their personal experiences challenged or upheld the implications of classroom readings. Second, students manifested and had to take responsibility for learning beyond what is possible, or even desirable from an instructor-delivered curriculum. Third, students experienced what we see as a more democratic form of teaching and learning wherein the students' experiences and new, local knowledge were folded into deeper understanding, discussion, and community action.

On a related note, we found that for critical service-learning to be successful there needs to be a long-term commitment to the process. Our campus-community partnership continues after more than five years. The project has shifted directions slightly to take place at a high school where students from several surrounding low-income housing projects attend. A long-term relationship allows all members to work out the difficulties, surprises, and discoveries of a dialogic, critical service-learning process.

The semester-based structure of college life can clearly disrupt community initiatives, and even cause them to be short-lived. As a result, we have thoughtfully imagined ways to bridge the work of students one semester to the next. We use the work products of previous students and residents—narrative accounts, end-of-semester video presentations and posters—to introduce the project to new students each semester. In this way, the past work is not lost, but instead carried forward by the faculty and community partners who continue with the project and use the bi-annual breaks as well to reevaluate, redirect, and improve the program (Cushman 2002).

In this process, we have found that a successful campus-community partnership involves not just one, but many partners to increase the resources available for a targeted group. By having multiple partners, the possibility to garner wide community support increases exponentially to ensure the project's success. Our program involved a corporate-owned daily newspaper, a nonprofit focused on the area's public schools and early childhood education, the local community foundation's young philanthropists, the area's housing authority, and the university's office of

leadership and service-learning. Cultivating and managing such relationships demanded great effort. We involved students in the process, but ultimately learned that it is faculty members who best provide the home base of consistency from which long-term community partnerships flourish, by sustaining and promoting the stories that emerge.

This unique critical service-learning project illustrates our moral obligations, especially toward women, to use the news and to collaborate with multiple community partners to advocate for public policy changes directed toward greater newspaper distribution and its attendant political engagement for vulnerable populations. This research also demonstrates the importance of "news talk," that is, of discussing the news among a diverse group of people as a means to contribute and create change through talk (Del Gandio 2008). By engaging in such a critical and political service-learning project we learned that transparent expectations for students are vital. We also learned that the quality of conversation and interaction is essential to bridging social capital (Putnam 2000) and in the development of self-other relationships (Bakhtin 1993) that allow for this bridging to happen. Finally, this study affirms the importance of close coordination with multiple service-learning partners, over the long term, as a means to create effective critical service-learning for all participants.

This study confirms that a vibrant civic life is greatly enhanced by access to news and the ability to engage in civic processes through storytelling to encourage dialogue. We contend that similar projects could and should be replicated in other communities with strong benefits for all campus-community partners. As such, we hope these lessons and the stories that inform them are useful to others who are interested in bolstering civic engagement via newspapers and critical service-learning courses.

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This partnership began as a six-month program between students in a 18,000+ student high-research activity university and a 236 unit low-income public housing complex located in the southeastern United States within a community having a history of institutionalized racism and poverty. This service-learning campus community partnership continues, now in its sixth year, with some changes.

ENDNOTES

- Free door-to-door delivery of the newspaper concluded after six months. However, our media partner reconfigured the newspaper stand on site to be an "honor box" that allowed residents to get the daily newspaper for free or pay. It is of note that this "honor box" netted revenue equal to that of the for-profit newspaper boxes located in the city's downtown.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY

Please provide your home address: _____

Newspaper Readership Survey

Before delivery last week, on average, how often did you read the *News and Record* during the week (Monday-Friday only)?

Never Once a Week Twice a Week Three Times a Week Four Times a Week Every day

Before delivery last week, on average, how often did you read the *News and Record* on the weekend (Saturday and Sunday only)?

Never Once on the Weekend Both Saturday and Sunday

What is the likelihood that you would read the *News and Record* if it was not provided free?

Not at all Likely Somewhat Likely Likely Very Likely Extremely likely

In addition to the *News and Record*, what other source(s) do you use to get informed about news and events?

(Check all that apply)

- Television
- Internet
- Carolina Peacemaker
- Family
- Radio
- Church/Place of Worship
- Rhinoceros Times
- Other (please list: _____)
- Magazines
- Community Newsletter
- Greensboro Observer

Which do you consider the most important source for your news _____

If you do NOT read the *News and Record* at least once a week, please skip the next 3 questions.

1. When you read the *News and Record*...

- a. Are you better informed about local community issues & events?
Yes Unsure No
- b. Are you better informed about national issues and politics?
Yes Unsure No
- c. Are you better informed about international issues?
Yes Unsure No
- d. Are you better able to discuss local, national and international issues with family and friends?
Yes Unsure No
- e. Do you save money by using the coupons?
Yes Unsure No
- f. Are you better informed about store sales?
Yes Unsure No
- g. Are you better informed about job opportunities?
Yes Unsure No
- h. Are you better informed about things for sale in the classifieds?
Yes Unsure No
- i. Are you better informed about movies, art, and entertainment?
Yes Unsure No
- j. Are you better informed about the outdoors and the environment?
Yes Unsure No N/A
- k. Do your children benefit in their educational goals and homework?
Yes Unsure No N/A

l. Please indicate any other benefits you receive from reading the *News and Record*:
(please list: _____)

******Please circle the most important benefit you receive in the list above.**

2. Check off the sections you read in the *News and Record*:

- Front page
- Local community section
- Classifieds (such as real estate, jobs, cars)
- Business section
- Comics
- Coupons/Advertisements
- Sports section
- Editorial section
- Obituaries
- Life section (such as movies and arts)
- TV Listing
- Other (please list: _____)

******Please circle the section that you read first in the list above.**

3. List the 3 most important things YOU have learned from reading the newspaper in the last month:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Have you ever subscribed to the *News and Record*? Yes No

If you haven't subscribed to the *News and Record* in the past, which of the following describes your situation?

- Not within my current budget
- Don't find useful information in the newspaper
- Not enough time to read the newspaper
- Don't like newspapers laying around my house
- Prefer other forms of media
- Other (please list: _____)

How many people live in your home other than you? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

Please skip if you live alone. Excluding you, list the ages of people living in your home and the TOTAL number of days you think they read the *News and Record* each week (Sunday-Saturday):

- Age _____ Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Age _____ Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Age _____ Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Age _____ Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Age _____ Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Think about your family meals at home. How often do you discuss the news over a meal (circle one):

Daily Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never _____

Community Involvement

How often have you participated in the following events in the local community in the past 6 months? (Circle your response)

Attended PTA meeting at your child's school				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Attended Greensboro City Council meeting				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Attended free cultural events (such as music in the park)				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Attended free public lectures				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times

How often have you participated in the following events in the local community in the past 30 days? (Circle your response)

Went to the local Farmer's Market				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Went to the Greensboro Public Library				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Attended neighborhood gatherings				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Attended local church/place of worship services				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Volunteered in the local community				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times
Visited a park or recreation area				
Never	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	More than 6 times

In the last year, have you... (check all that apply):

- Written a letter to a newspaper?
- Done regular volunteer work?
- Attended club meetings?
- Spoken in front of a large group?
- Contacted someone in state government?
- Contacted someone in local government?
- Attended a political rally?

Did you vote in the last presidential election?	Yes	No	Unsure
Did you vote in the last citywide election?	Yes	No	Unsure
Do you follow local news?	Yes	No	Unsure

How comfortable do you feel approaching city officials to discuss your needs and concerns?

- Not at all comfortable Somewhat comfortable Comfortable Very comfortable Extremely comfortable

How worthwhile is it for you to approach city officials to discuss you needs and concerns?

- Not at all comfortable Somewhat comfortable Comfortable Very comfortable Extremely comfortable

How comfortable do you feel approaching Ray Warren Homes/Greensboro Housing Authority managers to discuss your needs and concerns?

- Not at all comfortable Somewhat comfortable Comfortable Very comfortable Extremely comfortable

How worthwhile is it for you to approach Ray Warren Homes/Greensboro Housing Authority managers to discuss your needs and concerns?

- Not at all comfortable Somewhat comfortable Comfortable Very comfortable Extremely comfortable

Demographics

Age: _____

Gender: Male Female

How would you identify your Race/Ethnicity?

- Black/African-American Asian/Pacific Islander Hispanic
 Native American White/European American Other(please list)_____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Elementary/Middle School
 High School
 Community College/Technical Institute
 Some College
 4-Year College/University
 Graduate/Professional Degree

Are you employed? Yes No

If so, what is your occupation? _____

How many people contribute to your household income? 1 2 3 4 or more

How long have you lived in Greensboro?

- Less than 1 year 1-2 years 3-5 years More than 5 years
 If more than 5 years, please list number of years: _____

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLUE: LESSONS LEARNED DURING A SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THE GULF COAST

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Introduction

Scholars of Greek mythology tell us that Proteus was a shepherd of marine creatures who also had the gift of prophecy. Although his role was to protect marine life and portend the future, he would often change his form to evade capture. It is not clear why he was so quick to mutate in order to avoid telling what was to come. Perhaps Proteus didn't want to foretell a future where ocean life, the very creatures he was compelled to protect, would be severely impaired by the actions of human mortals. Fast forward to 2010 and to what has been ranked as the largest unintentional marine oil spill in human history. As the rivers of putrid brown and black bled from the depths of Proteus's ocean, it was as if Mother Earth herself was weeping away her insides. Through the black, however, emerged hope in the form of America's spirit of community, where people learn compassion for each other and develop the fortitude to support one another.

By taking the risk to make personal sacrifices, rather than wallowing in seclusion in an ivory tower, we in academics would do well to employ service-learning in our pedagogies, both to develop and inspire human ingenuity and to transform the ways that we interact and support community development and civic responsibility. Although it may be a herculean undertaking to break

from traditions of the academe, where instruction takes place entirely within the classroom, we advocate the merits of transformative educational experiences that occur outside the classroom. Such experiences need not "fit" within a particular academic discipline, nor do they need to be matched to some distribution requirement, assessed to a particular number of academic credits, or worse yet, assigned to a particular budget line. This article documents a transformative, life-impacting, service-learning experience afforded to members of an academic community from diverse backgrounds, academic disciplines, and personal and professional goals. The full value and impact of this experience cannot be fully or accurately assessed, but will continue to provide significant opportunities and insights for all the students involved, regardless of how they are academically parsed.

Termed Alternative Fall Break, the service-learning and community-enrichment experience described here asked that students, faculty, and staff take a risk and affirm their commitment to service-learning. In doing so, participants demonstrated incredible flexibility and adaptability by breaking with tradition. They gave up portions of their summer and fall break to plan, fund-raise for, and participate in a trip to serve and learn about the Gulf Coast, its recent environmental tragedies, and, ulti-

Sean R. Cornell is a geoscientist at Shippensburg University where he regularly employs service-learning in his Geology and Marine Science courses. Dr. Cornell has co-directed two Alternative Fall Break Programs in the last four years after initiating this service-learning program in partnership with Shippensburg University Women's Center in honor of Rachel Carson's 100th Birthday.

Veronica Woodlief is a graduate student at Shippensburg University pursuing a Master's degree in Geoenvironmental Studies. Her research interests include coastal environmental oceanography and geomorphology. After earning her MS, she plans to earn a PhD so she may become a college professor.

mately, themselves. After substantial planning efforts by numerous people, fifty three students representing twenty one different majors, together with six faculty and staff, gave selflessly of their time to travel to the Gulf Coast to engage in more than seven hundred hours of service. The program's objectives were twofold: 1) to contribute to the recovery of Gulf communities and environments in the wake of the BP Oil Spill, and 2) to provide a diverse group of students the opportunity to explore the political, social, cultural, and economic impacts of contemporary environmental issues in science and conservation.

Although the trip in October of 2010 lasted only five days, the benefits provided to the Gulf Coast communities in which we served were greater than any of us could have expected. Whether working to support environmental clean-up, playing games with children, refurbishing a home destroyed by storm surge, or working on community revitalization efforts, our presence was still very much needed and appreciated five years after Hurricane Katrina. Through these efforts, we have a better understanding of what nature writer and conservationist Terry Tempest Williams meant when she wrote: "I have inherited a belief in community, the promise that a gathering of the spirit can both create and change culture" (2001, 129). For every participant in the AFB, the simple act of working together to support and understand the conditions of others reinforced the importance of community, trust, hope, and working for the common good.

Something Old

No one is quite certain of the origin of the Victorian custom that is borrowed in the title of this article. Nevertheless, the components of the custom are wrought in the premise that hope and good fortune are bestowed upon those who carry out the canon of the tradition. In the same sense that a marriage is considered a journey, so too is the pledge of scholars who dedicate themselves to the pursuit of intellectual growth. Likewise as a marriage is a journey to be shared, so too must be the journey of the student. Here, we celebrate service-learning not only for the support and hope it provides to those in need, but also to rejoice in the intellectual journey and inspiration it provides to the learner who engages in service alongside a community of fellow learners.

There is a great tradition in the Geosciences for place-based, beyond-the-text learning. No course is complete without an excursion into the field, where students not only see, but also experience the world around them. Such experiences result in a more complete understanding of the size and scope of the earth, its varied environs and the processes active within them. Students develop an eye for observation and description of the natural world, and gain a much better understanding and appreciation for the interconnectedness of the natural world and human societies. For AFB, the tradition was extended to the entire campus community, comprised of students and faculty from diverse interests, experiences, and educational levels. For more than just a few of these students, including the seniors, this trip was their first field experi-

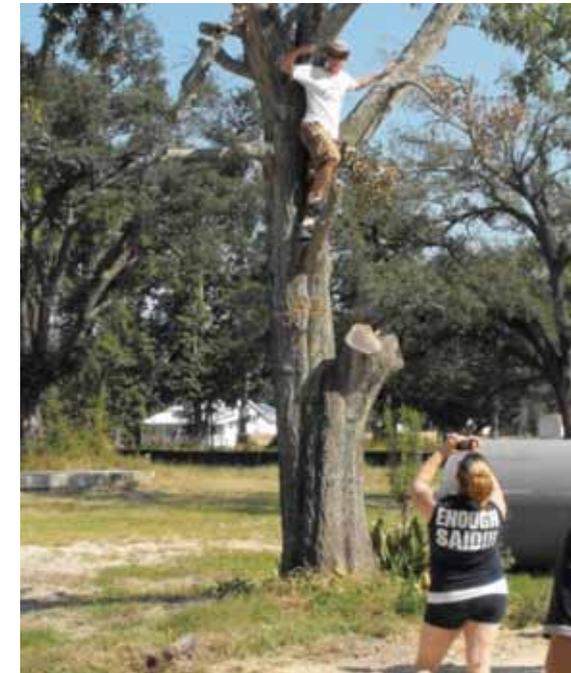
ence beyond their family vacation. A senior math major indicated that his only regret was that he had not been able to take advantage of experiences like this before. A junior social work major said "the time spent on the Gulf really got me thinking about where I am at this point in my life and taught me to try new things and step out of my comfort zone."

Something New

It can be argued that the pursuit of intellectual growth is inspired both by tradition and optimism. For many, the promise of the journey is exciting and stimulating. Developing the confidence to take such a journey extends from the knowledge that the journey will hold opportunities for discovery, growth, and prosperity. For others, the journey is met with trepidation and anxiety. Making those first steps into the unknown can be extremely intimidating. Imagine, then, the moment a student first steps onto a university campus. With their parents in tow, or pushing them from behind, they take those first steps (with plenty of luggage) full of apprehension and more than just a little insecurity. Yet with those first steps, students take a leap of faith that will open up a world of new opportunities. Will their college experience be as engaging, rewarding, and fulfilling as they imagined? For many students, including more than a dozen first-year students, the AFB trip was a milestone. For some it was their first college field trip, or the largest distance they had ever traveled without their families, or, for a few, the first time they had left Pennsylvania. Even for the faculty and staff who traveled alongside the students, the AFB experience afforded something new. Regardless of our experience, we couldn't help but be moved by what we learned.

For first-year students at the University of Southern Mississippi, the experience of beginning their own first year of college was robbed of them on Monday, August 29, 2005. When Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Park Campus, she packed Category 3 winds and pushed up a storm surge of nearly thirty feet. Katrina not only devastated the campus and surrounding community, but in one fell swoop annihilated the opportunity for hundreds of students in the class of 2009 to embark on their academic journey. For more than one thousand students, that single event changed their lives forever. For some, the promise of a college education, the promise of an intellectual journey, the promise of developing a new community and new friends, and the promise of a hopeful future were washed away with the receding storm surge. In Katrina's wake, the academic calendar for the 2005-2006 academic year was put on hold. The campus, the community, and the region were faced with the challenge of recovering from the largest natural disaster the region had experienced.

Some students transferred or enrolled at other universities, but for those who were able to return the following year, their campus was a significantly changed place. All buildings were still in a state of disrepair, and many were (and still are) in need of complete removal. There was no centralized campus, no center of student engagement, no



Students explored the remains of a community completely leveled by storm surge. The student in the tree shows the elevation of the storm surge that flooded this area. Note the foundations and half dead trees in the background.

physical campus community. Classes were held at remote facilities spread throughout the tri-city area. First year students even lost their identity as the Class of 2009. In spite of the disaster, the campus community, such as it was, began the long, laborious task of rebuilding. The task was to not only rebuild the physical facilities, but to also rebuild the hopes of the students at the heart of the entire community. Despite the daunting challenge, they had the strength to persevere.

There was something old at the heart of campus that transcended the destruction and despair and provided inspiration to initiate the reconstruction of the campus for the benefit of new academic communities that would themselves grow and be transformed by its influence: the "Friendship Oak." Although tattered and defoliated, the grand water oak not only survived Katrina, but the spring following Katrina she budded and leafed as she had every year throughout her over five-hundred-year life. The tree, buttressed by major support branches, not only showed great resilience through Katrina, but was symbolic of, and to, the community and its history. A placard under her great branches, dedicated in 1969, the same year that Hurricane Camille roared ashore, reads: "Friendship Oak, 1487. I am called the Friendship Oak. Those who enter my shadow will remain friends through all their lifetime." Thus, the great oak not only has sentimental significance for the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Southern Mississippi, but because she has withstood the test of time and adversity, the Friendship Oak is now a meaningful symbol for a community thousands of miles away; the Shippensburg AFB community grew together and learned lessons about life, friendship, and community during the field experience of a lifetime.

Something Borrowed

Geoscientists have always endorsed the benefits of field-based experiences in improving science education. Such experiences are known to enhance collaborative learning and higher-order cognitive skills, refine inquiry and observation skills, generally improve student attitudes and promote self-confidence. For AFB, we borrowed the knowledge that well-organized field trips provide opportunities for students to become active learners. At the heart of our program was the goal of providing service to the Gulf in the wake of the Oil Spill, while at the same time providing opportunities to learn and explore the complex social, political, and economic impacts of major environmental issues affecting society today. By asking questions about the natural world, developing methods for evaluating such questions, collecting data and evaluating these observations, and communicating their discoveries with others, students are effectively carrying out the scientific process. With faculty and students of diverse backgrounds and experience, many opportunities were available to broaden and deepen our understanding of the oil spill and its impacts. Nevertheless, the full magnitude and impact of the learning experience was not something that we could have planned for, as it went well beyond what we had originally hoped.

Although the Alternative Fall Break trip was short in duration, our personal experiences were enriched in immeasurable ways by the people of the Gulf Coast, and the lessons learned were borrowed for a lifetime. Their personal stories were heartfelt and more engaging than anything we might encounter reading a book or newspaper. Personal stories were substantiated and made real as we explored their surroundings firsthand and observed

the magnitude and intensity of destruction experienced. Observing their tears, facial expressions, and other raw emotions was indeed transformative. All of the individuals with whom we interacted offered a perspective not possible from a news report or from a textbook. The personal stories were unfiltered and unedited. We experienced the raw emotion of stories like the following: about families who had to cut holes in their roofs to escape flood waters or face drowning; about a woman who had to float a sick loved one out of her home on an air mattress; and about the hundreds of hours and millions of dollars invested in preserving and telling the stories of the Gulf's maritime history. These stories were more real and impactful than any classroom experience could ever be. Although the scientific process speaks for itself, our understanding of the scale and scope of hurricane damage will forever be impacted by what we learned from the accounts of hurricane survivors; because of their stories, we will also be continually mindful of how the human spirit can overcome adversity.

Let's return then to the class of 2009 from the University of Southern Mississippi. Although the class was originally constructed by the Admissions Department was disrupted in the aftermath of Katrina's destruction, some students returned to the university to pursue their future. Through their grit, determination, and the support of their community, those who had the resources to return to college borrowed on the strength of the Friendship Oak. They not only benefited from the revitalization of their campus community, but they enhanced it through their individual contributions as they reassembled as the class of 2010. Flash forward to the spring of 2010. The very same students who faced Katrina's destruction first hand persevered through five years of rebuilding and were preparing to graduate. They were undoubtedly looking forward to the next phase of their own intellectual journeys as they celebrated the end of this portion of their journey, extended though it was by Mother Nature. One might not be able to imagine the coincidence, but on the evening of April 20, 2010, a disaster of horrific proportions was once again bestowed upon them and the entire Gulf Coast region. A mere two weeks before their graduation, they became aware—along with the rest of the Gulf community and, indeed, the whole nation—that another emerging threat to their well-being was brewing just offshore.

Something Blue

On the day of their graduation, smoke and flames were observed billowing skyward across the crystal blue skyline of the Gulf Coast. Their day of celebration was overshadowed by the crisis developing off the Gulf Islands National Seashore and Ship Island, all of which were located not far offshore from the Gulf Park Campus. The now infamous BP oil spill had already dispersed millions of gallons of oil that had spread over thousands of miles. At the very moment of their graduation, the effects of the spill were flooding like high tide across the community. Commercial shrimp boats, recreational charter boats, and other vessels were all at dock, unable to go to sea by order of the

federal government. Through the stories of residents with whom we interacted, we learned that many residents were put out of work. Some received a pink slip as a result of the moratorium on oil drilling in the Gulf, others from the closure of Gulf fisheries for fear of chemical pollution, and still others from the closure of beaches and the pronounced decline of tourism in the wake of the slick. The very region whose recovery from Hurricane Katrina depended upon the financial well-being of its seafood and tourist industries was once again being assaulted.

If ever the Old Man of the Sea was to resist foretelling the future, it was certainly now. Who could imagine the uncertainty that these young adults must have felt as they looked to the future and across the beach to the ocean upon which their community so direly depended? Five years after Hurricane Katrina, the Mississippi Gulf Coast was still fighting to recover, but the enemy was known and therefore felt manageable; after all, hurricanes had been a part of the culture of the Gulf Coast for decades. Yet the oil spill added insult to injury as it was not a challenge previously encountered in this region or by these people. Although the land and physical structures could be rebuilt in the wake of Katrina, this disaster attacked the very heart of the communities of the Gulf, which was the ocean herself. How would this new tragedy impact the students' future? Would it rob them of the culture and history that made them who they were?

After several months of continuous spill, millions of gallons of oil, gas, and other compounds invaded the Gulf from the deepest abyssal plain to the windswept surface. It became quite obvious that recovery from something of this magnitude would not only require the hearts and gritty determination typical of Gulf Coast residents, but it would also require the collective efforts of our nation and the rest of the world. Perhaps, it was an event like this that Proteus was most fearful. The thought of his flock, down to the tiniest nutrient-cycling picoplankton, being destroyed by such an event would have indeed been enough to discourage him from contemplating the ocean's fate in the hands of man. The abyss of this tragedy is not yet written and will not be unraveled completely for decades to come, if ever.

However, what is known is that this event represents the singularly largest environmental catastrophe ever faced by the United States, and recovery is not only necessary, but essential to the well-being of the residents of the Gulf Coast, and indeed our entire world. After all, the Earth is only habitable because of its oceans. The very air we breathe, and the climate that sustains us is born from the seas. As written in any Oceanography text, or as eloquently illustrated in the eloquent prose of Rachel Carson in her book, *The Sea Around Us*, understanding how the oceans impacts us is just as critical as understanding how we impact the blue ocean. No one has ever captured the spirit of this sentiment as well as Baba Dioum did in 1968 when he uttered: "In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught" (qtd. in Wil-



Annotated aerial photograph of the Mississippi Sound from Pass Christian eastward to Pascagoula, Mississippi. The barrier islands, including Ship Island, are easily recognized from their reflective white-sand beaches. The pronounced green and brown colors characterizing the waters of the Mississippi Sound reflect the high productivity of the sound. Offshore, the absence of nutrients is represented by the clearer blue waters of the open Gulf. Although oil washed ashore on the barrier islands, fortuitously the properties and circulation pattern of currents in the shallow coastal waters prevented the oil from being entrained into the sound itself.

son 1992). It was ultimately for this reason that the AFB service-learning trip was organized so that the motley crew from the mountains of Pennsylvania could join Proteus and the residents of the Gulf Coast as shepherds of both the briny deep and our collective future.

A Silver Sixpence in Her Shoe

Introduced earlier, Terry Tempest Williams is a conservationist who has explored the relationships we have with the natural world. Profoundly influenced by Rachel Carson, and other leading environmentalists, she has written about ecology, the environment, and the many ties between the natural world, human society, and human health. Her experience and writings reflect a desire to inform others about our Earth, its precious ecosystems and how we both impact and are impacted by them. Like Carson, who wrote about some of the environmental impacts of natural resource extraction from the seafloor, and like the students, faculty and staff who participated in AFB, Terry Tempest Williams had the opportunity to explore the consequences of extraction of oil and gas from our oceans first-hand. In an interview given this past fall after she wrote the *Gulf Between Us*, she said "I have been fundamentally changed by the scale of what I saw.... We saw rivers of oil as wide as the Mississippi itself. When the press...said it was largely gone, oil remained...in a fouled sea extending to the beaches, bayous, and marshes. Five million barrels of crude oil does not just disappear. The oil is not gone. The people are not gone. It will be years before we know the truth of this very dark story" (qtd. in Hoffner 2009).

Undoubtedly Tempest Williams was profoundly impacted by what she saw and it heavily weighed upon her in ways that compelled her to write about the experi-

ence. Although we could never live up to her experience, nor hope to fill her shoes, we too benefited from the first-hand experience of the disasters in the Gulf. Although much of our time focused on supporting the recovery of areas on the mainland impaired by Hurricane Katrina, AFB participants traveled offshore to see oil and tar as it washed ashore on the barrier islands that adorn the southern margin of the Mississippi Sound. Ship Island, located near the western end of the Mississippi portion of Gulf Islands National Seashore, is one of six barrier islands that together form an important barrier island system that separate the sound from the open gulf.

Even though the islands themselves were not spared the deluge of oil and tar described by Tempest Williams, one lesson that became apparent was that the sandy islands performed their duty and protected the sound, its fisheries and mainland estuaries from being directly impaired by the oil. At the same time we watched pods of dolphins feeding in the sound, or thousands of white and spotted trout feed on small crustaceans, or pelicans and other seabirds as they rested on a derelict channel marker, the chain of six offshore islands formed the first line of defense for the coastline. Despite the use of dispersants and efforts to set the oil slicks ablaze, thousands of pounds of oil and tar washed up each day. Yet, as is their job during a hurricane, the barrier islands absorbed the brunt of the onslaught and acted as a giant sponge. In addition to soaking up oil and preventing that oil from flowing into the sound, the islands helped to channelize the flow of water through the sound from the mouth of the Mississippi River. Fortuitously for the gulf coast region, the very water that flooded parts of the upper Mississippi Valley throughout the spring and summer, acted to flush the Mississippi Sound with a vigorous flow and

therefore saved that portion of coastline from the same fate experienced by the Louisiana salt marshes located to the southeast, where significantly more oil washed not only onto the barrier islands, but behind them into the protected bay areas.

Other Lessons Learned

Regardless of our personal perspectives and preconceived attitudes, none of us were prepared for the lessons learned when we made the trip to Ship Island and witnessed the clean-up process in person. While we were there, we spoke directly to BP-employees, all of whom were Gulf residents who had other careers until the oil spill. Some were oil rig workers, while others were contractors, caterers, and fishermen. All of them revered these very barrier islands, and worked tirelessly throughout the summer and fall, often at less than half of their previous salaries, to clean the oil from the shores of Ship Island and others. Their personal stories, their powerful observations and diligent efforts to remove the oil soaked sand highlighted the human side of the oil spill in ways not previously understood. For everyone we spoke to, and although the oil spill was clearly disheartening to their way of life, it was surprising that their emotions were not focused on BP or Halliburton. Instead, their efforts were focused on the recovery effort. They viewed the oil spill as an incredible accident and put no stock nor value in pointing fingers at anyone, except maybe the federal government and regulations that they viewed as slowing and hindering the clean-up process. Perhaps the resiliency learned from Hurricane Katrina had transcended this oil spill after all. Having already dealt with some critical questions after Katrina—why me, why us, and why now?—it was clear that with or without oil life would go on in the Gulf Coast. We learned through their actions and comments that they are a gritty, resolute people who deal with adversity head-on and with unwavering determination.

We learned first-hand that they didn't wait for assistance; it's clearly not in their nature. Whether it was from outfitting docked shrimp boats with oil booms, or through the use of common kitchen tools to sift oil and tar from sand, when they were presented with a problem of such magnitude, they found strength in their community and used the resources they had at hand or repurposed others in innovative ways.

Yet however proud, they were also humble, welcoming, and hospitable. This was one of the most endearing lessons we learned. Uttered by more than one member of the clean-up crew, it became clear that our presence was appreciated. Even though we were a distraction to their work, they openly shared of themselves and their time. When they learned our story, they expressed a sincere gratitude for our willingness to make the journey from Pennsylvania to serve their communities and even thanked us for visiting Ship Island. They extolled our efforts to become better informed. It took us by surprise that they found the efforts of a group of college students to be important and vital to their effort. It showed them that others cared. However minor we thought our contributions were, our very presence signaled our motivation to learn first-hand about the reality of the oil spill as it impacted the people and environments of the Gulf Coast. Our experience was real, unedited and unfiltered by the lens of a reporter whose perspective may or may not have been objective. And for our efforts, we were the beneficiary of an important life lesson: through community action comes hope and through community comes optimism for a better tomorrow.

Whether we contributed to recovery efforts directly, or indirectly, this service-learning experience helped AFB participants understand the full-scope of our own actions in the Gulf Coast, even though we live so far away from the region. Although we consume petroleum resources,

and therefore must accept some responsibility in the Deep Water Horizon spill, we also appreciate that we have the moral obligation to be educated about the ways our choices impact and impair our environment and, by extension, the health of our communities culturally, socially, and politically. As the fifty three students and six faculty members who participated in the AFB continue on our own journeys through life, each of us must be a driver of the same positive change which we witnessed during our time in Mississippi. Whether through elementary and high school visits, online blogs, retooled classroom lectures, campus newspaper articles, a student symposium, other service projects, or even this very article, all of us have been transformed and have been inspired to share our experiences with our own communities. And although the impact of second-hand information can be somewhat muted, the stories speak for themselves. As one student remarked after attending the AFB student experience symposium, "it was the single most interesting, engaging presentation involving students that I have attended on campus. I was absolutely awestruck by the students' stories and thoughts about the experience they had in Mississippi." From this comment it is clear that the students who participated in AFB have been profoundly transformed by the stories of the people they encountered, by the landscapes they explored, and by the symbols of spirit, renewal and strength they witnessed over the course of the trip. AFB participants volunteered more than 700 hours of service in a community previously unknown to them. As time and the environment take their relentless tolls, our individual contributions may be forgotten. Yet, for all of the student and faculty participants, the service-learning experience created a productive learning community that will be remembered for a lifetime. As the students expressed in their own words: "\$23,000 raised, 2,100 miles driven, 700 hours of service-learning, 59 volunteers, one vision: learn, serve and pass it on, AFB 2010 = priceless."



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The Osprey Sentinel. As if it was assigned the job, this osprey sits on the branch of a dead tree and looks southward across the flat, over-washed spit at the western end of Ship Island. His curiosity and attentiveness piqued ours. We soon learned what it was studying so intently: on the Gulf side of the island, a crew, no less than forty strong, was engaged in clean-up of the oil spill. It was almost as if the osprey understood and appreciated their efforts. Like the inspiration we drew from the Friendship Oak, we drew great inspiration from this sea hawk.

TRADING TIME FOR TIME DOLLARS: THE POTENTIAL OF TIME BANKING AS A COMMUNITY BUILDING TOOL

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“Service is the rent we pay for living.” (Mariam Wright Edelman)

For those interested in building community and strengthening social networks, Edelman’s quote brings into view both a path we can take to achieve a better quality of life and the obstacles that prevent us from doing so. If we take Edelman’s “living” to mean the good life—healthy neighborhoods and strong communities—then to achieve it we must serve others. Unfortunately, as many of us are well aware, social squatters (those who do not actively contribute to their community) do not pay rent, and their continuous draw on our community resources have left our neighborhoods, towns, villages, and cities in social disrepair. Spectators do harm; they consume culture while others “do it.” Time Banks are membership organizations that trade services for a community currency called Time Dollars; these Dollars can then be used to buy services from the Bank/membership. This article discusses Time Banking within the context of the cultural challenges noted above and points to the opportunities that Time Banking holds for individuals and communities.

Putnam’s Call to Action

Robert Putnam tackled the problems associated with the social squatter in his book *Bowling Alone*, published in 2000. He argues that in recent decades “we seem more engaged with one another as friends than as citizens” (97). His work points to a decline in civic engagement since the 1960s, a drop in what he calls “social capital.” The relationships that we have within a community of others have value; they “affect the productivity of individuals and groups” and foster “norms of reciprocity” (2000, 20). The value found in these mutual obligations between community members is social capital. The goal is to eliminate the stranger among us. Social capital allows citizens to resolve collective problems more easily; it greases the wheels of social interaction and makes us aware of the many ways in which we are dependent upon each other.

Of the explanations offered by Putnam to describe the recent decline in civic connectedness, differences between generations is the most important. The “long civic generation,” those born between 1910 and 1940, reached its peak population in the 1960s. The “boomers,” their children, born between 1945 and 1965, and by far less civically minded than their parents, represented three quarters of the population in this same period, far out numbering their parents (2000, 255). The differences in generational behavior, Putnam notes,

Hints that being raised after WWII was a quite different experience from being raised before that watershed. It is as though the postwar generations were exposed to some anticivic x-ray that permanently and increasingly rendered them less likely to connect with the community. (255)

What about the Second World War, and the years that led up to it, had such a dramatic effect upon the lives of those born after it? If you are old enough to remember this period, you remember the conditions of life. For the rest of us, we have only books, films, and stories from our parents or grandparents to guide us in imagining such a world. National unity brought on by this war reinforced civic-mindedness; it “brought shared adversity and a shared enemy,” and “intense patriotism nationally and civic activism locally” (268). Eighty percent of this generation served in the military; it was the “most leveling event in American economic history” (271). In comparison, the generations that followed lacked great collective events to unite them. Generations that followed were fed by mass production, and therefore material consumption. However, the consumption of material goods is, in the end, not deeply satisfying. It does little to connect us as social creatures; rather, the consumption of material goods separates us.

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Generational differences, coupled with a growing peer culture, worked to distance children from family. The family no longer provided the reflection children needed to understand themselves; they now looked to their friends and peers more than any other generation in American history (Mintz 2009). Yet Mintz points to what he calls a “fundamental paradox.” As we moved to prolong and sentimentalize childhood, creating institutions that supported the steps/stages of childhood, which further separated them from adults and segregated them among other age groups, children became “more tightly integrated into the consumer society and more knowledgeable of adult realities” (383). As a culture, we cut off opportunities for children to have relationships with adults other than their family or teachers, and replaced these personal guides with overly structured activities, toys, and games that denied imaginative play. The result was a deepening contradiction between the child as a dependent juvenile and the child as incipient adult. This contradiction has confused and stressed the generations of children that followed the baby boomers, setting the stage for violence to self or others, or both. In all of this, perhaps, the sense of purpose to life was also lost. The title to Mintz’s book, *Huck’s Raft*, is symbolic: the raft itself represents childhood, and the wild river represents life. Huck Finn had Tom for support and guidance; he looked out for him. Every child, Mintz argues, needs a Tom. Growing up without such relationships makes the process much more uncertain and turbulent.

As Putnam shows, those born during the 1970s and 1980s were three or four times more likely to commit suicide than previous generations (262).¹ He points to social isolation and rampant individualism as sources for this trend: we spend more time alone and have fewer, weaker, and more fluid friendships. Drawing on the work of psychologist Martin Seligman, Putnam explains:

More of us are feeling down because modern society encourages a belief in personal control and autonomy more than a commitment to duty and common enterprise. This transformation heightens our expectations about what we can achieve through choice and grit and leaves us unprepared to deal with life’s inevitable failures. Where once we could fall back on social capital—families, churches, friends—these no longer are strong enough to cushion our fall. (335)

In the end, Putnam calls for a “moral equivalent of war” (276). “Creating (or re-creating) social capital,” he argues, “would be eased by a palpable, national crisis” (402). In the absence of such a structural meltdown, however, we must begin to work within the conditions we have at the moment. We need to be “civically creative,” “innovative,” and “ready to experiment” (401–403). And what we are in no short supply of, I argue, is our ability to be creative and innovative. But Putnam cautions us: “We should be wary of straining our civic inventiveness through conventional filters” (401). Solutions to the problem of social capital in the twenty-first century may not fit the traditional mold

of programs and policies. We should consider all ideas, even those that, as Putnam notes, are “initially preposterous” (401).

Time Banking and Social Capital

Readers of Putnam wishing for a clearer path to building social capital within communities will find the ending of his book a bit disappointing. Absent is a check-list of steps to take, or even a laundry list of practical ideas that have widespread relevance to communities of all kinds. As he admits, this was not his intention. Toward that end, he offers six spheres to focus our attention: youth and schools; the workplace; urban and metropolitan design; religion; arts and culture; and politics and government. Among the strategies offered for each of these spheres he calls on us to help create “networks that bridge the racial, social and geographic cleavages that fracture our metro areas,” and to help make the internet “social capital friendly” (408–410). Fortunately, there is an initiative that does all of this and more; it is called *Time Banking*.

Time Banking was the invention of Civil Rights lawyer Edgar Cahn. In the 1980s, in the face of cuts in government spending to social welfare programs, Cahn saw both a challenge and opportunity for change. As noted on the TimeBanks USA website, “If there was not going to be enough of the old money to fix all the problems facing our country and our society, Edgar reasoned, why not make a new kind of money to pay people for what needs to be done?” (2010). Time Banking is considered a complementary, community currency system where a membership body trades services (hours) for Time Dollars. One hour of service, regardless of skill level, equals one Time Dollar. Time Banking aims to strengthen community and build social capital through relationship building and reciprocity.

For the reader to better understand Time Banking and its potential benefit to communities, a review of both its practicality and theoretical underpinnings is needed. In addition, a review of the Time Banking literature will be offered, with particular attention to the cross-cultural comparisons between Time Banking in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Purposes and Principles of Time Banking

What is the difference between Time Banking and traditional volunteering? Does the benefit of earning Time Dollars equal or exceed the cost of earning them? In essence, what makes Time Banking matter? These were the questions that plagued Cahn in the early years of developing his idea. What he was certain about, however, was that relying on the traditional market economy to fix our social problems—as opposed to the non-market economy of family, neighborhood, and community—did not work. Professional problem solvers who are paid to enact programs and policies for others in need do little to chip away at root causes. Like Putnam, Cahn saw how society had evolved into a system of social squatters, with the “doers” getting fewer and older every year. The structure that had evolved took on a life of its own. Cahn writes,

We are currently trying to fix the old operating system with specialized programs operated by professionals supported by money and operating within the constraints of the market economy. So we ask schools to take over the role of families, police to take over the role of neighbors, the healthcare system to function as a support system, and specialized, public interest advocacy groups to function as the equivalent of an alert, engaged citizenry . . . As we contracted out function after function, we left emotional ties, relationships, and values without function, without soil. And such values, it turns out, do not grow hydroponically. People need to be needed by each other in order to reinforce bonds of love and affection. (55, 116)

Put simply, Cahn saw society “consuming its seed corn” (182). The real solution, he believed, was the non-market or core economy. Referred to as the second economy or the invisible economy, the core economy is “where goods and services are produced and exchanged in transactions driven primarily by relationships (families and neighbors), emotions (love, gratitude) and values (parental, spiritual or civic obligations) that are non-monetary” (114). For Cahn, the key issue was *money*. In the market economy, money and market price are the sole acceptable measures of value. Scarcity increases value. On the other hand, if there is plenty of something, then its value declines. Also inherent in the market economy are injustice and economic disparity: the subordination of women and the exploitation of ethnic minorities and illegal immigrants subsidize our economic system. This subordination and exploitation breeds distance and isolation within the system; it certainly does little to unify the collective body.

Essentially, what Cahn calls for is a fundamental partnership between the monetary economy and the core economy. Rather than continually leaning on professional problem-solvers to meet social needs through programs rooted in a market economy model, let us begin, “to enlist those whom we are trying to help as co-producers of the very results we seek to achieve,” something Cahn calls “co-production” (2004, xiii; see also Stephens 2008). Co-production empowers people—the same people that are generally excluded by the market economy (the poor, the disabled, the disenfranchised)—by including them in the process of helping others. From this perspective, time banking is the practical way of enacting and managing co-production. Not only are people valued through inclusion, but they also receive “real” value for their contribution of time through Time Dollars, the currency of community. As Cahn argues, “If you change the characteristics of money, you change the dynamics that flow from those characteristics—and in doing so, you redefine that range of the possible” (2004, viii). Time banking does just this: it changes the characteristics of money by placing value on people’s time spent helping others.

It should be noted that time banking and co-production are not just romantic notions tossed around at luncheons and workshops; it is not an academic exercise. There were 155 time banks in the United States in 2009 (eight time

banks in Pennsylvania alone), and over three hundred in the United Kingdom, where time banking and another type of community currency called Local Exchange Trading Scheme (LETS) have been institutionalized as part of the National Health Service (NHS) for more than a decade (see Seyfang 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; TimeBanks USA 2009; and Collom 2007). Recently, Catherine Needham noted that “co-production—also called co-creation—is gaining widespread attention as a way to improve public service provision in the U.K.” (2007, 221).² One of the reasons the United Kingdom is leading the community currency movement can be found in government. For the New Labor Party, “social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal have become policy buzz-words,” according to Gill Seyfang, a leading researcher and author on community currencies in the United Kingdom. It is the “dominant policy discourse” (Seyfang 2003, 699). “Social inclusion,” she continues, “is here understood to refer to the ability to exercise social, economic, and political citizenship rights, and social exclusion is the denial of those rights” (Seyfang 2002, 1). Culturally, too, there are great differences. Observers of Americans, past and present, have noted their attraction to independence, self-reliance, and materialism, and how money is the measure of success and power (Collins and Rushing 2003, 32). Britons, on the other hand, generally relish in small pleasures; they value quality of life, leisure time, and time spent with friends and family. Compared to their neighbors across the pond, “Americans often express a high sense of personal entitlement and a low sense of social obligation” (*Ibid.*, 32). These cultural differences are reflected in the types of time banks they develop. In the United States, time banks are less likely to be linked to larger, more formal organizations and are more likely to be run by neighbor associations, churches, or small non-profit organizations.³

The way time banks operate has changed a little over the years. Before the age of the internet, time banks were managed by a coordinator who acted as a broker for services. Members would tell the broker what he or she could do for others and what their particular needs were. Brokers wrote this all down on paper, reviewed the offers and requests for help, and made matches; they would place phone calls to each party and would make the introduction. After the service was received, the recipient would contact the broker, who would then put a Time Dollar into the giver’s account. Each month, the broker would mail out to all members an account summary, listing services given and received, as well as their current Time Dollar balance. As you can imagine, this process was labor intensive. Today, time banking is a cross between Facebook and online banking. TimeBanks USA, for a fee, provides an online database template (Community Weaver) that each time bank can personalize and develop for their specific use.⁴ Members fill out profiles online, complete with contact information, availability, identifying restrictions, and photos of themselves. Each member posts their requests and offers in the system and categorizes them within the following service areas: transportation, help at home, companionship, community activities, wellness, recreation,

education, home repair, and so on. When members are in need, they look within the category relevant to their need, make the contact, complete the service, and deposit the Time Dollar into the person's account. While the broker is not necessary to complete the transaction, they are still needed to facilitate connections and manage the overall organization.

The Value of Time Banking

Having understood the above, we are now prepared to answer the two questions that stumped Cahn as he was developing the time banking approach. First, what is the difference between time banking and traditional volunteering? Second, did the benefit of earning Time Dollars equal or exceed the cost of earning them? As one might guess, the benefits of time banking clearly outweigh the costs. One hour spent helping others not only provides a Time Dollar that a member can use to meet their own needs, but it also provides a great psychological reward. Time banks boost confidence; they promote feelings of belonging, of being needed and useful; they also offer members "a space for revaluing their work (perhaps giving it value for the first time), and for finding recognition and self-esteem for what they have to contribute to society" (Seyfang 2004, 68; see also Collom 2007 and 2008). Unlike traditional volunteering where help is seen as charity and the recipient is passive, time banking empowers both the giver (especially the giver) and the receiver. Some time bank members find a sense of purpose through their work. As one time bank member from the United Kingdom noted,

I think what it does for me; is it makes you feel wanted...when you're at work and feeling depressed, or sitting around the house, out of work, and feeling depressed, and somebody on the time bank asks you to come here and do something to help them, then you know you're a wanted person and nobody's going to forget about you. (Seyfang 2003b, 261)

Indeed, the physical and mental health benefits of time banking should not be underestimated. Putnam devotes an entire chapter to the relationships between social capital and health and happiness. He writes, "The more integrated we are with our community, the less likely we are to experience colds, heart attacks, strokes, cancer, depression and premature death of all sorts" (2000, 326). The logic is fairly simple: social isolation leads to stress and anxiety, which triggers the autonomic nervous functions (releases adrenalin and cortisol). Prolonged exposure to such conditions can lead to serious health problems (heart disease, depression, cancer, etc.).⁵ Social networks, as Putnam notes, can furnish tangible assistance (help with financial needs, supply transportation); they may reinforce healthy norms regarding smoking and/or eating habits; they may introduce one to first rate medical care; and they may even serve as a "physiological triggering mechanism, stimulating peoples' immune systems to fight disease and buffer stress" (327). In the United Kingdom, over half of the sixty four Rushey Green Time Bank members, for example, who presented symptoms of depression and isolation, were referred to the

time bank by their doctors, nurses, or other clinicians. The time bank itself was founded by a medical practice led by Dr. Byng. Many other time banks throughout the United Kingdom are situated within the health service system. In the United States, sociologist Judith Lasker published the first study that links time bank participation to improved physical and mental health. Surveying 160 members of a hospital-affiliated time bank called Community Exchange (CE), Lasker found that one in five believed that their membership led to improved physical health, and one in three believed that it led to improved mental health. Those reporting the most significant health gains were those living alone. But the most significant predictor of physical health gains, and a strong predictor of improved mental health, was attachment to the time bank, the sense of belonging to a collectivity of people who trust each other:

The fact that those who report gaining physical health benefits from participating in CE are highly attached to this organization, above and beyond the specifics of their transactions or any general health changes that occurred since they joined, suggests that this is a lot more than just a service exchange network. These participants are joining and creating a new community. (Lasker 2010, 10).

As we can see, time banks improve lives and strengthen community by establishing social networks that people can lean on for support and comfort.

Beyond the social, physical, and psychological benefits of time banking, there is also a significant economic benefit. Collom's research on a large, well-established time bank in the United States found that out of the 233 members who responded to the survey, 88% said their reason for joining was to "expand...purchasing power through an alternative currency" (2007, 40). This economic motivation was the strongest out of the thirty choices offered on the survey.

Equally important, but least understood among all benefits of time banking, is the civic/political benefit. As Cahn makes clear, there is a social justice perspective that underlines the time banking approach, one that strives for inclusion and equality. One interesting finding within the small but growing body of research on time banking is that time banks attract new people to volunteering. Of all the time banks in the United Kingdom surveyed in 2004, 51% of those who responded would not have taken part in traditional volunteering (Seyfang 2004). In another study from the United Kingdom, 28% of the membership reported getting more involved with other local organizations after joining the time bank (Seyfang 2003a, 703). The pattern that emerges here, and in other studies, is that time banking can be a gateway experience to civic involvement for some, and for many others, their only act of civic engagement. But who are time bank members? According to a two-year study of forty nine banks throughout the United Kingdom that Seyfang completed with Karen Smith, "Time banks are successfully attracting participants from socially excluded groups. This includes people in receipt of benefits, from low income households, retired people, the disabled, those

with a long term illness, women and non-white British ethnic groups" (2002, 2). Comparing time bank member demographics with those of traditional volunteers, time banks were made up of more women, 67% compared to 52%; they had more retired members, 42% compared to 19%; time bank members were more likely to not be in formal employment, 72% compared to 40%; and they were more likely to have a household income of under 10,000 pounds (\$15,000), 58% compared to 16%. While demographics for time banks in the United States do not yet exist, what research there is suggests that there will be some parallels with the United Kingdom. Of the differences, though, U.S. time bank members, generally, will more likely be white and have a higher education, part of what Collom calls the "disenfranchised middle class" (2007, 57). Seyfang argues, "Time banks provide a space for the articulation of values which do not fit into the mainstream economy, they challenge existing values and social structures of work and income, and offer a glimpse of an alternative" (2002, 6).

Conclusion

When reflecting back on what has been written above, it is not a stretch to say that time banking works. The benefits are slowly revealing themselves as we beat the bushes with surveys and evaluation projects, and the impact on individuals and communities is, overall, quite positive. But to make a time bank work, it also takes a lot of work. In Collom's work on a large U.S. time bank, he found that 83% of those who responded said that "time" limited their participation; they were simply "too busy" (2007, 42). Yet time, according to Putnam, is not the most significant variable. In fact, the pressures of time, financial strain, and a two-career family explain roughly 10% of our civic disengagement (Putnam 2000, 283-284). What stands in front of us, I argue, is choice. It is far easier for us to choose something else other than community. The long civic generation did not have a choice before and during the Second World War. The limitations of their lives shaped them; it leveled their expectations. There are no forces pushing us to choose the core economy—our friends, our families, our neighborhoods—over the market economy today. Indeed, there are more incentives to choose the latter over the former.

Putnam is right about many things, but by far, the most important sentence in his book, I believe, is this: in the end, what we desperately need to bring us back to center is a "moral equivalent of war" (276). I do not know what it will look like. I do not know when it will come. But something will come; there is no doubt. The path that we are on is unsustainable. Rather than back stepping in a time of crisis, let us do some of our homework today. Let us begin to build the networks we need to support us in times of tragedy. Let us work to strengthen our families and our neighborhoods now. Join a time bank. Build a time bank. Choose community! Cherish the benefits of time banks today, and find comfort in knowing that they will be there for you tomorrow.

ENDNOTES

1. As of this writing, it is hard to pick up a local paper without reading about young people taking their lives, often killing others before they kill themselves. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, "Between the mid-1950s and the late 1970s, the suicide rate among U.S. males aged 15-24 more than tripled (from 6.3 per 100,000 in 1955 to 21.3 in 1977). Among females aged 15-24, the rate more than doubled during this period (from 2.0 to 5.2). The youth suicide rate generally leveled off during the 1980s and early 1990s, and since the mid-1990s has been steadily decreasing." ("Facts and Figures: National Statistics," accessed on November 22, 2010. http://www.afsp.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.viewpage&page_id=050fea9f-b064-4092-b1135c3a70de1fda).
2. In a somewhat related thread, as of November 11, 2010, in what some might argue a punitive move, there is pending legislation from Downing Street, dubbed the "claimant contract," that, if approved, will require community service for those on social welfare ("New Rules on Jobless Benefit: Say No to Job, Lose Your Cash," 2010). While this new policy was not crafted with co-production in mind, it will be interesting to see, if it is approved, what, if any, benefits develop.
3. To date, very little is known about time banking in the United States. Researchers Ed Collom and Judith Lasker recently surveyed all time bank programs in the U.S. for their upcoming book entitled "Equal Time, Equal Value: Building Healthier Communities through Time Banking." This book will be published sometime in 2011-2012.
4. To tour the software and learn more about TimeBanks USA, visit <http://www.timebanks.org/software-tour.htm>.
5. In 2008, California Newsreel produced a seven part documentary entitled "Unnatural Causes." The film series explores socio-economic and racial inequalities in health; it highlights how the conditions of community can have lasting effects on your physical and mental health. To learn more about this film, visit <http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/>.

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FROM PATHWAYS TO PORTALS: GETTING TO THE ROOT OF A PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITY

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"I am a resident of Cabrini Green and I want to continue to live here forever. We care about Cabrini Green because it is a part of us. That's why I say that Cabrini is just like one big family. Just like any other family, we've had our disagreements, but we've been through everything together. To break up our family is just wrong, and I can't let that happen. . . . I have always had a dream that I would be able to raise two children of my own in 1230 N. Larrabee St., teaching them just as my father has taught me. . . . I know that justice will prevail—which is why we will never give up. We will come together and fight to get our buildings back. We've lost three of them, and don't plan on losing any more." (Maurice T. Edwards, Jr.)

In this impassioned plea, made in the wake of the implementation of the urban renewal initiative, the *Plan for Transformation*, Chicago public housing resident Edwards, Jr. pinpoints the heart of the relationship between self and place within the city's public housing neighborhoods. Not simply a space to sleep, play, and dwell, Cabrini-Green is something more, "it is a part of us." Taking Edwards's statement as a guiding philosophy, this essay explores the socio-spatial interconnections that exist and that have always existed between members of Chicago's public housing community and their lived environment. This focus stems from the phenomenological belief that people and place are synergistically intertwined. As Edward Casey states in the Preface to his influential book on the subject, *The Fate of Place*, "To be at all—to exist in any way—is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be *in* some kind of place" (1997, xi). In other words, people do not exist separately from the world they live in, but instead are "immersed" in it. This existential feeling of environmental immersion, what Martin Heidegger terms "being-in-the-world," is the basis of place experience (1962). Today, in Chicago's public housing neighborhoods, the intimate relationship between people and place is changing.

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is currently in the late stages of a ten-year urban renewal initiative that will see the city's high-rise housing projects replaced with glossy mid-rise, mixed-income accommodations. Upon completion, the fifty three high-rise buildings that once marked a gray and red slash across Chicago's inner-city skyline will be a distant memory. Ordered to pack up and leave not only their homes but also lifelong friends and support networks, many residents have, quite literally, had their roots yanked from beneath their feet. While there are many meanings ascribed to place—symbolic, political, topological, and imaginary to name but a few—social associations are perhaps the strongest. This is particularly true for residents of public housing for whom depending on neighbors to watch their children when they go to the store because they cannot afford childcare, or borrowing food from friends when they don't have the funds to buy their own, proves fundamental to the formation of place-based collective bonds. This dependence has been confirmed by Sudhir Venkatesh and Isil Celimli who claim that seventy-six percent of all Chicago public housing tenants' social networks are comprised of other project inhabitants. If they could, roughly seventy-five percent of all displaced CHA families would return to their old neighborhood (2004).

Nicola Mann is a PhD candidate in the Program in Visual and Cultural Studies at the University of Rochester, New York. She will defend her dissertation entitled "The Death and Resurrection of Chicago's Public Housing in the American Visual Imagination" in April 2011. Mann's investigation draws on the interpretative practices developed by the disciplines of film- and television-studies, art history, spatial theory, and community activism studies in order to investigate the destructive nature of late twentieth- and early twenty-first century popular visual representations of Chicago's public housing (1970-2010).

Through iconographic and polemical uses of natural imagery, painter Kerry James Marshall and installation artist Daniel Roth critically respond to this social displacement. Marshall's and Roth's central motifs of flower-laden 'pathways' and watery garden 'wells' not only map the physical configurations of streets and busy thoroughfares that existed within Chicago's public housing neighborhoods, but also illustrate the deep-rooted, rhizomatic social interconnections "inside" these places. Edward Relph conceived the use of "insideness" as a conceptual means to describe the degree to which a person or a group of people belongs to and identifies with place (1976, 141). Framed by the path and portal spatial motifs, I utilize the concept of "insideness" as a way to allegorize the deep-rooted, place-based networks of social attachment present within Chicago's public housing neighborhoods. Divided into two sections, this article employs the work of Marshall and Roth to chart and explore the attachment of public housing dwellers to their living environment and the threat that the *Plan* poses to this relationship; it also considers the current desire of some residents to safeguard community landmarks against the threat of demolition.

The first artwork I consider, Marshall's *Garden Project* series (1994-7), presents a historicized vision of the inter-laced social relationships that existed within Chicago's Stateway Gardens, Rockwell Gardens, Altgeld Gardens, and Wentworth Gardens housing projects during the mid twentieth-century. The multi-layered spaces (both literally and symbolically) of the paintings portray public housing as an Edenic paradise. Golden rays from a lemon-yellow sun lick the sky, plastic-wrapped Easter baskets speckle the well-tended lawns, and storybook bluebirds bearing festive scrolls fly this way and that, toting messages from 1950s- and 1960s-style ads such as "There's More of Everything," and "Bless Our Happy Homes" (Figure 1). Often dismissed as ironic, mock-naïve evocations of everything the high-rise projects are not—beautiful gardens—Marshall's nostalgic vistas are more complex than this paradoxical assessment permits. The organic connective symbologies at play in the artist's artworks replicate a very real history of collective practices within public housing. The pathway motif, present in all the *Garden Project* paintings, comes to symbolize the socio-spatial infrastructure of reciprocity so prevalent within Chicago's public housing neighborhoods during their lifetime.

While Marshall's paintings invite the viewer to an interpretive walk along its pathways, Daniel Roth's *Cabrini Green Forest* (2004) installation beckons her to step off this horizontal plateau and immerse herself in place. Roth's exhibition, installed at the Donald Young Gallery in Chicago in 2004, includes faux documentary evidence of a mythic forest that exists within a secret underground pathway connecting the Metropolitan Correctional Facility in the city's Loop with the Cabrini-Green housing project. The central motif in Roth's installation is a fiberglass well, or, as the artist refers to it, *Portal* (Figure 2). This reflective gateway invites the gallery visitor to cross the threshold to the subterranean world and explore the

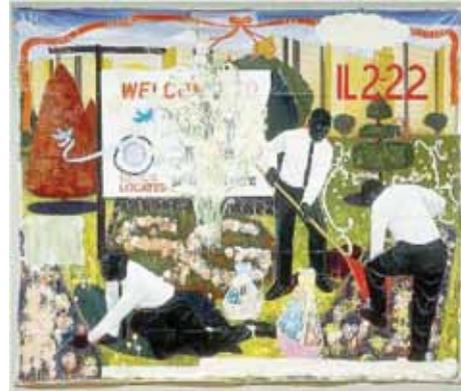


Figure 1: Kerry James Marshall, *Many Mansions*, 1995. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.



Figure 2: Daniel Roth, *Cabrini Green Forest (Portal)*, 2004. Courtesy Meyer Riegger.

unseen catacombs below. Like a modern day Jules Verne, Roth accepts the *Portal*'s invitation, returning from his mission with a selection of hand-written texts, wall drawings, and sculptural forms. Through these minutely detailed artistic testimonies, we learn that the land beneath Cabrini-Green is a labyrinthine terrain of twisted roots and thorns. While Marshall portrays mid-twentieth-century public housing as a dreamy paradise, Roth jolts us awake into the present day with an artistic interpretation of the socio-ecological trauma of urban renewal. Via the exploratory *Portal*, viewers become temporary "insiders," a position that allows them to appreciate the actions of some tenants striving to preserve community landmarks against the threat of urban renewal.

Through an analysis of the social turmoil caused by the impending demolition of a community landmark within Cabrini-Green, I argue that public housing should be recognized as more than simply bricks and mortar. For some, social clubs, beauty parlors, ball-courts, and mom-and-pop stores serve as sites of what I call usable memory. They are places where residents reminisce about their deeply rooted past, utilizing this historical attachment to place to unite and prevent the uprooting of community

landmarks in the future (Brooks 1918, 338).¹ Today, this community is rising up to defend their turf. Taken together, the *Garden Project*'s nostalgic pathways and *Cabrini Green Forest*'s mythic underground portal provide interesting models through which to consider not only the history of socio-spatial interconnections in the projects, but also as vehicles through which outsiders can appreciate insiders' attachment to place.

Pathways

Kerry James Marshall's journey began the day he was born in a public housing project in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1955. It was against this backdrop that Marshall spent his childhood years as a witness to some of the Civil Rights era's most pivotal moments. Inspired by this experience, Marshall became an artist, moving to Chicago in 1987 where he has lived and worked to great international success ever since. The nerve center of this artistic achievement is a tiny studio overlooking the recently demolished Stateway Gardens housing project on Chicago's South Side. From this vantage point, Marshall has witnessed a period of public housing history recently defined as a "dysfunctional mess" (Hunt 2009, 5). Chronic underfunding has meant that basic systems—elevators, roofs, building heat, trash collection—regularly failed, while budgetary turmoil during the 1990s left the CHA in managerial disarray. Concentrations of poverty reached acute levels, and in 1995 Henry Cisneros, secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, reported to congress that CHA projects comprised eleven of the fifteen poorest communities in the nation. The experience of being a participant in and, later, a front-row spectator to some of the twentieth-century's most appalling examples of racial discrimination presented for Marshall "a real sense of continuity and awareness of the problems of the existence of black people in America" (Marshall 2000, 20). For Marshall, the key problem is the issue of misrepresentation; too often residents are seen as a direct reflection of their failed living environment.

A chance experience on Chicago's Dan Ryan expressway on his way to work during the early 1990s led Marshall to channel this interest in the ill-treatment of public housing into the *Garden Project*, the artist's most critically acclaimed series of works to date:

So I'm getting off the expressway everyday and I see this sign, WELCOME TO WENTWORTH GARDENS. I look around Chicago and I see that there are three other housing projects called 'gardens'—Stateway Gardens, Rockwell Gardens, Altgeld Gardens. I started the project as a way of contrasting the popular notion of what a garden is supposed to be with the popular notion of what we understand housing projects to be. (Kennedy 1995, 86)

Contrary to "popular notions," the projects are literally (in terms of community beautification projects) and metaphorically (in terms of rhizomatic community interconnections) gardens. Having spent his formative years in public housing, Marshall possesses a wealth of memories

that bear witness to a sense of community and individual responsibility to the maintenance of one's surroundings. The artist describes how, at the age of eight, he gained access to collectively owned garden tools, which he used to tend the family's yard. Life in the projects, Marshall insists, "wasn't different than being in a house, except we paid less rent" (Keegan 1995, Section 5). Yet Marshall's paintings are in no way rose-tinted autobiographical accounts that nostalgically crave a return to more innocent times. Rather, the manicured lawns and pastoral splendor of Marshall's paintings complicate dominant media-based "popular notions" of the projects as ruinous, dangerous, and socially fragmented environments.

The artist deconstructs this one-dimensional framing by never letting the viewer forget that this painted portrayal is an investigation, not a recreation, of the real place. By rendering the projects' inhabitants against a cardboard cutout utopia filled with powder-puff clouds and gilded with synthetic summer sunbursts, Marshall calls attention to the falseness of our narrow image of them. The artist depicts a place at once mythic and unambiguously in order to complicate how we "see" public housing. Painted between 1994 and 1997, *C.H.I.A.*, *Better Homes Better Gardens*, *Many Mansions*, *Untitled (Altgeld Gardens)*, *Watts 1963*, *Our Town*, and *Past Times*, speak directly to the artist's desire to re-imagine the history of Chicago's public housing in the American visual imagination—as places that lived up to their pastoral names:

What I wanted to show in those paintings is that whatever you think about the projects, they're that and more. If you think they're full of hopelessness and despair, you're wrong. There are actually a lot of opportunities to experience pleasure in the projects. There are people whose idealism hasn't been completely eradicated just because they're in the projects. A lot of people who live in the projects have a Disney-esque view of the world, *in spite of everything* that's going on there... And the bluebirds and happiness, the sun shining so bright—all of those things are a fantasy of happiness. A fantasy of happiness that's not necessarily an impossibility (Reid 1998, 45).

Many Mansions (Figure 1), for example, depicts Stateway Gardens (1955-2007) during its formative years. Brightly colored baskets containing stuffed toys welcome arrivals to the new high-rise housing complex, while the slender outlines of a swing and a climbing frame scatter the meticulously manicured gardens. Center-stage within this vision, three men tend the soil, fashioning a flower monogram, "SG," to define the fertile land on which they stand. Above them in large stenciled letters, Marshall emblazons "IL 2-22"—the official designation of the public housing site in the State of Illinois—across the looming high-rise buildings in the distance. This organic symbiosis between gardens and high-rises contests "popular notions" that, as Marshall points out, tend to exclusively associate gardens with bucolic golden-hued country settings and public housing with alienating, concrete high-rise architectural monstrosities (Coyle 1993,

23).² By presenting the actions of residents working on or in place, *Many Mansions* transfigures this city/nature dichotomy and recognizes an immersion and interconnectedness between people and place, and subject and object. In other words, the artist re-imagines public housing as what Yi-Fu Tuan terms a “middle landscape” (2000, 25). Elaborating on this concept, he writes, “Between the big artificial city at one extreme and wild nature at the other, humans have created ‘middle landscapes’ that, at various times and in different parts of the world, have been acclaimed the model human habitat.... They show how humans can escape nature’s rawness without moving so far from it as to appear to deny roots in the organic world” (24-25). *Many Mansions*’s three central figures attest to this reading, reproducing the sentiments of many residents who testify to the importance of the cultivation of flowers within community spaces in the formation of neighborhood consciousness.

From the CHA’s early years in the 1950s to as recently as the late 1980s, flower competitions were fundamental to the creation of social solidarity within Chicago’s public housing (Figures 3 and 4). Elizabeth Wood, who presided as the Authority’s Executive Director between 1934 and 1954, initiated the competitions as a way for residents to take ownership of their land, and to feel a sense of permanence and responsibility for their living environment. Not simply a way of beautifying the neighborhood, the contests became a means of developing social networks. Henry and Elouise Messiah who lived in Dearborn Homes from 1950 until 1954 remember, “The flower shows brought tenants from various housing sites around the city together” (Fuerst 2004, 92). Beyond the flower competitions, community efforts ranged from organizing informal social gatherings with neighbors, to providing neighborly support such as information sharing, errand running, and child care, to organizing more formal resident-initiated service programs including reading and study groups, fire-prevention and education programs, and organized sporting activities (Figure 5). Recently, Mindy Fullilove has termed this kind of integrated, multi-dimensional social network—the near environment within which we find food, shelter, safety, and friendship—a “mazeway.” Fullilove writes:

We love the mazeway in which we are rooted, for it is not simply the buildings that make us safe and secure, but, more complexly, our knowledge of the “scene” that makes us so. We all have our little part to play, carefully synchronized with that of all the other players: we are rooted in that, our piece of the world-as-stage. (2004, 19)

Through the efforts of the community mazeway and events like the flower competitions, residents transform empty physical space into symbolically significant places that reproduce the values of its inhabitants. In other words, place becomes a fusion of spatial perceptions and social interactions. As Relph writes, “The existential crux of place experience is to be on the path—to belong to and

identify with the place” (Relph 1976, 14). To be on the same “pathway” as our neighbor, or to employ Fullilove’s analogous term, “mazeway,” constitutes knowledge of a physical environment as much as it comprises a group’s lived experience. Marshall’s *Garden Project* bears witness to this socio-spatial dynamic through the compositional motif of a pathway.

Our Town, *Pastimes*, and *Better Homes Better Gardens* feature roads that cut through Marshall’s neighborhood, virtually spilling out onto the spectator’s lap. The path in *Better Homes Better Gardens* emerges from a steep vanishing point in the background, escaping into the lower foreground amongst the domestic detritus of a summer croquet game (Figure 6). Marshall’s dense compositional trail engages the viewer unswervingly, inviting the spectator to walk through the space alongside two teenage lovebirds. White puffs dangle like halcyon harbingers above their heads, recalling the oral testimonies of housing project residents who say that this is where they found their “place.” Frank Reed, a long-term resident of Cabrini-Green remembers: “Looking back, I realized that I grew up in a neighborhood. Our Cabrini row houses were a community” (Marciniak 1986, 90) (Figure 7). Furthermore, the muddy brown disc of the flowerbed on the left-hand side of the painting deliberately echoes, in terms of both scale and theme, the dark circular shadow underneath the two figures on the opposite side of the canvas. Marshall’s “mirroring” technique speaks not only to the “rooting” of Reed within his lived environment (as user, creator, and product of this place), but also—through the inclusion of the flowerbed “W” monogram—a sense of spatial belonging and territoriality. Marshall’s painting symbolizes the most profound level of place experience or what Relph terms “existential insideness;” a state in which place is entrenched in one’s daily reality. This condition elicits a sense of absolute identity with a place, of appreciating unreservedly “this is where you belong” (Relph 1976, 55). Yet, somewhat paradoxically, this sense of belonging or “rootedness” does not necessitate stasis. Lips sealed and eyes alert, the couple in *Better Homes Better Gardens* head out into the world, helped by the careful addition of a garden hose in the bottom right foreground, which acts like a hook beckoning them along.

Indeed, whether crossing a street, standing outside a building waiting for a ride, congregating at a back yard gathering, or just gazing at their children from the kitchen window, the figures in Marshall’s works appear to be on their way somewhere. Like the pathway in *Better Homes Better Gardens*, the road in *Our Town* connects the image to the spectator’s own community or “our town,” indicating that this neighborhood is not as isolated as we are often led to believe (Figure 8). Amidst decorative curlicues of festive ribbons and bluebirds of happiness, a mother wishes her children off into the day. The thought balloon from the young girl’s head connects with the chocolate-box home like a dream, while her gaze points out of the frame of the canvas and into the world outside of the projects.



Figure 3: CHA Archives, Trumbull Park, 1951. Courtesy of the CHA.



Figure 4: CHA Archives, Cabrini-Green, 1981. Courtesy of the CHA.



Figure 5: CHA Archives. The 8th Annual Al Carter Black Olympics, Cabrini-Green, September 1984. More than 930 contestants took part in the Olympics which included a double jump rope contest, relays and races, softball, and a tumbling team. Courtesy of the CHA.

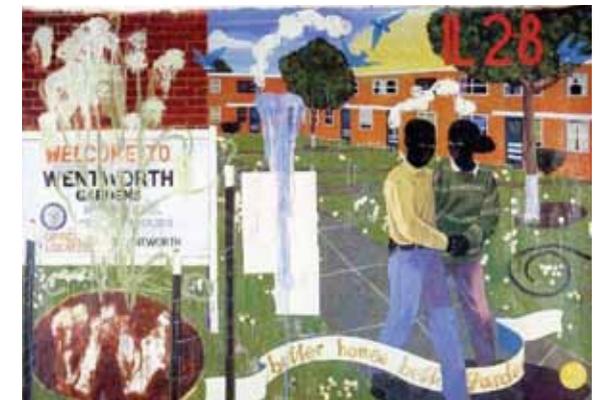


Figure 6: Kerry James Marshall, *Better Homes Better Gardens*, 1994. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.



Figure 7: Image from the Chicago Historical Society of Ida. B. Wells Homes in Chicago. Courtesy of the CHA.

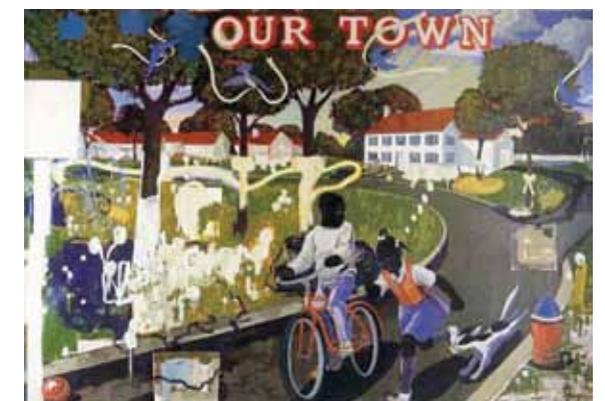


Figure 8: Kerry James Marshall, *Our Town*, 1995. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.

From an experiential perspective, the front door, or rather the home behind the front door, comes to signify the epicenter of human place experience (Figure 9). According to Relph, the home is “the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community, the dwelling-place of being” (1976, 39). It is the “central reference point of human existence,” as well as “the point of departure from which we orient ourselves and take possession of the world” (20, 40). As the girl in *Our Town* departs from this metaphorical starting block, she echoes the lived experience of ex-public housing resident Gwendolyn Duncan Alexander, one of the first people to move into Mother Cabrini Homes in 1943. Alexander recalls an inherent sense of mobility in the projects: “Cabrini was ideal because I was free to go anywhere I wanted” (Fuerst 2004, 212). Residents achieved this sense of freedom—albeit contained freedom—via the points of social contact encountered along the community maze. Maude Davis, who moved into Altgeld Gardens in 1949, remembers: “You felt free to go into your neighbor’s house, free to ask your neighbor for anything, because they were always sharing and giving.... We freely shared toys, whatever we had. Altgeld is where I learned to ride a bike. And it was on someone else’s bike” (137). As an analytic device, the speed connoted by the motion of Marshall’s bike suggests that orientation in public housing is constructed out of the order of the body *in situ*, negotiating urban pathway structures and integrated community networks. Marshall’s forked road motif gestures not only towards the reality of being free to explore the supportive maze of one’s near environment, but also to the paradox of this spatial situation. Despite their “immersion” in place, some residents were free to experience the world “outside” the projects.

The adolescent figure in *Untitled: Altgeld Gardens* is in a similar state of motion to other characters in the *Garden Project* series (Figure 10). Resting on his hands and knees on a purple blanket, he faces the viewer and seems to be in transition between reclining and rising. To one side, a white chimney leaks threatening blood-red stains onto a sundial with the letters AFDC (Aid to Families and Dependent Children). Here, Marshall acknowledges the



Figure 9: Children on front steps of their home, Altgeld Gardens, c.1940s. Courtesy of the CHA.

very real danger and violence that came to affect many young project residents. According to a data report by the *Chicago Reporter*, during the late twentieth-century, black male public housing residents between the ages of fourteen and nineteen years of age were seventeen times more likely to become involved in illegal activities than young white men of the same age (Laury 2007). Nevertheless, much like the forked road in *Our Town*, the crossroads behind Marshall’s adolescent figure seems to imply the variety of socio-spatial options available to him: to choose a path that leads to a life of crime and bloodshed or to choose a more original option. Located at a line of demarcation between Altgeld Gardens and the viewer, the teenager is therefore a gatekeeper between the worlds of past and present, life and death, housing project and the world outside. Listening to a radio that blares, “Our day will come and we’ll have everything,” Marshall’s figure has already made his choice. Specifically, the figure’s posture of predestination corresponds with the painter’s own experience as a former resident of public housing. In numerous interviews over the years Marshall has described how, as a child, he pleaded with his mother to let him stay late after school to leaf through his teacher’s prized scrapbook, which contained colorful postcards from exotic lands far away. When asked about what influence these early experiences in public housing had on his career, the artist responded, “it seemed like there were signposts all over the place saying, ‘Artists this way....’ Everywhere I went I met the perfect person to get me to the next level” (Reid 1998, 42).

Marshall’s successful career has taken him one step further than his teacher. His art has been included in many exhibitions including the 1997 Documenta X, the 1999/2000 Carnegie International, and the 2003 Venice Biennale. Marshall is not alone in his success. Award-winning singer and actor Jennifer Hudson, jazz musicians Curtis Mayfield and Jerry Butler, boxing champion Pernell Whitaker, and Governor of Massachusetts Deval Patrick, all spent their formative years as residents of Robert Taylor Homes on Chicago’s South Side. President Obama recently nominated U.S. Circuit Judge and ex-public housing resident, Sonia Sotomayor, for a seat on the Supreme Court. Describing her childhood in a recent article for the *New York Times*, Sotomayor identified the Bronxdale Housing project as the “launching pad” for her success (Alvarez and Wilson 2009). Obama, too, named the judge’s “extraordinary journey” in life as one of the main reasons for choosing her as a nominee (Lacayo 2009). Drawing strength from the Bronxdale Housing project community maze, Sotomayor is a success *because of* rather than *in spite of* her public housing roots.

Marshall’s survivalist agenda extends to the most critically celebrated of the *Garden Project* series, *Many Mansions* (Figure 1). The painting borrows from the powerful X-based composition of *Raft of the Medusa* (1819) by the French Romantic painter Theodore Géricault (Figure 11). Géricault’s painting depicts the Algerian immigrant survivors of the ship *Medusa*, which floundered off the west coast of Senegal in 1816. Specifically, the painting captures

a moment recounted by one of the survivors when, prior to their rescue, the passengers tried to signal to a ship on the horizon. It disappeared, and in the words of one of the surviving crewmembers, “From the delirium of joy, we fell into profound despondency [sic] and grief” (Riding 1993, 77). The ship, the *Argus*, reappeared two hours later and rescued those who remained. This incident was the result of mismanagement and became a liberal cause célèbre in France when the survivors were able to tell their stories. In his compositional selection, the artist acknowledges that during the mid to late twentieth-century public housing was “abandoned” by housing authorities across the country. Despite initially improving people’s lives by providing subsidized housing for low income urban families, over time these ideals were distorted by the implementation of repressive housing policies, underfunding, and mismanagement. By the late 1960s, Mayor Richard Daley had withdrawn crucial services like police patrols and routine building maintenance from Chicago’s public housing, which resulted in the neglect of elevator repairs, the vandalism of lobbies and corridors, and the use of stairwells as garbage dumps. By 1975, President Nixon placed a moratorium on public housing construction, which expanded waitlists for tenancy at existing, deteriorating developments. Ten years later, President Reagan reduced federal funding for public housing maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction from \$35 billion to \$7 billion annually. Many residents also insist that the CHA stopped screening tenants by the 1970s, which increased the presence of ex-convicts, gang members, and drug users. Cabrini-Green resident Wanda Hopkins recalls: “I think they just gave up on us” (Whitaker 2000, 121).

By choosing to base his composition on a painting where the main protagonists *survive* institutional neglect, Marshall re-imagines public housing as a place of endurance and hope. Raised on the shoulders of his comrades, the central black protagonist in *Raft of the Medusa* extends his arm out of the canvas (and on to survival) via a light-filled diagonal axis, which stretches from lower left of the canvas up to the horizon in the top right. When applied to the historical context of *Many Mansions*, Marshall’s artistic reference not only implies that survival in the projects is utterly dependent upon a supportive group dynamic, but also that this group is led by a determination to breakthrough ascribed framing devices. By breaching the painting’s metaphorical “frame” of expectations, the “survivors” of *Many Mansions* demand that we look beyond the narrative of neglect and despair most often ascribed to public housing’s history: to re-imagine the projects as a place of perseverance. Indeed, “in spite” of shared hardships and political abandonment, many residents have survived life in the projects by developing resilient bonds of community and networks of mutual support. Far from damaging the community infrastructure, obstacles actually solidified and enhanced place-based bonds. To put it spatially: the higher up the buildings go, the deeper the bond of the community within. Marshall pursues this idea with the least known and yet most intriguing of his paintings, *Past Times* (Figure 12).

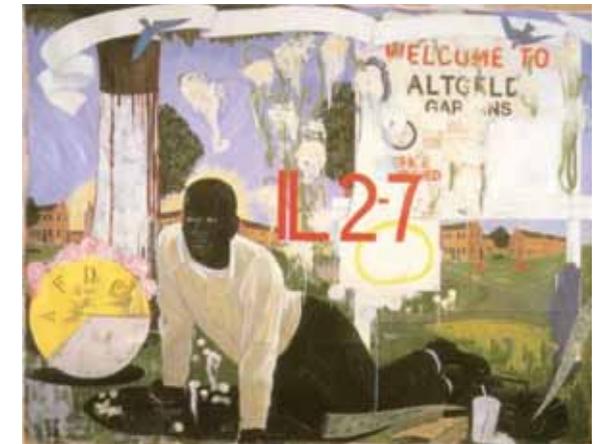


Figure 10: Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (Altgeld Gardens)*, 1995. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.



Figure 11: Theodore Géricault, *Raft of the Medusa*, 1818-1819.

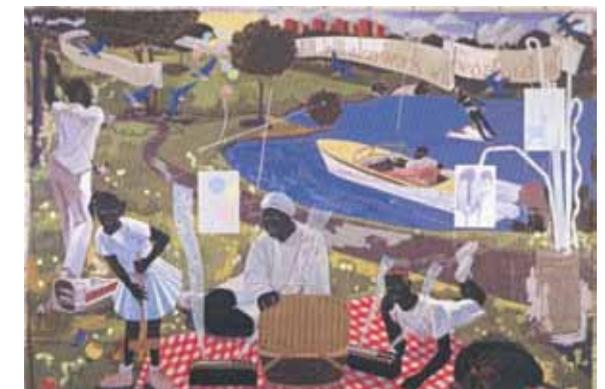


Figure 12: Kerry James Marshall, *Past Times*, 1994. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.

In *Past Times* Marshall revives the romantic social ideologies and symbiotic human/environmental harmonies present in pastoral paintings such as Giorgione's *Tempest* (c.1508) and Edouard Manet's *Dejeuner sur L'Herbe* (1863). In recalling these idealized landscapes, Marshall applies the vocabulary of what Dan Graham calls an ideology of "utopian forms that constitute a better or ideal society," a synchronization designed to unsettle viewer's expectations (1994, xvi). A father and son sit in a park listening to music; against an omnipresent flat blazing sun, African-American figures enjoy the stereotypically upper middle-class white pastimes of golf, croquet, boating, and water-skiing, a romantic vista that disrupts any easy claim to racial essentialism. Meanwhile, a narrow pathway traverses its way from the background to the fore of the painting, its starting place and target extending beyond the canvas frame. This volumetric formation (the distinct foreground, middle ground, and background) works temporally to spatialize the generational links between the father and son, emphasizing, again, how place experiences are time-deepened. While the father listens to Smokey Robinson's "Just my Imagination" (1971), the son's radio supplies Snoop Doggy Dogg's "Got my Mind on my Money and my Money on my Mind" (1994). As musical riffs evanesce into the air, Marshall emphasizes the important role music plays in defining not only historical periods, but also in preserving personal memories. Framed by the path motif, this spatio-temporal musical convergence of time—of then and now, father and son—signifies the sequential trail of memories provoked by the red brick high-rises in the distance. Set high on a hill like Cinderella's castle, the public housing building becomes a "memory palace," a place that functions as a visual cue, reminding the residents of their past and the past of their predecessors (Yates 1996, 22).³

Recalling Pierre Nora's definition of place as space where memory "crystallizes and secretes itself," *Past Times*, which was completed in the same year the CHA announced the *Plan*, embodies a particular moment on the pathway of public housing history (1989, 7). At the end of the path on the lower right hand corner stands a pot containing plant-like tendrils; from the ends of each leaf dangle crisp white sheets of paper. These blank canvases seem to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in a place where, despite the destructive effects of urban renewal, a sense of historical continuity persists. How do we frame, conserve, and represent the history and memories of a place that no longer exists? In the following section I offer a partial answer to this question via a discussion of the ways in which some current residents remain connected to their old neighborhoods through efforts to conserve community landmarks. When we think about it this way, memory of the past connects to hope for the future. As Mary Gordon puts it, "There is a link between hope and memory. Remembering nothing, one cannot hope for anything. And so time means nothing" (1995, 47). The preservation of a sense of place is, then, an active moment along the pathway from memory to hope, from past to future. If Marshall's blank canvases

pose questions about the preservation of a sense of place, then the spatial re-conceptualization provided by Roth's *Portal* offers, if not a definitive answer, then an alternate way of appreciating what it means to be *dis-placed* from one's memory palace.

Portal

Each project within the *Cabrini Green Forest* series involves the German artist's interpretation of a specific threat to place: tunnels lead to clandestine hiding places, concealed rooms disclose god-forbidden secrets, and isolated houses in the woods hold fearful suspicion. These "reconstructions," as Roth calls them, have been exhibited in locations including the Museum der Bildenden Künste in Leipzig, the Kunsthaus Glarus in Switzerland, White Cube in London, Artist Space in New York, and the Dallas Museum of Art (Berchem 2008).

A central motif common to all Roth's installations is a fiberglass well (Figure 2). Just as the legendary wardrobe provoked exploratory desire in the children in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, so Roth's physical and mental portal invites the viewer to cross this psychic threshold to explore the geographically and temporally distant world beyond: in other words, to immerse oneself *in* place. In *Cabrini Green Forest*, the *Portal* has been breached, the mine thoroughly quarried, and Roth has resurfaced from his excavation with a vast physical archive of documentary proof of the land below ground. Through a frenzy of hand-written texts, graphite wall drawings, sculptural forms, and architectural maps, we learn that the land beneath Cabrini-Green is labyrinthine terrain reminiscent of a Grimm's Brothers landscape. Drawings depict roots weaving in and out of the foundation of the high-rise public housing buildings above like a body's interior network of veins and arteries, while faint neuron-like graphite wall drawings trail over every inch of the gallery interior, like a rash on the architecture's skin (Figure 13). Roth intersperses these visceral two-dimensional drawings with lumpen wooden sculptures, placed like petrified anatomical specimens around the gallery (Figures 14 and 15). Roth's *underground* wilderness and the trove of

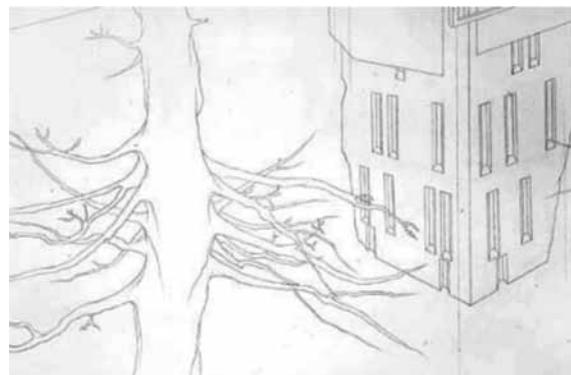


Figure 13: *Cabrini Green Forest (Bender-Rieger), 2004, Wall drawing of the Correctional Facility: dimensions variable. Courtesy Meyer Riegger.*



Figure 14: *Daniel Roth, 2004. Courtesy Meyer Riegger.*

corporeal relics retrieved from within succinctly illustrate the very real rhizomatic socio-spatial interconnections that exist *above ground* within Chicago's public housing neighborhoods. The artist's omission of figures reinforces the inexorable interconnections between place and dweller within public housing. In the *Portal* and *Cabrini Green Forest*, both conjoin to give way to a larger "mazeway" of place identity.

Beyond Roth's archive of mazeway memorabilia, other elements of the exhibition suggest a contested underground pathway at odds with the world above. The organic vestiges, which one can initially read as evidence of utopian communitarianism are, upon closer inspection, bound just a little too tight. Woven bark sculptures sprout like daggers from the gallery's whitewashed frame, leaving clumps of dirt on the floor like the casualties of a well-fought battle. In another section of the exhibition, the limbs of tree branches pierce a wall, seemingly resistant to Roth's quest to take the underground-forested path *over-ground*.

In making clear the relationship between bodily trauma and the site specificity of the Chicago housing project, Roth identifies a current conflict, which is all too real in the hearts and minds of many Cabrini-Green residents. Motivated by the racial and socioeconomic differences that have alienated the predominantly African-American population from their city neighbors since the 1970s, the CHA is razing its projects and replacing them with mixed-income accommodations. During the inception of the *Plan* in the mid 1990s, the tenants' elected Central Advisory Council negotiated a relocation rights contract providing that all lease-compliant families had a right to return to their rehabilitated communities upon completion of the new accommodations (Snyderman & Dailey 2002, 5). Unfortunately, while over six thousand Cabrini-Green residents were moved out with a Housing Choice Voucher (which caps rent at thirty percent of income), fewer than one hundred public housing families moved back into the mixed-income community (Bebow and Olivio 2005, 1). Instead, according to the Chicago Housing Authority Choice (CHAC), a group helping track relocated families, ninety-three percent of displaced residents have settled in communities that are majority African-American and seventy-five percent in neighborhoods that are considered struggling, high-poverty areas (1).



Figure 15: *Daniel Roth, 2004. Courtesy Meyer Riegger.*

Yet, for some residents, the trauma of this move pales in comparison to the ordeal of separation from the community mazeway. Their mazeway is replaced by a trauma Fullilove refers to as "root shock":

Root shock is the traumatic stress reaction to the destruction of all or part of one's emotional ecosystem. It has important parallels to the psychological shock experienced by a person who, as a result of injury, suddenly loses massive amounts of fluids. Such as blow threatens the whole body's ability to function.... Shock is the fight for survival after a life-threatening blow to the body's internal balance. (2004, 11)

Just as the body has systems to maintain its internal equilibrium, so, too, the public housing resident has ways to maintain the external balance between herself and the world. The erasure of one's socio-spatial infrastructure represents the fragmentation of some of the essential components of residents' group identity leading Fullilove to refer to urban renewal as "an amputation by the city of its own flesh" (11). For example, Seward Park, which is located in the shadows of the Cabrini-Green high-rises, has undergone a recent facelift. While the park once provided a space within which to exercise and meet up with friends, in 2005 the Chicago Parks Department privatized the space, implementing fees to access the sports facilities, thereby rendering access prohibitive to most Cabrini-Green tenants. Resident Jason Smith laments the loss of this space, "Those (basketball) courts brought the community together... All of this thrown out for condos" (O'Connor 2008, 93). Meanwhile, a Blockbuster, Starbucks, and the grocery store Dominick's replaced a New City YMCA and, "When Blockbuster and Starbucks arrive," says resident Deidre Brewster, "You *know* the writing is on the wall" (Smith 2004, 74). For Brewster and many other Cabrini-Green residents, this writing spelled the erasure of their homes, their surrounding neighborhood, and their lives as they once knew them.

Some tenants have not reacted passively to recent changes, however. In fact, many residents have made concerted efforts to act as caretakers of community landmarks and to maintain and renew place identity within public housing. Displaced residents remain connected to their old neighborhoods by returning to attend public housing

building reunions, commonly referred to as “Old School” parties, while children who have established trusting relationships with teachers and friends commute for miles to attend schools around their old projects. Faced with the demolition of his home, lifelong Cabrini-Green resident and Heneghan Wrecking Co. demolition worker, Kenneth Hammond, maintains his attachment to his childhood home by preserving pieces of its architecture and offering them to others for comfort (Kelly 2005) (Figure 16). This activity exemplifies Fullilove’s assertion that the relationship between home and dweller is like that of “Siamese twins, conjoined to the locations of our daily life such that our emotions flow through places, just as blood flows through two interdependent people” (2004, 10). This fusion of subject (Hammond) and object (home) illustrates the all-enveloping nature of insider platial experience. Imbued with sounds, smells, and feelings of moments shared, Hammond’s life is recorded on the walls of his former home, insinuated into the space by life. In the chapter “Intimate Experiences of Place,” Tuan argues that this profound relationship with place is a multi-sensorial experience, which involves “our whole being, all our senses” (2001, 146). Hammond’s collection of architectural remnants is therefore a physical embodiment of human attachment to place, a synthesis of subject and object to such a degree that they each constitute a meaningful part of the other.

Roth’s physical archive of remnants signal an absence caused by the disorientation of root shock and the desire of some residents to attach themselves to the material dimensions of their past. Roth employs the gallery’s white-washed walls as a planar frame upon which to stage this sensorial mental tussle. Dangling precariously like the central pulse of a metronome, the walls proffer woven roots and twigs as if inviting the viewer to take hold of physical elements of this place. Rendered as permeable membranes, the walls become a corporeal frame within which to reflect the resilience of a community striving to “hang on.” As if drawn by a powerful centrifugal force, the jutting limbs of tree branches pierce the porous crust of the wall like fingernails pushed deep into pale flesh. The branches symbolize the platial rooting of public housing, and, in turn, bear witness to the efforts of residents who utilize the position of their home or business as a territorial tactic in defiance of the *Plan*. Indeed, while most community landmarks in Cabrini-Green have succumbed to the influx of homogenous chain stores, some, like the owners of Strangers Home church, are determined to remain rooted and preserve their existence against the threat of an external force.

Squeezed amongst the new mixed-income developments, Strangers Home church has stood as an anchor of attachment to the residents of Cabrini-Green for over sixty years (Figure 17). In 2008 the church was put up for sale, sparking a concerted effort on the part of the Chicago Public Art Group to preserve its architecture for the surrounding community. The graying, weathered mural, which decorates its exterior walls, symbolizes this



Figure 16: Cabrini-Green, 2006.



Figure 17: Strangers Home Missionary Baptist church, Cabrini Green, 1975. Courtesy James Prigoff.



Figure 18: Detail of the Strangers Home church. Courtesy Chicago Public Art Group.

attachment to place. Entitled *All of Mankind: Unity of the Human Race* (1972), the mural by acclaimed muralist William Walker comprises a pantheon of political martyrs and heroes lost to atrocities and violence. Framed by circling doves, names including Martin Luther King Jr. and Medgar Evers appear under the heading “We Mourn Our Loss.” Already famous for his work on other Chicago murals such as the South Side’s *The Wall of Respect* (1967) and the Near North Side’s *Peace and Salvation* (1970), in 1972 Walker was invited to represent the “love and unity” (Sorell 1991) of Cabrini-Green on the side of one of its

most important community symbols, the church. The fact that the mural has remained untarnished by graffiti in thirty-five years is testament to the high esteem with which the surrounding community regards it. The mural is a textual marker of place, connecting current Cabrini-Green to its vanishing past.

This mediation between past, present, and future extends to Walker’s compositional choices. The lack of foreshortening in the mural removes depth and therefore temporality, thereby situating the past—specifically, residents’ memories of the past—firmly in the present (Pounds 1998) (Figure 18). This is a formal manifestation of what Marianne Hirsch has termed “postmemory,” described as the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic experiences that preceded their births (2002, 86). Moreover, Walker illustrates what Hirsch terms “written-in” memory: “The writing...is both written in *memory*, out of one’s memory, and *written-in* memory, a memory inscribed on the skin of the image itself, as a tattoo might be” (86). The names “written-into” the mural relate to the persistence of the church as a locus of collective social memory. Presented on the same compacted surface, the names of greats from the civil rights era are entombed, like artifacts of usable memory, in the here and now, as if to symbolize the tumultuous times in which the mural was painted and to inspire ongoing political mobilization.

Much like the narrative temporality embodied in the mural, Roth superimposes time *onto* place, rendering photographs, maps, and notes on the flattened plane of the gallery walls, thereby suggesting the ways in which memory can be built into the fabric of a place. Like the historical depths embodied in the trans-generational musical notes in Marshall’s *Past Times* painting, so the archival remnants in Roth’s exhibition, which transect and overlap with sinewy wall drawings, suggest that memories are like markers on an infinite timeline where no point is any more important than the next. In this sense, Hammond’s piece of concrete and the mural are instrumental material parts of this framework that, while unimportant as singular archival artifacts, are vital when considered as part of larger historical connections to place. For what binds together the memories of public housing residents is not the fact that they are contiguous in time, but rather the fact that they are synchronized with a whole ensemble of physical and social structures common to the community (Connerton 1989, 36). When residents recount how “we” worked together to overcome past obstacles and “we” achieved unexpected successes, they reinforce this sense of historical connectivity. This community collectivism corresponds with David Harvey’s assertion that, “Community activism can be a very important moment in more general mobilization. In this context we have to think about the construction of community not as an end in itself but as a moment in a process” (Harvey 1997, 24). For instance, in its black and white state, Roth’s photograph of a Chicago railroad tunnel indicates Cabrini-Green’s relationship to a wider historical story (Figure 19). While the names on the mural call to mind a sequential trail of memories, the

photograph invites the viewer to imagine the volumetric formation of the history surrounding the housing project. As an analytic device, the speed connoted by the motion of train as well as its position on a track, or path, suggests that this story is ongoing process, not a onetime event.

In sharing this story within the public forum of the Donald Young gallery, Roth’s exhibition serves to highlight a particular historical moment on this path, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense of memory being torn. Laid out on pedestals and hung at eye view, as opposed to the gallery standard sixty-two inches, the exhibition objects demand close analysis. Yet, the maps are un-coded, photographs dateless, and drawings so faint they are barely comprehensible. For Roth, frail contour lines, muddy footprints, and fragments of a half-life suffice; the rest he leaves for the viewer to fill in. Digging through the relics, the artist suggests paths through which the enlightenment *can* be found if you choose to look hard enough. In this sense, Roth’s *Cabrini Green Forest*, like Walker’s mural and Marshall’s *Garden Project* series, makes an urgent call for the social topography of Chicago’s public housing and its history to be deciphered and recognized as a valuable cultural asset.

This conversational theme extends to the experience offered by Roth’s centerpiece, *Portal*. Paradoxically, the aerial perspective at which the viewer approaches the well seems to deny any potential dialogue. The bird’s-eye-view is, of course, metaphorically associated with a surveying gaze and a comprehensive yet reductive overview of place. In Roth’s installation, however, the bird’s-eye-view is a locus of questions rather than definitive answers. Through its reflection, the *Portal* collapses and fuses the distance between the body of the spectator and the water’s surface, thus perspective loses its stance and we view and enter Roth’s underground world at the same time. Roth’s dissolution of space symbolizes the breaking down of distance and objectivity, and represents the possibility of subverting the conventional paradigm of Chicago’s public housing space. In other words, the outsider *deconstructs* the social and ideological differences separating public housing from



Figure 19: *Cabrini-Green Forest*, detail, Black and White photograph 37 x 48.5 inches. Courtesy Meyer Riegger.

the rest of the city, in turn creating an extended space of enlightenment. Finding themselves in this unlimited space of socio-spatial illumination, the viewer transcends “outsider” status and acquires what Relph terms “empathetic insideness”: a chance to meet the moment of feeling and seeing that residents like Maurice T. Edwards, introduced at the start of this essay, know firsthand (Relph 1976, 54-55).

Edwards’s rally cry for the preservation of his home highlights the need for open portals of communication between residents and the CHA. By asking the viewer to recognize public housing as a site of social interconnections—“it is a part of us,” as Edwards says—Roth generates a dialogue absent throughout its history and during the planning stages of the urban renewal initiative. For example, Mayor Daley proclaimed that Cabrini residents’ viewpoints will be heard throughout the entire decision-making process only *after* announcing the *Plan*. As Richard Wheelock, of the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago states, “The best of Cabrini Green has been totally ignored. The community that exists there has not been involved or taken into account in the planning process” (Kamin 1997, 65). Resident Deverra Beverly confirms this feeling of exclusion: “Transformation can work as long as they get input from those that live here. I have a problem when *outsiders* don’t make sure those who live here have input. To them it’s a job. With us, it’s more than a job” (Muhammad 2008, 8). In other words, residents should have been *actively involved* in the design of the *Plan* instead of having the plan forced upon them.

Cabrini Green Forest offers no definitive answer to these problems as such; instead, through a series of pathways of contemplation it provides an alternative way of seeing and appreciating the social interconnections that exist and have always existed within Chicago’s public housing community. The *Portal* proposes a reality “through the looking glass,” inviting dialogical intervention and awareness of one’s own positionality within the process of urban renewal. In this sense, Roth’s topographic fictions offer public housing residents and vicarious gallery goers alike the chance of a new beginning. In depicting Chicago’s public housing as a multi-layered landscape, Marshall’s *Garden Project* series and Roth’s *Cabrini Green Forest* invite non-public housing residents to re-imagine housing projects as sites of spatial contiguity and place-based identity, and to recognize its endangered social institutions as places worthy of preservation. By taking us on a transcendental journey from outside to inside, Marshall and Roth challenge the myth often propagated on mixed-income accommodation billboard advertisements that “A COMMUNITY IS COMING SOON.” Marshall and Roth respond: A COMMUNITY IS HERE. In fact, as Edwards states, *it is a part of us*.

ENDNOTES

1. This term is in many ways derived from “usable past,” coined by Van Wyk Brooks. Both terms offer a way to codify one’s forbearers and to construct a cultural identity in the face of disruption or chaos.
2. For example, Daniel Coyle, author of *Hardball*, a book chronicling the fortunes of a Cabrini Green-based Little League baseball team during the early 1990s, emphasizes the environment’s physical harshness in his description of housing project: “From afar, each building appears to have been formed out of a single gargantuan brick and shoved end long into the earth. The only signs of life come from the windows, many of which display shades, greenery, or in a few cases, lace curtains. Many others, however, are burned out, empty, hollow” (23).
3. In 1596 Matteo Ricci devised the technique of the “memory palace.” It is a mnemonic link system based on places and the architecture in places that allows a person the means of committing large quantities of information to memory.

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SOCIAL NETWORKING & VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

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Introduction

Social Network Sites (SNS) are increasingly transforming the lives of people across the globe. Facebook alone has 500 million active users, nearly two-thirds of whom reside outside the United States. Collectively, consumers spend more than eight billion hours per month on the site, and the average user has 130 friends. Sites such as MySpace and Facebook “allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others” (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007). Many SNSs have profile sections where users can mount their blog-type posts and upload their photos and even videos. Mutual links among users as displayed by SNSs facilitate interaction among the users at least on an informational level (boyd and Heer 2006).

The rise of social networking sites and other forms of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) has triggered a fierce public debate about the long-term effects of these new technologies on social intercourse. On the one hand, many researchers have documented the potential of CMC for establishing new types of communities and social networks. Others argue that these technologies have given more autonomy and self-reliance to the individual, thereby decreasing the interdependence and physical contact among people in corporeal space. As a result, there is the risk that individuals in the CMC era may live more as disembodied nodes solitarily attached to their computer monitors than as active social members of a human community. The research on the effects of CMC on community building is still in its infancy. Nevertheless, it is clear that the rise of computer-based social networks is forcing us to reexamine our most basic assumptions regarding communication and community formation.

Defining Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

Social networking sites (SNSs) are the venues and platforms whereby online social networking and virtual communities emerge. Boyd & Ellison define SNSs as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a

public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (2008, 211).

The main technical features of SNSs make it possible for users to display a personal profile and a controlled list of friends who are also members of the SNS. Sunden (2003, 3) believes that SNS users, via their unique personal profile pages, can type themselves into being. The mechanisms of SNSs enable their users not only to reinforce their existing face-to-face (FtF) relationships but also to create new relationships with complete strangers. Personal profile pages constitute an essential part of SNSs. The visibility of profiles varies by site and can be modulated by the user. Profiles on Friendster and Tribe.net, for instance, are searchable by search engines and thus visible to anyone. MySpace gives users the discretion to choose whether to make their profiles public or visible only to “friends.” Facebook takes yet another approach. Viewers of the same “network” can view each other’s profiles by default, unless the owners of the profiles set limitations on the visibility of the profiles. Boyd & Ellison (2008) believe that structural differences regarding access and visibility are a primary method by which SNSs distinguish themselves from competitors.

After establishing their profiles, users are encouraged to “weave” their networks by identifying those with whom they have ties in the SNS. The hyperlinked and cross-referenced lists of friends constitute a crucial mechanism by which SNSs help users expand their social networking. In addition, the intertwined connections are reinforced by users’ capability to leave messages on the profiles or “walls” of their friends. Although most SNSs are characterized by common features such as profiles, comments, friends lists, and private messaging, additional or extra capabilities vary greatly among SNSs. Some have photo- or video-sharing capabilities and embedded blogging. Others (e.g., Facebook and MySpace) support mobile interactions.

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While many SNSs target a broad audience, others aim at selected audiences or at least did so initially. For instance, when launched in early 2004, Facebook was open only to Harvard students (Cassidy 2006), and then expanded to include college students, and then high school students, and then offered access to everyone. For a long time, joining groups within Facebook required specific identification, such as ownership of appropriate .com email address for joining the corporate network. Some SNSs specifically and consistently cater to restricted audiences such as elite members of society. In terms of demographics, many SNSs restrict their target audience within populations of certain religious, linguistic, ethnic, political, or sexual backgrounds and orientations. aSmallWorld, for instance, only accepts members by invitation from existing members with defined privileges. BeautifulPeople is another SNS that puts restrictions on membership eligibility. Their membership policy states, "To become a member, applicants are required to be voted in by existing members of the opposite sex. Members rate new applicants over a 48 hour period based on whether or not they find the applicant 'beautiful.' Should applicants secure enough positive votes from members, they will be granted membership to the BeautifulPeople community." However, the demographics of SNS users certainly evolve, and SNSs often change their membership policies.

Defining the Virtual Community

Empirical evidence shows that CMC has proved to be a viable channel for the initiation and development of social connections. Wolak et al. (2002) surveyed a large national sample of U.S. adolescents and found that 14% of teenage respondents reported to have formed close online friendships, 7% of which extended into FtF meetings.

Scholars disagree on whether or not virtual communities share the authenticity of communities found in the physical world. Some believe that a virtual community lacks the geographical proximity or sense of place found in traditional communities. Others, however, assert that the distinctiveness of communities and, by extension, the boundaries of communities reside in the meanings which people attach to them, not in their structural forms. Scholars who support the validity of virtual community agree with Cohen (1985) that what really constitutes the essence of a community is not physical attachment but a shared spirit and affinity among networks of people (Ward, 1999). Fernback (1999) emphasizes the symbolic dimension of human community and asserts that "humans symbolically infuse their communities with meaning" that focuses on "substance over form" (209). A community's existence depends on "whether its members are able to infuse its culture with vitality, and to construct a symbolic community which provides meaning and identity" (Cohen 1985, 9). The virtual community is one that exists "in the connection between what social constructs the user imagines. Therefore, the CMC-facilitated virtual community is a real community where the communicators employ words on the screen to construct their identities, to decode others' identities, and to build a network of affinity via shared identities" (Fernback 1999, 213).

Social Capital

SNSs are attractive and popular for many because they help users create and maintain social capital—an important resource in interpersonal relationships. According to Coleman (1988), social capital refers to the "capital" or resources acquired and accumulated through the creation of relationships. When it comes to the processes of building relationships, the internet offers numerous advantages over the physical world. Cyberspace facilitates communication by reducing social restraints and certain indicative information (age, gender, race, physical appearance, and personal reputation) that may inhibit communication in FtF situations. SNS's ability to maintain a stable record of messages also serves to promote a sense of collective identity and group membership. The possibility to experiment with new identities may spur greater self-disclosure (Goh & Wijaya, 2007) and open new opportunities for interaction and friendships (Ho, Kluver, & Yang 2003). The flourishing of many social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter serves as testimony that the internet has been a powerful and successful agent in building and maintaining one's social capital.

Pros and Cons of a Text-based Virtual Community

If the virtual community can be considered as a genuine community, how does it compare with the FtF community? What are the strengths and weaknesses of a virtual community? According to the media richness theory, as advanced by Joseph B. Walther, the virtual community, much of which is text-based, would be judged as "media poor" as it possesses less immediate feedback, fewer cues and channels, and weakened personalization and language variety (1992). Due to the "media poverty" of the text-based virtual community, relationships formed in this environment may be weak, superficial, and impoverished, as compared with those formed in FtF communication. A virtual community thus may be of less relational intensity than a FtF community.

However, Walther (1992) argues that the "media poverty" of CMC and its consequent informational and relational poverty and uncertainty can be counterbalanced by other factors of CMC. Walther and boyd (2002) believes that the asynchrony and uncertainty of CMC may afford more space for communicators to craft their communication, fine-tune their own identities, and over-attribute affinity and intimacy with their communication partners. As a result, hyper-personal or super-strong relationships could emerge in CMC, if adequate time is invested. The media features of CMC may prove especially beneficial to certain groups of communicators, such as the elderly (Featherstone, 1995). Because of the disembodiment of the physical presence in text-based CMC, the elderly are enabled, if they so choose, to downplay certain aspects of their physicality such as age, appearance, mobility restriction, impaired speech, etc. As a result, the elderly may capitalize on their accentuated strengths and form via the internet strong relationships and companionship which they would find difficult in FtF interactions.

A study by Kanayama (2000), for example, demonstrates that senior male Japanese internet users find it easier to communicate with females through the internet. Kanayama (2003) posits that the factor of time may play an important role in constructing computer-mediated interpersonal relationships. Since users can keep, re-read, edit, and re-use their electronic messages, they are given more time to engage in various cognitive activities such as understanding, reflecting, empathizing, and imagining, all of which prove valuable in creating or maintaining healthy relationships. Once more, the asynchrony of CMC facilitates a more leisurely and manageable pace of communication, which can be pivotal to particular groups of communicators such as the elderly, as a more controllable pace of communication promotes adequate decoding of messages.

Impact of the Internet on FtF Social Networking

Some empirical studies (e.g., Kraut et al., 1998; Mesch, 2006) indicate that internet use can detract from one's efforts on social networking. Kraut et al. (1998) found that more time spent on the internet was correlated with declines in family communication and one's local social network. Greater internet use also tended to increase loneliness and depression. Mesch (2006) found that Israeli adolescents' internet use detracted from their closeness with family and was related with family conflicts. Other studies, however, have linked internet use with increased interaction with one's friends and family and with an enlarged local social network.

For individuals with social anxiety or who are otherwise isolated, the internet may even serve as a compensatory channel of communication. The internet's anonymity and relative lack of nonverbal and social cues help relax the anxious communicator. Individuals who experience restraint and nervousness in FtF communication find a new liberty in the virtual space (McKenna and Bargh 1999). Hu and Ramirez (2006) found that an individual's self-perception of lower social skills contributed to the desire to initiate online friendships. An empirical investigation by Stritzke, Nguyen, & Durkin (2004) revealed that when initiating relationships online, shy people experienced lower levels of shyness and sensitivity to rejection compared with their FtF experience. Bessiere, Kiesler, Kraut, and Boneva (2008) found that meeting people online helped to reduce depressive affect for individuals that have a limited social circle in their FtF communication.

However, other studies (e.g., Hu & Ramirez, 2006) did not support the social compensation hypothesis. Hu & Ramirez did not find that loneliness contributed to greater use of the internet for social purposes. The researchers' explanation was that the internet was still a relatively new media with which many have not acquired complete familiarity. As a result, internet use has not been fully utilized to satisfy people's need for social interaction and alleviation of loneliness. Another explanation given by the researchers was that the participants in their study were college students, a highly social group that rarely suffered loneliness.

Moody (2001) proposed that loneliness cannot be treated as a monolithic concept without discrimination among different types of loneliness. There may be two types of loneliness: social loneliness and emotional loneliness. Social loneliness emanates mainly from lack of a general social network while emotional loneliness results from lack of intimate relationships. Moody found that it was social loneliness rather than emotional loneliness that contributed to greater internet use. In addition, high internet use was found to be capable of alleviating social loneliness rather than emotional loneliness.

However, in terms of who is able to get the most from SNSs and CMC, it appears that "the rich get richer." That is to say that those who already have strong social connections and interpersonal skills tend to benefit the most from internet use in enhancing their social networking. Kraut, Kiesler et al. (2002) believe that existing social competence indicates an extrovert personality, which in turn contributes to internet use for the purpose of enlarging one's social connections. Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, & Smallwood (2006) reported that adolescents with more friends were engaged more often in instant messaging than those with fewer friends. Lenhart et al. (2005) found a connection between one's "buddy list" size and how long and intensely they use instant messaging. Hu & Ramirez (2006) found that there indeed was a positive association between an individual's sociability and his or her social use of the internet. Hu & Ramirez concluded that the distinction between online and offline social interaction is not that clear as has been suggested by the critics of social networking. People who communicate socially online do not demonstrate fundamental difference from those that communicate socially in FtF environment. Hargittai (2008) therefore concluded that use of SNSs and the relative lack thereof may contribute to a two-tiered social system. People with a larger existing social network who use SNSs more will have an increasingly larger social network, leaving those individuals who have a small FtF social network further and further behind.

The unique attributes of CMC can make this the preferred channel of communication among particular groups with physical restrictions, such as people who can't speak or hear well. Bowe (2002) reported that among deaf and hard of hearing Americans, the most popular medium of communication was CMC, particularly email and instant messaging. Beicastro (2004) indicated that CMC technologies enabled rural deaf students to overcome barriers suffered by traditional communication services. Studies by Austin (2006) suggested that computer-aided video conferencing helped create an environment that was socially inclusive for deaf students collaborating with hearing students.

Dynamics of Social Networks: Impact of FtF Communication Structure on Online Networking Behaviors

Just as social networking impacts one's relationship with the physical world, so too does one's social identity in real life influence one's relationships in cyberspace. Stud-

ies suggest that individuals in social networks tended to interact more frequently with those who shared a similar status in the real-life world. Indeed, Stefanone & Gay (2008) have concluded that the ultimate function of an online social network is to support existing interpersonal relationships and social structure when the online network was used in tandem with the communicators' FtF communication. However, as numerous cases of online support networks have shown, an individual's social network can exist completely online without the support of FtF contacts, though the latter if present may reinforce the former.

A person's existing offline network can affect his or her involvement with SNS. First, the size of one's existing FtF social network may lead to a greater need and desire for using SNSs. Research indicates that people use SNSs to connect with those in their existing FtF networks, rather than to initiate new relationships completely virtually (Ellison et al. 2007). Second, one's existing social network also influences which specific SNS an individual will use. As the old saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together," humans are no different in their propensity to associate with others that resemble themselves (Marsden 1987). As a result, individuals in the same FtF network also tend to congregate toward the same SNS to extend their FtF connections into the virtual space.

Impression Formation on SNS

Impression, perception, self-presentation, and impression management are all important factors in FtF communication. According to Tong et al. (2008), SNSs have put impression-forming information more or less beyond the control of the user. SNSs have introduced new types of impression-forming information, including messages left by the user's friends and SNS-generated statistics indicating the size of the user's social network. The internet's "Googling" capability to dig up all information about an individual available in the virtual space further puts impression formation beyond one's control (Ramirez, Walther, Burgoon and Sunnafrank 2002). Due to the new dynamics of impression formation in SNSs, Tong et al. (2008) believe that SNSs serve as an interesting venue to study interpersonal relationships and impression formation.

Walther's (1992) Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) claims that users in CMC circumvent CMC's deficiency in social and nonverbal cues by making more diligent use of the information available in CMC to facilitate their perception and judgment of other communication partners. Tong et al. (2008) used the term—"volitional cues"—to refer to the impression-forming information that is available in Facebook such as profile photos, textual self-descriptions, messages left by friends, and computer-generated information that indicates the size of the user's social network. Research has shown that wall postings by a Facebook user's friends certainly affect others' perceptions of this user. Such wall postings influence observers' ratings of the profile owner's credibility and social attractiveness. Wall postings that allude to the user's positive social behavior contribute to more positive

perceptions of the user, while postings that imply philandering and excessive drinking damage these perceptions. What affects the user's attractiveness is not only information that directly delineates the user, but also information that has an indirect connection with the user (Walther et al. 2008). For instance, the physical attractiveness of the user's friends (as visible from the user's wall) seems to affect observers' perception of this user's physical attractiveness as well. These dynamics of impression formation could be explained by Brunswik's (1956) Lens Model. According to the Lens Model, a social actor's non-behavioral clues leave residues in the environment of social interaction; observers avail themselves of such non-behavioral residues to derive inferences about the social actor's personality. A social actor's non-behavioral residues can be created intentionally or unintentionally, can originate from the actor or from others, and can be manifested in physical or virtual space (Vazire and Gosling 2004).

According to Tong et al. (2008), research regarding the impact of machine-generated information on impression formation has just begun. Such machine-generated information is rather varied, including, for instance, Facebook's automatically generated statistics indicating the size of a user's social network. Such automatically generated information may also impact observers' impression of a user as such information carries indications about a user's social status, credibility, and physical attractiveness. Automatically generated information about a user by an SNS may also carry connotations about the user's activities in that SNS such as whether the user's activities are normal or appear excessive.

Conclusion

The research on the relationship between Social Networking Sites and community building is still in its early stages, and scholars have yet to reach firm conclusions regarding the long-term social effects of the internet. One trend, however, appears clear. Our face-to-face and computer-based identities and social networks are increasingly merging. How this development will transform our visions of community and our desires for belonging remains unclear.

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GOOGLE IN CHINA: FINDING CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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As globalization continues to transform the world of business, companies that decide to expand into other countries are faced with many challenges. The markets in developing nations hold great promise; however, any company that wishes to operate in them must often overcome both relatively minor problems, such as dealing with cultural differences, as well as larger problems, such as serious human rights abuses. Google, the world's largest internet company, has to contend with both cultural differences and human rights abuses while operating in China. An analysis of Google's actions in China shows how creative solutions can be found to complex ethical problems.

The challenges Google has faced in China primarily stem from the Chinese government's controversial policy of censoring the internet. Censorship is currently enacted through what is officially known as the Golden Shield Project; however, in the West it is more often referred to by its unofficial nickname, the Great Firewall of China. This policy was enacted in 1998 and has drawn much criticism from Western governments and human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders (Clinton 2010; Amnesty International 2006; Reporters Without Borders 2009). Despite international pressure, the Chinese government adamantly supports the censorship, and in early 2010 it released a white paper addressing internet freedoms in China. In the white paper, the government spelled out its official policy, which is to block:

[Anything] against the cardinal principles set forth in the Constitution; endangering state security, divulging state secrets, subverting state power and jeopardizing national unification; damaging state honor and interests; instigating ethnic hatred or discrimination and jeopardizing ethnic unity; jeopardizing state religious policy, propagating heretical or superstitious ideas; spreading rumors, disrupting social order and stability; disseminat-

ing obscenity, pornography, gambling, violence, brutality and terror or abetting crime; humiliating or slandering others, trespassing on the lawful rights and interests of others; and other contents forbidden by laws and administrative regulations. (Information Office of the State Council 2010)

This policy is clearly broad enough that it gives China's Ministry of Public Security the power to block anything it wants.

The Chinese government often uses this power to quench criticism and suppress information about human rights abuses (Amnesty International 2006). In order to enforce the policy, China employs tens of thousands of people to monitor forums, chat rooms, and bulletin boards. It also filters all internet traffic coming into China from other countries and requires all internet companies in China to self-censor their content (Elgin and Einhorn 2006). Despite all of this, the Chinese government insists that "Chinese citizens fully enjoy freedom of speech on the internet" (Information Office of the State Council 2010). The censorship has certainly not affected demand for the internet among China's citizens; throughout the last decade the number of internet users in China has grown rapidly. In 2008 China became the country with the most internet users in the world, and by 2010 it had over 420 million users (China Internet Network Information Center 2010).

Given this huge and rapidly growing market, operating in China is of immense strategic importance for internet companies like Google. However, Google is also known for its strong moral culture and corporate mantra of "Don't be evil." Herein lies the ethical dilemma for Google: it needs to operate within China, but in order to do so it must obey the self-censorship policy that runs counter to its core values. In 2000 Google made its first move in the Chinese market by launching a Chinese version of

google.com (Schrage 2006). At that time the Chinese market was still relatively small; although google.com was operated outside the country, it was still able to meet its Chinese users' needs. In 2004 Google was criticized for the Chinese version of its Google News service. Google was omitting some sources that would be blocked by the Chinese internet filter from appearing on the Google News page within China (The Google Team 2004). Google responded that there was nothing they could do about these sites being blocked in China: if it included these sources, its entire Google News site might end up blocked. By 2005 the potential of the Chinese market was obvious, so Google opened a research and development (R&D) office in China (Google Inc. 2005). Its objectives were twofold: one was to recruit from the huge pool of computer science graduates in China, and the second was to build a team to develop products for the Chinese market (K. Lee 2007).

In 2006 Google's problems started when the company began receiving reports from its Chinese users about problems accessing and using google.com (McLaughlin 2006). The users reported that google.com was constantly slow, sometimes painfully slow, result pages had broken links, and the site was completely unavailable about 10% of the time. Google News was completely unavailable and Google Image Search only worked about half the time. Google determined that this was caused by ISP filtering. As a result of this bad user experience, it was rapidly losing market share to the Chinese search engine Baidu.com. Google decided that the only way to provide a good user experience in China was to launch google.cn. Google.cn would be hosted in China and subject to Chinese censorship laws, but it would provide a fast and consistent user experience to the Chinese. Google admitted that cooperation with the Chinese government on censorship went against its corporate values, but it justified the decision by pointing out that google.com would remain available and uncensored in China, that Google would alert users when a query was censored, and that providing some information was more consistent with its mission to organize the world's information than providing no information at all. It also expressed hope that by continuing to be a major player in China it would be able to exert pressure to lessen censorship.

Google's justification was not enough for critics who declared that Google was assisting the Chinese government in violating the fundamental human right of free speech (Reporters Without Borders 2006). Later in 2006, Google, like other major internet companies operating in the Chinese market, including Yahoo! and Microsoft, was called to a hearing before the Congress where their cooperation with China was compared to IBM's cooperation with Nazi Germany (U.S. Congress 2006). Google defended its position in the U.S. government and in 2009 had to defend its position to the Chinese government. Leaked U.S. diplomatic cables revealed that the Chinese government pressured Google to remove the link to google.com from google.cn after a member of China's Politburo Standing Committee discovered that google.com

was uncensored and searching for his name brought up results critical of him (Glanz and Markoff 2010). Google's staunch refusal to remove the link may have contributed to what occurred in early 2010.

In January of 2010 Google went public with the news that its servers had been hacked by a highly sophisticated attack originating in China (Drummond, "A New Approach to China" 2010). Leaked U.S. diplomatic cables revealed that the attack was coordinated by the Chinese government (Glanz and Markoff 2010). Google did not publicly accuse the Chinese government, but it did reveal that the objective of the attack was to access the e-mail accounts of Chinese human rights activists. Its investigation revealed that at least twenty other large companies had been targeted in the same attack and that e-mail accounts of other human rights activists that were compromised by means other than direct attack had been routinely accessed by third parties. As a result of this attack, Google's executives made the decision to stop censoring their searches on google.cn. They declared their intent to work with the Chinese government to reach a compromise; however, they recognized that violating Chinese law might require closing down google.cn or even their offices in China.

For several months Google remained in negotiations with the Chinese government, and on March 30, 2010 it announced that it would begin redirecting searches on google.cn to their Hong Kong-based site, google.com.hk (Drummond, "A New Approach to China: An Update" 2010). Although Hong Kong is part of China, it is not subject to the same censorship laws as mainland China. The Chinese government did not agree to this arrangement, and so a few days later Google changed from redirecting search results to providing a link on google.cn to google.com.hk. Google continued to offer other services, like Google Translate, Google Music Search, and Google Product Search from google.cn. The Chinese government apparently found this acceptable, and on July 9, 2010, Google announced that its Internet Content Provider (ICP) license in China had been renewed (Drummond, "An Update on China" 2010).

Although Google continues to operate google.cn and its R&D facilities in China, its conflict with the Chinese government has had a price. Today Google has only about 25% of the search market in China, compared to the 73% owned by its main competitor Baidu.com (M. Lee 2010). Google's CEO Eric Schmidt summarized the experience in China in an interview with Charlie Rose:

Rose: What did you learn from Google's experience in China?

Schmidt: The thing you learn about China is... Chinese citizens are very clever, very creative, and the Chinese government is very, very powerful.

Rose: So you didn't change government censorship policies by being there?

Schmidt: The evidence is clear that our entry did not alter censorship policies whatsoever. Negotiating, Charlie, doesn't work with the Chinese. (Rose 2010, 39)

Culture and Censorship

While Google and most Westerners roundly condemn the Chinese government's censorship as a violation of human rights and a tool to suppress debate and maintain power, the Chinese government strongly defends its position and it is supported by most Chinese. A series of surveys by the Pew Internet & American Life Project about internet use in China from 2000 to 2007 found that "over 80% of respondents say they think the internet should be managed or controlled, and in 2007, almost 85% say they think the government should be responsible for doing it" (Fallows 2008). Although there is a vocal minority, including Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo, that opposes the censorship policy, the apparent popularity of the policy among the majority suggests that there may be some aspects of Chinese culture that makes them view censorship favorably. As in the case of all cross-cultural conflicts, care must be taken to avoid the bias of the self-reference criterion, which is the unconscious reference to one's own cultural values (J. A. Lee 1966).

Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions offer an objective method of comparing cultural differences in regard to censorship (Hofstede n.d.). Hofstede's individualism scale measures how much a culture focuses on individuals and their accomplishments as opposed to an emphasis on group membership and loyalty to one's in-group. All Asian countries rank below average on this scale, indicating a collectivist society, and the Chinese culture ranks lower than any of its neighbors. Chinese culture expresses this through the concept of guanxi, a term that describes a complex network of influence which creates a strong aversion to conflict and an emphasis on harmony between all members of Chinese society (Robertson, et al. 2008). The government justifies the censorship of criticism by appealing to the need to maintain harmony between themselves and Chinese citizens.

A second cultural dimension that could affect the Chinese views on censorship is power distance. Power distance measures the level of acceptance of unequal distribution of power, and the Chinese culture has a much higher than average power distance (Hofstede n.d.). This means that in China power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of authorities, and questioning the authority's decisions is discouraged. This reflects the traditional Confucian values that prescribe a strict social hierarchy and emphasize complete fealty to those in authority that Chinese companies are apt to draw on when dealing with ethical issues (Lu 2009). The combination of collectivism and deference to authority probably contributes greatly to Chinese society's tolerance of internet censorship. As Robin Li, CEO of Baidu.com, said, "If the law clearly prohibits certain types of information, be it porn, or anti-government information, then I'm sure there's a reason for it" (Stone and Einhorn 2010, 63).

One final aspect of Chinese culture that is relevant to Google's problems in China is a tradition of Chinese ethnocentrism (De Mente 1993). For thousands of years China had the most advanced culture of any of its neigh-

bors, and at times the world. This led to deeply ingrained views that Chinese culture is superior to all others, that non-Chinese are barbarians, and that China has little to no need to interact with the rest of the world. Historically, this led to China being closed, sometimes completely, to trade for centuries. The industrial revolution has forced China to open up to the world; however, the ethnocentrism remains. Many Chinese strongly resent Western calls for reform and international pressure when it comes to issues like Tibetan or Taiwanese independence. A state-sponsored newspaper's characterization of United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's call for freedom of information on the internet as an attempt at "information imperialism" is indicative of the Chinese government's attitude (BBC News 2010). This pressure has created a situation where the Chinese government would lose face if it were to loosen restrictions on censorship and give way to the demands of foreigners. Thus, Chinese culture has created the conditions for internet censorship to remain entrenched in the Chinese government's policy for the foreseeable future.

As an American company, Google approaches the issues for censorship from an entirely different cultural perspective. According to Hofstede, America is the most individualistic country in the world. Individualist cultures do not shy away from conflict as do collectivist cultures. Therefore, Google has focused on the problem of censorship as a violation of the individual right of Chinese citizens to information. America also has a low power distance, signifying a willingness to challenge authority (Hofstede n.d.). Unlike the Chinese, Americans do not focus on harmony between citizens and government. In fact, Americans regard criticism of the government as a vital duty of its citizens for the maintenance of a healthy democracy. As inheritors of a philosophical tradition that focuses on the "inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Americans are much more likely to frame the issue of censorship as a violation of human rights. What a Chinese might consider a small sacrifice in the interest of peace and harmony, an American would see as a violation of the fundamental right to free speech. Combining these factors leads most Americans to the conclusion that since human rights are being violated by the Chinese government, the government is wrong and should be opposed until the situation is rectified. The disparate cultural attitudes summarized in Table 1 make it unlikely that any change in the underlying conflict over censorship will happen soon. Therefore, since Google is no longer willing to censor its searches, its options for providing search to mainland China are limited.

Ethics of Google's New Solution

Even though cultural differences are important, the situation involves a violation of a fundamental human right, and so its ethical implications must also be considered. Although cultural factors make American companies like Google focus more on the fact that the Chinese government's censorship is a violation of human rights, the Chinese government cannot use ethical relativism to

Table 1 - Culture and Censorship

China	United States of America
Collectivist – Rights of group most important	Individualist – Rights of individuals most important
High Power Distance – Unlikely to challenge authority	Low Power Distance – Likely to challenge authority
Views censorship conflict as a cultural difference	Views censorship conflict as a violation of human rights

Table 2 – Questions in Ethical Decision Making Models

Buller et al. Model	HKH Model
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is this situation high in moral significance? 2. Do I have a high level of influence over the outcome of the situation? 3. Is there a high level of urgency to resolve the situation? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the questionable practice (QP)? 2. Does the QP violate laws that are enforced? 3. Does the QP simply reflect a cultural difference or is it a potential ethics problem? 4. Does the QP violate the firm's core values or ethics code, an industry-wide code, or an international convention? 5. Does the firm have leverage to do business the firm's way? 6. Will doing business the firm's way improve practice in the host's market?

justify its actions (Donaldson and Dunfee 1994). Neither should Google appeal to the fact that censorship is required by Chinese law to justify its cooperation with the government (Dann and Haddow 2008). However, in some cases it may be appropriate for business to make moral compromises when cultural values conflict (Brenkert 2009). Therefore, it is useful to apply existing ethical decision-making models that combine both the cultural and ethical factors to evaluate whether Google is acting ethically with its current solution.

One model, proposed by Buller, Kohls, & Anderson (1997), gives a decision tree based on the three critical questions listed in Table 2. In answer to these questions Google's situation involves human rights violations and, therefore, is high in moral significance. Google's failed attempts to negotiate the Chinese government into allowing uncensored search shows that it does not have much influence over the situation's outcome. Finally, Google's decision to stop censoring search and the impending expiration of its ICP license led to urgency in resolving

the conflict. Buller et al.'s model suggests that an avoidance strategy, where Google ignores the conflict, is the best. Therefore, for Google to move its Chinese search to google.com.hk to avoid the censorship policy is an ethical action according to the model.

Another model that can be applied is the HKH model devised by Hamilton, Knouse, and Hill (2009). This model consists of a decision tree with six questions (see Table 2). The HKH model was originally applied to Google's launch of google.cn in 2006, and it recommended that Google not do business in China. However, Hamilton et al noted that if, in the phrasing of the "questionable practice," the definition of censorship was limited to "limiting searches without the customer's knowledge," then Google's actions could be justified by the model (152). In 2010 the situation remained largely the same except for the hacking incident. Google's statement that, "These attacks and the surveillance they have uncovered—combined with the attempts over the past year to further limit free speech on the web—have led us to conclude that we should review

the feasibility of our business operations in China," shows that they decided to expand the definition of censorship in a way that made them go along with the original recommendation of the HKH model (Drummond, "A New Approach to China" 2010). Thus, according to both models Google's current solution to the cultural conflict over censorship is ethical. However, is it a good business move

Analysis

One view of Google's effectual withdrawal from the search market in China, which essentially takes them back to where they started from in 2006, is that it is a defeat for Google. This view certainly has some merit; it is highly unlikely that Google would be essentially withdrawing from the Chinese search market if it had 80% of the market instead of less than 30%. Google's main competitor in China, Baidu.com, has shown few signs of slipping from its dominant position, and so Google's withdrawal can be seen as a savvy business move which allows them to exit a market where they were losing to the competition while claiming to be taking the moral high ground. However, this view is contradicted by Google's claims that it has entered China for the long term. In 2007 Eric Schmidt said that "The Chinese have 5,000 years of history. Google has 5,000 years of patience in China" (K. Lee 2007). This view also ignores some of the positive aspects of the current situation.

For Google, one of the most important positive outcomes of the compromise is that it resolved the conflict with the Chinese government, at least temporarily. One of the most important rules for operating in China is to "understand the market, but work with the state" (Paine, "The China Rules" 2010, 2). Google's stance against the censorship policy puts the Chinese government in a hard place; on one hand, Google is a large corporation that can bring large amounts of capital and technology into the country, but on the other hand it does not want to let a Western company dictate its domestic policy. The current solution allows the Chinese government to save face by permitting Google to continue to operate google.cn and not censor searches, while letting the government maintain that Google does not influence its decisions.

Even though Google has withdrawn from the Chinese search market, its offices in China are still open and it can still host non-search services on google.cn. If it were to host service on an external site, they would have to run through the Chinese filters and might suffer the same slowness problems that were crippling google.com in 2006. Furthermore, it still has access to the extremely important mobile market and can still employ talented Chinese computer science graduates. Thus, Google can concede the search market to Baidu while still maintaining an important presence in the Chinese market.

Perhaps most importantly, the current solution allows Google to maintain the integrity of its core values. Google's Vice President of Global Communications and Public Affairs admitted that self-censorship "runs counter to Google's most basic values and commitments as a company"

(Schrage 2006). This dissonance between Google's stated values and its actions is dangerous since self-governance according to chosen standards is essential to maintaining a strong ethical culture (Paine 1994). By no longer censoring its searches from China, Google's core values and its actions have been realigned.

Perhaps the most important lesson that can be learned from Google's experiences in China is that cultural conflicts over ethical issues do not have to result in mutually exclusive situations. While it may appear this way, Google is not faced with a choice of operate in China and "be evil" or don't operate in China and uphold the corporation's ethical culture. Although Google's current solution is not ideal, it is a creative compromise that allows it to maintain a significant presence in China while also upholding its ethical culture. When faced with similar cultural conflicts, other multinational organizations would do well to also seek creative compromises like the one that Google has found.

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ONLINE ACTIVISM FOR A HETEROGENEOUS TIME: THE PINK CHADDI CAMPAIGN AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIA

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On the sleepy Saturday afternoon of January 24, 2009, a mob of around twenty men attacked a group of young women partying inside Amnesia Pub at the Hotel Woodside in the busy Balmatta area of Mangalore, India. According to newspaper reports, the men kicked and slapped the young women and shoved them to the ground in full view of a camera crew from a local television network that was invited to capture the event (Gopal 2009). Following this attack, Sri Ram Sene, a right-wing Hindu group, and the Bajrang Dal, the radical youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) [World Hindu Council], claimed responsibility. Bajrang Dal activist Prasad Attavar claimed the attack was a "spontaneous reaction against women who flouted traditional Indian norms of decency" (qtd in T.A. Johnson 2009). Undaunted by the outrage over the attack on a Mangalore pub, Sri Ram Sene leader Pramod Muthalik, who was released on bail, threatened to forcibly "marry off" couples dating in public on Valentine's Day. Ahead of Valentine's Day, however, the Karnataka police arrested key leaders of the Sri Ram Sene in Mangalore as a preventive measure (Express News Service 2009).

In reaction to these events, a young female journalist from Delhi, Nisha Susan, working as a special correspondent for *Tabelka.com*, started a Facebook group titled the *Consortium of Pub-going, Loose and Forward Women*. Susan created this group a few days after the attack "as a faintly bitter joke." To her surprise, within only five minutes "two women had signed up laughing. Twenty-four hours later the campaign to send pink *chaddis* [panties in Hindi] to Pramod Muthalik and to crowd pubs with unlikely occupants was in full swing. The joke was now richly sweet" (Susan, "Valentine's Warriors" 2009).

Susan mentions in one of her articles that it was actually the Sri Ram Sene's threat of violence on Valentine's Day following the Mangalore pub attack that motivated her and her friends to begin the campaign. She writes, "All spectators understood that the Sene, a new and unwelcome franchise of India's favourite corporation, the moral police, was announcing a play for greater power." She then assertively remarks, "While Karnataka's BJP [Bh ratiya Janat Party] Government watched to see whether Muthalik could pull off his boast, we decided to give the Sene some attention" (*Ibid.*).

Five hundred visitors joined the campaign online on only the first day, and within a week the number jumped to forty thousand. Susan explains, "From Puerto Rico to Singapore, from Chennai to Ahmedabad, from Guwahati to Amritsar, people wrote to us, how do I send my chaddis?" (*Ibid.*). Meanwhile, "the campaign had gone offline" with collection centers for pink undergarments and an overwhelming response over the phone and through snail-mail. Many supporters, including men, claimed that they were not necessarily enthusiastic about alcoholic drinks nor had they visited any pubs in their lifetime, but they still supported the campaign. In the words of a visitor who posted his comment on the campaign's official blog: "Deep down, this gesture doesn't just stand for a right to raise a mug in toast but for an ideology, for freedom and for justice, for liberation from oppression and the right to dignity" (Supertramp0 2009).

After being repeatedly hacked, the Pink Chaddi Facebook Group and Susan's account were subsequently suspended, so she then moved on to blogging. The mainstream print and electronic media provided relatively positive press for the campaign and, in the process, bolstered its popularity and reach.¹

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Rights, Entitlements and the Neoliberal Public Sphere in India

How do we understand this “successful” feminist campaign, especially as it operated primarily within internet-based social networks in India? What are the implications for the formation and transformation of communities of Indian urban women and their political mobilization in the online public sphere of India? According to a recent report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India, the number of women online in the country has passed the twelve million mark and, more generally, 2007 was declared the “Year of the Broadband.” These are both positive trends, believed to be “heralding women’s participation in the Internet revolution.” However, only twenty three per cent of Internet users in India are women (2007). Across households of diverse socio-economic levels, men and children continue to use personal computers more extensively than women. The Internet and Mobile Association study shows that women use the Internet mostly to keep in touch with family members through email or to help their children with their homework: “The incentive to use the Internet grows out of their family roles” (*Ibid.*). As Vinitha Johnson notes, “Role definition underlies the reasons why women do not make ample use of technology and restricts their interests in such a way that they do not seek to fulfill their individual needs and their own growth” (2010, 162). The media and society continue to mutually define the role of women in the family, though subordination is not always explicit and is often self-imposed. In the case of lower class women, the additional disadvantage continues to be both attitudinal and economic.

Susan and others like her are not constricted by such limitations. Hence, when it comes to the relatively young, urban, educated, and often gainfully employed women living in cosmopolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and even Mangalore, Susan’s agency and activism resonates somewhat differently than for ordinary housewives living in the suburbs, even those with access to the internet. The category of urban working women is important here as it allows us, at least momentarily, to sidestep the pressing issue of the digital divide in a developing country like India.

Nonetheless, we cannot ignore, especially witnessing the sweeping transformations taking place in post-liberalization India, what Aihwa Ong refers to as “the mutations in citizenship to global flows and their configuration of new spaces of entangled possibilities.” For Ong, “the notion of citizenship tied to the terrain and imagination of a nation-state” is challenged as the flows of “global markets, technologies, and populations interact to shape social spaces in which mutations in citizenship are crystallized” (2006, 499). Aspects of citizenship like the notions of “rights” and “entitlements,” which were once conceived as inseparable, are turning out to be “disarticulated from one another and re-articulated with universalizing forces and standards” (*Ibid.*). Although political rights are, in theory, contingent on legal “membership in a nation-state,” in reality “new entitlements are being realized through

situated mobilizations and claims” within the conditions of globalization. These emerging connections suggest that “we have moved beyond the idea of citizenship as a protected status in a nation-state, and as a condition opposed to the condition of statelessness” (*Ibid.*).

Reconfiguring Agency: Surrogate Activism and the Politics of Belonging

Susan’s agency as an urban, independent working woman, active in both online and off-line socializing, may point to several emerging possibilities in the interplay of media, hegemony, and urban women’s activism in India. First, online media and web services provide the space and tools for advocacy, where the personal can become political. Citing incidents from India, Mexico, Thailand, and East Timor, Wendy Harcourt argues that women are increasingly developing an influential “layer of support through the Web and Internet from moments of need and social crisis, to safe spaces where personal struggles can be discussed and solutions shared.” She further claims, “Local women’s groups gain strength from support solicited at the global level” (2002, 154). Along these lines the pink *chaddi* campaign (hereafter PCC), emerging out of a local incident, evidently received substantial national and global support. To a certain extent, movements like these disseminate women’s collective experiences and encourage the realignment of the political domain for gendered social change.

Second, unbound solidarity promotes the legitimacy of the movement. For instance, a number of posts on Susan’s PCC blog have received more than one thousand comments, mostly praise or encouragement from diverse geographical locations. Within only a short space of time, one visitor from Singapore posted, “What an ideal I am joining in. I live in Singapore but will be proud to be a part of this!!!!” [*Sic.*] and another from Orange County, in the United States, exclaimed, “Brilliant idea! I am sending pink chaddis” (2009). In a symbolic sense, this textual participation legitimizes the “imagination” of forms of solidarity beyond the nation-state, although this solidarity is limited to populations that have access to the necessary technology.

Third, the politics of belonging is crucial to understanding the interplay between media, hegemony, and urban women’s activism. Nira Yuval-Davis points out that “belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home,’ and...about feeling ‘safe’” (2009, 8). Belonging is generally “naturalized and becomes articulated and politicized only when it is threatened in some way.” The *politics of belonging*, on the other hand, include particular “political projects aimed at constructing the notion of belonging in particular ways to particular collectivity/ies, which are, at the same time, being constructed themselves by these same projects in very specific ways.” This subtle difference between *belonging* and the *politics of belonging* is therefore vital for “any analysis of gender relations and the constructions of femininity and masculinity” (*Ibid.*). Jay, one of the commentators in the PCC blog writes,

I am not a woman, I do not drink and so do not go to pubs either. But I support this campaign because this is a campaign for freedom. It is not necessarily a campaign for the freedom of women or their right to go to a pub, but it is a campaign to stop a bunch of hooligans from appropriating the soul of this country...I have two daughters and I do not intend to allow them to go to a pub until they are adults and old enough to make decisions on their own and understand what going to a pub entails.

Thus the politics of belonging, Yuval-Davis explains, “tend to naturalize gender roles and relationships” in the “same ways that they naturalize boundaries of collectivities.” She continues, “the feminist political struggles aimed at women’s emancipation depend on the denaturalization and debiologisation of women’s roles, and thus the possibility of change” (2009, 8). Jay’s proclamation of solidarity with the PCC, despite the fact that he is “not a woman,” illustrates this potential for change (2009). Such change can be distressing; therefore, the anxious question one visitor asked Susan during an IBN Live chat is perfectly understandable: “Most middle class women scoff at your idea of adopting underwear as a symbol of protest. Do you really think it’s a nice idea?” (Susan 2009)

Moreover, political projects of belonging often attempt to constitute differences between the “civilized or moral ‘us’ vs. the barbarian or immoral ‘them’ in cultural terms at the heart of which are different constructions of gender relations in general and womanhood in particular” (Yuval-Davis 2009, 9). For instance, Sudeshna Niyogi candidly remarks in her comment on the PCC blog:

These people are ‘terrorists’ in the real sense of the word. Why point at other nations or other religions, when such shameless acts of terror are being allowed within our country and by the very people who are claiming to defend the Hindu culture and religion...I feel sorry for them...because these men are not capable of understanding the purity and sanctity of love...and the spirit of a nation. (2009)

Niyogi aligns herself with the pink *chaddi* campaign because of a shared moral objection to the “terrorist” tactics of the radical Hindu nationalists.

Finally, it is useful to think about these movements as surrogate activism and not merely as clicktivism.² The “successful” transition from an entirely online communication to offline communication and the corresponding transition from token protest, resistance, and support to tangible material confrontations are necessary to tread outside the elusive sphere of clicktivism.³ New media serves as a surrogate social-political space where gradual legitimization and the solidification of the politics of belonging occur prior to the deployment of the movement in realpolitik. Although the PCC does not entail such transitions entirely, it nonetheless efficiently encapsulates certain preliminary transitions. Consequently, a number of supporters defended the campaign on the PCC blog against claims that it lacked usefulness. One respondent,

Amrita, shot back: “Those of you who are criticizing the initiative for lack of seriousness – please think about any action that you have taken to try and counter the right wing forces since the Mangalore pub attack on women took place...Please respect the efforts of those who have organized the initiative” (2009).

These trajectories are not confined to gender-based movements, but can be applied to any online community or collectivity as a way to understand the reconfigurations of agency and politics through new media. Women, however, continue to be the most emblematic category for the deployment of these trajectories.

Hindutva, Feminism, and Online Activism for a Heterogeneous Time

To make sense of the PCC it is crucial to take note of the rising Hindutva movement in India. Although not a powerful force in the immediate post-independence years, Hindu nationalism has re-emerged as a popular and influential movement in the last three decades. Here, it is important to mention that contemporary Hindutva ideologues strain hard to convince common citizens that Hinduism and Hindutva are identical. But it is crucial to recognize how radically different they are. Hinduism is a singular, cohesive, self-conscious and sub-continental religious formation with its own history dating back to the ancient period. Hindutva, on the other hand, is an entirely modern development, which could not have emerged without the development of concepts about the nation-state, and is motivated by its insistence on a homogenized, aggressive, and essentialist notion of Hindu identity (Sarkar, Roy, and Chakrabarti 2005).

It is important to identify how the construction of womanhood within Hindutva discourse draws on images of women as ideal mothers, chaste wives, and compliant daughters. Not surprisingly, these notions are grounded on the idea of virtue being the precondition of women’s entry into the public sphere of nation-building. To some extent this is linked to social anxiety emerging from disruptions of gender norms, particularly as educated women enter the labor force, as well as from structural changes in the Indian polity and economy (Banerjee 2005, 140–41). Nevertheless, women like Nisha Susan can ventilate their position, albeit in a limited manner, because the Indian government, whatever its ideological positions may be, has not put an injunction on women’s legal rights, unlike some of the totalitarian developing nations in Asia.

It must be noted, however, that the new media plays a significant role for supporters of Hindutva as well. Scholars like Corbridge and Harriss (2000) agree that the fundamental patronage for the Hindu nationalist movement comes from India’s middle and elite classes. Even more crucial is the fact that significant support for Hindu nationalism comes from Hindu populations around the globe, with a heavy concentration in the United States. As Rohit Chopra argues, “the internet, in particular, seems to be the chosen medium for the Hindu nationalists working in technology to promote Hindutva,” as they “help maintain over five hundred VHP Web sites through which

to spread their messages about Hindutva, Hindu history, and Muslim-bashing” (Chopra 2006, 194). Thus, before we celebrate the emancipatory capacity of the new media, as in the case of urban working women in India, we need to be cautious about new media’s unhindered gateway.

In this light, it is essential to take account of this rereading of Hindu values within the framework of neo-liberalism by the transnational elite, which endorses an essentialized ethno-religious identity. Consequently, it is not surprising to come across serious allegations expressed in the PCC blog against Susan’s religious association and even her political motives. Providing a link to an online video, one commentator asserts that Susan and the media house where she works have links with SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India), a formerly banned Islamic student organization believed by many, including the government of India, to be involved in terrorism. A similar blatant allegation comes from an anonymous commentator who writes, “This blog is suerly created by Pakistani terrorists.... After Mumbai attack they are scared to attack directl.... so using Bolgs to spoil our country...Jai Hind” [*Sic.*] (Susan PCC 2009).

The comments posted on the official blog and others websites point to the vexing relationship among a range of issues involving Indian women, new media, and Hindutva. Nisha’s identity as an upper-class, English-speaking, working woman is crisscrossed with her Christian surname, her alleged indulgence towards drinking, her implicit disregard to religiosity, her supposed “lack of seriousness” and, of course, her “loose” sexuality; the comments sections of the official blog and other websites provide the sites where such antagonistic discourses play out in public.

Susan’s privileged socio-economic identity becomes the target for comments like, “Girls, who wont dirty their hands in helping a woman fallen on street are out here now, shouting to save pubgoing girls and their alcoholism. What an irony” [*Sic.*]. Hinting at the “sexually liberated” nature that the urban feminist women are believed to embody, another commentator rather mockingly wrote, “I am for the following: Wife swapping, prostitution, drugs and gambling. Can you pls start a similar campain for rights of people like me? I appreciate your leadership skills” [*Sic.*] (Susan PCC 2009).

The new media provides the space where the speaking subject (at least for the urban educated middleclass) may participate without prior restrictions. Thus it remains fluid, transient, and, to a certain extent, ephemeral, a condition that perhaps the new politics and identities share (Mitra 2002). Furthermore, the notion of hegemony becomes problematic even if we are only dealing with the hegemony of the elite, since gaining consent becomes inconsequential as the conventional centers disappear. Hence, there is no ideological closure as the verities of ideological positions are voiced (*Ibid.*).

A cursory look at the official blog may give the impression that the people in favor of this kind of urban radical feminist movement outnumber the staunch radical Hindu

nationalists, but a similar glance at any Hindutva related sites paint a completely opposite picture. To understand the nuances, I suggest it might be useful to think in terms of what Benedict Anderson terms, in the context of nationalism, “unbound serialities.” These “unbound serialities” are typically imagined and narrated in empty homogeneous time through the instruments of print-capitalism, such as the newspaper, the novel and, in the contemporary era, the new media. They allow individuals to think of themselves as members of solidarities that transcend the obligation of direct acquaintance; unbound serialities are thus potentially liberating.⁴ However, as Partha Chatterjee explains, “people can only ‘imagine’ themselves in empty homogeneous time; they do not live in it. Empty homogeneous time is the utopian time of capital. It linearly connects past, present and future, creating the possibility for all of those historicist imaginings of identity, nationhood, progress and so on” (2004, 6). But because “empty homogeneous time” is “not located anywhere in real space” (*Ibid.*), it may only act as a surrogate space for activism, as I have earlier mentioned. For Chatterjee, “The real time-space of modern life is heterogeneous, unevenly dense...Politics here does not mean the same thing to all people. To ignore this is, I believe, to discard the real for the utopian” (2004, 7). Thus the transition from this empty homogeneous time to heterogeneous time—avoiding the pitfalls of becoming “bound serialities”—remains a challenge for the women’s movement or for any incipient political movement on new media.

Conclusion

The constitution of Indian new media must be positioned within the context of wider social processes such as globalization, changes in the sphere of cultural politics, and the emergence of the transnational elites as agents of new forms and articulations of the politics of identity in a network society. It can be argued that the new media may appear to be the least reliable when it comes to momentous long term women’s movements, but it would be gravely erroneous to consider it as an entirely futile space incompetent for any effective politics. On the contrary, new media opens up innovative modes of belonging and perhaps equally atypical ways of approaching politics, individual communities, and cultural difference.

In this article my objective was to discuss one of the foremost Indian instances of how a specific community, predominantly consisting of urban women, can come together, collaborate, and take collective action using internet-based social networks. Focusing on the Pink Chaddi Campaign, I have tried to examine the intersection of the new media communication in India and its implications for the formation and transformation of individual communities. In addition, I have explored the mobilization of urban Indian women’s agency through social networks, blogs, and other networked communities in response to the rising Hindutva movement in the country, while also pointing out the challenges for such movements in a densely heterogeneous time.

ENDNOTES

1. According to Susan, the “campaign has been compared to Myanmar’s Panties for Peace campaign, [and] with the 1970s mythical bra-burning [feminism]” (“Valentine’s Warrior” 2009). The national media, especially the English language newspapers and news channels, provided extensive coverage of the event. However, the movement was entirely nonviolent and, in fact, Muthalik “gifted” pink saris to Susan and her group in reply to the pink panties campaign.
2. One of the critics of clicktivism, Micah White, argues that “this model of activism uncritically embraces the ideology of marketing. Scholars allege that these online campaigns think that the tactics of advertising and market research used to sell toilet paper can also build social movements. This manifests itself in an inordinate faith in the power of metrics to quantify success. Thus, everything digital activists do is meticulously monitored and analyzed. The obsession with tracking clicks turns digital activism into clicktivism” (2010).
3. It can be argued that even after such a transition from online to offline, the Pink Chaddi Campaign remains an equally symbolic or token activism. But it is important to take note that the politics of representation and the politics of identity almost always entail the deployment of symbolic actions through which it aims to open new avenues of negotiations and reorientations of power relation.
4. Bound serialities, Chatterjee writes, imply that “one can only be black or not black, Muslim or not Muslim, tribal or not tribal, never only partially or contextually so. Bound serialities, Anderson suggests, are constricting and perhaps inherently conflictual” (2004, 6).

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ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORK FLOWS: ARTIST'S STATEMENT

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According to the January 2011 issue of *IEEE Spectrum*, social networking is the second top technology of the decade (smartphones is listed as first). Social networking is used to build community and establish connections. One of the techniques to help identify brokering roles and map knowledge flows and gaps is called "Social Network Analysis" (SNA). Some people also refer to this technique as "Organizational Network Analysis," particularly when it is used to map social networks in organizational settings. In this technique, the minimum geodesic distance (shortest path) is calculated between two nodes. This technique has been gaining prominence over the past eight to ten years in the knowledge management community (Liebowitz et al., 2010; Liebowitz and Frank, 2011). There is even the International Network for Social Network Analysis (www.insna.org).

In keeping with the theme of this issue of *Proteus*, "Building and Strengthening Communities and Social Networks," four social network maps are presented that apply social network analysis for mapping knowledge flows and knowledge gaps in an international financial institution. The maps were constructed through data collection of primarily surveys and follow-on interviews. The social network analysis tool used for this analysis was NetMiner (see www.netminer.com).

The first map (a) shows the departmental flow of strategic knowledge through the international financial organization. Most of the departments are clustered together via the flow of strategic knowledge. However, a few departments (24, 20, and 15) are outliers whereby

they are not in the flow of strategic knowledge through the organization. This may be problematic, especially if one of the departments is the Strategic Planning Department for the organization.

The second map (b) depicts the junior-senior staff relationships with respect to the flow of process knowledge in the organization. The larger cube shows the non-management staff and the smaller cube is the managers, directors, and executives in the organization. As shown there is little process knowledge flowing between the senior employees and the junior ones.

The third map (c) shows another view of the process knowledge flow via the employees in the organization. Here, one can see the process knowledge flow connections between employees (anonymously designated by numbers).

The last map (d) portrays a web-centric view of context knowledge flow by degree of centrality based on department and employee level in the organization. Employee 158 (in the middle—one of the senior managers) has the highest degree of centrality with respect to context knowledge flow.

These maps are just a few examples of how social network analysis can provide an additional view of the organization. The technique also identifies the brokering roles of individuals in the organization: the central connectors, boundary spanners, peripheral specialists (isolates), and others. Through this technique, and social networking in general, collaboration and communication can be enhanced by applying the results of these analyses to further improve organizational collaboration.

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