



STUDIES IN URBANORMATIVITY

Rural Community in Urban Society

Edited by GREGORY M. FULKERSON
and ALEXANDER R. THOMAS

Studies in Urbanormativity

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For

Ronald C. Wimberley

Mentor and Friend

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Introduction

Alexander R. Thomas
Gregory M. Fulkerson

The scene was as non-rural as anyone can imagine. There that November day special towers had been erected by the police to keep an eye on Zucotti Park. Months earlier, a number of unemployed college graduates and social justice activists had begun to camp in the park as part of the movement that became known as “Occupy Wall Street.” Within weeks, the focus of the nation peered at the misdeeds of the top 1 percent of income earners who continued to profit even as the fortunes of the bottom 99 percent fared more humbly. By Veteran’s Day, the block of Lower Manhattan, in the heart of the financial district and one of the most urbanized locations on earth, had attracted not only those concerned with the plight of “the rest of us,” but with a range of other causes as well. It should have come as no surprise, then, when we witnessed a series of signs quite familiar around the countryside of the city’s Catskill Mountain hinterland: Don’t Frack New York.

On the surface, the common cause between New Yorkers concerned about the potential environmental degradation caused by hydraulic fracturing—a process of extracting natural gas from the shale formations of the northern Appalachians that involves a range of dangerous chemicals—was seemingly one of philosophical agreement among progressive activists. Within an hour’s drive of Cooperstown, the boyhood home of James Fenimore Cooper, America’s first novelist who built an international reputation extolling the virtues of New York’s natural environment, a drop of rain can flow north to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence or south to Chesapeake Bay, depending on where exactly the drop lands. In the Catskills, the headwaters of the Delaware River have been dammed and today provide a substantial amount of the city’s drinking water. The accidental contamination of the waters in this part of New York State could potentially impact people living anywhere from Quebec to Virginia and everywhere in between: an unlikely but nevertheless possible Black Swan event that occurs only once every thousand years or so. Beneath the surface, however, was another form of conflict: that found between one of the great cities of the world and its hinterland.

The good intentions of the activists aside, the danger of fracking was defined in very pragmatic terms: contamination of “the city’s” drinking water would be devastating to “the city.” Of secondary concern was the potential devastating effect of such contamination for the residents of the mountains themselves; in conversation after conversation, the assumption that the Catskills water somehow belonged to New York was never challenged but simply assumed. As such, the threat posed by fracking in the region was defined in terms of its effects on the city and its residents, and this perhaps explains why a number of government officials have argued for a ban within the city’s watershed but not in the region as a whole: if contaminated water could pollute New York, ban it; if it could pollute Binghamton’s water supply, well, that’s not so bad. Here, in the shadows of gleaming office towers was found not only a conflict between America’s elites and the rest of us, but between urban and rural interests as well. The fact that this latter conflict is so seldom recognized by social scientists and the public at large is a product of an assumption that urban life, urban values, and urban concerns are of primary importance. That is, it is an excellent example of urbanormativity.

The readings contained in this volume are meant to explore the status of rural places and rural people living in an urban society. Each of the authors argues, in their own way, that being “rural” in urban society has consequences—cultural, economic, and even medical—and is thus deserving of social scientific analysis. The first chapter, “Urbanization, Urbanormativity, and Place-Structuration” by Greg Fulkerson and Alex Thomas, serves as an introduction to this volume by introducing the reader to basic concepts for understanding urbanormativity and its consequences. The second chapter, “Critical Concepts for Studying Communities and their Built Environments” by Elizabeth Seale and Greg Fulkerson, expands on this first introduction by providing additional concepts and methodological considerations.

In “Historic Hartwick,” Alex Thomas explores how the decisions of the past inform how a community looks today. Karen Hayden continues the theme of how space can stratify and implicate one’s reputation in “Stigma, Reputation, and Place Structuration in a Coastal New England Town.” Stephanie Bennett similarly explores the role of space in the creation of spas acclaimed for the health benefits in “Taking the Cure.” Aimee Vieira then turns our attention to the problems faced by members of the English-speaking minority in rural Quebec in “Minority Groups and the Informal Economy.”

Barbara Ching and Gerald Creed then take us on a tour of urban restaurants and their attempt to market themselves based on a motif of rural exoticism in “Eaten Up.” Continuing with the theme of culture and food, Brian Lowe explores a series of conflicts as they are found in rural areas, including that of the production of *foie gras*, and the potential of cultural innovation found in rural communities in “Fracture Lines.” Chris Stapel examines the role of queer theory for both understanding rural communities and the LGBTQ community in the hinterlands in “‘Fagging’ the Countryside.” Polly Smith compares the presentation of rural life in one rural village in two novels written 150 years apart with

modern ethnographic research in “Return to Ridgfield Corners.” Karen Hayden rounds out our discussion of culture by examining the presentation of rural life and people as being “inbred” in “Inbred Horror.”

The last three chapters in this volume all contribute to understanding the structural conditions that underlie urbanormativity. Gretchen Thompson and colleagues explore the role of social inequality in North Carolina on rural residents’ access to drug treatment in “Matrixed Inequality, Rurality, and Access to Substance Abuse Treatment.” In “Eliminating Organizational Tensions, Disembedding Farmers,” Tom Gray and Curtis Stofferahn explore the role of cultural discourse on the way agricultural cooperatives operate in the Dakotas. And finally, Laura McKinney explores the role of entropy for understanding sustainability and urban-rural relationships in “A Study of Sustainability: Entropy and the Urban/Rural Transition.” We finish with a summary of the book’s findings and themes.

1

Urbanization, Urbanormativity, and Place-Structuration

Gregory M. Fulkerson
Alexander R. Thomas

In the year 2008 humanity witnessed one of its most historic, significant, and defining moments. Oddly, for most people the significance of this year went by completely unnoticed. The news media either ignored it altogether or gave it minimal acknowledgment as a trivial fact for the history books. In spite of the underwhelming lack of appreciation for the gravity of 2008, its significance is sure to play out over the next several decades in profound ways. The year 2008 should be remembered as the year in which the global human population tipped more heavily to the urban side for the first—and possibly last—time ever (Wimberley et al. 2007). In other words, there are now more people living in cities than ever before. The remaining shrinking half of the planet that lives in a rural area will be more heavily depended upon for supplying the food and other resources required to support this growing urban population.

Three years later, during May and June 2011, the floodgates of the Mississippi River were opened during the worst flooding in the south in decades. In northern Louisiana the waters poured through the gates onto the agricultural fields downstream, a torrent intentionally set to save the cities of Baton Rouge and New Orleans from the catastrophic floods that would result without relieving the pressure of the bulging river. Many news stories covered the events and noted the flooding of the rural population, some skipping over to the possible significance of the events on national produce prices. Few if any acknowledged that this was a sacrifice of rural interests in favor of urban interests, and fewer still questioned the logic of flooding people in rural communities in order to save those living in cities. The logic supports the city: the events sacrificed the few in order to save the many (see Thomas 2005). Yet without acknowledging the sacrifice, the idea of developing flood systems capable of accommodating the interests of both urban and rural people was missed. The events were the result of a culture that assumes that the interests of cities are of paramount importance, that urban cultural norms and values are not only dominant but superior as well. Cities are associated with a range of positive values: prosperity and

progress, education and refinement, cosmopolitanism and diversity. In contrast, those living in the country are associated with poverty and backwardness, ignorance and crudeness, boredom and homogeneity. And as the world becomes increasingly urban, the effect is not only demographic but cultural as well.

So why the complacency and apathy about 2008? Is the current path toward global urbanization so inevitable that its milestones are undeserving of recognition? Is anyone stopping to consider if this path is sustainable, desirable, or even possible? How is this reality understood culturally? How does it find expression at the local level to create different outcomes? These are some of the central questions that inform the discussion that follows. Before we can begin to approach the answers, we must start by thinking about what we mean by the terms urban and rural and consider how these questions have been addressed in the past.

The Meaning and Investigation of Rural and Urban: Old and New Ideas

Typically, when one thinks about rural places they imagine large swathes of physical space, occupied by a few people engaged in simple and honest hard work. This work is usually thought to be in some kind of extractive industry like farming or mining, and life is imagined to be pure, wholesome, and carefree, while at times difficult to endure. In reality, rural life is remarkably more diverse and varied than most people imagine, making such broad generalizations difficult to apply. Yet, physical space does present itself as something to be contended with daily in most if not all rural areas. Simple tasks like going to the grocery store, driving to work, dropping the kids off at school, going to the doctor, picking up the dry cleaning, or just stopping by to say hello to a friend, are major time and resource commitments for rural people. The ability to survive rural life is greatly influenced by the means people have for taking advantage of transportation and communication technologies.

Perhaps more importantly, rural people from all corners of the planet are bound by the shared fact that their existence is being threatened by the continual expansion and invasion of urban systems, designed to support cities at their systemic center by absorbing rural territory and resources on the periphery. Along the way these urban systems absorb or destroy rural identities, cultures, and ways of life. Urbanization—the expansion of urban systems—is driven by the inherent need cities have to obtain rural resources such as food, fiber, wood, minerals, fuel sources, and land in order to accommodate their swelling numbers. Thomas (2010) referred to this dynamic as “urban dependency”: without these resources cities could not survive as they are incapable of being self-sufficient (see also Chew 2001; Boone and Modarres 2006; Wimberly and Morris 2006). Arguably, the fact that the global urban population now surpasses the global rural population signifies that the hinterlands are being exhausted of their resources and that urban population centers are growing too large.

It should be noted that the invasion and exploitation of urbanization is not necessarily the result of cruel intentions or evil plans on the part of urbanites. Rather, urbanization unfolds as a seemingly inevitable natural progression (Thomas 2010). This idea is the result of an “urbanormative” cultural ideology that justifies rural invasion/exploitation as signs of progress, modernization, or perhaps even the extension of manifest destiny itself. Viewed in this light, urbanization is understood to be the savior of rural communities, offering a more worthy and meaningful existence. Since many urbanites will never encounter a truly rural setting or person, their ideas and representations are left to be informed by what is portrayed on television, in movies, music, literature, and art. To a large extent the story told by popular (mass) culture is either based on a reality that was long ago transformed or on an idealized reality that never existed. This means that the portrayal of rural people and places is not fair or accurate, and the value and worth of rural knowledge and experience are therefore either overlooked or under-appreciated. As the world grows increasingly urbanized, direct experience with and personal understanding of rural life becomes distorted further, and rustics (Ching and Creed 1997) must contend with an urbanormative culture replete with prejudicial attitudes that make them the target of subtle or blatant forms of discrimination.

The conditions of urbanization and urbanormativity, the structural and cultural invasion of rural space, combine to set the stage for ongoing conflicts of a political, economic, cultural, and environmental nature. Remarkably, scholars and students of rural structure, space, and culture will find scant social scientific attention is currently given to these issues in a coherent and systematic way, particularly at the local level. Early American sociology and rural sociology started with this focus, but interest has since waned. This early scholarship took the shape of what is now known as the rural-urban continuum framework (Redfield 1930; Sorokin and Zimmerman 1929). Rooted in the theoretical insights of Simmel, Tonnies, and Weber, the rural-urban continuum gave intellectual credence to studying the overlap of structure, space, and culture, and contributed a number of useful and interesting ideas.

By the 1950s-1960s, critics of the continuum (Dewey 1960; Miner 1952) grew convinced of its inadequacy as it was evident that life in rural places was being turned upside down by urbanization in general and in particular by the rise of industrial agriculture, the demise of labor intensive farming, and the shift away from small and medium scale farming toward large consolidations. Other extractive rural communities, such as the coal towns in West Virginia and the timber communities of the Pacific Northwest, experienced similar challenges as technological changes led to capital, rather than labor, intensive production processes. In turn, rural-urban continuum studies appeared futile since they were unable to produce conclusion with lasting value. For example, follow up research to Redfield’s folk culture analysis revealed that massive change had taken place, rendering Redfield’s original analysis obsolete and reversing many of his conclusions. However, rather than viewing such setbacks of the failure of the rural-urban continuum framework as an opportunity to develop a superior (and

more dynamic) paradigm that could account for such changes, scholars viewed this as the death knell for rural and community sociology as theretofore conceived (Newby and Buttel 1980; Pahl 1966), causing a massive disciplinary identity crisis that pushed rural and community studies further from the canon of sociology itself.

In fact, rural places did experience seismic and, in many cases, catastrophic changes rooted in dynamic political economic processes originating from central urban centers located far away from where their impacts were felt in the hinterland. Commodity markets, controlled by enormous urban agribusinesses, fueled the devaluation of farm products, by encouraging a greater reliance on chemical and mechanical inputs to improve productivity and increase the supply and boost profits. The result was an increasingly high cost of farming that many producers could not afford, plummeting prices for food and fiber, and greatly exacerbated negative environmental impacts of farming making it a less desirable land use in general. Today, only about 2 percent of the American population is employed in farming (Lobao and Meyer 2001), and with the loss of the family-based farming structure, a particular way of life and brand of rural culture was lost.

Because many people associate rural with agriculture and farm life, they have come to imagine that the demise of family-based agriculture has meant a corresponding demise of rural communities. Nevertheless, rural communities have adapted and changed in diverse and creative ways, allowing new forms to arise in the wake of the old. Wider shifts in employment in the service sector have found new forms in rural places, and many have even found themselves with a sizable creative class (Florida 2004, 2007, 2008). Such communities fashion themselves as art bastions, antique havens, music scenes, as tourist destinations, or as some combination of these. With this political economic re-shuffling of the cards, we see new kinds of rural cultures springing up everywhere, but in a much more heterogeneous manner than was the case in the old agricultural countryside. As a result, any attempt to paint “rural” with broad brush strokes, to cobble together a singular monolithic description, or to place it on a unidimensional continuum, is bound for failure. Just as the rural population must learn to adapt to the realities of the urbanizing world as it becomes global in scale, so too must scholars adapt their models for understanding rural places that accommodate the fact that rural areas are more diverse in both population and culture.

From the standpoint of scholars studying these social changes, we do not think a return to the rural-urban continuum framework is in order, but we also do not believe that the proverbial baby should be thrown out with the bath water. The intersections of structure, space, and culture in local spaces continue to matter and to an even greater extent, even while its social scientific investigation has grown complex and difficult to pin down. The gap we seek to fill in the literature is the formulation of a theoretical perspective and empirical toolkit that will equip one to study rural structure-space-culture dynamics in novel, complex, and

sophisticated ways that acknowledge the value of past approaches without being limited by their shortcomings.

The theoretical framework upon which we build our ideas rests on the claim that a complete analysis of rural-urban relations requires simultaneous attention to the structure of urbanization, mass culture, and urbanormativity, and the way these fuse together in space in a process we call place-structuration. This framework maintains a dynamic and nested systems view that is missing in the more static rural-urban continuum framework, and reflects contemporary thinking about the general process of structuration (Giddens 1986) and the way it is applied to communities of place (e.g., Pred 1984; Molotch et al. 2000). We will briefly introduce what we mean by structure, culture, and space before providing greater depth.

Structure

The structure component of our theoretical framework refers to the process of urbanization that dates back to the earliest urban system several millennia ago (Thomas 2010, 2012) and continues with great momentum through the present day. Urban systems can be defined as population centers that survive by organizing trade networks to pull in resources from the outer hinterlands. Initially, transportation and communication technologies limited these networks to adjacent hinterlands, but in the era of globalization these networks can span nearly any distances. By definition, urban systems are reliant on their hinterlands for survival, so as hinterland resources become scarce and population centers grow larger, urban systems must expand outward. Alternatively, as population centers shrink or if hinterland resources become abundant, the urban system may remain stable or even contract inward. In effect, this means that the boundaries of urban systems are constantly in flux. Outward expansion implies that rural areas will be absorbed and urbanized, while inward contraction means that urbanized areas on the fringe may become de-urbanized, and possibly return to a state of rurality once more.

Many urban systems have grown extremely large and have had to develop ever more complex trade networks to survive, experiencing what seems to be a non-stop outward expansion. This is particularly the case in those urban systems identified by Sassen to be “global cities” (Sassen 2001, 2011). Though this is important, we should also note the declining urban systems whose trade networks have failed to support their population centers. An example of this would be the urban systems located along the Erie Canal in upstate New York. With the rise of rail and highway networks, these urban systems lost their systemic linkages to the larger urban system of New York City, and have witnessed declining population centers, and decreased pressure on adjacent rural hinterlands. Many of these once agricultural rural areas have returned to a more natural condition as former fields filled with trees and brush.

Culture

In addition to examining the structure of urbanization and urban systems, we believe it necessary to have a concomitant focus on culture as encompassed by the ideology of urbanormativity. Alluded to earlier, urbanormativity grows out of a popular culture that distorts rural reality and contributes to the idea that urban is the way forward while rural is the way backward. Ideas about what is normal, acceptable, and desirable have an inherent urban character, and rural itself has come to be defined as deviant. In order for the utter structural domination of rural people and places to be carried out without protest it is important that everyone involved be convinced of the fact that urbanization equals progress and the promise of a better life.

In the best case, this will mean that rural culture and character will be viewed as desirable from the standpoint that they represent simplicity and escape from the rat-race of urban life. In the worst case, rural will be viewed paternalistically as symbolizing the uneducated, backward, and wild, and thus in need of being educated and tamed. For example, European attitudes about rural Native Americans embody most of these characteristics. This negative viewpoint led to various forms of “taming” from forced enrollment in schools and Christianization in churches, to the more extreme population transfers to reservations and genocide. The positive view some Europeans held toward Native Americans has come to be known as the “noble savage” view that encompasses the envy Europeans have for the Native American way of life and what it represents, even while rejecting it as a possible future reality. Thus, even when viewed in a positive light, rural remains to be understood as inferior to urban inasmuch as the march of progress continues to mean the sacrifice of rural character, culture, and life at the altar of urban expansion.

Space

The way urbanization and urbanormativity unfold and combine in particular physical spaces under different historical and contextual conditions drives the process we call place-structuration. Because “urban” is inherently exploitative of “rural,” the process of place-structuration typically reflects this exploitation in varying ways. For example, we have identified the “rural simulacra” (Thomas et al. 2011) as the phenomenon that results from a rural community that becomes transformed from being authentic to what is effectively a simulated community designed to appeal to the tastes of urbanites. This is achieved by capitalizing on urban cultural notions about what is desirable about rural settings and hiding or downplaying those aspects that are not consistent. Generally, we believe that we need a better understanding of where ideas of rurality originate, the emergence of rural simulacra, and the discovery of other forms of urban-rural exploitation.

We now turn our focus to a long view of human history in order to gain some context about the planetary transition toward urbanization beginning with

the appearance of the very first urban systems. We will then trace this evolution to the industrial revolution as the period of intensified urbanization that is now in an advanced stage. Urban systems are increasingly intertwined, and span the globe in ways never before seen.

Structure: The Long March toward Global Urbanization

The first known sedentary settlements appeared in the Jordan Valley of Israel around 12,500 BC, but it would be another 8,000 years before the first inkling of what most scholars call a city would emerge (Thomas 2010). Against the backdrop of several millennia of human culture, modern urban life is indeed novel, unusual, and in many respects experimental. If we do a little math, then we can observe that less than 13 percent of human (cultural) history has included anything that might resemble urban life, while about 0.06 percent (thirty years) has included contemporary global cities (Sassen 2001, 2011). This is an important insight for the development of a more robust sociological imagination about urban life. The question then becomes how urbanization got its momentum, launching the human species into its present urban existence as symbolized by the year 2008.

Although many urban scholars have used the term “urbanization” to refer to the growth and spread of cities themselves, the definition of “city” and “urbanization” is actually rather problematic. Thomas (2012) notes that most definitions of “city” are relative to the hinterlands surrounding the city. Such a definition *a priori* excludes the countryside from any meaningful participation in urbanization beyond the provision of raw materials and food. However, in order for cities to grow out of the pre-urban (that is, rural) milieu the political economy of agricultural communities must have had a significant impact on growing cities themselves. Thomas (2010; see also Thomas et al. 2011) has tied the growth of cities to changes in production, triggering first “urbanization” in the form of a “global” trading system with cities arising as nodes in this dynamic system. This view is consistent with other work in world systems research (see Frank and Gills 1996; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997).

The historical distinction between urban and rural is a recent phenomenon, dating only to the rise of cities and their immediate precursors themselves. Economic production can be divided into two broad circuits: rural production and urban production. In practice, elements of each have always been apparent, but the rise of urban production in prominence vis-à-vis rural production spawns other social and cultural changes in a given society. It is thus prudent to begin first with rural production.

Rural production refers to economic activities that are oriented toward the extraction or production of food and other natural resources. Although it closely corresponds with the primary sector of the economy, rural production should not be understood simply in this way as it involves in some way elements of all three sectors of the economy. Rural production is non-transplantable as its activ-

ities are limited to particular locations that are amenable to its practice. Crops require a certain amount of physical space, for instance, and a particular array of nutrients and temperatures that limit where production can take place. Although modern technologies may one day make urban farming in enclosed, climate controlled factories a reality, for most of human history and even today agriculture is limited by the natural environment to certain locales. This is also true for animals as they require food, water, and space, although “factory farms” have minimized the space necessary for such activities (much to the chagrin of the animals themselves). In mining the activity is limited by the fact that extraction can only take place where the material is located.

Rural production is marked by the fact that production of the resource occurs naturally even in cases where human intervention is possible. For example, mining simply extracts a material already produced through natural processes. In the case of agriculture the production of a food resource occurs naturally as well, although the domestication of plants and animal husbandry introduced humans to the equation. A seed of domestic emmer wheat, for instance, requires human intervention for reproduction (it must be planted and harvested), but the production of a new plant itself ultimately forms of natural processes. Humans can create technologies such as fertilizer that maximize the conditions under which production takes place, but nature ultimately grows the resource itself.

Societies organized around some form of rural production tend to be self-sufficient. In foraging economies the goal of the population is subsistence, and as such populations tend to hover near or below the carrying capacity of the landscape. In the case of overpopulation new groups are “spun off” and find new territories to exploit or, when this is not possible, an environmental stressor can result in a rapid drop in population due to starvation and, in most historical cases, disease. In agricultural societies this relationship between population and the carrying capacity of the land continues even as the technology (cultivation, animal husbandry) increases carrying capacity. Nevertheless, the tendency in such societies is for self-sufficiency even as such societies may develop extensive trade networks. For example, in the Fertile Crescent the period between the beginning of agricultural villages around 9500 BC and the first cities around 4500 BC the economy was dominated by rural production even though an extensive trading network developed. Indeed, toward the end of this period cities developed as “nodes” in this trading network primarily as a result of population growth in southern Iraq, but most of the region remained quite “rural” in character (Thomas 2010).

Rural production can, however, result in the creation of surplus. The surplus is normally put to use as a buffer against future conditions and as leisure. In foraging economies, for instance, surplus is normally represented by the excess carrying capacity of the territory. As the resources available in the territory outstrip the demand for use the community is able to withstand a downturn in resources due to such events as drought or fire. In addition, the surplus allows considerable time for leisure activities, producing what Marshall Sahlins (2003)

referred to as the first “affluent societies.” In agricultural societies the surplus could be stored in silos for use at a later date, and in fact the earliest trading systems aided in hedging against future events by spreading risk across a wide area (Fagan 2011).

Urban production is a second circuit, but should not be simply equated with the secondary or tertiary sectors. It is dependent upon rural production, but in the case of urban production the transformation of a product occurs through “unnatural” mechanisms. That is to say, through human or mechanical intervention. In one sense urban production has always been an analog of rural production: chimpanzees utilize sticks as tools to “fish” termites from their mounds. The tool is made from fashioning the stick into the appropriate instrument. Nevertheless, urban production is better understood as involving multiple circuits of production: it is the collection of multiple resources from differentiated environments in a specific site for the purpose of transforming them into a finished product (Thomas et al. 2011, 46). True urban production involves a multiplicity of circuits of production as it requires resources from multiple locations to be brought to one place.

Urban production tends to be space intensive. Although it is marked by the gathering of various resources from a multiplicity of settings, once these have been assembled in one place the actual productive activity often takes relatively little space. An automobile takes relatively little space for production itself, for instance, as much of the space in a modern factory is given over for mechanisms that allow for mass production (e.g., the assembly line); the car itself can be built in a garage. Urban production is thus favored in locations with ready access to transportation, nature providing some but not necessarily all of the advantages to a given city.

The complexity involved in urban production also predisposes it toward a degree of alienation between nature and the finished product. Whereas rural production must always occur where natural resources allow, urban production can in theory occur anywhere that those resources can be transported. This interrupt between the resource (e.g., corn) and the finished product (a soda produced with high fructose corn syrup) obscures the relationship between the resource and the product. How many people, while driving through the farmland of Middle America, relate the corn in the fields to the soda in their car, the fuel additive in their gas tank, and perhaps the plastic container in which their sandwich is sitting?

Whereas use value tends to be stressed in rural production, the complexity of the trade system involved in urban production and the obscurity between resource and product predisposes such economies to stress exchange value. Wealth is thus accumulated through the accumulation of tradable items, the ultimate tradable item being money. In contrast, even in advanced rural economies where wealth is measured in livestock, the exchange value is tempered by the use value of the animal for dairy or food.

Societies with urban production tend to have high populations as they also tend to have advanced agricultural regimes. The high populations increase the

demand for food resources, and the process of urban production itself increases demand for the necessary raw materials. The result is that systems based on urban production face spiraling increases in demand that necessitate that the urban system expand its sphere of influence in order to meet these demands. A failure to do so would result in starvation and the secession of manufacturing, as such cities (and by extension urban systems) are dependent upon their hinterlands. Urban dependency results not only in the continual expansion of the system and, by extension, warfare, but also has a variety of cultural manifestations discussed below.

The Industrial Revolution and Urban Overdrive

We should note that the portion of human history since the industrial revolution started roughly 300 years ago is 0.6 percent of human cultural history. This is widely identified as the moment in time when humans went into urban overdrive, radically transforming our basic modes of social, economic, and political organization. Demographers note that this was the time when the human population began its exponential climb to the current 7 billion people inhabiting the Earth. With growing numbers of people came more and larger cities. As a result, the need arose for greater resources, not the least of which was food, but also for fiber for clothing and textiles, as well as other resources needed to build the cities we see today. During this time the world also witnessed widespread transformation from feudal kingdoms to capitalist democracies.

The industrial revolution did not develop in an historical vacuum, but in a world that had long been divided by the colonial empires of Europe. It was an outgrowth of economic competition between empires built around urban systems (e.g., Rome, Constantinople) plundering the “new world” as well as the African and Asian continents for resources of all types. The Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British, and French were mired in wars with each other for centuries as they fought for a place of military and economic supremacy to both sustain and enable the growth of their populations. It is somewhat ironic that the competition for global supremacy by European powers, borne out of the need and desire for global resources to support growing populations with increasingly affluent lifestyles, also gave rise to modes of social organization that encouraged further population growth and thus exacerbated global competition for superiority. The more they grew the more they would compete, the more they competed the more they would plunder, and the more they plundered the more they grew.

In the midst of this global race for supremacy, and immediately following the planetary population explosion initiated by the industrial revolution, Thomas Malthus (1798) penned his warnings of impending disasters and collapse that would result from overpopulation in the forms of famine, war, and disease—dubiously named population checks. For Malthus, it was simple: the Earth was incapable of supplying the food necessary to support the swelling industrial cit-

ies of Europe, and the unrestrained sexual misconduct of the poor was almost certain to bring Armageddon.

Later Marx and Engels (see Meek 1973) would criticize Malthus for blaming the working class for the population boom in Europe, but shared some of his concerns. Marx and Engels were concerned with the impacts of urbanization, as illustrated in Engels, richly detailed account of the working condition of England (Engels 2009), and in the third volume of *Capital* (Marx 1993), where Marx elaborates his theory of metabolic rift (Foster 1999) and the disruption of natural cycles resulting from urbanization and the associated removal of people from the land through land enclosure. However, for Marx and Engels, the problem was not the lack of moral restraint on the part of the poor that was to blame, but the greed of the capitalist class who failed to compensate workers adequately and thus led them to unsustainable living conditions. Nevertheless, they believed that capitalism would successfully overcome the limits imposed by nature, averting the disasters imagined by Malthus, and rescue the human population from “the idiocy of rural life” (Marx and Engels 1848). The system of capitalism, though exploitative and brutalizing, was capable of meeting the demands of growing populations because the resources necessary to support huge populations could be taken from rural areas by way of brute force and magnified through human ingenuity.

While Marx and Engels’ critique of the exploitative nature of capitalism continues to stand the test of time, they and subsequent scholars have failed to appreciate the wider historical implications of pre-capitalist and even pre-feudalist forms of urbanization as the mechanism that initiated the global race for resources, colonialism, and even spawned capitalism itself. Even World Systems analysts, who claim to take the long view of history (Braudel 1993), have generally failed to comprehend capitalism as an outgrowth and response to hyperurbanization. As the economic mode of production used to support, maintain, and even fuel urban expansion, capitalism has rightly been critiqued for its perpetual exploitation of workers and the natural environment. It has come to be viewed by contemporary scholars as an unsustainable economic mode of production—unsustainable because of the fact that it is predicated on the basis of the existence of infinite resources. However, in the modern era of globalization, there are few corners of the Earth left untouched, and most resources have been or are being utilized to the point of depletion. These scholars have not viewed the problems of capitalism as part of the wider process of urbanization. Capitalism is the system responsible for both averting disaster and for digging the hole ever deeper, as it exacerbates and worsens the conditions to which it is responding.

At this stage we should consider what exactly urbanization entails. Urbanization can be thought of as a process that enables populations to live independently of the land and nature, from which food and other resources were historically gathered—recall that for about 183,000 years human existence was supported by living off of the land at the level of subsistence. The domestication of nature—plant and animal—evolved over a long period of time, and so too did

the ability of humans to cease the nomadic life, establish permanent settlements, and live somewhat removed from the demands of immediate subsistence. The foundation of this system is the ability to import resources from rural areas (Thomas 2010), and thus it has at all times involved trade.

We might conclude our discussion of the world urban experiment by noting that it was not until its arrival that the idea of rural even emerged. Early forms of urbanization emerged in a world that was entirely rural so there was no need to conceive of a rural concept. It was taken to be normal and real since the beginning of human history—biological or cultural. Over the last few centuries, as generation after generation of humans were born and raised in the more advanced contemporary urban landscape, the strange cultural idea began to form—that the urban way of life was normal and superior. Almost immediately a corollary sentiment grew in the form of nostalgia for the rural past, as insightfully noted by Raymond Williams' (1973) examination of literature dating back to early Roman accounts. Bell (2011) also notes how early Romans were quite unhappy with the filthy conditions of the urban environment. Romanticizing rural life started as quickly as the concept of rural gained meaning against the new dichotomy of urban. Thus from the beginning urbanormativity has held a bittersweet taste, creating a longing and nostalgia for the rural while simultaneously promoting a particular view of progress that is and always has been unsustainable.

The Hierarchical Nature of Urban Systems and Globalization

An additionally important point to note is that the structure of urbanization is hierarchical, and location in this hierarchy is related to relations with urban systems, as either central, peripheral, or somewhere in between. Structural centrality in the urban system implies larger population centers that are reliant on networks to the hinterlands to acquire the necessary resources to support the population centers. This structure is largely political and economic, while culture is infused with urbanormative ideology that justifies the political economic structure of rural exploitation.

Structurally, the unique location occupied within a wider hierarchical system of urban networks is key, with those places furthest into the hinterlands maintaining the most rural character, those in the process of being absorbed by the urban system as experiencing the loss of rural character, and those closer to the center of urban systems having, of course, the most urban character. There is also the case of places that were once dominated by an urban system that is now in decline, and these have an urban character that is decaying and perhaps in the process of returning to a rural character. Rather than being absorbed such places are being purged from the larger urban system. This is the case with medium sized cities that were formerly nodes between a larger urban system and the rural hinterland, and now find that they are losing centrality. The networks that

compose urban systems are thus in flux with shifts in centrality of particular networks and nodes happening frequently.

Location in the hierarchy is also more than a spatial relationship, since the presence of integrative institutions is another way to link communities to an urban system. Integrative institutions can include anything that provides a flow of information, resources, and people. Examples include colleges and universities, corporations, government agencies, and Non Profit Organizations (NPOs). Such integrative institutions have the ability to radically change a community that may not be spatially near an urban system, but as a result of the institution is linked into it nevertheless.

The concept of globalization itself can be thought of as competing urban systems composed of shifting networks supplying urban centers with resources taken from the world's hinterlands. Multinational Corporations acts as integrative institutions that provide linkages to urban systems in faraway places. This is the world as conceived by world systems analysts who identify a core, semi-periphery, and periphery at the level of nation-states. Within nation-states are urban systems that contain the same elements of core (urban center) to periphery (hinterlands) hierarchy, but complicating matters further, the networks of urban systems are not contained by national borders, and with advances in communication and transportation technologies, it is possible for an urban system to have its core in one country and its peripheral hinterlands in a country on the opposite side of the planet. Integrative institutions provide the means necessary to make this function properly.

The Future of Urbanization

What remains to be seen with the world urban experiment is whether the problem is urbanization itself, or the processes that have been used to create and support it that are to blame—ultimately finding form in the advanced global capitalist economy, the most complex network of trade relations the world has ever seen. The development goals of nations across the world are centered on urbanization and justified by cultural urbanormativity.

How has this urban juggernaut continued to gain momentum and to draw so few critics? We believe that part of the answer can be found in the critical school of thought (for an overview see Calhoun 1995). The critical school maintains that structural domination cannot be achieved without cultural legitimization as expressed in ideological forms. The most effective way to achieve hegemonic domination is to package it in such a way that it seems normal, natural, and even desirable. It is to this that we now turn our attention.

Culture and the Unchallenged Ideology of Urbanormativity

Now we return to our earlier questions about the collective disregard for the epic human milestone encompassed by the shift from a majority rural to majori-

ty urban global population. Historians and other social scientists have focused extensively on what we might call Enlightenment social changes that include the shift from feudalism to capitalism, the Protestant Reformation, and the general rationalization of society. In a way, they have missed the last major change emanating from the period: the urbanization of the world. To begin our exploration into how urbanormativity has become so hegemonic we examine the role of socialization and popular culture, while considering the ways in which urbanormative tastes translate into cultural capital.

Urban Socialization and Popular Culture

One potential reason the world ignored the planetary shift to a majority urban population is based in a general lack of historical comprehension. This may have something to do with the way we are socialized in our families and schools. In most K-12 school curricula, for instance, history lessons start with colonialism, the story of global exploration and conquest by the great European powers, the industrial revolution, the Protestant Reformation, and other important events that happened subsequently over the last few centuries. The evolutionary history of humans as a species is confined to science courses dealing with evolutionary biology, in which we are introduced to our taxonomic position as descendants of pre-human apes. However, this leaves unexplored a major segment of human history—between our biological beginnings and a world organized around large empires. That there is little or no effort to connect our evolutionary history to our relatively recent European history as told in history courses leaves us to presume that the interim must have been neglected out of its basic insignificance. As noted earlier, this period lasted from roughly 48,000 BC to 12,000 BC, thus spanning roughly 36,000 years, and life was entirely rural and marked by cultural development. If we use longevity as a measure, it would be difficult to imagine a more sustainable arrangement. Nevertheless, most take the view of pre-urban civilization expressed by Hobbes (1651) regarding the state of nature:

In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently, not culture of the earth, no navigation, nor the use of commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

This historical amnesia regarding the rural chapter of human cultural existence is fundamental to understanding urbanormativity. Such a view of pre-urban human history fails to outline how humanity emerged from this state of nature, as it does not recognize that the seeds of urbanization were planted thousands of years ahead of the growth of the first city.

Generally, our concern with urbanormativity is derived from the fact that it is an unchallenged ideology that legitimizes the global march toward urbanization, equating it with both progress and modernization, while denigrating the rural as irrelevant, unimportant, backward, deviant, and undesirable. In some respects, cultural domination is more difficult to understand and observe than structural domination. Scholars have given scant attention to the cultural forms of exploitation and domination. A recent notable exception is a brilliant study by Bell and York (2010), who offer an analysis of the coal industry in West Virginia and the methods it employs to foster a more positive public image. Some of these methods include setting up a pseudo-grassroots organization and engaging in an aggressive propaganda campaign based on manipulative commercials linking economic and social progress to the expansion of coal mining. In the case of West Virginian coal, the manipulation of cultural ideas, beliefs, and values is highly contrived and strategic. As a result, it is in some ways easier to examine empirically. It is perhaps more difficult to piece together the story of how in a more general way the popular media manipulates public sentiment through indirect, nonstrategic, and accidental ways.

In previous research (Thomas et al. 2011), we attempted a general, albeit exploratory, cultural analysis of popular television shows and films and its representations of rural life and people. This analysis revealed three cultural themes: rural as wild, rural as simple, and rural as escape. Rural areas were depicted as standing in opposition to urban life, as physically distant from cities, as maintaining a way of life and level of social organization that is easy to comprehend, and as offering retreat from the bustle of urbanization. We also discovered that, to a large extent, the representation of what constitutes rural is full of contradiction. On one side, rural people are revered for having desirable qualities and good character—viewed as simple, wholesome, honest, etc. (e.g., as in the television show *Little House on the Prairie*). Conversely, rural people are understood to be unintelligent, backward, unrefined, and, in many respects, frightening (e.g., as in the film *Deliverance*). Like most stereotypical representations, the ideas and images set forth are only loosely based in fact, and to a larger extent are distortions or exaggerations. However, when this is all that urbanites have to go by, the images become the best guesses about what rural life and people are really like.

The social representation of rural as simple, wild, and escape would be a trivial matter if it did not have real world implications. Unfortunately, these representations become the maps that guide interaction with rural populations, communities, and environments. When someone is identified as rural, as a result of the way they look, talk, or act, they become subjected to stereotypes. This may mean that such individuals will be considered unintelligent, simpleminded, perhaps hardworking and honest, but culturally unsophisticated (like the noble savage stereotype of Native Americans). These ideas color one's expectations and encounters in profound and meaningful ways.

Further, when entering a physical place that is defined as rural, the ideas of escape and retreat, as well as wilderness come into play. This will guide the way

such places are viewed and experienced, and will likewise shape expectations for how such places should be treated. Alternatively, interactions and expectations are not particularly influenced by learning that someone or some place is urban since this is taken implicitly to be normal. In summary, when a person or place is defined as rural, they are treated accordingly and this typically means put into a position of disadvantage and subordination. Put differently, being urban means having cultural capital, and being rural means lacking cultural capital.

Urban as Cultural Capital

Pierre Bourdieu (1986, 1987) offered some of the most insightful theoretical ideas on the matter of cultural capital although he was not explicitly concerned with urbanization or urbanormativity per se. His definition of cultural capital refers to all the different forms of knowledge, education, credentials, skills, and attitudes that convey the idea to others that you occupy a position of high social status. For Bourdieu this could be separated into three separate forms. The first of these is what he called “embodied” cultural capital, and this refers to the way we walk and talk, or in Bourdieu’s terms, one’s habitus. Embodied cultural capital is the result of being socialized into a privileged cultural tradition, and like the process of fermenting wine, cannot be rushed or imitated. Along these lines, Bourdieu went on to coin the term “linguistic” capital to refer to the forms of speech and dialect that convey social status. Reflecting on popular imagination, it is not difficult to identify some rather strong ideas about the way rural people walk and talk. The iconic “redneck” or “hillbilly” are almost universally represented as talking with a crude Southern dialect that sounds intrinsically uneducated, and acting in ways that are comically unaware of cultural standards.

The second form of cultural capital that Bourdieu identified is “objectified” cultural capital, referring to the objects that one may own that convey social status. Possessing rare and unique forms of art is an example of objectified cultural capital. Art conveys not only the means to acquire something of high economic value, but also the knowledge and understanding required to appreciate it is something that only a privileged background could provide. Unlike embodied cultural capital, it is possible for one to acquire objects and imitate high social status. This is essentially at the heart of what Thorstein Veblen referred to as conspicuous consumption. However, it is often obvious when objects are purchased to convey cultural capital, especially when one’s embodied cultural capital is inconsistent with one’s objectified cultural capital. For example, the premise of the popular television series, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, played off of the inconsistencies between different forms of cultural capital. The Clampett family (like most nouveau riche) had the economic means to purchase high status objects like a home in Beverly Hills, but were not socialized into the cultural world they occupied and thereby were repeatedly shown to be culturally incompetent and naive.

The third form identified by Bourdieu is “institutionalized” cultural capital, based on the kinds of institutional affiliations and credentials that one possesses. Obtaining an Ivy League education is one example of institutional cultural capital, as is the act of receiving a college degree in itself. The character of Jethro on the above-mentioned series, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, was repeatedly announcing his achievement of a sixth grade education, while the rest of the Clampett family hailed Jethro’s academic prowess with pride. This theme was repeatedly drawn upon to poke fun at the utter lack of cultural capital maintained by the Clampett family—a family who managed to achieve high economic status but could never acquire the cultural capital necessary to be considered a family of equally high social status and thus truly deserving of a place in Beverly Hills. The message implied is that one cannot truly buy cultural capital. You are either born into a position of high status or you are not. Thus to a large extent, cultural capital is an ascribed form of privilege, particularly embodied cultural capital being that is the result of a lifetime of socialization.

We should note that it is quite possible for someone to physically live in a remote rural location but still acquire a high level of cultural capital. This can be accomplished through ties to integrative institutions that provide cultural capital. For example, if one were to visit the town of Hamilton, New York, the impression would be that it is fairly rural. Due to the presence of Colgate University individuals in this community can achieve a very high level of cultural capital that comes with affiliation to this elite private school.

Extending Bourdieu’s ideas further it thereby becomes clear that cultural capital or high social status is synonymous with urbanity. Embodied cultural capital—talking and behaving in ways that convey one’s identity as urban—means that individuals will enjoy the privileges of assumed intelligence and competence. The dialects and accents, as well as different symbols and modes of behavior associated with being rural equate to a lack of cultural capital, and as being simple, unrefined, and incompetent. Objectified cultural capital—the possession of objects that convey high status—are objects that have been created in an urban system. As mentioned, art is something that is associated with urbanization. Conversely, owning objects associated with rurality (e.g., pick-up trucks, Marlboro cigarettes, cowboy hats/boots, guns, etc.) will lead to the perception of lower cultural capital. Last, institutionalized cultural capital, the credentials and affiliations one has to high status institutions, are almost universally urban. Rural itself is typically understood to imply a lack of institutionalized cultural capital, since it is assumed that rural people will not have much education, let alone advanced degrees (credentials) or ties to elite institutions such as country clubs or universities. Affiliation with rural institutions (e.g., the 4H Club, Future Farmers of America, hunting clubs, or the National Rifle Association) does not contribute to cultural capital. In fact, so tightly intertwined are cultural capital and urbanization that it is surprising that Bourdieu failed to make this point central to his discussion.

The idea of urban as cultural capital emerges in a story shared with me by a friend and colleague about the time she was applying to a graduate program at a

particularly prestigious Ivy League school in the Northeast. During her interview, the professor whom she spoke with interrupted her and began to mock her Southern accent in a sarcastic tone. The extent of her knowledge or any other merits that may have been relevant (her human capital) were overlooked because she did not possess the embodied cultural capital necessary to gain entrance into this institution, which would in turn grant institutional cultural capital with all of the privileges associated thereto. This professor was announcing his own position of privileged social status, while acting as a gatekeeper and reinforcing the urbanormativity that lies at the heart of cultural capital. In spite of this embarrassing example of pomp, my friend went on to complete her Ph.D., albeit with less institutional cultural capital.

The Future of Urbanormativity

In sum, understanding urbanormativity, the ideology that informs us about the inevitability and desirability of urban life, is infused in our culture to the point that cultural capital itself can only be gained through the demonstration of being urban, or at least of not being rural. This is shown in our very being or “habitus” as the way we speak, behave, and carry ourselves; it is shown in the kinds of credentials we acquire; and it is shown in the kinds of institutional ties we are able to forge. Conversely, demonstrations of being rural lead to paternalistic reactions at best, and at worst, hostile ridicule. Much of this is the result of popular culture and our general socialization in a society that erases from memory the long rural chapter of human existence. What remains to be discussed is the way these cultural patterns coalesce with the process of urbanization in real physical places.

Space, Inequality, and the Process of Place-Structuration

We maintain that the coming together of structure and culture in physical space is a process of place-structuration. The way that structure and culture combine in different localities will depend on a number of unique historical and contextual factors, as well as on the decisions and actions of particular actors such as key political and economic leaders. This view of place is consistent with ideas set forth by Pred (1984: 281):

As structuration unfolds, the structural properties of any social system express themselves through the operation of everyday practices at the same time that everyday practices generate and reproduce the micro- and macro-level structural properties of that social system.

Pred invokes the theory of structuration as discussed by Giddens and applies it to place, conceived as an ever-evolving process. In this conceptualization, individual actors are both subjects creating meaning as well as objects being acted

upon by structure. Since individuals have the reflexive ability to interpret what is happening and adjust actions accordingly, they can change the institutional and historical conditions that they inherit, either transforming or reproducing the structure and culture of place. Pred (1984:279) continues, "Place, in other words, always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space."

Working from a similar theoretical approach, Molotch, Freudenburg, and Paulsen (2000) view place as a dialectical process of structure and action. They contribute two important concepts: "tradition" and "character." They suggest that the character of a community represents the physical array of things that exist, which subsumes physical space and nature, and is the result of a particular structural location in a wider system. The tradition of the community refers to the cultural undercurrents that evolve dialectically with character. At the local level, a community's character (embodied structure) can influence or be influenced by its traditions (embodied culture). In this way, with every iterative change in this process of place-structuration, there is either a reproduction or transformation of character and tradition, creating either continuity or discontinuity, making something new or producing more of the same.

Molotch et al. (2000) apply their theory to the case studies of Ventura and Santa Barbara, California. Through their comparative historical analysis, the authors note the transformation of the character and tradition of both places, with one developing the character of an attractive tourist destination and the other developing an extractive economic character based on oil drilling. The historically contingent development of the character and traditions of these communities is illustrative of the process that we are calling place-structuration, or of the structure of urbanization combining with different cultural themes and urbanormativity, along with important decisions of key actors.

What Pred and Molotch et al. share is an appreciation for how physical space interacts with the more abstract structuration process detailed by Giddens. Unique contextual factors include the particular spatial and environmental qualities of place that both shape and are shaped by larger urban systems. The end result is a great deal of variation in terms of place stratification, with some places having spatial and environmental advantages that prepare them to benefit from urban systems, while other places have spatial and environmental conditions that leave them isolated and removed.

The literature on spatial inequality is helpful for our discussion of place-structuration and the uneven development of place based on different spatial contexts. Overall, the common theme of this literature is that rural populations are burdened with a comparative disadvantage resulting from space itself (Tickamyer 2000; Lobao and Saenz 2002; Lobao 2004). Earlier we noted that space is a common denominator for rural places, making mundane activities and practices like going to work or school, seeing the doctor, or grocery shopping burdensome and a greater investment of money and time. Urbanites, alternative-

ly, can assume if they need to have a particular good or service that they will be able to access it within a relatively short time.

In general, this rural comparative spatial disadvantage can be summarized as “who gets what, where” (Lobao 2004). Tickamyer (2000: 806) adds, “Relations of power, structures of inequality, and practices of domination and subordination are embedded in spatial design and relations.” We would add to this that the structures of inequality and practices of domination combine with the cultural ideology of urbanormativity to become etched upon the physical character of places. The reproduction of spatial inequality depends largely on a cultural ideology of urbanormativity. Thus, place-structuration is largely a process that reproduces social inequalities and gives them shape in communities.

The Reproduction of Mass Culture and Creation of Rural Simulacra

It is important to consider the nested, hierarchical quality of social structure, and how it is embodied in physical space creating a multilevel and multi-layered reality (Tickamyer 2000; Lobao 2004). The nested-ness of structure finds a parallel in the extent to which culture is hierarchical. At the macro level, culture is mass culture and has an urbanormative component, while at the local level culture finds unique themes. Only in the most remote and rural hinterlands will the unique cultural themes of a locality remain untouched by mass culture, and thus be spared from the ideology of urbanormativity. In such places we would expect to find a character and tradition that is highly unique. On the other end of the spectrum, the core of urban systems becomes the carrier of mass culture infused as it is with urbanormativity, and tends to perpetuate and reproduce what exists in other parts of the urban system, a character and tradition that is not unique.

For example, Macy’s is a department store that rose to fame in the large urban center of New York City. Over time, this store has been reproduced several times over and can now be found anchoring any number of shopping malls around the United States. In general, the phenomenon of the strip mall itself is the result of a continued reproduction of a mass culture and structure of urban systems. As urban systems have expanded their reach, more and more retail strips have emerged creating a uniformity and sameness across communities that once had more structural and cultural uniqueness. This has led to what Kuntsler (1994) refers to as a “Geography of Nowhere,” because the experience of traveling one place to another is so completely dominated by mass culture and structure, as embodied in suburban strip mall sprawl.

Just as urban systems have a tendency to reproduce the same basic character and tradition from place to place, so too do they tend to force a particular kind of rural quality on places that are defined as rural. In other words, urban systems may define a particular community as a desirable rural place that is linked to the urban systems as a destination. Once defined in positive and rural terms the community becomes a reproduction of what mass culture considers desirable about rural communities. As a result, the town will likely lose its own unique

character and tradition in order to emulate what the urban system thinks is appropriately idyllic. In this way, the town becomes a copy of an idealized rural town, and is thus why we refer to it as a rural simulacrum (Fulkerson and Seale 2012).

Simulacra represent, as Baudrillard (1983, 1994) noted, a copy without an original. Take for instance the mass cultural notion of rural as escape. Urbanites wish to find rest and relaxation when visiting a rural community defined as a destination spot. In turn, any activities that might interfere with the rest and relaxation would be deemed inappropriate. However, authentic (non-simulated) rural communities may have their own kind of bustle and busy-ness based on whatever industry or activity exists. The important point here is that the real buzz of the community may be silenced so that the character of the town may be brought into line with the theme of escape. The community in turn duplicates mass cultural ideas of rural, loses its true character, and in turn becomes a copy without an original . . . a simulacrum.

An extreme example of the rural simulacra is the Celebration community built by the Disney Corporation. Celebration was conceived by developers through the use of focus groups with potential residents that attempted to gather information about what they found to be the most desirable qualities in communities. Based on the received input, the developers set out to create the community in a way that appealed to these interests. The success of this experiment remains to be seen, but preliminary observations (Bartling 2004) suggest that it has not accomplished all of the goals that the developers had in mind. Celebration is an important social experiment that cuts directly to the heart of the question: Can real communities be created out of nothing?

Looking Ahead

What we have attempted to outline here is a general theoretical approach that considers simultaneously the structure of urbanization, the mass culture of urbanormativity, and the unique local configurations that result from the process of place-stratification. This approach is important as it restores empirical interest and investigation to the local level, while maintaining an interest and providing links to macrolevel processes. Because the approach is nested, hierarchical, and systems-based, it is impossible to ignore connections between local places and macro processes of urbanization and the spread of mass culture. However, because local conditions are critical to the process of place-structuration, it is impossible to imagine that the study of urbanization and mass culture can be complete without observing their expression through local place studies.

In conclusion, we would like to see the theoretical approach outlined here motivate a number of different lines of research. One branch could focus on the structural process of urbanization itself, examining its evolution through the continued investigation of available evidence from the archaeological record, following in the direction of Thomas (2010). Another branch could examine the origin and perpetuation of urbanormativity, highlighting all of the ways in which

it pervades mass culture. Investigation into the cultural themes related to urban and rural could be explored more deeply, as could urban and rural place identity (Ching and Creed 1997) as they relate to general cultural themes. Finally, a fresh line of research could proceed to investigate the process of place-structuration at the local level. This is perhaps the most exciting potential avenue since it restores local community studies to a level of importance and relevance that has been lost in favor of general mass society and cultural studies (Lyon 1987). Unlike the older generation of community studies, this new line would need to maintain the view that communities are themselves the result of the process of place-structuration and stratification that results from the combination of macrolevel structural and cultural processes as well as local spatial and historical conditions, and therefore cannot be studied as islands of human organization, but as occupying one node within a larger urban system network. Rural communities thus regain importance in the theoretical understanding of the larger urban picture, and the historical significance of the world urban transition may gain the appreciation it deserves and has thus far not received.

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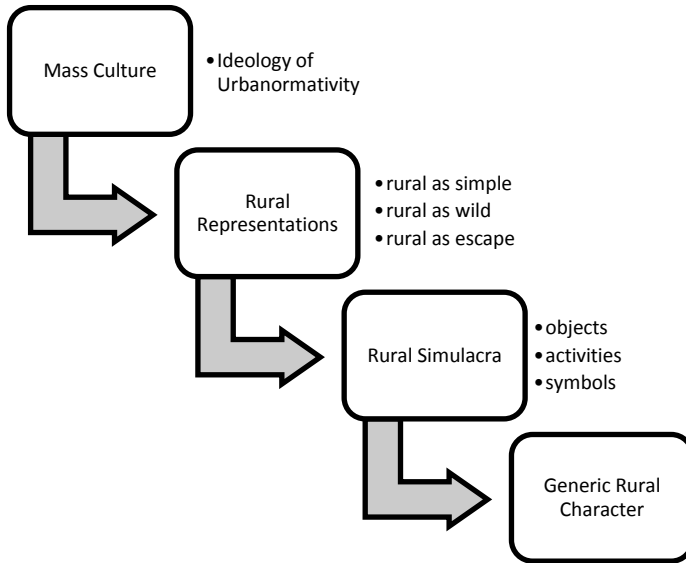
Critical Concepts for Studying Communities and their Built Environments

Elizabeth Seale
Gregory M. Fulkerson

Community sociologists have long noted the importance of the physical or territorial side of communities, and many have identified the physical environment as a fundamental characteristic when defining the concept of community itself (Hillery 1955). Recently, in their overview of the community capitals framework, Flora and Flora (2008) identify built capital and natural capital as fundamental components of communities, both of which refer to the physical environment. Similarly, the notion of “landscape” has been invoked to underscore the embeddedness and inseparability of communities in their surrounding physical environments (Greider and Garkovich 1994; Walker and Fortmann 2003; Petrzela 2004; Barton and Selfa 2011).

We wish to further the understanding of community built environments by drawing on an array of concepts that integrate social and cultural understanding with the way built environments change over time. This discussion builds on and elaborates ideas proposed by Thomas et al. (2010). As shown in figure 1, at a grand scale this begins with a general ideology of urbanormativity held by mass society; out of this ideology emerge representations of rural life; these rural representations then find form as rural simulacra as objects, activities, and symbols. As rural simulacra permeate the built environments of rural communities, community uniqueness comes to be replaced by a generic rural character. Taken to the extreme, a community would become one big simulation of rural life in the spirit of a Disney theme park. This dynamic is most likely to occur in rural communities that attract a population of urbanites, and so tourism and seasonal residency are important factors to consider in this process. As the economies of rural communities have increasingly shifted toward the service sector, the need to study and understand these dynamics is paramount. At stake are the qualities and features that make local communities unique. Ironically, unique qualities are important to finding a niche in a competitive market for tourists; however, as tourists come it is important to protect what is unique or else run the risk of becoming overly generic and thus like any other imagined rural community that one could visit—the “you’ve see one, you’ve seen them all” mentality.

Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram



Urbanormativity and Spatial Inequality

Our examination of rural built environments should be understood within the broader cultural context of urbanormativity. It is perhaps not surprising that in a society like the United States (and nearly all other wealthy countries) where the majority of the population is classified as urban, that urban life would come to be viewed as a benchmark for what is considered normal about “place.” The concept of urbanormativity was introduced by Thomas et al. (2010: 151) as “an assumption that the conditions of urbanism found in metropolitan areas are normative; a corollary is that a departure from an urban lifestyle is deviant.” In other words, this is another case where the dominant group enjoys visibility and social perceptions of normalcy while less powerful groups are either ignored or understood through a stigmatized and prejudiced lens. This is much like the concept of heteronormativity that emerged as a result of the dominant group being primarily straight, thus rendering heterosexuality the benchmark for sexual normalcy. As a result, the gay and lesbian community is made into invisible others or else understood through crude representations found in popular media representations (see, for example, Jackson and Gilbertson 2009).

Apart from the demographic fact that most people in the United States are urban, Thomas and colleagues maintain that urbanormativity is shaped and perpetuated by media influence. They note that most major production studios of

popular culture, for instance, happen to be located in Los Angeles or New York (the largest cities in the United States), and that a major part of the viewership lives in these places. Thus, program content and advertisements are created with the goal of appealing to urban audiences and tastes. In turn, any portrayal of rural people and rural life are filtered through an urban lens replete with stereotypes and misrepresentations. These arguments are consistent with earlier attention on media coming out of the critical theoretical tradition (e.g., Marcuse 1964; Habermas 1971, 1984; Kellner 1990) that outline how individuals become culturally dominated by mass culture through mass media.

At a more fundamental level, urbanormativity and rural representations are an outgrowth of spatial inequality (for a good overview of this, see the edited work by Lobao, Hooks, and Tickamyer 2007). Spatial inequality generally refers to the advantages and disadvantages that emerge as a result of position in physical space. As noted by Lobao and colleagues (2007: 1) in their introduction, the study of inequality—of “who gets what and why”—has neglected the important question of “where.” Similarly, Ching and Creed (1997) observe the absence of place-based identities in the general social inequality literature. Inequality scholars have neglected space—rural and urban—as pertinent to stratification or identity construction and the ways these overlap. Ching and Creed label these alternate place-based identities “rustic” and “urbane.”

Therefore, the importance of understanding and studying physical space and related built environments cannot be overstated. Having access to employers, schools, hospitals, retail establishments, as well as other amenities and necessities of life, is highly predicated on location in physical space and planning with regard to the built environment. Metropolitan areas by definition contain a higher density of people as well as goods and services that serve them, including (to varying degrees) viable transportation alternatives that enhance access. In contrast, rural communities are confronted with a range of challenges related to living with large tracts of physical space, including an inability to provide efficient and affordable public transportation, continuing mandates to consolidate or close schools, similar pressures to consolidate medical services, dealing with a limited number of options when it comes to finding work, and operating with a smaller tax base to support local amenities such as parks or other leisure outlets, not to mention maintaining basic infrastructural needs. Taking all this into consideration, one can observe that an urbanormative lens would presuppose easy access to most of life’s basic needs and wants. For rural communities, a premium must be paid in order to gain access to these taken-for-granted facets of life.

Urbanormativity shapes the expectations people hold regarding built environments, including an expectation for spatial density and ease of access. The built environments in rural areas violate these expectations as they are by definition spatially scattered. Oddly, while urbanites may find spatial density normal they may also find it undesirable and confining. This is evidenced by a longstanding desire on the part of urbanites to escape to the countryside, believed to provide freedom and other desirable experiences. It is interesting to note that what is considered normal may not be considered desirable. In fact, a

great deal of research has shown that urbanites actually have a preference for living in a small town rural setting (Fuguitt and Zuiches 1975; Pew Research Center 2009). More precisely, Pew suggests that small towns are the most desired places to live, but the most satisfied are people living in suburbs. Though most people want to live in a small town, they are least likely to be satisfied with their community if they do live in a small town.

This paradox of the desire for small town life coupled with a low level of satisfaction when living in a small town is solid evidence that there is a mismatch between the reality and the representation of small towns and rural life. Social representations of small town life are filled with positive images. This leads to questions about the contents of such representations. In fact, there has been some investigation into the makeup of rural representations.

Representation of the Rural

As discussed above, the ideology of urbanormativity promotes a particular set of rural representations. Before discussing the contents of these, we first consider the meaning of a social representation as this is an important theoretical concept. Many scholars credit Moscovici (1984) for outlining early ideas about social representations. In fact, the concept of representations is as old as sociology itself. In describing the concept, Durkheim (2001 [1912]: 18) states:

Collective representations are the product of a vast cooperative effort that extends not only through space but over time; their creation has involved a multitude of different minds associating, mingling, combining their ideas and feelings—the accumulation of generations of experience and knowledge.

In other words, representations refer to the process through which individuals come to share ideas and understandings about the world. It is important to note that even when representations survive the test of time, this is no guarantee of their accuracy. For centuries people believed the Earth was flat, for instance, and this representation was handed down and believed by millions of people. It may be most interesting to examine those representations that are the most distorted and yet have surprising resiliency.

For Moscovici (1988: 220), the definition of social representations is similar to Durkheim's: "networks of interacting concepts and images whose contents evolve continuously over time and space." He further theorizes that social representations may take three different forms: (1) *hegemonic* that refers to unchallenged and dominant representations, (2) *emancipated* that refers to alternatives to the hegemonic representation, and (3) *polemical* representations that refer to contested representations that coexist among competing factions. The first of these types—the hegemonic representation—is the most powerful as it overshadows competing representations and has the potential to prop up gross misunderstandings. The presence of competing or polemical representations is an

acknowledgment that there is more than one way of representing some facet of the world. Emancipated or alternative representations may only emerge when the shadow of the hegemonic representation is lifted, likely due to some new form of evidence or understanding that results in what Durkheim might term collective shock or collective effervescence.

We suggest that generally in the cultures of North America and Western Europe that urbanormativity has generated some distorted hegemonic representation of rural life. As hegemonic, these images of the rural are diffused, often through media, with little contention (Doise 1993), thus allowing misrepresentations and stereotypes to flourish. The only counterbalance to this phenomenon would be to promote an emancipated rural representation or representations.

Whether accurate or not, representations are the sketch of reality that people rely upon when they interact with an otherwise unfamiliar reality. Billig (1993) refers to the fundamental need humans have for social representations as anchoring. In other words, people are not generally comfortable lacking an understanding of reality, and will generate an understanding even if it is entirely comprised of speculation. Of course, operating on the basis of representations would be unproblematic if people were at all times rational actors with perfect information about the world—an assumption made by rational choice theory, for instance. The reality—or the representation of it—is unfortunately less perfect.

Generally speaking, a social representation can be based on any facet of social life. We could consider representations of family, the military, space exploration, food production (Fulkerson 2006), sports, religion, politics, economics, or science itself. As long as representations are a reasonable estimation, people can operate on their basis without problems. In a sense, even mystical, superstitious, and religious representations can serve as functional belief systems, even when they are entirely invented and lacking empirical support.

When it comes to constructing representations about rural life, rural people, and rural place, the story is no different. The questions become to which messages and images of the rural are we exposed and socialized into believing, and to what extent are those messages encouraging prejudice and misrepresentation about the rural? We would argue that one important way is through exposure to different media. From books, radio, television shows, and movies, to newspapers, documentaries, and music, one of the hallmarks of the digital age is the pervasiveness of media content in all its forms. There has been relatively little scholarly attention given to exploring rural representations, but the few existing analyses provide an excellent starting point. We hope to see more research on media and rural representations conducted in the future.

When it comes to forming representations of rural people, life, and places, the dominant representations are less than perfect, leading to gross mischaracterizations and prejudice. A reasonable discussion of rural representation and media should appropriately start with Raymond Williams (1973) who provided a highly insightful and painstakingly detailed investigation of rural themes found in a very broad range of literatures. One of his goals was to show how understandings of rural life have changed over a vast period of time, while highlight-

ing those elements that display a long legacy of continuity. His comparisons of twentieth-century literary works with those dating to ancient Greece and Rome reveal for instance, the common theme of city dwellers being dissatisfied with their environs and longing to escape into the rural countryside. More recently, as noted by Bell (2012: 171), the Roman poet Horace held a sentiment that continues to resonate through modern times:

*Fuscus, who lives in town and loves it, greetings from one who loves
The country . . .
You stay in your nest, I sing my lovely rural*

The letter from Horace to Fuscus goes on to further express the sentiments of rural as a place of beauty and freedom, while critiquing urban life as unnatural and enslaving. In another analysis of rural portrayals in the media, Thomas and colleagues' (2010) examination of television shows and movies from the last twenty years arrives at the following similar themes: rural as wild, rural as simple, and rural as escape. Thus it appears that from ancient poems to recent popular culture, idealized images of rural appear can have remarkable continuity. However, as Williams (1973) notes, some images of the rural have evolved and changed. For instance, ancient views of the rural portrayed it as including "unspoilt" nature, and this has evolved into views that are more pastoral. This is probably a reflection of the changing countryside itself as agricultural land uses have overtaken natural settings as the dominant land use in many rural places.

Other studies of rural representations (Short 1991; Bell 1992; Halfacree 1995; Haartsen et al. 2003) arrive at similar conclusions although are not all based on media studies. Halfacree (1995) and Bell (1992) for instance, base their analyses on interviews with residents of rural places. Halfacree notes the themes of rural as a place of relaxation, that lives by tradition, that promotes health and safety, includes a more natural existence, fosters a sense of community, offers a life of simplicity, and is associated in some ways with high status. Haartsen et al. (2003) base their analysis on survey data noting the importance of studying how themes associated with rural vary for different segments of the population, and find that young people are more likely to think of rural as "recreational." They also suggest the representations held by less powerful segments are less influential, resulting in less political influence. This can be taken as evidence for the idea that rural representations are hegemonic and shaped by the most powerful in society.

In summary, the empirical support for the existence of particular rural representations is remarkably consistent. The last point worth considering is the complexity that accompanies sentiments surrounding rural representations. For the most part the evaluation of the rural is positive, as noted earlier. Images of nature, freedom, simplicity, and escape are on their face valuable assets for communities. These are valued so highly that when entering into rural spaces individuals may have inflated expectations for what the experience will entail. The reality of rural places may disappoint if these expectations are not met, and

rural communities may go to great lengths to ensure this disappointment does not come to fruition. This would line up with research on residential preferences discussed earlier as well. This is particularly insightful for rural communities that rely on a tourism or seasonal residency. At the same time, we would note that the positive value associated with rurality has a dark side as well. Images of simplicity and nature can be easily morphed into images of backwardness and being uncivilized—after all, nature is often contrasted with civilization. Therefore, while there may be admiration for rural people and places, there is also a sense that rural is inferior. This can result in a kind of paternalistic attitude where rural people and places are respected and even adored, while at the same time must be cared for and looked after as if they are incapable.

In reconciling the inconsistencies between expectations put in place by various representations of rural life and the actual reality of living in or visiting a rural place, we might expect to see a few outcomes. One obvious result would be to adjust the representations of rural life to incorporate the new information that comes with firsthand experience of rural places and people. However, this is not the only possibility. Alternatively, the reality could be adjusted to match the representations, thus creating the kinds of experiences, objects, and life that was imagined. This, we believe, is what gives rise to the creation of rural simulacra.

Rural Simulacra

The notions of simulation and simulacra were first theorized by Baudrillard (1983, 1994) to refer to the strange phenomena of idealized hyperrealities that are based on images that have no basis in reality. Literally, simulacra are defined as copies that have no original. Any place, object, or experience that is created in order to match the images of a social representation is a simulation or simulacrum. Taken to the extreme, this finds form in such places as theme parks and shopping malls. In fact, it has become somewhat common to say something has become “Disney-fied” to imply this process, since Disney World is a simulation of a mythical reality that has no real existence outside of fairytales.

When we invoke the concept of simulacra in the context of rural people, places, objects, and experiences, we are referring to simulations of idealized rural life informed by rural representations. This can happen in theme park form, as for instance is the case with the Farmer’s Museum in Cooperstown, New York (better known for the Baseball Hall of Fame). The Farmer’s Museum is one big simulation of rural life in upstate New York during the nineteenth century, where visitors can see a blacksmith at work, quilts being created, pharmaceuticals being grown in a garden and turned into medicine, and where farming is happening all around. Similarly, the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Michigan is a large simulation of pre-modern rustic life.

What we find most interesting is not the creation of rural theme parks per se, but when rural simulacra find form outside the context and space of an intentional simulated theme park in so-called “real” rural communities. In their study,

Fulkerson and Seale (2012) offer visual evidence of rural simulacra in Cooperstown, New York—home to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. This quaint and charming rural community has several instances of rural simulacra, some of which are permanent and some of which are more fleeting. On a given day, for instance, one might find couples enjoying a ride in a horse-drawn carriage, or walking along the sidewalk, one will observe a “General Store” and find specialty shops selling objects such as “Country Crafts” that derive their value from being expressions of rural representations. All told, Fulkerson and Seale observe Cooperstown to be a desirable tourist destination, but warn that its development as a community may be on a slippery slope as its unique qualities come to be replaced by generic rural simulacra. As the community hosts roughly 400,000 visitors annually, most of which come during the summer months, the voice of its roughly 2,500 residents is easy to ignore. The future of the community and the direction of planning may therefore lie in the hands of people residing far from Cooperstown, giving it the shape and feel deemed appropriate from an urbanormative standpoint.

Generic Rural Character and Built Capital

In some respects, there is an opportunity for rural areas to capitalize on the cultural admiration held by urbanites. Just as the Roman poet Horace sung of freedom found in the country, so too do modern urbanites seek adventure, refuge and escape in the idyll and bucolic rural landscape. The reality of rural places may not live up to romanticized expectations, and the dark side of rural representations will likely emerge when disappointment results. If this happens, local people may be admonished as backward and uneducated simpletons. If the feeling is positive the community may find itself capable of supporting a robust tourist economy by providing the expected forms simplicity, wilderness, and escape. Businesses tapping into this will appeal to rural representations by offering experiences and objects that simulate rural life—allowing people to milk cows, view old fashion quilt making, take carriage rides, enter saloons with swinging doors, tour working farms, observe wildlife, engage in wild game hunts, and sleep in rustic cabins or charming bed and breakfasts. However, as more and more businesses participate in creating these objects and experiences, they begin to transform the character of the community. Since these rural images lack identification with any particular locale, they can be created in any location. There are some exceptions, as for instance, some people wish to experience the wine country experience of the Sonoma Valley. Generally, the uniqueness of place is lost in the creation of rural simulacra.

As this process unfolds, the built environment is transformed. To the extent that these changes yield gains in value, we can say that built capital has been created. This built capital is derived from the ability of the built environment to generate value through tourism, leisure, and hospitality. However, to the extent

that the value added is derived from cultural tastes, we can also view this as a form of cultural capital.

In their general discussion of community capitals, Flora and Flora (2008) suggest that built capital exists alongside a range of other capitals. For them built capital is largely tied to infrastructure such as roads, availability of internet and phone, water/sewage, waste removal, and so forth. Investment in infrastructure is of course valuable as it makes life in rural communities function smoothly. To be sure, less adventuresome urbanites would not find the absence of infrastructure to be charming when they escape to rural places. Staying at a rural bed and breakfast that has no running water or electricity may not make for an enjoyable vacation. As such, infrastructure is an important component of built capital.

Flora and Flora (2008: 56) state that cultural capital refers to the “values and symbols reflected in clothing, music, machines, art, language, and customs.” Moreover, along with Bourdieu, they maintain that cultural capital is an important way to transmit knowledge. It also becomes a mechanism for passing down advantage and privilege across generations. Bourdieu maintained that hegemony was a way by which one group forced its symbols and reward systems on other groups. In the context of urbanormativity, a hegemonic cultural ideology in the United States and many other urbanized societies, rural people are often put in the position of having external symbols imposed upon them.

From our perspective, the transformation of communities into generic rural towns is best explained when the concepts of built capital and cultural capital are combined into a single notion of built cultural capital—that is to say the externally imposed cultural symbols originating in urbanormativity find material form in the built environment as rural simulacra. Rural simulacra are not imposed by force or threat of punishment, but by promise of reward and gain. In turn, the urbanormative representations of rural life are either created anew by communities, or these communities are passed over and deemed less desirable.

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Historic Hartwick: Reading Civic Character in a Living Landscape

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As early as 1882, a visitor to the agricultural village of Hartwick, New York, described its streets as “poorly paved” (Weeks 1981: 39). Discussion of its cemetery as late as the 1890s described it as “ill maintained” and in need of a proper organization to maintain its grounds and plan for the future. A visit to the village today reveals a lack of signage to inform visitors of street names; the sidewalks—even the comparatively new ones—are not only uneven, but they lack other features common in American urban environments, such as curbs. The local playground is a hodge-podge of old monkey bars, swings, and a new basketball court, but nothing like the sleek complexes common in most American communities today. It is tempting to suggest that the comparatively poor infrastructure of the community today is the result of cultural continuity with the past, but the reality is more complex. Yes, the village had poorly paved streets in the 1880s, but many American small towns did as well, and photography from the turn of the century reveals new paved sidewalks being poured on Main Street. At about the same time the villagers formed the Hartwick Cemetery Association not only to plot its future, but to build a modern park-like cemetery that was all the rage at the time.

This chapter will examine the ways in which historical processes have shaped the settlement space of one village—Hartwick—and how these processes are revealed in the local landscape. Although today the business district and residential architecture are important aspects of the settlement space, this chapter examines the *civic character* of the village. Civic character may be understood as the physical infrastructure facilitated in public space. This includes the streetscape, parks, cemeteries, and even parking lots—any space conceptualized or utilized as part of the public realm. In contrast to features added to the landscape as acts of individual self-interest, civic character may be understood as an expression of collective identity reflecting those features the community as a whole considers important. It may be rooted in government action, but may also stem from the prerogative of other community-minded institutions. In addition,

civic character is the result of historical processes manifest in one time and place, and thus becomes the impetus for action in the future.

Reading the Landscape

In their study of Ventura and Santa Barbara, California, Molotch and colleagues (2000) distinguished between the character of a community and the traditions by which it was informed. Character is the physical-cultural makeup of a community at one point in time, and can be represented in part by the physical structure of a community. Character is an important feature of environmental impact statements: a key question for a proposed development is whether it will alter “community character.” In contrast, tradition refers to the cultural attitudes and relationships across time, and it both informs character and can be understood as character spread across time. In the example from the opening of the chapter, the character of the community is the relatively poor aesthetic quality of Hartwick’s infrastructure, and the forward momentum of this character across time is a local tradition. The tradition of aesthetic minimalism is today used to justify lack of investment in infrastructure, thereby reinforcing the village’s character.

In an inexact way, we may understand character as involved in the material culture of a community. It is generally physical, its presence a constant reminder of past decisions and an impetus to future ones. It is more readily read than non-material culture as there are artifacts which can be examined. Tradition differs in that it is heavily based in non-material culture; in cognition and thought and decision making. In studies of rural communities and, indeed, of any community, tradition and character must be understood together and analyzed as such, and this introduces problems of measurement quite familiar to all social sciences. As Material culture character is more readily, though not necessarily easily, measured, but non-material culture is by its nature more ephemeral and resistant to measurement. Some examples from archaeology serve to illustrate this point and, by examining issues of the past, inform our understanding of how to read a landscape in the present.

Plastered Skulls and Ancient Ruins

The settled environment of a community is a source of information about its social structure and culture. Community decisions about what is and is not important become encoded in the landscape and thus provide a valuable source of data for social scientists (Thomas et al. 2010). Archaeology in particular has developed techniques to read a landscape in order to develop ideas of how a culture operated. This ability to read the landscape is useful in studies of rural communities as well, but as with all such efforts in living communities, is limited by the quality of the knowledge of various phases of a community’s history. Two examples from the ancient world illustrate this point.

In the Levant, the region of the eastern Mediterranean that today includes Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Syria, archaeological sites dating to 9,000 BCE, a period called the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (PPNA), often contain the remains of a sequence of homes that had been burned and rebuilt many times over several hundred years. The homes themselves were typically oval or circular in design, sunken in pits about a meter deep and lined with stones, completed with a dome of wood and other materials above. Buried beneath the floors were decapitated skeletons that had apparently been buried there secondarily after some time in another location. Archaeologists believe that the homes were periodically burned in an attempt to rid the house of such pests as vermin, lice, and fleas (until recently, humans were typically infested with such insects). The body of a revered and recently deceased ancestor, such as a grandmother, was deposited under the floor of the new home and the house rebuilt (Cauvin 2000). The head of the relative (it is presumed) was “reanimated” with plaster, bitumen, and other materials in much the same way that a modern forensic anthropologist reconstructs the face of a crime victim; it was likely used in religious ceremonies (Hodder 2006). The archaeological record reveals the character of the community at the time: clusters of oval homes rebuilt periodically decorated with (among other things) the reanimated severed heads of relatives. It does not, however, reveal the cultural tradition that informed the continuation of this character, but a knowledge of social dynamics can inform the scholar as to its purpose.

There is interplay between the reading of the environment and the application of social theory. As the Neolithic environment encoded social relations, the archaeological record reveals a solution to a common economic problem: the free rider issue. A group activity can efficiently perform tasks, but a given individual who “opts out” of the required work may still get the benefit of the efforts of others; the individual is a “free rider.” In the case of the able-bodied, the answer is simple: exile. However, any given population has groups of individuals who will be beneficiaries of others’ labor but who, given dominant social norms, cannot be exiled. Children are an obvious population of free riders, but so are the elderly and those of limited physical abilities. In such cases, a community will choose to allow such individuals to be free riders. It is this issue that the plastered Levantine skulls addresses.

The PPNA witnessed the birth of the agricultural village, and the homes in which the decapitated bodies of relatives were buried under the floor were among the first agricultural villages anywhere in the world. There was no concept of private property during this period—this would come about thousands of years later—which meant that some way of addressing the free rider issue in a community needed to be developed. Labor inputs for the village’s collective fields were set by nature, and every able-bodied individual would have participated in tending the fields and the harvest. However, once harvested food would be distributed to each household on the basis of need, not contributed labor. This was not problematic as over multiple generations the “free rider” issue worked itself out: a family with small children and an elderly parent in one year would

in later years contribute more laborers than another family. Given the relative bounty of the harvest, however, the community needed to ensure its boundaries so that only members of the group would be entitled to the fruits of their labor, and the proof of belonging to the community was the presence of a family in the community over successive generations. The presence of generations of ancestors beneath the floors, although likely not tested, was a powerful symbolic testimony to a household belonging to a community and deserving of the harvest: even if not a donor household now, certainly in the past it supported others. The plastered skulls, taken off a shelf for religious purposes, were not only physical proof of this relationship but a symbolic means of communicating with those ancestors.

The PPNA villages offer an example of tradition and character coming together as a means of reinforcing economic and social relationships among differing households in the same village. The tradition is revealed through the excavation of the sites involved; a visit to a PPNA village at that time would not yield any of the decapitated bodies because, as they were buried beneath the floor, they would not have been visible. Only the reanimated skulls would have been visible in a “living” community.

The PPNA skulls are representative of the cultural tradition of a community adapting to a social issue. Once built, a feature of the landscape may continue to influence a culture long after its demise. For example, the Biblical book of Joshua recounts how Joshua destroyed the city of Ai during the conquest of Canaan. *Ai* means “ruin” in Hebrew, and the archaeological site of Ai was destroyed in the Early Bronze Age (ca. 2200 BCE), not during the time of Joshua (see Dever 2003; Finkelstein and Silberman 2002). The story likely came into being as an attempt by Israelites during the Iron Age (approximately 900 BCE) to explain the presence of ruins. Even as a ruin, however, the site required a cultural explanation for its existence.

Scholars of contemporary communities must also read the landscape to interpret past events, but at the same time they must understand the past to interpret contemporary sites. As with the plastered skulls, the underlying logic is often deeply rooted in social and economic realities that are only vaguely understood by the participants themselves. Also, given that modern scholars most often deal with living communities, they do not have the luxury of digging up one’s home or similarly inconveniencing the community. Scholars of contemporary communities must also contend with the fact that multiple phases of a community history are in place at the same time, in varying levels of decay, just as the ruin of Ai was a contemporary reality for the ancient Israelites.

Ai Americana

Just as the ancient Israelites dealt with the ruins of past civilizations in their midst, so too the residents of American communities live in a landscape that speaks to the fashions and economics of the past. In *Landscapes of Power*, Sharon Zukin (1993) discussed how in many American cities the relics of a glorious

industrial past, such as the factories, housing, and business districts build during the industrial era, continue to exist as part of the landscape. However, very early in the book she comes to an obvious point:

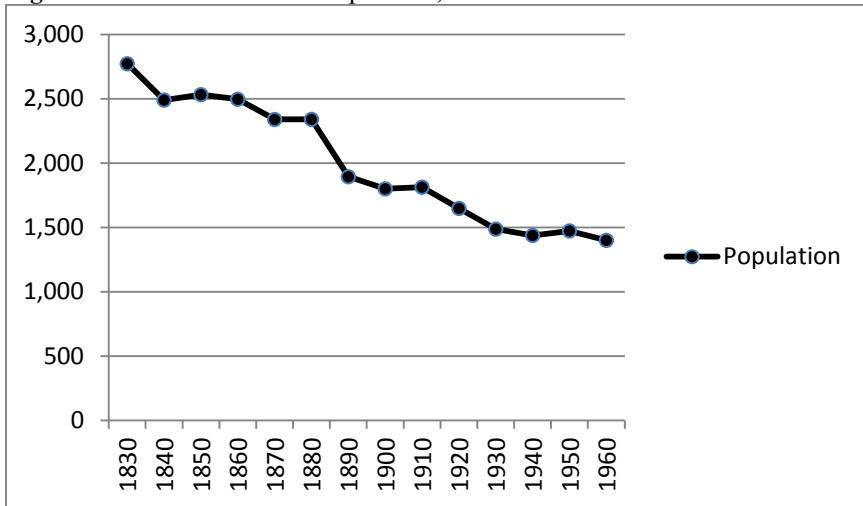
Those places that remain part of a production economy, where men and women produce a physical product for a living, are losers. To the extent they do survive in a service economy, they lack income and prestige, and owe their souls to bankers and politicians. (5)

In the United States, the great cities of the Great Lakes industrial heartland, stretching from Milwaukee and Detroit in the west to Syracuse and Utica in the east, have been largely deindustrialized as firms moved manufacturing to low wage regions of the world. In the place of once bustling factories are empty shells of buildings or great fields of polluted earth. Such cities have neither transitioned into service sector cities, nor have they died completely. They continue to exist as development and decline both transform the city as new investment most often skirts the areas of ruin.

The American approach to ruins has historically been multifaceted. In some cities, the history has been commodified into a service sector industry: tourism. This is the case in Lowell, Massachusetts, where the history of water-powered mills is highlighted at the Lowell National Historic Park. Similarly, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Steamtown National Historic Site offers the public a museum and rides on a reconditioned railroad. In most places, however, the ruins of the past simply exist in varying degrees of disrepair.

In rural areas, the presence of ruins has historically been considered to be part of the charm. In his history of the Catskill Mountains, David Stradling (2010) notes that part of the appeal for urbanites traveling to the mountains as early as the mid-nineteenth century was the supposed “timelessness” of the mountain scenery. However, the region had been settled as early as, or even earlier than, the American Revolution, developing rich industries in leather tanning and other mills. By the mid-nineteenth century, the remains of these facilities, particularly along creek beds, were considered to add to the allure of the region—curious signs of past occupation that only slowly changed as the wood rotted and the fieldstone foundations were gradually overgrown. In other words, rather than being seen as symbols of economic decline or even change, the industrial ruins were viewed as part of a pastoral environment. Indeed, even today the ruins of former farms and reforested fields are part of the pastoral environment to which urban tourists are drawn (Thomas 2003).

In Hartwick, this equivocal attitude toward the past permeates the local character. The town population peaked at slightly over 2,700 residents in 1830, then fell to only 1,400 people in 1960 (see figure 1). Much of this decline occurred during a twenty year period between 1880 and 1900 as local youth migrated to the Mohawk Valley in search of employment in the city of Utica and its nearest suburbs. The decline in population meant that the physical structure of the village was established very early, and between 1830 and 1960 relatively

Figure 1: Town of Hartwick Population, 1830-1960

Source: U. S. Census Bureau.

little new construction took place (although some new residential streets were added, particularly after the arrival of the railroad in 1900). Not surprisingly, the village is rich in structures dating to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but their level of upkeep is uneven.

The character of the village today thus reflects a period of stagnation and even decline over about 130 years. Since 1900, and particularly since 1960, the agricultural economy underwent an intense period of restructuring. The dairy industry became more highly centralized in larger firms, initially ending the provision of dairy products through small industrial facilities such as the Hartwick Creamery. As the industry became more centralized, the prices paid for raw milk declined as well, and by the 1980s the State of New York purchased cows in a bid to reduce the milk supply and thus bolster prices. The result was that by 1987 the human population of the county surpassed the cow population for the first time since the early nineteenth century. Similarly, the automobile made it easier for local residents to drive to nearby (and larger) communities for goods and services. Larger communities typically had lower prices and greater selection than Hartwick merchants because of economies of scale, and over time Hartwick residents were habitually shopping elsewhere (see Brown et al. 1996). By 1980, the local Hartwick business district had collapsed, the community supporting only a handful of locally oriented businesses (Thomas 1999).

Although the economic and architectural character of the village is interesting, this chapter will examine in detail the civic character of the village. Civic character differs from business and residential architecture because it is, by definition, a product of the collective decision making process. While it is true that

local government has historically, in both Hartwick and elsewhere, had a considerable degree of influence on the civic character, government is not the only organization to do so. Indeed, the fact that government is often perceived as the only instrument of civic character is testimony to the decline of a civic tradition that historically pursued multiple avenues of collective investment. As will be discussed, the Hartwick Cemetery Association is one such mechanism, as well as schools, churches, and other civic groups. To understand how the civic character developed in the village, it is necessary to understand how historical circumstances influenced past and current decisions.

Today, Hartwick is a village of 629 in a township of 2,110 residents. It is located thirty miles south of the city of Utica, New York, a metropolitan area of about 300 thousand people, and eight miles west of the village of Cooperstown, a tourist town home to the Baseball Hall of Fame. The median family income in 2010 was \$70,909, and the village had a poverty rate of 12.2 percent (U. S. Census Bureau 2012). And, of course, its landscape reveals its past.

A Little City

The town of Hartwick was born when John Christopher Hartwick, a Lutheran minister from Germany, bought 24,000 acres from the Mohawk Indians in 1754 (Arndt 1937). The Mohawks were at the modern village of Canajoharie, over thirty miles from the Hartwick Patent, and it is safe to assume that they did not see this out-of-the-way place as central to their own well-being. Hartwick received a patent from the British government in 1761, but intense settlement of the region did not begin until after the American Revolution. Hartwick had intended his patent to be known as New Jerusalem, a pious community based largely on a medieval German village. The settlers who arrived, however, were predominantly Calvinists from New England who preferred to own, not lease, their land, and so the community grew slowly. After Hartwick's death, his remaining lands were used to start the first Lutheran seminary in America, which survives today as Hartwick College in nearby Oneonta. In his will, Hartwick described his settlement in urban terms, directing that his lands, "be laid out into a regular town, closely built, to be called New Jerusalem, with buildings and hall for a gymnasium" (Strobel 1867: 29).

The town of Hartwick was not, however, developed by its namesake, but rather by land speculator William Cooper. In contrast to Hartwick, Cooper was a businessman whose motive was not to hold land but to sell it quickly and turn a profit; for Cooper, landholdings were a source of wealth and income, not parishioners or serfs. Cooper sold land to settlers even while many aristocrats clung to the semi-feudal land lease system, and in doing so helped to establish the "freehold" system in upstate New York (Butterfield 1955: 10). In his own village of Cooperstown he sought to develop a thriving commercial city that would attract new settlers and raise property values in the village. He sold large lots to liquidate land quickly, thus allowing him to repeat the cycle again. His goal was not

to develop a small town or an agricultural region, but from the earliest was to develop a city. He developed the Hartwick lands as an agricultural hinterland for his budding city, claiming that Cooperstown would prove as important as the mouth of the Buffalo River (Buffalo) and boasting of the village's superior construction to Utica (Cooper 1936 [1810]).

The attitude of Hartwick and Cooper remained dominant throughout the nineteenth century: villages, including Cooperstown and Hartwick, were not to be thought of as "small towns" but rather as small cities. Even the smallest villages attempted to "keep up" with the advances and fashions found in much larger cities, and in Hartwick this included such basic amenities as paved streets, concrete sidewalks, and a modern water system. As the largest cities grew to immense size this perception of small towns as "little cities" was gradually replaced by an anti-urban sensibility, but even as late as the early twentieth century many small towns were modeled on urban sensibilities. In Hartwick, this translated into a continued desire for "modern" amenities, and the criticisms of the village were often pale reminders of urban criticisms.

The 1890s brought the "City Beautiful" movement, a cultural phenomenon that found fault with the slum conditions found in many large cities (Wilson 1994). The answer for many was the rebuilding of the city in an effort to not only clear away poorer neighborhoods, but to provide urban amenities such as parks and exalted architecture thought to encourage moral virtue. Rural villages like Hartwick presented residents with conditions quite unlike the massive tenement districts of lower Manhattan and Chicago, but the discourse of urban beautification of the late nineteenth century nevertheless traveled to the countryside. As a result, the 1890s witnessed a series of efforts in the community designed to beautify the village and modernize its infrastructure. New sidewalks were constructed in the business district, for example. Not all improvements necessitated government action, however. In 1896, the Hartwick Water Works Company was formed as a joint-stock corporation with the principle intent of building a modern water system to provide a stable course of water for villagers (who, up to then, relied on individual wells) and for improved fire protection. The joint stock corporation was used as a way of raising capital to build the enlarged wells required to water the village and extend water lines throughout the community. In contrast to the twentieth-century understanding of the corporation, its role was to promote a specific social end and not merely to generate a profit for its owners. Indeed, profits were minimal.

The cemetery is a good example of how the community coalesced around such an issue. A cemetery is an example of collective sacred space. The primary function is the internment of dead bodies, a sign of respect for the dead but, at least as important, a mechanism for disposing of potentially disease-carrying bodies in a healthy way. Strictly speaking, it does not have to be attractive in order to fulfill this function, nor does it have to be seen as a public amenity. The Hartwick Cemetery dates to the early nineteenth century as a strip of land at the edge of town, and its humble tombstones performed the function of identifying the grave. A single dirt road ran through the strip of land, but there were no oth-

er amenities. By the late nineteenth century the grounds had come to represent the village character in a manner they had not in years past, and villagers began to see a more permanent mechanism for the planning and upkeep of the cemetery as essential. A scrapbook dating to the 1880s included the following note:

Everyone who is interested seems to be in favor of something being done to establish the fact of it being handled in a more enterprising manner than it has been in past years. If the effort is successful, steps will be taken at once to construct a vault, enlarge the grounds, and care for the lots that have been so long neglected. Last season the grass was not even mowed and if something is not done it will be a disgrace to the village. (Potter 2002: 386)

It is worth noting that the township includes many cemeteries, but it was only the cemetery in the village that received such attention. The concern was partly pragmatic: the community needed an enlarged space in which to bury the dead, and a vault was necessary as a place to store a cadaver during winter. The concern was not purely pragmatic, however: citizens were concerned that the cemetery would “disgrace” the village, and a proper village maintained such public amenities.

The Cemetery Association incorporated in 1894 and immediately designed its enlargement. The design of the cemetery followed the fashions of the day. New roads were laid out, including a meandering road next to a road to the fairgrounds and inner “streets” that connected various areas of the cemetery to each other. At the north end of the new grounds, a series of terraces were dug out of the ground to a depth of nearly eight feet, forming a large semi-circle of terraced gravesites surrounding a small garden lawn with a water pump at the center. Across the new road from the terrace, a concrete vault was built into the earth and given a façade of fieldstone. This was not small project: much of the work was done by hand. New plantings were added throughout the grounds to create a park-like atmosphere that, because the roads were paved in the 1960s, continues as a place of entertainment for walkers and cyclists in the village today.

The design of the cemetery is unique to the landscape of Hartwick, but its intent was influenced by the wider “City Beautiful Movement” and the dominant discourse governing how a community should look. When understood in conjunction to other projects of the time, including the new sidewalks and water system, it is clear that villagers of the time perceived Hartwick as a community that deserved what other villages also desired. This reflected a cultural tradition that dated to the early settlement of the village: villages were understood as small cities, and Hartwick was no different. As any proper city has a water system and a landscaped cemetery, Hartwickians deserved the same. This tradition was encoded in the physical structure—the character—of the settlement space and continues to this day.

An Incomplete Plan

Central New York is one of the early homes of public education in the United States, settled as it was by New Englanders for whom a good education was not only a civic but a religious duty (Woodard 2011). Even before John Christopher Hartwick's will left funds for the hiring of teachers and for the construction of the seminary in 1797, Amasa Peters had donated land in Hartwick village for a school in 1796. By 1810 there were seven one-room schoolhouses in the township, and by 1830 there were fourteen districts. Hartwick village contained two districts—one for each side of Otego Creek (Hornbeck 2002; Weeks 1981).

In 1878, residents of the village voted to combine the two one-room schoolhouse districts in favor of a new “graded” system. This involved building a new building for a “union” school on South Street. The new school was not only to be about providing a higher quality education, however, but also about the display of civic pride. One resident lamented in 1878, “Our new school house . . . is a fine looking structure, lacking in only one particular, as a public building—no appropriation was voted for a dome or tower” (quoted in Hornbeck 2002). The original purpose of the school was to provide education through the eighth grade, but as the nineteenth century came closer to an end pressure was put on school systems to offer classes at the secondary level as well.

New York State had instituted the Regents exam system during the Civil War. The intent was to ensure that students entering secondary schools, called academies, met a set of minimum qualifications. Many academies at the time were private but received state aid based on the number of students. The Regents system ensured that only academically qualified students would be admitted to high school, thereby costing the state less money in aid. Of course, had the war continued those not admitted to academies could have been eligible for the war effort (NYSED 2012).

In 1878, the Regents exam system was expanded to include specific subjects taught in the high schools as well. As the principle of Albany High School noted in 1878:

The salutary influence of the primary examinations in stimulating both teachers and pupils to thoroughness in the acquisition of the elementary branches suggested the extension of the system to academic studies. It was argued that the Regents exhibited great solicitude with reference to the admission of pupils to high schools and academies, but took no interest in the kind of instruction they received there, or the amount of knowledge with which they graduated. If there was danger of neglecting the elementary branches and advancing schools prematurely, the danger of superficiality and misdirection in the range of secondary study was still greater. (Quoted in NYSED 2012)

Local communities wishing to have their own high school curriculum could teach the classes, but only a state licensed academy could administer the Regents exam.

Some Hartwick students did, in fact, take a secondary curriculum and then stayed in nearby Cooperstown in order to take the Regents exams. The lessons were taught privately in the basement of the Presbyterian Church (Weeks 1981: 39). As being home to an academy with a secondary curriculum became an expectation of many rural communities, local school boards began opening public academies, usually as an expansion of their primary schools. Not surprisingly:

Hartwick Union School and Academy was established in March, 1898, through the efforts of the board of education and the citizens of the district on March 22, 1898 [*sic*], the Academic department was chartered by the University of The State of New York as a Junior Academic School so securing the benefits of the regent system of supervision and participation of the apportionment of money by the University. They planned to introduce Latin and Algebra in grammar grades. (Quoted in Hornbeck 2002)

The impetus for the creation of a union school and then an academy did not come from growth in the town. In 1870 the town population stood at 2,339; in 1880 it was 2,340. As Hartwick was improving its educational system, however, the population was falling: to 1,894 in 1890, and to only 1,800 in 1900—a 23 percent decrease in only twenty years! And although the population rebounded slightly in 1920 (1,813), by 1920 it had fallen again to 1,648. The impetus for the improved school system was cultural. An aspect of this change was that the wider culture demanded something more from a community than the one-room schoolhouse, as seen with the desire for a graded primary school and the later academy licensed to offer Regents exams. Another important aspect of this was community pride: a “proper” village had an up-to-date school system just as it had a park-like cemetery and new sidewalks.

In 1920 construction began on a new school at the end of Mill Street. The original plan called for a two and half story structure with brick façade, the basement used for academic purposes as well as the other floors (Hornbeck 2002). The original plan for the new school called for it to face a newly built street. The new public building looked very much like other schools in the region built at about the same time: a grand staircase located in the middle of a symmetrically identical brick building, a façade of white columns flanked either side of the double doors. Decorative brickwork adorned the space between the second and third story windows, a small portico centered above the main entrance. It is with the construction of this building, however, that the landscape records an interesting change in the civic character.

A modern cafeteria was built for lunchtime, but a gymnasium was deemed unimportant as the school district had gained control of a public hall with a stage and basketball court that had been built by the railroad. The public hall, now used as a community center, was only a block from the new school and deemed

close enough in order to save costs. As such, unlike other schools built during this time, Hartwick school—the building for the entire district—did not include a gymnasium. Students either used the sports fields across the street or, in winter, walked the block to the gymnasium.

Another feature of the new building that might appear odd today is the direction of the building. The street that was to have been built at the building's front was never constructed, and as such the front of the building faces a large lawn and the side of a house. The side of the building faces the street, and because it was never intended to be the front of the building, there is only one humble door. This adjoins a fairly utilitarian area, including a parking lot, that was designed to be the rear of the building. Had the new street been built the design would be obvious to any passersby; because it was not, it appears that either 1) they built a major public building with no obvious front, or 2) they built an ugly building.

It is possible that had the population continued to grow or, at the least, remained stable during the period between 1880 and 1920, the school district would have built a “normal” school building. Downward population pressure placed pressure on the school board to justify such an elaborate expense in the face of a dwindling population. Indeed, an initial attempt to build a new school in 1915 failed by a vote of 153 to 117. A new school required the district to cut corners, and the gymnasium was an obvious choice as the village already had one such facility. (Many communities did not have such a facility at that time and thus their school districts built them.) In addition, declining population also meant a declining tax base, and so even if approved there was a challenge in raising the required capital. Nevertheless, a village like Hartwick was expected to have such a facility—it was a matter both of internal community pride and external social expectation—and the new school, corners cut, was built five years later.

Streetscapes

The introduction of the automobile as a mass means of transportation occurred during the twentieth century. Seen earlier as a toy for the wealthy, cars and trucks came to be seen as agricultural equipment and tools for commuting as early as the 1920s. In New York State, the 1920s and 1930s witnessed an explosion of new road construction and improvement, particularly after Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president in 1933 and funneled funds to the state for road construction through the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps (Kay 1998). Through a combination of state and federal funds, existing roads in Hartwick came to be improved.

Photography and historical records indicate that as late as World War I highway construction and maintenance were primarily a local concern. As with the building of new sidewalks mentioned earlier, proper streets were considered to be a marker of community identity. However, with the expansion of road

building activities during the 1920s and 1930s the improved roads came at the cost of local community control.

The town first received state aid in highway maintenance in 1907—\$892.50 (Phillips 2002). In 1920, the town bore the cost of paving (with macadam) Main Street from the railroad station to the Main Street Bridge. This particular stretch of road contained the heart of the residential area and the central business district, but other areas of Main Street, as well as all of the side streets, were not improved. In 1921, the town further paved Main Street an additional two miles south of the village. In 1928, however, the county took over the ownership of the street both within and outside of the village, and the “Hartwick-Index” road was widened and paved for a stretch of about fifteen miles through the town. With the county taking ownership of the road, the maintenance and appearance of Main Street was now a county responsibility: the town gladly ceded the associated costs of the upkeep, but the county was more concerned with the street as part of a wider transportation network than a focal point of community activity.

In 1931, the state hired a Massachusetts contractor to build a stretch of highway along South Street for a distance of seven miles. In 1933, the state highway was extended both north and south, and route 205 became the dominant transportation route through the Otego Creek Valley. This had the effect of making Main Street, now a county highway, a secondary street. It also had the effect of ensuring that the two most important streets through the village were no longer under local control. The loss of local control for the main streets would dramatically impact the civic character of the village in the future; the local (town-owned) streets were all paved, but only one would be built with curbs and sidewalks.

Renewing Main Street

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed a gradual transformation of the structural roots of the village’s civic character. Whereas the turn of the century witnessed a civic character that sought to compete with other villages, and for the most part did so successfully, by the 1920s population and tax base decline resulted in a new school that failed to live up to the standards found in other communities. Not only was it missing a gymnasium, but the original plan that called for a new street at the building’s front was never constructed, and so the rather utilitarian side of the building became its public face. In the buildup to World War II, the provision of funding by the state and federal governments resulted in improved (normally widened and paved) streets through the village, but came with the loss of local community control over these streets. Of course, local government and many taxpayers were happy to cede local control over the streetscape because the costs would be borne by state and federal taxpayers, but no longer would local government have a significant say in how the streetscape would appear. As the community faced the economic shifts of the period after World War II, external forces came to dominate how the village would appear.

The period after World War II was one of considerable economic prosperity for the United States as a whole. The war had eliminated much of the global competition, leaving the United States the undisputed economic leader. The economy expanded at a staggering pace, and as the 1950s and 1960s continued new initiatives were indicative of growing American confidence. The 1950s had brought the interstate highway system and the 1960s brought the space race; in 1969 Americans became the first humans to walk on the moon. This impacted social policy as well: the federal government renewed efforts to reduce poverty, especially among the young and the elderly, and aid to education resulted in an expansion of the number of students in college. In most major cities the movement commonly called “urban renewal,” a series of policies and practices that had accelerated during the 1930s, reached its highest fruition during the 1960s and early 1970s. This often resulted in large areas of the inner city being demolished in the hopes of redevelopment, and met with varying degrees of success. The goal was frequently to rebuild the inner city, particularly in downtown areas, in a manner that would be more open (parks and plazas) and made more accommodations to the automobile (parking, wider streets, etc.) (Thomas 2003).

Hartwick was too small to qualify for urban renewal funds, but the cultural spirit of urban renewal nevertheless resided in the village too. Many of the commercial buildings dated to the nineteenth century, some as early as 1820, and their wooden structures required continual upkeep. Business was spread throughout the village, but the business district on Main Street was the hub of activity with twenty-four storefronts. Store space was limited, however: one business that sold general goods and appliances was spread across four storefronts, and a grocery store was spread across both of the storefronts in its building. Although Hartwick was comparatively small, the community still had a parking problem as nearly everyone living within four to five miles of the village shopped on Main Street. Not surprisingly, as was the case in communities big and small throughout America, many Hartwick residents believed the village to be in need of a major renewal project by the 1960s.

In 1964, five buildings along Main and South Streets were demolished to make room for a “modern” shopping center: a one-story (the former buildings were two-to-three stories) structure set back amid a small parking lot containing a laundromat, a liquor store, and a new supermarket. The loss of seven storefronts corresponded to a 29 percent decline in the number of potential business sites downtown, but the local newspaper beamed:

This beautiful new facility is a wonderful addition to the Village of Hartwick and local residents are quite excited about having a supermarket in their midst. (Freeman’s Journal 21 Sept. 1966)

Soon after, another two-storefront building was demolished to make room for a new fire station and a second such building was turned into a parking lot. By the end of the decade a three-story hotel was replaced with a mobile home, and an-

other building was torn down during the 1980s after spending some years as an apartment building.

Local residents had become increasingly comfortable with shopping in nearby communities during the period after World War II. Many village residents worked in other towns, and many farm families met the challenges of a declining agricultural economy by having at least one parent, normally mom, commute to another town for employment. As Hartwick residents shopped elsewhere the retail market in the village became more precarious. At first storeowners responded by delaying basic maintenance such as painting or by raising prices; in time, these strategies only served to drive away more customers. Many storeowners simply could not survive under such conditions and closed; in other cases, storeowners retired and nobody was willing to take their place. A resident related that when one store closed:

He just boarded the place up. I went in there a few years ago (during the late 1980s) and the place was just like he left it when he closed. There was still candy in the jars after twenty years; it was like a time machine. He just showed up one day and closed.

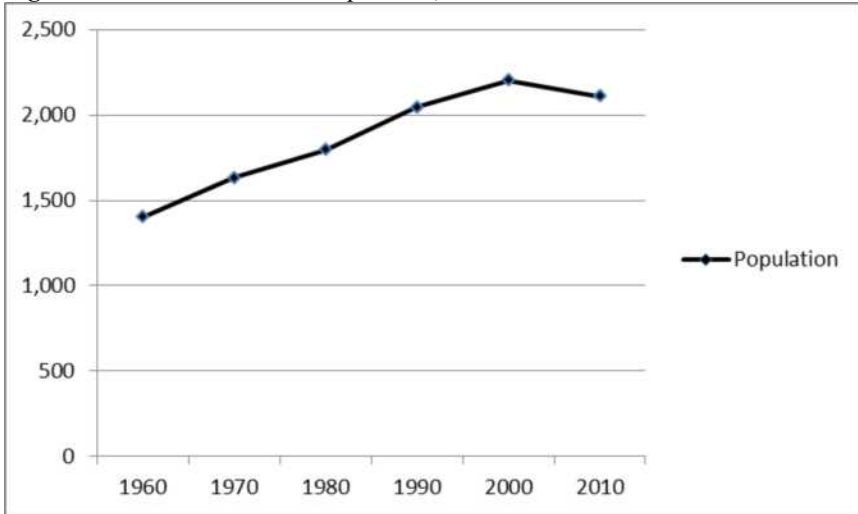
With the declining number of businesses in the central business district, Hartwick failed to generate the economies of scale necessary for a viable economic center.

The 1970s were marked by the economic oddity of “stagflation” nationwide, but stagnation would have been better than Hartwick’s fate. The decade was marked by a series of economic and social calamities best described as a “collapse” (see Thomas 2003). In 1978 the town closed the local landfill, and later in the spring the Victory supermarket chain closed its Hartwick store—the one that had opened in the new shopping center. As the supermarket had expanded into the entire complex over the previous ten years, the closing of the store left downtown with a gaping hole. In June, the Agway farm supply store in the former railroad depot closed its doors as well. The local business community responded to these changes by forming a committee to address the collapse of the local economy, but their efforts resulted in only one tangible result: the local Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) opened a day treatment center in the former supermarket. In 1980, Hartwick village contained only the following businesses: a bank, a small grocer, a diner, a gas station and garage, and a convenience store that also sold gas. By 1990 the grocer and the garage had closed as well. Downtown, only the fire department, bank, post office, and ARC remained.

Interestingly, the period since 1960 has also been marked by considerable population growth (see figure 2). The town population increased 16.5 percent during the 1960s and 10.1 percent during the disastrous 1970s; by 2010, there were 2,110 residents—51 percent higher than in 1960! Although there was comparatively little new housing in the village, much of the growth did occur in rural settings within the traditional catchment area of the village. However, by the

1990s a commercial strip had developed within the town of Hartwick just south of the village of Cooperstown, and this has increasingly become the home of community-oriented retail in the region (Thomas 2003).

Figure 2: Town of Hartwick Population, 1960-2010



Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Longtime village residents do not remember the late 1970s with fondness, but the collapse of the local economy was not the most traumatic event of the period.

No More Huskies

As education continued to be stressed by every level of government after World War II, small school districts like Hartwick had difficulty in keeping up with new fashions and state requirements. Although the high school was small, the school had a good reputation in sports. The school's football team was undefeated in 1952, and won every baseball championship in its league between 1952 and 1957 (Hornbeck 2002). The sports teams and arts events were no mere school functions: they were rallying cries for the local community.

In 1957, members of the Hartwick School Board contemplated consolidation with a neighboring district, settling on a consolidation plan with Cooperstown. The initial plan stressed the benefits to both communities: the enlarged tax base of a consolidated school district would allow for a new high school to be built in Cooperstown, and Hartwick residents would have access to the new facilities and curriculum. In April, the two districts agreed to send Hartwick students to Cooperstown that fall and begin the talks of consolidation (Freeman's Journal 17 April 1957).

On the eve of consolidation, the Oneonta Daily Star reported on Hartwick resident Jim Hamilton, a man who could “name the heroes, goats, records, pitches, and situations over the past few years with the quickness of an IBM machine” (Parce 1957). Noting that “few schools captured the public fancy as (had) Hartwick and her teams,” the loss of the school was portrayed not only as a loss for the community, but one that would realign the loyalties even of Mr. Hamilton:

Next Year? Jim hasn’t looked that far ahead, but we’ll put a bob on the line that he’ll know the facts and figures on the Cooperstown Redskins forwards and backwards . . . Thus, educational progress has ended a sports era. (Parce 1957)

In the final wording, however, the districts were not “consolidated”; Hartwick was “annexed.”

It was not until 1976 that the difference between an annexation and a consolidation would become evident. In February the school board considered a plan that would transport students above the fourth grade to Cooperstown. Part of the reasoning was that the Hartwick School did not have a gymnasium, and transporting the higher grade levels would enable the district to save the maintenance costs associated with the former railroad hall a block away; in addition, students would no longer have to walk to the gym. Students in kindergarten through third grade, however, could have gym class in the school cafeteria (Freeman’s Journal 25 February 1976).

Upon further consideration of the costs of the Hartwick School, however, it was determined that the district could save \$107,000 per year if the school were closed entirely. This figure was confirmed by an independent cost-benefit analysis later in the year. Within weeks Hartwick parents mobilized a group called SOS—Save our School. SOS collected signatures for a petition, explored the option of switching school districts to nearby Laurens, and ultimately held a rally at the school that attracted fifty people. The activism concerned the school board to such a degree that they requested the sheriff to attend the last school board meeting for protection (Thomas 2003). In the end, Hartwick students were bused to Cooperstown and the school was sold for \$10,000. The town bought the former sports fields and gym for a dollar; had the word “consolidation” been used in the 1950s, the properties would have automatically reverted back to the town.

History, Tradition, and Civic Character

The historical development of the village can be read in its current landscape as its civic character. A casual visitor might think the village to be rather depressed, and certain features of American urbanism, such as street signs, are sparse. Such a visitor might also remark that the villagers apparently care little about the community’s appearance, but the traditions that inform the civic character are not so easily described. In the classic study *The Urban Villagers*, Her-

bert Gans (1982) noted how the poor residents of Boston's West End neighborhood, later demolished in an early case of urban renewal, walked by empty storefronts and dilapidated buildings and cognitively "filtered out" their surroundings. Residents were accustomed to such surroundings because they navigated them daily: they were neither scary nor unattractive, but rather were a type of landscape "filler" that escaped notice. In Hartwick, residents drive by empty storefronts every day and think nothing of driving six miles for a supermarket; it is just part of everyday life, a landscape so routinized that its flaws are barely noticeable. If such a civic character is distinguished by neglect, it is a tradition of neglect that evolved over decades.

A visitor from even a moderately sizable town would notice the lack of street signs, particularly if they are looking for a specific address. The town government is concerned about the cost of such signs, and as a result only some streets have them. Curiously, only side streets have signs, the two main streets having none. During the 1990s, when the county established an Emergency 911 system, a unified system of addresses was put in place throughout the region. In Hartwick, the state and county highways were renamed: Main Street became County Highway 11 and North and South Streets became State Highway 205. Officially, there is no longer a Main Street in Hartwick. When asked, a town official noted some years later, "well, everyone knows where Main Street is." This is not true, however, and the local culture and even the few existing street signs demonstrate this. At one corner signs announce both Wells Avenue and School Street: they are the same street, but local residents bicker over the name of the street. Historically, the street was named Mill Street, but with the lack of a formalizing agent such as a street sign the name of the street has now changed three separate times. The names of local streets have changed demonstrably over the years: in her 1934 history of Hartwick, Pearl Weeks (1981) mentions Parr Avenue and West Street, but neither name is used today. Similarly, when the town erected a street sign for Miller Avenue, its name had somehow become Earle's Road.

In other cases, signage actually reveals a conflict in how residents perceive the community. At the former school gym on Main Street, the building is decorated with a pleasant work of folk art that reveals one aspect of the culture: a commodified version of rural life reflecting simplicity and innocence. In front of the building, a utilitarian green sign announces "Town of Hartwick Community Center." Such ambivalence between the utilitarian and the pastoral is found elsewhere as well. The town war memorial stands at the corner of Main and North Streets (well, now routes 205 and 11). The memorial is a large boulder adorned with a small plaque affixed to the front, a number of shrubs behind it and surrounded by a small lawn. A local community beautification group has placed planters atop 4x4 posts with flowers. The memorial unintentionally signals the local cultural tension between wishing for an aesthetically pleasing memorial and saving money; the cultural concern is understandable in a community that arguably overreached in creating its high school.

This cultural ambiguity is reflected in the character of the community in larger settings as well. The northeast side of the village is marked by the presence of the cemetery, the former school, and the town park. The school was purchased by one of the leaders of SOS who operated it as a store for a number of years, but it has stood vacant since the 1990s. The parking lot is closed to traffic and is slowly being returned to nature, a basketball court as overgrown as the parking spaces themselves. The sidewalk leading to the front of the building—functionally, the side of the building—is similarly overgrown, the bright red doors fading over the years. Across the street, the sports fields today serve as a town park, the baseball field used by the local youth baseball league. The playground includes a new basketball court, teeter-totters, two swing sets, and a jungle gym that dates to the former school. Some parents have expressed apprehension about allowing their children to play on the jungle gym due to its bare metal bars (it likely dates to the 1950s), but a town official noted in 2011, “I like it. I played on it when I was a kid, and if it was safe for us it’s still safe today . . . I’d hate to see it go.” Just to the north, the Hartwick Cemetery Association still maintains the lawns and terraces of the cemetery, and its paved roads are a favorite place for bike-riders and walkers alike.

The central business district is notable for the lack of buildings and businesses. The area has a sparse feel as the shopping center, converted to a day treatment program, and the fire department both have significant setbacks relative to other buildings in the area to account for parking. Combined with several empty lots and two vacant commercial structures, the area is a reminder that even in small town America “urban” problems exist. The loss of local control has saved the town money in terms of maintenance of the road, but it has also resulted in an uninspired approach to the streetscape. The county has treated the road as a rural highway and not as a village street. This was particularly apparent in 2010 when the highway department rebuilt the street through the west side of town, including through the remains of the business district.

On April 12, 2010, County Representative Steve Fournier reported to the town board that Main Street would be rebuilt, but the town board had no chance for significant input as to the design. As work progressed on the project over the summer, local residents began to notice more than changes in drainage: the parking lanes on either side of the street were converted to strips of grass between the sidewalk and the street: all street parking had been eliminated! Throughout the fall, various town officials received complaints: a town board member was told by a member of the fire department that the fire station needed a place for firefighters to park while out on a call; a planning board member was asked by a local minister why the parking in front of the church had been eliminated. At the November planning board meeting the topic was discussed, and in December the planning board passed a resolution condemning the project, particularly in regard to the elimination of parking. The following week, the town board invited the county highway superintendent and the county representative to the meeting. The highway superintendent noted that green space was necessary to slow traffic through the area, but village residents were not convinced.

As one resident noted, “how does somebody who claims to be a professional look at a street with cars parked on it and decide that—what the hell?—let’s just get rid of all the parking?” Another resident stated, “it’s like they’re trying to kill off what’s left in Hartwick so we all have to go to Cooperstown all the time.” When asked at the town board meeting, the superintendent stated that municipalities are not generally consulted as to the design of a new road project.

The following spring the grass strips were partially paved with asphalt, but a local resident opined in 2011, “they didn’t really fix the problem, just paved some grass. It still looks like hell!” In the July 2011 planning board minutes:

The Board decided that it should be on record that the Planning Board does not support or endorse either the original project, or the subsequent “fix” and the “dumb-ass” responsible should be held accountable for the inferior drainage of the roadway. Further, the Planning Board protests the County initiated action that proceeded without any regard to the Planning Board’s recommendation and without any apparent regard for the Town’s general health, safety, or welfare.

’Nuff said.

It was not just the county-owned Main Street that faced aesthetic issues. The state highway, formerly known as North and South Streets, has had no significant repairs except for occasional resurfacing in decades. The town-owned sidewalks are uneven, with one side of the street having received brand new sidewalks during a water system project in 2009 but the other side of the street making do with the asphalt sidewalks last paved during the 1980s. A blue directional sign erected by the state for which local businesses can buy advertisements sits empty at the intersection with Main Street, yet a more functional sign directing drivers to nearby communities is not found in the village. The streets have no curbs and poor drainage, the new sidewalks flanked with a strip of asphalt between the street and concrete walks. The local government has asked for some assistance from the state, including a lower speed limit and signs to direct local tourists to Cooperstown, but to little effect.

A recent attempt on the part of the town government, particularly the planning board, is illustrative of the problem. The minutes of January 8, 2008 note that a letter was sent to the New York State Department of Transportation requesting that the speed limit through the village be lowered from thirty-five to thirty miles per hour—similar to other villages its size—and the speed zone be extended in the south by about a quarter-mile. They also asked for a sign that would direct travelers to Cooperstown along Main Street as the village has a number of tourists. As this was not answered, a simpler letter was sent on June 3. According to the December 2, 2008 minutes, the Department of Transportation agreed to a traffic study.

After hearing nothing for two years, the planning board unanimously passed a resolution on December 7, 2010 that the:

Town Board request that the State Department of Transportation extend the 35 mile per hour speed limit to the southern extent of the Water District; further, that the Town of Hartwick sign also be relocated to this point. This re-signing of the area would increase pedestrian safety and the safety of the new business growth in this area of the Town.

Finally, on March 1, 2011, the planning board received word that the Department of Transportation acknowledged a serious problem with speed through the hamlet—many drivers greatly exceeded the speed limit—but refused to make any changes as it was an “enforcement issue,” and that the speed reduction might create more problems.

The loss of local control in this instance had been recognized earlier by other government officials, and in 2008 a town board member remarked that, “I hope this works, but I don’t think the state will do anything. We’ve been through this before.” The sentiment reflects decades of non-responsiveness to local concerns on the part of state officials, and as result a municipal “learned helplessness” has set in: many locals perceive that their concerns are not considered important. As one local resident stated after hearing that the speed zone would not be lowered or extended, “I guess they care more about that guy making it from Oneonta to Utica a minute faster than about the people who live here. Maybe if some kid gets killed they’ll do something.”

Luckily, no one has.

Encoded Landscapes

Civic character reflects not the cultural tradition at a particular moment in time, but rather the accumulation of decisions over the life of the community. Social structure and culture are indeed encoded in the landscape, the result at any moment in time being character. Civic character is one aspect of this landscape: it reflects how the collective conceived of itself both in the past and at the present. One might also discuss the array of housing options and their state of repair as residential character, or the economic infrastructure as economic character. However, civic character is unique in that it is reflective of community relations and self-identification.

In Hartwick, the present character of the community cannot be simply interpreted as a lack of care or of economic misfortune. Indeed, in terms of population the community is better off today than it was fifty years ago, and this likely indicates improved economic circumstances that have kept residents and attracted new ones. In order to understand civic character and the tradition that underlies it, one must read the landscape for clues to the past; tradition is not stable, but rather evolves over time. As Collins (1975) noted, culture is not a stable superstructure, but rather it is generated through social interaction and thus continually evolves. This evolution is encoded in the landscape as civic projects, abandoned attempts to keep up with other communities, and repeated

negative interactions with external forces. In Hartwick as in many small towns, the result is a civic character that today appears neglected, decayed, or even abandoned. The social forces that produced that landscape are the same forces that created the exalted urban landscapes of power and prosperity, but they reflect a different experience with the urban economy.

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4

Stigma, Reputation, and Place Structuration in a Coastal New England Town

Karen Hayden

Marginal places, those towns and regions which have been “left behind” in the modern race for progress, evoke both nostalgia and fascination. Their marginal status may come from out-of-the-way geographical locations, being the site of illicit or disdained social activities, or being the Other to some great cultural centre . . . marginal places that are of interest here are not necessarily geographical peripheries but, first and foremost, they have been placed on the periphery of cultural systems of space in which places are ranked relative to each other. (Shields 1991: 3)

This chapter provides a case study of a marginal place, a town that exemplifies the rural as wild image, one of the key rural as other perceptions emerging from the standards set by urbanormativity and its modern race for progress (Thomas et al. 2011; Fulkerson and Thomas 2013). I examine how one rural New England town became identified and circumscribed by its reputation for backwardness, lawlessness, and inbreeding. I explore how stories about the town and its inhabitants have been cobbled together over time to create a virtual structure—a mythological Stonewall—around the town. The stigma attached to the town, and often embraced by some of the town’s inhabitants, acts as a type of social differentiation based on notions of rural people and rural places as wild, untamed, and lawless (Hayden 1997; 2000).

I am primarily concerned with how stigmata, such as “inbred,” “illiterate,” “degenerate,” or “degraded” become geographically bounded and hence territorial in the relations they constitute, and how place and stigma interact from within the stigmatized community and throughout the larger geographic region. I examine how place comes to define a people and how they in turn define their community as in need of defense and not easily understandable to strangers. The socially structured reputation becomes a place-image and is understood through “oversimplification or a reduction to one trait, stereotyping or the amplification

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of one or more traits, and labeling *where a place is deemed to be of a certain nature*" (Shields 1991: 7, my emphasis).

I also explore the concept of stigmatized place as a type of place structuration, where place stigma are viewed not simply as place-identities, but communities to which solidarity, location, and the stigmatizing trait are attributed and the attribution is naturalized (Hayden 2000; Thomas et al. 2011). I investigate how a town that is not geographically isolated acquires a reputation for backwardness and for being an "inbred town," and how this image has persevered for centuries despite changes in the ecology of the region and within the community itself. I am interested more generally in how a *place* comes to define and structure a *people* and how they in turn define their community as fixed—as defensible, as *theirs* (Hayden 2000; 1997). As Thomas and Fulkerson note in their introduction to this book, urbanization unfolds as a seemingly inevitable natural progression, and therefore those communities who appear to resist this progression are marginalized and cast as other, as deviant (Fulkerson and Thomas 2012; Thomas 2010; Hayden 2000; 1997). This chapter takes a close look at how this process plays out through local stories, humor, folklore, and reputation. As Thomas F. Gieryn noted in his call for a better understanding of place within sociology, "Places are endlessly made, not just when the powerful pursue their ambition through brick and mortar . . . but when ordinary people extract from . . . abstract space a bounded, identified, meaningful, named and significant place . . . A place is *remarkable*, and what makes it so is an unwindable spiral of form and interpretive understandings or experiences" (2000: 471). In this chapter, I attempt to unwind the stories told and retold of one stigmatized and marginalized place.

The focus of this chapter is Seabrook, New Hampshire. Seabrook borders Massachusetts and is located on the Atlantic coast of Southern New England. Today it is home to approximately 8,500 residents as well as a nuclear power plant, a Wal-Mart, a Home Depot and a Lowe's, several grocery stores, and numerous chain restaurants. Because of its border with Massachusetts, which outlaws fireworks and places higher taxes on such items as cigarettes and alcohol, many fireworks outlets are found in the town, as are tobacco stores and convenience stores selling discount cigarettes and beer.

In the summer of 1871, the following story depicting "South Seabrook," one area of the town, was published in the *Boston Post*:

Leaving the good people of Newburyport behind, crossing the Merrimack [River] and, by an easy transition exchanging the Old Bay State for the Granite State, one quickly finds himself in an almost entirely uninhabited region, surrounded on every side by barren hills and shady nooks . . . Finding his way as best he can through the rough and narrow highway, the traveler suddenly comes upon the scene of a low marshy district, which a group of rickety shanties tells is the abode of some specimens of the *genus homo*. To satisfy what has now become a greedy curiosity, your correspondent enters a village, settlement, camp, or what you will, and there he finds—What? Not two score miles from the Hub of the universe . . . there he came upon a scene the adequate

representation of which defies pen, pencil, or brush . . . It is now known as South Seabrook, and is distant from Newburyport only about eight mile, and from Hampton and Salisbury beaches by a less distance. Geographically it belongs to New Hampshire, though it is by no means beyond the possible influence of Massachusetts enlightenment. (A correspondent to *The Boston Post*, July 6, 1871)

The article is laden with references to Seabrook residents as rural others to the urbane *Boston Post* readers—"not two score miles away in the Hub of the universe." The humanity of South Seabrook residents is questioned: are they "some specimens of the *genus homo*" the correspondent seems to ask. They are drawn in sharp contrast to the more enlightened "good people of Newburyport," which in the 1870s was a regional port and home to many industries, most notably textile and shoe manufacturing operations.

Several questions about Seabrook are important in understanding its external perceptions, factors outside of the community but which bear on it in detail, and of the relationship between identity and the practices of membership to the community. First, the town is, and has been for over a century, surrounded by folklore concerning its "image." Seabrook is a community of ill repute. It is viewed as essentially unchanging, fixed by its culture, and driven by pathologies associated with inbreeding. The myth that Seabrook is "inbred" appears in this and other nineteenth-century newspaper articles and is still discussed in neighboring towns today. I found numerous historical accounts describing the town's inhabitants as "little above the condition of savages" with "no schools, no church, no morals, no culture"¹ and with "brutish tastes and unbridled passions [which] led them to a state of positive barbarism"² (Hayden 2000; 1997).

In addition to the inbreeding stories, there are many attendant tales told of Seabrook's close-knittedness. While often viewed as a positive feature of a community, Seabrook is perceived as close-knit to a fault; they are too tight, too familiar, too insular and provincial. Their solidarity is innate; their property and their reputation itself is communal and fiercely protected. They are seen as both formidable and highly suspicious of outsiders. By those outside of the community, "Seabrookers" (as they are called) are known for their toughness and this trait is celebrated within the town (Hayden 2000; 1997).

Research Methods: The Study of Reputation

In Geiryn's call for a sociology of place, he notes that places are made as "people ascribe qualities to the material and social stuff gathered there: ours or theirs; safe or dangerous; public or private; unfamiliar or known; rich or poor; Black or White; beautiful or ugly; new or old; accessible or not" (2000: 472). My research into the ascribed qualities of Seabrook's reputation combined field research and oral histories and testimonials with a contextualized cultural history of the town. I examined culturally significant materials produced in, on, or about

the town from approximately the mid-nineteenth century to the present. I consulted regional newspapers for how the town was and is depicted and in what connections and reviewed personal journals and diaries written by town members and currently located in the town library, paying particular attention to representations and contexts which bear on the town's image or reputation. I also analyzed available folktales, folk songs, poems, jokes, and local humor for their portrayals of the town and its citizens (Hayden 2000; 1997).

In both my informal and formal interviews, I wanted to evoke spontaneous representations from both within and outside of the town to analyze how Seabrook residents currently represent their town and themselves, as well as how Seabrookers are represented by outsiders in the light of the town's reputation. For this I interviewed residents of Seabrook and people from its surrounding communities. I conducted formal interviews with twenty-four people, several of whom were interviewed on more than one occasion. All but two of these interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The ages of interviewees ranged from nineteen to seventy-four years. Several of the people I spoke with were from "old Seabrook families"—people whose genealogies could be traced back several generations in the town and who would be considered "Seabrookers." Others were from old Seabrook families, but currently lived in other towns in the region (Hayden 2000; 1997).

For outsiders' representations and perceptions of Seabrook, I spoke with people who grew up in the towns bordering Seabrook, or in the general area known as the Seacoast region. Other interviewees were people who moved into Seabrook from other regions of New Hampshire. The interviews lasted anywhere from one to four hours. Many interviews were conducted with more than one interviewee present, and were conversational and interactive (Hayden 2000; 1997).

I conducted additional brief interviews with people who were introduced to me by "key informants." I do not count these among my interview data, but these conversations did summon information which was quite useful to me in ascertaining current manifestations of Seabrook's reputation. For instance, I interviewed Dan numerous times and he also set up interviews with several of his family members, as well as took part in those interviews. Dan introduced me to other family members with whom I did not conduct formal interviews. But, Dan would inform them that I was interested in Seabrook's reputation, or simply say that I was studying Seabrook, and the person would make a remark or tell a tale, and I considered this data. A question invoked a story or brought a Seabrook tale up-to-date, and this information inevitably made its way into my writing. These were not formal interviews but I believe that there are many benefits to using this type of spontaneous data in researching reputation. Seabrook's reputation is based upon spontaneous, word-of-mouth enactments, and this is how I approached it methodologically (Hayden 2000; 1997).

Some Seabrook stories were solicited from respondents in interviews; others were overheard in bars, restaurants, and other public places. Reputation is at

base social; its existence depends upon people interacting. It takes on a life of its own, but not apart from its performance by social actors in the act of speaking (Hayden 2000; 1997). When one utters “the whole town is related,” or, “they’re all inbred,” the person is dramatizing that reputation. It is safe to assume the person has not *witnessed* the act of inbreeding, rather, the person is supposing, or resupposing what has already been said. The reputation’s genesis, history, and regeneration depend upon people’s fascination with it and their willingness to perform it (Hayden 2000; 1997). Further, the stigma attached to the town offers an example of how place structuration plays out “through the operation of every day practices at the same time that everyday practices generate and reproduce micro- and macro-level structural properties of that social system (Fulkerson and Thomas 2013). Not only do these stories cast Seabrook in a particular light, they also place the town in a lowly position on a hierarchy made up of neighboring towns looking down upon it.

Often the data I collected were unsolicited. Seabrook jokes were told to me by people who had no idea I was studying the reputation of the town. Others knew I was studying Seabrook and its reputation and offered stories they had heard recently or tales they remembered from the past (Hayden 2000; 1997).

Other Stigmatized Rural Places

In addressing the question of how a stigma becomes geographically bound by place, I hope to elucidate the phenomenon of the “branded town” or “branded region” or even the branded section of a particular town, as the commonly-used phrases “the bad part of town” or “wrong side of the tracks” convey (Shields 1991: 15; see also Wacquant 2007; 2008). The term inner-city has become a catch-all phrase for all manner of deviant behavior (perceived or actual) and in turn stigmatizes those who inhabit these spaces. As Jerome Krase observed in an essay which appeared in the 1979 collection, *Brooklyn, USA*, there is an undeniable *cache* of either negative or positive symbolic currency in one’s place of residence. He states,

We can be stigmatized or celebrated for our address . . . For example, Bedford Stuyvesant is widely known as a predominantly Black community: but why do many assume (knowing little more about the community than this fact) that it is also a “bad neighborhood” . . . In the ghetto, “those” people living there make it bad; or the people are somehow less because they live in that neighborhood. (1979: 252)

Wacquant also addresses the idea of urban neighborhoods as symbolic places onto which powerful meanings are projected and from which inequality is produced and reproduced. Inner-city places and their residents are vilified as dangerous as well as drug- and gang-ridden (Wacquant 2007; 2008).

The phrases “wrong side of the tracks,” “bad part of town,” or “bad neigh-

borhood” obviously denote socioeconomic and property value concerns. But there is also a cultural and folkloric element to these boundaries, a surplus of meaning which acts back upon the material conditions that initiate it. In other words, the imaginary boundary itself is organized as an instance of folklore or mythology (cf. Anderson 1983). As Anthony Cohen noted in the *Symbolic Construction of Communities*, “the sea may divide one island from another, just as the parish border may mark the beginning and the end of a settlement. But these boundaries are symbolic receptacles filled with the meanings that members impute to and perceive in them” (1985: 19). Similarly, Gieryn notes that “place sustains difference and hierarchy . . . in ways that exclude and segregate categories of people, and by embodying in visible and tangible ways the cultural meanings variously ascribed to them (2000: 474).

While the town I studied is unique, there are similarly reputed, stigmatized communities elsewhere. For instance, the entire region known as Appalachia—the term itself has become a signifier of “a strange land and a peculiar people,” (Banks et al. 1993) and the “idea of Appalachia” for people outside the region masks any understanding of the real, lived experiences of the people inside the region (cf. Stewart 1996; 1990). Kathleen Stewart’s book, *A Space on the Side of the Road* calls into question the idea of Appalachia as a thing. She states, “as an ‘object’ ‘Appalachia’ already has its place in an American mythic imaginary. There is the list of traits that has been assigned to it, such as a ‘poverty region’ and a ‘backwater’ or a ‘folksy place’” (1996: 4).

Another, more obscure example is found in *The Maine Islands in Story and Legend*, written by Dorothy Simpson from research compiled by The Maine Writers’ Research Club. One particular Maine island, called Malaga, is quite stigmatized, to the point of being made pariah-like. Although it is located near the mainland off of Harpswell and Phippsburg in midcoast Maine, because of its reputation for inbreeding, degeneration, and people “living underground like animals,” no township on the mainland would claim it (1987: 97). These geographic locations, whether they are entire regions or small islands, have become place metonyms; they are polluted sites whose reputations mark them off as other. A metonym is a figure of speech in which the name of one thing (or place) is used to denote another thing (or place) with which it is associated. It is similar to a metaphor, but in a metaphor one sign is substituted for another because it is somehow similar. A metonym is when one sign is associated with or closely related to another (Eagleton 1983: 99, 167-168; Burchfield 1996: 492).

In the case of Seabrook, the name itself has become metonymic. When I began this research, I considered assigning a pseudonym to the town to avoid the possibility of subjecting it to further ridicule and scrutiny. As the research progressed, the pseudonym issue became harder to reconcile, partly because of Seabrook’s metonymic quality. So much of the town’s reputation has become embedded in the name Seabrook that the name itself is symbolically loaded with connotations and, often, derision. Because of *Seabrook*, “brook” can be displaced and its meaning reattached elsewhere. For instance, I have heard people

“put down” or insult other townships by tacking “brook” on the end of the town’s name; so Amesbury becomes “Amesbrook” or someone from Salisbury can be classified as “a true Salisbrooker.” In the latter case, this was a self-identification of a man from Salisbury, who considered himself like a Seabrooker. He is a fisherman, enjoys hunting, is somewhat poor and tough. Other locations are called “little Seabrooks,” meaning a few people from Seabrook have moved there, or perhaps it is an area where families from Seabrook own camps or hunting cabins. These references themselves tell tales. Seabrook has become a metonymic insult—a *type* of place—a working class place, a tough place, an insular place. The little Seabrook allusions imply that Seabrookers do things in groups; they move together, camp together. And, wherever they go, the land takes on their mark. The reputation tied to the place of Seabrook can be displaced: it moves and takes root elsewhere (Hayden 2000; 1997). Recent research by Keene and Padilla (2010) in the area of health and place also found that spatial stigma can dislodge from one place and move with its bearers. Their work illustrates how inner-city residents bear the stigma of their previous neighborhood even as they move to new locales in an attempt to improve their health and well-being.

For Seabrook, the attribution of corruption by inbreeding is often associated with qualities normally understood as changeable. For instance, Seabrookers are known to speak in a dialect specific to the town and different from the dominant, core language. The dialect has been traced to Old English,³ and nuances of it can still be heard in town to this day. Seabrookers use phrases like, “we staved him up, *boy*” and *boy* is drawn out and exaggerated to sound like the nautical flotation (i.e., bell *buoy*). This means we beat him up or roughed him up. They also use the terms *ike* and *hark* as exclamations, as in “Ike, look at that!” Many of the Seabrook residents I spoke to said they thought the language was almost gone, or that “you don’t hear it much anymore.” But, for over a century, the language stood as an absolute difference, something that set the Seabrookers apart and tied them to an unchanging view of history—as walking, talking antiquities.⁴

The general association organizing the stigma is Seabrook’s primitivism. This association has persisted virtually without change in this respect for two centuries. For instance, the cartoonist, Al Capp, is rumored to have said in 1966 that Seabrook was his model for Dogpatch, the village and its rural country bumpkin characters depicted in the long-running comic strip, “Li’l Abner.”⁵ Whether or not this is true, its very suggestion fortifies the operation of a mythology that attracts such references. The fact that Dogpatch is often thought to be drawn from primitivist stereotypes of Appalachia or the Ozarks suggests just how primitive are the notions about Seabrook.

Seabrook’s imagery is partially class-related, but not in a simple statistically aggregated sense. It is interesting to note in this regard that, while its reputation is decidedly rural, geographically, Seabrook is not an isolated “backwoods” town. It is surrounded by many wealthy communities and has one of the largest stretches of beach in the state of New Hampshire. It is also accessible by many

interstate routes running through the town. This suggests that the typical accounts of the attribution of backwardness and social isolation as effects of poverty and physical/geographical isolation are not sufficient to account for either Seabrook's reputation or its insular qualities.

Stigma

The literature on stigma confines most of its analysis to individuals interacting in groups, or to groups which are stigmatized due to church or cult membership, for instance, or some other type of voluntary membership (Goffman 1963; Link and Phelan 2001). I am interested in how a *place* or a *town* acquires a bad reputation, and how the reputation is extended to the town's inhabitants, sometimes by default and sometimes by active efforts to keep it alive internally.

The sociological notion of stigma was first introduced in 1963 by Erving Goffman in his book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Goffman's exploration of stigma was concerned primarily with individuals or groups of individuals who were unable to conform thoroughly to societal standards of normalcy and the significance of stigmata on social interactions and the self. Goffman did not specifically investigate stigmatized places; however, his notion of stigma can be expanded and applied to the type of stigma tied to regions which I am discussing. While Goffman's work was mainly concerned with discrediting or spoiling attributes with which an individual is born or that one acquires in life, his perspectives can also be applied to stigmas *into* which people are born (Hayden 2000; 1997). Along these lines, in his article on urban place stigmas, Jerome Krase noted, "stigma is not limited to people . . . the concept can also be applied to places. The stigma of certain people can be transferred to a place they occupy; alternately people can be stigmatized by their free, or especially their involuntary, residence" (1979: 252).

While much of Goffman's book addresses stigmas due to bodily appearances or disabilities, or to perceived character flaws such as alcoholism or mental illness, he does also briefly discuss the notion of tribal stigmas—"stigmas of race, *nation*, religion, or *family lineage* which equally contaminate all members of the family" (4, emphasis added). The place stigma is fundamentally structured around region, and in the case of my own research, family name is also significant, since the town's stigma is that of being "inbred." I have heard many derogatory statements about the town in which people say that "they all have the same last name" or "there are only three last names in the whole town." The "they" in this insult encompasses the entire populace of the town. As Lillian, one of my interviewees said, "I remember people saying, 'All Southerners are Seabrookers and all Seabrookers are Southerners!' I used to hear that all the time growing up." To this Randy, another interviewee who was present, added, "Well, I used to hear people say, 'All Eatons are Seabrookers and all Seabrookers are Eatons!' Ah, poor Seabrook." The perceived derogatory feature

of being inbred is not, however, an individual or familial stigma; it is extended to the entire township and organized around geography and residency. The place itself is spoiled, and thus individuals known to be of the place are spoiled by default.

For individuals who are born into these spoiled spaces, both Goffman's notions of the discredited and the discreditable are applicable. There are some situations in which people are known to be from the discredited place, and other occasions where this is not immediately known, but is revealed or learned. There are still other circumstances in which the place means nothing. For people outside the immediate parameter of the region, Seabrook is not a significant object of ridicule.

In the case of the discredited, in the immediate geographic region in my study, Seabrook high school-aged students attend school in a neighboring town where their residence and its reputation are well known. In these cases Seabrook residents are clearly discredited; they are labeled Seabrookers, or Brookers. A typical account of the types of discrediting remarks and actions Seabrook residents endured in high school is offered by Deb, now forty-six. She reported that in her freshman year, she was labeled as a Seabrooker. I asked her what sort of things people would say and she replied,

Oh, you know, they'd call you a Brooker, stupid stuff like that. It's not necessarily what they'd say, it was just their actions. I was just *not* included, so therefore I didn't *try* to be included. I did my thing, I did sports, I was never a good student . . . But then, during the summer of my junior year, I started dating a guy from Hampton. So in my senior year, it was like I was the member of some elite group. But, it was funny, because I was an outcast prior to that. (Hayden 2000: 227)

There are some instances wherein individuals are not known to be from Seabrook and people assume they are from another, non-stigmatized neighboring town. In these cases, Goffman's notion of discreditable fits. One of my interviewees recalled the reactions of people who learned she was from Seabrook. Inevitably, people would say, "Oh, I didn't know you were a *Seabrooker*?!" In this exchange a seemingly normal individual is demoted to one who is less than. In the case of Seabrookers, the demotion occurs merely because of where they were born. But, once known, the individuals are discredited nonetheless. The stigma can be individuated, but it belongs not to individuals or even groups, but to a place (Hayden 2000).

In the third case, because of the regionalism of the place stigma, there are instances where the town of Seabrook is not symbolically significant. For instance, an interviewee in my study who attends college in a different state did not find she had to defend or apologize for her township at college, because it was not a significant object of ridicule outside of the immediate region of the town itself. While it is difficult to establish precise parameters of the town's reputation, it is local, and is confined to its bordering and neighboring towns

within an approximately thirty to fifty mile radius. Since I am discussing this stigmatized place phenomenon as a type of regional mythologizing, of stories told and retold without reference to facts or origins, it is not my desire to pin it down. Methodologically speaking, this is impossible. While the reputation centers around a township, the circulation of the reputation cannot be mapped. In folklorists' terms, these stories are folk legend and have been "transmitted by a chain of oral communication" (Cohen 1995: 53; see also Vansina 1985). These tales are not recorded and one can never know where the chain begins or ends.

Rural Reputations and Urbanormativity

While the sociological literature into the topic of stigma associated with place is sparse, I have located a few studies that address the sort of rural mythologizing in which I am interested. One example is offered by folklorist David Steven Cohen (1995). Cohen's research into the Pineys of the New Jersey Pine Barrens clearly illustrates a stigma constructed around a rural place. Like Seabrookers, Pineys are named or denoted by their residence in a particular region—in this case a vast, swampy, deeply wooded section of New Jersey which lacks clear geographic boundaries, but is nonetheless clearly bounded by reputation (1995: 47). As with Seabrook, this naming of people by their residence in the stigmatized region is a key element of regional rural stigmatizing. The denotation can be seen as a source of pride, but also serves as a basis for disdain. While there is clearly an insider/outsider distinction here, through my own research I have found that these distinctions can shift both within the community and from outside as well.

Cohen's research on the Pineys describes a group of people living in the Pine Barren region that embody both the rural as wild and rural as simple imagery. Pineys are described as ignorant, stealing, poor, pitiable, and neglected. The Pineys have become inextricably linked to their locality (1995: 47-77). Historically, the name itself seems to have a shifting referent. For instance, Cohen discusses a researcher in the late 1930s who, when asking where the Pineys were, was told that the "Pineys lived further south—until he reached a point in his travels when he was told they live further north" (1995: 48-49). Cohen illustrates that while the location of the term Piney does seem to move, the stigmatized role that the Pineys play in the larger region remains stable over time. They are the rural other to the urban center that is the greater New York metropolitan region.

Another component of what I am calling the stigmatized place phenomenon observed by Cohen is the elusiveness of the connotation to the unknowing outside observer. As one of Cohen's respondents told him, "if you gotta ask what a Piney is, then you haven't been there long enough to figure it out" (1995: 48). This clarity of the stigma for those from the region, yet lack of clarity for those on the outside, illustrates that locality and territory have much to do with the

stigma.

A similar example of this type of stigmatized community is found in Jane Hurwitz Nadel's study of rural Ferryden, Scotland. Ferryden is a small, distinct, kin-based and highly endogamous fishing village on the east coast of Scotland. Nadel states, "the town and its people were stigmatized . . . [they] were generally characterized as being inbred and weak-minded, dirty, coarse, sly, impulsive, bellicose, and inebriated. They were objects of satire, exploitation, revulsion, and occasionally well-meaning charity" (1984: 104). Nadel locates the source of Ferryden's stigma mainly in the fact that it was a rural fishing village, and fisher folk have "historically been marked as a distinct and low-prestige occupational group" and thus does not fully explore the regional aspect of the stigma (1984: 101). However, aside from her discussion of fishing, Nadel's research also reveals some of the characteristics of the place stigma with which I am concerned. Nadel mentions the strong linkage between "work, residence, and social image" and this suggests that the stigma attached to the village is not solely occupational but is also tied to place (1984: 101). She also acknowledges that not all fisher folk of Scotland received the negative stigma associated with the occupation, and that the "relationships between fishing and non-fishing people varied considerably from region to region" (1984: 104). Further, Nadel discusses Ferryden's endurance as a distinct communal entity which was isolated from, and subordinated to, other towns in its surrounding region (1984: 103).

As with the Pineys and Seabrookers, the inhabitants of Ferryden are named by their residence and are known as Ferrydeners in the surrounding area and True Ferrydeners within the town. This distinction separates older town members from incomers who moved to town for work at an oil services base located near Ferryden. In my research, I found people would often distinguish between real Searookers and people who moved into town more recently. Like Seabrookers, Nadel found that True Ferrydeners are "linked to the village by ties of kinship" and "believe that Ferryden belongs to them" and that they "define the village community in terms of themselves and their past" (1984: 102). These characteristics of ownership, of shared history, and of defending their community from the encroachment of outsiders is a common feature among stigmatized rural communities.

Interestingly, both the Ferrydeners in Nadel's study and the Seabrookers in my own study are known for their "rock hurlings," which in Seabrook are known as "brickings." Tales of Seabrookers throwing rocks at outsiders who venture into their town are still told in the surrounding region, and the phrase, "If you can't lick 'em; brick 'em," said to be a common Seabrook refrain, comprises part of the local lore about the town. One of my respondents, a twenty-year-old college student whose family has lived in Seabrook for several generations, said when I asked her about her town's image, "we were secluded and we threw rocks at people to keep them out." Since the town is not geographically secluded, I asked her to elaborate on this notion of seclusion. She returned to stories of rock throwing, stating:

For some reason, when I used to hear these stories when I was young, I don't even know who told me these stories, it may have been my neighbor, I don't know . . . I just got this image of everybody standing right at the town line and throwing rocks. I'm sure it wasn't like that, but that's what it sounded like. It was a very . . . keep-to-themselves-type community. (Hayden 2000: 230)

In Nadel's work, she also describes rock hurling as part of the local legend and symbolic of both the village's endogamy and social isolation. She states,

Local legend says that boys from the [neighboring] town who ventured across the bridge to the village would be met by a barrage of stones and refuse hurled at them by village men and boys. It is unlikely, however, that any town or farm youth who succeeded in establishing a liaison with a Ferryden girl would have wished to legitimize it by marrying her, for Ferryden and its people were stigmatized. (1984: 104)

In both cases, rock hurling appears to be a visible (and tangible) instance of the townspeople viewing their stigmatized community as fixed and defensible. And, in both cases, the practice is a source of in-group pride and is strengthened and celebrated through local legend, shoring up tales of the town residents' toughness. According to Cynthia, a sixty-nine-year-old woman I interviewed whose family is from Seabrook but who now lives in a neighboring town, the local lore about "brickins" dates back to the Revolutionary War. Growing up, she was told that Seabrook residents were not afforded the "right to bear arms" during the Revolution. She was not sure why this was the case but speculated that "they didn't like them because of the way they talked." Cynthia surmised that because of the Seabrookers' strong "Elizabethan English" accents, they were assumed to be sympathetic to Britain. Since they were not issued arms or ammunition during the Revolution, the story goes, they improvised by piling up rocks and bricks with which to defend themselves. Thus, the phrase, "If you can't lick 'em; brick 'em" emerged as a turn of the phrase, "If you can't beat 'em; join 'em."

In addition to the rock throwing practices and the folkloric celebration thereof, also notable in both the Seabrook and the Ferryden cases is the fact that the communities, which are not geographically isolated, are perceived as isolated and secluded. Nadel mentions that "unlike many old fishing villages, Ferryden is easily visible from the main road" (1984: 102). Historically there were parts of Seabrook which may have been isolated at high tide, but this is no longer the case; it is quite accessible, with major U.S. routes running through the town. But, I found many instances where Seabrook was presented discursively as very rural, as remote, almost unreachable. The perception of social isolation, of an island-like world unto itself, is produced and reified through social practices and cultural representations of Seabrook, Ferryden, and the Pine Barrens in the form of storytelling and local legends (Hayden 2000; Nadel 1984; Cohen 1995). These places are structured as remote and insular and then treated accord-

ingly.

Embracing the Stigma

These communities to which a stigma has become securely attached often grow to embrace their identity and their position in the regional hierarchy of places. Despite the negative connotations of the stigmatized identity, it is an identity nonetheless. In considering the in-group identity of Ferryden, Nadel observes that:

those groups and classes with little access to property . . . have been looked down upon, castigated for immorality, and regarded as dangerous and polluting. While the fisher folk of Ferryden value their identity, they also have longed for respectability. Looked at in this way, True Ferrydenhood takes on a paradoxical dimension. From the outset, the fisher folk's homes and livelihood were owned by the lairds, or mortgaged to fish curers. The only property the Ferrydeners ever owned free and clear was their community. To lose it would take away their source of dignity and respect, to render them less than fully human (1984: 113).

Cohen also noted that the Piney identity became a source of pride, with people from all over southern New Jersey heralding their identity with "Piney Power" bumper stickers and buttons (1995: 49).

In my research into Seabrooker identity, I found that many town inhabitants take pride in their community and seem to work at keeping their town's stigmatized image alive. For example, because they live on the coast near a large area of muddy flats, clamming, or digging clams, has always figured prominently in Seabrook's town culture. If, as Nadel contends, fishing is thought of as a lowly occupation, then clamming is the lowest of the lowly fishing vocations. It involves the backbreaking work of bending over constantly to dig a pitch fork into the mud to unearth the clams and sifting through the mud by hand to locate them. Seabrook women became well known in the region as expert clam shuckers, an even more grueling task of forcing the shells open to extract the clams. But, Seabrookers take pride in clamming. Since 1989, the clam flats have been closed on and off due to bacterial contamination. But, as one person I interviewed from a neighboring town said, "illegal clam digging has become a rite of passage for Seabrook boys." Illegal clam digging and trying to evade State Fish and Game officials have become sport in Seabrook, and these practices are played up as sources of pride and in-group identity. In turn, illegal digging becomes a new source of stories about Seabrookers and their perceived stupidity and lawlessness among the surrounding communities. In one local paper their brazen disregard for regulations was admonished; they were described as risking their own health, and since some were "caught bootlegging the shellfish,"⁶ risking the health of others as well (Hayden 2000; 1997).

In my interviews, other examples of pride within the Seabrook community emerged. Donna, the twenty-year-old college student who recalled the story of

people lined up at the town line throwing rocks, also remembered that among her elementary school, students displayed tremendous pride in their community. Once children reach high school age, they attend school in the neighboring town, where they are often singled out and made the butt of jokes about Brookers. But, in the town's own school, they sang cheers which incorporated and venerated the "Brooker identity" in their verses. She relayed a Seabrook elementary school cheer, which went, "S-E, S-E, S-E, A, B-R, B-R, O-O, K, Brooker, Brooker 'til I die, let me hear that Bubba cry!" "Bubba" is another term used within Seabrook. It is a familiar term, used as a signifier of insider identity. "Ayuh, Bubba" is a greeting used within Seabrook, meaning "Okay, buddy"⁷ or "That's right, buddy." If someone says, "He's a real Bub," or a "wicked Bub" this means he is a true Seabrooker, from an old town family, and not someone who moved in from out of town. It also epitomizes the Seabrooker identity: a tough person, someone you "don't want to mess with" (Hayden 2000: 233). There is a cultivated pride in the ownership of the stigmatized identity despite its inherent derogatory cast. This pride and sense of ownership in turn attributes to the longevity of both Seabrook's reputation and the town's identity. For some stigmatized regions, the inhabitants, *because of* their cohesion and communality, act to reproduce their reputation from within the region and to defend it from encroachment, drawing them even closer together and reinforcing their insularity.

When discussing the codes of conduct for stigmatized people and the issue of in-group alignments, Goffman stated,

Although these proposed philosophies of life, these recipes of being, are presented as though from the stigmatized individual's personal point of view, on analysis it is apparent that something else informs them. This something else is groups, in the broad sense of like-situated individuals, and this is only to be expected, since what an individual is, or could be, derives from the place of his kind in the social structure. (1963: 112)

This could not be any more clearly illustrated than in the case of individuals from stigmatized communities. When the place of one's kind is a stigmatized place, a place which is defined by others as polluted, as degenerate and inbred, this is a powerful force on one's in-group identity. Seabrook's culture as a community has incorporated ways to celebrate the town's unique reputation, venerating the infamous trait of toughness and insularity through its own folklore and oral history.

Conversely, some of my interviewees mentioned ways in which the reputation of the town negatively affected their own biographies. For instance, there is the case of Lillian, a woman in her mid- to late-sixties whose family was originally from Seabrook, but moved to Newburyport, Massachusetts, in her parents' generation to work in the shoe industry. Lillian said that growing up, she tried to keep her Seabrook family connections hidden from others even though one of her grandmothers still lived in the town. Lillian often visited her grandmother in

Seabrook, but she said, “living here in Newburyport, I didn’t let anyone know my family came from Seabrook.” I asked why, and she said,

Because of the reputation, because if they knew that, they’d be calling you a Seabrooker, and it wasn’t a very nice term back then. So, I was embarrassed. But, I’ll tell you one thing, they were warm, loving people—and neat as a pin. Least the ones I knew . . . some were strong-willed and didn’t necessarily respect the law. I wish I could go back. There are so many things I want to know and can’t find them out now and I just wish I could go back and listen to them, and talk to some of these old-timers that are gone.

Lillian makes a connection here between the embarrassment of being from a stigmatized place but also to a loss of a tight-knit community and kinship that she now mourns. For Lillian, a genealogy buff who avidly researches her ancestry, the loss of her Seabrook ties is significant. She said several times in our interviews, “If only I could go back, just for a few days, to hear the people speak in the dialect” (Hayden 2000: 225).

Conclusion: Reputation as Cultural Artifact

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (1983) argues that communities are artifacts. An examination of reputation and community can illuminate how communities are imagined from the outside, and then how those on the inside use the reputation to strengthen the community from within. The construction of community is also dependent on attributes that arise from outside the community itself and these attributes, however derogatory, can become an inner source of strength within a community. In the case of Seabrook, this revolves around an unsavory, invidious reputation made up of jokes, insults, disparaging remarks, and stories about the inbreeding and degeneracy of its inhabitants. This reputation became a symbolic boundary around the town, a discrediting mythology separating Seabrook residents from their supposedly non-inbred others. Some Seabrookers, in turn, have embraced their lack of acceptance, using it to strengthen community ties from within and to keep others out, for as Mary Douglas said, “those committed to the idea of home exert continual vigilance in its behalf” (1991: 305). In examining the reputation and the mythology that surrounds and supports Seabrook as a community I have shed some light on what Douglas calls the “mysterious supply of mystic solidarity” (1991: 305).

As Fulkerson and Thomas contend, in the paradigm of urbanormativity, cities and the people who inhabit them are associated with a range of positive attributes and are described by what they have: educational centers, museums, ballets. Cities are refined, civilized centers. Rural sites and their inhabitants by comparison come to be known for negative characteristics and for what they lack: they are uneducated; they are backward; they are simple. Rural places are

unrefined, uncivilized. The mythology that surrounds and denigrates stigmatized rural communities is an extreme example of how places are structured in this urban-as-center and rural-as-marginal paradigm.

The stigma surrounding Seabrook is part and parcel of place structuration. Seabrookers created an impenetrable closeness of kin and more than kin. This cultivated closeness made them the object of ridicule all the more so. A community that is so tight-knit is both dangerous, fascinating, and, because of the notion of inbredness and incestuousness, disconcerting. The image unsettles the outsider. This is not an idyllic, coastal New England community of postcards and travel brochures.

In his book, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, Rob Shields describes place myths. He writes, “[p]laces and spaces are hypostatized from the world of space relations to the symbolic realm of cultural significations. Traces of these cultural place-images are also left behind in the litter of historical popular cultures . . . These images connected with a place may even come to be held as signifiers of its essential character” (1991: 147). Urbanormativity is one form of historical popular culture that shaped Seabrook’s image.

In discussing the role of the stigma in encounters between normals and stigmatized others, Goffman said, “what is proven false is not the person with a differentness, but rather any and all those who happen into the situation . . . there are of course even more direct instances of the situation, not the person, becoming threatened” (p. 136). I have extended this notion of threatened situations to explicate the idea of threatened, or *threatening*, localities and their inhabitants. I examined how cultural boundaries are erected and reified in regional settings in such a way that the township itself is spoiled, and explored the role that the stigma play within the community and among people of the larger region in which these communities are located.

Notes

1. *Newburyport Daily Herald*, June 3, 1871.
2. *Boston Post*, July 6, 1871.
3. According to Hans Kurath (Ed.). 1973. *The Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England, Second Edition*, Seabrook is described as having “much inbreeding” and being “suspicious of outsiders” (p. 213). In a 1987 *Boston Globe* article on the dialect, a Seabrook woman is quoted as saying, “My father always used ‘hark’ with us when he wanted us to listen up. That’s Old English, but we learned that just the way kids learn ‘no.’”
4. The idea that endogamy can act to maintain language patterns was explored

by Stevens and Swicegood in their 1987 article, "The Linguistic Context of Ethnic Endogamy." *American Sociological Review* 52: 73-82.

5. Seabrook Historical Society 1968. *Seabrook: A Commemorative Book, 1768-196.*, p. 22.

6. *Newburyport Daily News*, July 24, 1993, p. 1.

7. These terms were mentioned by many of my interviewees and "Ayuh Bubba" was quoted in the 1987 *Boston Globe* article by Jerry Ackerman entitled "Our Dying Dialects."

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5

“Taking the Cure” The Rural as a Place of Health and Wellbeing in New York State during the Late 1800’s and Early 1900’s

Stephanie A. Bennett

Introduction

In the mid to late 1800’s, cities in New York State were centers of industry and immigration. Cities, such as New York City, Albany, Schenectady, Troy, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo, were the places where the powerful and wealthy elite built their factories and the immigrants worked to develop the products that turned the United States into an industrial leader.

This industrialization was fueled by coal and other burning fuels. Growing immigrant populations were segregated in densely populated neighborhoods within the city close to the factories in which they worked. This combination resulted in a living environment filled with smog, waste, and disease with death rates in New York City, Buffalo, and Rochester at 26.31, 18.32, and 17.39 individuals per 1,000 respectively (Billings 1894).

It was not uncommon for the wealthy to look for places to escape the disease and squalor of the city, especially during the hot, humid summer months. Many of the locations they found were in rural areas of New York State. To this end, New York State provided places that became havens for the wealthy to not only escape the city but to be cured from the illnesses of city living.

This chapter will focus on two such areas of rural escape and places where “taking the cure” became famed; Saratoga Springs and Saranac Lake. This chapter will explore their natural properties of “rural as healing,” their approaches and development as places for “taking the cure” and their legacies today.

Rural as Healing

The concept of rural as healing was not just the lack of pollution (air, water, and waste) and/or low population density (that decreases the spread of disease)—it was believed to be a result of the natural resources found there.

The most well known areas in New York State to “take the cure” were the mineral springs and resorts of Saratoga Springs. The area has been a vacation place for the elite since the early 1800s when hotels were built next to the mineral springs in the tradition of European mineral spas. Saratoga Springs’ location was believed to be beneficial because it had the following traits: “lower side hills of the Adirondacks . . . a sandy sub-soil affords city perfect drainage and the air is dry and invigorating” (Saratoga Spa 1919: 2-4.) The lack of humidity and good drainage was believed to increase air quality and decrease insect infestations. It was also the location of several mineral springs. The healing power of the springs was believed to be known to the Mohawk Indians of the Iroquois nation. The first account of a white man being healed by the waters was Colonel William Johnson in August 1767 where he was believed to be healed from his dysentery, gout, and complications from a gunshot wound. He wrote of the healing powers of the spring to Philip Schuyler (future Revolutionary War hero and one of the most influential men in area) and the legend of the healing powers became known (Waller 1966).

One early analysis of the mineral water took place in 1809. A variety of minerals were found to be in the water (Seaman 1809). Later analyses were done on each individual spring in the area. Each spring had a different level and variety of minerals, but the common component of the mineral springs was the carbonic acid gas which made the water carbonated (Stoddard 1888). The mineral properties were believed to provide relief for such ailments as “cardio-vascular-renal and chronic valvular disease” (Saratoga Spa 1919: 6.) Both drinking and bathing in the water were prescribed as treatments by many physicians located near the hotels (Stoddard 1888). Scientific studies in the 1920s and 1930s examined the iron content as a cure for anemia. In the 1950s research focused on the radioactive properties of the water as a cure for cancer (Swanner 1988).

A second well-known area to “take the cure” in New York State was Saranac Lake in the heart of the high peaks area of the Adirondacks. The pure air was known to be a relief for those suffering from tuberculosis that ran rampant in polluted, densely populated cities. The air quality of the area has been noted as: “altitude is only a little over fifteen hundred feet, whereas the pure, dry, bracing quality of the air is fully equal to that much greater altitudes of Davos, St. Moritz, or Denver” (Donaldson 1921: 240). This description parallels medicinal healing by air quality that has occurred in other location without the added challenge of altitude sickness.

To document the health benefits of the air quality, Dr. Joseph W. Stickler gathered health testimonials from those who had located to the Adirondacks to address their illnesses. Dr. Stickler compiled these testimonials in his book *The Adirondacks as a Health Resort*. While many came during the summer months to benefit from air, the first known tuberculosis patient to take advantage of this climate was Mr. Edward C. Edgar during the winter of 1874. Mr. Edgar found that sitting in the cold air during the winter relieved his illness (Donaldson 1921).

Developing a Place to “Take the Cure”

Neither of these two locations would have been considered a primary destination to address health issues without the influence of individuals who saw the potential healing benefits of these areas and initiated their development. This section will explore the main creator and developer of each community and their vision to capitalize on the areas’ rural healing benefits.

Gideon Putnam served as the impetus for the development of Saratoga Springs when he initially leased and cleared 300 acres of land. He later purchased the clearing and adjacent lands in order to build a tavern in 1802. From that point forward, Putnam bought and developed additional land that would come to be known as Saratoga Springs. Putnam’s eight children continued to develop Saratoga Springs as a premiere resort (Chambers 2002). From 1802 to his death in 1812, Putnam designed the basic layout of the village which encompassed several mineral springs. The tavern he built evolved into Union Hall at the center of Broad (with a large width of 120 feet) and Congress (sixty feet in width) streets. Across from Union Hall he constructed another hotel, Congress Hall. During this construction he created access to the springs for drinking and bathing (Swanner 1988). As part of the grand scheme of the village, Congress Park was erected next to the Congress Hotel to allow for spacious greenery around the springs centered in the park. The park contained three springs and a circular railroad to provide tourists with access to the park and springs from both Congress Hall and Union Hall (Chambers 2002).

Using Putnam’s construction as an example, the Columbian, Pavilion, and United States hotels opened in the city between 1809 and 1823. To increase travel to the area, many popular amenities developed. The Rensselaer Saratoga Railroad opened in 1835 which reduced the travel time to the village from the Albany area. Previously, all travel occurred via road or the Hudson River from Albany or Troy. As early as 1849, telegraph services were established in the largest hotels on Broadway, this enhanced and increased communication to the larger cities. Gaslights were installed by 1853 on Broadway which felt more like civilized society. By 1859, the three largest hotels, Congress Hall, Union Hall, and United States hosted almost 13,000 guests of the 40,000 visitors to Saratoga Springs each year (Sterngass 2001).

The original allure of the area was the mineral spring water. The exclusivity of the water ended when John Clarke bought Congress Springs in 1822 and started bottling and selling the water both inside and outside of Saratoga (Sterngass 2001). Forty-seven years later, in 1869, The Congress and Empire Springs Company opened and “became the largest mineral water company in the world” and forced John Clarke out of business (Sterngass 2001: 176).

Aside from the mineral waters at the resort, which had become widely available around the world, gambling also became a popular draw for those vacationing in Saratoga Springs. While gambling was found in the village as early as 1842 with a poker room established near the United States Hotel, it did not

become vast until after the creation of the race track (Waller 1966). In August 1863, the race track held its first four-day meet in Saratoga. The race course continued to host meets every August. To entertain the race goers after hours, Morrissey built what would become a grand gambling establishment in 1869; Richard Canfield bought the site in 1893 and heavily expanded it with Italian gardens and Tiffany windows. The Canfield Casino became an elegant fixture of the village with this renovation (Swanner 1988). By 1873, over ten open gambling houses operated in Saratoga Springs (Sterngass 2001).

In 1919, the Delaware and Hudson railroad company published a pamphlet that provided a history of the mineral springs along with their medicinal benefits. They advertised the grandeur of the hotels, and the sporting/gaming activities of the areas including the race track. The pamphlet cited the area as a “healthy, romantic, lovely vacation region of Northeastern New York” (D&H Company 1919: 5).

Advertisements for Saratoga Springs in 1888 exemplified the luxury of the hotels. Congress Hall advertised “over \$10,000 expended since last season in improvements and decoration. First-class in all respects” (Stoddard 1888: 57). In 1865, Harper’s Bazaar illustrated the genteel culture of the horse track by portraying women attending the races (Sterngass 2001: 149).

The most influential person to change the Saranac Lake area from one of recreational retreat to a medical “take the cure” region was Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, a doctor from New York City, who found relief from tuberculosis while recovering there in 1873. His recovery inspired him to develop a scientific research center in Saranac Lake. The prominence of the area increased as the study of tuberculosis peaked with the illness in the 1930s (Donaldson 1921).

Prior to Dr. Trudeau’s focus on the area, the region was known for its hotels and wilderness guides. In 1852, William Martin built Martin’s Hotel, the first hotel built exclusively to accommodate wealthy vacationers (Adirondack Research Library 2010). This hotel was followed by construction of Paul Smith’s Hotel which opened in 1859 approximately thirteen miles from Saranac Lake. Paul Smith’s would become the premiere resort in the area and would host such important guests as Theodore Roosevelt in 1871 and Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau in 1873 (Donaldson 1921).

The connection between Dr. Trudeau and Paul Smith brought about great changes to the area. Dr. Trudeau originally traveled to Paul Smith’s after contracting tuberculosis while practicing medicine in New York City. Dr. Trudeau noted quite simply that his health improved during his three-month stay in the Saranac Lake region and worsened when he returned home. In 1874, he permanently relocated to Saranac Lake to live out his life while creating a scientific refuge for tuberculosis patients. In 1883, Dr. Trudeau built his home and laboratory to study the disease of tuberculosis and opened up his sanitarium for people suffering from tuberculosis to come and “take the cure” in 1885 (Donaldson 1921). The creation of these facilities allowed him to further progress his knowledge of tuberculosis and incorporate the rural benefits of the area.

Following the arrival and developments of Dr. Trudeau, other improvements and progress in town made the area more accessible to tourists and sanitarium patients. These included major enhancements to the main road from Malone, railroad service from the east and west, and telephone service for the entire village. These improvements allowed for easier access to the area and connection with the outside cities for those wishing to take advantage of long stays in the area (Chilson et al. 2010). To advertise the area to those in the New York cities, Seneca Ray Stoddard (1893), noted photographer and travel guide author, characterized Saranac Lake as a “Picturesque blending of the primitive forms of old time with the swell structures of the prosperous later days, since it went forth that here was the health centre of the wilderness” in his guidebook (73)

In 1892, Dr. Trudeau was elected first president of the newly incorporated village. This allowed Trudeau to work from a very powerful position to make the village a resort for healing (Donaldson 1921). All future development and advertisement of the area centered on the wellness opportunities. In terms of development, by 1930 the village hosted approximately thirty “cure cottages” and four hospitals for those suffering from Tuberculosis (Caldwell 1993).

The main emphasis of treatment for Dr. Trudeau was the exposure of the patient and their lungs to the pure Adirondack air year round. Cure cottages in the community, along with the sanitarium, were designed with large open porches that allowed patients to sit on the porches in specially designed chairs during their recuperation. Dr. Trudeau also encouraged physical activity as the patients progressed. A winter carnival was established in the area in 1897 to encourage outdoor activity in the winter (Donaldson 1921).

Advertisement of the area was done in a variety of ways. Stoddard’s Adirondack guides included information on the area as well as the costs associated with visiting to take advantage of the cure. Stoddard’s language was colorful and provided an image of patients reclining on the large porches of the sanitarium summer and winter. He stated “the advantage to be derived from the Adirondack climate, a simple, out-of-doors life, and good hygienic surroundings, with suitable medical treatment” (Stoddard 1905: 73).

The Trudeau Institute regularly published *The Journal of Outdoor Life* from 1904 to 1935 aimed at those with tuberculosis. In the inaugural issue, Dr. Trudeau emphasized that the role of the journal was to “instruct all the disciples of this life as to the best methods of getting the best results mentally and physically from an out-of-door life and that it will bring something of the freshness, hope, and vigor of this out-of-door life to many poor indoor mortals who know nothing of its benefits or pleasures” (Trudeau 1904).

Pamphlets that included advice by former tuberculosis patients and other medical professionals at the Trudeau Sanitarium were published. In one, an invitation is presented by the Village of Saranac Lake that stated “a community that provides everything the health seeker needs for rapid convalescence. Beautiful scenery, complete rest, skilled medical care, and above all a stimulating climate

await you here” (A Friend 1934). This selling of the community by the Village of Saranac Lake promoted the ideals that were established by Trudeau.

The most unique aspect of the advertisements of Saranac Lake was that advertisements appeared to be aimed at both those suffering from pulmonary disease as well as those who were healthy. The advertisements for those suffering tended to emphasize the health aspect and not the cost. The Trudeau Sanitarium actually advertised that “the unfortunate rich are not admitted” (Stoddard 1905: 75). Hotels in the area, like the St. Regis, advertised that they were “one of the leading hotels in Saranac Lake . . . operated on the European plan” emphasizing their connection with elite service (A Friend 1934: 11). These two streams of advertising indicated that while the majority of the area was seen as a health resort, it also offered general tourism to enhance the economy.

Legacy

Changes came to the Saratoga Springs area as early as 1909 when a State Reservation was created by New York Legislation to “keep forever what is undoubtedly the most remarkable and medicinally valuable group of mineral springs in the world” (Swanner 1988: 162). This created public control of the springs. After various different forms of legislation, the culmination of the legislation in 1937 handed control of the Saratoga Spa area to the New York State Department of Conservation, including the Roosevelt and Lincoln Baths, Hall of Springs, Gideon Putnam Hotel, and a research laboratory/administration building (Swanner 1988). These areas are still operated by New York State Parks, Recreation, and Preservation Department and are encompassed within the Saratoga Spa State Park (New York State 2012).

Saratoga Springs’ peak ended in the 1940s and 1950s with the increase in the growth of the middle class and automobile travel in the United States. In 1951 all gambling houses were closed due to U.S. Senate hearings and Governor Dewey’s investigation of gambling. In 1952, the Grand Union, once the largest hotel in world, closed its doors. The reign of Saratoga as Queen of the Spas was over (Waller 1966).

While the Spa days were over, Saratoga’s legacy of mineral water has not ended. In 1872, the Saratoga Spring Water Company began bottling Saratoga mineral water and continues to do so today. This is the oldest continual distributor of the mineral water (Saratoga Bottling Company 2012).

The lasting legacy of Saratoga Springs appears to be Saratoga horse racing and gambling. Saratoga Race Track hosts a forty day race season starting July 20th and ending on September 3rd. The 143rd Travers Stakes was held on August 25, 2012 (Saratoga Race Track 2012). A harness track was built to complement the thoroughbred track in 1941. The harness track was renamed Saratoga Gaming and Raceway in 2007 when an expansion that included a video gaming enterprise opened in 2004 (Saratoga Casino 2012).

Saranac Lake's place as the premiere center for healing tuberculosis in New York peaked in 1942. In 1943, the antibiotic streptomycin was found to be a cure for tuberculosis. Once the discovery of a medical cure for tuberculosis that could be administered at home was found, the Trudeau Sanitarium closed in 1954. Another tuberculosis sanitarium run by the Sisters of Mercy, a catholic order of nuns, transformed into a nursing home in 1964. The final blow to what made the area an early cure resort was the closing of the Union Depot and the end of rail service in 1965 (Chilson et al. 2010)

Still the legacy of the area remains tightly connected to Trudeau. The Trudeau Institute, a medical research center for all respiratory diseases, is still located in Saranac Lake. Looking at the 2012 "State of the Village" report, the first three items listed from the 2011 goals and initiatives achieved were all related to biotechnology. The first item listed is the Trudeau Institute as confirming its place in Saranac Lake with an expansion. The report also noted that two new biotechnology firms would be locating to the village. This village report allows us to understand the importance of Dr. Trudeau's legacy and the importance of biotechnology in the area now and in the past (Village of Saranac Lake 2010).

Conclusion

Saratoga Springs and Saranac Lake were areas that provided natural resources that allowed for 'taking the cure' in New York State. Saratoga Springs emphasized the multitude of mineral springs in the area while Saranac Lake touted the purity of its air. Both areas would not have developed as well-known healing areas if not for powerful visionaries that were allowed to bring their ideas to fruition. Both areas were also transformed from rural isolated regions to "modern" developed villages with many of the benefits of city living including transportation and communication.

The greatest difference between the developments of these areas was the ability for the visionaries to complete their plans. Gideon Putnam lived only until 1812 and further development of the area diverged after his death. The area centered not just on the mineral springs, which became a bottled and sold commodity, but on the enjoyment of the affluent. Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau lived until 1915 and was able to see the predominance and growth of the village. Dr. Trudeau also served as president of the village which allowed him power to create the character of the community.

As with the growth of any resort community outside changes dictated the futures of these areas. The end of the affluent class able to vacation for long periods of time and the rise of the middle class brought great changes to Saratoga Springs. Access to the automobile and other vacation areas diminished the allure of area. For Saranac Lake, progress in the medical research industry both in the village and around the world developed a modern cure for tuberculosis. The

miracle of this discovery, although positive in its own right, made a health resort unnecessary.

The lasting legacy of both regions is still alive. Saratoga Springs still boasts a healthy summer vacation location. The race track draws thousands of visitors every year, Saratoga Spa State Park still provides a spa with mineral water bathing, and various other activities have developed in the area. Saratoga.com advertises Saratoga as “Your Ultimate Summer Destination” (Saratoga.com). Saratoga has secured its long-time draw as a vacation spot, just not a healing area. Saranac Lake also maintains a year-round vacation location. They capitalize on their history as a place to “take the cure” along with providing a wide opportunity of recreation activities. Saranaclake.com highlights the Historic downtown, year-round annual events (including the winter carnival), and recreational activities. It appears that Saranac Lake, while maintaining the Trudeau Research Institute, has reverted to its history of being an outdoor recreation area it.

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6

Minority Groups and the Informal Economy: English Speakers in Quebec's Eastern Townships

Aimee Vieira

Introduction

Making a living in rural communities can take many forms. Employment and self-employment in a variety of sectors, including agriculture, tourism and recreation, resource extraction, retail, services, hospitality, education, and even manufacturing may be available in a rural locale, but the operational scale, returns on investment and pay scales of these enterprises may not compare to those in more population-dense areas. Governments and local business organizations commonly encourage the development of new, legally established businesses whose activities are captured in government statistics, and whose receipts contribute tax revenues to the state. Governments in particular may attempt to discourage economic activities that occur outside of the formal sector, in part as they are unable to directly capture revenues from these segments, and in part to regulate certain behaviors that are considered undesirable. Nonetheless, informal economic activities persist. This research explores the relationship of informal economic activities that occur in conjunction with established small businesses that are operated by members of a linguistic minority in a rural community in Canada, providing further evidence of the interconnectedness of formal and informal economic activities (see also Bagnasco 1990; Williams et al. 2007). The persistence of informal economic activities, even within the framework of formal economic entities, suggests a reconsideration of how we use official economic statistics, as well as highlights the need to consider how governments capture revenues for public purposes and make policies to encourage certain types of economic activities over others, especially as these may contribute to differential outcomes for minority groups.

Formal & Informal Economic Activities

All economic activity contributes to supporting households and individuals within society. Officially measured economic activities capture only a portion of

the economically relevant activities in which individuals and households engage, even in contemporary market economies (Bagnasco 1990). These officially measured activities comprise what is known as the formal economy.

The informal economy includes the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services which have economic value, but which occur outside the realm of the regulated and legally encoded formal economy (Reimer 2006). This inclusive definition of the informal economy goes beyond that offered in some earlier sociological formulations (see for example the discussion in Portes & Haller 2005). This inclusive formulation, as well as Reimer's research into the legal aspects of the informal economy, suggests that formal and informal activities are closely connected to wider social conditions, a finding supported by others as well (e.g., Snyder 2004; Kim 2005; Sedden 2008; Ponsaers et al. 2008).

Research on informal economic activities tends to be based on case studies, as survey research on the topic, while certainly possible, has limitations (Tickamyer & Wood 1998). This research continues the tradition of ethnographically informed case studies to uncover some of the informal economic activities undertaken by individuals who operate businesses within the formal economy of a rural community in Quebec's Eastern Townships. Additionally, attitudes related to specific informal economic activities which occur within the study area were revealed in the interviews that comprised the core of this research. These informal economic activities include legal, quasi-legal, extra-legal, and illegal activities. Exploring the connection of formal and informal activities reveals a significant, but under-researched, component of economic actions.

Quebec's Eastern Townships

Rural communities throughout North America are often relatively diverse, and rural minority populations may confront specific challenges related to their minority status (Barcus & Simmons 2013; Carr et al. 2012; McAreavey 2012). This holds true for linguistic minorities in Quebec. In Canada, about 80 percent of the population of the province of Quebec speaks French as its first language, while English first language speakers comprise around 9.8 percent of residents (Statistics Canada 2012). The English-speaking population is concentrated in Montreal, but Anglophones can be found throughout the province. In the primarily rural Eastern Townships region, Anglophones historically were the majority of early settlers (Little 1989). Although there has been a significant out-migration of English-speaking Quebecers in the past thirty years (Floch 2002), in some small rural communities today, residential patterns persist where Anglophones still comprise the numerical majority of the local population. In these enclaves, English-speaking people can often live their daily lives without having to speak French. In rural Quebec communities, Anglophones face economic opportunities constrained by local conditions and by the need to serve an increasingly French-speaking clientele, as well as a political context that complicates their situation. The recent ascent of the Parti Québécois to power at the provincial level supports an effort to enforce the primary use of French in gov-

ernment and business, including the naming practices of large multinationals such as Wal-Mart. Monolingual Anglophones living in rural regions of Quebec in particular face an increasingly difficult employment environment (Audet 1994; Fenwick 1982; Albouy 2008), where the wages earned by Anglophones are exceeded by Francophones with similar skills. Albouy (2008) argues this is due to a falling demand for Anglophone labor in the province.

While such pressures drive some Anglophones out of the province, or into metropolitan areas with larger English-speaking populations (especially Montreal), others chose to move to, or remain in, rural communities, often by pursuing a self-employment strategy. As in the rural United States (Goetz 2008), some rural residents choose self-employment in the formal economy to meet their economic needs, while others turn to the informal economy where relations based on social trust play a heightened role (Uzzi 1999; Williams 2001). However, this research indicates that self-employment activities by linguistic minorities within the formal economy are frequently linked to informal economic activities which support formal economic activity; these two sectors are not as distinct as might be presumed. Additionally, government regulations and the friction between the Anglophone minority and the pro-French language efforts at the provincial level may influence the connection between formal and informal economic activities for English-speaking Quebecers.

Reimer (2006) explored aspects of the articulation of the informal and formal economics in non-metropolitan regions of Canada, with findings suggesting that the informal economy fulfills multiple needs: acting as a safety net; a buffer for structural changes; and building social cohesion. His work draws on data generated through a longitudinal analysis of household survey information and census data for particular communities, which provides only a partial picture of the nexus of the formal and informal economies. Furthermore, he intentionally excludes those aspects of the informal economy which are illegal or potentially so, and which may comprise a significant component of the informal economy. Illegal aspects of the informal economy might differ significantly from legal ones in terms of how they relate to social cohesion, contribute to (or detract from) social trust, and contribute to the formal economy: illegal elements of the informal economy are not excluded here. Reimer's findings appear to be generally supported in this study, with the addition that illegal informal economic activities also seem to serve to bracket identity.

By limiting the population under consideration to a specific minority language group in a specific community, this study has the potential to reveal information about minority group cohesion and informal economic activities beyond the literature on specific ethnic enclaves, as suggested by prior work by Govindasamy & Nambiar (2003) on formal economic activity by minority groups in multilingual settings. This work develops an aspect of the field that is significantly under-explored—that of non-ethnically linked linguistic minorities—and should allow for a fuller consideration of the articulation of informal and formal, legal and illegal, economic activities among this rural minority Eng-

lish-speaking population. This population provides an opportunity to further explore the relationship of both formal and informal economic activities to minority group identity and cohesion, particularly as expressed through relations demanding social trust, such as those involving illegal activities occurring within the informal sector. The addition of a provincial government that complicates regulatory compliance for monolingual Anglophones may increase informal economic activities as part of a larger element of Anglophone identity.

Data & Methods

The bulk of the data for this study was generated during an intensive three-year ethnographic field research project conducted in a rural community in Quebec near the Vermont border that focused on self-employed small business operators and entrepreneurs. Historically, border regions have presented a particular set of opportunities for informal economic activities (Slowe 1991). An important element of this research community is its proximity to the United States, as the English-speaking minority in the region is situated to potentially take advantage of the U.S. market in their economic activities, as well as benefit from access to a nearby linguistic refuge. The study area includes three contiguous towns with a population that was greater than 60 percent English as first official language spoken (a Statistics Canada formulation) in the 1996 Canadian census (the most recent available at the time of initial selection), and greater than 50 percent in the 2011 Canadian census (language spoken most often in the home).

Data are drawn from several sources: interviews with self-employed business owners within a particular locality, law enforcement personnel and key informants; an extended period of participant observation within the locality, including interactions in both the formal and informal economy; government statistics from the federal, provincial, and local level; and a long-term review of local print and web-based information. The intensive phase of field research was conducted from 2004 through 2007 with data collected from news articles, advertisements, government resources, and extensive field notes from participant observation of community activities and exchanges with key informants. Since no exhaustive list of all Anglophone-owned and operated businesses in the area could be identified, a working list based on telephone directory entries, Chamber of Commerce membership data, and regional economic development agency documents was utilized to gauge the total number of possible enterprises and range of economic sectors, and respondents were recruited through a combination of snowball and purposive sampling. During the summer of 2006, thirty interviews of self-employed persons residing in and operating a business within the identified study boundaries who self-identified as Anglophones were conducted. Recruitment of respondents and interviews continued until it was judged that saturation had occurred, and it was determined that additional interviews would yield limited additional insights. Interviews, which sometimes included two individuals engaged in an enterprise, were recorded and transcribed. Ongo-

ing data collection from secondary sources, along with regular frequent return visits to the study community for observation, has been continuous from 2003-2012, with plans in 2013 for a future series of interviews with prior respondents and new entries into the study population. In an effort to protect the confidentiality of the respondents, all names, including place names, have been changed.

Interview information included here results from a protocol not designed to elicit information regarding informal economic activities, and yet, respondents often made reference to direct and indirect involvement in informal economic activities. Nonetheless, the data reveals the importance of informal economic activities to formal, and illuminates how individuals integrate informal economic actions into the operations of their formal enterprises. The data on informal activities includes references to various activities, including legal and illegal exchanges for cash, services, or trade. These transactions included activities related to unrecorded cash transactions within the formal economy, informal labor exchanges, off-the-books cash labor in both households and enterprises in the formal economy, as well as production of controlled substances. Therefore, this study provides only a glimpse into the arena of non-recorded economic activities. Because the research was not designed to specifically elicit information on informal economic activities within the operation of a formal economic entity, the findings can only be considered preliminary and suggest that this is an area that would benefit from further study.

The organizing unit of analysis is the household, with an emphasis on household survival strategies; that is, how households organize their income producing activities to support their particular lifestyle choices within the specific constraints and opportunities available in a particular place during a period of time. A variety of arrangements were observed. In some households, only one family member was engaged in self-employment, in a single formal entity. In other cases, as many as three distinct different formal economic enterprises were being pursued by households with two adult members, sometimes independently by one or another member, and sometimes in cooperation in one or more. Sometimes multiple generations were engaged in a single economic enterprise. In this study, these extended generational enterprises resided in separate households. In a few cases, two or more unrelated individuals were engaged in a single enterprise, or in somehow conjoined enterprises. A few households had one or more members in paid employment in a non-related business. Single person households were observed in seven cases. No single form predominated, and the thirty interviews covered forty-eight distinct businesses. The analysis of data included a qualitative reading of interview transcripts and field notes, employing heuristic frameworks and multi-level coding to support a rigorous assessment of the dataset.

Study Findings

The informal economy includes the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services which have economic value, but which occur outside of the formal economy, which is regulated and codified in law (Reimer 2006). The informal economy might include the occasional exchange of labor, goods, services, or cash payments for casual exchanges (e.g., babysitter, errand-runner, yard work, tutor, etc.), where the individual being paid does not regularly engage in these activities as part of a formal enterprise. These exchanges may or may not be part of the commodified economy; that is, they may occur as “non-exchanged work, non-monetized exchange and non profit-motivated exchange” (Williams 2001: 222).

The informal economic activities reported by respondents in this study which occurred specifically in conjunction with licit enterprises included:

1. systemic unrecorded economic exchange in conjunction with licit business (i.e., cash sales, cash discounts for goods equivalent to the sales taxes, barter of labor or goods, all unrecorded);
2. non-permitted sales of controlled materials in conjunction with legal business activities (i.e., alcohol, cigarettes, fuel);
3. activities related to manufacturing or agricultural production which do not comply with governmental regulations but which impact economic outcomes of for-profit activities (i.e., spreading or storing manure in a non-compliant fashion);
4. non-conventional financial activities, including cash loans and pre-paid sales as a form of short-term financing.

Other informal economic activities also occur in the study area with or without connection to an operating legal entity. Among those that were specifically identified in interviews, without a clear indication of direct participation by the interviewees, included:

5. manufacturing or cultivating controlled substances (especially marijuana);
6. sales or trafficking of drugs and stolen goods;
7. the poaching or taking of public natural resources outside of regulations.

In at least one case, a respondent reported having direct knowledge that his clients were engaged in marijuana cultivation and trafficking, and that his business had benefited substantially by cash sales to these clients. In several others, references were made regarding individual non-respondents engaged in one or more of these activities. References like this can be used to help estimate the size of such activities in a given area (Bouchard 2007).

Regulatory Non-Compliance Activities

As in many communities, the study site has a significant informal sector where legitimate work is done for cash to avoid taxes and/or the effort of conforming with regulatory oversight. For example, one respondent working in construction stated: “as the renovation industry goes, there’s a lot done for cash, so I felt that, you know what, the less questions I ask, and I’m also, I like to do things on my own . . .” A few enterprises included in the study operate completely informally (or did at some point during their history), with only oral agreements, in exchange for cash. This was observed in handyman, landscaping and renovation activities, as well as in some other service industry activities. Other businesses conduct the majority of their activities formally, on the record, and subject to taxes, but still engage in some informal economic activities, or have during the early days of their operations, operating informally until the business became viable enough to require access to more formal opportunities, a technique observed elsewhere (Kim 2005).

Examples of this combination of formal and informal economic activity, especially in earlier years of business operations abound. These included sales that would have required a significant upfront effort, and sometimes costs, related to regulation, which discouraged businesses from complying. The following example includes evidence as well of the cohesive normative relationships in the community:

Respondent 1: There was gas sales, but it was totally illegal. It was totally illegal. It was totally illegal. They were going to shut me down unless I conformed, which cost us about ten grand to do that . . .

Interviewer: . . . when did you guys start hiring staff?

Respondent 1: When we became legal. Because, we had a blind pig¹ for twenty years.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent 1: Yeah, we didn’t have a permit for booze. But the mayor drank here, and the chief of police [. . .]. That’s when it was easy. And that’s because, if you needed beer, you just went up to the *dépanneur*,² and got, what type are you drinking? You go up and you know, they’d keep the inventory for you.

One other respondent also reported having had a blind pig, but shut it down after it was discovered by the provincial police. In this second case, the business owners attempted to get a permit, but they were blocked by nearby residents who objected to alcohol sales in their neighborhood.

Other types of unrecorded sales by formal enterprises included retail and service exchanges. In some of the small locally owned shops, if one is known to the proprietors and staff, and willing to pay cash, the price charged does not

include sales taxes. In unrecorded cash sales of this sort, no receipt is given but if a return is necessary, the relationship with the shop owner makes it possible. If the shop is busy with tourists, the cash discount will not usually be made until they are out of earshot. Paying cash for labor done by someone known to you and resident in the community was a norm for in-group members (for example excavating, horseshoeing, and various teaching, cleaning, property caretaking, and health related activities) as were retail cash sales without charging sales taxes to other shopkeepers and friends from the community. These activities acted as forces for social cohesion in a small community.

The prevalence of cash in some unrecorded deals provides the opportunity for small scale integration of proceeds from illicit activities. The local marijuana cultivation industry sometimes gets mentioned as the source of cash used for some unrecorded purchases. I was told unsubstantiated stories of shops and restaurants bought with cash, as well as cash renovations and upgrades to property which business owners and other residents attributed to income from marijuana cultivation and trafficking.

While some unrecorded cash sales are clearly intended to avoid paying taxes or avoid regulatory compliance, in other cases it might have more to do with a view about the right relationship between the government and the governed, or it may result from language-related misunderstandings. Some of these informal exchanges primarily confirm in-group membership, cementing social relationships, and tying individuals together.

The tax-avoiding technique of unrecorded cash sales has been the subject of a significant recent effort on the part of the provincial tax authority, Revenue Quebec, especially in three industries: restaurants; construction; and cigarette sales (Revenu Québec 2012). Revenu Quebec's focus on these three areas of economic activity as areas where tax avoidance occurs is supported by evidence from the interviews, but they do not cover the full range of non-compliant nor tax avoiding strategies. In conjunction with this effort, Revenu Quebec also implemented a media advertising campaign against tax avoiding behaviors encouraging customers to insist on receipts and the use of traceable forms of payment (CTVCanada 2012), arguing that such activities lead to a lack of resources for government services, specifically in health and education. This media campaign might not be as convincing to those who do not support the governing political party, and it might perversely serve to encourage non-compliant behavior by those opposed to the provincial government.

Operating entirely in an informal fashion incurs opportunity costs, in that the enterprises are not eligible for some of the government grants and services available to small businesses and start-ups, but at least some of the respondents preferred to minimize their reliance on government services.

Interviewer: So you didn't take advantage of any of the government offices or anything for young people starting their own businesses?

Respondent 2: Absolutely not. Um, I don't want to take from them, as long as they don't take from me, in the sense.

Interviewer: Yeah. Leave me alone, I won't ask you for anything?

Respondent 2: Yeah, exactly . . .

It was only in the year prior to the interview that this respondent became "legal," getting his cards from the government. He also chose not to participate in some government assistance programs for which he was now eligible, explaining "I don't really need their money . . . I try to be as independent as I can." The Anglophone population included in the study not engaged in agricultural enterprises tended to express skepticism toward government programs of support for small business, even when they participated in them.

Respondents actively engaged in farming enterprises generally take full advantage of government programs offered to help them produce more, protect the environment, expand their operations, or otherwise ensure their livelihood, and whose operations are more difficult to conduct without the knowledge of the government, as they are highly visible and heavily regulated. And yet these people still engage in informal economic practices to reduce their compliance burden, such as manure stockpiling and spreading manure produced on farms not their own. "Manure swaps" such as this provided benefits for both farming operations, and also served to confirm social ties between the cooperating parties.

For some Anglophones in the study, compliance with provincial efforts was onerous, in part due to the province providing important information only in French, with the requirement that individuals take action to request materials in English or audits by an English-speaking official, which could create delays and in some cases, fines for delays or misunderstandings. During field work I observed a provincial housing inspector speaking only in French to an Anglophone shopkeeper who clearly was unable to understand much of what was being said, which had to do with a lease on a rental apartment above her shop. The inspector apparently understood the woman's mixed French-English, as he would repeat much of what she said in French. In another case, an Anglophone couple operating a bistro specifically commented on their own difficulties communicating with provincial tax authorities during the interview:

Respondent 3: The one person who was on our case for the taxes did not speak English, so I would always have to speak to a different person, and then they wouldn't do anything.

Respondent 4: And they weren't going to get anyone else to call either.

There is an interesting undercurrent to the current provincial tax code enforcement activities. In a review of the press releases available on the Revenue Quebec website in January 2013 regarding enforcement actions in the restaurant

industry in 2011 and 2012, all but one of the surnames of individuals identified as violators in these statements were clearly non-French in origin. This, combined with provincial insistence on the use of French, may serve to further harden distinctions related to minority language identification, especially as the population of Anglophones continues to shrink as a share of the total population.

Cash Constraints

Income can be hard to come by in seasonal operations such as tourism and agriculture, so a number of strategies for dealing with intermittent income streams were in evidence. Labor exchange, barter, and pre-paid sales were all techniques businesses employed to deal with cash shortages, given that conventional financing was not common (beyond a mortgage), especially for non-agricultural businesses in the study.

To conserve cash, some business owners traded services in exchange for necessary temporary labor, especially to cover times when the owner(s) had to be absent. These labor exchanges involved customers, friends, or other business owners. One respondent, with both an agricultural enterprise and a service enterprise, shared his farm equipment with a much younger neighboring farmer who then would complete the majority of the work associated with haying, and they would share the crop for their separate beef operations. The owner of a women's clothing retail establishment put it this way: "You've got anyone closing, and I am very guilty of this, of not keeping regular hours but I do have to produce, and I have to do that in the city, and I can't afford to keep a girl in." She, and others, would trade goods, or more rarely pay cash, for temporary labor. It was also common to see a shopkeeper on the sidewalk, keeping an eye on her store and her neighbor's, while one or the other needed to briefly leave the shop.

Small business owners living and economically active in the area also developed unique ways of conserving cash resources and ensuring an adequate cash flow. One restaurant had regular customers who would advance them a certain amount for future meals in exchange for receiving an additional amount in credit on the pre-paid amount (e.g., \$1,100 in product for \$1000 advanced). This allowed them to secure funds in advance, smoothing their cash flow, as well as ensure a regular loyal clientele. In the earlier example of the blind pig, the reliance on nearby shops to act as a ready supply of inventory allowed the enterprise to conserve cash rather than tie it up in inventory stores. Both of these examples require a degree of trust among participants that was essential for on-going operations.

Conclusion

Social trust plays an important role in both formal and informal economic activities, from finding financial resources (Uzzi 1999) to the opportunities

available to an individual (Audia & Rider 2005). Morselli (2001) suggests that social trust among individuals involved in exchange increases in importance with informal economic activities. For those informal economic activities which might also be illegal, social trust becomes increasingly important. Such admission to, or engagement in, informal economic activities must be considered to increase the degree of solidarity among participants, as each has knowledge which might potentially be used against the other. By engaging in such activities only with language group members residing in the community, these informal exchanges can increase group solidarity and social cohesion.

Engaging in informal economic activity within the context of a formal enterprise might fulfill many different functions for the population in the study area: it may be primarily an effort to maximize income by avoiding regulatory or tax responsibilities (improving individual economic outcomes); it may strengthen relationships among participating individuals (increasing solidarity); it may serve to highlight an Anglophone identity; or it may result from an inability to meet economic needs through legitimate means. Informal activities here were also crucial to the founding or continued viability of some formal enterprises, as was also observed in Kim (2005). A linguistic minority might also resort to informal economic activities in an effort to minimize interactions in the dominant language, where minority status becomes an explicit burden and cost. Informal economic activities in the study area do appear to highlight relations of social trust. They also help demarcate lines of belonging and non-belonging among social groups. Informal and formal economic activities co-occur in ways that are significant for local communities. Including only measures of formal economic activity in sociological research will result in research that fails to develop a full understanding of the economic dimensions of any society, especially as informal economic activities seem potentially to contribute more to social cohesion than do formal economic activities, especially for minority groups.

Notes

1. Slang for a bar or individual making illegal alcohol sales.
2. Quebec French term for a convenience store, word commonly used by Quebec Anglophones residing in study area.

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7

Eaten Up: Urban Foraging and Rural Identity

Barbara Ching
Gerald Creed

In our 1996 introduction to *Knowing Your Place: Rural Identity and Cultural Hierarchy*, we took our cue from Raymond Williams' (1975) assertion about the ongoing "force" of "images of the country and city" to argue that "no degree of 'development' could obliterate the continuing economic importance and cultural distinctiveness of the countryside where food is produced and human life sustained." Informed by the material necessity to feed growing populations and the cultural persistence of versions of pastoral that ascribe value to country life and the people who live it, we asserted that agriculture would preserve a cultural space for the countryside and country people. In short, we believed that the value of food could sustain the dignity and the cultural value of the countryside and country people.

In this new look at the cultural hierarchy which elevates the urban(e), we critique social developments that have further entrenched the binary even as they hold the potential to recalibrate it. In 1995, when we were putting the finishing touches on *Knowing Your Place*, we failed to recognize the power of cultural capital to reproduce hierarchies even in the face of essential dependency. We would have acknowledged that gourmets and wine connoisseurs had status but we never could have imagined that the current widespread urban fascination with food, the very thing we thought might ultimately protect, if not enhance, the cultural value of rural people and places, now further erases them.

In this reexamination of cultural hierarchy, then, we look at new social developments that have challenged the dependencies we thought would sustain rural identities in the face of what Fulkerson and Thomas (2013, in this volume) have called "urbanormativity." Now, the urban consumer of food, in particular the "foodie" has assumed the role of cultural and political arbiter of agriculture and value. Food studies and food writing are the new mechanisms for any attention to the countryside (replacing peasant/agrarian studies and earlier versions of the pastoral). A best-selling food writer confided to one of the authors off the record that there was no market for writing about rural places and people unless

it focused on food consumed, like the stories themselves, by urban people. At times this focus does ramify into concerns for peasants and farmers, as in the notion of fair trade produce, but mostly it directs attention to inputs other than human labor such as the conditions for livestock rather than those who raise it and to the discerning tastes of those who “source” local ingredients for farm to table restaurants. Moreover, an increasing interest in “urban farming” allows urbanites to circumvent the peasant or farmer and get food from other urbanites. Foraging may be the definitive iteration of this eclipse of the rural since it conceptually allows foodies to bypass the producers altogether. Thus, we begin with a brief discussion of other efforts and then turn to foraging as our primary illustration of the increasing urban normativity of food production.

Foundational to this discussion is the fact that these efforts rarely result in urban self-sufficiency. Very few practitioners can expect/intend to escape dependence on farmers and livestock raisers in the countryside. In other words, the practices of urban farming and foraging are as much representational and positional as material: practitioners produce who they are by producing (or collecting) what they eat. If there is any “truth” to the notion that “you are what you eat” the possibilities for managing and presenting one’s identity through food efforts and choices is another tool for the twenty-first century citizen of the world to fashion the public presentation of the self they want to construct.

The Urban Agrarians: “A Lovely Trend”

The most visible example of the effort to remake food as a quasi-urban product is urban gardening. Community gardens have a long history but as they have expanded and attracted greater attention (American Community Garden Association 1998), much of the discourse suggests a new motivation vying with the prior objectives of creating green spaces or oases in the city. Increasingly, talk centers on their value in food production and supply particularly as the collocation “urban *farming*” becomes more prominent. Gerald Creed participated in one such garden for three growing seasons in New York City and found that the value of the produce barely exceeded the cost of inputs. Sociality and recreation were more predictable products than profit or food. Barbara Ching’s gardening experiences in urban Memphis confirmed this rough cost benefit analysis. Good yields required a cheap and plentiful source of manure, and inside the beltway, there is no convenient source. Even with neighbors willing to tolerate the stink and gabble of backyard goats and poultry, keeping these animals safe from meter readers, raccoons, and their own mischief requires more time than day jobs allow.

The indisputable value (assuming there is no disputing taste) of urban farming for individuals comes through in identity construction and management. See for example, the spate of books on this topic published since 2009. Seattle homemaker Jennie Grant may have the most intriguingly righteous title with her

City Goats: The Goat Justice League's Guide to Backyard Goat Keeping (2012). Robert and Hannah Lit generously propose *A Chicken in Every Yard: The Urban Farm Store's Guide to Chicken Keeping* (2011). Note the preciousness of *Urban Homesteading: Heirloom Skills for Sustainable Living* (Kaplan and Blume, 2011), a title that puts weeding on par with the family silver. Noted ecological activist and writer Bill McKibben blurbed Jennifer Cockrill-King's 2012 *Food and the City: Urban Agriculture and the New Food Revolution* with language that similarly aestheticizes the practice: "All over the world I've watched urban dwellers begin to figure out that they can start growing food, too. It's one of the loveliest trends on earth." What's really the trend, we stress, is not that urban dwellers grow food. They probably always have. The trend is the contemporary discourse that assigns a distinctive value to the urban version.

Discussions of "urban agriculture" offer yet another perspective on urban normativity. Moving beyond the backyard, urban agriculture encompasses serious efforts to grow food in all sorts of places such as industrial roof tops and abandoned lots in poor neighborhoods. This larger scale farming not only allows urbanites to sidestep their rural dependencies (or at least reduce them) but it also allows the "legitimately" urban to see agriculture as the tamer of urban jungles. We have noted previously how most of the negative stereotypes of urban life are typically identified with the "inner city" so that the city itself, unadulterated or unqualified, remains pure and ideal (Ching & Creed 1996 19). While community gardens have long accompanied gentrification, urban agriculture now cultivates the inner city at the same time that it helps urban residents of unmarked city locales avoid the backward countryside. The rhetoric of a 2009 story in the *The New York Times Magazine* uses these binaries to make news, to find the conflict that makes for plot, and to simultaneously disavow and reclaim the degraded urban. Author Elizabeth Royte extols the efforts of Milwaukee resident Will Allen to "make the inner city the next front in the good-food movement," using "14 greenhouses crammed onto two acres in a working-class neighborhood . . . less than half a mile from the city's largest public-housing project" (Royte 2009: 22-24, our emphasis). Allen's Growing Power Farm, she says, is "an agricultural Mumbai." The racialized language and visuals used to describe Allen, the son of a sharecropper, likewise separate the inner city from the unmarked city. The big print title announces a "Street Farmer," a clever twist on idioms like "street fighter" or "street thug." The full-page picture opposite shows the 6'7" Allen dressed in a hoodie, softened with the motto "Together We Are," offering up a double handful of earthworms. Urban agriculture has domesticated the dangerous black man of the white urban imaginary at the same time that it allows the white urban consumers of his produce to feel virtuous, distinctive, and more urban than ever. They can "locally source" so completely that they bypass the countryside.

We don't mean to argue that urban agriculture on this scale is worthless. Some of the largest expansions of urban agriculture are in the world's poorest cities, making the material contribution undeniable. Indeed, where resources are scarce, a modest amount of produce can constitute a significant relative contribution (Crossette 1996, Howard nd). In the United States, pejoratives such as "food desert" call attention to the benefits of urban farming as a contribution to improving the nutrition of urban children, often assumed to have limited access to affordable fresh produce. Royte quotes Allen "From the housing project, it's more than three miles to the Pick'n Save. That's a long way to go for groceries if you don't have a car or can't carry stuff." In his 2012 book, *The Good Food Revolution*, in which Allen can tell his story without tailoring it to the interests of the *New York Times's* readers, Allen has important things to say about his vision and what it means to be an African American farmer after the southern/rural diaspora. In other words, he links the existence of food deserts to the plight of African Americans, and he does so from a critical rural studies perspective. He opens with an epigraph from George Washington Carver—"in dirt is life"—and goes on to place his decision to farm in the context of the effect of on African Americans. He contrasts W.E.B. DuBois's vision of the "talented tenth" leading the freed slaves to social integration with Booker T. Washington's belief that self-sufficiency and practical skills would allow African-Americans dignity and advancement. "There never was a place among DuBois's talented tenth for farmers," he notes (6).

Representations of these new urban farmers show a noticeable change of register compared to parallel engagements we discussed in *Knowing Your Place*. Then we (Ching and Creed 1996) noted how individuals who farmed in the city, often recent migrants from the countryside, were commonly derided as lacking urban taste. In popular terms they were Beverly Hillbillies, and in academic parlance, "peasant urbanites." Their failure to appreciate that the city was no place for crops or livestock threatened to corrode the urban environment. By contrast, the community gardeners and street farmers popular in current discussions are not *from* the countryside but have discovered the value of agriculture through their urban sensibilities and experiences. Since they are already antithetical in some ways (especially along the vectors of race and class) to the derided images of rusticity that validate/elevate the urban, their agricultural pursuits are acceptable and incorporated into a new green, progressive, organic, urbanism that actually removes dependence on peasants or farmers, and those dependencies that persist must be more closely examined.

Sourcing and Curation

Urbane eating now requires increased scrutiny and selection of the rural people and places that supply food. Sophisticated urbanites make a point of buying food from sources that are purportedly sustainable, organic, humane, etc. By

only rewarding farmers with their business who produce in ways that reflect the values of the refined and cultivated consumer, they can urbanize the countryside. This practice reaches its extreme version in the “locavore” fascination—the elevation of anything grown or raised locally over that obtained from distant locations (unless of course we’re talking about the dearest foods, such as champagne, truffles and caviar, where distance and scarcity is essential). Restaurants abound promoting their use of locally grown vegetables and livestock. Manhattan’s Bell, Book, and Candle grows salad greens and garnishes on the rooftop of its building. The Trellis restaurant in suburban Seattle explains itself, on the “philosophy” tab on its website, as “Seattle’s most pure ‘farm-to-table’ restaurant dining experience” Executive Chef Brian Scheehser practices sustainable farming on his ten-acre farm in Woodinville. He grows and harvests fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs featured on the Trellis menu, including his signature “Two Hour Salad” with ingredients harvested within two hours of being served.¹ Portland, Oregon’s Urban Farmer Steakhouse boasts of “sophisticated farm to table dining” although they don’t go so far as to promise city raised Angus steaks.² Even supermarkets advertise the extent of their local procurement as a selling point and the popularity of farmer’s markets in most big cities confirms this attraction. It’s important to note how abstractly the word “local” works in these circumstances. In Iowa, where no one lives very far from a farm, grocery stores and roadside stands sell Grimes sweet corn and Muscatine melons, naming what could be called, but of course is *not* called, the “terroir” or “appellation d’origine contrôlée” of foods that grow well in the state’s particular microclimates. While Creed was growing up in North Carolina, the way to refer to plentiful local produce was “home grown.” Elsewhere, the urban consumer is the one who determines the radius of the local as well as its value. This much is clear: local is nearby but it is not where you live. The farmers producing what urbanites seek may have to drive six hours to reach the local farmers market. Near, in other words, without being *too* close to home. Such proximity is only desirable when the producer is not just a farmer but rather an “urban farmer” growing his bounty in the indisputable confines of the city itself. Restaurant employees tending some pots on the roof or in the courtyard of a fashionable restaurant, also make the grade.

Popular activities such as “pick your own” trips to the country to gather berries, apples, and pumpkins also allow urbanites to source their food. Comedian and mock-anthropologist Christian Lander points out the privilege and fantasy that inspires these pastimes on his *Stuff White People Like* blog:

... as more and more white people moved into cities, they lost their connection to working the land. In recent years, the most advanced white people have quit their jobs, moved to the country and opened artisanal dairies and small scale radicchio farms. However, not all white people have the ability, or the trust

funds, to quit their jobs and follow their food-based passions. Some white people have to get their fix by picking their own fruit. Many of you might be familiar with the process of harvesting a crop, some of its more intense variations are often referred to as “migrant labor” and “slavery.” Under these conditions, laborers are expected to work extremely hard in order to live up to large expectations about their fruit picking output. When white people harvest a crop it’s known as “berry picking” or “pick your own fruit.” Under these conditions, white people are expected to work leisurely with no real expectations and then they pay for the privilege to do so.

Just as privileged urbanites pay to play on pick your own farms, they also seek out and create demand for “heirloom” varieties of everything from tomatoes and apples to pigs and turkeys. In what could be a classic structuralist dynamic, the binary opposition between wild and cultivated has produced a mediator in the form of heirlooms—varieties that are domesticated, but perhaps not so hybridized and modified as to be unrecognizable from potential wilder antecedents. Heirlooms, then, are prized and curated by urban consumers as artifacts they have saved from the ravages of agriculture just as museum curators do for their collections.

In all these efforts, however, the dependence on agriculture and farming remains, muted perhaps and pushed to the background, but through one increasingly popular urban fascination, the urbanite can get to a nearly unmitigated, unadulterated connection to his/her food source: foraging. As the current pinnacle in the efforts we turn our attention to urban foraging.

The Flaneur as Forager

The demise of foraging and its replacement—farming—created city life. Thus, anthropologically speaking, “urban foraging” is an oxymoron. Foraging, when anthropologists use the term, hinges on tapping naturally occurring resource as one’s primary food source.³ As Daniel Webster put it, “when tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization.” In the span of human history, this civilization is still young. It was no more than 12,000 years ago when our ancestors made the “leap” from foraging to food production. The current norm of industrial agriculture is fewer than a couple of centuries old. Anthropology textbooks commonly note that over 90 percent of humans who ever lived sustained themselves by foraging. Up to 99% of human history unfolded before agriculture replaced foraging as the primary means of sustenance.

In the twenty-first century, “urban foraging” brings pre-history into the city, allowing flaneurs, the quintessential figure of urban sophistication, the fantasy of feeding themselves, both literally and spiritually, as they enact their stylish strolls, bypassing rustic labor and even the agricultural revolution, whether they forage in the city or gather outside the limits and bring the gleanings back home.

And, like the flaneurs before them, say Charles Baudelaire the foraging flaneurs pronounce on their findings. At its most extreme, the (self) representation or urban foraging straddles the pre-history of agriculture with the most up to the moment food fashions. Writing in *The Guardian* in 2011, Nick Weston, himself a foraging expert, notes “This has been called the year of the foragers. Every year more and more people . . . indulge in a spot of Mesolithic role-play.”⁴

Iconic comparisons of the costs and benefits of this transition point out that by some measures, foragers may often live better than food producers (especially those who end up on the lower end in the systems of inequality that have always developed along with food production). Focusing on the surfeit of resources, Marshall Sahlins (1972) referred to hunters and gathers as the “original affluent society.” Following this lead, Allen Johnson (1978) notes that hunters and gathers work much less than either farmers or industrial workers, and are generally free of obesity and related diseases common in food producing societies. Anthropologist Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, looking back on her fieldwork in the Kalahari, favorably contrasts the variety of foraged food with the fruits and vegetables familiar to the American diet: they “ate about 80 kinds of plants, including 25 kinds of roots, 7 or 8 kinds of berries, 16 or 17 kinds of fruits, 3 or 4 kinds of melons, 4 kinds of leaves . . . 11 kinds of tree gums, and 2 kinds of beans. They also ate palm hearts” (106). Moreover, most of these anthropological comparisons are based on ethnographic fieldwork among contemporary foraging societies in marginal environments (the only ones left to them by the successful spread of agricultural and industrial agriculture). Thus, we can reasonably assume that our foraging ancestors, living in the more productive environments, fared better, perhaps enjoying, as a group, the sort of leisure and plenty that only the privileged enjoy in most civilizations.

Foraging gained a widespread audience in 2007, when Michael Pollan published his *Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. The book opens on an Iowa farm to describe the pressures and dangers of industrial farming; the first of the four meals, an outgrowth, so to speak, of Iowa corn, takes place at McDonalds in Marin County, California. Pollan goes on to explore organic farming on large and small scales. His final meal emerges from a do-it-yourself episode in which Pollan cooks from wild yeasts, foraged food, and game. Already an expert gardener, Pollan needed to find teachers to round out his meal, and to do so, he draws on centuries of accumulated knowledge, including the literary and anthropological. Pollan refers to Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, and Virgil and studies of the paleolithic period to describe why he wanted to hunt and gather and why he needed teachers to do so confidently. His purpose in exploring ancient food chains, Pollan explains, is “didactic”: “like other important forms of play, it promises to teach us something about who we are beneath our civilized, practical, grown-up lives” (2007: 280). He believed he would be “prepar[ing] and eat[ing] a meal in full consciousness of what was involved . . .

the ultimate destination of the journey I'd been on since traveling to an Iowa cornfield" (2007: 281). Most people don't have the leisure and social capital that Pollan enjoyed as he read, worked with experts, and hunted in Northern California for wild mushrooms and game. He strolled through Berkeley with baggies for what he named, after his research into (ancient Roman) property rights, "usu-fruct": fruit trees with branches hanging over public space and thus legitimately harvested by members of the public (2007: 397-98). But in our reading of his fourth meal, we note that he made it "this one time" (2007: 411), and that he sought to do it by himself (as much as possible) to know just how much work, and delight, it would cost him. As his title says, he was exploring a dilemma, not flaunting a lifestyle.

Vestiges of foraging have long offered "play" for urban dwellers. Hobbyists engage in nutting, mushroom hunting, herb collecting, and the berry picking described above. Only in the last several years have these activities become known as something more serious than a hobby as they merge into an encompassing phenomenon called "urban foraging." When combined with the adjective "urban," foraging can denote almost any kind of provisioning. After Pollan, many people include the notion of harvesting from fruit trees in the yards of unoccupied houses or in public spaces. While the website Pollan mentioned, Los Angeles' www.fallenfruit.org, didn't make any claims to wildness, other sites do. See, for contrast, Portland, Oregon's *Urban Edibles* website, "a community database of *wild* food sources in Portland, Oregon" (emphasis ours, to call attention to the use of the word "wild").⁵ The food sources that people post about are overwhelmingly fruit trees, in many ways the antithesis of wild food since fruit trees, for the most part, are deliberately planted. But the blurring of wild and cultivated is in many ways our point. The restaurant "Forage," on Los Angeles's Sunset Boulevard, creates its menu by "select[ing] the best of the market from local farmers we've known for years, and we invite the best of the backyard from our friends and neighbors who care as much as we do about making conscious food choice."⁶ Foragers market in New York City explains itself as "a neighborhood market. We bring clean and ethical food of the highest quality to our customers by shortening the distance between farm and fork."⁷ You could eat dinner or brunch at their "Foragers Table," too.

Even though it is tacitly recognized that no one could survive on collected foods, any foraging activity is sufficient to qualify a participant as an urban forager. No matter how puzzling or whimsical, all of these new understandings of the term "foraging," distinguish the urbanites who partake in them from the masses who engage in the most common and least strenuous forms of provisioning: conventional grocery stores and chain restaurants. It also removes them from symbolic contact with conventional agriculture. Indeed, much of the discourse of urban foraging speaks of plenty and pleasure completely removed from the contemporary food system and even from the agricultural revolution. The extent of these practices has not yet been measured, but suppliers meeting demand testify to the liveliness of this trend. Organized foraging excursions

thrive in many cities across the United States, how-to books, both “field” guides and cookbooks are being published, and a growing literary genre recounts and reflects on foraging.

“Wildman” Steve Brill’s foraging tours and other products exemplify the new discourse of foraging. Nearly every weekend, on both Saturday and Sunday, you can take a foraging tour of one of the New York City area’s park with him as your guide. Like the flaneur, he wanders through the city with an audience of potential emulators. An image of him as a construction-hat clad australopithecine on his website illustrates the fantasy of both mastering the city and ignoring the country. Brill plays the well-muscled alpha male leading his tribe through the Olmsted designed landscape of Central Park, with its glittering pond and the sun-struck skyscrapers. What makes this image quintessentially of the moment, though, is the fantasy of escaping the agricultural revolution, of having culture without agriculture. The caption, “the tradition of foraging goes back a lo-o-o-ng way in my family!”⁸ allows Brill to be both pedigreed and wild, free from the taint of the rustic yet surrounded by the glamour and novelty of the city. He demonstrates his urbanity through the books he writes and illustrates about using wild plants; he recently developed an “app” for identifying them with your cell-phone.

To learn how Brill presented his knowledge and why people came to him, in November 2011, we signed up for two consecutive foraging trips, a Saturday morning in Forest Hills Park and a Sunday afternoon in Central Park. The Saturday morning group was small, ten people counting us. Three, Barbara included, had foraged with parents and grandparents as children, or had had free access to fields and woods. Like Brill, perhaps they might say that foraging runs in their families. The most outgoing participant, eager for this kind of reconnection, was from Montana and was especially eager to learn about the edible species in New York; she had also been on a spring tour with Brill. Others were drawn by the desire to participate in the trend. A medical student, also from Montana, came, he said, because it “sounded cool.” He had signed up a group of friends but they were “too hung over” to come. The two of us collected enough greens for a salad although the woman from Montana, willing to dig up burdock roots and a small sassafras tree, returned home with more. You could make root beer with the sassafras roots, Brill claimed. I would be surprised if any of us amassed more calories than we burned—even if we made root beer. The crowd in Central Park the next day was too large to accurately and discreetly count, at least fifty people, including a more sizable group of trend-followers and the idly curious. One young woman described a foraging tour she had taken of the Lower East Side that sounded more like vandalism and theft to us. When I asked what they had found and where, one example she gave was kale from window boxes.⁹ Some were foreign tourists who barely touched any of the edibles that Brill led us to. They seemed most interested in the guided walk in the city’s most famous

and vast park. Food was simply another attraction among the many diversions that the city had on offer, a snack that the urban forager could accept or decline.

In the city, foraged food also confers distinction and cultivates privilege apart from the task of actually foraging for it. Wandering to places where wild food is served also demonstrates sophistication. Forage San Francisco's Wild Kitchen, for example, "is a roving Underground supper club. From a roof-deck in the mission one week, to a houseboat in Sausalito the next, The Wild Kitchen knows no geographic bounds. Sixty diners sit around the communal table, enjoying lavish 8 course meals, with each course highlighting a sustainably foraged ingredient from the local landscape; these meals connect the eater with his natural surroundings in a new way."¹⁰ The language of the website flatters its potential customers with access to boundless new experiences, exclusive locales, and gourmet food. To partake of the wild kitchen, the eater simply wanders the city to its various locations and pays for the food, just as s/he would in a restaurant or market. But the wild kitchen entails no labor on the part of the eater.¹¹ Yet another restaurant named Forage, this one in Salt Lake City, simply uses its name to evoke little more than fine dining salted with trend speak: "At Forage, we believe that a great meal is more than just good food and wine and that a great restaurant does more than just satiate hunger. We are committed to taking each dinner on a memorable journey, the kind of experience where no detail is left unattended. Forage provides a deeply personal rendition of gourmet cuisine, one where non-typical methods of cooking meet tradition, refinement, imagination, and the best local ingredients to create an experience you will remember."

Just as the Wild Kitchen serves eight-course meals from the local landscape, cocktail culture preens itself on wildcrafted liqueurs. Drinkers can marvel at the new liqueur on the scene, "St-Germain," imported from France, and according to its advertising campaign, unique because the key ingredient, elderflowers, are hand gathered by "paysans." The fact that foraging was involved creates the true mark of distinction: "we can safely say that no men, paysan or otherwise, will be wandering the hillsides of Poland this spring gathering wild potatoes for your vodka. Likewise, we know of no Bavarians planning to scour the German countryside in search of exotic native hops and barley for your beer."¹²

The spate of cookbooks and guidebooks published for foragers, or forager wanna-bes, implies that rather than eating hand to mouth, the flaneur-gatherer saunters from Central Park to Park Avenue. Or, in the case of Jane Kramer, a *New Yorker* "reporter at large," you recruit the chef of the world's top ranked restaurant, NOMA, in Copenhagen, to teach you how to forage, and cook. As she puts it in "The Food at Our Feet," her November 2011 contribution to the magazine, itself born from the desire to express American urbanity by excluding "the old lady in Dubuque,"¹³ "the pursuit of wild food has become so fashionable a subject in the past few years that one eater.com blogger called this the era of the "I Foraged with Rene Redzepi Piece." "I'll admit it," she goes on, "I wanted to forage with Redzepi, too" (2011: 80). Allied with *The New Yorker*,

Kramer can get what she wants, and she arranges her rendezvous with Redzepi while she is summering at her home in Umbria. In the meantime, she reads *The Wild Table*, a 2010 coffee table cookbook by Connie Green, who describes herself as “a longtime ‘huntress.’” Green supplies Napa Valley’s finest chefs including Thomas Keller—owner of the French Laundry, one of the top restaurants in the United States. While remaining in the realm of haute cuisine, as opposed to the “famine food” or “animal food” that Kramer acknowledges has shaped her Umbrian neighbors’ approach to foraging, she also imagines herself spanning human history, savoring both the finest in pre-historic and contemporary haute cuisine. The first sentence of this lengthy essay announces: “I spent the summer foraging, like an early hominid with clothes.”

Redzepi’s *Noma: Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine* (2010) is pure spectator sport given the obscurity and inaccessibility of the Scandinavian beach plants that Redzepi glorifies. The recipe for “Celeriac and Icelandic Moss, Seaweed and Egg Yolk” exemplifies the obscurity (2010: 319), and the \$59.95 price tag, for a 368 page, 4.8 pound book consisting largely of full-page color plates, conveys the perceived value of this tome. Closer to home, other books promise that you can bask in the glow of five-star cuisine: not only Kramer’s selection, *The Wild Table*, but also *Foraged Flavor: Finding Fabulous Ingredients in Your Backyard or Farmer’s Market, with 88 Recipes* (2012) by Tama Matsuoka Wong and Eddy Leroux. Wong is the forager for Daniel Boulud’s Manhattan restaurant and a retired financial services lawyer who takes taxis into New York City to make her deliveries; Leroux is the “chef de cuisine.” As usual, the title and text promise delights and say nothing about the origins of the bulk of calories on your plate.

Even more indicative of foraging’s significance in building an urbane identity is the more explicitly literary foraging memoir, a genre that has begun to flourish like dandelions. Rowan Jacobson’s 2010 *American Terroir: Savoring the Flavors of Our Woods, Waters and Fields* epitomizes distinction with its title; it simultaneously evokes French fine wines (terroir) and American dominion over the landscape. Without cringing, Jacobson proclaims that this land is our dinner plate, and by America he means every edible inch from the North Pole to the southern tip of Patagonia. Adding an antique flair to his creative non-fiction, writer Steven Rinella allied himself with Auguste Escoffier, using the *Guide Culinnaire* to create a forty-five-course meal from food he hunted and foraged during a year spent traveling across the United States, carbon footprint be damned. In his 2005 *Scavengers Guide to Haute Cuisine*, he explains his longing for Bourdovian distinction: “if I can’t pull off this feast, this last year of my life will seem a little less extraordinary” (2005: 4). Langdon Cook, author of *Fat of the Land, Adventures of a 21st Century Forager* (2011) also pursues such distinction on a regular basis as he continues his adventures in his blog, initiating other flaneurs as he describes his preparations for teaching a class on urban

foraging in the Art of Food curriculum offered by Seattle's Cornish College of the Arts. He locates some wild fennel growing on the edge of a parking lot and harvests some pollen. He experiments by sprinkling this pollen on pork chops and broccoli and concludes that he has tasted a "fairy dusting."¹⁴ Further books are forthcoming: Portland Oregon's "Wild Girl" Rebecca Lerner blogs at "First Ways: Urban Foraging and Other Wilderness Adventures" (the use of the word "wilderness" makes an interesting juxtaposition) and has a book contract for "an entertaining, info-packed nonfiction narrative about how foraging changed my life. In 2009 I lived off wild plants in Portland for two weeks as a survival experiment to explore what it's like to be wild in the city."¹⁵

Final proof of foraging's cultural capital can be found in the one-upmanship that it provokes. Celebrity foragers leave footsteps to follow and incite others to blaze trails. Home from her summer in Umbria, Jane Kramer finds an invitation to the Vassar Club's foraging tour of Central Park, guided by Steve Brill, from all appearances.¹⁶ The event is already over so she can't go; Kramer mentions it as a point of contrast with her much more exciting and exclusive foraging adventures with Rene Redzepi. Adam Gopnik, another *New Yorker* writer returning from Europe, seeks out Brill's foraging tours hoping to recapture the glorious local food that made his years on the magazine's Paris beat so delightful. His dismissive conclusion underscores not only the futility of the experience but also its banality from the Parisian point of view: he and his children slip out of the park for deli sandwiches at the lunch break,¹⁷ and as he sums up his attempts to find local food to match the savor and savoir faire of France, he sardonically lingers on the sassafras saplings that Brill must regularly point out: "we . . . knew we could forage in the Park, and so had a source for homemade root beer."¹⁸ While Gopnik's New York has Brill and root beer, his Paris has brilliance and sparkling champagne. Even Manhattan, then, can become the sticks from the most haute perspective.

Of course, a taste of foraging can also underscore the dependency we still have on those who tend the flocks and fields, supplying us with broccoli and pork chops to gild with our fairy dust. But when that fact gets discussed, if it gets discussed at all, we are not in the realm of taste-making and urbanity. Here, we're still down on the farm or holding the family together. *Edible Iowa River Valley*, an unglossy magazine that Barbara picked up in a market in Des Moines¹⁹ contains a first person account by Robert Leonard of foraging, or weeding, on a friend's farm in early spring—so tilling and sowing could begin. He walks away with a bag full of bitter greens such as nettles and dandelions, enough to make a side dish for the family dinner. Recognizing the small gains of his hours, he repeats what the farmer told him: "Wild foods will never be a dominant part of our diet." The farmer, with her fields weeded, will go on to sow the rows and rows of plants that will fill many plates the rest of the year. Indeed, what the farmer announces reinforces the distinction (in Bourdieu's [1984] sense of the word) of urban foraging. The marked term "*urban* foraging" shows how inherently rural and devalued "foraging" writ plain must be. Without the marker,

our minds, thanks to centuries of thinking through our language, link the countryside and foodstuff, whether field grown or found. But now, with increasing concern about the environmental and health issues posed by our food systems, agriculture, outside of the boutique versions, is devolving into an industrial science barely consonant with its etymological links to culture and cultivation while foraging is evolving into an art, burnished with delicacy and moral significance.²⁰ In the flaneur's vision, agriculture becomes urban foraging's low, almost unmentionable other. Yet for all of the moral hauteur of urban normative eating, foraging as currently practiced is only sustainable if it remains as currently practiced. If all of NYC or Copenhagen wanted to eat mushrooms, wild greens, and nuts from the parks, or buy them from stores or restaurants called Forage, violence would erupt. Even if urban foragers don't envision scarcity, even if wild foods were limitless, these pursuits rely upon limited participation by those in the know. It is this very knowledge, such as it is, that requires corrective and critique from the rural perspective. The end of our dependence on rural labor and land is nowhere in sight; it needs to be in mind, too.

Notes

1. Source <https://www.heathmankirkland.com/trellis/kirkland-washington-restaurants.aspx>. Accessed January 21, 2013.
2. Source <http://urbanfarmerrestaurant.com/>. Accessed January 21, 2013.
3. Thus, an anthropologist would most likely have conceived of "urban foraging" as a somewhat analogic effort to characterize the food getting techniques of homeless or impoverished city dwellers who depended on food and other essential materials left or thrown out by others in the urban context—more akin to dumpster diving.
4. Source <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2011/mar/11/foraging-without-damaging>. Accessed February 17, 2013.
5. Source <http://urbanedibles.org/>. Accessed January 26, 2013.
6. Source <http://www.foragela.com/?view=connect>. Accessed January 26, 2013.
7. Source <http://www.foragerscitygrocer.com/>. Accessed January 26, 2012.
8. Source <http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com/body.html> Accessed June 21, 2012.

9. Foderaro, Lisa. 2011. "Enjoy Park Greenery, City Says, but Not as Salad." *New York Times*, July 29, 2011 (retrieved 2-8-2013 from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/30/nyregion/new-york-moves-to-stop-foraging-in-citys-parks.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).
10. Source <http://foragesf.com/home-foragesf/>. Accessed June 21, 2012.
11. Forage SF does offer foraging walks, as well, and in summer 2012, they were nearly sold out.
12. Source <http://www.stgermain.fr/story.php>. Accessed June 22, 2012. The website, however, does not refer to the foragers as "paysans"; the booklet that comes attached to the bottle, however, does, and it features the same picture.
13. The prospectus for *The New Yorker* goes on about this old lady: "It will not be concerned in what she is thinking about. This is not meant in disrespect, but THE NEW YORKER is a magazine avowedly published for a metropolitan audience."
14. Source <http://fat-of-the-land.blogspot.com/2010/08/angel-dust.html>. Accessed March 21, 2012.
15. Source <http://firstways.com/about/>. Accessed June 24, 2012. Of course, a meeting with Wildman Steve Brill was inevitable; see the October 27, 2011 post "In Which 'Wild Girl' Meets 'Wildman'."
16. Source https://secure.www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/VRG/event/showEventForm.jsp?form_id=78069. Accessed June 22, 2012.
17. Full disclosure: we were lured out of Central Park on our lunch break, too, by the proximity to Barney Greengras' excellent smoked fish.
18. Adam Gopnik. 2011. *The Table Comes First: Family, France, and the Meaning of Food*. New York: Knopf.
19. This magazine is a version of local food magazines published across the country by Edible Communities. The articles here in Iowa consist of mostly portraits of family farms and farm stands.
20. These ideas helped give rise to the "freeganism" movement that is a wholesale boycott of corporate produced products with a special emphasis on food. More information can be found at <http://www.freeganism.info>.

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8

Fracture Lines

Brian M. Lowe

Introduction

Thomas et al. (2011) note that the meanings of “rural” are quite varied and often strongly defined by urbanormative standards. These meanings are connected to urban interests that seek to utilize rural environments for natural resources, economic production, recreation, or other forms of development. However, in spite of these characterizations, rural areas can also be sites of historically significant cultural, social, and ideological innovation. Through the introduction of the concept “fracture lines” the goal of this chapter will be to explore rural innovation and to alter historical narratives that have heretofore neglected its importance.

As a preliminary example of rural innovation, we can begin by considering the events leading to the historic 1859 raid on the federal armory at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia—an event that many believed sparked the American Civil War. The outlying ideals of abolitionist John Brown propelled him into the Kansas-Missouri border wars in the 1850s prior to the later Raid. His ideology evolved in rural enclaves that stood well outside of urban social control and urbanormative ideologies of neighboring population centers. Reynolds (2005) contends that Brown’s early years in Hudson, Ohio as a Caucasian living in an area populated by Native Americans, served to facilitate a radical racial egalitarianism. Brown and his family would later live out these ideals in Mt. Elba, New York at an isolated location on land purchased by Gerrit Smith. Here Brown and his family lived beside, worked among, and perhaps most controversially, dined with African Americans. Mt. Elba was undesirable as a location of agricultural production, but was highly advantageous as its relative isolation permitted Brown’s communal living quasi-experiment to persist without being crushed by urban political authorities or social norms.

Such social and geographic distance may also help account for the social and ideological innovations of abolitionists in smaller cities, such as the seventeen anti-slavery societies that existed in 1835 in Oneida County, New York, and whose presence may have precipitated the 1836 “Utica rescue” of two fugitive slaves from the office of Judge Chester Hayden in Utica, New York:

Mr. Christian Miller arrived in pursuit of, and with a power of attorney from the executor of the estate of John Geyer, of Woodstock, Shenandoah County, Virginia, to arrest Harry Bird and George, two runaway slaves who had resided in Utica since about September 1st. They were arrested by constables Chase and Osburn on Wednesday evening, and on Thursday morning were taken before Judge Hayden for the investigation of the claim of Mr. Miller.

According to Judge Hayden, Mr. Miller addressed the slaves, alleged to have escaped, as Harry Bird and George – they, however, denied the names given them by Mr. Miller, as well as all knowledge of him or his companion.

After a short time, Alvan Stewart, Esq. appeared as counsel for the blacks, and inquired whether Judge Hayden considered them in his custody. Hayden replied that he did not, and that they were brought before him without process, charged as fugitive slaves, and were in the custody of the claimants.

Mr. Stewart then rose and proceeded to speak generally on the subjects of slavery and kidnapping. Stewart contended, that, as in this, all men were presumed free. Though slaves were liable to arrest under the act of Congress, it was to be presumed that these persons were not within its provision, and were consequently illegally arrested, and should be discharged without further detention...

During the whole day considerable excitement prevailed and men and boys frequently collected in the streets. About six o'clock in the evening, a crowd assembled around the door and on the stairs of Judge Hayden's office, and symptoms were exhibited by a part of the assemblage of an intention to attempt a rescue.

Several persons were engaged in endeavoring to keep open a passage down the stairs. Just before half past six in the evening, a signal was given and the lights were extinguished. A door of the rear office, which had been left locked, was forced open by breaking the lock and a number of Negroes and white men made a rush for the room in which the prisoners were confined, the door of which was burst open.

After a severe struggle with the officers and citizens who were on guard, they succeeded in rescuing the fugitives, who have not since been heard from. The rioters were armed with clubs about eighteen inches long, and evidently prepared for the occasion.

(Source: <http://www.oneidacountyfreedomtrail.com/Abolitionism/UticaRescue.htm#second>)

While anecdotal, this suggests that the moral vocabulary (Lowe 2006) of abolitionism had taken sufficient hold such that these slaves were successfully liberated despite the political and social forces within the United States that reinforced the practice and legitimacy of slavery.

As another preliminary example of rural innovation, we can consider the emergence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—commonly

known as the Mormon Church—that would have likely encountered significant opposition in more populated and policed areas. The Mormon Church was founded in rural New York State, as part of the “burnt-over district” beginning with the purported revelations of Joseph Smith at Hill Cumorah near Palmyra, New York in the 1820s. This culminated in the publication of *The Book of Mormon* in 1829 and the formal establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on April 6, 1830 (Krakauer 2003: 57-62). As the church and the controversies surrounding it expanded—especially over concerns regarding polygamy—the Mormons moved west into Missouri and Illinois, eventually expanding the city of Nauvoo to rival Chicago in size in 1840, while containing a militia nearly half the size of the American Army at that time (Krakauer 2003: 106). Nauvoo currently has “more than 40 sites from the historic 1840 time period” (see <http://www.historicnauvoo.net>). Following the killing of Smith on June 27, 1844, the Mormons made their famous trek, under the leadership of Brigham Young, to what eventually became known as Salt Lake City. One of the unifying facets of exceptionally truncated narrative is how rural/wilderness space served as an incubator for the LDS church, allowing it to survive and expand while outside of the political, economic, or cultural control of other agents. This may help explain the attractiveness of Utah, settled when it was, outside of the United States. On a meso-sociological level, this same pattern was noted by Melville in *Moby Dick*, as nineteenth-century whaling vessels commonly spent over one year at sea and evolved sub-cultural norms at odds with the larger society, such as racial tolerance.

These preliminary examples support the proposition that rural areas can become zones of creativity and change. They involve a lack of social control that then allows innovation to flower without the suffocating repression of a unified urbanormative ideology. The underlying proposition is that the greater the social and/or geographic distance from dominant political, social and economic actors, the greater the potential for cultural and social innovations. However, these examples assume a unitary ideology. This leaves unexplored the potential possibility that arises when there are conflicting power bases. In other words, what if power (see Lukes 1974 for an extended elaboration) is not concentrated in the hands of unified actors that have shared interests, such as slave-owners united in their desire to maintain the legality of slavery, whose legitimacy is effectively unconstrained or checked by other actors? In short, what if there are several actors warring competing or divergent interests, making compromise difficult, that are struggling to define what may occur within rural areas, or what may pass as the meanings, histories, and identities of those rural areas? To answer these questions the concept of “fracture lines” will be introduced and developed.

Cases of Fracture Lines

The following are case studies of what will be termed here “fracture lines,” or geographic and/or social spaces that become flashpoints of conflict because they are adjacent to irreconcilable groups, proxies in the conflict between these larger and concentrated groups, or may be reached physically, socially, and/or culturally by one or more vehicles. This perspective of conflict draws analogously upon ecological proposals for encouraging biodiversity, as outlined by Soule and Noss (1998, as noted in Fraser 2009) in “Rewilding and Biodiversity.” They propose the existence of two types of spaces that will encourage biodiversity: cores and corridors. In terms of encouraging and expanding biodiversity, Soule and Noss advocate expanding on traditional notions of cores:

Core protected areas had long been a feature of conservation design, but Soule and Noss described national parks and wildlife refuges as only the beginning, the kernels from which larger, mightier protected areas must grow. Cores, they argued, must be continental in scale, preserving entire ecosystems: mountain forests, grasslands, tundra, savannah. Corridors were necessary to reestablish links between cores, because isolation and fragmentation of wilderness areas erode biodiversity. They enable wildlife to migrate and disperse. (Fraser 2009: 9)

While not a perfect analogy, Soule and Noss imply that the significant presence of species requires cores or concentrated areas where they may thrive, and corridors that facilitate movement outside of cores—corridors. In situations of conflict, social groups clearly require some space in which to become significant actors (for example, see Collins 2010), but also physical or virtual means to extend influence from cores into contested areas. While some of these corridors may be deliberately created by third parties—as in the cases of infrastructure or communication networks—others may be latent, only becoming apparent in the wake of a conflict or controversy.

The following case studies represent such conflict situations and involve activities and meanings that were contested in rural areas, underscoring the importance of rural space. The ways these competing core groups intersect with each other is both a necessary precondition for conflict and potential for continued domination or resolution of conflict. The first case of conflict, the controversy over foie gras, involves small farmers whose products are both valued and stigmatized in urban areas while the role of the state is ambiguous. The second conflict, an ongoing controversy over the target shooting of live pigeons in Hegins, Pennsylvania in which urban centers both encouraged and subsequently challenged this practice. Last, the third case involves the

development of a new form of warfare between English and French colonists in the contested North American wilderness. These cases suggest that in order for these conflicts to occur, zones of conflict must be created, *both* as geographic locations and as social and cultural spaces. These conflicts necessitate both symbolic expressions as well as material expressions and involve the state in determining which activities become positively or negatively sanctioned. In addition to the conflicting parties, the (in)ability to bring some aspect of state power to bear on the side of one core conflict group produces a legitimate corridor of influence which may resolve the conflict in question.

The Case of Foie Gras: Multiple Power Bases, or when State Power is Neutral or Non-Reactive

As Caro (2009) notes, the practice of foie gras has existed for over 5,000 years and has been the subject of several waves of controversy and moral condemnation during that time. Foie gras is the fattened livers of geese (and more recently ducks) that are deliberately increased through gavage or force feeding. Foie gras is produced in parts of the United States, Canada, and France in relatively similar fashions: the geese or ducks are kept in open spaces or ranges until they are about twelve weeks old; then the birds are placed into group pens (largely in the United States) or in individual pens (in Canada and France). While in the pens, the birds experience gavage that involves the following:

a metal tube or pipe being lowered down the bird's throat two or three (or, with some geese, four) times daily over a period of two to four weeks. For about two to 10 seconds each time, the feeder delivers a corn-based meal down the bird's esophagus either by way of a funnel and gravity or via a pneumatic or hydraulic machine. The gullet fills up with food, and the bird digests it before the next feeding (Caro 2009: 6).

This process is intended to both mimic and accelerate the liver fattening that migratory ducks and geese engage in prior to migration, whereby the liver fat sustains birds during migration, and to produce livers swollen with fat for human consumption.

Both this process of raising and force-feeding and the production of a commodity that has been a luxury item since the reign of Louis XV have made it a source of controversy. Foie gras has existed for thousands of years, even being described in *The Odyssey*, and has received praise as delicious and condemnation as an indicator of decadent indulgence. Despite its near disappearance in Parisian restaurants following the French Revolution, foie gras became established as a staple of fine dining in France and the United States by the end of the nineteenth century. The sustained foie gras revival weathered the

industrialization of food production, the Great Depression, the Holocaust and the coterminous destruction of much of European Jewish culture, including raising ducks and geese for foie gras, and became established in Israel and France following World War II. Foie gras continued its paradoxical expansion as object of desire and moral condemnation: in 2007 in France, 35 million Mulard ducks were raised—a hybrid breed of ducks created largely for foie gras production. Simultaneously during this period of expanded foie gras production and consumption, force-feeding for food consumption was banned in several European countries including Norway, Denmark, Italy, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Other nations, including Switzerland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom moved to curb foie gras; in 2003 the Israeli Supreme Court banned foie gras production through extending existing animal cruelty laws to foie gras, though stopping short of instituting a ban on the importation of foie gras (Caro 2009: 25-33).

Foie gras has remained primarily an urban culinary luxury item and has been largely available only in exclusive, urban restaurants. Foie gras has been championed by several prominent “celebrity chefs” whose emergence has been paralleled by mediated food culture in magazines and television programs which have popularized gourmet dining. Chicago chef Charlie Trotter is an exemplary embodiment of this phenomenon: beginning with the opening of his 1987 Lincoln Park, Illinois restaurant, Trotter became a “flag bearer in a national haute cuisine revolution,” in part because of a mediated presence that featured both Trotter’s culinary skills (PBS *The Kitchen Sessions with Charlie Trotter*) and volatile personality including being named by *Chicago* magazine as one of Chicago’s ten meanest persons of 1996 and shouting to a cook, “I will kill your whole family if you don’t get this right! I need this perfect!” in the 1997 romantic comedy film *My Best Friend’s Wedding* starring Julia Roberts (Caro 2009: 2-3). Despite his previous publication of *Charlie Trotter’s Meat & Game* in 2001 featuring fourteen foie gras recipes, serving foie gras in his restaurant, and even posing for calendar photographs on foie gras farms, in 2002 Trotter ceased serving foie gras. This termination was unannounced and only became public knowledge in 2005, in an interview with Chicago Tribune restaurant critic Phil Vettel, who mentioned it in the course of an article about the competition between Trotter and fellow Chicago chef Rick Tramont, a former employee of Trotter’s. The discussion of this overtly economic conflict drew upon foie gras as either a symbol of suffering and cruelty—Trotter’s stated reason for abandoning foie gras—and Tramonto’s statements regarding Trotter’s apparent hypocrisy in reservations over serving foie gras which did not displace Trotter’s use of other meat-based dishes and outspoken condemnation of animal rights claims. This conflict was featured in articles appearing in the *New York Times*, the *New York Post* and *Newsweek*; the *Chicago Tribune* withheld a front

page story for one week regarding the conflict because of the growing media coverage of the comatose Terri Schiavo and a concern over other appearances of insensitivity because of discussions of feeding tubes. The conflict gained attention because of a visible animal rights campaign against fellow luxury chef Wolfgang Puck in Los Angeles and his use of foie gras. The significance of this mediated conflict is that it demonstrates the overall urbanity of foie gras in its offering as a luxury commodity and its status as symbol of affluence or cruelty and how this conflict transpires within urban restaurants and newspapers.

A central concern of the contemporary animal rights movement and many animal welfarists has been the question of the inherent cruelty associated with “factory farming,” or the systematic and enormous activity involved with rearing animals for human consumption. This was also a central concern in the production of foie gras: Was the deliberate force-feeding and confinement of ducks and geese prior to slaughter inherently cruel even when workers and owners of foie gras farms did not condone or tolerate other forms of abuse?

This case had been made in a 1991 anti-foie gras video, *Victims of Indulgence*, released by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) (narrated by Sir John Gielgud). The video featured covertly obtained footage from Commonwealth Foie Gras of force-feeding, accompanied by experts describing the practice as inherently cruel and then followed by an appeal by Gielgud for viewers never to purchase or consume foie gras and to inform others why foie gras was cruel. (Caro 2009: 57). The film was released and in circulation during the 1990s and early 2000s when foie gras was becoming an established staple of gourmet fine dining. A covertly filmed video shot on one of the farms which serves Elevages Periogord in Quebec, the largest Canadian foie gras company, was posted on the Internet by the Global Action and Farm Sanctuary. According to Caro, the video was filmed by “a temporary worker with a hidden camera, the footage shows employees kicking ducks, wringing their necks and swinging them like baseball bats to smash their heads against hard surfaces . . . also depicts just-sexed female ducklings being gassed, but not always killed, in garbage bags” (41). For animal rights activists, this video provided undeniable evidence of the inherent cruelty of foie gras production and the violence that the intensive rearing and slaughtering of animals for human consumption necessarily evokes cruelty among those employed in these industries.

In the United States, domestic foie gras production has occurred largely at two foie gras farms: Hudson Valley Foie Gras in Sullivan county, New York, and Sonoma Foie Gras in Ripon, California, approximately eighty miles east of San Francisco. Hudson Valley Foie Gras was co-founded by Izzy Yanay and Michael Ginor, who had learned foie gras production in Israel. Yanay noted that despite the legality of foie gras production in the United States and the presence of French restaurants, there was virtually no domestic foie gras production. On a

business trip to expensive New York City restaurants, Yanay met Ariane Daguin at Les Trois Petis Cochons (Three Little Pigs) in Greenwich Village. Daguin's father and grandfather had both been renowned chefs and influenced the popularity of foie gras in France. After her immigration to the United States, she co-founded D'Artagnan to sell foie gras and other duck products. With her knowledge, the proximity of Hudson Valley Foie Gras, and her connections to luxury restaurants, Daguin and Yanay realized a mutually beneficial business arrangement, which established Hudson Valley Foie Gras as the primary foie gras producer in the United States and D'Artagnan (as of 2007) as a \$50 million business. The same proximity to urbanity which served to elevate domestic foie gras would also serve to facilitate its detractors. This is exemplary of the "goldilocks principle" of innovation discussed earlier, of being neither too close nor too far from urban areas.

In the early 2000s, three animal rights activists, Bryan Pease, Sarahjane Blum, and Ryan Shapiro, were inspired by proximity and the perceived vulnerability of foie gras, to target both Sonoma and Hudson Valley. Shapiro viewed foie gras as an ideal target for moralistic attack not because of the number of animals killed for foie gras (about 500,000 ducks annually, roughly equivalent to the number of broiler chickens slaughtered per day by some larger chicken slaughterhouses) but because it could be a battle that the animal rights movement could fight and win, and possibly introduce other people to a wider spectrum of animal rights concerns: "a tremendous stepping stone to broader issues of factory farming. It's not that far of a leap to show that while this is so clearly and egregiously cruel and needless, it really isn't significantly different from any of the other billions of animals who are suffering on factory farms" (Caro 2009: 69).

In order to inform the public moral imagination about foie gras production, Pease began covert filming at Sonoma Foie Gras in California in 2002, and later at Hudson Valley Foie Gras with Blum and Shapiro. Pease and his supporters entered the grounds of Sonoma Foie Gras at least twelve times (late at night or early in the morning) to film the farm conditions. Despite difficulties in filming—both opposition by employees and failures by a concealed pinhole spy camera to produce visible footage—Pease and the other activists finally captured graphic and compelling footage. The activists filmed two injured ducks in pens that were unable to prevent a rat from chewing bloody wounds in their posteriors while being filmed under a battery-powered halogen light. The activists filmed what Caro termed "Rat Munching on Ducks' Bloody Ass Wounds" and then transported the ducks to a veterinarian for treatment (64-65).

In New York, Blum and Shapiro began covert footage filming at Hudson Valley Foie Gras, originally intending to both provide newsworthy footage of foie gras production and to record "open rescue":

videotaping themselves and other volunteers removing ducks from their cages and getting them veterinary help. Such work was popularized by an American-born activist living in Australia named Patty Mark, and Compassion over Killing, Paul Shapiro's group, followed her lead by having members videotape themselves rescuing caged layer hens, releasing the footage to the press and hosting news conferences. (Caro 2009: 72)

The production of spectacles was central to this effort, and led to a strategic split between Peace and Blum and Shapiro. According to Blum:

Our intentions kind of just evolved from it being, 'Hey, let's take a camcorder in and take some pictures and see what we get' to 'Let's really figure out how to create a cornerstone piece that groups nationwide can take to restaurateurs, can take to their representatives in government, can take to the media and can use again and again to really educate about something nobody knows anything about. (Caro 2009: 72)

In pursuing the goal of a self-contained spectacle, Blum and Shapiro developed a website, *GourmetCruelty.com*, where two edited versions of their covert footage were referenced as *Delicacy of Despair*. One version (eleven minutes long) focuses on foie gras and is intended for restaurants and politicians. The longer (sixteen minutes) features an additional five minutes of "open rescue" which visually juxtapose the ducks being confined in cages and subsequently moving freely, and an appeal to viewers to become vegans (73-74). Emphasizing that the film does not simply represent one case, *Delicacy of Despair* includes footage from both Hudson Valley and the infamous Sonoma segment involving the rat attempting to eat live ducks.

As a device intended for existence within the spectacular, Blum and Shapiro sought various media outlets for *Delicacy of Despair*, before it was first utilized on September 16, 2003 in a San Francisco ABC-TV "I-Team Investigation" report. The broadcast relied heavily on excerpts from *Delicacy of Despair*, including the aforementioned rat attacking two ducks, is accompanied by statements by avian veterinarian Laurie Siperstein-Cook, and provided a sympathetic account of the illegal trespass through describing the rehabilitation of the fifteen ducks taken from Hudson Valley and Sonoma Foie Gras farms. The controversy grew through an 18 September *Los Angeles Times* article and in a September 19 follow-up television broadcast in which Guillermo Gonzales (owner of Sonoma Foie Gras) inadvertently reaffirmed a canonical animal rights claim: that force-feeding ducks was inherently cruel. Subsequently, *Time* magazine and the *New York Times* covered the controversy, and by the following spring Animal Planet broadcast a documentary concerning Blum, Shapiro, and *Delicacy of Despair*. Despite the eventual arrests of Blum and Shapiro for trespass which ultimately led to misdemeanor convictions and

community service, making Blum the first person in the United States to be arrested for open rescue, momentum in California continued to support the animal rights claim that force feeding of animals is inherently cruel. California bill SB 1520, which prohibited the force-feeding of ducks and geese, effectively criminalizing the production of foie gras, was co-sponsored by the Association of Veterinarians for Animals Rights, Farm Sanctuary, Lawyers for Animals, and was publicly promoted by actress Bea Arthur and Melissa Rivers. Despite testimony in which the inherent cruelty of foie gras production was questioned, SB 1520 was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger on September 29, 2004 with a provision enacting the law beginning in 2012 to allow Gonzales, California's only foie gras producer, to change businesses (Caro 2009: 78-84).

The Case of Live Pigeon Target Shooting: Constructing and Defining Rural Traditions

While hunting has been synonymous with rural areas for millennia, it is within agrarian civilization that hunting became the prerogative of elites (Lenski 1984). In North America following European contact, most hunting by European Americans was for subsistence or for economic reasons, such as the massive fur trade that largely supported the economy of New France. During the course of the nineteenth century, North American populations began to increase in and surrounding urban areas, encouraging the development of hunting as a recreation for both rural residents and as a means for wealthier urbanites to connect with nature. The vision of hunting as a masculine, wholesome, and invigorating experience encouraged urban involvement in this inherently rural activity, and encouraged the creation of national parks in the United States as a natural space outside of individual ownership (see Brinkley 2009). Hunting also seemed to be largely impervious to claims from the animal protectionist movement of the mid to late nineteenth century. Henry Bergh, who established and presided over the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), which was modeled on the British Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, attempted to extend newly established laws surrounding animal cruelty toward recreational hunting and specifically pigeon shooting. It was swiftly rebuked by the courts so effectively that the animal protectionist movement would confine its activities to companion and farm animals, attempting to ensure that the latter were humanely slaughtered, until the emergence of the animal rights movement in the late 1970s. By this time, other forms of animal-based activities, like dog and cock fighting, were subject to legal sanction. The significance of this brief overview of hunting in the United States is to establish that hunting continued well into the twentieth century in rural America with the support of urban actors and power elites, and that the

genealogy of many hunting practices and traditions contains an indelible urban influence, paradoxically the same urban centers that also gave rise to animal protectionism and animal rights.

Bronner (2008) provides an excellent case study of the interconnections between the urban and rural and the status of hunting in his analysis of the controversy over the annual “pigeon shoot” in Hegins, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is an ideal context in which to study the evolution of the status of hunting and by extension, urban-rural conflicts, because Pennsylvania annually has among the largest purchases of hunting licenses in the United States. It is also the headquarters of several animal rights and animal advocacy organizations, including one of the original American animal advocacy organizations, the American Anti-Vivisection Society (Bronner 2008: 99). Protests began in Hegins in 1987 and continued through 1997, pitting animal rights protesters who were overwhelmingly white, middle class, with college educations or above, and traveled from urban areas, against local participants, who were white and described themselves as “descendents of farmers,” even if they currently were not engaged in agriculture (115). The annual Labor Day “pigeon shoot,” the term attached to the event by participants, involved the released of approximately 9,000 captive pigeons in a semi-open area where they were targeted by shooters; about 7,000 were killed and 2,000 escaped. The shooting was observed by spectators and included “trapper boys” whose task was to dispatch wounded pigeons by breaking their necks. Those pigeons killed were subsequently ground into fertilizer. Bronner (2008) contends that both the pigeon and the “pigeon shoot” were symbols within a “moral drama based on a clash of rural and cosmopolitan values in modern America that derives from fundamentally different views of human dominion over the land and its creatures” (101).

Considering the “pigeon shoot” in terms of critical urban-rural relations provides a more complex perspective. Bronner (2008) notes that “pigeon shoots” were supported in Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania State Sportsmen’s Association in part through offering cash purses for top shooters. The Hegins shoot began on Labor Day in 1934 as part of a homecoming celebration, noting that many young people could no longer rely on rural employment in coal fields or farming, and were seeking employment in urban areas (112). Hegins named its event after local competitive pigeon shooter Fred Coleman, who had won several state championships, and was thereby able to gain widespread recognition: “had a reputation for prime hunting lands, and it vied with Chicago and Kansas City for champion-level contestants” (113). Hegins also attempted to distinguish itself from other competitors within the trapshooting culture through relying on live pigeons, despite the move toward “clay pigeon” ceramic discs launched as targets. In short, the Hegins Labor Day event was defended by practitioners on the grounds that it was “tradition,” and emerged as a reaction to

economic transitions. It was sponsored initially by a statewide organization, and maintained its distinctive use of live pigeons initially as a strategy to differentiate itself from similar events in order to attract shooters from across the United States.

Unexpectedly, the initial concern about the Hegins “pigeon shoot” did not emerge from urban elites, but instead began in 1984 when a local couple contacted Trans-Species Unlimited in order to express their concerns about the pigeon shoot. Bronner (2008) indicates that the popularity of the “pigeon shoot” was already waning at this time, suggesting that some aspects of the “moral vocabulary” of both the animal rights and environmental movements—in this case, that killing animals purely for entertainment—was not justifiable (see Lowe 2006). Ironically, the arrival of protesters beginning in 1987 attracted many locals and reinvigorated the pigeon shoot until 1999, when a court ruling effectively terminated the event. In terms of urban-rural relationships, the Hegins Labor Day event highlights the necessity of a comparative-historical approach; in this case to discern that the “tradition” being defended by “pigeon shoot” participants was established through organizations and a network active in urban centers of pigeon shooters, and was subsequently adopted by the locals as tradition. Moreover, until the arrival of external animal rights protesters for the waves of protest beginning in 1987, the residents of Hegins seemed to be following a more general trend in American society of an overall decline in recreational hunting. The reaction of “pigeon shoot” participants may parallel a sort of proto-nationalism in which the imagined tradition is vigorously defended as indigenous, disguising its establishment by urban interests (see Anderson 1991).

The Case of Military Innovation and the North American Colonies

Ross (2009) uses as a point of departure a 1765 encounter between about a dozen British officers and Major Robert Rogers of the British colonies in North America in a London public house to reveal the stark and profound social, political, and cultural forces that had created these divergent military figures:

Their officers gathered in formal institutions devoted to training them not just in tactics but in carefully prescribed conduct appropriate to their rank, working their way carefully through Humphrey Bland’s *A Treatise of Military Discipline*. Unlike them, Rogers had risen to seniority without the benefit of a military academy or access to any corpus of the literature of war. Unfettered by such reflexive traditions or rote knowledge, Rogers practiced—and largely invented—an new form of deep woodland warfare, innovating and synthesizing techniques and tactics as he went, rising from command of a company to that of a battalion and then a regiment, then to a divisional command, all within five

years—on deadly merit alone—a breathtaking rise not possible in the Old World for a younger son.

His bold design and concert-pitch execution of long-distant expeditions, often under extraordinary duress, depended on his teaching a mixed force of provincial militiamen, raw woodsmen and farmers, British regular volunteers, and Indians, not to fight with dumb, lash-taught resolution but to think for more than themselves—a shattering break with past European practices. From the woods of New England emerged a new kind of war-maker, a path-breaker of new tactics, an innovator of new technologies, and perhaps most important, a motivator of warriors as individuals, who could draw them far beyond their perceived capabilities. (Ross 2009: 3)

Rogers' personal qualities aside, the above suggests several sociological factors that would help explain why persons such as Rogers were far more likely to create and establish a wholly innovative form of warfare than the aforementioned military class. In terms of the Weberian multi-dimensional conceptualization of stratification—class, status, and party—all three were clearly more fluid in North America (Weber 1958). The officers described above were all members of the gentry class and had been formally trained and indoctrinated as military officers. Conversely, Rogers had been accepted into the New Hampshire militia without formal training and without the support of any formal organization outside of the colonial governments which called for the creation of militia units, and his initial rank was based on his capacity to recruit new troops—and his ascendance through the ranks was tied to his recognized military successes. It is also notable that the Roberts family was Scots-Irish, and the discrimination experienced by members of this ethnic group caused the Rogers to become part of the exodus of established North American population centers like Boston and head to wilderness areas to create homesteads. As noted above, the membership in this low status group did not inhibit Rogers' initial placement within the New Hampshire militia nor his subsequent recognition for military success, including the 125 pieces of eight awarded to him by the New York General Assembly. Unlike the British officers corps, Rogers had neither been trained as an officer nor as a recruit whose training fundamentally centered around reactionary obedience and discipline.

These distinctions became evident as European wars spilled over into their North American colonies and the European tactics were deployed on a North American wilderness frontier, as evidenced at the Battle of Lake George on September 8, 1755. In May 1755, a significant military force was sent to New France to prevent further British expansion into North America: “the government in Paris dispatched Marechal-de-Camp Jean-Armand, Baron de Dieskau and six of its 395 regular battalions, numbering some 3,000 Troupes de Terre, to the New World aboard 16 men-of-war. The Swiss-born mercenary commander Dieskau had served with some distinction as a cavalry officer under the famed Marechal Maurice de Saxe during the War of Austrian Succession”

(Ross 2009: 74). In short, France had dispatched significant military resources, including officers experienced in European warfare to confront the British. A portion of the French forces (about 1,400) had been deployed to reinforce Fort Saint-Frederic and moved towards strategically critical Albany where approximately 2,200 British forces were preparing defenses prior to moving toward Lake George, including Rogers with his first command. On September 7, William Johnson of the British was informed by Native scouts that the French, under Dieskau, were marching toward Fort Lyman and possibly the British encampment under Johnson. Partially influenced by the Mahican sachem Theyanoguin, also known as Hendrick, Johnson opted not to send an entirely concentrated force to meet the French, but to both attack and reinforce. On September 8, the British forces were ambushed, resulting in the deaths of British commander Ephraim Williams and Theyanoguin. The British were thrown back onto their encampment, which was only partially fortified and under Johnson's orders was enhanced by a bricolage of wagons, boats, and logs. The encampment was attacked by 220 French regulars, who emerged from the surrounding forest in formation under Dieskau. The disciplined volley fire also allowed the French to be exposed to the four British artillery pieces: "Their close-order volleys riddled the boats and wagons, but Johnson's cannonballs," recorded a British provincial gunner, "made Lanes, Streets and Alleys thro' their army." Dieskau's gamble that his best-disciplined line troops could break through the haphazard defenses failed; repeated heroic charges brought only a devastating casualty rate of one out of three men (Ross 2009: 76)." Ross concludes that "Johnson's untested provincial forces had won a substantial victory over hard-disciplined metropolitan regulars," inflicting 253 deaths on the French and 306 on the British, and allowing the British to retain their hold on territory which allowed access to Lake George and Lake Champlain (Ross 2009: 77). Significantly, the conventional training and discipline of European regulars did not transmute the terrain and geographical realities of the North American colonies into territories easily controlled by established military orthodoxy; conventional fortifications with artillery were essential for the European powers, but they did not allow for uncontested expansion of military control of widespread areas. In short, capital intensive military resources, like cavalry and artillery, were of limited military use in a rural and largely wilderness environment. Perhaps unsurprisingly as most wilderness areas had been contained and/or destroyed by 1400 in Europe (Ross 2009: 4), European military doctrines, entwined with organizational and cultural patterns of stable hierarchy, did not encourage creative solutions to these realities. The syncretistic development of what would become the basis for "irregular" warfare lay in the amalgamation of Native, colonial, and European thought, technologies and cultural innovations.

The distribution of European colonial power inhibited the development of a unified, hegemonic political and/or cultural authority in the New World. Ross (2009) notes that the established population and military locations served more to negate entry by opposing powers by inhibiting travel, rather than to establish significant dominance over a region:

France's North American empire hinged on control of the north-eastern continent's major watercourses, which were critical not only as trade routes into the interior but also as strategic highways to counter and contain British land ventures. By the 1730s, while the British inhabitants were strung thinly along the eastern seaboard in patterns of local and relatively spontaneous settlement, the French, children of a state-centered culture, planted forts along strategic sea, lake, and river narrows, not to protect an ongoing frontier of settlement but to deny passage at will, based on centuries of strategic mastery maintained on another continent. The massive fortress of Louisbourg protected the Atlantic estuary of the St. Lawrence; Fort Niagara closed off the Niagara River's entrance into Lake Ontario and with it access farther west to the Great Lakes; Fort Saint-Frederic at Crown Point prevented the passage of hostile vessels from Albany, and ultimately from the continental gateway of New York City, northward into what was to become New France. (Ross 2009: 73)

Ross also notes that the French had good relations with Native tribes, primarily with the networks of fur traders, and were able to utilize these good relations to encourage participation in raiding parties that attacked British settlements. These raids were successful in inhibiting further British expansion into the interior of North America, but were not of sufficient strength to destroy British control of strategic locations.

These competing power centers also contributed to alternative paths of cultural evolution, which in turn contributed to the innovative development within warfare, partially through the creation of incompatible symbolic boundaries. Ross (2009) argues that the efforts of Catholic (primarily Jesuit) priests and Puritans served to encourage differing relations between the French and British and Native Americans—and that these differences on the part of British colonists created fears and anxieties that were accelerated by French and Native raids against British settlements:

From the outset, the Puritans had little luck winning over the demonic pagans to a doctrine whose severely unpretentious religious ceremonies offered little compared to the rich and numinous rituals of the more ancient faith. Under French Catholicism the Indians could retain their customs and beliefs so long as they attended Mass, said a few prayers, swore allegiance to the king, and kissed the cross. In contrast, the Puritans thought this amounted to the merest lip service. Conversion, in the eyes of John Eliot, Jonathan Edwards, and their like, required the initiated not only to go through the motions but to understand what the words and rituals meant. But the French were fearful of alienating peoples

who were able to sever the lucrative fur tradeways; hence the high officials sent out from metropolitan France to administer peasant Canada did not encourage deep-going agricultural settlement nor support claims to vast tracts of land. By contrast, such issues of displacement rent a large and violent divide between the Northeastern Indians and the land-hungry and unrestrained British colonists. (Ross 2009: 37-38)

These cultural differences, in tandem with the differences in population distribution and relative inability of the British colonists to secure themselves from the well-founded fear of French and Native raids, cumulated in significant fears that were stoked by the outbreak of war in Europe. In March 1756, a month before formal declarations of war between Britain and France, Ross contends that fears over war and raids were amplified by deeper anxieties that, according to Laurence Gipson, “the British colonies would become the Norway of America, an industrious country . . . limited to an existence on the very margins of the western continent” (109). These Durkheimian social currents became expressed in contemporary newspaper accounts, including the Boston newspaper announcing the appearance of Robert Rogers and advocated unrelenting conflict with the French:

Although the populations of the English colonies heavily outnumbered those of the French, victory on the field of battle was no certain thing. The depth of animosity and dread entertained by the British colonists toward their northern—and now western rivals revealed itself on the same front page of the paper announcing Rogers’s visit: “They ought to be considered Enemies to [the] Human Race, and to be extirpated from the Face of the Earth, or at least to be humbled as obliged to live peacefully with their neighboring Powers . . . Let us not, then suffer a Ship to rest in our Harbour, nor a Gun to lie in our Arsenals, till the French are entirely driven out of North America (109-110).” (Material in brackets in Ross)

These aforementioned fears of violence and geopolitical diminishment encouraged the development of innovative means of warfare that could meet the demands of the North American context.

While the above mentioned raids and defeats of conventional forces encouraged innovations, like most cultural and social transformations, the development of new forms of military units had deeper historical roots. Ross (2009) notes that the term ranger first appeared in thirteenth-century England and eventually became attached to “irregular militia” that patrolled the Scottish-English border in the late sixteenth century. The term had also been used in the New World with previous wars, including the unit organized by Captain Benjamin Church of Massachusetts in 1675, comprised of mixed Natives and colonists that fought in the King Philip’s War. This unit combined Native

fighting strategies and tools (such as hatchets) and encouraged tactical innovations like fighting in loose formations, at great variance from fixed European battles. These innovations were apparently effective: Church and his unit killed the Native leader Metacombet or “King Philip,” the Chief of the Wampanoags and leader of the other Native groups fighting the British colonists (43-44). In 1756, these innovations were known to a limited degree, but were given economic and political support when Roger Roberts was summoned to Boston to meet Governor William Shirley, “the acting commander of British forces in North America” (107). Ross characterizes Shirley as recognizing the need to foster and bolster North American military innovations with the legal and economic powers of the state; “Shirley, a pioneer New World imperial administrator who was forever angling for better ways of doing things, saw in Rogers the raw potential to put to work the as-yet-inchoate strengths of the New England frontier and to forge a long-range force that could counter the acknowledged present superiority of the French and Indians in woodland combat” (112-113). The meeting culminated in Rogers receiving funds to recruit rangers, along with the political authority to do so, and economic support for arms and other equipment such as whale boats brought from Massachusetts to New York for use on Lake Champlain. These resources contributed in Rogers and other rangers synthesizing Native technologies and methodologies, like wearing Native-style clothing and using equipment like snowshoes, with western firearms. Ross notes that these conditions encouraged further developments on the part of the French with the appearance of individuals like Charles-Michel Mouet de Langlade, a Métis of Native and European heritage who had participated in Native-led raids including one led by Chief Pontiac in the Miami River valley in Ohio and who was an adroit practitioner of *la petite guerre* or small-engagement warfare (122).

Significance of Fracture Lines

The cases above suggest that rural environments can be crucibles of cultural innovation, dependent in large part on having degrees of freedom from urban-based power and orthodoxy. In the case of foie gras, a form of agricultural production that is bound to elite urban centers, it became vulnerable to protest claims both in rural areas and urban centers alike. As Caro’s (2009) account demonstrates, foie gras has been the historic subject of both praise and condemnation, and therefore in itself the development of a controversy surrounding its production is not without precedent. However, the resurrection of this form of agricultural practice to meet demands from elite cultural production and consumption in elite restaurants of large cities including Chicago, suggests the significance of two forms of cultural fracture lines. The

first emerges within the elite producers themselves, who are not united in their acceptance of this practice despite their apparent unanimous acceptance of many other culinary dishes created with meat, and the ambivalence among many wealthy potential consumers who could be persuaded that the process of foie gras is cruel and therefore unacceptable. The second cultural fracture line is made evident when the efforts to establish foie gras farms in New York and California come under attack by animal advocates and are not defended by other agricultural businesses. This form of agriculture is innovative enough that when visual representations of the foie gras farms are made public both through mass media and through online videos there is no organizational countermeasure to these representations. More established forms of agricultural production, such as dairy and raising pigs for human consumption, do have organized responses that have influenced both media coverage and public policy—in some cases, despite significant public opposition to specific agricultural activities, such as “factory farming” (see Kirby 2010). In sum, elite cultural producers and consumers that were divided about the desirability of foie gras, and a culturally and politically isolated form of agriculture—foie gras production is not protected by organizations affiliated with more traditional agricultural businesses—is vulnerable to claims generated by a small, dedicated group of activists who were able to build an alliance with more established animal advocacy organizations as well as other urban elites.

The case of pigeon hunting in Hegins, Pennsylvania suggests the significance of cultural stability that is not challenged by existing fracture lines. Bronner (2008) notes that the “live pigeon shoot” developed as a way to attract competitive sharp shooters to competitions in circuits that involved both rural areas and urban centers. It was never some sort of longstanding tradition that was retained by immigrants or somehow developed organically. Despite its invented nature, the hunt had become largely uncontested in Hegins, although its popularity appeared to be waning among the regional participants. When largely urban animal rights protests arrived to challenge the pigeon shoot in 1987—partially in response to concerns raised by Hegins residents—the pigeon shoot rapidly assumed a totemic aspect, representing a rural identity that revitalized previously declining interest in the event. Rather than stigmatizing or creating a negative moral standing for the event (see Rozin 1997), the protests reinforced the cultural significance of the pigeon shoot. Only with a lengthy court case was a partial resolution to this conflict realized, indicating the depth of the strategic blunder of the animal rights protesters. Instead of encouraging the residents of Hegins to ignore a commercially invented practice that was already in decline, the animal rights protesters effectively conflated the annual event with the identity of the community, sealing any sort of cultural fracture.

Finally, the case of developing new forms of warfare moves the analysis of fracture lines to the meso-sociological level. The fractured nature of colonized North America—in the sense that military control was contested by British or French backed forces, along with Native American allies—meant that any significant dominance could be easily achieved and maintained. Moreover, the geographic distance and topography of North America inhibited the creation and establishment of military hegemony outside of fortifications through the deployment of resource-intensive military technology such as naval vessels and artillery. These conditions—a lack of clear military or political dominance, lengthy distances between centers of influence, and presence of French, British, Native American, and colonial populations—encouraged military innovation. These innovations included the mixing of different skills, weapons, and pieces of equipment into qualitatively new patterns, such as rangers using snowshoes to enter French territory during the winter. While Ross (2009) argues that certain political leaders, like Governor William Shirley, recognized the value of innovation and provided economic support and political latitude for such experimentation, the time and space distances involved (see Giddens 1984) hampered efforts to enforce orthodoxy. In sum, these divisions encouraged innovations and their testing through armed conflict.

These cases suggest a general relationship: that the presence of fracture lines and the absence of potent hegemonic sources of influence may create conditions that are ripe for innovation in rural settings that in turn function as “corridors” between the “cores” of conflicting ideas. Further investigation of fracture lines will yield new insights in the study of cultural and political innovation. This lens is also useful for thinking about existing studies, such as Brinkley’s (2011) analysis of the history of Alaska, as American territory and state. He reveals that there were great tensions between individuals and economic interests who looked to Alaska as raw material for economic activities—fishing, lumber, oil, etc.—and those who sought to have large tracts of land preserved as pristine national parks. Both sides in this conflict attempted to influence local and national public opinion and government to realize their agenda for decades, with the preservationists deploying cultural artifacts, primarily films and writings, as tools for advocacy. Similarly, as noted in the beginning of this chapter, the areas outside of North Elba, New York, allowed John Brown and his supporters to engage in radical social experiments of racially integrated living while incubating that abolitionist ideology that ultimately led to a raid on the federal armory at Harper’s Ferry (see Reynolds 2005; Horowitz 2011). Frank’s (2004) analysis of the Great Plains agricultural region of the United States also exemplifies the phenomenon of fracture lines, as the region evolved into a hotbed of radicalism and political innovation in the 1890s. Each of these cases and examples of existing research suggest that the fracture lines perspective can aid us in appreciating the important roles played

by rural people and places in generating significant historical innovation of both national and global importance.

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9

“Fagging” the Countryside? (De) “Queering” Rural Queer Studies

Christopher J. Stapel

Among the fundamental projects of queer theory are the deconstruction, destabilization, and disruption of taken-for-granted dichotomies (Halperin 1995; Marcus 1995; Stein and Plummer 1994; Sedgwick 1990). The nascent rural queer studies literature has promisingly taken up the canonical poststructural task of destandardizing “modernity’s epistemological commitment to classification” (Marcus 1995: 209) by acknowledging that (homo/metro) normative sexual categories inadequately incorporate rural subjectivities (Bell and Valentine 1995; Cloke and Little 1997; Halberstam 2005). It collectively fails, however, to display a queer theoretic “willingness to interrogate areas which normally would not be seen as the terrain of sexuality” (Stein and Plummer 1994: 182), most notably the rural/urban binary.

The spatial, the sexual, and the social constitute one another in manifold ways. Failing to interrogate asocial, asexual conceptualizations of the rural is problematic because hegemonic understandings of the countryside are too often based upon urban imaginaries of sociosexual homogeneity. Perhaps the greatest limitation of rural queer studies—a limitation I maintain contributes to an epistemological invisibility of rural queers—is its paradoxical reluctance to queer the categorical distinction between rural and urban. Orthodox queer theorists tend to casually approach the rural as a taken-for-granted remnant of a neatly delineated urban; when rural queer scholars do attempt to locate the rural they rely almost entirely on modernist definitions bounded by population, density, and metropolitan centrality. I believe a more fluid, subjective, sociocultural rurality will bear a more fruitful rural queer studies.

I argue here that a critical deconstruction of the rural will allow scholars to approach rural subjects on their own terms; it will allow scholars of rural queer studies to decouple “queer” identities from norm-disruptive queer theoretics and embrace the self-described “fags” and “homosexuals” who inhabit rural places. Spatially peripheral sexualities and the discourses that mutually constitute them will otherwise go undetected by those with a remedial understanding of rural lexicons and other cultural dimensions of rurality. In order to engage with rural subjectivities, including rural queer subjectivities, scholars must resist the urge

to privilege (homo/metro)normative discourses that actively, and perhaps not-so-unintentionally, silence rural people of all sexual identities.

In this chapter I elaborate the position that dominant metropolitan imaginaries of rurality fail to capture complex rural identities, visibilities, practices, and epistemologies of same-sex desire. In other words, that rural queernesses are “rendered invisible” (Gray 2009: 91) by a singular metropolitan account of rurality, absent nonnormative subjectivities, that is “increasingly divorced from the rural spaces which it nominally represented” (Mormont 1987: 17). I then describe how intersectional methodologies, employing a multidimensional sociospatial construction of rurality, might more adequately illuminate same-sex desire in the countryside.

Epistemological (De)colonization

To this end I draw from Halfacree’s (2006) Lefebvrian “three-fold model of rural space” and Michael Bell’s (2007) rural sociological “rural plural” in an attempt to develop a synergistic dialectic that unifies material spaces, which I call rurals, and their idealized representations, which I refer to as ruralities.

Rurals are material spaces that satisfy a set of (largely) arbitrary criteria. These criteria can be demographic (based on population and densities), geographic (based on proximities and adjacencies), economic (based on the presence or absence of productivist agricultural and extractive industries), or based on other measures (such as commuting patterns), though social rural criteria are notably rare. Rurals are nearly contiguous with Bell’s (2007: 405) “first rural”:

fundamentally materialist, seeking an objective, anyone-can-count-it-and-count-on-it determination of the rural, rooted in the material presence, or lack, of persons on the material foundation of the land. Second, it is fundamentally spatial, finding the rural to be something we can map. Third, it is all fundamentally dichotomous, no matter the unit of analysis, still seeking an in-or-out view of the rural that we can draw across the gray continuum of the micropolitan, the adjacent, and the outlying. And fourth, first rural is a fundamentally relative view of rurality, in which the rural is always understood with respect to, and immediately implies, the urban.

Yet rurals also encompass material spatial, social, sexual, and other practices that mutually constitute them; rurals are the manifold spaces that emerge from the reflexive relationship between Halfacree’s (2006: 51) “rural localities” and “everyday lives of the rural.” Rurals contain both the “dirt and rock, concrete and steel” and the “act and experience” that Herring (2010: 13) contrasts in locating rural spaces and places.

Ruralities are the subjective, idealized, “phantasmatic” (Herring 2010: 13) representations of the rural. They’re “significant imaginative space[s], connected with all kinds of cultural meanings ranging from the idyllic to the oppressive”

(Clope 2006a: 18). Ruralities are analogous to Bell's (2007: 408-9) "second rural," or the "rural of ideas," incorporative of Halfacree's (2006: 51) remaining dimension of rural space, "formal representations of the rural." Crucially, a rurality "can have a subversive aspect when it results in space being (re)appropriated from the interests of the dominant" (Halfacree 2006: 51).

Ruralities and rurals are not monolithic; rurals are as numerous as localities and practices and ruralities as numerous as imaginaries and subjectivities. Just as material localities and practices are mutually constitutive of the rural, so too are rurals mutually constitutive of ruralities. That is, the materialities of rural spaces inform their representations, and representations and imaginaries of ruralities shape their material contours. Indeed "materiality, representation, and imagination are not separate worlds" (Harvey 1996: 322). "Part of the task for rural studies, then, is to identify key practices with which to express both internal and external connections between the material and imaginative worlds of the rural" (Clope 2006a: 24) Thus a task of rural queer studies, taken up in this essay, is to recognize how rural queer practices bridge material rurals and imaginative ruralities.

My preliminary thesis is that rural subjectivities are increasingly invisible because metropolitan imaginaries of the rural (or urban ruralities) have tended toward hegemony but are largely decoupled from the material rural. Rural queer subjectivities in particular are difficult, if not impossible, to access because urban ruralities are often imagined void of same-sex desire. For example, the (homo/metro)normative "sexual geography in which the city represents a beacon of tolerance and gay community, the country a locus of persecution and gay absence," described by Weston (1995: 282), discursively eliminates rural queernesses. A queerless conceptualization of rurality is the result of an epistemological colonization of rurals by dominant urban ruralities. Undoubtedly this colonization is "exercise of power that privileges one set of social relations over another" (Murdoch and Pratt 1993), urban ruralities over rural ones.

In the context of the contemporary United States, ruralities of urbanites, steeped with intolerance, backwardness, and homogeneity, dominate even when they fail to reflect material rurals. In other words, urban imaginaries of rural places have hijacked the public imagination and our collective understanding of rurality bears no resemblance to the realities of rural people. This closely follows Clope's (2006a: 24) reading of rurality in which the "symbolic notions of the rural have become detached from their referential moorings, meaning that socially constructed rural space has become ever more detached from geographically functional rural space." What Herring (2010: 6) might call "compulsory forms of urbanization," I recognize to be epistemological colonization. The "re-deployment" of "rurality" that Herring (2010: 6) believes will "promote a critical form of queer anti-urbanism" is a particular case of a larger postcolonial project.

To be sure, metrocentric constructions of rurality do not occur by chance, but rather "function[s] as a displacement of urban queer bashing in favor of fet-

ishistic renderings of violence encountered in small towns and rural areas” (Puar 2008: 70). It’s as if the homophobia of the city is irrelevant if the urban can collectively imagine a comparatively more intolerant countryside. Indeed, “hegemonic representations of rural culture can act as an exclusionary device, serving to marginalize particular individuals, groups of people, and even places on the grounds that the practice and performance of gender, age, sexuality, disability and so on is somehow other to the rural norm” (Cloke 2006b: 447). So straight, white, cisgendered urban dwellers can exert their power and “distance themselves from the horror of the heartlands and to even congratulate themselves for living in an urban rather than a rural environment” (Halberstam 2005: 27) by creating horrific and degradative images of rurality in order to excuse their own homophobia, racism, and misogyny.

An urban hijacking of rurality is of import to rural queer studies because it limits access to rural ruralities. Rather than seek out rural queer life in the colonized, (homo/metro)normative urban rurality, rural queer scholars must (re)construct a rurality inclusive of the subjectivities of people who live in rural localities. Cloke (2006a: 18) has warned that “as soon as attempts are made to deconstruct the rural metanarrative, much of that conceptual strength dissipates into the nooks and crevices of particular locations, economic processes, and social identities.” I’ve got a hunch that the most vulnerable nooks and crevices in my deconstruction are the intersections of socio/sexual/spatial identities and practices.

Intersectional Methodologies

I’ve illustrated how a deconstruction of the rural/urban binary—a queering perhaps—opens an epistemological space for rural queer subjectivities. Yet my musings have been entirely theoretical with very little evidence of utility. In this section I draw from an archive of autobiography, anecdote, interview, and existing literature in an attempt to show how intersectional methodologies can “reveal some hidden or ‘lost’ aspect of this space” (Halfacree 2006: 44). Urban ruralities, like those described above, imagine rural queers, when they exist, in urban terms using (homo/metro)normative identities, practices, and discourses. I attempt to show that many rural “queer” subjectivities aren’t “queer” at all, and that to access them rural queer scholars might consider “dequeering” the countryside.

When asked in an interview (Eisen and Kenyatta 1996) to speak to whether communities of color—and particularly African American religious communities—are more overtly homophobic than white communities, the esteemed scholar, Cornel West, provided the following response in concluding that homophobia “runs pretty deep in both”:

I know when I was growing up in the Black community, most people knew that, let's say, the brother who played the organ in the church was a gay brother. People would say, oh, that's so and so's child. You know, he's that way. And they'd just keep moving. There wasn't an attempt to focus on his sexuality; he was an integral part of the community. It wasn't a matter of trying to target him and somehow pester him or openly, publicly degrade him. Those who said he's "that way" didn't believe that way was desirable, but they just figured that's just the way he was, that's just his thing, you know. But one of the ways in which he chose to function was to be part of his community. People knew it, but he just didn't make a big deal out of it. (358-359)

Surely, West is on point in presuming that homophobia and heterosexism are universally institutionalized and practiced. Often, however, the manifestations of these and other forms of intolerance are structured hierarchically such that the bigotry of those on the margins, including people of color and rural dwellers, is represented as more insidious than the bigotry of the privileged. Analogously, that acceptance and tolerance among white people, secular people, and metropolitan people is more welcoming and authentic than that of rural dwellers.

People of color, people of faith, rural dwellers and those at the intersections are often imagined as intolerant of queer folks. I turn to West's insightful reading of subcultural homophobias (as problematically silenced and gendered as it may be) because it demonstrates that narratives of queer invisibility and unacceptability in subaltern communities are often without merit. For example, while some may read West's account as one of "closeted homosexuality" I highlight that not only do the churchgoers acknowledge same-sex desire (which West labels gay), but the faith community also names it (that way), de-essentializes it ("there wasn't an attempt to focus on this sexuality"), and welcomes the individual who expressed it ("he was an integral part of the community"). One-dimensional approaches might read the congregation as bigoted, intolerant, and unwelcoming, but at the intersection of gender (nonconformity), race, sexuality, and religion we are able to locate acceptance of sexual minority individuals in the black church.

My past experience as a born-again (rural-dwelling, white, male) Christian adolescent in both evangelical and Pentecostal churches also highlights rarely recognized intersectional identities, practices, and discourses of same-sex desire. Although my faith community adamantly opposed same-sex behavior and both "gay" and "queer" identities, it recognized the presence of same-sex desire in the church. As an adherent I abstained from all forms of sexual behavior, but maintained a relatively public identity as one who *struggles with same-sex attraction*. I worshiped, prayed, counseled, and socialized with others who struggled with same-sex attraction using language ("accountability partner," "spiritual warfare") and practices ("reparative therapy") relatively unfamiliar to either evangelicals or queers. I had no expectation of opposite-sex attraction, but my "queerness" was only visible at the intersection of faith and sexuality. I imagine many other rural queer subjectivities are similarly hidden.

“Fag(got)” and “homo(sexual)” subjectivities are rarely examined by queer theorists who seem to read them rather uncritically as homophobic, backward, and antiquated. However, fag and homo identities, practices, and discourses have rich implications for the work of rural queer scholars. Several years ago at a meeting of the Appalachian Studies Association I attended one of several LGBT-themed sessions headlined by a man who chose to stay in the region throughout his academic and professional career. Throughout his talk he assumed a “homosexual” identity and recounted how his hometown friends from rural West Virginia embracingly employed the f-word in proclaiming “you may be a faggot, but you’re our faggot.” This anecdote is reminiscent of the Kentucky community documented by Gray (2009: 84) where an informant shared “these may be queer kids, but they’re our queer kids.” In this case a word that often evokes hostility in urban localities was used to denote rural, place-based acceptance of a same-sex sexual identity. Without an intersectional regional/spatial/sexual lens the employment of a “homosexual” identity and the use of the word “faggot” might be misread as homophobia.

Just as *that way*, *struggling with same-sex attraction*, *homosexual*, and *faggot* are accepted and commonly understood allusions to same-sex desire in West’s black church, my former faith community, and rural Appalachian West Virginia, so too are like that, a little funny, does things his own way, lesbo, dyke, and others metonyms for same-sex desire that are arguably more functional among country folks than words like gay and queer oft favored by metro-oriented scholars.

A promising strategy for accessing the subjectivities of rural queers located outside the imaginaries of metropolitan ruralities is to submerge ourselves at socio/sexual/spatial intersections that have for the most part eluded investigators until now. I channel Murdoch and Pratt (1993: 423) in asserting that “we do not just need new ingredients but rather a completely new recipe” for our rural queer studies. It’s not that we’re failing to locate subjects of interest—we don’t need new ingredients at all—but rather that we fail to recognize rural queerness when it is staring us in the face because it fails to reflect our metronormative expectations.

One of my favorite examples of not recognizing rural queerness is Jerry Lee Kramer’s (1995) *Bachelor Farmers and Spinsters*. Kramer acknowledges the presence of a bookstore that sells gay magazines, a home that functioned as a *de facto* gay community center, the use of nearby post office as a meeting place for gay men, and regular household gatherings of lesbian women. Yet rather than recognize the community’s unique place-based queer practices he concluded that queer people in Minot lived in a “time capsule” relative to his metrocentric expectations. “I’ve met some gay men and lesbian women,” he wrote,

who outwardly differ very little from their urban counterparts, at least within the private spaces of their homes. These people seem to have formed relatively positive homosexual identities, as well as a sense of gay and lesbian community, often without any direct contacts with urban homosexual communities. This

suggests that while a gap still exists between nonmetropolitan lesbians and gay men and their urban counterparts, this discrepancy may be narrowing, thereby providing them with expanded choices concerning the environments, identities and lifestyles they wish to adopt. (213)

In practice a rural queer methodology draws on a portfolio of techniques, informed by Harstock's (1983) feminist standpoint theory, Collins's (1990) black feminist thought, and Probyn's (2003) "spatial imperative of subjectivities" that acknowledges that subjectivities are mutually constitutive of the spaces they co-inhabit. By acknowledging that our subjects' identities, both sexual and sociospatial, are fluid and unstable, we escape the modernist tendency to bound desire and the spaces they inhabit.

"Standpoint carries the contention that there are some perspectives on society from which, however well-intentioned one may be, the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible" (Harstock 1983: 117). Using examples from the black church, rural evangelicalism, and regional Appalachia, I showed that that these invisible perspectives—particularly in the case of rural queers—are often intersectional in nature. Dialogue, reflexivity, epistemic privilege, and their contemporary iterations are not suitable for investigations of rural queers if the researcher doesn't speak—or can't recognize—the language of his subjects. The spatial locations of such intersectional standpoints are of paramount importance as subjectivities necessarily co-constitute the spaces they occupy.

Our epistemological imaginations give rise to inquiries about what can be known, who can know, and how knowledge is validated. A strictly prescribed, hyperrational scientific project that favors the standpoint of the most privileged knowers is the orthodox analytic approach for most questions. While the standpoint, agency, and situatedness of knowers is of great importance so too are the structural dimensions of knowledge validation. Knowledge claims are tested both explicitly and implicitly for internal logic and external validity in accordance with rules consistent with the social structure in which they are imbedded. If a claim is deemed true then it is incorporated into the structure and informs subsequent validations. The external validity of a knowledge claim is judged by experts rather than lay people. "Each community of experts must maintain its credibility as defined by the larger group in which it is situated and from which it draws its basic, taken-for-granted knowledge. This means that scholarly communities that challenge basic beliefs held in the culture at large will be deemed less credible than those which support popular perspectives" (Collins 1990: 203). The nondominant ways of knowing (which we might call peripheral epistemologies) are not validated by hegemonic epistemologies because the periphery, by definition, challenges that hegemony. Tautologically, peripheral epistemologies cannot challenge or contest the hegemony because they have not been validated. As a result peripheral actors, in this case black women, face an academic "community that does not grant that Black women scholars have compet-

ing knowledge claims based in another knowledge validation process” (Collins 1990: 202). Dominant actors are deemed knowers and peripheral actors are not.

Problematically, as urban ruralities have colonized rural ruralities, the epistemological structure of the countryside privileges urban ways of knowing; knowledge—even rural knowledge—is validated on urban terms. Furthermore, Jones and others have posited that non-expert voices are required if one wishes to intersect the rural other, including the rural queer, into the discourse: “lay discourses of the rural amount to a significant part of rurality itself, directly shaping and mutating it, and also interlinking with other levels of discourse which have their own impacts. They have to be amongst the central objects of academic studies of the rural, especially if ‘other’ perspectives are to be considered” (Jones 1995: 39). But as Collins attests, lay discourses face tremendous challenges in permeating knowledge validation schemes.

Since dominant ways of knowing have the reciprocal consequence of legitimizing the exclusion of peripheral epistemologies we must explore how other ways of knowing can contest hegemonic frameworks and move beyond metronormative scholarship. We must envisage a radical frameworks that successfully contest hegemonic knowledge, frameworks I refer to as *epistemology of the periphery*. Contesting the dominant epistemological framework is not an easy task. As Ladson-Billings (2000: 258) writes “the process of developing a worldview that differs from the dominant worldview requires active intellectual work on the part of the knower, because schools, society, and the structure and production of knowledge are designed to create individuals who internalize the dominant worldview and knowledge production and acquisitions processes.” The reflexive relationship between the prevailing epistemology and the social structure conditions marginal knowers to believe that their peripheral epistemologies are deficient rather than different.

Peripheral epistemologies differ from hegemonic ones by recognizing experience as a basis for knowledge, validating truth claims through dialogue, valuing empathy and interpersonal relationships, and remaining accountable to a respective community of knowers (Stanley and Wise 1993). Furthermore, peripheral methodologies often value reflexivity, consciousness-raising, subjectivity, ethical standards, and the empowerment of marginalized people in the research process. These characteristics are quite divergent from the highly objective, dichotomous, rational, hierarchical, neutral, positivist, hegemonic project of science, thus threatening the prospect of a peripheral contestation of hegemonic epistemologies. But we shouldn’t be deterred as we know that “investigating the subjugated knowledge of subordinate groups . . . requires more ingenuity than that needed to examine the standpoints and thought of dominant groups” (Collins 1990: 202). I posit that dominant standpoints can indeed be contested by moving toward particularistic knowledges of highly deconstructed and intersectional others.

To access nondominant, decentered, oftentimes colonized, epistemologies of the periphery—including those of rural queer folks—we must “do so using

alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge" (Collins 1990: 202). Should we encounter a radical post-structuralist epistemology of the periphery we must be willing to embrace methodologies and knowledge validation schemes that at first "appear to violate some of the basic epistemological assumptions of our training as social scientists" (Collins 1990: 202). We must be open "to new categories, unfamiliar interconnections and unknown language concepts and representation" (Cloke and Little 1997: 6). If researchers are not attuned to the social and cultural realities of peripheral subjects then they will not recognize "queer" identities, discourses, and practices for what they are. Rural queer scholars must be willing to embrace the experiences of rural fags and homos; willing to accept rural queers, queers of color, and queers of faith whose (in)visibilities are not coterminous with urban closets; and willing to part with their metronormative queer theoretic discourses. If investigators fail to understand the unique ways that queerness manifests itself in the countryside and, conversely, how rurality shapes the experiences of queers, then the project of rural queer studies is moot.

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10

Return to Ridgefield Corners: Cultural Continuity and Change in a Rural Village

Polly J. Smith

There is a persistent tension between an idealized reality and the one with which the individual is actually confronted. This is true in the realm of community studies in particular as the search for the ideal community dominates real estate and community development projects across the United States. In the cultural realm this tension is evident in the presentation of rural life. For an urban society unaccustomed to rural communities, the small town has come to represent something of an ideal reality whether that presentation is utopian or dystopian. In either case, the perception of rural life is guided by simulacra: an image of reality that comes to represent reality itself (Baudrillard 1994).

When we consider the difference between urban and rural, the lifestyle, people, and geographic area are often presented as somehow different from one place to the next. This dichotomy has worked its way into the sociological tradition. For instance, when studying urbanization in Europe, Töennies (1963) noted that urban areas demonstrate *gesellschaft* whereas rural areas demonstrate *gemeinschaft*. Urban places were thought to be more impersonal, more chaotic, more opportunistic and individualistic; they are considered places where there is much competition and a sense of us versus them. In contrast, the *gemeinschaft* of rural communities were thought to represent the tight bonds of kinship and limited networks of social interaction. Simmel (2002) even suggested that, in contrast to the supposed simplicity of rural life, the nearly constant stimulation of urban life led to a mental state that can be described as nearly neurotic. Rural areas have often been portrayed as very personal and even inclusive places where people are community oriented and act in the interest of the neighbors. In contrast, Wirth (1938) defined urban places as large, dense, and heterogeneous in direct contrast to small, sparsely populated and homogeneous rural communities.

More recent research has questioned this simple dichotomy between rural and urban. Herbert Gans (1962), in *The Urban Villagers*, noted that the seemingly chaotic life led in inner city neighborhoods was best understood as organized along many of the same principles of rural villages. Gans showed that

many of the recent Italian immigrants had brought facets of Italian rural village life to Boston's West End neighborhood. Similarly, Fischer (1975) proposed that cities are not merely chaotic jumbles of heterogeneity but rather networks of manageable "subcultures"; by and large, this research has withstood the test of time (see Logan & Spitze 1994; Fischer 1975).

Rural areas are not as simple as the classic theorists viewed them either. Fitchen (1991) made a distinction between the "truly rural" and those rural communities not so far removed from urban life. More recently, Thomas et al. (2011) noted that American culture is an "urban" culture: not only do four-fifths of Americans live in metropolitan areas, but American culture assumes that metropolitan life is "normal," and by default rural life is abnormal. This assumption of the normalcy and even the superiority of urban lifestyle is referred to as *urbanormativity*.

Urbanormativity is evident in American culture through three distinct motifs about rural communities: 1) rural as simple, 2) rural as wild, and 3) rural as escape (Thomas et al. 2011). Each motif is a result of the dominance of urban people and places within the larger culture, and as a result is less a reflection of rural place than a complex interplay between how urban dwellers define rural areas and the identity that rural residents adopt for themselves. The Rural as Simple motif perceives rural life as more simple and uncomplicated than that in urban places. Although it is about rural places, this motif cannot exist without the dichotomy with urban communities as it is seen as a reaction to urbanism. Similarly, the Rural as Wild motif is also defined in opposition to urban areas, but this motif reads that relatively "unbuilt" landscape into the culture as well. Rural places and people come to be associated with chaos and a lack of "civilization." The appeal of the Rural as Escape motif is the perceived lack of order; in essence, whereas the Rural as Wild motif sees the rural as dangerous, Rural as Escape sees this quality as something desirable.

This essay examines claims about the chaotic life of cities as well as urbanormative assumptions about rural life by examining a small community as presented in three time periods. The earliest literary reference to the village is in James Fenimore Cooper's 1823 novel *The Pioneers*. The name Ridgefield Corners comes from a romance novel called *The Sex Cure*, written by Elaine Dorian in 1962. By examining claims about the community's culture and social structure during the 1790s and in 1962 with more recent ethnographic data in the same community, the fuller complexity of rural life, both in the past and today, will be demonstrated.

Settling Ridgefield Corners

The American mythology suggests that as the original thirteen colonies expanded beyond their small settlements after the American Revolution, settlers were searching for a place to call their own in a quest for true independence and

freedom. It is during this time period that Ridgefield Corners experienced its first and arguably only major phase of growth. The land grant in which Ridgefield Corners is located was “purchased” from a loyalist who fled during the American Revolution, and after the war it was developed by selling (rather than leasing) land to new settlers. By the 1790s Ridgefield Corners was growing rapidly with settlers from New England searching for new land (Thomas 2003).

The author James Fenimore Cooper wrote of Ridgefield Corners starting with the publication of his third novel in 1823. Based loosely on his own childhood in the 1790s, *The Pioneers* explored the tensions found during the early settlement of the community. Ridgefield Corners was, prior to the American Revolution, only twenty miles east of the western limit of European settlement as agreed between the British and the Iroquois in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768. Located in the hills south of the Mohawk River, the region was already home to local Iroquois, European frontiersmen, and at least one itinerant preacher intent on building a Christian utopia in the wilderness (Arndt 1937). Cooper captured this diversity of ethnic groups by representative characters: Dirck Van der School (Dutch), Hiram Doolittle (a newcomer from New England), Monsieur Le Quoi (French), Major Frederick Hartmann (German), Judge Templeton, a Quaker land speculator, and the Episcopal Reverend Grant, among others. John Mohegan, a former Delaware Indian chief, is used to symbolize the passing of both the frontier and his own great nation. As Cooper showed, Ridgefield Corners was never the homogenous population often assumed by an urbanormative society: from the beginning the population exhibited a degree of demographic diversity.

The major event in the region during the 1790s was the opening of the frontier for westward expansion, and in Ridgefield Corners this meant an influx of new settlers arriving from New England. *The Pioneers* is about the loss of the frontier as these immigrants brought “civilization” with them. Cooper decries the loss of the wilderness to farmers clearing fields and new villages springing up in a period of only a few short years. His main character, a brusque woodsman named Natty Bumppo, repeatedly expresses Cooper’s concerns for the wild. In one scene, he fondly reminisces about the view of the Hudson Valley from an overlook in the Catskill Mountains that had been largely destroyed even by Cooper’s time (Stradling 2010). In another scene in which the new settlers kill hundreds of passenger pigeons, even wielding a small cannon left behind during the Revolutionary War to do so, Natty kills only one bird for his own use.

The people of Ridgefield Corners, particularly the New England settlers, are portrayed throughout *The Pioneers* as unsophisticated and greedy. The encroachment of the new settlers represented not only an increase in population, but a marring of the wild environment that raised new questions. Ironically, Cooper’s own father was indicted in this trend as he sold his lands to settlers in the hope of building not a small town but a true city (Cooper 1936 [1810]). Such a venture involved not only building the village itself—Ridgefield Corners’ original street plan was a gridiron plan with streets deemed in *The Pioneers* to

be too wide—but the clearing of thousands of acres of forest to make way for farms. In the novel, John Templeton, a local judge and state legislature member, brags that he had fought for a designated hunting season so as to prevent over-hunting. Natty Bumppo argues that a true hunter would not take more than he needs and that such regulation is unnecessary, but Templeton knows that increased population makes such an argument untenable. In another scene, debate ensues over who owns a deer killed on another's land: Does the deer belong to the hunter or the landowner? Throughout these arguments, wisdom is on the side of Natty Bumppo, not the settlers intent on transforming the wilderness into a town. Cooper had grown up as part of America's budding elite, and he frequently took the side of aristocracy and hierarchy (see *The American Democrat* [1838]). Consistent with the upper class understanding of nature as the preserve of the wealthy for hunting, his novels used the Ridgefield Corners middle class as a symbol of wasteful greed and the corruption of nature (Stradling 2010). Cooper would not, however, be the last would-be aristocrat to portray the local non-elites in this manner. Indeed, the same disdain for the middle class that surfaces in Cooper's work also emerges in *The Sex Cure*.

The Sex Cure

The romance novel written by Dorian (1962) validates many aspects of the community noted by Cooper in terms of the environment, population, and overall social dynamics 130 years after *The Pioneers*. The basic storyline is driven by a scandal that involves numerous personalities, each of whom represents a piece of life in the community. The main character, Justin Riley, is a doctor at the primary institution in the community, Mary Stevens Memorial Hospital. He is a newcomer to the community and so does not really belong; he is accepted because of the status of his wealthy wife, formerly Olivia Turner, and her family. Her father is a New York State Senator. Justin interned at the hospital early on in his medical career along with local boy Stu Everett, who encouraged him to do a residency at the hospital and the later accept a full-time position. Stu regarded Justin as the best thoracic surgeon around professionally, however his personal life was something altogether different. The scandal that is the main focus of Dorian's piece is based on a young girl who has complications resulting from an illegal abortion and is brought to the hospital in dire condition after the procedure. As Stu performs the surgery that saves her life, Justin is named as the father. While she lies in the hospital in a coma the community discusses the actions leading up to the event as well as the all but certain future of the esteemed Dr. Riley.

As in any small town, a scandal of this nature allows people to focus all of their social energy on finding out as much information as they can about the persons in question. This is often done by providing what information a person knows or assumes to know in public conversation and then attempting to gain

new information as well as confirming any information that might have been questionable (Levin & Arluke 1987). Olivia was previously engaged to Stu Everett. Stu had refused to marry her because of her money (he yearned to be “self made”), and when Justin Riley came to town she was intrigued by him. Riley seemed to attract every woman in town. As an intern he had had sexual encounters with numerous nurses but would not commit to anyone. However, he had been particularly attracted to Olivia at one time and she had been determined to marry him after Stu refused despite warnings from her father and others. They married even though Olivia knew Justin would never change, and he indeed did have numerous sexual encounters with various partners after they married and this was well known in town. The women involved often tried to convince Olivia to leave Justin so they could have him for themselves, but this was not acceptable for someone of her status: her father told her that she knew what she had gotten into and was obliged to accept it. Justin told each of them in turn that he had no intention of leaving his wife and the son he assumed to be his.

The scandal at the heart of the story began when Justin’s latest fling, with his then assistant, who had gotten pregnant. Justin gave her the money for an abortion, but she had waited too long and the person he had told her to see refused to do the procedure. She was desperate and used a less-reputable individual; the procedure did not go well and so she found herself in the hospital fighting for her life. Justin and Olivia’s life was fully exposed as the young girl clearly stated Justin was the father. This event led Olivia to re-examine her marriage and Justin to take a closer look at his place and future in Ridgefield Corners. Stu Everett also had some soul searching to do, particularly as he knew that Olivia’s son was his and not Justin’s. Olivia’s father was up for re-election and had to find a solution to the current family problem, and many of Justin’s previous lovers were rethinking their relationships with Justin as well.

In the end, Olivia divorces Justin. She reunites with Stu, telling Justin the truth about the boy he has been raising all those years. She leaves the boy with her parents, noting that Justin should not see him, and leaves town for Reno after a sexual encounter with Stu that encourages her and one with Justin that reaffirms that she has made the right choice in divorcing him. Justin is effectively “put in place” by the chief of staff at the hospital who tells him discreetly not only that he will never be a true citizen of Ridgefield Corners, but that he would likely lose his license in New York State for his actions. As such, he encourages Justin to consider his options, that he is a great surgeon and should have no trouble finding a job elsewhere. With this reality Justin turns to the young girl in the hospital who would soon be released and tells her that they will make a life together anywhere she pleases because in the end she loves him and that is what matters. It seems that Stu and Olivia will marry after the divorce is settled for an acceptable period of time and Olivia returns to Ridgefield Corners. They will raise their son and all will end up the way it should have been all along. As for the senator, he settled the family business by paying off the parents of the young girl who promptly left behind their daughter and the town with their newfound

money. Justin was told that this was all he was to have of the family's estate unless Olivia chose to give him more. With the death of the town's ruling tyrant, the senator would win re-election and life in Ridgefield Corners would continue as if Justin Riley had never existed.

Even allowing for literary license, the image of life in Ridgefield Corners is hardly one of simplicity and innocence pictured by the metropolitan majority. To the degree that the portrayal of small town life is accurate, the key difference between rural and urban life is the smaller network of individuals involved. Whereas in a city a scandal of this nature might go unnoticed, in a small village it is the talk of the town. There is no running from an issue in a small town if it creeps to this level—if the girl had not almost lost her life, everyone would have continued on their merry way. Sex is unspoken of in such circles, yet everyone is doing it—the local individual who performed the abortion on this young girl had done so for many local women. Indeed, this was her primary business, hidden only by the daycare facility she ran where many of the children were given chloral hydrate so that she could contain them while their mothers were out and about entertaining men, sometimes their husbands, more often not, for days on end. The analysis that follows will take a closer look at the nuances that exist among and between the people and places in Ridgefield Corners more than the scandal itself.

Return to Ridgefield Corners

The three motifs that arise from urbanormativity—Rural as Simple, Rural as Wild, and Rural as Escape—are evident in *The Sex Cure* but in complex ways. In no case is the presentation of the motif a straightforward expression of rural life as “simple” or rural people as “wild,” but rather the book presents a complex interplay of the motifs as they reinforce one another. There are continuities in how the community is represented from *The Pioneers* to *The Sex Cure*, and these align with features of the community today.

Rural as Simple

Just as earlier sociologists portrayed rural life as “simpler” than that found in urban societies, *The Sex Cure* illustrates this phenomenon throughout the book. Justin Riley is attracted to the community, in part, because of the perceived simplicity of the lifestyle in contrast to the pressures of urban life (also an aspect of the Rural as Escape motif). Basic norms and values are presented as objects of consensus, even as the social structure is presented as a multilayered stratified society. The social stratification is, if nothing else, a fairly straightforward structure: Cy Stevens is the town patriarch, there is an educated professional class who perceive themselves to be the ruling class but whom Stevens terms the “peasants,” and the masses of the lower classes subject to the whims

of the town oligarch and professional class. Hence, even in her presentation of a complex society, the hierarchy is conceived as a simple society where one's place is understood by all. Indeed, by virtue of coming from the "outside world," part of Justin Riley's problem is that despite being a member of the professional class by education, he nevertheless does not truly "belong."

The Rural as Simple motif perceives rural life as more simple and uncomplicated than that found in urban places. As such, Ridgefield Corners would be attractive to those who were seeking a simpler life for a variety of reasons. As described by Dorian (1962), "there were no through highways in Ridgefield Corners and few automobile accidents. During the day, the [emergency] room was kept busy with farm accidents or a waitress cutting her hand half off as she pushed some trash into a garbage can. Tractors sometimes messed up their operators" (15). The community is presented as a stark contrast to urban life, or so it might appear. The local population would at first glance also appear very different than its urban counterpart. As Dorian (1962) describes the local population they were, "laborers, farmers from the nearby fields and home-going merchants crowded into the small bar of the Glimmer Glass" (112). When speaking to the character of the primary institution in Ridgefield Corners, Dorian (1962) notes "the hell of a small one-hundred-bed hospital such as this one, and of small town hospitals anywhere, was that everyone knew everything about everyone else" (134).

Indeed many of the residents of Ridgefield Corners may have come to the town seeking a simpler life. Justin Riley had grown up "in the tenements" (Dorian 1962: 69), and although as an intern, "he had definite plans for his future . . . he would not marry into the trap of a four-room apartment with two or three kids and five thousand a year from the hospital when he got his residency" (Dorian 1962: 16). Stu Everett had convinced him that, "the hospital is small but it's the best cardiology research clinic in the east—an internship there will mean something." He had been afraid even then of being buried here. But once he was seriously involved with Olivia, life in Ridgefield Corners had ceased to seem a trap. He began to think of himself as safe and secure (Dorian 1962: 111). He had once imagined a summer day in Ridgefield Corners as:

The kind of day on which families would get together for picnics. Kids still young enough to believe in love would go swimming together and later try to make out in their parked cars, still believing in the goodness, the bounty of their love. State troopers would send out warnings to motorists to drive carefully. . . All those things, large and small, happy or sad, would be happening in the kind of world he had once hoped to share with Olivia. The normal world where people did what was right because doing right was easier than not. (Dorian 1962: 36-37)

Marge Miles had left New York where she "had been a New York deb attending a stylish junior college" (Dorian 1962: 9). Although the junior college Marge had attended was just outside of Ridgefield Corners her intent and cer-

tainly that of her parents was not for her to stay there, but to return to urban life in New York. When she had told her mother of her plans to marry a local from Ridgefield Corners while visiting their Park Avenue apartment for Christmas, her mother stated plainly, “Marge’s sister and I have pink mink jackets for Christmas and Marge has to present the family with a cowboy husband. I never want to see her, to speak to her, again” (65). She had traded all that urban life had to offer for a simpler life, one with a man who “was a farmer, horse trader, and riding instructor” (5) from out west who had settled in Ridgefield Corners. She had traded urban life to live in “A big, rambling dump of a farmhouse . . . [with] an eighteen month old kid, forty head of horses that she helped . . . care for and now, in the summertime, the riding day camp” (5). The home is later described as having an “oversized shabby room with its planked floors, its hook rugs, its clothes hung on a corner pole” (8). As is common in other cultural artifacts such as films and television, the simplicity of rural life is presented in opposition to the perceived complexity of urban life (Thomas et al. 2011).

The description of life and even homes is still applicable to some families, though certainly not all, in Ridgefield Corners today. When talking to numerous doctors in town it becomes evident that many of them did an internship or residency at the local hospital or took a job locally due to a tight urban job market. Few intended to stay in “Small Town USA,” but after some time in the community many decided to stay. Most doctors, once recruited, will stay, but they do come to realize that life is not so simple as they initially imagined. Many, particularly the spouses, complain of the lack of suburban-style opportunities in the community, such as a competitive gymnastics team or advanced-placement classes at the local high school. To find such amenities residents must drive, and a number of residents drive their children to suburban Utica thirty miles away for gymnastics or a tutoring center. For these residents, the complications of urban life were traded for a set of new complications. Some residents speak of living in a “bubble” when they go for weeks and never leave the small village, and of course there are examples of the very types of scandals presented by Dorian in her account.

The doctors at the hospital are thought of as upstanding citizens and pillars of the community. They serve on the boards of the various community institutions—the public and private schools, the sports leagues, and other organizations. Their significant others sometimes own local businesses and serve on town and village committees, all of which convey the appropriate air of middle class respectability. There is a highly gendered aspect of this: many of the spouses are women, and the village has the lowest female labor force participation rate of any community for sixty or more miles in any direction. Perhaps most professional wives are “stay-at-home” wives, but many chafe against the traditional gender roles imposed by a community that remains socially conservative even among an educated sub-population. Many women volunteer as “classroom moms” in the local schools, allowing them to look after their own and their friend’s (generally upper middle class) children.

Despite the veneer of respectability, however, the hospital is still filled with daily gossip about who is sleeping with whom and what their significant other will do in response. In one particular case, a caught husband informed his wife that, "I have been doing this for years . . . it's the challenge of being able to get away with it." With the secret out, he left town after divorcing his wife, returning to town a year later to marry the woman with whom he had the affair. In another case a midwife was married to a local businessman. After they had three children he married another local woman and they had children, and then he cheated again and remarried for the third time. Another doctor-nurse duo were married, had two children and then divorced after much scandal including some issues with their children involving drugs. There are no reliable statistics on such dalliances, but it seems unlikely that Ridgefield Corners stands out as some rural Sodom. More likely the community reflects trends found in urban communities as well, but news of such affairs spread widely in the small community that consciously presents itself as being more wholesome and simple than the wider urban world. Such news is thus treated with a particular trauma as it contradicts the collectively sown image the community has created for itself.

The few who come to Ridgefield Corners from outside and actually manage to leave the community rarely return; these are the ones with the fewest ties to the place. Those who come as a couple and do not find what they are looking or hoped for frequently leave as a couple. In the end Rural as Simple is relative—the motif cannot exist without the dichotomy with urban communities as it is seen as a reaction to urban life.

Rural as Wild

The case of the Rural as Simple can be compared to the notion of the Rural as Wild which is also relative: one cannot deem that a place is wild unless it is being compared to another. The Rural as Wild motif implies a lack of civilization and all that it brings to a place. In one of the numerous descriptions of Ridgefield Corners, Dorian (1962) notes that the Glimmer Glass Restaurant had been named after one of the local lakes. "A century or two ago this had been wild country where bear and bobcat prowled. A big summer attraction here was still the graveyard where the last members of an Iroquois tribe were buried" (111). As with the Rural as Simple motif, this motif is also utilized to categorize varying subpopulations within the community: the lower classes are seen by the upper classes as being more "rustic" and "wild."

The wild aspect of the local community is set in contrast to a rational-legal authority structure: instead of a "civilized" social structure, Ridgefield Corners is presented as run by a town oligarch, a man whose power enabled him to define "civilization" and against whom others were to be judged. This was evident in the social hierarchy that exhibited a simple power structure: "Ridgefield Corners was Cy's town and he ruled it with a tyrant's hand" (12). Thus the village's

population was divided between those who were wild and those who were not in a manner similar to the landscape itself:

The township covered a series of rolling hills. Whenever you topped a ridge, a whole new view crashed into your line of vision. Ridgefield Corners was bordered by the humpbacked shadow of the Adirondacks. Stretching toward that shadow as far as the eye could reach were the houses, farmlands, stud farms and dairy farms that one way or another belonged to old Cyrus Stevens. (12)

He owned not only the town but its primary institutions—including Mary Stevens Memorial Hospital—and this gave him the power to decide who worked and who was run out of town (Dorian 1962). This is confirmed in the novel when Justin is advised, “this is one no one can help you with. Just hope Olivia sticks with you and that the girl lives, or you might find yourself not only drummed out of town, but drummed out of the medical profession as well” (Dorian 1962: 20). This sentiment further indicates that the divide that existed in Ridgefield Corners was between the ruling classes and those deemed less than civilized: either you are part of the ruling class and have power to determine the fate of others or you are a member of the great unwashed whose fate is decided by others. Dorian (1962) notes that the fate of Justin Riley is in the hands of his wife as she states, “My money and my father’s influence got you where you are” (22).

The wild motif extends to gender roles as well. There are three types of women presented in the novel, “the social, outdoorsy women who were his patients—the women in white he worked with . . . and the tall, passionless beautiful woman to whom he was married” (22). The doctor’s wife was not the only well-bred female in town, however; there were several others there for various reasons. Misty Powers was dubbed as “the area’s gayest divorcee—and because she had three presumably well-born children” (7). There were also those couples who are servants in the homes of the wealthy. The servants were often viewed as being in need of training, “Brooks showed his face at the swinging door. Olivia had schooled Brooks as perfectly as she schooled her Irish hunters and her chows, and in the early days of their marriage, her diamond-in-the-rough husband” (35). After all, “a girl like Olivia—a tall, spare girl who suggested the Wellesley campus and walks in the rain, and soap rather than perfume” (34) was much more civilized than those who were born to be her servants.

There were also three types of men, “there was the quietly tender kind . . . who made you feel like a protected little girl. There was. . . the swift impulsive kind . . . who had your sweater up over your head before you even knew what he had in mind. And there was [the man] who was all man, but without connivance or guilt” (58). Olivia Turner had had encounters with all three: the first kind was represented by Stu, to whom she had become engaged and who was well-bred and would have been accepted by the family. The second was Justin Riley, whom she had married because she had found him wild and whom she had once loved, but now was not much more than a nuisance. The third was Sandy Miles,

with whom she had had a brief encounter when her parents had left her home with the servants for the summer while they were in Washington. This encounter could have led to what was best for Olivia, "If she had not been such a snob, Olivia might well be married to Sandy and been far better off" (58).

In other discussions of the men in town it is clear that there are those who are more civilized and those that might want to think that they are, but simply are not, "They were all at the bar by nightfall just as Justin had known they would be. They were not as rich as they would like to be or they pretended to be, and the cash register at Harry Kyle's Tavern always held its share of bum checks" (67). The owner of the tavern had lived in Ridgefield Corners for twenty-nine years. He had left New York because of his wife's health, however because of his experience, "under Harry's management . . . the same gossipy anybody-who-is-anybody quality" that had made many a New York places famous existed at the Tavern (67). Yet it had its wild side as well. The county sheriff sat at the end of the bar with his gun exposed and often noted that, "A gun . . . is a real phallic symbol boy. It's the image of power, the power of a male. Never underestimate it" (69).

The attitude of the more civilized in town was very apparent in the text presented by Dorian (1962). Those who were civilized did not like those who did not belong. The good doctor wonders, "why had she never liked him? She had wanted him, once, even loved him—but liking was something she saved, he thought, for her own well-born kind" (37). Indeed she was not the only one with a moral code of sorts: her father, from whom she had likely learned well, also had a code which he applied to all including his own son. "The code, among other things stated that when a man was guilty of wrongdoing, he had better pay for it in his own lifetime" (38). Given that the Senator applied this code to his own son it is no surprise that it was applied to Dr. Riley as well. When discussing the current scandal with Justin the senator remarked, "the girl's parents want money. That means lawyers, headlines, scandal" (40-41). Justin noted at this time that he intended to do nothing. Olivia corrected him and indicated that of course he would do something. This took Justin back to his previous life in "the tenements of New York's lower East Side, where everyone had told him what to do—his old man, his mother, his teacher, the social workers who had tried in vain to get his old man off boozing and beating the family" (41). But given his status in Ridgefield Corners he would, in the end, have no say; to protect the family and as a payoff to be rid of Justin the senator would indeed pay off the young girl's family. After all, the senator believed that money was always the answer and that anyone who was not well-bred could be bought. Indeed, soon after meeting Justin Riley the senator had remarked about Justin that, "outside of medicine, a man totally without scruples" and "he can be bought" (50). In the end the senator had the last word. He summoned both Justin and the girl's family to his office where the price would be paid—not to get rid of the girl's family but to get rid of Justin Riley.

Scandals were nothing foreign to those in Ridgefield Corners. Beyond the affairs of the doctors and their wives there was the town babysitter. The babysitter herself was considered by the elite to be uncouth in many ways, but she was always available and asked few questions: “the town’s babysitter . . . had a heavy hand. When the children became too much to handle, a little chloral hydrate extended their afternoon naps into the next day” (73). Such behavior on the part of both the babysitter and the local women was thought to be a sign of the wildness of the town, even of an inner decay in the town: “drinking and fornicating were the two local pastimes” (73).

Nevertheless, Ridgefield Corners was Cy Stevens’ town; it was his family’s creation and he did whatever he could to keep it that way. He made certain that it was what it was and no more—he was in control of the image presented to outsiders as well as the fate of those who viewed themselves as insiders, but who, in reality, were just pawns on the chess table controlled by Cy. Even the senator had to struggle to stay in check when it came to Stevens even though the two were in opposition on most issues. Evidence of Cy’s control and power was everywhere and known by everyone.

The local doctors, privileged enough to be there, often noted that it was, “Too bad . . . that Cyrus Stevens could not spare a few million from his prize cattle and race horses to modernize his hospital. Maybe Cy had no desire to modernize the hospital, or the town. The town was his, a small, almost eighteenth century world divorced from the larger world without” (17). Indeed Cy was always looking to gain more power through land speculation—even though his estate alone sat on 300 acres of farmland—and the local elite realized that if they were to leave he would be waiting to take over their land holdings:

When Sam and Misty Powers had been divorced . . . the twenty room mansion and surrounding five hundred acres had been sold to Cy Stevens. The land speculators of whom Cy Stevens lived in constant dread would never get their hands on the one-time Powers estate. (24)

The locals were often left to struggle because of the elite land deals in Ridgefield Corners. “Cy Stevens’ closing off his land to the hackers has made it pretty rough” (74). Even the local elite, who lived on inherited wealth, had an interest in keeping, “the town broke if they were going to live like millionaires on comparatively small income” (74). Indeed,

all the other wanted land . . . belonged, fortunately, to a Stevens relative or employee, held for Cy in the employee’s name. Senator Turner and other crackpots like him could not charge Cy Stevens with keeping a stranglehold on the town for his own profit and convenience—there were lots of other landholders, at least on the town records. (99)

Stevens harassed those who would not sell by spying on them or trying to convince the bankers that held their mortgages to foreclose. If this did not work he

would try to dig up personal dirt so that the “the townsfolk feel right about seeing . . . run off the property” (99). In the final analysis Cy thought that the town, “was being taken over by riffraff” (100). When it came to his own medical care he clearly noted that, “the doctors at that hospital . . . are all bunch of horses’ asses. When I need a doctor, I’ll get my doctors from New York. I just keep that hospital for the peasants” (100). Although he had little respect for those in his town, it was still his town and he would decide what it was and who was in it. One detects the ghost of James Fenimore Cooper in such sentiments, and there are those in the community today who might say something similar.

Is Ridgefield Corners wild today? There is still a clear divide between the “haves” and the “have nots,” and the majority of the haves are members of the upper middle classes who “have” because of work, not through the interest on a massive family fortune. Indeed, a connection to the local hospital still brings with it a sense of prestige. The town still has its Cy Stevens as well as other members of the upper class who live off of inherited wealth, their presence in such a small town an occasional reminder to the upper middle class that they are not what they pretend to be. There are also different settings for different groups of people just as in the novel. The different factions rarely socialize, but can for appearance sake if need be. Some view Ridgefield as an historic, elite, eighteenth-century small town with its geographic beauty and status; while others view it more as a place to live the good life and raise their children. There are those who are pure and pious in their presentation, but this is not to say that the town lacks its scandals and is without many shortcomings. Scandals serve not only as a way of equalizing class distinctions in a community where they are uncommonly visible but seldom discussed, but also as a way of reaffirming that even though the village may be “wild” it is also different than its urban counterparts. Indeed, it is an escape from those other places.

Rural as Escape

Finally, there is the Rural as Escape motif. Escape is socially constructed to be a manageable environment that operates outside of the perceived rules of “mass society.” The Rural is perceived as a place away from the dangers and stressors of mass society, a place where one can conceivably succeed by being a “big fish in a little pond.” It is founded on disaffection with the sins of mass society, and as such is also constructed in opposition to urban hegemony.

Stu Everett is an ideal example of an individual who grew up in a small town always looking up—looking at those who he perceived as better than him, who had more and thus were more than himself. Even after leaving town and attending Harvard Medical School, becoming one of the doctors he perceived as having some sort of power and status over him as a young boy, he still felt inferior. Engaged to the senator’s daughter he still cannot see himself being a man if he were to marry into money because that money would be “hers,” and he desired to make his own money, his own way, and prove himself. With his,

“clipped, Harvard-accented voice, pink-and-white, snub-nosed face, and . . . crinkly blond crew cut” (Dorian 1962: 18), Stu was nevertheless certain of himself only in Ridgefield Corners. The certainty of his position was assured only in Ridgefield Corners, and to go elsewhere would confront him with the anomie present in urban society.

Upon returning from medical school Stu could have married Olivia but instead he brought Justin Riley to town. In doing so he would be credited not only for his own talent in the operating room but also for bringing another very skilled surgeon to town. Olivia truly loved Stu as he was, and even Justin knew that as he clearly stated, “you knew you were a fool for Stu. You married me to save yourself from being a bigger fool. I wasn’t a lover, a husband, I was a damned rescue squad” (22-23). Although Stu had perceived himself as having something to prove to the town’s more wealthy, he did not as the senator himself noted, “Stu Everett—there’s a boy you should stick with—fine family, sense of responsibility, good schools, good clubs” Compare this to his comments about Justin Riley: “A man like Justin Riley ought never make a promise—he has nothing to back one with” and “A man like that . . . will break your heart twenty times over” (39).

If Stu had really wanted to make a name for himself why would he return to Ridgefield Corners? Why would he bring the likes of Justin Riley with him? Could it be that he saw what was “out there” and wanted to be in Ridgefield Corners because he felt safe there? He knew that with Justin there to make all of the mistakes he would shine brightly no matter what he did. He would always be better than Justin Riley simply because he belonged and Justin did not. Indeed, the chief of staff had told Justin, “you’ll always get a rotten deal unless you find your own kind of place . . . I’m usually glad to be alive. Which makes me a suitable citizen of Ridgefield Corners—something you’ll never be, something nature never intended you to be” (133).

Stu realizes what he has done, and in a conversation with Olivia he tells her:

the money was a big thing with me. I couldn’t marry a woman who had so much more than I did and you respected that. It’s different now, of course, I’m successful on my own. Next year, I’ll probably move into New York, get a big appointment, set myself up in private practice. I’ve run away long enough . . . It’s always running away when people hide in a town like this, a town that’s dying, that’s had it.” (118)

Indeed, Stu makes it clear that Olivia is not quite what she thinks herself to be living in Ridgefield Corners, “know something Livvy sweet? You’re a bum too, honey. A well-mannered well-born beautiful bum—and so am I” (121). The lesson is that some of those who leave then return in order to escape to a small town; in fact, even those from outside move to a small town for the certainty in order to escape the uncertainties of urban life.

Olivia too was in Ridgefield Corners as a means of escape, although her reasons were much different than Stu’s. She was indeed well-bred, at the top of

the social structure, but had once wanted to leave and make a life elsewhere—somewhere bigger, and thus presumably better. She returned to Ridgefield Corners in order to escape the larger realities of life. Her father's political contacts and influence had landed her a job as a social worker in New York "in her Junior League days after college" (55). She was not, however, prepared for such a position but was determined to do well. She became particularly interested in the case of one young boy, and in her desperation to help him she had gone to his apartment one day where he raped her. Prior to this incident she would not have believed herself to be so vulnerable. "Olivia had turned in her resignation the following day and had left at once for the haven of Ridgefield Corners" (57). Thus, Olivia's life in Ridgefield Corners from this point on was an escape from the real world "out there," where things that she did not even want to imagine happened to other people.

Justin Riley was also escaping from the city tenements to Ridgefield Corners, a life—as indicated earlier—he once imagined to be very different from its reality. Misty Powers had not escaped to Ridgefield Corners herself, but was hidden there with her two children by her ex-husband and his family. Even Cy Stevens managed to create an escape for those who he believed needed to be sheltered after a time of service. After growing dissatisfied with his nurse, he noted that he would not keep her on the job but he would protect her. When he no longer needed her himself he set her up with a house and its furnishings, suggesting that beyond that she would have to take of herself. She ran a babysitting service and provided illegal abortions, two services that were much needed in town.

Rural as Escape is something that is also well stated and realized in Ridgefield Corners today. There are many who are not only looking for a simple life, but are also running from a previous life or a bad experience. Many discuss the simple life that they appreciate in the community, but conversations can quickly turn to fears of the urban and suburban lives lived by their counterparts elsewhere. Many seek to escape to a place where their children will be safe, ideally with good schools and little crime.

Discussion

The Sex Cure is best described as a cheap *Peyton Place* rip-off, dismissed as an "excruciatingly badly written novel" and a "trashy book" (Weber 2007: 373). Although based to some extent on the real village of the time, and a "key" to the novel identifying the characters with their real-world counterparts was (and is) in circulation, the book also utilizes a series of stereotypes about small-town America and social class relations that ultimately obscures the reality about the actual village. Nevertheless, scandal is also a mechanism for "leveling" social relations: since it can occur with nearly anyone, and is most enjoyable when the

target of scandal has cultivated an image of moral superiority, its subtext is that despite inequality people are nevertheless essentially the same.

The reaction in the community was especially severe, tempered in comparison to *Peyton Place* only by the fact that it did not enjoy the commercial success of its infamous progenitor. The name of one of the characters was not disguised in the novel, and the actual woman pursued and won a libel suit against the author and her publisher. Due to public reaction, the trial was moved to a community about seventy-five miles away, the judge noting “truthfully or not . . . the book allegedly exposes the private mores of some of the local inhabitants,” and that “the village has been dealt too much of a blow to its local pride to be able to assure a fair trial” (Otsego Farmer 21 May 1964).

The libel suit was only the latest and most successful reaction in the village. Shortly after the novel’s publication, vandals painted “get out” in large red letters on the author’s home, more or less confirming her depiction of an isolated hick town wary of strangers. She commented, “It gives me the most wonderful material for my next book” (Observer Dispatch 2 November 1962). The attack brought the novel into the open, however, and “Operators of book stores ranging from Binghamton north to Utica said they were getting inquires about the book, but most said they had not stocked it . . . The novel, originally to sell for 50 cents, was bringing \$1 to \$4 where it could be found” (Evening Recorder 3 November 1962). The author alleged that the local police knew the identity of the perpetrators and failed to act, but there is no evidence that this was the case. One author reported rumors that the local elite family “bought up every copy . . . the only copy available anywhere, a paperback published for fifty cents, cost me more than a hundred dollars” (Weber 2007: 372). Others claim the book was burned by enraged villagers. The village promotes itself as a “perfect village,” and many residents seem to have accepted this marketing as an authentic declaration of the community. One resident noted in 2000, “This is the cutest town in New York. How many other towns have flowers on Main Street?” Similarly, another resident compared the village to others in the region:

I don’t understand why anyone wants to live anywhere else. There aren’t any other towns quite like this in the world. Ya go up to Fort Plain or Herkimer and they look so run down. Oneonta’s too big; I mean, it’s a city. A little city, but a city. No, (Ridgefield Corners) is about as ideal a town as you can get . . . it’s like a town right out of the fifties. (Both quotes from Thomas 2003).

Community pride is common in many if not most places, but the level at which many local residents have adopted the rural simulacra marketed for tourists as an authentic expression of the community has historically meant that scandals, even and perhaps especially those that occur in most communities at one time or another, are particularly painful. They not only expose the community as being, as one resident claimed, “merely ordinary,” but they challenge the self-concept of the village and its residents who claim to be unique. Indeed, the community has developed such a strong identity around its supposed simplicity and purity that

any deviation results in a sharp reaction. When a high school student lobbed a homemade pipe bomb during the 1990s, it was not only the local police who punished the youth: the school airbrushed the young man out of the yearbook. More recently, a series of scandals related to bullying in the school system have sharply divided the community according to class lines; such unfortunate incidents happen in many communities across the country, but in a village that defines itself as being unlike, even better than, the rest of the country, such events exhibit a level of trauma rarely seen in more urbanized settings.

Ridgefield Corners is, despite the subsidies heaped upon it by paternalistic local elite families, not terribly different than most other American small towns. The motifs utilized by Elaine Dorian to describe the community are commonly found in descriptions of rural communities, but they are cultural ideals constructed in an urbanormative society. They are not reality itself, but rather they are lenses through which reality is interpreted. It is a simulacrum first expressed by Cooper in his portrayal of the community in *The Pioneers* and that continues to influence cultural projections of rural life. The villagers themselves by-and-large see themselves through these same lenses, and the occasional scandals that plague every American community, whether a kid lobbing a pipe bomb downtown, the publication of a smut novel, or even just a few kids picked up for smoking marijuana, confront the community with the reality of being like everywhere else. Whether defined by the outsider author of *The Sex Cure* or by local soccer moms, the rural simulacra is, for many, the reality.

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11

Inbred Horror: Degeneracy, Revulsion, and Fear of the Rural Community

Karen Hayden

What draws men together are the mechanical forces such as the affinity of blood, attachment to the same soil, the cult of their ancestors, a commonality of habits . . . It is only when the group has been formed on these bases that cooperation becomes organized. (Durkheim 1984 [1933]: 219)

In the introduction to this book, Fulkerson and Thomas contend that urbanormativity grows out of a popular culture that distorts rural reality and contributes to the idea that urban is the way forward and that rural is the way backward. Ideas about what is normal, acceptable, and desirable have an inherent urban character, while rural itself has come to be defined as deviant. In this chapter I explore the notion of the inbred community: rural, close-knit, insular places and their depictions in popular culture as deviant and even horrific. I place what I call the mythology of inbredness within the larger nineteenth-century idea of degeneration. I argue that these small, rural, tight-knit communities, where “everyone knows everyone” and “everyone is related” came to be, for those on the outside, an allegory for what will happen if society or even small segments of society resist modernization and association with others in the steady march of progress. In the urban-rural divide and cultural ideal of urbanormativity, the message of the inbred community is clear: degeneracy, primitivism, savagery, regression, and an overall devolution will result if groups are allowed to become too insular, too close, too familiar. It is tight-knittedness to a fault.

The equation of consanguinity, or marrying within a small group of related people, signifying degeneracy was loosely modeled on the nascent nineteenth-century bio-evolutionary paradigm exemplified by Darwinism and Herbert Spencer’s social evolution. In their introduction to a collection of essays on the intellectual history of the notion of degeneracy, J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander Gilman find:

The word degeneration was itself a curious compound. First of all, it meant to lose the properties of a genus, to decline to a lower type . . . to dust, for in-

stance, or to the behavior of beasts in the barnyard. It also meant to lose the generative force, the force through which the green fuse drives the flower. During the nineteenth century, the pattern of degeneration was further identified in the physical as well as the natural sciences . . . In addition, the idea of degeneration encouraged typological, just as much as it organized physical and biological, speculation; and in its more popular aspect it invited some very unscientific stereotyping. Finally, and for all its connection with *natural* phenomenon, its most powerful association was with something *unnatural*—when associated with desire or supernatural dread. (1985:ix)

This chapter explores one example of this unnatural, unscientific stereotyping and how it was manifested in a supernatural dread that I am calling the mythology of the inbred community. I will examine how the notion of inbreeding and primitivism has been used, reused, reconstructed, and incorporated into the local culture through jokes, put-downs, folklore, moralizing newspaper articles, and imaginary boundaries, and how this is one example of a larger association of the mythology of inbredness. As Chamberlin and Gilman contend, “degeneration provided a context for the interpretation of situations, and a text for speculation” (1985: ix). I investigate how this text for speculation was serviced in popular imagery of insular, reputedly inbred communities and how these types of places and people became a part of an “ingenious fusion of folk wisdom with the language of degeneration” (Greenslade 1994: 174). I explicate how the larger message of “inbreeding leads to degeneracy” became part of American popular culture and how this mythology become a warning to us all and to what end. I examine several different instances of these sorts of cautionary tales in American popular culture and discuss the messages contained within.

For the evolutionary schema to become so entrenched and unassailable it needed to creep into the popular culture of the mid- to late nineteenth century. It continues to be so potent and enduring because it is continuously recreated over time, resulting in a type of taken-for-granted, mundane knowledge permeating everything from schoolyard ridicule to horror stories. These larger cultural messages in turn inculcate the image of allegedly inbred places and lock them into their roles as “inbred communities”—as regional examples of a larger cultural bogey-man which we all fear, or at least keep at arms’ length. Inbred place myths become readily available receptacles for a cultural lesson that we, as a society, feel the need to learn and relearn (Hayden 1997; 2000; 2014).

In his inquiry into the theme of degeneracy in late-nineteenth-century British novels, William Greenslade (1994) discusses the function of myth-making and scientific discourses of regression and degeneracy. Using Frank Kermode’s (1967) distinction between myth and fiction, Greenslade states “the mythic component of a concept and practice such as degeneration lies in . . . its constructedness” (1994: 3). Kermode wrote “fictions are made for finding things out, and they change as the need for sense-making changes. Myths are the agents of stability; fictions are the agents of change (1967: 39).

The myth of inbredness and particularly the rural inbred community became one such agent of stability in the larger concept of degeneration. Chamberlin and Gilman argue that:

degeneration crystallized some perennial disagreements about the continuities and discontinuities of natural history . . . the idea permeated various thought-processes from biology and genetics to sociology and psychology to literature and the arts . . . but it also became an inevitable structure of reality, an indisputable fact. (1985:ix-x)

I examine how the idea of the so-called inbred community achieved the permanence of an indisputable fact and an inevitable structure of reality. The specter of the inbred community—the very tight-knit and insular group of people in rural, backwoods settings—took on the role of a local reminder of a message of urbanormativity we must all heed—namely the message of progress or regress. I examine depictions of inbred communities in popular culture and the language, metaphors, and discursive practices of these cautionary tales. I hope to illuminate how and why the inbred town became such a powerful image, and why it remains so today.

Shirley Jackson's Vision of New England

The first examples of the larger cultural message of inbred communities as degenerate come from Shirley Jackson's short stories "The Lottery" and "The Summer People," written in 1948 and 1950 respectively. Like Jackson's most popular short story, "The Lottery," with its view of small-town barbarism wherein village folk gather once a year for a ritualized stoning of an arbitrarily selected town inhabitant, the "The Summer People" shares the theme of the tightly-knit, insular New England community, its oddities and even its horrors. "The Summer People," however, makes explicit the subject of the inbredness of the town as an explanation for its insularity and degeneracy, a theme only implied in "The Lottery." In "The Summer People," the scene of inbred horror is set in the following passage:

Physically, Mrs. Allison decided, as she always did when leaving the grocery store after one of her inconclusive conversations with Mr. Babcock, physically, Mr. Babcock could model for a statue of Daniel Webster, but mentally . . . it was horrible to think into what old New England Yankee stock had degenerated. She said as much to Mr. Allison when she got into her car, and he said, "It's generations of inbreeding. That and the bad land."

The Allisons are "summer people"—outsiders from New York who own a vacation home in a fictional New England town where they spend their summers every year. Since they are retired, they decide to remain at their cottage beyond Labor Day, as they have nothing to rush back home to. The natives of the town

consider this an unacceptable intrusion; after all, even the touristiest of towns wants to resume their normal lives after Labor Day. Summer people are not supposed to stay beyond the permissible time allotted for summer, and because of their native inbredness, the townsfolk retaliate, plotting revenge against these interlopers. In the course of the short story the natives degenerate; they regress from mildly annoying the Allisons with their slowness and inconclusive conversations to absolutely terrorizing them. By the end of the story the Allisons are holed up in their cottage with no kerosene nor mail from the outside world since the town folk, growing increasingly restless, refuse to deliver these services to non-natives after Labor Day. Their phone line has been severed and their car disabled. They are trapped, and at the end of the story, the two old people are huddled together in the darkness waiting for the degenerate, inbred natives to come get them.

Jackson's story relies on the validity of the idea that the inbred, insular town is inevitably degenerate and thus dangerous and even horrific. Other than their inbredness and territoriality, no explanation is given for the native's monstrous turn. They are now creatures of instinct, predators lashing out at those who dare encroach upon their place, their home. What appears serene and bucolic on the surface can turn horrific, predatory, and savage within a matter of a day.

Shirley Jackson was not a native of New England; she grew up in California and then moved to Rochester, New York where she attended college. She transferred to Syracuse University, and after college, moved to Bennington, Vermont from New York City. She lived briefly in Connecticut before returning to Vermont (Westbrook 1982: 230-235). Jackson is clearly able to distance herself from the so-called degenerated Yankees about whom she became famous for writing. A topic embedded in much of Jackson's writing is humankind's potential for evil and cruelty. To convey this gothic view of humanity, she relies on grotesque imagery of communal closeness; the towns depicted in both "The Summer People" and "The Lottery" reveal the horror within. Jackson's New England villagers are frightening because of their odd solidarity and primitive, superstitious rituals. The natives in "The Summer People," in particular, possess the ability to be normal and abnormal, primitive and modern. They can maintain some semblance of normalcy to a point. When their insular and sacred social unit is threatened, however, they regress to their degenerate, primitive ways. These stories are very brief; the reader is not given much information with which to judge these strange folks, and thus, their superstitions and automatic distrust of outsiders appear innate or natural—it springs forth from their very constitution.

In both "The Lottery" and "The Summer People," the lure of a pastoral village life where everyone knows everyone turns grotesque. These are inherently degenerative tales. In "The Lottery," the conductors of the stoning rite are prominent members of the town. As Perry D. Westbrook discussed in his book, *The*

New England Town in Fact and Fiction (1982), the unity of this town is not reassuring; it is scary. Discussing “the Lottery” he finds,

Frighteningly noticeable is the solidarity of the people—their sense of being a tightly knit, even sacred social unit—in the spirit of New England social covenant. The town is all-important; the individual must be ready to give his life for its well-being. The people gathered in the town green gossip and joke familiarly just as they would at a Fourth of July celebration or at a town meeting. The lottery is but an episode of their yearly routine, another occasion when people meet and strengthen the bonds that hold them together. (231)

After writing “The Lottery,” Jackson argued that it should not be seen as applicable only to New England towns and people. She explained that she wrote the story as an “allegory of innate and universal human viciousness, stupidity, and credulity” (Westbrook 1982: 232). According to Jackson, we all contain the primitive within us. Perhaps it is just more easily aroused in these savage, tribal, and rustic rural settings.

In “The Summer People,” the theme of degeneration is made even more conspicuous. In Jackson’s urbanormativity, because the natives are so insular to the point of being inbred, they can quickly revert to their innate, savage tendencies that bubble just below the surface of their seemingly normal countenances. In both stories, the theme of the people being tied to the land—to the town itself—also makes them appear anachronistic and backward. These are people who have lived in the same spot for generations upon generations, since Daniel Webster walked among them. This rootedness in a place and solidarity to home and township, almost unheard of “in this day and age,” is also portrayed as inherently anti-modern and regressive. The natives turn hideous when their land is encroached upon because they see it as ancestral and inborn; it belongs to them and, quite naturally, it must be defended and kept within the group.

Home and Family

A more recent inbred horror story with the themes of extreme insularity, regression, and ties to ancestral land appeared on television’s popular series, *The X-Files*. The science fiction/drama series, created by Chris Carter, ran on American television from 1993-2002. In an episode entitled “Home” that first aired in October of 1996, the show’s protagonists, Agent Dana Scully and Agent Fox Mulder, find themselves investigating an inexplicable horror. This predicament is not unusual for these two Federal Bureau of Investigation paranormal experts; indeed, it is the basis for the so-called speculative fiction program (cf. Genge 1995). However, the horror in this particular episode was not the usual alien abduction, giant parasitic monster, or evil government conspiracy that Scully and Mulder typically find themselves chasing but never quite explaining. This

episode is about a small, rural, and seemingly bucolic Mayberryesque town and a family known as the Peacocks.

The program begins with the sounds of a crying child. Viewers see three figures standing outside a rundown farm house in the pouring rain. One is digging a hole while the two others look on. One of the onlookers sounds distraught, choking out low, guttural moans as thunder cracks in the background. The next scene depicts a bright, sunny baseball field with several young boys playing ball. A player hits the ball beyond a fence, and the boy who had been running after it stops dead in his tracks. He says, "It went on the *Peacock property!*" The ball players exchange uncertain glances, and one of them pulls another ball out of his knapsack; the game begins again. The player at bat scuffs his feet, waiting for the pitch. His foot hits something mushy and when he looks down he sees blood rising, bubbling from beneath the dirt. He backs away slowly, staring at the bloodied soil. Ominous music rises with the blood. The other players catch on that something is amiss, and they too back away. The scene cuts to Agent Scully bending over a small rectangular hole in the earth, measuring it and the blade of the shovel that dug it. She rattles off her measurements in a technical, scientific tone as her partner, Agent Mulder, plays with the baseball left behind by the startled boys in their haste to leave this polluted playing field.

Drawing upon the urban versus rural trope, Agent Mulder reminisces about his childhood, saying that if he were not tied to a big city because of his FBI career, he would settle down and build a home in a place like this.¹ Scully dryly replies, "It'd be like living in Mayberry." At just that moment, the local sheriff arrives, introducing himself as Sheriff Andy Taylor. He thanks the FBI agents for coming, explaining "It's just me and my deputy, and hell, we've never had anything of this nature." He says the population of Home is only a few hundred and "everybody knows everybody." Mulder asks who lives in the rundown farm house near the field, saying, "Did you question them? Because they've been watching us the entire time." Sheriff Taylor hesitates, and then says, "That farm belongs to the Peacock family, three boys now—well men—guess you could call them human. Their folks were in a bad car wreck, and we suppose they died." Scully says, "You *suppose?*" Sheriff Taylor continues, "Well, we tried to administer medical attention, but the boys hauled the bodies away. They haven't been seen for ten years, so we supposed they died."

Scully asks again, "Have you questioned the men?" Three figures can be seen on the porch in the distance. Sheriff Taylor tries to explain, saying "The Peacocks built that farm during the Civil War. It still has no electricity, no running water, no heat. They grow their own food, they raise their own pigs, they breed their own cows . . . raise and breed their own *stock*, if you get my meaning."

Scully insists that as the closest residents to the crime scene the men must be interviewed, at least as witnesses. Sheriff Taylor says the boys "wouldn't understand." After a long pause, he commences to defend his small town against urban sprawl and the culture of urbanormativity. He says:

This town is my home. It's quiet, peaceful. I don't even wear a gun. I've seen and heard some of the *sick and horrible things* that go on *outside* my home, and at the same time I knew we couldn't stay hidden forever. One day the modern world would find us and my hometown would change forever. And when I saw *it* in the ground, I knew that day had come. I want to find whoever did this, but in doing so, I'd like it if the way things are around here didn't have to change. I know this is "iffy" Bureau jurisdiction, but I didn't know where else to turn. So I called the Bureau in Pittsburgh, and when I described the victim, they said I should see you.

Scully and Mulder proceed to the Sheriff's office, where they meet Deputy Barney (Pastor, not Fife). They examine the victim in a closet-sized bathroom, because the Sheriff wants to keep the investigation out of sight. Scully and Mulder are shown the victim—an infant—a horrifically malformed infant, a monstrous birth.² Scully, the pathologist of the team, is taken aback by what she sees. She exclaims, "Oh my God, Mulder, it looks as if this child has been afflicted by every rare birth defect known to science . . . I don't even know where to begin!" Mulder says, "I guess we can rule out murder as the cause of death." Scully says, "I don't know about that." She finds evidence that the child was alive when it was buried. Mulder states, "There's something rotten in Mayberry."

The two go outside to discuss what they have just unearthed, and Scully ponders, "Imagine a woman's hopes and dreams for her child and then nature turns so *cruel* . . . what must a mother go through?" Mulder replies, "Apparently not much in this case if she'd just throw it out with the trash." They discuss the case, trying to determine whether it is an "FBI matter." Scully contends that the child is not the result of a single polygenic mating . . . "those defects are the result of autosomal dominant disorders,³ and from the degree . . . mutations that go back many generations." Mulder says, "Sheriff Taylor implied that the boys in the family were not really the type that could easily get dates." Scully recalls the sheriff also implied that they practice inbreeding. She explains, "there are theories which pose that our bodies are simply *vehicles* for genes needing to replicate." Since the agents have been told that there are no females in the Peacock family, they theorize the boys must have kidnapped a woman, because, as Scully puts it, "if the instinct and the need is strong enough, they will answer it anyway that they can." Scully speculates that a woman gave birth to the child, and probably against her will. Since "kidnapping is a Bureau matter," the two forge ahead with their investigation of the Peacocks.

The case only gets more complicated, with layers that fold in upon themselves, like family generations stretching back to the Civil War and beyond. The agents search the Peacock property—their home, their world. The house is empty of the brothers, and the agents find probable cause to enter the premises. Inside, they discover plenty of evidence that there was indeed an unattended birth inside; footprints and a shovel clearly indicate that the infant was the same one buried alive in the field abutting the Peacock land. As Scully and Mulder discuss

the need for Sheriff Taylor to arrest the boys, we, the viewers, can see that they are being watched and heard. A set of eyes are watching the agents. The eyes appear to be hiding beneath the floor boards of the house; they look like part of the house. The agents leave the scene, call Sheriff Taylor and he agrees that the boys should be arrested in the morning, saying he will obtain the warrants.

That night, the sheriff sits on his porch wistfully looking out at the town which he knows will never be the same. Before he turns in for the night, he ponders whether he should take out his gun, but decides against it, locking it away in a box. He passes by his front door, which he does not lock and upon which the camera lingers. He joins his sleeping wife in bed. In the meantime, the viewers have seen a monstrous-looking face siphoning gas, transferring it from a barrel into a white Cadillac that Agents Scully and Mulder had seen at the Peacock house earlier. Next, three figures are seated in the car, traveling down an isolated road, playing Johnny Mathis's "Wonderful, Wonderful" on the tape deck.

The Peacock boys brutally murder both the sheriff and his wife with a club-like instrument. The camera never shows any of the boys in full view, but we see glimpses of their hideous faces, their super-human-like strength as one tosses the sheriff aside; the entire time they emit animal-like grunts. Meanwhile, in his hotel room, Mulder watches a nature show on the television. The show documents a pack of wild dogs. The voice-over instructs that the eldest, dominant male of the pack encircles its prey to assure the others it is killed and that it is safe to approach.

The next morning, Deputy Pastor is sitting on the sheriff's porch waiting for Scully and Mulder to arrive. He discovered the bodies when he came to give the sheriff crime reports and DNA test results on the infant. The agents investigate the scene and Mulder, states, "they really went *cavemen* on 'em." Scully's perusal of the DNA reports leads her to determine that the lab must have botched the tests; she comments that there are "far too many gene imbalances, it would have to be a lab error, this child's cells would have had to divide triple-fold in cell metaphase." Mulder asks, "Triple? What if each of the Peacock brothers was the father of that child?" Scully replies, "Only one sperm in thousands from a single individual can penetrate an ovum membrane." Mulder says, "What if generations of autosomal breeding could produce such mutations?" Scully says, "there would have to be a weakening of the ovum, and that would have to come from a female member of the Peacock family, and there aren't any left."

Meanwhile, the viewers have learned that the Peacock brothers' mother is alive; it was she beneath the floor boards who overheard Scully and Mulder discussing the arrest of her boys, prompting the attack on the sheriff and his wife. The boys are back at the homestead preparing for the assault on their world by the outsiders. Mrs. Peacock offers moral support. Sounding very much like Sheriff Taylor the day before, she tells her sons:

They'll be comin' now. We knew this day was gonna happen. That they'd try to change the way things are. All we can do about changin' things is be ready

for it—be ready for them. Let them know that this is *our home* and *this is the way it's gonna stay*.

The agents decide to go to the Peacocks with the aid of the deputy, who, within minutes, is killed by a booby-trap set by the brothers. Through the safe distance of their field glasses, Scully and Mulder watch as the brothers move in on the deputy's body "like a pack of animals." Mulder recites his lesson from the nature show on wild dogs, explaining to Scully why they encircled their already dead prey. He adds his own insight in the following soliloquy:

What we're witnessing here is undiluted animal behavior—Mankind absent of its own creation of civilization, technology, and information, regressed to an almost prehistoric state, obeying only the often savage laws of nature. We're outsiders invading the den, and trying to take away their one chance of reproducing—which we're gonna do.

Still taking a cue from the animal behavior lesson, Scully and Mulder distract the boys by releasing some pigs from their pen. The agents make their way into the house where they discover Mrs. Peacock under a bed, strapped to a board with wheels. She is dismembered, missing both arms and legs, which, we learn; she lost in the car accident that killed her husband. Her other physical deformities, such as her severe facial disfigurements, are presumably the result of her inbredness. She is the missing ovum that Scully and Mulder had speculated they would find, but she is not a kidnapped victim being held against her will. The camera pans to Peacock family photographs adorning the wall. We see generations of Peacocks, all quite similar in appearance, with the telltale facial deformities, but none as monstrous as the brothers. Mrs. Peacock and her husband are posing in one of the photos, and aside from their facial deformities, they look happy, content.

Mrs. Peacock screams at the agents to go away, leave her alone. They say they are there to help her. They can take her for medical attention. Scully surmises that Edmund, the oldest brother, is both father and brother to the other two. Why she believes this is unclear, since, according to the sheriff, the father has only been dead ten years, and the other two boys, we learned from Sheriff Taylor before his untimely death, are in their twenties.

Mulder leaves the room to keep an eye on the boys. Scully tries again to talk Mrs. Peacock into leaving the house. She says, "*This is our home—why leave it?!*" Scully says that she must need medical attention. Mrs. Peacock explains how her boys attended to her after the accident using methods the family learned in the "War of Northern Aggression." The mother says, "they're such good boys." Scully tells her that they have murdered three people, and Mrs. Peacock says, "I can tell you don't have any of your own children. Maybe one day you'll learn, the pride, the love, when you know your boy will do anything for his mother."

The boys are approaching the house at this point, and Scully runs to help Mulder, leaving Mrs. Peacock and her maternal lesson behind. There is gunfire and a scuffle and Mulder is in danger. Scully runs back toward Mrs. Peacock, yelling to the boys, "I've got the mother!" One brother was killed in the scuffle, another runs after Scully and is killed by one of the booby traps that he and his brothers had set. In the confusion, the other brother disappears. Scully and Mulder look for him and find that he had escaped with his mother. They are gone.

Scully and Mulder put out an APB on them and the police set up a road block around a thirty-mile radius. Scully says, "In time we'll catch them." Mulder replies, "I think time already caught them." The show ends with Edmund crawling out of the trunk of the Cadillac. He is talking to his mother, who is also in the trunk. She says:

There, there. Sherman and George were good boys. We should be proud of them. And you've got to know, Edmund, you can't keep a Peacock down. There'll be more. Now we have to move on, start a new family, one we'll be proud of—find a new place to call ours—our new home, brand new home.

I dwelled on this episode of the *X-Files* for several reasons. First, it clearly articulates what I am calling inbred horror. Because of generations of inbreeding, the Peacocks have degenerated into savage, homicidal monsters. The episode illustrates several components of the inbred mythology, tales which define, circumscribe, and stigmatize supposedly inbred locales in their surrounding regions (Hayden 1997; 2001; 2014). This particular show is not about any real place. Like many episodes in the *X-Files* series, however, this show reinvents superstitions and beliefs to mine people's fears of what we think *could happen* or *could be true*. The series was known for its ability to tap into age-old, folkloric superstitions and fears (cf. Genge 1995). For instance, an episode called "The Jersey Devil" drew upon regional New Jersey lore of the "Leeds Devil," and combined it with "Bigfoot" legends (Genge 1995: 23). The New Jersey stories date back to the 1700s when folklore emerged about a thirteenth child, a half-human, half-beast "devil child" born to a woman named Leeds. The child, as the legend goes, flew up the chimney and has been terrorizing the region ever since (Genge 1995: 23-24). In other episodes, the show takes on faith healers, werewolves, ghosts, vampires, cults, witchcraft, demon-possession, cannibalism, and extraterrestrials. As with most superstitions and spooky tales, the proof hardly matters.

The Horror Within

The use of inbreeding and the extremely tight-knit, insular community is another instance of the program's ability to deploy preexisting fears, speculations, and even partial truths, while updating them for late-twentieth- to early-

twenty-first-century television-viewing audiences. The show's propensity to mix folk stories, superstitions, religious beliefs, and science fiction with scientific jargon as well as the credibility of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation gives it an air of plausibility. The "Home" episode in particular had an aura of facticity established through scientific terminology and references to genetics and DNA testing. It also drew upon the dread of extreme insularity and isolation by relying on fears of inbreeding, degeneracy, and the horror within.

The "Home" episode reveals many themes of nineteenth-century notions of degeneracy, some of which are made quite explicit and others to which are only alluded. First and foremost, although the show focuses on one inbred family, the story highlights the closeness and insularity of the entire rural town through copious references to "Mayberry," the idyllic, insulated small town of the *Andy Griffith Show*, and the sheriff's monologue at the beginning of the show where he says, "This town is my *home*. It's peaceful, quiet . . . I've seen and heard some of the sick things that go on outside my home, and at the same time I knew we couldn't stay hidden forever. One day the modern world would find us and my hometown would change forever." His sentiments are later mirrored in Mrs. Peacock's warning to her sons as the outsiders are closing in on them. She says, "They'll be comin' now. We knew this day would happen. That they'd try to change the way things are . . . this is our home and this is the way it's gonna stay." Through these two almost identical monologues the writers⁴ situate the theme of inbreeding as the horror within the small, close-knit, tightly integrated community. The sheriff's fears of the modern, outside world polluting his town were unfounded—the monsters exist within its midst and they are profoundly *un-modern*, regressive, and degenerate. Hence, the Peacocks can be seen as one end on the continuum of the small town's insularity. They are a metonym for the backwardness of the entire town that is portrayed as stuck in its Mayberryesque past. This theme is reinforced throughout the show, with references to "everyone knowing everybody" in town and by dwelling on the idea that one need not lock doors in this type of town. Thus, the rest of the town can be seen as only a few steps from the Peacock's, the rottenness seething at the very core of this antiquated town. They are the extreme end of an insular, inbred spectrum. They are Mayberry run amok.

Devolutionary Theory

Themes of devolution, regression, and degeneracy also run throughout the episode's narrative. Throughout the episode, the three Peacock boys are depicted as atavistic throwbacks on an evolutionary timeline that is steadily marching forward. Agent Mulder says "they really went 'caveman' on 'em" as he views the bodies of the sheriff and his wife. Later he clarifies his thesis stating, "What we're witnessing here is undiluted, animal behavior—mankind absent of its own creation of civilization, technology, and information regressed to an almost pre-

historic state, obeying only the often savage laws of nature.” And, since the inbredness of these miscreants has been established through genetic testing, the causality is taken for granted. Inbreeding leads to not only genetic problems and a pronouncement of recessive genetic traits—it causes people to devolve into absolute savagery. Because of their inbreeding, nature has “turned cruel.” The Peacocks are not fully human, they have returned to a previous state, half-human and half-animal. They are cavemen, emerged from their own cave-like insularity. By shutting out the modern world, keeping civilization at bay, and turning inward, they have regressed. They are throwbacks to a much earlier time when clubbing people to death and having sex with one’s mother were supposedly quite common.

Yet the Peacocks do exist within the modern world. They can drive automobiles and siphon gas, they listen to music, and know how to use technologies to their advantage in booby-trapping their house. They have foresight and are able to put two and two together—they kill the sheriff before he can arrest them and rig their house when they know the law is bearing down on them. They have human emotions, and like many families, they adorn their walls with pictures of relatives; they are loyal to themselves and their mother. All of these characteristics establish these inbred, rural others as close yet far, as savages in the midst of civilization.

Much of the nineteenth-century literature of degeneration called upon imagery of the degenerate type existing within the process of modernization and urbanization. Progression forward required “interacting with and creating degenerate spaces near at home” (Stepan 1985: 98). Certain groups have been set aside as necessary and accessible reminders of society’s capacity to regress, to devolve. Historian Nancy Stepan noted that “degeneration became a code for other social groups whose behavior seemed sufficiently different from accepted norms as to threaten traditional social relations and the promise of ‘progress’” (Stepan 1985: 98). Rural degenerates became part and parcel of the rural as wild and rural as deviant themes so central to urbanormativity (Fulkerson & Thomas 2014).

The idea that progression necessitates regression was central to many of the nineteenth-century writings on degeneracy because as Robert Nye observed, the concept of decline is “conceptually inseparable from that of progress” (1985: 49). Discussing sociology and degeneracy he states, “the exponents of a science of society found it impossible to discuss the progressive aspects of social evolution without considering the negative effects that accompanied it, and that threatened to stall or even reverse the ‘normal’ condition of advance” (1985: 49). Similarly, Colin Sumner asserts that the terminology of degeneration and “degenerate type” is still operative today; it has simply been replaced by deviance and “the deviant type” in sociology (1994: 136). Fear of social degeneration is still readily apparent as a sign of modernity’s tentativeness. Sumner states:

[The growth of the concept of social deviation] was a sign of modernity's self-doubt, a sign of uncertainty about what is normal and about the healthiness of normality. But it was a sign within a utopian discourse which was involved in the cultural reconstruction of the normal, which was a key moment in establishing a stable, corporate society . . . It was thus a pragmatic holding concept pregnant with its contrary. (1994: 136)

The possibility of inbred communities, because they have been constructed as isolated pockets of primitiveness which can crop up in rural locales virtually anywhere, offer ready reminders of civilization's contrary tendencies.

Family Roots

The theme of people tied to place also runs throughout the "Home" episode. It appears as if the land itself germinates these strange, grotesque Peacock creatures. As in Jackson's short stories, part of the Peacock's and the entire town's primitivism is revealed in their immobility and rootedness to ancestral land. The connection to the land is portrayed starkly in one of the first scenes, when the Peacock's blood rises from the soil. Another scene shows Mrs. Peacock's eyes peering from below the floorboards of her ancestral home, as if her dismembered body is embedded in the house itself. This trope of rootedness and embeddedness in the earth and home further establishes the Peacocks as regressive and anti-modern. In a modern world where geographical and upward mobility signifies progress and advancement, these territorial people stay below the surface in a chosen state of decline. And, as with the town-folk in Jackson's "The Summer People," they turn truly degenerate when their land is intruded upon by urbane others from the modern world. The dialectic of progress and regress, rise and decline, movement forward versus deep-rooted immobility is reinforced in these images of people dug into their dens like animals.

Along with the trope of rootedness to place, the Peacocks are also stuck in time. Throughout the episode, there are numerous references to antiquity, to the family living in the Civil War era without running water, electricity, and other modern amenities. At one point in the story as the FBI agents plan to approach the Peacock property, the sheriff's deputy instructs them to wear bulletproof vests, because the Peacock brothers have been known to fire Civil War muzzle loaders. The deputy yells, "I for one am *not* getting taken out by some antique!" These references further establish the inbred people as throwbacks, as people stuck in both space and time. Similarly, the Peacock brothers are called "the boys" by the sheriff, providing another metaphor for their arrested development and regressiveness. In his discussion of degeneracy and sexuality, Sander Gilman noted that:

The child is the primitive form of man; the primitive is proof of man's earlier attitudes toward sexuality. In this conflation of types of sexual Otherness the

germ of the concept of sexual degeneration is present. Hidden within each individual, capable of being triggered by his fantasy in opposition to his rational mind, is the tendency toward perversion. Perversion is the basic quality ascribed to the sexuality of the Other. Individual perversion is thus seen as proof of the potential perversion of the group. (1985: 73)

As both the products of, and participants in, inbreeding, the Peacocks are reminders of society's ability to degenerate, to regress to primitive monsters.

Other Inbred Horrors

I have lingered on a few examples of rural inbred communities in popular culture that clearly illustrate themes of the rural, close-knit community as degenerate, deviant other to the urban, normative standard. It is important to note, however, that while I have discussed only a few ideal types, the shocking image of inbred, degenerate groups can be found in numerous American horror films. Indeed the "backwoods horror film" and "inbred movie" are now recognized as a genre unto themselves, for example, "The Top 25 Backwoods Horror & Suspense Movies" compiled by Mark H. Harris for About.com and "The Top 10 Inbred Movies of All Time" on the Bloody Disgusting website catalog the best of this subgroup of horror films. The cult classic, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (dir. Hooper 1974), in the top five on both lists, features a depraved Southern family who kill anyone who ventures into their homestead. When one of the victims escapes to a nearby store, she finds that the owner, who she thought would help her, is also a member of the family and brings her back to the house. The family's barbarism is reinforced as they trot their dead grandparents out of the attic and serve up a dinner of their victims.

The Hills Have Eyes (dir. Craven 1977) featuring a "brutal band of inbred hillbilly cannibals," (*Video Hounds Golden Movie Retriever* 1997: 318) offers another inbred horror. Here another group of isolated savages turn predatory when people intrude upon their territory. This group has the additional gene-altering problem of having been exposed to some type of nuclear testing, however, the fact that they have "taken to the hills" to live away from others in a small group which reproduces itself, is also intrinsic to the plot.

Deliverance, both the 1970 James Dickey novel and the 1972 movie (dir. Boorman) based on the book, rely on the notion that isolated, inbred groups are genetically defective and inherently barbaric (see also Thomas et al. 2011 and Goad 1997). The protagonists are outsiders, four men who attempt to escape from the modern, civilized world to the untainted wilderness for a weekend of canoeing and bow hunting. As they meet the locals in a remote region of Georgia one man mutters, "talk about genetic deficiencies" and another peers into a shack-like home to see a severely physically disabled girl. One of the other men plays guitar with a puny looking boy, a banjo aficionado, whose eyes are too small and close together. Aside from his banjo skills, the boy is clearly "retard-

ed,” and does not seem to recognize the men only a few minutes after their encounter. The story does not simply portray these isolated people as having genetic problems and thus pitiable, however. Two of the four weekenders later meet up with two “mountain men” or “toothless bastards” who immediately set out to rape them. One of the “mountain men” succeeds in raping one of the canoers, forcing him to squeal like a pig as he assaults him. They are about to do the same to the other man when the remaining two in the foursome arrive and kill one of the perpetrators; the other flees. The locals in this story are prototypes for degenerate, isolated, backward people who have escaped modernity altogether. Throughout the drama, the rural people are depicted as animals, as part of the brutish, unpredictable natural world that the modern, civilized men must battle and overcome (Thomas et al. 2011: 158-161; Goad 1997: 97-98).

White Trash, Redneck Jokes, and Inbredness

As Thomas et al. (2011) and Fulkerson and Thomas (2014) illustrate, urbanormativity places rural people and places as the deviant others to the urban norm. This othering of the rural can be relatively harmless, i.e., the rural as escape from city life idea; or it can be utterly horrific as in the horror stories I have discussed. Somewhere in between these two ends of the continuum of rurality are redneck and white trash jokes (cf. Goad 1997; Roskelly 1993; Wray and Newitz 1997). In this type of humor, rural people are viewed paternalistically as symbolizing the uneducated, backward, and wild, and thus in need of being educated and tamed (Thomas et al. 2011).

Rednecks and white trash are readily available anti-modern types within modernity. As Jim Goad argues, the term redneck is “already embossed with stock images . . . the stereotype is so fully fleshed out as to need no explanation” (1997: 18). Redneck jokes stand as a constant, humorous reminder that people will tend toward devolution if they are allowed to buck the trend of progress and modernization. The jokes hinge on the assumption that rednecks are stupid, uncivilized, and backward. Many rely on inbred, incestuous themes, such as: You might be a redneck if your family tree has no branches (or looks like a wreath). You might be a redneck if you go to a family reunion to meet Mr. or Mrs. Right, or if your brother-in-law is your uncle. Or, you just might be a redneck if you go Christmas shopping for your mom, your sister, and your girlfriend and you only need to buy one gift. Or, you might be a redneck if your gene pool does not have a deep end, or if you are your own aunt or uncle, or if your dad is your favorite uncle. In the mid 1990s, a list of 283 of these jokes was posted on the Internet under the heading “The Canonical List of Redneck Jokes.” It concluded with: “Warning: if twenty-five or more of these are true, you should seek *civilized help* immediately!” I was reminded again of the inbreeding leads to degeneracy message recently as I waited at a traffic light behind a pick-up truck sporting a bumper sticker which read simply “Discourage Inbreeding.” Surrounding the

words were smiley-face images, each with something grossly askew, like a hand sticking out of a head, or a mouth on a forehead, or three eyes.

The Frailty of Progress

Through humor and horror stories, cautionary tales and gory movies, there is a lesson to be learned about an insidious devolutionary tendency within our civilization—namely that progress has not succeeded fully and must be constantly attended to. A necessary expression of modernity is its oppositional figures and contrary tendencies. Because of the mythology of inbredness, a type of sense-making and an agent of stability based on partial truths and outright lies, incorrect assumptions about genetics, and age-old fears and suspicions, groups of people who are perceived as inbred and degenerate, such as rural folk, rednecks, or bestial mountain men, stand as reminders of this oppositional tendency. William Greenslade notes a tendency to fear that which is obscured in the forces of modernization. The belief that larger, progressive changes in society were at the same time spawning dangerous, countervailing forces was crystallized in notions of degeneration. He states,

The belief in the existence of degeneration, or even the suspicion that it existed, fostered a sense that what might really be happening to civilization lay somehow hidden, buried from sight, yet graspable through patient observation of the contours of the surface . . . Bafflement and disillusionment found release in a theory which seemed to identify the sources of rot . . . Degeneration provided such a structure inscribed within the ambiguity of the term itself, within its twin interlocking semantic properties. “Degeneration” represented the boundless capacity of a society to “generate” regression: on the one hand, generation and reproduction, on the other decline, degradation, waste . . . The remarkable grip which the idea secured suggests a permanent secularized “fall” from grace, a structure of feelings of extreme disappointment for which the religious sanctities offered little help. (1994: 15-16)

The late-nineteenth-century fields of genetics and heredity captured people’s imagination and offered a scientific rhetoric which dovetailed nicely with extant prejudices and fears. For instance, Sybil Wolfram noted that,

[W]hen ordinary people today attribute prohibitions of [consanguineous] unions to the ill effects of inbreeding specifically that it results in idiot children, this is supposed to be by biological or genetic mechanisms. However, in the past the belief that inbreeding results in idiot children had a different basis which was not biological: “when idiocy did follow consanguineous marriages, as it sometimes would, it was believed to be the fit punishment of some divine law.” (1985: 145)

Foucault argued that the nineteenth-century middle class concerns with genealogy “became a preoccupation with heredity” as people scoured their ancestry for

possible “defamatory quarters . . . diseases or defects of the group of relatives—the grandfather’s general paralysis . . . the hysterical or erotomanic aunts, the cousin with bad morals” (1978: 124-125). In the same period, “the analysis of heredity was placing sex (sexual relations, venereal diseases, matrimonial alliances, perversions) in a position of ‘biological responsibility’ with regard to the species: not only could sex be affected by its own diseases, it could also. . . transmit diseases or create others that would afflict future generations” (Foucault 1978: 118). Foucault noted how several nineteenth-century “technologies of sex” coalesced in what he called the “perversion-heredity-degenerescence” nucleus. He explained,

Innovations that merged together quite well, for the theory of “degenerescence” made it possible for them to perpetually refer back to one another; it explained how a heredity that was burdened with various maladies (it made little difference whether these were organic, functional, or psychical) ended by producing a sexual pervert. . . but it went on to explain how a sexual perversion resulted in the depletion of one’s line of descent—rickets in children, the sterility of future generations. (1978: 118)

Similarly, Greenslade wrote,

Heredity offered, it seemed, a sufficiently embracing explanation for all that mattered and all that could not be resisted. It was precisely attuned to uncover what was hidden and unavailable to reason, what was deaf to the efforts of social control or told against official, middle-class standards of morality and taste . . . If all that was irrational, injurious and disturbing could be encoded in the determinism of heredity, it meant that the irrational was preserved as a mystery, whose secrets only the high priests of science could understand. (1994: 17)

Greenslade notes that, on the whole, “late nineteenth-century positivism did not flinch from the role of moral teacher. In the writings of the major scientific proponents of degeneration, concepts and tropes, which affirm traditional classifications of experience into normal and abnormal, right and wrong, are never far from the surface” (1994: 27).

Why are these so-called inbred groups such potent reminders of society’s intrinsic tendency toward devolution? Recent genetic studies have shed more light on recessive gene transmission (or increased homozygosity) within small, isolated populations. Some studies have found that if there is an existing genetic problem within the group, there will be a higher probability that those genes will be transmitted to offspring (cf. Ottenheimer 1996; Arens 1986; Cooley et al. 1990). Not all recessive genes are problematical,⁵ however, and some isolated populations have found non-stigmatizing ways to deal with the increased appearance of these genetic anomalies (cf. Groce 1985). Still other so-called inbred populations have shown no higher incidence of genetic problems than non-inbred groups (cf. Ottenheimer 1996: 83; see also Wolfram 1987: 145-146). Thus, while there is an increased probability for pre-existing genetic problems to

emerge in inbred groups, there is clearly no evidence that such groups degenerate or devolve to subhuman monsters.

The Individual Body versus the Undifferentiated Mass

What is warded off or suppressed in these types of cautionary tales? In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Mary Douglas asserts that the boundaries of the body symbolize the boundaries of society (1966: 115). She states:

The idea of society is a powerful image. It is potent in its own right to control or to stir men to action. This image has form; it has external boundaries, margins, internal structure. Its outlines contain power to reward conformity and repulse attack. There is energy in its margins and unstructured areas. For symbols of society, any human experience of structures, margins or boundaries is ready to hand. (115)

If inbreeding represents confusion not just of family roles, but also of *bodies*—individual bodies—perhaps this is what is protected in the portrayals of inbred communities as inherently regressive and degenerate. The sharing of sexual space in so-called inbred groups and the sharing of bodies in incestuous unions must be prohibited because it threatens the external margins of the self—the corporeal individual. For instance, Douglas discusses Jean Paul Sartre’s use of stickiness or viscosity to illustrate one way in which human beings learn to confront anomaly. When first encountered, viscosity is repellent because the essential relation between the subjective experience and the outside world is blurred. Describing a child plunging his hand into honey Douglas found:

Its stickiness is a trap, it clings like a leech; it attacks the boundary between myself and it . . . Plunging into water gives a different impression. I remain solid, but to touch stickiness is to risk *diluting myself into viscosity*. Stickiness is clinging . . . In this way the first contact with stickiness enriches a child’s experience. He has learnt something about himself and the properties of matter and the *interrelation between the self and other things*. (1966: 38-39, emphasis added)

Douglas, following Sartre, argues that melting, clinging viscosity is judged an “ignoble form of existence in its very first manifestations” (39). What might Douglas’s discussion of the margins of the body and Sartre’s viscosity tell us about the revulsion of close-knit, insular, inbred groups? Perhaps what is muddied or confused in close relatives involved in sexual relations, and thus possibly procreating, are the individual bodies themselves—a blurring of bodies and an undeveloped notion of the individual margins of selves could result. This would stand for confusion much more damning than unclear familial roles. The following statement from Douglas furthers this point:

Sexual collaboration is by nature fertile, constructive, the common basis for social life. But sometimes we forget that instead of dependence and harmony, sexual institutions express rigid separation and violent antagonism. So far, we have expressed a kind of sex pollution which expresses a desire to keep the body (physical and social) intact . . . Another kind of sex pollution arises from the desire to keep straight the internal lines of the social system . . . we noted how rules control individual contacts which destroy these lines, adulteries, incest and forth. (1966: 141)

Here, Douglas again discusses the need to keep sexual lines of contact straight both from within and without the social system. Further, since Douglas has used the body as a metaphor for the social system itself, it follows that certain sexual unions within the internal lines of the system would lead to the confusion of bodies—the smallest divisible internal system. This confusion would, in turn, cause an internal chaos of the entire system, or, as Sander Gilman stated, “individual perversion is thus seen as proof of the potential perversion of the group” and even the society as a whole (1985: 73).

In *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*, Foucault noted an increased attention paid to controlling individual bodies as a means of controlling the population (1978: 105-125). As the need to control sexuality increased from the end of the eighteenth century onward, so did the fixation on embodied individuals. As Chris Shilling (1993) also notes, “from the eighteenth century there was a large increase in discourses on sexuality which linked the sex of individual bodies to the management of national problems” (77-78). This concern with embodied individuals had major consequences in terms of social control. It allowed governments to exert “a far greater degree of control over individuals than had previously been the case” because “*people could be made more separate and different, and hence, more controllable*” (1993: 78, emphasis added). Perhaps the danger of the inbred community is that people are not seen as properly individualized and differentiated, and thus somehow beyond the scope of social control. These groups are over-related: the same blood is running through different bodies and thus, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other.

Discussing the modern, civilized body Shilling said “the civilized body characteristic of modern Western societies is highly individualized in that it is strongly demarcated from its social and natural environments” (1993: 150). Borrowing from Norbert Elias ([1939]1978), Shilling notes that there has been a progressive socialization of bodies in modernity and that the “separation of the body from nature helped provide the basis for differentiating between individuals” (1993: 150-151). Elias contended that bodies have become civilized through the processes of socialization, rationalization, and individualization ([1939]1978: 249-257). Socialization of the body entails hiding away natural, biological functions. Rationalization means the body is self-controlled through morals and rational thoughts which “interpose themselves between emotional impulses” (Shilling 1993: 166). Rationalization also involves the gradual differ-

entiation of the body; the body itself is broken down into smaller, seemingly separate, parts. Individualization of the body involves people “conceptualizing themselves as separate from others, with the body acting as a container for the self” (Shilling 1993: 166). Elias noted that individualization of private, separate bodies is “now so self-evident that it is rarely questioned,” yet the nature of this boundary is “never properly explained” ([1939]1978: 249). Elias believed the notion of individuated bodies caused people to construct an “affective wall between their bodies and those of others” wherein people are conceived as “hermetically closed individuals” ([1939]1978: 249-250). In modern societies, the civilized body is marked by its distance from nature and its distance from other bodies, and the flesh of humans became a source of embarrassment as extreme measures of privacy were enacted. This is not a pre-social state, it has been socially created through what Elias calls civilizing processes ([1939]1978: 250).

Summary

In the mythology of inbredness, several powerful, and powerfully modern, notions are called upon to assemble the rural, insular, isolated community as inherently degenerate, regressive, and horrific. First and foremost are the misconceptions and partial understandings about heredity and genetic transmission in isolated groups which are entwined and shored up with age-old notions of inbreeding leading to monstrosities in offspring. The belief that the children of inbreeding would inevitably be of a lesser stock and somehow physically and/or mentally malformed became unquestioned common knowledge.

Second, in the idea of the inbred community, sexuality is brought to the fore. These communities are circumscribed by a form of degenerate sexuality. Inbreeding connotes love-less sex and procreation among too closely related people. They are said to breed like animals in the barnyard. It suggests a sharing of sexual space where sex is a common event—they do it all the time. In a society which views the only truly proper form of sexuality as that which occurs between two heterosexual, consenting, unrelated, monogamous, romantically involved adults, this is a particularly damning image.

Third, there is the picture of a group of people known only as a collectivity—they are tribal, clannish, closed off to others. Their bodies are not fully individuated; their minds not properly civilized. They are over-related, sharing the same flesh and blood among the group, like communal property. If you intrude upon them, they will descend upon you *en masse*. Like late-nineteenth-century notions of crowds, which were also described in terms “heavily indebted to organicist socio-biology rhetoric,” any form of collectivity was highly suspect, as regressive in evolutionary terms. Instead of fully individuated persons, collectivities “tended toward homogeneity” (Greenslade 1994: 23; see also Pick 1989). This is similar to Raymond Williams’ discussion of romantic notions of our rural past signifying “wholeness,” but a wholeness that is inherently primi-

tive and childlike when viewed in evolutionary terms, from the perch of urbanormativity and its heterogeneous, modern, cosmopolitan world view (Williams 1973; see also Clifford 1986: 98-121; Thomas et al. 2011; Fulkerson & Thomas 2014). The perception of homogeneity is assumed in inbred communities—since they're all related; one person is indistinguishable from the next. They are a collectivity that chooses to not mix with others, preferring their own company and abhorring strangers, to the point of attacking them. This is clearly a problem in a modern, individuated, rational, and contractually based society.

The mythology of inbredness tapped into the larger mythology of degeneration which installed an alternative myth to that of progress. This alternative myth spoke to the dark side of progress (Greenslade 1994: 16; Chamberlin and Gilman 1985). Inbreeding is seen as particularly insidious as it is a corruption by blood—an irreversible decline. It is a secular, modern, and genetic fall from grace constructed to replace previously intact religious falls from grace. And it is the antithesis of the cosmopolitan, urbane norm.

Notes

1. The town or region in this story is not named, but there are several mentions of the Civil War, including one to “the War of Northern Aggression,” and Pittsburgh is mentioned and thus, the southern-ness of the town is implied.

2. The term ‘monstrous birth’ was used by Mary Douglas in *Purity and Danger*. She used it when describing how the Nuer deal with the anomaly of a birth which blurs the lines between humans and animals. She wrote, “The Nuer treat monstrous births as baby hippopotamuses, accidentally born to humans and, with this labeling, the appropriate action is clear. They gently lay them in the river where they belong” (1966:40).

3. The term ‘autosomal’ refers to any chromosome which is not a sex chromosome. It is used by geneticists to refer to genetic disorders which can be passed by recessive gene transmission (cf. Ottenheimer 1996:128-129; Cooley, Rawnsley, Melkonian, Moses, McCann, Virgin, Coughlan and Moeschler 1990 1990:57-68). However, recent studies in genetics have pointed out the tendency to attribute any genetic problem in a small, isolated community to inbreeding. For instance, Harper and Roberts (1988) state, “*There is a strong tendency to attribute any genetic disorder seen in a member of an inbred community to the breeding that has occurred.* . . One needs to eliminate [other] variables before attributing the high frequency of disorders to consanguinity or inbreeding in a population as a whole” (p.180, emphasis added).

4. *X-Files* consultants James Wong and Glen Morgan wrote the “Home” episode according Williams, *TV Guide*, December 21-27, 1996, p. 26.

5. Sybil Wolfram (1987) notes that studies of cousin marriage and the like from the 1850's onwards, and finally genetic theory, suggested that inbreeding intensifies characteristics, but good as well as bad (p. 145).

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12

Matrixed Inequality, Rurality, and Access to Substance Abuse Treatment: A Community Structure Analysis of North Carolina Communities

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Introduction

Historically, rural areas have been viewed as insulated from social problems associated with cities. The American public imagines “its rural population as a repository of almost sacred values and a stable anchor during times of rapid social change” (Brown and Swanson 2003: 1). In recent decades, this mythic view of rural communities as safe havens immune from urban problems has been challenged (Struthers and Bokemeier 2000). Long-standing impediments to the health and welfare of rural communities such as heavy alcohol use and poverty rates that exceed those of urban areas are well documented (e.g., Jensen, McLaughlin, and Slack, 2003; Morton 2003; Jensen 2006). More recently, the increasing presence of gangs, rising crimes rates, and growing concerns related to illicit drug use further demonstrate the vulnerability of rural communities to contemporary social problems (Conger 1997; Donnermeyer 1997; Rephann 1999; Wells and Weisheit 2001).

Several studies report similar rates of alcohol use across rural and urban areas, and greater use of illicit drugs such as stimulants and methamphetamines among rural populations (Beauvais and Segal 1992; Donnermeyer 1997; Leukefeld, Clayton, and Meyers 1992; Moxley 1992; Wagenfeld et al. 1994; Schoeneberger et al. 2006; Thomas and Compton 2007; Van Gundy 2006;

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Wargo et al. 1990). Additionally, government studies of crime and imprisonment show that the most significant increases in causes of incarceration in the early 1990s were in narcotics and other illicit drugs (Governor's Crime Commission 1992), and this trend has continued. Drug policy makers and service providers claim that substance abuse problems impose significantly detrimental effects on community health and well-being. It is generally recognized that in communities where substance abuse problems are extensive there is a subsequent decline in the quality of life (e.g., increased crime, accidents, increases morbidity, and economic losses due to unemployment and sick leave). The majority of past research on alcohol and substance abuse focused on prevalence rates among urban populations (Schoenberger et al. 2006; Webster et al. 2009). As a consequence, the full extent of the problem in rural communities was underappreciated until recently.

Widespread substance abuse carries potential long-term negative consequences for younger populations, and particularly for rural youth (Sloboda, Rosenquist, and Howard 1997; Van Gundy 2006; Pruitt 2009). A number of studies find that rural adolescents are more likely to use alcohol and illicit drugs such as cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine (Hall et al. 2008; Leukefeld, Clayton, and Meyers 1992; Lichter, Roscigno, and Condrón 2003). Even more alarming is that rural youth begin using alcohol and illicit drugs at a significantly earlier age (Lichter, Roscigno, and Condrón 2003; see Pruitt 2009) thus accelerating progression into the use of other hard drugs, deeper addiction, and developing related needs for treatment (Dennis et al. 2003; Grant and Dawson 1997; Hallfors and Van Dorn 2002).

In light of the abundance of evidence indicating that substance abuse problems extend well beyond the margins of urban areas, many researchers—rural sociologists in particular—have begun to focus on long neglected rural populations. While most studies focus on identifying prevalence rates, few extend the scope of their investigation to assess disparities in access to substance abuse treatment and prevention services in rural versus urban areas (e.g., McAuliffe et al. 2003; Perron et al. 2010), and overall treatment outcomes among rural populations (e.g., Hiller et al. 2007; Hall et al. 2008). Due to deficient resources, rural communities often struggle to provide access to prevention and treatment services (McAuliffe et al. 2003; Pruitt 2009; Perron et al. 2010). Research shows that the largest substance abuse treatment gaps are found in the South, Southwest, Northern plains, and mountain regions (Hiller et al. 2007; Hall et al. 2008). These regions also represent historically marginalized areas of the United States where disparities in quality of life indicators persistently lag behind the remainder of the nation, including the Black Belt South of which North Carolina—the location of this investigation—belongs (Wimberley and Morris 1997).

This chapter examines how the structure of communities—community solidarity, political competitiveness, and social rigidity—influences substance abuse prevention outcomes in North Carolina communities. We extend this framework to include a modified version of Eberts' (2012) structural variable of equality,

that we term “matrixed inequality.” This research builds on previous work by community structural theorists including Eberts and Schwiriam (1968), Merschrod (2008), Moxley and Proctor (1995), and Young (2009). The intention is to inform rural treatment policy by identifying those characteristics of communities that foster or impede the capacity to address substance abuse. North Carolina provides a particularly appropriate case as McAuliffe and colleagues (2003) identify the state as having the worst disparity in alcohol treatment services in the Eastern United States. Perron and colleagues (2010) ranked North Carolina among the bottom ten states in terms of urban populations lacking access to outpatient substance abuse treatment programs.

Socioeconomic Conditions and the Challenges of Contemporary Rural Life

Rural America is undoubtedly changing in significant ways. The dramatic transformation of the economic structure of the United States during the twentieth century, coupled with the dynamic pace of technological change and increasing global integration produce a host of new challenges. Primary and secondary sector industries that traditionally sustained rural people and places—farming, fishing, mining, timber, and manufacturing—are employing fewer workers (Van Gundy 2006). The transition away from these traditional industries to newer support services has created an increase in “good” jobs for those who are well educated and low-paying “bad” jobs with little or no benefits for less skilled workers (McGranahan 2003). The most recent farm crisis of the 1980s further threatened already vulnerable economies in many rural areas as many farmers with small and medium-sized land holdings went out of business and the agriculture land market hit rock bottom. One of the few remaining economic advantages held by rural populations was in low-cost labor and land. Globalization has shifted this balance of power as both are less expensive overseas, making rural communities even less appealing as destinations for domestic businesses (McGranahan 2003: 140).

Moreover, many rural communities are plagued by a host of other threats to their well-being. Among these are fewer educational opportunities and resources for school systems, along with inferior academic achievement levels compared to their urban counterparts (Beaulieu, Israel, and Wimberley 2003), weak infrastructures that include inadequate transportation and other public services (Van Gundy 2006; Pruitt 2009), the steady outmigration of young people—the rural “brain drain”—as well as the exodus of many of the more affluent and educated members of the population (Parr and Kefalas 2010).

As a result of these widespread social and economic changes, the poverty rate of rural America currently stands at 16.5 percent, a rate higher than the national average of 15.1 percent and exceeding the urban rate of 1.6 percentage points (USDA 2012). Poverty rates have long been higher in rural places than in urban ones (Jensen 2006) and children and youth are particularly vulnerable

(Flora and Flora 2008). Chronic economic disadvantage in rural areas is one of the main reasons for the increased health risks of persons living in rural areas, which include substance use problems (Conger and Elder 1994). Placing youth at further risk for substance use and abuse is the breakdown of family structure in rural communities (Stevens et al. 2004) that includes an increasing rate of divorce (Struthers and Bokemeier 2000) and has led to a rise in the percentage of female-headed households that has nearly equaled urban rates (Lichter and Jensen 2002). This trend suggests that the impacts of rural inequality may exacerbate already dire conditions for marginalized groups including women and African Americans.

Rural Culture and Attitudes toward Substance Abuse and Treatment

Rural Americans are frequently depicted as independent, self-reliant in times of crises, intensely religious, conservative, and distrusting toward newcomers (e.g., Beltrame 1978). A number of scholars contend that such traditional cultural values and norms adversely affect adolescents' substance use, initiation into treatment and treatment outcomes (e.g., Beltrame 1978; Conger et al. 1994; Hall et al. 2008). For example, Van Gundy (2006) identified a higher tolerance of alcohol use by minors in rural communities where heavy consumption is sometimes viewed as normal behavior. In addition, traditional rural values and norms may reduce the willingness of individuals and families to accept assistance for substance abuse, as this is understood to be a stigmatizing "hand out" (Robertson and Donnermeyer 1997; Struthers and Bokemeier 2000; Fox et al. 2001; Fortney et al. 2004). Discussions of the effects of rural culture on substance abuse have thus generally viewed it as more of an impediment than as a source of support. An alternative to this cultural approach might be to consider the impact of structural dimensions of communities as discussed below.

Community Capacity, Structural Dimensions, and Substance Abuse Treatment Access

We examine how community structure affects substance abuse services in North Carolina communities. Currently, there is little research that has shown how community characteristics affect physical health, mental health, or substance abuse. One study concluded that the socioeconomic structure of the locality can affect the operation of programs which will determine the impact of community health systems on health status (Miller, Voth, and Danforth, 1982). Local organizations, institutions, and citizen organizations can serve to facilitate supportive attitudes and actions among residents, as communities assume more responsibility for the general welfare of their populations. The awareness, attitudes, and actions of local people can influence whether and to what degree substance abuse prevention, treatment, and related services will be provided (Edwards and Letman 1982). Florentine and Anglin's research (1997) showed that

the role of communities in treatment efforts were important, as availability and frequency of treatment within a community setting play a significant role in the effectiveness of dealing with substance abuse.

Also scarce is research published on community efforts at prevention, but the most comprehensive community approach published shows promising results. Pentz (1993) instituted community wide prevention activities in Kansas City, Kansas and Indianapolis, Indiana. Results after five years of implementation indicated consistently lower prevalence rates of cigarette, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine and crack than control schools. Evidence that such programs are going on elsewhere and community substance abuse approaches are available in the published literature provided by Vicary and colleagues (1996). Researchers have also found that neighborhood structure and demographic characteristics affect substance abuse rates (Donnermeyer, Barclay, and Jobes 2002; Silver, Mulvey, and Swanson 2002). However, these studies have not examined the importance of what Frank Young has termed community structural dimensions (1999; 2009).

Using a community ecology framework, Young and colleagues (Moxley 1992; Moxley and Proctor 1995; Young 1999, 2009) have found that community capacity, including attendant underlying structural dimensions, significantly impacts a range of quality of life indicators. Community structural characteristics represent important pathways to addressing several social ills, and have proven useful in related development practices and efforts (Merschrod 2008). This body of work suggests that studies examining substance abuse prevention and treatment would be well served to account for these structural causes of community well-being. Yet, research on substance abuse treatment and prevention, has largely failed to account for this fundamentally important framework, choosing instead to rely on limited cultural or individualistic explanations. This impedes our understanding of the mechanisms through which attributes of communities (including rural communities) importantly shape local responses to problems such as substance abuse. Our investigation follows the work of community and rural sociologists who have theorized that community-level emergent properties—community solidarity, political competitiveness, and social rigidity—are important determinants in the explanation of social change and development (Merschrod 2008; Moxley and Proctor 1995; Young 1999; 2009). We define these terms more carefully below.

Community solidarity refers to a common sense of identity or mutual objectives based on shared experience (Thompson, Fulkerson, and Jicha 2010). Also referred to as “structural solidary” by Young and Young (1973) or “community activeness” by Luloff and Wilkinson (1979), communities endowed with this attribute have a greater capacity to act in a collective manner (Moxley and Proctor 1995). Some degree of solidarity is needed for a community to address widespread social problems and to access joint goods. This is accomplished through a community’s ability to foster cooperation and collective action by enabling intra-communication between community collectivities.

A number of studies have focused on developing structural and interactional measures of social solidarity. For example, Young (1966, 1999) emphasized community-wide organization, structural patterns, and community symbols, which reflect increasing levels of social solidarity. On the other hand, Lloyd and Wilkinson (1985) have stressed coordinated community level social interaction and collective action. This study integrates these two perspectives. Solidarity also refers to the extent to which there is evidence of “emerging community-wide social organization patterns or institutions that tend to unite or are more inclusive of the total community” (Moxley and Proctor 1995: 313). Thus, solidarity is hypothesized to promote proactive and protective communal action, such as the availability of substance abuse treatment services.

Political competitiveness, also referred to as pluralism or fluidity, is the degree to which competing collectivities within the community are able to place effective demands on resources, encouraging a broader distribution of these resources (Moxley and Proctor 1995; Young 1999). Research findings support the effects of political competitiveness on quality of life indicators such as health services (Moxley and Proctor 1995). Researchers have tested empirically, and found support for, the hypothesis that competitive political systems benefit lower classes and have more liberal social policies (Young et al. 1984; Key 1949). This results from the political pressure exerted by multiple constituencies (Young et al. 1984).

In this study, political competitiveness refers to the degree to which distinctive political groups have emerged in a community in a balanced fashion, without one single party exerting absolute dominance over the others. Thus, political competitiveness is hypothesized to promote an equitable distribution of resources, as indicated by substance abuse facilities in this case. Given that substance abuse treatment efforts are likely to benefit disadvantaged populations, these efforts should be positively correlated with political competitiveness.

Social rigidity has been defined as “the use of ascriptive criteria for political and economic positions and barriers to vertical social mobility” (Young et al. 1984). Social rigidity, along with political rigidity, has been shown in previous studies to be negatively related to community welfare (Young and Moreno 1965). In this study, social rigidity is defined as “the degree to which the community has social segregation, cleavages, and divisions that are publicly visible within the community” (Moxley and Proctor 1995). The result of rigidity is a lack of competitive communication or pluralism, and can easily result in an uncompromising and unproductive stand-off within communities (Thompson, Fulkerson, and Jicha 2010). In contrast, the presence of open lines of communication between sub-groups within the community can create a system that promotes the resolution of internal differences and enhances the capacity to address social problems. In this study, we test the hypothesis that social rigidity is negatively related to substance abuse prevention efforts.

The final structural dimension tested in this study includes centrality. This measure represents the proximity to North Carolina’s political capitol, Raleigh.

Measuring centrality as distance to the state's capitol allows for us to also examine the impact of distance from powerful actors and decision makers, often regarding drug policy, on the relative access to substance abuse treatment among communities. Centrality, the degree to which a community has access to the broader social system's information system, has been previously shown as a significant predictor in community level studies examining well-being indicators (Moxley, Jicha and Thompson 2011).

These structural dimensions of communities, as defined by Young (1999; 2009) are most commonly treated within the core of this body of literature. They have been shown to significantly influence a multitude of well-being outcomes, including infant mortality (Young and Lyson 2001) and the provision of health services (Moxley and Proctor 1995). We extend this framework to a new variable of interest, substance abuse treatment, and also introduce into the framework "matrixed inequality" as an additional structural dimension as theorized by Paul Eberts. Prior work integrating the work of Eberts, including his treatment of equality as a structural dimension, with that of Young's symbolic structuralism (1999; 2009) has been principally done by Merschrod (2008). We extend this effort by including inequality as a matrixed structural dimension following the seminal work of Collins (1986; 2000) within the sociology of inequality literature and the work of Eberts (2012) within macro-structural and community sociology literatures.

Matrixed Inequality as a Structural Dimension of Communities

Eberts (2012) identifies equality, the equal access to resources among community members, as an additional structural dimension of community in his framework of macro-structural community systems theory. In fact, Eberts and Schwiriam (1968) demonstrated that structural inequality was a significant predictor of and positively correlated to community crime rates. Eberts posits that the structural dimensions of community—equality in addition to concepts similar to centrality, political competitiveness, and solidarity described above—serve to facilitate information processing and capacity building (Eberts 2012; Eberts and Schwiriam 1968). Thus, communities with lower levels of inequality will have higher levels of capacity and improved well-being as a result. In relation to substance abuse treatment access, we would expect inequality to hamper treatment access as it increases.

Although Eberts and colleagues importantly identify equality as a structural dimension of communities, they define equality primarily from a class perspective. In doing so, they fail to take into account the intersectionality of inequality (Browne and Misra 2007; Collins 1986, 2000; McCall 2005). Prior research has indicated that marginalized groups often experience the impacts of inequality through a multiplicity of lenses (Brown and Misra 2007; Collins 1986, 1998, 2000). Traditionally marginalized groups, including women and racial minorities, can be structurally creating a "matrix of domination" (Collins 2000). Thus,

while white women must deal with unequal treatment and opportunities that privilege men, they have the advantage of white privilege (McIntosh 1988). African American women, on the other hand, are caught in a double bind of disadvantage across race and gender lines (Browne and Misra 2007; Collins 1986, 2000; hooks 1984; McCall 2005). Scholars have extended this concept to encompass a range of inequalities extending beyond race and gender to include, for example, studies on sexuality (Meyer 2012).

For our purposes, we focus on the intersectionality of race and gender as these are currently the most extensively examined dimensions outside of the community structural dimensions literature. Specifically, we extend Eberts' structural equality dimension to include the intersectionality of race and gender insofar as African American women are doubly disadvantaged and among the least likely to have equal access to quality of life enhancing community services such as substance abuse treatment. We expect this disadvantage to be heightened in rural areas. As a result, African American women residing in rural communities experience an additional level of disadvantage due to the cultural, socio-demographic, and socio-economic marginalization of these areas. We analyze and subsequently discuss these relationships, and others presented earlier, in the sections that follow.

Methods and Data

Our sample includes all county seats in the state of North Carolina as well as those counties with a metropolitan area larger than the county seat. Data were collected through key informant surveys of community town clerks. After matching data by community, and accounting for missing data and non-responses, eighty-four communities are included in this analysis for a response rate of 68 percent.

In this study we examine access to substance abuse treatment efforts. The dependent variable, the number of substance abuse treatment facilities in 2012, was collected from SubstanceRehabCenter.com, an extensive database of substance abuse treatment centers throughout the United States. Because we log-transformed this outcome measure to correct distributional abnormalities, it represents the log-odds of having access to substance abuse treatment across communities. We log-transform all remaining variables in the model to create a stochastic model following the suggestion of York, Rosa, and Deitz (2003). As a result, the model may be interpreted where a 1 percent change in the independent variable leads to a congruent 1 percent change in the dependent variable.

Key theoretical independent variables include solidarity, political competitiveness, and rigidity are all taken from key informant town clerk surveys and are dichotomous indicators, with one indicating the presence of a particular item and zero indicating the items absence. First, solidarity is measured as the reported existence of a central community monument, plaque, or memorial dedicated

to veterans or other venerable members of the community. Second, political competitiveness is measured as the reported lack of a singularly dominating political party; thus no one political party dominates local elections. Finally, persistent racially segregated neighborhoods and community sub-areas as reported by town clerks comprises the rigidity measure.

In the present study, matrixed inequality captures the intersection of race and gender with rurality. Thus, we aim to measure the multiplicative impacts of race and gender as a proportion of the rural population across communities. We compute the indicator to measure matrixed inequality by race, gender, and rurality as follows:

$$(\text{Percent Black Population} * \text{Percent Female Headed Households}) / \text{Percent Rural Population} = \text{Matrixed Inequality}$$

Based on prior studies we include a number of standard demographic control measures (e.g., Moxley and Proctor 1995). Demographic control variables include percent of population over sixty-five, median family income in dollars, percent of college graduates ages twenty-five and older, percent black population, percent of female headed households, percent rural population, and total population. All demographic data were collected from the U.S. Census Bureau for the year 2000.

Findings

In this section we will present the descriptive and analytical statistics included in this study. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all measures included in the study. Table 2 presents the OLS regression analysis¹ predicting the log-odds of substance abuse treatment facility presence across included North Carolina communities. Four sets of regression models were run to derive a full model including all iteratively significant indicators. Only those predictors found to be significant were included in subsequent models combining indicators. We chose a cut-off significance level of .10 to minimize the likelihood of eliminating a significant indicator downstream where its impact may have been confounded by the inclusion of other non-significant indicators. The relatively small sample size of our study, although we have over 80 percent of all county seats represented, precluded the estimation of models with a large list of predictors. As such, we had to keep our models as parsimonious as possible and chose to estimate an iterative full model that included significant predictors only from previous core theoretical models.

Model I reports the correlations between the sociodemographic controls and our outcome measure. Significant predictors in this model at the .10 level or better include total population and percent of college graduates. Both of these indicators are positively correlated with log-odds of access to substance abuse

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Number of Centers 2012 (ln)	84	.00	2.56	.4945	.75736
Population 2000 (ln)	84	4.69	12.32	8.5370	1.53901
Percent Rural 2000 (ln)	84	9.87	10.81	10.2837	.20982
Median Household Income 2000 (ln)	84	.00	96.09	29.6897	20.07563
Percent College Graduate 2000 (ln)	84	1.81	11.97	6.7220	2.09813
Percent 65 and Older 2000 (ln)	84	.00	113.11	30.6378	43.50073
Percent Female Headed Household 2000 (ln)	84	.07	.33	.1715	.04551
Percent Black 2000 (ln)	84	.04	.32	.1175	.04426
Matrixed Inequality (ln)	77	.00	1.01	.83	.377
Solidarity	56	.00	1.00	.4821	.50420
Political Competitiveness	81	.00	1.00	.77	.426
Rigidity	83	2.08	5.89	4.7422	.66168

treatment, increasing it by nearly a third of a percent and nearly 3 percent respectively.

Model II includes the significant indicators from Model I and accounts for the impact of the structural matrixed inequality indicator. All three variables are significantly correlated to the outcome measure at the .10 level or better. The impacts of population and education have a similar magnitude as model one in the positive direction. Our matrixed inequality measure indicates a significant relationship between odds of access to substance abuse treatment. Thus, the likelihood of having access to substance abuse treatment decreases as the percentage of African American Female Headed Households as a proportion of the rural population increases.

Model III presents the correlations of traditional structural dimensions of communities on the odds of treatment access. All three dimensions—solidarity, political competitiveness, and rigidity—are significant. Solidarity and political competitiveness both increases the odds of substance abuse treatment access across communities, while rigidity decreases the odds of access. Centrality is not a significant predictor of access to substance abuse treatment as examined in this study.

The final Model IV reports the impacts of all previously identified significant predictors—total population, percent college graduate, matrixed inequality,

Table 2: OLS Regression Models Predicting the Log-Odds of Access to Substance Abuse Treatment across North Carolina Communities

Variable	Demographic and Socioeconomic Model (I)		Intersectionality Model (II)		Community Dimensions Model (III)		Full Model (IV)	
Population 2000 (ln)	.320**	.650**	.291**	.591**	--	--	.304**	.619**
Percent Rural 2000 (ln)	.036	.078	--	--	--	--	--	--
Median Household Income 2000 (ln)	-.049	-.013	--	--	--	--	--	--
Percent College Graduate 2000 (ln)	2.748#	.161#	3.349*	.196*	--	--	3.019*	.176*
Percent 65 and Older 2000 (ln)	.196	.012	--	--	--	--	--	--
Percent Female Headed Household 2000 (ln)	-.267	-.104	--	--	--	--	--	--
Percent Black 2000 (ln)	-.055	-.074	--	--	--	--	--	--
Matrixed Inequality (ln)	--	--	-.053#	-.136#	--	--	-.051#	-.131#
Solidarity	--	--	--	--	.304*	.145#	.356*	.170*
Political Competitiveness	--	--	--	--	.494*	.268*	.315*	.171*
Rigidity	--	--	--	--	.273#	.151#	-.227#	-.125#
Centrality	--	--	--	--	-.069	-.060	--	--
(Constant)	-1.463	--	-2.332		.124	--	-2.69**	--
Model F	8.02**		19.03*		3.20*		12.17*	
Adjusted R ²	.372		.397		.100		.447	

Standardized betas reported in italics
 ** p-value= .001, * p-value = .05, # p-value = .10
 N=84 with mean substituted values estimated

solidarity, political competitiveness, and rigidity. Rigidity and matrixed inequality both impede the odds of substance abuse treatment access across communities, and have reported betas of $-.221$ and $-.051$ respectively. The remaining predictors are all positively correlated with access to substance abuse treatments chances. This includes the centrally important structural dimensions of communities. The implications of these findings, including relevance to the broader literature and policy are presented in the following concluding section.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this concluding section we will further discuss the relevance of the current study to the broader literature, especially rural and community sociology, as well as implications for public policy on substance abuse prevention and treatment. Our findings demonstrate relevant consequences for further community studies, especially insofar as structural dimensions of communities and issues of rural inequality are considered. These findings may be fruitful avenues for future public policy interventions.

Community Well-Being and Underlying Structural Dimensions

Substance abuse treatment access constitutes one aspect of broader health services systems that support public health. The promotion of public health issues—including substance abuse, obesity, domestic violence, and tobacco—align with national priorities of the Surgeon General to promote population health through the prevention of public health concerns (Surgeon General 2011). Thus, the theoretical models analyzed here apply to outcomes that are more broadly related to public health services and outcomes and should be interpreted within this context.

The sociodemographic model tested in this study indicates the significance of population in sociological analysis. Indeed, population has been integral to social analysis since the classical studies of Durkheim (1893) on the Division of Labor on Society and the more recent examinations of the POET (population, organization, environment, and technology) model developed by Duncan (1961) and Hawley's Human Ecology model (1950). Human population continues to hold significant theoretical sway among environmental sociologists as well (Dunlap and Catton 1979; Ehrlich and Holdren 1971; York, Rosa and Dietz 2003). In its simplest form, a growth in human population often represents an attendant increase in population density, an often used indicator of the rural/urban distinction. Generally, urban communities will have greater populations and population densities. The present analysis shows that as population increases so does the chance of gaining access to health services in the form of substance abuse treatment. This finding is consistent with other studies that indicate a broader array of services is available to more highly populated, urban are-

as. However, additional layers must be examined to understand how and why access to treatment varies across communities.

To uncover these answers we employ a framework that accounts for traditional structural dimensions that are extended to include “matrixed inequality” as conceived here to include forms of rural inequality. Similar to prior studies of the impacts of macro-structural processes within communities on health services (e.g., Moxley and Proctor 1995) and well-being outcomes (e.g., Young 1999), we find that solidarity and political competitiveness—the degree to which a community holds a common purpose and the extent to which competing ideas are legitimated, respectively—both improve the odds of gaining access to substance abuse treatment. On the other hand, rigidity—isolated subgroups within a community, often along racial lines—impedes the chances of gaining this access. Thus, the more that a community works together toward a common goal, while also leveraging its diverse population (as opposed to isolating minorities), the greater access to important health services, such as substance abuse treatment, its members will have. This is a significant finding that suggests these structural dimensions are important levers for community developers and policy makers to consider when instituting positive social change efforts.

We add to the literature on community structural dimensions the concept of “matrixed inequality.” This is consistent with prior efforts of Eberts (2012) and sociology of inequality scholars, namely Collins (1986; 2000) because we account for the multiplicity of domains across which inequality is reproduced, including race, gender, and rurality. Mainstream sociologists do not often consider the latter, rurality, as a domain of inequality. Our findings suggest a cumulative marginalization of race, gender, and rurality specifically within the context of substance abuse treatment access. We suggest that this structural dimension will have important implications for other well-being and health services outcomes, and as such it represents a fruitful area of future rural, community, and sociological studies.

Rural Challenges Related to Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment

Many rural communities face the daunting challenge of addressing the increasing prevalence of substance abuse problems while being armed with inadequate treatment options. Further compounding matters are high poverty rates, spatial isolation, and deficits in law enforcement, all of which affect the ability to respond to alcohol and drug abuse. This means left unaddressed the substance abuse and related public health problems will persist, likely and increase in magnitude. This may ultimately require more intensive and costly treatment strategies (Pruitt 2009).

Alternatively, preventative efforts have a great deal of potential to address these issues head on. Community-based health interventions include some of the most effective and evidence-based strategies that are designed currently to address substance use prevention and treatment (Berkman and Kawachi 2000;

Surgeon General 2011). Incorporating strategies that can leverage the positive impacts of community solidarity and political competitiveness efforts may further enhance the effectiveness of these approaches. For instance, our study suggests that community health interventions would do well to work across political interest groups, include the voices of marginalized groups, and aim to identify cohesive themes and ideas within the community where synergies may exist.

Of course, the current study has a number of limitations. For instance, it is possible that persons living in a particular area with limited or no facilities could just as easily access treatment facilities outside of their town (Perron et al. 2010). Thus, there was unmeasured geographic variation in terms of use not measured here. However, transportation barriers common in rural areas, especially among marginalized groups, means that nearby access to treatment options is all the more important (Pruitt 2009). In addition, the disparity in treatment services commonly experienced by rural communities makes boundary-crossing less likely than in urban settings. Our data do not indicate the extent or quality of treatment options offered. The relative deprivation of rural areas could be even greater given that rural facilities often offer less intensive in-patient treatments such as detoxification (Pruitt 2009). Lastly, our sample was not randomly selected and data were collected only in the state of North Carolina. Thus, the ability to extend the findings to cases outside of NC is limited. At the same time, this study can inform substance abuse policy across similar states of the United States, such as those in the South which also suffer from large gaps in substance abuse treatment accessibility.

Policy Implications and Need for Further Research

Researchers have not adequately examined the determinants of access to substance abuse treatment services in rural areas not to mention their effectiveness. Most national-level studies concentrate on urban-based treatment programs, although two studies by Hiller et al. (2007) and Hall et al. (2008) have indicated that rural treatment is successful and treatment outcomes are comparable to urban programs. Community health promotion efforts addressing substance abuse will need to address deficiencies in rural infrastructure while keeping in mind structural factors that differentiate rural places from the urban norm (Pruitt 2009). Our study indicates that structural dimensions are important avenues for community developers and policy makers to consider when instituting positive social change efforts. In particular, it would benefit policy makers and health promotion experts to seek ways to reduce the marginalization of women as well as ethno-racial minorities while considering the ways in which these dimension of oppression may overlap with others. The current analysis suggests that the deprivation in access to substance abuse treatment services is compounded in rural communities.

While the structural dimension of “matrixed inequality” identifies domains of deprivation, it also highlights groups which can be integrated into efforts to

address public health problems in targeted ways to help those most in need. When incorporated with the other structural dimensions, this also suggests that the re-integration of marginalized groups into the community cultural and structural environment will positively impact overall well-being, insofar as it is connected to similar processes as those that determine access to substance abuse treatment access. Given prior studies, there is ample evidence to suggest that these processes are indeed similar. Our current study contributes to this body of literature by extending macro-structural community frameworks to include the impacts of matrixed inequalities on substance abuse treatment access. In short, "Identifying the impact of rural social structure on how communities address formerly urban problems is a new contribution to our understanding of rapidly changing rural place" (Edwards, Torgerson, and Sattem 2009).

Note

1. Models were estimated using mean substitution to account for list-wise missing data using SPSS, IBM software.

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13

Eliminating Organizational Tensions, Dis-embedding Farmers: A Ten Year Retrospective on the (Organizational) Political- Economic Losses of Dakota Growers Pasta Cooperative

Thomas W. Gray
Curtis Stofferahn

This paper is about a shift in organizational identity and how a new generation, durum-processing cooperative in North Dakota (Dakota Growers Pasta Company) became a subsidiary of Glencore International, a transnational corporation headquartered in Baar, Switzerland, with offices in over fifty other countries. Dakota Growers was originally conceived to help local farmers add value to their durum production with an organization, i.e. a cooperative that they owned, governed, and used. To become a subsidiary of a firm that is anything but local, in a state second only to Minnesota in the total number of cooperatives, is not only a surprise, but a near anathema in the cooperative community. Even more surprising, this has occurred in North Dakota, a state with a long history of opposition to big business, anti-corporate sentiment, and populist agrarian traditions (Mooney 2004; Mooney and Majka 1995).

In addressing this shift in identity, the paper has four distinct sections. In the first section we provide a description of organizational type, and focus specifically on Glencore as an investment oriented firm (IOF) and Dakota Growers Pasta Company (DGPC) as the cooperative. This section also includes a brief description of the historical context of grain marketing and production. In the next section we present the inherent tensions in cooperatives as tipping points between cooperative priorities and investment firm and profit priorities. In the following section we present the results of a discourse analysis that highlights the types of narratives utilized to influence change in DGPC identity from cooperative to IOF form. Fraser's (1989) work on oppositional and privatization discourse frames is drawn upon with the purpose of surfacing

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greater awareness of the narratives that influence what Frazer's refers to as "needs struggle." In this case we are looking at shifts in Dakota Growers Pasta Company's identity as tensions are tipped toward an investment firm logic. The final section of the paper presents a summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Organizational Types and Context

Fairbairn (2003) suggests a format to understand organizational identity (and shifts in organizational identity) is to ask questions about: 1) what the organization is, 2) where it came from, and 3) what it does. Though originally developed to understand cooperative identity, it will be used here as a framework to help clarify organizational identity and identity shift.

Glencore International

Glencore International is an investment oriented firm (IOF). In linear logic, if somewhat simplistically, investors with money seek to make a return on their money by investing in an activity that will return a profit, thereby ending up with more money. Investors-owners have little connection to the business activity of the firm. If use is made of the activity, it is only on an incidental basis. Governance is, in part, organized by shares owned. Typically shareholders have one vote per share held. There are no organizational limits on the amount of shares any one investor can own. A board of directors, elected by the shareholders provides strategic planning and long-term oversight and direction of the firm. A management core is hired by the directorship to handle the daily decision making of the firm. It is not unusual for the firm CEO to be a major stock holder. The fundamental and organizing logic of the firm, as with all investment firms, the predominant business form globally, is to make a return on investment (roi) for its shareholders. This objective can lead, however, through a very convoluted path of horizontal and vertical integration by product and location, and if successful, through expanding market share.

Glencore was formed in 1974 with a management buyout of Marc Rich & Company. Its activities included marketing ferrous and non-ferrous metals, minerals, and crude oil, acting as a middle-man between source and product user. In 1988 it integrated backward, becoming an equity and majority holder in a zinc/lead mine in Peru. Since that time it has become a "leading integrated producer and marketer of commodities, with worldwide activities in the marketing of metals and minerals, energy products and agricultural products . . . [it's activities include as well] . . . the production refinement, processing storage and transport of these products" (accessed November 23, 2012, from <http://www.glencore.com/company-overview.php>). It is currently recognized as the largest commodity trading firm in the world and is often accompanied in

public narrative with the question “Is Glencore Too Big to Fail?” (Finch 2011). It is not a firm that has operated free of criticisms. It has been cited as having questionable accounting manipulations in Zambia, receiving kickbacks in the oil-for-food programs for Iraq, various human rights and environmental violations in mining interests in Columbia, causing acid rain and health problems in Zambia, various human rights and environmental violations and charges in the Congo (Davis 2011; Kimball 2012).

Dakota Growers Pasta Company

Dakota Growers Pasta Company became operational as a new generation cooperative in 1994. Cooperatives are a type of corporation characterized by multiple member-owners who are user-members. Incorporated under state law, cooperatives operate under a unique set of principles and practices. Cooperatives are formally controlled and governed by a board of directors elected by and from its membership. The cooperative derives equity from member-owners and operates for their benefit. Cooperative earnings are allocated to members based on use. These unique principles guide cooperative formation and conduct: user-owner, user-control, and user-benefit. 1) The people who own and finance the cooperative are those who use it. 2) The people who use the cooperative are those who control it; they exercise that control by meeting attendance and voting, electing their Board of Directors, and making decisions on major cooperative issues. 3) The cooperative’s sole purpose is to provide and distribute benefits to members on the basis of their use. These benefits may be quite diverse and include among them: improved bargaining power, reduced costs, access to products and services otherwise unavailable or unaffordable, market access and expanded market opportunities, improved product and service quality, increased income, community strength, political action, economic enhancement, competitive benchmarking, and democratic voice. They can also provide a sense of community and solidarity from the very process of participation and involvement (Zeuli and Cropp 2004; Dunn 1988).

Several unique practices distinguish cooperatives from investment firms. Patronage refunds distribute earnings to members based on “use.” Members form cooperatives for “service,” not for monetary return on investment. Return on equity capital as an investment is limited by law—though a cooperative may exceed juridically defined rates if it’s voting structure is limited to one-person, one-vote provisions. Cooperatives often cooperate among themselves and promote the cooperative way of doing business by educating all participants (International Cooperative Alliance, accessed December 15, 2012 from <http://www.ica.coop.principles>). For cooperative member-patrons, the activity of the organization (and their use of that activity) is central to their relationship to the organization.

New generation cooperatives, while complying with the Capper Volstead Act of 1922 (the enabling legislation of cooperatives), represent a degree of hybridization with investment firms (Stofferahn 2007). Traditional agricultural cooperatives generally have open membership policies, and membership fees are nominal. Any farmer with the relevant products can join the organization, and in turn the cooperative provides a guaranteed market for their output. In NGCs, a farmer must purchase delivery rights, in the form of contracts to deliver a specified amount of production. More than one contract may be bought by any individual farmer, but there is a limit set by the cooperative. These delivery contracts become the member's equity share account. These accounts grow according to how much product the member delivers (or uses) the cooperative. The farmer is obligated to deliver the contracted amount; the cooperative is obligated to receive it, but no more than the amount contracted. NGCs are organized to provide the service of value-added processing of the commodity. The cooperative, in-part, raises capital with the sale of these contracts, with prices among cooperatives variously ranging from \$1,500 to \$10,000 or more. Members are free to buy and sell these contracts among themselves. Benefits from operations flow back among members, according to the use they make of the cooperative, i.e. in proportion to how much product they deliver for processing. Voting rights generally remain one-member, one-vote. The cooperative may also sell preferred stock to the larger public, with preferred stock holding no voting rights. Their relationship to the cooperative is one of an investor (Stofferahn 2007; Harris, Stefanson, Fulton 1996; Sousa and Herman 2012).

Dakota Growers Pasta Cooperative (DGPC) fits the mold of a NGC as described above. While providing an outlet for durum farmers, it supplies branded and private-label pasta products and flours to retail, foodservice, and food ingredient companies in North America. With an annual milling capacity to grind more than 12 million bushels of grain, its production facilities produced up to 500 million pounds of pasta annually. Brand names included Dreamfields, Pasta Growers, Pasta Sanita, Primo Piatto, and Zia Briosa. Under license, the cooperative also distributed Ronzoni, Prince, Creamette, and Mrs. Weiss pasta brands to the foodservice sector. The firm was successful over time, returning increased value to farmers as a local organization they owned and governed. It was the third largest pasta producer in the United States in 2002 (Gray, Stofferahn, Hipple 2013).

Context of Grain Production and Marketing

Grain farming like the rest of agriculture has experienced a radical industrialization due to mechanization, biological innovation, and specialization on farms. Production has expanded on individual farms due to this innovation, accompanied by a precipitous drop in the number of farms over-all (see <http://agofthemiddle.org/>). There has been a parallel dynamic in agribusinesses

with a few firms accounting for a majority of total sales in several agricultural sectors (see Socially Responsible Agriculture Project; Farmers Union, and Organization for Competitive Markets). These large corporations have been able to garner commanding market shares with a series of maneuvers that include integration both vertically and horizontally by product and location (going global), making acquisitions of competing firms (and firms with different but complementary products), as well as forming joint ventures and strategic alliances. Glencore International, the commodity trader, integrated vertically upstream to strip mining, downstream to refining, processing smelting, horizontally to locations around the globe, via a series of different commodities, i.e. metals and minerals, energy products, and agricultural products.

Farmers have been caught in these dynamics such that they are squeezed between high input costs and low market prices, with little to no power in facing much larger agri-businesses and multinationals in the market place. In a prior era of agricultural production, feed, seed, and fertilizer were produced on farms. With mechanization, the development of agri-chemicals, artificial fertilizers, and biologicals, these inputs were shifted off farm to incipient agri-businesses and sold back to farmers at high and historically increasing costs. These innovations allowed for massive expansions in on-farm production, but such large volumes also meant low to stable product prices over-time. High cost inputs matched with relatively low product prices put many farmers in a cost-price squeeze that forced farm bankruptcy and further farm expansion and industrialization.

In a marketing context, cooperatives are often formed when “over-production” results in low prices (relative to costs) and/or when “hold-up” situations occur that a monopsonist (single buyer) or an oligopsonist (few buyers with a large market share) can dictate prices to independent producers. By aggregating, farmers are able to coordinate sales, gain some market power, and improve incomes. Similar dynamics can occur upstream when purchasing from a single seller (monopoly) or oligopolist (few sellers with large market share). Organizing into a cooperative and in processing their output, as Dakota Growers did, can provide scale and product niche for capturing value for farmer-members, rather than turning their output over to traders and private processors.

Inherent Tensions and Tipping Points

In “Democratizing Rural Economy” Mooney (2004) reviews four tensions or contradictions within the larger socio-political-economy that interface with agricultural cooperatives, as well as exist within organizations. These tensions—1) capitalism/democracy, 2) local/global, 3) traditional/new social movements, and 4) production/consumption—will be reviewed here in terms of their implications for shifts in cooperative organizational identity, and as tipping

points in the organization. The final tension between production and consumption will be reserved for discussion in the last section of the paper, given it has had less conscious relevancy with farmers of Dakota Growers, but has great implications for internalizing environmental and human costs societally.

Capitalism/Democracy Tension

This tension, to take exception from Mooney, and to short-cut needed description is stated here as “person-use-democratic-organization/capital-return on investment (roi)-share-organization.”

Historically most agricultural cooperatives in the United States have followed a “one-member, one-vote” principle (Reynolds, Gray, Kraenzle 1997; Hueth and Reynolds 2011; Reynolds 2004). Regardless of the amount of investment held by any single individual, all members have equal voting power. This is in contradistinction to voting structures within investment firms that base voting privileges on the number of shares of common stock owned, i.e. one share, one vote. While cooperatives privilege personhood, IOFs privilege capital.

However cooperatives must make earnings to survive through time. And they are in competition with business forms that emphasize short term roi. These roi firms, as the dominant business form in the larger socio-political-economy, create a context of pressure on cooperatives to adapt to the needs of capital, rather than the needs of people. Needs of capital are often translated as the need to be unencumbered for efficiency reasons, and due a return equivalent to its size—argued as “investment will not occur otherwise.” The tension, “person-use-democratic-organization//capital-return on investment (roi)-share-organization,” becomes very real with considerable pressure from within its competitive context, to simplify it toward a “capital-roi-organization.”

There are then, frequent threats to the “one-person, one vote” principle in terms of modifying it, eliminating it, or de-vitalizing it due to the unintended consequences of other dynamics. Direct threats often come out of the theoretical agency of neoclassical economics. From this position, arguments are made to shift one-member, one-vote to proportional voting, i.e. aligning votes held to volume transacted with the cooperative. It is a general practice in cooperatives that as “use” is made of the cooperative, equity contributions are assessed according to “use” made of the organization. The greater the volume transacted, the more equity, and in proportional voting, the more votes. When proportional voting is used, it de-privileges equality of member and personhood, and in turn weights organizational rationality and identity toward the needs of capital, and in particular toward the selective needs of larger farmers, or a large farmer class. Larger farms, in general, account for greater level of volume committed.

At other times there is pressure for the wholesale restructuring of cooperatives to IOFs (e.g., California Olive Growers, Calavao Avacados,

GoldKist, Capital Milk, American Rice, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta Wheat Pools). Conversion to IOFs simplifies cooperatives away from the multiple values of “use” and the potentialities of democratic voice, and re-organizes them to a singular logic of roi and exchange value. Conversion eliminates the tension entirely and shifts the organization to an identity of capital-roi rationality.

There are secondary pressures that serve to de-vitalize democratic principles. As mentioned above there has been considerable concentration of ag-markets such that large agribusiness IOFs often hold commanding market shares (e.g., Cargill, ADM, and ConAgra grain firms). These firms set the competitive context for cooperatives. To accommodate to this competition (as well as to the decline in farm numbers) many cooperatives have merged, made acquisitions, and formed joint ventures (often with IOFs,) creating complex bureaucracies in their own right. These structures create distance between farmers and the decision making points of the organization, thereby muting democratic dynamics, even if one-person, one-vote principles are followed (Fairbarin 2004). Boards of directors continue to be elected from farmers, though the complexity of these organizations, and expertise required to function on boards can be well beyond the skills of individual farmer-members.

This distance is complicated by a management that frequently holds more information about, for example law, finance, and marketing than directors. Fulton and Larson (2012) refer to this dynamic as a problem in “asymmetry of information” between agents and principal, agents being a management, hired by directors, and directors acting as the principals of the organization (ultimately serving at the behest of the members). Fulton and Larson (2012) suggest the agent/principal problem is more complicated by CEOs who come with different agendas, often based in inflating their own marketability and exchange value in the larger national and global market. They tend to conceive and manage organizations in a manner congruent with the management of IOFs. Their performance expectations may be based in “grand visions” for the organization and such personal goals as high salaries, perks, and job security (Sousa and Herman 2012). Under these circumstances the board may come to be in a near dependent relationship to management, rather than in a position as strategic decision maker.

To continue through time in providing service to members organized around use values, the cooperatives must retain the use/financial returns tension. Earnings are necessary to maintain the financial needs of the organization. However, vigilance must be exercised to prevent a dominant tipping toward roi imperatives (in spite of the considerable pressures to do so, as articulated above). To do otherwise is to render impotent the use-democracy aspects of the organization.

Local/Global Tension

In pursuing growth and profitability some cooperatives have developed global locations (e.g., Cenex-Harvest, Land O'Lakes) to compete with investor-oriented transnational corporations (TNCs). This adds another layer of distance (i.e., physical distance) between members, member governance, and cooperative decision making. This distance can then tip a member/management tension toward management prerogatives (the agent), as well as the needs of capital.

Globalization, along with bureaucratization tends to demand standardization and often, a resulting subordination of unique local qualities. Cooperatives, given their unique user-owner character, have a strong tendency to be locally embedded. Equity-capital resides with the user-owners, and in the case of farming, where user-owners live, i.e. on the farm. This is quite different from investment oriented capital that seeks fluidity, and freedom (as opposed to freedom of the person). Local embeddedness from the standpoint of capital, and from the agency of neoclassical economics, is an unnecessary constraint that interferes with mobility and the efficient application of capital resources. However from a person centered understanding, geographic embeddedness prevents capital flight. Mooney (2004: 88) suggests, from an historical perspective, geographic embeddedness serves a long-term functional adaptation (an efficiency of a different sort) that shields cooperatives and communities to which they are [embedded] from . . . recession that would drive capital from the region."

While cooperative character results in a natural embeddedness, the demands of a neoclassical efficiency and the mobility of capital, IOF competition, organizational complexity, globalization, and CEO managerial culture, call for a "freeing-up" and disencumbering of capital from locally "constrained" attachments. Like the person-use/capital-investment tension, cooperatives need some degree of both in terms of market development, but an over-emphasis can result in a loss of local identity as well as a differentiated uniqueness that only embeddedness can provide.

Traditional/New Social Movement

Mooney (2004: 91) argues (citing Castells 1983 and Melucci 1994) that agricultural cooperatives are sites simultaneously of both new and traditional social movements. They can be readily seen along class lines as a means "of surplus value retention by direct producers (farmers)," and in this respect, have traditional social movement characteristics. However to the extent they represent enlargements for new voices, or previously weak voices into decision making, they are akin to new social movement values. The multiplicity of use values, as realized in cooperative participation allows in other "logics of action," as does its explicit democratic voice aspects. This multiplicity, perhaps only in latent form, has the potential to challenge standardizations inherent in bureaucratic

forms, demands for globalization, as well as visionings of a CEO around maximization of product, growth, money and power (Mooney 2004)—what Melucci (1994) refers to as the constitutive logic of the larger system.

However Mooney (2004) suggests a tendency to push a traditional movement orientation, e.g. an economic class position, can narrow down a cooperative to such an extent that it may re-design for proportional voting and/or uses large membership fees, gives a cooperative a bias toward large farms while minimizing breadth of voice for all farmers. Both the focus of economic class economic advocacy and the breadth of multiple and different voices are needed. If conversion to an IOF occurs, the tension is resolved. The cooperative ceases to be instrument for either traditional or new social movements and the organization is appropriated by a contextually larger logic of maximizing production, growth, money, and power.

Viterra Acquires Dakota Growers, Glencore Acquires Viterra

Glencore International acquired Viterra Grain in 2012 for \$6.2 billion. Viterra, an IOF multinational grain handler headquartered in Regina, Canada, had been formed in 2007 from an amalgam of three previously existing grain cooperatives and a private firm. Viterra acquired Dakota Growers as a subsidiary in 2010. The rationale for Glencore's acquisition of Viterra included: "1) turning Glencore into a truly global trader in wheat, barley and canola, boosting Glencore's global origination capabilities, by filling a key geographic gap in origination markets, 2) increasing origination capabilities in the Australian market, 3) increasing access to emerging global agricultural markets with growing populations and increasing protein consumption rates per capita, 4) expected increased earning within the first year, and 5) increasing cash flows with low on-going maintenance costs" (Glencore 2012).

The tensions inherent in the pre-existing grain cooperatives between use-democracy and capital roi, local and global, and old and new social movements have disappeared. Glencore is a globalizing transnational that seeks to maximize returns on investment, by purchasing low and selling high, by operating within a larger socio-political-economic and global logic that emphasizes profit, growth, and power. In its descriptions of acquired Viterra assets, it lists under "processing acquisitions": 1) Five oat and specialty grain milling facilities in Canada and United States, 2) Two pasta production facilities in the United States, 3) One canola processing facility in Canada, and 4) 42 percent interest in Prairie Malt in Canada. Not much more than a footnote, the entry "two pasta production facilities" is the Dakota Growers Pasta Company. As listed here, DGPC has been reduced to a sourcing subsidiary of one of the largest multinationals in the world, Glencore, ranked fourteenth on the Global 500

(accessed February 11, 2013 from <http://www.money.cnn.com/fortune/global500/>).

Viterra, itself a multinational, though paled in size relative to Glencore, acquired Dakota Growers Pasta Company (DGPC) in 2010. DGPC had previously converted from a cooperative to an IOF in 2002. With the acquisition of DGPC by Viterra, DGPC gave up any pretense of being locally owned, controlled, and operated by local shareholders, as the board of directors had promised during the conversion campaign. In spite of Boland's (2012: 47) reassurance that "there has been no outward signs that the conversion has changed the overall long-term strategy of DGPC, it still used durum wheat from the region in its semolina-grinding and pasta manufacturing plants. The external capital has helped it expand, and DGPC is well positioned to take advantage of the changes in the U.S. pasta industry" the future was not to so unfold. The failed clairvoyance of this statement has become painfully evident. The locally owned farmer cooperative had been morphed in identity to become a subsidiary of Glencore, a firm engaged in various activities from strip mining to smelting to most recently, pasta making. The critical and de-reformative change occurred with the conversion of Dakota Growers to an IOF. Conversion resulted in an elimination of the inherent tensions specified above, and thereby creating a fundamental shift in DGPC's identity. The following section will address how this change was influenced by competing discourse frames that were accessed during the decision period. The work of Nancy Fraser (1989) was drawn for this review.

Discourse Narratives Concerning Conversion

This section will introduce a qualitative analysis of the narratives around the conversion of Dakota Growers to an IOF. A categorical epistemology by Fraser (1989) is introduced for sorting out the character of the different narratives used in the decision. These categories are then associated with the various tensions described above to highlight their relationship to the continued operation of the organization as a cooperative.

Fraser's parses contentious debate as 1) privatizing, 2) expert, 3) oppositional, and 4) re-privatizing discourse. Her framework comes from conceptions of "needs-struggle" that exists between and among different societal positions (e.g., classes, races, genders, regions, organizations). According to Fraser (1989) and Prieur (2006) struggle occurs over how needs are defined, who is culpable in power relationships, and where responsibility for satisfaction is placed (e.g., the individual, the family, the community, civil society, the market, or the state. Privatizing discourse tends to place responsibility with the individual or the family and tends to accompany dominant hegemonies of late capitalism and such derivative institutions as IOFs.

Explicit struggle in the form of oppositional discourse can occur when subordinate groups are able to push into greater public awareness, levels of deprivation and disadvantage that catch the public's attention and with it, broader degrees of civic responsibility. Re-privatization discourse tends to appropriate oppositional narratives, but in a manner that pushes oppositional definitions and responsibilities back to the individual and familial level. Expert discourse often serves as a tipping discourse, giving legitimacy to one particular narrative or another. Fraser cautions that expert discourse tends to be used most frequently in re-privatizing strategies, pushing opposing voices back into the sphere of the personal and the familial.

Three types of communication formats were used to get a qualitative sense of how these argument were made explicit in the DGPC decision: 1) documents filed by the DGPC board of directors with the Securities and Exchange Commission; 2) newspaper accounts, opinion pieces in the editorial section of the state's major daily newspapers, and letters-to-the-editor; and 3) testimony of cooperative members and knowledgeable obtained from transcripts of personal interviews. We provide summaries of the arguments, in ideal type form, here. (A detailed description and presentation of this research can be found at Gray, Stofferahn, and Hipple 2013).

Privatizing Discourse

Two privatizing discourse frames will be presented here as revealed in the Dakota Growers case. They address the "needs" of capital to be unencumbered, and rationalized within a singular logic of making a return on investment. Expert consultants with legal, banking, and accounting expertise, were drawn upon in the on-site decision making, and helped formulate the positions (Collins 1991a, 1991b; Schrader 1989).

Equity liquidity refers to the access individual members have to their equity in the organization. There is no general market for the sale of cooperative equity "stock" as exists for investment firms listed on stock exchanges. While cooperatives have equity redemption programs, a member cannot "cash-in" at their own individual preference. The equity is only relatively liquid. This is part of the strategy of keeping organizations embedded in member locality through time. In DGPC, as with most new generation cooperatives, members can sell their equity stock, but only to existing and prospective farmer-members.

The equity liquidity discourse for conversion proceeded along the following lines. The original conversion discussions were triggered by difficulties some members had in delivering on their contracts due to wheat blight problems. Since these members were not "using" the cooperative, their interests tended to shift to an appreciation in equity stock values. There were other members who were reaching retirement age and though still using the cooperative, were

interested in “cashing-in.” Other members simply wanted the equity for their own alternative purposes. If conversion were to occur, it would result in making equity stock available to those who wanted to sell, buy, or appropriate it. Presumably a broader market would open up, making stock available to non-producers and non-farmers, thereby raising its value. With cash in hand it would also be free for investment in other ventures.

As revealed in the SEC filing, the board of directors and upper management argued there was little choice but to convert to an IOF, and still be responsive to members’ concerns about liquidity. Other alternatives were acknowledged, such as continuing to operate as a cooperative, or converting to a limited liability company. However, only conversion to an IOF received serious considerations.

In reviewing SEC filing documents, newspapers, and interviews, the equity liquidity argument was the most often cited rationale for justifying conversion, and the most persuasive in prompting members to vote for conversion (Gray, Stofferahn, Hipple 2013). The arguments were organized around investment options, and not “use.” None of the discourse addressed the importance of local, nor in keeping the organization as an instrument for farmer class interests. Equity fluidity is a privatizing discourse in that it removes from consideration any thought concerning maintaining or opening voice opportunities. Potentialities and possibilities are considered from the perspective of singular logic of privatized investment and needs of capital.

After equity liquidity, the access to investment capital (equity access) was second in importance in convincing members to vote for conversion. Throughout the SEC filing, newspaper articles, and interviews the necessity of securing greater access to equity capital was considered fundamental. In their strategic planning the board and management had always planned to become “a major industry player.” They sought to achieve that position through market growth, firm expansion and acquisitions, partnerships, strategic alliances, and joint ventures. These strategies require borrowing capital, but borrowing capital results in debt service. The expansionary strategy was legitimized by reports that competition in the future was expected to become much tighter. To continue to maintain its current activities, as well as to grow and expand in the future would require additional capital. Conversion would be needed in order to access the amount of capital needed to maintain company activities into the future, and/or to expand activities via the various growth strategies, in particular, through joint ventures. These positions were further supported with the expertise of various accounting and banking consultants.

This discourse pushes the use/investment tension toward investment, loss of democratic process, and loss of the local with the development of organizational bureaucracy and globalization. The discourse seeks to bring the organization more in line with larger constitutive logics of growth, profit, and power and totally obscures any previous considerations inherent in either old or new social movement orientations.

Oppositional Discourse

Two oppositional discourse frames will be presented here as revealed in the Dakota Growers case. Oppositional discourse in this context, seeks to set a narrative frames that oppose conversions and retain the internal inherent tensions of cooperatives. Two frames will be presented, voluntary-populism and a grain farmer contextualized, social class discourse.

Voluntary-populist (V.P.) narratives blend the language and discourse of populism and voluntarism into conceptions of cooperatives. Populism refers to “political ideas and activities that are intended to represent ordinary people’s needs and wishes” (accessed December 15, 2012 from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/populism/>). Voluntarism refers to social action, where individuals freely join a social movement, collective action, or an organization to achieve some social, economic, and/or political goal. This discourse frame begins with the individual who is a joiner. Joiners come together with sets of similar ideas, values, and preferences to form a group, or an organization. The individual plays a central role, though it is a political individual, as a voluntary member of an organization. Cooperatives are organizations formed by individuals on a voluntary basis to achieve goals, often for a group of individuals who are at some socio-economic disadvantage relative to other more powerful interests (e.g., monopoly-oligopoly, monopsony-oligopsony as discussed previously). Mutuality of interests among these individuals is central to organizational formation.

Those using oppositional discourse tended to use a voluntary-populist narrative most often. References were frequently made to farmers as members of the cooperative, and less so to farmers as an existent group. Predominant were concerns about: 1) loss of member democratic control generally, 2) loss of the one-member, one-vote principle, 3) speculation that conversion was an attempt by some members of the board to avoid term limits set by cooperative bylaws, thereby preserving their power and influence, 4) displacement of member control to out-of-state non-farmer investors, 5) loss of communication exchanges between members and the organization via participation in membership meetings, 6) loss of information from member newsletters, and 7) loss of patronage dividends paid to members.

There was an implicit understanding, though perhaps not in dialectical language or Fraserian terms, that one cannot have a cooperative without tensions. Earnings are necessary, management is necessary, even growth and adaptation to larger environmental pressures are important. However there was also an awareness that if conversion were to occur, there would likely be losses to democracy (e.g., one-member, one-vote, concentration of power within) to local embeddedness (e.g., to out of state, non-farmer investors,) to traditional economic class benefits (e.g., member patronage dividends,) and in

opportunities for more generalized voice (membership meetings). There is of course overlap in this parsing. Democracy for example applies to each of these categories. However what ultimately is revealed is a member concern that a person-centered organization, their organization, is being displaced by one that privileges the needs of capital over the needs of members, i.e. the needs of people.

Grain Farmer-Class narratives have a different starting point than discourses embedded in populism. In populist analyses, the individual is the initiating focus. Groups and voluntary organizations (cooperatives) are understood as formed from individuals coming together and pursuing certain goals based on their similar “ideas” and values. They then pursue these ends as a group, held together by common ideals (and ideas), values, and preferences (see social idealism, Hinkle 1994). From a class perspective the class itself is the central focus. Class is not just a group of individuals with similar ideas, values, and interests coming together to pursue some end. There is a defining relationship in how people make a living, or earn their “material,” means of survival in the economy (see social materialism, Hinkle 1994). (It needs noting that farmers cannot be described as a class quite as easily as for example labor. Farmers expend labor and they also manage, employ, own, rent out, rent, and contract. And these functions differ in degree by commodity and product raised, and region of the country farmed. We note Mooney’s [1988] very careful specification of contradictory class locations of farmers more generally.) For ease of discussion we use the split term “class/collective action” to help capture in language 1) the disadvantaged power relationships specifically, of North Dakota farmers relative to larger corporate and global interests, 2) their common material relationships to agriculture, 3) their actions in forming cooperatives (not unlike labor union formations) to off-set their subordinate position, and 4) in using cooperatives as an instrument for their specific “class” interests.

Though not as prevalent as the voluntary-populist discourse, the producer class frame was articulated in a number of news accounts and interviews. It was argued that 1) the original purposes of the cooperative were being lost; 2) With conversion, farmers would be losing a tool for influencing their shared destinies; 3) Cooperative mission was to be an advocate for family farmers (at times stated as yeoman farmers) in part to oppose big business and non-North Dakota corporations; 4) The cooperative was to oppose these interests, its primary purpose, was to provide service to members and add value to local producers’ products; 5) Control of the precious equity-capital created could be lost to non-local non-farmer investment interests; 6) Loss of control to outside investors could mean the facility could be re-located out of the area; and ultimately 7) DGPC could be lost as an instrument for farmers to have an influence on the future.

Oppositional discourse based in farmer class narratives tended to highlight and tip the old/new social movements tension, not unexpectedly toward a traditional class understanding of cooperatives. This is most easily seen in

language supporting yeoman farmers, family farmers, protection of the accumulated equity-capital of farmers, and opposing big business. As with voluntary-populist oppositional discourse, there was little language supporting cooperatives as a vehicle for multiple voices explicitly (new social movements), though as a supporter of cooperatives there is an implicit endorsement for the multiple use-values of cooperatives (ownership, governance, and benefits). The dramatic tension is the opposition to the larger constituent logics of a global capitalist system that would result with a conversion, and the consequent shifts to a uni-dimensional investment logic.

The oppositional-class narrative tended to be linked with a localism discourse that emphasized protection of “local” interests from appropriation by “non-North Dakota” corporations, seeking to ensure that the organization is not re-located “out of the area,” and the importance of adding value to “local” producers’ products. Unlike the privatizing discourse, the oppositional positions lacked the support of an expertise narrative.

De/Privatization Discourse

Re-privatization strategies acknowledge these oppositional arguments while simultaneously dismissing their legitimacy. It pushes power relations back to the individual or private level. Farmers as a populist group or a class interested in empowering themselves cease to be a central goal of the organization. Instead, return on investment for the individual owners, whether farmer and local or non-local investor, becomes the central and singular organizing principle of the organization.

The hallmarks of discourse opposing conversion from a member-owned cooperative to an investor-owned firm are distrust of big business, advocacy for family farmers, and countervailing non-North Dakota interests, among others. The oppositional narratives frames power, or lack thereof, not as an individual farmer concern, but rather as a larger voluntary-populist or social class issue. Thus with organizing, individual powerlessness becomes a political issue. DGPC was organized to empower and amplify the voice of this community of farmers so they would have greater influence on the forces that affect their lives. They took action by forming a democratically designed cooperative organization. Retention of cooperative structure also means retention of the various existent tensions specified earlier. Oppositional discourse does not argue for elimination of tensions, but rather for survival of the cooperative, but in particular its democratic, multiple “use” (ownership, governance, benefits) and local emphases.

Re-privatizing discourse tends to take shape as a “yes/but” or straw man form. In the SEC filing and in various news accounts, the board and management of the cooperative sought to displace oppositional interests and

privatize member concerns. Opponents indicated that 1) converting from a cooperative to an investor-owned firm would reflect poorly on cooperatives generally and suggest they were an inferior form of business organization; 2) Durum farmers might lose their market for durum; 3) Non-farmer interests might gain control over the new investor-owned firm; and 4) out-of-state interests might acquire the company and remove it from local control.

Proponents of conversion argued that, yes, board members took pride in the image of cooperatives, as well as cooperative membership, but conversion was a necessary change. Yes, conversion to an investor-owned firm was necessary to avoid business failure and achieve expansionary goals, but conversion should not be taken as a reflection on the inferiority of the cooperative form of business. Yes, conversion would be an unfortunate loss, but the investor-owned firm would remain a self-help, neighborly pasta maker. Yes, selling stock to non-farmers could result in non-farmer control, but the new company would still be owned and controlled by North Dakota farmers. Yes, out-of-state interests would likely invest, but the conversion would keep stock in the hands of farmers and still allow producers to be able to deliver durum to the company. And, yes, durum would be sourced from a much larger area, but the new company would retain its value-added emphasis.

These arguments were reinforced in news accounts in which cooperative managers maintained that the pasta operations as an investor-owned firm would not be significantly different from a cooperative. Indeed, members might expect more dividends under an investment business structure, while day-to-day operations would not be significantly changed. In fact, conversion could result in windfall profits. In news accounts citing the SEC filing, cooperative leadership maintained that, yes, loss of control was an issue, but local farmers would continue to have an influence on the board of directors, since a third of the seats on the board of directors were required to be filled by North Dakota farmers. By retaining this number for durum farmers and North Dakota residents, the board of directors maintained that the composition of the board of directors of the newly formed investment-oriented firm would be only “slightly different” from the composition of the board of directors of the cooperative. These arguments, as with the privatization discourse, were supported and given legitimacy, and were in part formulated with the expertise of a hired consultant team of legal, accounting, and banking advisors.

Privatization-De/Reprivatization Prevails

The privatization and re-privatization narratives prevailed when the vote was taken for conversion in 2002. Farmers ready to retire, and those who were not shipping anymore were more interested in equity liquidity and predisposed to arguments from management about the importance of capital access for expansion. The membership more generally became interested when projections

were made about the market value of shares jumping with liquidity. One cooperative director suggested that after conversion shares could increase twenty-two times actual earnings, citing American Italian Pasta Company trading value at the time. This suggestion of windfall profits provided impetus for many members to vote for conversion as a way to maximize returns on investment (Gray, Stofferahn, and Hipple 2013).

Those arguing for retention of cooperative form, or opposing conversion, were poorly organized, and lacked access to information and adequate resources to rebut claims of the “experts.” Their vehicles for articulation tended to take shape solely as “speaking up” at public meetings, and commenting for newspaper articles. With little to no resources or organization their critiques were limited to defending cooperative principle, citing the original purposes of the cooperative, and demanding the board and corporate officers substantiate their claims and predictions—which could be easily done with the help of hired expertise. Since management and the board were arguing from privatization and re-privatization narratives, the only time they offered cooperative “use,” “local,” and “voice” comments was in a “yes/but” format. The SEC filing for the conversion indicated that the board only conducted one study, and that was to determine which organizational form would provide better liquidity, as buttressed by experts. No studies were conducted to assess the longer range outcomes for farmer-members due to loss in cooperative form.

Post-Conversion Study: Stofferahn reported a re-analysis of the interview data in 2007 with a focus on the former members’ (qua investors’) specific responses to conversion. These interviews were conducted in 2003-2004. Board members and management were not interviewed given the CEO’s comment that “upon the advice of legal counsel, any information on the board’s position on conversion could be found in the company’s filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission” (Stofferahn 2007). At this point a market for shares had not materialized and there was no liquidity for member owned assets. Particularly troublesome was the lack of information coming from the organization. Members of the cooperative had regular information exchanges through participation at meetings, and receiving quarterly reports, and newsletters. This flow of information all but dried up after conversion. Without a market established for shares, members had to rely on word-of-mouth to glean whether anyone had sold shares and at what price. There was little to no information about the profitability of the company, about the possibility of receiving dividends on their shares of stock, or the value of shares. Former members were profoundly disappointed, and even embarrassed about the results and reported a loss of pride due to the shift in status from member-owners to owner-investors (Stofferahn 2007; Gray, Stofferahn, and Hipple 2013).

Viterra and Glencore

In 2007 Viterra, an IOF, was formed out of three previous Canadian grain cooperatives and a private firm. Following this formation, it conducted an aggressive acquisition strategy (Viterra, accessed December 15, 2012, from http://www.alacrastore.com/mergers-acquisitions/Viterra_Inc-1026193). Eight major acquisitions were made, it acquired a stake in another company, and divested itself of another. This resulted in multiple offices in Canada and Australian. Its own genesis as rooted in cooperatives, was de-localized to a globalization strategy, and with all the acquisitions, an implicit bureaucratization, as directed by directors and management. The inherent tensions of a cooperative had been eliminated. The singular rationalizing logic of roi was adopted.

After several poor years of financial performance, 2009 marked a “very good year” financially for Dakota Growers Pasta Company. In 2010 Viterra acquired Dakota Growers. The board of directors of both companies approved the merger, which was structured as a tender offer (i.e., open offer to stockholders) followed by an all-cash exchange. The liquidity that had been promised during the conversion decision was finally realized, eight years later. Many “shareholders” were resentful that the board and management had not achieved liquidity for the shares as anticipated by the conversion. Many farmers who had been “investors” in Dakota Growers saw the acquisition offer as their only way to sell their shares, and decided to “take the money and run.” Reassurances were made by Viterra that the DGPC plants would not be closed and grain would continue to be sourced from farmers in the region (*Agweek*, March 10, 2010 accessed November 2012).

Of course what was once an asymmetry of information between management the board and members had become, with conversion, a very radical asymmetry in power. Farmers were now customers rather than members. The organizing logic became investment not use. The scope of the organization was disembedded from local to global. The organization as a point for voice of new and/or old social movement character, had been displaced by a voice, within a context of global competition, for rationalization to maximize product, growth, money, and power. This process was in part facilitated with a privatizing and reprivatizing discourse that neutralized and dismissed oppositional discourse.

The relationship between Glencore and the durum farm customers (no longer members) of Dakota Growers Pasta Company will likely parallel the one with Viterra, only more so. Agriculture products are only one aspect of Glencore’s business, the home office is in Europe with multiple offices and activities around the globe. Its web publication “Glencore-Viterra: Information for Farmers and Growers,” makes no mention of Dakota Growers or North Dakota farmers. It focuses on Australian and Canadian producers. Dakota Growers Pasta has shrunk to a much smaller part of an overhead, and owning

organization. There have been no reassurances, as came with the Viterra acquisition that the facility would continue to operate and source from local farmers. Individual farmers, as individuals, have become meaningless in terms of influence and power, as embedded within an organization that has also been charged with environmental, human rights, and accounting violation.

Much was lost with conversion. The comment from a neoclassical economics perspective rings even more hollow: “there has been no outward signs that the conversion has changed the overall long-term strategy of DGPC. It still used durum wheat from the region in its semolina-grinding and pasta manufacturing plants. The external capital has helped it expand, and DGPC is well positioned to take advantage of the changes in the U.S. pasta industry” (Boland 2012).

As long a DGPC can serve as a profit center for Glencore, there is a greater likelihood the facility will continue providing service to North Dakota producers. The original purpose to add value to farmers’ products with a democratic, locally embedded organization that emphasizes use values, and empowers farmers has been lost. The flood gates of displacement permitting later acquisitions by Viterra and Glencore were opened with conversion and the consequent simplification to a singular roi rationality prevailed.

Conclusion

The analysis of the discourse of conversion indicated that the privatization and re-privatization narratives held sway over oppositional discourse. However also evident was the effective collapse of the democracy/capitalism tension even before conversion occurred. Fulton and Larson (2012) write about the asymmetry of information between agents, i.e. leadership of the cooperative, and principals, i.e. the members. While members offered oppositional discourse critiques of the conversion option, they were easily dismissed by managers and directors holding technical information that was supported by consulting experts. Members were left to articulate at meeting with little organization and no expert support. The resultant conversion to an IOF resulted in the elimination of inherent cooperative tensions. Dakota Growers became a tool for profit, money, and power, ultimately to be captured by Glencore. A “person-use-democratic organization” had devolved and was tipped to emphasize “return on investment-share-organization.” Democracy for members was replaced by bureaucracy for capital. Local niche and farmer embeddedness were displaced by a singular customer relations, and farmer powerlessness within a far flung, multi-product transnational corporation headquartered in Baar, Switzerland. Voice, and the possibility of alternative social movement logics, whether new or traditional, was eliminated. Elimination of the defining inherent tensions of

cooperative organization was complete and farmers were dis-embedded from their local organization.

We have not spoken to a larger societal production/consumption tension as articulated by Mooney (2004). As promised we will give some brief discussion to its fundamental importance for societal organization. This will be followed by a brief consideration of possible recommendations to mitigate some of the pressure on cooperatives to convert.

There was little comment and narrative concerning links between farmers and consumers (i.e., production to consumption) in the conversion discourse. However it is of central importance in the context of challenges from the larger socio-political-economy. The current organization of agriculture tends to treat various environmental and human costs as externalities. There is little opportunity, beyond direct government regulation, to bring these costs inside business decision-making, particularly as organized around IOF logic and rationality. This is in part due to the severe market separation of production and consumption. Production and consumption interests tend to be understood at antagonistic poles. Yet they presuppose each other, one requires the other. Production anticipates consumption, consumption anticipates production.

As a potentiality and as articulated from an earlier tradition of cooperative development, Voorhis (1961: 150) suggests the development of a cooperative commonwealth: “if a considerable proportion of farm crops [and food] could be sold directly by farmer-owned enterprises to consumer-owned ones, the spread between what farmers receive and what consumers pay would amount simply to the costs of processing, transportation and sale.” (as cited in Mooney 2004: 85). This would raise the possibility of better returns to farmers and lower prices to consumer. Perhaps more importantly, “member-users” of the respective services of agricultural and consumer cooperatives could provide, through democratic process, (and through the use values of governance, ownership and benefits) a basis for internalizing what has been externalized (Mooney 2004; Friedmann 1995, 2005). Health, environmental and land use concerns would no longer need to be as external—according to roi logic. With membership and use values of democratic governance and ownership, what exists in a member’s life world (e.g. environmental and social costs among many other things) could be internalized.

The potential of cooperative organizations to internalize externalities with use-values, and through their respective democratic process, provides a potentiality for addressing these problems. In a relative sense, this potential is much greater than the singular rationality inherent in IOFs, given their characteristic external and disconnected relations among production, investment, ownership, benefit, and consumption. The emergence of community-supported agriculture (CSAs), though yet on an incipient level, demonstrates the viability of this linking. Many are organized either informally or formally along cooperative principles. To the extent cooperatives reduce or eliminate their democratic characters through conversion, they displace this potentiality.

Recommendations

Stofferahn's field work in North Dakota revealed support for certain policy recommendations that may serve to off-set pro-conversion initiatives and at least bolster oppositional discourse and allow for a more even handed treatment (Gray, Stofferahn, and Hipple, 2013).

Provisions in Canadian cooperative statues allow for a minority (20 percent) of members to call for a third party performance audit and review of management practices. Had such a provision existed in the Dakota Growers bylaws, a minority of members could have called for a review of the conversion decision, allowing for the possibility of expert discourse supporting oppositional discourse.

Recommendation 1

Cooperative should consider adopting bylaw provisions that allow a minority of their members to call for a third party performance audit and review of management practices in the cooperative.

There is a similar position on scenario planning. In scenario planning attempts are made to identify different possibilities about the future based on uncertain but influential and driving forces. Under the Dakota Growers case, analysis "by a third party" could have sought to project the likely outcomes of conversion for members and for the cooperative business re: conversion versus remaining a cooperative. Based upon knowledge gained in this planning, a more informed and even choice might be made.

Recommendation 2

In the event that the board of directors of a cooperative is considering conversion to an investment oriented firm, the board should be required to contract with an independent third party firm to conduct scenario planning to determine whether outcomes are beneficial or damaging both to the members and to the larger organization.

Some of the suggestions were more in the realm of public policy. Several lending institutions and state agencies offered low interest loans and other lenient fiscal allowances to support formation of Dakota Growers Pasta Cooperative. The appropriation of public funds was to realize a public purpose of encouraging economic development, to provide collective benefits to the state and private benefits to cooperative "members." With conversion benefits would now accrue to individual non-resident, non-farmer shareholders. Equity raised in the cooperative for one purpose, had been converted in a corporation to another purpose. Suggestions were made that this process should be subject to a penalty.

Otherwise, there is nothing stopping any company from organizing under the guise of a cooperative in order to raise equity under extremely lenient terms, only later to convert to an IOF.

Recommendation 3

Public entities should consider policy that would impose repayment penalties and other disincentives on individuals and businesses that convert cooperative equity shares to private stock. Converted shares should be subject to a penalty in recognition that the equity raised in a cooperative for public purposes was converted in a corporation to private purposes.

Cooperatives as economic entities are one of a few institutions that retain semblances of democratic governance in early twenty-first century United States. Various processes of bureaucratization, centralization of decision making, asymmetries of expertise and information, and short term investment rationalities that externalize environmental and human costs, continue as we build a Weberian “iron cage” of modernity. Perhaps the academy of academics might give some greater focus to protecting and bequeathing institutions with potentialities of embedded democratic process, and voice to old and new logics of organization.

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14

A Study of Sustainability: Entropy and the Urban/Rural Transition

Laura A. McKinney

Introduction

“Sustainability” is a term that has become part of the global, popular discourse on development in recent decades. According to the United Nations Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, “Our Common Future” (1987), “Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This extremely influential report ties the role of the economy, the environment, and human development together to achieve sustainability objectives. Implicit to this approach is an interdisciplinary framework that draws upon relevant perspectives to improve understanding of the relationships among these three dimensions. Despite the recent upsurge in discussions of sustainability, sociological theorizations are virtually absent of a sustainability emphasis. This chapter seeks to fill this gap by synthesizing dominant approaches in the development, environmental, and rural sociology literatures with fundamental laws of nature taken from physical and natural science models in order to advance an interdisciplinary understanding of sustainability in rural and urban contexts. Specifically, the concept of entropy is used to show how rural and peripheral areas are experiencing a loss of productive energy in order to produce benefits and subsidize energy consumption in urban and core regions of the world.

Entropy is a foundational concept in the physical sciences that is intimately linked to sustainability, as all species depend on energy and matter gleaned from the environment to support their life (Daly and Cobb 1989). Entropy essentially refers to disordered matter and energy that have declining utility; waste is the ultimate embodiment of entropy and is virtually devoid of uses. While the quantity of matter and energy is constant—as stated by the first law of thermodynamics—the quality of that matter and energy is dynamic and tends toward entropy, as captured by the second law of thermodynamics (Georgescu-Roegen 1971; Prigogine 1967). Taken together, the first and second laws of thermodynamics offer that the quantity of matter and energy is constant, but the quality is dynam-

ic and tends toward entropy. The loss of usefulness so that work may be done is entropy.

The entropy law offers that in their pristine state, all natural resources exist in a state of order, with very low entropy, and maximum capacity for rearrangement so that work may be done. Low-entropy natural resources range from air, land, water, coal, oil, wood, plant and animal biota, and serve multiple purposes related to the current sustainability of all life forms, or what some refer to as having high “embodied energy.” Embodied energy is what sustains life for humans and our co-species; the result is the conversion of highly useful, embodied energy to less useful, entropic matter. Processes of extraction and production reconfigure raw materials, create pollution, and generate entropy or disorder. As resources are used and applied in processes of production, they become more chaotic, less ordered, and less useful. These production processes are accelerating the deterioration of the physical world due to their intense use of natural resources and the pollution they create. Recall that the first law states entropic matter and energy remain in perpetuity; we can never remove these useless materials (e.g., pollution, waste) from the environment. While the tendency toward entropy is a basic axiom of nature that cannot be overcome, we do have the ability to accelerate or decelerate the generation of entropy, depending on how sustainable our use is of those resources. Thus, entropic dynamics are inextricably linked to the economic processes and social relations in which they are embedded.

Inherent to the capitalist economic regime and industrial mode of production are current patterns of resource use, waste generation, and disposal, which threaten our long-term sustainability. The conversion of high quality energy to entropic matter—the entire life-cycle of pristine resources to resultant waste and pollution—is consequential for development, especially in rural places. It is undisputed that urban areas are dependent on rural resources including food, fiber, and minerals to meet basic needs for nourishment, apparel, and shelter, just to name a few. In addition, rural areas are increasingly relied on to provide landfill space to dispose of the waste generated at various points in the processes of production and consumption. The wealth of urban areas comes at the expense of accelerated dissipation of entropy, but this disorder is not confined to the urban locales in which it is generated. Instead, urban areas export entropy to rural areas, which happens both between and within nations; the purchasing power of urban centers permits the exploitation of rural resources to maintain unsustainable production and consumption arrangements that compromise prospects for sustainability. This chapter elaborates on the theoretical linkages among sustainability, entropy, and rural/urban exchanges.

In the current context of environmental crises such as global warming and biodiversity loss, and economic and social problems including poverty, war, and hunger, sustainability advocates seek solutions that simultaneously address environmental, economic, and social dimensions in favorable ways. To be sure, sustainability hinges on the equality of access to resources across space (e.g., rural

and urban areas) and across time (e.g., current and future generations). Sociology is uniquely situated to enhance sustainability research, given its advances in the areas of political-economy, the environment, development, and rural and urban studies. Despite its growing importance and the applicability of existing perspectives within the discipline, sociology lacks an established, systematic approach to issues of sustainability. This is the gap this chapter seeks to fill by providing an interdisciplinary examination of sustainability as it relates to rural and urban spaces. Specifically, through a theoretical synthesis of social, natural, and physical science models, the importance of entropic dynamics in the proliferation of urban areas and the companion demise of rural resources is articulated in both global and subnational contexts. What follows is an elaboration of the theoretical frameworks that serve as points of departure, treatment of historical evidence, and an overview of the empirical approaches to sustainability, followed by conclusions and implications for future research.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundations informing this chapter include theories of imperialism (e.g., Marx 1976), global power/dependency approaches (e.g., Frank 1978; Wallerstein 1974), theories of unequal ecological exchange (e.g., Hornborg 2001), the community capitals framework (e.g., Flora and Flora 2013), and spatial inequality perspectives (e.g., Lobao, Hooks, and Tickameyer 2007) in sociology. The goal of this chapter is to trace the historical linkages of modern capitalism, as informed by the theoretical interpretations listed above, and establish the importance of low-entropy natural resources to chronicled patterns of imperialism and its modern iteration of global dependency relationships between urban and rural spaces. As articulated by Marx (1976: 579-80), “A new and international division of labour springs up, one suited to the requirements of the main industrial countries, and it converts one part of the globe into a chiefly agricultural field of production for supplying the other part.” Meso-theoretical applications in the same vein are also discussed, to further explore within-nation inequalities emerging from the quest and conquer of low-entropy natural resources that favor urban development at the expense of rural areas.

Global Political-Economy Theories

The basic thesis of global power/dependency approaches and theories of unequal exchange is that the global division of labor maintains the most profitable modes of production in wealthy, powerful core nations while relegating less-profitable (and environmentally damaging) forms of production to poorer, peripheral nations (Frank 1978; Wallerstein 1974). Itself a result of historical lega-

cies of colonialism, the modern world economy is taken as a new form of imperialism that perpetuates the underdevelopment of the global South, whose supplies of labor and natural resources are exploited to meet core consumption demands, preserve relatively intact core environments, and augment core capital accumulation. Unequal exchanges (Hornborg 2001) are consequential for the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of peripheral areas, as specialization in primary exports distorts and destabilizes domestic economies (Sachs and Warner 1999) and contributes to a declining resource base, which has obvious implications for the health of the environment as well as future prospects for socioeconomic progress (Bunker 1985). That is, given the requisite ecological inputs to maintain economic operations (fuel, raw materials) and meet basic needs such as sustenance and shelter that are the cornerstone of advancing well-being, the absence of a healthy, vital environment severely compromises long-term trajectories of development, broadly defined.

The current era of globalization marks a significant shift of focus among development practitioners. For example, McMichael (2004) notes a departure from concerns of fostering national economic growth to emerging concerns of managing global finances and the global commons, with policies carried out worldwide by external agencies such as the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund. Structural adjustment loans, the debt regime, trends of deregulation, and global market integration comprise the strategies—collectively referred to as the “globalization project” (McMichael 2004)—that seek to reorganize national political and economic structures in ways that facilitate global capital accumulation. Poorer, less powerful peripheral nations are targeted as ideal candidates to participate in the methods listed above, in an effort to promote development. Loans are doled out to national governments alongside contractual agreements to modify national economic and political structure to align with deregulation and facilitate global market integration. Rural people suffer from the installation of these policies that no longer guarantee their access to financial institutions, undermine local autonomy, and erode the social safety nets that many depend on for the assurance of meeting basic needs. Deregulation and global market integration opens local markets to foreign investors to prompt the process of industrialization, based on the belief that industrialization will prove as efficacious to boosting development in the periphery as it was in core nations. Doing so exposes the rural masses to market insecurities and vulnerabilities unparalleled by local, regulated markets. Global fluctuations have profound consequences for peripheral production, which can be entirely dismantled by market crises and mobile capital investments. In the era of globalization multinational corporations can easily divest from rural, peripheral areas and transfer investments to new areas of the globe and even in entirely new industries to aide capital accumulation. Peripheral areas vying for foreign investors must do so in a globally competitive context that creates a “race to the bottom” where nations aim to attract capital investments by boasting extremely low wages and a virtual absence of labor and environmental regula-

tions, with obvious consequences for the sustainability of these nations and the people in them.

Notably, the lack of success of these strategies has been observed by the Nobel Prize winner in economics, Joseph Stiglitz (2007), who acted as Chief Economist of the World Bank from 1997 to 2000. Stiglitz candidly criticizes these prescriptions as benefitting wealthy nations to the detriment of poorer ones. His optimism in the current economic system, however, causes him to stop short of advocating systematic changes to alleviate worsening inequalities; instead, he focuses on eradicating greed from global governance. He additionally offers that less-developed nations put into practice the same strategies to encourage growth and development that worked for wealthy nations; all while maintaining the stance that every nation in the world can achieve the same level of development as those witnessed in core zones. For Stiglitz, mismanagement of global affairs is to blame, but, once corrected, opulence can be a reality enjoyed by all. Thus, he advocates a managerial perspective that maintains a basic belief in the potential for sustainable capitalism. He is not alone in his belief in and support of capitalist markets, which characterizes the dominant, neoliberal approach in the discipline of mainstream economics. Offered below is an elaboration of economic theorizations and their incompatibility with entropic dynamics.

Hornborg (2001) exemplifies the sort of scholarship that seeks to decouple economic theory from its modern underpinnings to critically evaluate the neo-classical paradigm vis-à-vis physical properties encompassed by the laws of thermodynamics. Among his conclusions is the irreparable rift between modern economic theories and physical principles. To illustrate, although raw materials have greater thermodynamic potential than processed or finished goods, the latter command higher prices in the market. Thus, current pricing systems reward the dissipation of entropy; moreover, following conventional models, profits garnered are typically reinvested to expand production capacities, resulting in a reciprocal relationship that dissipates more entropy at each juncture of the profit-investment-expansion cycle. This is especially consequential for rural areas' economic development as the very resources they provide—low-entropy natural resources—are devalued in market exchanges. The impact on rural sustainable development is stark; the low price for rural resources in the market makes selling more at a cheaper price the only “solution” to get ahead in fiscal terms, which is the exact dynamic that endangers sustainability, development, and well-being, particularly over the long-term. In the modern capitalist economy, rural land and people are trapped in a precarious position in which enhancing prospects for long-term sustainability threatens livelihoods and short-term means for advancement—an unenviable dilemma traceable to the dominant approach to urban economic development that is devoid of ecological reality. In

short, economics that is at odds with thermodynamics is also at odds with rural development.

In addition to the belief that industrial machines augment the value of resources, the current capitalist economy subsidizes the vast bulk natural resource withdrawals and contamination, which are costs consistently externalized by firms. This tendency is significantly linked to the economic approach to the factors of production, whereas capital and labor assume meaningful values that are compared and analyzed, but land is rarely accounted for (if so, typically the cost of rent) and degradation never enters the equation. Known as “Ricardian land”¹ the assumption embraced by the discipline of economics is that the land provides free gifts, the flow of which continues in perpetuity without declines in abundance or vitality. This notion is thus in clear contradiction to the basic laws of thermodynamics that would posit the productivity of the land declines as energy is used. This tendency disproportionately affects rural people precisely because these are the resources they have access to, and are the ones they depend on for survival now and in the future. As firms externalize costs of toxicity and degradation, they essentially transfer liabilities to the broader communities in which they operate. Industrial run-off and pollution degrades the air, land, and water that provide rural livelihoods based on fishing, farming, and the like. In the presence of impaired ecosystem functioning, rural people face major constraints to providing a way of life. Taken together with the dominant economic approach that devalues the thermodynamic potential of ecosystems, rural people consistently face seemingly insurmountable challenges that threaten their well-being and prospects for future development.

Biel (2006) compellingly argues the fallacy of current prescriptions for development that emphasize industrialization and global market integration, which is immediately evident when viewed in the context of thermodynamic principles. Biel (2006) links entropic disordering to a number of adverse social conditions, including social entropy in the periphery. For Biel, the physical environment and the social world are inextricably linked. Modes of capital accumulation that permitted the current levels of development in the core hinged on initial phases of high accumulation that drove infrastructure creation and augmented the labor pool, which led to the stage of mass-consumption accompanied by an expanded market. Thus, the transition from traditional to industrial society relies on social “fuel” in the form of inequality and labor inputs that ultimately make more resources available to the impoverished and boost their standards of living. As core nations become more oriented to financial and service sector pursuits, their mass consumption is supported by the same social “fuel” and physical environment inputs from the periphery in ways that do not propel the latter’s relative development and, in fact, exacerbate their impoverishment. Biel proposes that the capitalist mode of production in the current milieu of globalization accelerates degradation of the periphery’s physical environment (e.g., used in a sink capacity) and erodes traditional society (e.g., larger segments of the population become urban laborers) as it creates social entropy

that is expressed as inequality and poverty. Thus, core ordering is only possible by and wholly dependent on exchanges with the periphery—that are both economic and thermodynamic—that radically alter the social and environmental circumstances for the periphery as they seek to mimic the core nation's trajectories of development. His approach necessarily rejects the notion that comparable development is possible for peripheral nations, because the system of capital requires a periphery to which disorder is exported and the physical and social environments are drawn upon to sustain development and consumption in the core. In effect, Biel (2006) views international political economy and relationships therein as dissipative systems that transfer contradictions inherent to capitalism from the economy to the physical environment and social realms, with the adverse outcomes concentrated in non-core areas.

In a research statement released by Andre Gunder Frank (2005), he points out the axiomatic importance of the dissipation of entropy to historical trajectories of development over several thousands of years across the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. He notes the ascendancy of urban centers depends far less on internal strengths within a city than the surrounding areas that assume positions of disadvantage, to which entropy is dissipated by urban growth continues. Locally and globally, hinterlands absorb entropy and associated ecological costs of urban development. His argument extends beyond ecological issues surrounding the dissipation of entropy, to social and political realms. Emphasizing the impacts culminating from the military-industrial complex, he links entropy emanating from the manufacture and arms trades to social disorder in the form of war that plagues underdeveloped regions. The quote below exemplifies his position (Frank 2005):

But perhaps more serious even is the dissipation of socio-political entropy from the richer who sell their military hardware and training that aids them better to afford “democratic order” at home to the poorer abroad who import these arms and use them to kill each other in an entropy absorbing ever more chaotic “Third World.” Even so, the arms producers keep enough of them for their own use to enforce, maintain and even further extend this exploitative and entropic world division of benefits for themselves at the enormous cost to everybody else. That is called preserving human rights, freedom, democracy, civilization and most recently also combatting terrorism.

The (Low-Entropy) Natural Resource Curse

The vulnerabilities and developmental woes of societies with abundant natural resources are well documented (Bunker 1985; Sachs and Warner 1995; 2001). Legacies of colonialism and imperialism are historically linked to the quest for productive (low-entropy) natural resources. The abundance of resources in rural areas heightens their propensity as targets for conquer and con-

quest so their reserves can be used to support urban demands of consumption and capital accumulation. Closely related to Hornborg's observations on the disparity between pricing systems and thermodynamic principles, the capitalist economic regime and exchanges therein contradict sustainable development in rural areas. Rather than boosting development in areas rich in the natural resources needed to sustain life, societies and individuals in the global South suffer from distorted economies, relatively stagnant rates of growth, and a general lack of well-being. Development strategies advocated by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization exacerbate these conditions by encouraging less-developed countries to adopt neoliberal economic policies including specialization in comparative advantages, global market integration, deregulation of markets, and the privatization of public goods (McMichael 2004). The developmental outcomes associated with these strategies have been less than stellar, and even worsened conditions for some of the nations that closely adhered to them. Specialization in comparative advantages narrows the export profiles of societies to a handful of primary commodities that are subject to extreme market fluctuations; further, dominance of domestic production in primary exports is shown to be of little benefit, and even detrimental, to long-term economic growth. Global market integration brings about market instability far beyond that of local and regional markets for which societies are powerless to control. Deregulation of markets removes protectionist measures that proved efficacious for development successes in the past, and privatization erodes the social safety nets that individuals depend on to help meet basic needs.

Frank (2005) accentuates the importance of global political processes, which are increasingly best characterized as inter-urban politics. World cities are networked in ways that permit the delay of political changes that could transform the system to benefit the rural masses. Sassen (2001) similarly articulates the significance of urban centers by connecting the rising tide of globalization and companion trends of deregulation and privatization to the heightening importance of cities and regions alongside the waning relevance of nation-states as a unit of analysis. One conclusion of Sassen's analysis is that the geographic dispersal of production within globalization contributes to the essential importance of coordination and management efforts, which tend to operate in urban centers. Thus, the decentralization of production processes across spaces has not reconfigured the landscape of power and wealth so as to redistribute these goods along the geographically dispersed locations where production takes place, but rather advances the nodal strength of the headquarters at the expense of weakening the influence of subordinate entities operating elsewhere. The implications include advocating a subnational approach to examine production that analyzes the regional effects on spaces in the larger context of global trends. Offered below are related perspectives that make use of similar frameworks to understand the connections between global phenomena and local outcomes.

Subnational Applications of Spatial Inequality

The study of spatial inequality represents a relatively new and emergent strand of research in sociology. Grounded in critically-oriented theory and making use of both qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques, this body of research represents a contemporary method to analyze the spatial dimensions of inequality—the focal area of concern for the sociological discipline. Combining frameworks drawn from demography, environmental, and rural sociology, this tradition seeks disciplinary advancements that wed foundational inquiries of inequality with concerns of the spatial distribution of resources. The approach is methodologically innovative in utilizing fringe units of analysis (e.g., counties, local markets, regions) in lieu of the conventional focus on urban and cross-national actors. The well-established traditions of analyzing social processes in urban cities and nations obscures processes occurring in ordinary “middle spaces” that are of direct relevance to inequality outcomes. Despite their importance to the focus of our discipline, these areas have not yet received the theoretical and empirical scrutiny accorded cities and nations. The spatial inequality approach has promise to bring a new emphasis to rural areas that are otherwise left out of consideration when examining phenomena at the national or urban level (Lobao, Hooks, and Tickameyer 2007). Recasting sociological inquiry in subnational contexts is especially essential in light of political decentralization trends occurring in the last few decades that underscore the significance of local and regional processes that contribute to the distribution of inequality outcomes.

Neoliberal rollbacks that began in the 1980s under the Reagan administration have decentralized government functions from the federal to local level. The transition heightens the importance of assuming a spatial perspective to understand subnational social, economic, and environmental effects. The neoliberal agenda cuts back federal governance and functioning, which have to be absorbed by local governments that are often ill-equipped to do so, especially those in poor, rural areas. This economic approach believes limiting government interventions and services promotes economic growth. Studies assuming a spatial approach to examine the outcomes associated with the neoliberal shift do not support this postulate; the negative effects are especially acute in poor, rural communities. Contrary to neoliberal doctrine, subnational studies provide evidence that expanding public sector employment and social programs promotes economic growth and diminishes income inequality (Lobao and Hooks 2003). The rise of the penal state is a governmental shift in emphasis contemporaneous to neoliberal rollback. Subnational research has examined the effects of the location of prisons in poor rural areas, which are often believed to promote growth of such marginalized areas. Findings point to the impaired growth of counties where prisons are located compared to similar counties where penal institutions are absent (Hooks, Mosher, Genter, Rotolo, and Lobao 2010). Particularly rele-

vant to the present discussion are “treadmill of destruction” analyses that identify the adverse effects of the post-WWII emphases on militarism and arms races that led to a concentration of toxicity in areas adjacent to Native American lands in the United States (Hooks and Smith 2004). The results point to the historical processes that drive marginalized populations and dangerous munitions testing to remote and relatively desolate areas, with negative toxicity effects on the land and its inhabitants. In sum, the decades since the 1980s represent significant political shifts that are especially propitious for the application of subnational analytic techniques; much of the research accrued in this vein demonstrates the consistent negative effects of these shifts on poor, rural communities and the people in them.

Globalization projects and economic restructuring alongside advances in communication and transportation technologies present new challenges to rural areas striving to succeed in the era of globalization. Trends similar to those occurring at the global scale in which core nations function as dissipaters of entropy and peripheral nations absorb their excess are occurring within nations, as well. Essentially, the circumstances remain that competition among rural areas for market shares of industry undermines wages and the health of the environment that would otherwise boost their sustainability, and economic restructuring forces rural people in core areas to compete with labor markets globally (see e.g., Schulman and Anderson 1999). The relocation of industry to the periphery plays a central role in perpetuating losses for rural areas within the core that once had market advantages of lower wages and rent compared to their urban counterparts. They, too, suffer from deregulation that complicates access to credit and financial institutions. The era of globalization creates global competition for industries, and rural places in core zones have often lost out. In addition to general trends of economic restructuring, the mobility of capital and our ever-increasing reliance on natural resources intensifies the perilous circumstances facing rural spaces.

Increased demand for natural resources coupled with highly mobile capital is especially consequential for rural communities. Extractive industries in rural places—for which Appalachia is perhaps the archetype—have been extensively researched to understand the social and economic effects on communities. This model, termed “internal colonial dependency” by White (1998), accentuates the vulnerability of poor, rural places dependent on few extractive industries; the greater mobility of capital exacerbates the precarious position where industrial relocation can devastate local economies. The central challenges to communities with large concentrations of extractive activities include dependence on processing, market fluctuations, and ultimate depletion. Extractive industries are unique in their reliance on processing—that is, these raw materials undergo “finishing” to be transformed into usable commodities. Value is added in the output phase of processing, which benefits the communities where the finishing takes place more so than those of extraction (e.g., selling finished lumber rather than raw wood). The absence of physical principles in the current economic approach

to pricing sustains the notion that finished goods are of higher value than raw materials, though the latter have greater thermodynamic potential. This is consequential for rural areas that are home to extractive industries; the environmental and social entropy generated by extraction is not compensated in market exchanges. On the contrary, the capitalist world market tends to favor the more intensive use of energy rather than less. It is thus hard to imagine a scenario in which sustainable rural development is possible under the current capitalist milieu that is devoid of basic ecological accounting principles.

The doctrine that all social and economic progress depends on quality inputs from the environment is embraced by rural sociology. In particular, Flora and Flora (2013) offer a “community capitals framework” that identifies the interlinkages among financial, human, social, cultural, natural, political, and built capital stocks; natural capital is taken as the foundation for all other forms. Processes of production and consumption inherent to socioeconomic advance rely on low-entropy energy and matter. While the use of matter and energy are basic axioms of life that necessarily lead to increased entropy, humankind does have the ability to accelerate or decelerate its generation depending on how sustainably we use resources. Sustainability requires assessment across space and time; we must critically examine the spatial distribution of needs being met, such that gains in one area do not create losses in others, as well as the temporal aspects of equality in access to resources, such that future generations have the ability to meet their needs. Amplifying rural areas’ vulnerability to the loss of natural capital—the most valuable of the capitals—is their relative lack of political capital that is reflective of political pandering to densely populated locales, for the benefit of garnering a higher volume of votes and in recognition of the higher costs-per-person of maintaining infrastructure in sparsely populated rural areas. Moreover, rural places are disadvantaged in terms of financial capital, which contributes to less negotiating capacity as they strive for higher prices in the markets in which they sell their goods. Oddly, the more successful rural communities, under the logic of capitalist markets, have found ways to increase the rate of entropic decay by further processing raw goods as a result of having access to financial capital.

Assuming a subnational perspective, low-entropy natural resources are unequally distributed across space. The exploitation of rural resources and labor is observed within nations and is closely linked to thermodynamic principles. Taking an interdisciplinary approach that weds relevant strands of physical, natural, and social sciences shows the fundamental importance of entropic disorder to issues of sustainability, or the ability to meet present needs without compromising future generations’ ability to do the same. Low-entropy natural resources are necessary to sustain life; the quest and conquer of those areas rich in such resources is an under-explored axis in the history of exchanges that heavily contributes to current inequalities between and within nations. Offered below is

treatment of historical evidence on the exploitation of energy sources, with special attention given to the impact of industrial modes of production. To anticipate, urban development comes at the expense of rural environmental degradation; the effects of environmental disorder amplify social disorder, which is particularly relevant for rural locales that historically have a greater dependence on ecosystem functioning to support their way of life.

Historical Evidence

The emergence of the industrial mode of production marks the greatest achievement for improving standards of living, which is largely due to its dependence on terrestrial sources of energy (oil, natural gas, petroleum). Contrary to solar energy—of which there is an unlimited supply but a pre-determined and unalterable flow (about ten to twelve hours per day)—the only constraint we face regarding the flow of terrestrial energy is the technological sophistication of machination used for withdrawal, which has exceeded at an unprecedented rate in recent decades. Despite the substantial gains in consumption and production as well as attendant rises in standards of living, many ecologists warn our current use of the environment is unsustainable (see e.g., Daly et al. 2007; Ewing et al. 2010; Rees 2002; Wackernagel and Rees 1996). The problem is that these richly productive resources are finite. The more we use now, the less room we have to grow in the future. Moreover, the switch from solar to terrestrial sources of energy accelerates waste generation and the appropriation of natural resources as we now have the ability to execute intense, industrialized modes of production that allow us to dig, drill, and penetrate ever deeper into the earth's surface. Paradoxically, this ability necessitates more aggressive and severe provisions to access and extract low-entropy materials. As the intensity of resource extraction and appropriation increases, so too does the reliance upon precious resource inputs that are necessary to fuel these operations—all of which introduces greater entropic disorder into the environment. The increasing scarcity of resources has not diminished our use of them; instead we focus our efforts to locate subterranean reserves and espouse technological optimism to remain obdurate consumers of nature.

The ideology of urban as characteristic of forward progress is at odds with thermodynamic postulates, and thus compromises sustainability in the long-term. When examined using a thermodynamic lens, it becomes apparent that modernization, in general, and urbanization, in particular, accelerates the dissipation of entropy in the system, which constricts future room to maneuver. Disordered environments complicate humanity's ability to meet their basic needs. As societies modernize and urbanize, they are in fact creating more disorder or entropy in the very physical and natural systems needed to sustain life. The health and vitality of the environment is weakened by the introduction of chaos and disorder, which makes socioeconomic progress more difficult to achieve.

Part and parcel of the industrialization of society, and contemporaneous events such as the Protestant Reformation, is a modern, mechanical world view that lauds adherence to ideals of reason, rationality, and ordered explanations. Emphasis is placed on scientific methods with empirical precision to accumulate knowledge. Mathematical discoveries of Newton and Descartes among others uncovered law-like explanations of predictable forces that govern the world. In search of universal laws that could be applied to social phenomena in the same way, scholars such as John Locke and Adam Smith advanced similar ideas regarding property, government, and the economy based on the axiom that the natural basis of social activity is individual self-interest, and rational and industrious uses of nature maximize efficiency. As such, the scientific and industrial revolutions bore an indelible influence on solidifying the consensus that science and technology are the means by which we realize the collective goals of progress. The result is a society that fetishizes machines (Hornborg 2001) such that we attribute to them mystical powers of generating value apart from the social and environmental fuels necessary for their operation. The proliferation of technology, especially those reliant on entropy generating fossil-fuel provisions, has substantial consequences for sustainability, treated below.

The greater reliance on terrestrial sources of energy to power machines also marks the genesis of a rural labor transition that severely impacted peasant subsistence. In part, certain societies (e.g., the United States) adopted farm machinery in response to the rising cost of labor. Others (e.g., Brazil) were slower to incorporate these emerging technologies precisely because low labor costs undermined their use (McNeill 2000). Regardless of the timing of such transitions, the effects on the rural peasantry are quite uniform. More machines on a farm equates to fewer workers needed as field hands, which has obvious impacts on the rural labor force. Industrial agriculture has attendant outcomes such as the preference for crops that are especially well suited for machine harvesting and a generalized growth of monoculture practices to reduce expenditures for various labor-saving devices unique to specific crops. These historical shifts thrust rural peasants into the market economy, which ultimately undermines their culture of reciprocity that once served as an important mechanism to enhance food security (Scott 1976). No longer able to secure their basic needs through traditional subsistence farming means—whereby food produced on the family farm nourished the family—the rural peasantry increasingly faced complications surrounding the sale of their labor to the owners of the means of production. This heightened insecurity in general for these people, as the majority of these jobs are seasonal and subject to extreme market fluctuations. Thus, the ethic of subsistence that once existed to equalize losses incurred due to various farming vulnerabilities (e.g., flooding, drought) was eroded, with attendant effects of jeopardizing the food security of the rural peasantry as a whole. The issue, then, is to ponder the relative merits of abandoning traditional, rural ways of life and the cultural

knowledge therein in favor of modern, industrialized approaches used to meet the rising demands of growing, increasingly urban populations. For example, the burgeoning sector of the unemployed coupled with the inevitable limitations of fossil fuels suggests the better path might be one in which more people are employed and we rely less on finite resources; both would result in widespread sustainability gains.

Not only did rural labor suffer an assault from industrial agriculture, but so did the conventional knowledge of farming practices that proved efficacious for people and the earth. For example, the eradication of conventional techniques such as poly-cropping and crop rotation that functioned as pest control and fertilizer, respectively, presented new challenges to the industrial mode of agricultural production (Mazoyer and Roudart 2006; McNeill 2000). Perhaps predictably, industrial agriculture refuses to yield to natural limits set forth by the earth and opts instead to apply chemical insecticides and fertilizers to crops in order to produce similar outcomes of traditional techniques. A significant difference is traditional techniques sought to discover ways to sustainably maximize returns from the earth. Though incongruent with capitalism's tenet of continual expansion and eradicating idle time in production, allowing land to lay fallow, engaging in crop rotation, and poly-cultural planting represent customary ways of resisting pests, enhancing soil fertility, and boosting yields in a sustainable manner (Daly and Cobb 1989). As capitalism endeavors to encroach upon rural spaces in ways that aide accumulation, the dispossession of land from rural holders has the twin outcome of removing traditional knowledge regarding subsistence techniques that met people's needs for centuries past without compromising the ability of subsequent generations to do the same. To be sure, industrial agriculture weakens economic, environmental, and social sustainability as it disparages the moral fabric of rural life. Land becomes a target for encroachment, the peasantry are pushed off of it, flung into commodity markets of exchange, forced to sell their labor and suffer the vulnerabilities therein; moreover, the health and vitality of the ecosystems are compromised as traditional cultural knowledge is abandoned in lieu of chemical-intense, fossil-fueled based methods to circumvent the natural limits posed by the earth. The result is environmental contamination, degradation, and the eradication of a cultural ethos of immeasurable importance.

The industrial mode of agricultural production assumes a reductionist stance to cultivation. Seeking to superimpose the factory setting on the farm, industrial agriculture relies on chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides to boost productivity. One extremely influential advance toward the realization of achieving industrial agriculture is found in the work of Justus von Liebig, a chemist, who reduced soil fertility to the presence of three chemicals—nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium—and, in doing so, initiated the transition to an unsustainable path of industrial agriculture based in intense chemical inputs that severely impairs soil fertility such that the high yields of today are robbing future generations from achieving the same. Moreover, the manufacture and

transport of chemical-based additives are heavily reliant on non-renewable energy sources; therefore compounding the threats to sustainability posed by the industrial mode of agriculture insofar as we continue to make disproportionate withdrawals of these finite resources with little care or regard for the future problems brought by our over-use. Finally, reconfiguring livestock production into concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) is yet another branch of industrial agriculture that reinforces the industrialization of crop production, as corn is substituted for traditional feed to lessen the time to valorizing profits in the marketplace. In short, animals have been trained to subsist on a corn-based diet, which is cheap and—when supplemented with fat, protein, and synthetic hormones—quickly fattens the animals. Intense methods to grow burgeoning amounts of corn to feed livestock depend heavily on the use of fossil fuels as outlined above. In addition to the reciprocal relationship between industrial crop and livestock techniques, CAFOs present disastrous consequences for human and environmental health. Apart from humane concerns regarding animal treatment, the concentration of animals and their waste in contained lots escalates the proliferation of diseases that increasingly threaten the health of humans and that of the environment. Animal wastes that at one time were reintegrated into the soil to boost fertility and yields are geographically removed from the natural application found in traditional approaches to farming and instead pose new threats as vectors of disease and a form of pollution (Pollan 2006); the sustainable method for dealing with entropy (waste) loses to the industrial mode of thinking. At once, we increase our reliance on finite resources, worsen environmental decline, and threaten human health, all of which comprise a trinity of sustainability losses. Thus, while the reductionist approach to the industrialization of agriculture boosts yields in the short-term, the long-term consequences of pollution and degradation of air, land, and water, and the loss of traditional knowledge of truly sustainable cultivation techniques acutely threaten prospects for sustainability. In other words, short-term gains in productivity come at the cost of long-term declines that undermine future generations, in contradiction to the sustainability directive to protect them.

Entropy is dissipated at various junctures of production and consumption processes, including: the removal of resources from the environment, the generation of waste, and the extraction and expenditure of inanimate sources of energy. The latter is a historically distinct feature of modern society indicative of a more entropic ecological context, as expounded below. The greater the reliance on the environment—due to, for instance, increased consumption and population growth—the greater the declines in environmental quality. This is consequential for the energetic efficiency of production and consumption activities; that is, greater amounts of energy are withdrawn to support consumption of the growing population, and in doing so, these sources become increasingly difficult to obtain. To illustrate, hunting and gathering tribes subsisted on readily available

sources of energy that required virtually no energy inputs to cultivate and far less energy expenditures to access, compared to subsequent societal types (Nolan and Lenski 2011). As populations grew, so did the amount of entropy in the system, which necessitated increasingly intensive production to meet consumption demands. To illustrate, horticulturalist and agrarian civilizations dealt with the more entropic environment by employing purposive cultivation techniques that utilize organic matter in the soil to meet sustenance needs. As Marx (1976) observed (see also Clark and Foster 2009), intense use of the soil quickly outpaced its ability to replenish itself and wealthier, more powerful societies compensated by importing organic materials (i.e., bat guano) to regenerate soil fertility. Most recently, the mode of industrial agriculture has become increasingly reliant on fossil fuel and chemical inputs, with attendant declines in overall (thermodynamic) efficiency.² No longer are energy sources prevalent in our immediate environment, but we must scavenge ever deeper into the earth's surface to uncover precious reserves of low-entropy matter and energy. Each of these methods requires their own source of energy to fuel the further removal of resources. In the end, we succumb to an unending spiral of increasing entropy and decreased efficiency, which comprises a cycle that reproduces in perpetuity. This mushrooming results from both the increased consumption demands and the fact that the easier-to-reach sources are depleted and highly entropic; because of this scarcity, humanity must expend far more energy to access the few sources that remain.

The Empirics of Sustainability

Given the fundamental importance of natural resources to socioeconomic progress that is at the heart of sustainability initiatives, accounting for withdrawals in an ecological framework is a paramount concern. Doing so permits assessments of stocks of natural resources across space and time as well as efforts to monitor the sustainability of past and current patterns of use. This information is central to strengthening our understanding of resource constraints that future generations will face and the specific impacts on rural spaces and people. Many proposals of indicators of sustainability at the cross-national level exist, though there is no scientific consensus on the "best" measures. Offered below is an elaboration of the more popular data choices applied in national sustainability analyses, based on the distinction of weak versus strong sustainability approaches.

Weak sustainability proponents eschew the dilemma of "finite resources" by positing that there are no patterns of natural resource depletion that capital cannot cure. Weak sustainability adherents emphasize deepening environmental pressures that seem to threaten sustainability can be overcome by human-engineered, compensatory mechanisms (Neumayer 2010). Thus, this camp remains relatively optimistic regarding natural resource depletion, which is in

stark contrast to “strong sustainability” approaches that firmly maintain nature provides crucial ecological functions for which there is no substitute (Daly and Cobb 1989; Neumayer 2010). Strong sustainability advocates generally share disdain for weak sustainability assumptions and measures, such as the “genuine savings rate,” to gauge sustainability; opting instead for the use of more ecologically based measures of environmental pressures, such as the ecological footprint.

One modification to traditional measures of economic productivity proposed by some ecological economists (e.g., Hamilton and Clemens 1999; Dietz and Neumayer 2007; Neumayer 2010) is the genuine savings rate to indicate weak sustainability. This indicator adjusts the traditional GDP measure based on the assumption of substitutability among forms of capital (e.g., natural, human, manufactured); that is, accumulation of other forms of capital compensates for reductions in stocks of natural capital. Specifically, the net savings indicator subtracts energy, mineral, and forest depletion as well as damages resulting from particulate emissions from the sum of national savings plus educational expenditures.

The basic theme of this approach is that stocks of human, manufactured, and natural capital are fungible; thus, it is posited that corresponding advances in human and manufactured forms of capital negate natural capital losses. That is, in a world of extensive natural resource depletion, compensatory accumulation of other forms of capital makes commodity production possible. To illustrate, technologically intensive hydroponic methods for cultivating food can offset limits to food production stemming from depleted, infertile soil; manufactured flood control management and dam infrastructure can correct for repetitive flooding resulting from deforestation.³ Thus, other forms of capital inputs such as those related to the costs of equipment, chemicals, and humanly-engineered systems that mimic ecosystem functions mitigate the need for concern and actions adhering to the strict conservation of nature. The incorporation of entropic dynamics into current theorizations is consequential for this debate, as elaborated below.

The frailty of this approach is the veritable absence of physical and natural science laws of thermodynamics and metabolic capacities. Specifically, the laws of thermodynamics illustrate those efforts to reverse or recapture the dissipation of energy that occurs as resources are used and applied in processes of production yield less energetic potential than the inputs required. For example, the hydroponically grown vegetable offers less, in terms of dietary energy, than the capital inputs (i.e., electricity, growing equipment) needed to grow it. Capital-intensive infrastructure to replace natural ecological functions such as dams used for flood control is expensive and provides less protection than the natural barriers, such as flourishing wetlands and forest areas. They are often in need of repairs, supervision of operations, upgrades and expansions, while destroying hab-

itats and endangering species; they are, quite simply, unsustainable. In fact, infrastructure has a “half-life” that requires teardown, disposal, and rebuilding. Recycling, which represents the sort of technological fixes in the purview of weak sustainability approaches, is another false panacea. Often, these processes are characterized by the same dynamic; the usefulness (in energetic terms) supplied by the materials recovered is less than the inputs (e.g., trucks, fuel, machines to sort, melt, and redistribute the materials) necessary to restore them. The second law of thermodynamics, or the entropy law, captures the reason there are no quick fixes or technological solutions to remedy our overuse of the environment. Simply, there is no technological form, regardless of sophistication, that can reverse the fundamental, axiomatic physical laws of energy, matter, and entropy. The conclusions and implications of this final point are of fundamental importance: we must develop ways to live within our ecological budget, we cannot overcome basic natural and physical laws, and our current approach to economic affluence and growth is simply unsustainable.

Strong sustainability approaches differ from weak sustainability perspectives in their strict adherence to the belief that natural resources provide invaluable functions for which there are no substitutes. Indeed, strong sustainability proponents oppose weak sustainability measures, such as the genuine savings rate, in favor of more ecologically based measures of sustainability that do not make assumptions regarding the substitutability among stocks of capital. Although not without critiques (see e.g., Fiala 2008), the ecological footprint is a premier indicator of strong sustainability that has enjoyed an appreciable amount of attention in the environmental sociology (Jorgenson and Clark 2009; York, Rosa, and Dietz 2003), human ecology (Rees 2004), and urban planning (Rees and Wackernagel 1996; Rees 1992) literatures. The ecological footprint quantifies the land area and natural resources necessary to support a nation’s consumption and production demands and absorb waste. Comprised of six key areas of concern—cropland, fishing grounds, built-up land, forest land,⁴ and grazing land—the footprint represents a comprehensive approach to ecological accounting. The Global Footprint Network (2009) also provides companion estimates of the supply of land types, or the available biocapacity of nations, although applications of these data are relatively lacking in the sociological literature. While focusing on the ecological footprint is useful for cross-national comparisons of production and consumption demands on nature, estimates of biocapacity are at least equally informative, especially when viewed in an entropic perspective. Harkening back to our earlier discussion of entropy, the ecological footprint corresponds to the disorder introduced to the environment whereas biocapacity approximates the low-entropy natural resources that are ordered, useful, and give us future room to maneuver. As our global supply of biocapacity declines, so does our future ability to prosper in social and economic terms. Taken together, ecological footprint and biocapacity estimates are helpful in determining the carrying capacity of the earth and the degree to which specific nations and their domestic attributes contribute to “overshoot” (Catton 1980) of those limits. The

development of similar measures at the subnational level would allow for better accounting between urban and rural regions, but are not yet available. However, it is possible to examine aggregate trends in terms of the overall percent of the population that is rural relative to the size of the nation's ecological footprint.

Maintaining equilibrium between demands on nature and the limits of our ecological supply is at the heart of sustainability initiatives. Natural and ecological science models demonstrate that ecosystems regenerate themselves, within certain limits. For example, microorganisms enrich and fertilize soil as they decompose waste, thereby enhancing the soil fertility that promotes forest growth, which subsequently sequesters carbon dioxide emissions that would otherwise escalate global warming trends. Thus, nature is extraordinarily capable of correcting for anthropogenic pressures placed on the environment. However, these metabolic and regenerative processes become overburdened by intense land use, burgeoning consumption, and mounting waste, which handicap various facets of ecosystem functioning that sustain life. These are the basic limits of ecosystems; specifically, the availability and productivity of biocapacity (i.e., low-entropy natural resources) bounds the amount of consumption and waste generation that can be processed by regeneration and metabolic activities. Put simply, consumption and production in excess of available biocapacity is unsustainable.

Table 1 presents data for the year 2007, taken from the Global Footprint Network (2009), on average ecological footprints and biocapacity per person for various country groupings, as well as the average percentage of the population comprised of rural people. The ecological footprint column provides estimates

Table 1: Ecological footprint and biocapacity data, 2007, per capita.

Country group	Ecological Footprint	Biocapacity	Entropic Disorder¹	Percent Rural²
High Income Countries	6.1	3.1	-3.0	23.1
Middle Income Countries	2.0	1.7	-0.2	53.3
Low Income Countries	1.2	1.1	-0.1	73.0
Africa	1.4	1.5	0.1	64.0 ³
Asia	1.8	0.8	-1.0	53.6/70.8 ⁴
Europe	4.7	2.9	-1.8	27.0
Latin America & the Caribbean	2.6	5.5	2.9	21.8
United States & Canada	7.9	4.9	-3.0	19.5
Oceania	5.4	11.1	5.8	67.0 ⁵

¹ Negative numbers indicate overshoot—nations where demands on nature exceed available biocapacity. Ecological footprint and biocapacity data taken from Global Footprint Network (2009).

² Data taken from World Bank (2009).

³ Sub-Saharan Africa.

⁴ East Asia and Pacific/South Asia, respectively.

⁵ Pacific Island small states.

Table 2: Global data on the ecological footprint, biocapacity, and rural population over time.

Data Series	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2007
Ecological Footprint ¹	2.4	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.7
Biocapacity ¹	3.7	3.1	2.6	2.3	2	1.8
Ratio of EF to biocapacity ¹	0.65	0.90	1.08 ²	1.17 ²	1.25 ²	1.50 ²
Percent Rural ³	66.7	63.8	60.5	56.7	53.0	50.6

¹ Data are per capitized, and represent global hectares per person (Global Footprint Network 2009).

² Values in excess of one (1.00) represent an ecological deficit, where demands on nature exceed available biocapacity.

³ Data on percent rural population for the world are taken from World Bank (2009).

of the average global hectares per capita (gha/pc) on which production and consumption demands are made within the specified country groups. Biocapacity data represent the average global hectares of biologically productive land available to individuals located within each group, and thus correspond to a per capita estimate of the available low-entropy natural resources. The third column, entropic disorder, is the difference between the two. That is this value represents the difference between biocapacity (what nations have) and the footprint (what nations use) to result in an ecological accounting of overshoot (negative numbers indicate demands exceed biocapacity) or ecological surplus (positive numbers signal biocapacity exceeds consumption). The final column provides country group averages for the percent of the population residing in rural locales.

Comparisons across countries in different income classifications are helpful in identifying the nation groups that over-use the environment. High income countries evidence the highest rates of urbanization and consumption, as shown by the percent rural (23.1) and footprint (6.1 gha/pc) estimates. High income countries also demonstrate the most severe states of overshoot, with average consumption demands exceeding available biocapacity by three global hectares per person. Footprint and rural population values decrease markedly for middle- and low-income countries. Nations in the middle-income group are mostly rural (53.3 percent) and have footprints that are one-third (2.0 gha/pc) of their high-income counterparts; low-income countries are predominantly rural (73.0 percent) and place about one-fifth (1.2 gha/pc) of the demands on nature compared to high-income countries. Middle- and low-income countries show overshoot by less than two-tenths of a hectare. To compare, consumption in excess of ecological capacities in high-income countries is almost seven times greater than that of middle- and low-income nations. The nations with the highest proportions of urban populations place the highest demands on nature in the greatest excess of resource endowments, while the more rural nations show far more sustainable patterns of consumption and negligible overshoot of natural resource capacities.

Regional comparisons based on the data presented in Table 1 are also instructive. Predominately rural Oceania nations have the highest reserves of biocapacity per person, with an average of 11.1 global hectares per person. The

highly urbanized nations, United States and Canada, place the highest demands on nature, with an average ecological footprint of 7.9 gha/pc. Oceania nations evidence the highest rate of ecological surplus (5.9 gha/pc), whereas the United States and Canada and Europe are in the most severe states of overshoot (3.0 gha/pc and 1.8 gha/pc, respectively). To an important degree, these values demonstrate the geographical North-South divide that corresponds with established power, wealth, and general development differentials. This also parallels differences in the relative size of rural populations in the regions.

Table 2 provides global averages for the ecological footprint and available biocapacity, expressed in global hectares per person, alongside worldwide estimates for the percent of the population residing in rural locales. The correspondence between the declines of rural populations and available biocapacity illustrate the precise dynamic treated in this chapter. Most relevant to our prospects for sustainability is the dwindling resource base over time, as evidenced by the diminishing values for available biocapacity. These numbers, when viewed in a thermodynamic lens, represent the declining amount of low-entropy natural resources available; that is, the ecological provisions necessary to sustain life. While the footprint estimates do not seem to indicate substantial increases over time (average demands on nature in 2007 increased by 0.3 hectares per person since 1961), the biocapacity data reveal a different story. The latter, average estimates of available biocapacity per person, are half the value in 2007 as compared to 1961. Put differently, we have half the amount of available biocapacity or low-entropy natural resources as we did in 1961. When examined over time, the long-term pattern is clear: we are becoming increasingly unsustainable as a species, along with our co-species, and this happens as the world grows increasingly urbanized.

Examining the ecological footprint over time is informative for tracking progress toward closing the “sustainability gap” represented by the difference between consumption and the supply of biologically productive land found in primarily rural areas. Moreover, it is a most conservative appraisal of overshoot as it is based on six major areas of consumption (many more exist), neglects noxious gas emissions outside of carbon dioxide, and accounts for ecosystem demands for only one species—humanity. As improvements in measurement techniques accumulate, we can be certain that the magnitude of severity in the “sustainability gaps” identified by current ecological footprint estimates will add to the urgency of requisite policy changes.

Conclusions

The tendency toward entropy is given, and cannot be reversed. The knowledge that all structures eventually meet this thermodynamic fate is of cen-

tral importance to social sciences although the concept is seldom considered in these disciplines. A disordered environment leads to social disorder, which is especially evident in rural areas whose people interact with the land in the course of their livelihoods. Those who are more so connected to nature—individuals who engage in farming, fishing, forestry, mining, ranching, animal husbandry, or any number of occupations directly tied to the management of natural resources are especially vulnerable to changes in ecological functioning. As environments are compromised, so, too, is the well-being of those who depend on ecological vitality to maintain employment and profitability, in general. Droughts and flooding devastate crops and livestock; hurricanes and tornadoes wreak havoc on ecosystems that have ripple effects on the beneficial flows of ecological services to humans. Declines in the health and vitality of the environment have direct links to social discord.

Entropy in the form of air pollution aggravates trends of global warming that directly increases the frequency and magnitude of devastating weather-related events. Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and droughts are but a few examples of these misfortunes that diminish the functioning of ecological systems, which has rather obvious impacts on rural communities and the people in them. Natural disasters are catastrophic tragedies that displace humans, disrupt lives, dismantle communities, and result in widespread disorganization that requires vast amounts of money and time to overcome and try to correct. The immediate effects on urban areas are formidable as people must orient themselves to life without basic creature comforts to which we have grown accustomed such as electricity and air conditioning. Rural areas experience the same discomforts, but the effects can linger on far beyond power being restored with lasting impacts on profitability and general well-being. Given the proclivity for rural people to be more so tied to or dependent on the land in the course of their livelihoods, it is reasonable to expect a longer recovery for ecosystem restoration when faced with natural disasters. The disruptions in daily life resulting from these crises are precisely the sort of social disorder that results from increased entropy.

Urban centers create entropy through their demands for construction, transportation, electricity, and sustenance needs, the bulk of which are met through harvesting resources and harnessing energy from rural areas. Concomitantly, entropic disorder is introduced into rural areas as the waste generated through, for instance, demolition, industry, and general consumption accumulates in landfills. Urban and rural dwellers alike depend on crucial ecosystem functions that flourish in sparsely inhabited areas to provide resource inputs, metabolize pollution, and diffuse contamination. It is clear that urban and rural spheres are intimately linked; indeed, urbanism would not be possible without rurality. Interestingly, rural areas can function independent of urban ones, but the opposite is not true. These dynamics remain seemingly obscured from popular discourse that consistently hails the merits of urban spaces and fails to accredit rural places for making possible their very existence.

Urbanormative ideology would suggest that rural people are dependent on urbanites to serve as cultural referents indicative of the educated, refined, cosmopolitan, and generally desirable ways of life. Urban centers and the people in them are believed to lead the path to progress, broadly defined. However, the thermodynamic analysis of energy use and exchanges leads to radically different conclusions. Truly, urban dwellers are highly dependent on rural areas and the people in them to make possible their way of life. While urban spaces are typically believed to serve as the epicenters of continuous improvement and general advance, they also generate long-term demands on the earth to be met by short-term strategies of rural desecration. It is not only the demands on resources that contribute to rural demise, but also the ideologies that emanate from urban centers; economic perspectives on the market, exchanges, and fiscal growth mystify the true value of rural commodities (both land and labor). In sum, the dominant neoliberal approach is at odds with physical principles, which compromises rural development.

The economic system rests on the basic axiom that humans use technology and culture to better our environments into valuable entities. When viewed in a thermodynamic perspective, the confounding nature of the current capitalist system in relation to physical principles is formidable. One facet of the discord pertains to the implicit belief that industrial machines improve upon—or create value in—the free gifts from nature. As Hornborg (2001) points out, rather than seeing machines as dissipaters of entropy, dependent on fuel flows and human labor inputs, we have fetishized their very existence to the point that we believe they create value in the raw goods extracted from the earth. Although raw materials from nature represent the highest order and greatest possibilities for use, they garner less in market exchanges than more entropic and disordered finished goods. Indeed, an analysis of the system of capital in strictly thermodynamic terms shows how the dissipation of entropy is rewarded (i.e., profits) in market exchanges. Equally problematic is the sanguine belief in continued abundance of the earth's bounty and failure to properly account for ecosystem functioning in economic analyses. This is reflected in pricing systems as treated above, in the transference of costs of toxicity from firms to communities, and the exclusion of ecological accounting from economic models. A system centered on theoretical assumptions that fail to value ecosystems is ultimately unable to reconcile rural development with economic growth in urban areas. If rural areas are to develop in similar trajectories, we must devise an economic and pricing system that appropriately compensates rural communities and the people in them for the invaluable functions they provide.

The implications for future research are numerous. They include more applications of both cross-national and subnational approaches to gain insight to the various ways that rural development is compromised by entropic dynamics. At the cross-national level, ecological footprint and biocapacity data can be used

to model the drivers and possible palliatives to increased disorder in the system. Subnational analyses could make use of soil erosion, extractive industry, pollution, and waste data complemented with socioeconomic measures to specify the precise dynamics that contribute to development and under-development in urban and rural areas, respectively. Implications also include the continued emphasis on strong sustainability, which appropriately identifies the central role of natural capital to development outcomes. Further, theoretical perspectives and empirical examinations should critically evaluate the assumptions of neoliberal economic approaches to elaborate on their incongruence with physical dynamics, and subsequent impacts on rural development. Research in this vein contributes to knowledge that has the potential to bring us closer to understanding the possibilities that exist for rural areas and the people in them to become more sustainable.

Notes

1. This reflects Ricardo's stance on land and soil as being "indestructible" (see Haney 1949).
2. Whereas hunting and gathering tribes' ratio of energy expenditure to energy retrieval hovers at about 1:10 (Hornborg 1992: 10), parallel estimates regarding industrial agriculture evidence a near reversal of the ratio, which is approximately 10:1 (or one unit of food energy gained for every ten units of energy expended; see Webber 2011).
3. Deforestation itself is, in part, a result of cutting for export to the core (see e.g., Jorgenson 2008).
4. Forest land calculations include demands on forest materials (e.g., food, fiber, fuelwood) as well as the forest area needed to absorb the carbon dioxide gases generated from the burning of fossil fuels.

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Conclusion

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Since 2008, when our planet crossed the threshold and became predominantly urban, it has become tempting to believe that the significance of rural people and places is fading away. Urban norms dominate our social imaginations regarding what constitutes a normal life. Cultural production in the many forms it takes—movies, music, literature, etc.—reinforces urbanormativity that either ignores or denigrates rural realities. Institutions of higher education—centers of culture and knowledge—are removing their support for rural sociology and rural studies. Structurally, the requisite forms of economic dependence on rural production are being concealed, neglected, or denied under an illusion of urban self-sufficiency. Spatially, rural areas and communities must negotiate the many ways in which hegemonic urbanormative ideals shape and reshape the character of the community. With such important and profound changes taking place, it is surprising that the overall reaction to date has been so minimal.

In this volume we have gathered a collection of research that attempts to address this collective inattention. Each contribution sheds light on the cultural, structural, and spatial dynamics of urbanormativity, and we hope this research is useful for sparking imaginations, starting conversations, trailblazing research agendas, and effecting change in the way people think about and relate to rural life. In this concluding chapter, we will revisit some of the core concepts and ideas that have been raised and consider how future research may build upon this preliminary work.

Looking Back

From the contributions in this book we note at least two broad integrative themes based on how urbanormative culture intersects with (1) space and (2) social structure. Each contribution provides unique elements that contribute to these themes, but also to the general overlap of culture, space, and structure, as discussed below.

Urbanormative Culture Intersects with Rural Space

The first overarching theme is related to the ways in which urbanormative culture overlaps with rural space to produce particular outcomes, be they positive or negative. Lowe's chapter on "Fracture Lines" posits that rural areas provide space for organizational and institutional innovation that comes as a result of existing on the periphery of urban social control. Lowe maintains that rural space was essential, for instance, to the development of the Mormon faith as practitioners were able to develop their religious beliefs and practices without the constraints and sanctions of larger imposing urban-based religious bodies. Vieira's chapter on rural informal economies underscores the value of rural space, freed from the constraints of giant urban economies and government regulations. She finds that the ability to operate an informal economy has profound socioeconomic effects that include strengthening relationships between participants, highlighting Anglophone identity, and compensating when the formal economy comes up short in terms of meeting the needs of the community.

Seale and Fulkerson theorize a process that links widely held urbanormative ideas to identifiable rural representations, and outline how these representations take form as rural simulacra that transform the character of rural places into hyper-rural realities. Research on the communities of Saratoga Springs and Saranac Lake by Bennett provides empirical support for these ideas, as the notions of "rural as escape" and "rural as healing" fundamentally shaped the character of these communities by catering to urbanites from New York City who were seeking recovery from the ills—as in the case of tuberculosis, for example—of city life. The natural resources, such as the mythical springs in Saratoga, were imagined to have healing and restorative powers. For better or worse, the influx of New York City dwellers to these communities defined their development and identity. The end result has been successful tourism economies and leading roles in biomedical research. Such positive outcomes are not always the result, but do show how urban expectations can be channeled to foster growth and development in rural areas, even when the foundation is forged from illusion (i.e., healing springs).

In his discussion of the character and tradition of the village of Hartwick, New York, Thomas notes the way a local place has been shaped by decades of cultural ambivalence and decline—a result of being less competitive with other regional population centers and falling victim to urbanormative stigma. The town struggles to remain a real place on the map, as it saw its Main Street converted to a county highway, symbolically undermining the sense of place that residents are able to realize.

The analyses of Seabrook by Hayden and of Ridgefield Corners by Smith also contribute to the notion that urbanormative ideals give shape and direction to the development of rural communities. These analyses converge on an interesting insight insofar as local residents come to embrace the colonization of their communities, reinforcing externally imposed stereotypes and in turn giving them greater support. In Seabrook, residents sometimes embrace the stigmas attached

to the community—that it is backward, insular, and rough around the edges—as a way to assert local pride. This can be contrasted to the general sense of defeat and ambivalence experienced by residents in Hartwick, as reported by Thomas. According to Hayden, Individuals in surrounding communities attach the stigmatized affix “-brook” to the end of other community names if they were thought to have the negative characteristics associated with Seabrook. In Ridgefield Corners, as noted in the chapter by Smith, great measures were taken to protect the “perfect” village image that dates back to the early nineteenth century in the writing of novelist James Fenimore Cooper. So committed to this pristine image were Ridgefield residents that they would suppress anything that threatened or deviated from it by engaging in a kind of historical censure that has included erasing faces from school yearbooks. These case studies make for an interesting comparison; one was imagined to exemplify the best of idyllic rural life (Ridgefield) and one the worst (Seabrook), but in spite of the difference in evaluation, residents in both places accepted and embraced how their communities were understood externally and acted in ways to preserve it. In turn these communities embodied the character that appealed to external expectations and to the desires of local residents who reinforced these expectations by internalizing them and identifying with them. In a sense, this suggests that communities can undergo a self-fulfilling prophecy, in much the same way that individuals may.

In her chapter on “Inbred Horror,” Hayden addresses the origins and development of the longstanding and horrendous urbanormative myth of the inbred rural community. Her analysis traces the evolution of the idea in popular cultural sources from literature, television, and film. As she notes, the seemingly innocuous nature of contemporary “redneck jokes” perpetuates the inbred myth that has become a fixture in the urbanormative imaginary. If a particular community were to be stigmatized as inbred, it is hard to imagine how the future success of the community would not be undermined, particularly if locals were unable to assert their own ideas of the character of the community. The study by Thomas would suggest that such a stigmatized place would experience a severe blow resulting ambivalence and shame.

At the individual level rural is a dimension of identity that carries with it a host of stereotypes. When this identity intersects with other dimensions, such as sex, race, and sexual preference, the result can be a magnification of prejudice and discrimination, and may give rise to marginalization and “othering.” In his chapter on “‘Fagging’ the Countryside,” Stapel examines the complexity of the intersections of gender, sexuality, and rurality. He notes that scholars in the tradition of queer studies have failed to validate the subjective experiences of individuals living in rural areas that experience or identify with same-sex attraction, inadvertently rendering them invisible. His analysis advances our understanding of the layered complexity of rural identity and further dispels simplistic urbanormative assumptions of rural sameness. Indeed it is difficult to discuss rural culture as a singular monolithic entity because of the many ruralities that people live.

Urbanormative Culture Intersects with Structural Subordination

The second overarching theme that comes through in this volume is more squarely centered on the ways in which urbanormative culture intersects with structural forms of rural subordination. McKinney's analysis theorizes rural exploitation through the concept of entropy and the laws of thermodynamics. She observes that high-energy resources in rural areas are being extracted, removed, and sent to urban areas for value-added processing and consumption, leaving a wake of environmental degradation and social disorder—i.e., entropy. Ironically, many of the processed goods are in turn sold back to the rural areas from which the initial raw resources were taken. Cultural biases inherent to urbanormativity provide the ideological justification needed to support this one-way extractive and exploitative structural relationship. In the same vein, the chapter by Thompson and colleagues shows how rural communities are coping with rural social disorder in the form of substance abuse. Not only is rapid urbanization at least partially responsible for the creation of substance abuse problems in the countryside, but the treatment services necessary to help those suffering are disproportionately located in urban centers. Rural areas must therefore negotiate a dearth of structural capacity in attempting to address a higher than average rate of substance abuse (social entropy).

Also writing on the overlap between structure and urbanormative culture, the chapter by Ching and Creed problematizes the notion of urban foraging and urban agriculture, noting that a new urban food fad is undermining the one characteristic that fundamentally defines rural life—food production. Ching and Creed bring to light the changing cultural meaning of food, the emergence of the urban “foodie,” and the linking of cultural capital to urban food tastes. Urbanormative ideas of crude rural food production—conventional, non-organic, backward food—prompted efforts to internalize the structure of food production in urban areas where it will be held to a higher standard. Of course the reality is that many rural food producers are organic for all intents and purposes, but find the federal rules for certification to be overly burdensome. At the same time, the idea that 8 million people could be fed without importing food is highly doubtful, particularly when relying on such methods as associated with the oxymoronic “urban foraging.” The chapter by Gray and Stofferahn provides a detailed organizational level analysis of food production, highlighting the transformation of a rural cooperative (Dakota Growers Pasta Company) that was absorbed into a much larger international conglomerate (Glencore International). This organizational change meant sacrificing democratic autonomy and a concern for local quality-of-life issues in exchange for a focus on profit maximization. The narratives that justified this transformation stemmed from a global urbanormative focus on exchange values, profit, and capital expansion that is at odds with narratives protective of rural life and use values. Overall, both chapters speak to the urbanization of the structure of food production. Indeed, the last decade has witnessed important cultural changes with respect to food, informing

urban tastes and expectations, and reshaping the rural food landscape that must now appeal to higher urban expectations for organically produced food.

Looking Ahead

The research discussed above initiates important research agendas, and there are several directions that future research can take regarding the study of urbanormativity and more generally of rural exploitation. Indeed, these issues involve culture, structure, and space, and research projects should continue to examine these dimensions and the way they overlap. It should also be noted that while we believe we have introduced a novel perspective and set of research ideas, that we also believe much of the research already being conducted in rural sociology is consistent with our project, even if not framed as studies in urbanormativity. In the following sections we will outline some immediate thoughts about future research that have emerged during the process of completing this volume. We would also note that while it is helpful analytically to separately discuss culture, structure, and space, in reality there is never such a neat separation. We simply divide our discussion along these lines as a way to organize thought.

Structure

The basic impetus behind studying the structural dynamics of urbanormativity is to promote greater understanding and awareness of how urban populations rely on and exploit rural resources and people. We have maintained that rural areas are necessary to support urban life, as they provide the necessary resources to sustain urban populations. Research should identify the mechanisms through which rural exploitation is carried out, paying special attention to the use of cultural ideologies and narratives that are based on urbanormativity. Also important will be identifying attempts to conceal or deny the underlying reality of urban dependence on rural production.

Examinations of structure can make use of a range of methods. They may take the form of organizational analyses, such as the study by Gray and Stofferahn in this volume, they can be based on studying commodities and their supply and distribution networks, they can examine policies at different levels of governance that are supportive of exploitative practices, and they can be based on the study of services, as in the contribution by Thompson et al. in this volume. The practical goal of this research would be to create a less lopsided structural relationship between rural and urban areas, where the inevitable entropy created by harvesting and processing resources is not shouldered disproportionately by rural people, who may not even be able to enjoy the benefits of the final products they are making possible.

Space

The spatial components of urbanormativity should be studied with a few goals in mind. One of these is to document and explain how rural communities are being transformed and reshaped by external urban tastes and interests. Many of the contributions—including those by Hayden, Thomas, Smith, and Bennett—adopt a community level focus to show how space is appropriated and controlled by urbanormative standards. The spatial hierarchy and inequality that results from these processes is not a new idea to rural sociology, but the cultural aspects of this have not been fully theorized or examined, and has been traditionally led by an exclusively structural orientation. As Thomas shows in his study of Hartwick, the development of a community's character and traditions is a long complex process that cannot be fully appreciated by a snapshot taken by an outside observer.

Another possible avenue of research would examine spaces that may be undergoing a return to a rural state. As deindustrialization sweeps across much of the developed world, leaving a wreckage of declining cities in its path, we can expect such places to undergo a process of ruralization. In other words, such places begin to return to modes of production that are closer to nature, have lower population size and density, and begin to adopt social and cultural modes of interaction that are less urban. This research would problematize the assumption that urbanization is a linear evolutionary process by showing the examples and conditions under which urbanization can become reversed.

There are a number of practical goals that might be related to studies of space. On one hand, gaining an understanding about the processes shaping rural places can provide a way to help these same places make informed decisions about how they are developing. As some of the contributions show, rural communities may welcome the influence of urban tastes and the role they play in shaping community identity and development. However, other communities may wish to reassert local control over identity and direction of development to become something that local people want, and not what external urban people want to see transpire. This will be particularly important for communities that become stigmatized by the worst qualities of rural stereotypes. However, even successful communities may not like the costs that come with maintaining an unrealistic image in order to remain attractive to urbanites.

Culture

The goal of cultural studies of urbanormativity should be to increase understanding and awareness of how rural realities are being socially represented, as well as how these representations are being constructed and maintained. Relevant to this will be the identification of alternative representations that challenge the hegemonic. With this in mind, research is needed that scrutinizes everyday forms of media—music, television, film, books, newspapers, websites, blogs, social media sites, and so on—for the themes of urbanormativity they are pro-

ducing. Such examination should attend to both mainstream and esoteric sources.

A similar corresponding line of research could attempt to document and measure the kinds of rural representations currently held by the general public through interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Such research would bring to attention the kinds of stereotypes about rural people and places that are circulating. In other words, this line of research would examine the extent to which cultural producers in the media are actually influencing public attitudes, values, and beliefs. Ultimately, it would be useful to connect media influence with these public studies more directly.

The practical outcome of cultural research at a broad level would hopefully be to debunk myths in the social imagination of rural life. Such cultural change can precipitate structural and spatial changes as well. Once people establish a more realistic idea of what it means to be rural—thus becoming less urbanormative—they may be less willing to endorse policies and practices that exploit rural people and places. In fact one could argue that long-term structural and spatial reforms may not be possible in the absence of cultural change, since urbanormativity provides the ideological justification for the structures and spaces of rural inequality and subordination.

Concluding Remarks

The study of urbanormativity, whether aimed at structure, space, or culture, is extremely important. In the popular imagination, rural life is poorly understood and prone to misunderstandings and stereotypes. These views inform the way rural people and places are treated. The current alignment of structure, space and culture is favorable to urban centers that absorb the productive capacity of surrounding hinterlands in order to maintain large populations and opulent lifestyles. In the process, rural areas are left with the entropic results of social disorder and environmental decline. To be sure, the experience is not the same for all rural communities, as some come to be associated with the more desirable images of rural life, attracting tourists and even new residents dissatisfied with city life. But even the most successful rural destinations must accept the idealized identity-shaping standards of urbanites, or else risk losing favorability. Even traditional food-producing rural communities are finding that the shifting urban preference for local and organic food is making it more difficult to compete and survive.

In the end, we can view this all as a living experiment—an urban experiment. The results have not been fully realized, as the world has only been urban for a few years (since 2008). Will rural areas continue to shrink in size and significance? Will the world's urban population continue to extract all that it can from the rural population until there is nothing left? Can the world survive without rural people and places? We may not definitively know the answers to these

questions, but we are at least thinking about them, which is important since we are living in a time when surprisingly few people are asking such questions.

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