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NEOLIBERALISM, HEGEMONY AND COMMUNITY IMAGININGS

by

Boone W. Shear

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Submitted to the
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Boone W. Shear

NEOLIBERALISM, HEGEMONY AND COMMUNITY IMAGININGS

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Western Michigan University, 2006

The idea of “community” evokes many long held, positive imaginings. Community implies neighborliness, togetherness, helping each other, tolerance and understanding. Community is set against modern society and is commonly understood to be a solution to the deleterious impacts of capitalism and the state. Although community can be a site of resistance, I am also interested in the ways in which the ideology of community assists in facilitating capitalist inequalities.

The latter part of the twentieth-century saw a significant restructuring of capital in the United States as privatization and deregulation were accompanied by a decline in the welfare state. These efforts and policies, sometimes described as “neoliberal”, have helped to create great challenges for many localities. In Kalamazoo, MI, government and citizens are making efforts to address a general withdrawal of resources, class inequalities, economic restructuring, poverty, and increasing homelessness associated with neoliberal capitalism. Drawing on Gramscian theory, as well as the works of contemporary scholars like Miranda Joseph and Sue Hyatt, I consider the ways that “community” assists in maintaining capitalist hegemony by naturalizing capitalist development and depoliticizing citizen-subjects.

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INTRODUCTION

In late September of 2005, a couple dozen or so mostly lower income Kalamazoo citizens congregated in a church on Kalamazoo's East Side, one of Kalamazoo's poorest and largest neighborhoods, to meet with the Kalamazoo City Commission Poverty subcommittee. The meeting began with brief introductions by each of the three commissioners making up the subcommittee who expressed hope for the future, gratitude for the opportunity to have a community dialogue, and open minds for what they were about to hear. The meeting was presented as an open forum for Kalamazooans to tell city government what it could do to help alleviate poverty. This was a concern of direct bearing to many city residents as Kalamazoo at this time was suffering a near 25% poverty rate, increasing homelessness, an abysmal real estate market, a dire employment situation, a troubled school system and so on.

Some of Kalamazoo's poor and homeless residents had been telling city officials for over two years, in an organized and consistent manner, exactly what they thought the city could do to address their concerns. Indeed, operating through the Michigan Organizing Project (MOP), poor and homeless Kalamazooans, joined by some community activists, had been testifying at city commission and other public meetings for a number of years and had, among many other suggestions, proposed plans for the creation of an affordable housing trust fund that might begin to ameliorate some of the poverty in the city. The Kalamazoo Homeless Action Network (KHAN), a derivative of MOP, had more recently

taken up some of MOP's causes as well as organized its own direct actions aimed at protesting discriminatory policies of local businesses and allegations of police transgressions against the poor and homeless. The city of Kalamazoo had received a lot of input from some poor Kalamazooans who had specific ideas about what government could do to help make their lives better.

Towards the end of the citizen testimonies, a colleague and friend of mine who was a long time activist and member of both MOP and KHAN got up to speak. He pointed out that just that very day there had been a headline in the local city paper, the Kalamazoo Gazette, that proclaimed triumphantly "The Difference a Year Makes" (KG September 29, 2005). The story detailed a number of overlapping development projects in the works for downtown Kalamazoo. Years of planning by private developers, quasi public development organizations and local political leaders had generated potential projects ranging from a downtown cinema complex to a convention center, with total estimated costs for the projects in the tens of millions of dollars. The Gazette reported that "A combination of private and public funding, including the sale of bonds, was anticipated." (KG September 29, 2005). My friend asserted that, in contrast to development initiatives, little headway had been made towards directly addressing the needs of Kalamazoo's most vulnerable residents.

The three city commissioners on the subcommittee appeared to listen intently to all of the various testimony, giving their full attention to what was being said. Finally, as the subcommittee was concluding the meeting and

responding to the comments made that evening, one of the commissioners stated "And we have to be one community. We do. And what we need are 1st chances and 2nd chances and 3rd chances and 4th chances and 5th chances." and "We have got to put this issue, this lack of *community*, this need for *community*, on the front burner in the city" (emphasis added).

This response seemed to resonate with people in the audience, was a theme I heard often as a reasonable response to the challenges facing Kalamazoo during the course of doing the research for this thesis and appealed to me as well. For one thing, the idea of coming together as a community to help each other seems commonsensically the right thing to do. If some people in my community are on the margins, are being left out, or are being excluded from what my community has to offer, I want to help to bring them into the center and include them. Similarly, it is important for me to feel like I am part of a community. I want to be working together with people on common goals and feel like I have some purpose in that camaraderie.

Even while generally agreeing with the idea of bringing our community together for the benefit of all, I nonetheless felt somewhat ambivalent and unsatisfied by this response. Just what was meant by a need for community and how was community to be built? Did every one have a common understanding of what community, and developing community, might mean? Moreover, was building community a satisfactory response to the problems presented at this and other forums? People were primarily testifying about discrimination, poverty and

the need for affordable housing. In other words, they were addressing adverse social conditions in Kalamazoo that can be linked to globalization, complex political-economic practices, national and state policies and local governance. A “lack of community” did not appear to be a primary concern of the Kalamazooans at the meeting. But *community* was presented as integral to the problems expressed at the meeting, and implicated as a logical solution. It seems important then to attempt to figure out how community is to be interpreted and imagined.

This thesis asks: How is the concept of community deployed in relation to capitalist governance? More to the point, to what extent and in what ways can imaginings and enactments of community challenge, or conversely, strengthen practices of capital accumulation and capitalist inequalities? In what ways does “community” effectively guide or discursively confound the beliefs and practices of social actors who are attempting to transform social conditions and how does it help to produce particular political-economic subjects? While recognizing that community and actions related to community have multiple meanings, imaginings and political results, I am primarily interested in contradictions associated with community and here suggest some of the ways in which “community” is complicit in capitalist hegemony in Kalamazoo, MI.

Following this introduction, the thesis will be divided up into six additional chapters. Chapter two explores understandings of community through scholarly literature and popular works and discusses relationships between community- as a discourse and ideology- and the political-economy. This is not

an attempt to comprehensively review variant meanings of community or to fully historically trace the development of the concept, but is instead meant to identify recurring major themes related to community that are salient to this essay.

Chapters three through six discuss community imaginings in relation to capitalist governance in Kalamazoo, MI: chapter three considers community in relation to neoliberal development, chapter four analyzes and speculates about community imaginings surrounding a seminal, privately funded public scholarship program. Chapter five considers collective resistance efforts that fall outside the socially acceptable parameters delineated by “community” and chapter six examines the role that community has in explaining, if not producing, the depoliticized actions of a community festival. The final section will consider the limitations and possibilities of community responses to the conditions produced by capitalist relations.

COMMUNITY AND HEGEMONY

Anthropologists have long been concerned with community. If culture is the primary milieu in which ethnographers operate, community is its unit of analysis. Indeed, these two concepts are mutually dependent as a delineated community sets the boundaries for the culture to be studied. The quality and dimensions of these boundaries are quite flexible as community (and culture) can be comprised of familial relations, extended kin networks, or residents of a city, region or nation. Today, the compositions of communities may reach beyond time

and space to form “ethnic communities”, “internet communities”, “transnational communities”, communities formed through a common occupation or a common interest and so on. Thus, community imagines a bounded social network comprised of individuals with common interests and common subjects. The consequences of community imaginings can be epistemologically problematic. As Carlota McAllister points out in her analysis of anthropological understandings of indigenous Guatemalans during the Guatemalan civil war, community as a concept homogenizes individuals within a delineated community and flattens political variation that might move beyond a discreet, “authentic” Guatemalan-Maya community. “Anthropological arguments about Maya participation in the insurgency rest on the presumption that when one Maya speaks it is as good as if all Maya had spoken, and that when Maya speak, what they say is good for all times and places” (McAllister 2002: 13).

I agree that the use of community as a diagnostic and conceptual tool is fraught with difficulties. Not only does community imply an authentic and even static homogeneity, but like any reification it is incomplete and cannot account for the multiplicity of subject positions due to differences in individual personality and position structured through class, race, age, gender and so on. Despite these complications and concerns, there is no doubt that human beings are social animals. More saliently, people long for a sense of belonging to and working within a group of likeminded peers with a common purpose and common goals who care about each other. As Benedict Anderson’s work suggests, the desire for

community is so great that individuals are willing to look beyond economic, social and historical differences if it means that they can imagine themselves as part of a larger community bounded together and moving through time and space as one unit (Anderson 1983). Indeed, some scholars suggest that community is an essential quality of the human condition that declines relative to an increase in social complexity and technological advancement. In the late 1800's Ferdinand Tonnies made a distinction between "community" and "society" that would portend much of the subsequent literature concerning community in the social sciences. In *Community and Society- Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tonnies [1887] 1957), Tonnies proposed Gemeinschaft (community) to be organic and natural, composed of intimate social bonds that unify a social organization. For example, kinship relations can be best described as Gemeinschaft. In contrast, Gesellschaft (society) is artificial and contrived, and characterized by social isolation. For example, social relations in business and commodity exchanges can best be described as Gesellschaft. Tonnies explains, "Gesellschaft deals with the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings which superficially resembles the Gemeinschaft in so far as the individuals live and dwell together peacefully. However, in Gemeinschaft they remain essentially united in spite of all separating factors, whereas in Gesellschaft they are essentially divided in spite of all uniting factors." (Tonnies [1887] 1957: 64-65). Gemeinschaft is composed of reciprocal relationships (Tonnies [1887] 1957: 41) whereas Gesellschaft can be characterized by unequal class relations (Tonnies [1887] 1957: 100-101). Tonnies

associates Gemeinschaft with rural life, authenticity and the past and Gesellschaft with urban life and superficiality (Tonnie [1887] 1957: 34-35) (Society, for Tonnie, can be understood as a modern invention if not a euphemism for modernity).

Tonnie's work highlights some of the major dichotomies associated with community and society that recur throughout scholarly literature and maintain their potency in contemporary U.S. culture. "Community" and "society" are set in opposition to each other. Society's oppression, social isolation, urbanity, confusion and modern dislocations contrast with community's simplicity, authenticity, organic familial relationships and solidarity. In its most base and elementary understanding community is good and authentic whereas society (i.e. modernity or civilization) is potentially harmful for human beings and alien to the human condition.

Community imagined as a social organization, or way of behaving within that social organization, is indelibly linked to the past. In his 1963 ethnography, *Culture Against Man*, Jules Henry supposes that culture, although created by and "for" man" (Henry 1963: 12) is also problematic for an individual's personal fulfillment, alienating him from emotional and psychological needs. By culture, Henry appears to be primarily referring to institutions, and the activities related to institutions, of the political economy of the modern nation state. In particular Henry is interested in querying a culture, the United States, that is "increasingly feeling the effects of 150 years of lopsided preoccupation with amassing wealth

and raising its standard of living” (Henry 1963: 4-5). Henry posits that culture is created for the benefit of human beings and to alleviate the “conflict and suffering that it [human culture] creates” (Henry 1963: 10). Because human actions are primarily geared towards survival, emotional needs have been neglected making “society a grim place to live in” (Henry 1963: 12) and although “man has survived physically he has died emotionally” (Henry 1963: 12). It seems that Henry might posit that United States culture more closely resembles Tonnies’ *Gessellschaft* than *Geimenschafft*.

Henry looks to the mid-twentieth century United States to help explain his suppositions. He divides motivations for human action into two main categories: drives and values. These motivational categories, he explains, are both “creations of the culture” (Henry 1963: 13) but “Drives belong to the occupational world; values to the world of family and friendly intimacy” (Henry 1963: 14). Henry appears to believe “values”, which encompass beneficent, positive social interaction, are integral to the human condition and important in fulfilling emotional and social needs (Henry 1963: 14). Drives on the other hand, are motivations for personal accomplishment, status and wealth and are fully upheld by the societal institutions of a modern, industrialized United States (Henry 1963: 14). Drives and values then appear to be in conflict. Henry explains that although drives have created great wealth and raised the standard of living in the United States, the occupational and broader social roles produced in contemporary US society alienate individuals from each other and their emotional needs ((Henry

1963: 26-28). Henry's arguments appear to imply that culture, and in particular modernity, is problematic for the human condition. Perhaps a more fundamental and stable set of "community" relationships that might fulfill emotional and social needs is missing from US culture. Indeed, at one point Henry reveals the tenuous nature of community in the United States: "In many primitive cultures and the great cultures of Asia, a person is born into a personal community, a group of intimates to which he is linked for life by tradition; but in America everyone must create his own personal community" ((Henry 1963: 147).

Similarly, Stanley Diamond (1974) posits civilization to be problematic for individual well being and perhaps even antithetical to human nature, and like Henry, Diamond also equates "primitive" society with community. In fact, Diamond flatly states that "the primitive society is a *community*" (Diamond 1974: 167). But in contrast to Henry who attributes modern cultural contradictions to "a primitive condition which continues to confuse his social and personal life" (Henry 1963: 11), a condition from which "has emerged the central problem of the human species: the fact that inner needs have scarcely been considered" (Henry 1963: 11), Diamond looks to the primitive condition as a solution to modern emotional and social ailments. In, *In Search of the Primitive* (Diamond 1974), Diamond argues that social relationships and cultural practices in primitive society are culturally integrated (Diamond 1974: 138-142), mediated by kin networks (Diamond 1974: 144-146) and are individuated and connected to community as opposed to individualized, isolated and anonymous (Diamond

1974: 159-167). Diamond believes that “primitive” culture allows individuals in primitive societies to be more closely related to their essential humanity than individuals living in modern civilization. Diamond suggests that modern civilization, which he seems to obliquely define as “the modern state, that is, contemporary civilization coincident with maximal politicization of society” (Diamond 1974: 128) moves individuals further away from an ideal human existence. Members of primitive societies are better able to express themselves and their human nature through their positions within a primitive culture that allow for a full range of behavioral expressions as opposed to “civilization” which allows for and produces narrow and one dimensional subjects (Diamond 1974: 165-166). “Here is the paradox: rationalized, machinized and secularized civilization tends to produce standard, modal persons rather than natural variety” (Diamond 1974: 165). Diamond argues that individuals in civilized societies are socially unfulfilled, lonely and isolated. For example, Diamond asserts that in modern civilizations the desire to fulfill emotional and social deficits lead to romantic love--which is important and perhaps unique to non-primitive cultures. Romantic love enables individuals to project their unmet social/emotional needs onto another individual, “father, mother, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, *baby*” (Diamond 1974: 161), needs that might have been fulfilled if the individual was born into an extended network of communally united kin. It would appear that Diamond believes that the social structures of primitive societies, or communities, are in fact existentially better for humanity than modern civilization. Diamond

warns that “the sickness of civilization consists, I believe, in its failure to incorporate (and only then to move beyond the limits of) the primitive” (129). Thus, Diamond’s argument is in some measure an implicit exhortation to return to community.

Understanding the present in terms of the past and privileging the past over present conditions is a common theme in scholarly works, literature and popular culture. In *The Country and the City* (Williams 1973), Raymond Williams details the enduring nature of the community/society dichotomies. In reverse chronological order Williams takes us back through English literature in which an idealized and happier past and a kinder, more natural (rural) place is longed for. Williams argues that this continuing imagining and romanticizing of a more natural and rural social configuration is accompanied by changing material conditions throughout the development of capitalist society that are causing social change, hardship and dislocations for individuals. Community then both evaluates the present in terms of the past and presents a model in which to reshape the present.

This longing for an idyllic, authentic community continues to strongly resonate with the American public today and can be readily seen in contemporary pop-culture. Garrison Keillor’s longstanding, anachronistic “A Prairie Home Companion” provides a good example. The popularity of the live radio show, which features grassroots music, man-made sound effects and perhaps most prominently, storytelling, is in part a testament to the narrative environment that it

creates. As the Washington Post stated, "'A Prairie Home Companion has become a neighborhood of the air, an answer to an American desire to fence off a small portion of the cultural landscape as a refuge from the coarseness, cynicism and irony that are postmodern life" (Washington Post 1998). In other words, A Prairie Home Companion presents an idealized and longed for idea of community. Perhaps no better example of the type of community that the show imagines can be seen than in the shows weekly monologue, The News From Lake Wobegon, in which Keillor regales the audience with stories of the fictive community Lake Wobegon, where ice fishing, church events, ball sports and other wholesome community organizations and activities structure the lives of social actors who somehow remain outside the purview of many of the social and emotional dislocations brought about by technological, economic and political change. The timeless world that Keiller creates suggests many of the most powerful images and ideas associated with community and reiterates the Geimenschaft/Gessellschaft dichotomies.

Community is a solution to social ills is largely taken for granted. M. Night Shyamalan's 2004 thriller, *The Village*, similarly plays upon ideas of an authentic, bucolic community and contrasts beliefs of an idyllic community with the harshness of modern society. In the movie, set in the contemporary United States, a group of urban professionals decide to start a new life together after meeting in therapy sessions for relatives of victims who have been murdered. The group seemingly attributes the violent deaths of their relatives to a modern, urban

world that has lost the kind and neighborly values of community. As is revealed over the course of the movie, the group sets out to live a pre-industrial, bucolic life in the middle of a nature reserve, creating a complex mythology to keep subsequent generations from leaving the safety of the community. It is indeed an unlikely scenario and the movie questions the efficacy and morality of the groups intentions, but the premise of the movie relies on the audience's taken-for-granted understanding that this type of extreme behavior to reestablish community, although unusual and unlikely, is at the very least a logical plan to counter the social ailments inherent in modern society.

Community is unequivocally a positive social configuration that is an intellectual response, in and of itself, to modernity's alienation and dislocation. Community as a solution to social ills has and continues to resonate strongly throughout our society. But what are the impacts of understanding social change to be caused by a breakdown of community? Raymond Williams' *The Country and The City* (Williams 1973) suggests that, although the wistful longing for a more neighborly, kinder and authentic social organization may have some real historical analogs, understanding social hardships in the present as a general breakdown or deterioration of a more natural and better rural life might mask more complex and more historically particular political-economic changes that occur as class relations restructure (Williams 1973: 96). I largely agree with this general premise as it in turn suggests that understanding contemporary social problems in terms of community can have myopic results. For example, within

any given period of time there very well may be a change in social relationships and practices that undermine the neighborly, familial relations that might characterize community but these changing relations are inextricably linked to changing material conditions. Thus, reifying and romanticizing community and implicating changes in community as the cause of and solution to social ailments, merely skims the surface of the political-economic processes shaping social relations and can create depoliticized subject positions. Moreover, if the solutions to social ailments are found in working in a community that is imagined without the political-economy and concomitant class relations, then underlying, fundamental political structures may be obscured or left unaddressed.

Indeed, today community tends to be imagined as independent from and enacted outside of the political realm. Some of the dominant tropes relating to community are well represented in Hillary Clinton's 1996 bestseller, *It Takes a Village*, in which communities of increasing scope form concentric rings around individuals; from families and neighborhoods, to the nation and ultimately to the "global village". Clinton aspires to inform her readership of "ways to come together as a village to support and strengthen one another's families and our own" (Clinton 1996: 18). Clinton presents harsh social realities confronting today's children and imagines layers of community working through varying institutions (families, schools, churches, and government) that might be better able to respond to them. For example, she lauds civic organizations that are directly confronting crime on the neighborhood, exhorts government to develop

more programs to deal with the impacts of crime on children (Clinton 1996: 128-145), and urges families and the communities in which they are situated to take responsibility in creating a safe environment for their children (Clinton 1996: 128-145), develop moral character (146-181), and lead the country out of its “spiritual vacuum”. (Clinton 1996: 179). Clinton does profess to see government as a site of community and a place of intervention on behalf of citizens. She even acknowledges the problems with a free market economic system (Clinton 1996: 293-296) and contrasts US policies with the more interventionist Japanese and German governments (Clinton 1996: 296). Clinton also makes clear that government is “a partner to, not substitute for, adult leadership and good citizenship” (Clinton 1996:292) and that “government is not “them” but “us”, an endeavor that joins with volunteerism and the efforts of the private sector in sustaining our mutual obligations to our children, families and communities” (Clinton 1996: 312). The role of government is in many cases described as a way to help facilitate other institutions function as sites of community so people can come together and help each other *outside* of government. As Robert Putnam point out, “giving time and money to help others is a long and distinguished tradition in the United States. Both philanthropy and volunteering are roughly twice as common among Americans than among citizens of other countries” (Putnam 1996: 117). The importance placed on civic responsibility and civic participation has its roots in religion (Putnam 1996: 65-68, 117) but can also be seen as stemming from the Unites States’ formative liberal tradition in which civil

society is believed to be an oppositional force and counterbalance to incursions of the state (see Buttigieg 1995 for analysis). “The private sphere (i.e. civil society as distinct from and opposed to the state in the liberal scheme of things).... is regarded as the terrain where freedom is exercised and experienced” (Buttigieg 1995: 5). Nikolas Rose suggests a more recent elaboration of this private/public oppositional dichotomy in his essay *The Death of the Social?* (Rose 1996). Rose asserts that the latter part of the 20th century saw a fundamental restructuring of the relationship between government and citizens. As the welfare state was dismantled, concomitant discursive imaginings diminished the idea of the social body, apropos government. Consequently, social welfare has increasingly become an individuated enterprise as individual responsibility and a focus on fixing the individual have become increasingly hegemonic and commonsensical approaches for social change (Goldstein 2001, Lyon-Callo 2004). More saliently, social welfare is often facilitated not directly through government, but in civil society as “community(ies)”-composed of individuated subjects carrying out individual actions-come together to help other individuals. Non-profits (Joseph 2002: 69-118) and volunteer organizations (Hyatt 2001) are believed to be the central mediators of *community*. Indeed, “one gives to one’s community or to “the community” by contributing labor or money to a nonprofit” (Joseph 2002: 70). The understanding of this type of community as the primary and most logical place for social action necessarily cleaves the interconnectivities between

government and “community”, imagining a civil society/community that operates in an independent, autonomous sphere (see Hyatt 2001: 204, Joseph 2002: 11).

It is within this context of an autonomous and oppositional civil society that community is imagined. This conception of community is typified in Robert Putnam’s highly publicized and influential 1996 book, *Bowling Alone*, in which Putnam decries the dissolution of social-capital in the United States over the previous three decades. Putnam measures the decline of social capital, a euphemism for community, primarily in terms of voluntary membership in a wide range of civic institutions: “a documented drop of 25-50 percent in the membership roles ‘of such diverse organizations as the PTA, the Elks club, the League of Women Voters, the Red Cross, labor unions and even bowling leagues’” (Hyatt 2001: 207 quoting Putnam). What I am primarily interested in here though, is neither an investigation of the empirical status of community (i.e. Putnam) nor a critique of the extent to which “community” may offer a solution to society’s ills brought about by the variant impacts of global capitalism, dislocation of social networks because of technological changes, problematic government policies and so on. On the contrary, I want to examine the ways in which “community” is complicit in the production and maintenance of our political economy and concomitant production of inequalities. As Joseph cleverly deduces, if we look beyond the primary thesis in *Bowling Alone*, we can begin to see this argument laid out before us. Joseph points out that Putnam’s thesis supposes that, not only is the production of social capital (most especially social

cohesion-not conflict and dissent) generally “good”, but that it is of critical importance to “the health of democratic states and economic prosperity” (Joseph 2002: 12). Thus, “social value of local community, for Putnam, is not the challenges that such communities might offer to dominant regimes but rather that they are “sites of incorporation into hegemonic regimes” (Joseph 2002: 12). I agree with Joseph’s critique and largely appropriate it (as well as Sue Hyatt’s 2001 critique of volunteerism) here to help form the underpinnings of my arguments, and like, Joseph, I will do so not as “a fan of capitalism (like Putnam) but “as a critic” (2002: 13).

A brief discussion of Gramscian notions of civil society will help clarify my beginning point further. As Buttigieg (1995) argues, Gramsci understood civil society to be inextricably intertwined with political society (the state) and is indispensable to Gramsci’s conception of hegemony in which consent to and maintenance of capitalist inequalities is accomplished not only through direct political-economic domination, but rather throughout society writ-large: political and civil society. “He [Gramsci] was also convinced that the intricate, organic relationships between civil society and political society enable certain strata of society not only to gain dominance within the state but also, and more importantly, to maintain it, perpetuating the subalternity of other strata” (Buttigieg 1995). Buttigieg goes on to more forcefully assert the importance of civil society apropos state/elite power, “The acquisition of a hegemonic position in civil society is ultimately more important to the ruling classes than the acquisition of

control over the juridico-political apparatus of government” (Buttigieg 1995: 30). Thus, “community”, taking place in civil society and enacted through voluntary participation in civic institutions articulates with state and by extension, furthers elite interests. Moreover, I suggest the defining characteristics of the dominant configuration of community: social cohesion, social remediation and its perceived existence in an autonomous civil society, all serve to promote hegemony by depoliticizing and individuating social actors. In other words, community functions as an ideology in service of capitalist interests. Raymond Williams identifies three conceptions of ideology used in Marxist writing: “(i) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group; (ii) a system of illusory beliefs—false ideas or false consciousness—which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge; (iii) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas” (Williams 1977: 55). These three variants allude to the dynamic power relations in which ideologies, and all knowledge, are produced. Ideologies, then, must be understood in their relation to the political economic system in which they operate and the ways in which they are produced from, challenge or facilitate capitalist relations. It may be useful here to discuss (if not entirely define) some of the characteristics of contemporary political economic conditions in the U.S.

Many scholars discuss current political-economic conditions in the United States, as well as the global economy, in terms of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism as a political-economic project emerged in response to the economic crisis of the 1970’s, decades of Keynesian growth and the concomitant compromise between

labor and capital after World War II (Harvey 2005). Harvey explains that the political system of “embedded liberalism” (Harvey 2005: 11) in which capital was regulated and intervened upon by the state in the form of public enterprises, social welfare and so on; was challenged by the political theories and policies associated with the neoliberal state “whose fundamental mission was to facilitate conditions for profitable capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital.” (Harvey 2005: 7) “The freedoms it [the neoliberal state] embodies reflect the interests of private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial capital.” (Harvey 2005: 7). Efforts to support these interests can be clearly seen in the 1980’s Reagan presidency in the United States and the Thatcher administration in Great Britain- administrations that had success in deregulating capital and privatizing public works while dismantling the welfare state and weakening labor. On a global level, neoliberalism has meant the proliferation of international trade agreements that open markets to international investment and the deregulation of capital through a variety of coercive techniques thereby further increasing capital mobility and corporate power.

As Lyon-Callo notes, “Neoliberalism is more than just a set of practices and policies, it is a set of ideas and ways of imagining the world” (Lyon-Callo 2004: 11). One of the discursive impacts of neoliberalism is an overriding emphasis on individual responsibility for individual (and social) welfare. This is not altogether new as an ethos of individualism is historically engrained in the liberal democratic tradition (see Macpherson’s *Political Theory of Possessive*

Individualism for a discussion). Still, individualism is renewed and reasserted under neoliberalism and obfuscates the impacts of government policies that structure material conditions, including inequalities and poverty. Harvey describes the consent to neoliberal practices and the restoration of class power: “a programmatic attempt to advance the cause of individual freedom could appeal to a mass base and so disguise the drive to restore class power” (Harvey 2005: 40). Indeed, it has become in many cases commonsensical that individual improvement, responsibility and efforts are the keys to social change and, obversely, the possibility of government intervention and responsibility for social welfare is diminished (see any number of essays in *The New Poverty Studies* 2001 for examples).

Many scholars have noted that trends of deregulation and privatization associated with neoliberalism have been accompanied by increasing corporate power and corporate governance (see Beck 2000, Buck 2005, Giroux 2005, Korten 2001 for examples). For some scholars, current political economic relationships in the United States appear increasingly fascist as government and corporate interests continue to merge (Buck 2005, Giroux 2005). Pem Buck asserts that in times of economic restructuring “the elite turns to fascist policies of increased exploitation” (Buck 2005). These policies, Buck maintains, must be consented to, and are carried out and managed by what can be referred to as the middle class. However, “asking the middle classes to be complicit in greater devastation at the same time that they themselves are experiencing greater

exploitation and insecurity is tricky” (Buck 2005). Indeed, *Keeping the Collaborators on Board as the Ship Sinks* (the apposite title of Buck’s presented paper) requires that “a set of fascist ideologies, adjusted to fit the particular circumstances, in order to carefully orchestrate middle class consent” (Buck 2005) are promoted. We can see this occurring on a national level: as inequality increases (Yates 2003 and Scipes 2004), class mobility thickens (Correspondents of the New York Times 2005), personal debt escalates while savings rates reach lows last seen during the great depression (Rifkin 2000), an ongoing state of war is waged and so on; ideologies are deployed to further elite interests. Buck identifies some of these ideologies to include, “Hyper-nationalism”, “racist paranoia” and “glorification of military manhood and male honor.” Whether or not “fascism” aptly describes current political-economic conditions in the U.S. (and in Kalamazoo), is a debate for another paper and is irrelevant to the larger point: ideologies, mediated through the middle classes, are deployed to facilitate elite interests. I am not asserting that ideologies are solely in the service of domination or that there is an essential ideology of “community”. On the contrary, “community” is multivalent and has many intentions and interpretations, but when deployed from within a particular hegemonic, political-economic context, spurs a related, if not cohesive, project. Indeed, this is exactly how ideologies operate: “The whole purpose of what Gramsci called an organic ideology is that it articulates into a configuration different subjects, different identities, different projects, different aspirations. It does not reflect, it constructs a unity out of

difference” (Hall 1990: 166). In other words, ideologies conform to the political and cultural imaginings of divergently positioned subjects and are then able to politically and culturally realign individuals in support of the dominant class interests. In the following pages, I look to explore the ways in which an organic ideology of “community” is deployed to maintain hegemony and manufacture consent in Kalamazoo, MI. I consider how “community” naturalizes the neoliberal development model, scuttles opposition to it and helps to produce “depoliticized” subjects.

Over the course of this research, Vin Lyon-Callo and I have worked closely with community activists (as they try to make sense of and transform social conditions in Kalamazoo) on an array of different projects including political campaigns, living wage movements, multicultural festivals and planning committees, poverty reduction groups and local media. In every case we have attempted to position ourselves alongside our collaborators, in many cases actively participating in their/our projects, and made efforts to critically assess their ideas and practices (and our own). Our observations were, as much as possible, shared as we actively sought out discussion and reflection with the goal of creating the possibility of new responses to social problems. The data that informs the remaining sections of this thesis stems from these activities, as well as from archival work and textual analysis. Quotations used are direct quotes (in the case of public statements) or reconstructions of conversations in which effort is made to convey accuracy of representation.

NEOLIBERAL COMMUNITY

On June 23, 2005 the Supreme Court affirmed that “if the government says that taking residential housing and giving over the property to private real estate developers for private use is a public purpose, the constitutional requirements are satisfied. Under the Court’s decision, if the government says it is a public purpose- if the taking is part of a broader development plan- then it is a public purpose by definition” (Mokhiber and Weissman 2005). The decision in *Kelo v. New London* confirmed the legality of government seizure of private land for private development, a practice that had become not uncommon by the end of the 1990s: from 1998-2003 “more than 10,000 homes and small businesses” were targeted by state and local governments for eminent domain and subsequent private development (Marks 2003). Mokhiber and Weissmen (2005) note some of the expected consequences of the decision that Justice O’Connor points out in her dissent: “Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party, but the fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms. As for the victims, the government now has the license to transfer property from those with fewer resources to those with more” (Mokhiber and Wiessman 2005 quoting Justice O’Connor). Further, what are the impacts owing to the particular type of development that might take place? Will the development project gentrify other low income residents out of surrounding neighborhoods? If the plan hopes to

draw corporate investment to the region, will the jobs created spur more inequality by paying poverty wages? Most striking however, is the sanctioning of spending public funds to assist the development efforts of private corporations. This seeming contradiction was reconciled early in the court's decision regarding a local government's seizure of private land for private development "The city has carefully formulated an economic development plan that it believes will provide appreciable benefits to the *community*, including, but not limited to new jobs and increased tax revenue" (emphasis added) (Kelo et al. v. City of New London et al. 2005)

Although this particular ruling was not without controversy, the essential supposition underpinning the majority opinion, that private development (assisted by public support) is inherently good for "communities", has become quite axiomatic and the use of eminent domain for business ventures and corporate profit is not unfamiliar to Kalamazoo. In 2003 the Kalamazoo City Commission discussed the purchase of the KTS Industries property, long held by the same family and at the time housing a number of small businesses, as part of the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan. The plan called for the development of a mixture of residential and commercial buildings along the banks of the Kalamazoo River, a long abused and often ignored resource for the city. After attempting to purchase the building from the owners, the city sued under eminent domain thereby pressuring the sale of the property in 2004 for use in a development plan that dovetails with Kalamazoo's efforts to remake itself as a hub of technological

ingenuity and cultural renaissance, and to build a community where upwardly mobile Kalamazooans can “live, work and play” (City of Kalamazoo 2003: 9). This is one piece of a larger development effort in Kalamazoo that is discussed, and largely understood, as being “good” for the entire community. A community that is struggling to restructure economically and socially in relation to adverse economic conditions and a community which is not cohesive but is greatly divided along class and race lines and whose constituents have very different needs and increasingly unequal privileges. The region has lost over three thousand manufacturing jobs over the past 11 years, coinciding with the closures of 4 paper mills, a GM plant and a Kellogg’s plant in neighboring Battle Creek. (Lyon-Callo and Hyatt 2003: 185). The rapid transformation and restructuring of Kalamazoo’s historically largest and most prominent employer, the Upjohn Company- a pharmaceutical manufacturer that put Kalamazoo on the global economic map and merged with Swedish company Pharmacia in 1995 which then merged with Pfizer in 2003 creating the largest pharmaceutical company in the world- has exacerbated the deteriorating employment situation. In 2003, Pfizer began to restructure and pull out of Kalamazoo, and “eliminated 1174 jobs in the county [Kalamazoo County]” (KG July 24, 2005). An additional announcement of more job layoffs in 2005, “about 500 pharmaceutical-sciences jobs” (KG July 22, 2005) leaves the downtown Kalamazoo area with “a fraction of the human-drug-research work that was done here before Pfizer bought Pharmacia Corp. in 2003 and relocated most of its human-drug-discovery and research work” (KG July 22,

2005). The Pfizer restructuring is also directly draining city coffers. The Kalamazoo Gazette reported in early 2006 that “Demolition and donation of buildings in downtown Kalamazoo will cut Pfizer Inc.’s property-tax bill an estimated \$1.66 million this year.” (KG March 19, 2006). Kalamazoo’s population continues to decline as the middle-class and white people flee both concentrations of poverty in the city, and the poor job market overall in the state. Despite Kalamazoo’s poor housing market, affordable housing is in short supply as rent continues to outpace income for many Kalamazooans leading to a steady rise in homelessness (Stravers 2004a, Stravers 2005, KG October 10, 2005). Indeed, a local homeless shelter director and homeless advocate reported in 2004, “Last year people spent more nights in Kalamazoo’s emergency shelters than ever before in the city’s history. Our eight local shelters provided 83,000 nights of refuge, up 10,000 nights over 2002” (Stravers 2004a) and in 2005 the Kalamazoo Gazette reported that “Volume was up 12% last year when nearly 93,000 nights of shelter were provided” (KG October 10, 2005).

The city’s budget shortfalls are an ongoing concern and are commonly attributed to national and state economic policies. Relatedly, city, state and national funding for a wide variety of social programs, activities and works has not kept pace with need. Indeed, at a city commission meeting in 2003, the Kalamazoo city manager stated, “.....I’m sorry that Representative Lipsey left the chambers, I hope he will hear these words somehow, someway and that is we need to bring this message to Lansing because there are obviously issues going on

in Lansing that affect our ability here locally. And there are issues, as commissioner McCann reminded me, that are going on in Washington DC that are affecting us here locally. The bottom line is that we don't have enough money to accommodate the needs of the growing concern and the growing needs in the community. We have millions and millions of dollars of infrastructural problems in this community, this budget, addresses a good portion of them but still falls short of the growing infrastructure needs of an aging urban core like Kalamazoo." Local activists also attribute poor conditions locally (and poverty more generally) to ongoing international trade policies, corporate welfare and regressive taxes. Minorities and the poor have suffered greatly under these conditions. As reported in a local newsmagazine, "Median annual income for Black families in the county is 56% of median income for White families. White families have almost double the income of the typical Black family. In a nation with a long and ugly racial history this kind of disparity is a measure of how much we still need to change. In terms of dollars, median income for White families in Kalamazoo County in 2000 was \$56,415 while for Black families it was \$31,312: a difference of over \$25,000 a year. Those at highest risk of poverty in our community are Black children under 12. Over 42% of Kalamazoo County's Black children under 12 live in poverty. For five-year-olds the percentage in poverty climbs to 49%. For White children under 12 the numbers are very different. Only 8% of White children in this age group live in poverty" (Stravers 2004b). The city of Kalamazoo's overall poverty rate was nearly 25% in 2000, and child poverty rate is almost 27%.

According to a recent survey of Kalamazoo County's poor residents (those earning incomes of up to 1 ½ times the poverty rate), during the previous year over half of those surveyed (or people in their household) could not afford a dentist but needed to see one, over 40% needed to see a doctor but couldn't afford to, almost half needed to buy medicine but couldn't afford to, nearly 40% couldn't afford the rent, almost 30% had their utilities shut off and over half needed food but couldn't afford to buy any (quoting and paraphrasing from Bleyer, Lyndell R., Wendy L. Wintermute, Jordan Yin and Alan L. Rea, Jr. 2003).

The economic restructuring taking place is causing incredible hardship for lower income families but it is also making life most unpleasant, and most certainly more precarious, for the middle classes. In general many areas that have long been associated with a good "quality of life" seem to be under threat. Debt is accumulating, health care and other social service costs are increasing while government and corporate pensions are scaling back and job security is more tenuous. Kalamazoo would seem to be no exception. As a "senior regional analyst with the W.E. Upjohn for Employment Research" (KG February 26, 2006) stated in a Kalamazoo Gazette article, "If you're looking for a life-time career with one company, it's likely not going to happen" (KG February 26, 2006).

The reaction to these changes which are of course common to many cities in the Midwest has been predictable. The dominant model has been to create a political, social and economic climate that is purported to attract businesses and further market-based growth. Mathew Ruben describes this phenomena as the

“neoliberal development model” (Ruben 2001: 436) in which local responses to the impacts of national and global neoliberal policies engage in similar and related policy directives: “a market based program of deregulation, investment tax-credits, downsizing and outsourcing of public services, and an up-by the bootstraps philosophy” (Ruben 2001: 436) that target the growth of business and moves resources away from the poor. In Kalamazoo, the neoliberal development model is simultaneously explained as intrinsically good for the entire Kalamazoo community (variant iterations of “we have to have a thriving business community in order to help with poor social conditions” are familiar refrains) and justified as a necessary response to national and global neoliberal policies. Many local leaders, activists and residents appear to believe that it is more the job of the federal government (and state government to a lesser extent) to take care of its citizens- “We don’t have the resources [on the local level]”- local government should only have to be a caretaker providing basic services. In contrast, it is commonly accepted by city leadership and many citizens that local government must invest in infrastructure and business if Kalamazoo is to remain competitive for corporate investment. The introduction of a regional growth plan in 2005, spearheaded by the regional development agency Southwest Michigan First, calls for privatization, decreased benefits to city employees and selling off of public assets (KCGP 2005), but has nonetheless garnered widespread support by elected officials and Kalamazoo citizenry. Similarly, a development project discussed in the Fall of 2005 that involved upwards of \$70 million, described by one of the

project facilitators as “extremely complex” (KG October 28, 2005) and “includes multiple parties and timelines” (KG October 28, 2005) was given the greenlight by the city commission despite the fact that the businesses that stand to profit from the project had not revealed any of the details involved. The idea is that the market is the best provider of social welfare and the reasonable course of action is to support market based solutions to social problems. In late 2005, Kalamazoo’s newly elected mayor reaffirmed city policy: “My philosophy is going to be market-driven; you can’t work against it nor would I want to. The market has given more people more opportunity than any other system devised” (KG November 27, 2005; for critiques of this philosophy see Farmer 2003, Gershman and Irwin 2000, Harvey 2005, Lyon-Callo 2004 and Yates 2003 among many others). Thus, neoliberal growth in Kalamazoo means continuing tax abatements for businesses to locate and invest in the city, privatizing of public employees and plans to sell off public lands and gentrify downtown. The common-sensical acceptance of business interests dominating policy occludes the range of possible responses to neoliberal restructuring on the local level by stifling democracy and naturalizing market-based and corporate led responses. I contend that the ideology of “community” assists in naturalizing increased corporate governance and elaborates corporate-government development schemes as social welfare projects while providing arguments against challenges to these practices and depoliticizing citizen subjects and their practices. And because community is synonymous with cooperation, understanding and getting along, social action described in terms if

community tends to lean away from conflict. Obversely, confronting or attempting to challenge social order through direct action or even participatory democracy is seen as antithetical to community practices.

Beginning in the late 1990's two researchers from the local, elite liberal arts school, Kalamazoo College, one of whom was also the vice-mayor of Kalamazoo at the time, began to publish a series of reports that accompanied a larger project that they entitled, "Convening the Community". This undertaking was an effort to gather social capital to elaborate on plans for regional collaboration and growth in Kalamazoo County that might be able to respond to the impacts of "corporate downsizing and plant closures" (Cunningham and McKinney 1999: 1) and economic restructuring in general. The project was explicitly and concertedly an exercise and effort to engage in public dialogue and facilitate community participation in developing strategies for growth. Said the researchers (among other goals and objectives) "we propose to develop a mechanism through which citizens can participate in ongoing discussions of regional change" (Cunningham and McKinney 1999: 1), "use a grassroots , inclusive, participatory process in order to identify the range of core values and visions in the county regarding growth management issues" (Cunningham and McKinney 1999: 6) and "to help build a common vision for the community" (Cunningham and McKinney 1999: 5) Surveys, interviews and meetings with citizens and community leaders were held in 1999-2000 to gather information which resulted in the development of four "resource teams to address economic

development, intergovernmental cooperation, land use and community excellence” McKinney, Geist and Cunningham 2000: 15). Convening the Community is no doubt a sincere effort spearheaded by two well informed and publicly committed academics. Much time and work was put into gathering community input in order to attempt move forward on political and economic initiatives. As the scholars note, “[But] the public’s voice is missing. And without a public mandate, transforming change will be difficult to achieve” (Cunningham and McKinney 1999: 3). However, it is important to consider what possibilities for change may be included, excluded or produced from within a particular context. In the Afterword to *The New Poverty Studies*, Maskovsky (2001) problematizes community participation in “publicly funded service provision models” (Maskovsky 2001: 478). He points out that “this emphasis on community input is occurring at the same time social services are being withdrawn and privatized” (Maskovsky 2001: 478). Maskovsky goes on to say that “some scholars and activists might now argue that greater community input into social provision models in the context of welfare state contraction is a cynical way to regulate the poor through a model of self-empowerment” (Maskovsky 2001: 478). In this light, we can reconsider the Convening the Community project, particularly in relation to ways in which “community” implicates citizen-subjects in the neoliberal project. If the social welfare projects available to community members when gathering community input are strategies that fall within the neoliberal development model, then not only will the input, ideas and knowledge

that support those strategies likely be produced, other possibilities and movements for social change that fall outside the existing parameters (particularly those that confront dominant political-economic structures) might be obscured or pacified. In an effort to respond to social and economic conditions caused in part by deindustrialization in Kalamazoo County the participants organized, in the context of community, around particular ideas of economic growth, capital accumulation, cooperation and community responsibility. For example, although many of the surveyed participants in the city of Kalamazoo identified crime, inequality and jobs and the economy as important issues, issues greatly impacted by the deregulation of capital and withdrawal of government services under neoliberal capitalism, there is little in the project reports to show that the researchers and participants offered solutions that might attempt to directly address inequality and “the economy” other than development strategies and intergovernmental cooperation. On the contrary, in the “Declaration Concerning Economic Development In Kalamazoo County” (see <http://www.kzoo.edu/convene/docs/econDevDecl.pdf>), one of four “declarations” used to “frame activities at (the) last large public meeting” (McKinney, Geist and Cunningham 2000: 16) bullet points tout the efforts of private development groups, advocated for “symbiotic relationships between government and businesses at all levels”, and reinforce the naturalness of capitalist inequalities in the statement ““the poor will always be with us’especially in today’s economy, for the poor are the least mobile segment of our community”. The

points that did target inequality were palliative measures aimed at ultimately individualized solutions such as “improving education.” Moreover, membership in “community” here was expressed in terms of responsible, individualized action through civil society. Bullet points included: “(We dedicate ourselves) to be as productive as possible in our work and in our communities (to do well *and* to do good)”. Absent from the declaration were any specific efforts that fell outside the purview of the neoliberal development model. I am not claiming that this was the intention or a conscious effort on behalf of the researchers, but invoking community and enacting a community participatory project appears to have resulted in an effort to work within current political economic structures and *cooperate* with state and elite interests. As I have argued, government support for corporate development and profit has come to be axiomatically understood as community building and inherently good for the community. Indeed, assisting corporate citizens and facilitating capital accumulation has become the natural formation of social welfare. Consequently, citizen-subjects are created that more easily and primarily imagine themselves as active social actors in a discreet and bounded civil society. A discussion of the responses to and discourses surrounding a recent, monumental philanthropic action helps us to better understand these processes.

KALAMAZOO'S PROMISE

While writing up this thesis, another event happened locally that reinforced what I had been thinking about the uses of “community” as a reasonable response to neoliberal restructuring in Kalamazoo. On November 10th 2005, Kalamazoo Citizens were greeted with surprising and welcome news. A group of anonymous philanthropists had created a city-wide scholarship program that would guarantee payment of college tuition to any public college or university in Michigan. The only conditions of the Kalamazoo Promise are that students must live in the Kalamazoo Public School district, attend Kalamazoo Public Schools (the number of years attended correlates with the percentage of tuition paid with full payment of tuition possible) and maintain a 2.0 grade point average in high school. Reaction to the Kalamazoo Promise was emotionally charged and ambitiously hopeful as Kalamazoo leadership, media and citizens began to consider the possible ramifications. The Kalamazoo Promise, it was believed, might fix the Kalamazoo Public School system, provide an incentive that would give answer to low graduation rates in KPS (particularly among lower income and minority students), cure Kalamazoo’s failing housing market, halt and reverse white (and middle class) flight, transform social inequality locally, spur economic growth by providing an incentive for families in the region to move to the area, persuade businesses to remain or relocate to the area and, in general, seen as a panacea to the miserable economic conditions in Kalamazoo and the social welfare of its residents. The Kalamazoo Promise provided hope for

government and citizens who were facing great challenges. For weeks after the announcement the Kalamazoo Gazette was inundated with joyful letters to the editor. Residents spoke of crying upon hearing the news being “overcome with joy”, “and being in shock”, by this “Brilliant!”, “Selfless”, and “dream of a gift” given by “angels of God”, who were able to see “beyond any boundaries.” The scholarship program was referred to as “the most important event in the history of Kalamazoo since the founding of The Upjohn Co.,” said to “set an example of love for humanity.” One editorial compared the donors to super heroes: “So we have heroes among us. Something akin to the Justice League of Kalamazoo. If you look closely, you can see their tights and capes peeking out from under their well-tailored suits and dresses” (KG November 27, 2005)

The universal praise of the Kalamazoo Promise is greatly and most certainly deserved. Although I am dubious about the efficacy of the Kalamazoo Promise in fulfilling some of the claims that local leadership and citizens have made, there is no denying the significance of “The Promise” and the unusual generosity of Kalamazoo elites. To be sure, the Kalamazoo Promise is a very nice idea that will benefit some families greatly. Conspicuously absent from any public discussion, however, has been an analysis of the political-economic conditions that make this type of private donation possible (and needed). Social inequality is by no means a natural occurrence but is instead constructed out of political-economic policies and social practices that are supported by particular interests. Well deserved commendations have been given to the donors of the

money but not much has been considered apropos the contradictions of a “community” with a near 25% city poverty rate and \$10 million dollar budget shortfall, but with enough private resources distributed among seven donors to endow a fund with perhaps a half-billion dollars (a figure that Vin Lyon-Callo came up with while discussing the Kalamazoo Promise over lunch and it turned out to be the same figure put forward by the Grand Rapids Press, reprinted in the Nov. 30 issue of the Kalamazoo Gazette). Indeed, in what is perhaps the most glaring indictment of capitalist inequality in Kalamazoo, overflowing homeless shelters and rampant poverty can be juxtaposed with two billionaires, two of the world’s richest 793 people, who call Kalamazoo their home (Forbes 2006).

What is of even more interest for this thesis is that the Kalamazoo Promise was met with disbelief, surprise, and amazement, in part, because the enormity and scope of this project was seemingly beyond the possibility of some Kalamazoo citizenry to imagine, let alone enact, for themselves. A number of letters to the editor referring to the Kalamazoo Promise support this assertion:

“I am still in shock”

“generous beyond belief”

“incredible”

“nothing short of a miracle”, “this is a dream”

An editorial in the Kalamazoo Gazette similar claimed, “The community is awed by the magnitude of the Kalamazoo Promise” (KG November 13, 2005).

I think that something like the Kalamazoo Promise was possible amazed Kalamazoo Citizens because the idea of taking democratic initiative for a similar sized social welfare project, to muster the public will, to take transformative community action, was virtually unthinkable. The inability to envisage, let alone mobilize, the public will and take collective action for publicly funded social welfare, can be understood if we examine how Kalamazoo citizens viewed this corporate patronage in relation to community. Numerous respondents spoke in the Gazette of the sense of pride they now had of being a resident of Kalamazoo after the beneficent considerations of Kalamazoo's elite:

“It is a total shift in our perception about our community”

“I am very proud of Kalamazoo”

“The Promise makes us proud when we think of the exciting future of Kalamazoo”

“I have been proud of our community on many occasions, but never have I been so moved as by the generous gift of the Kalamazoo Promise to our students, our community and our county”

Shortly after the announcement of the scholarship, a “community celebration” was held in which to honor the donors and celebrate Kalamazoo solidarity.

Even more interesting, the crafting of social welfare policy through the donorship and direction of 7 uber-wealthy individuals, was understood as a shining example *of community*:

“It tells (young people) that we, as a community, care about them”

“Such a gesture shows the true color of the community. It shows the true heart that lies within”

The superintendent of schools echoed this statement, “It’s been said that Kalamazoo is a very special community. Tonight, we have proof of that now more than ever before” (KG November 11, 2005). Kalamazoo Mayor-elect expressed it best in saying “I can’t believe we have such a generous community”. (KG November 11, 2005)

There is no denying that the Kalamazoo Promise is a generous and significant gift that should benefit Kalamazoo writ-large. But is it really an example of “community”? Does it derive from community efforts? On the one hand, to understand the funding and direction of a social welfare policy by 7 elite people in a city of 80,000 as an example of the Kalamazoo community seems to pose a contradiction. Community implies collectivity, in this case the collectivity of Kalamazoo citizenry; all of Kalamazoo’s residents coming together in social exchange and mutual collaboration, not the decisions and actions made independently by seven people. On the other hand, if individual actions in a community are to be recognized as the practices that take place *in civil society* through the actions of individuated subjects working as independent agents (as volunteers, through non-profits, or by *charitable giving*), then the Kalamazoo Promise is the consummate “community” action.

Reactions to the announcement of the Kalamazoo Promise outline the subjectivities of Kalamazoo citizens, in relation to community, in bold relief. After the implementation of the Kalamazoo Promise—which was understood to be a community effort-- it was now understood that it was individuated community subjects' responsibility to make sure that the potential impacts, as delineated by the Kalamazoo Gazette and government officials, would come to pass. Letters to the editor offered in the Kalamazoo Gazette demonstrate an individualist ethos underlying community imaginings:

“We must now leverage this opportunity and not drop the ball”

“Your gift challenges the adults in our community to support, encourage and inspire our students”

“we as a community must step up and involve ourselves in the education of our youth inside and outside the classroom”

“Families who intend to accept the scholarships can honor the donors by volunteering at their students' schools, their churches and/or in the community right away”

Similarly, media and Kalamazoo leadership called for community support of the Kalamazoo Promise. The Vice Mayor “challenged Kalamazoo residents to be ‘keepers of the promise’ by assisting local schools in preparing all students to take advantage of the scholarship opportunity” (KG November 15, 2005). The Kalamazoo Gazette featured one editorial that exhorted, “this entire community must become involved in developing ways to make The Promise become The

Reality” (KG November 16, 2005) and then stated the importance of volunteering. Another editorial lauded the efforts of civic institutions that were supporting the Promise and then “urge[d] the entire community, both minority and non-minority, join together in this very important endeavor” (KG January 4, 2006). This outpouring of support, calls for people to help each other, to work across racial and class lines and take full advantage of the opportunity in front of them does indeed reflect a sense of communal thinking. Kalamazoo residents made public calls to support a project that might benefit everyone in the imagined community. However, this outpouring of support stayed well within the boundaries of what was acceptable *in terms of community*. Citizens, who were not able to imagine initiating such a venture through government intervention via collective action were now holding themselves (and each other) individually accountable, as part of a larger community operating in an imagined autonomous civil society, for the anticipated social benefits of the Kalamazoo Promise. In order for a public social-welfare project on the same scale (or even much smaller scale, to have taken place) this would require collective action, conflict, challenging Kalamazoo’s dominant governmentality and threatening social order, actions that are antithetical to dominant understandings of community. In Kalamazoo, even the beginnings of these types of social actions are denounced by those who see them as a threat to the neoliberal social order supported by community and in many cases go unsupported by citizens and activists who consider themselves to be on the left.

THREATENING COMMUNITY

In the Spring of 2005, a city commission meeting was filled with the impassioned pleas of many African-American Kalamazooans. Led by the local NAACP President, numerous black citizens spoke to the commission during the citizen comment period about racism in Kalamazoo. This action was spurred by increasing friction between many African-American residents and the Kalamazoo Police force over allegations of discrimination in the police department, but the testimonies discussed a wide range of social and political economic concerns. Among the issues that they felt needed to be addressed were "...high prison rates and low job opportunities, the lifetime labeling that hurts felons' job prospects, alleged police insensitivity and brutality and growing hopelessness among black youth" (KG May 10, 2005). One prominent black leader said that, "...what we are angry about is that the system fails us" (KG May 10, 2005). Citizen after citizen gave emotional testimony, emoting concern and anger and sometimes demanding that something be done to change these conditions. Conditions that can be attributed to the material inequalities brought about by capitalist relations. Many African-American residents had been attempting to work with the system for years and many have received discrimination and racism, poor jobs and social and economic inequality in return. It seemed only logical that they would express this situation publicly and try to hold government accountable for the impacts of racialized capitalist inequalities. This action was a sincere, democratic effort to challenge government to find ways to intervene on behalf of its citizens. A group

of concerned citizens created social capital and exercised their democratic rights. With this in mind, it is useful to consider some public statements and initiatives in relation to this act. This action was seen as inappropriate or misguided by some. For example, the mayor of Kalamazoo at the time later criticized the citizens who testified and said, “[the city manager who much of the criticism was directed towards] is not responsible for many people’s problems,’ Jones said. ‘They need to solve problems on their own. Anyone can complain. Anyone can castigate. But what are you doing to make things better? If the answer is nothing, it’s time to get a life and get on with it’” (KG May 17, 2005). What was interesting to me about this comment was that it seemed to regard this direct, democratic social-action as not doing something “to make things better”. Perhaps, this was because the action was an “inappropriate” expression of community. It was confrontational, not neighborly, and it tacitly argued that civil society and government were sutured together, not distinct. Moreover, government intervention was privileged over individual action.

Not all of the city commissioners were as equally dismissive as the mayor, and not all Kalamazoo citizens were unanimous in their criticism (on the contrary, some people were very excited about the possibility of an emerging campaign). A number of more concerned responses were put forward by Kalamazoo leadership. Some commissioners called for action and a number of local leaders over the coming months spoke of racial equity and systemic and institutional inequalities, but another response appeared to be a call for maintaining or building

“community”. The city manager said that, “this is a statement on the country and state... We have to come together” (KG May 10, 2005). Arguing that escalating racial tensions might be harmful to business and development, the “business community” pledged to take a leadership role in helping to soothe race relations. The Regional Chamber of Commerce chair stated that “Our ultimate goal as a chamber is to lead the charge in the conversation, to be the bridge-builder ... and find a level of common respect and dialogue so that all voices can be heard” (KG June 11, 2005). The Chamber representative’s emphasis on dialogue, bridge-building and coming together implicates the community as the intrinsic culprit *and* solution for racism in the city and absolves government policies and economic practices of culpability. Similar to the Mayor’s more critical comments, it is implied that *individual* community members need to work out their problems to fix these social concerns by coming together and cooperating as a community. (In contrast a much maligned local NAACP President responded in the Gazette, “We really don't need a dialogue. What we need is for the laws to be enforced.” (KG June 11, 2005)).

Another response to racial discord was the racism summit “aimed at people in positions of power, those that can bring changes to institutions and their cultures” (KG October 8, 2005) which displayed a “clear spirit of cooperation (KG October 8, 2005). The Kalamazoo Gazette reported that this annual event, held at the university, attracted over 100 “community leaders” and came away with measures aimed to review college curriculum, improve the “racial climate”

of workplaces and amend the city housing code (KG October 8, 2005 A1). The mayor stated that “racism is something that is very hard to eliminate. We as a community can do better, and we are the type of community who comes together to do better” (KG October 8 2005). Community action was where it belonged, in civil society, operating in harmony to ameliorate the impacts of corporate governance. (It should be noted however, that there was not a consensus about how to deal with racism. The Kalamazoo Gazette also reported a number of differing views from the attendants about the potential effectiveness of the racism summit and particular anti-racism efforts).

Community was threatened later that year when the Kalamazoo Homeless Action Network (KHAN) took action against discriminatory policies of a local McDonald’s franchise. KHAN, primarily comprised of homeless Kalamazoo citizens, had targeted the downtown restaurant after a number of homeless citizens had reported being treated rudely and differently than other McDonald’s customers. At issue was the enforcement of a store policy that required customers to leave the restaurant after a certain amount of time had passed without any purchase. Some homeless citizens maintained that this policy was not being enforced evenly. They said that they were being asked to leave before the designated time had expired and that customers who appeared not to be homeless were not being asked to leave. To provide empirical evidence for this claim an experiment was done by two of the lead organizers from an affiliated group. They went to the restaurant dressed nicely in clean, casual attire, sat down at a table

without purchasing anything and preceded to have a conversation for a length of time that greatly exceeded the designated time limits set by store policy. They were not approached by management to leave. A reporter from a local newsmedia repeated this experiment and produced a similar outcome. When a series of meetings with the management of the store (supported by direct-action including pickets) did not achieve the outcome that KHAN desired, a halt to discrimination through a change in store policy, KHAN then decided to change tactics to bring more attention and more pressure to the situation. On July 31, 2005, KHAN drove a bus to the store manager's house and for a short period of time held up signs, chanted slogans and demanded an end to discrimination. This act was viewed as inappropriate if not shocking by some of KHAN's sympathizers and was problematic for some of KHAN's supporters who distanced themselves from the group. For example, the social service organization in which KHAN had previously held their meetings made a decision to ban the organization from convening on site. By directly implicating and confronting an individual whose individual actions were integrally bound up in the discriminatory practices KHAN was confronting, KHAN was seen as breaking some sort of unspoken rules of community engagement.

KHAN continued with its confrontational tactics in early 2006 when "a dozen or so speakers spent more than an hour chiding commissioners" (KG March 7, 2006) for government inaction regarding their concerns. The Kalamazoo Gazette reported that "Kalamazoo City Commission members responded that the

group's criticism of agencies providing food and shelter here may actually undermine the help that those agencies provide vulnerable people" (KG March 7, 2006). It appeared that some of the commissioners and agencies that worked hard to try and deal with the issue of homelessness and try and assist homeless people felt that it was too much for KHAN to yell at the very same people that are trying to help them. An editorial in the Kalamazoo Gazette, reflecting the general sentiment expressed about the situation, sympathized with the anger and frustration that homeless people feel, praised the city commission for trying to tackle real-life problems, and then compared KHAN to Malcolm X and admonished them for using a "by any means necessary" mode of operation rooted in confrontation and agitation" (KG March 23, 2006). The editorial concluded, "Kalamazoo has good people doing good work- and trying to do more- to help the homeless. KHAN needs to use those means to make the necessary changes in our community." (KG March 23, 2006: A3). The article omitted the effectiveness of Malcolm X's tactics and interestingly equated the exercising of democratic rights with a "by any means necessary" approach, perhaps revealing the extent to which KHAN's actions threatened community order. Indeed, I believe that KHAN's actions were antithetical to dominant understandings of community. In contrast to thoughts and actions near universally agreed upon, apropos the Kalamazoo Promise,- volunteerism, working together, supporting each other, the importance of individual responsibility- or neoliberal development efforts, KHAN'S and MOP's actions have attempted to hold government accountable and transform,

although sometimes somewhat obliquely, capitalist relations. But these actions are viewed as intrinsically taking place outside “community”.

To be clear I am not arguing here that community discourse and imaginings are the only *reasons* why there appeared to be a general disapproval among Kalamazoo leadership, media and liberals of KHAN’s actions (if not their interests). However, community, and ideas associated with community, function to naturalize existing social-economic conditions and government-elite practices. As a result, challenges to this conception of community are therefore threats to social order and more easily scuttled while seemingly more logical community actions like the racism summit and supporting the Kalamazoo Promise are taken up.

As I argued earlier in the paper, community is imagined as a remedy to a full range of social and economic maladies. Community implies coming together, bridge building, understanding and compassion. Community action is imagined to take place in an autonomous civil society and operate through civic institutions as individuated subjects help each other to be individually responsible for themselves, and community is deployed to promote and maintain neoliberal development. And, as I have suggested, community discourses produce particular types of subjectivities who primarily imagine themselves operating under the conditions that community delineates.

DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY

In 2004 about twenty of us were seated around a table in a neighborhood association boardroom discussing the logistics of food vending at the upcoming Multicultural and Ethnicity Festival (MEF), an event that was founded by John Ramirez, a local Hispanic activist to, in part, respond to problematic social conditions. A woman who was new to the MEF planning committee poked her head through the door and asked if she was in the right spot. John Ramirez, who had met her at a recent leadership workshop, caught her eye, and welcomed her. “We have quite a diverse community represented here,” John said, and began to introduce everyone. “This is Sheila representing the African American Community, this is John representing the Indian Community, Tom representing the Muslim Community, Frank representing the Hispanic community.....”. He went around the table like that, pointing out the unofficial representatives of each imagined collectivity until he turned to me, sitting just to his right. “And this is Boone Shear”, he said, “representing the college student community” and gave out a hearty, knowing laugh. He continued, “Look at all this Diversity, we are all very different. We have different interests, different cultures, eat different foods but we are all one larger, Kalamazoo Community too. But we can all come together and celebrate our differences and be one community. As a community we are diverse, but as a nation we are one.” In this short introduction, John assumes many of the meanings and assumptions behind the dominant discourse of community. Not surprisingly, and in contrast to the political, direct actions of

KHAN and the more loosely organized demonstration by many African-American residents at city hall, the MEF has been acceptable to seemingly all (and even embraced by some) of Kalamazoo's leadership, media and business. Indeed, city officials speak at and attend the festival, the local media has reported favorable accounts of the event and many powerful corporations have become sponsors.

As I assert in *What Does Diversity Have to Do With Politics?* (2005 unpublished) one of the characteristics of the multiculturalism produced at the MEF, for which I served as a planning committee member for 3 years, is that it is largely understood to be "apolitical" and thereby "implicitly endorses capitalist relations of production" (2005). I go on to argue that the ideas and actions at the MEF are structured by and reproduce an imagined multiculturalism in which community cohesion, bridge building and ultimately, individual responsibility are privileged over political engagement. What I do not consider in that essay, is the extent to which "community" articulates with multiculturalism.

The MEF was envisioned by its founder and by many members of the planning committee, to be a response to problematic social conditions in Kalamazoo. For example, the founder of the event told me privately, and stated many times publicly to media and in everyday conversations with people when discussing the event, that Kalamazoo has problems, but that we can come together and work on these problems as a *community*. It was presumed that these problems could be overcome if people began to come together as individuals and take responsibility for themselves within in a larger community. I (and sometimes

others) suggested fairly consistently to planning committee members that perhaps if we wanted to improve social conditions in Kalamazoo then we should address the root causes of some of its ailments such as government policies and capitalist relations. When this was suggested, however, there was almost always the same response. People consistently said that they did not want the MEF to be political and that this event was about coming together as a community, being inclusive and tolerant—not confrontational or accusatory. Thus, political-economic and historical forces that structured the conditions in Kalamazoo- that the MEF was responding to- were largely disappeared. Responsibility for social change was for that of the “Kalamazoo Community”, a community that was squarely situated in civil society and detached from, and believed to be oppositional to government- a community that was comprised of equivalent, *individual* community members, operating in civil society, who were to change themselves or to help others to change.

THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Although Kalamazoo is in some ways an atypical Midwest city- for example, in the amount of private capital held and invested by Kalamazoo’s hyper-elite- it is quite typically being subjected to the same political-economic forces impacting communities throughout the United States: corporate conglomeration and restructuring, deindustrialization, social welfare rollback, increasing corporate governance and so on. These conditions are not going

unnoticed or unaddressed by Kalamazooans. Robert Putnam provides a wealth of empirical evidence to support his thesis that there has been a general decline in what he defines as social capital in the United States (Putnam 2000). However, like Lyon-Callo and Hyatt (2003), I believe that many community efforts are not on the wane, at least in Kalamazoo. There are many, many citizens actively engaged in Kalamazoo and working extremely hard to try and improve their lives and the lives of others. Numerous peace activists groups, poverty reduction efforts, grassroots organizations, living wage proponents, alternative media and more loosely assembled concerned citizens are desperately trying to respond to changing conditions that seem beyond their control or inevitable. Moreover, there are plenty of concerned citizens who are devoting much time in civic organizations, volunteering and in charitable organizations to try and make Kalamazoo a better place. What I have tried to show is that some efforts are more privileged than others. Discourses and imaginings of community are powerful discursive structuring agents and are deployed to promote particular efforts for particular interests. Community is in many configurations not oppositional to state and elite interests, but is rather in service of them. Community, functioning as an organic ideology, assists in furthering capital accumulation and elite interests by naturalizing some responses and hindering others. Community naturalizes capitalism and produces citizen-subjects who believe that community action should be a cooperative, individuated project that operates in civil society. But can community be a truly transformative enterprise? As many have noted, any

state of hegemony is inherently incomplete. There is always room for resistance and subversion. Is it possible to politicize community and/or community subjects in ways that challenge capitalist relations?

I think the activities of KHAN and less formal community displays like those showcased at city commission meetings demonstrate that oppositional community configurations clearly are possible. But can local community efforts truly challenge the global processes creating localized conditions? J.K. Gibson-Graham suggests that this is indeed possible but requires a “radical[ly] repositioning” of subjects in relation to capitalism (Gibson-Graham 2003: 54). Gibson-Graham cites multiple projects that they have nurtured that strive to provide a framework for individuals to begin to imagine themselves as active agents in the political economy. “The people engaged in our research conversations had a chance to encounter themselves differently—not as waiting for capitalism to give them their places in the economy but as actively constructing their economic lives, on a daily basis, in a range of noncapitalist practices and institutions. In this way they glimpsed themselves as subjects rather than objects of economic development, and development became transformed as a goal by giving it a different starting place, in an already viable diverse economy” (Gibson-Graham 2003: 68).

Gibson-Graham suggests that a community of true pluralism that does not flatten difference is possible to cultivate through the right kind of communal activities. “A space has opened up for relations with others who are largely

“other” to them—people with whom they have nothing in common—and a community economy is in the process of creation” (Gibson-Graham 2003: 66).

Gibson-Graham further suggests that “community” built outside the field of global capitalism may be enough to begin to form interclass alliances that might be willing to reconsider the material conditions and class privileges that capitalism has brought. “What emerged, for example, from the awakening of a communal subjectivity was a faint but discernible yearning for a communal (noncapitalist) economy. This was not an easy yearning to stimulate or cultivate. The ability to desire what we do not know, to desire a different relation to the economy, requires a willingness to endanger what now exists and what we know ourselves to be” (Gibson-Graham 2003: 69). Thus, Gibson-Graham tells us that if community is imagined and practiced in relation to noncapitalist practices, a new kind of political subjectivity in relation to capital is possible.

Perhaps more non-capitalist projects in Kalamazoo could spur a growing community of radicalized subjects. However, we must be careful in describing the actions of any group or “community” of people to not homogenize them. There is indeed a range of subject positions in the middle class and among elites, just as with any group of people. In other words, there are many reasons why people do not take more of an oppositional stance in relation to neoliberal governance. At the same time, it is all too easy to vilify elites for exploiting workers and the middle class for facilitating neoliberalism. Some people are undoubtedly greedy or selfish but many perceive capitalism (and neoliberal capitalism) as the best

thing we've got. Further, and most importantly, I think that there are many, many people who are not ignorant of the contradictory nature of their political positions and recognize the shortcomings of neoliberalism but just don't know what else to do. A friend and mentor of mine, a university professor, expressed similar sentiments to me after we discussed an earlier draft of my thesis. He said, "I thought about my own connection to "community" and your arguments a lot last night. I went to the Cindy Sheehan rally in Bronson Park where I saw all the old familiar faces and had that wonderful sense of community when a group of people come together in common purpose--in this case getting the neocons out, preserving democracy etc. etc. However, once I got home I wondered what we had in fact accomplished. We've been doing this for 3 years-not much yet. Similarly, I can understand and partially agree with your critiques about a system that makes the Kalamazoo Promise seem like a marvelous gift-- at the same time that I think it is marvelous. And not just because I may directly benefit. I know the biggest problems in K-zoo schools and the community are poverty- I know on the grand scale what to do about it- but on a day to day basis I am flummoxed as to how one puts that into action. So, I volunteer at school and end up feeling good about what I have done at the same time that I know I am colluding with the state's increasing disengagement with public services." These thoughts are very similar to an ongoing internal conflict within myself and I am sure not unfamiliar to many well off Kalamazoo liberals and progressives who want to help improve

conditions and at same time want to be part of a community that has some sort of purpose/togetherness.

I think that Gibson-Graham's work mentioned above is a vital piece to this puzzle. Creating alternative frameworks for community- non-capitalist frameworks for community- gives people a chance to respond to social problems in potentially subversive ways while radicalizing individual subject positions. The community effort itself can lead to new imaginings and ideas and does not have to stop with the project at hand. As Hyatt and Lyon-Callo note, "...neighborhoods and communities have always been the sites where social change necessarily begins. Large-scale social movements like the Civil Rights movement, the anti-apartheid movement and the nascent present-day anti-globalization and anti-imperialist movements all emerged from activities initially as seemingly innocuous as church suppers and community meetings and from demonstrations, sit-ins and other public confrontations that at first appeared to be completely disconnected from each other" (Hyatt and Lyon-Callo 2003: 142).

I think alternative frameworks for community can indeed help people to envisage new ways of thinking and acting. However, the discursive impacts of community itself make these efforts difficult. Community is clearly a reification and an ideology that operates within a heavily politicized and asymmetrical cultural field. As such it pushes people to imagine themselves and others in particular ways. But I think just as importantly, there is something existentially real apropos a desire for community. I feel that there is little doubt that Stanley

Diamond (Diamond 1974) is generally right. Communal relations are more amenable to the human condition than relations born from “civilization”. And just as important to the human condition, I think, is the need for purpose and acceptance. Most people want to be liked. It is very difficult to be politically oppositional to anyone let alone your friends. For example, in my political efforts, particularly when making public statements, I always feel an internal conflict between saying what I viscerally feel to be true and worrying that I am going to upset or offend someone, particular someone I respect. Some of my most anxiety ridden days have come from knowing that my public statements and actions were going to make some people upset and have them be upset with me. It is an exhausting process. It is much less distressing to work together within the confines of acceptable and established social, political and bureaucratic pathways. Addressing inequality and deleterious social conditions is an arduous undertaking for individuals.

Although history has shown numerous examples of people working together through communities of common purpose and making gains against social oppression, community-as an ideology and as an existential reality- also confounds these efforts. Community can be a site of resistance but there is much about community itself to overcome: it discursively confounds individuals by positioning subjects in an imagined depoliticized civil society, privileges some types of social actions while squashing others and naturalizes neoliberal capitalist

development. It is important to rigorously analyze the political implications of community if we wish to develop more equitable, *community* relations.

Appendix

HSIRB Approval Letters

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Date: February 5, 2003

To: Vincent Lyon-Callo, Principal Investigator
Adriana Rosas, Student Investigator
Elizabeth Pesta, Student Investigator
Boone Shear, Student Investigator

From: Mary Lagerwey, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Lagerwey".

Re: Extension and Changes to HSIRB Project Number 01-01-20

This letter will serve as confirmation that the extension and changes to your research project "Understanding Neighborhood Transformation" requested in your memo dated February 3, 2003, have been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

The conditions and the duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

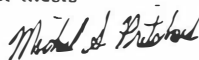
Approval Termination: February 8, 2004

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: February 8, 2001

To: Vincent Lyon-Callo, Principal Investigator
Peter Lawson, Student Investigator for thesis

From: Michael S. Pritchard, Interim Chair



Re: HSIRB Project Number: 01-01-20

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Understanding Neighborhood Transformation" has been **approved** under the **expedited** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may **only** conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: February 8, 2002

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