

THESIS

WORKING FOR THE LAKOTA: THE THEORY OF PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT

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This study is about a community and a process. It conveys the importance of participatory approaches to engage locally initiated, community development. Community members and outsiders alike have a place in development through entering the process as participants, focused on locally driven processes. After discussing colonial modes of development, a 2011 youth building initiative, from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, is discussed as a mode of decolonization by Lakota communities. Participatory development processes, from the initiative, provide examples of how participation is useful, both for development in the ‘here and now’, and to test and improve the *theory of participation*.

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Introduction

This study is about a community and a process, two elements which cannot be divorced in authentic, participatory community development. More specifically this study outlines the processes of a Lakota conceived and directed community development initiative located within the Wounded Knee District, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota. The Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation (WKCDC or CDC), a Lakota non-profit organization located within the District, provided the vision for a youth building initiative. The vision encompassed two goals: 1) building self-esteem and empowering youth; and 2) remodeling a building into a community youth facility. This study unfolds as a series of narratives and experiences from the youth building initiative combined with discussions of participatory development, community development, critical education, indigenous knowledge and Lakota ways of knowing and seeing the world. Participatory development processes, from the initiative, provide examples of how participation is useful, both for development in the ‘here and now’, and to test and improve the *theory of participation*.

The remainder of this introduction utilizes a world-systems approach to unmask development as a form of colonization and moves toward a call by both the late French philosopher Michel Foucault (2003, 1980) and Maori anthropologist Linda Smith (1999) for local, indigenous initiated and directed development. Chapter One opens with a discussion applying Paulo Freire’s (2006) assertion of a *true word* and Bopp and Bopp’s (2006) call for a principle-centered approach to development and then explains the philosophy of participation. The chapter concludes with an analysis of development literature and the spectrum from macro-oriented development approaches to micro-oriented development approaches—from global to community to individual. Within the first chapter, the theory of participation unfolds. Chapter 2

describes the Reservation context, the WKCDC as an alternative to colonial models of development, and then the participatory development processes utilized during the initial stages of the youth building initiative. How those processes, including my involvement and learning as an outside participant, strengthened the long-term feasibility and on-going momentum of the initiative are also discussed. Chapter 3 delves more specifically into the events and relations that occurred at the job site and the implications of those social relations on local communities and the participants involved—constructive social work. The chapter concludes by recounting what was accomplished throughout the youth building initiative at the job site, youth, and community levels. Chapter 4 documents community responses to the initiative which were collected by Lakota community members through participatory evaluation surveys and through my observations as a participant. The chapter further details the effects of the initiative on developing both individuals and community while providing information to consider for future development initiatives. The Conclusion sums up the specific Lakota case study, exposing how a local community, and an outsider, put into operation the notions of participatory development, both to test and improve the *theory of participation*.

Exposing Development

Before understanding the community, and the processes of participating in development, a greater understanding of the implications of development on communities is required. The following section provides the background knowledge of the historical movement from colonialism and control over indigenous resources, bodies, and minds to neo-colonial modes of development and then to the call for indigenous movements to repair and heal communities from colonization.¹ Then, the plea for locally initiated community development is explored.

¹ Neo-colonial is used here to refer to colonialism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Historically, development was about control, colonialism, and appropriation (Bodley 2008; McGillivray 2008:29-30; Tucker 2007; Rist 2006:75-79; Smith 1999; Rodney 1973). Through a world-systems approach, the development of underdevelopment has been exposed as colonial involvement with peripheral or marginalized countries (Frank 1991).² Contrary to modernization theory, which adopts an outsider's perspective of, "let 'us' come help 'you'" to peripheral communities, a world-systems perspective allows for the perspectives of peripheral communities to assert, "when 'you' come 'you' harm 'us'."³ Development has thus perpetuated poverty and neglect in communities throughout the world, while those countries, agencies, and individuals initiating development maintain the role of colonizer, profiting off of local development projects and the structures that their projects reinforce. These oppressive infringements on human rights have been experienced for nearly two centuries by Lakota on Pine Ridge. Their current situation is evidence of these experiences. The power structure was purposefully implemented to not work in their favor. The 21st century provides a new era in which the effects—disease, dis-ease, malnutrition, joblessness, and hopelessness—play out. Bodley (2008:167-184) precisely describes these effects as "the price of progress."

In the 'post-colonial' era people have tried to be more inclusive and question the unequal power relations between core nations and peripheral communities, not solely other nations. Hall and Fenelon posit that "it is the interplay between the local and the global that is critical"

² World-systems theory posits that "those countries that are fully industrialized, monopolize technological expertise and innovation, control financial decision making for the system as a whole, and pay relatively high wages to skilled workers are said to belong to the **core** of the world system" (Lavenda and Schultz 2010:187). On the other hand, "countries whose main contributions to capitalism are raw materials for industries in the core and expanding markets for manufactured goods are said to belong to the **periphery** of the world system" (Lavenda and Schultz 2010:187). I use the term marginalized or peripheral to describe an individual, community, or nation which has been 'cast to the side' and left out of political, economic, environmental, or social discussion, even when those discussions concern the fate of those individuals, communities, or nations.

³ Modernization theory is a "unilineal theory of economic development" (Lavenda and Schultz 2010:183). Some economists [subscribing to modernization theory believe] that they [have] a universal recipe for modernization, 'a technological fix' that [guarantees] economic development in any new nation that [follows] their advice" (Lavenda and Schultz 2010:183).

(2009:12). Still, institutional and conceptual barriers keep reinforcing the colonial appropriational relationship.⁴ Hence ‘post-colonial’ insinuates freedom from colonial times of oppressive violence and discrimination, but the contested term is held hostage in one way or another between constrictive single quotation marks. This is because the structural relationships of the colonial era continue from the past through to today (Smith 1999:98). Colonization has transformed from geographies to psyches and economies thus continually manipulating the minds and markets of the ‘formerly’ colonized.

The world-systems approach describes the ways in which indigenous peoples have been violently and systematically coerced from powerful, autonomous, self-sufficient nations into co-dependent, economically exploitative relations (Hall and Fenelon 2009). The profound correlations between the underdevelopment and continual impoverishment of peripheral areas and the continual wealth appropriation and enhancement of the core remain evident. Peripheral communities—mothers, daughters, sisters, brothers, fathers, and sons—and their genuine advocates are attempting to mitigate and overcome the atrocities perpetuated by prosperous core communities to this day.

To complicate the situation, the relationships between peripheral communities and dominant, core nations are manipulated and diluted within public media and other modes of discourse to perpetuate ‘false truths’. One of these ‘false truths’ is the notion that the boot-straps model explains inequities that exist between communities. The boot-straps model, as refuted by Omi and Winant (1994:21), claims that many ethnic groups have not reached success because they have failed to relinquish culturally engrained values and habits that are counter-intuitive to economic success. Thus they have not ‘pulled themselves up by the boot-straps’.

⁴ In this context, the term appropriate means to take or steal and then use the item (ex. Knowledge or a natural resource) to your own advantage. To exploit is similar to appropriate though exploit is used more commonly when referring to humans, such as a master exploiting the work of a slave.

Simultaneously, and unbeknownst to most Americans, the boot-straps model results in power ridden labels such as successful vs. lazy, rich vs. poor, and successful vs. lazy. Technocratic, economically successful nations then pride themselves as ‘less barbaric’ or ‘more advanced’. Thus, ‘more advanced’ countries perceive themselves as necessary developers of the less technocratic, less financially oriented nations and communities who have failed to ‘pull themselves up’, in hopes of ‘developing’ them.⁵

The developed vs. undeveloped discourse, has become a mechanism in which colonialism, in a post-colonial world, continues. Without these labels and other power laden elements of contrived public discourses, “relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented [. . .]” (Foucault 1980:93). The discourse of development allows for the inequities and power relations of the current global economy to persist unabated. It is in this way that development has become neo-colonial, the newest form of colonial appropriation, in which “the institutions and legacy of colonialism have remained” (Smith 1999:98).

Public discourses purport to define the “Indian problem” (first coined in the 1800s) as the economic development lag and social and health disparities within indigenous communities. As Sillitoe (2002:3) explains, “The modernization approach – not only dismisses local knowledge but also views it as part of the problem [. . .].” The conditions of indigenous communities are viewed as a ‘problem’ necessitating a ‘solution’ by outside interventionists because they have not followed the cultural norms of the West. Some would say, “they have not pulled themselves up by the boot straps.” Meanwhile, the role of the West in creating those poor conditions is

⁵ This does not insinuate that assisting other individuals, communities, or nations is wrong. But often times assistance is carried out in a very inauthentic, undignified, and sometimes militaristic way. Such assistance is a means of perpetuating colonialism—being authoritative over other individuals, communities, and lands. This assistance more aptly leads to charity toward, temporary control of, or belittling of individuals, communities, or nations, which does not lead to local empowerment or community problem-solving and is thus unsustainable (See Freire 2006 and Ch. 2).

completely ignored. This discourse of development continues the cycle of colonialism as it communicates “explicitly or implicitly, that [indigenous communities] have no solutions to their own problems” (Smith 1999:92).

Local Initiation

Countering the development discourse, localized approaches highlight the importance of locally driven and collaborative community development (Sherman, class lecture, February 14, 2012; St. Pierre, personal communication, September 29, 2011; White Butterfly, personal communication, February 22, 2011).⁶ There is no cookie cutter, one-size-fits-all approach to development (Baohua 2005:57; Stoesz et al. 1999; Kretzmann and McKnight 1993:10; and Freudenberg N.d.:106). According to Foucault (2003:6), there is an “inhibiting effect specific to totalitarian theories, or at least [. . .] all-encompassing and global theories,” that explains the folly of cookie cutter approaches:

Not that all-encompassing and global theories haven’t, in fairly constant fashion, provided— and don’t continue to provide—tools that can be used at the local level [. . .] But they have [. . .] provided tools that can be used at the local level only when, and this is the real point, the theoretical unity of their discourse is, so to speak, suspended, or at least cut up, ripped up, torn to shreds, turned inside out, displaced, caricatured, dramatized, theatricalized, and so on (Foucault 2003:6).

Though a systemic approach such as world-systems explains why inequities evolved and persists within communities at the local and national scales, Foucault lauds localized theory as essential. An anti-systemic, localized approach is necessary when implementing local changes in indigenous communities to combat atrocities stemming from historical and current inequities and to avoid the ongoing appropriation of wealth perpetuated by development interests outside of the local community.

⁶ For more information on Calvin White Butterfly’s ongoing community development projects on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation visit his Wounded Knee Tiyospaye Project website at <http://www.wktp.org/>

A localized approach, Foucault (2003:6) asserts does not “mean soft eclecticism, opportunism, or openness to any old theoretical undertaking, nor does it mean a sort of deliberate asceticism that boils down to losing as much theoretical weight as possible.” On the contrary, a localized approach is conducive to an “autonomous and noncentralized theoretical production [. . .] that does not need a visa from some common regime to establish its validity” (Foucault 2003:6). Academia and scientific discourses have been built through the appropriation of local forms of knowledge and consequent subjugation of, or delegitimizing of, local knowledge.⁷ Smith (1999:38-39) explains this conundrum from an indigenous perspective: “We live simultaneously within such [dominant] views while needing to pose, contest and struggle for the legitimacy of oppositional or alternative histories, theories and ways of writing.” Thus, Foucault (2003:7,8) argued that an “insurrection of subjugated knowledge” or a “reappearance of what people know at the local level” is necessary to combat elitism in the sharing and dissemination of knowledge, or in this case, to combat paternalistic initiations of development.⁸ Yet with unprecedented efficiency, outside development agencies infiltrate areas, propagandize their involvement to gain support from citizens, and continue to appropriate natural, economic, and cultural resources from peripheral communities, reinforcing the historical, colonial hierarchy (Bodley 2008; Tucker 2007).

Alongside indigenous groups and other peripheral communities, some scholars, theorists, and practitioners have tried to structure genuine, participatory development approaches to address the problems created by colonialism and faulty development initiatives (Chambers 2011;

⁷ I use the term subjugation to mean control or enslave. Think of subjugating knowledge as the act of claiming knowledge to be worthless and useless in comparison to other forms of knowledge. Some have surmised that science subjugates community forms of knowledge, making the community feel inept (Foucault 2003:6).

⁸ I use the term paternalistic describes a relationship in which one actor in the relationship acts as an overbearing, often abusive father and the other actor is forced into the role of an incompetent or neglected son. An example is how the U.S. has treated Native Americans, how masters treated slaves, or how England treated the American Colonies in the past.

Bopp and Bopp 2006; Sillitoe et al. 2002; Smith 1999). In an effort to decolonize the psyche and institutions of colonially indoctrinated communities, indigenous peoples have “mobilized strategically around new alliances,” to foster “genuine alternatives to the current dominant form of development” (Smith 1999:98,105). Among these “new alliances” and “genuine alternatives” is the call for authentic participant engagement in community development.

Chapter 1

The Theory of Participation: Methods and Mechanics of Participatory Development

The previous discussion provided a theoretical and historical basis for understanding colonialism, and the evolution of colonialism into development. Foucault (2003, 1980) and Smith (1999) call for local, indigenous approaches to decolonize development, yet these theoretical underpinnings provide little explanation as to how outsiders can and should engage with communities to participate in development. One of the main contributions of this study is the explanation of participatory development not only as a method but as a theory in and of itself. The next sections explain participatory development as a methodology and a theory.

The Philosophy of Participation

“Participation is the active engagement of the minds, hearts and energy of people in the process of their own healing and development. Because of the nature of what development really is, *unless there is meaningful and effective participation, there is no development*” (Bopp and Bopp 2006:85). In the past, participation was used to describe an outsider’s engagement with a community. Spradley’s *Participant Observation* (1980) is indicative of this. However, with an understanding of participation as defined by Bopp and Bopp, it becomes a term imbued with community empowerment rather than with community need and concession. Adopting this view, along with the teachings of Paulo Freire (2006), *participation* becomes a theory driven mechanism in which local communities and outsiders come together, as *participants*, to achieve community defined goals.

As a theory or philosophy, grounded with practice, and a practice which reconstitutes philosophy, participatory development is similar to Freire’s assessment of a *true word*. A *true word* through a balance of reflection and action, leads to transformation (2006:87-88). However,

“when a word is deprived of [. . .] action,” or “if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection,” the word will not lead to true transformation (Freire 2006:87-88).

Freire’s conversation about a *true word*, one that I connect with participatory development, describes a major conundrum of development. On the one hand, development suffers from lofty theoretical assertions which rarely translate to ‘on the ground’ action and leads to outsider discussions, overarching assertions, and goals about communities in which they never have and never will be a part. On the other hand sporadic action occurs, which is often the product of socially, politically, and culturally uninformed people who enter a community with little knowledge of development and a tendency toward ‘charity’. These approaches are by-in-large counter to development and destructive to communities. They are unsustainable.

Participatory development provides a mechanism in which genuine dialogue and action within a local community and between a local community and outside researchers/practitioners can occur. The relationship between local community members and outsiders is important to human development in general. As Freire (2006:85) professed: “The pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity; therefore it cannot unfold in the antagonistic relations between oppressors and oppressed.” This does not insinuate that local communities where development occurs view themselves as oppressed and down trodden. But generally speaking, communities initiating community development have been taken advantage of, pushed aside, or ‘forgotten’ by people from outside of those communities. As already mentioned, this is why there is either a perceived or real need for development. Similarly, this does not assume that all outsiders are viewed as oppressors. However, in white/indigenous interactions, there is a history of oppressor/oppressed

relations, which Freire (2006:57, 85) asserts, must end for genuine liberation to occur—a proposed reason for development.

Utilizing a participatory development approach allows for research to be theorized, initiated, articulated, acted upon, and evaluated by local communities from within their own ‘way of knowing’. Simultaneously, participatory development provides a means for these acts to be viewed, understood, and practiced by outsiders engaged in the development process. Likewise, utilizing participatory development as a theoretical basis allows for local ‘ways of knowing’ to dictate research and consequent action, as opposed to aligning practice and procedures with a theory derived from outside the community. A theory derived from outside the community and estranged from community values is not likely to produce lasting development effects. On the contrary, Freire (2006:85) expounds, “[. . .] the point of departure must always be with the men and women in the ‘here and now,’ which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene. Only by starting from this situation—which determines their perception of it—,” he continues, “can they begin to move” (Freire 2006:85).⁹ A community development initiative must emerge from within the community.

Participatory development requires immense amounts of planning and orchestration, though. Harrison (2001: 236-237) emphasizes planning above almost all other aspects of participating with community development. However, she maintains that Barnhardt’s (1977:94-95) “tolerance for ambiguity” is essential (Harrison 2001:59). This “tolerance for ambiguity” is similar to Chamber’s call to remain “optimally unprepared” (2011:xiv). Rugh draws these two, seemingly incompatible approaches together when engaging in participatory process: “It should

⁹ Freire’s phrase ‘here and now’ is used consistently throughout this study referring to a present reality that locals can relate to.

not be either a pre-planned blueprint or undefined on-going process-as-an-end-in-itself, but an adequate learning-action phase to develop plans in a fully participatory manner” (1999:F-vi). Planning is essential, but not to the extent of controlling the process in a way that does not account for unforeseen circumstances or happenstance events which may arise during a participatory process. Limiting the conditions of possibility could prove ineffective or damaging to participatory development. Indeed, it is rigid approaches, which do not account for alternative ideas or changing directions, which often leaves communities stagnant or dying to begin with. In this way, the melding between locals and outsiders, the delicate balance necessary within participatory development, at first glance appears haphazard. “But,” as Scott-Villiers et al. (2012:2) notes, “in truth it is not; it is done carefully and it sticks to its principles like glue.”

“Development,” according to Bopp and Bopp (2006:66, 209), “comes from within. The process of human and community development unfolds from within each person, relationship, family, organization, community, or nation.” Principles of participation, then, must also come from within. Principles must be felt inward and lived outward for authentic participation to be internalized, reflected upon, and acted out. Because of the both inward and outward focus of this study, some may critique it as being too self-reflective. Reflection, though, coupled with action is necessary to participate in meaningful development while working for a community.

Principles—not directives, guidelines, steps, rules, or prescriptions— but principles which encapsulate a philosophical, internal belief in community and processes can yield fruitful action and sustainable outcomes (see Bopp and Bopp 2006:209). The grounded and simultaneously fluid nature of principles, not frameworks and structures, provides a means in which the *theory of participation* can be replicated in community development initiatives regardless of scale or scope. Laundry lists of principles have been developed and include

elements like inclusiveness, honesty, loyalty, fairness, courage, caring, respect, tolerance, duty, lifelong learning (Vincent II 2009:60, 69). All communities are comprised of principles, which, in some way or another, are compatible with the principles of other people. While speaking with a grassroots community organizer on Pine Ridge about principles, he said, “study our virtues, humanly, but we are not asking you to be Indian” (personal communication, February 22, 2011).

While engaging in action research in Uganda, Scott-Villiers et al. (2012:4) defined three imperative principles: openness, respect, and listening. Openness to the reality that communities or people have something to teach, respecting the voice and conversations of people within communities—believing what they say to be true, and listening clearly and attentively to community members are all necessary principles “based on a philosophy of trustworthiness” (Scott-Villiers et al. 2012:4). Trustworthiness separates the true humanists whose efforts are “imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power” with those who “truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation [. . .]” (Freire 2006:75, 60).

Applying Freire’s concept of a *true word* and Bopp and Bopp’s principle-centered approach provides the potential for participatory development to be what Smith (1999:38) calls, “important for indigenous people.” In this way, I propose that participatory development: “helps make sense of reality[, . . . provides] a method or methods for selecting and arranging, for prioritising and legitimating what [indigenous people] see and do,” and helps organize and determine action all the while creating new knowledge (Smith 1999:37). If practiced correctly, the *theory of participation*, in a macro sense, provides the means for an outsider to engage with and learn from local communities, and in a micro sense, absorbs local ways of knowing to drive the theory resulting in meaningful action.

At the same time, participatory development is rife with difficulties and potential pitfalls that can undermine the good intentions of the process. Not least of these is the outside facilitator or *participant*. Some other issues which arise involve: inclusivity and determining whose voices are heard, defining the community, and how choices are made and implemented. The following dissection of development literature provides insight into current conversations regarding participatory development as well as potential problems with participatory approaches, notably outside participation.

Participation and Development

Critiquing development as a form of colonialism infers that so often development hinders communities rather than improves them. In fact, Heckler (2007:103) argues, “science,” and other beliefs and development approaches I might add, “holds a unique authority to decide what is valuable, not only within its own circles, but also in wider society.” Her scientific work with Piaroa people in Venezuela led her to understand the way in which outsider’s infringed their beliefs upon local communities and has thus created losses in traditional, or local knowledge in those communities. In cases such as these, the communities were hindered by development, while outside researchers were enlightened by new ideas and ways of knowing that were extracted from communities. Meanwhile, the communities were left with more ‘problems’ to solve and less resources to solve them with. In some cases, she explains, local knowledge was taken and is now used to further marginalize indigenous populations (Heckler 2007:91).

However, participatory development initiatives are not limited to indigenous populations or even communities. While some scholars assert that development must occur at the global or international scale to halt the travesties faced by local communities (Kiely 2005; Hines 2000), others call for more national or regional approaches (Lahire et al. 2011; Johanson and Adams

2004; Hill et al 2006). Regardless of scale, many development initiatives focus on specific segments of a population such as agriculturalists (Brydger 2010; Brydger and Pickering Sherman 2009; Townsley 1996; Cleveland and Soleri 2007; Marzano 2007; Brannstrom and Filippi 2006; Woodland and Hill 2006), women (Akers 2011; Newton 2006; Momsen 2006) and youth (Ansell 2006; Ansell 2005; Villarruel et al. 2003).

Youth Involvement

Unlike earlier youth development initiatives, more contemporary practices and studies highlight youth development and empowerment as a means to community development, not merely a result of community development (Kizito et al 2012; Scott Villiers et al 2012; Beck and Purcell 2010; Pearrow 2009; Jennings et al. 2006; Kretzmann and McKnight 1993; USDHHS N.d.). More and more, youth development and empowerment is being viewed as a step toward community development not solely a product of community development.

Too often, youth are viewed as a deficit to community development, “relegated to the margins of community life” (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993:29) and appear in youth and community development situations once they have been deemed as menaces to society (ie. court ordered programs, see Brown et al. 2003). Similar to Haines (2009) and Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), Huber et al. (2003:298) reject a deficit approach in favor of an asset approach: “building on youth assets [. . .] suggests that youth have many talents, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that will contribute to their own success.” Furthermore, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:30) assert: “Many young people yearn to contribute meaningfully to their community and can flourish when they are given the opportunity to do so.” And, they continue, “If their dreams are viewed as assets, they can at any given moment become partners in creating a better future for everyone” (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993:30).

Scott Villiers et al. (2012) McGee and Greenhalf (2011:28) Beck and Purcell (2010:50), Huber et al. (2003:302), and Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:29), not only agree that youth and community development are complimentary, but that youth should have a voice in the decision-making processes of the community. Engaging youth in community development processes where they feel important, considered, and acknowledged as having a voice “integrates change at both individual and community levels” (Jennings et al. 2006:49). This approach “involves youth in their communities in ways that build on young people’s strengths and give them hope for the future” (USDHHS N.d.:4). In this way, transformation of young individuals, the same individuals continually referred to as ‘our future’, is a plausible and effective approach to community development.

Outside Participation

As communities seek to empower youth through job skill trainings, workshops, local governance positions, and other approaches, outside individuals and groups are often called upon for assistance. Though some scholars and practitioners strongly caution the request for outside assistance (Smith 1999), others promote outside collaboration with local communities (Lahire et al. 2011; Harkavy and Hartley 2009a, 2009b; Sillitoe, ed. 2007; Sillitoe et al. 2002; Bopp and Bopp 2006; Harrison 2001). The presence of outsiders engaged in participatory development, though, should not create a negative power imbalance in which the community is at the beck and call of outsiders. Instead, a more balanced power dynamic, or a situation in which the community holds the power and outsiders work *for* the community and not vice versa, promotes a position in which community empowerment and change can lead to sustainable development

solutions, not dependency.¹⁰ Harkavy and Hartley (2009a:1), explain a difficulty for outsiders, specifically academics, to overcome when engaging with communities:

Developing powerful and effective university-community partnerships for youth development is extremely difficult to do. It requires, among other things, overcoming traditional ivory tower thinking and doing; developing creative, comprehensive approaches; and engaging long-term democratic, collaborative work.

More so in the past, but still today, “ivory tower thinking and doing” included the mindset that academically derived knowledge was somehow superior to local community knowledge.

Scholars and practitioners alike have debunked this ‘superiority myth’ though the mindset is still prevalent. Others such as Ross et al. (2011), Sillitoe et al. (2002), Schönhuth (2002) and Harrison (2001) demonstrate ways in which outside and local knowledge can work in tandem. Schönhuth (2002:145) explained that a traditional, rigorous academic research design is nearly incompatible with a participatory model in that by design, it already displays power imbalances, having originated in the university as opposed to within the community. Though Schönhuth (2002:144) mentions communities and outside, activist researchers as “ideally equal counterparts” I would argue, along with Ross et al. (2011) and Smith (1999) that because “the research process itself is informed and partly controlled by local communities [. . . t]he researcher becomes a facilitator in this process [. . .]” (Schönhuth 2002:144). This “does not mean,” as Harrison (2001:65) learned, “suspending [. . .] judgment about the best ways to proceed.” On the contrary, she states, “If the local community did not want professional judgments and opinions, it would not have invited the fieldworker to participate [. . .]” (Harrison 2001:65). Yet, the community should be in control of a participatory approach while outsiders participate upon the community’s request. As participatory approaches are meant to empower local communities, the ability for communities to request outsider, technical assistance is not a

¹⁰ See Ross et al. (2011:193-234) for an example when communities collaborate with outsiders in natural resource issues but maintain the majority of the power within the collaborative relationship.

reflection of their dependency, but a reflection of their agency in assessing their situation and requesting the assistance of others. Therein lies the critical difference between communities requesting authentic collaborative assistance and communities being dependent upon or forced to accept ‘assistance’.

The knowledge held by outsiders and locals should be negotiated though (Schönhuth 2002). In other words, at the interface of development, knowledge should be given and received by both the community and outside researchers in a way that optimally “empowers local people” (Schönhuth 2002:155). For participatory development to last, the outsider must work primarily *for* and *with* the community, not *over top* or *aside from* the community. Even more directly stated, outsiders engaged in development “at the end of the day [. . .] should walk away taking very little of the credit” (St. Pierre, personal communication, March 16, 2011), because after all, the outsider knowledge comprises only a small part of the whole. Therefore, as Beck and Purcell (2010:51) state, working with marginalized communities requires, “reflective practitioners who understand the subtleties of how power works and how change can be effected” (Beck and Purcell 2010:51).

For an authentic, participatory approach, not solely an approach that “[leads] to the muting of other cultural views and values, even threatening their continued existence” (Sillitoe 2007b:4), community and outsider satisfaction, at least partially, is critical. Outside satisfaction should correlate with community satisfaction though. Development has traditionally been about outside satisfaction and measured in accordance with outside metrics of success, despite community opinions to the contrary. Hence, outside participants must be aware of community viewpoints and expectations before agreeing to work *for* and *with* the community. In this way,

satisfaction becomes a part of the process and relations between participants not solely a product of outcomes such as a new community building.

Processes such as feeling empowered by working together should be considered, often beyond outcomes, when accounting for success and satisfaction. Harkavy and Hartley (2009b) take this one step further. In describing an approach used in Philadelphia to build “university-community partnerships for youth development,” they explained it as, “continuous, comprehensive, and beneficial to both the organization or community studied *and* the university” (Harkavy and Hartley 2009b:1,13, italics added). This way provides a means in which all agents involved in a process learn and thus develop, whether at an individual, community, or institutional level. With a history of colonialist implications and extending judgments upon local communities, it would be deleterious if universities did not benefit from participation, or in other words, come to understand the lasting, positive effects of authentic participation in community initiated and directed development processes.

Participatory Rhetoric

Community development generally begins with an assessment to decide what the development process should look like. These assessments could be as formal as multi-page surveys and focus groups or as informal as community members talking amongst themselves. Participatory approaches to development (Jennings 2000), research (Jason et al. 2004), communication (White et al. 1994) or other initiatives require participation from the local community or group in which the initiative is taking place. In participatory development literature, the assessment of a development process is commonly referred to as Participatory Rural Appraisal. Development practitioner and scholar Robert Chambers (2011:7) describes Participatory Rural Appraisal or PRA as “a family of approaches, behaviours and methods for

enabling people to do their own appraisal, analysis and planning, take their own action, and do their own monitoring and evaluation.” PRA, then, is used to explain the initial survey or ‘appraisal’ process of a local area, facilitated by the local population. This term, though, often coincides with Rapid Rural Appraisal, or RRA, which Rugh (1999:F-ii) explains as less participatory in that it doesn’t fully engage local community members, and is more extractive. The rapid notion of this approach generally doesn’t allow time for proper collaboration and the results are often not shared with the community due to time constraints, ill-planning, or other issues related to disrespect or negligence. According to Rugh (1999:F-i), however, Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an alternative to extractive, semi-participatory approaches. More specifically, “PLA is used not only for assessment, but also for project design, implementation (training, learning), monitoring and evaluation” by local communities (Rugh1999:F-ii). “PLA,” then, “is a long-term commitment to on-going development of a community’s capacity to identify its own needs and implement action plans to improve its *own* conditions” (Rugh 1999:F-ii, italics added). Similar to Rugh’s explanation of PLA, Freudenberger (N.d.:9, italics added) concludes that Participatory Rural Appraisal is “not only the collection of information but also its eventual use *by* the community as it plans to further activities.”

This study avoids minor distinctions and discrepancies by, similar, yet denominational terms such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers 2011; Rugh 1999; Townsley 1996; Freudenberger N.d.), Rapid Rural Appraisal (Chambers 2011, Rugh 1999; Freudenberger), Participative Rapid Appraisal (Beck and Purcell 2010:93), Participatory Action Research, Community Action Research (Smith 1999:127), Community Participatory Action Research (Harkavy and Hartley 2009b), Emancipatory Research (Smith 1999:127), Participatory Reflection and Action, and Participatory Learning and Action (Chambers 2011, Shah 1999). A

plethora of ‘tool-kit’ vocabulary, is by-in-large unhelpful to local communities. Lengthy assortments of participatory vernacular allows outside participants to carry out their agendas, with varying scales of participation—from no collaboration what so ever to full on approval and participation by the community—while still being able to explain their approach as participatory. Though methods are often employed to instill researchers’ agendas and theoretical implications on to communities, this is unlikely to occur with genuine participation. Furthermore, added adjectives and adverbs seek to provide greater room for discrepancies, distinctions, and deliberation, while allowing researchers and practitioners to fulfill an agenda. A multitude of catch phrases, labels, and identifiers of a participatory process creates the potential for categorizing—segregation and separation—which is the antithesis of the participatory approach I am arguing for in this study. Such lengthy, and seemingly never ending ‘tomāto, tomato, potāto, potato’ discussions are counterintuitive to participatory approaches. Indeed, one of the strengths in a participatory theoretical perspective is a movement away from lofty, “traditional ivory tower thinking and doing” and toward ground work, applied in the ‘here and now’ (Harkavy and Hartley 2009a:1).

The participatory approach demonstrated in this study views all involved—youth, other community members, the WKCDC, and myself—as participants. In doing so, the power laden dichotomous distinctions of researcher/participant, researcher/community, participant/community, white/Indian, practitioner/community, were at times eliminated but for the most part were mitigated through power sharing. That is not to say we did not have different responsibilities. At times participants were directed by other participants. But we viewed each other equally as human beings and as critical components of the development processes, each with something essential to contribute.

This study utilizes either the encompassing term *participatory approach(es)* because all of the descriptors mentioned above—learning, action, community, and appraisal—are necessary for any authentic participatory approach, *participatory development* because the project analyzed in this study was part of a larger, community derived agenda to enhance community and economic development, or *participation*. These general terms encompass the particularities of participatory approach sub-categories, such as the ones mentioned above, while remaining fluid enough to present a true case study, relatively free of finger pointing. With a greater understanding of participation, let us now turn to a case specific engagement with *participatory development*.

Chapter 2

A District Initiative: Community, Youth, and Participatory Development

The following chapter describes the context in which the Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation operates—the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation—the structure of the CDC, the beginnings of a youth building initiative which included Lakota and outside participants, and my initial engagement with the process.

The WKCDC declared: “A healthy future for young people of the communities of the Wounded Knee District and the vision of real opportunity for them is at the very genesis of the Wounded Knee CDC” (2012). The CDC proposed utilizing participatory development to not only develop youth, but to utilize youth as a means to develop community (see Scott-Villiers et al. 2012; McGee and Greenhalf 2011; Beck and Purcell 2010; Jennings et al. 2006; Huber et al. 2003; Kretzmann and McKnight 1993 for similar approaches). In a call to both engage youth and beautify their communities, the CDC pledged:

We will involve youth from across the district in activities that not only beautify the area [and] repair community facilities but give them useful lifetime skills as well. Their skills as problem solvers, job holders/creators, business and home owners of the future are a principle concern for our Wounded Knee CDC Board of Directors and Advisors (WKCDC:2012).

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and Wounded Knee

The Wounded Knee District is one of nine districts on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation located in southwest South Dakota. Historical trauma, highlighted by the infamous massacre by U.S. soldiers of Lakota families on December 29, 1890, and the 1973 AIM occupation at Wounded Knee mar the historical spaces and stories of the District. Trauma continues today, as in other indigenous regions of the world, by the political, economic, and social suffocation of indigenous voices and bodies.

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, similar to other indigenous reservations, reserves, and territories, is often viewed as a peripheral community, a title insinuating that it lags in the economic and technological sectors in relation to core nation-states such as the U.S and Canada.¹¹ Furthermore, this lag has been created by the exploitation of resources and labor, politicization over and marginalization of communities by dominant governments, and the market-economy (Hall and Fenelon 2009). Red Cloud Indian School (2009) reports that Pine Ridge is one of the most populated and economically impoverished reservations in the United States. As of 2005, approximately 27,000 Lakota called the Reservation home (Pickering 2005:3). Larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined, Pine Ridge, at 3,468 square miles, is the eighth largest American Indian reservation (RCIS 2009). Of the residents, 49% live below the poverty line (RICS 2009). Of the population, age 18 to 65, who wanted to work 40% is unemployed (Pickering 2005). Shannon County encompasses the Wounded Knee District and is consistently in the top ten most economically impoverished counties in the United States. Only Haiti exceeds the Reservation in low life expectancy, in the western hemisphere (RCIS 2009). Men on the Reservation are expected to live to 48, while women's life expectancy is 52 (RCIS 2009). These numbers are staggering. But as a recent You Tube clip arranged by local Lakota youth in response to ABC's special report, "A Hidden America: Children on the Plains" demonstrates, the Reservation is "so much more than that" (Falcon Daily 2011). This study further reinforces their claim.

The Wounded Knee District has "approximately 3000 enrolled Oglala Lakota Tribal members" with the two largest villages, Manderson and Wounded Knee [Figure 2.1], located just off of Highway 28, which then converges with Highway 33 (St. Pierre N.d.).

¹¹ Throughout the thesis the term Reservation or Rez is used to denote the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

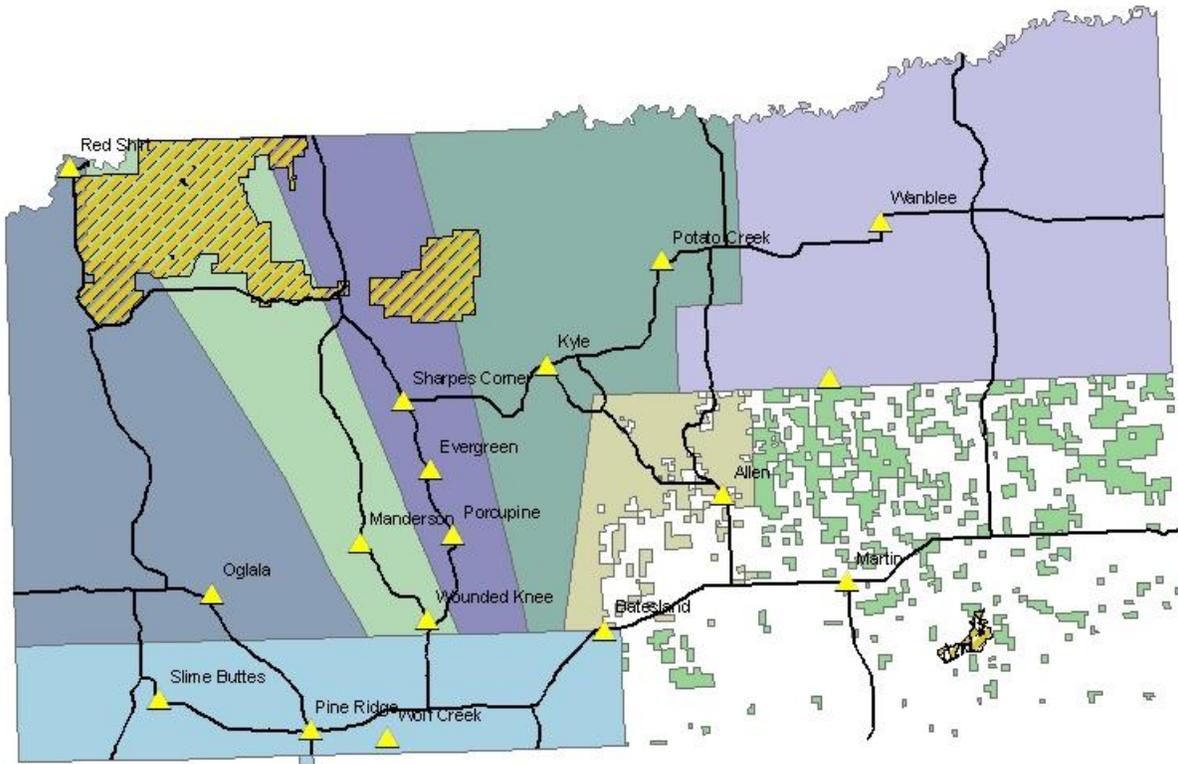


Figure 2.1 Pine Ridge Indian Reservation with Districts
 Figure provided by David Bartecchi of Village Earth on March 6, 2011.

According to Calvin White Butterfly, a community organizer and founder of the grassroots organization Wounded Knee Tiyospaye Project (WKTP), there have been eight different tiyospayes, or “extended families” identified in the District (White Butterfly N.d.). In general, they are represented by eight geographically distinct communities which include: “Wounded Knee (Canke Ope), White Butte (Makoska), Manderson, White Horse Creek (Sungka Wakpa), Hehun Gleska [Spotted Owl], Grass Creek (Peji Wakpa), Crazy Horse (Tasunke Witko), and Wakan Tiyospaye” (White Butterfly N.d.). The Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation is a certified 501(c) (3) non-profit located in Manderson and is a community

development corporation for the District, having members on the board who were born and raised in various communities throughout the District.

The Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation

With a past and present marred by neglect and violence from outsiders leading to neglect and violence from within, limited access to capital and high death rates has led to a population systematically void of many elders and knowledge holders, community development on the Reservation is an arduous task. In this environment, the Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation symbolizes an alternative to colonial development, decolonizing the landscapes and mindsets of local Lakota. Comprised of a Board of Directors—six elders—along with a Board of Advisors, also comprised of elders and local Lakota community members from across the Wounded Knee District, Mark a CEO selected by the Board, an office administrator, and various office staff, the CDC focuses on the assets of their communities to enhance individual esteem, Lakota ways of knowing, economic growth and thus sustainable community development.¹² For these reasons, in part, the Wounded Knee District represents several of “[m]any indigenous communities [that] are spaces of hope and possibilities, despite the enormous odds aligned against them” (Smith 1999:98).

Federal Empowerment Zone funding, grants and donations provided the CDC with the opportunity to create a “long term and permanent impact on chronic poverty and unemployment and bring [. . .] well thought out community defined needs and solutions to reality” (St. Pierre

¹² Mark St. Pierre has spent his entire adult life participating in development in Indian Country. He was influential, along with Kathy Sherman, in starting the very first Native American Chamber of Commerce on the Reservation. He is an accomplished author on Lakota life, is knowledgeable in Native American histories and art, and along with his wife Tilda Long Soldier, owns a bed and breakfast on the Reservation. To respect our friendship, he is referred to as Mark throughout this study.

N.d.).¹³ From the beginning in 2009 the CDC recognized Lakota youth as an important voice for defining community needs and as an overall asset to community development. The Board realized on the Rez, as did McGee and Greenhalf (2011:28) in Africa, that “Children and young people, despite their demographic weight [high population], are traditionally, culturally, legally and structurally marginalized from decision-making processes.”¹⁴ In a conversation with Mark, he stated emphatically that, “when these kids realize they can do something with their hands, that is the beginning of a personal transformation of self perception” (St. Pierre, personal communication). This transformation of perception is necessary in a time when, “The communities’ perception of themselves is helpless” (St. Pierre, personal communication). Though their self perceptions, more accurately described as self deceptions, are by-in-large created by the abuses and neglect, both historical and present from the outside, transforming self deceptions must come from within. Beck and Purcell (2010:49, italics added) purport:

The work starts from *where young people are* in relation to their own values, views and principles, as well as their own personal and social spaces. It seeks to go beyond where young people start, to widen their horizons, promote participation and invite social commitment, in particular by encouraging them to be critical and creative *in their response to their experience and world around them*.

It is with similar views that the CDC solicited local Lakota youth for their first community development project, a youth building initiative: revitalizing an abandoned, single room school house in the Wounded Knee District into a community youth facility for the District.

¹³ Empowerment Zones were created by the Clinton administration to enhance community and economic development in areas through the U.S.

¹⁴ Lakota customarily refer to the Reservation as the Rez, and thus, to appeal to Lakota readers, I chose to use this term on some occasions.

Youth

While some conclude that job skills and career training are directly imperative to development, the WKCDC took a less direct approach, viewing job skills training as an avenue to increase self-worth and esteem by making youth aware of their potential. Job skills training during the remodeling process became more of a tool tied to the ‘here and now’ of building esteem and community assets, rather than a mechanism to enhance economic development for the future as seen in some more macro- oriented approaches (Lahire et al. 2011; Johanson and Adams 2004; Narayan 2002). Though the CDC is dedicated to enhancing economic development through career training, job skill retention was thought of as more of a tangential end, rather than a rigid focus. Instead, relationship and individual building through education was imperative to job skill training during the youth building initiative.

Focusing on individual esteem and youth empowerment coupled with job training skills, created present solutions to the ‘here and now’ realities of youth and possible long-lasting economic impacts. Beck and Purcell (2010) explain the primary focus on radical education approaches aimed to liberate youth and communities as opposed to centralizing on outcomes such as retaining job skills. The key purpose of youth work, they purport, is to “[e]nable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential” (Beck and Purcell 2010:49). Indeed, teaching the youth to engage in thoughtful dialogue and think constructively was paramount to the CDC’s (2012) objective to create “[a] healthy future for the young people,” a future comprised of healthier individuals and thus healthier communities.

A holistic approach, incorporating various elements from within and without the individual and community sets the stage where, as Freire (2006:83) describes, “people develop

their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.” This process of transformation can then be established among individual youth. Relating to youth by posing questions such as, “What should we do with this dilapidated building overlooking Manderson?”, in a way that they can understand within their own situations and contexts tends to be less alienating (Freire 2006:81). Similarly, individual and community development within the comfort of everyday surroundings, provides an opportunity where youth “feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge [, b]ecause they apprehend the challenge as interrelated to other problems [relating to themselves in the world and with the world]” (Freire 2006:81). In educating the youth in their own communities, under the advisement of their communities’ development corporation, and utilizing their communities’ and individual objectives, ideas, and assets provided a space in which youth could connect themselves and their empowerment with that of their own communities. This is contrary to workshops, conferences, and lectures where sometimes indigenous peoples must trek through jungles, board planes, and traverse national and international boundaries to learn how to become ‘empowered’. Dissimilar to these approaches, or to what these approaches imply, Mark (personal communications, 13 February, 2012), in concluding the youth building initiative, expressed his delight in having provided a local space where youth learned that, “[t]hey can have a high quality of life by investing in the community they live in,” rather than moving away.

The Board’s primary concern was enhancing the youth in the District by expanding their realization to incorporate positive views of themselves and their communities. The results of these realizations and self-reflections are endless, immeasurably persisting into the future. The

CDC hoped to promote a process-driven approach, where youth empowerment occurred throughout, rather than an approach bounded by outcomes.

Collaboration

Not only did the Wounded Knee CDC utilize internal community assets, such as youth, other community members, and local ways of knowing, but they relied on strategic alliances made on their behalf with organizations at the tribal, state, regional, national, and international levels. Currently the CDC converses with: Oglala Lakota College (OLC), the local tribal college; Re-member, a local non-profit focusing on relationship building and structural building; and Lakota Funds, a local micro-lending organization; among others. Various tribal members provided and continue to provide their services to the CDC as well. Some support was as surprising as a decadent chocolate cake, provided by Bette's Kitchen, a local Lakota restaurant, or hot spaghetti lunches provided by the CDC. Other support was given in the form of verbal confirmation, and monetary and material donations.

During the initiative, the Board Chair donated his monthly Board check to materials for the youth building initiative and donated his flat bed trailer to haul materials from Rapid City, 90 miles away. In addition, many other Board and community members donated their artwork—star quilt pillow cases, porcupine quill earrings, and documentaries—to reward donors during the efforts to raise funding for materials. Donors from as far as Israel and the E.U. donated to the youth building initiative, by-in large, from the fundraising expertise of Fort Collins, CO based non-profit Village Earth. In line with Crowdrise.com, the renowned social media site, Facebook and email was used to solicit insight as well as financial or thoughtful support from folks across the globe.

The CDC's connection with Dr. Kathleen Sherman at Colorado State University, eventually leading to their connection with me as a job site supervisor, proved influential for the CDC as well.¹⁵ Access to the technological resources of the university, my ability to start the preliminary processes of the initiative free of charge but for university credits, and the social networking abilities afforded by the university setting were helpful to the youth building initiative.

At the organizational level, The W.P. and O.E. Edwards Foundation, Habitat for Humanity in Fort Collins, CO; Mountain Valley Floors, Inc., Fort Collins, CO; and Knecht Home Center Ace Hardware in Rapid City, SD; and Village Earth, Fort Collins, CO proved to be the most valuable collaborators to the project. The W.P. and O.E. Edwards Foundation surprised the CDC with a \$5,000 grant during the last week of the youth building initiative. Habitat provided windows, doors, electrical components, lighting, a bathroom sink, a vanity, a toilet, a kitchen stove, and much more. Mountain Valley Floors provided approximately 250 sq. ft. of floor tile and underlayment while Knecht Home Center provided personalized tool belts and hand tools for each youth worker. Knecht also set up a contractor's account to provide the CDC with the highest discount available for all materials throughout the process. In addition, Home Depot in Greeley, CO provided a \$100 gift card and Village Earth raised \$2,000 from donors across the world.

¹⁵ Throughout the rest of this study, I refer to Dr. Kathleen Pickering Sherman as Kathy. Currently she is the Chair of the Department of Anthropology at Colorado State University and has worked as a lawyer, legal advisor, and economic anthropologist dedicated to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for the last 25 years. Her work and influence on the Rez and at CSU campus are too broad and far reaching to confine to footnotes. I refer to her as Kathy not out of disrespect but to demonstrate the way in which she presents herself as a sincere, humble, and compassionate friend to me and many others. Without her friendship and trust in me, I would have never made it onto Pine Ridge. At school, on the Rez, or in her home she is referred to as Kathy. It would be unjust to call her anything else. To learn more about her work on the Reservation visit: <http://anthropology.colostate.edu/pages/faculty/sherman.aspx>

Some of the less noticeable but equally influential collaborators, indeed the economic mechanisms behind the CDC's existence, are the United States Department of Agriculture and United Sioux Tribes. The USDA funneled money from the federal government to community development corporations throughout the U.S. after the Clinton Administration declared certain areas as Empowerment Zones. On a regional level, United Sioux Tribes, a development corporation comprised of eleven Lakota and Dakota tribes, provided support to the CDC, especially before the CDC received federal 501 (c) (3) non-profit status.

Lastly, the WKCDC partnered with an existing program to utilize Lakota youth for the youth building initiative. Every year, youth on the Reservation await the start of the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) Summer Youth Program. Each district on the Rez receives money from the Federal Job Training Partnership Act which is used to pay youth ages 14-22 to work in their local communities, twenty-hours per week for a four week session. There are two sessions throughout the summer, thus the youth who were not able to participate in the first session can apply for the second session. The CDC requested 16 youth from the District to work on the youth building initiative and in return the Summer Youth Supervisor delegated 13 youth to the youth building job site of which ten completed the program.¹⁶ Only two were female and aside from painting, they worked in the CDC office. The youth building initiative lasted for four weeks during the heat and powwow celebrations from mid June to early July. In July a second group of youth worked on the building under the supervision of an OLC student.

¹⁶ Of the three participants who did not finish the program, one told his mother, who is directly opposed to the CDC that he was bored on the job site because our first several days consisted of pulling nails and preparing original materials from the school house to be reused. I feel that his mother was influential in his decision. Another young man only worked for the first two days and the District Summer Youth Supervisor told him to not come back. The young man was required to provide a social security number and other documents to join the program and had never complied. The third young man who did not complete the program was well versed in carpentry, due to his previous experience with Job Corps. and a diligent worker. However, due to various personal reasons he missed three days of work in a row, resulting in his expulsion from the program.

The immense amount of collaboration needed to build youth esteem and remodel an abandoned building is humbling at best. The CDC's willingness to work with outsiders both highlights their humility but also their acknowledgement that all things are connected. The multiple available sectors for collaborative processes, must not be ignored and should be included, or at least recognized as effecting micro-scale development. Yet a focus on these sectors presents a conundrum with local communities, making it difficult to ground macro-level organizations, such as national governments or global entities, in the 'here and now'. Thus an appreciation and gratitude toward outside support should be accompanied by what Bopp and Bopp (2006:66) call "an inner-directed flow of energy." "Outsiders can often provide catalytic support in the form of inspiration, technical backstopping, training or simple love and caring," they assert (Bopp and Bopp 2006:66). Yet an inward flow of energy, both at the individual and community level, is imperative for human and community development. The current global economic system contrasts this inner-directed notion in that economic development at the national levels often occurs due to the outward flow of resources and consequent demise of local, marginalized communities and individuals. For these reasons, the CDC accepted with humility my services as an intern, monetary gifts, thoughts, consultation and prayers from outside their District, and funneled them directly toward local Lakota youth.

A Participant from the Outside

I was expected to play various roles within the development process. As a CDC intern my roles included: fundraiser, researcher engaged in participatory appraisal, job site youth supervisor, and project evaluation participant. The remainder of this chapter describes the methods and mechanics which formed my role as a fundraiser and researcher involved with participatory appraisal, along with the insights of Reservation community members. Chapter 3

details my role as a supervisor participating in constructive social work and Chapter 4 explains the participatory evaluation process.

Though the CDC viewed job skills as a tangential end, I viewed them as imperative to the completion of the community building. My view of the project was originally centered on monuments—the structural—the CDC’s focus was on the momentum—the personal. Differences such as these are inherent to any collaborative processes, but should be mitigated. We all come in with our own biases, and initially, with our own world views that shape our perceptions of a participatory development process. I entered the process focusing on outcomes. Yet after engaging with community members and the CDC, processes became much more important than outcomes.

Lasting community development is holistic in that everything is connected either directly or indirectly. Thus, outsiders engaged in community development could become annoyed, overwhelmed, and even burdened, by requests or demands to assist in multiple areas or take on multiple roles outside of their given expertise or forte. If an engaged outsider feels negatively toward community requests, it may be important to ask, “Is it of greater importance for me to develop community or to develop a thesis, portfolio, or other form of documentation?” The answer to this question dictates the answer to the next question: “Should I be involved in this development process?”

My philosophy on the Reservation is based on learning from others while trying to live by the mantra: Be aware of when skill set, ability, and talent intersects need or want. More recently I have incorporated the question, “How can I work together with local community members?” after a trip in 2009 which entailed swooping in with an entourage of other university students and cleaning up rummage around a property. The weekend project which, after driving

past the individual's property the last three years, has not resulted in any long-term results, and was more akin to a forthcoming discussion about *great white sharks*. Though it was part of a larger Service Learning project, it was more closely related to disservice learning, as the Reservation or individual property owner received no real benefit or service, unless groups of outsiders swooping onto an able bodied individual's property and picking up garbage for two days can be understood as a benefit.

My understanding of community development on the Reservation was guided by Foucault and Smith's declaration of localized voices and initiation, thus I was constantly aware that my actions and practices were critically examined through local, Lakota lenses. When in doubt of my actions in and assumptions of Reservation communities, I persistently questioned my Lakota friends and acquaintances, Mark, Kathy, and fellow CSU field school participants, a process known as triangulation (Chambers 2011:8-9; Shah 1999:3.15). Freudenberger (N.d. 17) describes this process as "the diversification of perspectives that comes about when a set of issues is investigated by a diverse, multi-disciplinary team, using multiple tools and techniques, with individuals and groups of people who represent the diversity of the community." Despite a diverse cohort of supporters—people with whom I could "cross-check, qualify, and correct" (Chambers 2011:8-9) my actions—I did fumble through mistakes, as also outlined throughout this study.

Fundraiser

After speaking with Mark, and grasping the Boards intentions for the facility, my first charge was to draft a letter to request funding from different organizations. The letter was drafted and modified depending on which corporation or organization was being addressed. This process was time consuming and took over a month. Each corporation required different

specificities within the letter, some wanting dollarized amounts of requested material while others wanted specific, individualized item lists.¹⁷ I was careful not to duplicate funding requests. In total, monetary donations were \$7,068.09 while the estimated labor and material donations was \$8,892.50. These totals, combined with several other miscellaneous donations estimated \$16,485.58.¹⁸

As a participant fundraiser, I was able to utilize social connections, technical connections, and personal characteristics to gain access to materials and funds which would have proven difficult for some Lakota community members to procure. First, having ties with the Fort Collins community, and having over several years, befriended the Executive Director of Village Earth and the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, Fort Collins proved monumental to the fundraising and thus the building process. Without these invaluable friendships, it would have been much more difficult to receive their total support, as they have countless opportunities to assist others, even without donating time and energy to Pine Ridge. Second, being enrolled at Colorado State University afforded me the opportunity to receive three Thesis Credits in preparing for summer research. This in turn, gave me a time slot to perform unpaid duties associated with fundraising and making preliminary trips to the Reservation. And third, being born in Virginia and characterized with a southern drawl allowed me to converse with others, such as executive directors and general managers of corporations and organizations. I have learned in life, that this drawl, while it creates hesitancy by audiences in academia, has often helped me navigate blue collar communities. When speaking in classes for the first time or in other academic circles, I have felt apprehension from professors and students. But when I walk

¹⁷ Two of these letters are attached as Appendix I.

¹⁸ A total breakdown of donations is attached as Appendix II.

into a hardware store and say, “I need’a git ten pounds of 8 penny galvanized nails to put up cedar siding,” they think, “man this guy knows his stuff.”

Furthermore, Reservation border towns and nearby cities still hold racist views of Lakota people. Not having a ‘rezzed out’ accent, according to some of my informants and friends, helped when talking to corporate and organizational authorities. I witnessed this on several occasions, comparing my solo trips to Rapid City and my trips when youth workers accompanied me. There were never any problems when I arrived alone, but when I brought Lakota youth along, whether one or five, either in lumber stores, grocery stores, or restaurants, we were scrutinized. Welcome to the 21st Century.

Some of the connections and characteristics which proved effective for fundraising also enhanced opportunities for community integration on the Reservation. Utilizing university resources, previously developed social networks, and being able to converse comfortably with Lakota people provided a platform to begin speaking with locals. Conversing with locals is a healthy starting point for collaborative, community-based research. In this development process, integrating within the community, an imperative to participatory development, proved invaluable as it provided the mechanisms necessary to utilize local voices, and, as this study demonstrates provided a space in which the community had decision-making authority throughout the process—from initiation to project evaluation. Two tangential but equally valuable outcomes of participation included continual invitations to community events and the building of longtime friendships and alliances. The remainder of this chapter explores the on-going dynamics and usefulness of participatory development to the youth building initiative including: community integration, surveying as a researcher, continual involvement, and lasting friendships and alliances.

Community Integration and Utilizing Local Voices

To dialogue with locals and utilize local ideas, I spoke with Mark, then with the office assistant and set up several one-on-one meetings with Lakota folks whom I already knew, or were friends of friends, or were recommended by Kathy, Mark, or the office assistant. In addition, I was invited to attend a regularly planned meeting of the Wounded Knee District Youth Council. I chose to meet with people who were engrained in the community and have a vested interest in positive community momentum. This aligned with Stoesz et al.'s (1999:134) affirmation that an organization "cannot merely invite local participation; it must assure that such participation is appropriate and consistent with the overall [community development] objectives." After all, Stoesz et al. (1999:134) asserts that "while the leadership must reflect local interests and values, it must be able to marshal community resources in ways that promote and benefit the community's overall developmental agenda rather than primarily the interests of [those in power]." The idea was to find competent leaders and community allies to "[whip] up popular enthusiasm for [the] cause" (Stoesz et al. 1999:146). Basically locals were the conduits of public relations as opposed to me, an outsider who few people from the community knew and even fewer trusted at the time. I traveled to Pine Ridge for two Community Feed Back trips: one from March 17-20 and the other from April 29-May 1.

Community Feedback Trip I

To initiate public dialogue, I opted out of scheduling meetings or capacity building workshops for two reasons. One, Lakota people typically do not value attending meetings and two, due to reason one, the information gleaned at meetings is often not valuable. When explaining participatory mapping meetings in Indonesia and Malaysia, Fox et al. (2005:8) reported that, "[M]any villagers failed to attend meetings. In some cases, the meeting schedule

conflicted with the need of villagers to attend to their farms. In others, some villagers disagreed with the goals of participatory mapping and thus refused to participate in the conversation.”

Though scheduling conflicts and disagreement account for meeting absences by Lakota community members, and not showing up is a customary way for Lakota to show disapproval, Kathy (Sherman, personal communication) conceded that more importantly meetings are western-centric and Lakota for the most part do not attend meetings. The people that attend meetings are people that attend meetings. To receive useful, concrete information from some of the most reliable and respected community members, other modes of informational exchanges besides formalized, office-setting-type meetings must occur. More traditional Lakota generally do not speak up at meetings, provided they even attend, leaving the information gathered at outsider directed meetings futile at best. Many Lakota prefer less formal occasions, as noted by a community leader and participant fundraiser who stated, “just take a small folder so we don’t look so important” as we drove to the Tribal Administration Building to deliver a request for support to President Steele.

My first of two weekend visits to Wounded Knee concerning the youth building initiative consisted of “a major early requirement for successful community development” in which I sought to identify and recruit “competent, reliable leadership” (Stoesz et al. 1999:146). From March 17 to March 20, I set up one-on-one appointments with a politician from Porcupine District, a community leader and liaison from Manderson, Loan Portfolio Manager of Lakota Funds David White Bull, a couple who are authors and long-term community organizers of Wounded Knee, and the Youth Director/Councilperson for the Wounded Knee Community. Several happenstance meetings, or meetings ordained by fate if you will, aided the process as well.

COMMUNITY POLITICIAN

One morning at the Odd Duck Inn, a political representative from Porcupine, a village in a neighboring District, spoke with me and CSU students interested in development over warm pancakes and coffee. Conservation, community dignity, and cultural pride were all concepts which he spoke about concerning buffalo caretaking—one of the WKCDC's many future objectives. Though he spoke primarily about the complexities of initiating a bison range, he applied those same concepts to the youth building initiative as well. Understanding a diversity of needs and perspectives from community members is integral to community development, for all things are connected and are not in isolation from one another. During a later meeting over coffee with him at his home, he spoke antagonistically about the youth project and snickered as he explained that getting 40 youth to work together on the Rez would be extremely challenging. Luckily for my sanity, forty youth did not show up to the job site, as that situation would have been unmanageable. He also remarked that someone from within the Wounded Knee District, not Mark who commutes forty minutes from the Medicine Root District, should head the CDC.

Despite the political leader's characteristically antagonistic remarks, nothing prepared me for the couple I spoke with in Wounded Knee. As friends of mine, and life-long combatants of social injustices among urban Lakota in Denver and Lakota on the Reservation, they have experienced the faults and defeats of working with tribal agencies, districts and the Tribal Council. Their negative experiences and not having the luxury to travel back to Evans, CO and remove themselves from political dishevel or community antagonism—one of my many privileges as an outsider—has left them emotionally and physically burned out at times.

WOUNDED KNEE COUPLE

Like many times when on the Reservation, Kathy, her husband Richard, other CSU Anthropology students, and I, entered a welcoming couple's home along Mouse Creek as guests for dinner. Toward the end of the night, after listening, and watching the sun go down over the green rolling horizon, I asked to use their printer. I needed to print out a questionnaire for a youth council meeting for the following day. As their printer was spitting out questionnaires, the lady of the house approached me and I explained to her more in-depth what I was doing with the CDC and how the project came to be.

In no time at all, she began expressing concerns and grew distressed. I was assured that, "[I] may think I'm helping the people, but it is really going to the District [leaders]! She also explained that her husband had money and land set aside in Wounded Knee that he had hoped one day would be suited for a youth facility. Her face was red and voice trembling. Her emotions were not based on the moment, but were deeply passionate and based on years of striving to make a difference in their local communities, often having the tribal government snuff their momentum.

By the time we had migrated out from her bedroom and into the living room, Kathy sat calmly and the lady's husband sat in his lazy boy, in his usual form—eyes cast downward, hands folded and mind continually working, thinking deeply and carefully. What was he going to say? Was I going to see him enraged for the first time? "Elbert Tail", would have things to say about this situation, the lady trembled. She was referring to Dick Tall, an elder from the Manderson community whom had been bludgeoned to death by two drug addicted teens wielding a club several years previous. Prior to his death, he had owned the land in which the CDC headquarters and the future youth facility perched. The lady continued explaining to me the dangers of the Manderson and Wounded Knee communities, dangers which seemed much more authentic than

the commentary I've heard from those who caught Manderson in passing on the television series Gang Land.

Apparently, as my friend went on to explain, an outsider and former AIM (American Indian Movement) member from the East Coast tried to build a youth facility in Wounded Knee. He funded the project and worked on the site out of what she perceived to be guilt for being an accomplice in the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation. The occupation led, among many other things, to the destruction of a local gas station convenience store which the community has been without ever since. In his humanitarian charge, the former AIMer neglected to receive community input and was not acting on community requests. One community member was going to help but died of a heart attack. Lakota people believed this death and consequent abandonment of the building process was correlated to spiritual elements associated with the land. In fact, years prior to the grandiose idea of erecting a youth facility, someone hanged them self on the property. It is common on the Reservation to abandon an area where a death or suicide has taken place, regardless of the economic value western society would place on the property. Today, a metal building perched upon a concrete pad remains a dormant eye-sore for the Wounded Knee community, a continued reminder of yet another man's humanitarian ignorance and paternalistic presence on the Reservation.

As the concerned woman, whom I had initially hoped to receive praise and insight from, continually and frantically lamented, I sat on the floor, listening, just listening and wondering how her husband would react. His face grew longer and his gaze pierced the floor ever stronger. I waited for a tear to fall, as happens when he thinks at length and speaks of times passed, the present, and a hopeful future toward community healing. Finally, he interrupted his wife: "You

can't just come at this from emotions," and then with grave humility he began to speak about his experiences.

I learned that he was originally invited to be a part of the WKCDC Board of Elders, but declined due to his detestation of tribal politics. They wanted him to be a part of the initial stages—creating goals, objectives and direction. However, he declined to get involved with the political elements of the CDC. His lack of involvement, a stance created by the years of trauma and head butting with the tribe, is indicative of similar situations on the Rez where elders whose experience and wisdom are invaluable to communities have sought refuge in their homes, away from others. This isolation of elders is not easily understood by outsiders who seek to talk with 'leaders'—the Tribal President, CEOs and Executive Directors of Organizations and other facades who obscure organic, community-based leaders. Finding true community organizers and those enmeshed with positive community momentum often requires breaching the surface and going beyond the names that pop up on tribal websites and Google searches. Often times, the knowledge holders are somewhat isolated from the public view.¹⁹

Before I left their warm and, despite the contention, welcoming home that night, our host stood up quickly and addressed me cynically as the white man who would, "whisk right in and solve 150 years worth of problems." I responded:

[Friend], I hope you know me enough to know that I am 29 years old and cannot solve all of my own problems. I'm not here to solve anyone's problems. I'm here because someone from the community said, 'You know carpentry and you work well with the people here.' I don't have objectives except to see what the youth want to do with that building and to work alongside them this summer.

¹⁹ Sometimes outsiders, like myself, propose doing something on the Reservation, and want to meet with the Tribal President or the heads of local organizations. This could prove helpful on many occasions. However, I can't help but think, "If I were initiating community food security initiatives in a local community, would I first try to meet with President Obama or with local farmers and ranchers?" Often times, it is beneficial to talk with community members and find who they define as the 'go to people' or people who are considered experienced and knowledgeable in various different facets.

Her tone changed, though she had already been calming from her agitation for some time. We looked each other in the eyes, something that would be considered rude if I were to do so to her Lakota husband. Like a wise and caring mother, she advised me to look out for myself and make sure I remain healthy throughout the process and to ask critical questions to make sure I want to stay involved. While walking toward the back door, the man stood from his chair, all 6'3" of him, gave me a long hug and said, "You're always welcome here," requested that I keep in touch throughout the remodeling process, and assured me that he would speak to the Board to inquire about their objectives. As I walked out the backdoor he concluded by saying he was willing to help during the summer.

This meeting, supposedly for spaghetti and dessert, caught me off guard but proved to be unforgettably influential in preparing me for my work that summer. I learned that people have legitimate concerns, not just racially motivated or socially antagonistic concerns, about "another white man" coming in to help screw things up. Even some of my closest allies on the Reservation have deep-seated, legitimate concerns of proper community representation, the exploitation of Lakota by outsiders, and the exploitation of outsiders by Lakota. I strove to learn from the AIMers mistakes, taking in consideration the spirituality of development and working *with*, not *over top of*, community members. And I learned directly from community members to question the motives of the Board and to constantly question the motives of who I was truly working for. Though I had read about some of these concerns from academic journal articles and books, allowing Lakota voices to direct my focus and address concerns proved much more effective than gleaning information from books.

YOUTH DIRECTOR AND YOUTH PRESIDENT

The following day, after a trek up the eroded and muddy Cedar Butte, I met with the Youth Director and Youth Council President of Wounded Knee.²⁰ I expected, after confirming and reconfirming with the Director, that 8-10 youth group and council members would show up. Nevertheless we were all excited to meet. A CSU student accompanied me, which I was so thankful for because with her unobtrusive compassion and social work capabilities she was able to open conversation with the Youth Council President, a young, shy junior in high school. Without her assistance it would have been a fairly quiet and awkward meeting. I explained to them my purpose and that I was there solely to gain insight from community members about what a youth facility, or multi-purpose facility, may look like for the District. The Youth Council President reiterated, among other things, that youth in the area would be willing to work 40 hours a week if it involved helping the community and learning trade skills such as carpentry, drywall and plumbing. This is contrary to public discourse employing the ‘boot straps model’ to display Lakota youth as hopeless and lazy. This model is still assumed by many as indicated by a nearly retired Rapid City politician who professed a supposed epiphany: “In my years of working in Indian Country, I’ve come to realize that most Indians are lazy and don’t want to work” (St. Pierre, personal communication, January 9, 2012). Mark called the assertive gentleman to discuss collaborative opportunities between the CDC and the official’s office—one that supports small businesses throughout the state—but after hearing the gentleman’s theory on development in Indian Country, it was assumed support would be minimal to null.

After speaking to the Youth Director and Youth President, and noticing the building we were convened in needed many repairs, I asked, “Do you even want that building remodeled into

²⁰ Only three youth from the Wounded Knee Community participated in the remodeling though 12 submitted paper work to the Youth Director. The Youth Director, who doubled as the village Councilperson never turned in their paper work.

a community youth facility or would you rather the remodeling occur here?” The Youth Director reiterated that they would like the center at the CDC property, six miles from the Wounded Knee housing, because it would give the forthcoming District Youth Council more freedom from traditional community members whom do not want to see change in their communities. These community members, as one Lakota gentleman explained, “[D]on’t want anything to do with change and the only thing they can do to hold power is maintain the status quo.” The Youth Council President, confirmed this and I viewed it as at least one refute to folks who detested the location of the CDC being close to Manderson village and six miles from Wounded Knee village, while still using the famous Wounded Knee name, to bring resources to Manderson. Indeed, other Wounded Knee community members, including the CDC office assistant, a TANF worker at the CDC, and several youth workers openly supported the location of a district youth facility being outside of their village.²¹

GRASS ROOTS, COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

One Lakota gentleman from Manderson with ties throughout most of the smaller communities in the District met to talk about first hand community-based development experiences. He works with the more rural communities within the District whom are often left out of broader community discussions. The humble, long gray-haired, and fluent Lakota speaker, is a strong ally with positivity, zeal, and community respect, somewhat of an *ikce’ wi’caśa*, or common man, a strong compliment among Lakota people. He is a momentous thinker, activist and traditional knowledge holder. The community organizers voice trembled as he spoke to me and several fellow CSU students at the CDC about his dream: “Children were walking mostly north and south with no direction. The sun was very close and hot and the

²¹ TANF stands for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Family members receiving federal subsidies through TANF are required to work a set number of hours, per week, in order to receive the benefits. In this way, it is a matter of giving and receiving not unbalanced dependency.

children were suffering, but I couldn't stop them." Because of this dream, he brings awareness to children including teaching and supporting language and oral traditions. He meets with *uncis*, or grandmas, and frequents schools and other areas where children gather.

During his presentation, he explained the importance of an outsider, such as myself, being involved, a concept reiterated in development literature (Ross et al. 2010:193; Bopp and Bopp 2006:82; Harrison 2001:33, 36; Freudenberger N.d.:9). Along with the community organizer, Harrison (2001:33) states that, "collaboration with researchers from outside the community has certain advantages [including] drawing on expertise that is not available in the community and utilizing outsider perspectives." This concept was reiterated during the remodeling process by two elders: "What your doin for the youth is a good thing. We need to get these Indians off the GA [government assistance]." Her friend continued, "They don't know how to do things like that around here anymore, they used to, but not anymore," referring to the degradation of job skills among youth on the Reservation. There are professional carpenters on the Reservation, but expecting them to dedicate four weeks of their time without pay, in an area known for economic impoverishment, did not complement the CDC's plan for community and economic development.

After explaining outsider involvement, the community organizer recollected entering the University of Nebraska as a freshman, several decades prior, and being awed by the presence of diversity: "[It is] a work of a miracle, all people coming from everywhere to learn together." This statement correlates with his thought on the Medicine Wheel. According to him, the wheel not only symbolizes the four directions but red, yellow, black, and white people. The wheel represents the world in circular motion and all the people who are supposed to work together. He explained his Medicine Wheel philosophy as a theory which should be used in community

development. His theory provides room for outsiders, white in appearance such as myself, to be welcomed by and work with local marginalized communities to problem solve and think critically about the future.

Also memorable from our discussion was his focus on a Higher Power. The concept of a Higher Power in community development is by-in-large absent from participatory community-based development literature or most academic discourses in general. He spoke of his traditional Lakota/Christian upbringing in which generosity, fortitude and courage were similar in the walks of traditional Lakota people and Jesus of Nazareth and how Lakota spiritual notions and Jesus' teachings and are not conflicting.

He remembered his grandfather asking, "What would you say to the dead?" This charged question encourages him to maintain positivity when experiencing the clashes between positive and negative forces on the Reservation. His respect for the dead, or more precisely, his ancestors motivates him to build community and allies. Unlike the Catholic and Episcopalian priests who built churches and withdrew from the Reservation in part based on low Sunday attendance, this wise elder stated, "We have to capture our communities because our dead are buried there." Like many others in the community, his motivations are not based on statistics and quantitative data sets such as attendance but on deep spiritual ties to the land, the people, and the Creator. If, then, organic intellectuals and community mobilizers are not motivated by quantitative analyses and categorical figures, why should community developers, academics and bureaucrats find solace in such numbers? This quantitative reliance among some scientists and community development practitioners creates strong fundamental incompatibilities for collaboration (Ross et al. 2011; Sillitoe, ed. 2007, Sillitoe 2002).

LOCAL CARPENTER AND BUSINESS OWNER

Though unplanned on my part I met up with a local carpenter as he was nailing pine shake shingles on a roof near the Singing Horse Trading Post, where my CSU cohorts had entered to buy souvenirs. Having no money to purchase souvenirs, and hoping to build relations with local tradesmen, I climbed on the roof and begin talking to the hard working gentleman, wrapped in Carhartt overalls and battling the wind as it blew his hair in his face. I explained to him my intentions and asked if he would like to be involved. To my surprise, a CDC Board member had already asked him to supervise the project. Additionally, his fiancé was an intern at the CDC and has since became a full-time, paid accountant there. Due to his increasing business opportunities, and desire not to be slandered as a nepotist among community gossips, he declined the opportunity to work as a co-supervisor on the youth facility.²² However, he assisted by patching several leaks on the roof of the old building and provided me with guidance throughout the process.

Through his insight as a clean and sober community member with a hardened past, he mentors youth while working at the local K-8 school and occasionally hires them to work with him on various carpentry projects. Keeping in touch with men like him, and having youth see that I had approval from respected men in the community opened opportunities to build respect and trustworthy relationships. Some people consider these type of meetings with locals as coincidental, but some of the Lakota involved saw them as a holistic, orchestrated picture, something spiritual perhaps which defies scientific rigor and isn't easily proven or disproven otherwise, something Lakota would say are "In a good way," or *wáste'*.²³

²² Nepotism refers to looking out for your family first. In many ways, nepotism is a good thing, though it is usually thought of in a negative light (ie. corruption in the work place or small town politics). This term is spoken of frequently on the Reservation.

²³ *Wáste'* is pronounced wash and tay as in tape. Wash tay.

During a later meeting with this guy, he explained the importance of what I was doing and sympathized with me for planning to make change in the community while being an outsider. He, himself is an outsider from Oklahoma. Like most other community members I talked to, he mentioned the extreme importance of praying over the grounds and smudging the area with sage because the building was so old and because it was a school, insinuating that negative occurrences may have taken place there. Less talked about from others, but emphasized by this gentleman, was talking directly to the spirits—letting them know we were doing something positive, “especially during that time [referring to Sundances] there are a lot of spirits walking around,” he informed me. As a Sundancer and traditional believer, he wanted to assure that spirits were on board with the remodel job and that they would assist, rather than pose a threat to the project.

Community Feedback Trip II

The second community feedback trip, from April 28 to May 1, at first glance appeared non-productive, from a Western centric lens. I couldn't meet with the Wounded Knee Chairperson or the grassroots, community organizer as planned. The community organizer and I were supposed to visit some of the more rural villages in which he is familiar with to speak with youth and their families about plans for the community youth facility. His intended approach was very informal: casually walk the streets and speak to children as they are playing. Due to the extreme cold and winds, we would have had difficulty achieving what we had planned to do anyways. However, I did have time to meet with him briefly. Between high winds, and his dog barking as my eight year old son Dylan played with him, it was difficult to hear his deep, soft voice, in the front lawn. But he once again reiterated the importance of having an outsider involved with the project. Additionally, he explained that the community youth facility would

inevitably enhance the community and correlated well with his projects based on identifying extended families in the communities and reinstating traditional forms of governance in the District.

Despite the lack of formal meetings on the second trip, I was able to speak several times with Mark to learn more about the vision for the school. Also, I was able to spend time at the job site, creating tool lists, taking measurements and envisioning different ideas with the remodeling process. In addition, I met once more with the local carpenter and spent more time at the CDC, maintaining a presence and building relationships. Concerning relationships, my son tagging along during the trip, allowed us to bond as well. Family is of dire importance to Lakota people and me. Thus, including my family during my research endeavors has always been important. Not only does it encourage greater family growth, appreciation, and bonding, but when I include my family, they create greater points of similarity between Lakota people and me. Now, several of my friends on the Reservation inquire about my family every time I see them.

Researcher

To collect the thoughts and inputs from a broader array of community members, I proposed creating participatory rural appraisal surveys to gain a better understanding of community desires and needs for a community youth facility and for job training skills. In line with a participatory approach, the surveys were designed to allow community members to assess their own communities. Questions and prompts in the survey focused on assets and included: “Are there any skills that you would like to learn this summer?”, “List at least one thing about yourself that would benefit your community.”, “Do you know community members that you would like to help with specific trade skills (Electric, Drywall, Heating, Plumbing) on a project?”

and, “If there were a youth or community facility, what would you envision being in there?”²⁴

The surveys were distributed to four community members during my March and April visits. From the beginning, Mark was reluctant about the idea, stating, “youth here don’t fill out surveys,” and emphasized his point by explaining the intrusions that often accompany western scientific data collection. Despite his discontent, he allowed me to continue the process.

First, I distributed surveys to the Wounded Knee Youth Council, which opened discussions about what type of skills they would like to learn, what empowerment means to them, and what types of amenities they would want in a district, community youth facility. The President and Youth Director both mentioned that they would change the questionnaire to suit their local needs and then distribute it throughout the Wounded Knee community. This, I thought, was perfect because “[. . .] community participation practitioners are beginning to realize that the design and implementation of PRA [. . .] exercises need to be tailored to the particularities of local situations” (Baohua 2005:57). Several edits were made on site, while others were supposed to be made later by the council. To my knowledge, the surveys were not further edited as I never spoke with the council again. Unfortunately, I lost contact with the Councilperson who was my connection to the Wounded Knee Youth Council. She quit returning my phone calls and emails. During the summer, as the remodeling progressed, the village called a meeting unbeknownst to the Councilperson, and initiated her impeachment, for her negligence in many situations.

Then, contrary to Mark’s justified hesitancy, the CDC office assistant approved of the surveys and commented on the significance of projecting inclusivity towards people throughout the district—trying to capture as many local voices as possible. She, having several youth and young adults in her family and surrounding village, agreed to distribute the surveys.

²⁴ The appraisal survey is attached as Appendix III.

Furthermore, during a later meeting with the community organizer, he agreed to distribute the surveys to youth in the more rural communities in which he conducts surveys for his own projects. Additionally, he left some in the front office at Rocky Ford School, a local school in a neighboring district which educates many youth from the Wounded Knee District and at Wounded Knee School, located in Manderson. The timing was inconvenient, though, and the secretaries warned him that participation would be minimal. This was my fault as I did not provide him with the surveys until near the end of the school year. Unfortunately, no surveys were gathered from these two schools. However, the connections the community organizer made with the secretaries or passer-bys viewing the surveys created opportunities for exposure that otherwise would have proved difficult and time consuming for the CDC. Due to budget constraints, the CDC cancelled the remainder of their community visibility meetings that they conduct throughout the District, so this acted as a minor public relation ploy which otherwise would not have been possible. Along with the community organizer, the local carpenter agreed to distribute the surveys throughout Manderson as well. In all, approximately 60 surveys were made available for distribution by the three community members and the Wounded Knee Youth Council during the last week of April with remodeling set for June.

Survey Data and Control

As of early May, none of the surveys had been received or returned by community members. If I had to stick to a strict agenda or ‘recipe’, the absence of initial data collection would have been formidable from a rigorous scientific perspective. However, “recipes,” Freudenberger (N.d.:106) contends, “contradict the core principles of [participatory approaches] which strongly discourage their use at rote exercises.” Thus, I encouraged all four community members who agreed to administer the surveys, to assess each youth on a situational basis, and to

utilize less formal avenues to obtain information if they felt that would have been more effective. Each situation was different. Thus, the three community participants simply talked with the youth and conveyed our agenda of inclusivity and remodeling a community youth facility. This proved a reasonable option for some youth who would shy away, “be too cool”, or were apprehensive about filling out surveys.

So eventually, one completed survey was returned. Why was only one survey returned? One possible explanation lies in what Harrison (2001:34) might call improper “research training for people at the community level” on my part. I didn’t train the three community participants or the Wounded Knee Youth Council on research methodologies at all. I only reiterated the importance of reaching as many community voices as possible. Community training may have been helpful. However, time, monetary, educational, and other resource constraints prevented this from happening. More importantly, the three community participants who agreed to help with the surveys felt they could retrieve knowledge from the community more efficiently without succumbing to western notions of data retrieval, notions which often seem intrusive and impolite by the receiving community. In this line of thought, Smith (1999:117-118), provides a more plausible explanation as to the lack of surveys either distributed or received during the planning process: “[I]ndigenous peoples are deeply cynical about the capacity, motives or methodologies of Western research to deliver any benefits to indigenous peoples whom science has long regarded, indeed has classified, as being ‘not human’.” Over the years Lakota people have expressed this sentiment: “These surveys have never changed anything for me!” when surveys are administered by universities, tribal agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, and then the normal media/marketing questionnaires that frequent everyone’s door step from suburbia to reservation village. It should be mentioned here that Kathy’s research, including a seven year,

random sampled Cash and the Social Economy Longitudinal “Household Study,” has been used to refute the 2000 Federal Census leading to an extra nearly three million dollars per year flowing toward the Reservation, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been acquired through grants which primarily cited Kathy’s work. However, individuals often do not realize the implication of such research and such research in other indigenous areas has often failed to meet the needs of individuals. Similar to Lakota people, Smith (1999:88) explains Maori discontent, in New Zealand, with western academic research due to the failure of researchers “to address the real social issues of the Maori.” Also the lack of completed surveys could be explained in this way: like most other teens, Lakota youth simply don’t fill out surveys and writing is not traditionally a Lakota focal point (St. Pierre, personal communications).

By the end of the two Community Feedback Trips, I had talked to very few Lakota youth, accepting the Wounded Knee Youth Council President, a young adult TANF worker at the CDC, one youth from a neighboring district that I met in Denver and two youth males in Oglala village in a neighboring district. But contrary to rigorously structured community development approaches, I was continually told, by Mark and others at the CDC, to wait until I started working with the youth. He recommended joining them in other activities such as basketball, and gaining their trust so I would receive open and honest information, not just ‘hot air’ responses about their visions of a youth building. Their recommendations, based on lived experience on the Reservation, mirrors Sillitoe’s (2002:6) suggestion to avoid superficial findings related to “routinized processes.” This threw a loop in my adolescent participatory development theology as I felt ill-prepared and ill-equipped to begin the remodeling process with limited engagement with local youth during the project.

During the fundraising stage, before, and even after I sought input from local community members, I wrote many ideas on paper that I hoped to bring to the building process. Preparedness and excitement is important, critical even (Harrison 2001:236-237; Chambers 2011:4-6), but must not become overbearing. Mark bluntly interjected one day reminding me not to “continue forty years of dependency and disabling” and to, for the most part, “let the youth make the decisions” as I blabbed about grandiose ideas I had for the facility (St. Pierre, personal communication, May 20, 2011). As a lifelong, hands-on community developer Mark emphasized: “I’m not telling you what to do or how to think, I’m just telling you we have philosophical differences and I want to let the youth make the decisions that they want” (St. Pierre, personal communication, May 20, 2011). After forty minutes of argument and debate, I hung up the phone feeling completely patronized and frustrated—straight pissed to be exact.

It took several days but I soon realized that, though I did not appreciate his delivery, I needed to be careful about my role as an outsider engaged in development as opposed to an initiator of or enforcer of developmental processes. Harrison (2001:236) explains this conundrum of community urgency and being hell bent on a particular theory to the point that I was “unwilling to perceive any defects in [my] approach.” I continually thought, “Yes I am trained in the western academy, but I am different. I know how to utilize the community’s voice.” However, I needed the blunt advice from Mark, leading toward introspection to remind me that, indeed, I was applying strict paternalistic methodological demands to the development process. In the words of Smith (2001:68), “criticism of individual researchers and their projects is deflected by the argument that those researchers are different,” and I was guilty of such deflection.

I later learned that having carpentry tools and materials on the job site was not assuming or paternalistic, despite not having engaged with many youth. On the contrary it was setting the stage for a dialogue between the youth and me. It was being prepared. I was, “creat[ing] conditions that increase their epistemological curiosity in order to develop the necessary intellectual tools that w[ould] enable [them] to apprehend and comprehend the object of knowledge” (Macedo 2006:19). The object of knowledge in this case was the remodeling of the building. It was, in part, due to the presence of tools and new materials laying around the job site that the youth were able to see past the decrepit building and imagine themselves as rehabilitating it to a new form, expanding their “epistemological curiosity” beyond the ‘here and now’ (Macedo 2006:19).

Being prepared in this way aligned with Harrison’s (2001:237) assertion of “careful planning.” In retrospect, the fundraising, assessment of the remodeling process, gathering of rudimentary building materials, and speaking with local community members, constituted ample planning. I falsely correlated extensive strategic planning with intensive community involvement. I had been stressing, trying to engage in planning. The Board however, had been preparing throughout their life, building on experience from having been born and raised in the area. Furthermore, Harrison (2001:82) concedes that in smaller, specific development programs or in programs where extensive strategic planning takes place only to suit external funders, “the strategic plan tends to lack connections to the day-to-day activities of the organization and is largely meaningless.” Not to mention, Harrison (2001:82) continues, “planning exercises can waste time and resources.”

Yet Mark’s prior concerns and “philosophical differences” spoke to more than just planning. He was protecting the community from outsider oriented, colonial development and

psychological colonization in which outsiders heavily influence the community receiving development aid. He wanted me to remain more neutral and let the youth decide the specifics of the building. Chambers' (2011:xiv) plea to remain, "optimally unprepared" while maintaining that "[g]ood participatory processes are predictably unpredictable" speaks to Mark's concerns of my naïve, overbearing approach. According to Chambers (2011:xiv), "Participatory processes cannot be 'properly planned', where 'properly' refers to fixed content and strict timetables." Fixation is by-in-large a western notion of space management or control which can also be asserted upon ideologies and psychological preparation for future events, but is especially foreign to indigenous groups with more cyclical, non-linear philosophies. Relinquishing control—not being fixated on my own ideas— not only relieved myself from the stresses of over planning but also allowed my position as an outsider to mesh more appropriately with the surrounding communities. During the development of a cultural center in New Mexico, Harrison (2001:81, italics added) spoke of the local, appropriate use of planning methods: "The planning process was based on a belief that sustainable development requires knowledge of the traditional culture and integration of ways to proceed with methods *that already work well*, rather than introducing development *that does not support existing values and activities*."

In my charge to be community driven, introspective, and a facilitator, not an enforcer, I emphasized theoretical concepts of community inclusivity and planning over the actual community initiated, grounded development processes. I couldn't see the forest for the trees. Dozens of surveys were not returned, contrary to my wishful thinking. However, many people throughout the District had conversed with the CDC, the three community participants, or me, and the job site was prepared for the remodeling process per the request of the CDC. The community was providing feedback, just not in the ways in which I had paternalistically

envisioned. The gathering of information by community members and myself provided a basis for ideas concerning the community facility, including: cosmetics, furnishings, architecture, the social aspects of remodeling, and what events and programs should take place in the facility. The information was justifiable by the Board for the continuation of the project, mirroring Freudenberger's (N.d.:9) assertion that, "The emphasis on PRA is often not so much on the information as it is on the process and seeking ways to involve the community in planning and decision making."

Throughout the planning process, it was difficult to achieve what Stoesz et al. (1999:146) calls, "maximum local participation in planning and decision making," mostly due to spatial and time constraints of all members involved with the process. Yet, Sillitoe (2002:6) recommends "more time spent in the field, not hurried and intrusive questionnaire-driven survey visits" with the "aim to involve a range of people from any community." Thankfully then, "intrusive questionnaire-driven survey visits" remained minimal and, despite my initial worries, a continual community dialogue was created during the integration process. Also, "maximum local participation" should be balanced with on the ground reality (Stoesz et al. 1999:146). "Idealistic ideas about community collaboration and active participation," Smith (1999:140) advises, "need to be tempered with realistic assessments of a community's resources and capabilities, even if there is enthusiasm and goodwill. Similarly," Smith (1999:140) continues, "the involvement of community resource people also needs to be considered before putting an additional responsibility on individuals already carrying heavy burdens of duty." Regardless, of some shortcomings, mostly due to my spatial constraints living five hours away and temporal constraints of all participants involved, the CDC and I felt confident that positive, local leaders

were not only participating in all areas of the development process but were funneling information and enthusiasm about the project throughout the District.

Continual Involvement

Continual involvement in the community should be a priority if nurturing friendships, local engagement, learning more, and reciprocal dialogical processes are goals to promote lasting development effects. Only when an outsider, researcher, or mentor concedes to also playing the role of student can the goals be met. Freire's (2006:84) discussion of humanism, the act "of becoming more fully human," provides a lens in which life is much more than mere existence but of understanding our life as "the process of *becoming*—as unfinished and incomplete beings in and with likewise unfinished reality." In other words, we are all students. The community organizer (personal communication, March 18, 2011) explained this concept of *becoming* in the Lakota way when he spoke about his fluency in Lakota: "I know the language well. But I will never be an expert at it or anything else until the day that I die." This way of thinking provides opportunities for western notions of research, development, or just simply 'being' to glean from the lessons, traditions and ideologies of cultures operating in contrast to the mainstream.

To learn from the communities in which collaborative development is occurring, a presence must be maintained. If community development is holistic, then so should be the engagement of outsider participants throughout the community, because as emphasized throughout Lakota thought, "all things are connected." Having established relationships, and continually building relationships through dialogue provides amazing opportunities to attend community events and to understand more about relationships below the surface level and beyond casual interactions. Likewise, Harrison (2001:73) asserts that cultural events "can provide a positive vehicle for understanding people from groups different from one's own."

For me, a breezy, sun kissed day of repairing shingles was halted by an invitation to attend a memorial dinner. The sheer amounts of food, gift giving, people and prayers alluded to the cohesiveness of extended families and the importance of celebration and community togetherness in communities on the Reservation. These ceremonies are common on the Reservation and take place on the one year anniversary of a loved one's death. It is a ceremony of remembrance and honor for the deceased. In an area where racial tensions still rise, just as in neighboring towns and cities, and consequently racial stereotypes are also broken, it was spectacular witnessing the non-Indian nurses, from Hot Springs, SD, attending the event. They were invited by the family of the deceased, since, among other things, they were his last caretakers here on Earth. It was a tearful event for the nurses, both male and female, who were called to the front of the gymnasium, and presented with blankets and other gifts, a symbol of gratitude beyond words. Contrary to many American ceremonies, the family in mourning during the memorial dinner blessed the community through giving, and even outsiders were presented with gifts bound by appreciation.

Like the dinner, weekends of work and rest were also accompanied by visits to the Batesland Pow wow, considered by all to be the oldest and most traditional pow wow on the Reservation, and later, a visit to the Kicking Bear Pow wow in Manderson. "Pow wows," according to Graham (2009:28-29), "are considered public gatherings where families come to watch family members and friends perform various dances, listen to drum circles, and socialize. There is no admission fee, although entrepreneurs welcome the dollars spent by tourists on food and local crafts."

To attend such events, though, often requires optimal unpreparedness, as previously mentioned, to make way for "exploring, experiencing and learning" (Chambers 2011:xiv).

Having an open schedule enhances the possibilities of attending community events. If, as I have noticed from several field school students in the past, weekly duties include planning continual weekend trips to extensively remove yourself from the area in which you are working, then sincere community development may not be your cup of *wakalapi*.²⁵ Continual presence is necessary and communities must not be treated as nine to five work sites. Consider yourself on obligatory yet voluntary overtime. As participants, we ‘get’ to be there, we don’t ‘got’ to be there.

As an outsider, it is important to attend community events to familiarize with warranted community scrutiny, meet and speak with others, learn more about cultural norms and behaviors, and to have fun. Of all the lessons learned from the memorial dinner and pow wows, the two most important in my mind are Lakota generosity and Lakota humor. They know how to have fun. A small glimpse of generosity and humor is relayed in the following situation from the Kicking Bear Pow wow:

Around 9:00 pm the pow wow announcer, between other jokes, mentioned that the soup and fry bread were almost ready, but that an elder needed to retrieve a child’s shoe from one of the pots of soup. While stalling, as there were hundreds of hungry Lakota and the food was not yet ready to serve, the announcer stated, “We have buffalo meat in the stew, that’s why we had to wait so long to serve it. If it were beef it’d be okay, because you’d just get fat and slow like those cows. But since it’s buffalo, things are gonna get wild here.

Despite contrary outsiders and media describing Lakota communities being viewed as poor, desperate, and lazy, community events generally entail food prepared for hundreds, provided by one or several local families. And this generosity is genuine and served with doses of humor.

These personal experiences helped me stay focused. Several times I became angry at the lack of youth involvement for the day or the mental demands of working on the job site and

²⁵ This is not to say I didn’t take occasional trips into the Black Hills to vacate and relax my mind after 80 hour work weeks. *Wakalapi* is a Lakota word for coffee and is spoken frequently on the Rez, even among non-Lakota speakers.

chauvinism engulfed my thoughts. Thoughts like, “I drove 90 miles to Rapid last night to pick-up materials and 90 miles back and then woke up at 6:00 am, only to have them sit around and send text messages,” lingered on difficult days. Often I confronted the youth on those occasions, but that didn’t always ease my tension. But my experiences with Lakota generosity, along with memories of Dad working generously, ever so patiently and through humor with others in his construction company, allowed me to maneuver through momentary lapses of self praise and sequential beratement of the youth workers. Maintaining a presence, which in turn helped maintain my psychological stability, not just ‘working’ but ‘being’ in the community and having fun off the job site strengthened relationships between the community and myself.

Lasting Friendships and Alliances

The greatest tangential effect of working with the communities on the Reservation, has been the lasting friendships which have evolved. An interest in Lakota culture, while striving to learn more about myself, set the stage to converse deeply with several Lakota families, perpetuating the level of trust between our seemingly disparate worlds. The next two stories resemble the relationships built through continual involvement and honesty.

I was particularly impressed with one of the youth workers due to his hard work, dedication to learning trade skills, and respect. He was the youngest yet most diligent and hard working of all the youth involved in the project. He worked voluntary overtime several days a week and took on various jobs without complaining. One night he accompanied me to Rapid for materials and we did not arrive back to the Reservation until nearly 11:00pm, having to work the next day. One day his father called the CDC and said he didn’t want his son working unpaid overtime anymore and that he had plenty of work and chores that needed to be done around the

house. I assured him that his son was never coerced into working but on the contrary he was a dedicated learner and that I would have him home on time from then on.²⁶

Several evenings later, I was welcomed into the yard by the father while dropping the youth home after work. We shook hands and spoke about his son's dedication to hard work and perseverance, having to deal with being the youngest on the job site, and being made fun of for his zealous work ethic. With a deep, slow voice and precise recollections the father explained his efforts to encourage the young man to stay in sports, maintain good grades, and refrain from the grips of drug and alcohol. Shortly after our meeting, trust was built between the father and I. He eventually invited me over, one late night, to "visit over *wakalapi*" and to look at his collection of beaded art work, an art form passed down from his mother.

The young man from Wounded Knee volunteered on two weekend excursions since the summer. During one of those weekends he worked in sub freezing temperatures. His involvement has led to the CDC gifting him with his own, professional tool belt equipped with personal hand tools, in which he has used to work in Rapid with his uncle, and an occasion to work for the CDC to earn money before the Christmas season. By choice, the young man spent most of his earnings on his family. This relationship has proved monumental for the both of us, providing me with a friendship, while providing a young man with the esteem and confidence to know he can make a difference in his community and through hard work and dedication can help financially support his family.

During the latter part of summer, one young man stayed with my family in Greeley. The relationship this young man and his family began by working with him, his brother, and his sister during the youth building initiative. The mom and dad frequented the job site to assess the

²⁶ Several of the youth workers would have worked over time accept their pay checks are part of a federal program stemming from the Job Training Act. Through this act, only 20 hours of paid work is permitted during the week for youth. All overtime was voluntary and unpaid.

remodeling process and chat with me while bring their sons and daughter to work. Our relationship strengthened through long drives on the Reservation, sharing meals, and talking together about life, the Reservation, and each other. Eventually the father started calling me and vice-versa just to chat and joke around with one another. This relationship eventually led to an invitation by the father to combine our families together in a *hunka lowaŋ'pi*, or The Making of Relatives.²⁷ He invited me over that Friday evening and presented me with two beaded key chains which they bartered for with a family artisan. The ceremony, they insisted, could not proceed until I received a gift from them—a symbolic manifestation of prayer. That Friday I anxiously journeyed to their home for a night of storytelling, gift giving, and meal sharing. When the time was right and the sage was smoldering just perfect, the father asked his two sons, his nephew, and me to go outside. We stood in the dark, looking at the moon as a warm breeze whisked across our faces. We smudged or cleansed ourselves, wafting sage smoke across our bodies—God—made peroxide if you will. He prayed in the Lakota way, turning toward all four directions. When the verbal prayer seized, we all stood in meditation for a time and then shook hands and hugged one another. “Now we are brothers,” the father told me. This ceremony has occurred for generations, even before the Reservation system and is an indication of an alternative and more inclusive view of family, one that transcends biology and focuses on relationships.

Now when I am on the Reservation, or when their family plans to head into Colorado, there are no worries about food, lodging, security, or comfort. Such invitations, inviting my family into their intimate world, not solely their community, exemplifies the notions of empowerment imbued within participation where people contemporarily viewed as ‘developers’

²⁷ I was not able to confirm this spelling.

or ‘practitioners’ become the recipients of gifts which supersede monetary, measurable value. This family, has assisted monumentally in my personal development.

This family has helped me and my wife and children tremendously. During my visits they have, on every occasion welcomed me and provided me with shelter. Once, I called to make arrangements to stay at their place: “Hey Brother, do you have any plans in a couple weeks? Do you have a place I could stay?” He laughed, “Hey brother, Lakota don’t make plans. Anytime. Hey, eh, anytime you can stay here.” Now, whenever I return home from the Rez, they assure that I leave with enough food to share with my wife and sons. It is through these exchanges that the stereotypical flow of ‘charity’ changes directions and the community where outsider’s work gifts them with a greater ability to provide for the needs of their own family. Building trust provides an avenue in which these exchanges can occur.

These friendships, though only in the beginning stages, are important to community development and remodeling, or more precisely, the long-term, healthy process of youth, relationship, and community building, providing an opportunity for all involved to draw closer to humanness. Likewise, they also indicate the two-way process of development. Development is a mutual process, one of giving and of receiving, regardless of perceived positions within the process. These relationships epitomize the notions of abandoning oppressive distinctions such as developed vs. underdeveloped, us vs. them, and giver vs. receiver, within community development processes. In a truly participatory process, distinctions become blurred when all involved contribute in ways that are meaningful to their communities, their families, and their selves.

Chapter 3

On The Job Site: Constructive Social Work

In March, on a windy yet unseasonably warm afternoon, the decrepit building sat perched upon a hill overlooking the town of Manderson to the northwest. White and quaint, its walls remember the presence of students and a blackboard some 40 years ago. The visual of tidy pupils arranged in rows listening to a teacher pointing to vocabulary words on the board soon gave way to the smell of mouse urine and horse dung which permeated the building. Weathered and worn, abandoned at best, remnant shards of glass lay beneath what were once front windows. Names of local youth had been etched in what used to be a chalk board. This seemingly undesirable place became a site of good spirit, team work, compassion and youth building. The project lasted for over four weeks, and the impact will continue to for years to come.

During that four weeks youth cleaned out the entire building and premises, tore out, replaced and finished drywall, installed tile at two entry ways, replaced doors and windows, repaired and trimmed out windows, reframed an exterior wall, tore out and replaced damaged cedar siding, primed and painted the exterior. In addition, they learned how to function on a job site as a construction team. If the job site supervisor's role merely involved the remodeling of an abandoned building, this chapter is finished. But as I quickly learned, the project entailed so much more than structural remodeling. It involved the building of individuals and community. This chapter comprises several stories involving my interaction with youth workers and the community, and highlights the relational, emotional, spiritual and economic elements of the youth building initiative.

In Chambers (2011) book on participatory workshops, he outlines "21 PRA/PLA questions to Ask Oneself." I asked myself these questions during the remodeling process, but also retrospectively. After reading the book, I was able to readdress some of these same

questions and assess how participatory processes and methodologies accommodated the community and youth building process. The following questions will be used to direct the anecdotes within this chapter:

1. "What questions would 'they' (local people, participants, [. . .]) like to ask me?",
2. "Why do they think I am here?",
3. "How did I behave?",
4. "Is my behavior empowering or disempowering?",
5. "What will happen after I leave?", and
6. "What have I left undone?" (Chambers 2011:11-13)

What questions would 'they' like to ask me? Why do they think I'm here? and Great White Sharks

"Man, what 'chew gonna do wit' dis' building. It should be tore down." Without a pause, the youth, decked out in Jordan gear and a smirk, examined the premises and continued: "What about the black mold? Does it have termites? It's rotten!" This young man entered the job site three days later than the other workers. The first several days of the Summer Youth Program, he was quite skeptical. Unlike many traditional Lakota, he was very boisterous and vocal about his concerns. He, along with countless other Lakota and indigenous people worldwide, has become well versed and exhausted with the ill-conducted, well intentions of 'do-gooders'.

"I'd live in this. It's sturdy," I assured him as I shook the front, south east facing wall. "There's no black mold," I explained through my stutters and the giggles from other youth in the background, as they edged on the conversation. While becoming increasingly nervous, I expressed to him that I was a carpenter and that hardly anything would be accomplished without the help of him and the other young men in the room. The stares from the others penetrated my whole being. "Oh, you another white man comin' to teach us somethin', huh? What 'chew gonna teach us, huh? You gonna show me how da do somethin'? You here wit' one a those church groups ain't cha? You came wit' dat' church." I listened intently, a bit confused and

quite nervous about the confrontation. “Nah, I didn’t come with no one. I’m here by myself.” He looked surprised, but was still apprehensive, along with all of his friends.

Why would I come to Manderson by myself? Other reservations know about Manderson. Folks from all over utilize the small village of Manderson as a butt for jokes and conversation pieces. News briefs, on-line blogs, fly by night photographers and the television series *Gang Land* poses Manderson and other parts of the Rez as dangerous gang territory. These discourses—public conversations, whether distributed through voice, newspaper, or computer screens—are not based on full and total truths. These discourses are fashioned from information, opinions and still images that ground (wo)men, middle(wo)men, and media tycoons want to convey as truths, but are misleading.

For power and authority to function, there must be a discourse—there must be a public conversation piece which describes the roles of people and communities as inferior to other people and communities (Foucault 1980:93). This maintains a social hierarchy, so others may feel powerful. Without these conversation pieces, as mentioned earlier, “relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented [. . .]” (Foucault 1980:93). It is then, in part, because of the public media about the Reservation that unbalanced relations are established which project some groups as powerful (ie. outsider groups such as universities, NGOs, and churches) and disempowers the Reservation communities. Reservation groups are perceived as nearly powerless agents in initiating change within their own communities. This media influences both outside groups and local people:

Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, *which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness* Freire (2006:63, italics added).

In other words, when outsiders come to the Rez, whether gently or in full force, Lakota people know how society in general thinks of them—as lazy and incompetent. Some Lakota individuals internalize these characteristics, becoming dependent on the services of outsiders. Others aggressively resist outsiders, and reject any relationship with them, because they expect them to have negative, false views of Lakota communities. Still, others will accept service from an outsider, ‘take what they can get’ from them, and then slander them as *waśi’cuŋ* when they depart.²⁸ But ultimately, most Lakota actively, cautiously, and respectfully engage in dialogue and development regardless of racial, cultural, and socio-economic differences and despite vastly different ways of knowing and doing. They are able to distance themselves from the media discourse and use Lakota values and philosophies to interpret the situation.

Part of the misperceptions of Lakota and outsiders of each other are perpetuated by fly-by-night charitable and development operations. Often during the summer months groups from all over the world swarm around the Reservation painting houses. Because they have never asked the families what they need, the painting takes place, despite the inner dilapidated state and more immediate needs of some of these homes. A group of twenty-plus individuals paint a house with cheers of joy. Meanwhile, little children peep out from drawn blinds, wondering what is happening. Older children stare while they traverse the streets. Young adults ignore them all together and carry on with their daily activities. Adult Lakota contemplate whether they should apply to get their house painted or if it is worth the hassle or the seemingly obligatory relationships that may follow. It is in this way that outsiders seek to empower themselves through belittling local communities, whether purposefully or naively. It is through these life-

²⁸ This term is used in lieu of ‘white man’ and is generally derogatory. It is pronounced wa as in wash, she and chew. Wa she chew. The ŋ is a nasal n.

long experiences, that I became suspected of being “wit’ one a’ those church groups” or “another white man comin’ to teach us somethin’.”

The young man raised important questions, signaling that he would not allow someone to come onto his turf and spread their ideologies and smiles unchallenged. His questions were mere externalizations of what many youth in the community wanted to ask me anyways. Some folks, from off the Reservation, would have snubbed him as unappreciative or a punk. However, with an informed knowledge of the history, community, and experiences of Lakota people, this youth can be easily described as concerned for his community and trying to protect it from unwelcomed intrusion. Well intentioned outsiders have “a lack of confidence in the people’s ability to think, to want, and to know” (Freire 2006:60).

In concluding the conversation with the young man, I was able to explain to him that I came to Manderson because I was invited to work with local youth. The CDC invited me to help the youth create positive changes in the community. I also explained that I did not buy in to all the public hype about the dangers of the area. Years of indignity, neglect, and slandering of Lakota communities by outside social and political groups have strained relationships between outsiders and Lakota. Mitigation and positive momentum is possible through learning, inclusivity, dialoguing, honesty, trustworthiness, and community integration (Scott-Villiers et al. 2012; Chambers 2011; Freire 2006; Bopp and Bopp 2006).

Several days after our initial meeting the youth posed a more difficult question for me to answer: “You ain’t here ‘cuz you wanna be, you here ‘cuz a school ain’t cha’?” This was harder than the question: “You here wit’ one a those church groups ain’t cha’? You came wit’ dat’ church.” In fact, it was largely because of school that I was there. I had been to the Rez approximately ten different times since 2007, all of which were related to volunteerism through

the Ethnic Studies Department, assisting Kathy with evaluations of various Lakota organizations, conducting research for Lakota farmers and ranchers, and gaining community insight on the youth building initiative. I entered all of these scenarios through ‘school’. However, school was not my only reason for coming to the Reservation. My reason:

I worked construction for nearly 15 years, since I was in seventh grade rather. Starting at \$10 a day (\$1.25/hr), I marked studs for my father as he nailed up base board trim. I unloaded the tools in the morning and packed them back up after a hard day’s work. By age 23 I had worked my way up to Supervisor. In my early twenties, Dad went out of business and I began working for a company well known for their steadfast commitment to quality throughout the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. I learned so much from my Dad and these guys—jobs skills I had never known and social skills as well, including: integrity, courtesy, and helping others without expecting anything in return. We built decks, re-shingled roofs, replaced windows, and built homes, cottages, and second homes. As I spent my third year with the company I began to question some of the clientele. Some of them ‘needed’ second homes and vacation cottages in the mountains. Something was wrong with this picture. I wanted to work with those who may never own their first home or may not have adequate food or health security. I wanted to build alliances with people and communities who are often forgotten about or intentionally pushed aside in the greater economic and political system, not those who ‘already have it made.’ That is why I applied at Colorado State University to work with Kathy. But, I had planned to write my Master’s thesis with Lakota farmers and ranchers, a project that I had crafted in the confines of my graduate office, without the consent of the farmers and ranchers I had proposed working with. Then, thankfully, the CDC requested my assistance in remodeling the building while simultaneously conducting job skill trainings for local youth.

After receiving the invitation from the CDC, though, my mind was still colonial in the sense that I was thinking of the farmer and rancher proposal I had created without community input as something I could do *for* the community. “In the meantime,” I thought, “I could spend several weeks working with youth as more of a ‘charitable donation’ to the community.” Then Kathy, always looking out for the community, said, “If the community is inviting you to help *with* a project, why are you worrying about a ‘project’ that you would be ‘projecting’ *on* the community?” That is when I gave up on the traditional, academic, top-down farmer rancher proposal and dedicated myself toward the youth building initiative.

So, I was able to explain that, in fact, it was partially because of school that I was there. Throughout the course of the project, I was open to answering their questions, explaining my story of how I came to be on the Reservation, in the Wounded Knee District, and on the WKCDC jobsite. The outspoken young man continued nailing up drywall, thinking, perhaps, of passed failed attempts of white guys to come into his community with big, yet shallow, self-conceived plans. His pressing tenacity was healthy and overall allowed me to think introspectively and grow. Community members are very astute when outsiders refrain from telling the whole truth. As outsiders, regardless of intentions, we should frequently be held accountable for our actions, not only by the communities in which we work but by our peers and our conscience.

During the second week of construction, 15 passenger vans, the white Fed types, rolled into Manderson [insert Jaws theme song here] filled with missionaries proclaiming their faith in Jesus. I could tell after reading their side window which stated, “Honk if you love Jesus,” that they came not only with smiles, naiveté, and buckets of cheap house paint, but with a message. These folks, along with countless other church groups, storm reservations every year. In Manderson, the vans stick together, demonstrative of their compassion toward, well at least toward the cohesiveness of their group. Swarming like *great white sharks* at sea, the Indians are *chum* to be devoured by middle class religiosity. During the evenings, small groups of predominantly white youth meandered around the village as noticeable as a dorsal fin cutting up the shoreline. The groups were usually composed of four to seven folks, with what appeared to be an older person leading the swarm. Were the numbers for comfort or maybe for perceived protection? I don’t know but after passing the same group twice, waving to them, and having none of them turn a head or bat an eye, I assumed they were difficult to speak with.

After I waved, the leader of one cohort, a girl of probably 14, looked fearful for her life and perhaps fumbled through The 23rd Psalm: “ [. . .] Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death [. . .],” as she traversed Manderson’s dusty road side (Ps. 23:4, King James Version). As the Lakota youth worker would have put it, she was “wit one of those church groups.” I never saw any Lakota walking with them, with the exception of little children playing on the playground and smiling as young ladies snapped pictures of them. If the invasive photographers were ‘lucky’, the children were dirty and flies perched upon their faces just before the pictures were taken. These pictures make good public relations and perhaps allow the church to raise funds for next year’s mission trip. If anything, the photos—articles of self-edification for the photographer—would ensure the church group and other likeminded humanitarians that they had accomplished something.

I know the church groups do have a positive effect in Manderson. My Lakota brother manages a horse shoe tournament for one church from Tennessee every year. In addition, he has commented on the thoughtfulness of the church that strategically comes at the end of one month every summer because that is when families are in the most need. The church, for an entire week, serves the community dinner and often distributes leftover food before they leave. However, the minimal and often ‘exclusionary’ presence, as indicated by the swarms that walk the streets in each other’s merriment, characterizes some missionary groups.

These characteristics, though, are not exclusive to just church groups but are indicative of a larger concern encompassing humanitarianism in general. These characteristics also apply to a swath which includes anthropologists, other academics, new age spiritualists, development practitioners, and others. Substitute Psalm 23 with Kumbaya, a Margaret Meade epitaph, or Pan Indian slogans such as ‘The Earth is my Mother,’ and this story has happened a thousand times

over to indigenous people. It is not to say that such groups are of an evil nature, have bad hearts, or should be conversely thought of as the ‘them’ in the us vs. them line of thinking. Doing so would be contrary to the call of Freire and other postmodern thinkers to abandon the weighted distinctions of us vs. them, rich vs. poor, good vs. bad, and holier than thou vs. nobody. Indeed, the actions of ‘do gooders’, of which I have been very much a part, is demeaning and counter-productive to liberating the minds of colonized peoples. However, damning such groups to the negative side of binary distinctions—labeling them as the ‘bad’ guys—only reinscribes and perpetuates inhumanity. Western epistemology perceives the world as a collection of binary oppositions (Ede and Cormack 2004:24).

One elder and everyday Lakota man from Wounded Knee, Walter Littlemoon, refrains from perpetuating inhumanity with his quest of recognizing, “what it is to be Lakota, a human being. I have found no place for the words, ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Through this process and with the help from nature’s grandfathers, the rocks, the trees, the wind, I am beginning to see and to understand situations and people just as they are” (Littlemoon and Ridgeway 2009:88).

How did I behave? Is my behavior empowering or disempowering? Pitiful.

Prior to the remodeling process, I visited with Mark for coffee at the bed and breakfast, and confided in him my greatest concern: not knowing how to engage with the youth and feeling my personal experiences would not catch their attention. Something about my knee high shorts, out of date Nike shoes with a detached sole, Amish hat to ward off generational skin cancer symbolic of my pasty pigment, and Bible Belt accent made me feel as though the youth would not want to connect with me. Yet I was continually encouraged from locally involved community members to be myself. When discussing these issues and my concern with ‘fitting

in’ and ‘appealing to the youth’, the community organizer (personal communication, March 17, 2011) spoke softly: “When you talk about the campaign for human development, if you have compassion, you’ve by-passed most of these things.” In the same vein, Mark told me to: 1) engage the youth intellectually; 2), to take them seriously and; 3), to show sincere interest in their stories while sharing with them my personal experience. These three elements involve being open and honest with oneself and others—requisites for compassion.

At the end of a long and productive first day of working with the youth, Mark was impressed. I went into his office, looking for guidance and wisdom—a voice from experience. “I told you it’s all working out,” he said with an ‘I told you so’ smirk. Before the project began, he pressed me to encourage the guys “but wait ‘til it’s sincere, because they can see when you’re just making it up.” He expressed: “Look them in the eyes and say, ‘you’re smart’. They will be taken back and think, ‘me?’” as he motioned, touching his chest with his finger tips. “It will change their life,” he concluded, voice cracking. I didn’t expect to receive a crash course in social work, but his words were necessary and life changing for me. He spoke them as if it were once him who needed those words until he grew emotionally and spiritually to the point where he could use heartfelt dialogue to influence the lives of kids around him. Indeed it was this initial passion which drove him to Indian Country. Now, he was passing the baton to me.

We went on to talk about suicide on the Reservation—the end, the final tipping point for youth who can’t understand the weight that rests heavily between their shoulder blades; the unfathomable heaviness that begins to suffocate them as it wraps around their necks and compresses their sternums, leaving them in a constant state of unwanted, undeserved and misunderstood anxiety. It wasn’t until then, unfortunately, that I realized this was so much more

than remodeling a building, so much more than job training skill, so much more than just construction work.

Honesty and sincerity as Mark explained, is imperative to working in community development or with youth in particular. Sequentially, action research is “[b]ased on a philosophy of trustworthiness” which includes: openness, respect, and listening (Scott-Villiers et al. 2012:4). Smith (1999:140) wrote about honesty in relation to research with indigenous communities: “Not all indigenous communities are adverse to such projects; they tend to be persuaded not by the technical design, however, but by the open and ‘good’ intentions of the researchers. They also expect and appreciate honesty.” Honesty and trustworthiness are inextricably connected, though, as Freire (2006:87) explains: “[. . .] to speak a true word is to transform the world.” Furthermore, “An unauthentic word [. . .] is deprived of its dimension of action [. . .] and the word is changed into idle chatter [. . .]. It becomes an empty word [. . .]” (Freire 2006:87). Empty words, void of reflection and/or action have been spoken continuously to Lakota people by outsiders such as myself. This is, in fact, why several alternative sustainable housing efforts have failed, lying unfinished and marring the landscape. President John Steele was convinced by scam artists that UNESCO was going to deem the Reservation a World Heritage Site and send billions of dollars to the Reservation. Politicians promise better health care, only to have the possibilities of better health care stifled by Congress (I specifically remember Hillary Clinton’s speech from Little Wound School on the Reservation). Yet when true words are spoken, and reflection and action follows, trust is built.

Honesty should infiltrate all aspects of the individual researcher and their relationships. Thus, it includes: being honest with others, toward others, with one’s self and about one’s self. The story about the concerned and vocal youth illustrated how I came to understand the

importance of being completely honest with others. The next story describes the importance of honesty toward others, with one's self and about one's inner self. The remainder of the section is not prescriptive, because in some cases total honesty and outright transparency may be harmful to individuals or relationship building (see Briggs 1970). However, in this situation, and in many mentorship situations, honesty is critical to youth building.

It was the first and only day in which constant, cold rain and dreariness soaked the job site. The black spot on the back ceiling of the building grew damp and spitter-spattered—a constant, natural nag, reminding me that my roof patching job was insufficient. Before the youth arrived, I took the time to stay dry in the office, making phone calls to Knecht's preparing for my next 180 mile trip for materials. When the youth arrived they were car pooling in two separate vehicles. Instead of halting my conversation with the Knecht's store manager to greet the youth, I assumed I could let them prepare for a day of work on their own and join them after my phone conversation. After all, some CSU undergraduates were in the building at this time, assisting with the remodeling process, and I figured they could converse and commence working with one another.

After hanging up the phone, I looked outside to find that all of the Lakota youth workers had vanished, cars and everything. There was not even a sign that they had been there. "Hmm?" I thought, and went into the building, chatted with the CSU undergrads, and began trimming up a window, a rewarding task I had hoped to save for one or two of the youth. Certainly they went into town and picked up lunch. Nearly an hour past and I was growing impatient but continually remembered how my Dad dealt with these types of situations on a weekly basis. My shoes were wet, my hat was wet and smelling (a combination of rain water and perspiration), and I was working on a community facility that wasn't even in my community. The youth arrived together

and rushed through the front door, laughing and lolly-gagging, ill-prepared to work. I supposed their actions were induced by the rain and they thought they would have the day off. At least this is how my co-workers and I used to react on rainy, dreary days.

Upon their entry, I asked assertively, “Alright, whose gonna go out with me and find a 2x4?” I motioned across the yard, about 100 yards away where a pile of wood eluded to the existence of a once strong and sturdy barn. We had gathered wood from that pile throughout the remodeling process. When I posed the question that someone walk out in the pouring rain and help me find a board, they scattered like wild fire and verbally declined to help, each of them trying to excuse themselves before the other. I flipped out. I snapped, “Ya’ll are fuckin *pitiful* you bunch a’ fuckin bitches!” You could have heard a pin drop. I lost 10 years and turned 19 again during that moment, expressing my anger in ways I hadn’t done in years. To even more closely imitate a cheesy 1980s action movie, I had both middle fingers flying during the rant. The youth stood silent. If I weren’t seeing red, I probably would have noticed that they were either staring at me in disbelief or staring at the floor feeling condemned. One of the more humble young men of the bunch said, “Ah, eh, I’ll go help you!” and splashed across the yard through the pouring rain in search for a 2x4. I quickly found one lying just outside the building which I had forgotten about. I picked it up and began using it, looking without remorse at the youth digging through piles of wood in the rain. The others paced the floor, stared at their feet, and muttered, “Eh, *uη’cik’a*, *uη’cik’a*. He called us pitiful, *uη’cik’a*.”²⁹

I began to collect my thoughts and realized that *uη’cik’a*, I had just previously learned from two community members, is used commonly, even among non-Lakota speaking community members. When people pray, it may sound something like, “*Tunkasila*, or

²⁹ *Uη’cik’a* is pronounced u as in uno, the η is nasal, chee as in cheese, and cu as in cut. U η chee cu.

Grandfathers, we are so *un'cik'a* without you.”³⁰ Or when speaking of the street Lakota in Pine Ridge and White Clay they may be referred to as *un'cik'a* and in need of God, or the Creator’s providence.

The tension settled and work slowly commenced. For my own sanity, I ignored them all for a time, working alone. Occasionally I broke the silence to send sharp, cynical remarks across the room. Eventually the oldest member of the bunch joined me and trimmed in a window, with dedication and keen precision. Perhaps it was his way of saying sorry. Actions speak louder than words.

The next day I apologized for my approach but explained that their unwillingness to work warranted my frustrations and for that I was not sorry. Two days after the incident, the young men joked about my anger and couldn’t believe I could snap like that. Maybe they thought I was more macho or perhaps they were happy to know that I to could use the same language that they used on the job site. I don’t know for certain, but it created greater mutual respect than before. One thing is for sure, though, through showing my feelings, openly and honestly, the youth realized that I was sincere and genuine. From then on, when I praised them for working hard or completing a task, they knew I meant it. Exposing an angry, unrestrained side of me instilled in them that I was not walking around with big smiles, jokes and giggle to be fake and withholding something from them. It brought authenticity to our relationships. They knew that I was indeed happy to be there, enjoyed working with them, but wasn’t a push over.

Despite my general refrain from using demeaning language, during that rainy day I spoke quickly what came to mind. On a sheer whim, I was honest toward others and with myself, outwardly expressing my inner emotions at that time. And by chance, as some would call it, it

³⁰ *Tunkasila* is pronounced T as in tape, unk as in skunk, a as in Avogadro, si as in she, and la as in fa, so, la, ti, do. Tunka acts as a syllable and shela acts the second syllable. Tunka shela.

connected with the youth. Had I passively resisted my feelings and presented a dishonest facade—pretending I wasn't concerned about their tardiness and disdain for work that day—an opportunity to relate with them could have slipped away.

Though speaking to the youth in this way could have been a mistake, it worked in the favor of all of those involved. Briggs (1970) learned this the hard way after losing her temper, not hiding her emotions and withdrawing on several occasions while typewriting a dissertation in the iglus and tents of the Utkuhikhalingmiut, a group of Inuit in the Arctic. To them she became “sometimes very annoying (*urulu*) and [made] one lose patience [. . .]” (Briggs 1970:287). But in this instance, being honest toward others and with myself provided further opportunities to open up and be honest about myself with the youth. With few prior youth mentor positions I was not well versed in assuming the role of mentor. However, I had picked up from conversations with several friends that sometimes honestly engaging in personal questions asked by the youth could be detrimental to the relationship building and youth building process. Nonetheless, due to the level of experience these young men had in relation to ‘unhealthy’ lifestyles, in many respects similar to the lifestyle I led as a teen, I felt compelled to share openly about my past, when they inquired.

Conversations about drugs, fights, and sex frequented the job site between the guys. Occasionally, they asked me to engage in storytelling, but I emphasized that the stories were not about me now, but were of my past. I didn't place much emphasize on this fact through my words, but through daily actions. Just as inviting my family members to the Reservation provided a point of commonality with Lakota people, my honesty about my teenage years provided a point of commonality among the youth. Contrived commonalities or pretending to be understanding or sympathetic: “Oh, I see what you're going through,” is easy for a listener,

particularly one with ‘street smarts’ to pick up on. But where authentic commonalities exist, they provide an avenue to engage in meaningful dialogue. The young men were excited to hear stories about me, which didn’t seem to fit the person standing before them. Without being honest and sharing stories of personal transformation, how much more difficult is it for others to view themselves as agents of change, individual empowerment, and transformation? The youth grew interested, realizing how much we actually did have in common. Additionally, personal conversations between myself and the youth heightened their curiosities or yearnings for personal, healthy lifestyle changes.

If community development and remodeling is centered around youth building, then it is imperative that youth be aware of the effects of personal transformation. Thus as researchers or mentors, it could very well be deleterious to veil our own histories and stories of personal transformation for the sake of objectivity or neutrality. Youth must be aware that all people are constantly changing, albeit at different paces and through different processes. If communities are composed of individuals, then individual transformation is a critical impetus for change within those communities. Researchers and practitioners must make themselves subject to the curiosity and scrutiny of community members. Otherwise, dialogue seizes and gives way to a one-way-street model of development. With this approach, just as in the colonial model, outsiders enter a community, assert their opinions, solicit community members, further strip the community of self-worth and dignity, and then leave hastily before their own lives, weaknesses, and agendas are exposed.

Honesty with others, toward others, with oneself and about oneself creates a stage where open dialogue can occur among everyone involved, trust can be built, and demeaning stereotypes

of us vs. them, good vs. bad, and holier than thou vs. nobody can be eroded—paving a way toward transformation.

What will happen after I leave? “It’s just gonna get broke,” and Spiritual Implications.

“Just that if it’s in Wounded Knee it’s gonna get destroyed,” responded a Lakota teen when I asked about her opinions of a community youth facility for the Wounded Knee District. After two weeks of working with the youth, their sentiments were similar as we installed a newer, triple pane window. “We’re doin this for nothing, it’s just gonna get broke.”

“Those horse boys will come up here all drunk and bust out the windows,” another continued.

“Well, why hasn’t the CDC been vandalized, it’s been up here since last January?” I asked and then hastily responded, “Maybe things are slowly changing. Hopefully, when the community sees guys like you working together to remodel this building, they will at least think twice, or you can encourage them not to continue to make their community look in shambles.” Of course, it’s easier as an outsider to make assertions, without having the physical and psychological gifts and baggage of living within a community undertaking development initiatives. But my role as job site supervisor encompassed making recommendations, though they weren’t always objective, plausible or well received.

One guy, the youngest of the group, and one of the most confrontational, was stunned, having no idea the CDC office had been perched on the hill, overlooking the community for so long. The young man who initiated the conversation of vandalism walked to the side with me and we continued our conversation. “Why do youth around here do that?” I asked ethnocentrically, momentarily forgetting that I used to vandalize cars and homes, creating great monetary and emotional damage, in my own neighborhoods. In my youth, I never questioned

why I was “hurting my own people?” as outsiders often cynically phrase situations when talking about travesties within reservations and other ethnic communities.³¹

“Because it’s the rez, it’s Manderson,” he replied frankly.

“Well, we can’t keep the building from being vandalized but what we can do is build up ourselves, our community pride, our skills and talents. Do you think if this building gets vandalized, this was for nothing?”

“Yep.”

“You didn’t get anything out of this?”

“Yeah, like carpentry and stuff,” he smirked.

“Then there you go.” Having my mind on the physical remodeling process, in retrospect, I hastened through the conversation. His attitude was not one of disrespect or disregard towards me or the project but a mixture of frustration and acknowledging the reality of past failed attempts by outsiders to *bring* change to a community with paint or a box of nails, from the outside in.³² Attempts to *bring* change negate the principle of community-based, empowering transformation. Communities are not banks in which *change* is deposited. On the contrary,

³¹ Violence in marginalized communities is considered “horizontal violence” or “striking out at their own comrades” by Freire (2006:62) and is partially caused by feeling oppressed by outsiders and thus anger is turned inward towards oneself and one’s community. This approach is plausible and factual. However, other factors come into play. For example, Mark has spoke continually about the myth, believed and spread by outsiders that “Indians are like a prairie dogs that lives in harmony with one another.” Like any other society, Lakota people are not homogenous. Where I am from, there is a high frequency of Americans of German and Scotch-Irish descent. Families are close, and have often times inhabited the area for six generations or more. There are also petty crimes and heinous crimes such as murder and sexual molestation. However, despite the homogenous population (predominantly German and Scotch-Irish decent) I have never heard the public, either through news media or conversations, explain these acts as people “doing this to themselves.” Indigenous people are no different. They are human beings.

³² I soon learned his typical teenage practices of staying up until dawn during the work week and becoming tired and grouchy as the day progressed also influenced the youth’s reactions toward my assertions. Lakota teens are like any other teens in this respect and many others. Despite disagreements on the job site—an inherent situation in dialogue—he was one of the most respectful workers and calls me uncle when we speak now or when I come by to visit family.

change must *come* from *within*, not *given* from without. Freire wrote: “Authentic liberation—the process of humanization—is not another deposit to be made my men. Liberation is a praxis: the *action and reflection of men and women upon their world* in order to transform it” (Freire 2006:79, italics added).

Similarly, as an outside participant, “One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people” (Freire 2006:95). Thus outside participants must, with dignity and respect, provide or not strip away, the creative physical, social, or spiritual spaces in which men and women reflect upon their own world. This understanding proved invaluable as the topic of spirituality arose during the conversation about vandalism. This conversation of spirituality was not in the sense of the moral issues associated with damaging valuables and shelters within the community, but conversely a haunting leading to the vandalism of the abandoned building as a warning to those living there.

The abandoned school house had been converted to a home and one of the last people living there was a sweet, friendly, white woman—local post-master for the area—according to some locals. Her home was continually broken into and vandalized, finally leading her to move away. I quickly attributed these vandalisms to ill-behaved kids, possibly with a racist upbringing, and without an imagination, much like myself when I was young. However, the assertive young adult went on to explain that the house was haunted. “Haunted?” I questioned reluctantly, thinking if it was haunted no one in the community would use it. “It’s not haunted,” I thought. After one community member from Wounded Knee advised me to look into the history and events that took place there, people around the community told me many stories about the old school house. None of the former students from the school, now with

grandchildren of their own, mentioned it being haunted. But from the youth's understanding, or way of knowing, spirits had caused youth to vandalize the property so the tenant would move, preventing them from experiencing any forthcoming negativity wrought from living in the structure.

This way of knowing, or coming to perceive the spirit world, was much different than my thought process at the surface level. But upon further pondering, I realized I had been taught and experienced through Judeo-tribal philosophy and Christian encounters that spirits often influence behaviors whether in a positively or negatively perceived way. Through dialoging with the youth, and further self-reflection I realized that not only did the young man make a point from the spiritual views of some Lakota, but also in accordance with some of my ways of knowing. Our conversation further strengthened my appreciation for him, his ability to engage in a teacher role teaching me as a student, and his spiritual understandings of life and life's connectivity to and intertwining of other realms.

The spiritual realm provides a place of contention for academics, practitioners and people in general. It is difficult to compare, contrast, and quantify a realm or realms which is believed to be everywhere, yet nowhere, here nor there, here and there, everything and nothing. Though fervent, classical religiosity prescribes dualistic distinctions such as sinner vs. saint, the characteristics of spirituality does not conform to the dualism within classificatory thinking. Thus, us vs. them, animate vs. inanimate, rich vs. poor, good vs. bad, and holier than thou vs. nobody, distinctions do not exist. In many beliefs, forces within the spiritual realm battle or conflict with one another—good vs. evil or positive vs. negative. However, engaging spirituality within the development process does not necessitate prescribing distinctions on people involved with the process. Subjectivity, toward the spirituality of development, then, provides a platform

to greater understand local communities and the undercurrents comprising the development processes without the classificatory religious or scientific distinctions of us vs. them.

Some scholars opine that spirituality is a critical component to development (cite library books). Dr. Cornel West, in speaking about the “the hopelessness plaguing the minds of African American youth” surmises that it is a “spiritual crisis [which] cannot go unheeded, for there can be no economic empowerment or political struggle without spiritual resources.” It is in this vein that the CDC and every community member I spoke with, emphasized the importance of prayer and spirituality (see also Chapter 2).

Physical Food and Spiritual Food

In speaking to community elders, not one person spoke without mentioning blessing the grounds. Some, such as the local carpenter spoke more in depth about communicating our intentions with spirits, while other painted broad brush strokes, solely mentioning that the place should be smudged or blessed. Either way, it was clear that a ground cleansing or blessing ceremony and community feed was essential to the vitality and success of the remodeling process and the future applications of the building. The CDC office assistant had been placed in charge of contacting a medicine man or other notable person in the community worthy of conducting the ceremony. For one reason or another, this responsibility was eventually placed on me, a responsibility that in retrospect I was glad to take on and forever changed by. I was given the phone number of an elder, who lives just below the Wounded Knee Cemetery. Like often times on the Rez, several folks from the office gave me directions to his home, stating “He lives just around the curve and to the right.” Ambiguous to me it seemed, but to people on the Rez, they would have had no problem understanding these directions. “Oh, he has the flag?” I asked trying to connect the dots and was given confirmation. Later that day, my wife Jess, and

twin sons Dylan and Devin, and I drove toward where I thought the gentleman lived but I notice the home I was thinking of and the home the office staff had explained were not the same. So I walked to the door reluctantly and knocked. I heard muttering through the door, “Come in,” so I entered slowly into the hallway of the home, filled with two women and many grandchildren and the rich smell of dinner cooking on the stove. “Does John live here? He told me to stop by,” I said to the beautifully aging woman. She rubbed her hands on her apron and hollered toward her husband in the back bedroom. As I looked back he motioned me, and welcomed me back to his bedroom saying he was “back here and had just gotten up from a nap.” He sat on a folding chair, perched beside his bed. Eagle feathers, staffs, sage and other medicinal plants adorned his room. Diabetic insulin needles sat among books on his shelf and DVDs, tapes and other items common to most American households covered the corner area next to the television. I entered the room, sat easily on the corner of his bed, and presented him with the Blue Drum Tobacco that the CDC office assistant and an elder lady who sat on the CDC Advisory Board told me to gift him. With his dark shades on, he smiled and accepted the gift. He used the exact script that the Advisory Board member had told me he would say: “What can I do for you?” I explained the WKCDC to him, what we were working on, and requested that he bless the area and the building. After explaining to him the location, he realized where I was talking about and replied, “I will do this when the weather is good.” I paused, waited a moment, and my frantic westernized thought process rolled on: “What date, what time, what should I be prepared for.” I waited, and he began talking about something else—his recent eye surgery which consisted of removing war shrapnel from his skull. Then, after several minutes of storytelling and me enjoying it while also thinking, “my family is waiting in the car,” he continued our prior conversation asking, “When do you want this to happen?” I explained that it was up to him, while internally hoping we could pin-

point a date—a symptom of my controlling thought processes in relation to time, place, and events—an element of control which has not yet completely plagued Lakota culture and many other indigenous cultures. They have not been thoroughly colonized by the clock (Pickering 2004).

John repeated his earlier answer: “I will do this when the weather is good, so people won’t get stuck in the mud.” There was a lot of silence and he spoke in short, succinct sentences wasting not one sacred word between humans. It wasn’t awkward but instead, honorary silence. Eventually, he pulled out a slip of paper, wrote his name and number on it and said, “The morning you wake up and the weather is good, call me and we will do it then.” I stood up, practiced my Lakota saying, “*to kśa ake’*,” and left feeling as though I had convened with an elder of utmost respect.

Having met with John on a Monday, and knowing that the forecast wasn’t so great for the next several days, I mentally prepared to have the ground blessing and community feed on Friday. This would have given us time to clean up the job site, call John Friday morning, and have the meal and blessing Friday at noon. In my mind, everything made linear sense. So I drove up to the jobsite Thursday morning, assumedly 36 hours before the ceremony. I was preparing the job site for the day’s activities when suddenly the office assistant and another office worker arrived early, unloading food from the trunk of the car. “We’re gonna have the feed today,” the office assistant mentioned casually. “What!” I thought. A change of plans, chipped away at my ways of knowing and planning. I called John and he was obliged to do it. The day progressed and the youth worked diligently on drywall and then cleaning up the area, making it safe for elders, and setting up tables and chairs. By noon many people started showing up from Manderson, Wounded Knee, and smaller communities such as Crazy Horse. Several

ladies from the office prepared soup, *tawi' nige'* (menudo or beef stomach soup), fry bread, and peach *wo' japi* or fruit pudding. As I was waited for someone from the community to welcome everyone and start the ceremony, the office assistant asked, “Are you about ready to start?” motioning toward me with her eyes, signaling that I was expected to call everyone together. I exited the CDC office building, asked John if he was ready to start, and began gathering people around in a circle inside the school house.

John wafted lit sage with a feathered fan, aromatizing the area. About 18 of us—men, women, and children waited five or ten minutes quietly in a circle for late comers. Then he commenced. He spoke a few words in Lakota and then stated, “I hear this is gonna be used for youth in a positive way.” He thanked me for honoring him with the occasion and explained, “I will say the prayer in my language.” The prayer lasted three or four minutes and it was beautiful, positive and powerful. Afterwards, Mark spoke about the intentions of the CDC and the obvious presence of supportive elders from the community. One Board member and former grade student of the school joked: “This place over here used to be my favorite spot,” and he walked over and placed his nose on the wall where the chalk board used to be. “They used to make me put my nose right here,” he acted and we all laughed. An elder lady from the Advisory Board, the grass root, community organizer, and the office assistant spoke. I said very little. The youth had to listen to me every day as it was an awkward moment for I wasn't sure of my role in speaking at an occasion attended by so many elders. The advisory board member, with certainty and eloquence reminded the youth that there are people like John all over the Reservation and encouraged youth to seek out the Red Way. In all, over 30 people showed up for the community feed. We ate and for the first time ever I witnessed Lakota elders sitting around a table, speaking consistently in Lakota—reminiscing and discussing life in the past, present, and future.

The Spirituality of Development

Incorporating a spirituality section in this study proved difficult not because it is so often dismissed in academic and development discourses, but because, similarly to Lakota life-styles, spirituality cannot be compartmentalized. “The Greeks, whose knowledge construction was the precursor of that adopted in Western Europe, made a separation between the” natural world and supernatural world (Ross et al. 2011:62). For the Lakota, these worlds are not separate entities but encompass all elements of everyday life. “Every person, every animal, every blade of grass has a spirit that is positive and can be of help to the others” (Littlemoon and Ridgeway 2009:3). Spirituality, in some form or another, whether relating to a Supreme Creator, or to spirits which manifest into human accord, discord, or indifference, was mentioned by every elder concerning the development process. Thus, the thought processes of Lakota spirituality (including traditional, Christian, and syncretic forms), combined with my own spirituality involving an omnipotent, all-knowing, and loving God, dictated much of the processes which occurred throughout the remodeling and youth building. Hence methodologically, not only in a ‘spiritual realm sense’, spiritual elements played a role in the development process. Once, as I worried, despite my usual faith and perseverance, over the technicalities of the remodeling process and the Summer Youth Program, Mark stated, “You have to have faith that you are doing something *wašte*’, or good, and *Tunkasila*, the Grandfathers, are gonna take care of you.” He later reminded me, as I was burning out and spilling with negativity after a long hard work week that, “when you do things in a positive spirit, things begin to happen.”

It is through a spiritual lens that many Lakota people view the world and all of its physical, emotional, and economic evolutions. Thus researcher objectivity to this spiritual adherence leads to, what Linda Smith (1999:39-40) frames as dehumanization through non-

neutral objectification. By remaining objective to indigenous belief systems, indeed the systems which govern many peoples' thought processes and ways of knowing, researchers and practitioners are leading non-verbal, psychological assaults on indigenous peoples. As mentioned, Freire (2006:95) explained that, "One cannot expect from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people." Thus abstaining from spiritual dialogue or minimizing the effects of spirituality on development processes, especially within a community that relies heavily on spirituality is counterproductive to development within that community. Omitting spirituality from community development is like coming to a job site without some of the tools, or perhaps like leaving the entire toolkit at home. Such omissions create power dynamics among participants and antagonism between outside and community participants.

As previously mentioned, spirituality, and acknowledging spirituality in development provides a potential arena to break through us vs. them dichotomies. The spiritual realm is not based on mathematical equations and numerical systems, systems that many people do not ascribe to anyways (Sillitoe 2007a:261-267). Thus correlations such as 'If this ____, then ____,' cannot be derived. In short, spirituality has the ability to 'level the playing field'. This gets tricky however. When, through human interpretation, spirituality is snuffed in favor of religiosity, and specifically religious fervor, dichotomies arise which provide a controlling individual or group with the frame of mind to dominate, or infringe on others' beliefs. This can be seen by many groups who view humanity through the lens of sinner and saint, lost and saved. Such views are incongruous with participatory development. Religiosity of the spiritual and sacred promotes further prejudice and bondage toward individuals and communities already being discriminated against. Conversely, providing room for the spiritual beliefs of individuals

or communities relieves the stresses which accompany control and manipulation by researchers and practitioners who are used to asserting power, whether psychologically or physically, over others. In this way, relinquishing control provides room for individual and relational growth.

A participatory approach welcomes diverse views, even of spirituality, and this was evident on the Reservation. Though, I assured the youth workers, I was not “Wit’ one a those church groups,” I was later able to explain to some of them my beliefs just as some of the other youth were able to explain there’s to me. This mutual respect and dignity was manifest through a gift my Lakota family gave me on a return visit. Now a stitched, plastic canvas cross adorns my wife’s living room wall and is stitched in the four sacred Lakota colors: red, yellow, black, and white. This gift was symbolic of the unity between our families wrought from openness, honesty, and humility throughout the development process.

Researchers in general are trained to remain objective in their spiritual beliefs, though others take more of an advocacy approach, berating mainstream beliefs due to the physical and emotional violence caused by religious fervor. However, even atheism is a belief in the absence of a Supreme Creator or Creators. As outside participants with predisposed beliefs enter a community, if conversion to a specific belief is not a part of the communities development agenda, then conversion should not be a part of the outside participant’s agenda. There is a distinction between a program that operates from a community view, in this case a Lakota spiritual view, a value based approach and a program which teaches or preaches to impose cultural or spiritual values on to participants. The latter mode of communication does not provide the groundwork for true liberation.

Differences in accordance with the spiritual realm do not necessitate distinction or disagreement. In the presence of multiple spiritual beliefs, commonalities which often manifest

in similar value systems (ie. love, peace, trustworthiness) provide a point in which the us vs. them frame work is dismantled in the name of unity. In this way ‘us’ and ‘them’ becomes a heterogeneous ‘us’.³³

What have I left undone?

It is here that I turn to the question, “What have I left undone?” provided that *I* ‘done’ anything. Before answering this question, it will be useful to recount what *we* accomplished:

- 1) relationship building within and without,
- 2) provision of a safe environment,
- 3) empowered youth, and
- 4) structural and individual asset building.

The remainder of this chapter will first focus on accomplishments and conclude with possibilities for the future.

Relationships

During the youth building initiative intergenerational relationships were built between youth and elders, between local communities, and between the youth and I. A connection among youth and positive community role models—healthy, cross-generational relationships—is imperative to sustained community and individual development (Ferrari 2003:206; Huebner 2003:327, 353; Perkins et al. 2003:6). Furthermore, according to Perkins and Borden (2003:329) programs that “provide youth with the chance to develop positive relationships that connect them to peers and adults in their communities [. . .] increase the likelihood that youth will successfully navigate challenges as they move toward adulthood.”

During the initiative, youth were continually surrounded by elders from their communities, providing a healthy balance to solely being surrounded by me and all of my

³³ The term heterogeneous refers to different whereas the term homogenous means the same. Thus heterogeneous ‘us’ refers to everyone in the development process, despite being different, comes together, united under one agenda.

whiteness. As in many communities some of the youth were unfamiliar with many of the elders even within their families but more so those not directly kin. Similarly, the community organizer from Manderson, involved throughout the process, knew the families of some of the involved youth, but did not personally know any of the youth working on the building. However, his attitude and actions demonstrated his compassion toward the youth and their individual empowerment during the building initiative. One day he called me, stated that he was walking down the road toward the job site, and asked if I could pick him up. He was coming to get an estimate for a new metal roof for the building in hopes that the Tribal Administration would assist with funding. After hanging up the phone I explained I was going to pick him up. I further expressed that, “he is really into this and he has no personal gain, I mean he’s a cool guy, he’s walkin’ down the road right now.”

“Oh, you think that means he’s cool?” replied a predictably vocal youth. Maybe he had a rough night or was just trying to get under my skin, a plausible explanation for eighteen year old contriteness. Then again, perhaps he contextualized my comment about walking down the road. If walking down the road equates coolness, the majority of Lakota on the Rez are or have been incredibly rad! But that’s not what I meant. I was discussing the fact that the gentleman was walking down the road, from several miles away to try and make greater things happen with the youth building. “No,” I responded, “the fact that he’s walkin down the road and has nothing to gain from this project except to see something positive happen for the youth makes him cool.”

“I don’t even know that guy. What has he done for our community?” he asked, redirecting our conversation. I then explained the community projects the elder has initiated and painted him as a prime example of a role model directly engaged in community-based, Lakota development. I had hoped to appease the youth until I picked the elder so he could speak for

himself. When I brought the elder to the job site, he wrote a phrase on the wall: *ikce' wi'caśa*. He went on to explain the concept of a 'common man', a concept which some of the youth had never heard but others knew quite well. He spoke both softly and directly, compassion enveloped his stories of himself and his community where he was born and raised—in the Wounded Knee District. The youth were mesmerized, especially compared to their actions prior to his arrival. He had struck a nerve with some, indicated by the question of one of the youth after he left, "Eh, he is an elder. Isn't he?" For the next several days the youth inquired more about him, while through their own reflection of themselves and their community, realized that Lakota people, who they don't even know, have a vested interest in their future.

Similar to the disconnect between intergenerational community members is the historical antagonism between communities. Manderson and Wounded Knee have never gotten along. A much respected elder from Wounded Knee recounted times in his youth when, "the Wounded Knee boys didn't talk to the Manderson boys because they were from Manderson" (personal communications 3/18/11). During a Friday recap of the week, I mentioned that I was proud of the youth's ability, during that week, to set aside differences and work together. It was as if I brought up something they hadn't realized. Perhaps I should have kept my mouth shut. I talked about my experience in Iraq with Kurds and Arabs. One of the Iraqis had never even met a Kurd, but was raised to hate them. Through a program focused on individual and community development, I witnessed some of them become close friends. As I shared this story after the first week, heads begin to shake back and forth and I was interrupted abruptly, "But you don't understand, we are [divided] here. This is the Rez." Despite the contestation with words, their actions—responses to a community development initiative within their own comfortable surroundings—showed that they were willing to break boundaries. This same youth, just hours

before had confessed that he was tired of the politics of families only looking out for their own families, and that he was not going to raise his kids to do the same. True participatory development, bonded with reflection and action provides a space where destructive mentalities created by decades of antagonism can begin to break down.

Finally, and suitably after mentioning antagonism, the relationship between Lakota youth, their families and myself has further blurred the slash between the white/Indian dichotomy. This slash perpetuates racism and plagues the minds of both Indians and non-Indians. Trust must be built between individuals. However, an initial distrust is not inherent. Though I struggled and battled relinquishing control, specifically in relation to specific construction work—my expertise—I kept in mind what was told to me from the beginning: I must let the youth know that they were somebody and that they have talent and ability. In essence, I had to trust them. Freire (2006:73, 75), when speaking of humanists, as opposed to humanitarians who often “preserve a profitable situation for themselves,” affirms that “[. . .] efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in the people and their creative powers.”

Through interactions or sometimes through non-interactions like painting houses without the help of locals, Lakota youth are continually told that they are not trusted, they are not capable. These actions perpetuate distrust. On the contrary, highlighting the importance of Lakota youth voices in development and being fully honest, something that took me several days and veracious prodding by the youth to do, creates a space for mutual trust. It is easier to trust in someone or some entity that has faith, or trusts in you. Through continual conversation and bouncing ideas back and forth, though we hadn't known each other long, one elder from the community encouraged me to “be inspired” and continued by saying, “I love the world and you

are a part of it.” These bonds, formed by either a built or inherent trust, pave the way where people from all walk of life come together to achieve.

The trust built with youth opened up doors, as previously mentioned, where I was befriended and accepted by families—a possible healing process to past atrocities among interactions between Lakota and whites. This was demonstrated once, as during a follow up visit I picked up a youth worker to help paint the exterior of the community youth facility. I asked the young man to grab his tool bag from the house. He stuttered a bit and then his Dad, eyes cast down in a traditional Lakota way, explained that he had pawned the tool belt for two car tires in preparation for the upcoming winter. The father spoke to me, in earnest, detailing the situation in ways that I would not have expected from him, or anyone else who hardly knew me. No community member should feel obliged to share their financial situation with anyone who has entered their community. Yet he continued, looking away, and rubbing his forehead as he explained to me his situation. I looked at him intently, connecting with his eyes as I had always been taught, but also bouncing away gazing into the forested ravine behind his modest home, remembering that staring into the eyes of a Lakota male signals disrespect. His story reiterated for me a mutual trust we had gained toward each other. I understood his situation, believed the words he felt compelled to speak in his front yard, and later encouraged his son that, “at least [he] got to use the belt in Rapid City to work with his uncle some at the end of summer. And now your family has two new tires to help keep them safe on the roads this winter.”

With conversations like this, anthropology can be a curse. While the father spoke with me, emotions swarmed my head:

Is he lying? Did he hock the belt for drugs? No of course not [I was trying to convince myself.] No one has ever taken it upon themselves to come outside and explain to me their financial situation. In deed many indigenous people *feel* so beat down and undignified, or conversely proud enough, that they could care less about explaining

themselves to anyone, much less someone they hardly know. I am understanding. Surely, most other people would think he hocked it for drugs! [So, not only was I judging him, but other people as well.] Ah geez, why can't I just be normal and listen to the man. In an extraordinarily humble way, he is confiding me!

In this way, anthropology has ruined my life. A simple conversation becomes a battle of the mind. My mental responsiveness did signal my bias and judgmentalism, however. Had this happened in the context of an American suburb, my mind would have not wrestled with the many ideas floating through my psyche but would have instead, related to the situation as a father with his own family to care for. Regardless of my inconsiderate mental wanderings, though, maintaining trust proved fruitful in this circumstance.

I lost no sleep over this incident but did think about it on the drive home. What if he had approached me via email with a: "Hello Michael, I hope this email finds you well," as opposed to, "Hau, Mike," and a hand shake? And what if he expressed that he utilized his Visa card to purchase a set of SUV rims, or better yet took out a bank loan to buy a new car for his son, instead of explaining with dignity that he pawned his son's tool belt for car tires? Then I would have mentally judged him as wasteful as opposed to coming to the conclusion that he was maximizing his available resources to sufficiently provide for his family. Or what if, after his email, his name was accompanied by a mega list of job titles and accolades, as opposed to his way of ending a conversation with "later," because some Lakota refrain from saying 'good bye'. Ironically, had this conversation occurred in cyberspace or a suburban space, despite that I am from a rural area, I would not have dealt with conflicting thoughts. Thankfully, though, our conversation occurred within the confines of his personal and comfortable space, not cyberspace.

For the Reservation, pawn shops are the one stop loan shops. There are no banks, as of yet, and the federal legal system makes access to credit for American Indians difficult (Brydger 2010:42-50; Pickering 2000:73-76, 130). Credit cards and other mechanisms used to extend

purchasing power in the market system aren't easily accessible. This man was providing for his family, extending his credit to make ends meet—within the means available to him—no different than any other respectable father living off the Reservation. A participatory approach provides the mechanisms necessary for outsiders to rid themselves of the comforts of their personal and sometimes cyber spaces to engage with locals, on their turf. Yet these opportunities must be captured in order to disengage the us vs. them, insider vs. outsider mindset. When delving into locals' societies, economies, and geographies, the possibility for personal spaces to become negotiated, judgments to become suspended, and trustworthy friendships to be built, can flourish.

During a return trip to the Rez, as we visited over *wakalapi* the father asked, “Are you gonna need [my son] to help you tomorrow?” his voice muffling as he traveled further away from the kitchen and down the hallway. “Because I got something for him,” he continued, making his way back into the living room with his son's tool belt, equipped with all the personal tools which adorned it two months prior.

A Safe Environment

Though acting and dialoguing within a community may provide the backdrop for authentic conversations and relationship building to occur, it doesn't necessarily mean those comfortable and personal spaces within the community are safe. As the fly by night photographers and Gang Land would like to portray, areas on the Reservation are not always safe. Though I detest such stagnant, one-sided views of Reservation communities, sometimes for local youth just as anywhere else in the world, there are safety issues.

On the last day of the job, one of the youth came surprisingly early. He hadn't slept that night and in the early morning hours, had an altercation with his father, not the man he calls Dad, but the man who helped bring him into this world. Due to the deeply personal conversation that

took place between me and the usually not so sincere youth, the entirety of the story will remain in that personal space between the two of us which occurred beneath the sun on the front lawn of the CDC.

Regardless, I assured him that he should stay and work. It was our last day and I told him that he could work alongside me digging holes around the foundation and priming the building. We could work together, both on the building and on his very real emotions. I affirmed that before quitting time he could go into the office and rest up before our barbeque rib celebration that Mark and Tilda were holding at their home, just off American Horse Creek. “I wasn’t gonna come up here today, but I’m tired ‘a that place. It’s always down, people always talkin trash Mike. But up here, it’s always happy and we have fun, so I came.” This story contrasted my linear western working brain once again. I had been thinking about what was left undone and how much of the building still needed remodeled instead of how much had been done—safe spaces had been created both at geographical and deeply personal levels.

The last hours of work concluded with the young man sleeping on the floor of the CDC, catching up after a long night, while others showed their emotions in different ways. After checking on the young man, I walked across the front lawn in the scorching heat and entered the youth facility that was steadily coming together. My serene, melancholy thoughts were interrupted by laughter, as one jokester who was pacing through the building yelled, “Fuck! Fuck I’m gonna miss this place!” while another put his arm around me and asked for us to get a picture together. In many ways it was an emotional day, but that space is still there and being over 90% remodeled, is certainly remodeled well enough to function as a community youth facility. But just like the facility, the personal spaces built during that summer, provide a greater abundance of opportunity to laugh, to cry, to let loose, and to build up one another.

Empowered Youth

Though the term empowerment is consistently debated, the term empowered youth here refers to their increased awareness of their abilities and their sense of accomplishment, derived from within their own community. Not only did the WKCDC in general and the job site in particular become a comfortable place for the youth, but they grew more comfortable with their abilities to work together despite differences in age, community, high school, and interests. More importantly, the youth building initiative enhanced their abilities to create small changes in their community. Small changes, both monumental and personal, are the antithesis of stagnant, unchanging communities. Just as New York City didn't spring up over night, individuals do not wake up one given morning and completely change the world. It is a process.

After a follow up visit on the Rez, I stayed with a family and was made aware that one of the youth had patched drywall in his *unci*'s basement, a skill which we had learned together. I mean together in every sense of the word. I did not know how to patch drywall until we replaced drywall and patched holes in the old school house. One of the main goals of the initiative was to provide job skills to the youth for future opportunities but namely so the youth could make changes in the households and communities they were living in at the present. Through empowering them, it is okay if I receive no credit for their training, in fact I don't expect to hear a "thanks" from the young man who patches his grandmother's wall. He has already showed his appreciation through the trust and respect he gave me over the summer. Anyways, "If you've done it all properly," Mark taught me, "very little credit will rest on your shoulders. The community will own the credit too" (personal communication, March 16, 2011). Kathy had warned me of this as well stating, "If you are looking for credit, go speak at a conference" (personal communication, May 24, 2011).

This was reiterated several times throughout the remodeling process. One youth picked a side window and decided that trimming in the window, with original wood from the old school house would be his project. During the course of several hours, he utilized the mitre saw, table saw, and pneumatic trim nail gun to restore the interior trimmings of the window. Later that evening, his mom walked through the building, examining what had been accomplished. “This is my window,” the young man pointed out, “I did it all by myself.”

“Sh-eh, nuhuh,” his mom joked with disbelief. She watched on as I took a picture of her son standing tall and proud by the window. After the picture, the mom laughed and said, “Now you can fix your window!”

Assets

Just as the WKCDC intended, the summer project provided both a means for youth to feel empowered and for youth to remodel an otherwise derelict building to help beautify their community. However, the youth building initiative exceeded their expectations. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the personal and structural assets that the youth building initiative enhanced.

As exemplified through prior stories, the youth felt personally empowered through learning new job skills, honing skills they already had such as the ability to problem solve, working together, and acting and reflecting on the notion that they do have a voice and a visible, useful presence within their communities. In a structural sense, though, the youth building initiative provided new assets to the District in at least three ways. The youth: 1) provided a new facility to host a variety of functions; 2) increased the financial assets of the communities’ development corporation; and 3) actualized the WKCDC as a true asset to the community.

In an area where family and community gatherings are abundant, a new space for parties, local parties, meals, weddings, community meetings and workshops is essential. Currently, Manderson has a CAP (Community Action Program) office and had a youth center, within the village, which was vandalized having most of the amenities stolen. Wounded Knee village has the Wounded Knee Community Service Center as well, but the building is actually under the jurisdiction of the Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing (OSLH). Likewise, the former youth councilman confided that having a District community youth facility distanced from the villages would promote greater creativity for local youth governance, providing a buffer zone for polarizing village politics.

The WKCDC, provides a space for such buffer zones, an area in which, the Board of Elders, are by-in-large exhausted with tribal infighting and antagonism. They also act like other organizations on the Reservation, in many ways, melding traditional Lakota ways of knowing with westernized business practices. At least initially, most of their funding has come from outside sources which often rely on outcomes, deadlines, and qualitative measures. Through receiving several small and mid-sized grants, the CDC is very aware of the difficulties working with organizations that focused on quantitative measures.

Not only is the grant process of applying, submitting, waiting, being denied, or being granted money along with a laundry list of stipulations arduous and time consuming, but the necessary evil of grants, does not address dire situations in the present. People focused on necessity— food, clothing, shelter, health security, and safety—today cannot afford, figuratively speaking, to wait for grants. Mark reiterated community frustrations with the grant writing process:

We have to act now! Communities don't have the time to commence to think to write a grant and wait nine months to possibly begin to plan for a grocery store, only to have to

write another grant to build the grocery store and wait six to nine more months to see if the grant came through or if the grant was denied to start the process over again.

Forethought, often a privilege to those not worried about receiving the daily provisions that some take for granted, is necessary to continue the grant writing process. But in the meantime, communities need to see change in their communities wrought by the energy from within their neighborhoods.

This was a concern for the CDC—getting something done on the ground and quickly to boost community esteem and confidence in the CDC. Thus the youth building became one symbol of accomplishment in the ‘here and now’ for the CDC and the youth who participated. It also became a monetary asset for the CDC, giving them greater leverage when they apply for federal grants or for bank loans, both of which rely on numerical standings such as monetary assets.

While interning for the WKCDC, I had to contend with doubtful or hesitant community members who rightfully asked questions like, “So what are those guys doing up there?” In the past, when money is received by community organizations on the Rez, or anywhere else for that matter, money is often passed on to family members or given to families to assist with utility bills, namely the high expenses of propane related to inadequately insulated and improperly maintained housing. This type of assistance provides noticeable yet very temporary fixes to community needs. Such assistance, though, can also nurture mentalities that focus solely on the present and can eliminate opportunities to think and plan into the near or long-term future to mitigate dire situations. For this reason, but also because of the corruption and nepotism in local politics, community members are initially skeptical even toward community organizations. The youth building initiative provided an opportunity for the community to participate in a community development process resulting in quick, noticeable changes, while the CDC was able

to focus on longer-term, more specialized processes such as grant writing for large sums of financial assistance from outside entities. The youth building initiative then, not only, proved to be a structural and financial asset to the community, but also a psychological and emotional asset—a symbol of what the community can accomplish through combining youthful energy and elderly forethought.

What could be done?

The youth building initiative was personal and communal, individual and national (Oglala Lakota Nation), young and old, past, present and future. The initial question of this section, “What have I left undone?” can then be reworded as, “What could be done?” Either question poses endless possibilities. The latter, however, is more positive and hopeful. As in any community, the possibilities are endless. However, the WKCDC has actively engaged youth and elders from various communities within their District, created a safe and stable environment for youth, provided a means to empower youth, and enhanced individual, community, and organizational assets. By focusing on the ‘here and now’ while acknowledging long-term community building, the CDC utilized willing and able community assets—the youth—to provide a better future for their communities. Just as I did for the youth, the CDC in a more encompassing way expanded the “epistemological curiosity” for the community allowing them to mobilize in a way conducive to securing a better future for the District (Macedo 2006:19). The process, much more than just job skill training, has now entailed countless youth and elders who participated in all aspects of the youth building initiative—from pre-planning to remodeling—and many others who have been involved with the CDC through volunteering office services, insights, and consultations as well as working as paid laborers and experts to finish the community youth facility. The youth building initiative catalyzed greater community

support for the CDC, which until then had been scrutinized for, “taking community money” and having nothing to show for it (community member, personal communications). As mentioned, grant writing is time and energy consuming and generally conducted aside from the view of community members leading them to believe that “nothing is being accomplished” (community member, personal communications).³⁴

Currently the CDC is completing a wood working shop, adjacent from the community youth building. This was an economic development initiative proposed by the Board after the youth building initiative was ending. Premiere Wood Products entailed the volunteerism and the paid labor of local community members and organizations to transform another abandoned building into something useful. The future possibilities are endless, yet the CDC provided a platform to engage community members, both dialogically and actively, in promoting a better future for the District.

³⁴ These reactions are produced by the same mentality which views longitudinal research as unhelpful to the Reservation, yet Kathy’s research has been monumental and has had wide reaching socio-economic effects in the micro-economic, tourist, housing, health care, and natural resource sectors among others.

Chapter 4

Participatory Evaluation and Recommendations

This chapter documents community responses to the initiative which were collected through hand-written letters by the youth, through observations as a participant, and by Lakota community members through participatory evaluation surveys.³⁵ The gathered information further details the effects of the initiative on developing both individuals and community. The chapter concludes with recommendations to consider for future youth and community development initiatives in the District.

Successes or “Peaks”

Due to my overzealousness and lack of experience performing remodeling projects with youth, I initially proposed that the structure would be up and running as a community youth facility by July 15th, 2011—computer lab, art showcase, power point projector, kitchen, the whole works. If judging success in accordance with my initial thoughts, equating success with monuments and structural outcomes as opposed to socially sustainable processes, the whole project could have been viewed as a flop. During my first community feedback trip to the Rez, though, the visit with the Wounded Knee couple provided the impetus needed to change my emphasis from outcomes to processes. I did get caught up on completing daily construction tasks, yet the words from a Wounded Knee elder remained central to my understanding: “Focus on the little successes” because big successes can feel overwhelming and lead to failure. “When they come to work within ten minutes of being ‘on time’, congratulate them and thank them,” he explained (personal communication, March 18, 2011). I frequently forgot his words, which are important to any development initiative. Small successes are important, indeed they lead to sustainable outcomes.

³⁵ The evaluation is attached as Appendix IV.

Small Successes

At the end of the first week, I spoke to the youth about my highs and lows—my thoughts both positive and negative concerning the project. One youth interrupted as I talked about highs and lows, “peaks and pits, Mike, peaks and pits.” I told the youth what I liked: their hard work; their ability to work together; their humility in learning new things; and their ability to remain humorous and light hearted despite the blaring heat and rapid work pace. Then, I told them what could be worked on: staying on task and formulating away that each youth could work their maximum 4 hours a day, without all the youth being there at once, basically setting up half day shifts. When I asked the youth for their responses and feedback the room grew silent. One young man broke the silence and declared, “I’m just glad I gotta job!” He was not interrupted by laughter, snide remarks or the like. He was serious and the other young men and women in the CDC office knew it. My surprise at his response was indicative of how far I had strayed, just in the first week, from focusing on small successes, small processes. My thoughts were focused toward a rigid, finalized outcome. The expectations of outsiders focusing on rigid outcomes contrast with locals focusing on community strengthening processes leads to development failures. Local communities are blamed for and bear the brunt of perceived failures, though ‘failure’ is often assessed from foreign notions of success, thrust upon locals by outside understandings and ‘ways of doing’. Success is not inherently equal to or necessarily derived from outcomes.

The youth and community members continually reorganized my priorities, despite my western bent toward measuring success with a completed community youth facility. Small successes were achieved and acknowledged by youth throughout the program. The following examples of success demonstrates that the term ‘small’ is relative and should not be used to

denigrate or undermine community perceptions of success. On the last day of the job, youth wrote letters to the CDC, expressing their appreciation for being invited to work on the community youth building. “I just wanted to say thank U for all the great timez an[d . . .] wonderful food and drinks,” noted one young man. Similarly, another wrote, “Thank you for feeding me and letting me get on [the] computer.” Some of the youth wrote about the building in light of “teaching us a new skill” or “teaching me a lot of new stuff and how to repair and fix an old house.” But the youth primarily mentioned the fun they had, the food they ate, and the new things they learned without connecting the processes to the outcome of a remodeled community youth facility. They were appreciative, as one young man wrote, “for the opportunity for working on the house and giving us a chance to do something new.” But processes, not an outcome, glued the community to a development initiative.

Action

Through participant observation, I gleaned information from youth and the community concerning their perceptions of the youth building initiative. I felt relieved during the first couple of days when one young man told his friends, “I like this supervisor better,” and then went on to explain that during this program they “actually get to do stuff.” Further questioning the young man as he swept and gutted out the building, led him to explain this was the first time they ever did anything which felt productive during the Summer Youth Program. In the past some of them were given lawnmowers that didn’t work and supervisors who left them alone. With nothing to do, youth would migrate home or to the basketball courts until clock-out time. His friends shared similar stories. Some of this went on in 2011, when other groups of youth were playing games on their electronic devices, or computers and getting paid for it.

Volunteerism

Another notable observation was the amount of voluntary overtime some of the youth worked. One young man from Wounded Knee worked overtime every week, while others helped out occasionally. Volunteers from the community provided the CDC with approximately 30 hours of unpaid services during the summer. During the October follow up visit six community members donated approximately 20 hours of their time to the community youth building.

Healthy Spaces

One of my most rewarding experiences, as previously noted, was when a young man who almost did not show up on the last day but then decided to (see Ch. 3). He felt the job site represented a safe and happy space for him. Safe and happy are two elements which come to mind when people think of healthy youth and communities and, thus, the young man's thoughts should be considered as a success. The WKCDC hopes to provide safe and happy spaces both for youth and other community members.

Job Training, Engagement, and Coming Full Circle

Another success was rewarding for myself, a young man, and the CDC. The young man from Wounded Knee who received his own personal tool bag from the CDC was not only able to utilize his skills while working with an uncle in Rapid City, but was able to further work for hire by the CDC (see Ch. 3). He was able to work in early December at \$10 per hour making money for him and his family just before Christmas. Before I came to the Reservation that weekend, I called his father to see if the son was available to work. He invited me to visit them once I arrived at Wounded Knee. While sitting at their kitchen table, the young man said, "When I found out it was you [talking to Dad on the phone], I was like, yeah, I'll help Mike. I didn't even know I was gonna get paid."

This young man's story has been woven throughout the study. During the summer, the youth was paid, through a federal program to work at the CDC, but his father would not allow him to work voluntary, unpaid overtime. Upon meeting his father, though, trust was built and his son was then allowed to work overtime. Most of the young man's money went to his family. He was gifted with a tool belt from his community's development corporation. The young man used the tool belt to work with his uncle for 2 months at \$12/hr. Shortly after that, his tool belt was used as collateral to acquire safer car tires for the winter. Then the young man volunteered his time to the CDC in October to give back to the community. After agreeing, to what he thought was volunteering in December, he was paid through funding by the CDC. During that time, his father returned the tool belt to him. Events from the past, present, and future had come full circle.

Community Approval and Longevity

Aside from the relational and psychological aspects associated with the youth building initiative, the actual remodeling proved effective as well. Two Lakota community organizations, the District Summer Youth Program Supervisor, and the Wounded Knee couple all asked if I would return in 2012 to participate in similar projects. Though only one of these community members have followed up with me, their initial responses signified an approval in what was taking place in the District.

The above mentioned observations, as well as the high turnout at the community feed and changes in some community members' perceptions toward the CDC, provided insight into community perceptions. However, an evaluation survey was created by the CDC and myself to strategically evaluate the program according to youth, families, and the Board of Directors. As warned, the surveys did not go over well. Though a community member agreed to distribute them to the local youth, for a small payment per completed survey, only that member and their

nuclear family filled out the survey. In all they provided me with six completed surveys which are helpful but, nevertheless, more input could have proved valuable for further program planning.

Individual and Family Empowerment

One young lady, a freshman in high school wrote: “When I set my mind at something I can achieve it.” The summer of 2011 was the first year this young lady participated in the Summer Youth Program, so she was unable to compare her experience to other years. However, she felt empowered from her experience. The two females assigned to the WKCDC job site stayed in the office for the most part. However, this young lady painted the entire handicap ramp in front of the CDC and along with her younger sister, mother, and father, she painted a large portion of the community youth facility.

When asked, “How did you feel about yourself or your potential at the end of the 2011 summer youth program?” her brother wrote, “I feel good. [I] learned something different this year. [I] did something different for once.” He learned he was a “good worker,” which I can vouch for. This young man, after spending four years obtaining second year, sophomore status in high school, said he was ready to quit “messing around.” Currently his GPA is a solid 3.0. He will graduate high school one semester earlier than originally expected and is planning to join the Oglala Lakota Tribal Police.

Another youth related his experience on the job site to a Lakota tradition of manhood: “[I learned] to suffer in the hot sun and [to] be a warrior, install windows, painting, [and] measuring.” Later this young man helped with a sliding patio door installation and a roofing job in Colorado. His answer reiterated his Lakota pride, but also his humor. He continually fretted me on the job site, telling me to let my hair down and “be a warrior.”

His antics, indicative of typical Lakota humor, particularly impressed my sons. Once, when Dylan offered Devin a soda, a drink which had been shared by several of the youth already, Devin was at first apprehensive. But when Dylan emphasized, “It’s okay, we’re warriors!” Devin kicked back the drink and gulped it with pride, wiped the remnant drips off his chin, and smiled. Reservation youth were not the only ones feeling empowered.

The mother who filled out the survey “learned that if [she] can push [her] kids they will learn and finish their project.” She also expressed satisfaction in that her “kids learned how to remodel a house” and “[t]hat [her] kids achieved something.” To the question: “Is there anything you would like to add or anything you think me or the WKCDC should know?” she responded, “keep up the good work every year.” Throughout the District, this was the only nuclear family in which the entire household, at one point or another, dedicated time to the youth building initiative. This is particularly impressive in that the mother, and specifically the father, was initially skeptical of the CDC’s rhetoric of community and economic development and of Mark.

Though these results are flattering the biases of such responses are evident. The process made apparent the positive approval of everyone involved and even passer-bys was apparent throughout the process. The negative feelings associated with the youth building initiative were less apparent.

“Pits”

Community Strife

Every time I entered the CAP Office in Manderson, sometimes upwards of five times a day, I was confronted, though respectfully, with community strife toward the CDC. To clock the youth workers in daily, I drove one mile to the CAP Office, a rounded structure prevalent in almost every community on the Reservation. Every morning I was greeted by a community

member mopping the floors. Several folks walked up and down the hallways entering and exiting various offices. The main office smelled of freshly brewed coffee. A bit of rapport was built with the office staff and we eventually engaged in casual conversation. By the end of the youth building initiative the office staff offered me candies, coffee, and the opportunity to work on another project. Yet at first, the atmosphere felt fairly tense when I was in the office. The first morning clocking in the students, a well known fellow and facilities manager for the District asked, “Where are you working?”

“Half mile up the hill there at the CDC,” I responded.

“Ahg, that’s the wrong place!” he yelled from across the office. He, along with the three ladies around him chuckled. His jocular outburst obviously stemmed from a more serious concern. This concern was expressed the following week by the mother of a fourteen year old youth worker. The worker himself was a large male, probably 6’2”, very quiet, and down cast. He wore a grey hooded sweat jacket daily, even during the heat of the day and did not converse often. The first week of the job was rather mundane and for nearly two days this young man pulled nails out of base board and quarter round, in hopes we could sand, stain, and reinstall them as original trim. One morning as I clocked youth, I told his mother who worked at the CAP Office, to come up and see what her son had been doing. I reiterated that he was a hard, and thus far, dedicated worker. She inhaled then exhaled. Reluctance overwhelmed her countenance. “Well, what do you do?” she asked.

“Me or the CDC?” I asked in return.

“Well, why don’t they remodel the youth facility that we have? We have one right here in Manderson,” she continued. I explained to her my perspective and assured her that my thoughts and opinions were not necessarily the thoughts and opinions of the CDC Board. I

explained the concept of having a community youth facility for the entire District. Then I explained some community members' rationale: placing it in the middle of Manderson would create tensions and appropriation of facility resources by Manderson, restricting access by other villages in the District. Furthermore, I said, I'm not into "this community, that community" talk. No matter where we placed the community youth facility, I explained, someone would complain about not having it in their community. Either way, I continued, other community members will ban together and appreciate that the CDC took initiative to preserve a building that would have otherwise gone to waste. I ended with the question, "So where is the perfect place to have a district community building?"

The lady continued the conversation by explaining her perspective on community factioning: "I wasn't into it [community antagonism] either until I realized 'they', [people from Wounded Knee], are over there, and 'we' are here, and 'they' use our CAP Office and take our resources." I listened respectfully and intently, trying to understand from her perspective but couldn't help but think: "Lady, it's not about politics, it's about your son!" As an outsider distanced from and naïve of the real community struggles she was referring to it is easy to cast judgmental thoughts. Nevertheless, she never stepped foot near the job site, and several days after our conversation, her son quit. She connoted it with him being bored from pulling nails, but it was much more than that. Along with her aforementioned qualms, she, and the CDC Office Assistant at that time were continually butting heads at District meetings.

Several weeks later, another young man who worked on the building, quietly asked the same question. He asked it, not outright, but casually within another conversation as if it were something he had pondered and discussed with family members. "Why aren't we remodeling the building that's already in Manderson?" he questioned. I explained to him the same thing I

explained to the woman at the CAP Office, and added that the CDC felt there was less chances of having it vandalized being further from the housing. Regretfully, I snuffed a learning moment for myself and failed to get at the bottom of why people were asking this question.

Through later conversation by community members at the CAP Office I was told the WKCDC “stole [their] money.” It was assumed, at least by some, that the Empowerment Zone money, which had been dispersed in the 90s, was supposed to go the CAP Office. I never heard anything else to substantiate their claim. Nevertheless, their interpretation of past events is valid and should be taken into account by the CDC as they continue economic and community development in the District.

Tribal Strife

On several occasions, locals mentioned the Tribal Administration was trying to freeze the CDC’s assets because the CDC is on privately held land, which legally makes them a non-tribal entity. This was the very reason, though, that the Tribe could not freeze their assets. The Tribe has no jurisdiction over the CDC, even though the CDC, with the exception of Mark, is comprised of enrolled tribal members. Despite the Board members feeling emotionally aroused from setbacks due to tribal strife, they were bound to make motions toward beautifying their District. Indeed at a Board meeting, the eighty-five year old Board Chair stated, “It’s about the community, not just the Board members, we’ve got to make them know that. [. . .] We’re gonna see some development here [. . .] it’s for the children.” Yet some of the Tribal Administrators are from the Wounded Knee District. Community level strife has transcended to tribal level strife, and vice-versa.

To date, no Tribal Council members have met with the CDC, yet some of them oppose, and are moving toward freezing the CDC’s assets. They have no legal grounds to do this. “They

don't want to change," stated a young woman living in Manderson who was educated at Oglala Lakota College. Members of the Tribal Administration claim the CDC has no jurisdiction on the Reservation, and that they are a state-chartered organization. However, the CDC is not state chartered. They are recognized by the State of South Dakota, and the U.S. as a certified 501 (c) (3), non-profit organization. In all fairness, it should be mentioned, that the CDC, as of yet, has not followed through with meeting the Tribal Administration and clearly conveying their intentions either.

Individual and Relational Contradictions

Community and tribal level strife are evident, yet even more complicated at the individual and relational level. Despite tribal contention, volunteers continue to donate their time and efforts for community and economic development and women fulfill their TANF requirements at the CDC office. One such woman, I met briefly during a follow-up visit. As Mark and I leveled the foundation of the building a young Lakota lady approached him. After their conversation Mark, with a nod hinted toward her partner, and said "Hey, were having a volunteer day today and tomorrow so tell your boyfriend he can help." As she walked over to the car to inform her partner, Mark told me that she was the new TANF worker at the CDC. To our surprise the young man immediately exited the driver-side door, strolled away from the car, and walked toward our dirt encrusted bodies. He watched carefully, understanding our goals for the day and visualizing what we were trying to accomplish by jacking up the foundation. After five minutes he grabbed a shovel, jumped into one of the three foot deep holes, and began digging. Mixing Portland cement with dirt and water and then shoveling the condensed muck into prefabricated concrete columns was dusty, dirty, and yet, completely necessary to maintain the integrity of the newly remodeled facility. Conversation between the three of us lightened the

mood and supported my thoughts, that relationships are foundational, no pun intended, to community development (community member, personal communication, March 18, 2011; Bopp and Bopp 2006; Kretzmann and McKnight 1993).

The young man, handsome, athletic, and in his early twenties, had recently married the TANF worker. He raises her two children as his own. He spoke highly of respecting women, taking care of his wife, nurturing her through a bout of health complications, and being a role model to his nephews and other family members. He attributed his thoughts on being a male role model to his Dad. Toward the end of the day, I inquired, “Who is your father anyways?” As it turned out, his father has been involved with the Tribal Administration for nearly 30 years. When the young man left with his wife, I thought: “A Tribal Administrator’s son just donated three hours of service to the CDC’s assets, the Tribal Administrator’s daughter-in-law is learning job skills through her TANF commitments with the CDC, and the CDC is, in essence, supporting two of the Tribal Administrator’s grandchildren. By the CDC allowing her to fulfill TANF’s weekly working requirements, she is able to receive Federal, financial assistance. Yet the Tribal Council has tried to destroy any leeway the CDC has gained toward enhancing development for the Wounded Knee District.

Vandalism

The most explicit form of community dissatisfaction with the youth building initiative, but more specifically with the CDC was vandalism. The CDC was forcibly broken into during October of 2011. A laptop was stolen and electronic copies of the receipt were erased from an office computer. The CDC was broken into one time afterwards. Additionally, some sheetrock in an adjacent, abandoned building was crushed, and a window in the community youth facility was broken. Though no charges were filed, minor investigations occurred. The CDC believes

that these occurrences were related to vengeance from a lady who's contract with the CDC expired during October. Sadly, this reinforces the young man's lived experience who said: "it's just gonna get broke."

Prior to the youth building initiative, the community organizer had recommended I let the youth know "that things have value" and assure that "negativity is left at the gate." It is only through the youths' individual transformation that they can influence those around them, or their children in the future to refrain from activities which have far reaching negative consequences. Through valuing themselves they can leave negativity at the gate, as opposed to thrusting it upon the spaces and places they call home, weakening the cycle of deleterious community angst.

My 2 Cents

As an outside participant, it is beneficial to be relieved of burdens of community expectations toward continual factioning and antagonism or to be relieved of the real life emotional and physical trauma from what, from the outside, can appear to be ridiculous internal community strife. Factionalism, though, is a serious problem that hinders development both on the Reservation and in communities throughout the globe. The Federal government carefully and strategically created political factionalism among the Lakota through years of oppressive policy and resource rationing. Now, through the tribal government operating under non-traditional modes of governance, factionalism continues as a barrier to community development. Only through relationship building and continual dialogue can perceptions leading to strife, whether true or contrived, be brought to the surface.

Mitigating Strife

In general, as community participation increases, skepticism and strife can be more easily understood and mitigated. The CDC is already incorporating more community members and

organizations from the tribal, state, and national levels into their networks. Expanding their visibility, and engaging more community members as participants can lead to the transparency needed to relieve skepticism. Currently, some community members have wondered, “Where is all the money going?,” despite the fact, there wasn’t much money to begin with. Offering workshops to community members for researching economic resources, fundraising, and grant writing could provide more spaces for community involvement and greater budgetary transparency. Simultaneously, engaging in more community oriented activities such as bake sales may provide an avenue for community members to come together at the CDC. Bake sales, arts and craft sales, or other appropriate home-town strategies to cater to tourists and raise funds during the summer months, may facilitate greater community cohesion toward economic and community development. Though the economic returns of such events are often trivial, the social returns of relationship building are long-term and necessary for community development. Utilizing more community members as worthy participants is essential.

Additionally, the CDC is comprised of local tribal members who are intimately aware of community needs and assets. However, spending more time and resources, say through community gatherings, is necessary to gain input from other, more skeptical, community members. More sharing of ideas and opinions may allow for a broadened view of community visioning and erode some community and tribal strife.

Gender

The CDC has been influential in training young women through the TANF program. Their efforts, training women, have been noticed by several community members. One community member, a young lady and mother who interned there throughout the summer, has benefitted substantially through her involvement with the CDC. Her goal, when I first met her,

was to rent an apartment in Rapid City and start a life for her and her children. All summer she worked toward this goal, while learning office skills at the CDC. In October, she was still working at the CDC. When I entered her office to catch up with her, she was filling out requirements for an apartment lease. During my December visit, I was unable to speak with her, yet a letter posted on the CDC's cork board made evident her achievements. The letter, from the young lady, thanked the CDC for providing her with a down payment for her first apartment and showed her gratitude for what the CDC had done for her and her community. She had a goal, and through hard work and dedication, she achieved it. With humility though, she extended gratitude to the organization that helped her achieve her goals.

This woman's story is a huge success and should not be taken lightly by the CDC staff and Board. When youth initiatives are planned for the future, they should consider this story. The youth building initiative itself was about youth development. However, the youth were predominantly males. One of the females was a diligent painter while the other young lady in the program preferred to stay indoors. Despite current gender role expectations or perceptions, gender roles should be considered in future youth development initiatives. There is much work to be done for both men and women striving to create healthy communities—healthy space for the future.

Maintaining Connections

Just yesterday while taking a break from typing, my brother from Manderson called to shoot the breeze. We joked around, caught up on each other's family happenings, and then he mentioned, "I miss it up there." He was referring to the job site. He mentioned another youth had been talking about the job site earlier in the week too. It is a geographical space but is now a space within their collective memory, a place where "good things happen." One of these young

men passes the CDC daily on his way to school while the other drives by it several times a week. Yet they haven't been back to the CDC since July.

Connections with youth need to be maintained. Without viewing youth as an unequivocal asset to communities, they “can easily become trapped in a cycle of ongoing dependency, and the community itself will lose some of its greatest potential assets” (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993:29). Surely, the Board and Mark view the youth as assets, but further actions must be taken to assure that youth recognize themselves as assets. Action must lead to self-reflection. Some notable ways to maintain constant communication while holding youth accountable as participants of community development include: hiring some as maintenance workers; keeping in touch with them through face-to-face interactions, letters, and phone calls, or simply inquiring about their future plans. Engaging in workshops, offering evening tutors for students, and even providing their space as a place for college studying or preparatory work are just a few more ideas. All of these recommendations, some which without a doubt have been considered by the Board, require money and resources. If the community development initiatives undertaken by the CDC are sustainable though, monetary flow will continue, whether as a slow trickle or through lump-sum grants.

Conclusion

The remainder of this study includes: a summarization of the youth building initiative in the Wounded Knee District, lessons learned, a recap of the *theory of participation*, and a final urge for authentic participation.

A Community and a Process

This study provides an alternative view to “a shocking and disturbing world,” and “a world that has been hidden from us in plain sight,” as portrayed by public media (ABC News 2011). The WKCDC provides a space where Lakota people participate in community development, develop their communities and selves, and turn assets which could go to waste into something *waste*. With the help of community members and outsiders they have developed “spaces of hope and possibilities, despite the enormous odds aligned against them” (Smith 1999:98). Lakota voices are heard and manifested into social and economic action in the Wounded Knee District. Through daily interactions in the ‘here and now’, the CDC is decolonizing their environment. They act as gate keepers of community and individual development processes, by not allowing outsiders to thrust development initiatives or foreign principles, goals, and directives into their communities.

My actions on the Reservation were most notably part of the present. But my learning as a participant, as a self-reflective teacher, and student, has greater future implications for Lakota people and participants engaging in development in general. Using a theoretical perspective based on *participation* allowed relationships to be built on trust—a firm foundation for individual and community development. Trust in other human beings and trust in oneself is essential for lasting, sustainable development (Bopp and Bopp 2006:64-67, 209).

To engage as a *participant*, regardless of background and expertise, a degree of trust must occur at initiation. Similar to other indigenous people, some Lakota people are skeptical of outsiders. But if some people hadn't trusted me, I would not have been invited to participate in development. Accordingly, I trusted in Lakota people just as some people trust equations, laws of nature, foundations of academic disciplines, and 'experts'. In doing so, Lakota ways of knowing, and culturally compatible ways of doing, allowed the youth building initiative to flow as a participatory development initiative. Because of our trust for one another, the youth building initiative resulted in genuine, community action. Without trust the youth building initiative would have remained a local dream, a lofty theoretical discussion, akin to an "empty word" void of commitment, action, and transformation (Freire 2006:87).

By welcoming, though with caution, outside *participation*, the CDC reiterated the notion that "the misfortune of anyone is the business of everyone" (Bopp and Bopp 2006:82). This reflects a common Lakota belief, much older than academic and development literature, that is used frequently at ceremonies or as a departing gesture: *Mitakuye Oyasin*, or We are All Related. "All of us, no matter who you are (person), or what you are (grass, trees, rocks), are the same. No one is better than anyone else" (Black Bonnet 2010).

Perhaps humanity is not all related or perhaps 'We are All Related'. Regardless of the multiple positions to refute or support this claim, we can all relate through our humanity—through our lived experiences, between the miracles of life and death, of being human. In community initiated development processes, humanity provides a point of commonality where outsiders and local community members can convene at the same development table, more closely leveling the playing field, and addressing the negative power

imbalances that negate community voice in development processes. This facilitates a stage where genuine *participation* can occur.

Initially, the first sentence of this conclusion stated, “The Lakota have nothing to learn from this thesis.” Self-effacement or the ‘I learned more from them than they’ll ever learn from me’ mentality, is nice and appears humble, but in essence can be used to mask intentions and downplay pride of practitioners and academics, allowing outsiders to continually wedge themselves within communities. This is counter-intuitive to the *theory of participation* which I am calling for throughout this study. In actuality, authentic dialogue, in this case the ongoing dialogue of participatory development renders a “horizontal relationship,” a two-way relationship among participants (Freire 2006:91). I benefitted immensely from my participation with Lakota people, and will continue too. Likewise, my effects on the Reservation, though they will not always be connected to my name, will continue through a web of interactions, as evident when the Lakota young man repaired his grandmother’s basement walls.

Participatory development combines assets with local communities with the assets of outsiders in a way that is not destructive toward or invasive to local communities or individual psyches. As authentic *participants*, outsiders are not in control. We do not call the shots. Indeed outsider shot calling has led to the violent decline of indigenous communities for hundreds of years and the current pressing need to decolonize development. Outside *participants*, though, do have the potential to add value to communities and participatory development in a multitude of ways. From this specific case study, I learned how outside participants can: 1) enter and engage with a community that has different “ways of knowing” than oneself—providing motivation for an outsider and community members to dialogue, reflect, and act with one another; 2) assess and record the processes of a community development

initiative—both successes and failures—so that future development initiators can access useful, foundational knowledge; and lastly, 3) test the *theory of participation* to look for imperfections which can be addressed to further improve the way in which outsiders interact with local communities.

Lessons Learned

An Outsider's Perspective

Entering the Wounded Knee District as an outsider allowed me to contribute a different perspective to a community initiative. The summer of 2011 was influential for the CDC. They felt the time had come for them to let others know, “It’s about the community [and] the children” (personal communication). While there are community members on the Reservation, well versed in carpentry, the possibility for them to donate large tracts of time, and abandoned their customers, especially in an area accustomed to economic hardship, was not feasible. In fact, the implication of community projects on community resources, including community members should be considered in any community development initiative (Smith 1999:140). My accessibility and privileges of university resources and a wife with a stable income and psyche, allowed me to dedicate several months to a project in exchange for internship experience, gas money and a Master of Arts Thesis. Thankfully, a small grant allowed the CDC to gift me with income for the project as well, but the original agreement did not entail a salary. Thus, as an outsider, I was able to funnel resources onto the Reservation to both work as an asset for the community and to increase community assets through youth esteem and structural remodeling.

For myself, I was able to engage in a setting which could have been uncomfortable had I not relinquished some control, control which is derived from access to resources, in my case—time, social connections, and university technologies. The anti-systemic movements of flowing

resources toward the Reservation, in a manner congruent with community defined goals, and continually addressing control, provided a situation, counter to predominant modes of development. The Lakota were in charge of community development as opposed to being subjected to development. Though I stumbled through the process in many ways, presenting myself with humility—as both teacher and student— created opportunities to dialogue with local community members about my presence, my position, and my mistakes. Humility facilitates learning.

As an outsider I witnessed community and tribal strife, without being directly engaged with or internally affected by the associated turmoil. Indeed, my own community, where I was born and raised, could benefit from youth esteem and structural remodeling. Yet having come from within that community would present some challenges. I have deep historical and familial roots in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia which provide both positive memories and relationships but also negative turmoil. However, while working in a community as an outsider, I was able to focus on a community defined goal, and direct community enthusiasm and other assets toward that goal, in order that processes were rendered to enhance youth esteem and job preparedness. An outsider's ability to see beyond the bare life 'here and now' provides a perspective geared toward the future health of local communities. Often times, elders envision healthy futures, but, nearing the end of their life, are often no longer physically able to enact their visions. My position as an outsider allowed me to engage in conversations with youth and elders from different communities, and diverse political stances which are otherwise, often rife with conflict. These conversations opened up new occasions for dialogue, reflection, and action for the sake of community development.

Documentation and Replication

Originally, I imagined the on-the-ground, ‘here and now’ effects of the youth building initiative, coupled with the indirect benefits of informing outsiders to engage as authentic participants in local communities, were the only ways that the Lakota could benefit from this written study. In other words, in viewing the last 15 months as a development process, I perceived my construction work as action, beneficial to Lakota communities, and the written study as reflection, beneficial to outsiders. However, this, in-and-of-itself, is segregationist. This binary thinking, compartmentalizes the entire dialogue which has been ongoing between myself and Lakota communities. Just as outsiders benefitted from construction, through the selling of materials, tax write offs, and the emotional and psychological effects of ‘donating to a cause’, Lakota people can benefit from the written component of this study. This study will be used as documentation for the CDC’s first community development initiative. However, it is beneficial to other community development corporations or community groups both on and off the Rez who are interested in undertaking similar initiatives. Similarly, the presentation derived from condensing this study, could be useful for educating organizations about participatory development and explaining the possibilities of outsider/community partnerships in reaching community defined goals.

Theoretical Imperfections

Participatory development is not a magical solution to community problems. No matter how closely someone is aligned with the *theory of participation*, there will be problems which arise as humans interact. For example, there will be times when community values are conflicting with the principles of an outside participant. Earlier, I wrote that “[a]ll communities are comprised of principles, which, in some way or another, are compatible with the principles of other people” (see Ch.1). This does not mean principles are always compatible with one another.

Yet, the fluid nature of principles and the local initiation of development processes required by the *theory of participation*, provides opportunities to deal with conflict.

Principles are fluid in the sense that outsiders and communities may not have the same type of principles, but can still come together, knowing that principles are important. For example, many of my spiritual beliefs are not completely in line with my Lakota friends. But we are able to learn from one another and agree that spirituality is important. This allows for the building of common ground even amongst dissimilar views. However, a hope for common ground does not provide a clear answer for how to deal with conflicting views of outsiders and communities. This section presents some lessons learned to help address conflicting principles.

It is foreseeable that, when employing the *theory of participation*, in other projects or in other cultures, outside and community principles may appear incongruent with one another. In these situations, though, through processes, there may be room for mitigation. For example, some communities place high levels of emphasis on leadership hierarchies, which contrasts the liberal, Western notions of inclusivity, and grass roots approaches. Ignoring these principles and thrusting outside derived principles and theories on a community would be detrimental. Indeed, this is a colonial move. If used authentically, the *theory of participation* cannot be used to assimilate a cultural group to fit an outsider's perception of principles.

On the other hand, a principle, such as strict adherence to hierarchical rule, may require an outside participant to work more closely with elected or delegated leaders rather than every day community members. Though this appears to contradict inclusivity, this does not mean through processes, other voices cannot be included. For example, American 'culture' has long been considered male centric and male dominant. Males earn more money than females and males comprise a large majority of leadership, compared to females. However, I am hard

pressed to think of any male I know, who is in a relationship with a female, and whose decisions are not heavily influenced or even dictated by her physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, and economic assets and needs. Concepts such as leadership and hierarchy, and the language used to define such concepts, are heavily contingent upon the cultures from which they derive, and thus should be viewed so. In this way, principles may be more congruent than they first appear and through processes, could be negotiated.

Even observing communities to provide room for other voices would prove difficult in some circumstances, though. It would be difficult for me to even observe, or converse casually with, women from conservative families in Iraq, for example. Such situations could be mitigated through a diversification of outside participants. In other words, my southern drawl and male orientation would not assist me in this situation. Yet an outside female, or a female working for a community development organization, or other organizations that mingle among both outsiders and local communities may provide opportunities in this situation. Through processes—building relationships, observing, and interacting with community members, on a human-to-human level—mitigating perceived differences between outsider and local community members is possible.

Historically, the most damaging scenario involving incongruent principles is when outsiders stay and forcefully, whether physically, economically, spiritually, or psychologically, try to change the community. Striving to change a community by imposing a principle, overarching theory, or belief system on them is not congruent with *participation*. In fact, that is colonialism, the antithesis of the *theory of participation*. Colonialism was, and is, all about perceiving other people and their spaces as inferior to principles considered foreign or wrong to the people being judged. Judgment are what colonizers used and still use to justify conquering

lands, bodies, and minds, in an effort to change others, or make them disappear. An empty building, marring Wounded Knee, is a less violent indication of this mindset, even though it derived from the good intentions of a former AIMer. An outsider planned and built the structure, without considering the social and spiritual elements of the community (see Ch. 2). He was focused on outcomes, and ignorant of the communities' adherence to processes. The community had little input into the building, and in return, has received little, if any, benefits from the empty, metal building. *Participatory* initiatives must arise from within communities, not be thrust upon them.

It could be beneficial, depending on the situation, to dialogue about perceivably incongruent principles. Indeed, ways of knowing are continually shaped by experiences with the world. Dialogue enhances, informs, and revises perceptions. This is, in part, transformation, a critical component to development. Thus a change in principles, derived from dialogue between locals and outsiders, may enhance a development initiative. If a community did not want outside assets as part of their local development, they would not have asked for assistance from outside participants (Harrison 2001:65). Accordingly, assets are often delivered in the form of alternative ideas and perspectives. Though an outside participant must work *for* and *with* local communities, this does not insinuate a master/slave relationship that leaves outsiders at the beck and call of local communities. If the outsider participant's voice is muffled, dialogue is not achieved and the cycle of inhumanity continues (Freire 2006:57).

Using a dialogical process to mitigate conflicting principles occurred several times during the youth building initiative. Most notably, was when Mark contested my outsider, academically derived, view of inclusivity. On one hand, I felt ill prepared for not having spoken with many youth before the first day on the job site. On the other hand, I continued to make decisions about

the youth building before the remodeling process. Mark described my actions as philosophically different than the CDC's and warned me not to "continue forty years of dependency and disabling" (St. Pierre, personal communication, May 20, 2011; see Ch. 2). I was told by four community members, that I should gain insight from youth after meeting them for the first time and engaging with them on the job site. Several others mentioned that I should use my social networks, people who already knew and trusted me, to gain information. I had to build trust and respect with the youth first. I had to go through the processes which were appropriate to the community.

Another example of conflicting principles during the youth building initiative centered on gender. As I mentioned earlier, I am not sure if the two females designated to the job site wanted to spend most of their time in the office due to personal desires or cultural norms.³⁶ Yet, I had hoped that the remodeling aspects of the youth building initiative would be empowering both for males and females. When the timing seemed appropriate, on several occasions, I encouraged the two young ladies to assist with the community youth facility. One of the young ladies, including her female family members, proved to be excellent painters. From her work on the job site, she learned that she can achieve anything she sets her mind to (see Ch. 4). The conversations I started with the young women and men about gender and gender roles never brought hostilities to the job site. Additionally, two CSU undergraduate females assisted during the final week of remodeling. Their presence provided a healthy alternative to the daily, presence of masculinity on the job site.

If values of participants are completely incongruent, an outside participant may relieve themselves from the participatory development process. This is precisely what my skeptical

³⁶ It should be noted that female office workers at the CDC dedicated days of construction labor to another remodeling project with the CDC and community volunteers during the writing of this study.

friend, the lady from Wounded Knee, meant when she advised me to continually ask critical questions to make sure I wanted to stay involved (see Ch. 2). Through further conversation, she explained that some development initiatives in the past solely benefitted people in the District who cared more about their pocket books than about the community. She knew that scandalous behaviors, such as power holders manipulating others to maintain control over local resources, are counter to my beliefs. If outsiders cannot handle conflicting principles and philosophies, though, it would be most appropriate to respectfully leave the situation, as to not become a colonizer.

More case studies are needed to test and improve the *theory of participation*. It cannot be used to police outsiders or communities with cruel intentions. Yet, enhancing the theory's plausibility to facilitate thorough dialogue among communities initiating development, and outsiders, is critical to solving local, community problems.

Recap of the Theory of Participation

Participatory approaches, as I argue in this study, require a philosophical understanding and inner reflection on principles such as trust for and of local communities, an appreciation for local values, and the ability to traverse dichotomous distinctions—to teach and to be taught, to speak and to listen, to view *all* involved first as humans and second as *participants*. Only then, can reflection lead to action and action reconstitute the need to reflect (Freire 2006), create new ways to view the world and to assess the lenses in which the world is viewed, and reiterate the philosophical foundations of *participation*. Only then, can *participation* become *theory*.

In this way the *theory of participation*, is similar to other theories. Just as Marxism requires a belief in labor exploitation resulting in capital accumulation, the mystification of laborers' perceptions, and social revolution (Antonio 2003); world-systems theory requires a

belief that the wealth of one nation is directly related to the impoverishment of another (Wallerstein 1979:61); evolutionary theories entail certain beliefs in historic biological processes; and white supremacy requires the belief in a supreme race; the *theory of participation* requires an inherent belief in the ability of human beings; belief that human beings have the capacity to transform their communities positively, or, ‘in a good way’. Through *participation*, the ability of human beings necessarily manifests in outward action just as theory, in general, manifests outwardly in the formulation of research questions and the quest to answer those questions. The community organizer from Manderson spoke at the CDC one evening about his life-long involvement with human development in the Wounded Knee District. His dedication and outward displays of trust, hope, and compassion has largely been built upon others who believed in him: “I remember sitting on my grandfather’s knee and hearing someone say, ‘This young boy is gonna do something for his people, and we are gonna see it happen. History is gonna track this man’” (personal communication, March 18, 2011).

Theory then, does not have to remain afloat in academic clouds but can rain down as action quenching both outsiders and insiders—*participants*—of development processes. The grounding of locally understood theory provides a situation in which judgments can be suspended and distinctions such as white/indigenous and outsider/insider are not erased, but become less important, further blurred if you will, to human development. In this way, the term ‘us’ can include both sides of binary distinctions and anything in the spaces between. This blurring provides a space where trust can be built, trust which has been broken at the individual and institutional level for over two centuries and continues today in the daily interactions between indigenous peoples and ‘whites’.

Despite this blurring, though, predisposed beliefs and predetermined judgments stand at the forefront of action, indeed they are a part of all humans and accompany the adoption of any theoretical perspective and way of knowing. As practitioners and academics, those beliefs can be minimized by adopting a theory which is flexible (not a boxed framework or rigid structure) and compatible with local ways of knowing. In this way, the judgments and predisposed beliefs on communities become personal and individual as opposed to structural and dogmatic. They become transformable instead of intertwined with and indispensable from an overarching belief system. This personalization and transformation is the beauty of the *theory of participation*. During a quest for healing from deep, historical trauma—human development at its most complex—Walter Littlemoon wrote:

I've come to realize that to judge a person from the position of being right or wrong prevented me from looking at them, or even myself, clearly and that in reality, prejudging was causing me to withdraw from the brotherhood of life to which the Lakota have always belonged (Littlemoon and Ridgeway 2009:88).

Entering a community as a *participant*, as a tool in the development process, provides a space where judgments can be more easily suspended. As human beings interact *with* one another, not as objectified subjects or subjectified objects under globalized theoretical scrutiny, but as human beings, reality and false judgments are more easily distinguishable from one another.

An Urge for Authentic Participation

In an age where sustainability infiltrates many discussions, in rural spaces, university settings, and anywhere in between, academics and practitioners have much to learn from the *theory of participation*. For universities, the practicality and replication of the *theory* in communities across the world, or even in neighborhoods down the street, promises opportunities for the past, the present, and the future. Replication is plausible because a *participatory approach* does not require an overarching, globalized, totalitarian theory, but entails action and

reflection, genuine dialogue, local initiation, and principles. This is contrary to predominant modes of development and research where questions are ‘answered’ and methods are employed apart from local ways of knowing. Approaches driven by theories unfamiliar to locally engaged community members are often viewed as invasive. However, by employing a theory which integrates “cultural protocols, values and behaviors [. . .], university researchers [. . .] can legitimate innovative, cutting-edge approaches which can privilege community-based projects” (Smith 1999:15, 125).

Participation, encompassing everyone involved, provides a mechanism in which local communities and namely indigenous peoples can funnel outside resources back to their communities in ways that decolonize their psyches. Soliciting outside assets to accompany community assets provides the means to both focus on the ‘here and now’ of development (ie. raising esteem) while broadening the possibilities for future empowerment (ie. job skill training). This is contrary to, unsustainable, short sighted modes of development. Some short sighted modes may be necessary, for immediate survival, but have draw backs as indicated by rotting bags of flour, in Africa, or heaps of ‘ungently’ worn clothing in Pine Ridge. Yet, even with authentic *participation*, monies, time, and other resources may not always be utilized to maximum efficiency. While reading over an initial draft of this study Mark thought: “Michael, this doesn’t always work! But,” he further explained through laughter, “doing it the other way never works” (St. Pierre, personal communications, February 13, 2012). In other words, outcomes, such as the delivery of flour and clothing, may occur when development initiatives are forced upon a community, but it is unlikely those outcomes will directly lead to empowerment, local-decision making, or greater community sustainability. More frequently they perpetuate dependency or facilitate further appropriation of wealth from local communities.

Being informed of successful *participatory approaches*, universities can come to understand authentic *participation*, contrary to approaches with the term ‘participatory’ tagged to it, as a sustainable solution to development. This is particularly compatible with Colorado State University’s (CSU:2012, italics added) mission to provide communities with “access to unbiased, high-quality information, tools, and skills to understand *their* unique needs and opportunities as *they* strengthen *their* economies and opportunities.”

On a global scale indigenous communities are keenly aware of development and the negative and positive implications associated with both the term and the practice. Furthermore indigenous groups are familiar with the *theory of participation*. As explained in this study, much of the theory is embedded within their day-to-day life—humility, listening, taking time to reflect, the purposeful avoidance of controlling and manipulating situations, and understanding that all things are connected.

Participation provides a platform where indigenous peoples can regain control of their own past, present, and future, control which has been traditionally appropriated by outsiders. This lengthy conversation began with assertions from a white, Frenchman, Michel Foucault, who by appearance, profession, and geographical location, could be viewed as a symbolic atrium to the heart of colonization. It is important, though, to understand that voices in positions of privilege, too, demand individual, community, and economic development be driven by local, indigenous voices.

Humans yearn to have rights, yet when marginalized communities cry out for their voice to be heard, for the right to live as human beings, outsider populations often become fearful or distrusting. This is evident in non-African American views of Jesse Jackson and the late Martin Luther King Jr., Arizona’s education policy concerning Mexican American History, and South

Dakota's political rhetoric concerning Indian reservations. Nevertheless, outsiders are necessary participants in the call for *participatory development*.

Humans, in general, know that indigenous peoples feel mistreated and marginalized. Accordingly the 'white man', or other visible symbols of privilege, colonialism, or control, must be viewed as authentic participants in liberating, not liberators of, the indigenous voice and decolonization (Bopp and Bopp 2006; Freire 2006). As participants of development, there is still much to learn about the unintended consequences of good intentions. But unintended consequences can be mitigated and avoided by participating *for* and *with* communities, not *over top* or *aside from* communities.

Furthermore, by understanding indigenous peoples' current trauma as having developed and perpetuated from outside of their communities (Hall and Fenelon 2009; Bodley 2008; Tucker 2007; Smith 1999; Fenelon 1998), the real 'Indian problem' is uncovered. The 'Indian problem' can be tamely described as a stripping of indigenous spiritual, individual, socio-economic, political, and natural resources, by outside forces. This problem is no longer solely relegated to indigenous communities, but to rural and other marginalized communities across the globe. Regardless, utilizing outsider resources as compatible assets to local community assets can enhance the efficiency of community momentum toward the positive and chip away at the 'problem' forced on to communities. The 'problem' originated with outsiders. So, then, the solutions must be equitably derived from authentic *participation*.

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Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation

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Appendix I

Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation



Box 200
Manderson, SD 57756
Telephone: (605) 867-1068
FAX: (605) 867-5574

“Empowering Wounded Knee District”
email- woundedkneecdc@gmail.com
website- www.woundedkneecdc.org

President- Bob (Frank) Ecoffey
Vice-president- Robert Lamont
Secretary- Valaria Red Cloud
Treasurer- Thomas Harvey

Member- Deb Cuny
Member- Karen White Butterfly
Member- Paul Pawnee Leggins
CEO- Mark St. Pierre



Equipping Youth for Future Generations:

*A request for donations to enhance technical capacity for
the Wounded Knee Youth Programs Facility*

Michael Brydge
WKCDC Intern, CSU Anthropology Graduate Student
5/13/2011

Introduction:

The following is a request for charitable donations to benefit a locally directed and inspired community initiative for development in Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Currently, an abandoned, single room school house (20'x35') mars the Wounded Knee District on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. With funds delegated by the Job Training Partnership Act, the Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation will pay nearly 40 youth (ages 14-22) from the district to transform the school house into the Wounded Knee Youth Programs Facility.³⁷ Despite available funds for hourly wages and a \$7,000 earmarked budget for the project, we are requesting donations to increase our technical capacity and ability to utilize materials that will ensure a viable building for the future of youth on the reservation.

Shannon County is the second poorest county per capita in the United States and though students have dreams and aspirations, they often fall short of opportunities due to the dire poverty on the reservation. The reservation is five hours from Fort Collins, making it the closest reservation to this area, the Southern Ute Reservation being nearly eight hours away in SW Colorado. This youth programs facility will provide meaningful opportunities for reservation youth—leaders of the future—in the social, political, and entrepreneurial realms.

Background and Foreground:

As an intern with WKCDC, working cooperatively with Colorado State University for four years, and with an extensive, fifteen year background in construction, I have been charged, along with several other supervisors and community members from the Wounded Knee District, to supervise the remodeling process of the abandoned school house. This supervision will include teaching the youth how to harness energy and enthusiasm toward remodeling the facility into something which sustains for future generations. The completed facility will provide youth with the technical resources to compete in the 21st century. This project will begin June 1st 2011 and will be completed by July 1st 2011. Though the facility will be renovated in one month, the project's success will last long into the future creating increased self worth, a sense of individual self-esteem, a plethora of carpentry skills and mutual feelings of community collaboration among all those involved.

So what?

It should be stressed that this project is extremely unique for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Hundreds of projects are started on the reservation every year. Unfortunately they rarely come to

³⁷ For more specific information on the Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation, the Wounded Knee Youth Programs Facility, or the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in general visit www.woundedkneecdc.org. The WKCDC is currently seeking 501 (c) (3) status but they are recognized by the State of South Dakota as a non-profit. We are currently operating under Village Earth, as an umbrella 501 (c) (3). For a tax deduction, use their tax ID #: 84-1243878. Village Earth's IRS 501 (c) (3) letter is attached to this email.

fruition because they are seldom initiated, directed, facilitated or completed by the community. Too often, outsiders impose their goals and objectives onto the community, without ever considering the true needs of those most closely impacted. This project, however, was initiated, planned and is being directed from within the local reservation communities. Likewise, other than myself as an intern, the entire labor force and energy will come from within the reservation communities. However, despite the local aspirations, external help is needed and is greatly appreciated.

Partners:

Currently involved in the project are the Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation, United Sioux Tribes, Colorado State University Department of Anthropology, the Wounded Knee Youth Council, Home Depot (Greeley, CO) and Habitat for Humanity (Fort Collins, CO). We are awaiting responses from Best Buy (Greeley and Rapid City).

Needed Materials:

The materials from the list will be used to replace all exterior doors and windows and some of the siding, paint the exterior structure, repair the ceiling, walls, and interior trim, paint the interior, remodel the bathrooms, and replace the roof. The personalized tool bags will be given to the youth as a catalyst to build their own tool kits and accumulate skills for the future. More materials will be needed; however, once the project is underway we will utilize our leftover earmarked funding to purchase them from Menards. This is a generous request; however, we appreciate your consideration in furthering both the youth's aspirations and community beautification within the Wounded Knee District at any capacity.

Personalized Tool Bags:

20 tool bags
40 pencils
20 Swanson speed squares
20 razor knives
20 tape measures
20 chalk boxes
10 trim hammers
10 straight claw framing hammers

Building Materials:

960 linear ft. 6"x 1/2" clear, kiln dried cedar siding
1230 sq ft. of Lifetime Hidden Fastener Metal Roofing
27' Residential Ridge
70' Roof Edge
27' Valley Cap W-Wing
13' Residential Dormer Flashing
54' Residential Rake
2 pkg. Pro-Ridge Vent
5 sheets of 1/2" sheet rock
4 sheets of 5/8" sheet rock
3 sheets of 3/4" tongue and groove OSB

9ft. 3.5"x 3/4" unpainted base trim
10ft. unpainted quarter round
30 bags fiber insulation
1 27.5"x35.5" window
6 28"x52" windows
1 32" steel entry door
1 36" steel entry door left hand
2 Top mount Bath Sink
2 5lb dry wall nails
3 rolls Sheetrock brand joint tape
5 3in Economy Paint Brushes
1 2.5" Purdy XL Glide Paint Brushes
1 roll 250' 14-2 wire
Approx \$250 of misc. electrical materials
Approx \$250 of misc. plumbing materials
Interior and exterior paint

Though we have a viable labor force and brilliant young minds, we need your assistance with materials to assure a viable structure for the future of youth on the reservation. If Menards may better assist this project in other ways, please contact me. I am open to any suggestions or other ways in which you could donate to this empowering cause.

Thanks for Your time and considerations,

Michael Brydge

WKCDC Intern, CSU Graduate Anthropology Student
540-448-1826
mkbrydge@gmail.com

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Personalized Tool Bags:

- 12 tool bags
- 12 pencils
- 12 Swanson speed squares
- 12 razor knives
- 12 tape measures
- 12 chalk boxes
- 6 trim hammers
- 6 straight claw framing hammers

Building Materials:

- 960 linear ft. 6"x 1/2" clear, kiln dried cedar/pine siding
- 12 sheets of 1/2" sheet rock
- 5 sheets of 5/8" sheet rock
- 3 sheets of 3/4" tongue and groove OSB
- 9ft. 3.5"x 3/4" unpainted base trim
- 10ft. unpainted quarter round
- 1 32" steel entry door with frame
- 5 paint rollers without handles
- 10lb drywall nails
- 3 rolls drywall tape
- 1 Purdy (or comparable trim paint brush)
- misc plumbing materials
- 5 gallons exterior primer
- Interior and exterior paint

3 sq ft cedar shake
5 tubes ext wood and window caulk
3 tubes interior painters caulk
1 cedar or redwood 2x4
Wood putty
1 3/4"x5.5"x9' interior trim
1 5/8"x5.5"x9' interior trim
Latex pc mortar
Unmodified Thin set mortar
grout

Though we have a viable labor force and brilliant young minds, we need your assistance with materials to assure a viable structure for the future of youth on the reservation. If you may better assist this project in other ways, please contact me. I am open to any suggestions or other ways in which you could contribute to this empowering cause.

Thanks for Your time and considerations,

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Appendix II

Donors and Donations

Grand Total Estimated Monetary Value: \$16485.58

Material and Labor Donations: Estimated Total: \$8892.50

Alec Respects Nothing, Manderson, SD Estimated Value = \$20
2 hours of drywall repair

Buck Spencer, Manderson, SD Estimated Value = \$100
Provided cedar shake and repaired several leaks in the roof

Chris Cuny, Spotted Owl, SD Estimated Value = \$75
Donated ¾ of a day for house leveling and drywall

CSU Volunteers, Fort Collins, CO Estimated Value = \$2000
3-4 volunteers for 9-10 hour days for one week

Doris Respects Nothing, Wounded Knee, SD Estimated Value = \$75
Lawn mower

Frank Ecoffey, Manderson, SD Estimated Value = \$200
Donated a hauling trailer for one trip to Rapid City to transport building materials

Habitat for Humanity, Fort Collins, CO Estimated Value = \$3,500
Bathroom sink, handicap toilet, 2 interior doors w/ hardware, 1 chandelier, 1 120"x64"
triple window, 1 window, oak bathroom vanity, kitchen stove and range, electrical
meter box, electrical breaker panel, ceiling fan, miscellaneous electrical boxes

Henry Red Cloud, Oglala, SD Estimated Value = \$25
Donated 6' step ladder for 4 weeks

Home Depot, Greeley, CO Value = \$100
4 \$25 gift cards

Knecht's Lumber, Rapid City, SD Value = ??

Mark St. Pierre, Kyle, SD Estimated Value = \$1,000
4 weeks of lending the following tools and accessories free of charge: table saw,
landscaping tools and wheel barrel, hydraulic jacks, drywall tools, tile saw and
flooring tools, reciprocating saw, extension power chords, 6' step ladder and extension
ladder gasoline, screws, nails

Michael and Jess Brydge, Evans, CO Estimated Value = \$180
Microwave, ¾" copper plumbing pipe, 8p galvanized nails, trim nails, travel funds

Mountain Valley Floors, Fort Collins, CO Estimated Value = \$1,000
Approx. 132 sq. ft. of tile and underlayment

Summer Youth, Pine Ridge Reservation, SD Estimated Value = \$217.50
Approx. 30 volunteer hours (estimated at minimum wage)

Tilda Long Soldier, Kyle, SD Estimated Value = \$400
Floor tile installation workshop.

Monetary Donations: Total: \$7068.08

W.P. and O.E. Edwards Foundation, Red Lodge, MT Value = \$5000

Agnes Davis, Danville, VA Value = \$20

Frank Ecoffey, Manderson, SD Value = \$48.08

Village Earth, Fort Collins, CO Value = \$2000

Village Earth sponsored a fund drive which resulted in many individuals and family monetary donors from across the globe.

Fundraising Gift Donations: Estimated Total: ??

These Lakota community members provided gifts promised to the highest monetary donor of Village Earth's fundraising drive.

Amanda Pumpkin Seed

Mark St. Pierre

Tilda Long Soldier

Wilma Thin Elk

Miscellaneous Donations: Estimated Total: \$525

Bette's Kitchen, Manderson, SD Estimated Value = \$25
Chocolate cake

Tilda Long Soldier and Mark St. Pierre Estimated Value = \$100
Hosted the final celebration meal at their home

Wounded Knee CDC, Manderson, SD Estimated Value = \$400

The CDC hosted a community feed and ground blessing ceremony, provided nutritious lunches approx. 8 times for 10 youth workers, and provided a final celebration meal when the 4 week project term was over.

Appendix III

Summer 2011 Youth Questionnaire

Age:

District:

Community:

Are there any skills that you would like to learn this summer? Mark yes to all that apply and add other opinions.

Roofing
carpentry
plumbing
painting
siding
landscaping
organizing
other

What time of day do you like to get together in the summer?

How about during the school year?

The Wounded Knee Community Development Corporation (WKCDC) estimates that it would take 3-4 weeks to remodel the building.

How many hours per day would you like to help your community during the summer?

How many days per week?

What would keep you from participating in group activities to help the community?

What do you think you are best at? (This could be absolutely anything!)

List at least one thing about yourself that would benefit your community?

What do you like about your community?

Have you been in any types of summer programs in the past?

What did you like about them?

What didn't you like about them?

What kinds of activities would you want to be involved with this summer?

Do you know community members that you would like to help with specific trade skills (Electric, Drywall, Heating, Plumbing) on a project? Names? Numbers?

If there were a youth or community facility, what would you envision being in there?
Equipment?

Please add any other questions, comments or input that you may have.

Thanks for your time and your participation!

Appendix IV

2011 WKCDC Summer Youth Program Evaluation

Name (This must be included if you want the \$10 stipend):

Age:

Mailing Address (If you want the \$10 stipend for filling out this survey, your mailing address is required.):

I am writing up a final report for the WKCDC and for my Master's Thesis at Colorado State University

Check one of the following:

- It is okay to use my name in the final report/thesis.
- DO NOT** use my name in the final report/thesis.

- 1) How many years have you worked in the summer youth program.
- 2) Compare working in the 2011 summer youth program to the previous years.
- 3) Do you feel like the WKCDC summer youth project was a success as far as remodeling the multipurpose, youth facility, yes or no?
 - 4) Explain why or why you did not think it was a success:

5) Do you feel like the WKCDC summer youth project was a success as far as teaching job skills, yes or no?

6) If it was successful in teaching job skills, what types of skills did you learn?

7) If it was not successful in teaching job skills, what should have been done differently?

8) Before the 2011 WKCDC summer youth program what construction skills did you have?

9) After the summer youth program, what tasks would you feel comfortable performing in your own home or in a relative's home?

10) I have heard some of you have used some of the construction skills from the 2011 summer youth program. If you have used any of the skills, please explain how you used them?

11) How did you feel about yourself or your potential at the end of the 2011 summer youth program?

12) What did you learn about yourself during the 2011 summer youth program?

13) What did you learn about working with others during the 2011 summer youth program?

14) What did you learn about working with people from different communities in the district?

15) Do you feel young people have a role in developing their community?

16) If yes, what is the role?

17) If no, why not?

18) What do you think the role of young people should be to improve the quality of life in the Wounded Knee District?

19) What benefits the community more, organizations that primarily invite outsiders in to complete their objectives or organizations that require participation from community members to complete community goals?

20) Is there anything you would like to add or anything you think me or the WKCDC should know?

These last questions will provide feedback to help suggest ideas for projects for youth and their role in land and natural resources.

21) Are you interested in learning from elders about using and identifying plants on the reservation for food, medicine and/or ceremonies?

22) Do you think it is important to ensure native plants are abundant on the reservation? Would you be interested in being a part of a project that has this aim?

23) If you have any other thoughts or ideas for projects related to land and natural resources what would they be?