

A TALE OF TWO CITIES: LONG TERM RECOVERY FROM DISASTER AND THE
ARTICULATION OF INEQUALITY

by

ASHLEIGH ELAIN MCKINZIE

(Under the Direction of Patricia L. Richards)

ABSTRACT

Although scholars have written much about disaster, disaster recovery, and how both can produce or exacerbate inequalities, less attention has been given to the study of intersecting inequalities in the context of disaster recovery. Most disaster scholarship tends to isolate one type of inequality. In this dissertation, I draw upon critical race theory, intersectionality, and feminist theory to argue for an intersectionality that is radically based on context. In this dissertation, the contexts are Joplin, Missouri and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I draw upon fieldwork from 2013 to 2015 (a total of 10 months), 162 in-depth semi structured interviews, and archival data to answer the question of how inequalities are articulated in long-term recovery from disaster. I also investigate historical processes in both locations to understand how inequalities after disaster are based larger ongoing patterns. In addition to proposing intersectionality based on context, I have four main findings. First, in both Joplin and Tuscaloosa, historical inequities in housing and segregated spaces and existing class and racial inequalities

influence who was affected by the storm and who was able to recover more quickly.

Second, I show that colorblind racism varies based on context. Third, I find that the availability of low-income housing in long-term recovery from disaster varies based on location, gender, race, age, and class. Fourth, I find that residents in Tuscaloosa are more collectively traumatized than are Joplin residents. I conclude with public policy recommendations.

INDEX WORDS: Disaster Recovery, Intersectionality, Inequality, Tornadoes, Housing, Colorblind Racism, Collective Trauma, Missouri, Alabama, Reverse Redlining, White Flight

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the citizens of Joplin, Missouri and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. You invited me into your homes, broke bread with me, cried with me, and shared your stories. This project would not be possible without you. I don't personally know what it's like to try to recover from disaster, and I am forever sad that you had to experience it. However, from the bottom of my heart, thanks for being willing to tell me about it.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to the National Weather Service, 2011 was the fourth deadliest tornado season in United States history. Approximately 500 people died that year, mostly due to a series of tornadoes that hit Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi in late April and a single tornado that killed 161 people in Joplin, Missouri on May 22nd. The two storms that caused the most devastation were the Joplin tornado and one in Tuscaloosa, Alabama on April 27th.

May 22nd, 2011 was a day that forever changed my own life but, more importantly, the lives of so many other people. At 5:41 PM, Central Standard Time, an EF5 tornado, over a mile wide, slowly and violently tore through Joplin, Missouri and destroyed over one-third of the city. I grew up south of Joplin and had family and friends who lived there. Through straight-line winds, I made the drive from Fayetteville, Arkansas to Joplin, Missouri. I saw human remains, body bags, and a town that looked like something from the set of a movie.

I volunteered in Joplin after the tornado. While working with other volunteers and survivors of the storm, I could not help but notice how the tornado seemed to affect people in disparate ways based on race, class, and gender. My experiences working with tornado survivors created what Smith (1987) calls a problematic. In other words, despite

the message from the media and politicians proclaiming that these tornadoes did not discriminate, my everyday experiences begged to differ. My initial selection of Joplin as a research site was intended to investigate this problematic and challenge dominant, extra-local understandings of disaster.¹ In the fall of 2012, I decided to look at media representations of the Joplin tornado. I immediately noticed that a large portion of the media reports compared the Joplin and Tuscaloosa tornadoes. I also noticed that Joplin and Tuscaloosa were responding to their tornadoes in different ways. I decided to do a comparative study based on those different responses, differing geographies, demographic make-up and histories.

With the exception of Hurricane Katrina, we do not know much about long-term recovery from disaster. Almost all disaster studies focus on the months and year following the disaster and then interest wanes. Moreover, there is very little comparative work on recovery from disaster. Furthermore, there have been many suggestions for research on disasters to use an intersectional frame. I began the project with these issues in mind: that empirically little is known about long-term recovery, that most studies isolate on type of inequality and ignore others, and that there is little research in this area that uses a comparative approach. I also hope to contribute to a debate in the literature about whether communities come together in solidarity or if disaster causes community fragmentation. This has been a puzzle that heretofore has confounded disaster scholars. I contribute to this debate by looking at recovery in two separate sites with unique histories, political responses, and geographies.

My research questions are: 1a) How have spaces inside Joplin and Tuscaloosa been constructed in classed, gendered, and racialized ways, creating particular privileges and vulnerabilities? 1b) How are these privileges and vulnerabilities exacerbated in long-term recovery from disaster? 2) How do socio-historical policies such as redlining and white flight affect the articulation of inequality? 3) How do trauma and suffering aggregate to the community level?

I would like to begin by introducing Crystal Long. Crystal's story had one of the biggest impacts on me and the ways in which I thought about recovery. My fieldnotes reveal her terrible situation:

In August of 2013, I drive up to an extended stay motel in Tuscaloosa where many 2011-tornado survivors are living. It is raining heavily. I knock on the door and Crystal Long opens the door and invites me in. The hotel room is sparsely furnished and I immediately notice that Crystal is drying her clothes over the air conditioning unit beside the bed. I glance over to the bathroom and see that Crystal has been washing her clothes in the tub. Crystal is an African American woman in her thirties. She has three children and she and her husband separated after the tornado. I sit on the bed to begin the interview. Crystal anxiously rubs her hands while she answers the interview questions and while we talk. She is excited about my project and tells me, "Someone needs to let the world know that some of us in Alabama are still hurting! We still need help." She breaks down and cries several times during the interview. As I leave, she grabs me for a firm, long hug and thanks me again for talking to her and "telling her story."

Crystal was impacted by not one but two tornadoes in April of 2011. In 2013, she had bounced from extended stay hotel to another. She finally got an apartment but fell behind on rent. She watched in horror as the authorities threw her and her children's belongings into the yard. When I interviewed her in 2013, she told me that she was chronically

depressed. We last spoke in September of 2014. She had finally found permanent housing, but she was still having trouble making ends meet. Crystal's story proved not to be unique. Although poor before the tornado, the tornado put her over the edge and into a position, that renders the question: recovery for whom?

This dissertation is a story about two tornadoes and the devastation they caused. It is a story about how structural inequalities make it harder or easier to put the pieces back together. It is also a story of ordinary people, going about their lives in ordinary ways and struggling to afford daycare, deal with marital problems, and strife within families. Nevertheless, this also is a story about how these things are complicated by EF4 and EF5 tornadoes and how those daily routines and problems are compounded. It is also a story about discrimination, conspiracy, rumors, and loss.

In so many ways, this is a story that mirrors the deep divides in the social landscape of our country. These divides caused by race and class inequality, the lack of upward mobility in this country and how, in every situation, there are winners and losers. The pain, grief, financial struggles, and discrimination often fall disproportionately on the shoulders of those least equipped to deal, the elderly, the single moms, people of color, and the poor and working class. As a sociologist, though, it is not enough to point out that those who are marginalized often bear the biggest burden when it comes to recovery. There are differences within social groups that are often glossed over. There is no uniform experience of being, say, an African American woman in western Alabama who goes through a tornado and struggles to recover. There are a multiplicity of experiences

and viewpoints and my goal is to tell those stories while also showing the material consequences of intersecting social inequalities.

This is also a story about disaster survivors in the process of long-term recovery. When the news cameras leave and the story fades from the collective conscious, strategies for survival are still ongoing. In some ways, in our society, we are intrigued by disasters in a way that is almost pornographic. What is left out of this obsession is the realization that for many, their lives were already a series of disasters and for some of those people, the disaster never ends.

This is a difficult story to tell. I collected over 160 interviews with people who vary based on class, race, gender, and age. The interview transcripts are raw with emotion, anger, disbelief, anxiety, depression, and sorrow. The process of doing fieldwork on this topic and the analyzing my data is the hardest thing I have done in my life. This is not to take away from the suffering that people in both communities endured. I do not know what it is like to lose all earthly possessions, or worse, a loved one, because of a natural disaster. I cannot imagine how it feels to be homeless for two, three, or four years after a catastrophe. However, as my participants narrated their experiences to me, and while reading, analyzing, and writing them into a final document, I too have shed tears over the loss of livelihood, life and possessions. I share in their grief and I understand how their lives have been, and will always be, irrevocably changed by nature's fury.

Moreover, this is a difficult story to tell because of the deep chasms and unequal opportunities still rearing their ugly heads in the process of recovery from disaster. It is not as if there was not discrimination or inequality before the disaster but in a disaster aftermath, these inequalities can become more salient. Disaster affords an opportunity to understand how inequality created by institutional forces is brought into quick view after disaster strikes. Racialized, gendered, and classed institutions created inequalities that existed prior to disasters. In this dissertation, I focus on four historical processes: 1) The unique histories of both regions, Tuscaloosa as a university town and Joplin as a once vibrant mining town; 2) legacies of racial inequality in both cities with attention to the civil rights struggle in Tuscaloosa and Joplin's history as a sundown town; 3) national and state policies in both locations that have created precarious situations for people; 4) housing inequality and specifically reverse redlining, segregation, and the housing crisis of 2008.

This is also a story about community trauma. I explore how local government and to a lesser degree, federal response contributes to the perceptions of a toxic event or an opportunity for a community to come together in solidarity. I compare each city's response and how local response is related to collective trauma. Unlike some disaster research, my aim is not to excoriate, place blame or laud *particular* leaders. Instead, I want to provide a holistic picture of how residents perceive government response, and how differing responses contribute to their understanding of their own recovery. Indeed, there is probably no way to get it absolutely right. There are certainly participants in my

study who blame individuals for their suffering. I do not wish to ignore their suffering or downplay how passionately they felt. However, I want to take an institutional look at how local governments responded and how that is, again, perceived and experienced by individuals. Moreover, I do not necessarily take the view that *individual* leaders in disaster aftermaths and in long-term recovery are themselves racist, classist, ageist or sexist. Instead, I focus upon the institutions in which they work that cause relief and recovery to be unequal. I do not doubt that particular local, state and federal actors are culpable, but as a sociologist I do not find that to be the most interesting part of the story. Instead, I ask, how is it that these institutions can respond in certain ways and create rules that enable (or do not enable) individuals to act in certain ways?

I have several aims in this dissertation. I hope to contribute to disaster literature by offering a case-study comparison of two cities that have different histories, responded in different ways, and have with dissimilar legacies of inequality. This is my empirical goal. However, and tied to this goal, is to problematize intersectionality by arguing that a focus on contextual factors related to political response, history, and geography is a way to get out of the myriad debates in the social sciences and humanities about how to best design research that focuses on complex inequalities. This is not to say that I claim this is the only way to do intersectional research but I believe my focus on context is a helpful addition to these debates.

To that end, I focus on differences and similarities between and among categories. I sampled based on four categories: race, class, gender, and age. My sample size is large

in order to make meaningful comparisons across and within these categories. There are several reasons for doing so: first, some intersectional research has been faulted for only focusing on triple marginalization; that is poor, black women or some other iteration of stacked disadvantages. I do not take issue, as some do, with that research. However, I take a different approach in that I am comparing across and within categories. For example, I did interview poor and middle class black women and their standpoints and epistemological understandings of the world are very different from each other. These different understandings are especially illuminating when compared to the middle class white folks I interviewed. Second, making these comparisons is important to show the constructed-ness of categories. These categories are not biologically real, though they are real in their consequences, and people who are categorized in certain ways do not have singular experiences. There is much danger in assuming that all people of color, all women, all people of certain ages, or all of the poor have the same experiences. Thus, I am trying to strike a balance between showing the real material consequences of being categorized in particular ways and while realizing these categories are socially constructed. Finally, I am comparing all these positionalities with the explicit aim of avoiding reification or treating these categories as if they are biologically real.

1.1 A Tale of Two Cities

Disasters have piqued intellectual interest for decades. In 1969, Robert Merton argued:

Sociological theory and research not only help us to identify and to understand what goes on when disaster strikes but also that, conversely,

the investigation of these phenomena can extend the sociological theories of human behavior and social organization far beyond the confines of disaster situations. In this sense, collective disasters provide research sites strategic for developing certain sociological theories. Conditions of collective stress bring out in bold relief aspects of social systems that are not so readily visible in the less stressful conditions of everyday life.” (P. xi-xii)

Disaster researchers across the disciplines have consistently noted that post-disaster settings are the perfect "laboratory" to investigate social issues because social relations that are usually mystified or not readily apparent are brought to the fore. In times of crisis, the invisible strings that link inequality to history, lived experience to social structure, and structure to agency and culture, are made visible (Adams 2013; David and Enarson 2012; Fothergill 2004; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 1999). Disasters represent a crisis, a rupture of reality that can reveal the socially constructed aspects of categories of difference, inequality, and hegemony (Hall 1986). In spite of this, the common-sense narrative is that disasters do not discriminate; they affect and disrupt the fabric of social life equally across race, ethnicity, gender, and social class (Andersen 2008; Button 2002; Eyerman 2015; Steinberg 2000).

While both Joplin and Tuscaloosa experienced a “natural” disaster, in this dissertation I simply refer to both tornadoes as disasters. Scholars have problematized the man-made or technological view of disaster versus natural disaster dichotomy most harshly since Hurricane Katrina. The Army Corps of Engineers had knowledge that many of the levees surrounding New Orleans could not withstand a Category 3 Hurricane. Yet, no federal or state money was distributed to fix the problem. The

flooding of Louisiana and Mississippi and the subsequent oil and chemical spills also challenge the view that we can separate technological and natural disasters. By examining socio-historic context, I show the *unnatural history* of natural disaster in both locations (Steinberg 2000). Dyson (2007) argues that in the context of Hurricane Katrina, class made race hurt worse. Indeed, existing structural arrangements such as where people live, what kind of house they live in and if they have access to resources (such as vehicles and savings accounts) are racialized, classed, aged and gendered.

1.2 Disaster and Inequality

In order to situate myself in current debates, I review literature that examines inequality and disaster. (My next chapter will examine how I am contributing to existing critical and feminism theory). I divide the review into three sections: disaster as gendered, disaster as classed, disaster as racialized and affecting those with other social vulnerabilities.

There is also a scholarly debate in the literature about whether disaster represents the opportunity to equalize communities. I have data to speak to disaster challenging some white residents' stereotypes about black men and to question their own relatively privileged status in Tuscaloosa. Similarly, there is a narrative in the media and from my respondents that disaster is an equalizer. In the days and weeks following disaster, there is a sense of liminality, community, solidarity, brotherhood and sisterhood (Oliver Smith 1999). However, sometimes these feelings quickly disintegrate (Hoffman 1999). Thus, while I recognize that the social experience of disaster at the community level is a way to

challenge stereotypes and can foster a sense of commonality, only focusing on that liminal space of solidarity ignores how history and context will influence recovery and redistribution. Furthermore, the questions must be asked, “Who *gets* to experience the feelings of community and solidarity and how does government response (local, state and federal) influence the feelings of a cohesive or disintegrated community?”

Surprisingly, gender has been one of the most under-researched areas in disasters studies (for exceptions see Cupples 2007; David and Enarson 2012, Enarson and Morrow 1998, Fothergill 2004; Fordham 1998; Hoffman 1999; Stehlik, Gray and Lawrence 2000). Previous research suggests that disaster compounds and complicates women's traditional roles in the home and community (David and Enarson 2012; Enarson and Morrow 1998; Fothergill 2004; Hoffman 1999).

Nor is gender inequality a common frame that the media, politicians, or even social scientists use to discuss the injurious effects of disaster. A recent example of this omission is the ways in which social scientists and journalists interrogated Hurricane Katrina. Much was written about how disaster is racialized and classed following Hurricane Katrina but there was no concomitant scholarly endeavor to understand the gendered dynamics of disaster (see Andersen 2008; Eyerman forthcoming). Hoffman (1999) argues that in a very progressive town in California gender relations were brought to the fore after a wildfire devastated the community. While the residents espoused gender equality, it was *women* who cleaned homes, took care of children, were

responsible for making many negotiations with insurance companies and were expected to quit their jobs to tend to the domestic sphere while men were not.

There is also evidence of increased violence against women after disaster.

Zahran, Shelley, Peek, and Brody (2009) use GIS at the county scale level after Hurricane Andrew to demonstrate there was an increase domestic violence but no other types of crimes. In Enarson's survey of 77 domestic violence shelters, she finds that there is increased demand for services in disaster-hit areas despite shelters' reports of decreasing resources. In Thailand, Akerkar (2007) finds that after the Indian Ocean tsunami there were fights between husbands and wives about having sex. The women did not want to have sex in a shelter with little privacy and this led to abuse and emotional hardship. Juran (2012) notes that after the Indian tsunami, one-third of the women in Tamil Nadu reported sexual violence (People's Report 2007). Fisher (2010) documents the ways in which the Indian Ocean tsunami was gendered because of the increase of violence against women, economic hardships, and the loss of housing and jobs that disproportionately affected women.

Understanding how disaster affects the articulation of gender inequality also means investigating how disaster affects men. Heckenberg and Johnston (2012) argue that men are rarely cast as victims in the context of disaster. The gendered expectations of protector and provider prohibit them access to being understood as victims (it defies cultural logic). This is important because dominant assumptions about masculinity might lead men who are suffering to turn to drugs and alcohol instead of counseling.

Heckenberg and Johnston are correct in arguing that we must know about how disaster affects men and boys but the opposite is just as important. When women are essentialized and cast as victims, how is this also harmful in their recovery process?

Concerning class inequality, one of the earliest accounts of how disaster affects working class folks is sociologist Kai Erikson's examination of the Buffalo Creek Flood in the early 1970s. Years of environmental mistreatment by large coal companies resulted in the overflowing of an earthen dam that literally washed away entire communities. For residents of Buffalo Creek, the disaster was ongoing, and Erickson refers to their suffering as *collective trauma*.

Research shows that how and where homes and businesses are constructed and what types of homes people live in has very real impacts on how they survive and recover from disaster (Adams 2013; Fothergill 2004; Kusenbach, Simms, and Tobin 2010; Steinberg 2000). Scholars also argue that social class is an important dimension of understanding disaster because the poor often have lower levels of cultural capital, which results in difficulty obtaining government and community assistance. However, other researchers argue that regardless of social class, communities possessing higher levels of social cohesion will be able to recover and reconstruct much faster than those who do not (Adeola and Picou 2009; Aldrich 2012; Cupples 2007; Fothergill and Peek 2004).

Donner and Rodriguez (2008) review the literature on social class and disaster and show, not surprisingly, that the poor have the most sub-standard housing and usually do not have insurance. Disasters create a precarious situation for the poor because it is

often affordable housing that is destroyed. In their review of the literature on social class and disaster, Fothergill and Peek (2004) show the poor are more likely to die as a result of disaster, more likely to live in substandard housing before disaster, and less likely to be able to deal with emotional and mental health issues.

Many scholars have noted that disaster is racialized. Steinberg (2000) discusses the ways in which the discursive shift from calling natural disasters "acts of god" to "natural disasters" was itself based on racialized reactions to disaster. For example, over a century ago in Charleston, South Carolina, after hurricanes hit the region, African Americans would gather and pray in public spaces usually reserved for white folks. They wanted to atone for their sins because they understood weather events to be the result of God's fury. This obviously upset the Charleston elite and so, as Steinberg carefully shows, the phrase "act of god" was replaced with "natural disaster." This was an attempt to purge white spaces of black bodies and paint African Americans once again as superstitious and uneducated in their pleas for God's forgiveness. The Charleston elite wanted blacks to go back to work. In an interesting twist, business leader Francis Dawson expressed his view of understanding a disaster as an Act of God: "Not only would he find it unmeaning in itself, but absolutely dangerous to the welfare of others" (as quoted in Steinberg, p. 16).

Another exemplar showing how natural disasters are racialized is Klinenberg's (2002) examination of the Chicago heat wave. Decades of white flight from inner city

neighborhoods led to failing infrastructure, increased crime rates, and loss of social cohesion resulting in a higher percentage of deaths in the African American community.

Nothing, however, could bring the racialized dimensions of disaster to the fore more than Hurricane Katrina. This ranges from media exaggerations of violence and tales of a war zone to the fact that many African American neighborhoods in New Orleans still have not been rebuilt 11 years after the storm (Adams 2013; Brusnma, Overfelt, and Picou 2010; Bullard and Wright 2009; David and Enarson 2012; Dyson 2005; Giroux 2006; Potter 2006, Tierney and Bevc 2006; Weber and Peek 2012). New Orleans went from almost 80% African American to 60% African American after Hurricane Katrina (Adams 2013). Moreover, disaster is racialized at every stage—from initial impact to long-term recovery. Davis and Bali (2008) show the placement of FEMA trailer parks is correlated with poor, black neighborhoods. Donner and Rodriguez (2008) argue that people of color are differentially affected by disasters because they are less likely to leave, less likely to trust public institutions, less likely to have insurance, and less likely to hear disaster warnings (see also Fothergill 1996).

There is also evidence of disaster exacerbating other types of inequality. Disaster disproportionately affects the elderly because they are more likely to have mobility and health problems, have fewer social networks, and live on a fixed income (Klinenberg 2002). I have evidence in my own data that people in the Latinx were afraid to ask for government service because of the fear of deportation thus leaving these communities to fend for themselves.

Furthermore, Klein (2007) argues that after crises, barons of industry and government officials who are influenced by neoliberal principles assert free-market logics in new ways—that is, they use the crisis to further the agenda of a neoliberal market. She conceptualizes this as “disaster capitalism.” Most recently, Adams (2013) has described the ways in which disaster capitalism, neoliberalism, and Hurricane Katrina converged to turn disaster into profit for both private sector companies and non-profit organizations at the expense of helping those who were in need (see also Barrios 2011; Klein 2007; Trujillo-Pagan 2012; Weber et al 2012). Barrios (2011) argues that cultural and class considerations were not considered after Katrina. The city attempted to use neoliberal principles of private investment to rebuild the city instead of taking into account how residents interact with the city and its spaces. The free market approach to rebuilding New Orleans served to further widen the gap of social inequality. Dyson (2007) shows how disaster capitalism has made a sort of second disaster in the recovery phase in New Orleans. For example, contractors were given low-bids and the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires contract workers be paid the prevailing wage, was suspended. Similarly, Trujillo-Pagan (2012) reasons that free-market policies after Katrina refashioned racial difference by making immigrant workers into low-wage workers, which highlighted racial tensions. She states:

In the wake of the hurricane, neoliberal policy decisions included both the implementation of new policies and the selective enforcement of existing regulations that shaped profitable markets for contracting recovery work. These decisions also encouraged the development of a large and low-paid labour force for work in construction jobs. (P. 55)

The focus on the political economy and neoliberal regimes guides much of my thinking throughout my dissertation because a focus on neoliberal shifts shows how historical trends associated with market and state policies tend to marginalize further the already marginalized. However, with a few exceptions, like Adams (2013) and other scholars who focus on neoliberal markets after disaster, there is little attention to the active articulation of inequality in terms of its links to socio-historic context and geography. Most scholarship, while an improvement over theories of disaster that had functionalist biases, isolates one type of inequality to tell the story of disaster. Moreover, much of this work reifies social inequality and assumes false homogeneity among social groups. Thus, I complicate single-axis frameworks with the inductive intersectionality approach I develop in my dissertation.

1.3 Methods

In order to answer my research questions, I made use of three methods: ethnographic observation, interviews and archival work. During the summer of 2013, I used a pilot interview guide in both cities. After returning home from the field and analyzing data, I revised the interview guide to include new insights, questions, and ideas. The interviews were semi-structured, and I asked the interview questions thematically and contained probing questions to understand their experiences and answers to my questions in more detail. (Emerson et al *ibid*; Lofland et al *ibid*). I spent four months in both locations beginning in May of 2014, and I worked part time with disaster organizations whose focus was long-term recovery. My activities with both

organizations ranged from answering telephone calls and acting as a liaison between those who were in need and those who had resources to give. While in the field, I analyzed data as I collected it in order to ascertain the fit of my interview questions and research questions to the social reality I observed (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995; Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland 2006). I also attended city council meetings and other community related events in both towns. Each evening or after any event, I wrote extensive field notes paying attention to emergent themes and also events, episodes, conversations, and activities that addressed, complicated, or challenged my research questions.

I conducted in-depth interviews in Joplin and Tuscaloosa with residents, city leaders, non-profit workers and first responders. I chose participants based on their variation on demographic variables: race, class, age and gender. I gave my respondents short demographic surveys and they provided subjective assessments of their race, class and gender. I also interviewed city leaders, non-profit workers, community leaders, first responders, police and firefighters. My rationale for interviewing those in the city who might not have been personally affected by the tornado was to give a holistic account of the disaster, some of the challenges the city and disaster organizations faced, and most centrally to tap into some of the gendered, racialized, and classed effects of the disaster or how these inequalities were exacerbated.

In order to understand how socio-historic context creates racialized, gendered and classed spaces, access to resources, living arrangements and current political response, I

conducted archival work in both cities and on the internet. I also reached out to history, geography and other professors who live in both cities and possessed knowledge about the history of both cities. More information about my methods can be found in my methodological appendix.

1.4 The Tornadoes

I discuss this at more length in a subsequent chapter but I want to paint a picture of the tornadoes and their immediate aftermath to give a sense of the horror, pain and tragedy that Tuscaloosa and Joplin residents witnessed in 2011. Here, I provide several narratives from my participants before outlining my dissertation chapters.

Tammy Jones was an African American woman in her fifties. We met on her front porch in August of 2013. At the time of the interview, she was worried because of a 400-dollar electrical bill that was due the next day and she did not have the money to pay it. She surmised that her grandkids would have to stay somewhere else until she could scramble to find the money to pay the bill. She told me that she shuffles from one bad situation to another. When I ask about experiencing the tornado, she tells me this:

I went Alberta Elementary and there wasn't *nothing*, I am talking about flat and um, I went in Piggly Wiggly [a grocery store] and they brought this little boy and his neck was hanging and they had him on a blanket and the [other] kids that got killed (pause). It broke his neck and there was a lady in the grocery store that had a stick going through her chest. The trees was in [down], the poles was blocked off. Everything was, I mean, it was gone. In a matter of minutes, it was gone.

And uh, they uh, everybody started wandering [around] and everyone was crying. Me and my sister was on this side of Alberta but my niece and them stayed off into Alberta. We couldn't get to them, there weren't phone lines or nothing. We wandered and walked all night. It was really frightful. But uh, I mean it was, it was something. In all the years I've

been on this earth, I have never experienced that. (Tammy Jones, August 2013)

Cassie Simpson was a tall blond white woman in her early thirties. We met in her home in Joplin and this particular part of Joplin was barren. There were no trees, and you could see across the town and stretches of empty lots and concrete slabs. Cassie has children, and she went through a divorce after the tornado. She described the tornado aftermath like this:

I had no way to get home and I didn't know where my kids were at and I had no contact with anybody. Everybody's houses and cars and stuff were blocked in. The streets were, you know, they were completely packed full of trees, houses, humans, you know. I saw – I don't even remember everything I saw. It was like lots of injuries. Saw people stuck in cars. Saw people stuck under debris (Cassie Simpson, June 2014).

Lizzie Goins was a short African American woman with small dreadlocks that had touch of gray in them. She was sixty years old. At the time of tornado, Lizzie had just moved to the Joplin area from St. Louis. Lizzie's home was not damaged but many of her belongings were still in the car (since she just moved) and she survived the tornado in a grocery store. The car, her pride and joy—a fully loaded Infiniti G-series with leather seats that was well maintained and that she had just paid off—was destroyed. She laughs, “God knew I loved that car too much, I was too proud of it so he took it away.”

Lizzie cried while telling me this:

[It was a] beautiful day, we went to church, me and a friend of mine, and so it was like a nice day, the sun was shining, went home, went home and made dinner and everything. I said, “Well I guess I'll go and get the grandkids and go get some ice cream.” So went down to my son's house. Went to get the grandkids to take them and go get ice cream, but nobody answered the door. So we sat there and decided, let's just go to the grocery store and get some ice cream, do a little shopping. So we got

some ice cream, got some cheese, a few odds and ends and so forth, and beautiful, sunny day. Gorgeous day. Came outside of the grocery store and it started getting dark. It started raining, started pouring down. And where we were [by] the building, [we] couldn't see nothing, [it was] so dark and raining. So I said, "Well it's raining so hard and I can't see, let's just wait." 'Cause we had put the groceries in the car and we started across the parking lot. It started pouring down so we pulled over.

Then the wind started getting heavy. The car started swaying. We were just sitting here and a long line of grocery carts just slid across the parking lot. We said, "We better go back inside." So me and my friend, we went back inside. Then all the sudden he said "Run! Run!" I'm like, he said "Run! Start running!" And I tried to look and it was just like it was on TV. The grass and all the stuff just start coming in [up]. So I found a corner over by the meat department, I'm like, "No, that's not gonna work." So we went up in there. There was nobody in the store. Everyone had taken cover, so we were like on our own, so we went in, there was a great big trash compactor with a couple of big pipes holding it. So we were on the side of that compactor, ducking down, holding on and just praying. The wind was blowing so fierce and I couldn't see so I just took my glasses off and I put them in my pocket and just started praying. And I'm holding onto my friend and I can feel the wind just start pulling, just pulling at my leg. I'm like "Oh Lord, I can't hang on, oh Lord." I just prayed and prayed. It happened too fast to be afraid, only thing you can do is pray, just have faith. So I just prayed. (crying). (Lizzie Goins, June 2014)

Gabrielle Nunez was a Mexican woman in her fifties. She has dark short hair and brown eyes. Before the interview, the translator told me, "And people want to be like, 'it happened three years ago, we need to move on with our lives' and she [Gabrielle] doesn't feel like we should. People are still suffering and we need to tell our stories. Even though it's hard, and even ten years down the road, we will still need to tell our stories." Gabriella's family was so traumatized that her two sons leave for Mexico during tornado season. When I ask her about that day, she told me:

After everything happened, when the calm arrived, it began to rain hard, hard, and I thought, I said, eh after the scare, since I was disoriented, and I said, "Everything has calmed down." But, we heard people scream over here. Then there were, she said, "Mom, there are people outside." She went outside and I told her, "Don't open the doors, don't open the door." But we didn't have anything anymore, nothing around us. There weren't any windows, there wasn't anything.

They were people that had been hit by a van, and they had, they came scratched up with glass in their heads, all wet. After when I, we told them to come in, but to come into the house. We began to help them with towels and what I had dry in the laundry room, and sweaters. Everything that I could... that I could give them. They were a family, as seven people came [to her house]. (Gabriella Nunez, July 2014)

Dalton Biddy was an African American man in his early forties. He lived in public housing and was living in public housing when the Tuscaloosa tornado hit. We met at a Barnes and Noble and decided to sit outside. He was a thin man wearing jeans, a button down shirt and a leather jacket. Dalton was tall and had bloodshot eyes. He had a wide smile and crooked, white teeth. He told me about his experience:

I turned around, by the time I turn around, man it is wide as you can see, and I mean, it's just like tails, just all you could see from the big one in the middle, the two on both sides, which is like tails just whipping down, up and down, in and down, so me, I see these people, I tell them, I said [to a nearby stranger] "man, look at the tornado." So he sees what I see. I said "man, get the kids in the house."

But you can see it coming straight toward me and I dart in the house and run down the hallway and jump in the tub, and I asked the Lord, I said, "Lord if you're going to take me, take me quick. I don't want to feel anything, just take me quick." Before that, I stood on the porch, and when I looked I could see a house going up in the air, and as far as I could see this house, next thing you know it was just like it was a bomb inside the house, and that's what made me just freeze on the porch and say "oh my God, those people are dead. Those people are dead." Next thing you know it's just getting closer and closer, rocks was hitting me in my face, but I'm still trying to look and I could not look anymore, because this thing is like -- It was at the Salvation Army. That's just a block away, and I

darted in the house, and when I darted in the house, I locked the door and ran down the hall, because all you could hear was [tornado noises], and you could hear stuff hitting the house, just hitting up against the house. It was picking up stuff, cars and stuff, boom, next thing you know all my windows shattered. All I could remember hearing stuff flying through the house. Total silence.

I jumped out the bathtub, me and my girlfriend, start to the front door, I've got to pry the door open. When I looked out the door, man it made me cry. It was like somebody had dropped a bomb outside, and I said "oh my God. Somebody's dead. I know somebody is dead." Man, all I could see was water spewing, gas -- natural gas spewing like it was water. (Dalton Biddy, November 2013)

As is clear from reading this narratives, the tornadoes were tragic, upsetting and tore apart my participants' sense of reality and other social anchors.

1.5 Damage from the Storm

In Tuscaloosa, twelve percent of the city was damaged including major infrastructure such as social support agencies and city buildings. Fifty-two people died and over seven thousand became unemployed in a matter of minutes. Almost six thousand houses and almost 400 commercial structures were damaged or destroyed. Of the homes destroyed, 1,066 were rental units. On April 27th, Alabama was hit by a series of tornadoes. The other tornadoes affected the amount of volunteer help that was able to get into the city. In Joplin, there was no other weather event, which made getting services to people less of a logistic nightmare (see figure below).

In Tuscaloosa, 24 out of 52 of the victims were black (28 white); 33 were female (19 men) and 28 were over the age of 50 (24 under 50). Around 65 percent of the deaths occurred in Alberta City (Prevat et al 2011). Several deaths occurred at Rosedale, which is one of the public housing apartment complexes in the city.

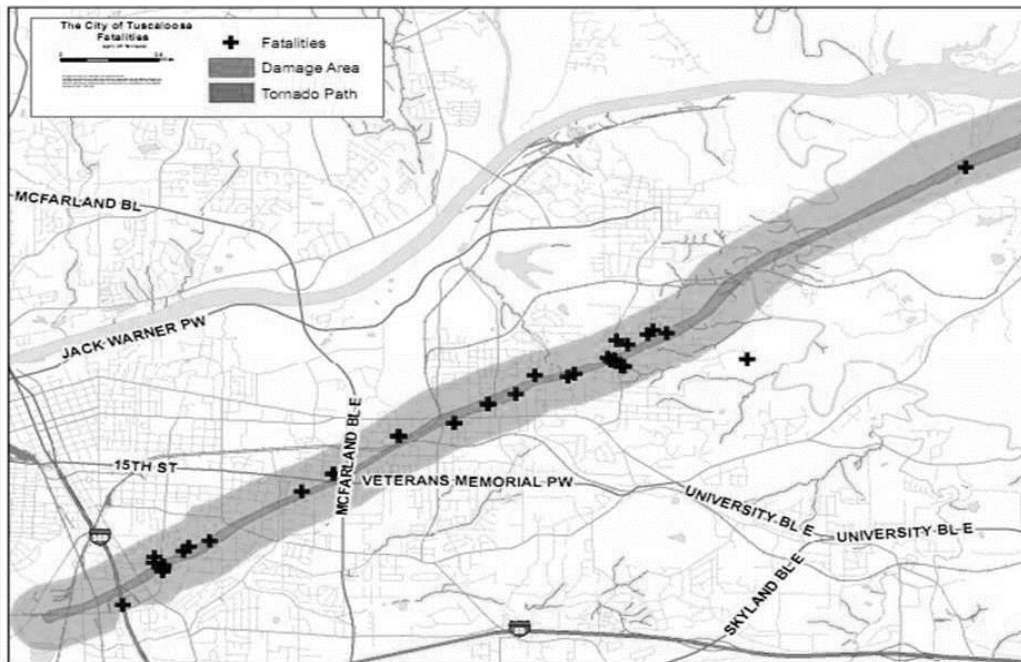


Figure 1: Path of the Storm in Tuscaloosa²

In Joplin, one third of the city was destroyed or damaged. Over nine thousand people were displaced and 161 were killed. Almost half of destroyed and damaged housing was rental housing. In terms of fatalities, there is missing information on five of the people who died. Of the 156 (161-5) victims for whom data exists, the overwhelming majority were white, blue collar and/or retired. 85 were women (71 men); 97 were aged 50 (59 younger than 50). The figure below shows who died in what areas of town.

NOAA National Weather Service Joplin Tornado Path of Destruction

Sunday May 22, 2011, an EF5 tornado with multiple vortex tore through Joplin, MO with 200 mph winds, leaving almost 160 people dead. The tornado is the deadliest since modern record keeping began.

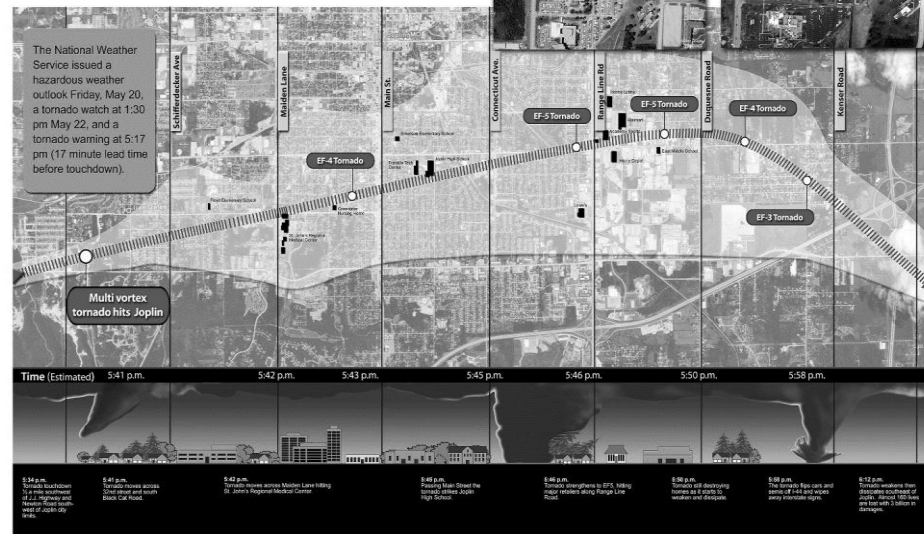


Figure 2: Path of the Storm in Joplin³

1.6 Outline of Dissertation

In Chapter Two, I introduce the concept of *inductive intersectionality*. In this chapter, I first review the many ways in which scholars and activists have employed intersectionality. Secondly, I review how sociologists have used intersectionality. Third, I look at debates about best to do intersectional work. The most common debate is whether it is time in feminist theorizing to jettison intersectionality and, instead, strive for post-intersectional analyses. In the second chapter, I maintain that such debates are mostly unhelpful because approaches to multiple inequalities that claim to be beyond intersectionality or capable to do something intersectionality cannot perhaps miss the

mark in some ways. I propose to do or conceive of intersectionality inductively, with context, research questions, and methodology guiding what variables to choose.

I make this argument by using critical race theory and articulation theory. I contend that critical race theory, and indeed intersectionality, already provides the theoretical integrity to do what other approaches try to get beyond. I use articulation theory to show that although some uses of articulation theory go too far for my comfort, a focus on articulation helps us to avoid reifying socially constructed categories. Both critical race theory and articulation draw attention to the importance of context though attention to this logic has not been fully named or realized in sociology. I end chapter two with an example of how induction guided the whole dissertation and how I analyzed my findings.

Chapter Three provides the historical context for both Joplin and Tuscaloosa (decades past and the recent past). I give a class and racial history of both locations drawing attention to the differences, and where appropriate, the similarities. I look at Joplin's history as a mining town and Tuscaloosa's as a university town. Secondly, I compare the experiences of desegregation in both locations and Joplin's history as a sundown town. Then I present findings from an analysis that looks at reverse redlining in both Joplin and Tuscaloosa in 2007 (before the Great Recession). Reverse redlining is the process by which people of color, women, and those who are working class have to turn to predatory lending because they are denied conventional loans. I find that reverse redlining is clustered in census tracts with higher numbers of people of color, single

moms, and those who are working class. I then use information from previous research showing how the Recession differently affected women and people of color in Tuscaloosa; I present findings from my own analysis of foreclosures in Joplin. All of this history is to set up the findings gleaned from my interviews and observations contained in chapters Four through Seven and my methodological appendix.

In Chapter Four, I show inequalities in access to housing after both tornadoes. I first focus on homes as a place in juxtaposition to the third chapter, which examines spaces. I briefly review literature on made and un-made homes and show that the burden of duties in the domestic sphere unsurprisingly tends to fall on the shoulders of women and is exacerbated in the aftermath of both disasters. I then look at the similarities and differences in Joplin and Tuscaloosa in terms of problems in access to housing. In this chapter, geography takes on particular importance, as regional differences are largely the result of differences in Joplin and Tuscaloosa and Tuscaloosa's proximity to New Orleans. For example, Tuscaloosa did not allow the federal government to bring in FEMA trailers while Joplin did. Furthermore, Tuscaloosa residents had trouble with housing caused by student housing while Joplin did not. I end this chapter with an examination of specific problems associated with owning a home.

In Chapter Five, I examine varying perceptions of relief and recovery. In this chapter, I examine Joplin residents' perceptions of Tuscaloosa, and, additionally, how they explain their recovery in comparison to Tuscaloosa in color-blind racist ways. I also show that social class stands out as the most important explanation for recovery across

both locations but that race stands out as an important explanation between the two cities. I examine and problematize the “leveling effect” both cities experienced and point to how the leveling effect is racialized. I also show how particular intersections articulated themselves in long-term recovery in both locations in addition to showing the importance of access to capital as an explanation for recovery.

In Chapter Six, I shift the unit of analysis to the community level and look at how collective trauma aggregates to the community level. I show how collective trauma is far worse in Tuscaloosa than in Joplin. I contend that this is due to a variety of things but point to two problems in recovery specific to Tuscaloosa. First, the citizens of Tuscaloosa were very concerned with how their government responded in ways that Joplin residents were not. Second, because of the past history of blatant inequality, residents in Tuscaloosa in juxtaposition to Joplin, were more likely to point out race and class reasons for recovery both within their city and in comparison with Joplin.

Throughout the dissertation, I show how race, class and gender matter in different ways and in different contexts in long-term recovery from disaster. In my final chapter, the conclusion, I return to my research questions, how I answered them, discuss general implications, limitations, and policy implications. I conclude by considering directions for future research.

Finally, though I mention this in my methodological appendix, there are many things I could have focused on this dissertation. Throughout the dissertation, there are many themes that could stand out as important. For instance, many of my participants

discussed the importance of religion. I will leave that part of the story for a different analysis. However, I want to acknowledge its importance to my participants, though due to space limitations, I mostly omit that finding (and some others) from this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONTEXT-DRIVEN INTERSECTIONALITY

This dissertation draws on several theoretical traditions. In this chapter, I discuss how I conceive of inequality based on feminist and critical literature. I review the many debates in the intersectionality literature and argue that a focus on context—geographical, socio-historical and political—is a way out of the many deliberations on how best to do intersectional work. This chapter and my argument is explicitly concerned with debates about inequality and intersectionality within feminist and critical literature—and not methodological and theoretical literature about how to do ethnography, qualitative research, and social science in general. I also review key insights from critical race theory. I argue that the concept of *articulation* is a way to re-center context in intersectionality. Thus, I am borrowing from intersectionality, critical race theory, and articulation to accomplish what might be called an “inductive intersectionality.”

I define inductive intersectionality as the process by which specific cases of complex inequalities are discovered based on *context*, research questions, and methods at hand. Inductive intersectionality uses insights from the local to illuminate and speak to workings of power and domination in a more general sense. Inductive intersectionality, then, is both a theoretical and methodological way to understand the articulation of inequality in many contexts (and in this dissertation, in relation to disaster). It is also a

way to get beyond static conceptions of inequality that plague some scholarship that uses a more deductive approach or ignores contextual details.

For example, to give a sense of how my argument will unfold, I trace the genealogy of intersectionality. It was borne from critical race theorizing and other critical feminist standpoint perspectives (Cooper 1892; Crenshaw 1991). As intersectionality traveled through time, and through and between disciplinary fields, scholars have often taken social categories for granted and used a more deductive approach to intersectionality (see for example McCall 2000).⁴ Though here I am condensing a complex and lengthy debate in feminist theorizing, some sociologists and scholars in other disciplines have responded to this deductive approach and the resulting reification of social categories, with attempts to get beyond intersectionality (Puar 2012). Moreover, as I detail in the coming sections of this chapter, post-structural scholars such as Judith Butler (1990) implicitly chide intersectional approaches, and she uses the tendency to write “etc.” after a list of intersecting inequalities as an example of unsuccessful attempts at signification. I respond to each of these debates by arguing that both deductive approaches to intersectionality and the response from some scholars, articulation theorists, and post-structuralists are somewhat misguided. In the case of the former, it tends to rely on positivism; in the latter, it ignores that critical race theory (and intersectionality) have the potential to show the racialized and gendered social order *and* avoid reification. For instance, a focus on context gives meaning to categories, how they are constructed, and what categories are important.

I highlight how many intersectional scholars emphasize the importance of context and why those insights are crucial for intersectional sociology.⁵ Therefore, what I am proposing in this chapter is not completely new or novel, however, I am drawing from various literatures to highlight the importance of context and bring specific attention to it. I also use *inductive intersectionality* to problematize the vulnerabilities model in disaster research and offer a brief comparison of how inductive intersectionality guides my own research on long-term recovery in Joplin and Tuscaloosa. In conclusion, I claim that inductive intersectionality is not only useful for intersectional sociologists but also for theorizing about complex inequalities in the current profit driven era.

2.1 Debates in Feminist Theorizing

Theories about social inequality have unfortunately tended to sometimes get stuck using a single axis framework, such as race *or* class *or* gender. For example, although many consider the early feminist movement to be a white women's movement, women of color in the Global North and women from the Global South challenged monolithic assumptions about women. They have argued that feminists had to consider how the experiences of women who are not white defied Western assumptions about gender inequality. Specifically, in the United States, responding to the largely white, middle class women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, black feminists insisted that women's movements had to also combat heterosexism, class oppression, racial inequality, and violence against women (Combahee River Collective 1977). Additionally, black and Latina feminist activists were organizing at the same time as white feminists (Pulido

2006; Roth 2003). Moreover, in the mid-1970s, a group of legal scholars created *critical race theory*. Crenshaw (1991), a critical race theorist, conceptualized the term intersectionality, which encapsulates some of the early challenges to monolithic thinking about race and gender (bell hooks 1981; Cooper 1892). Crenshaw argued that the experiences of racism and sexism are not reducible to the sum of their parts, meaning that the dynamic experiences of being a black woman cannot be adequately captured by using a single axis framework.

The theory of intersectionality has been reworked, debated, and continues to be relevant in both social scientific and humanities scholarly literature. First, it is widely recognized that on the individual and interactional level people have a range of identities and experiences that cannot be reduced to one stable category (Andersen and Collins 2007; Brah and Phoenix 2004). Second, scholars have documented that structures and institutions operate intersectionally creating particular advantages and disadvantages for different groups of people (Alexander-Floyd 2012; Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; Collins 2001, 2005, 2009, 2011; Crenshaw 1991; Duffy 2007; Glenn 1992, 1988, 1999; Hall 1996; Hancock 2007; McCall 2005; Stasiulis 1999; Walby 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006, 2011). Most feminists who use intersectionality in their research will agree on one theoretical premise: intersectionality should aim, as both a scientific and political enterprise, to expose the inner workings of power and domination (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall 2013). Despite this agreement, I argue that there are three broad ways intersectionality has been conceptualized in sociology.

The first approach borrows from insights of standpoint theory. In general, standpoint theory starts from the premise of the Hegelian master/slave metaphor and argues for the epistemological advantage of studying the standpoint of those who are marginalized by their race, class, gender, or other social inequalities to more objectively understand power relations (bell hooks 1981; Collins 2009; Harding 1996; Stoetzler and Yuval Davis 2002). Collins (2009) argues that black women have unique perspectives because they are “outsiders within.” Her meaning is that their standpoint from the position of marginalization gives them a way to analyze power relations and society in creative ways because they experience being *in* the dominant culture but also being denigrated as *other* (see also Du Bois 1999 [1903]). Moreover, the matrix of oppression based on race, class and gender gives a particular voice to experiences that dominant groups do not possess (Collins 2007; see also Duffy 2007).

The second perspective calls for a *relational* approach to studying inequality and argues that categories chosen for analysis should not be decided *a priori*; instead, the researcher should be sensitive to socio-historic details that illuminate *what* types of inequality to study and *why* they are important. In other words, what categories are salient for one research project might not be important for another (Glenn 1992).⁶ An additional feature of this approach is to show that concepts such as “blackness” and “poorness” are not constructed in a vacuum (Choo and Ferree 2010; Glenn 1999). The privileges that come with being a middle class white woman are partly because of the material circumstances of people of color whose decisions are constrained by racial, gendered, and

classed hierarchies. For example, when white middle class women entered the work force, this change was often enabled by paying women of color low wages to tend to their homes or watch their children. This approach shares many of the features of context driven intersectionality because of the focus on history and illuminating how intersecting inequalities and privileged positions are co-constituting.

The third approach, like the second, argues for both understanding how intersecting inequalities are accomplished on a daily, experiential level while also understanding that institutions operate in such a way to create intersectional opportunities and disadvantages for different kinds of people (West and Fenstermaker 1995; Ridgeway 2011). These approaches at times overlap, however I separate them for heuristic elucidation and because some scholars tend to highlight one over the other.

Intersectionality has not been without its critics. Some scholars have questioned what variables to include or exclude for analysis (see Davis 2008). Davis warns of an “infinite regress” of intersectional projects (to get at what she means, she is questioning how do we know when to stop adding axes of oppression and marginalization such as race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, and age). In sum, I interpret the almost panicked response to the “what variables to include” question as being driven by positivism because it seems to imply that the question is answerable in some generalizable way. Although such questions unsettle me, it brings up an important point. How do we convince others that we choose the “right” variables and

how do we know when we have chosen “enough”? As I argue, context driven intersectionality obviates the question in the first place.

As mentioned, in a different way, this critique has also come from post-structural scholar, Judith Butler (1990), who argues that when feminists write etc. after a long line of inequalities it, “[is a] sign of exhaustion as well as of the illimitable process of signification itself” (p. 143). Yuval-Davis (2006) argues against Butler by noting that intersectionality is a crucial project that must be historically specific and because of the political necessity of bringing attention to intersecting inequalities.

There are many debates in intersectionality across the disciplines. First, intersectional scholars have been charged with only focusing on identity categories and not enough on how structure co-constitutes and reinforces intersecting inequalities (Yuval Davis 2011). Yuval-Davis contends that intersectionality sometimes is interpreted as being about identities and not about material redress (Yuval Davis 2006). Second, anti-racist scholars are, at times, uncomfortable with current uses of intersectionality that do not include the experiences of black women because intersectionality originated from their standpoints (Bilge 2013). Many argue that the omission of black women from intersectional frameworks does violence to the rich genealogy of black feminist thought (Alexander-Floyd 2012). Third and similar to the discussion above, some scholars argue that there is no methodological clarity for how best to *do* intersectionality. For example, Hancock (2007) argues that using intersectionality to study the most disadvantaged intersections can be interpreted as the “oppression Olympics”.⁷ In trying to provide

methodological precision, Hancock provides guidelines in order to overcome some of ambiguity in intersectionality.

Tomlinson reasons that these debates *within* intersectionality are mostly unhelpful because they call attention away from the work we need to do to counter subordination. She also maintains that debates in intersectionality can be a trope for erasing a “radical critique” (2013:996). She calls one such criticism of intersectionality the “rhetoric of regulation.” For example, Hancock (ibid) gives *a list* of what constitutes intersectional research. In her typology, she recommends that categories be given equal attention, that members differ politically, and that mixed methods are most appropriate. In short, in an effort to get away from the “oppression Olympics,” Hancock instead reifies social categories by discussing what are and are not good uses of intersectionality. Tomlinson lambasts Hancock for trying to give “a coherent set of empirical research standards for intersectionality” (Hancock 2007: 63 cited in Tomlinson, 1004: 2013). Tomlinson writes, “This critic systematically privileges—at a great cost—the disciplinary positivism of social science over anti-subordination arguments coming from other disciplinary programs” (2013: 1004). Tomlinson is bringing attention to the ways in which debates about intersectionality can actually be quite problematic.

2.2 *Getting Beyond Intersectionality?*

The biggest current debate in intersectionality across the disciplines is whether we should keep intersectionality as a useful tool or if we should aim to for a post-intersectional understanding of inequality (Puar 2012). A fourth approach, advocated by

Puar and others, posits that intersectionality has largely used a “difference-from” framework meaning that much of this scholarship re-centers white women and reifies socially constructed categories. What she means is although scholarship that is produced from women of color centers their experiences, white women’s intersectional scholarship often privileges gender over race. Puar contends, instead, for thinking of the coming together of inequalities as an active process or *assemblage*. This means that nothing is static, fixed—that there is no ontological stability when thinking about intersecting inequalities. Puar does not necessarily think we have to get rid of intersectionality but that it should be paired with assemblage in order to understand “what is prior to and beyond what gets established” (p. 63).

Another approach is to think about inequalities as a “rhizome.” A rhizome is a plant that moves in all directions and bears roots and shoots. As a metaphor, the rhizome “is used to illustrate knowledge production that follows more associative lines of flight or processes of de-territorialization that is, knowledge production that does not stick to one theoretical territory” (Lykke 2011: 211). Lykke uses the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and suggests that the image of a rhizome could be used as a metaphor to envision the ways in which new intersections might similarly bear new fruit and how intersectionality could be used with other critical approaches. She conceives of intersectionality as a nodal point that could be combined with thinking about inequality rhizomatically. For instance, instead of allowing for intersectionality to be the “black box” when thinking about inequality, perhaps, and in order to keep the concept flexible,

there should be more dialogue between intersectional scholars and deconstructionists and queer theorists. Both Puar and Lykke propose to think with intersectionality in a way that moves beyond disciplinary lines of thought in order for intersectionality to be vibrant and avoid reification.

I am grateful for their insights. Indeed, both Puar's and Lykke's concerns and suggestions are partly a response to the deductive approach many scholars use. However, I do not think "intersectionality as assemblage" or "intersectionality as rhizome" is necessary. As I argue in subsequent sections, critical race theory paired with a focus on context can similarly demonstrate how inequalities actively come together. Moreover, in particular, Puar tends to take her argument to the point of unintelligibility. The ongoing unequal social structure and institutions actually do share ontological stability because though what inequalities come together and how they matter might differ, intersecting inequalities always matter and they insidiously remap and remake themselves in new ways.

Sociologist Ivy Kin (2008) argues that we have to get "beyond intersections" and proposes to use a culinary metaphor that is supposedly superior to intersectionality. She shows how sugar is produced, used, experienced, and processed in our bodies as a way to understand how race, class, and gender are similarly produced, used, experienced, and processed. This approach allows us to understand how structural and individual forces are mutually constituted. For example, just as sugar is produced, so are race, class and gender inequalities. She writes, "We ask how and under what conditions, for what

purposes the forms of race, class, and gender under consideration were produced, and what ties their production together” (p. 155). In sum, Ken argues for taking seriously the ways in which structures produce inequality and can be read as urging for scholarship to get beyond identities.

I do not disagree with many of the suggestions contained in post-intersectional approaches. The above approaches to “get beyond” or amend intersectionality are not worthless endeavors. However, I wonder in some ways if they miss the point, and I take issue with the very language of “getting beyond” (Ken 2008). While some uses of intersectionality might employ static frameworks of inequality or reify social constructions, the seminal statement on intersectionality is that intersecting inequalities are more than the sum of their parts. When we think about what that really means, it is a statement that encompasses what other approaches try to get beyond. If something is more than the sum of its parts, each part requires careful inspection and the structures and institutions that give meaning to those parts to understand the total (sum). I maintain that it is not necessary to get *beyond* intersectionality because intersectionality holds the theoretical integrity and promise to do exactly what other approaches purport to get beyond. Indeed, Carbado (2013) similarly contends that getting beyond intersectionality is to “replace intersectionality with, or at least apply the theory alongside, some alternative framework.” (p. 815). Carbado argues that those who wish to replace intersectionality imply that their theory “has the ability to do something that intersectionality cannot do or does considerably less well” (2013: 816).

In addition to feminist debates about how to best conceptualize intersectionality, there have recently been several recommendations for how to make intersectionality more robust. For example, in much intersectional work, whiteness, masculinity, middle and upper social class, and heteronormativity are not interrogated. Carbado writes, “Colorblind intersectionality refers to instances in which whiteness helps to produce and is part of a cognizable social category but is invisible or unarticulated as an intersectional subject position” (2013: 817). Again, I agree with Carbado, and argue that what is needed is more attention to both intra-categorical variations and inter-categorical variations for the explicit purpose of avoiding homogenizing tendencies, interrogating whiteness (and the middle-class and masculinity), to show how categories are constructed. For instance, it does not make sense to assume that poor black folks in Los Angeles are exactly similar to poor black folks in the Deep South. However, sometimes scholarship (and at times intersectional scholarship) assumes that there are no differences within socially constructed groups. Moreover, Carbado is suggesting that intersectional work that has focused on, say, disadvantaged women of color, while necessary, can make masculinity and whiteness invisible.

Moreover, attention to context has long been foundational to critical scholarship but explicit attention has not yet been drawn to it. For example, Tomlinson writes, “Drawing on arguments about history, difference, flexibility, fluidity, specificity, and multiplicity, scholars argue that gender- and race-based anti-subordination struggles do not flow organically from shared physical features but rather emerge in efforts to imbue

complex embodied identifies with dynamic political meanings” (2013: 96). Tomlinson is drawing attention to the idea that good intersectional work considers context. Here she is also highlighting, though implicitly, that intersectionality should be an inductive process as she stresses the importance of history and specificity. Moreover, just because many projects might examine the oft-used categories of race, class, and gender, this does not imply that they mean the same things at all times and in all places. Context driven intersectionality can help show how categories are given meaning, produced in locales, and constructed by the social order.

2.3 Critical Race Theory: A New Approach?

I offer a way to get out of these debates is to go back to the starting point of intersectionality. Intersectionality was borne out of critical race theorizing among black feminists and it is there we find the tools to understand how society, history, the law, and politics construct categories (Collins 2009; Crenshaw 1991; Zinn and Dill 2009). We do not need to get beyond intersectionality. Rather, we must be attentive to structure and construction while also showing that there are *real material consequences* of categorization. Legal scholars created critical race theory in the 1970s (Bell 1973). They challenged the notion that law is neutral by bringing attention to how the law creates and perpetuates racism. Indeed, Crenshaw, a black feminist and critical race theorist, coined the term intersectionality.

Beyond intersectionality, scholars working within the purview of critical race studies have offered several insights that are useful to orient understandings of inequality

in my research. For example, though Du Bois is often not given the credit he rightfully deserves, he was one of the first American sociologists to use induction to build theory, guide analyses, and move away from “arm-chair theorizing” that characterized much of early sociological thought (Morris 2015). Du Bois used induction and his personal experiences to answer the question: “...How does it feel to be a [the] problem?” (Du Bois 1903/1996, p. 101) Du Bois further characterized the problem to be that of the color line between whites and African Americans. Additionally, for decades, feminists of color have been making similar arguments. Though they might not make the explicit link between their scholarship and critical race theory, they make similar arguments, adding the complexities of gender, class and sexuality (Zinn and Dill 1993).

Critical race theorists demonstrate how race is created as a way to uphold or create the racial order. Roediger (2006) documents how immigrants from Europe effectively became “white” as opposed to being categorized as “other” (being othered more closely aligned them with people of color). Said, though not necessarily considered a critical race theorist, (1978) demonstrates the tendency to homogenize different cultures in the Middle East and the colonial ventures it enabled to flourish—effectively showing how race is created for political projects (see also Narayan 1997; Mohanty 1988). Haney-Lopez (2006) shows how the legal constructions of race are unstable but in ways that allow the distinctions between whites and those with brown and black skin to remain intact. Critical race theory, in sum, supplies the tools necessary to use intersectionality in a way that conceives of inequality as always influenced by geography, history, the law

and politics. While some of these scholars are making macro-level arguments about the constructions of race, I am indebted to their insights because they force theorizing that is attentive to the particular forces that construct race. This is important precisely because induction from contexts should also show how geography, history, and politics construct complex inequalities.

Intersectional scholars and critical race theorists alike draw attention to race in the context of neoliberalism. Sirma Bilge (2013) argues we need to “save intersectionality from itself.” She draws upon the same arguments in critical race theory. She argues that current neoliberal projects imagine “fantasies of transcendence” that we live in a post-racial, post-gender, and post-class society. Bilge posits that intersectionality has become de-politicized and used as a “corporate diversity tool.” She contends that the best way to counter de-politicized intersectionality is to pay “proper attention to historical contingencies, to specific contexts, and the purposes of specific arguments” (p. 420). This has also been labeled neoliberal multiculturalism—where difference is celebrated *in name only* without actual material redress (Hooker 2009; Melamed 2006; Richards 2013). Indeed, David Goldberg, a critical race theorist, argues (2009) in *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* that antiracism has turned into anti-racialism, the refusal to name or race or racism as something to be addressed. He also calls the attempt to reduce the importance of the state starting in the 1970s “as a response to this concern about the impending impotence of whiteness...it was a short step from privatizing property to privatizing race” (p. 327). Goldberg and Bilge are speaking to the tendency

of jettisoning racial problems back into the realm of the private sphere and out of the public, which, in turn, makes inequalities seem as if they are personal problems.

In short, critical race theory pushes us to not only think about how race is made but also how imbricating inequalities can be erased from the public sphere by tendencies such as neoliberal multiculturalism, the focus on individual problems and not public issues, and when difference is celebrated in name only. When we consider insights from critical race theory, it assists in making sure that intersectional projects are intimately connected to political redress and forces thinking that considers how race and other social categories are made and remade in particular contexts.

2.4 Articulation Theory

Stuart Hall (1980) argues that when we think of categories (such as intersecting inequalities) we must think about their articulation and can assume no homology among categories without thinking about history and context. In Hall's usage of articulation, he is suggesting that articulation shows the relationship between types of marginalization and power. Moreover, concepts like hegemony and ideology can hide that the articulation of inequality is contingent. Makus (1990) writes, "For Hall, 'articulation' refers to non-necessary connections that can create structural unities among...historical conditions" (p. 496). Similarly, Smith (2009) argues categories for analysis should be discovered in the process of research to avoid reification. The concept of articulation builds on these insights to posit the non-foundationalist position we should assume when thinking about inequality (DeLuca 1999). Slack (1996) argues that articulation is both a theory and

method in cultural studies. Slack writes, “articulation can be thought of as a way of characterizing social formation without falling into the twin traps of reductionism or essentialism” (p. 112). The point is to think about how inequalities intersect and come together in particular contexts and how they “articulate” themselves, rather than taking them as pre-existing givens. I like to think of waves and ripples as a metaphor for articulation. Water represents the totality of oppressions and inequality. The pull of the moon, the wake from sea vessels, aquatic life and wind all influence how waves and ripples are created and sustained. The articulation of inequalities is much the same way. Geography, history and politics influence what is articulated in particular contexts. Inductive intersectionality, addressed below, allows us to understand these contexts and what forces are brought to bear within them.

However, the concept of articulation (and some of its post-modern uses) as a wholesale solution to understanding inequality (vs. intersectionality) is not adequate either. The radical focus on contingency can elide the material redressing that has yet to be accomplished for political purposes. Indeed, for example, Mohanty connects post-modern projects to neoliberalism because they can further those ideologies by omitting “systemic critiques of structures and institutions” (2013: 986). Thus, drawing from critical race theory, articulation, and intersectionality, I propose that intersectionality be context driven and avoid post-modern elisions.

2.5 Implications of a Context Driven Approach

What does inductive intersectionality add to feminist literature about intersectionality and what are the implications? I see several contributions. First, as I have detailed, it allows for the possibility of avoiding reification while also showing how inequalities are attached to structures and institutions. Second, drawing from the logic of induction, it does not necessarily hold that intersectional research must be accomplished by any single method—only that whatever method is chosen must be attentive to context. Similarly, it is borne from anti-racist feminist scholarship and critical race theory, which both demand that analysis and findings be connected to larger justice and political projects. Finally, it is cartographic and historical. That is, the emphasis on induction from contexts shows that particular intersectional projects have unique racialized, classed, and gendered spaces, places, histories, and geographies.⁸

Methodologically, inductive intersectionality forces us consistently to ask if we are reifying categories of difference and giving proper space to the theorization of how history, politics and geographic location create inequalities. This is not say to researchers and activists embark upon projects *tabula rasa*. That is not possible. However, inductive intersectionality requires, in the process of research and social justice work, that there is no *rigidly* defined program of what inequalities will be chosen. For example, Sandra Bland, an African American woman, recently committed suicide in a jail cell after being pulled over and arrested for no apparent reason. This nonsensical arrest and her suicide brought attention to the necessity of thinking about how other women of color are

similarly killed and tortured in jail with no to little police repercussion or culpability. This horrendous injustice brought attention to how the social movement #blacklivesmatter needed to be inclusive to how #blackwomenslivesmatter (also Crenshaw's #SayHerName).⁹ This is precisely what I offer that inductive intersectionality has the potential to do. In the context of social justice and research, categories chosen for analysis and social movement organizing are identified inductively in an ongoing process. Clarke and McCall (2013) similarly argue that intersectionality is a process and write "[It is] just as appropriate to define intersectionality by the *process of doing research* as it is to define by whether or not it uses some other traditional marker of an intersectional project" (2013: 350, italics added). Thus, I argue that thinking about intersectionality inductively moves us away from many of the more fruitless and distracting debates about intersectionality toward more promising theoretical and methodological possibilities. Inductive intersectionality allows for a flexibility, curiosity and sense of change that I hope will be useful for future intersectional projects.

2.6 Not By Name

In this section, I offer a few examples of scholarship that are exemplary in showing the importance of context and using an intersectional lens without explicitly claiming their work as intersectional. Mohanty (2013) writes "I have argued against a scholarly view from above of marginalized communities of women in the global South and North, calling instead for attention to historical and cultural specificity in understanding their complex agency as situated subjects" (p. 967). Mohanty and other

transnational, post-colonial feminist scholars call attention to two things: first, there is a great deal of scholarship that uses an intersectional lens but does not explicitly engage intersectionality. Second, many scholars not necessarily recognized as experts in the field are producing intersectional scholarship and analysis.

For example, Shannon Speed invokes intersectional thinking with the metaphor of a mosaic. Speed (2014) looks at violence against immigrant women and writes: “I suggest that gender violence might be better understood as a *mosaic*, in which distinct forms are assembled and the overall picture created by their juxtaposition can only be fully comprehended by contemplating them all together” (p. 78, emphasis added). Speed is arguing that gender violence is created and nuanced by race, immigration status and class. Speed also writes:

Re-conceptualizing gender violence as a “mosaic” is not inventing a new way of talking about gender violence for the sake of better description; it has important political implications. One of my biggest concerns with the continuum model is that it posits individuals at one end of a linear scale and the state at the other. (P. 88)

That is, thinking about gender violence as a dreadful mosaic shows the importance of thinking about the ways in which inequality comes together in particular places and times in particular ways; the case studies she provides show the ways in which context matters for women who are situated in them.

Karen Brodtkin (1997), an anthropologist, writes about how the white versus not white color line has changed in *How Jews Became White Folks*. Brodtkin engages a narrative that is very personal to her and incorporates details from her own life in a

fashion that is meticulous in historical specificity. Interestingly, she documents that Jewish women, like black women, were stereotyped as “not lady-like.” Brodtkin argues that the changing color line has everything to do with power and hegemony—that is, the changing color line afforded whiteness to *some* ethnic groups in a way that keeps the line between white and people of color solidly intact.

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994), in her ethnography *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration* begins by asking the question: “How do gender relations facilitate or constrain both women’s and men’s immigration and settlement?” (p. 3). She finds that contrary to previous conventional understandings, Mexican men and women do not have monolithic experiences with migration. Instead, she finds that immigration changes gender roles, and that men and women have different reasons for migrating and staying in the United States or desiring to return to Mexico. Hondagneu-Sotelo shows how immigration, gender, class, and ethnicity intersect in Mexican immigrant experiences, though does not explicitly claim her work is intersectional.

CJ Pascoe in *Dude, You’re a Fag*, uses ethnography to examine masculinity and femininity in a Southern California high school. She does not only approach the categories of race, gender, and sexuality in such a way that examines how these categories of difference translate into domination and oppression, but adds significant layers of complexity. Pascoe shows that constructions are fluid and that the discourses surrounding them are institutionalized. For example, she shows how adolescents can move in and out of the “fag” category depending on the context, but also shows how

constructions of masculinity and femininity differ based on whether or not the group of students she observes are in mixed gender, race or age groups.

Pascoe challenges any essentialized notions of masculinity and femininity as binary opposites or fixed categories. However, she does this in such a way that shows how popularity and race dictate how much transgression or “gender play” is available to certain students. For example, Pascoe shows that African American boys could not be too heterosexual because they were seen as predatory. However, they were allowed to perform dance moves and dress in styles that might have rendered white boys “fags.” Similarly, African American, Latina, and white girls could enact lesbian identities without repercussion because many of the boys in the school admired them for their toughness and enjoyed the fantasy of two women making love. Pascoe’s work shows how sexuality, gender, and race intersect in the context of a California high school.

I briefly mention these examples, again, to call attention to the fact that what I am presenting is not a totally novel approach, but is perhaps novel in explicitly talking about induction and context (see also Richards 2004). I am arguing that the theoretical promise of intersectionality has yet to be realized because of the lack of attention to its contextual and inductive roots.

2.7 Interrogating the Vulnerabilities Model

In the context of this dissertation, I use inductive intersectionality to problematize the vulnerabilities model. Early disaster work was defined by a focus on the return to normalcy and how and if communities come together or disintegrate into mass panic. In

the 1980s, scholars challenged some of the functionalist biases and collective behavior models in favor of a more critical understanding of disaster (see Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 1999). This new body of research, produced by anthropologists, historians, political ecologists, and sociologists contended that natural disasters often have an unnatural history (Adams 2013; Fothergill 2004; Hewitt 1983; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman 1999; Steinberg 2000). These scholars argue there are structural, institutional and discursive mechanisms that situate people in harm's way prior to and following the event. Oliver-Smith (1999) argues that disasters are "disastrous" because of the ongoing social order, a point that has been documented widely in recent work. Other social scientists show that in countries of the Global South, the constructed-ness of natural disasters is even more apparent. Legacies of imperialism and colonialism that disrupted local farming and building practices, as well as structural adjustment policies, have resulted in failing and flimsy infrastructures and unnatural deaths and sickness (Auyero and Swistun 2009; Cupples 2007; Doughty 1999; Fielding 2012; Jackson 2005; Oliver-Smith 1999; Vaughn 2012; Zaman 1999).

Largely, the previously mentioned scholarship has fallen under the purview of some form of the vulnerabilities model. Vulnerability as defined by Blaikie et al (2004:11) is "characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the impact of a natural hazard." The vulnerabilities model proposed by Wisner and colleagues (ibid) argues that instead of looking at disasters only we must try to situate them in broader historical trends. *Prima*

facie, this appears to fit into an induction framework quite well. However, in their elaborate schematic models these authors reify vulnerabilities and do not sketch out the implications for how their theorizations about particular types of disaster might be context dependent. For example, they propose two models to understand disaster vulnerability: the pressure and release model and the access model. The pressure and release model focuses upon how the causes of vulnerabilities, usually themselves divorced from disaster events, are magnified after disaster. The access model attempts to explain how vulnerability unfolds when and after disasters strike. Anderson (2011) argues that the focus in the vulnerabilities models “pays little shrift to political implications of definitions of vulnerability...universalist perspective(s) becomes much stickier when applied locally” (p. 21). I argue that to do justice to intersecting inequalities, attention to history, politics and geography and research questions at hand is paramount.

2.8 Articulation of Inequality in Long-Term Recoveries

Barnshaw and Trainor (2007:105) argue that only in the past decade or so have sociologists attempted to understand “the impact of disaster events on the larger ecological and social structures.” Fothergill (2004) argues for an understanding of disaster that takes gender, race and ethnicity into account. However, I find much of the treatment of inequality after disaster to be problematic for at least two reasons. First, the concept of recovery implies the return to a state of things before the disaster. This elides the fact that for some, their lives were already a disaster; some people were suffering long

before the disaster (see Blaikie et al 2004). Therefore, while I use the term recovery, I do so with an understanding that the very concept has a functionalist bent. In this dissertation, I ask the overarching question of “recovery for whom?” Second, much of the work on inequality and disaster homogenizes social groups. That is, there is very little work on disaster recovery that shows both variation among and between social categories. I argue that inductive intersectionality is well suited to understand these complex inequalities.

While the chapters to come display this more completely, to give a sense of how context impacted my data collection and thinking while conducting research, I now offer several examples of how Joplin and Tuscaloosa vary and how that variation offers compelling contextual details and clues about long-term recovery in both locations. For example, I did not originally include age until I returned to Joplin in 2014. I also thought about physical mobility and sexual orientation. However, and despite my best efforts, I was not able to find individuals who wanted to talk to me about their experience based on disability or sexual orientation. This does not mean that disability and sexual orientation are not important considerations in recovery from disaster. Instead, it simply suggests that they did not present themselves as important in the context of my work. In short, this means that by inductively analyzing from each location and their specific histories, race, gender, age and social class presented themselves as most important for my research project. I now present how race, region and political response influenced how I employed an inductive design.

Race

Race mattered in different ways in the two locations. White Joplin residents mostly narrate that racial inequality is a thing of the past and does not bear upon one's ability to recover. When I ask my participants questions about recovery, many offered examples of how Joplin is "different" from Tuscaloosa or other cities that have been devastated by disaster. Kathy Sharpe, an older white woman with dark hair, a wide smile and quit wit, told me:

We're the kind of people here who don't take *handouts*, and so it was a lot to go apply for one if your business wasn't physically affected. And I was too easily intimidated. I didn't want to be taking *handouts* I wasn't supposed to be getting. I didn't want to be -- and I think our Midwestern values, I think it was I didn't want to be asking for money that I didn't deserve. (May 2014)

This theme of "Midwestern" values is pervasive in my data. Consider this excerpt from my fieldnotes after an interview with Sally Kimmock, the director of a non-profit organization in Joplin. Sally had a master's degree in psychology and had asked me what research design I was planning to use. I responded that I was doing an ethnography of long-term recovery. She changed the course of the conversation and told me, emphatically:

"Speaking of eth's, people want to try to make the case that disaster affects people different based on ethnic group." I asked her, "You don't think it does?" She shook her head from side to side. "No, I don't. At least not in Joplin." (May, 2013, fieldnotes)

In fact, only about 10 percent of my Joplin sample (N = 87) suggested to me that race is part of the story. Instead, race entered into the story in coded and implicit ways. Many

times, my participants in Joplin would compare themselves to Tuscaloosa without prodding. The reason, beyond color-blind racism pathological in our society, is that Joplin is mostly white. I detail historical reasons for this in the next section.

Racial inequality appeared to operate differently in Tuscaloosa. Jayce Comstead, a local leader in the black community in Tuscaloosa tells me, “Tuscaloosa's situation was a little bit different. There was already a dichotomy of relationship. Housing was already based upon racial divides.” When I asked Jayce how churches helped people, he said,

So there was a hesitancy, perhaps – perhaps now, to even try to minister to the people that were – that were messed up as a result of this, on a white/black thing, because they didn't want to seem like they're patronizing. But at the same time, it was like, ‘we don't know the language [white church leaders say]’ and I said, ‘English.’ (September 2014)

Jayce is pointing to two things. Race divided the city before the tornado and the city was so divided that someone told him they wanted to help the black community but “they didn’t know the *language*.” In Tuscaloosa, it was like the tornado knew to hit the poorest areas of town (and because race and class map onto each other), where people of color live. Joplin’s black neighborhood, East Town, was not hit. Had the tornado devastated East Town, the racial divides of the city would have been more on display.

Region

I address regional differences in a subsequent chapter, but I want to give a brief explanation for why Joplin is predominantly white. Joplin was a sundown town. Sundown towns refer to the process by which towns restricted the mobility and number of people of color in their city limits. While most people think that sundown towns

simply refer to keeping blacks out of areas after dark, Loewen writes, “A sundown town is any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus ‘all-white’ on purpose” (2005:4). While in the Deep South, segregation functioned to spatially separate people by race, in the Midwest and portions of the Ozarks and Appalachia, sundown towns literally shaped the demographics of the region. Loewen writes, “Outside of the traditional South—states historically dominated by slavery, where sundown towns are rare—*probably a majority of all incorporated places kept out African Americans*” (p. 4, italics original). Loewen says that this is a hidden history of racism. Loewen also shows that sundown towns were often created out of violence. That is, when blacks would move in, they were forcibly removed through mob violence or worse, they were killed. This is interesting precisely because Joplin is so homogenous when compared to other locations. Joplin’s history as sundown town demonstrates how racialized spaces are historically produced.

In Tuscaloosa, overt segregation functioned to create racialized spaces. Alberta City, the neighborhood that took a direct hit from the tornado, provides an illustration to this point. After World War II, Alberta City was a bedroom community and was mostly white. After segregation ended, blacks aspired to move up and out of the West Side (historically segregated neighborhood in Tuscaloosa) and to Alberta City. As blacks moved into Alberta City, whites moved out. Money also moved out of the area. Silas and Hilda Salk, a middle-aged African American couple who live in Alberta City, explained it like this:

Silas: I am just being honest, the majority of the area that the tornado struck was black. It was mostly the rental properties and that's what it did. It just went through and destroyed our rental properties. It wasn't like that when we first came into the area. It was a good neighborhood, it was quiet but after about ten years, it did a complete turn and this whole section all this area over here, even over [by] the school, on the other side of the school, all that changed. In a ten year period.

Hilda: yeah, Juanita Drive was a big rental area.

Silas: and it just, it changed.

Me: uh huh, so when you first moved in here, were there white families?

Together: yes.

Me: and they moved out?

Hilda: they moved out, yes.

Me: and then you saw property values go down, [and then] slumlords came in?

Hilda: yes, yes, right!

Silas: some of them that moved out, didn't sell, they rented. That's where the issue came in. And then they wasn't screening who they rented to, they just rented them. I said within seven years after we move here, it got awful. (October, 2014)

We can see here that in both cities, there were different racial policies—some de facto and some de jure—that functioned to keep blacks out of white areas. However, these processes occurred in different ways based on the region. This suggests that blanket statements about how history and policies create racialized spaces miss the mark because they cannot speak to the specificity of how these policies work in local contexts.

Differences in Long-Term Recovery

Local governments in Joplin and Tuscaloosa responded to their tornadoes in different ways. This is also an example of how I used induction to understand how inequalities are created. For example, Joplin's libertarian approach to recovery tended to dampen feelings of disbelief, disintegration and anger. This is not to say that there are not examples in my data of individuals criticizing Joplin's approach. There are many. Tuscaloosa residents, however, are much more dissatisfied with their government's approach to long-term recovery. Tuscaloosa implemented a plan to make the city more attractive and sustainable. Many of my participants are critical of the plan. Some see it as too much government oversight, some see it as a mechanism that exacerbates inequality, and others see the plan as an outright conspiracy theory. Joplin residents, overall, seemed to be much more content and satisfied with recovery. These differences in recovery map onto existing inequalities. The poor in Joplin seemed to fare much better than the poor in Tuscaloosa did. However, most black residents in both cities are critical of recovery and relief aid. Moreover, many middle class citizens in both cities—but especially Joplin—are generally satisfied with recovery. This shows that the ability to recover is based on not only access to resources (which is in and of itself classed, racialized and gendered) but also local political response. Furthermore, even though response might be neutral in theory, people will experience response differently based on structural inequalities.

I have offered these three examples to show that race always matters but in differing ways. The same is true for gender and class. In Tuscaloosa, the divide between

rich and poor is striking. Tuscaloosa has one of the highest indices for income inequality in the country. In Joplin, class matters because it is mostly a working class town. Age and gender differences are less pronounced in each city but differing state policies and similar national policies map themselves onto particular locations—social and geographic—in different ways. This is the subject of my next chapter. My purpose here has been to give a brief picture of how inequalities matter but in different ways.

2.9 Conclusion: Intersectional Theorizing in our Neoliberal Era

In this chapter, I traced the genealogy of intersectionality. I demonstrate how intersectionality has been used in sociology and address some of the critiques of intersectionality. I also draw from critical race theory and articulation theory to argue that intersectionality is best accomplished based on context. In my dissertation, this consideration is based on history, geography, and political response to the disasters. I have also demonstrated that an inductive approach or context-driven intersectionality is not necessarily a novel idea but that specific attention regarding the importance of context in intersectional work has not yet highlighted in feminist debates in the social sciences concerning how to best theorize multiple inequalities and do research on those inequalities.

I write this dissertation with neoliberal shifts in the Global North in mind. Klein (2007) argues that in the context of neoliberalism there are “orchestrated raids on the public sphere in the wake of catastrophic events, combined with treatment of disaster as exciting market opportunities, ‘disaster capitalism.’” (p. 6). Gotham and Greenberg

(2014) analyze disaster recovery after 9/11 and Katrina and argue that there is evidence of “crisis-driven urbanization” wherein there is “neoliberal urbanization, uneven development, and what we have come to call uneven landscapes of risk and resiliency” (p. 224). They show how federal money was not necessarily used in areas that needed it most, and instead was used to encourage private real estate development and housing stock. They are also critical of sustainability efforts after disaster because they tend to employ the logic of the market and are created for the middle class—not necessarily for the benefit of all (such as biking paths, p. 232). This directly informs my understanding and criticisms of Tuscaloosa’s recovery as an effort to make the city more sustainable for particular types of people.

In following chapters, I outline how particular policies have made disaster hurt worse. Framing disaster recovery in the context of our current neoliberal era is *also* connected to my impetus for using inductive intersectionality. Grzanka (2014) argues:

Intersectional analyses of politics tend to derive concepts and principles *inductively*, rather than deductively, which allows for creative theorizations of taken-for-granted concepts such as “rights” and “justice.” Intersectional scholar-activism remains invested in justice and social transformations, but in created policy agendas from the ground up—based in experiences of multiply marginalized groups—rather than simply adjusting neoliberal or otherwise hegemonic policies to accommodate or include social minorities. (P. 230, italics added)

So I conclude with policy recommendations that are anything but perfunctory.

Based on my analysis of the political responses to both tornadoes, I demonstrate how race-neutral, gender-neutral and class-neutral policies, as well as larger historical trends, create and perpetuate structural inequality.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: THE PAST INFORMS THE PRESENT

I call my home, Joplin. I suppose the money I have paid in the way of taxes has gone to school funds to educate people such as came to my house last Wednesday night and broke out my window panes and routed my wife and children and scared them nearly to death. I found them in a box car near the railroad track... and I sit in my house and hear the howling fiends utter oaths that drove me mad: 'Get out, niggers, this is a *white man's town*.' Now, would I say again. I would say, O Lord, if there is any, have mercy on my soul, if a black man who lives in Joplin has any.¹⁰ – 1906, Anonymous black man writing to a Joplin newspaper after a man was lynched (emphasis added).

In this chapter, I outline the history of Joplin and Tuscaloosa with specific attention to histories of race, class, and gender inequalities. After spending three years examining and analyzing archival, scholarly and other documents related to both cities, inequalities resulting in unequal access to housing have struck me as the most important in the context of my research. Therefore, I first give a social class history of each location focusing on Joplin's history as a mining town and Tuscaloosa's as a university town. Second, I show the history of racial inequality in both cities. I examine segregation, civil rights, and the desegregation of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and Joplin's history as a sundown town. Segregation in Tuscaloosa is so severe and ongoing that the school districts are largely segregated and lawfully so. In 2000, a judge lifted the desegregation mandate and the schools quickly re-segregated. I demonstrate existing social problems in both locations prior to the 2011 tornadoes and Alabama's passage of HB-56, which was the draconian immigration bill, targeted at Latinx. Third, I outline

how neoliberal trends have served to exacerbate inequalities by examining the economic crash of 2008 and how the housing crash had differential effects on people based on their social locations. Throughout the chapter, I contend that inequalities always matter but I show they matter in different ways based on context. That is, I demonstrate that it is not as if difficulties in housing are some mere artifact of the tornado. On the contrary, I examine specific mechanisms that led to unequal opportunities in housing ongoing before the tornadoes. My overall plan in this chapter is to give historical information about each location to show how policies in both cities plainly shaped the demographics and spaces in each city.

3.1 American Apartheid: Segregation by Design

It is no accident that cities and towns are segregated by class and race. Social scientists have long been interested in how cities and neighborhoods are structured and how spaces affect life chances. W.E.B. Du Bois noted in the *Philadelphia Negro*, an impressive study on race at the turn of the 20th century, “In Philadelphia, as elsewhere in the United States, the existence of certain peculiar social problems affecting the Negro people are plainly manifest. Here is a large group of people—perhaps forty-five thousand, *a city within a city* who do not form an integral part of the larger social group” ([1899] 1995:5). However, as noted by Massey and Denton (1993), Philadelphia would later experience hyper-segregation. Indices for segregation increased after 1910, barely a decade after Du Bois’ social study, from 46.0, meaning that (based on population) around half of blacks would have to move to achieve integration, to 88.8 in 1940, meaning that

almost 90% of blacks would need to move to achieve integration. Massey and Denton similarly argue that the structural forces that helped to shape the “ghetto:” industrialization and the immigration of blacks into northern cities. In the South, Jim Crow did the work industrialization did in the North.

From 1900 to 1940, racial violence increased. It was often organized and sent a clear message to blacks: “you cannot live here, you cannot be here or you might die.” This violence, coupled with the huge masses of Southern blacks to Northern cities created more and more intense isolation. Moreover, this violence also forced middle-class and educated blacks to move into black ghettos. This was not necessarily the case for ethnic whites, who, at the time were not considered white, but they certainly were not black either (Roediger 2006; Brodtkin 2006). Massey and Denton argue that European immigrants did certainly live in segregated enclaves but they differed from black ghettos in three ways. First, they were heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity. Second, most European immigrants did not live in the enclaves. Third, immigrant enclaves served to assimilate ethnic whites into American society—where they solidly became part of the “mixing pot” after World War II. This mixing pot was never designed to include people of color and certainly not blacks.

After World War II, suburbanization, largely spurred by the HOLC (Home Owner Loan Corporation) providing loans to returning GIs further created segregated spaces. I detail redlining in a subsequent section but, effectively, history repeated itself in terms of racial segregation and isolation. These suburbs were white spaces. Moreover, whites

also began to flee cities to live in suburbs, taking valuable resources with them and resulting in, many times, loss of infrastructure. White flight is a process ongoing today.

I provide this brief history to contextualize the rest of the chapter. Class and race inequalities have general and specific histories it is important to understand that what happened in the Jim Crow South, and sundown towns elsewhere, are part of a larger pattern. Whether it is institutionalized, due to the actions of individuals, an economic decision, the results are the same and come to structure the life opportunities and housing opportunities of people of color in the country today.

2014: Joplin

I drive over a viaduct into East Town. Though only a tiny section of Joplin, I immediately notice it is more dilapidated than the rest of the city and it seems dead. *Where are all the people?* I notice the one-hundred-year-old houses are jammed close together. There are two restaurants, one a BBQ restaurant and another, a soul food joint. Additionally, save a couple of car body repair shops, and a tattoo parlor, there are no other businesses. As I leave East Town, literally just a few streets of the city of Joplin, I drive back over the viaduct and am in downtown Joplin. I drive by Wall Street, where the Joplin lynching occurred. I shudder and try to ignore the knot in my stomach. I think of Treyvon and then taste salt from my sobs.

2015: Tuscaloosa

At this point, I've gotten a sense of this town's segregated past and gotten used to how different the West End is from most of the rest of the city. It previously was quite shocking. I've also gotten used to, for better or worse, the segregation and poverty in this college town. It did not stand out to me like it did in 2013 and part of 2014. I walk to meet a professor at the University of Alabama. It is a gorgeous campus. It is a sleepy fall day, everything seems to slow down, and the leaves are turning hues of orange and fire red. The slant of the autumn sun makes pull out my sunglasses. I walk along the sidewalk; take my time, enjoy the coolness of the day but also the heat of the sun. I can feel its warmth to my core. It is

around noon. I suddenly realize I am not too far from Foster Hall, where George Wallace made his infamous last stand. I think of how it must have been 60, 50, 40 and so on years ago. I see several students of color, walking along, in some cases with white students, in some cases listening to music. I stand there, pull out a cigarette, light it, and think about history and how things change. I think to myself *I will go find Foster Auditorium after my meeting*. However, no more than does that thought pop into my head I am interrupted by loud music coming from a large pick-up truck. *Mississippi Queen* by Mountain is suddenly my reality. I look more closely at the pick-up and see a large Confederate Flag in the bed of the truck. It undulates in the sunshine. A chill of fear and then a sense of disgust rips through me like a knife. *Things change, sure Ashleigh, but things stay the same.*

3.2 Mining Town: Joplin

Joplin was platted in 1873 after the discovery of lead; however, it was a settlement on the Santa Fe Trail prior to that date. There was no permanent European/US American settlement in the area prior to 1833 (Gibson 1972). Joplin is in what is known as the tristate mining district (Missouri, Oklahoma and Kansas). The district was eventually the largest producer of zinc and lead in the U.S.

Prior to 1900, Joplin was known as a “poor man’s camp.” The miners had little capital of their own and had to pay royalties and buy their own dynamite (Gibson *ibid*). Joplin miners were exposed to very hard work and numerous health hazards, including the outbreak of tuberculosis. The miners in this area also generally resisted unionization. Gibson writes, “Undoubtedly, one cause of the lack of action in the district is that most of the labor force was recruited from small farms of the Ozark hill country” (p. 201). There was no shortage of labor from these farms. Gibson goes on to assert, “Others claim with less validity that the lack of appreciable foreign-born population explains the absence of

labor trouble” (p. 201). While the weak labor movement and resistance to unions is likely explained by a multitude of factors (such as a large labor pool), this area of the country is relatively racially homogenous. Walter Williams surveyed the district in 1904 and praised the area for being contained of “self-made men” (Williams p. 294 as quoted in Gibson 1972, p. 202). In 1940, a reverend testified to the Secretary of Labor: “They [miners in the Tri-State area] are Americans, white Americans...they are pretty independent” (as quoted in Gibson, p. 208). Moreover, Gibson also notes that as long ago as 1889 the area was known for having substandard housing (p. 255). Joplin also had quite the reputation for raucous nightlife. *Joplin Daily Herald* reports: “We venture to assert that there is no city in the United States that allows lewd women as much latitude to pursue sinful avocations as does Joplin” (May 14, 1880 as quoted in Wood 2011:19). There were many saloons, a red light district and Joplin was notorious for gambling (Wood 2011).

After World War II, the value of lead dropped and Joplin’s success in the mining industry diminished (Larsen 2004). Demand for lead decreased as it became cheaper to mine them in other countries. Joplin was able to diversify its economy but the majority of current jobs to this day are low-wage blue-collar jobs. Freudenberg and Wilson (2002) claim in “Mining the Data: Analyzing the Implications of Mining in Nonmetropolitan Regions” that mining has mostly neutral or unfavorable economic consequences for local economies in the long term. In keeping with that pattern, Joplin’s history as a mining town has situated it as a blue-collar town in the present day. The median income is

15,000 dollars less than the national average and the poverty rate is 19.2 percent.

According to Bowen Research, in 2013 Joplin's major industrial sectors were retail trade, health care, manufacturing transportation and warehousing. Sixty percent of households in Joplin have incomes less than 40,000.¹¹ When comparing housing segregation by class in Joplin and Tuscaloosa, there is less variation in Joplin than in Tuscaloosa. While there are two areas of concentrated wealth in Joplin, the city's history as a working-class town has situated neighborhood median income more evenly across neighborhoods. (In Tuscaloosa, the wealth is concentrated more unevenly). Joplin is more homogenous in terms of class and race in comparison to other Missouri statistical metropolitan areas, such as Springfield, St. Louis, Jefferson City, and Kansas City. It also has a higher poverty rate than Missouri and a lower median income.

3.3 University Town: Tuscaloosa

Tuscaloosa was platted in 1819, the day before Alabama entered the Union. Tuscaloosa is in Western Alabama along the Black Warrior River. It was Alabama's capital from 1826 to 1846 and during that time, the University of Alabama (henceforth UA) was established. During this period, the city experienced a population boom and then decline when the capital moved back to Montgomery (Hagood 2011). During this time, there was also an influx of African slaves and conflicts between whites and Native Americans, thus changing the region's demographics as the Native American population decreased and African population increased. In the 1830s, the primary economic activity was cotton farming which relied on slave labor. Hagood (ibid) argues that while much

has been written on the frontier ethos that justified Westward expansion, less has been written about how that same ethos was evident in the settlement of Southern states. The attitudes of rugged individualism and the ability to take over nature and “savage” peoples are evident in both national policies like the Monroe Doctrine and the settlement of cities like Tuscaloosa. Hagood (ibid) contends that early residents conceptualized Tuscaloosa as a “raw frontier” and saw Native Americans as a menace.

After the Civil War, it took Tuscaloosa decades to recover economically (Flynt 2004). Fleming writes, “When the war ended, there was little good money in the state and industry was paralyzed” (1905: 277). Blacks and whites suffered tremendously; however, blacks often lived in complete destitution (Fleming 1905). Though agriculture was the state’s main economic activity after Civil War, the Great Depression severely affected Alabama’s agricultural industry. In Tuscaloosa County, the main sources of income were agriculture, timber and coal mining¹² (Flynt ibid). Moreover, Flynt contends that after integration, Alabama students were just as stratified by class as they were race; just as black and whites were separated so too were the poor and the wealthy, though the experiences of class and race segregation are obviously different (p. 331).

In the present day, inequality in college towns is pervasive. There is still a bifurcation by race and class in many college towns (Florida and Mellander 2015). Indeed, inequality in college towns mimics that of larger cities (to give an example, Tuscaloosa is more segregated by class than Birmingham and is just as segregated by race as Atlanta). To give another example, sociologist Sharon Hays, in an interview,

echoed what poor folks in Charlottesville, VA say about the University of Virginia. It is dubbed “the plantation.”¹³ Moreover, Desmond (2016) remarks that folks in Milwaukee say that the University of Wisconsin-Madison is “thirty square miles surrounding by reality” (p. 316).

Today, Tuscaloosa’s prime economic activities stem from education, health care, coal mining and two manufacturing plants: Mercedes Benz and Michelin. The median income in Tuscaloosa is 38,500 and the poverty rate is 26.3 percent. In comparison to Alabama, Tuscaloosa has a lower median income and higher poverty rate. Furthermore, Tuscaloosa had one of the highest Gini coefficients in the country. The Gini index is an indicator of wealth distribution. A Gini index of 1 indicates that that there it total inequality and a Gini index of 0 represents total equality. The United States’ Gini index is .41 according to the World Health Organization (2013).¹⁴ Tuscaloosa’s is .53. The figure below shows segregation by class in Tuscaloosa. In other words, Tuscaloosa is more economically segregated than the United States’ average. In comparison other statistical metropolitan areas in Alabama, Tuscaloosa’s class and race inequality is similar to the rest of the state.

That Tuscaloosa is a college town is a source of many of my participants’ consternation and anger. As I will continue to demonstrate, participants understand the appeasement of students is treated as more important than their welfare. The ongoing construction of student housing while affordable housing is *still an issue* for long-term

residents, leaves participants with feelings that the UA, and the revenue it brings the city, is more important to the city than their well-being.

3.4 Sundown Towns: A Mechanism for Present Day Cultural Colorblind Racism

The legacies of racism and racist policies are written into the landscapes of neighborhoods and affected the demographic make-up of both cities. Missouri was a border state, which means that it was a slave state but it did not leave the Union (along with Kentucky, Delaware, Maryland, and the newly created state of West Virginia). Moreover, though Missouri does not have the same reputation as Deep South states, to argue that racial tension and fighting did not exist in Southwest Missouri would be incorrect. As Harper (2010) indicates, there was racial violence in Southwest Missouri. However, Missouri did not have black codes (laws that defined a slave's relationship to their owner) and in 1824, an African American could sue for their freedom. In Joplin, during reconstruction, the white population in the area boomed and the African American population doubled. However, due to two lynchings that occurred in 1901 (in neighboring Pierce City) and 1903 (in Joplin), reportedly 100 families left the area. After this incident and reflecting the growing segregation around the country, in 1908, a segregated school for African American children was established (Bogle 1991).

While the role of past racist policies was a much easier to uncover in Tuscaloosa (indeed, much has been written on the subject), in Joplin it was not as evident. I grew up southeast of Joplin and never really questioned why my surroundings were so white. It was not an interrogated part of life—it was just the way it was. As already mentioned,

the Ozarks are relatively homogenous in racial and economic terms – it seemed as if everyone was white and working class. I felt unease whenever I would encounter individuals from more privileged stock and wasn't sure how to act around people who didn't look like me. When I was a teenager, I began to learn of the Klu Klux Klan and the grandmaster from Arkansas lived in Harrison, Arkansas where I received much of my primary education. Harrison is in the Arkansas Ozarks and a two-hour drive from Joplin. I learned how African Americans were forcibly removed from Harrison but still did not really question why the region was predominantly white. I did not understand the role of sundown towns until I started to write this dissertation. In present day, there is a large billboard in Harrison that reads, “anti-racism is a code word for anti-white” sponsored by the White Genocide Project. The billboard keeps being taken down and subsequently keeps being put back on full display. Now there is a sign that reads, “It's NOT racist to heart your people,” and is explicitly sponsored by the Klu Klux Klan.

Though sundown policies varied from place to place, the system of control was largely the same: to keep jurisdictions white. That is, some towns allowed blacks to work in town but not live there and others would only allow one or two black families. However, regardless of the specific policies, sundown towns functioned as systems of social control and exclusion. The history of sundown towns has been hidden in the non-traditional south and Midwest. Loewen conceptualizes racism after 1890 as the “Great Retreat”—a massive removal of people of color from white spaces. Often, blacks were forcibly removed or killed to enact sundown policies. This pattern is remarkably

consistent across non-urban areas in the Midwest, West, and the non-traditional south (such as the Ozarks, Oklahoma, the Appalachians, Texas and Florida). Sundown towns were a point of pride and used a selling point for white migration into towns. “No negroes here” was often printed in newspapers and pamphlets from sundown towns. (Most of the time, the language was much more offensive than “No negroes here” was.) Loewen (2005) criticizes scholars for not paying attention to sundown towns but he brings up an important point: since white is the norm, whiteness is not interrogated. Sundown towns are a case in point. Loewen argues that social scientists and historians are uncomfortable trying to explain the absence of something, such as the absence of people of color in certain towns. Loewen maintains, and I agree, that silences and absences are just as telling as presences and utterances. It is from this premise he makes his case: majority all-white towns deserve attention on their own merit. In Joplin, as elsewhere, the absence of people of color is telling because it did not happen on accident.

Joplin and the surrounding communities were almost all sundown towns. Infamous lynchings occurred around the start of the 20th century in Joplin and other nearby communities, such as Pierce City and Springfield. In the more densely populated areas of the state such as St. Louis and Kansas City, violence against people of color was ubiquitous. (Jewett and Allen 2004). In Joplin, Thomas Gilyard was lynched in 1903 after being falsely accused of murder. A mob of three thousand people surrounded him and he was hung from a telephone pole. Loewen maintains that “towns with successful riots wound up all-white, of course, or almost so, and therefore had an ideological interest in

suppressing any memory of a black population in the first place, let alone an unseemly riot that drove them out in the first place” (p. 92). Violence had a contagion effect as blacks would observe the violence occurring in other communities and then move away from these cities. After the Gilyard lynching, half of the city’s 770 African American citizens left. Loewen shows that the percentage of African Americans in Joplin was less in 2000 than it was in 1902 (and the trend continues in the 2010 census). This is an example of how the Great Retreat occurred in Joplin. This is also similar, though different in form, to the segregation that occurred in large cities at the turn of the 20th century.

Moreover, the African American inhabitants who stayed were forced to keep quiet about their marginalized positions or suffer the same fate as Gilyard. Leslie Simpson, a local Joplin historian, writes:

In the 1937 *Negro City and County Directory*, the majority of Joplin’s black citizenry were porters, domestic workers, and janitors. The only black-owned businesses were a dry cleaner, shoe shine parlor, barber shop, shoe repair shop, and a boarding house. Speaking of 1937, the introduction to the Joplin city directory for that year, written by the Chamber of Commerce, enthuses that ‘The population is almost entirely white and almost entirely composed of intelligent, native stock, thereby eliminating the chief source of recurrent labor troubles.’ These are merely observations based upon a few historic documents. The black history of Joplin has yet to be written.¹⁵

Joplin was not welcoming to other non-white groups either. The city’s white residents drove out Chinese laborers and gypsies. For instance, in 1911, police harassed gypsies who had settled on the outskirts of town and they eventually left, likely due to the mistreatment they experienced.¹⁶

After the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in 1954, Joplin Junior College was ordered to desegregate and the public school officially desegregated in June of 1955 (Bogle 1991). Though this occurred peacefully, this was mostly due to a local black leader and Joplin's first male African American councilmember, M.W. Dial, who instead of trying to make whites understand the struggle of African Americans, sought to make blacks more agreeable to whites by encouraging passivity. Missouri was once praised for how quickly they followed the desegregation mandate but that came to a halt in 1958 and, according to Billington (1966), some urban areas experienced resegregation.

This history of sundown towns and the inability for residents and social scientists to recognize their role in shaping demographics and citizens' understanding of race in majority-white areas is evident in Joplin. According to Bogle (1991), a school leader, Cecil Floyd stated this about the region's African American population: "We have a different type of colored persons than we had in the big cities. We don't have that type of people...we have a good type of black people" (p. 438). Furthermore, because the African American population was so small, they faced isolation in Joplin. Boyle writes, "The white community in Joplin has misinterpreted the black experience in the city. Passiveness has been equated with approval" (1991:439). The claim that there was "no problem" with desegregation is based on the inability to see how expecting African Americans to be more passive is an insidious mechanism of white supremacy. Allport (1979) contends in the *Nature of Prejudice* that the assertion of "there is no problem here," does not mean that areas of the country that did not experience widely publicized

racial violence and tension are free from culpability. Instead, Allport argues, it mimics the racial and class blindness of our society. Indeed, the experiences of “peaceful” desegregation and the racial ideology that African Americans are somehow “different” in Joplin from in other places provides a narrative to which many of my participants subscribed. The idea that there is “nothing to see here” informs current white residents’ understandings of the racial hierarchy or lack thereof. I examine this topic in a subsequent chapter.

So while the racial history of communities such as Joplin is different than other areas, this particular narrative of “nothing to see here,” does just as much damage to the ability of those who are not white to recover from disaster as perhaps the more blatant forms of racism that occur after other disasters. Although integration occurred peacefully in Joplin, Missouri, the history of race relations in the Ozarks and specifically in Joplin have been elided. Gordon Morgan, a sociologist, shows that people in the Ozarks destroyed reminders of blacks who once lived there Morgan (1973) was attempting to write the history of African Americans in the area and complained, “Some white towns have deliberately destroyed reminders of the blacks who lived there years ago” (quoted in Loewen, p. 264).

My investigation into the history of Joplin and the creation of unequal spaces led me to investigate redlining—the process by which neighborhoods were ranked by their proximity to neighborhoods of color that resulted in segregated cities and town—and white flight post-segregation. Though East Town is segregated by race, I have not been

able to find any evidence of redlining. Bogle, a historian, demonstrates that prior to integration, blacks and whites lived in the same neighborhoods. She writes that in the 1930s, blacks self-segregated in East Town (1991).

However, not surprisingly, Joplin was not free from discrimination after the civil rights movement. For example, in 1977, HUD found that the city had not sufficiently documented its strategy to employ women, people of color, and the poor (*Joplin Globe*, 1977). Indeed, in 1988, *The Joplin Globe* reported that African Americans in the Joplin area dubbed Joplin a city that had “hidden racism.” The same newspaper reports that African Americans in Joplin had some trouble finding rental housing outside of East Town—that certain property owners would not rent to blacks. Currently, Joplin has a dissimilarity index of .354 meaning that 35.4 percent of African Americans would need to move into white neighborhoods or vice versa in order for the city to be completely integrated by housing. So unfair opportunities in Joplin related to housing (and other social inequities) appear to be the result of de jure discrimination in the post-civil rights landscape.

3.5 Slavery, Segregation, and Desegregation

My assertion that context is important to understand inequalities is evident when comparing Joplin and Tuscaloosa. Tuscaloosa’s history of race relations is much different from that of Joplin. For example, Hagood (2011) contends that the history of African Americans in Tuscaloosa has also been elided, though he focuses on a different time in history. There are many accounts of encounters with Native Americans but the

struggle of African Americans after the Civil War and through Reconstruction is yet to be written. The history of African Americans in Alabama stops after the civil war and begin with Jim Crow. In Alabama, Jim Crow officially began in 1901 with a new constitution that stripped voting rights from almost two hundred thousand African Americans who had been eligible to vote under the 1875 constitution (Flynt 2004). Flynt writes, “[T]he architects of the 1901 constitution frankly stated the arguments of class privilege and racism, which were paramount in their deliberations” (p. 28). Alabama did this by increasing voting restrictions due to criminal convictions. The constitution states:

The following persons shall be disqualified both from registering, and from voting, namely: All idiots and insane persons; those who shall by reason of conviction of crime be disqualified from voting at the time of the ratification of this Constitution; those who shall be convicted of treason, murder, arson, embezzlement, malfeasance in office, larceny, receiving stolen property, obtaining property or money under false pretenses, perjury, subornation of perjury, robbery, assault with intent to rob, burglary, forgery, bribery, assault and battery on the wife, bigamy, living in adultery, sodomy, incest, rape, miscegenation, crime against nature, or any crime punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary, or of any infamous crime or crime involving moral turpitude; also, any person who shall be convicted as a vagrant or tramp, or of selling or offering to sell his vote or the vote of another, or of buying or offering to buy the vote of another, or of making or offering to make a false return in any election by the people or in any primary election to procure the nomination or election of any person to any office, or of suborning any witness or registrar to secure the registration of any person as an elector. (Article VIII, 42)

The constitution also contained other restrictions that were disenfranchising such as poll taxes and literacy tests (Feldman 2004).

Three decades later, in the 1930s, the Department of Education found that the African American death rate in Alabama was 1.3 percent versus .08 percent for whites

meaning that per 1,000 in the black population vs. per 1,000 in white population, blacks were almost twice as likely to die when compared to their white counterparts. Though the crude death rate is an imperfect measure as everyone eventually dies, it does show how particular populations and geographical areas have higher rates of death than others do. Moreover, African Americans were more likely to suffer from the ravages of disease and made half as much money each year than their white counterparts (Clark 1993). In 1933, after Vauldine Maddox, a young white woman, was murdered, the city simmered with anger and three young African Americans, Dan Pippen, Jr., A.T. Harden, and Elmore “Honey” Clark, were arrested. Two of them were shot execution style and lynched. A month later, a paralytic black man, Dennis Cross, was lynched for tearing a white woman’s dress (Hollars 2011).

Though no more lynchings occurred in Tuscaloosa that are a part of the official record, attempts at official integration in Alabama took more than a decade. In 1956, angry whites protested the admission to the UA of the first African American student, Autherine Lucy (Clark 1993; Hollars 2013; Lieb 1995; Rogers et al 1994). She was quickly expelled for her “protection” (Mokrzycki 2012). Desegregation did not officially occur at the UA until 1963. This was contentious as well because Governor George Wallace had campaigned on making sure that segregation was the law of the land in Tuscaloosa. His “last stand” at the UA did not prevent Vivian Malone and James Hood from eventually registering for classes.

Legal integration did not solve Tuscaloosa's problems with race. In the summer of 1964, African Americans became increasingly convinced that peaceful protest would not be an option when the KKK attempted to block the desegregation of the movie theater and gunfire was exchanged. Moreover, Hollars (2013) has written about how the civil rights movement in Tuscaloosa has also been overlooked. While much has been written on Selma, Montgomery, Atlanta, and Birmingham, Tuscaloosa's role in the civil rights movement has been left out of popular and academic accounts of the movement. In 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. appointed T.Y. Rogers to go to Tuscaloosa and become the pastor of First African Baptist Church. Rogers hoped to invigorate Tuscaloosa's civil rights movements. He did energize the black youth and on June 9th of 1964, several people headed to the church to gather before demonstrating in downtown Tuscaloosa. The police responded by releasing mustard gas into the church, and then attacking the congregation. Almost 100 people were taken to jail and many were injured in this brutal police action. This day became known as "Bloody Tuesday" (Hollars *ibid*). Though the local authorities tried to suppress the civil rights movement in Tuscaloosa, activists were successful at bus boycotts and sit-ins. In 1964, the city's public facilities were integrated.

In Tuscaloosa, there was a moment in the late sixties when students crossed the color line jointly to express concerns over police brutality and the Vietnam War. After desegregation and into the late 1970s, white students' attitudes towards blacks seem to have improved. For example, Mokrzycki demonstrates that more African Americans

were writing in the university newspaper and there was an African American homecoming queen in 1973. From 1973 to 1976, students' attitudes on racial equality and gender equality became more liberal according to survey data collected by UA psychologist, Jerome Rosenberg (2012:311). However, as the population of African American students increased, the rhetoric of "African Americans as a threat" once again became more prevalent and there were many racially motivated incidents in the 1980s. Mokrzycki argues that racial tensions are ongoing to the present day. Muir and McGlamery (1984) show that in the 1980s, students were more likely to see blacks as their equals but believed that they possessed negative attributes. Muir and McGlamery also show that white students did not see blacks as potential friends. The students actually had more negative views of blacks than they did in the 1960s and 1970s. Recently, Fine and Clarke (2010) have written about a history professor who came to Tuscaloosa in 2001; he wanted to show publicly the links between the construction of the UA and slavery. There was *vehement* backlash from the community. Beyond characterizing the professor as a socialist liberal, the community thought highlighting *that* past was a worthless endeavor. It took until 2006 for UA to acknowledge publicly the role of slave labor in building the university. I choose to highlight desegregation here because it offers important points of comparison and contrast with Joplin, and I have presented both histories to demonstrate that race and class matter in Joplin in Tuscaloosa, albeit in different ways.

3.6 Inequality in Access to Housing

Redlining was practiced in urban areas in both Missouri and Alabama. While I could not find much evidence that Joplin exercised redlining to keep blacks from integrating into white neighborhoods, the story in Tuscaloosa is quite the opposite. As recently as 2005, banks have been charged with engaging in redlining practices in Alabama, Tuscaloosa included. Tuscaloosa is indeed segregated by race and class. This is no mistake. The table below shows how the historically black neighborhoods on the West Side of town have stayed black after the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968 and the Community Reinvestment Act in 1977. The Community Reinvestment Act was implemented to stop the process of redlining. Redlining was a common practice after World War II that has shaped the landscape of many towns and urban areas. The HOLC (Home Owner's Loan Corporation) established guidelines for lenders based on race. Areas deemed as safe investments were colored green and considered first grade, second grade areas were shaded blue, yellow shaded areas or third grade areas were buffer zones—the majority of the population was white but there was an African American neighborhood nearby. Areas shaded red, or fourth grades, were predominantly populated by African Americans. These lending practices obviously contributed to segregation and concentrated poverty in particular areas. Redlining denied African Americans access to decent housing—the main source of familial wealth in the United States.

More recently, banks engaged in subprime lending to the poor and working classes, who are disproportionately people of color (Hernandez 2009). Subprime lending

is the process by which people are given loans that have a substantially higher interest rate when compared to conventional loans. Subprime lending is usually practiced when the borrower has a poor credit score and is considered a risk. Hernandez (ibid) argues that people of color are more likely to turn to subprime loans after being denied access to other mortgage loans. He also maintains that subprime loans will map onto existing neighborhoods that were historically redlined. This process is conceptualized as *reverse redlining*. While I do not have access to redlining maps (they are available for large metropolitan areas such as St. Louis, Birmingham, Chicago, Atlanta, New York City, etc. at the National Archives, but not for smaller cities), I do know that the West Side was and is segregated, and when blacks moved into other parts of town, whites began to move out (see next table).

Subprime loans came into existence when, in 1980, the Depository Institutions Deregulatory and Monetary Control Act removed controls for how much interest could be charged. In 1982, the Alternative Mortgage Transaction Parity Act was passed and these two actions translated into the practice of checking credit scores and basing interest rates on those credit scores. Credit scoring became the norm for lending credit and subprime loans rose dramatically in the following years. It is quite evident that these new practices negatively affected people of color more than whites (Hernandez ibid).

3.7 Subprime Lending, White Flight and Re-segregation: Tuscaloosa

I conducted my own analysis of subprime lending in Tuscaloosa and Joplin and more information about that process can be found in Appendix B. The table below shows

census tracts in Tuscaloosa. The table also gives information by tract. The first column represents the actual tracts in Tuscaloosa. This was an interesting endeavor because Tuscaloosa has incorporated many areas in the county that are not specifically within city limits. I use the census tracts that are mostly in the city limits and not all of unincorporated areas. In the table below, I also give information about the demographics of each tract. The highlighted cells show the relationship between race, income, gender and age, the percentage of people who were denied loans, and the percentage of people who applied for subprime loans. In the table, “SP” refers to subprime lending.

Table 1: Relationship between Census Tract and Reverse Redlining

Tract	% female headed	% 65+	median income	% white	%rental	population	Census Tract	Conventional loans to purchase home originated	approved/not accepted	denied	withdrawal	incomplete	% denied	#SP	% SP
104.03	20.03	23.26	30,068	63.62	41.11	3513	104.03	53	3	12	6	0	16	1	2
104.04	23.81	16.5	20,637	39.51	57	2551	104.04	26	2	3	1	1	9	1	4
104.07	8.91	18.81	36,803	79.63	42.52	2892	104.07	47	11	6	3	1	8	3	6
112	9.59	18.53	10,870	53.64	97.6	1948	112	0	1					0	0
114	3.09	4.19	11,764	74.75	84.18	7271	114	88	7	10	7	3	9	0	0
116	18.5	5.93	20,634	44.06	57.32	6986	116	33	2	9	4	2	18	6	18
117.01	39.52	14.26	18,636	0.71	55.67	2812	117.01	7	1	5		1	35	0	0
117.03	36.35	13.79	21,913	2.59	38.22	3900	117.03	17	2	5	3		18	0	0
118	32.85	16.69	19,021	1.63	46.1	3380	118	16	2	8	6	2	22	6	33
119	17.47	10.83	18,412	42.92	73.12	5116	119	73		4	3		5	3	4
120	6.94	19.39	21,380	82.77	70.35	3471	120	217	11	22		7	8	1	0
121	11.57	17.38	32,736	80.62	41.94	3694	121	141	8	27	20	2	13	2	1
123.03	15.45	16.04	44,797	67.71	39.96	5779	123.03	73	11	25	8	5	20	5	7
124.03	19.4	7.02	40,083	55.94	37.85	2406	124.03	23		1	4	1	3	0	0
124.04	25.72	12.57	37,895	26.83	35.71	2005	124.04	52	1	5	2		8	2	4
124.05	23.9	12.16	25,942	37.94	59.1	5569	124.05	46	4	13	6	4	18	4	9
125.01	23.04	12.2	35,547	24.67	17.36	1820	125.01	13	3	5	4		20	4	31
126	8.76	7.1	20,494	65.71	73.2	1493	126	18	1	1	2		5	0	0
127	12.95	10.12	22,734	23.09	21.02	2806	127	44	3	7	7	1	11	4	9
128	30.82	19.16	43,029	68.61	56.21	3262	128	26	3	4	8	1	10	7	27
Mean	15.7	20.8	27,731	54.1	52.3										

***Based on 2000 census

I find that tracts containing more people of color have the following characteristics: there is a higher percentage of people who apply for subprime loans and do not receive them, or, as in the case of the West Side, there is more evidence of subprime lending. In tract 128, the percentage of female-headed houses is high and so is evidence of subprime lending activity. The figure below gives another visualization of the data contained in the previous table. Additionally, subprime lending activity tends to be clustered in tracts where there is a lower median income than the rest of the city (with two exceptions). More information about these data can be found in Appendix B.

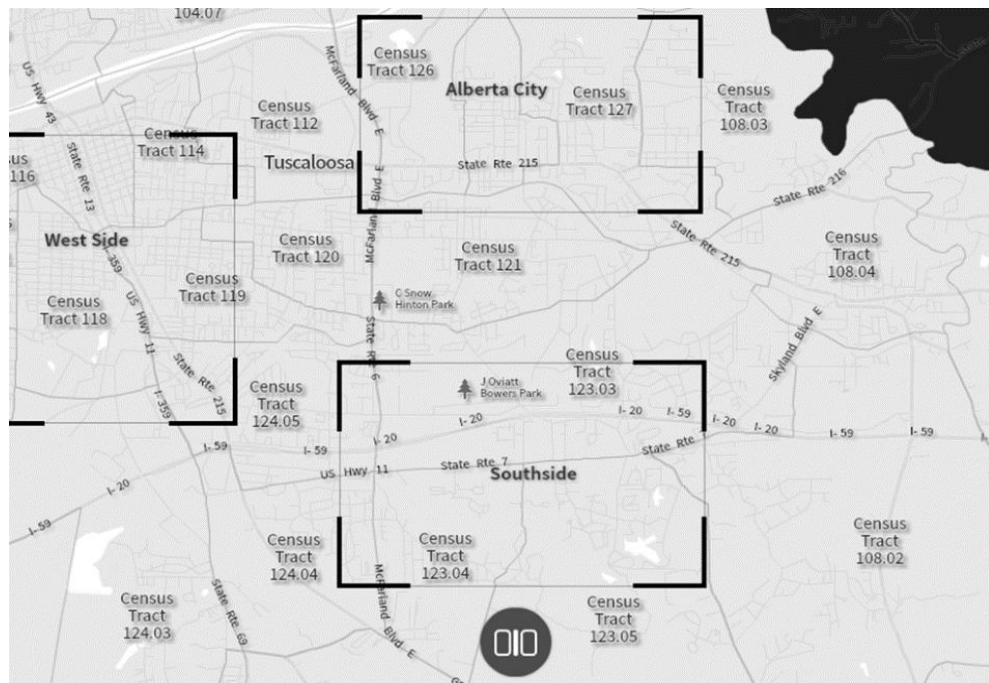


Figure 3: Concentrations of Subprime Lending in Tuscaloosa

White flight is another process by which unequal neighborhoods are created. White flight is an interactional process by which whites move out of neighborhoods after people of color move into them. There is much evidence of white flight in Tuscaloosa.

The historically black neighborhood, West Side, has never had a majority of white people. However, Alberta City, a bedroom community for Tuscaloosa after World War II, drastically changed in the decades following. As African Americans got access to mortgages and moved out of the West Side (which is historically and presently economically depressed) and into Alberta City, whites moved out. In 1970, whites predominately populated Alberta City. The trend of decreasing numbers of whites in Alberta is ongoing. Parts of Alberta City are fairly integrated but the new tract (127) shows the dramatic decrease of whites in the area (the census tracts for Alberta City changed after 1990).

Table 2: White Flight in Tuscaloosa

Tract	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
	% white	% white	% white	% white	% white
104	68.29				
104.01		63.85			
104.02		94.82	89.57		
104.03			76.26	63.62	59.24
104.04			47.65	39.51	43.82
104.07				79.63	73.21
112	97.44	80.84	73.24	53.68	
114	87.16	89.01	84.05		
114.01					74.75
114.02				91.48	65.39
116	54.91	35.35	23.17	44.06	23.08
119	72.21	74.04	57.4	42.92	
119.01					63.97
119.02					13.28
120	95.04	92.48	88.65	82.77	90.44
121	96.62	96.04	92.77	80.62	68.82
123	86.34	80.87			
123.01			80.65		
123.02			70.49		
123.03				67.71	52.01
124	93.64	74.04			
124.01			47.73		
124.02			65.13		
124.03				55.94	51.95
124.04				26.83	33.33
124.05				37.94	25.02
125	67.48	69.62	69.02		
125.01				24.67	19.61
109 (Alberta City)	93.69	77.91	70.44		
110 (Alberta City)	81.94	70.32	74.55		
117 (West Side)	13.19	5.4			
117.01 (West Side)			0.53	0.71	1.04
117.02 (West Side)			4.47		
117.03 (West Side)				2.59	0
118 (West Side)	4.6	0.091	0.49	1.63	0.67
126 (Alberta City)				65.71	65.13
127 (Alberta City)				23.09	14.08
128 (Alberta City)				68.61	51.44

The data contained in this chart were obtained using Social Explorer, an interactional mapping tool that uses census data. I gathered census data for each decade starting in the 1970s to ascertain if the West Side had become more integrated and to show white flight in Alberta City. The West Side was overwhelming black in 1970 and this is the same in 2010. Actually, it was more integrated in 1970 than it is today (census tracts 117 through 117.03). In Alberta City, in 1970 the census tracts were 109, 110, and predominantly white. However, as you move to the right of the table, you see that the percentage white begins to decrease decade after decade. This is especially the case in the census tract 127, created in 2000. Moreover, the segregation of the city is evident in other areas of town. Census tracts 116 and 119 also experienced white flight. These areas border the West Side. Finally, census tracts 123-125.01, the South Side, also experienced white flight.

One of the main mechanisms by which Tuscaloosa has maintained segregation is its school districts. In 2000, after years of integration, Tuscaloosa school systems were no longer required to integrate. A judge ordered that the segregation mandate could be lifted because the Tuscaloosa school system could be trusted to keep integration ongoing (Hannah-Jones 2014). The integrated high school, Central, broke into three high schools. Journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones (2014) writes, “The school board’s gerrymandering of attendance zones means that although it is located in a racially diverse area, the new Central’s student body is 99 percent black. Nearly one in three black children in Tuscaloosa now attends a de-facto segregated school.”¹⁷ The high school that now

contains 99 percent black students is the poorest of the three. These schools have been dubbed *apartheid schools* (Kozol 2005). Prior to the 2000 decision, white parents had moved out of town into nearby suburbs so they could send their children to nearly all-white schools or put them in private schools. They took resources and power with them. To combat this trend and keep revenue within city limits, in 1993 the city built an elementary school, Rock Quarry, on the other side of the Black Warrior River, in an almost all-white area. When the school was built, the city promised that the composition would be equal numbers of black and white students. Today, only nine percent of the students at Rock Quarry are students of color. Currently, Tuscaloosa has a dissimilarity index of .536 meaning that 53.6 percent of African Americans would need to move into white neighborhoods (or vice versa) in order for the city to be completely integrated by housing.

Tuscaloosa is also currently situated in a climate of civil rights retrenchment; that is, racism is explicitly evident in Tuscaloosa and Alabama at large. In 2013, the UA sororities only inducted *one* black woman. Currently the UA still does not have a diversity requirement in their general education program. In addition to trying to implement a law that gives police officers the right to profile Latinx, Alabama is also closing Department of Motor Vehicle offices in eight of ten counties that have the highest percentages of African Americans.¹⁸ State budget cuts have searing effects on African American communities, as it is often public welfare programs and public services that are on the chopping block. Furthermore, during fieldwork, I drove by a large billboard every

day that read #SECEDE. The League of the South, which the Southern Poverty Law Center classifies as a neo-confederate hate group, sponsors this billboard.

Another example of institutional racism and increasing nativist anxieties about immigration is the Alabama bill HB-56. Alabama's HB-56 bill shaped my access to Latinx participants in the city. Since its passage, most of the bill's provisions have been deemed unconstitutional. However, it passed in 2011 and has been cited as the most draconian immigration bill in recent history. The point of the bill was to make undocumented immigrants' lives so difficult they would self-deport. After the passage of the bill and especially after the tornado, undocumented people left the state en masse. Those who stayed sought help from the local Catholic Church. However, AL HB-56 shows how one piece of legislation created a situation in which Latinx felt they could not seek help. There is also much anecdotal evidence that, among Latinx, the dead buried their dead and then left the area (Weber and Lichtenstein 2015). This seems to have a ring of truth to it as a trailer park that was mainly populated by migrants took a direct hit, but paradoxically, there are no names of Spanish descent on the official list of those who perished on April 27th. Since those living in trailer parks are more likely to die and be injured, it does seem rather curious that there are no names of Spanish descent listed. Therefore, for Tuscaloosa's Latinx population, it seems there was very little help offered to them or they felt as if they could not ask for help.

3.8 Subprime Lending: Joplin

In Joplin, subprime loans are not the same across census tracts, but they do not *neatly* correspond with higher levels of poverty, female-headed households, older age, or race. To ensure that I was not missing important information, I further looked at each individual case (n = 43) of subprime lending in Joplin in 2007. Women and people of color were not disproportionately represented. (Information about individual income and age are not available.) However, while researching subprime loans in Joplin, an interesting pattern emerged. While most of Joplin is white, the areas that have more non-whites are poorer, have higher percentages of rental housing, and higher percentages of female-headed households.

Table 3: Relationship between Census Tracts and Subprime Lending

census tract	% female	% over 65	median income	% white	% rental	population	census tract	originated	approved/not accepted	denied	withdraw	incomplete	% denied	# SP	% SP
101	14.18	14.45	22,679	82.41	49.82	5660	101	60	4	8	5		10	3	5
102	9.8	12.66	37,830	92.91	27.05	3680	102	77	8	4	5		4	3	4
103	12.72	10.66	31,348	92.39	38.99	5665	103	100	4	8	12	2	6	4	4
104	7.87	21.35	35,122	94.18	31.44	4258	104	64	8	10	7	5	11	2	3
105	11.4	19.4	34,574	92.56	38.49	5026	105	85	6	9	4	4	8	0	0
106	17.24	13.6	25,382	89.58	56.62	5660	106	94	4	15	3	2	13	3	3
107	8.66	24.65	36,389	95.55	26.07	2698	107	43	3	8	6	1	13	0	0
108	15.46	13.87	25,022	91.15	48.83	4428	108	78	7	30	8	2	24	2	3
109	11.99	13.58	36,297	93.53	33.97	5251	109	109	14	19	5	3	13	5	5
110	13.79	11.02	22,448	89.16	60.78	4336	110	70	5	27	7	5	24	4	6
111	12.45	10.49	52,321	94.94	20.56	1869	111	26	3	8	1		21	3	12
112	10.04	11.09	32,579	94.18	23.25	6070	112	94	15	34	17	1	21	10	11
114	12.33	13.82	30,706	94.04	32.92	5319	114	124	12	24	6	2	14	5	4
205	7.42	17.34	42,125	94.17	24.79	9044	205	142	16	26	11	2	13	1	0.07
mean	12.3	12.5	30,555	91.4	42.4										

Therefore, while subprime loans did not correspond with particular census tracts in Joplin, there is evidence that poverty, female-headed households and percentage person

of color are concentrated in census tract 101. In Tuscaloosa, as we have seen, subprime loans did map onto historically redlined neighborhoods and neighborhoods that have experienced white flight.

Not surprisingly, the state of Missouri is also in a crisis of civil rights retrenchment. Missouri became the focus of attention of racial inequality in Saint Louis and Ferguson when police slew Mike Brown. However, for black Missourians who have lived in and around St. Louis, the killing of Mike Brown was not surprising. For years, white flight has taken valuable resources and infrastructure from Ferguson. Moreover, when one travels to East St. Louis, they will witness the existing racial divide created by urban renewal mechanisms and institutional racism, and they will be visiting one of the most dangerous places in the world.

In St. Louis, one of the most segregated cities in the country, schools are also segregated. The state largely abandoned a desegregation mandate because Missouri governor Jay Nixon made the mandate voluntary. This caused, for example, the school that Mike Brown went to one of the poorest in the country and one of the most segregated. Nikole Hannah Brown (2014) writes of the Ferguson school district Normandy “Throughout the region, the educational divide between black children and white children is stark. In St. Louis County, 44 percent of black children attend schools in districts the state says perform so poorly that it has stripped them of full accreditation. Just 4 percent of white students do.”¹⁹ Sadly, the story is similar in Kansas City.

3.9 Neoliberal Shifts and the Housing Crisis of 2008

Since the 1980s, cutbacks in social welfare programs have been pervasive. Urban restructuring was put into motion in the 1970s and involved “a range of policies to engineer economic growth by privatizing public services and assets, deregulating major industries, reducing corporate taxes and intensifying interurban competition for capital development. More broadly, neoliberalism ‘conflates’ democracy and the free market” (Gotham and Greenberg 2014:13). Neoliberal policies have had severe effects on women, the elderly, the poor and people of color. Dramatic rollbacks in government welfare programs and systematic deregulations fall on the shoulders of those who are least equipped to respond. For example, the welfare reform of 1996 cut welfare rolls in half and left women scrambling to figure out how to provide for their families. Neoliberal policies and ideologies have infiltrated into all parts of society—including disaster aftermaths. After 9/11, the trend toward outsourcing monies to private parties became routine. This “disaster capitalism” (Naomi Klein, 2007) moves public monies to the private sector after a crisis.

Neoliberalism should also be understood not only as an ideology but also as a colonializing force into everyday life. Geographers Peck and Tickell (2002) argue for understanding neoliberalism as a *process*. They argue that neoliberalism is a regulatory regime that is now more “‘depoliticized,’ acquiring the privileged status of a taken-for-granted or foundational policy orientation. Meanwhile, a deeply interventionist agenda is

emerging around ‘social’ issues like crime, immigration, policing, welfare reform, urban order and surveillance and community regeneration” (p. 289).

Moreover, Vicanne Adams (2013) shows how after Hurricane Katrina there was a dearth of public money and emphasis was put on charitable donations instead of investments in destroyed neighborhoods. Adams quotes Foucault who wrote, “The problem of neoliberalism was not to cut out or contrive of a free space of the market within an already given political society...the problem of neoliberalism is rather how the overall exercise of political power can be modeled on the principles of the market economy” (p. 9).²⁰ Adams maintains that in the context of disaster recovery, the “needy” become a site for capital production but not social welfare. Neoliberal policies have not only fundamentally changed society, but neoliberal logic has crept into disaster aftermaths.

I briefly mention some of the changes brought about by neoliberalism to argue a specific point: the housing crisis of 2008 should be understood as a result of neoliberal reforms and policies, most centrally the deregulation of banking agencies. Kotz (2010) claims that the Great Recession is “the crisis of neoliberal capitalism.” Though neoliberalism was part of the cause of the Great Recession, it has also been used, unfortunately, as the solution. In short, the housing bubble burst and had effects on the global economy. The hardest hit were women, the working class and people of color (Jourdain-Earle 2011; Lichtenstein and Weber 2014). This is directly related to why the most marginalized people in our society are more likely to receive subprime loans. That

is, women, people of color and the working class are more likely to turn to subprime loans. Neoliberal ideology is not only the cause for such catastrophes but also remaps itself in new ways in the aftermath of disaster.

From 2008 to 2012, women in Tuscaloosa County were at higher risk of being foreclosed, their homes were worth less, and they lived in “at risk” neighborhoods. Women’s foreclosures during this period were more likely to occur in the West Side, Alberta City and the Southside. Lichtenstein and Weber (2013) also show that foreclosures are clustered in predominantly African American neighborhoods in Tuscaloosa County.²¹

I did my own analysis of foreclosures in Joplin, and more information about that process can be found in Appendix B. I find that higher numbers of foreclosures did not necessarily correspond with tracts that have higher numbers of people of color, though census tract is an imperfect measure. The table below gives a visual representation of foreclosures by census tract. Tracts 110 and 112 had the highest numbers of foreclosures. There is some racial disparity since tract 110 has more people of color when compared to other tracts, and both 110 and 112 have lower than average median incomes. Thus, foreclosures, unsurprisingly, are more likely to occur in lower income areas. However, in general, Joplin had lower foreclosure rates than both Missouri and the United States during this time. The national average for foreclosures in 2011 was 16 percent, Missouri was nine percent, and Joplin was five percent, which suggests that the Joplin housing market was immune to the housing crisis.²² Although, when comparing

recovery are not happenstance—they are based on long-standing and recent inequalities that are created by structural forces and neoliberal shifts. In particular, I have shown that the access to housing is racialized, gendered and classed and varies by location. I have also examined inequality in both cities based on their differing histories. With these histories in mind—subprime lending, segregation, sundown towns, and the housing crash of 2008—I now turn to my three analytic chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

INEQUITIES IN ACCESS TO HOUSING

In this chapter, I have three central findings. First, I show how social class is one of the best explanations to understand access to housing after disaster. In making this argument, though, I also show how class intersects with other inequalities, in particular working class and poor women of color. Second, I show that there are some common themes in both Joplin and Tuscaloosa in terms of access to housing. Third, I argue that many problems associated with housing reflect larger trends in the country. However, the crisis of disaster makes these issues particularly salient or even revelatory of housing problems in both locations.

Disasters create a situation that robs people of their jobs, their belongings, their sense of self, their cars, and most of all, their homes. The home is a place that people actively create and adorn as an extension of themselves (Blunt 2008; Cuba and Hummon 1993; Dayaratne and Kellett 2008). In our society, a home also is a “back stage” where people can unwind and let their hair down (Goffman 1959). While I discussed racialized spaces in previous chapters, in this chapter I extend the discussion to a focus on place. While space refers to abstract, disembodied locations such as census tracts, countries, and neighborhoods, places, such as one’s home, are spaces that people experience and that take on symbolic meaning. Not only is access to housing an institutional problem but

people who lose their home and have subsequent difficulties finding a new one experience a variety of negative emotions because they feel as if they have lost their place in their social world. For example, when a home is flooded or damaged after disaster, people describe feelings of invasion to the extent that some people compare damage to their home as something akin to physical assault (Fothergill 2004). Damage or loss of housing is related to negative psychological outcomes (Carroll et al 2009).

In the previous chapter, I describe how inequality creates racialized and classed spaces. In part of this chapter, I will document difficulties in access to housing after the Joplin and Tuscaloosa tornadoes and how it has varied by race, class, gender, age and location. While there are commonalities among people's experiences with housing, there is no singular experience. However, difficulties in access to housing tend to fall along class lines, although only thinking about difficulties in access to housing as a function of social class is a bit of an over-simplification. This suggests that social class is a way other types of inequalities manifest themselves. For example, many people of color are working class or poor. Similarly, single moms tend to have more problems than their married counterparts do because they have less access to economic resources.

Moreover, though social class stands out as the most important explanation in terms of people being able to rebuild or repair their houses quickly, other things are also important to consider. There are other issues such as problems with mortgage companies, insurance, contractor scams, access to wealth, student housing, the dearth of low to middle income housing, slum lords, FEMA housing units, and rental prices skyrocketing

immediately after both tornadoes. I argue that the latter set of issues is ongoing in our society but disaster recovery reveals them to people in ways they may not have been aware prior to experiencing disaster.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. After reviewing relevant literature on the home and disaster, I provide five cases to illustrate the difficulties women face when disaster “unmakes” their homes, drawing attention to how gender intersects with race and class in particular ways. Women, and not men, were more likely to describe the trials and toils of their homes being unmade. I then discuss the similarities and differences between the two cities in terms of inequities in access to housing. Finally, I turn my attention to homeowners, many of whom fought battles with their insurance company, mortgage company, or were scammed by a contractor.

4.1 Home UnMaking: The Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class

I present the findings in this chapter with attention to how it feels to have a home unmade and to wait or be delayed in home re-making. Many people described themselves as homeless after the tornado. This was not necessarily associated with what we normally think of as homelessness. For example, in the context of disaster aftermaths, for some people losing their home made them feel homeless even though they would eventually find another place to live. Bruce Cook, a white working class man in Joplin, described he and his wife’s 11-week displacement as “a very long night—we were homeless” (May 2013). Indeed, the loss of home is perhaps a tragedy that supersedes

social categories. The key difference though is that waiting for a home to be remade does vary by intersectional identifications.

There is a substantial literature on how a house is more than a house—it is a place imbued with symbolic meaning. While scholars have written much on the construction, creation and recreation of home (Dayaratne and Kellett 2008), there has been less attention to what happens when the home is damaged or destroyed. Baxter and Brickell (2014) conceptualize this as home unmaking which is “the precarious process by which material and/or imaginary components of home are unintentionally or deliberately, temporarily or permanently, divested, damaged, or even destroyed” (p. 134). A focus on home unmaking recognizes that at all points in someone’s lives, the domestic sphere is being unmade in some form or another. This is far different from literature that looks at how home is *made*, though the two are not mutually exclusive (Baxter and Brickell *ibid*). In the context of disaster and recovery, a focus on unmade homes renders visible the difficulties in long-term recovery in a way that is attentive to emotions, hardships, and meaning making.

To give a sense of how homes are unmade, I will tell the stories of five different women. All the women are women of color and poor or working class. All of the women except one were renters. I chose to share these women’s stories because they show how race, class and gender matter together. For example, unmade homes were also a problem for poor and middle class white women, but their situations do not usually reflect the same intensity as working class and poor women of color. Interestingly, it also seems that

the emotional burden of unmade homes tend to fall on the shoulders of women, as my interviews with men didn't show a similar pattern—at least not to the extent that they did with women. This could be due to at least two reasons: first, particular forms of acceptable masculinity might not allow the men to feel comfortable discussing unmade homes, and second, that labor in the domestic sphere tends to fall on women's shoulders especially in times of crisis.

Isabella and Lucia Perez

I first met Lucia at a Mexican restaurant in Joplin. I was trying to recruit participants from the Latinx community and the manager of the restaurant told me that the tornado had affected several of her employees. Lucia told me that she and her mother wanted me to tell their story, and that she would be happy to translate for me. A few days later, I met them in their house. They had previously been renters but a local organization had helped them build a home and they are now homeowners. Their new dwelling is in the heart of where the tornado hit, a mixed income neighborhood with two and three bedroom homes. When I walked into the living room, I greeted both Lucia and her mother, who is an undocumented immigrant from Mexico. Isabella has only a primary education because she had to stop going to school in order to help around the house. Isabella had just finished her shift at work and was still wearing a kitchen apron. They were displaced after the tornado and had experienced some discrimination and difficulty finding a place to live. We were having a conversation about how they feel when it storms and the conversation took a turn:

Ashleigh: When you hear the alarms now, how do you feel?

Isabella: mmm bad. Tell her when I feel bad like this, I gave \$300 for rent for a trailer house, and I still felt bad. We would cover ourselves with a blanket.

Lucia: when we lived in the trailer and everything and the sirens would go off and the rain, it just sounds so much worse when you live in a trailer and everything

(Isabella is crying again, sobbing a little).

Isabella: We all stood up and began to say... Tell her that in that trailer house there wasn't, the windows were broken, the carpet was just a hole because of the landlord. Tell her that your dad would pay rent there, but they wouldn't go to fix it. We didn't have mattresses.

Lucia: yeah we would just huddle up and everything. The reason why my dad didn't want us to live in there because the windows were broken like, from the outside, like you know how there is usually two windows? The outside window was broken, and um,

Isabella: Tell her that it was sad. It was as though, it was as though we were in a garbage dump there. Very bad, it was bad.

Lucia: I know, like I used to go by there and when I go by there now and it's just still a really bad state and situation.

Isabella and Lucia had previously told me that having to live in a trailer after the tornado was traumatic because every time it stormed, they would re-live the tornado. This is because sound and wind are magnified in a prefabricated home. They had their home destroyed only to have to live in a trailer owned by a slumlord where they did not feel safe. Isabella was so upset recalling the memory that she sobs while answering my questions. While they were able eventually to become homeowners, just driving by that trailer now makes them sad. When the interview ended, Isabella grabbed me and hugged me for a long time, saying "Gracias por contar nuestra historia" over and over again (thank you for telling our story).

The Pedersons

The Pedersons are a working class black family in Joplin. A key informant put me in touch with Alaina, a young mother. Alaina had enthusiastically agreed to be interviewed. I met them in Alaina and Darrell, her fiancé's, apartment. Cheresa, Alaina's mother, wanted to be part of the interview and took a very active role in answering the questions, as did Darrell. They had all lived together in a home when the tornado hit. At the time of the interview, Cheresa was still living in what she considered a "bad" apartment and was, three years after the tornado, still trying to find something better. We were having a lively discussion about housing in Joplin and they told me:

Cheresa: the place that we [eventually] got, and it was terrible, but --

Ashleigh: He [the landlord] price gouged, too.

Darrell: Yeah, he price gouged.

Cheresa: Yeah, so we could all be together and the kids can have -- get back to --

Ashleigh: A normal routine.

Cheresa: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Darrell: Yeah, anything to get back to a normal state of mind.

Cheresa: Right. But it was terrible. We cleaned it. Oh, they let us get in. But it was -- I mean, it was terrible. It stunk so bad, but we [got on our] hands and knees, all my family came. We got on [our] hands and knees, we scrubbed, scrubbed, scrubbed. Anything, just so we could have a place to stay. It was the worst damn house.

While the Pedersons were able to find a new house, they hated living there, it stunk, and they paid too much in rent. However, they were in a desperate situation because they wanted to give their children a sense of normalcy. The Pederson's were very angry

because FEMA had not helped them. Cheresa told me she was not surprised because her brother did not receive any help from FEMA after Katrina. Cheresa said, “My brother then was down there. He had already told me FEMA is a joke. He said ‘FEMA is a joke.’ He told me that while he was down there doing all that stuff—because they lost everything too—[and] he got a lawyer and everything. He still didn't get anything” (July 2014).

Franscine Shock

Franscine Shock was a young homeless black woman in Tuscaloosa. I interviewed her in my car at a local park. Franscine was not too forthcoming with answers to my questions about her background so I did not get to know her as well as some of my other participants. After being displaced for over a year, she lived in a home that was damaged by the storm and it was not repaired the way it should have been by a neglectful property owner. While living in deplorable conditions she had a heart attack. She is now unemployed because of her physical health and she and her children are homeless. Franscine told me:

I'm just -- And I still have stuff in storage, and my storage is behind. I went to talk to the storage man, my stuff been in storage ever since the storm. I've been making payments, payments here and there, here and there, here and there, because I really had nowhere else to put it, and I'm glad I didn't put it in the other house, because we didn't stay there long enough, we was back out [on the streets]. So I talked to him, he was like “Well, you know, you behind a whole lot. You was paying only a portion here and there, here and there.” I was like, “Well, how much will it take for me to just move out?” He was like, “Well, you can bring me \$125 and I'll let you get all your stuff out.” I said okay, so now I'm struggling at that point, and I mean, I have got assistance since the storm, like when they was here helping people do stuff, trying to find houses. They was helping,

but it was just hard. Everybody wanted to -- took a lot. A lot of people had to be replaced so --

Franscine goes on to tell me why she does not want to move into public housing:

So I kind of, it's just moving to the housing authority -- moving to the projects, so to say, and you've got a lot of kids out there that raised they selves, don't have no kind of rules, no kind of regulations, no kind of respect, they don't have curfews, mine do, even my 19 year old. He's 19, but he know 12:00, 1:30 for him, fine, he's in my house. And my rules is my rules, so other than that, I could have probably been out there, but I was more, not wanting to go, because until I have to go see for myself, where I was going to be placed and what's the surroundings, I just wanted to check that out before I just up and put somebody else through the emotion of going through all this and I decide, nah, I don't want this. Nah.

At the time of the interview, Franscine was living with a family member, but described the situation as strained and cramped. However, she was unwilling to be placed in public housing because she was worried about the welfare of her children. At the time of the interview, Franscine was looking for a job so that she could move out of her family member's home and get a house of her own for her and her children.

Joyce Rodgers

Joyce Rodgers is a bi-racial young grandmother from Joplin. We met at her home—her family was the beneficiary of a new home built by a local non-profit I worked with in Joplin. Her grandson was running around the house while I conducted the interview. Joyce and her husband had owned their own home but after the tornado, their finances toppled and they used their insurance money to pay off the house—essentially putting them in a situation where they had to start over. Joyce described the difficulty of not having a home after I asked about a picture hanging on the wall:

Yeah. These are my grandkids. He was just a little over two, no wait, a little over one, sorry, and we spent I think the first week pretty much in a

daze. We contacted our insurance right away and they were quick to get with us and stuff, but we were staying with family and it was really hard, because when we realized we needed a place to live, it was gone. We didn't have anything, any choices. There was nothing in a 60 mile radius for us to rent. So we ended up getting a travel trailer and my husband and I and our two sons lived in this travel trailer for three months. It was a place to sleep. I'm not going to complain about that. It was very tight, though. But I think for the first year to two years it was really hard. To me I still kind of feel a huge loss, even though everybody in our house was okay, we found our other dog the next day after the tornado. The house that we lost was everything that we had been looking for in a house, and we had just started buying it the year before. (June 2014)

Joyce told me previously that the home they bought was their first home and it was a dream come true, and Joyce is trying to convey that she was thankful they were able to find a place and stay together—she doesn't want to seem ungrateful (a very common theme among my participants, even those who were struggling). However, she told me that even though they were homeowners and had family members in the area, the tornado took away their ability to make choices. She describes the travel trailer as “a place to sleep.” Their family had finally purchased their dream home only to lose it in the tornado and have to start over again.

Tanisha Roberts

I met with Tanisha in 2013. She is a black woman from Tuscaloosa, has six children and is a single mom. She worked for the University of Alabama but had a very difficult time finding house after her rental home was destroyed. The organization that I worked with in Tuscaloosa was finally able to help her find housing. Tanisha was very upbeat and cracked many jokes during our interview, even telling me with a hearty

chuckle that she wished she could marry President Obama. She was jovial but told me about her experiences with housing:

We stayed at my daughter's for about eh, because everybody was grabbing houses as soon as they could. And everybody that had houses available and livable, they was like going skyrocket on the rent. They went so high, it made it hard to be able to afford it. You could afford something through FEMA but when FEMA left you have to think about what's the, you know [long-term]. We ended up getting a house in Carbondale (a nearby town) for nearly a year. After we left, she [the landlord] was only letting us rent the house for a while because we were storm victims. She wanted much more than she was letting us rent it for. And I could not afford 1100 dollars, so I ended up moving to Holt (a town in the backyard of Alberta City) for 600 dollars a month and I stayed there for six months and at Christmas time, we couldn't use the bathroom or take a bath because everything was coming up in the tub. And, I called the lady who I was renting from and let her know what was going on and I found out later that she was sick in the hospital with pneumonia. I understood that, her daughter was taking over, and her daughter did nothing. So I went to the health department because it was unsanitary. Basically you are using the bathroom and it's coming up in the tub. You could not take a bath. I called this plumbing place on Greensboro Avenue and they charged me 75 dollars an hour and it took them three hours because the woman that was adding on to the back of the house, it was built on top of the septic tank. To fix it, you had to have a pump and she never installed one. So she got mad because I went to them and she tried to evict me. And my kids called me and told me that the sheriff was at the house. The sheriff was a friend of hers that grew up with her in the neighborhood, and they was trying to set my stuff outside. I am thinking, they can't do that. But then I met Jolie and she said don't worry, don't worry. (August 2013)

Tanisha had to first stay with family, then move to another location in another town, only to be removed from that situation because the property owner wanted to jack up the rent, then lived in a house where the septic system was malfunctioning, and then eventually evicted. Two and a half years after the storm, she was finally in a stable situation but only after moving from place to place for almost three years.

All of these women's stories show the emotion associated with not having a home or waiting to find a home. Their narratives are some of the most poignant in my interviews. Interestingly, all of them are working class or poor, and they are all women of color. First, we see that they are worried for the children's well-being and safety. Second, they want their stories to be told—many of them feel as if they have been forgotten. Third, they are anxious to get back to a sense of normalcy but for many of them, that simply had not happened yet. Furthermore, for those who had gotten back in a house, they were still quite anguished over the situation and the experiences with not having a house or having a house that was not livable. Taken together, these women's stories suggest that women, and in particular working class and poor women appear to carry the burden of home unmaking in both emotional and material ways. I present these data about the effects of home unmaking as a way to frame and contextualize the rest of this chapter.

4.2 Regional Similarities: Systemic Inequities in Access to Housing

As I have demonstrated, race and class segregate both cities. In this section, I discuss the similarities between the cities: criticisms of the city in regards to lack of housing, I argue that the similarities are due to larger systemic problems that probably occur after most disasters in the country such as skyrocketing rental prices, homelessness and slumlords. However, I want first to provide words from some of my participants that illustrate how Joplin and Tuscaloosa were segregated by race and class. Bradford Middleton, a community leader in Joplin, told me:

There's still some people like the segregation incomes, they don't want to live to that, you know, the low income person next door. And course those projects had to be presented to the state and as soon as people got wind of them, where they were going, of course of the homeowners said "I don't want low income development next to me."

And so you see these communities now that are, you know, and I'm not going to say there aren't individual issues, but kinda from more of a planning or structural societal level or city level, you look and see that these very same, you know, that segregation hurts people. You know, it hurts like homeowners in these areas and their home is suddenly worth nothing and there's no money coming in so there's not that oversight like you're talking about with more homeowners and sort of the same thing actually happened in Tuscaloosa unfortunately. I don't know – it's hard to compare it to Joplin because East Town wasn't hit, but you know, they had a segregated low income area, very segregated by race and class, it's not rebuilt. It's absolute, I mean, you know, you got a large homeless, poor, you know, sometimes poor, and, you know, African American population there and there's nowhere to go because, you know, it was so segregated. (July 2014)

Benjamin Muller, a wealthy white man with progressive views on race and class inequality said, "This neighborhood is redlined, you know where Central High School is? You know my kids wouldn't go there even though I can hear their band practice, I can hear their football games on Friday night." He was saying that although he can hear Central High School band practice, if he had children, his children are districted to go to the nearly all white school. Benjamin lives in Forrest Lake, which is approximately two miles from Alberta City and Central High School; however, the nearly all white school is six miles away. Similarly, Laura Stark, a white woman who is a social worker in Joplin told me about a friend of hers who lives in an upper class neighborhood:

I have a friend that lived over there, and as they were rebuilding, because that was the -- in my mind, upper middle class neighborhood in some ways, and as they were rebuilding subsidized house opportunities were going to build, and they did the good old "not in my backyard," and my

friend is a social worker (laughs) by training, and he said “You know what, it's one thing to fight injustice, but I don't want it in my yard. I don't want devaluation in my property,” and I just -- really my jaw just dropped. It was startling to me. (June 2014)

These quotes illustrate that some participants in Joplin and Tuscaloosa know about how the city was already segregated prior to the tornado. This brief section is meant to contextualize how separation and segregation existed prior to the tornado and some of the negative reactions to trying to use the aftermath as a way to integrate neighborhoods.

Homelessness, Slum Lords and Lack of Housing

Homelessness—either caused by the tornadoes or exacerbated by them—was also a major concern in both cities. For example, in Tuscaloosa, the Salvation Army was destroyed. Susie Simpson, a white community leader in Tuscaloosa told me in 2014 that “One of the things that we're struggling with is people that were marginally housed before definitely are struggling. We have 241 homeless K-12 students in city limits alone” (November 2014). In Joplin, efforts to build a large homeless shelter are underway because the current homeless shelters are inadequate. Shalisha, an African American community leader in Tuscaloosa described the situation:

Salvation Army, which is one of our partner agencies, their shelter was destroyed and I think that's been a huge impact on our community because people didn't realize how many homeless people we had. The storms blew away our only shelter here in town and now you have this problem of all these homeless people. Where do they go? So we have to find relatives to stay with. We are also doing a lot of bus tickets, like if you are here and you have family in Birmingham, what have you, we will give a bus ticket back to [get back to] them. (August 2013)

Laura Stark described the homelessness problem in Joplin as being directly related to both the 2007 recession and the 2011 tornado:

Yeah. It's pretty steady, and especially since the recession, I mean, the recession affected homelessness and put a different face on it, and the recession was kind of interrupted in Joplin by the tornado. We have the recessions [which] hit in 2008, Joplin was a little insulated from it. But, really the face of homelessness and the face of hunger, it really radically transformed after the tornado and after the recession. It became much more single moms who normally could have fed their families and found a place to live, where did they go? It was not just what we would have thought of as homeless before that.

Here Laura describes a point of my previous chapter. The recession (as well as historically racialized neighborhoods) had an impact upon the “face” of homelessness after the Joplin tornado.

Another similarity between the two locations was the preponderance of “slum lords” who made the problem of housing worse. Brandi, a young white woman in Joplin described property owners as profiting from the tornado but not passing that profit on to their tenants who had lost everything. Shalisha Timmons, a young African American community leader in Tuscaloosa similarly told me, “Landlords got the checks and they could choose to build back or they could choose not to build back. And it’s like, they need a check—they lost their homes, but they [the landlords] were entitled to it because it was their property, if that makes sense. So I think we had a lot people who were renting that did not get the help they needed because the landlords got the checks” (August 2013). Tommy Oaks, a retired white man in Tuscaloosa faulted slum lords for the incredible devastation because the lack of repair caused houses in Alberta City, prior to the tornado, to be “intrinsically weak.” Tammy, an African American woman in Tuscaloosa told me:

This house isn't worth what I am paying. The landlord, I mean you know, he's not a landlord. [It's only] by the grace of God [that] I am making it. Whatever you see [motions to the house behind her], I tried to make it feel like home. As far as going and getting help on a bill? It's all about the government and "they don't have the money" [to help me]. I am like "What happened to the millions of dollars that was awarded to Tuscaloosa for the victims of the tornado?" Sometimes I want to go to the city council meeting and ask. [Because] we are *still* living in slum lands. (August 2013)

Tammy's rent increased, and she has to deal with living in a substandard house and can barely pay her bills. Don Sawyer, a community leader in Tuscaloosa told me:

Don: Alberta is the tale of two boulevards. Where you live – where you're staying right now, those are mostly home owners, great neighborhoods, neighborhood associations. On the other side was where the slum lords and most all rental section eight housing, and you got your –

Ashleigh: And they took their FEMA money and –

Don: Left. And now they're greedy. Now they're – you know, probably the hardest part about building back has been the greed of people selling their property for developers. (September 2014)

Don suggested that slumlords or property owners are taking their FEMA money and refusing to rebuild. George and Sharon Yokum, a white couple who are retired and live on a fixed income in Alberta City conveyed to me that rent is twice as high as it was before the storm because property owners *can* get away with charging that much. While this might seem inevitable from an individual economic point of view, it does speak to the need to change public policy that deals with disaster aftermaths. There should be some sort of incentive for property owners to build back their property. Moreover, it also speaks to the need of some sort of oversight when it comes to property owners, such as legislation at the city level that prevents slumlords from getting away with being

neglectful to their tenants (see also Desmond 2016). Rent increased immediately in both cities. The price of rent going up is insurmountable for some people because they were barely making it anyway. In some instances, people explained the loss of housing and the subsequent high rent as something that happens out of necessity. However, for those are barely making it, it takes away their power to make their own decisions and do what they must to take care of their families.

The lack of low-income housing two, three, and four years after the storm is the most cited concern from my participants in both Tuscaloosa and Joplin. In Tuscaloosa, the complaints are many and far ranging. Almost immediately after I arrived in Tuscaloosa, my key informant asked me to go a meeting on mental health that non-profit workers and community leaders would attend. I arrived at the meeting on a beautiful fall day. The meeting was in a large room in a police station on the southwest side of town. I felt a bit out of place because I realized that most of these people knew each other and I was obviously not part of that circle. My fieldnotes reveal the lack of agreement among city officials on the issue of low-income housing:

The meeting that Jolie wanted me to go to was a meeting of people to discuss mental health—the alliance is comprised of veteran concerns, housing, child and adolescent services, community awareness, crisis intervention, and fund development. Today the special speaker opened, ironically, his talk by saying that it was the “best of times and the worst of times, it was a tale of two cities” which is the title of my dissertation. He started the speech by blaming the largely republican state politics. He said that the chronic underfunding of state’s general fund was causing serious problems. Then it was time for questions and answers. A woman asks the speaker about the problems of child homelessness. She argues that there is no affordable housing. The speaker suggests that the price of land is the problem and asks what more can they [the city] do? He says “this is a

tough situation.” The woman is persistent and asked why they can’t approach the housing situation from a moral standpoint. The speaker from the city responds by blaming greedy individuals for the lack of low income housing. (September 2014)

The city leader and speaker here did not acknowledge the role the city or federal government should play in providing low-income housing. Instead, he blamed individuals, which takes any responsible for redress out of the public sphere and into the private.

Later in the year at a city council meeting, I watched in disbelief as the city council approved the plans for a cottage community. The cottages’ rent ranged from 1,000 dollars upward. The cottage community would be rental property and built in Alberta City. In late fall of 2014, I was interviewing Beatrice Moore who worked with a non-profit in Tuscaloosa and was a tornado victim herself. Beatrice is a white woman from Louisiana but has lived in Alabama for many years. She is in her 70s, a widow and retired. We were sitting on her couch, discussing the dire housing situation in Tuscaloosa and she told me:

Beatrice: I read in the paper just yesterday about this cottage thing they are wanting to put in Alberta but then I looked at what the rent was going to be, one thousand to 1200 dollars a month. Who in the heck, who in the hell is going to live in it. Those people don’t have that kind of money.

Ashleigh: I mean...that’s even high for a mortgage.

Beatrice: it’s higher than my mortgage. It’s a cottage development. Where they build like a circle of cottages around like a common area. (October 2014)

Beatrice expressed complete disbelief that a cottage community was going to be built. Many participants felt similarly, that the city was trying to come back for only

some and not for all. I present a more thorough discussion of Tuscaloosa's approach to recovery in a subsequent chapter but residents were similarly critical of other new projects. For example, the city built a state of the art tennis court in Alberta City. Hilda and Silas Salk had a very energetic discussion about this:

Hilda: we was told after this street got set up, you see that field right out there [points out their window]? They was going to put a playground. Okay, the kids have nowhere to play. You took Jaycee fairgrounds and you put the tennis courts.

Silas: listen, listen, they didn't use that Jaycee fairground as a place for the kids to go anyway, you got this money, you've got these block grants and all this stuff, that's what you need to put in the neighborhoods, that's what they are for.

Hilda: but they are not and why are they going to put this tennis court out here? Who play tennis? I mean you know what I am saying.

Silas: you know exactly what the status is of that. You are within one mile of that university. That's who's going to use that. Yeah, they make bring in these tournaments but when they bring them in, that's to generate funds. They are going to make money off of that. Don't think they just turned it into a tennis complex for nothing. They are going to make money off of that. (October 2014)

Hilda: oh yeah, we know who play...yeah that's the majority of, the black people are saying out here: who plays tennis?

Hilda and Silas felt as if they could see through the city building a tennis court instead of a playground. They are also not happy that the city is using federal funds for a tennis court because, in their opinion, it is not going to be beneficial for citizens of Alberta City. Additionally, they argue that most low to middle income African Americans do not play tennis and second, they think it is just a way to bring in revenue for the city since it's so close to the university.

Participants in both Joplin in Tuscaloosa had similar experiences of being critical of the housing situation in long-term recovery. As I have demonstrated, both tornadoes took place after the 2007-08 recession. Participants' dissatisfaction about how each city was spending federal and state money after the disaster was sometimes based on a misunderstanding of how funds could actually be used. This points to the need for cities that have experienced disaster to do a much better job educating their citizens in terms of how they can use government money. Moreover, it also points to the fact that disaster money needs to be earmarked in ways that would allow cities to rebuild more low to middle-income housing.

In Joplin, most of the criticisms were about revitalization projects and the new high school. Participants thought Joplin city leaders were trying to make the city "high class" which did not make sense to them because the demographic make-up is mostly blue collar. Cheresa, Alaina and Darrell were very critical of how Joplin was spending money. They explained it to me like this:

Darrell: Have you heard about the high school? Joplin High School?

Cheresa: Oh girl, you ain't been by there to see it?

Alaina: You know they have -- They're building a football...

Darrell: A practice field.

Alaina: They have a practice field, and it looks like a pro football practice field. There's like three gyms now -- three or four big gyms. One gym holds 3,500, over 3,500 people.

Darrell: [It is] ridiculously nice, like you wouldn't believe. Yeah, the money they got went into the economy not into the people's pockets who actually needed it. None of them actually got help. They built bigger and better houses, bigger and better restaurants...Bigger and better schools --

The amount of cars that they have working on that place is ridiculous. You would think it was a power plant. I come from Texas, and I've seen schools in Texas, and none even come close or compare, and this is a city, like Tulsa, and Austin, I've seen huge schools. That school looks like a college. The school looks like a college, it really does, like it's really up to date, and this is for high schools.

Ashleigh: So yeah [you are saying], the local government is using the money to make Joplin better, but people are still suffering?

Darrell: "Better Joplin." That was their motto after we got hit, we're going to come back bigger and better. But people with careers, all of that was demolished. I know they're offering up -- They claim they're opening up bigger, and better opportunities for everyone, but it's not for everyone. It's for the *high class*, that's what it's for. We can't afford \$975 in rent! (July 2014)

Darrell, Alaina and Cheresa reflect what many participants felt as well. That is, that both cities were not coming back for the everyday average citizen.

In this section, I have shown similarities in terms of access to housing. I argue that the similarities are due to larger systemic problems that occur after most disasters in the country. Few protections for renters and regulations prohibit property owners from price gouging. When disasters of such magnitude destroy a good portion of infrastructure and housing, it is inevitable that there will be problems with making sure that everyone resettles quickly. I discuss some of my recommendations for policy changes at the federal and state level in my final chapter.

4.3 Differences Between the Two Cities: Disaster as a Revealer

In this section, I examine differences between Joplin and Tuscaloosa, and how they create particular difficulties in access to housing in long-term recovery. Because Joplin and Tuscaloosa are different kinds of towns, one a university town and the other, a

smaller working class town, particular context-dependent problems were evident. In Tuscaloosa, issues were related to student housing and football whereas in Joplin the presence of FEMA trailers created problems for the residents who lived in them. I argue, similar to my previous point, that many of these housing inequities are ongoing, however, a crises such as disaster revealed them to my participants.

Problems associated with Student Housing

In 2013, after returning home from preliminary fieldwork in Tuscaloosa and Joplin, I began to search for a place to live in Tuscaloosa when I would return in 2014. In Joplin, I was able to stay with people I knew in the area; however, in Tuscaloosa, I had to find a place to rent. It was immediately striking to me how expensive rent was. I could pay 700 hundred dollars to live on my own or around 500 to live with other students. Most places were not that cheap and I did not want to live with other students because I value my privacy and I did not want distractions from doing my fieldwork, research and interviews. It took me nearly *a year* to secure housing. I became desperate and starting search on craigslist. I was almost scammed several times, and I finally met a couple who were renting out their basement for less than 500 dollars. They had wireless internet and a place for me to shower and cook. The kitchen was comprised of a mini-fridge, a microwave, and a single electrical skillet. Never in my life had I eaten so many TV dinners. A situation I had not envisioned, but after a year of searching, it was my only affordable option. My experience trying to find housing is particularly revealing when that you compare the resources I have access to those of many of my participants. If

nothing else had come available, I would have been able to take out a loan or borrow money from family. I had everyday access to the internet, which means I could search on apartment finding websites, room-share websites and sublet websites. That it still took me a year to find housing shows how abysmal the housing market is for working class and low-income people. My participants told me this is because Tuscaloosa is a university town and all the rebuilding that has occurred post tornado is mostly geared toward students. There are obviously other problems such as property owners not rebuilding their rental houses and how difficult it is to replace older housing stock; however, the most cited reason for difficulties in housing was the overwhelming importance placed upon catering to the large student population. The construction of new student housing was a cause for concern as was the phrase “football is everything.” My participants told me time and time again is that football was more important to the city than citizens’ well-being. Catherine, an African American community leader told me:

[With] the housing component, we got lucky, it was summer, so students had migrated out so all of the properties and these real estate people, they were thinking, “oh thirty days, we can let them stay here, and they will bounce back.” It went on more than thirty days. One woman, some of them got in nice property and they didn’t want to leave because it was an upgrade to where they had been living, but they couldn’t stay there...because eventually all this does roll around. Football season comes, the climate changes, you know...

Catherine was telling me that the local real estate business doubly benefitted. They were able to fill their housing stock over the summer after the tornado and then kick out the residents when football season started. Catherine continued:

Yes, unfortunately for Tuscaloosa, we are a college town, I mean it's fortunate but a misfortunate. The university is our driving industry. [So] the developers locally said, "That's big business – we can get a two bedroom and charge 500 dollars apiece." You know, per room, you are sharing a common kitchen, a common living room and that's a thousand dollars. Where normally a two bedroom would have been 600 dollars. People are profiting, so all of the sudden around here, that became the market...and right about then is when the storm happened. It is not profitable for those same realtors to go and do low-income apartments and charge 500 for a family of three who can make the payments when with three people they can get 500 dollars apiece. So, that's the problem. (August 2013)

Catherine is speaking to increasingly popular student housing floor plans where each room has a bathroom and there is one common kitchen and living area. Property owners are able to get 500 dollars (and many times much more) per room. Therefore, it is more lucrative to build this type of housing instead of family units. Sharon Yokum thought about what would happen in the future:

So what's going to happen to these properties? What's going to happen to these? These are not being built for families, because you cannot take a family apartment or a family house is three bedrooms, two baths, two and a half with a master suite, with a bathroom. They're not four bedrooms with four bathrooms with one tiny common area. Who is going to live there 10 years from now when that's obsolete, and the newer, and the bigger, and the better come along? So our concern is not now.

Several participants spoke to the boom and bust of student housing. Logan Tenney complained, "Everything is university, students and bars. The downtown is nothing but bars, and students, and housing, and right now the bars *and* football." While I was discussing the lack of low-income housing with Bianca May, she told me, "I don't know who they think is going to do all the service jobs and stuff like that, that these college

students demand that someone do. So we need people of every income level but we need to have houses for them.” The Salks spoke critically of the housing situation and told me:

Hilda: And the reason being, the reason that you can’t find anything decent at a lower price, it’s going to be 8 [hundred] or better. It’s because we are close to the university. The students has moved off campus pretty much and into the neighborhoods. And the people that are owning them and renting them, they know that they can jack that price and pretty much get what they want.

Ashleigh: uh-huh. Because their parents will pay it?

Silas: right.

Hilda: oh yes.

Silas: if you find one, it’s not going to be up to where you want to be. In an area you don’t want to be in.

Hilda: and then mommy and daddy get one so they will have a place for football season.

Silas: for football season.

Hilda: because we didn’t have that many hotels. So, you know we are like, “we will just get a place and pay year round.”

Low and middle-income people are priced out because of the housing crisis, students moving into neighborhoods and parents buying a house so they can have a place to stay during football season. Tommy Oakes told me this about football being favored over dealing with people who are suffering:

Yeah, we’ve got injured people, we’ve got traumatized people and you know what? Their biggest objective now between now and football season is to clean up along the routes of traffic. To look good. You go two blocks down either side of University Boulevard or Rosedale and places like that, they give you a citation for not mowing you lawn. And I told him [police officer], (he got into trouble for where his truck was parked without a tag) you’ve got all this stuff going on in Tuscaloosa and you are worried about where [I park] my truck.

And it's like the police officer said, "They are interested in one thing and that is making a big show for football fans." And he said that, "We've got to make it look good for football fans." He kind of smirked. He didn't agree with it either.

Steve Smith, an illiterate white man in Tuscaloosa similarly told me with a chuckle

"Yeah. I mean, it's [if] it looks bad, it affects football. We can't have nothing affecting

that football." Dolly Smith, a white upper class woman, said, "We can always jump

through whatever hoops we need to build student housing, but we are completely unable

to look around this entire country and find any model for affordable working class

housing." Susie Simpson, a young white woman who is a community leader in

Tuscaloosa explained the situation like this:

The way things work is we're overwhelmed with student housing right now, and it's really priced your average person out, and so that's the housing crisis we're in right now. Everything is so -- in terms of housing geared toward students, and what was once affordable for people that were low income or poverty is now like say something was \$300 or \$400 pre-tornado is now \$400, \$500, and \$600 a month, and the things that were median income are now really, really priced out. So that's kind of what we're looking at. There was a housing crisis (laughs) before that...One agency called [her and said], "I have a mom with eight kids in a hotel getting kicked out because it's game day." If you're in a hotel and it's game weekend you get kicked out unless you can pay the (laughs) outrageous, I mean, \$200, \$300 a night, and so these people with no resources already get kicked out because of a football game. That's the end of it. It's that there is a football game.

In sum, one of the main problems in Tuscaloosa is related to the overwhelming amounts of new student housing being built and much less effort to build low-income housing.

Moreover, the low-income housing that is available is much more expensive that it was before the tornado. However, the construction of student housing was ongoing prior to the tornado. Indeed, over the past decade the undergraduate population has grown by

five percent each year, making the University of Alabama one of the largest state flagship schools.²³ What is interesting is that the tornado and lack of low-income housing made the construction of student housing more noticeable to my participants.

FEMA Trailers: The Specter of Katrina

The city government of Joplin decided to put two FEMA trailer camps on the outskirts of Joplin while Tuscaloosa leaders decided against using FEMA trailers at all. This is a point of contention with my Tuscaloosa participants because many of them think that the city should have allowed FEMA trailers. Many community leaders expressed that they did not need FEMA trailers because there was enough available housing stock—a point that raised my eyebrows because of the lack of low income housing even two and three years after the tornado. Lou Carpenter, a white community leader in Tuscaloosa, told me:

One of the first things we did, we assumed we would have a lot of homeless people. We assumed we would need to work with FEMA to set up trailers and things like that, so one of the very first tasks that my office did was try to locate properties in which we could do that. Most places do. And so what we found – because of that – was something that we weren't really that aware of, and it's we had a lot of vacant or absorption capacity in our housing, and it was something that we just weren't aware of. But the existing available housing stock, rental stock absorbed the bulk of the people who were displaced. (October 2014)

Alyssa, an African American woman and city leader in Tuscaloosa, cited a reason that resonates as closer to the truth for most of my participants. She said, “So we didn’t want to do a quick fix I hate to say like Katrina, but to move people into trailers only 18 months later for the government to be stuck with putting people out and with the stigma of putting people into the parks” (August 2013). Susan Reynolds, a white community

leader explained: “We don’t have any people in FEMA trailers. We’ve *never* done that. We were very successful at putting people in vacant housing and then quickly creating new housing. Most of our people have relocated whether it is public housing or other areas in our city” (August 2013). When speaking to Jolie, my key informant, I tried to get down to brass tacks. I asked her:

Ashleigh: So you're saying the city though wouldn't -- because of the real estate influence, they wouldn't approve that measure?

Jolie: That's right. Not even on an interim basis. They weren't asking to do it three years or five years, but there was some fear that if you let them in, it would be hard to get people out of them, because they had seen that in other disasters and -- (sighs)

Ashleigh: Katrina, yeah.

Jolie: And that may have been valid, but I would tell you the ones they put out in the county [the county got a few trailers], we got them out pretty fast. (November 2014)

Here we can see, again, the specter of Katrina, and the presence of trailers in New Orleans after six years, influenced decisions city leaders made in Joplin and Tuscaloosa. There is a perception that people do not want their city to become another New Orleans, a statement infused with unspoken race and class connotations. Tuscaloosa and Joplin dealt with this in three ways: Tuscaloosa refused FEMA trailers and Joplin put them on the outskirts of town and made sure people resettled quickly. Kathy Sharpe, a middle class white woman, explained the situation in Joplin. She said:

And then the FEMA trailers, I mean, I'm proud of Joplin but it's kind of funny to me to know that like there's still FEMA trailers down in New Orleans when Joplin had such a tight window of time. They were strict with us...So I don't know how these other communities...FEMA still has FEMA trailers in them 10 years after the event.

Janita Fuller, a white community leader in Joplin, also told me that living in a FEMA trailer in Joplin started to carry a negative connotation:

I would say maybe a year and a half after, being those – even a tornado survivor started having like a negative connotation in a sense. You know, with the FEMA trailers. But I know the kids started getting a really hard time at school because they lived in FEMA trailers, you know?

Indeed, Scott Mayes conveyed an attitude that undoubtedly FEMA trailer occupants were well aware:

I also think, on that note, people took advantage of it. FEMAville, you know, they had two years to find housing...rent free, no bills, you know, nothing. I think they may have had to pay electric, but I think a lot of people took advantage of it and didn't do anything to better themselves. They milked it...I think that a lot of people seriously took advantage of the system.

Based on Scott's statement, there is little wonder as to why living in FEMA trailers began to carry a negative connotation. Similarly, Steven and Kelly Derdick expressed disdain for the FEMA trailers, "I've never seen so many FEMA trailers in my life. And we could have moved into a FEMA trailer, but he suffers from PTSD, and he just didn't feel safe" (June 2013). However, those who lived in FEMA trailers told a different story. They expressed how difficult it was for them. Carissa Foster, a young black woman in Joplin told me:

Ashleigh: What was the experience of living in the FEMA trailer?

Carissa: Hated it. Sorry, couldn't stand it.

Ashleigh: No, please [go on].

Carissa: Fucking hated it. It was horrible. You had a door in your bedroom, and then a window facing the lot. That was one thing -- I just moved the dresser in front of it, because I fucking hated it. There was

break-ins out there. Every day I came home there was a cop car out there or something going on. It just got irritating. I hated it. I can honestly tell you I hated it. And then afterwards you start hearing people getting depression. I heard it around. (June 2014)

Deborah Ray similarly tells me, “I hated it. I hated living in a trailer park. And just, there was no privacy” (June 2014). It is clear, then, that perceptions of FEMA trailers were different based on location. Perceptions were also different based on those from the outside (i.e. did not have the experience of living in a FEMA trailer) or, conversely, experienced living in one. The commonality, however, is that (with the exception of people who actually lived in the trailers) the experiences of New Orleans influenced Tuscaloosa and Joplin city leaders and residents. They refused to allow FEMA trailers in Tuscaloosa. Moreover, Joplin residents compared how quickly they were able to move the trailers out of the city in comparison to New Orleans. Currently, there are still FEMA trailers in New Orleans. The cities’ responses reflect a fear of being perceived as another New Orleans, which implicitly is a racialized fear. It also is a function of how terribly all levels of government failed the citizens of New Orleans. This leaves little room for wonder on why city leaders in both cities had huge concerns about FEMA trailers. On an individual level, two things seem to be apparent. First, Scott and others like him, characterize those who had to rely on FEMA for housing as not worthy of the aid, which also reflects a racial and class bias. Second, the pride many people, both citizens and community leaders, expressed when explaining how they were able to resettle people into the community is also based on racialized understandings of disaster recovery. It appears as though New Orleans represents the racial other in the minds of many of my

participants. Paradoxically, though, both cities needed housing options for low-income people even four years after both storms.

Specific Problems Associated with Owning a Home

While it could be interpreted that owning a home gives people an advantage over renters, this may not always be the case. Although a house is a major source of familial wealth, the working class and people who did not have the time, knowledge or resources to fight their insurance companies, were at a disadvantage. To give a sense of the struggles with insurance companies, mortgage companies and difficulties associated with being scammed by a contractor, I want to introduce Benjamin Mueller. Benjamin was perhaps one of the most privileged people I talked to in either city—a point he acknowledged. He lives in an affluent neighborhood that was also destroyed by the storm. He and his wife moved to Alabama from another state and he had been a successful businessperson before partially retiring. I remember feeling great unease when we first started talking because his house and his possessions were far more ornate than anything I had ever seen in person. I remember thinking “I am so out of place here.” However, Benjamin’s gentle demeanor and thoughtfulness in answering my questions quickly diminished my discomfort and actually, the interview lasted almost three hours. His wife had been a graduate student and that is why he told me he wanted to be interviewed. “Anything to help a graduate student,” he told me with a chuckle. Although Benjamin had a calming presence, he had been a shrewd businessperson earlier in his

life—a characteristic that served him well after the storm. Benjamin and his wife were *still* trying to work with their insurance company three and half year after the tornado.

I include details about Benjamin because even though he was one of my most affluent participants and had the cultural capital to take on his insurance company, he told me that all the struggles he and his wife were going through caused depression and strife. Several times throughout the interview, he would talk about a particular struggle and then offer words like “We had the resources to do this—most people don’t.” I asked Benjamin about mental health and he told me:

I don’t freak *out* but the depression it comes and goes. My wife is having some of it now. All you can do is get up and say, “I am going to push through.” The easy rationale is that we have both noticed...we had it much easier than many people. When it comes down to it because, I don’t know how your research covers this but we had to fight with our insurance company. It was strange because I was, we ended up with the vice-president from the insurance company in our driveway and I said, “Well, here’s [my] lawyer, so this is *it* today, we are going to decide or we are going to court.” Anyway, the point is that we had education, money and the wherewithal, emotional stability, financial stability, just imagine. You know that’s what I said, suppose you were 30 years old and everything you had was wiped out and you both worked and you had two kids and lived paycheck to paycheck and your insurance company offered half what your policy was worth, or do what these guys were trying to do—freeze us out. Well you do what most people are going to do which is to settle. Because they have to!

And uh, that’s what...I said, “You know, you need to pick your battles friend. You got the wrong warrior. I have read the policy three times, it’s imprinted on my brain, there is nothing you know that I don’t. And I said, we are both economic players. (October 2014)

Benjamin’s story points to several things that frame the rest of this chapter. He and his wife have mental health issues that are partially the result of a long and drawn out process with their insurance company. His wife was so fed up that she could not deal with

pricing the items in her closet. He also told me, and my participants' stories show, that most people settle because they have to. I now turn to my analysis of problems with insurance companies and how being a homeowner does not always mean someone is going to be able to recover. It seems that the many times the opposite is true. Insurance companies that low ball those who are working class put people on the margins in ways that they may not have been before.

Many older folks had let their insurance lapse because they were forced to choose between having insurance and being able to survive. For example, Renita chortled and told me:

It didn't take but one time [to know that she needed insurance]! But I had just me and my grandson and we was talking about, and I said, we gotta get those trees cut, I am going to get myself together and get some insurance on the house...believe me I got some now...cause FEMA came in and just gave us a little something...they gave us like 1200 for the clothes and the furniture and there was four people and that's all they gave us and a little bit for the house. But I didn't worry about it. The man upstairs holds the world and we in it now...so. (August 2013)

Renita lived on a fixed income and since FEMA did not give her enough for repairs, she had to rely on the organization with which I worked in Tuscaloosa. When I asked her about why she did not have insurance, she told me that since the house was paid off, she did not think to have any. However, she told me that she learned her lesson. Renita's response is also interesting because it is reflective of many African American respondents' tendency to talk about recovery, their problems with recovery, and the strife in their life in a way that puts emphasis on spirituality as a source of strength.

Mary Davidson, a family friend whose husband left her years ago, causing her financial situation to be more vulnerable, told me.

Ashleigh: and did you have insurance on your home?

Mary: no, no, the house that we lived in, it was just falling down around me. I didn't have the money to fix per se things. Under the eaves, birds would go up in the attic and my dad would come over and nail a piece of wood. And birds would find another place, the roof in the back bedroom, it leaked and we tarred it, we did everything trying to get it not to leak. And a good hard rain would come and it would leak. The furnace was out, the AC was out. The furnace was real rusted up because of the water running down the furnace whenever it would rain and the pipe and everything was rusting up. My dad had just put a new heater/air conditioner in it and uh, (sigh). I always feel bad that dad spent almost two thousand dollars that and it wasn't even a year old and the tornado came and tore it up. I didn't have insurance, I couldn't keep up on the repairs on the house and the insurance. The insurance was expensive so I dropped the insurance because like a dummy I thought "Nothing will ever happen to it." You know? (May 2013)

Mary shows that she made a "choiceless" decision: "make it" or pay for insurance (Arextaga 1997). Indeed, Shalisha, an African American community leader told me in 2013 "Some of them were staying in homes that didn't have insurance. It was "We get insurance or we eat," so you can understand that and it's just, my heart goes out to them."

Many folks were also underinsured. Rick Robinson, a man in his early forties in Joplin, took his insurance money and started a small business. A couple of years later, he lost his business in addition to losing his house. I worked with Rick right after the tornado in clearing debris from his house and then we met at his restaurant in 2013. He told me:

Rick: yeah, and no...the insurance allowed me to pay off my mortgage and they didn't give me enough to rebuilt and I wasn't ready to take on a new mortgage and insurance. I own an acre and quarter ground and *five*

trees (implying that many were destroyed). I don't think if I had the money, I don't think I could rebuild. Not on the structural side, but on the personal side, the formulas and models that they use to figure out depreciation and determine your personal value...it's math that will always benefit them. I paid 100, valued at 100, but after depreciation it was at 25.

Ashleigh: Jeez

Rick: yeah, and in order to fight it I would have had to have an attorney or accountant or both and I didn't want to fight them.

Ashleigh: and that takes cash.

Rick: sure. And I know about this stuff. I study, I went to the university and the only way to beat the insurance, like a casino, is to be the owner. You can't beat an insurance company. (May 2013)

Rick was so upset by the loss of trees and the lack of money from the insurance company that he decided not to rebuild. He also acknowledged that to take on his insurance company he would have to have the capital to hire a lawyer and an accountant. Rick, like many others, had to start over. Joyce Rodgers, a biracial woman in Joplin told me, "I think the people that had insurance but maybe not enough, kind of slipped through the cracks, I mean, it seems like a lot, but for what we lost, we probably would have never -- when we turned in our sheet for our losses to get our money back, it was almost \$100,000 and we only had \$50,000 insurance. You're talking that was 20 years of stuff" (July 2014).

Several of my participants had a multitude of problems. The phrase "just can't win for losing" appears in my codes over one hundred times. I have previously introduced the Salks, a retired working class black couple in Tuscaloosa. Their story is one of the most damning of all my participants. In addition to people having trouble with

their insurance or contractors, some people had issues with their mortgage companies.

They told me:

Hilda: At the time, we, because we was dealing with our mortgage [company]. After the April 27th tornado, they stated that we hadn't, we hadn't made a mortgage payment since 2009. So we were like, whew.

Silas: it happened in '11 now.

Hilda: yeah

Silas: they said we hadn't made a payment since '09

Ashleigh: and you had?

Hilda: yes!

Ashleigh: yeah

Silas: via bank draft.

Hilda: this happened

Silas: I had lost all my paperwork (because of the tornado).

Hilda: but trying to get people to believe this you know, you have no paperwork at that time to just pull out of your closet and just "this is the truth."

Ashleigh: because it's destroyed.

Silas: that's what they thought.

Hilda: right but our mortgage was going off of what they had, you know. "Our records indicate this and that." And this is what they indicated to FEMA, that these people have no coverage. So that's how we were able to get assistance. We had been approved for a non-profit to build us a home, but because of the stuff with [our mortgage company] we lost that. Because they have to build it on your property and we didn't have property. They foreclosed on the piece of property that we did have, [they] did. Yes, we went through it.

Silas: FEMA, they contacted the mortgage company and said, "you can't do this, the president has declared this as a disaster area and all processes need to cease." But they went ahead and so.

Ashleigh: so you really lost everything?

Hilda: *we lost everything.*

Silas: uh, the property was sold and foreclosed two weeks after the storm, the property was sold within 60 days I believe, give or take. But it was a done deal, so we was just without.

Ashleigh: right.

Hilda: but we was working in between with Samaritan's Purse and Habitat. In the mix of the tornado, I had a heart attack and I also had a stroke.

Silas: no I am making payments like I was over there. Uh, keeping a lot of records. Because if this come again...

Ashleigh: right, and now you have probably a 30 year mortgage.

Silas: it's 15.

Ashleigh: yeah, and I don't know how close you were on the other one but you know it's kind of like starting over?

Silas: it is, it is.

Hilda: we actually are. Even though the mortgage is interest free, but we still are starting over, and this is something I really felt like that we wouldn't have to worry about it.

The Salks' mortgage company swindled them, and they lacked the cultural and social capital to contest it. They lost everything and almost immediately, Hilda had a stroke and a heart attack. The Salks, in retirement and almost finished paying off their mortgage, were forced to start over.

I close with Taylor Frank's story. Taylor is a married middle-aged professional who had problem after problem in the tornado's aftermath. Taylor is an African American woman who finally received help from the organization with which I worked. Her story shows the confluence of bad contractors, stubborn insurance companies, debilitating health conditions and the stigma of charity.

...Our home is in his name and we were married and I couldn't live there. I have Sarcoidosis disease and I couldn't stay there but he stayed there and I went to a hotel. Because the house was in his name, the insurance didn't want to pay for my hotel and I was like, "but we are married!" And they were bugging out.

[Our house] had to be repaired, our garage went down, the ceiling, we had, the windows were blown out and trees had come down. My husband and I had matching cars and he was in his car and mine was in the garage and the trees literally snapped on the top of the garage. The garage just collapsed so we lost that and um, we had some problems with the roofing in one of the bedrooms. We lost furniture and that kind of stuff. Washer, dryer, refrigerator, that kind of stuff. We replaced it...we had insurance but. It was a struggle, I had to see a lawyer and that bothered me because it was like, I am not indigent, why I am doing this? I can do this, but I went anyway because the insurance was refusing to pay for my hotel. But what bothered me was that the people who didn't have the wherewithal to say, I am going to an attorney. And I did. And I don't know what would have happened if I didn't

Now this guy, was a known contractor, we didn't get some friend of ours. But he was just hiring anybody, he just hired anybody. So it was like, when they came out to do inspection, what they did, did not pass inspection and the insurance company said to stop. So at that point we didn't have anything done up until, April or May of 2012. It was a year later before we had anything done. We lived in the house and I went back and forth to the emergency room, back and forth, back and forth, I kept getting lung infections [because of irritants in the house and her medical condition]. They came and sprayed and stuff and it settled down but August of 2011 was horrible. Because I was in the emergency room...colds all the time and it was because of the stuff that was in the house. I was sick...just sick, I lived in the den, we moved our couch into the den because the den wasn't hurt and I slept on that. And the bathroom in the back bedroom was okay but we couldn't use the kitchen, and we couldn't use the laundry room, we couldn't use the living room.

It was day to day. That's what it was. It took us a long time to get...well we put everything in one room...all of our clothing, all of our furniture, to try to hold onto to what we had so when we got ready to get back to normal living. For a year we lived out of garbage bags. We would clean the clothes and throw them bad in the garbage bags. And it's like I don't remember. And my supervisor was really good, he let me come in at staggered times and so some mornings I could find stuff and some

mornings I couldn't. And we ate out for a *year*. We literally cooked nothing in our house for a year because it was like, we threw out all of pots and pans even the ones we could save because they had gotten icky. And so, the insurance company, well we bought stuff to replace it. But the kitchen was held up by 2 by 4s and we joked that we just ran through the kitchen because we didn't know when it was going to collapse. So, we would quickly make it through the area of the house because the ceiling was literally held up by 2 by 4s...and I had to leave the hotel because it was getting dangerous.

And Jolie, they [organization] started coming to help me in June or May of 2012, and by that time, we had moved back into the house, we had patched it up enough. We had one room and one bathroom. I could not wash clothes. But I didn't tell anyone, and they couldn't tell. And I told Jolie, it's so hard sometimes, they brought university students to come over and paint because our contractor was one of those people that wasn't honest, and it didn't pass inspection and they stopped the work on the house. And all of that is still in court but after that, I had to ask for help. And that bothered me because I was not, I mean I was out at FEMA helping people do their letters. I had no clean clothes, but you couldn't tell because I was just like I am going to get through this. And that was one of the experiences that I felt like was uh, if you were, functioning, you didn't ask for help, I didn't ask for help for my husband, he didn't ask for help.

Taylor's story shows that being a homeowner does not necessarily insulate people from troubles associated with housing in long-term recovery and tornado aftermaths.

Specifically, Taylor was scammed by a contractor, had trouble with insurance, and had trouble asking for help. She describes that it was difficult to ask for help because she was not indigent. Taylor and her husband lived *out of trash bags* for a while in order to keep up the façade that they were making it.

In this section, I have shown that owning a home still can result in difficulties in access to housing and returning to state of normalcy. Indeed, even my most privileged participants express troubles three and a half years after the storm. In a way then, in

terms of housing, disaster recovery can be seen as an equalizer. However, for those who are close to the margins, the loss of a home often means having to start completely over. Moreover, I also argue that the problems associated with housing in this chapter are part of systemic issues with housing in the country that were revealed to participants in the wake of the storms. These findings speak to decades of sociological insights that disaster is a crisis that can reveal the ongoing social order and how that social order reproduces and creates inequities.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown regional differences and similarities in access to housing after the tornadoes. I have offered a view of the complications associated with the place of home being unmade. I have also shown the difficulties home owners face. I have three main findings. First, unmade homes tend to be a burden for women in ways that they are not for men, reflecting women's relegation to the domestic sphere. This finding should be interpreted with caution because men did not talk about their homes in the same way that women did or did not talk about home unmaking and remaking at all. However, other researchers have found similar patterns. For example, Suzanna Hoffman (1999) documents a similar phenomenon after a wildfire ravaged a progressive town in Oakland. Hoffman's experience shows how gendered institutions still are because *even in* a progressive town where her neighbors espoused egalitarian gender roles, women were expected to tend to the private sphere and, in some cases, quit their jobs to do so.

Moreover, that the burden of unmade homes tends to fall on women reflects general trends in both an empirical and theoretical sense. In Tuscaloosa, home foreclosures and reverse redlining occurred in census tracts where there were high numbers of female-headed households. In Joplin, reverse redlining occurred in census tracts with higher numbers of renters, female-headed households, and people of color. My analysis also shows that race, gender and class matter in similar ways in both Joplin and Tuscaloosa when it comes to unmaking homes and in many instances, this process is still ongoing.

Second, the similarities in Joplin and Tuscaloosa tend to reflect general problems associated with housing after disasters in the context of the United States. I argue that there are specific federal measures that need to be put into place to alleviate some of these issues because they tend to happen repeatedly, especially after large disaster events. What stands out as important is there are general problems in access to housing irrespective of disaster aftermath, and there are particular problems in access to housing after disaster that supersedes context. Both issues could be assuaged with public policy changes that I detail in the final chapter.

Third, the regional differences are a function of each unique context. Indeed, one of the main differences is the presence of FEMA trailers. In Joplin, due to the size of the city, its distance from New Orleans, and its homogenous population, FEMA trailers were allowed on the outskirts of town. Tuscaloosa, in contrast, has a heterogeneous population with one main source of economic revenue: the university. As Steve Smith said, “we

can't have anything affecting that football." This was likely on the minds of Tuscaloosa community leaders. Moreover, in terms of demographics, Tuscaloosa is far more similar to New Orleans, and this is reflected in Alyssa, a city leader's comments "I don't want to say another New Orleans, but..." This concern might not have been as salient if not for Tuscaloosa's well-known sordid past with racial relations, in addition to the Civil Rights movement. Had the city allowed FEMA trailers, it might have been on full display just how divided Tuscaloosa still is in terms of race and class. This division might have prompted national criticism that the city wished to avoid. I have also argued that there are similar processes after disasters and that disaster can be a revealer of structural and systemic inequality.

Moreover, Tuscaloosa is a university town. Indeed, the building of new student housing and not low-income housing, was the second major difference between Joplin and Tuscaloosa. This is also part of why history is so important. Since the university is a major source of revenue, students are also a source of revenue. For my participants though, student construction seemed to be ongoing at the expense of those who need assistance to settle into a new home. In short, all three findings in this chapter bolster my theoretical argument that context (history, geography and political) is paramount for an intersectional understanding of long-term recovery. Moreover, the history of the civil rights movement, demographics, and housing problems before each tornado occurred are also important considerations to understand inequities in access to housing in Joplin and Tuscaloosa.

CHAPTER FIVE

COLOR BLIND RACISM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF STANDPOINTS

My objective in this chapter is to examine how inequalities come together in different ways in Joplin and Tuscaloosa. I examine people's perceptions of recovery and their struggles to recover. I find that there are racial differences in the leveling effect experienced after the tornado. I also find that Joplin residents but not Tuscaloosa residents used cultural coded colorblind racism. Moreover, I show how intersectional identities inform perceptions of recovery. I end the chapter with a focus on the importance of family, social and cultural capital in people's ability to recovery from disaster

The overarching findings in this chapter are twofold: 1) race is salient in different ways in Joplin and Tuscaloosa's long-term recovery, and 2) intersectional identities inform perceptions in intersectional ways in both contexts. Methodologically, I maintain that induction is a particularly powerful resource to understand how history and geography influence different positionalities. Throughout the chapter, I show that, overwhelmingly, already-marginalized groups of people disproportionately experience difficulties in recovery after the tornado. Moreover, I show differences between and among those groups.²⁴

5.1 Come Together? Only for Some: Different Perspectives and the “Leveling Effect”

In addition to using context-driven intersectionality, it is important to understand that intersectionality borrows insights from standpoint theory. In general, standpoint theory starts from the premise of the Hegelian master/slave metaphor and argues for the epistemological advantage of studying from the standpoint of those who are marginalized by their race, class, or gender to objectively understand power relations (hooks 1981; Collins 2009; Harding 1996; Stoetzler and Yuval Davis 2002). Collins (2001, 2008) argues that black women have unique perspectives because they are “outsiders within.” Her meaning is that positions of marginalization render a critical way to analyze power relations and society in creative ways because they experience being *in* the dominant culture but also being denigrated as *other* (see also Du Bois 1903). Moreover, the matrix of oppression based on race, class and gender gives a particular voice to experiences that dominant groups do not possess (Collins 2007; see also Duffy 2007).

It is well documented in the literature that crisis creates an opportunity for neighborhoods, regions or an entire country to come together in solidarity (Durkheim 1912; Eyerman 2015). Indeed, my participants speak of a leveling effect that causes them to break down in tears and show much emotion when recalling how their city and neighbors responded. However, for many, those feelings of solidarity and liminality did not last. In both Joplin and Tuscaloosa, the overwhelming majority of participants (both those who were affected by the tornado and city leaders) felt as if the local, state, and federal government did a great job of providing relief in the immediate aftermath (though

not all). They also narrate feelings of sameness, or as I call it, “a leveling effect.”

Indeed, there was much evidence of cooperation among citizens, neighbors, emergency personnel and government officials. Tom Gallaher and Lindsey Simons, a young white couple from Joplin told me:

Tom: [Response was] more than adequate. Like I said, as soon as being set up with donations and you could just go in and get what you need and there were people driving around handing out food to people who were trying to clean up their rubble...yeah it was great. I think they did a tremendous job...It was just one goal...and that was to get everyone okay, and that was it. I don't think there was a gender bias or racial bias, or anything like that...it seemed like it was one brotherhood.

Lindsey: people would go with their chainsaws to another yard and help them cut down trees and the limbs they had, they would go help someone else that needed help. (May 2013)

Tom and Lindsey represent what the majority of my middle and working class white participants narrated about people coming together in the immediate aftermath. This was indeed the dominant response from white respondents—that there was a levelling effect. A middle class white woman in Joplin who owned her own business had a similar view.

While having coffee at chain coffee and bagel shop, Kathy Sharpe told me:

It had an effect of ameliorating social class. It put everybody on a level playing field, and in a community this size, everybody became everybody's brother, so there was a sense of, you knew people that had more money and people that had less money, but everyone was in it together, and so there was a really refreshing new sense of camaraderie and community. (June 2014)

However, contrast the adulation of a “job-well-done” in Joplin with information I learned about the aftermath of the Tuscaloosa tornado. City leaders decided to block off a

majority poor African American neighborhood so that they would be cordoned off from President Barack Obama while he visited. I wrote this in my fieldnotes:

Jolie, my key informant, told me a story about when President Obama came to town. They blocked all the citizens in University Manor with barb wired fence and wouldn't let them out for two and half days. The citizens were barricaded in because it is a high crime area. She said that many citizens are really still hurt over this because the President went to Rosedale, not very far away, and met with citizens who lived in public housing but not University Manor. There was one cop who let the organization in to give away one meal a day. She said that some of the issues in University Manor that already existed were exacerbated by having no power and nowhere to go. (Fieldnotes, 10/10/2014)

Jolie's reflections suggest that there were racial and class disparities in relief distribution. The needs of the most marginalized were not taken into account for the supposed safety of the rest of the city—they were not even allowed access to food! To make problems worse, Jolie told me that it was unseasonably hot after the tornado; people in that neighborhood had to stay in warm houses and deal with the problems accompanying no electricity without being able to leave. In many ways, this response to a black neighborhood literally hid their visibility and put them in a barbed wire cage.

The idea that marginalized groups have a special sight or an ability to see things in ways the dominant group cannot, appears in three ways in my data and from some of my African American participants. First, they recognize that the leveling will not last. Second, they describe the leveling effect in almost utopian terms. Finally, they are acutely aware that things might have been different had the tornado struck other areas of town. In Joplin, a middle class black woman, Sierra, tiredly told me:

I mean, it happens -- that usually happens when a disaster hits, like 9/11, everyone was "Kumbayah, we love everybody," [they] wave[d] the flag

“Americans, woohoo, everybody comes together.” [And then] three months later, get back to your separate ways. Here, [they] did the same thing. (July 2014)

Hilda Salk, is quite reflexive when she talks about the leveling effect. She recalled to me what she told the volunteers who helped her:

Living in Tuscaloosa all our lives. I am like, “this is good right now. But once all the tornado [help] cease, all this love and affection that we’ve been getting, it’s going to stop. It’s going to go back—we will be separated [again].” (October 2014)

Both Sierra and Hilda clearly understood that things would go back to being separate and the leveling effect would not last, a feeling that my white respondents did not articulate.

In a different way, a black man in Tuscaloosa was incredulous about the leveling effect immediately after the tornado. It was unlike anything he had ever seen. Danny Rockbury said:

I mean, everybody, I mean, you would be surprised. Everybody was the same for one time. Everybody was the same. I mean, that day everybody was the same. I mean, I saw what God wanted us to be, not caring about who it is, just caring about what we need to do. I tell folks, if I ever seen God reveal himself, it was that day. I’m telling you, I’ve never seen that, and I told folks, I said “*you better enjoy this.*” (September 2014)

Danny said, “you better enjoy this” implying that all the love outpoured in Tuscaloosa was unlike anything he’d ever seen, but he hints that things would eventually go back to normal. Similarly, Theresa Richards, a working class black woman in Joplin told me, “There was no Black, there was no White, there was no brown, no red, no yellow; it was just us. It didn’t matter. It’s just, we are one. And that’s what it felt like. *I don’t remember ever feeling anything like that*” (July 2014). Both Danny and Theresa compare the

leveling effect to something almost otherworldly and utopian. It is interesting to note that white respondents did not present the leveling effect in such awe-struck terms. While they did narrate solidarity, it seemed as if the feelings of community were to be expected.

In both Joplin and Tuscaloosa, as I have demonstrated, the areas of town with the highest populations of African Americans were not directly hit by the tornadoes. In both cities, many participants of color told me, “thank God, West Side didn’t get hit” or “thank God, East Town didn’t get hit.” Carter Sampson told me:

I represent East Town and that’ll bring tears to my eyes [when I think about if it had been destroyed]. I hear those folks all the time, “I thank God.” I’m being honest with you.” I thank God it didn’t go through East Town.” Not saying I thank God it went somewhere else because the devastation. It [just] would have been a difference. Let’s *be honest*. (June 2014)

Mr. Sampson is a Hurricane Katrina survivor who moved to Joplin after Katrina devastated New Orleans. Sampson has first-hand knowledge of inequities in long-term recovery based on class and race is making implicit comparisons with Joplin.

African American respondents repudiate the claim that feelings of solidarity and community or the leveling effect lasted. Furthermore, after the help poured in, some African Americans told me that the even the rules of the game changed. I previously introduced Crystal Long who was living in a hotel room in 2013. When I asked her about the help she received from the city and non-profits, she told me:

I stayed in a hotel for, we stayed in that hotel, for the whole summer...and that’s when things [got] harder here, as far as help-wise. They helped for you know, for a little while, but then the rules changed you know and I am still living in a hotel room. The help stopped, the attitudes changed and they made it harder for us. They changed the rules as far as like

government housing. They changed the rules for emergency housing. You have to be on a waiting list and follow waiting list procedure. They changed it to where the income, where, we have to have three times the amount of the rent in order to rent places around here. (August 2013)

Crystal is speaking to two issues here. She tells me that rules of getting services changed for poor black folks. Second, for a while, there was an outpouring of help, but the help stopped. This is not a comment I heard from any of the white participants.

However, feelings of exclusion and difference did not exclusively fall along racial lines. A couple in Joplin, Miguel and Nancy Rios, also felt as if relief and recovery were fair for all, similar to Tom and Lindsey. Miguel is Latino and they described themselves as middle class. They told me that people who were still suffering were themselves to blame and did not agree that discrimination played a role in people's inability to recover.

In sum, while some were thrilled at the community coming together in solidarity, for others, the solidarity and feelings of sameness quickly disintegrated into feelings of belief, bitterness, confusion, depression and anger. Marginalized standpoints are important in this case to understand that not everyone felt that sense of community, commonality and goodwill.

5.2 Regional Differences: Cultural Colorblind Racism and Explanations for Recovery

Many white participants in Joplin have a very interesting view of Tuscaloosa. Upon learning that I was comparing Joplin and Tuscaloosa recovery, they would use coded colorblind phrases to describe Tuscaloosa residents. This did not with my Tuscaloosa residents. This is, I argue, related to the information I presented in the history chapter on the ideology that "there is no problem here" or "Joplin has a different kind of

black people.” Many respondents credited Joplin’s recovery to “Midwestern work ethic” or “we didn’t wait on handouts.” Moreover, the very idea of Midwestern values or Midwestern work ethic is a racialized way of viewing the world. It implies that residents in the rural, white Midwest have the abilities to do things better than people in other parts of the country.

During one of my first interviews in Joplin, a middle class white man in his forties told me that the Tuscaloosa aftermath was a “cluster-fuck.” My fieldnotes in 2013 show my discomfort on the subject:

I was surprised by my interviews in Joplin. I found myself cringing several times at their thoughts about Tuscaloosa, and the implicit racism of their comments when they compared the two cities. It was like there was this common narrative coming from the Joplin residents: Tuscaloosa isn’t recovering because the African Americans wanted a handout and they did not want to do any of the hard work. (May 2013)

Many other folks also credited their unwillingness to seek help from non-profits or government agencies because they did not want a handout. Sophia Carter, a white Joplin resident said to me, “I’m fine, I’m fine. Somebody else has it worse than I do. I don’t need help. Someone else has it worse than I do. We’re fine, we’re fine, we’re fine” (June 2014). Miguel Rios told me “That’s what differentiated Joplin from so many places was because everybody pulled together” (May 2014). Furthermore, Helen Douglas told me:

Here’s the real big thing [in comparison to Tuscaloosa and New Orleans]. The night I was driving around and you can’t see diddly squat, but there were people helping each other do whatever. They weren’t *waiting*. I mean, a lot of times we stop and go “Are you guys ok? What do you need?” “We’re fine, we’re helping each other.” That’s what the difference is, and I think it’s that rural Midwest being about “We just take care of ourselves.” And we take care of each other. (July 2014)

Midwestern and libertarian “values” framed the ways in which Joplin residents saw themselves in comparison to Tuscaloosa and often New Orleans. This regional and largely political explanation places the blame on the individual and does not consider institutionalized racism. Consequently, Joplin’s history as a blue-collar, conservative town with a very small non-white population allows residents there to understand themselves and others in color-blind racist ways (Bonilla-Silva 2010). Because racial confrontation or even interaction is not a daily reality for them, they are able to believe that Joplin’s people of color are somehow a different stock of black folks than those in Tuscaloosa.

Another interesting regional difference is how folks in Tuscaloosa understand recovery in Joplin. They felt as if they were forgotten about because the Joplin tornado and the news of the death of Osama bin Laden eclipsed their tragedy. Many community leaders also thought that Joplin got more money because Missouri is a swing state and the 2012 elections were on the close horizon. Dolly Smith, a middle class white woman in Tuscaloosa said to me: “Well, I think that's probably why you had some of the suspicion from our leaders in terms of, if you're doing comparisons with Joplin, I think he [city leader] feels like we got a short trip when it came to federal funds” (November 2014). Here we see political and regional differences working in a different way that is not necessarily based on color-blind racism but the political climate in 2011. That is, Missouri is a swing state (even though Joplin is very conservative); conversely, although Tuscaloosa is a democratic college town, the state of Alabama is solidly Republican.

While it is likely true that the election of the 2012 election might have something to do with why Joplin received more federal funds than Tuscaloosa, I argue that something much more insidious occurred. For instance, consider Sierra, a middle class black woman's lengthy comments on comparing Joplin and Tuscaloosa:

Everybody got out and helped everybody, but that doesn't make us any more special than the next person or people before. They would compare us to Katrina, and oh, "*they're* just waiting." Well, I'm sorry, but when you have water covering your building, your street, everything, you have to wait for the water to subside. That's going to take at least three weeks just depending on the severity of it, and so I would get so mad. [In a situation like Katrina] what can you get out and do? There's nothing you can do but wait, and while you're waiting, yeah, you need some assistance. It just so happened that we had extra buildings, and we had some land to put the trailers on. And so it's like, "no, we weren't extra special and it's not about *Midwestern values*." It's about [that] there was a need, people got out and did what they could, what they could, and that's the key thing.

[So when comparing Tuscaloosa], I can't put my finger on it, because Tuscaloosa happened three weeks before us, almost to the day, to the time, and they didn't get all that [help]. I wonder why? There you go. That's almost...(long pause) that really brings it glaringly obvious, doesn't it? Wow, I guess, I never really...(long pause). But now hearing myself say it, it's like why didn't they get all that? Because (pauses and then laughs) I'm sitting here trying to think, "wow." I can't think of anything that would differentiate it really, because they got hit, it was awful, it was terrible, and it was just as bad as ours, as the E5. It was like ours, and I know, I remember they had the Guard down there, but I don't recall reading stories where...(long pause) and even when talking to community leaders, I don't recall reading all these different people coming in and all these things being offered. I don't recall that. I just don't recall that happening.

During the interview, Sierra asks herself a startling question: why didn't Tuscaloosa receive the help and aid that Joplin did? She says, "That makes it glaringly obvious doesn't it?" referring to the fact that Tuscaloosa and New Orleans are comprised of far

more people of color. She recognizes that perhaps the reason Joplin received such an outpouring of volunteers, state and federal relief is because it is perhaps easier to galvanize funds when “white” communities are affected. So while the roles of each state in the election cycle might have influence how much relief they received, it seems likely that disparities in willingness to help the racial other also played a part (McKinzie 2016). Moreover, recently, sociologists Erin York Cornwell and Alex Currit show that during emergencies, there is a huge disparity in who receives help from bystanders. For example, whites are twice as likely to receive help, as are black patients (Cornwell and Currit 2016). Tuscaloosa received a mere 10.1 million from the federal government while Joplin received 150 million.²⁵ This shows how the federal government responded to Tuscaloosa in classblind and colorblind ways by not considering Tuscaloosa’ heterogeneous population.

Tuscaloosa residents did not point to a particular reason, like Midwestern values, for recovery or lack thereof. Instead, their criticisms were directly more towards the government. When I would tell my Tuscaloosa participants that some Joplin residents felt as if recovery was based on Midwestern values, and that they were not waiting on a handout, my participants would look at me quizzically. One older white male, Bob Crawford, who owned a failing business in Tuscaloosa had a difficult time when I told him what some Joplin residents said. After several minutes of trying to figure out why they would say such a thing he told me “I guess they [Joplin residents] are just poor and proud?” (September 2014). Other people in Tuscaloosa, both black and white, would

know exactly to what Joplin residents were referring. In Joplin we see how an almost majority white population is able to distance themselves from racial inequality but make racist statements, nonetheless. Moreover, while cultural color-blind racism was prevalent in my interviews with my Joplin residents, many people of color (similar to Sierra) there were far more critical and do not rely upon coded statements to explain recovery. I explore this theme more fully in a following section.

5.3 The Case of Latinx

One of my most interesting findings was the sympathy expressed by blacks and whites for Latinx in both cities. This is especially the case since the same sympathy or understanding was often not extended from whites to African Americans, especially in Joplin. This suggests that color-blind racism works in different ways depending on the context and what particular racial groups are under examination. Sierra Donaldson, said to me:

You know I didn't hear too much [about the Latino population]. And I don't know if that's just because it wasn't reported, or if they were scared to report. Yeah. Because they're not treat -- If anybody is treated any worse than us [African Americans], that's probably them (laughs). (July 2014)

Similarly, whites offered a sympathetic view. Don Sawyer, a white community leader in Tuscaloosa told me:

We had built a good relationship until the tornado and it's kind of like – now it's so fragmented again. They were gone. They didn't trust anyone. I mean, we had a huge thing at a shopping center, you know, the flea market type of thing where the food – and I would see them afraid to come up there. And then later I took a group of four guys – Put them in my car and took them – and they wouldn't get out of the car. I took them out of

the car and filled my SUV up with cases of water, food, everything. They were so happy. But they wouldn't get out of the car and help me load. I had some people load it – because they were so afraid. And probably they were illegal. But scared, young – scared to death. (September 2014)

Don did not articulate differences in recovery during our discussion of African Americans and white folks. Therefore, my interviews show how there is indeed a complex system of racial relations in both locations, in which sympathy towards undocumented Latinx is often not extended to African Americans.

Although I was only able to interview two Latinx in Tuscaloosa and seven in Joplin, their situations post-tornado share a common thread: fear of deportation. I briefly present the difficulties my Latinx participants faced and then discuss what some of my white and black participants expressed about the plight of Latinx post tornado. Aaron, a fifth generation Latino in Tuscaloosa, told me:

With the [Latinos], they were probably afraid to come ask for help so you didn't really know what help they needed. Part of that is because, in 2010 or 2011, Alabama passed a strict immigration law, so if they were not here legally, they did their best to stay hidden, or leave. I am involved with a local soccer team and we had several soccer players that just weren't there anymore at the end of the school year. It's like where did they go? (August 2013)

Similarly, Javier Lopez said, "They are going to be scared, they might be afraid to ask FEMA." Isabela tells me after I asked if she thought she received less help because she was Latina, "The only one who helped me was [my friend]." Isabela went on to tell me that they were discriminated against when they went to a local aid center to get basic toiletries and that many of the aid centers did not have a translator. When I asked Gabriela if she tried to access help from organizations, she told me:

No because I don't have papers. At the church, they told us that they were going to help us. Eh, a lawyer was going to help us, but my husband went and when he got there they told him, "Give me your social security number." But they knew that all the people affected that didn't have social security went to the church. He told them, "No, it's just that I don't have social security." He was told, "You know that the government doesn't help illegal people." Well, sometimes one is scared to, yeah, scared to ask. For us, the churches helped a lot. They gave us food and that was a big advantage, for one. That still one doesn't despair over all of it because the credit of everything in your fifteen years that you have struggled for, disappears like smoke. But the important thing is that we have life and are able to keep working. And still you can, like the saying, 'debt after debt,' but we keep fighting to go on. (July 2014)

This was a common misperception among Latinx participants. In reality, FEMA officers cannot report to ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and are required to help the undocumented. However, the current national immigration climate prevented undocumented people from knowing the facts about FEMA aid, much less subsequently applying. In sum, it seems as if the sympathy extended towards those in the Latinx community was not always extended to other marginalized groups. Furthermore, those in the Latinx community faced unique challenges in recovery from disaster due to fears of deportation.

5.4 Intersectional Identities Inform Perceptions of Recovery

In this section, I show how intersectional identities come together to affect perceptions of recovery. Bonilla Silva argues that on an individual level, colorblind racism is expressed using at least four different frames. The first is the abstract liberalism, the tendency for folks to talk about race and racism in terms of how far we have come. Second, when folks use minimization of racism, they tend to ignore race or downplay its role in society. Third, similar to sentiments expressed by white Joplin residents is

cultural racism, the tendency to find fault with the culture of people of color. Fourth, and more insidious than the other three is to equate problems in non-white communities as natural and expected, that is to normal their supposed inferiority. In this section, I first examine how poor whites in both locations, while critical of recovery because of their social class position, nonetheless do not discuss race or downplay its role in recovery. This is *minimization of racism*. For example, Krista Robles lived in a hotel room after a harrowing experience due to the tornado. She was living in poverty prior to the tornado though she had just used some settlement money to buy a trailer house. Krista narrated the situation of living in poverty and desolation after the tornado:

I had, a billboard, it's a sign that the, some people own, it was a sign, and pieces of that had blown off. And it was actually like a tarpaulin, like a tarp it had the covering on it, well we got some guy folks out there to get the tree off my roof and uh, I didn't stay there, I left there and stayed gone for like a month. I had the water and power cut back off. Of course it cost me, after like a month, I got up enough nerve and we went out there. They [the guy folks] come over there and they tried to tarp it, but it [water] was still leaking down my walls, and they got that tarpaulin and pulled it and got up there and covered my roof with that tarp. Well I was able to get back in my bedroom and stuff. Uh, but, still when it rained, um, I don't know how it was getting down in the walls but it ruined the electrical plugs.

But that tarp saved me. I got to stay there but uh, like I said, no hot water, the kitchen sink had rotted. I had two tubs, like on my front porch, and I had a hose pipe. That's how I washed my dishes. On the front porch, for a year. Winter, summer, all winter, I was out there washing my dishes. And uh, cooking on a, like a two eye, and a microwave. Couldn't plug nothing up because it would throw the breakers. We didn't have no heat, no central heat. No air, nothing. Uh, we was using a fire place when we had wood. And then staying in, I was staying in one room with an electric heater. When I couldn't build a fire, I was staying in one room because of no heat. You couldn't move around because it was freezing. (September 2014)

Krista left the house because it was freezing but her dog was not with her. While she was gone, her trailer burned to the ground and killed her dog. Krista pointed to social class as *the* reason for difficulty in recovering:

As far as like rich or poor, it affecting, I think it just, it's all the same, just when it hit, it hit rich or poor, black or white, it don't see no dollar signs or colors. It just the people that's poor people like me, we had to depend on FEMA or churches or something. But yeah, it took us a while. It affected us a little different because we are slower to get on our feet. (September 2014)

I introduce Krista in my fieldnotes after interviewing her.

She [Krista] was almost displaced by the tornado but then a fire came and destroyed her mobile home. The "apartment" she lives in now is in a hotel that has been converted into apartments with a fridge and microwave. They are tiny. There is no living room, only a bed situated the length of the room with a typical hotel room arrangement. The juxtaposition of this hotel against the wealth of the downtown area, which is two blocks away, is staggering. The location seemed like a rough place. All the windows of the apartments had shades or blankets over the windows. There was trash everywhere. The paint was cracking on the railings. (September 2014)

Steve Smith, an illiterate white man in Tuscaloosa understands how recovery is unfair for those in poverty. He said to me:

But I know if it hadn't been for Jolie, see the city was going to come in here and tear down these houses...[They] got money to burn, and nothing being done about it, [it's] their [individual people's] problem. They just messed with low class people because they [low class people] can't afford to fix this, can't live without going through somebody [an organization] to fix it. (October 2014)

Clearly, Krista and Steve have a different view because they understand that the poor got the short of the end the stick based on their experiences of being in abject poverty.

However, they fail to articulate differences in recovery based on race. In juxtaposition

with many of my Joplin residents though, they do not rely on coded phrases in the way that many Joplin residents did. I choose to highlight Krista's story because it shows some of the incredible obstacles to recovery when one is already living in poverty.

Class and gender also framed how people of color perceived government response and long-term recovery. A few my participants in both locations who were older middle class black men who seem to be influenced by a type of racial uplift ideology (e.g. Booker T. Washington and others). They also seem to be expressing sentiments that align with the frames of abstract liberalism. Gabriel Tomlinson, a leader in the black community, told me this when I asked how the city responded and if recovery was equal:

There are many Blacks that were not out there [affected], but their voices are out there. [I say] "Guys, we have a responsibility to take care of ourselves. The slave mentality has to end. We know that we need an education, and in America, it's free. Okay? But folks shed blood for us to go vote, [you] won't go vote. You've got a school down the street, you ain't go to the classroom, and then when you go you won't even take a textbook." So there are some issues that's within us that we have to deal with...It's much easier to go get on welfare. (October 2014)

Many older, middle class black men subscribed to this same ideology—that is, that the black community needs to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” which shows how class can frame perspectives in sometimes surprising ways. In a different way, Josiah Crad, a middle class black man in Tuscaloosa, had the interesting perception that being a first generation middle class black family served to disadvantage his ability to recover in unique ways:

Like I said, I really can't really say anything about the government, because the government didn't help me. To me, they didn't really help the

middle class, because the middle class, we're the ones that's working, paying our insurance, and doing stuff like that.

After prodding, Josiah told me that part of the problem is that middle-class blacks in Alberta City were looked over because the city was more worried about catering to the rich areas of town.

To me, we did feel like it was -- Like I said, because the tornado actually went through like Alberta, through -- down like toward Rosedale [public housing], then like I said, like me and my wife were saying “like okay, now they paid for so much to clean out the lake, whatever that is, Lake Tuscaloosa,” you know what I'm talking about? Now they went and spent so much money to clean Forest Lake out --To do all this, because that's like we say again, the upper scale neighborhood, but we're looking at it like, “okay, well why you didn't put that much money into cleaning up Alberta or our cleaning up our neighborhood? What, because we're in a \$100,000 house or low income, people that don't really have a lot of money?” (September 2014)

Josiah is critical of the city because a lake in an upper-class neighborhood was drained and cleaned while no such resources were funneled to Alberta City. Both Josiah and Gabriel offer interpretations of recovery that seem to be influenced by their different class positions. Indeed, there is a long history of those who are black and middle class having perspectives that are somewhat deleterious to black folks. From Booker T. Washington to modern day examples, such as Herman Cain and Ben Carson, there have been conservative voices in the black community but they are often also middle or upper class men (for example, 13% of black men who voted, voted for Donald Trump).

Disaster researchers have just recently begun to write about the ways in which disaster differentially affects men and women. However, saying that disaster differentially affects men and women falls short of the mark. What I mean is that gender

differences in recovery were also framed by race and class and cannot be understood without taking race and class into account. Middle class black women had different views on recovery than some of their male counter-parts. Tiffany Withers, who considers herself lower-middle class and likes to look nice, told me this:

I went to temporary emergency services, and this was maybe I'd say a month after the storm, and I had difficulty getting help there. I guess because maybe I didn't look a certain way (long pause). What I mean by that is no matter what I'm going through, I tried to put myself together, but that don't mean that I'm together *inside*. And so I didn't *look* like I was having a hard time. I'm like, I really need some help. Like it was little things like that that really had bothered me, because I really needed the help. (October 2014)

Another middle class black woman, Taylor Frank, told me that she and her husband put on “work” clothes to go through her damaged house. National Guardsmen asked her what she was doing in that neighborhood. She said to him, “I live here.” These women’s experiences suggest that middle class black women have to find a balance between looking *middle class enough* to be in certain areas or looking *poor enough* to receive assistance. In a similar but different vein, Sierra, in reflecting up on how frustrated she got over not being able to speak her mind after the storm, narrated:

There's nothing else I can do but just pray, because yeah, that's about all you can do, because yeah, there's no other recourse except to get so freaking mad (long pause). I mean, you know? And what does that do? What does that do. I know I'm preaching to the choir. I so infrequently get to vent about it or discuss it, because of the circles I'm in and -- because -- I'm spirited. Also, why *can't* I be spirited? Why can't it be a spirited discussion for me? (July 2014)

Sierra recognized that she is caught in a bind. She does not want to be understood as spirited because -- but she gets angry because she wants to speak her mind. Here class,

gender, and race come together to literally silence this woman from being able to speak her opinion for fear of how her colleagues will interpret her anger.

Therefore, we see that positionalities based on class vary by race, gender and location. Sierra's excerpt was one of the most incisive across all of my participants.

Overall, though, the most critical understandings of relief and recovery were from those participants who considered themselves poor. Carissa Foster, a black woman in Joplin told me this:

I'm still struggling. That's why I went to school. I was struggling before, said "I might as well struggle." You look at it and you're like, okay, "I was struggling before the tornado." I'm not going to sit here and say I wasn't, but to have to restart over, people are going to only help so much. This all happened during the summer. They didn't come around during the winter. I mean, I just literally -- the first winter afterwards, probably had two pair of jeans to wear. Who was going to buy my clothes? They're like well, "you got money from FEMA." I got so sick of hearing that. That was the big thing I got sick of hearing." Well, you got money from FEMA." So did fucking Joplin. (June 2014)

Carissa went on to tell me that she is sure people were treated differently in recovery based on race." I mean, how many people after the tornado on TV did you see [who were] Black? They're fucking high" [if they think race didn't play a role] (June 2014).

Similarly, Lavern Becker, a black woman who is a lesbian bemoaned being right above the poverty line, "I mean we were barely making it. *We were barely making it*" (October 2014).

Finally, many educated and middle to upper class whites in Tuscaloosa were quite critical of recovery because of how it perpetuated racial inequality. The history of civil rights in the area allowed many participants to recognize that recovery was racialized and

classed. Furthermore, since the University of Alabama is in Tuscaloosa, many middle class whites with whom I spoke were very liberal in their outlooks. Sarah Washington, a white middle class woman in Tuscaloosa thinks the city missed its opportunity. She said to me:

And how things were redistricted and rezoned. You know, why did the city choose to fight Taco Casa on how tall their damn cactus sign was but not fight to get – you know, they could have come in – like, Rosedale got rebuilt, why didn't they do a subsidized housing project in Alberta City? That would have been fantastic. You know, that's what you do. When the neighborhoods wiped clean, that's an awesome opportunity to come in and build subsidized housing. You know, build a retirement village. Build something useful for the majority of people. But no, everybody was out to make a buck with the – with the construction, and so now what do we have? We have an overabundance of what's considered student housing – which you were talking about, you know, you're going to pay 800 dollars to live with three other people? Yeah, you've got granite counter tops, but you know, where's a working class person going to live? And so our community and Alberta City got dispersed. I think – and I'm going to cry thinking about this. They missed that opportunity, they pushed them out. They pushed them out (crying). (September 2014)

Sarah's perspective directly relates to many middle class whites in Tuscaloosa who clearly understanding the racialized dynamics of the storm, and do not use color-blind racism to discuss recovery—for many Tuscaloosa residents, racial inequality has been and is on full display. In sum, perceptions of recovery differed based on social location as well as geographic location. This variation among groups shows that homogenizing tendencies are dangerous and do not do justice to particular perspectives. In sum, when comparing the two locations, race is particularly salient for two reasons. First, Joplin residents often used color-blind racist statements to explain away institutional racism and

why Tuscaloosa was slower to recover. Second, we see that positionalities that align with being marginalized repudiate claims of togetherness or the leveling effect.

5.5 The Intersections of Particular Disadvantages: Winners and Losers in Recovery from Disaster

I now turn to how particular disadvantages revealed themselves, sometimes independently of other categories. I first discuss gender inequality, second, the difficulties associated with being elderly, and, third, how access to different types of capital played a role in people's ability to recover.

The Burden of Gender

Women face particular challenges in post-disaster settings. They are more likely to die, and to bear the brunt of domestic responsibilities. Some literature suggests they are likely to be victims of abuse after disasters (Akerkar 2007; Fisher 2010; Juran 2012). My findings suggest that poor women are particularly hard hit by the tornadoes, especially poor women of color. Across my categories though, women narrated to me the excruciating work they did in the aftermath of the tornado, whether it was looking for loved ones, caring for their children, or having to rely on charity. Natalie, a young white woman in Joplin told me:

Because of my children and my husband worked and his job was still there and he had to go work. And I was like, *I can't leave them right now*. I need to make sure that we are stable, I need to make sure that we have a place to live, that we have a place to calm down, and that my kids have a place to be normal and be regular kids again. (May 2013)

Natalie did not go back to work for several months to ensure that her kids were okay.

This pattern is consistent in my data.

Because women are often relegated to the domestic sphere, especially after disaster (see Fothergill 2004; Hoffman 1999; Pacholok 2013), they are usually the ones who have to seek out charity and do the work of putting back their homes together. Fothergill (2004) has conceptualized this as the “stigma of charity.” My findings support hers after the Grand Forks flood. Fothergill finds that women in her study had to deal with the onerous tasks of associated with cleaning and remaking the private sphere. However, they did have to enter the public sphere in order to seek out charity. She finds that even with her working class women, they experienced a fall from grace due to having to rely on charity—sometimes for the first times in their lives. I interviewed almost equal numbers of men and women, and it was women who narrated feeling “strange” or “weird” to have to ask for help while men did not articulate the same emotions. This likely suggests that, similar to Fothergill’s participants, their female-counterparts were likely doing the work of seeking out charity. Taylor Frank also told me: “I had no clean clothes, but you couldn’t tell because I was just like I am going to get through this. And that was one of the experiences that I felt like was uh, if you were, functioning, you didn’t ask for help” (August 2013). Similarly, Jalessa McDonald, a young African American woman in Joplin said to me:

It did [feel weird to ask for charity]. It did because I mean, I’ve never had to before. I mean, I’ve been independent, I mean, you know, I’ve took care of my own, I mean, even living at home when I was 15 and I did my own thing, you know, I worked, I babysat, cleaned houses, and I was on my own when I was 17 and, yeah, it was hard. You know, I’ve never been on assistance before. I’ve never had *to be* on assistance before. You know, I’ve always worked one or two, I mean, at least two jobs, two or three jobs. And that was hard. And you know, in some of the places, people

were helpful and they were friendly, and then in some of the places they weren't, really. You know, you had people trying to, you know, I mean, we went to this one place and, we were at Catholic Charities, and it was a Caucasian lady and her mother and we were looking at something and the woman came and snatched it and was like "No, that's mine." (July 2014)

Here Jalessa narrates both how difficult it was to go on charity and then to experience prejudice, which demonstrates how the stigma of charity is also, itself racialized.

Another interesting finding that has not yet been explored in the literature is something as simple as finding the right sized clothes. Tanisha, a middle-aged black mother in Tuscaloosa explained it like this: "Clothes were scarce, people were donating but by me being so big, there was hardly anybody donating my size" (August 2013).

Carissa Foster, a working class black woman in Joplin complained about the lack of clothes that fit her. "Well, I didn't have anything to wear, for one, because all my scrubs were damaged. Yeah, all my scrubs were damaged. And scrubs are not cheap, and then I was 125 pounds heavier, too, so plus size clothes are not cheap, and churches -- That was the other thing that I was bummed out about. What was I going to find? I didn't" (July 2014).

Perhaps the most saddening finding was all the health problems that women (and not men) from both cities suffered after the tornado. Suzanne Perkins, a black woman from Joplin, developed breast cancer for the second time in her life. Francine Shock's story, as a young, poor, black homeless woman shows the intersections between stress, poverty, being a single mom and homeless. I asked her why she thought she was still suffering three years after the Tuscaloosa tornado. She said:

Because for one, eventually the house wasn't repaired the way it should have been repaired. I had to end up moving from that house. It was hard for me to find housing, so we stayed with someone and it took me about a year and a half to find somewhere to stay, and when I found that place, it was hit by the storm also, so when I did move there they told us that everything was up to par. They had fixed the house and everything, but once we moved in the house, we had power surges that come through, we had a small fire, some electric wire wasn't done, so therefore it forced me to have to move *again*, within that time to where I moved in with my sister, and I've been with her now since -- for a while, and I'm just trying to find a place. I found a place, but within that time, I had a heart attack. Congestive heart failure, congestion heart failure, so I'm unemployed right now. It's basically...me and my kids are homeless and we're staying with my sister and her three kids. (October 2014)

Here we see the convergence of having to deal with a slumlord, trying to take care of her children and then losing her job because of having health problems. Francine credits her heart attack to the stress of the tornado. Finally, Hilda Salk dealt with the combination of a stroke and a heart attack after the Tuscaloosa tornado. She refused even to discuss the actual day of the tornado because she thinks it is bad for her heart.

While class and race are important to understand differential access for women, in my interviews with male participants, a staunch masculinity pervaded their narratives—men did not go into detail about how their gender put them at an unfair disadvantage. When men would cry during the interviews, they would apologize profusely and tell me “I never do this!” My female participants did not do this. Scott Mayes said:

And so the shitty part is now, every time I talk about it, it is raw and I tear up...and it fucking pisses me off because I am like, *I am the dude*, why am I crying? It aggravates me. But the bad thing is that I took it too far and I got to where, but I was cheating as much as I could on my girlfriend. I felt out of control, I felt as if I had no control...and so I cheated as much as I did because you know, that month, that two months that I was sneaking around I felt different. It got me away from everything. This tornado has

screwed up every part of my life and I am trying to pick up the pieces the best I can. I understand it was my choice that I did everything. But, it sucked. (May 2013)

Here we see Scott's difficulty coming to grips with his masculinity being threatened because of the storm and in needing to express his emotions. His narrative reveals that he sought other ways to assert his masculinity—a finding that several other men also revealed. While I do not have many findings related to masculinity, the few times masculinity revealed itself as important, the narrative was strikingly similar to Scott's story. Thus, how disaster affects masculinity or causes people to assert masculinity in different ways should further be explored (for example, see Pacholok 2013).

Age

Age was not a part of my initial research questions and focus. However, after returning home from the field in 2013, I realized that both Joplin and Tuscaloosa have elderly populations and that those who are older have particular difficulties in recovery that are important to consider. In the context of my research, age was important because the elderly are more likely to suffer disproportionately due to being under-insured or in poverty. Disaster also unduly affects the elderly because they are more likely to have mobility and health problems, have fewer social networks, and live on a fixed income (Klinenberg 2002).

While working with the non-profit organization in Joplin, one of my tasks was to interview clients for a biography that the organization could then display to its volunteers and funders. Almost all of the people I interviewed for the organization were over age 50.

While I cannot use the data from those interviews, I did write fieldnotes about my observations. During my first week with the organization, I made the following notes about my interviews:

An elderly man came into the office in what looked like work clothes. He needs work done on his basement because although he got insurance money to fix the basement, he had to use the money to fix a compressor on his AC system, which cost him to the tune of 5,000 dollars. He was visibly agitated when he came in and insisted on talking to the client intake person. I could tell he felt out of place and nervous. He was apologetic about needing to talk to her but refused to do the interview with me until he talked to her. This man was a veteran and had weathered hands.

I interviewed another elderly woman. She exhibited discomfort when talking to me. We met at her house and she cried during the interview. She told me that the tornado broke her heart, and still breaks her heart. She cares not only for herself but also for her disabled son. She didn't have insurance and had to rely on savings to pay for materials. (May 2014)

Other elderly folks the organization served while I worked there had been scammed by contractors and insurance companies, did not have enough insurance or the right kind of insurance (e. g. flood insurance), did not have insurance at all, or were living in substandard housing. Often times FEMA aid or a Small Business Loan (SBA) was not enough. In sum, during my time with the organization in Joplin, those who were the most in need three years after the storm were late middle age to elderly. My experiences were different with the organization in Tuscaloosa and this is a function of the broader services they offered. Though other groups experienced the aforementioned hardships, the elderly in both locations seemed particularly hard hit because of decreased social ties, social mobility, and physical mobility.

In 2013 while doing an interview with Kelly Derdick and her husband, Steven, who was in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, she lamented about how difficult it was to be on a fixed income, older, but not quite at the poverty level. Kelly and Steven are both white and Kelly told me while I interviewed them in a very small apartment in Joplin:

I applied four days afterwards and uh, we ended up, when it was all said and done and this is over 32 years' worth of stuff, with 10,000 dollars. The economical of it, the economy of it, and the people in Joplin...there were nice houses on the west side of town, but the majority of people that were hit were below poverty. We waited to get this apartment because it was new, and we've had so much trouble. We make too much money to get any help. I applied for an assisted living home and we make 2,000 too much [per year], and then all these new places that are being built you have to meet the guidelines...We don't have one [a washer and dryer], we've been married thirty four years and we need a washer and a dryer, and now we just wear the same clothes over and over again. It's just frustrating. It doesn't matter that he is disabled. We thought maybe we could get some help. (May 2013)

Kelly was clearly upset because FEMA quantified 32 years of belongings as only worth 10,000 dollars. Their story points to the difficulties that is associated with living on a fixed income and mobility and health problems. In Tuscaloosa in August of 2013, I interviewed Renita, an African American woman, who was a former client of the organization I worked with the following year. Renita cared for her sister who had an intellectual disability. They were both on a fixed income, elderly and had previously decided to let their insurance lapse because they could not afford it. Thus, after the storm, they were defenseless. Had it not been for the organization I volunteered with, I am not sure what Renita and her sister would have done. George and Sharon Yokum, an

elderly white retired couple had to settle with their insurance company because they did not have the means to take them to court. George is a lung cancer survivor and the couple lives on a fixed income. When I asked them who the losers are in long-term recovery, they told me “Poor old ones.”

Beatrice Moore and Leanne and Harry Goodley, all retirees, all told me they had to use their savings and almost depleted their 401ks to make up the difference between what needed for their homes to be rebuilt or fixed and what their insurance companies gave them. While these three people, all from Tuscaloosa, are perhaps more privileged than many others I talked to, they went from having savings and investments to being almost on the margins due to the tornado. Another elderly man in Tuscaloosa, Logan Tenney, was almost 90 years old and a widower completely had to rebuild his house because it was destroyed. Logan told me with a grim grin that conveyed anguish, tiredness but also a touch of gratitude that he was still alive:

Ashleigh: Is there anything else that I didn't ask or –

Logan: Well, I'm 89 years old.

Ashleigh: I was going to ask you that, okay.

Logan: I'll be 90 in February, and I've been through it. I've been through the war [World War II]. I've been everywhere, and I've been through tornadoes before. I've been through this, and I've been shot at, and hit, and missed, and everything. I thought I was going to finish up pretty good, but then three years ago (laughs) this happened. So -- And I survived, so that's what counts. I survived. (October 2014)

While Mr. Tenney told me this, my eyes started to brim with tears and I thought how awful it must be to pick up the pieces at an older age. If the storm were this impactful on him, a man of means, how much worse it is for those who do not have access to capital.

One of the more troubling examples of how age and race intersect is the debacle that Ethel and Gerald Wilson endured in recovery after the Joplin tornado. Their story had a happy ending, but the couple had had to deal with the discrimination that accompanies being a bi-racial marriage for decades. Moreover, they bought two houses that were in disrepair right before the tornado and had not yet gotten insurance on the houses. I asked them if they used their insurance to rebuild.

Gerald: No, because we hadn't even got the insurance on the house yet. We was a week into the contract.

Ethel: Somebody told me to call Reassemble this City. I said I've already been there and they can't do anything, because the papers [on the house] hadn't even been transferred to our name.

Gerald: So we eventually go over there, and okay, the lady said, well, "he [man who sold them the houses] didn't fill it [the paperwork] out right." So I brang it back and we didn't get the deed to the house until December [seven months after the storm]. And then he skipped town, but she finally got him and made him sign the papers so they could –

Ethel: [Interrupting] because the bank didn't get the houses until December, after the tornado, but we had bought them before that, and he just held it up so he could get the FEMA money. After he got the FEMA money stuff, then he brought the right paper for me to sign, and then he was gone. Yeah. He took the FEMA money. Yeah, and then she [woman who works with RC] got on the Internet and she found him. I don't know how much he got, but -- because he was owing money to US Bank. I think, because that's where his loan was at, so we had already paid him for the houses, but we didn't still know that he had a lien against them. So he took that FEMA money and got out of debt and then he left town. He was kind of shady.

Ethel later revealed that she was bipolar and that she had to be hospitalized for a nervous breakdown due to the tornado. When I asked her if her breakdown was the result of any reason beyond the normal triggers, she conveyed to me that the tornado made her *so sad* that she just sat and cried. Ethel and Gerald were in their mid-70s. They had finally purchased homes at that age, only to have the tornado destroy the homes. Then, as they told me, the man who sold them the home scammed them. Eventually the organization built them two new houses. When I interviewed them, they were so thankful that they could not quit crying.

While many city officials told me that they did not think race mattered in recovery, they were sympathetic to the plight of older folks. When I met with Kennedy Vix in Tuscaloosa, a white woman who worked for a non-profit, she had a very disparaging view of African Americans, telling me that they scam the system in any way they can—her opinion regarding African Americans was one of the most scathing of all my participants. However she also told me, “And you know what, I think the elderly did take it the hardest” (October 2014). Similarly, Miguel and Nancy Rios, who were quite adamant that there were no racial components to recovery, were sympathetic to the elderly. When I asked them why older folks might be at a disadvantage they conveyed that since the elderly live on a fixed income, they often have to let their insurance lapse because otherwise they would not be able to eat. In sum, age mattered in both locations and in similar ways. How age mattered, though, was dependent on other categories such as social class, whether or not they were widowed, and race.

Class and Capital

In this section I examine how social class influences recovery. My interpretation of my findings is that social class frames gender, age, and racial inequality in the context of long-term recovery. I am drawing from scholarship that recognizes how social class informs gender and race does not mean that I maintain social class is always the most important social category. In short, my argument is that class seems to be one of the most important elements in long-term recovery from disaster but that *how* class matters cannot be understood without taking race, gender and age into account. However, in this section, I focus mainly on class. Indeed, I was immediately struck by how social class shapes one's ability to recover from disaster. Since I sampled from a large pool of residents, I was continually astonished by *how much* social class mattered. Moreover, that such stark inequities can be side by side in the same town, especially in Tuscaloosa, was also troubling.

While I recognize that social and cultural capital are not necessary proxies for social class, many scholars have suggested they are. Indeed, the importance of social and cultural capital has been the topics of many debates. Capital—social, cultural and familial—is a major mechanisms by which through people are able to recover from disaster. While there is much in the literature to suggest that social capital is an important indicator of people's ability to recover from disaster, there is not much of an indication of how capital operates differently in different contexts. It is mostly assumed that social and cultural capital tends to map onto those with access to monetary capital, though not

exclusively. However, in both locations, the closeness and resources of peoples' family tended to ameliorate some of the difficulties in long-term recovery. In this section, I show the importance of capital and how it varies by social groups and contexts.

There is some debate in the disaster literature regarding the importance of social and cultural capital. It seems to make intuitive sense that if a person who is affected by disaster has the "know-how" to deal with applying for aid, take on their insurance company or mortgage company, than that person will be more likely to recover or regain a sense of normalcy. In sociology, the skill sets for interacting, and properly engaging with institutions has generally been conceptualized as cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). This is a type of capital because, like money, it is used to navigate life and succeed in life in ways that others who do not possess the right kind of cultural capital might not have the skills or *habitus* to do so. Moreover, it also makes sense and indeed much as been written on the subject, that having extended social networks will be expedient in the context of disaster recovery. Lee and Blanchard (2012) write that social capital is, "Generally speaking, strong social networks, normative consensus with expectations of reciprocity, and interpersonal trust are ingredients for social relationships that can be productive (generating either good or bad collective outcomes)." (p. 28)

Family (or familial) capital is often subsumed under social capital (Coleman 1988). It is part of what makes social capital essential for human development. However, in the context of my research, I am simply referring to family capital as help received from family after the tornadoes. Those who did not have family ties in the area had to

rely more on social welfare organizations, FEMA and other types of aid and charities. Family was also a source of comfort and strength. Interestingly, assistance from family superseded social categories. What I mean is that it did not vary based on race, class, gender or age. Assistance from families is quite common. Participants often moved in with family members, received aid from family members, and their family members would come from other states to help with the onerous tasks that accompany recovery. Phrases like “My mom (or substitute parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins) helped me” were extremely common. Mary Davidson, a middle-aged white woman who is working class told me about her family in the Joplin area. In the context of our conversation, she told me:

[T]he whole time that the tornado happened, I never was scared that I wouldn’t have a place to go. I didn’t think “What I am going to eat? Where am I going to eat? Where am I going to go? Am I ever going to have a house? Am I going to be able to afford, you know?” My brother helped a lot in building the house, he would volunteer to come over, and he was here almost every single day when they were building the house. (May 2013)

Mary tells me she was not worried about recovery. Though this certainly is not a common theme across my interviews, the help she received from her family was. In the context of disaster recovery, I contend family capital or family ties operate differently than social capital. Social capital was far more evident in Joplin than in Tuscaloosa, while family capital was pervasive across both contexts.

In Tuscaloosa, very few individual participants refer to social ties as being an explanatory mechanism for why they had or had not recovered. In Joplin, this was

brought up very often. Indeed, my own observations confirm extensive social ties in Joplin. It is somewhat of a big, small town. While it does not have the characteristics of a rural town, it was not uncommon to hear that most of the town's inhabitants are connected in some way. Laura Stark, a community leader, told me "In fact, I did a talk once about social capital, that social capital really helped us in this. And I like mapping of social capital, not that it's static, but I think if people want to prepare as a community, prepare for a disaster [social capital is important]" (June 2014).

Cultural capital did not present itself as a pervasive theme in either location. In fact, I only have a few examples in my data to show *how* cultural capital mattered. This shocked me as I was expecting those with less cultural capital in regards to bureaucratic institutions to have more trouble with recovery. Thus, while the findings I present here are the result of my observations and interviews, they should not be understood as generalizations for the entire community. Based on my methodological design, it is possible that there is more to the story. If I had been able to spend lengthy amounts of time with individuals and families in the immediate aftermath, my findings might be different. However, I contend that based on the egregious mismanagement and institutional racism and classism that reared its ugly head in the aftermath of New Orleans, FEMA and other aid agencies have steadfastly tried to make the process of applying for aid and assistance easier for low-income individuals. I asked the question "did you find the process of applying for aid or assistance to be difficult?" repeatedly and I got the same general response: "No." Some participants went on to tell me that they

received assistance from FEMA workers or other aid workers to ease the difficulty of filling out forms, etc.

I do have two examples, though, which are instructive and scholars should explore in future research. Both deal with knowledge that middle class people possessed that many people who were working class or poor did not. For example, Sally was a director of a non-profit in Joplin. In 2013, we met in her office in Joplin and she told me about her experience with the storm. I asked Sally about her thoughts on government response. She told me:

Sally: FEMA did not mistreat anybody.

Ashleigh: Why do you think they did such a good job?

Sally: They were fair, they were more than fair, you know uh, one instance, was that, I had my laptop computer in my car when my windows broke and my laptop computer was damaged, at that particular time, as a counselor, I had, I was, in Missouri, the substance abuse counselors were required to take training and they were online classes, and so I was just really, because it was, I had a test that was due and so I was really upset and the FEMA worker said, "You know we don't normally replace computers and things like that" and I said, "You know, I was in school, this was required for my credentials, every counselor in the state of Missouri has to qualify for this class. I have a test due." And they replaced my computer. They, and, they absolutely replaced my computer so that I could finish my training. And they didn't have to do that, they couldn't have towed the line, they could have said, you know, "[We] really can't help your professional credentials right now." But they helped me keep my professional credentials intact. (May 2013)

This conversation stood out to me. I remember thinking "Well, you knew to ask, and you knew *what* to ask." Lareau (2011), writing about cultural capital and child rearing, conceptualizes this as concerted cultivation. Concerted cultivation refers to skills parents

transmit to children that allow them to succeed in different institutional contexts. Another example of how cultural capital operates is that although FEMA might initially deny a person aid, it is disaster survivors' right to petition or to re-apply. Most people in working class or poverty situations were unaware of this. A middle-class black man in Tuscaloosa said:

This is really interesting, the way FEMA operated—you think you could make a claim and they would deny you, but unless you went about appealing the decision, you wouldn't know that there was FEMA support. So that was really interesting the way, just knowing a little about the process, I was aware you could appeal...but they would initially deny you because there was assumptions that your insurance company would take care of you. So they would deny you on the surface even if you went to your insurance company and you had to follow up with FEMA in order to get any benefits. It was a really interesting process and something that I will be interested in finding out how many people took the extra step in finding out what FEMA was available for individuals because I think people, and the guy who initially put the tarp on my roof said there was nothing FEMA could do because he had tried. And I said "That doesn't sound right." If there's a gap between insurance and what it costs to get your house fixed, there should be some FEMA money. And in essence, there is. But if after you are told initially there is no help from FEMA, a lot of people don't pursue it, I know that's what he did and that's my assumption that others did not follow up like they could have. So, that whole process, there needs to be an explanation for people in that situation, because if I didn't follow up—there was a gap between the 10,000 dollars it cost to get my roof replaced and what the insurance company was willing to replace. There was some issues there that I think might have affected our community, the African American community, just because they didn't know to go through that process. I'll be interested to see how that worked out. (Oral History, conducted by Tuskegee University students)

This man was reflective about his situation his knowledge that you could reapply. Most people simply did not know they could appeal their denial. While many participants offered searing critiques of FEMA, they did not articulate problems with the paperwork

or the process. Moreover, they knew what to ask and what resources were available to them.

When you juxtapose the aforementioned experiences with Magdalena, an undocumented single mother from Mexico (by way of California), who suffered a subdural hematoma because of the tornado, it is evident how important cultural capital is. Magdalena took shelter in a walk-in cooler where beer and liquor bottles were stocked. She was struck by flying debris and woke up days later in a hospital in another state. Magdalena's story is one of the most harrowing I encountered. Two of her friends died in the storm, she herself barely survived, and after the tornado, she fell into a deep suicidal depression. She turned to methamphetamines, her partner left and she lost custody of her children. Three years later, she was in a stable relationship, had regained custody of her children and was two years sober. When I asked Magdalena if people were treated fairly after the tornado, she told me:

Somewhat...because there's a lot of people who are still dislocated, who still – (pause)...That's why it took me so long to get a place. Like I didn't get my house directly affected like some people got everything destroyed, but due to the brain injury I couldn't work. I couldn't work for the first year. I couldn't work, if it weren't for the tornado I would have kept working. I would have been all right. I wouldn't have lost [everything]. And I was having a very hard time getting assistance from the government. When I called places and telling them about the tornado, look, I need a house, they wouldn't help me. I didn't get the help, so I don't know about that [if recovery was fair]. (July 2014)

Magdalena did not articulate knowledge that FEMA can help with medical expenses and other losses due to natural disasters. So while I do not have many instances in my data to compare examples of how cultural capital matters, the failure of many of my working

class and poor participants to communicate knowledge of how aid and assistance works does suggest that cultural capital matters. Hence, though many participants told me that they had no problem with aid forms and assistance, it is clear that is only a small part of the story. There are other types of knowledge that can assist in recovery that many folks simply did not know existed. This shows that the *absence* of cultural capital is something that should be explored in future research.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I make both theoretical and empirical contributions. I have demonstrated variations among different social categories in perceptions of relief and recovery by using context to drive my intersectional analysis. Had I privileged one type of inequality over another, I might have missed how important social class is in the context of recovery, and how colorblind racism varies by location. For example, I had originally thought that race would stand out as the important thing to consider, however, it matters in different ways, and does not seem to tell me much more than social class in Joplin. I had also thought that LGBT people might be part of the story, but they mostly told me that they did not feel that their experience was different than other people's experiences based on their sexual orientation. Furthermore, I might have ignored differences among groups altogether.

My findings highlight the importance of doing intersectionality inductively. When we consider contextual details in our examination of inequality and people's perception of inequality, different things are salient; for example in Joplin, cultural color-blind

racism is employed by whites, but not as much in Tuscaloosa. For non-whites in Joplin and both poor whites and black, middle class men in Tuscaloosa, race, class, and gender come together to produce minimization of racism or abstract liberalism.

It follows, then, that thinking about inequality as static or additive misses the mark. The “leveling effect” that whites and blacks differentially experienced show how people of color renounce claims made by the dominant group and how they sometimes challenge colorblind racist statements. Therefore, while I maintain that social class is one of the best predictors of recovery, it cannot be understood alone. Nor can it function in particular ways without taking other imbricating inequalities and geographical differences into account.

This chapter, however, leaves some questions partially unanswered. I was not able to tease out why or how masculinities were detrimental in long-term recovery, nor was I able to understand completely how cultural capital was important. I believe that both questions should be explored in future research on long-term recovery from disaster. These topics were part of the material I gathered from interviews and observations but there were not enough data for me to make claims about some of the trends I observed. My following chapter examines how the ongoing social order produces mental health problems, negative emotions, and trauma.

CHAPTER SIX

PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE AND COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

For the past several decades, since Kai Erikson's exemplary work on the aftermath of the Buffalo Creek disaster in the 1970s, scholars have considered that trauma might not only be the property of individuals' experience but might also be the feature of a community that has undergone war, disaster or some of other event. However, in another sense, since individuals are situated within the social order, in a basic sense, all traumas are social. Despite these two seemingly contradictory conceptualizations of trauma, I argue that a sociological understanding of trauma does not to be one of the other.

In this chapter, I consider differing local political response as an explanation for how and why a sense of community is fostered and created in disaster aftermaths and recovery. I open with the idea that in both Joplin and Tuscaloosa "everyone was affected." Second, I discuss literature about collective trauma and cultural trauma. Third, I discuss similarities in response in the two locations. Fourth, I look at the differences and argue that slow recovery in Tuscaloosa, on its face, seems to be about government response; however, I make the argument that it is because Tuscaloosa is more heterogeneous than Joplin is. Thus, my argument is two-fold: collective trauma is a

product of government response *and* inequality. I end the chapter with this consideration in mind and discuss how it helps us to understand the differences and similarities in Joplin and Tuscaloosa.²⁶

6.1 Literature Review: Cultural Trauma and Collective Trauma.

Sociologist Kai Erikson was the first to conceptualize trauma as something that could be a feature of a community ravaged by disaster. He spent time in Buffalo Creek, West Virginia after an earthen dam collapsed into the community and washed it away. The dam was the holding place for water and slag because of coal mining. The collapse affected mostly blue-collar miners and their families. Erikson developed the concept to describe the almost unbelievable despondency the community, as a whole, seemed to possess. Erikson also made comparisons between disaster survivors and those who are affected by other types of trauma. He wrote:

When we talked previously about the modern mountaineer, that numbed and dispirited creature shuffling off to welfare offices of one kind or another, we were talking about somebody who already suffers the effects of shock. And this revised portrait is not exclusive to Appalachia. It could serve as a reasonable likeness of people anywhere who seem to have lost in the contest for status and proportionate share of their land's wealth, so it should be no surprise if we sometimes catch fleeting glimpses in this portrait in the kinds of people that live in sharecroppers cabins, or Indian reservations, in black ghettos, on skid rows, in immigrant quarters, or wherever it is that the victims make their home. I will argue...that these people too are the survivors of disaster and the pain reflected in their faces is a form of trauma. (1972:132)

Erikson discusses how those who live in economically depressed social locations are already the victims of trauma and so, for those in Buffalo Creek, the forgotten, the disaster had a worse effect than perhaps it would in other communities. He also makes

the case that everyone in Buffalo Creek was affected two years after the dam collapsed. He contends that the trauma people suffered in Buffalo Creek was a syndrome, “a group of symptoms that occur together in a kind of package and affect whole populations of individuals similarly” (p. 137). Erikson maintains that there is a distinction between individual trauma, which only affects one person, and collective trauma, which is a blow to the tissues of the community.

I find Erikson’s definition of collective trauma to be particularly useful to understand events that affect more than one person. A hallmark characteristic of large disasters is loss of community and often, neighborhood and community level transformations. For example, disasters can rip apart neighborhoods and create new ones such as FEMA trailer parks. However, somewhat puzzling to me was that Tuscaloosa residents seemed to be suffering from collective trauma two to four years after the storm while Joplin residents, on the whole, did not. Erikson additionally argues that what causes collective trauma is loss of communality. Loss of communality is defined as “the thought that the community, or maybe even the entire world, has been obliterated altogether and can no longer serve as a source of personal support” (Erikson 1976:199). We need not, as a society, look back further than Katrina to immediately understand how this happens with loss of neighborhoods, social anchors, and displacement.

Erikson does conclude that a disaster can be a result of chronic conditions as well as acute events and sometimes an event can have elements of both. Erikson writes, “A chronic disaster is one that gathers force slowly and insidiously, creeping around one’s

defenses rather than smashing through them” (p. 255). So we can think of types of marginalization as chronic conditions that wear at one’s defenses.

Since Erikson’s landmark book *Everything in its Path*, a number of scholars, primarily cultural sociologists, have sought to provide a general sociological theory of trauma. Jeffrey Alexander and Ronald Eyerman are at the forefront of this work. Although beyond the scope of my investigation, Alexander and Eyerman are cultural sociologists, and they tend toward using the nation-state as the unit of analysis, which makes it difficult to comprehend how something like a disaster in Tuscaloosa, Alabama can engender cultural trauma. Alexander opens his book, aptly named for such a grand undertaking, *Trauma: A General Social Theory*, by asking how traumas become collective. How do they take shape and what gives them meaning? His point is that while there is always human suffering, trauma is not always part of the collectivity or does not also take on significance for a large group of people.

I argue that large, publicized conversations need not take place for something to cause or be a cultural or collective trauma. However, Alexander and Breese (2011) argue that making individual suffering collective is “cultural work” meaning that there is a public effort to make sense of the trauma (p. xiii). In a different way, Eyerman (2015) separates individual, collective and cultural trauma in his analysis of media representations of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He contends that all traumas can be social and many of them are collective but they become cultural when they take on meaning for a large group of people—or, in his words, shine light on a broken covenant,

namely here in U.S., that our government will take care of us. Clearly many residents of New Orleans were not taken care of, and it caused our society to reflect on race and class chasms in ways that usually do not occur (Eyerman 2015). As mentioned, I think acknowledging all traumas as social is a step in the right direction. Despite this, most of my disagreement with the cultural sociologists is a different understanding of what culture is. Eyerman writes:

Cultural traumas are public articulations of collective pain and suffering that require representation through word, sound, and image as well as interested parties to construct and communicate them. These take form as narratives that create and cultivate a unified experience for disparate individuals. Such narration turns the individual experience of trauma into a coherent meaning framework, a story, helping traumatized individuals to make better sense of what has happened to them. (P. 8)

It is interesting that he writes this passage because in the previous paragraph he argues that other types of disasters such as tornadoes destroying a small town would not affect collective identity in the way in which the aftermath of hurricane Katrina did. All of this raises the question of whose collective identity we are talking about.

I suggest that Eyerman and Alexander are mistaken to think that events that might not register or attract national attention do not engender cultural or collective trauma. In addition, a collectivity that is traumatized may be a nation, but it may also be a smaller collectivity, such as the residents of a city like Tuscaloosa or Joplin.

6.2 Tornado Shit and Sensing Terror: Experiencing the Tornado

The phrase “everyone was/is affected” came up repeatedly with my participants. Not surprisingly, people did not have to lose a loved one or belongings to feel loss.

Participants described their experiences with the tornado as inducing shock, being surreal, and causing a range of emotional responses. Moreover, most of my participants described the aftermath as if a “bomb had gone off.” Many recounted experiences of waking up and not knowing where they were, being trapped in rubble, and holding onto their loved ones for dear life. Some described the experience as “time speeding up” and yet others as “time standing still.”

Most of my participants vividly recounted the day the tornado hit. In fact, when I asked them to tell me about their experiences with the tornado, it often took up a one fourth and sometimes half of the interview. The ability to remember traumatic events in clear detail, as if it happened yesterday, is a common phenomenon that psychologists link to emotional arousal. Events such as disasters and the assassination or death of political and other iconoclastic figures become etched in the brain (Cahill and McGaugh 1998). Often, people will be able to recall small details, for example, what they were wearing, when the event occurred. My participants told me that their immediate emotions ranged from disbelief, sadness, shock, sorrow, fear, worry, and feeling disoriented or lost.

Silas Salk, a black man from Tuscaloosa, recounted to me exactly what was going through his mind and what he was wearing in the aftermath of the tornado. The tornado sucked him out of his house through the chimney. He told me that he stepped over dead bodies, something he had never even told his wife. He had yelled at some youngsters to get off their bikes and take shelter when he realized that the tornado was going to hit—

only to see their lifeless bodies moments later. Others, such as Theresa Richards described exactly how things looked in Joplin after the tornado:

Franklin Tech, on fire, and telephone poles in the street and just people were just -- I think it had to be like just shock, because people were walking around just I mean, totally lost, just -- it almost looked -- It's almost like you were just taking up and planted into like a new civilization. (July 2014)

People narrating shock, disorientation, and “just wandering” were consistent sentiments. Several of my participants told me that it was like a zombie effect or *The Walking Dead*. Sheila and Randon Turner, a young white couple in Tuscaloosa, told me, “And we open the door, and the world was changed” (September 2014). Another common narrative was to describe how everything looked after the tornado. In addition to describing their horror with what their towns looked like, often referring to it as a war zone, participants also similarly described how the tornado ruined their belongings. Megan and Tom Crawley, a white couple in their sixties in Tuscaloosa, told me:

Megan: Everything had this tornado –

Tom: *Tornado shit*. That's what we call it.

Megan: Okay, (laughs) I was trying to come up with another word.

Tom: Okay, it was just dirt –

Megan: Insulation.

Tom: Insulation, pieces of wood, splintered wood, glass.

Megan: It was like somebody just sprayed it on everything.

Tom: It was coating everything that you tried to get out [recover], so -- I don't know how, but something that would be completely sealed up –

Megan: Yeah. It would be inside.

Tom: And it would be inside. (laughs) I don't know how.

Megan: Like a box. But if you had a -- If you found an article of clothing or something that had a little bit of that on it, we learned to just throw it away, because it wouldn't come clean. (November 2014)

This narrative of tornado goo, tornado shit, mud, debris and mold is ubiquitous in my interview data. Indeed, I witnessed it also when I was in Joplin volunteering in 2011. Many of my participants also described that this goo or shit felt as if it was not only invading their belongings but also their psyche.

Though I focus on collective trauma, I do understand that people have individual responses to disaster trauma, something that might be thought of as individual ontological insecurity because of disaster displacement or damage to their home (Giddens 1991). Some participants told me that two, three and four years after the storm, mental health problems had started to get better; however, for others they did not. It is of little wonder, then, that a tornado would engender mental health problems and emotional discomfort. Compounding that situation of experiencing horror, surreal surroundings, and a loss of reality is the struggle to recover. Here we see how inequalities that were created or made worse by the storm can have very real consequences for people's emotional states and mental health. I want to mention this here because although this is not the topic of this chapter, it is important to note that people experienced individual mental health problems and trauma from the tornadoes and their aftermaths. Moreover, individual traumas also inform collective traumas.

6.3 Similarities in Government Response and Perceptions of Government Response

In this section, I show some of the similarities in both locations as it pertains to response, both governmental and other types of response. First, though, it is necessary to explain that Joplin took a more libertarian approach to disaster recovery—allowing many of the businesses and homes to come back quickly with less government oversight. Moreover, although new codes and zoning were put into place in some areas of town, the effects of those new rules were not felt nearly as universally they were in Tuscaloosa. Joplin also had developed CART, Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, which was comprised of citizens who wanted to effect change in terms of how their city was going to come back. Tuscaloosa created *Tuscaloosa Forward*, which was the result of extensive city meetings, planning, and an online platform. From what I have garnered, the CART recommendations were not followed and the *Tuscaloosa Forward* were, to some extent. However, many people in Tuscaloosa felt as if the heavy-handedness of *Tuscaloosa Forward* was a mistake and influenced too much by two separate factions: students and their influence, and the largely progressive elite of the city (professors and other professionals mostly employed by the University of Alabama).

Tuscaloosa Forward proposed new bike lanes, a walking path the length of the area the tornado destroyed, new coding and zoning, and requirements for businesses and homes to comply with new codes if more than 50% of the structure was destroyed. Since much of what was destroyed in Tuscaloosa had been grandfathered in, in terms of zoning and coding, rebuilding houses and businesses was more difficult in Tuscaloosa.

Moreover, since part of what was hit in Joplin was big box stores (and they were already compliant with code when they were destroyed), they seemingly came back overnight.

While people in both locations lauded all forms of government for a job well done, the criticisms leveled at Tuscaloosa's leaders was one the most prevalent topics of conversation. Citizens in Tuscaloosa were *far* more upset with their government than citizens in Joplin, which contributed to an overall sense of collective trauma. Moreover, residents in Joplin seem to have a sense of comradery, community, and goodwill in ways that were not necessarily articulated by Tuscaloosa residents

There were also similarities. For instance, almost everyone was unanimous in their assertion that the local community and local governments did a good or at least decent job in the *immediate* aftermath. This is a bit different from what happened after New Orleans. Those who did complain about the immediate response were few in number, but their voices were loud—for various reasons. Some felt as though they had been forgotten (and they were, especially in the unincorporated areas of Tuscaloosa where the county is responsible and not the city of Tuscaloosa). Others, mostly coming from a libertarian standpoint, thought the city did not do enough to encourage citizens to cooperate, there were too many restrictions on what could and couldn't be done safely, and that this hampered the ability for members of the community to help one another. However, this was a small minority. Nonetheless, as I will show in a following section, people are not so sure about how the local governments did with long-term recovery.

I am not the first person to compare Joplin and Tuscaloosa. In terms of city and community leaders, especially in Tuscaloosa, there was a hesitancy to speak with me, because of a highly cited *Wall Street Journal* article written by an economist and a historian. I found it alarming that the article argued that Joplin's government got it right and Tuscaloosa's did not. They argued for a pro-business approach to recovery instead of a pro-person approach to recovery. After a little more investigating, I realized that there is a whole literature, mainly written by economists who argue that businesses and capital should take the lead in disaster recovery. Proponents of this view also argue that government usually just gets in the way (Smith 2013). This neoliberal trickle-down pro-business approach was completely unsavory to me because it seemed to ignore people, especially those who are not privileged, but it did give insight into why these professors might praise Joplin and fault Tuscaloosa. Naturally, then, it makes sense why some people did not want to speak with me.

However, though I will argue there is more collective trauma in Tuscaloosa and less in Joplin, this is a community-level view. When you begin looking at this intersectionally, a different story emerges, as I demonstrated in chapter four. Therefore, I am not here to write an opinion piece about who got it right or wrong. Nor, as I mentioned in my introduction, am I going to blame particular individuals or delve into the scandals that emerged in both locations. I will leave that part of the story for journalists or other social scientists to report. I am more interested in what my participants' opinions of the government and how that relates to collective trauma.

There are also similar criticisms leveled at both cities I feel I must mention but do not have the space to fully analyze and present. Citizens in both cities thought that local governments (and sometimes federal) were using donated funds in non-straightforward ways. Citizens thought local governments were greedy, weird, did too much, and did not do enough, beholden to special interests, squandered federal funds or simply, that “government officials are stupid.” Another interesting common response was that cities should not conceptualize crises as opportunities in the face of suffering. Since there were similarities in two cities with different histories, different politics, and differing responses, these experiences can provide poignant policy recommendations.

6.4 Government Response as Radicalizer

In this section, I want to discuss how crisis, and specifically the aftermath of a crisis, has the ability to radicalize people in a way. This was not as prevalent with my Joplin residents but it was there nonetheless. However, with Tuscaloosa residents, as shall be more apparent as this chapter unfolds, there was much evidence of the tornado as a radicalizer and a great quantity of “political talk.” I define political talk as obsession over government response.

About halfway through my time in Joplin in 2014, I started to notice that some people were almost fanatical with the government’s response whereas some were nonchalant about it. Some participants would acknowledge that they were not pleased with the government, but some could not quit talking about. In Tuscaloosa, this happened quite often, perhaps because I became primed to it in Joplin. Then when I went

back to my interviews from 2013, I noticed evidence of political talk from my 2013 interviews. For instance, in 2013 in Joplin, a middle-aged woman was answering the interview questions, and her husband, not supposed to be part of the interview, began droning on and on about FEMA, local response and inadequacies of government. When I went back to my fieldnotes, I had written this about Joe.

At times, it felt like Joe was interviewing me. In fact, I had not planned on interviewing him. I was going to interview his wife and he just showed up. And he would not quit interrupting and answering for her. It wasn't that he didn't have a kind demeanor or wasn't friendly, it was just that, in my view, either he had the wrong definition of the situation, or he truly thought his answers might yield better insight than hers. (May 2013)

My fieldnotes show that not only was he answering questions for his wife, but also that he seemed to feel as if he could lend insight I did not know about the topic.

When I look back through the interview, I found much more evidence of this political talk. Joe told me:

The Christian community did more in the city than anyone done, period. And if the government had stayed out of Moore [Oklahoma], the Christian community would have done the same there. Um, I didn't see the city of Joplin do anything, I did see Empire [electric] and that's understandable *because* they have to get their power back on. I watched the Christian community clean this city up, I watched the hands-off position out there.

I mean you don't expect, I don't expect the government to do things for us. As for the relief situation, they came in and they wasted as far as I am concerned, I am still *chapped*, I understand what they did with the trailer park deal out here [FEMA trailers]. I mean you can't come in here for 10 months or 15 months, or what have you and house people, temporary and stuff like that, and house people and then sell that stuff into the public. That's not an answer, I don't know what the answer is, but when I see the failings of the things that I see done. We had people that we were willing to remove debris and stuff like that, and most of the debris removal was contracted through the city to FEMA. They had great big contractors

come in that were moving the stuff at exorbitant rates. To me, who is paying that bill? I don't know what the answer is, but that's not it.

There was an almost knee-jerk anti-government response that Joe talks about and he can't help himself, he kept coming back to these same these same themes. He also implied that Moore would not recover (a town hit by a tornado in 2013). In 2014, I met with Eliot Spears who had, perhaps, the most scathing critique of the city of Joplin and the federal government. Eliot was an interesting person to interview—full of contradictions. At some points, he was crying about all the outpouring of love and other times he was threatening to harm politicians. Eliot was telling me about the troubles he had with his insurance company and interjected:

Eliot: Well, you know, and then you get Obama coming through town and I'm not an Obama fan. As a matter of fact, I'm probably the one person that don't like him more than anybody else in here. And then Obama gets on there and says "We're here to help you. If you need help, I'm instructing the SBA to be right there besides you guys to help you guys pull through this." I go "Ok, good. Maybe, you know, this disaster, maybe I can get the money I need since I only got \$11,000.00 back from my insurance."

I go to the SBA and fill out all their paperwork. I got good credit and with me paying my mortgage off, I owed nothing to nobody. I owed not a dime to any one person in this world, nobody. And I had good credit, I owed nothing to nobody, so I go up there and say this is my situation. And the SBA turned me down. They said "We can't help you with a loan." I go "I'm homeless!" I go "I got \$11,000 plus \$20,000, so I've got \$31,000 to put into this. It's not like I'm asking you guys to do anything free. And I own a company." I go "As soon as I can get back on my feet, I can start paying." You know, and that's right away. It's not like I've even messed them up or anything. Sorry!

They created a law called the Dodd-Frank law that says if you're self-employed, you gotta go underneath all these particular things so I go "Son of a gun." I go "So you created a law that you basically can't override for

emergencies in an emergency situation that helps somebody out. They can pay you back.” They said “Nope, we can’t help you.”

The Dodd-Frank law specifically prevented me. And I mean, you can’t get more madder than to think the United States government created a law that keeps you from doing it and I’m not a racist or anything, but one of the bankers told me that if I was a minority, they could put me in a different category and they could help me, but because of my situation, they get audited, they get in a lot of trouble.

And I told that bank president, I go “Let me tell you something. You can do it if it was one of your relatives that I pulled out of that.” *crying* I go “If it was one of your relatives that I pulled out of out of all that stuff and I helped them, you’d be going out of your way to help me.

I’ll tell you something else. You know if my grass gets too high – I need to cut it now – but if my grass gets too high, it used to be that they’d come in and cut it, you know. They’d send you a letter and say “You got 7 days to get your grass cut.” Ok, so you’d out there and cut it. But if they cut it, its \$35. They jumped that up to \$250.

Ashleigh: After the tornado?

Eliot: Yeah. They did it because of all these properties that people got off of and so basically what happens if they cut your yard 3 times? Now all the sudden, you owe them \$750. Your property’s only worth about \$4,000 and you’re building someplace else. If you just let that sit there for the whole year, the city will probably take it. And the city owns a whole lot of property around town because they took them that way. (August 2014)

Eliot represents much of what we are seeing in our country today. Men, specifically white men, who for whatever reason, job loss, housing loss, disaster, etc. are blaming the government as the source of their woes. Therefore, while, on the one hand, he was critical of the local and federal government for helping the racial other, he was also critical of the government because he did not get any help and feels as if he is the victim of reverse racism.

In Tuscaloosa, Lily Jones and her husband James were *incredibly* critical of the government. Lily described the tornado as having woken her up. Her business was damaged and she had a lot of trouble rebuilding and then learned about eminent domain. This led her to embrace libertarian ideology. I really enjoyed getting to know Lily and her family and Eliot too, until he began talking about harming a female politician. I spent more time with Lily than I did some other participants, and I want to include her story about what she perceived as government overreach. In fact, she told me that what gives her anxiety is the government. Lily and James lost their home and then she spent years fighting with the local government and the new codes, which personally hurt her and her ability to reopen her business. Her husband told me that he thinks he has PTSD over the whole thing. When people struggle, even if they seem to place the blame on the wrong people or structures, it is only natural to feel their pain. Indeed, Eliot, Lily and James had suffered tremendously. Lily told me:

And I didn't have an opinion of government necessarily before the tornado. I admit that. I tell people, I'll openly admit, I was not paying attention to the world, I was not paying attention to the city, state, federal, I wasn't paying attention. I was just going along doing my thing, and then when it happened -- It took a tornado to wake me up. That's something that I have said many times, and I admit that, and I was ignorant.

I had a perfectly legitimate good business at 5:11pm on April 26th, that (laughs) 24 hours later it's out of code, out of date, dangerous, and it's not compliant, and it's -- (laughs) That's sick. So while your building was outdated, you're out of code. Yeah, you might have been legitimately a business two minutes before the big tornado came through, and we might have liked your tax money then, but now... (September 2014)

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the pros and cons of eminent domain or how it can have particularly harmful effects for people, especially since in 2005 the Supreme Court ruled that eminent domain could be invoked on the behalf of private companies. However, we see with Lily that her perception of complete government overreach was the source of radicalization and the donning of a new political ideology. In a different way, Sarah Washington, a middle class, highly educated white women in Tuscaloosa told me after I asked her if she had any thoughts on how people coped with the tornado. She answered:

Sarah: Now, let me think about that. I know several people who have become – I'm trying to think of the right word, and it's not radicalized. That's not the right word. But if they leaned a little towards being religious, they became extremely religious. If they leaned a little towards skepticism, they just became full on atheists. If they – it sort of pulled us all more towards our poles, and me included. I know friends who drink, who drink a little heavier. I would probably put myself in that category. I mean, you know, after bad weather, what do I do? I go to the liquor cabinet and pour that shot.

Ashleigh: Yeah. Sure. Sure.

Sarah: I – I would – yeah, I would say that's a pretty consistent pattern. But like I said, people who were already kind of religious are very, very, very much so now. I think it very much threw things into relief, and people who were, you know, naturally inclined to reach out to others have become much more activists about it. People who were inclined to pull into themselves have much more pulled into themselves. (September 2014)

This was an interesting observation as it confirmed what I had been thinking for several months. Sarah went on to tell me that she switched churches to go to a church that was more community and activist oriented. In sum, the main finding is regardless of

location, a crisis and the response after a crisis can be a radicalizer for some folks. Instead of the solidarity and community that people think of after disaster, for some, not only do they never experience solidarity, but also they become more radical in their outlooks. This radicalizing process impedes communality and leads to collective trauma. I argue that since there were more radicalization or ideology changes in Tuscaloosa when compared to Joplin is part of the collective trauma Tuscaloosa residents endured. I now turn to my finding that Joplin residents did not articulate collective trauma to the same degree that Tuscaloosa residents did.

6.5 Joplin: Less Evidence of Collective Trauma

In this section, I discuss criticisms of the local response in Joplin. Political ideology in Joplin seems to have played a meaningful role in citizens' ideas about government response and appears to have resulted in less of a blow to the tissues of communality. This was the case for two reasons, from contradicting political ideologies. Bradford Middleton, a community leader in Joplin told me that Joplin tried to implement a comprehensive rebuilding plan. He said to me:

Bradford: And FEMA came in eventually and we, even – they have planners on staff. They came in, we talked to them as well, and out of those discussions, they really evolved into, I don't if you've heard about the CART that's, what's what stand for now, it's been so long. Citizens Advisory Recovery Team, I think.

Ashleigh: Ok, yeah, I think I've run across this.

Bradford: We even had a debate amongst ourselves, you know, your husband lives in this area, this is a very conservative part of the country. Very conservative part of the state, actually. Probably the *most* conservative. We didn't want to control the process or look like the city

was driving this CART process cause people would question when we get, when sometimes the government gets so involved, questioning “OK, what’s in it for them? Why are they doing this? What are they trying to hide?” You know, like, I call it around here a healthy mistrust of government. And so what we did, we intentionally made sure there was no city staff or city leaders – when I say city, city of Joplin – leaders in the administration of that group.

Bradford’s narrative shows that due to the conservative ideology of Joplin residents, CART’s recommendations were largely ignored. George Slaten, another community leader, was quite happy that he was given anonymity, and told me:

George: [Recovery is] kind of a mess. And then they had a lot of long-term planners here and, you know, we developed theories, some of us here locally, about what was going on with that because everybody was well aware that FEMA’s reputation from Katrina was not very good and figured well, they’re trying some new things. They’re trying maybe some things they didn’t try down there. You know, but we put some time in on that. They were the ones that encouraged the Chamber of Commerce and the city manager to put together a long-range planning group.

Ashleigh: Is that CART?

George: That’s what turned into CART. I was invited to those original meetings. I would ask to be a co-chair of a housing committee. It’s also becoming a conflict because I’m out here as an advocate for low and moderate income families, senior citizens, I almost feel like you’re working against me because while this is going on where we’re putting together projects with a developer that will benefit, you know, some of the public and the community were not also having any discussion about what the low and moderate population needs and that’s what Joplin is, you know. Joplin is a place where people can live and be comfortable. Always has been. It’s almost like some just cannot accept that or appreciate it, and it’s just not enough for them. But it’s always been that way. I grew up with people that as they got older, they wanted our downtown to be different than it was. It needed help, but it doesn’t have to be a bar district, does it? And if a church locates on Main Street, naturally the church is going to have some say about, you know, what else goes on Main Street, so if you want it to be different than that, you can do that, it’s fine, but this is what Joplin is now, you know. The city has some

of the resources it has because of the population we had before. Why are we planning things that aren't going to benefit those folks? You know, they're not going to have the money to enjoy a lot of what we talked about building.

George's comments stand in *direct* opposition to most of my participants. George, someone who works with those who need public housing or housing vouchers, thinks the city missed an opportunity to provide more for low-income people. In contrast, most white (and some participants of color) were generally happy with government response because it mostly mirrored their political leanings. For example, Kathy Downs, an Indian-American doctor in Joplin told me:

I think it [local response] was really good. They were here and they were helping and you know, I know that I called by the city because we had to get a private company to tear out our structure but they were stopped because of asbestos. And so, uh, they had to come in and do the burrito wrap and I am like, "gah, every other house in this neighborhood has asbestos and you are going to pick on mine?"

Similarly, I asked Theresa Richards, a working class black woman what she thought about recovery and she told me that people were "absolutely" treated fairly. Both of these women are quite adamant in their support for how the local government responded. The few people who were upset, with the exception of those who were angrier with federal government, directed their anger to the city's unwillingness to do more for those who were marginalized. In sum, I did not observe a universally vexed community in Joplin. There were those who had become more radical, and there were people of color who repudiated the claims of solidarity and recovery that mostly white folks articulated. However, trauma did not seem to aggregate to the collective level in Joplin.

6.6 Tuscaloosa: More Evidence of Collective Trauma

In this section, I look at how the city responded and argue that most people in Tuscaloosa were victims of trauma due to their perceptions of the inefficacy of the local government's response. I first discuss criticisms of *Tuscaloosa Forward* and then segue into how recovery and the government's response felt particularly unfair for those who were poor or not white. I use Doris Callahan, a white upper class woman lawyer to make this segue because she most heavily criticizes *Tuscaloosa Forward* from a planning point of view and as being discriminatory. In some ways, after a crisis like a tornado, there is plenty of blame to be passed around for a variety of different reasons. However, and what is surprising to me, is that there were so many more criticisms and evidence of trauma in Tuscaloosa. Some criticized *Tuscaloosa Forward* as too progressive, others as not progressive enough, and others had no idea it even existed. Moreover, my interviews, overall, lasted much longer in Tuscaloosa than they did in Joplin. I now examine the criticisms levelled at *Tuscaloosa Forward* (hereafter TF) and then turn to collective trauma and inequality.

Tuscaloosa Forward: The Government is not Smart

Benjamin Mueller, a wealthy man from Tuscaloosa, announced to me that government people are not smart. I asked Ben what he thought of Tuscaloosa Forward:

Benjamin: it's [Tuscaloosa Forward] not a happy ending...So anyway, the Tuscaloosa Forward plan is going to bring us back three times more than before. In my opinion, that's a failure, I would much rather have the zoning that we had before the tornado than that. (October 2014)

Benjamin was very critical of how things ended up with TF because although he contended that the intentions were good, the result was quite “wonky” and did not represent all the hard work and planning that went into the process. Moreover, the new codes seemed to be catered to the student population. Others felt as if the newly implemented coding and zoning regulations were anti-business and that TF pitted homeowners against business owners. In 2013, I visited Jessica, her sister, and her husband at their cottage outside Tuscaloosa in the county. Jessica had lived in Tuscaloosa at the time of the tornado. Jessica is a tall blonde, and we discussed her situation while drinking some Bud Lights. Jessica told me wearily after I asked her about Tuscaloosa Forward:

All I know is that some of the places that wanted to come back, like Milo’s and stuff like that, they couldn’t get it because the University had already bought that area for student housing. So Milo’s has not come back, some of the restaurants have not come back. Um, if you go down Crescent Ridge Road, it looks like hell, it looks like *pure hell*...and that’s the main route for all the Mercedes people that live in Northport, or in that area close by and every one of them is just like, what are they going to do to that area, it is close to the University I am sure they have plans. But it still looks so bad. People have set up tents out there where the houses used to be—people have been kicked out of those areas too. It’s just so bad. (August 2013)

Moreover, similar to the findings in my housing chapter, many folks felt like the plans in Tuscaloosa Forward were geared towards a “high class” city or a “green” city. This seemed somewhat silly to many residents because, in their opinion, Tuscaloosa is not those things. Instead, they interpreted the move to a progressive city or a “bike-able” or “walkable” city, as an attempt to attract more students. Lily Jones argued that people

came to TF meetings who weren't even affected and were sometimes the squeakiest wheel. She told me:

They fucking loved to come to these meetings and be like, "well I think we should have a this, and a this, and a this, and we need bike trails, and we need walking paths, and we need this." And it was like, "okay, did you lose your house? Did you have anything?" – "Oh no, I live over" – "Then shut the fuck up." That's really how it felt, that's really where it started -- that's what it started feeling like. (laughs dryly) Because there were people who lost -- And it was difficult for those people. So yeah, but there were too many people who didn't lose anything, and they wanted to be part of this vision -- (laughs) visioning process. Which they wanted a Bed, Bath, and Beyond or their bike club would like to have a bike path somewhere. (laughs) And that did not sit well with the business people at all. None of the people I know. I would love for you to name me one business person who was affected who was happy about this recovery. (August 2013)

Lily was quite angry with those who came to the meetings and did not lose anything. Moreover, she was also angry because she does not believe they have any idea how difficult it was for the business to bounce back. Harry Goodley, an older white man who was retired told me the walking path was not a great idea because it would connect nicer neighborhoods with more undesirable neighborhoods. Some people even told me that it would become a route for drug dealers. Harry said:

But if that walking path was right down there in that thing, it would destroy our lives, and I guess people down in Cedar Crest or whatever feel a little bit different because it's a more dense neighborhood, but we think that is the stupidest thing in the world. They're going to go all the way from Rosedale that used to be a high crime area, got destroyed, all the way to Alberta that used to be a high crime area, (laughs) got destroyed, so now you're going to have a walkway from one end to the other where all the 50 inch TVs in the middle, find it easy to get out either end. So that's enough soapbox, I guess, but I haven't really studied it that much, but the attitude -- There's some kind of attitude of turning us all into walking, *greeny* -- I don't know. (November 2014)

Harry clearly conveyed disdain for both the walking trail and the idea that government response would turn Tuscaloosa residents “greeny.” Moreover, many felt as if they response and TF was not democratic at all. There were many meetings and much input but most people in Tuscaloosa thought the whole thing fell short for a variety of different reasons. For example, though the leadership in Tuscaloosa is solidly Democratic-leaning, many people told me that the donors to the local government were only out for themselves, regardless of party. That is, instead of Tuscaloosa city government responding to the people, they were beholden to their wealthy donors. When I asked Lily if TF was democratic, she answered with a laugh “It depends on what you mean by democratic. I mean, two wolves and a lamb take a vote on what to have for lunch. That's democratic” (August 2014). In short, my findings support the idea that people in Tuscaloosa did not think the government running efficiently or democratically, though their criticisms came differing political ideologies.

Tuscaloosa Forward not Equitable

There were also race and class inequalities in the way TF was implemented and operated. One of the main ways by which residents could give input on the TF plans was through a Mine Mixer online platform. Tommy Oakes, a white man, tells me:

They [the city] did it through mine mixer, hell, we didn't have a computer, we couldn't give any input. We were out of power and we had other things on our mind. The only people who gave input were the snooty do-gooder types. All the city committees involving civilians have been dissolved. We were involved in development for years and those committees were dissolved. (August 2013)

Tommy conveyed that for those who did not have a computer, they couldn't participate. Not having a computer is racialized and has class and age implications.

Similarly, Stan Rodgers, a white man, told me:

I was there, Tuscaloosa Forward meetings, that's interesting that you bring up the racial angle. I was at one of these, and it was a pretty key meeting too. The main developer in town was there, there was like a resident's association and it was like, one where they ratified one of the Tuscaloosa, they had like one of the final votes, I don't think, I don't remember seeing any African Americans there. There was a lot of people from sort of neighborhoods, including near where I had lived, which is right by Hargrove and Hackberry where Hargrove sort of curves off. People from but it all seemed to be kind of white and middle class. (October 2014)

Indeed, many participants thought that the city had colluded with the rich in the area to bring the city back to make it more attractive for students with little regard for ordinary citizens. Moreover, though from differing standpoints, when discussing government response there were many angry outbursts, sobs, and other emotional reactions. Benjamin Mueller told me that land prices tripled post-tornado and that has kept people, except the wealthy, from buying property and rebuilding. Lily Jones says it best when she calls it a "club thing." Lily told me:

Their connections to big university, and there's just a lot of connected handshakes and stuff that -- I mean, I don't know, I can't say that I have proof of this or anything, not getting in trouble -- (laughs) on any of that, but it's just a -- It's just a known -- Yeah, club thing. (laughs) You go down in the planning or hearing for a planning thing, well, the guy who runs all the dump trucks in town is on the commission, and so he tends to vote for things that are going to -- It's just -- It's not just the mayor and council. It's people who are on the board who have businesses or have (laughs) -- They've had all kinds of changes that have been made lately for how things -- And even people who were in the expensive part of town have been furious. (August 2014)

Lily laughed about how much collusion she witnessed and how recovery was geared towards those who had deep pockets and not necessarily for the citizens of the city. What she meant is that owners of large businesses needs were taken into while small business owners were not.

Doris Callahan, a wealthy white woman, who had been involved with Tuscaloosa and citizen's initiatives told me about a council that was supposed to advise the city in the aftermath of the tornado. She described herself as more than a little jaded and told me that the advisory committee was white.

You know, and we treated it very seriously. We were – we were each – it was a body of – it was supposed to be seven people, one appointed by each councilman, and then right off the bat they got in trouble because there weren't any black people in it, even though there's two or three black city council – there were three black city council members, they had all appointed white people, and so then there was this controversy. You know, so that started, and then – so we got some black people, and I don't remember how many people it was ultimately. No more than 11, I don't think. (October 2014)

Doris went onto to tell me that the advisory council and TF were the biggest jokes and biggest sources of failure she has even been a part of. She hinted that most of the problems were because the advisory council was largely perfunctory and that there was never any intention of listening to the council or the citizens in the first place.

It's the biggest crock, and it makes me mad every time, but I go because I don't want them to stop asking me [to be involved], because I might find out something. I don't know. Anyway, we committed a lot of time, lots of hours, and it wasn't just, you know, oh, unemployed housewives like me. It was – they were – I mean, not that my time – my time does matter, but it was, you know, people with jobs, people with businesses, people high up in the university, and we put a lot of time and effort into it and then we made our report and we submitted it to the city council, and then the city

council adopted the Tuscaloosa Forward thing and so at the next meeting I said, well, what about what we did? You know, what – because I thought – I mean, we had some things to say about the report, and I went back and looked at the report and I mean, the recommendations to Tuscaloosa Forward, the glossy book – and nothing that we said was in there, and so I said, “well, what about what we did?” And the answer was – I’m not kidding – I said, “What did you do with it? What – you know, what became of it?” [The answer] “We had it bound.” Oh, good. That was worth all my time. It’s bound. (October 2014)

Doris articulated what many others also told me, though they might not have been as involved as Doris might. TF and the planning processes were not democratic and did not take the needs of the most marginalized into account. In short, the government response and, in particular Tuscaloosa Forward, engendered a tear in people’s sense of community.

Collective Trauma and Inequality

In 2014, my key informant told me that *Americorps* volunteers were not in Tuscaloosa in as great of numbers as Joplin and they did not set up shop long-term like they did in Joplin. I was able to corroborate this visibly because the non-profit with which I worked in Joplin largely was run from *Americorps* volunteer labor. I use this example to argue that much of the trauma in Tuscaloosa is due to perceptions of the city trying to pull one over on people of color and the poor and working classes. Indeed the failure of the local government to provide housing for people, particularly those who are poor, was on full display in Tuscaloosa. This caused much grief for my participants in Tuscaloosa, both those who were not able to quickly recover and those who were.

In this section, I present my findings related to inequality and local government response in Tuscaloosa and show that the black and poor folks' needs were not taken into account or at least there was the perception that their neighborhoods were expendable or amenable to revitalization projects. This mainly occurred in Alberta City as it bore the brunt of the storm. Other poor and working class areas, such as the "projects" were rebuilt quickly and then handed over to a private company. However, echoing the findings I presented in my housing chapter, public housing is further away from the university. At present moment, there are over 2,000 people waiting for public housing. This weighs heavy on the minds of progressively minded middle class folks and those who are struggling to find housing.

In sociological housing literature, the revitalization of the inner core of the city and the removal of the poor from public housing into voucher housing has been going on since 1993 (Oakley, Fraser and Bazuin 2015). However, disaster provides that opportunity without any political scuffle that might occur without disaster. Disaster is "the best thing that could happen." Indeed, Doris told me:

The consultants that we hired to come here out of Austin, Texas and produce this thing. But see, I don't know if they were required – let me just give you my jaded point of view, and my – my slightly informed and uninformed point of view, which is worth less than nothing. But I used to wonder why the city was continually – seemed to be continually going through these planning processes – *pre-tornado*. (November 2014)

During this interview, I remember thinking, "Aha, there were plans on the books prior to destruction." Therefore, I contend that these feelings of backroom deals and

conspiracies, especially when marginalized folks weren't taken into account, was a major concern for Tuscaloosa's residents.

Indeed, residents in Alberta City display the most severe evidence of collective trauma. As Michael told University of Tuskegee students about Alberta, "It is just different, it not a community no more, it is like it dropped a bomb on us and that's just it" (Oral History, 2013). Michael was answering the interviewer's question about how he feels the African American community was affected. There was also a sense, owing in no small part to the experiences of Hurricane Katrina, that poor areas of town, especially Alberta City, were more heavily patrolled following the Tuscaloosa tornado. Thus, I asked a police officer about the patrol in Alberta City:

Ashleigh: And also on the cop side – if you can't speak to this, that's fine – but wasn't there a lot of – wasn't there a pretty – wasn't Alberta pretty heavily patrolled?

Roy: Eventually, yes.

Ashleigh: Eventually. Okay.

Roy: In fact, we had a huge number of National Guard here. I mean, especially if you probably compare us to other natural disasters, I think we had probably far more National Guard than is normally committed, and I don't want to speak to – speculate as to why that was, but we were grateful to have them. But they were used I think in Holt, in Alberta, in that area right in there to do a lot of patrolling at night, in particular to prevent looting and things like that.

This was not something that was unnoticed by residents.

In recovery, Alberta residents in particular offered some of the most scathing criticisms and evidence of similar traumas. Alberta folks had similar angers, tears, and

visible exhaustion over their turmoil in recovery. Silas and Hilda told me angrily that rebuilding in Alberta was pushing residents outside of city limits. They said:

Silas: well the thing of it, what happened, you had these investors fly in here from *Texas, Florida, Tennessee* and they bought up everything they could buy. And what they are doing, they are going to build something that's going to bring revenue.

Ashleigh: student housing?

Silas: [yes] apartments. And that's what you've got going up everywhere. Uh, they won't stop it. Like the city to me, like the city would uh, do something to stop some of this apartment building. But, they are not going to do it because of the university, it's steady growing. So they are going to keep that kind of stuff, so like single family homes, you won't get one inside the city limits no more, you've got to go outside.

Hilda: you've got all this area...

Silas: you are going to have to go out in the county, to build one, or they are building homes outside the city limits, and you've got some people that don't have the transportation. (October 2014)

Silas told me that by pushing out residents, in the form of rebuilding apartments and not affordable housing, residents would have to go outside city limits, which puts those who do not have access to a vehicle at a disadvantage. Hilda was in disbelief because there was so much land but nothing could be done because, as Silas said, it had already been bought up. They are clearly suspicious that Alberta City was undergoing gentrification in recovery.

There were also similar criticisms about what was rebuilt from citizens of color. During one city council meeting, a woman stood up and asked why the city had not fixed the draining problems in Alberta City. Another problem was that as the rest of the city

seemed to bounce back; Alberta looked barren and quite a bit of the infrastructure had not yet come back, though this looked better in 2015 than it had the previous two years. In sum, my principal finding is that there was more collective trauma in Tuscaloosa than there was in Joplin and this is based on perceptions that the government wasn't looking out for the poor and people of color.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued two main points. First, the character of government response is crucial to residents' sense of recovery. In the cases of Joplin and Tuscaloosa, this seems to be important because Joplin's libertarian approach caused less consternation than did Tuscaloosa's, for better or for worse. Second, race matters in two ways. People of color in both communities seem to be more traumatized than white folks as they overall, seemed to have more difficulties with recovery and did not express lasting feelings of community and solidarity. Moreover, at the community level, overall response appears to be racialized in terms of which communities receive more aid since Joplin received almost 15 times more federal money than did Tuscaloosa. In the next chapter, I discuss this trend in other contexts, give policy recommendations and offer conclusions for the whole dissertation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERSECTIONAL THEORIZING IN OUR NEOLIBERAL ERA:

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In this dissertation, I have tried to make sense of people's lives in long-term recovery from disaster. I have argued that a consideration of context is necessary to do good intersectional work. Additionally, I argue that in the milieu of disaster recovery, it is necessary to understand inter- and intra-categorical differences. I trace critical and feminist thought and draw from both to argue for considering intersectionality in terms of its unique articulation in particular times and places. In making this argument, I show that local and state histories are necessary to understand the disaster aftermaths in Joplin and Tuscaloosa. This is the case for at least three reasons. Local and state histories inform current housing inequities, colorblind racism and different perceptions of relief and recovery, and the creation of collective trauma.

Additionally, I have also argued that problems associated with recovery center on housing, both the lack of low-income housing and homeowners' trouble with insurance and mortgage companies. Furthermore, I argue that class and race matter in different and similar ways in Joplin and Tuscaloosa depending upon what particular intersections are under consideration.

To take this back to the beginning, I do agree that in “troubled” times such as disaster, there is an opportunity to understand the inner workings of power and domination that “settled” times might not reveal. The sheer, raw emotions people feel when they are convinced they have been bamboozled for one reason or another provided me with information I otherwise might not have been able to garner.

In this chapter, I return to my research questions and explain how I answered them. I offer what I think are the three main conclusions of this dissertation project and how these conclusions further sociological scholarship on disasters in particular, and inequality in general. I provide future research recommendations and give public policy recommendations. I see my conclusions as interrelated because they all fall along the lines of intersecting inequalities.

7.1 We Don’t Have to Get Beyond Intersectionality: The Utility of Inductive Theorizing

Intersectionality and black feminist thought both offer a systematic critique of racialized, gendered, and classed institutions (Bell 1992; Collins 2009). In this moment of civil rights retrenchment, intersectionality is a critical theory that will keep the most marginalized viewpoints front and center. It is also a critical tool for scholars who want to grapple with intersecting inequalities and how institutions operate intersectionally, in ways that always benefit those who are privileged.

Thinking about intersectionality inductively (or based on context) moves the concept forward in important ways. I have argued it obviates the “what variables to include” question. It is a middle road that can avoid both positivistic reductionism and

post-modern erasure tendencies. In the case of this dissertation, inductive intersectionality shows how race, class, gender, and age are structured and constructed in the contexts of Joplin and Tuscaloosa while also showing the material consequences of being marginalized in different and intersectional ways.

Doing intersectionality inductively also demands that research be centered on social justice. As I have shown, this means that in the context of research and social justice, there is flexibility to reimagine how inequalities matter and perhaps that in certain contexts, particular inequalities might matter more than they would in other contexts. For instance, I show that social class stands out as one the single best explanation for people's ability to recover from disaster in both cities. However, class also intersects with other statuses to influence their perceptions of relief and recovery. Racial inequality matters in both locations in that black folks talk about the leveling effect in different ways than their white counterparts. Black participants understood that the leveling effect would not last, and this points to the importance of understanding marginalized viewpoints because, to go back the premise of standpoint theory, they have an ability to see that is unavailable to those who are more privileged. In other critical scholarship, this has been conceptualized as a third eye (Kelley 2002) bifurcated consciousness (Smith 1987) and double consciousness (Du Bois 1999). Another interesting racial difference regarding the leveling effect was how African American participants invoked almost spiritual metaphors to understand the leveling effect and their suffering in general. This is interesting precisely because it reflects how some people in the black community have

made sense of their suffering throughout history. Moreover, race, class and gender come together in ways that make it difficult for some black women. For instance, in Tiffany Wither's case, she didn't look *poor* enough to receive aid, and in Taylor Frank's instance, she didn't look *middle class* enough to be in a certain neighborhood. Doing intersectionality inductively helped me to understand these viewpoints in ways that a deductive approach might have missed.

I have also shown that intersectionality has the power to interrogate unmarked social constructions such as whiteness and masculinity. I show how, in particular, whites do not express the same concerns in long-term recovery as their black counterparts. However, this too is a bit of an over simplification. There were whites in both cities, particularly Tuscaloosa, who understood their privilege and why poor folks and people of color were having a tough time recovering. Moreover, in the case of many poor white folks, it wasn't necessarily that they didn't care about black folks' plight, but that it hadn't really occurred to them because they were busy picking up the pieces of their lives.

Furthermore, my context driven analysis shows that because of history and geography, whites in Joplin were more likely to endorse cultural colorblind racist views of blacks in Tuscaloosa. I have argued that Tuscaloosa residents' failure to articulate cultural colorblind racism is due to Tuscaloosa's past of dealing with segregation and the civil rights movement. Another implication of inductive intersectionality is that just because something is not part of the immediate story (for instance, the absence of people

of color in Joplin and my inability to interview Latinx in Tuscaloosa) does not mean there is no story to tell. As I have demonstrated, nearly all white towns are white by design. This is similar to segregation in Southern towns and hyper segregation in urban areas. Though the mechanisms are different based on geographic areas, the result is nearly always the same: segregation by design.

As the current moment of fear of deportation and the hard, hawkish, nativist immigration policies that will likely be a reality in the coming months and years, I am incredibly disappointed that I did not find Latinx to interview in Tuscaloosa. However, this tells us something. That the Latinx community left after the tornado and did not want to talk to me is interesting in that it forebodes of things to come. The current Attorney General of the United States supported the immigration legislation agenda in Alabama. This is horrifying but does tell us, perhaps, of how things will be different for undocumented people in the aftermath of disaster in the country in the future. I think the larger sociological lesson, as others have argued, is that the absence of something does not mean it cannot be part of the analysis (Loewen 2005). As I have argued elsewhere, absences can be just as telling and sociologically interesting as presences (McKinzie 2016).

In this dissertation, I also show that inequalities that go along with aging in the country need to be taken into account in the aftermath of disaster for two reasons. First, elderly folks in Joplin and Tuscaloosa often endorse more politically conservative ideas than the younger generations, though this varies based on race and gender. Second, those

who are elderly are often on a fixed income and perhaps do not have enough insurance to repair their homes.

My final thoughts about inductive intersectionality are that, as I argued in chapter two, it is not anything new at all. In some ways, I think inductive intersectionality is giving another name to black and Latina feminist thought. Black and Latina feminists argued that their viewpoints had to be taken into account in feminist and race theorizing, and that those viewpoints would challenge epistemological and methodological premises in sociology and in other disciplines. The very logic of induction is to start with the specific to make sense of the general. This is precisely what black feminist thought and critical race theory already do. Thus, *prima facie* it might seem that inductive intersectionality does not add to the tools we already have. However, I think that thinking about intersectionality inductively is part of black feminist thought but also demands specificity regarding certain research and social justice projects. Our society, for the foreseeable future, will be structured by intersecting racial, class, gender, and other inequalities. What inductive intersectionality adds, then, is a way to get at what *matters* in what *moments* in what *places*. It is not an end-all-be-all solution to understand inequality but it is one that recognizes that we must start with a view from the bottom *but also* recognize that space, politics, and history are important considerations as well. Finally, it also stresses the importance of comparing those marginalized voices with privileged ones for a more robust understanding of the phenomena at hand.

7.2 History and The Permanence of Inequality in Access to Housing

I finish this dissertation in the current context of severe segregation, hate crimes, and unequal rights. The story of the future is yet to be told but a look to the past offers some clues. A historical examination of both cities of Joplin and Tuscaloosa and the states of Alabama and Missouri were important to understand inequality in access to housing, re-segregated schools, and current conditions of inequality. History was also important in terms of understanding why Joplin residents were more willing to endorse cultural colorblind racist views about blacks in Tuscaloosa. Joplin's history as a mining town is important to understand why it is a working-class town to this day. Tuscaloosa's history as a college town is important to understand the severe current gap between rich and poor and black and white neighborhoods. History was also important to understand who was affected by the recession and how this affected access to housing after both disasters.

I also think the creation of segregated spaces can shed some light on our current political moment, both here in the United States and abroad. Joplin and Tuscaloosa's violent past in terms of trying to keep white spaces white might lend insight into the current hateful rhetoric we are experiencing in the country regarding those who are not white and Christian. The violence done in the past to keep spaces white will continue to repeat itself, in terms of not only housing but also hate crimes, police brutality, and the continuing roll back of civil rights legislation.

I did not start this dissertation as an expert in urban studies. However, upon my arrival in Joplin and, especially in Tuscaloosa, the need for affordable housing would have been visible to anyone's naked eye. Thus, while the country grapples with housing inequality, this is brought into much narrower focus in the aftermaths of disasters. The importance of segregation, white flight, and creation of sundown towns cannot be overstated in terms of understanding the lack of affordable housing in the current moment.

Housing is such a fundamental part of our social life and is a human right. Even when "housing goes wrong" like so many folks think happened after Katrina because of FEMA trailers, it has a ripple effect on the rest of the country and how localities deal with the aftermaths of disaster. I have demonstrated that the "specter of Katrina" influenced how Joplin and Tuscaloosa decided to deal with displacement. Tuscaloosa did not allow FEMA trailers and Joplin relegated those in need to the outskirts of town, away from the view of the rest of the city. This literally cut them off. The racialized reactions to Katrina and legislators' inability to deal with affordable housing are still in the hearts and minds of our elected leaders today.

Women and their social worlds have historically been and currently are relegated to the domestic sphere. Thus, the lack of housing and the enormous task of remaking a home after disaster are gendered, racialized and intersectional. Most of the women of color with whom I spoke in both cities were still dealing with trying to find housing or gain a sense of normalcy for themselves and their children. Thus, as we try to find

solutions to the lack of affordable housing, proposed legislation cannot be classblind, genderblind or colorblind. Moreover, because women are often tasked with remaking homes after disaster, they are put in the public eye when they need aid. This causes stigma for them that their male counterparts do not seem to experience to the same degree.

7.3 Race and Collective Trauma

In looking over the entirety of this dissertation, I am not sure that painting Tuscaloosa residents as showing more evidence of being collectively traumatized in comparison to Joplin tells us the *whole* story. I want to offer three more thoughts about collective trauma. First, I believe that in looking at chapters four and five, it is obvious that people of color in both locations endured trauma and white participants did not necessarily articulate. Therefore, I think it is fair to conclude that while, overall, people in Tuscaloosa endured more collective trauma than those in Joplin, an intersectional view is necessary to avoid papering over trauma experienced particularly by certain sectors of the communities. Second, I think it is also fair to ask to go back to Sierra Donaldson's startling discovery mentioned in chapter four. Why did the federal government give far more money to Joplin than to Tuscaloosa? I think in this instance there is more to understand in terms of recovery and racial homogeneity, with New Orleans being the modern standard of racial politics and recovery, with a majority black population and Joplin, in some ways, being the opposite with a majority white. When viewed this way, on a continuum, I argue that Tuscaloosa's recovery fell somewhere in the middle. That

is, in New Orleans, Joplin, and Tuscaloosa government relief and aid have operated in racist ways, with homogenous communities receiving more aid than heterogeneous ones. Moreover, that it took Congress so much time to release money for victims of Hurricane Sandy, particularly when there were no such squabbles after Joplin is another example of how race, perhaps unconsciously, plays into the hearts and minds of who we see as victims and who we see as deserving of aid. The victims of Hurricane Sandy were more race and class diverse than Joplin residents. Moreover, working class and poor communities affected by Sandy waited longer to get their power turned on and received literally no media coverage. Thus, communities of color and poorer communities seem to wait longer to get aid and seem to get less aid. Third, I argue that overall, race does more to tell us a story about who wins and who loses in terms of government and community response than social class does. I maintain this to be the case because, again, it seems to be the most convincing explanation for why Tuscaloosa got short shrift in comparison to Joplin.

7.4 In Sum

In this section, I return to my research questions and how I answered them and offer some thoughts about how my findings tell us something about inequality and domination in general in our current neoliberal era. The research questions that guided this study were:

1a) How have spaces inside Joplin and Tuscaloosa been constructed in classed, gendered, and racialized ways, creating particular privileges and vulnerabilities?

1b) How are these privileges and vulnerabilities exacerbated in long-term recovery from disaster?

2) How do socio-historical policies such as redlining and white flight affect the articulation of inequality?

3) How do trauma and suffering aggregate to the community level?

In answering my first research question, I show how neighborhoods were created in racialized ways, which has implications for poor folks and for women. I also show that middle class neighborhoods, though they experienced destruction, tended to bounce back much more quickly than working class neighborhoods; this was especially the case in Tuscaloosa. The segregation caused by sundown towns and historical processes of redlining contributed to situations where the middle class came back more quickly and the working class did not (and has not). Similarly, in answering my second research question, I found that sundown towns, white flight, reverse redlining, and segregation affected who was a victim of the disasters and who could recover quickly. In answering the third question, I have shown that slower governmental response and the perception of heavier-handed or shady government response contributed to those in Tuscaloosa being more collectively traumatized than their Joplin counterparts are. I also answered questions I did not ask. My chapter on colorblind racism and the leveling effect were a result of being in the field, and finding common themes in my data upon returning home. The same is partially the case for the chapter on housing inequities. I did not think about how unmade homes might be gendered until I started to get a sense of my data.

Moreover, I think my findings reinforce the point that under neoliberalism, capital and not citizens are of prime concern in disaster aftermaths (see also Adams 2013; Gotham and Greenburg 2014). One of the best examples of this is the construction of student housing in Tuscaloosa while the needy were hardly an afterthought. Furthermore, that Tuscaloosa leaders were worried about dilapidated houses affecting [that] football (to quote Steve Smith, a poor man in Tuscaloosa regarding how important football is to the town and local economy) and commerce also points to the fact that even in the aftermath of disaster, the main indicator of recovery is businesses opening their doors and a growing economy. My findings also point to the idea that in our racially, gendered, and classed structured society, those who hold power, whether that be the rich, corporations, or political leaders, have a personal stake in keeping our society unequal and segregated. For example, city leaders in both locations understood that low-income housing was a problem but there did not seem to be political will to do much about it. Moreover, even those who considered themselves “progressive” would balk at the thought of mixed income housing and talk about fears that those types of neighborhoods would bring down home values in a certain reverse “not in my backyard” sentiment.

7.5 Contributions and Directions for Future Research

My research contributes to the current literature in several ways. First, I have answered the call to understand disaster aftermaths in an intersectional way. Second, my inductive design problematizes the vulnerabilities model for two reasons: the vulnerabilities model is too generalist to understand inequalities in particular contexts and

tends to elide individual agency. I agree with Shannon Speed (2014) who argues that indigenous migrants who are the victims of state and interpersonal violence are the very definition of agency because despite all the terrible things that they experience, they still go on. The same is true of disaster survivors. While structured domination might limit the choices they can make, especially those who are marginalized, disaster survivors exercise the agency they have to try to get their lives back to a sense of normalcy. Third, my theoretical framework offers answers about how to do intersectional work. This is an important contribution to the literature on intersecting inequalities because it starts with marginalized folks, particular contexts, and privileged voices to try to answer questions about intersecting inequalities in general. Fourth, I have shown that local political response to disaster and racial and class heterogeneity are important considerations in answering questions about how communities come together after crisis or how crisis can create trauma and community fragmentation. Fifth, I contribute to the literature by showing that colorblind racism is not monolithic and varies by context. Sixth, I show how home making and unmaking is gendered and how women, and not men, tend to have to deal with the hard work of putting themselves and their family's lives back together.

Future research on disaster aftermath should continue to use an intersectional framework. Moreover, future research should look at how masculinity is challenged in the aftermath of disaster. Though I only have a few examples of this in my own work, I believe this is an unexplored area and should be examined. I also argue that future research on disaster aftermath should include the experience of those in the Latinx

community. As sociologists, we know very little about the hardships they face in the aftermath of disaster and so their experiences of discrimination, fear of deportation, and whether or not they feel able to ask for aid should be explored. Finally, more research should look at the how religion is used by people to make sense of their social worlds in the aftermath of disaster and long term recovery.

7.6 Policy Recommendations

In conclusion, based on the overwhelming amount of criticisms of federal government articulated to me by my participants, I offer several policy suggestions that could help alleviate social suffering in the aftermath of disaster. First, the Federal Emergency Management Agency must have a Cabinet position. Our changing climate will cause disasters to happen more often and to be more severe. Disaster aftermaths and the changing climate obviously need to be a part of public policy in the country. Second, the findings in my housing chapter point to specific public policy changes at local and federal levels that needs to be implemented to better deal with disaster aftermaths: first, there must be a concerted effort to educate citizens on what their options are after a disaster. There was much confusion on the part of my participants regarding how federal funds can be used. For example, many homeowners and renters were shocked to learn that in order receive money from FEMA, they would have to take out a Small Business Loan through the federal government and effectively go into debt. This very confusion is the source of much strife and anger. Second, in juxtaposition to my first point, many of their criticisms suggest that changes should be made to how funds can be ear-marked

post-disaster—the federal and state governments must ensure that low income housing be rebuilt and should provide incentives for landlords to rebuild. Third, there should be penalties put in place for property owners who price gouge after tornadoes and for those who do not adequately address the needs of their tenants. When we think about Tanisha’s story in Tuscaloosa, no single mother should have to subject herself and her six children to a feces-laden bathroom. This is truly unacceptable. There also must be measures that protect homeowners from their mortgage and insurance companies. When people must deal with these problems, it is like adding salt to an already traumatic wound. Moreover, measures must also be put into place to prevent contractors from coming into disaster-stricken areas trying to fool people and make easy money.

Relatedly, rebuilding after disaster should be done in a way that takes people and the environment into account. As I have remarked in previous chapters, what good is a biking path if people do not have housing? We must, as a society, figure out some way to rebuild homes and businesses in sustainable ways. To paraphrase Doris in chapter six, it is unbelievable that communities cannot find a model, the world over, that would help us figure out how to rebuild sustainably and with *people* in mind. People in their local environments and our environment must be the chief concern when it comes to rebuilding—not the economy or making a dollar.

Third, FEMA must do a better job of training its workers to deal with specific communities. Specifically, though FEMA did a better job of following the lead of specific communities and their needs under the Obama administration, there must be a

concerted effort to let undocumented people know that they, as of now, have access to FEMA money. I see this as one of the biggest failures of FEMA as Latinx often did not know they could seek aid from FEMA regardless of their legal status.

Fifth, part of the increase in funding for disaster aftermath should directly deal with the mental health needs of people. Mental health funding currently does exist, but that so many of my participants told me I was the first stranger with whom they had shared their experience was startling. Some folks narrated feeling that mental health services would not really help them, others pointed to the stigma they anticipated they might feel if they “admitted they had a problem,” and some folks simply didn’t know that mental health services were available to them. Indeed, that many participants tearfully thanked me for hearing their story and endeavoring to tell their story seems to also point to the need for more mental health services in disaster aftermaths. Sixth, the rule that those who have defaulted on student loans are ineligible for FEMA money is ludicrous. This specific policy needs to be stricken. Seventh, and finally, the National Guard must have sensitivity training about race, ethnicity, and poverty. So many of my participants felt the National Guard was discriminatory and rude to them. Many folks talked about how uncomfortable, and not safe, they made them feel. I understand the role of the National Guard after disaster in assisting local police precincts and other necessary personnel but they need to have cultural sensitivity training that ensures they do not reinscribe trauma and fear on already vulnerable and traumatized citizens.

7.7 Final Thoughts

I think this dissertation speaks to sociologists, disaster practitioners, and anyone who is interested in making our society more just. As I have argued, disasters are a form of “troubled” times that reveal inequality that “settled” times might not. Moving forward, I think scholars should continue to investigate disaster aftermaths with a close eye to intersecting inequalities. This is not only important because they will undoubtedly increase, but also important to know in the context of rapid climate change. To end, in this dissertation, I shared the stories of folks whose lives were irrevocably changed by disaster and their aftermaths. I have endeavored to represent their lives and stories in as accurate of a way as I know to do.

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS AND DETAILS

My research makes use of three methods: ethnographic observation, interviews, and archival work. The following pages are divided into four parts. I first describe my methods and describe my sample and participants. Second, I describe the organizations with which I worked. Third, I discuss problems I encountered in the field. Finally, I discuss ethics, validity and reliability.²⁷

A.1 Method, Rationale, Sample and Participants

I spent four months in both locations beginning in May of 2014, and I worked part time with disaster organizations whose focus was long-term recovery. My activities with both organizations ranged from answering telephone calls and other clerical work and acting as a liaison between those who were in need due to the tornadoes and those who had resources to give. Working with these organizations enabled me to recruit interview participants and participate in their daily lives. In addition, I had several contacts in both cities who helped me to locate particular individuals. While in the field, I analyzed data as I collected it in order to ascertain the fit of my interview questions and research questions to the social reality I observed. (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995; Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland 2006).

I also attended city council meetings and other community related events in both towns. Each evening or after any event, I wrote extensive field notes paying attention to emergent themes and also events, episodes, conversations, and activities that addressed, complicated, or challenged my research questions. In detail, I described the social world that disaster survivors inhabited and the challenges, joys, triumphs, and sorrows they conveyed to others and me in the setting. I did not write field notes while doing observations because I was concerned this would have been interpreted as unnatural or stilted. Instead, I utilized jottings in the field and wrote field notes when I was alone.

However, my project evolved to focus more on qualitative interviews than observations. This is because the work with the two organizations did not allow me to recruit as many individuals and spend time with tornado survivors as I had hoped. While in both cities, I had to be creative about how to collect data and what to observe. I drove around to look at built recovery and commemoration sites. I made friends and hung out with them at their homes for dinner and cocktail parties. I also visited landmarks that the city rebuilt. In Tuscaloosa, I spent a lot of time in the West Side. Alberta City and the West Side are the most segregated areas of the city, with large proportions of African Americans.²⁸ I lived in “Alberta” (as residents call it) but would frequently visit businesses on the West Side. This was important for me both to get a sense of geography and to understand the history of the civil rights movement in Tuscaloosa. I hung out in bars and restaurants to write fieldnotes or do my work. I had many informal conversations with residents about my research, and I wrote fieldnotes about all of those

these interactions. In Joplin, I spent time in East Town, with the largest majority of African Americans, to get a sense of geography and how segregation is written into the landscape. In Joplin, East Town is separated from the rest of the city by a viaduct bridge. In Tuscaloosa, Alberta City is separated from the rest of city by a bridge that goes over McFarland Boulevard. In the end, though I have over 300 pages of fieldnotes, I drew *mostly* from my interview data.

In order to understand how privileges and vulnerabilities are articulated in long-term recovery from disaster, I conducted in-depth interviews in Joplin and Tuscaloosa with residents, city leaders, non-profit workers and first responders. During the summer of 2013, I conducted pilot interviews in both cities. After returning home from the field and analyzing data, I revised my interview guide to include new insights, questions, and ideas based on preliminary research. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. Interview questions were asked thematically and contained probing questions to understand their experiences and answers to my questions in more detail. The interviews were audio-recorded (unless the participant did not agree; this only occurred with one participant). After each interview, I wrote detailed field notes describing the interview interaction, details not captured by the tape recorder, and ideas, insights or new questions that occurred during the interview or based on the information they shared with me (Emerson et al *ibid*; Lofland et al *ibid*). I followed the same practices in 2014 and 2015.

I sought to build a sample that varied based on class, age and gender. In reality, this sampling was not precise because I gave my respondents short demographic surveys

and they provided subjective assessments of their race, class and gender. Thus, in my dissertation they are categorized based on their subjective understandings of their identity.²⁹ Though my research is using socially constructed categories, my inductive research design allowed me to refine or rework the categories I chose in the process of research. I used the demographic categories of race, class, and gender to establish the range of people I initially wanted to interview. However, in the process of research I did not rigidly adhere to these categories. For example, after spending some time in both locations, it became important for me to understand how age is part of the story of inequality in long-term recovery. Furthermore, in Joplin and Tuscaloosa, I tried to understand how sexual identity and orientation might be part of understanding inequalities exacerbated or articulated by recovering from disaster. I was able to interview one LGBTQI identified person in Tuscaloosa. In Joplin, I searched tirelessly for ways in which to contact those who were part of the gay community such as visiting gay bars and pride events and contacting local leaders in the gay community. Everyone told me the same thing: in the context of disaster recovery, they did not feel discriminated against based on sexual identity or orientation. This does not mean that there is no narrative to tell, but that in the context of my work, it did not present itself as important.

As I collected historical documents and as my research unfolded, I was open to asking new research questions and re-evaluating the categories I chose for analysis in addition to showing variation among socially constructed categories. Altogether, I conducted 162 interviews in Joplin and Tuscaloosa from people who varied based on

race, class and gender. During my first weeks in Joplin in 2014, I began to notice that age needed to be included in my analysis. As I have shown, the elderly are more likely to be under-insured, have physical problems, small social networks and limited mobility. If you look at the demographics of death because of disaster, it becomes especially clear that the elderly are not only at increased risk for difficulty in recovery but are more likely to die upon initial impact.

The interviews were conducted in a variety of locations. I tried to make the interview location convenient for my participants. Recorded interviews were conducted on front porches, at camp-outs, in people's homes, at churches, at people's workplace, in parks, in my car, at restaurants, bars and coffee shops. I also had numerous informal conversations throughout my days in both locations. This was especially the case in Joplin where I knew many people and had conversations with them to share ideas that I had and get their feedback. These informal conversations happened at grocery stores, health food stores, gas stations, beside a pool while relaxing with friends, after church services, and with my key informants. In short, I had no problem striking up conversations with people I did and did not know as it pertained to my research. Sometimes, these informal conversations would lead me to find interview contacts and sometimes they did not.

I interviewed tornado survivors, non-profit workers, fire fighters police officers, first responders and local leaders. My rationale for interviewing those in the city who might not have been directly affected by the tornado was to give a holistic account of the

disaster, some of the challenges the city and disaster organizations faced and continue to face, and most centrally to also try to tap into some of the gendered, racialized, and classed effects of the disaster, or how these inequalities were exacerbated.

City leaders were asked questions so I could understand some of the challenges in long-term recovery and how it varied by social groups, a sense of the immediate aftermath so I could paint a compelling picture of both tragedies, and what resources were available to people after the disaster. I was very direct with my questions, that is, I did not mince words when asking if people were treated differently. I asked them to tell me who they thought were the winners and losers in long-term recovery. I also asked demographic questions and statistical questions regarding the history of both regions, what groups of people were affected and social problems that were exacerbated or created by the tornadoes. When I conducted interviews with non-profit workers, for example, I asked them to tell me their organization's mission statement, who they served and what they thought were the biggest challenges in present-day long-term recovery.

Many of these interviews also turned out to be quite cathartic for me. What I mean is that I was having and continue to have a strong emotional reaction to people's stories about their suffering after the tornados. Disaster personnel told me that this is quite common, and this was reassuring. Furthermore, because my friends and family were affected by the Joplin tornado, mental health professionals told me that my emotional reaction to my research is unsurprising. I also began to question whether I should have undertaken formal disaster trauma training before doing interviews on such a

traumatic topic. I do think I would have been better prepared for the interviewing process; however, the mental health professionals with whom I spoke assured me that since I was in Joplin after the tornado and witnessed what I witnessed, there is no amount of training that can make person immune to such tragedies.

Mental health professionals also provided a place for me to gauge their thoughts on my preliminary findings or share my frustrations over not being to locate more people of color, and in the case of Tuscaloosa, Latinx participants. One African American mental health professional told me that there is a significant amount of distrust towards researchers (and mental health professionals) in the lower income African American community in the Deep South. In general, this is not surprising because of medical and scientific racism. In particular, the egregious past practices in Tuskegee, which is not too far from Tuscaloosa, is undoubtedly part of the community's collective memory. Furthermore, most of the city leaders who I interviewed (though certainly not all) considered themselves progressive and when learning about my topic, we engaged in lengthy, and sometimes shocking, discussions about inequality in both regions. Some of their insights and ideas, and their willingness to provide me with historical details and statistics, are the only reason this project was able to come to fruition. They gave me new ideas that provoked me to think about my research in different ways.

After asking community-related questions, I switched back to my regular interview guide and asked if they were affected by the tornado. Overwhelming, city official participants narrated stories of loss, suffering and on-going mental health issues.

I also asked questions about their perceptions of efficacy of both the government and those who came to volunteer. These interviews were mostly conducted at the city leader's office.

The categories of city official and citizen overlap, as I do not only categorize a tornado survivor as someone who lost their home or who was in their home at the time of the tornado. My research makes clear that loss of employment, car, home or loss of friends' and families' homes causes suffering. In some ways, and many participants narrated this to me: the whole city was "a survivor" or "tornado affected." While the bulk of the people I spoke with did lose their homes, I was open and eager to talk to folks who lost things other than their homes.

The interviews themselves were also structured in a way that made my participants feel at ease. Many people requested doing the interview in their home because of comfort and due to the emotional nature of recalling the tornado and problems with long-term recovery. Moreover, some people wanted to do the interview at their home so they could show off their newly built house. A few participants wanted to be interviewed with their partner. I complied with these requests. The length of the interviews ranges from 20 minutes to over three hours.

In addition to the 162 people I interviewed, I also conducted three oral histories with people in each location. In Joplin, I met with three women who had very different experiences with the tornado and who had unique histories I felt were exemplary parts of the overall story. One woman, Jean a white woman who is working class, was

interviewed because although her house was not destroyed, she has lingering mental health issues because of the tornado. Mary is white and working class. Her home was destroyed and she has ongoing mental health problems due to the tornado. The final life history in Joplin was with Theresa, a black woman who was former crack addict from the St. Louis area who had lived in Joplin for several years. Her house was destroyed but Theresa describes herself as being very resilient. She told me that overcoming addiction was by far the most traumatic thing in her life. So while the tornado “sucked,” and despite being working class, she and her husband, an immigrant, bounced back quite quickly. I also interviewed an 80-year-old African American woman, Sue, who had lived in Joplin during the civil rights movement and the process of desegregation. In Tuscaloosa, I did a life history interview with George and Sharon Yokum. They were both retired, in poverty and white. I also did a life history interview with a local civil rights leader, Dominique Davis, who described himself as a “foot soldier” in the civil rights movement. He worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and was able to give me information on race relations in the city of Tuscaloosa over the past four decades.

In 2015, I travelled back and forth to Joplin and Tuscaloosa for member checks and follow-up interviews. In August 2015, I spent four days in Joplin and met with two non-profit workers and a professor. In all three interviews, I told them about my preliminary findings and dissertation chapters. I do not include the three interviews from Joplin in 2015 in my sample total because I was mainly interested in getting their

feedback. In September of 2015, I spent three days in Tuscaloosa. I decided not to do formal interviews in Tuscaloosa and instead just took notes from my conversations with three professors who are working on similar topics. I spent the majority of one day with my key informant who drove me around Tuscaloosa so I could get a sense of what has been rebuilt since 2014. Unlike Joplin, Tuscaloosa has made much progress since 2014. This probably has more to do with the fact that Joplin rebuilt so quickly in the immediate aftermath while Tuscaloosa did not. However, Alberta City still bears the scars of the tornado. While the trees are beginning to be covered by kudzu and the grass is beginning to cover empty lots, there is still a sense of emptiness and desolation. This is also the case in Joplin. There is an abundance of empty lots in lower to middle class neighborhoods that have not completely come back. The difference is that since Tuscaloosa changed so many codes and made new regulations, it was slow to recovery while in Joplin, reconstruction started almost immediately. That is why Joplin did not look much different in 2015 than it did in 2014 while Tuscaloosa did.

In order to understand how socio-historic context creates racialized, gendered and classed spaces, access to resources, living arrangements and current political response, I conducted archival work in both cities, on the internet and by reading other scholarly accounts of both cities and the disaster. This part of my research has been some of the most difficult because there are so many topics that could shift my focus: the ongoing downward mobility throughout the country, extended analysis of welfare reform and its deleterious effects on women, and more attention to FEMA and SEMA policies. The list

could seemingly go on and on. As I have demonstrated, I chose to focus on what I argue is most important to understand the interviews I collected and fieldnotes I wrote. Three issues stood out to me as the most important: local economic history, housing (focusing on redlining and foreclosures, and how that varies by social group), and “sundown towns.”

I also have access to oral history projects in both cities. Both projects were done for the purposes of telling tornado survivors’ stories. The project in Tuscaloosa was carried out by three undergraduates at Tuskegee University focusing explicitly on the racial dynamics of the storm. I coded the data from this project and information from the project is contained in this dissertation. These interviews are all with black men: a university student, a professor, and a blue-collar worker from Alberta City. The state historical society sanctioned the project in Joplin but it did not turn out to be useful. That is, there was no information in the oral histories in Joplin that I had not already collected in my own interviews. I have also conducted content analyses of national newspaper coverage of both tornadoes. That research is not directly related to my dissertation but insights from it guide my understanding. By using ethnographic observation, interviews, archival work and other data sources, I adhered to principles of triangulation—the use of different data sources to “corroborate or illuminate the research in question” (Marshall and Rossman 2011).

Sample Details

As the tables below clearly show, I interviewed more whites than African Americans. I also interviewed far more city leaders, first responders, non-profit workers, police officers, and community leaders than I had intended. There are two reasons for this. First, seven of 52 “city officials” were tornado survivors. Thus, “city officials” are actually 28 percent of my sample. However, I am still uncomfortable separating survivor versus non-survivor or affected versus non-affected. Even those who I have categorized as “city officials” all knew someone who had been affected. In many cases, the people they knew who were affected were among their closest friends and family. Many of those categorized as “city officials” also knew some of the deceased. The interviews and interactions I had while in both cities were laden with emotion: crying, sadness, anger, sorrow, shame and guilt. This does not vary between those categorized as citizens and those categorized as city officials. The categorization is mainly for convenience. There were only five interviews in which the participant visibly showed no emotion and clearly articulated that she/he believed that full recovery had occurred. Furthermore, over half of my participants divulged that they had mental health problems that were ongoing two to four years after the storm. Overwhelming, these mental health issues were anxiety, panic, PTSD, and depression.

Table 4: Sample Characteristics

Tuscaloosa		Joplin	
City Leaders, etc.	Citizens	City Leaders, etc.	Citizens
<i>Race</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Race</i>
Indian American = 0	Indian American = 0	Indian American = 0	Indian American = 1
African American = 11	African American = 17	African American = 4	African American = 13
White = 16	White = 29	White = 20	White = 42
Latinx = 1	Latinx = 1	Latinx = 0	Latinx = 7
<i>Sex</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Sex</i>
Female = 15	Female = 27	Female = 11	Female = 43
Male = 13	Male = 20	Male = 13	Male = 20
<i>Class</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Class</i>
Middle/Upper = 27	Middle/Upper = 21	Middle/Upper = 19	Middle/Upper = 21
Working/Poor = 1	Working/Poor = 26	Working/Poor = 5	Working/Poor = 42
<i>Age</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Age</i>
Under 50 = 12	Under 50 = 22	Under 50 = 15	Under 50 = 33
Over 50 = 16	Over 50 = 25	Over 50 = 9	Over 50 = 30
n = 28	n = 47	n = 24	n = 63
N = 75		N = 87	
N = 162			

In terms of gender, (no one in my sample identified their gender as incongruent with their sex) my sample was 59 percent female, 41 percent male. In terms of race, my sample was 28 percent African American, 67 percent white, five percent Latinx, less than one percent other race.³⁰ The class breakdown is 54 percent middle (or upper) class, 46 percent working class (or in poverty). Age differences in my sample are 51 percent below the age of 50 and 49 percent above the age of 50. I made every effort to make sure that I sampled relatively equally across categories.

I recruited participants by using a broad array of methods and strategies. In 2013, I used my contacts in Joplin to help me find tornado survivors. In Tuscaloosa, I relied on Jolie, my key informant, who drove me around the city to interview individuals who her organization had served. I also had several contacts in Tuscaloosa because of my fieldwork in Joplin. Some of my Joplin participants knew people in Tuscaloosa. (The world is, indeed, a small place.) In 2014, I set up *some* interviews before arriving to Joplin but I was hoping to rely mostly on the organization. The organization helped me, but I also had to rely on other strategies that I detail in a subsequent section.

All three years, interviews with city officials were much easier to plan than interviews with citizens. Mostly, this consisted of emailing the leader, telling them about my project and planning a time to meet. I conducted interviews with 24 city leaders in Joplin and 28 in Tuscaloosa, seven of whom were directly affected by the tornado in Tuscaloosa and two in Joplin. These individuals were overwhelmingly middle class and varied based on race, age, personal ideology, gender and political affiliations. The city leaders worked in a variety of occupations and community organizations: as elected officials, community leaders, mental health professionals, non-profit workers, first responders, and police officers and fire fighters.

I interviewed 47 citizens in Tuscaloosa and 63 in Joplin. In addition to demographics, participants varied based on political affiliation and personal ideology. Some were homeowners and some were renters. A few in Joplin lived in “FEMA-ville” after the storm (two temporary trailer parks on the outskirts of Joplin). Some were

business owners, others were stay-at-home moms, and others were fast-food workers. I interviewed homeless people, people who could not read or write (in these two cases, I read the consent form to them) and executives of large companies.

I gave all participants anonymity, though a great number of them were adamant that they wanted their names to be used. There are several reasons for this. First, some were so angry by how they were treated by local and federal governments, other people, or non-profit organizations that they wanted their opinions of various entities to be known and in writing. Second, some told me that they simply did not care if their name was “on record” or not (though, humorously, many of these same people would tell a juicy or risqué story and suddenly observe that they were pleased the interview was anonymous). Third, many city officials had already given so many interviews that their “official” stance on matters was already publicly known. Although, again, when realizing they had anonymity they would start to slide into saying things like “Well, I am actually glad this is off-record.”

To reiterate, the categorization of “citizen” versus “city leader” seems somewhat forced and unnecessary. However, because the structure of the interviews was somewhat different and because the interviews were conducted in different settings, I keep participants categorized in this way, recognizing the partial overlap in their experiences.

Organizations

In order to conduct work with the organizations I obtained permission from the directors of both organizations. Though I changed the names of the organizations for the

sake of anonymity, I will disseminate and present the results of my research to them. The organization I worked with in Joplin was close to the downtown area in a strip-mall facing a main thoroughfare. The office was small and comprised of four main areas: the front desk area, offices, volunteer orientation area and a back room for construction plans. The organization was created after the tornado. The organization's only focus was rebuilding homes or doing home repairs that were a result of the tornado. The organization shut its doors in 2015.

The organization in Tuscaloosa was in place prior to the 2011 tornado. Unlike the Joplin organization, it is entirely faith-based and operated by unpaid volunteers. Its current location is in a church office. It moved to this location after the tornado. The church office is separated from the church and is located in the same building as the cafeteria. After the tornado, the organization changed its focus only to help tornado survivors. The work of this organization is more varied than the organization in Joplin. While home repairs and construction comprise the majority of services they offer, they also help people who are homeless, or need food, help with paying their bills, or household items, furniture and appliances. While I was working there, they began serving non-tornado affected people. When I left in December 2014, they were in the process of phasing out clients who were victims of the 2011 tornado unless it was an extreme circumstance. The organization's board voted to wrap up services and focus instead on a more recent, smaller tornado that occurred in Tuscaloosa County in 2014.

A.2 Problems in the Field

I am indelibly influenced by feminist methods and ethnography. My biography, biases, emotions and relationships were written into fieldnotes, reflections, analysis and final products. My position as a working class white woman affected every part of my research and I tried to be as reflexive about my positionality as I could. In this section, I detail some of the problems I encountered in the field. I first discuss problems with access. Second, I outline complications resulting from being a young woman; and third, how I started to have panic and anxiety attacks while in the field.

Gaining Access and Developing Trust

I tried to choose equal numbers of participants based on race, class, gender and age to show inter and intra-categorical variation; however, this proved to be difficult for two reasons. First, Joplin is an overwhelmingly white community. One-third of my Joplin sample is black, and I was able to interview seven people who identified as Latinx. Three of the seven interviews were done in Spanish with the assistance of a translator. Second, I had to learn strategies for recruiting people of color because they were skeptical of me and my position as a white woman. I had several scheduled meetings with people of color who cancelled their interviews.

Recruiting people of color proved to be far more difficult than I had anticipated. Thus, I started reaching out on social media, to ministers of African American churches, advocacy groups, the NAACP, non-profit organizations, and Catholic priests. I spent time at local Mexican restaurants and at restaurants in East Town, and I went to majority

African American churches. I spoke with university professors to try to find contacts or understand more about the city in a way that would enable me to find contacts. I pestered all my friends in the area for names of people of color who were affected. I finally had a breakthrough when a local black leader gave me five names of African Americans who were affected. Had she not given me those names, this would be a different dissertation. I was able to snowball sample from those five individuals. The reason for having trouble finding African Americans to speak with might, at first blush, seem related to the fact that East Town was not hit. However, I had the same problems in Tuscaloosa. I discuss this more below.

In Tuscaloosa, the process was the same. I joined Facebook groups, contacted local leaders, organizations, Latinx advocacy groups, the NAACP, city officials and other community leaders. I hung out on the West Side and tried striking up conversations with people of color. This led me to some respondents but not nearly the number I had hoped for. After analyzing my data, I am satisfied with the job I did during research collection. I really cannot think of another strategy I could have enacted to recruit participants. In terms of demographics, people of color are over-represented in Joplin and slightly under-represented in Tuscaloosa. My Joplin sample is 29 percent of people of color (the city is 12 percent) and my Tuscaloosa sample is 40 percent people of color (the city is 45 percent).

When I asked a local leader in the black community in Joplin why this might be the case, he explained it to me like this:

“What good is it going to do?” And that’s how they feel. [They say to him] “You know what, I can talk about it until I’m blue in the face,” but these people don’t feel like they are going to be helped. What’s going to be done? They figure they just telling they story, again, but nothing ain’t going to get done. (Carter Sampson, July 2014)

Silas and Hilda Salk told me, a blue collar retired African American couple, that they wished they could inform people of color that my project was actually about and what my racial politics were. They explained to me that they thought more folks would be willing to speak with me if they knew the intent of my study.

Consider this excerpt from my fieldnotes after my interview with Cheresa, her boyfriend Darrell and her mother Alaina. I interviewed the three of them in a modest apartment on the north side of Joplin:

After I turn off the recorder, I notice that Cheresa is lighting up a cigarette. “Can I smoke in here?” “Girl, of course, I was wanting one the whole time but didn’t want to offend you!” I grab my cigarettes and as I am lighting my cigarette Alaina tells me. “You remind me of Erin Brokovich. I think it’s great what you are doing.” Cheresa brings me an ashtray. “Is your husband black?” “No,” I laugh, “He’s white. I have always been interested in racial justice and didn’t know how I would apply that interest. After being here in the Joplin tornado or the aftermath, I finally figured out that this is what I wanted to do.” Cheresa responds, “Well, you’ve got your work cut for you, you sure do!” (P. 125, fieldnotes, 6/27/2014)

It became clear that it was *odd* to participants that a young white woman was interested in telling the stories of suffering from the standpoints of people of color: nearly every person of color I spoke with asked if my partner was black. That is, from the standpoint of most participants of color, it seemed as if the only conceivable way I would be interested in racial inequality would be if I personally knew about problems people of

color face. This is a startling and compelling narrative on race relations in both locations because it shows how history informs current subjectivities. Moreover, I had to learn to be incredibly specific about my racial politics when talking to most people of color. I had to go into very explicit detail to explain that I was trying to expose racial inequality in long-term recovery and that I would do everything in my power to represent them and their experiences with accuracy.

The Young Female Researcher

My position as an educated, privileged white woman was on my mind and part of my analysis, fieldwork and interviews from the start. Thus, I do not wish to reproduce stereotypes. However, as a woman, there were times (especially during interactions with men) I wondered who actually possessed the power. To be certain, I am grateful for their time and willingness to talk to me about their experiences, though many interviews with men turned into “teaching sessions.” Furthermore, I felt in danger in some situations precisely because I am a woman.

I had several interactions that exacerbated feelings of isolation, panic and anxiety. The first experience that caused me to reflect on my gender was during one of my first interviews while doing preliminary fieldwork. I interviewed a woman in her home. During the middle of the interview, a man who was not actually supposed to be part of the interview jaunted into the living room and began to tell me about FEMA, natural disasters and the federal government’s response. At first, I was thankful for his insight but then I realized he was being paternalistic. He was, in effect, “mansplaining” to me—

and to my actual participant—the government’s role after nature disaster, a topic that I have been studying extensively for years and that she experienced directly.

It was *impossible* to know how to feel during these situations. These men gave me their time, invited me into their homes, and were friendly and welcoming. However, there is a fine line between being appreciative for information and the realization that I was being talked down to. How would the interaction have been different if I were a man? “Teaching sessions” became a predominant theme in my interviews with men. I would ask questions from my interview guide and many times the men took the opportunity to try to change the direction of the interview to unrelated, unhelpful topics such as elaborate explanations about information I already knew. The fact that I am highly educated did not prevent me from being seen as a young woman who needs to be “taught” things about my topic. I would often try to explain politely that I already knew the information they were offering but it rarely deterred them. Men would also often ask me questions about where my husband was, and if I had a family. These types of questions made me feel uncomfortable and were jarring because they caused me to realize that my identity was based on my place in the world as a wife or a mother.

Several participants also hit on me in both communities. This was not a pervasive theme because I just began avoiding situations where I might get harassed. Consider this excerpt from my fieldnotes:

During one of my interviews with an older man in Tuscaloosa, he abruptly ends the interview, announcing that he has things to do. We have only been talking for 20 minutes! I shake his hand goodbye and he doesn’t let go of my hand. Instead, he puts his other hand on top of my hand and

gazes into my eyes. “I wish I would have known you were going to be such a looker! I would turn back time and not marry my wife.” While he says this, he is holding my hand in between his two hands. I chuckle nervously. He drops my hand and wishes me good-bye. (Fieldnotes, 9/30/2014)

While this interaction was harmless in the sense that it did not put me in any danger, the culmination of these types of experiences began to produce a weight that I carried. It was physically and mentally exhausting to realize that in so many of my interactions, my gender reigned supreme.

While I was in Tuscaloosa during the summer of 2013, I did not have the funding to spend as much time as I had hoped and had to work 12-hour days for a week. It was overwhelmingly exhausting. In Joplin, I had the good fortune of being close to various social networks and long-time friends who I could visit and rely upon as sounding boards. I was able to “check-out” for a day or two (even though my time there was limited too) when I needed a break from the emotional and physical exhaustion. Since my time in Tuscaloosa was even more limited and because I knew no one in that location, I did not have any support during my short time there. Men who were staying in the same hotel as I also hit me on several times. The next excerpt shows my discomfort with these interactions:

I walk into the hot, sticky Alabama sunshine and a young man approaches me and asks for my phone number. I tell him I am not from this area and that I have a husband of almost a decade. “What he doesn’t know won’t hurt him.” “I am not interested.” The young man is unaffected by my comments. He moves his pelvis close to mine and puts his hand on my shoulder. “Whaddya say? I am going to be here tonight and I’ve noticed that you are here alone. Whaddya say we get together? I could make you feel like a real woman.” I don’t want to seem rude but I also don’t want to

put myself in potential danger. “Really, I appreciate it and thanks so much for your offer but I am really just not interested.” (Fieldnotes, 8/10/2013)

The heightened awareness of my gender caused me to think about things I had not thought about before. Was my hair suggestive? Skirt too short? Should I wear make-up? Tennis shoes? High heels? A baggy t-shirt? I wanted to look nice when meeting with city authorities and other professionals, but I also did not want to invite uncomfortable flirtatious interactions. There was one particular day that I actually changed clothes *three* times based on the three different people I was interviewing. The realization that my gender was such a huge part of my interactions produced anxiety as well. Was I avoiding particularly rich experiences because I did not want to be hit on? Was I stilted during interviews in a way that was not natural due to worrying about sexualized interactions? These types of experiences haunted me. They made me scrutinize myself and limited the places I felt I could safely travel, ultimately influencing my work in the field. Thought this did not affect the quality of my work, it did make it different (Hanson and Richards 2017).

Emotional Reactions to Fieldwork

In the middle of my very first interview, the participant broke down and started sobbing while narrating what it felt like not to know if her daughter was alive or dead. My nasal passages began to sting and I immediately remembered how terrible it was not knowing if my husband’s parents were dead. I emailed my major professor and asked if it was okay to cry with participants. She informed me that she had also cried with her

participants on occasion and she encouraged me to keep notes about it and to start reading some of the literature that discusses emotion in the field.

After two years of reading literature on emotions in the field, I have come to believe that attention to researcher emotion is of paramount importance. As Kleinmann and Copp suggest: “The curious policing of socially correct feeling within the fieldwork community can lead to a rather bizarre slanting of research reports wherein the fieldworker is represented as wallowing in an almost *unmitigated delight* while engaging in the research process” (p. vii, italics added). Kleinmann and Copp argue that talking about emotions in the field could help other researchers by elucidating why fieldwork is so difficult. Ellis (1991) argues that exploring the physical, bodily dimensions of emotions is scant in sociological literature. She writes:

[S]ociologists who do examine the biological part of emotions, tend to sever the body from lived experience...But it is important to examine the role of physiological feeling in lived experience, for example, in our embracing of feeling rules, and to look at how people label physiological response or ignore it. (P. 25)

Thus, had I ignored emotions and bodily lived experiences, I would have left out part of the story. If I do not divulge this information, how it affected the research process, I am not being true to my audience, the research, or myself. It is also important to reveal this type of information to dismantle oft-cited descriptions of what constitutes high-quality qualitative research (Hanson and Richards 2017).

In addition to experiencing heightened emotions while doing research, two experiences during preliminary fieldwork caused me to have panic attacks. The first

occurred halfway through my time in Joplin. Jasper County (where Joplin is located) was under a tornado warning and I was staying in a modular home. I wanted to leave and go somewhere safe but my friend assured me that the tornado was going to miss us. I was not so sure. I had spent that very day interviewing tornado survivors and their experiences were on my mind. Moreover, Moore, Oklahoma had been devastated by a tornado earlier that day. My sister lives five miles south of Moore. Thus, fear of death, (related to being in Joplin after the 2011 tornado and being in a modular home), thinking about the experiences my participants had narrated to me, and worry over my sister's safety caused my body to produce adrenaline. Except this adrenaline rush did not stop. I began hyperventilating and thought I was having a heart attack. My vision changed and I felt dizzy and faint. I thought I was going to die.

This experience troubled me. In fact, I later learned, one of the characteristics of panic disorder is panicking about panicking. Moreover, panic disorder and agoraphobia are highly correlated because fear of panic can lead to fear of leaving one's home. Early in the process of my data collection, I had a panic attack related to weather. Thus, anytime the weather forecast called for the threat of tornadoes, I would worry and panic about potential panic attacks. I had trouble driving in heavy rain and this forced me to reschedule several interviews and stay home.

The second experience happened while in Tuscaloosa in 2013. I was staying at a seedy, extended stay hotel and my key informant told me it was not safe to leave at night. She told me, "Ashleigh, stay in your room." So I did. One night, I heard a man

erratically pounding on people's doors. My first reaction was that perhaps he was in trouble or had been hurt. I looked out of the window and the glow from the exterior lights illuminated, for a second, a small handgun in the man's hand. I immediately thought about what would happen if he shot down someone's door or my door. I would have been completely defenseless. The panic I experienced when he was banging on my door was nothing short of nightmarish. He eventually continued to the next door and then was gone. In reaction to this experience, I have had other panic attacks related to safety issues while in the field. I monitored every aspect of my appearance and did not allow myself to be in areas of either town that are considered dangerous after dark.

I also began to worry that particular interviews might cause me to have a panic attack. Because the attacks seemingly came *out of nowhere*, I was afraid that I might have one while a participant was narrating a particularly traumatic experience to me. I coped with this by informing most participants that I had developed panic disorder because of being involved in the immediate tornado recovery in Joplin and then being in the path of another storm in 2013. While it was not my intent, this revelation actually elicited good data. Many participants opened up to me about how they too had mental health issues as a result of the tornado.

Methodological reflections about ethnographic work abound (Sutton 2010; Richards 2004; Pascoe 2007; Huggins and Glebbeek 2009; Bernstein 2007). However, when beginning to experience panic attacks while doing research, I found very little that would assist me in understanding how other qualitative researchers have dealt with

experiencing panic and break through anxiety as a result of being in the field or doing interviews. I have always been a somewhat anxious person but I had never before experienced a panic attack. Furthermore, instead of motivating me, anxiety became a stumbling block. During days when I was experiencing high levels of anxiety, I had a hard time doing *anything*.

While panic and anxiety are often mentioned offhand, there is no sustained discussion on how experiencing panic in the field influences researcher decisions (such as how relationships are formed, and how to relate to research participants). Instead, I found support in psychology, psychiatry and disaster research. I learned that counselors and other aid workers experience *compassion fatigue* and *vicarious trauma* (Banford et al 2011; Norris et al 2002). Compassion fatigue refers to the tendency of some aid workers to experience symptoms similar to PTSD that may cause them anxiety, depression, the avoidance of geographical places and/or discussing the event (Campbell 2007). Vicarious trauma is defined as the experiences of those who work with trauma victims and experience a loss of identity, avoidance, numbing, depression and anxiety, intrusive thoughts and feelings and experiences of increased vulnerability (Culver et al 2011).

The horror that occurred on May 22nd, 2011 tore apart the lives of friends, loved ones and acquaintances. Although I do not wish to equate my experiences with those of my participants, the six weeks I spent volunteering in Joplin immediately after the storm made me feel as if I had been a victim of this storm too in some ways. I had to deal with my husband's grief over witnessing Joplin in shambles. *Shared reality* refers to the

process wherein mental health and aid workers are victims of the same communal disaster. Baum (2010) writes that although the concept of shared reality has been in the literature for many years, it has received little attention. In short, while we know that aid workers and mental health professionals can experience mental health problems while working with trauma survivors, there is not much that examines how this affects the emotionally embodied experience of conducting field research.

I want to clearly specify that I *do not* in some way believe that I can understand what it is like to have gone through a tornado. I can only assume based on my experiences and information from participants. And though doing this research has been difficult, I am not suggesting that my experiences can even begin to compare to those of tornado survivors who lost friends, possessions, jobs and homes. Though this research has affected me in ways that have lasted long after the research was complete, at the end of the day, I could come home.

The best resource for me as I was experiencing panic attacks and debilitating anxiety was to read ethnographic accounts of previous research on disasters. Pacholok (2013) describes the impetus to study gender and disaster after personally experiencing a devastating tornado. She writes, "...I moved on to graduate school, but the tornado stayed with me. It will always be part of my personal biography, a piece of who I am. To this day, my pulse quickens in fierce summer storms" (p. xi). Pardee (2014) narrates the experience of being a Katrina survivor and interviewing low-income black women who were also survivors for her dissertation. She describes her experiences:

Since the moment I saw the storm headed for my city on the television, I have never yet had a single day where I did not think about the storm, its destruction or this study. *It is exhausting.* To manage the mix of emotions that I felt every day, I collected data in fits and starts, conducting four or five interviews in a week, until I was emotionally and physically exhausted. (P. 197, 207, italics added)

Independent researcher and anthropologist Suzanna Hoffman describes how she felt after a wildfire ravaged her neighborhood in Oakland in 1991:

I had no salt. By this I mean I had no salt to put on my food, and also that I had no salt left for tears. My weeping depleted every grain from my being. I had no thread. By this I mean I had no thread to stitch my daughter's hem, and also I had lost the thread of my life...Who I am, what I was, what I intended to do, the fabric of my life utterly unraveled. I had no numbers. I lost all the addresses and phone numbers of everyone I knew or had ever known....I had no papers, no sheets, no warm, wooly sweaters, no lights....No joy crept into my days for a lengthy while. Happenstance banished the happy-go-lucky, seemingly forever. (1999, P. 174)

Reading these accounts helped me work through my own emotions doing research on such a devastating topic. Though I have not been able to find discussions on the embodiment of panic and anxiety, reading about others who have experienced disaster as both victim and researcher provided some solace on sleepless, tearful nights. Others' methodological reflections were not only comforting but helped me realize that I was not alone in experiencing heightened emotions related to research on disasters.

All of these problems in the field influenced the research process and how I related to my participants. If I could choose, I would never have another panic attack again. However, the experience did give me a personal indication of just how severely impactful a natural disaster can be. Moreover, as I have shown, it provided a way for me

to talk to participants about their mental health. I believe that divulging my struggles with panic took away some of the social stigma attached to having mental health problems and provided a safe space wherein they could talk to me about their own difficulties. I also found myself interacting with participants in ways that I would have not interacted with them if I had not been worried about my safety or worried about having a panic attack. However, and most certainly due to my outgoing personality, I ended up telling almost everyone with whom I spoke. This was actually helped me carry out my research in the moment because participants knew that I might have an attack; divulging my own mental health issues thus also made spaces feel safer for me.

A. 3Validity, Ethics, and Reliability

I argue that the question of truthfulness can sometimes be misleading one for qualitative researchers. As a feminist, influenced by postmodern critiques of truth claims, I like to think of truth with a little “t.” Thus, I made every attempt to represent my participants in a way that does justice to the stories they told me and for the overall goal of improving people’s experience with disaster. I subscribe to the notion of *transformational validity*. Cho and Trent describe transformational validity in opposition to positivism:

[Because] positivist inquiry is no longer seen as an absolute means to truth in the realm of human science, alternative notions of validity should be considered to achieve social justice, deeper understandings, broader visions and other legitimate aims of qualitative research. In this sense, it is the ameliorative aspects of the research that achieve (or do not achieve) its validity. Validity is determined by the resultant actions prompted by the research endeavor. (2006: 324)

Cho and Trent (ibid) posit that transformational validity recognizes multiple perspectives (the researcher's included), emphasizes researcher reflexivity, positionality, and has the end goal of empowerment.

I obtained Institutional Review Board Approval for this research in the spring of 2013. My participants gave their consent by signing the IRB approved consent form, and I gave them a copy for their records. Additional ethical issues that I navigated with this research included the costs of talking to people about very traumatic experiences. This did cause some emotional stress to the participants (and myself). However, I argue that the benefit of understanding inequality and the lived experience of disaster outweighed the potential emotional cost to some of my participants. In fact, most participants thanked me for talking to them. The citizens of both Joplin and Tuscaloosa desperately wanted their stories and experiences to be told.

My position in the world is different from that of others. I went into the research setting with my own biases and epistemological standpoint. Thus, in terms of reliability, I scrutinized my actions and decisions in a way that is equivalent to doing research with the thought that someone was looking over my shoulder. This allows me to be able to explain to others what I did and why. I kept journals that detail my ideas and decisions I made in the process of research for both reliability purposes and my overall commitment to ethics and reflexivity.

A. 4Conclusion

This research has several strengths. I have a large number of participants and the interview data are rich. I also interacted with several participants before the actual interview and after the interview was over, and made some friends during the process of this research. Although this project turned out to be more interview based than ethnographic, I have several friends/participants in Joplin and Tuscaloosa with whom to discuss my research. Therefore, it is not as if all my participants were *only* interviewed. I participated in their lives when I could and when it made sense.

A final limitation of this research is that I am a white woman who is highly educated and has access to material and emotional resources. I was cognizant of this during every stage of the research. I do not know how this research would have been different if a different person had conducted data collection. However, because I know what it is like to be poor, suffer from mental health issues and experience disaster, I believe I was able to identify participants in important ways. In sum, I have endeavored to represent my participants and myself as truthfully as I can and know how.

APPENDIX B

METHODOLOGICAL DETAILS FROM HISTORY CHAPTER

B. Information about Subprime Lending Analysis

I conducted my own analysis to ascertain if reverse redlining occurred in Joplin and Tuscaloosa prior to the 2008 Great Recession. First, I used the Federal Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Home Mortgage Disclosure Act's (HMDA) public raw data, which is a report of lending activity. This application is available for download on the internet and is a report of loans. The software allows users to be able to search for lending activity by cities. I then exported the data to an excel spreadsheet. Second, I used census tracts in Social Explorer to gain information about the census tracts that was not contained in the HMDA data. Third, to understand if subprime lending was aggregated in particular census tracts, I used the HUD subprime lender list, which is the best way to understand subprime lending activity. The excel spreadsheets lists the lending companies for each reported loan in each location and I was able to cross-reference institutions that HUD deems engage in subprime lending. I also used the HUD subprime lender list to ascertain the specific location of subprime loans in each city and the number of subprime loans. There are no data for some of the tracts so I excluded those. Both reverse redlining and the recession are important to understand how neighborhoods were created prior to the tornado and how historical policies and practices put vulnerable people in harm's way.

B. 2 Findings from Subprime Analysis in Tuscaloosa

In Tuscaloosa, interesting patterns emerge based on race, class and gender. The area of town that has experienced blight and white flight, Alberta City, corresponds with tracts 126, 127, and 128. In two of three tracts, there are higher percentages of people denied from even *receiving* subprime loans and those who did receive subprime loans. Additionally, in census tract 126, very few people applied for funding to purchase a home. This tract has the largest majority of rental housing and is one of the poorest. In tract 128, we see the relationship between female-headed households, and a neighborhood that is currently experiencing white flight. Census tracts 123, 124, and 125 correspond to the South Side of the city where white flight has also occurred (and subsequently there are higher percentages of people of color). This area of town was not directly affected by the tornado, but it is interesting to note how this area of town was affected by the subprime crisis as it too contains fewer whites than it did years ago and the median income has gone down. Finally, census tracts 117.01, 117.03 and 118 correspond with the most segregated part of town. The percentage of people who were denied access to subprime loans is much higher than other areas. Census tract 118 has the highest percentage of subprime loans for the entire city. The relationship between income and subprime loans is evident in census tract 116 because the median income is around 20,000 and there was higher than average subprime lending activity.

B.3 Foreclosure Analysis

I did my own analysis of foreclosures in Joplin from 2008 to 2011. I travelled back to Joplin in December of 2015 to visit the local library to access microfilm of the *Joplin Globe*. Lenders are required to publish foreclosure sales in the local newspaper in Missouri³¹. The *Joplin Globe* is Joplin's largest newspaper and one of the oldest in circulation in Joplin. In December 2015, I searched through microfilm of the Joplin Globe for 2008. For the years 2009 to May 22nd, 2011, I used newspaperarchives.com. I searched for the word "foreclosure" in that date range and got 1,742 results. I narrowed down results that were not relevant (e.g. ads for "avoid foreclosure"). I also excluded results wherein the physical address could not be verified. Upon beginning my retrieval of results, I also noticed that foreclosures are listed in the legal section under the subtitle "notice of trustee's sale." I ran the search again with "notice of trustee" and that query rendered 165 results. Although this is regrettably a small sample, I still present the information I found in order to give a sense of what was going on in terms of foreclosures prior to the tornado. There were 68 foreclosures where the physical address could be verified. Of the 68 cases, 15 of them single females, 14 were single males, 33 were married persons, one was related family members (non-married) and five were cohabitating couples. In terms of gender, it is closely aligned to the city averages, though data on *home-ownership rates* by gender are not existent. Single male households account for 20.5 percent of foreclosures from 2008-2011 and roughly 20 percent of housing type in the 2000 census (there is not information on whether or not the males

have children in the foreclosure announcements). Single women households account for 22 percent of foreclosures and 40 percent of housing type in the 2000 census. In 2000, married couples accounted for 44.35 percent of households in Joplin and 48 percent of foreclosures during the time I analyzed.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Tuscaloosa was chosen because the city experienced a similarly devastating tornado less than a month before the Joplin tornado. Thus, though my selection of Joplin is based on personal experiences, preliminary fieldwork reveals that the comparison of similarly affected cities with different responses by local government offers an empirical case wherein I can theorize about the following relationships: disaster and inequality and how disaster trauma is embodied individually and collectively.

² Storm Surge. Accessed March 13, 2017. <https://stormsurgefilm.com/contact-us/>

³ National Weather Service. 2012. “Remembering Joplin.” Accessed on March 3rd 2017. http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/news/052212_joplin.html

⁴ Though McCall’s work has been incredibly useful for the conceptualization of intersectionality, her own scholarship tends to approach intersectionality from a deductive approach.

⁵ Some sociologists do emphasize context but the theoretical purchase has not yet been fully realized.

⁶ While the relational approach shares many similarities with my approach, the explicit call for induction not yet been made in sociology.

⁷ Hancock does not argue we need to get past intersectionality but does criticize anti-racist conceptions of intersectionality as the “oppression Olympics.”

⁸ Inductive intersectionality speaks to some analogous debates in ethnographic literature such as the tension between grounded theory and extended case study method (Charmaz 2014: Burawoy 1998). However, I don't necessarily see inductive intersectionality as akin to grounded theory because I work from the assumption that intersecting inequalities are embedded in the social order and began my research project with those theoretical insights in mind. My approach calls attention to how they matter and why.

⁹ Anita Little "Kimberle Crenshaw on Sandra Bland and Why We Need to #sayhername." *Ms. Magazine*. July 30th, 2015, accessed on February 12, 2017.

<http://msmagazine.com/blog/2015/07/30/kimberle-crenshaw-on-sandra-bland-why-we-need-to-sayhername/>

¹⁰ *Joplin Daily Herald*, April 20th (as cited in *White Man's Heaven* 2010:96).

¹¹ Bowen National Research. 2014. *Housing Needs Assessment: Rental and For Sale Housing Needs, Joplin, Missouri*, accessed on February 12, 2017.

<http://joplinmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/4218>

¹² Donna J. Siebenthaler. 2007. "Tuscaloosa County." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*.

Accessed on February 12, 2017. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1298>

¹³ Pat MacEnulty. 2004. "Will Work for Food: Sharon Hays on the Real Cost of Welfare Reform." *The Sun Magazine*. Accessed on February 12, 2017.

https://thesunmagazine.org/_media/article/pdf/344_Hays.pdf

¹⁴ The World Bank "GINI Index" Accessed on February 12, 2017.

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

¹⁵ Leslie Simpson. 2012. "Joplin's Black History" *Historic Joplin*. Accessed on February 12, 2017. <http://www.historicjoplin.org/?p=627>

¹⁶ Brown. 2010. "Gypsies and Joplin." *Historic Joplin*. Accessed on February 12, 2017. <http://historicjoplin.org/?p=142>

¹⁷ Edirin Oputu. 2014. "A laurel to ProPublica: A Superlative Investigative Piece Examines the Resegregation of America's Schools." *Columbia Journalism Review*. Accessed on February 12, 2017.

http://www.cjr.org/minority_reports/a_laurel_to_propublica.php

¹⁸ Zachary Roth, "Alabama DMV closings draw call for federal voting rights probe," MSNBC, October 5, 2015, accessed January 30, 2016,

<http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/alabama-dmv-closings-draw-call-federal-voting-rights-probe>.

¹⁹ Nikole Hannah-Jones. 2014. "School Segregation, the Continuing Tragedy of Ferguson." *ProPublica*. Accessed February 12, 2017.

<https://www.propublica.org/article/ferguson-school-segregation>

²⁰ Foucault, Michel. 2010. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 197-1979*. New York: Picador.

²¹ Lichenstein and Weber collected data from all of Tuscaloosa County. Tuscaloosa county is quite populous when compared to Joplin and it was harder hit by the recession.

²² Novogradac and Company. 2011. "Updated Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis: Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri." Accessed February 12, 2017.

<http://joplinmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/1265>

²³ September 19th, 2015. "University of Alabama Seeks to Manage Growth in Enrollment." *Tuscaloosa News*. Accessed February 10, 2017.

<http://www.tuscaloosanews.com/news/20150919/university-of-alabama-seeks-to-manage-growth-in-enrollment>

²⁴ Portions of this chapter have been accepted for publication at *The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. Please see references for full citation.

²⁵ February 9th, 2016. "Federal Auditors Question Tuscaloosa Twister Funding." The Associated Press. Accessed December 23, 2016. <http://whnt.com/201602/08/federal-auditors-question-tuscaloosa-twister-funding> May, 2016. Onstot, Lynn. "Fact Sheet, City of Joplin." The official city website. Accessed December 23, 2016. www.jomo.org.

²⁶ In a basic sense, collective trauma is also the product of people being affected by the same weather event.

²⁷ Portions of this appendix have been accepted for publication at *Symbolic Interaction*. Please see references for full citation.

²⁸ There is a distinction in Tuscaloosa between West End and the West Side. My key informant tells me in email communication: "Well, like most things in the Deep South, absolute truth is a moving target ☺. The terms are sometimes used interchangeably." Thus, I collapse the difference and refer to it as "West Side."

²⁹ I also use black and African American interchangeably throughout this dissertation because my participants used the terms interchangeably.

³⁰ The three interviews from the oral history project are included in the dissertation that makes my sample size in Tuscaloosa 78.

³¹ “Foreclosure Laws and Procedures by State” *Realty Trac*. Accessed on March 8th, 2017. <http://www.realtytrac.com/real-estate-guides/foreclosure-laws/>