"VOTING WITH THEIR FEET":

AN EXPLORATION OF LEISURE IN AN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

by

RUDY DUNLAP

(Under the Direction of Corey W. Johnson)

ABSTRACT

Within leisure studies, the concept of community has often been treated as a context within which to study the delivery and/or benefits of recreation and leisure services. As opposed to merely serving as a context for leisure service delivery, the present study treats community as a social construct that affects and is affected by leisure activities. Using an ethnographic methodology, this study described and analyzed the intersection of the concept of community and leisure practices in the context of a communal farm in rural Georgia. Specifically, this study was guided by the following research questions: 1) what customs, rituals, language, values, artifacts, and leisure practices characterize the unique culture that exists at the Farm? and 2) how does the unique culture of the Farm allow its residents to resist and/or perpetuate dominant discourses regarding the organization of community, the design of communal space, and the experience of communal leisure ? Data were generated via participant observation, ethnographic, and semi-structured interviews during twenty months of interaction within participants and five months of residency at the study site. Thematic analysis of the data yielded three significant cultural practices that have been developed into three separate manuscripts. The first manuscript describes and analyzes the focal practice of Family Dinner. This weekly potluck meal serves a means for acculturating attendees to practices that are unique to the Farm. Family Dinner is also analyzed as a leisure education context in which social power is exercised to perpetuate group norms related local agriculture. The second manuscript examines the interrelated nature of work and leisure on the Farm. In contrast to the larger society, farm work often fulfills many of the characteristics attributed to leisure. The final manuscript explores competing conceptualizations of community as they manifest within the daily lives of participants at the Farm. Within the context of a dispute over the use of communal space, members of the Farm described their community using concepts analogous to *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Analysis and interpretation of the data support the contention that community is a fluid concept that is performed in various ways depending on the context.

INDEX WORDS: Leisure, Community, Work, Conviviality, Ethnography, Leisure Education, Bourdieu, *Gemeinschaft*, *Gesellschaft*

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DEDICATION

For my best friend and true love, Danielle.
None of this would have been possible without your unending encouragement and support.
Congratulations on your release from indentured servitude!

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I have not arrived at this place in my life alone and recognition must begin with my colleagues and mentors at the University of Georgia. Among the many gifted individuals who I have worked with, I would like to thank Drs. Kathy Roulston, Bettie St. Pierre, JoBeth Allen, Betty Bisplinghoff, Diane Samdahl, and Gwynn Powell for their contributions to my development as a scholar. In particular, I am grateful to Gwynn for her mentorship and guidance in the classroom.

As a student, I have shared classes with many talented young scholars, but special recognition must go to Lisbeth Berbary, my "work wife" and fellow ethnographer during the past four years. Continuing with the family metaphor, Stephen Maynard has been my intellectual brother and sparring partner throughout my doctoral studies. His quick wit and intellect are matched only by his enthusiasm and integrity as scholar. Without his friendship, I could not even aspire to call myself a scholar.

I began my graduate studies at UGA as a direct result of Dr. Doug Kleiber's kindness and generosity. As I have wandered across the intellectual landscape in search of a home, Doug has followed willingly. Throughout our journey, he has offered me nothing less than his wisdom, honest feedback, and encouragement. I will especially miss our discussions shared over a pint.

Proof of his wisdom, Dr. Kleiber encouraged me to conclude my doctoral studies under the guidance of Dr. Corey Johnson. To the extent that I have found a place and an identity in academia, it is by following his example. Dr. Johnson is an exemplary teacher and a daring scholar who promises to make his mark in leisure studies and beyond. More importantly though, Corey has been my intellectual "older brother" and friend and for that I am truly grateful.

Long before my intellectual family coalesced, my actual family nurtured and guided me. Through their words and deeds, my parents, Randy and Mary Helen, taught me two lessons that have been especially useful in this endeavor: first, be true to yourself, and second, commit fully to your passions. Without their love and guidance, I would not have attempted, much less completed this degree.

Last but certainly not least, I give special thanks to the members of the Farm whose hospitality and sense of adventure made this experience possible. As with most communities, the Farm is constantly welcoming new individuals into its midst while saying farewell to others. However, special thanks are due to Mosey, Rowdy, Wendy, Bernie, George, Hank, and Farmer Bob who were constants throughout my experience. That being said, everyone I encountered at the Farm contributed to this work in some way and I thank you all.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: NEIGHBORS UNKNOWN

"I'm going to light the grill," my neighbor yelled as we passed each other at his front

door. We exchanged hellos and he told me that I could put my food in his oven to keep it warm.

"Can you believe it's been two years and this is the first time we've eaten dinner

together," his girlfriend said to me as I entered the kitchen.

"I know," I answered. "Kind of sad isn't it."

She smiled and nodded in agreement.

The next few hours passed quickly as the four of us, my wife, my two neighbors, and me,

stood around a charcoal grill, sipping beers, cooking food, and conversing in front of their

house. The air buzzed from the energy of our conversations. Two strings of separate

conversations shared airspace with the enveloping aroma of okra sizzling on the open grill and

the sound of music pouring out the front door. Amidst the words and the smoke and the beer

buzz, I looked at the façade of our neighbors' home and felt an eerie familiarity. Were it not for

the difference in exterior colors, our neighbors' house could easily be mistaken for own. Both

houses are typical of the neuvo one- and two-bedroom bungalows that have sprung up

throughout our small town. They both have small, but inviting front porches to the right of the

front door, large floor-to-ceiling windows, and hardwood floors. "All that was once old is new

again," the saying goes and this is certainly true of our houses. When riding through older

neighborhoods in our town, one can glimpse bungalows built in the 1940s and 1950s from which

the design of our houses is inspired. These older neighborhoods and their houses conjure up a

mythologized nostalgia for a time when neighborhoods were more tightly knit, a time when neighbors got together for dinner more often than once every two years.

Walking around inside of our neighbors' house was even stranger. Imagine coming home one evening to find that in your absence someone has completely redecorated your entire house. This is the impression that I have while touring the interior of my neighbors' home. Same nine foot ceilings, same wood floors, similar fixtures, and an almost identical floor plan. The one deviation between our two houses being the kitchen. Our kitchen is something of an architectural afterthought in which two people can hardly clink glasses, much less entertain. Our neighbors' kitchen by contrast was large enough to accommodate the four of us around a table. Later that evening during dinner, my wife told a family story that I have long since committed to memory, so I took a momentary hiatus from the conversation to visually investigate the contents of this 'alien' kitchen. The dark walnut-stained cabinets and crimson paint on their kitchen walls were the most obvious differences. Looking past the color scheme, my gaze immediately fell to the collection of cookbooks that were neatly lined-up beside the refrigerator on the kitchen counter. Not surprisingly, we shared several titles in common, such as The Joy of Cooking. More interesting though were the books that we did not share in common, such as several titles devoted to mastering the art of the grill. My fascination with their cookbooks no doubt stems from my penchant to judge people by their books, cookbooks included.

In the midst of my examination, I realized that this was the first time I had actually seen their kitchen. For that matter, it was the first time I had spent more than 30 seconds in their house. Having lived next to one another for two years, all four of us new homeowners, I realized that we really did not know one another at all. As we shared a meal and our respective biographies with one another, I realized some of the unique similarities that I share with my

next-door neighbors. For two years we had been exchanging "hellos" and "good mornings,"

but had remained acquainted strangers. For two years, we had all been missing out on the

opportunity to get to know two other people who live, eat, and work right next door. For my part,

I simply had not 'made time' to develop a relationship with my neighbors. As a result of this

realization, my enjoyment of the evening was tinged with a hint of regret.

The Search for Community

I believe my misgivings at not having connected with my neighbors are symptomatic of a

stronger sentiment within the larger culture. This sentiment has evinced itself in the popularity of

Robert Putnam's scholarship on community, especially as found in *Bowling Alone* (2000).

Putnam (2000) argued that since the 1950s, the health of America's communities has been

steadily declining. Among our many shortcomings, Americans are voting less frequently, joining

fewer civic organizations, and engaging in fewer informal social activities with each other.

Lacking the strong social bonds that result from such civic activity, America's communities are

less prepared to deal with a variety social ills, including environmental degradation, crime, and

poverty. Using nostalgia as his tool, Putnam (2000) has called for a return to the level of civic

engagement that characterized the generation of Americans who were young during the Great

Depression and World War II. This nostalgia for a more tightly connected community, whether

mythical or factual, has spurred my own interest in the study of communities, the communitarian

movement, and the function of leisure in creating healthy communities.

Not surprisingly, the field of leisure studies has also been influenced by *Bowling Alone*'s

(2000) examination of civic engagement in American communities. Putnam (2000) was explicit

in his references to the importance of leisure for the cultivation of civic engagement in American

communities. Referring to declining participation in leisure activities, Putnam concluded that,

…across a wide range of activities, the last several decades have witnessed a striking

diminution of regular contacts with our friends and neighbors. We spend less time in

conversation over meals, we exchange visits less often, we engage less often in leisure

activities that encourage casual social interaction, we spend more time watching

(admittedly, some of it in the presence of others) and less time doing. We know our

neighbors less well, and we see old friends less often, In short, it is not merely "doing good"

civic activities that engage us less, but also informal connecting. (p. 115)

In light of such arguments, a number of leisure scholars have begun to extol leisure as an

antidote to the malaise that Putnam describes (c.f. Hemingway, 1999; Glover, 2004a, 2004b;

Maynard & Kleiber, 2005). These inquiries have taken the form of conceptual explorations of the

linkages between civic engagement and leisure as well as empirical investigations of leisure as a

space for civic engagement.

Intentional Communities

The scholarly responses to Putnam's (2000) work span the academy and no doubt will

continue for some time to come. Among the countless projects inspired by Putnam's work,

scholars have examined the potential for Internet 'communities' to generate social capital

(Dimaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001), the potential usefulness of community

development strategies that emphasize social capital (Dhesi, 2000), and the proposed benefits of

social capital for public health (Hendryx, Ahern, Lovrich, & McCurdy, 2002). However, the

visibility of such work ignores the grassroots efforts on the part of countless individuals to

cultivate community in cities, towns, and neighborhoods across America. In her work,

Intentional Community (2002), Brown observed that concerned individuals have been banding

together to solidify communal bonds and address social ills since before this nation's inception.

Indeed, the creation of the Plymouth Colony by the Puritans in 1620 can be understood as a grassroots effort to create a community. Since the creation of Plymouth Colony, the communitarian impulse has remained a recurring facet of the American experiment. One of the most prominent expressions of American communitarianism is in the formation of intentional communities. Brown (2002) describes intentional communities simply as,

> …a kind of 'voting with the feet' – a call to action that is personal and communal, bringing together the needs of the individual with those of other individuals, reestablishing the bonds that connect human beings but in a particular fashion. The members of these communities often see themselves at odds with or needing to withdraw from the larger society; however, that withdrawal occurs within the context of the larger society. (p. 5-6)

An intentional community then represents a form of *living* critique of issues within its parent culture. Such critiques exemplify the concept of praxis in which action and philosophy inform one another in a type of ongoing dialogue. The distinction between praxis-oriented efforts of intentional communities and the conceptual explorations of scholars is important. Where scholars risk their time and egos in the course of their explorations, members of intentional communities often commit large sums of money, time, and sweat into their efforts to create a better society. By "voting with their feet," intentional communities are indicting the ability dominant social arrangements to meet their needs.

In his history of American communities, Benjamin Zablocki (1980) argued that intentional communities emerge at moments of profound social and cultural upheaval. Not surprisingly then, the counterculture era of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States spawned more intentional communities than at any other time in the nation's history (Zablocki, 1980). Most memorable from this era was the free love/free drugs/free sex commune-style community.

However, the notoriety of such hippie communes overshadowed the abundant variety intentional communities spawned by the counterculture movement. Communities formed around concerns related to civil rights and social justice, various religious and spiritual traditions, as well as numerous environmental issues and philosophies.

Communities that are formed around a mandate to address a specific social ill remain vibrant only as long their complaints go unheeded (Brown, 2002). Once a societal ill has been addressed to a substantial degree, a community's *raison d'être* disappears and the community dissolves. In addition to losing their mandates, many intentional communities dissolved due to their members' disillusionment with the reality of communal life. Many idealistic communities of the counterculture era were poorly organized and survived solely on the charisma of individual leaders. Once this charismatic leadership proved insufficient, such intentional communities often dissolved. Coupled with the effects of meliorative political action, the dissolution of these charismatic communities has contributed to a dramatic decrease in the number of thriving intentional communities in the United States.

Despite their decline since the 1960s and 70s, intentional communities remain a small, but fascinating feature of the American social landscape. As was the case during the counterculture era, contemporary intentional communities are as varied in their aims as the number of social ills present in contemporary America. To address these ills, intentional communities create a bounded physical and social space in which individuals can form a microcosm of their ideal society (Brown, 2002). Contemporary communities have formed around philosophies and ideologies ranging from radical feminism to liberation theology to deep ecology to various eastern spiritual traditions. Given such variety amongst contemporary intentional communities, a discussion encompassing all of them is beyond the scope of this

investigation. Nevertheless, these groups share the moniker intentional community precisely because it is this aspect of their existence that marks and differentiates them from the larger society.

Understanding intentional communities is as much about understanding what they are not as what they are. They are not a rather haphazard settlement of individuals into neighborhoods and towns whose development patterns are driven primarily by economic considerations and class divisions. Intentional communities tend not to be created in the "cookie cutter" style of neighborhood development that isolates individuals and families within the confines of their "suburban castles". An interesting remedy to the isolating characteristics of the so-called 'natural neighborhood' is the co-housing form of intentional community. Whereas many intentional communities form around political, religious, or philosophical agendas, co-housing communities are formed simply to foster interaction among their members. Such interaction is often encouraged by the design of physical space in a co-housing community. Houses in such a community are often clustered closely together around a common area, a design which encourages casual interaction amongst community members. Paralleling the intentional design of physical space, intentional communities often deliberately design temporal space by way of scheduling regular shared meals and/or social gatherings. In this regard, one may be forgiven for concluding that the *raison d'être* of the intentional community movement is actually the cultivation of shared leisure. Indeed, it is within the context of communal meals and celebrations that leisure scholars may find their *entrée* into the exploration of intentional communities.

<div align="center">A Review of Relevant Literature</div>

My exploration of the phenomena of intentional communities was necessarily accompanied by a review of relevant literature. I began with classical considerations of leisure as

found in the work of Hemingway (1988) and Maynard and Kleiber (2005). The various iterations of leisure put forth by these scholars utilize the Aristotelian conceptualization of leisure and pay special attention to the function of leisure in the context of community. These conceptual explorations were complemented by the empirical investigations of Arai and Pedlar (1997) and Glover (2004a, b).

As mentioned above, leisure scholars have embraced the concept of social capital and sought to emphasize leisure's importance for its development. Ironically, these explorations of leisure and social *capital* have largely ignored considerations of power, the exception being Glover (2004b). To remedy this shortcoming, I have utilized Bourdieu (1986) and his explication of the forms of capital and their relationships to labor and power. Bourdieu's decidedly Marxist approach to conceptualizing social capital contrasts sharply with the more recent and popular incarnation of social capital as espoused by Putnam (2000). Putnam's analyses have failed to consider the intimate linkage between social capital and its sibling, financial capital. By applying Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of capital, I was able to situate both leisure and the intentional community phenomenon in a social landscape that is characterized by inequitable power relations.

I will conclude my review of existing scholarship with a pragmatic assessment of its usefulness for my inquiry. To this end, I hope to divest my conceptualizations of leisure from tendencies to essentialize its meaning. By essentializing concepts such as leisure, scholars divest themselves of their responsibility for the re-production and appropriation of various power-laden discourses. To the extent possible then, my hope is to assess my use of concepts such as leisure in order to illuminate, rather than obscure the use of various discourses.

The Research Setting

As mentioned above, intentional communities are as diverse in their purposes as they are in their numbers. However, a cursory review of the intentional community phenomenon indicates that, like me, many of these communities seek to transform society through their work. The residents of intentional communities are literally re-creating society through their daily lives and leisure often plays an instrumental role in this process of re-creation. The aim of this exploration is then to begin to understand the intentional community movement by exploring an intentional community called the Farm[*]. The Farm is small collection of individuals who have created an intentional community on a thirteen-acre plot of land in rural Georgia. It was created to address what its members see as a fundamental alienation between members of society, including the non-human members of society. The Farm community, which calls itself "the Family," has taken on the tenets of permaculture to guide its cultivation of community. Using the design of permaculture, the Farm's members seek to remedy this alienation by recognizing their interconnectedness to the land and its many non-human inhabitants. These efforts express themselves in practices such as eating food that is grown on site and returning the resulting waste products to the land, which in turn perpetuates the production of food crops. By taking into account the presence and well-being of the Farm's non-human inhabitants, its members are extending the communitarian impulse beyond its traditional boundaries.

At present the Farm consists of six full-time residents between the ages of 25 and 35. Its physical infrastructure consists of a five-bedroom lodge house, a barn, and two trailers, which can accommodate up to thirteen full time residents. While the Farm's members grow various herbs and vegetables for their subsistence, they all also have full-time occupations within the

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[*] All person and place names are pseudonyms.

surrounding community. In this respect, my behaviors and responsibilities as a graduate student will not be out of sync with the daily and weekly rhythms of the Farm's residents.

<div align="center">Methodology and Methods</div>

As an exemplar of the intentional community phenomenon, the Farm is a unique manifestation of community that contrasts sharply with dominant forms of community in the larger society. As a phenomenon of inquiry, the Farm could be examined using numerous methodologies and methods. The Farm could be studied by charting its economic or ecological inputs and outputs. Alternatively, one could undertake a longitudinal study of the health of the plants, animals, and humans that live at the Farm. Arguably though, the Farm is intriguing due to its creation as a social phenomenon. As mentioned earlier, intentional communities such as the Farm embody a critique of the larger culture. Consequently, their existence is imbued with powerful social meaning for both their residents and the larger society. Ethnography has traditionally been the methodology used to capture depth and complexity of social and cultural meaning. By living, working, eating, and sleeping within the culture of study, ethnographers hope to glimpse the culture from *the inside* (Wolcott, 1999). I believe this approach of "living one's way into the culture" (p. 43) is therefore well-suited to address the Farm.

In addition to my choice of methodology, my use of certain theoretical perspectives also dramatically shapes the form of my inquiry. I believe that inquiry is meant not simply to *understand* humanity's existential predicament, but more importantly to affect positive *transformation* towards a more egalitarian existence. Implicit in this approach to scholarship is the assumption that the "social landscape" is characterized by imbalances in power. Consequently, my approach to inquiry utilizes the work of scholars such as Bourdieu who recognize the existence of such power imbalances. This critical form of inquiry seeks to describe

and understand artifacts of culture, such as leisure, while simultaneously troubling their use in structures and discourses of power. The scholar's task is to observe, interpret, and imagine, not to take his or her subject matter (or subjectivity) for granted. A more lengthy exposition of my theoretical perspective takes place in Chapter Two; however, it is sufficient at this point to say that my analysis explores the ways in which intentional communities function in response to fundamental imbalances in power within society.

To create my ethnography, I spent five months, living, working, and observing the Farm and its residents. I collected data using the methods of participant observation, interviewing, and to the extent possible document analysis. More simply, I slept in a pop-up style camper on the Farm. I cooked and ate meals with its residents. I talked to, listened to, and questioned them about their thoughts and feelings on all manner of subjects. In short, I engaged in all of the behaviors that constitute living life in a community. Throughout this experience, I took copious field notes in order to reconstruct my experience in the form of three manuscripts.

Purpose and Research Questions

This ethnography describes how the unique culture of the Farm, especially as a context for leisure, functions as a critique of dominant discourses of community. The following research questions will guided this study:

1 – What customs, rituals, language, values, artifacts, and leisure practices characterize the unique culture that exists at the Farm?

2 – How does the unique culture of the Farm allow its residents to resist and/or perpetuate dominant discourses regarding the organization of community, the design of communal space, and the experience of communal leisure?

Organization of the Chapters

The term ethnography is often confusing due to its dual meaning as both a process and product. Ethnographic methodology (process) has undergone numerous transformations throughout its history, not the least of which has been its adoption by fields outside of cultural anthropology. Similarly, the ethnographic product, most often a manuscript, has transformed as well. Setting aside a review of the changing epistemological assumptions about texts, authors, and audiences, one may still argue that the "gross anatomy" of ethnographic manuscripts has changed. During cultural anthropology's infancy, ethnographies were understood to be lengthy monographs that offered a more or less comprehensive description of the culture under study. Indeed, the monograph remains an accepted format for the representation of ethnographic experiences in numerous disciplines in addition to cultural anthropology. However, as ethnography has been adopted by disciplines outside of cultural anthropology, the monograph's predominance as a representational format has been supplanted by the journal manuscript format (Wolcott, 1999).

Consistent with this trend, my dissertation utilizes a manuscript format of organization and representation. Three self-contained manuscripts are presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, respectively, and each manuscript addresses a prominent feature of the Farm's culture. Chapter Four explores the phenomenon of Family Dinner through the experiences of a composite character named Aunt Kathy. Chapter Fives describes and analyzes the nature of work and leisure with the Farm culture. Finally, Chapter Six engages the concept of community and explores the manner in which competing conceptualizations of community manifest themselves within the daily lives of Farm members. When taken together, the three manuscripts comprise an ethnographic representation of the Farm's culture. Each manuscript is composed with the intent

of submitting it to a particular journal in the field recreation and leisure studies. Consequently, each manuscript contains its own introduction, review of literature, description of methodology, and presentation and interpretation of findings. As is customary of the manuscript format, each chapter includes its own list of references.

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CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reflecting a larger trend within the social sciences, leisure scholars have recently turned their attention to the interplay of leisure and community. Such increased attention can be attributed, at least in part, to a measure of scholarly currency that is associated with terms such as communitarianism, community, and especially social capital. More than a mere trend however, one must hope that leisure scholars have focused attention on the intersection of leisure and community in an effort to recapture the social justice legacy of our field (Hunnicutt, 2000). This scholarly concern with the health of American communities was echoed in the overwhelming popularity of works such as Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone*. Responding to Putnam's claims that the vitality of American communities has waned in recent decades, leisure scholars have set about to make the case that recreation and leisure activities ought to be central to the cultivation of healthy communities. Supported by a nostalgic vision of the "great good place" (Oldenburg, 1997), leisure scholars have suggested that recreation and leisure spaces can reclaim their function as "hubs" of communal activity (Glover, 2004a; Hemingway, 1999; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005). In our haste to offer solutions, however, leisure scholars have ignored the conditions that brought about the degradation of community in the first place. Therefore, in addition to reviewing relevant scholarship within leisure studies, this chapter will reference scholarship throughout the social sciences that has attempted to explicate the causes of the decline of community in contemporary America.

Review of Relevant Literature

I begin my review with Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swindler, and Tipton's (1996) *Habits of the Heart*. I do so not because it is the most important or influential work on the state of community in America, but rather because it is an important work that has been neglected by leisure scholars. When referencing *Habits of the Heart*, leisure scholars generally mention the concept, *lifestyle enclave*, and its accompanying critique of individualism (Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005; Pedlar, 1996). This is unfortunate because Bellah and company have offered scholars an important distinction between that which I shall term 'shallow' and 'deep' conceptualizations of community. These shallow and deep conceptualizations represent competing discourses related to the idea of community within American culture. Confronting the deep/shallow distinction is a crucial step for any efforts to strengthen American communities.

Deep community is that which existed in the small towns and villages that dotted the landscape of the United States during its first century of existence. Referring to Tocqueville's descriptions, Bellah et al. (1996) explained that in "…the still agrarian America, as indeed throughout the nineteenth century, the basic unit of association, and the practical foundation for individual dignity and participation, was the local community" (p. 38). The decentralized nature of these agrarian communities encouraged, even required widespread and active participation on the part of its citizenry in the affairs of government. Participation in community affairs was nurtured by a "social ecology" grounded in the moral and ethical principles of individuals' face-to-face relationships with one another in these communities. Beyond the domains of family and religion, the local town or village functioned as the dominant social structure through which individuals regulated their behavior and grounded their identities.

This deep form of community encompasses a paradigmatic view of individuals that is essentially relational (Bellah et al., 1996, p. 284). Given the immediacy of one's material needs, even the most austere homesteader in the early republic depended on the assistance of neighbors and friends. The mythology of the self-reliant American described by Tocqueville was couched in the taken for granted importance of local communities (p. 38). Individuals raised in deep communities would no sooner think of themselves as detached from community as they would consider their heads detached from their shoulders.

This deep conceptualization contrasts with the shallow, which has dominated American discourse on community for the last century. Shallow community is grounded in the philosophy of individualism of which Bellah et al. (1996) identified two types: utilitarian and expressive individualism. Utilitarian individualism espouses the idea that when individuals are allowed to aggressively pursue their own interests (usually economic interests), society as a whole will benefit. Expressive individualism contrasts sharply with this economic focus by asserting that individual success ought to be measured by the extent which one has plumbed the depths of one's intellectual and artistic sensibilities. In short, expressive individualism was the romantic response to the calculating interests of utilitarian individualism. Both conceptualizations of the individual took root early in the United States' history. America was (and is) mythologized as the land of opportunity in which individuals can achieve success and gain fortune regardless of the social status into which they were born. However, the mythological 'self-made American' of the early republic was firmly grounded in the constellation of deep communities previously described. Tocqueville (as cited in Bellah et al., 1996) observed the tension inherent in this arrangement and warned of the harmful effects of individuals' economic pursuits prevailing at the expense of their participation in communal affairs.

Tocqueville's warnings of the looming threat to community health posed by individualism were prophetic. The successor to the self-reliant farmer of agrarian America is the liberalized, autonomous individual of the twentieth century. Untethered from the moral ecology and face-to-face responsibilities of a local community, the liberalized individual is autonomous, self-reliant, and above all free. Lacking the foundation of communal relationships, the liberal individual must be protected by rights, which in turn reduce the efficacy of local communities (Sandel, 1992). Rather than looking for meaning and identity from within a community, the liberal individual undertakes the 'construction of the self' as one of life's central tasks (Bellah et al., 1996, p. 65). Consequently, when the liberal individual chooses to form associations, private or public, it is for mutual benefit, rather than for membership and dependency.

Bellah et al.'s (1996) incisive socio-cultural analysis of individualism and community has been paralleled by the work of communitarian philosophers such as Sandel (1992). Sandel identified Rawls's (2005) liberal conceptualization of justice and individuals as being representative of contemporary (shallow) philosophical approaches to understanding community. Rawls's "unencumbered self" is a coherent, discrete individual who exists prior to experience and culture (p. 18). As such, the unencumbered self only enters into co-operative associations and cannot enter into a constitutive community. In other words, the unencumbered self cannot cede its self to the ends of a community. Drawing on Kantian philosophy, Rawls argued that to relinquish any part of the self for constitutive ends is to relinquish the very freedom that makes one human.

The cooperative communities formed by unencumbered selves contrast with the constitutive or what I have called deep community. The constitutive community recognizes that individuals have inherent connections with one another (Sandel, 1992). Individuals are born into

relationships and considerations of wholly formed, autonomous individuals do not reflect reality. Membership in constitutive communities entails individuals ascribing a measure of their identity to that membership. Further as a function of membership, members are subject to moral claims that arise from dependency on one another. Hence, this form of community is pivotal in individuals' *constitution* of themselves.

Sandel (1992) argued that the decline of constitutive communities occurred concurrently with dramatic political and economic changes in the United States. As industrial corporations rose to prominence at the close of the nineteenth century, they transformed the economic landscape of America and usurped the economic vitality of small communities throughout the United States. As workers migrated from small towns to big cities, they took with them an ethic of political participation. The political void left by the decline of small communities was filled by an increasingly powerful federal government. Unable to craft a comparable substitute for the face-to-face moral ecology of small communities, the federal government strengthened its claim as the guardian of liberties and protector of its citizens. This trend was evidenced in the establishment of corporate anti-trust regulations and numerous regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, which took on the role safeguarding citizens from industry. Such regulatory functions had traditionally been performed by face-to-face meeting between members of community. This centralization of industry and government, accompanied by the ascendance of the discourse of rights, heralded the demise of participatory democracy and deep communities in the United States.

This transformation from deep to shallow communities was mirrored within the field of recreation and leisure studies. As a field of practice, recreation and leisure services administration traces its roots back to the work of individuals such as Jane Addams, Frederick

Law Olmstead, Joseph Lee, and Luther Gulick. Addams's settlement house movement and

Olmstead's advocacy of urban parks both sought to utilize leisure and recreation as means to

heal social and communal schisms caused by immigration and slavery. Lee's playground

movement and Gulick's effort to create what would become the YMCA were intent on using

recreation to rescue children from the social ills caused by rapid industrialization. These

reformers were guided by the understanding that their efforts would ultimately contribute to the

overall moral development of their communities (Hunnicutt, 2000). Such reforms were

necessitated by the nation's transformation from a collection of many small, deep communities

to fewer urban centers (Sandel, 1992).

This reform heritage contrasts sharply with the contemporary benefit/outcome oriented

model of leisure services administration. The benefit/outcome model has resulted largely from

the necessity for public leisure service agencies to justify their existence by accounting for the

effectiveness of their programming outcomes. Consequently, leisure services delivery has begun

to emulate a corporate model of delivering products and services for individual consumers

(Coalter, 1990). This corporate conceptualization of leisure service agencies has obvious

advantages as it is easier to demonstrate the efficacy of programming outcomes for individuals

than for communities. However, the benefit/outcome ethos of leisure service delivery has

perpetuated shallow conceptualizations of community in which individuals associate merely for

mutual benefit. This transformation has been reflected in leisure scholarship that has increasingly

focused on individual benefits to the neglect of community-based scholarship (c.f. Arai & Pedlar,

1997).

In an effort to redress leisure studies' neglect of community, several leisure scholars have

embraced social capital as a conceptual vehicle for examining leisure's role in strengthening

communal ties (Glover, 2004a, 2004b; Hemingway, 1999; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005). The overriding theme of these works is simply that leisure activities and venues are uniquely suited to cultivating connections between members of communities. With the exception of Blackshaw and Long (2005), leisure studies scholars have largely ignored the theoretical elaboration of social capital offered by Bourdieu (1986). Despite its benign appearance in leisure scholarship, I contend that social capital is closely aligned with liberal and utilitarian conceptualizations of the individual, which in turn promote shallow and instrumental forms of community. A brief review of social capital scholarship will illustrate the argument.

Social Capital

Scholarship related to the concept of social capital has burgeoned into a veritable sub-discipline since the release of Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone*. Hemingway (1999) and DeGraaf and Jordan (2003) have adequately summarized Putnam's iteration of social capital for use in the field of leisure studies. Putnam's social capital is conceptualized as aggregated connections between individuals within a community and the reciprocity and trust that accompany such connections. With regards to this conceptualization of social capital, leisure is generally understood to be conducive to the cultivation of social capital and civic engagement. Leisure scholars' reliance on Putnam's brand of social capital has neglected previous and arguably more nuanced conceptualizations of social *capital*. I highlight the term capital because Bourdieu (1986) has offered readers an understanding of social capital that takes into account its relation to other forms of capital, such as financial capital.

Bourdieu's (1986) schema of the forms of capital has a decidedly Marxist slant. Essentially, capital is potential labor that may be deployed as real labor or used in hegemonic ways to accomplish one's aims. Capital has traditionally been embodied in the products of labor

(e.g., an antique clock which represents the hundreds of hours of labor). Despite a transformation of workers' labor into time, capital remains tied to labor and continues to represent the capability to exert one's will in the physical and social world. In this sense, as DeFilippis (2001) reminded us, capital is intimately related to power. Its accumulation and use are primarily responsible for the shape of the social landscape. "[Capital] is what makes the games of society—not least, the economic game—something other than simple games of chance offering at every moment the possibility of a miracle" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241). Capital reproduces itself in such a way as to conserve the power relations that it makes possible in the first place. Not surprisingly, this process of accumulation and reproduction has notoriously favored the interests of certain social categories (e.g., people with white skin, males, heterosexuals) at the expense of others (e.g., people of color, women, gay men, lesbians).

A second fundamental principal underlying capital is its capacity to transform itself (Bourdieu, 1986). In doing so, realized economic capital may take on the guise of cultural or social capital. The cultural and social forms of capital are efficacious in the social world as long as they: 1) remain conjoined in some manner to economic capital, and 2) are successful in obscuring their relationship to economic capital. For instance, an appreciation of classical music will remain a privileged form of cultural capital so long as it is "purchased" with time spent learning about its nuances. Only families of a certain economic stature can set aside the time necessary to appreciate the subtleties of this relatively obscure form of music. Appreciation of such art forms then becomes its own currency which may serve as markers for the development of social connections/capital. Once established, such social connections may eventually be converted back into economic capital through businesses relationships. The transformations that

take place throughout this sequence serve to obscure the role of economic capital in preserving existing social relations and power inequities.

With an understanding of these fundamental principles of capital, one is better prepared to explore Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital.

> Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (p. 249)

Similar to all other forms of capital, social capital ought to be understood as being instrumental. This conceptualization of capital is entirely consistent with its economic origins as a crucial component of market economies. Bourdieu emphasizes this saying that "[t]he profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible" (p. 249). Groups form precisely because there is an advantage to do so, an advantage related to the use of capital. Further, the advantage of group membership exists precisely because membership is exclusive. If anyone can join, potential capital is available to anyone and ceases to lose its value. Therefore, to retain the value of their collective capital, all groups must be exclusive to some extent. This understanding of social capital contrasts sharply with Putnam's (2000), whose characterization of social capital is predominantly uncritical.

Previous scholarship has critiqued Putnam's (2000) version of social capital quite effectively. Portes (1998) brings to our attention the tautological nature of Putnam's social capital. By beginning with the effects that he wished to document (prosperous vs. declining communities) and working backwards to uncover the *evidence* of social capital, Putnam was

assured of finding support for the efficacy of social capital as a concept. Drawing on Bourdieu, DeFilippis (2001) critiqued Putnam for ignoring the essentially instrumental nature of capital and its function in sustaining inequitable power relations in society. DeFilippis' critique is supported from within leisure studies by Blackshaw and Long (2005), who offer a comprehensive critique of the functionalist nature of Putnam's social capital. Of Blackshaw and Long's (2005) many arguments, two in particular are relevant in the present analysis.

First, Blackshaw and Long (2005) highlighted the disconnect between Putnam's (2000) macro-formulation of social capital that is supported by volumes of survey data, and the contextualized experience of individuals who live in the communities about which he wrote. Numerous studies have sought to remedy this disconnect and Glover (2004a, b) has ably done so within the leisure studies scholarship. Glover's explorations of individuals' experiences in a community center and a community garden have begun to elucidate the ways in which leisure experiences contribute to and/or detract from the formation of healthy local communities. Additional projects in the vein of Glover's work are needed to continue the evolution and elaboration of social capital as a tool for understanding social behavior.

Second, and more relevant to the present essay, was Blackshaw and Long's (2005) comparison of Putnam's social capital to Bellah et al.'s (1996) work and communitarian philosophy more generally. Blackshaw and Long contended that Putnam's (2000) social capital was a thinly-veiled version of communitarian models of community. The authors accurately diagnosed Putnam as having used communitarian language and rhetoric to support his description of social capital. However, Putnam was generally ambiguous in his use of communitarian rhetoric. His comparison of social capital to civic virtue was clearly an allusion to Tocquevillian conceptions of community (p. 21). However, within the distance of just a few

pages, Putnam espoused the importance of social capital's generalized reciprocity for creating efficient and prosperous economies. Putnam's individuals were conceived as autonomous actors capable of choosing to cooperate or associate with others. Despite being more ambivalent than Bourdieu about the matter, Putnam clearly found it difficult to dispense altogether with the notion that social capital was instrumental in nature. I contend that for social capital to have any coherence as a concept, it must be understood as being essentially instrumental and grounded in a liberalized conceptualization of the individual.

Leisure Scholarship on Community

Despite its recent infatuation with social capital, leisure scholarship has maintained an ongoing examination of the intersections between leisure and community. Here I will examine several of the more recent efforts that have taken community not simply as a context for studying individuals, but as the focus of inquiry. For the sake of convenience, I will begin with several conceptual discussions and proceed to the few empirical works that deal with leisure and community.

A seminal piece of scholarship in the recent spate of work related to leisure and community is Hemingway's (1988) "Leisure and Civility." Similar to Bellah et al. (1996), Hemingway's analysis paid particular attention to cultural, in this case the cultural context of ancient Athens. Hemingway began by debunking the popular interpretation of classical leisure as being contemplation. To latch on to Aristotle's description of leisure as contemplation was to ignore the overriding importance of the *polis* in the lives of ancient Athenians. While contemplation was an essential component of leisure, the life and leisure of Athenian citizens revolved around the *polis*. As an arena for public discourse on topics of practical reason (*praxis*), leisure served to inculcate citizens with the civil virtues that sustained their participation in the

political affairs of Athens. Hence classical conceptualizations of leisure cannot be divorced from the essentially relational character of ancient Greek life.

For its members, the Athenian *polis* can be understood as a deep or constitutive community. Indeed, banishment from the *polis* was considered one of the more severe capital punishments in ancient Athens. Not surprisingly, Hemingway (1988) argued that the leisure practice of gathering to converse about social and political affairs was viewed as essential to the health and welfare of the city-state. This contrasts sharply with the privatized and commodified forms of leisure that dominate contemporary society. Far from functioning simply as a history lesson, Hemingway offered the ancient Athenians as a counterpoint to the manner in which contemporary leisure takes place.

Nearly a decade after Hemingway's explication of leisure and civility, Pedlar (1996) made a general indictment of leisure studies for failing to substantively and empirically address the concept of community within its scholarship. Despite an ostensible concern with *community* in recreation and leisure services, the scholarship of the field failed to adequately explore the concept of community. Pedlar pointed out that such inattention to the importance of community and community development stands in stark contrast to our field's origins as a social justice movement. The de-politicization of recreation and leisure services has occurred concurrently with its professionalization. The net effect of this transformation has been the gradual removal of communities' capabilities to facilitate their own leisure experiences. The public abdication of its capabilities occurred concurrently with the evolution of leisure services administration as a professional field. In essence, Pedlar argued that leisure services had instead begun to emulate a corporate approach to service delivery by transforming citizens into consumers and leisure experiences into products.

Using the work of numerous scholars outside of leisure studies, Pedlar (1996) couches the professionalization of leisure services within the larger tension between individual and collective interests in contemporary society. Drawing on the work of Lasch (1988) and Newbrough (1995), Pedlar echoed Bellah et al.'s (1996) contention that liberal values regarding individual rights undercut the efficacy of community in contemporary society. Highlighting the lifestyle enclave as a pseudo-(shallow) community, Pedlar concluded that individual interests had largely prevailed in eviscerating the concept of community of its substantive benefits.

In an effort to remedy the lack of deep community in contemporary society, Pedlar (1996) recommended adopting a community development model for leisure service delivery. As opposed to simply operating within a community, community development approaches seek to develop communities' latent skills and promote its autonomy from professional institutions. In contrast to professional approaches, the direction and goals of community development projects are determined by community members themselves. While lauding the empowerment that takes place as a result of community development, Pedlar pointed out that an often neglected function of the development process is the establishment and strengthening of ties between community members. While individual projects may be more or less successful in addressing challenges facing a particular community, the cultivation of ties between its members strengthens a community's capacity to address unforeseen challenges in the future.

Despite having fallen victim to the liberalized conception of individual rights, Pedlar (1996) contended that leisure services may yet play a pivotal role in the struggle of communities to reclaim their autonomy. To do so, Pedlar argued that leisure services should abandon its focus on leisure experiences as products and turn its attention to communities' participation in the

design and administration of leisure experiences. By empowering its citizens to address their own needs, leisure services could take steps to reclaim its reform heritage.

Arai and Pedlar (2003) followed up Pedlar's initial foray into the scholarship of community with an examination and comparison of the respective influence individualism and communitarianism on leisure. In many ways, this piece captured the themes I have brought to light in the present essay; namely, any discussions of community contain tacit assumptions about the essential nature of individuals and their relations to others. Arai and Pedlar frequently referenced Bellah et al. (1996) and their contention that liberal individualism has been detrimental to leisure specifically and to society in general.

Arai and Pedlar (2003) relied heavily on Friedman's (1992) concept of *Gemeinschaft* to distinguish between different forms of community. Similar to the constitutive community, *Gemeinschaft* is characterized not simply by a feeling of association, but rather a sense of belonging. Related to leisure, Arai and Pedlar contend that such forms of community form around what they refer to as focal practices (Borgmann, 1992). These include activities such as community gardening, singing in a choir, or participating in a group hike. Arai and Pedlar (2003) were quick to point out that such constitutive communities and practices risk becoming homogenizing, oppressive, and exclusive. Such tendencies are well documented in Glover's (2004b) study of community gardeners described below. To avert the subjugation of individual liberties in the name of the common good, Arai and Pedlar (2003) made an oblique reference to Habermas and the importance of fostering dialogue and participation in the formation and maintenance of communal norms and goals. Having acknowledged the potential pitfalls of deep community, Arai and Pedlar concluded by endorsing an inadequately described form of postmodern communitarianism. More transient and contingent than Bellah et al.'s (1996) efforts

to recover a social ecology, this iteration of communitarianism focuses on focal leisure practices such as those discussed above. Tantalizing in its vagueness, Arai and Pedlar's focal leisure communities beg for empirical elaboration.

In contrast to Arai and Pedlar's (2003) vagueness, Maynard and Kleiber (2005) offered a more tangible vision of the ways in which contemporary leisure services may be transformed to foster civic engagement. Proceeding through an elaborate analysis of Aristotelian concepts related to leisure, friendship, community, happiness, and excellence, Maynard and Kleiber advocated for a renewal of leisure as the social domain within which civic engagement is cultivated. As opposed to simply amusing participants, leisure services ought to offer its users the resources to engage in dialogues and activities related to the common good of the community. Maynard and Kleiber paid particular attention to retirees as being capable of leading such a renewal.

Maynard and Kleiber's (2005) application of Aristotelian concepts to contemporary contexts fails to neatly interface with the deep/shallow community distinction that I have thus far described. This disconnect is reflected in the ambiguity surrounding Aristotle's conceptualization of community, which lies at the heart of Maynard and Kleiber's thesis. As described by Hemingway (1988), the inseparable relation between citizens and the *polis* (p. 481) suggested that the *polis* was a constitutive or deep community. This rather simple characterization of the *polis* was troubled by Aristotle's description of community as needing to be essentially heterogeneous. Heterogeneity does not necessarily preclude constitutive identity, but Yack (1993) further problematized this issue by suggesting that according to Aristotle, the function of community was actualization of individual potential (Maynard & Kleiber, 2005, p. 480). The resulting ambiguity makes simple categorization of the classical *polis* as either a deep or shallow

form of community more difficult. However, on balance, Maynard and Kleiber seem to have suggested that individuals' relationship to the *polis* was more constitutive (deep) than (instrumental) shallow.

The ambiguity of Aristotelian community was further troubled by Maynard and Kleiber's (2005) use of Putnam's scholarship on social capital. As discussed above, despite utilizing rhetoric of the common good, Putnam's work betrayed a liberalized conceptualization of the individual. Consequently, the use of Putnam's social capital plagued the authors' visions of communities revitalized by leisure services. Are such communities merely associations of self-interested individuals similar to Bellah et al's (1996) lifestyle enclaves? Or, are these communities in which participants constitute their identity and to which they feel a sense of duty? Or, finally are these communities that embrace merely focal leisure practices (Arai & Pedlar, 2003)? Such questions cannot adequately be answered with conceptual exploration alone. Empirically inquiries into the function and nature of all manner of communities will allow the scholarly community to elaborate and refine the conceptual offerings described thus far. In effort to resolve such conceptual ambiguities, I will now turn to the relatively few empirical explorations of leisure and community.

From the outset, I must clarify that empirical studies *within* communities are not the same as studies *about* community. Among the more frequently cited pieces of scholarship on leisure and community is Arai and Pedlar's (1997) description of and participation in the implementation of a community health initiative in rural Ontario. This exploration of the Woolwich community's participation in the Healthy Communities Initiative (HCI) was grounded in the literature and concepts of community development and serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992).

Participation in the HCI was understood as a form of serious leisure, which simultaneously

empowered the community to address challenges to its overall health.

Many of Arai and Pedlar's (1997) findings were related to the development of

individuals' abilities to effectively participate in community events. In aggregate, the

development of individuals' capabilities contributed to the overall efficacy of the community.

Beyond the development of the community's functional abilities, however, participation in the

HCI contributed to a sense of camaraderie among participants. This camaraderie was especially

notable because it was developed across social divisions of class and socio-economic status.

Connections such as these that bridge social divisions are touted as being especially important

indicators of a community's health (Putnam, 2000). Consequently, the authors surmise that

participation in the HCI was generally beneficial, not only for individual participants, but for the

community at large. Further, the outcomes of participation in the HCI lent support to the

assertion that volunteering and serious leisure are particularly beneficial forms of leisure.

Arai and Pedlar's (1997) approach to discussing leisure in the context of the HCI is

weakened by its failure to address the deep/shallow community distinction. By utilizing serious

leisure as a theoretical vehicle for exploring volunteering, they implicitly endorsed a liberalized

conceptualization of individuals and a shallow conceptualization of communities. This

interpretation is reflected in the authors' thematic analysis which described benefits to

individuals as being predominantly instrumental (e.g., becoming more vocal in the community,

acquiring technical skills). Serious leisure takes the liberalized individual for granted as its unit

of analysis. Additionally, benefits to participation in serious leisure pursuits, such as

perseverance or feelings of accomplishment, accrue strictly to individuals (Stebbins, 1992). This

approach to understanding leisure is consistent with the liberalized conceptualization of an

autonomous individual who associates with others strictly for mutual benefit. Despite failing to address this theoretical distinction, Arai and Pedlar (1997) offered leisure scholars a useful exemplar of action-oriented scholarship related to community development. Further, their work has served as a catalyst for subsequent projects related to leisure and community.

Two of the more illuminating empirical contributions to the scholarship of leisure and community have been Glover's examination of a community center as a venue for the social construction of citizenship (2004a) and his narrative inquiry into the experiences of community gardeners (2004b). Considered as a pair, these pieces are valuable because they illustrate the reality that communities are not exclusively harmonious and egalitarian. Further these two pieces implicitly and unintentionally described the deep/shallow community distinction.

Glover's (2004a) inquiry at a community recreation center explored its participants' conceptualizations of citizenship. Glover framed his interpretations in a brief synopsis of scholarship related to concept of citizenship. These models of citizenship were grouped into two basic divisions, formal and active citizenship. Formal citizenship was consistent with Bellah et al.'s (1996) utilitarian individualism and Sandel's (1992) liberalized individual. In short, formal citizenship is rights based and eschews any commitment on part of citizens to pursue common political goals. By contrast, active citizenship stressed individuals' rights and obligations not simply to other citizens, but to the collective citizenship. Active citizenship was clearly more consistent with a constitutive or deep concept of community.

Glover's (2004a) findings were grouped into typologies of the participatory citizen, the responsible citizen, and the communal citizen. Ostensibly, all three typologies are more closely related to active, than formal conceptualizations of citizenship. Unfortunately, the dichotomy of formal and active citizenship became obscured in Glover's interpretations of his findings. He

began by relating the responsible and communal typologies to Coleman's (1988) expression of social capital. True to its economic origins, Coleman described social capital as a form of social credit building in which community members cultivate capital through reciprocity. Individual' contributions to one another engender reciprocity and a form of instrumental obligation. This application of social capital was largely consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) explication of social capital as an instrumental currency. Glover tempered this interpretation, however, by asserting that generalized reciprocity to the community at large cultivates an ethic of contributing to the common good. As mentioned above, this manner of discussing civic virtue differs considerably from the type of civic virtue associated with a constitutive community such as the Athenian *polis*. Despite this ambiguity, Glover's findings generally supported the interpretation that participation in the affairs of the community center was associated with an active, rather than formal conceptualization of citizenship. Additionally, he concluded that participation informed by ideas of active citizenship benefited the community in general and not simply its active members.

Glover (2004a) concluded his exploration of the community center with the observation that in addition to benefiting communities, strong social networks can also function to exclude and marginalize individuals. Glover (2004b) proceeded to explore this theme in more depth in his exploration of the experiences of a group of community gardeners. Narrative analysis of the gardeners' experiences revealed it to be a community fraught with tension related to issues of race and power. The garden was situated in an ethnically diverse neighborhood that was in the midst of revitalization. The revitalization process was led by a neighborhood association that sought to rid the neighborhood of crime and blight. The community garden project 'grew' directly out of this neighborhood association.

Glover's (2004b) inquiry reveals the complexity of actual communal contexts. The neighborhood association and its accompanying garden were sources of racial tension within the neighborhood. Being composed predominantly of white residents, many residents of color saw the neighborhood association and garden as being 'white projects.' Additionally, the association's overt opposition to local gangs of African American youths made it a polarizing entity for some of the neighborhoods' African American residents. Several respondents voiced their concern that their participation in the association might have potentially led to retribution from local gangs. In turn, several white members of the neighborhood association admonished the inactive residents of color for failing to contribute to the neighborhood's revitalization. These realities contribute to a more nuanced understanding of social capital. Glover concluded that the potential benefits stemming from social capital were mediated by individuals' positions relative to social norms and power structures. I would extend this observation to nature of communal interactions more generally.

<div align="center">Communities, Social Worlds, and Places</div>

Despite its recent preoccupation with the concept of social capital, leisure scholars have dealt with numerous concepts that are closely related to issues of community. As suggested by Bellah et al. (1996), the term community has traditionally referred to a loosely bounded geographic space, the physical structures within that space, and the inhabitants therein. This conceptualization of community differs fundamentally from the terms used when describing a phenomenon such as a virtual or online community. Likewise, the traditional concept of community would fail to encompass identity-based communities such as, for example, the Latino or lesbian communities within a large, metropolitan area. The evolution of technological, social,

and economic conditions has resulted in forms of "community" that could not be foreseen in the villages and towns of colonial America.

One of the concepts that is often related to community and leisure is that of *social world*. Through his explication of the social world concept, Unruh (1980) sought to distinguish amorphous and diffuse forms of social organization, such as a community of surfers within a particular locale, from more formal and easily recognizable social structures, such as religious or police organizations. The distinguishing characteristics of Unruh's social worlds were 1) voluntary identification, 2) partial involvement, 3) multiple identification, and 4) mediated interaction. Utilizing these four criteria, the concept of social worlds can address of more diffused and transient form of social organization. Referring back to the work of Bellah et al. (1996) and Sandel (1992), Unruh's (1980) social worlds concept was more closely aligned with that which Sandel would term associations for mutual benefit. In other words, Unruh's four criteria presupposed a liberal conceptualization of individuals who are independent and capable of existing apart from any community.

The social world concept has been particularly useful for leisure scholars as recreation and leisure activities often serve as organizational foci that lie at the heart of any particular social world (Unruh, 1980). Whether the activity is bridge or bowling, rock climbing or rock collecting, individuals with mutual leisure interests tend to associate and organize around such interests. Such associations are often far from being wholly constitutive of individuals' identity and are increasingly mediated by communication technologies (e.g., email correspondence or internet listservs). Such organization foci are quite often activities, but they may also be geographic locations, such as a particular surfing spot, an art gallery, or a city in general. However, "geographic centers and territorial referents exist in which little or no face-to-face interaction

among social world participants need occur" (Unruh, 1980, p. 285). These settings are as much conceptual contexts for social worlds as they are physical.

The concept of social worlds figured prominently in Stebbins's (1992) concept of serious leisure. One of the distinguishing characteristics of serious leisure was its accompaniment by a social world organized around a particular activity, e.g., long distance running or B.A.S.E. jumping. For example, the social world concept is prominent in Gillespie, Leffler, and Lerner's (2002) description of competitive dog sports, Scott and Godbey (1994) examination of contract bridge players, and Gibson, Willming, and Holdnak's (2002) exploration of collegiate football fans' identities. Relating the social world concept discussed above (Bellah et al., 1996), it becomes clear that leisure social worlds are synonymous with the concept of lifestyle enclave. Similar to the lifestyle enclave then, social worlds can be understood as forms of association which fail to generate the moral ecology that Bellah et al. praised in deep forms of community.

Despite often being conceived of as merely another form of community, social worlds are best understood as shallow forms of community. They lack the compulsory face-to-face interactions and moral ecology (Bellah et al., 1996) that accompany more intimate and geographically discrete forms of community. As discussed above, social worlds conceptualize participants as being independent of the associations and organization they choose to join. If phenomena such as internet listerv groups, bridge clubs, and monasteries can all be described using the term community, I assert that our language related to the concept of community has failed to keep pace with the evolution of social organization.

In her theoretical review of 'sense of place,' Stokowski (2002) tangentially addressed the problematic nature of concepts such as community. Stokowski indicted leisure scholars as having been too positivistic in their treatment of place. As opposed to taking a place's existence

for granted, Stokowski challenged scholars to consider the ways in which places are discursively produced. For example, rather than existing simply as a collection of forests and mountains, wilderness has evolved as a concept with social and often political implications. At the outset of the European settlement in North America, the wilderness was portrayed as the domain of all which was evil and uncontrollable. A mere two hundred years later, the romantic vision of thinkers such as Emerson and Thoreau transformed the wilderness into a source of purity and redemption. Such a transformation is exemplary of the manner in which the construction of place is a product not of its physical attributes, but rather its function in the larger 'social landscape.'

While Stokowski's (2002) focus was on the conceptual construction of physical places, her analysis is equally germane to the construction of community. This approach to understanding community produces a meta-dialogue that asks critical questions such as, 'in what ways do communities focused around leisure function to perpetuate the larger organization of society?' More specifically, 'in what ways are intentional communities conceptually constructed within the discursive practices of the academe or the popular media?' Such a dialogue challenges scholars not to simply take a community's existence for granted, but rather to examine the ways in which particular communities are constructed by exogenous forces.

This proposal seeks to construct a discursive framework using the deep and shallow forms of community that have been presented thus far. If deep and shallow forms of community exist on opposing ends of conceptual spectrum, where might intentional communities fall on such a continuum? Previous empirical scholarship related to leisure and community (Arai & Pedlar, 1997; Glover 2004a, b) has utilized concepts of community that are found on the shallow end of the conceptual spectrum. Research contexts such as community health initiatives or community gardens can hardly be considered deep or constitutive communities. By contrast, an

intentional community such as the Farm might perform a constitutive function for its members. An ethnography of a community such as the Farm offers scholars an opportunity to explore a context for leisure on the "deep end" of the community spectrum.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In comparison to the haphazard organization and shallow communities that are formed in conventional suburban neighborhoods, intentional communities present themselves as unique and relatively unexamined forms of social organization within contemporary society. The experience of leisure within such contexts is undoubtedly unique as well. As such, the primary purpose of this study is the exploration of the unique culture that exists at the Farm and the nature of leisure within this unique culture. Among the many research methodologies available to explore the Farm, I felt that ethnography was best suited to the task. The plasticity of its approach and the richness of its representation made ethnography the perfect methodology with which to better understand the dynamic context that is the Farm.

Site Selection

I chose to study the Farm for reasons both practical and scholarly. While not necessarily embracing the label intentional community, the Farm residents' lifestyles generally conformed to the characteristics of such phenomena. At the time of my study, the Farm accommodated six full-time residents who were not related to one another by kinship. All of the six chose to settle at the Farm with the understanding that they would actively participate in its community. Therefore, in the most basic sense of the term, the Farm's residents chose to live in a manner that *intentionally* created *community*.

Description of the Farm

As its name suggests, the Farm was an actual working farm—a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm to be precise. CSA farms are supported by local residents who purchase shares in the Farm's operations thereby circumventing the industrial agriculture infrastructure in the United States. In the Farm's case, one share for the summer season of 2007 cost $390 and supplied produce for a household of four on a weekly basis. The Farm's CSA operation was the primary means by which it interacts with its surrounding community. Therefore, as a condition of their membership at the Farm, all of its residents contributed to the cultivation and upkeep of its crops. In contrast to shallow forms of community discussed earlier, membership in the Farm community entailed responsibility, not simply residency.

Physically, the Farm was situated on approximately thirteen acres of relatively flat land. Two thirds of these thirteen acres were in the form of fields on which its various crops are cultivated. The Farm's produce included, but was not limited to the following: tomatoes, peppers (sweet and hot), cucumbers, various types of squash, broccoli, peas, beans, lettuces, peanuts, edamame, asparagus, corn, amaranth, carrots, onions, garlic, various herbs, and figs. The majority of these crops were grown in one of three large plots that measured approximately sixty feet in width by eighty feet in length. Aside from these three main plots, there exist numerous small beds that contained herbs and lettuces and were located next to the main house for ease of access.

The main house sat in the physical center of the Farm's property and was its most prominent building. The main house was a timber-framed, lodge-style house that was approximately twenty years old. Its tall prominent roof line displayed a set of south-facing peaked windows that captured the sun's rays year round. The main house contained five

bedrooms and housed all six of the Farm's permanent residents as well as the CSA's office. The main house also contained a kitchen, large dining room and family room, bathroom, and laundry facilities. For all intents and purposes, the main house served as the social focal point of the Farm.

The remaining half of the Farm's property was covered in a lowland oak-pine-hickory forest. The forested portion of the Farm sat on the western end of the property, meaning that portion of the property that is furthest from the road. The forested portion of the Farm contained a short walking trail that followed a small creek. Besides serving as an ideal site for growing mushrooms, the "back side" of the Farm was rarely visited and was viewed as primarily being habitat for native wildlife.

If the Farm's physical context contrasted sharply with the nature of most urban and suburban neighborhoods, so too did its social context. Residency at the Farm entailed considerably more responsibility and social participation than does residency in a typical American neighborhood. The Farm's norms related to participation in communal affairs distinguished it as exemplary of the larger intentional community movement.

Most prominent among these social functions was a weekly "Family Dinner" that took place on Wednesday evenings. This is the one evening each week that all the Farm's residents could count on seeing and communing with one another. Family dinners had a festive atmosphere, but were also a forum for conducting community business. Such business included information sharing about the progress and needs of the CSA, brainstorming regarding challenges affecting the community, and voting on matters that require the consensus of the entire group. Family Dinners often included numerous individuals who do not live at the Farm. This "extended family" included the Farm's physical neighbors as well as its many friends and

friends of friends. In addition to weekly Family Dinners, the Farm periodically hosted parties and celebrations of all sorts. Parties tended to be semi-public affairs and often attracted individuals with only a tenuous relationship to the Farm and its residents.

Consistent with the extant scholarship on intentional communities (Brown, 2002), the Farm's physical and social conditions made it exemplary of the intentional community movement in general and therefore attractive as a research context. Additionally, as a doctoral student, I had neither the time nor resources to establish rapport with one of the more prominent intentional communities that exist across the country. Given my access to the Farm via one of its residents, George, its convenience as a site of study was undeniably attractive. Additionally, with only six full-time residents, the Farm was large enough to accommodate a diversity of opinions, but small enough for a fledgling ethnographer to begin to grasp its totality.

Despite being familiar with intentional communities generally, I had never lived in nor even visited one prior to my first visit to the Farm. Thus, while the Farm was generally grounded in my "home culture," it was sufficiently "foreign" so as to provide a fertile ground for ethnographic research (Wolcott, 1999). In other words, the norms and practices of the Farm were sufficiently foreign so that their meanings were not taken for granted during the generation and analysis of data.

<center>Gaining Entry and Building Rapport</center>

"Shiiiit," I sighed while staring at our living room ceiling. It was a little after seven o'clock on a Wednesday evening in late March and I was comfortably situated on our living room couch. My exclamation actually encapsulated the nuanced sentiment that I was exhausted did not want to attend "family dinner" at the Farm that evening. Light was quickly vanishing from the sky and I had been awake and articulate at 8am that morning in order to spend fifty

minutes talking about research and evaluation to a less than enthusiastic classroom of undergraduates. The rest of the day had been filled with the meetings, small talk, and grading that constituted a "day at the office." Needless to say, I was exhausted and wanted nothing more than to continue laying on the couch and staring at the ceiling—indefinitely.

However, I had created some momentum out at the Farm and I could not let that fizzle out. I had been out there three times already and had been thwarted from being able to discuss my research interests in any meaningful way because a crucial member of the "family" had been missing on each visit. I had been promised that everyone would be there tonight. I had to go. I had to turn "it" on. I had to generate excitement at the Farm about this project, and to do that I had generate excitement about this project in myself. There was nothing trivial about that task. After all, the Farm is my dissertation. There's no alternative; if I don't make this work, I'm "up the creek" as they say. I swung my legs to the right, stood up from the couch, and inhaled deeply. Little did I know, that once again, I would drive out to the Farm and mingle and schmooze only to discover that a crucial member of "the family" was absent from dinner again. Had I known that, I might have stayed on the couch.

As this journal entry illustrated, cultivating rapport at the Farm was no simple affair. I attended numerous "family dinners," parties, and work days on the Farm before I was able to conduct a meaningful discussion about my research interests with all of its residents. Once that discussion began, there were intense discussions about the nature of the research and ethical issues related to confidentiality. However, in time, a consensus understanding was reached about the purpose of my research and the details of my stay at the Farm.

My path to the Farm was circuitous indeed. I had been acquainted with one its residents, George, for quite some time. He participated in a previous research venture related to his

activities as a long distance backpacker, but I was unaware that George lived in an intentional

community. It was he, not I, who suggested that perhaps I would be interested in "what was

happening at the Farm." My curiosity was piqued, so I visited the Farm for a party and was

intrigued by the openness with which I was received. Spurred by my reading of Putnam's (2000)

Bowling Alone, my budding interest in the health of American communities seemed to have

found a potential research outlet. Contrary to my desires, however, my access to the community

as a researcher was not instantaneous. Despite being warm and open to me as someone interested

in their community, the Farm had its gatekeepers (Patton, 2002) as does any other community

that scholars have attempted to explore. My many visits to the Farm had been spent interacting

with its permanent residents, who were its gatekeepers of access. I had to speak with each of its

residents individually as well as collectively about my interests and intent. They in turn

conferred with one another and consented to my presence as a researcher at the Farm. Due to the

Farm's consensus decision-making process, were one member to have had serious objections to

my research agenda, I would have had to pacify that person's concerns. Consequently, I had to

court each and every resident of the Farm as opposed to simply convincing one or two of its

principal members.

Data Generation

Having established rapport with the Farm's residents, I moved into the community and

began generating data for analysis. I choose to speak of data generation rather than data

collection because the term *generation* more accurately describes the researcher's task.

Collection implies that researchers extract pre-existing bits of data from a context in much the

same way a farmer might pick a tomato off the vine. However, if pressed to describe the process,

virtually any ethnographer will agree that such is not actually the case. Data are generated by the

descriptions that the researcher decides to compose based on the phenomena that he or she observes. That which ultimately becomes data is those bits and pieces of the researcher's experience that are selected for inclusion into his or her field journal or tape recorder. The term generation highlights the active role that the researcher plays in creating, rather than discovering data. Further, use of the terminology "data generation" reinforces the concept that data and phenomena are related, but distinctly separate entities. In other words, no matter how gifted the researcher, no description can do better than approximate the lived experiences of participants and researchers. With this understanding in mind, I proceed with a summary of the ways in which I generated data from my experience at the Farm.

Participant Observation

The method most often associated with ethnography is participant observation and indeed it was my primary method of data generation. Participant observation entailed "being present." I highlight this term because it points to the dual nature of participant observation. Not only is the researcher in the midst of events as they unfold, but he or she is ever mindful of the questions that brought about the research in the first place. This participation in the culture being studied ought to be long enough that the ethnographer experiences some degree of immersion in the culture. As Fetterman (1998) explained, the researcher needs to be present long enough for participants to "forget their 'company' behavior and fall back into familiar patterns" (p. 36).

Guided by this vague standard, I committed to five months of living at the Farm and generating data. To reach a sufficient level of familiarity with the context and saturation with the data, ethnographies typically entail a year or more of data generation. Wolcott (1999) strongly advocated for this position saying that any less time would not allow ethnographers to sufficiently explore and become immersed in any particular culture. His concern is that shorter

ethnographic endeavors are so narrowly focused that they fail to provide a holistic account of the culture under study.

However, exotic cultures have typically been the purview of anthropology, and while the Farm is different from many common living arrangements in the United States, I hesitate to label it exotic. Despite the fact that the Farm is unlike any living situation I have ever participated in, I contend that its grounding in contemporary American culture renders it sufficiently familiar to accommodate a five month data generation period. In contrast to undertaking, for example, an ethnography in a rural Peruvian village, my visit to the Farm did not require the acquisition of a new language or of radically different social mores. I did encounter new rituals and customs that were unique to the Farm. However, such novelties were silhouetted against a dominant culture with which I was familiar.

Participant observation was the primary method that I used to generate data at the Farm. As discussed above, participant observation consists largely of "being present" in the research context, and consequently, I was be present to cultivate, cook, and celebrate with the Farm Family. My physical presence was complemented by a "presence of mind" through which I observed the context relative to my research purpose and questions. While I had been "present" in two senses, physically and mentally, I also endeavored to be present in two separate, but closely related domains of experience. Acknowledging that I was the principal data collection instrument, my analytic efforts focused not only participants' experiences, but my own as well. I maintained a research journal that served as the primary tool for collecting data related to my own experiences at the Farm. The generation of such data while at the Farm highlighted my role as a participant in the research process. My reflections on the experience of living in a communal space or of contributing to communal activities such as farm work were as useful as those of my

fellow participants in this context. Additionally, the research journal facilitated personal reflection on my role as a researcher.

Similar to most of the Farm's residents, I had numerous commitments away from the Farm during my stay. Therefore, much of my observation took place in the mornings, evenings, and on the weekends. The Farm was most active during these times due to the work and school schedule of its residents. During my residency at the Farm, my observations ranged between two and twelve hours a day for as few as one day to five days a week. Due to my focus on the Farm as a community, my observations sought to capture those times when numerous community members were present and interacting with one another (e.g., Family Dinners, celebrations, work weekends). In order to capture the experiences of a "typical week" at the Farm, I utilized a time graph to ensure that at a minimum I experienced every waking hour of a calendar week on the Farm at least once (i.e., not continuously).

The data generated from my observation and participation took the form of field notes. Initially, I recorded my field notes orally into a digital audio recorder. To do this, I utilized a type of "oral shorthand" in which I sought to encapsulate episodes of experience with as brief a description as possible. The use of distinctive words or phrases in my recordings served to stimulate my recollection of events when transcribing my recordings at a later time. The time and place to compose field notes was often determined by the research context, and no competent ethnographer would dare miss out on "the action" in order to record field notes, potentially threatening his or her credibility with participants. However, I endeavored to record and transcribe my field notes as soon as was convenient given the setting. For example, during a typical Family Dinner at the Farm, I was able to slip away to the restroom or garage to record notes into the digital audio recorder regarding a particularly notable event. If possible, I

transcribed oral field notes into typed field notes on the same evening that events took place.

When such a quick transcription was not possible, I did so on the following day. In some cases, it

was possible and/or necessary to omit using the digital audio recorder altogether and proceed

immediately to the act of typing field notes. The product of the transcription process was an

expanded set of field notes. Such notes are called expanded because their content is augmented

with contextual descriptions that are recollected after an event's occurrence. The recollected

nature of these notes necessitates their creation as soon as possible following the events being

described.

Throughout the transcription of my field notes, I differentiated, as much as possible,

between descriptions of surroundings and events and my subjective reactions to such

phenomena. Recognizing that my description of the "facts" was necessarily subjective, I

nevertheless worked to distinguish between a description of events and my speculations as to

their symbolic meanings. These speculations, sometimes called *headnotes*, served as the stimulus

for both my research journal as well as my analytical memos. Discussed in more detail below,

the research journal allowed me to focus on my experiences in the Farm community and my

subjective reactions to the research process. In contrast, analytic memos allowed me to

conceptually organize and probe the data for meaningful relationships.

In an effort to engage participants in my data generation, I conducted a process referred

to as member checking in which I encouraged participants to review and comment on my data.

At periodic intervals, I made my expanded field notes available to members of the Farm for their

review and reaction. I invited their assistance in creating a record that would adequately recollect

the events being researched. Additionally, I offered the Farm's residents the opportunity to

review and react to finished manuscripts. This invitation has been offered with the understanding

that manuscripts represent my own analytic conclusions and are therefore not necessarily subject to their revisions. To date, my fellow participants have not substantively responded to the generation of data or the subsequent manuscripts. Among other potential explanations, their lack of response invites the assessment that they have endorsed my data and representations.

My observation of the Farm focused initially on creating a macro-scale description. The organization of physical space in an intentional community such as the Farm was notable for the way in which it distinguishes itself from other forms of social organization. Consequently, my initial descriptive efforts focused intently on the Farm's physical space. I endeavored to construct "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of the sights, sounds, smells, and surfaces that constitute the sensory experience of the Farm. Additionally, my initial macro-descriptions captured each of the Farm's permanent and semi-permanent residents. Similar to my descriptions of place, my characterizations of the Farm's residents sought to create nuanced portraits of each individual. During these initial descriptions of place and participants, important analytical questions began to present themselves. Therefore, as my time at the Farm progressed, my focus evolved from a macro-scale to a more circumscribed investigation of particular aspects of the Farm.

The Research Journal

The initial data generated from my experiences took the form of personal journal entries about the process of developing rapport and gaining access to the Farm. Such journaling continued throughout the data generation process. As I was the primary data generation instrument, my journaling process facilitated the expression of nascent analytic insights. It also functioned as a means to monitor my subjective orientation to the research process. With the assistance of my research mentor, the journal allowed me to identify potential barriers and/or insights into the analytic process.

My research journals consisted of personal reactions to and musings about my interactions with participants. As opposed to field notes that chronicled the behavior of participants, my journal entries focused primarily on my thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. I made every effort to record my entries as soon as possible after interactions with participants. As was the case with Family Dinners, my journal entries were often composed the morning after an evening visit to the Farm.

Interviewing

In addition to recording my own thoughts related to the research process, I collected the thoughts of my fellow participants through the act of interviewing. By "enquiring" (Wolcott, 1999), the ethnographer performs that most fundamental of human actions, a comparison of his or her perception of events to that of others. The ethnographic interview can provide the researcher with crucial details about the research context that could not otherwise be obtained. Interviews may yield information about past events or other contexts that can be crucial for understanding the immediate context.

As opposed to Fetterman (1998), who considered interviews to be the principal ethnographic method, Wolcott (1999) took a slightly more judicious approach to interviewing. While the ethnographer is unlikely to ever shed his or her researcher persona, that persona is perhaps never more prominent than during a research interview. Participants are often wary of such overt questioning and the prospect of having to speak as a group's representative. Simply asking a question about a topic or behavior can mark it as being sensitive. Additionally, participants' expectations regarding what they believe ethnographers want to hear may preclude candid answers. Such cautions are not meant to dismiss the utility of interviewing, but rather to recognize its appropriate place as one among the "triumvirate of ethnographic methods"

(Wolcott, 1999).

Ethnographic interviewing ought to be distinguished from its more formal cousin, the semi-structured research interview. As opposed to the carefully scripted interview, ethnographic interviews are often short and impromptu affairs. A sudden event may spur the ethnographer's interest and serve as fodder for a conversation with a participant. While such interviews may lack the covert strategies of a more scripted interview, their candidness can yield crucial insight into the research context (Spradley, 1979). As with observation, the ethnographer must balance the creation of interview notes with the need to maintain rapport and credibility with participants.

During the course of this research, I used both ethnographic and semi-structured interviews in an effort to describe participants' understandings of events. The casual, open atmosphere of the Farm and its residents was often accommodating to impromptu ethnographic interviews. The extended nature of my data generation period allowed me to pursue topics of interest in a more circuitous and less urgent manner. Spradley (1979) described the ethnographic interview as a "series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants" (p. 58). In other words, an ethnographic interview need not be perceived by research participants as necessarily being an interview. Given that the ethnographic interview is but one component of an on-going data generation process, maintaining and perpetuating rapport during the interview is paramount.

Beyond simply collecting information, the ethnographic interview is meant to encourage participants to take on a pedagogical role in relation to the researcher (Spradley, 1979). The researcher perpetuates this process by offering participants "ethnographic explanations." Such explanations are simply statements that orient participants' talk to a certain topic. For example, during the course of conversation, I might encourage a participant to take a pedagogical stance

by requesting that he or she "tell me about how [you] came to live at the Farm." By coaching

participants in this way, the "ethnographic conversation" became more efficient than a more

natural form of conversation.

Due to its informal nature, formal recording or note taking typically will not accompany

any ethnographic interviews that I will conduct. Data from informal interviews will be generated

in the form of field notes that will be typed or recorded using a digital audio recorded as soon as

possible after interviews take place. As opposed to utilizing a formal interview protocol,

informal interviews will be guided by emergent or enduring topics of interests (e.g., how did

weekly Family Dinner get started?).

Ethnographic interviews were complemented by semi-structured interviews with the

Farm's six permanent residents. These more formal interviews were conducted after the

intensive period of data generation had concluded. These interviews served to address lingering

research needs and to bolster the trustworthiness of the data. Participants were asked about topics

such as the structure and function of family dinner, the relative importance of labor with the

Farm community, and the use and division of space at the Farm.

Secondary Sources

In addition to primary data generation, I also relied on secondary sources of data related

to intentional communities. Such materials included other ethnographies, but also any sort of

factual or conceptual scholarship that was relevant. Consulting the work of other scholars can be

especially useful for acquiring a foundation of information needed to orient oneself to a new

culture. With this in mind, Wolcott (1999) has warned that ethnographers ought to not become so

dependent on the work of others that it replaces or biases one's firsthand experiences of a

culture.

Description

Despite its requisite commitment, ethnographic work promises to touch both scholars and the larger populace by means not afforded to other research methodologies. Well-written ethnographies create in their readers a sense of "being there," of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and experiencing the events that the researcher has chosen to share. Descriptive accounts are the media through which research experiences are evoked. It stands to reason then, that description is the most fundamental ethnographic task and the basis for subsequent analysis and interpretation of the data. Consequently, I created "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of the Farm and its members that evoked the sights, smells, sounds, and sensations of my research experiences. As explained above, the foundation of this descriptive record was formed in the creation of my expanded field notes and analytic memos.

The horizon of description in any research context is seemingly endless. To render such an infinite field of description manageable, the descriptive process was guided by my research questions: 1) What customs, rituals, language, values, artifacts, and leisure practices characterize the unique culture that exists at the Farm, and 2) how does the unique culture of the Farm allow its residents to resist and/or perpetuate dominant discourses regarding the organization of community, the design of communal space, and the experience of communal leisure? Using these questions as my guide, I endeavored to create rich, elaborate descriptions of the research context.

Wolcott (1994) offered budding ethnographers a three-part schema with which to understand their research process. As mentioned above, description is primary among these three components. Following description are the processes of analysis and interpretation. Wolcott (1994) described this collection as the D-A-I formula. Having discussed description let me now

talk about analysis.

Data Transformation

Despite being the foundation of the research process, description of the research context cannot stand alone to represent the researcher's experience. In other words, the data do not speak for themselves. The researcher must review the data and identify patterns and relationships that make meaning of the data.

Analysis

Where description encompasses the incomplete transformation of experience into written and graphic form, analysis further complicates the representation of experience by organizing the data according to its salient patterns and relationships. My analysis began by reading and re-reading field notes and transcripts. During these readings, I identified passages of text that contain coherent and significant concepts. I marked these passages and encapsulated their significance with a representative word or phrase. This process is known as *open coding* (Charmaz, 2006). Where possible, I attempted to construct my codes by using participants' terminology, otherwise known as coding in response to "indigenous concepts" (Patton, 2002). Codes were then organized into categories that reflect larger *themes* in the data. The coherence and accuracy of these themes was tested by comparing them back to the data. Finally, several of these themes were selected for representation in subsequent manuscripts.

Interpretation

Once analytic conclusions have been drawn, the ethnographer may choose to explore the implications of his or her work in light of larger theoretical and conceptual debates. This act of moving beyond the data and its patterns is narrowly defined by Wolcott (1994) as interpretation. If interpretation takes place, audiences will be keen to see that a sufficient review of the pertinent

literature has been undertaken and that the ethnographer is not overreaching in his or her attempt to connect data to theory. Wolcott (1994) emphasized that interpretation is a component of the research process that requires significant familiarity with the data and with the phenomenon under study. Consequently, interpretation is not often a significant component of doctoral dissertations. Nonetheless, I endeavored to connect my analytic findings to extant scholarship related to leisure practices and concepts of community. In particular, my findings have implications for the concept and practice of leisure education, the relation between work and leisure in contemporary society, and the scholarly community's understanding of the manner in which competing discourses shape actual communities.

Writing

"Writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled method of discovery" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 967).

St. Pierre's comments on writing highlighted the generative and creative nature of the writing process. If the researcher analyzes and interprets through the writing process, then writing should not be reserved until after data generation has taken place. Consequently, I began writing within two to three weeks of having begun data generation. There was no shortage of ways in which to write about my experiences as an ethnographer. Written representations may range from being stylistically dry and report-like to intriguing, plot-driven narratives that read like fiction. Wolf (1992) ably compared these different styles in her collection of essays and field notes entitled *A Thrice Told Tale*.

In an effort to highlight the power of writing as a methodology, Wolf (1992) juxtaposed a fictional account, a collection of field notes, and a conventional journal article that all dealt with a particular incident she experienced while doing fieldwork in Taiwan. The fictional account,

entitled "The Hot Spell," is by far the most evocative of the three. Throughout the account, readers are left to wonder whether a woman's erratic behavior is the result of a mental disorder or divine intervention. Tension surrounding this ambiguity grows until the story's fantastic conclusion in which a natural disaster suggests that the protagonist's behavior had been influenced by divine forces all along.

In comparing "The Hot Spell" to the other accounts, Wolf's (1992) field notes seem to lack continuity and coherence, while the journal article took a more distant and authoritative position from the reader. Her purpose for presenting the three accounts was to address issues related to an ethnographer's voice, audience, and the on-going tension between poststructural critique and feminist scholarship. Wolf's collection of accounts can also be used to understand the inherently creative nature of writing as an ethnographic method. When compared to the field notes and journal article, Wolf's fictional account obviously utilized a fair amount of artistic license. Despite its fantastic nature though, Wolf contended that the fictionalized account was more successful in accomplishing ethnography's goal of illuminating the culture under study.

Therefore, in addition to field notes and analytical memos, I composed vignettes or "tales" that illustrate particular analytical and/or interpretive conclusions. Tales are narrative, plot-focused representations of culture (Van Maanen, 1988). Similar to Wolf's (1992) "A Hot Spell," ethnographic tales may take a certain degree of license in an effort to enhance the reader's understanding of the cultural context. In an effort to represent and understand the Farm in different ways, I constructed tales in several of the different genres (realist, confessional, impressionist) described by Van Maanen (1988).

Trustworthiness

Similar to any artisan's product, readers of ethnography must have a means with which to

evaluate its quality. Often termed *validity*, this aspect of evaluation is concerned with the degree to which the ethnography itself corresponds to the events that it purports to describe. The ethnographic community has vacillated back and forth between embracing and abandoning the concept of validity.

To represent a position advocating for the use of validity, I turn to Fetterman's (1998) comments on the subject:

> Triangulation is basic in ethnographic research. It is at the heart of ethnographic validity—testing one source of information against another to strip away alternative explanations to *prove a hypothesis*. Typically, the ethnographer compares information sources to *test* the quality of the information (and the person sharing it), to understand more completely the part an actor plays in the social drama, and ultimately to put the whole situation into perspective. (emphasis added, p. 93)

Fetterman's explanation of triangulation betrays a rather orthodox position on validity as well as a positivistic orientation towards inquiry. For Fetterman, validity is directly related to the truth value of one's claims and triangulation is a fool-proof method for evaluating such claims. Such an assertion is problematic due to its reliance on a so-called "immaculate perception" of events. This idea holds that by using rigorous methodology, a researcher could arrive at a true and definitive interpretation of events. As daunting as such a proposition might seem from a logistical standpoint, it is even more problematic philosophically. Immaculate perception assumes that there is in fact a definitive interpretation of any particular event. Even if one ignores the practical impossibilities of achieving such a definitive view, the political implications are that all partial views are illegitimate. This supposes that only researchers who have access to the rigorous tools of modern social science are capable of attaining such immaculate perception.

Such an orientation to inquiry implicitly takes on the rhetorical position that Haraway (1988) termed the "god trick." The "god trick" is the use of a disembodied voice, a "specter" of scientific discourse that purports to simultaneously know something from everywhere and nowhere. Doing so ignores the researcher's own partiality in the process of constructing an account thereby avoiding responsibility for such partiality.

With this argument in mind, one might be forgiven for inverting the assertion that claims to validity, as a measure of correspondence between representation and experience, are an ethical obligation of the researcher. Where validity takes on the guise of aiding the researcher in providing a definitive account of events, it may actually be an ethical shortcoming. Crucial to this argument are the claims that ethnographers make about their scholarship. Does the ethnographer purport to represent a definitive depiction of experience? Or rather, is his or her ethnography a rigorous and reflexive attempt to depict one individual's interpretation of an experience (c.f. Ellis & Bochner, 2000; 2006)? This latter goal can be pursued by delicately placing the researcher within the ethnographic text. As discussed above, the ethnographer begins to situate his or her knowledge as a subject by being present in the text. This approach to inquiry does not remove the privilege inherent in authorship, but it does make the ethnographer present so that he or she may begin to be interrogated by the reader.

Wolcott (1994) has also been critical of validity's usefulness for ethnographic inquiry. His arguments against it are intriguing and dramatic, but I shall sidestep these except to highlight his indictment of ethnographers' use of validity as a concession to their quantitatively-oriented colleagues. Rather than disavowing the concept of validity as being wholly incongruent with interpretive work, Wolcott argued that ethnographers acknowledged its importance and proceeded to demonstrate the ways in which their work was valid. This concession is

undoubtedly a result of the very real privilege that positivist inquiry enjoys in the academy.

Despite such a political disadvantage, Wolcott argued that qualitatively-oriented scholars would

be better served by negotiating "the terms" of the dialogue that it has engaged in with positivist

traditions of inquiry.

As opposed to pursuing the futile and potentially harmful task of creating a *valid*

representation of experience, Wolcott (1994) argued that ethnographers ought to be guided by

the desire to create *understanding*. He defined understanding as "the power to make experience

intelligible by applying concepts and categories" (p. 367). As discussed earlier with regards to

representation, one cannot underestimate the power being wielded when ethnographers represent

the experience of their participants. With this responsibility in mind, Wolcott contended that

ethnography, especially its interpretive functions, ought to increase understanding related to

topics and contexts that under study.

Related to issues of validity or understanding, my approach to qualitative inquiry has

been more closely aligned with Wolcott (1999) than Fetterman (1998). I have not claimed to

offer a definitive representation of events at the Farm. Instead, my hope has been to increase

readers' understanding of life and leisure in an intentional community. However, substituting

understanding for validity should not imply that I have abandoned rigor in the research process. I

have used numerous strategies to ensure the rigor of my research methods, which will in turn

bolster the trustworthiness of my representations of the Farm. As opposed to offering truth, a

standard of trustworthiness necessitated that I worked to faithfully and honestly represent my

partial perception of events. My ability to honestly portray my experiences has been aided by

several procedures that are designed to interrogate my depiction of life at the Farm.

Member checking was perhaps be the most effective means of checking the fidelity of my

representations of the Farm. Member checking entailed allowing the study participants to review and critique the accuracy of my expanded field notes and interview transcripts. Having been present to observe the events being described, participants were best able to improve the accuracy of my descriptions. Collaborating with participants to create an accurate description of events was a process of negotiation. As opposed to having the outright authority to alter my field notes, participants and I discussed depictions of events that were satisfactory with both parties. Where discrepancies between parties could not be resolved, I attempted to represent the complex and contradictory recollection of events in my field notes, memos, and manuscripts.

In addition to reviewing my field notes and interview transcripts, participants were asked to review and react to draft manuscripts. Reviewing manuscripts allowed participants to react to the analytic and interpretive propositions I made related to my research experience. To date, members of the Farm community have not reacted to my manuscripts.

In addition to collaborating with participants, I engaged in a weekly conference with Dr. Johnson in order to review the process and products of my research. Having previously constructed an ethnography, Dr. Johnson's consultation was crucial for identifying ways to strengthen my data generation methods. During our weekly meetings, Dr. Johnson and I reviewed my research journal, field notes, and interview transcripts in order to assess the quality of my research processes.

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CHAPTER FOUR

TAKING AUNT KATHY TO DINNER: FAMILY DINNER AS A FOCAL PRACTICE[1]

Abstract

Situated in relation to numerous projects that explore the conceptual relation of leisure and community, the present study utilized an ethnographic methodology to describe the intersection of leisure practices and the lived experience of community within the context of a communal farm, known simply as the Farm. The researcher spent five months living on the Farm and used participant observation and interviews to generate data. This manuscript focuses specifically on a leisure practice known as Family Dinner in which members of the extended Farm community gathered for weekly a potluck-style meal. Analysis revealed that Family Dinner served as a context for acculturating members into practices that emphasized conviviality. When conviviality is understood as a proxy for leisure, Family Dinner can be understood as a type of informal leisure education.

INDEX WORDS: leisure, community, ethnography, meal, conviviality, leisure education

Aunt Kathy closed her phone and looked at me. "That was your mother. Your father's not feeling well, so they won't be able to make it tonight. It looks like it's just you and me kid."

Likely story, I thought to myself. The old man's going to hear about this next time I see him.

Aunt Kathy gave me a big, sadistic smile that made me wince inside. My Mom's sister was visiting from New Jersey. Actually, our house was just a stopover on her way to the retirement kingdom known as the state of Florida. It just so happened that Aunt Kathy was stopping over on a Wednesday night. Wednesdays are Family Dinner nights at the Farm where I am conducting my dissertation research. Normally, I would have skipped the dinner, however given the intensity of my data collection; I could not afford to skip the dinner this Wednesday. When Aunt Kathy had called a week ago to inform me that she would be in town, my parents had promised to make the hour-long drive from their house in order entertain her for the evening. Now I was stuck with her.

"How would you like to come to Family Dinner with me?" I half-heartedly asked.

"What's that?"

"Well, every Wednesday night, the people who live out at the Farm where I'm doing my dissertation research have their friends and neighbors over for dinner. It's an ongoing thing and anyone is welcome," I explained.

"Oh, I would love to…that is if you don't mind bringing your Auntie along," she smiled again, which added to the hint of indignation in her tone.

"Of course I don't mind." Bold-faced lie screamed the little voice in my head. "I think you would really enjoy it." She won't fit in, said the little voice.

"Well, it's almost 7:30. We probably ought to get going don't you think?" she asked.

"You might want to have snack Aunt Kathy. It's not unusual for folks to begin eating at 9:30 or 10 out at the Farm." Aunt Kathy squinted indicating her objection or puzzlement to this fact. This did not bode well for the evening I thought.

"You'll see why once we get there," I explained. "Okay, let's get moving. I'll grab the beer if you'll carry the hummus."

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Aunt Kathy was fortunate to be visiting during a short spell of cooler temperatures. During this last week in September our high temperatures were in the mid eighties and the humidity had abated slightly. Late August in this part of central Georgia had been blistering with the heat index topping 110 degrees. As we drove, Aunt Kathy reminded me of something I had long since forgotten—that the drive from my house to the Farm was a beautiful one. The late evening sky was a deep, azure blue. As we sped down country roads, we passed rural neighborhoods, cattle ranches, and tiny white farmhouses sitting solitary in the midst of hundreds of acres of pasture. A healthy, vibrant shade of green infused the landscape in spite of the region's persistent drought.

"Wait til you see the Farm," I promised. "It's beautiful."

"So these are a bunch of hippies, right?" Aunt Kathy asked. "I know a thing or two about hippies. You know my generation started the whole hippy thing." Aunt Kathy has never been one to mince words.

"NO!" I shouted. "No…sorry. It's just that they're not hippies, and they don't like that term." When had I become so protective of the Farm's image? Did I think I was one of "them?" Was I one of them? "They're an intentional community," I offered.

"Okaaay, sounds like hippy to me, but what's an 'intentional community?'" she asked.

"An intentional community is simply a group of people coming together to create a shared and often alternative vision of society. Intentional communities come in all different flavors. There are communities that form around certain spiritual beliefs such as meditation or monastic communities. There are feminist groups and communities that form around environmental beliefs. Then, there's co-housing, which is just a bunch of regular, mainstream yuppies who simply want to be deliberate about creating connections to one another. This idea has really moved beyond the whole free sex, free drugs, free food communes of the sixties."

"What, no hippy orgies at the Farm?" she asked sarcastically.

Holy shit, I thought to myself. "Look, you have to promise me you're not going to say anything like that, or we're going to head back to Town to find something to eat," I demanded.

There was pause. "So what brought you to study these people?"

"Aunt Kathy, don't play games. I'm serious. This is my dissertation research and if you want to cause trouble, we're not going."

"Fine, sweetie. I won't embarrass you in front of your friends" she condescended. "You didn't answer my question though. Why did you decide to do this for your dissertation?"

"Well, I suppose there are a number of reasons. I guess I'm drawn to the idea of studying intentional communities because I'm sympathetic to the argument that the health of American communities is declining. Having spent some time living in suburban neighborhoods and apartment buildings, I don't think those living arrangements are conducive to creating strong communities. I might be romanticizing the idea that American communities have ever been any healthier, but there are obviously many people out there who agree because the number of intentional communities is growing," I explained.

"There've always been wacko...I mean, there have always been people who've felt the need to run off and do there own thing in the country," she countered.

"True, but there may be more intentional communities now than ever before in the U.S. By some estimates, there are as many as 1000 throughout the country and those are just the ones that can be counted," I countered. "I think the increasing popularity of the co-housing movement says volumes about the fact that many 'normal' folks feel a lack of community in their lives and I feel that as well. You wait and see. The Farm is not a bunch of hippies running away from society. They're fully engaged in the larger community."

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Introduction

The concept of community, especially in the guise of social capital, has lately received considerable attention from scholars within the field of recreation and leisure studies (Arai & Pedlar, 1997, 2003; Blackshaw & Long, 2003; DeGraaf & Jordan, 2003; Glover, 2004a, b; Glover & Stewart, 2006b; Hemingway, 1999; Hunnicutt, 2000; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005; Pedlar, 1996). With notable exceptions (Glover, 2004a, b; Arai & Pedlar, 1997), most scholarship on the topics of leisure and community has been conceptual rather than empirical. Additionally, much of the conceptual scholarship mentioned above has lamented the declining health and efficacy of American communities (Arai & Pedlar, 1997; DeGraaf & Jordan, 2003; Hemingway, 1999; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005). This assertion has been encouraged in large part by popular works such as Bellah et al.'s (1996) *Habits of the Heart* and Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone*, both of which offered discouraging characterizations of America's communal health. However, lacking in these diagnoses of communal health is sufficient empirical analysis of the concept of community as it is manifested in the lived experiences of individuals. The

present inquiry aims to remedy this deficit by describing and analyzing the unique culture and accompanying leisure activities that characterize the Farm (pseudonym) community. In doing so, I will pay particular attention to the customs, rituals, language, values, and artifacts that are unique to the Farm. Additionally, I seek to identify the manner in which individuals associated with the Farm reproduce and/or resist localized, hegemonic discourses related to the Farm's culture.

Intentional Communities

Recent scholarship within leisure studies related to community has tended to focus on social capital, civic engagement, and strategies that leisure services agencies ought to undertake to improve the efficacy of American communities. However, the visibility of such scholarship has overshadowed grassroots efforts on the part of countless individuals to cultivate community in cities, towns, and neighborhoods across America. In her work, *Intentional Community*, Susan Love Brown (2002) observed that concerned individuals have been banding together to solidify communal bonds and address social ills since before this nation's inception. Indeed, the creation of the Plymouth Colony by the Puritans in 1620 can be understood as a grassroots effort to create an intentional religious community. Since the creation of Plymouth Colony, the communitarian impulse has remained a recurring facet of the American experiment. One of the most prominent manifestations of the communitarian ethos is the formation of intentional communities. Brown (2002) described intentional communities simply as,

…a kind of 'voting with the feet' – a call to action that is personal and communal, bringing together the needs of the individual with those of other individuals, reestablishing the bonds that connect human beings but in a particular fashion. The members of these communities

often see themselves at odds with or needing to withdraw from the larger society; however,

that withdrawal occurs within the context of the larger society. (p. 5-6)

An intentional community then represents a form of "living critique" of issues within its parent

culture. Despite being as varied as they are numerous, most intentional communities demarcate

themselves with social and physical boundaries of some sort. In most cases, intentional

communities own property and buildings that are used as residences. Many intentional

communities are structured using charters, by-laws, and various other legal agreements that

enumerate the rights and responsibilities of members. In some cases, membership in a

community may be based on informal or "handshake" agreements and a sense of mutual

obligation. In virtually all cases, intentional communities form in order to pursue a shared,

alternative vision of that which constitutes a good society.

In his history of American communes, Benjamin Zablocki (1980) argued that intentional

communities emerge at moments of profound social and cultural upheaval. Consequently, the

number and prominence of intentional communities in the American social landscape has varied

considerably throughout America's existence. Not surprisingly, the counterculture era of the

1960s and 1970s in the United States spawned more intentional communities than at any other

time in the nation's history (Zablocki, 1980). Most memorable from this era due its dramatic

departure from accepted social norms was the free love/free drugs/free sex commune. However,

the notoriety of such "hippie communes" overshadowed the abundant variety intentional

communities spawned by the counterculture movement. Communities formed around concerns

related to civil rights and social justice, various religious and spiritual traditions, as well as

numerous environmental issues and philosophies. The majority of intentional communities

started during the counterculture era have dissolved due to poor management, a lack of

resources, and/or a lack of relevancy in the face of social change. Despite this decline, intentional community phenomenon remains a small, but enduring feature of American society. The Fellowship for Intentional Community, a national clearinghouse and resource sharing organization for intentional communities, lists more than 900 intentional communities that are currently active in the United States. As was the case during the counterculture era, contemporary intentional communities are as varied in their aims as the number of social ills present in contemporary America.

Leisure Scholarship and Community

I contend that the intentional community phenomenon presents scholars with a rich context in which to examine the intersection of leisure and community. As implied by the term, intentional communities form in order to create and solidify connections between individuals, which in turn facilitate the pursuit of a particular value, spiritual belief, or philosophy. Nonetheless, intentional communities exist as social experiments in which members pursue strategies to foster communal bonds. Not coincidentally, leisure is often seen as prime medium through which to establish and solidify communal relations.

Several leisure scholars have advocated for leisure services agencies taking a more active role in the cultivation of civic engagement within local communities (Arai & Pedlar, 1996; Glover, 2004a; Glover & Stewart, 2006b; Hemingway, 1999, 2006; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005; Reid, 2006). Such an approach to leisure services administration is appropriate and long over due. However, this approach presupposes that communities need professionals and agencies to address issues related to the welfare of their communities. The intentional community phenomenon suggests that individuals are capable of addressing such needs without the assistance of leisure professionals.

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We turned off of paved roads and onto the Farm's long gravel driveway. The front third of the property is composed of a small field that looks down on the rest of the Farm. After having grown thick over the summer, this field had recently been "bush-hogged" with the new tractor, which left it looking as if it had just received an "agricultural crew cut." I drove slowly down the quarter mile driveway so that Aunt Kathy could take in the Farm's landscape. To our right, on the north side of the property, a wave of kudzu was perpetually falling out of the forest that surrounded the Farm. The driveway ran along the north side of the property and to our left sat the Farm's cultivated fields. Residents of the Farm called their fields "gardens" despite the fact that they were each at least an acre in size.

The driveway ends at a two-bay garage that sits on the western end of the Farm house. The garage and tool shed sit opposite one another and form a little, square parking area that is approximately forty feet by forty feet. I pulled up and parked in front of the compost bin that sat in front of the tool shed. Aunt Kathy and I got out of the car and were greeted by a loud, throaty bark. I looked to the back steps and saw Bella slowly bouncing towards us on her three legs. Bella was the only dog that actually lived at the Farm and she greeted virtually every visitor with the same loud bark. To the uninitiated, Bella's bark seemed to say "who are you? What do you want?" In actuality, Bella was saying, "pay attention to me. Come scratch behind my ears!" I called to Bella, which silenced her bark. I grabbed the beer and hummus and told Aunt Kathy to hang out in the parking area. I deposited the hummus and beer in one of the garage's five refrigerators and returned to find Aunt Kathy scratching behind Bella's left ear. "How about a quick tour of the gardens?" I offered. I estimated that we had at least another hour of late summer sun, which was plenty of time for a garden tour.

For visitors from the North, the most distinctive feature of rural Georgia in the summer is its humidity. People say the air is heavy, but actually it's the people that feel heavy. You move a little slower and you're covered in a thin rime of sweat that accumulates in every nook and cranny. Within minutes, a person's shirt has begun to cling and the edges of his or her hairline are soaked. Droplets of sweat mass on the forehead and wait for the opportune moment to slip into an eyeball and interrupt whatever is happening. To spend time outside, in the South, in August is to sweat.

<div align="center">***</div>

The Farm

In July 2007, I began living in and studying a small, communal farm in rural Georgia called simply, the Farm (a pseudonym). I spent the next five months living and working at the Farm in order to create an ethnographic representation of its unique culture. The Farm is small as farms go, encompassing a little over thirteen acres of forest, fields, and buildings. Six individuals lived at the Farm during my stay. These full time residents formed the nucleus of the Farm community, which consisted of between twenty-five and fifty individuals who spent time there on a weekly basis. Additionally, 2007 marked the Farm's first year as a community supported agriculture (CSA) operation. CSA operations circumvent the industrial agriculture infrastructure by interfacing consumers directly with farmers in their local communities. Consumers actually become seasonal shareholders who are intimately acquainted with farmers and the origins of their food. As a CSA, the Farm produced food for thirty-six shareholders and thus the number of individuals that were a part of the Farm Community may have been as great as sixty or seventy individuals.

The Farm's property is one-third forest and two-thirds fields. Slightly west of the property's center sits the main house, which serves as the social and logistical center of life and activities at the Farm. The house is a rectangular, log home that extends about fifty feet in length and twenty feet in width. A kitchen, dining room, family room, office, full bathroom, and bedrooms occupy the upper floor of the house. The bottom floor of the house, which is largely below grade, features a small apartment with bathroom, a basement, and garage. The length of the Farm house is oriented perpendicular to the north-south axis, so as to optimize its absorption of passive solar energy throughout the winter.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

We walked around the back of the Farm house to the "hoop house garden" that sits to the east of the Farm house. As we did, we passed the kitchen garden that sits just south of the two picnic tables that sit directly in front of the rear entrance to the house. In late summer, the kitchen garden is for me the Farm's showcase. The kitchen garden contains a beautiful, chaotic planting of ornamentals and vegetables. Deep, vibrant green tomato foliage mixes with the red and yellow zinnia blossoms. The dark, broad, shiny leaves of the pepper plants highlight the silky white blossoms of the Angel's Trumpet, otherwise known as jimson weed. Interspersed in the beds are basil, okra, lantana, and sunflower blossoms that are so bright as to actually seem loud. "Oh myyy gawd. That is gorgeous," Aunt Kathy exclaimed pointing to a zinnia bloom. Aunt Kathy asked what type of flower it was. I spent the next few minutes introducing her to the bounty of the Farm's kitchen garden. Despite not having planted or cared for the plants myself, I felt some degree of pride and ownership in its beauty.

We continued on and walked through an opening in the bamboo and net fencing that surrounded the hoop house garden. The cool spell we were experiencing meant that

temperatures were in the lower eighties by 8 o'clock. As we walked, the Katydids' chanting finally began to radiate from the surrounding trees. Not surprisingly, the hoop house garden was dominated by a large "hoop house" that covered the length and breadth of three rows of crops. The hoop house was composed of a skeleton of large metal pipes onto which an enormous piece of semi-translucent polyethylene plastic was attached. This domed shelter was approximately seven feet tall at its apex, leaving sufficient room to maneuver underneath. The hoop house served primarily to protect plants from Mother Nature's whimsy during the shoulder seasons of fall and spring. During the summer months, the plastic on either side of the hoop house could be rolled up to allow for air circulation and cooler temperatures underneath.

As I looked around, I saw two gardens in one. In my mind's eye, I saw the flat, barren rows that I had first encountered on a chilly evening last February. That garden co-existed with and magnified the vibrant display that lay before us. Seeing these contrasting images in my mind's eye made the garden's abundance even more spectacular. Six and seven foot tall tomatoes plants dominated the hoop house and looked as if they meant to burst through its plastic sheath and climb higher and higher. Cherokee Purple, Bloody Butcher, and Yellow Pear fruits hung heavy on the plants and silently testified to the fertility and skill of the Farm and its stewards. In between rows of tomatoes and peppers sat overgrown rows of zinnias with blooms that exploded in deep shades of ruby, saffron, and tangerine. Beyond the zinnias stretched a row containing a various types of sunflowers, with blossoms as large as my head.

"Smell this," I invited Aunt Kathy while holding out a piece of tomato foliage.

"Smell what?!" Aunt looked around pensively. Despite or because of the late hour, honey bees zipped in and out of the nearby plants and around our heads.

"Smell this tomato plant," I commanded. Aunt Kathy put her nose forward and took a quick sniff. I leaned over, buried my nose in the tomato foliage, and inhaled deeply. "That is the smell of a garden for me." Tomato plants have a clean, quintessentially leafy smell that has always captured the garden's essence for me. I could tell from Aunt Kathy's expression that she didn't share my fascination with tomato foliage.

"Look at these," I stepped through a row of pepper plants and knelt beside the broad velvet-like leaves of an eggplant.

"What?" Aunt Kathy asked. She stood her ground until I half-begged, half-ordered her to come closer and see what I had in my hand. She gingerly stepped between the pepper plants and stooped to see what I held. Another "Oh myyyy gawd" filled my ears. I held a softball sized Rosa Bianca eggplant. That gets them every time, I thought to myself. The Rosa Bianca is spherical and white with dark purple and light lavender streaks radiating from its stem downward. In my opinion, it's one of the most beautiful vegetables in the garden. "I know," I said. "It's called a Rosa Bianca, and it's my favorite variety of eggplant."

"Let's take that one," she said in a hushed tone as if someone else was listening.

"What? No," I laughed and chided. "We'll check inside first. There are probably already some picked for dinner."

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Family Dinner

Family Dinner is held on Wednesday evenings at the Farm. Originally created as a means to settle disputes and share information about farm operations, Family Dinner has evolved from its utilitarian function into being almost exclusively a social event. Most evenings, dinner is an informal affair that may or may not be shared by the Farm's residents. In contrast, Family Dinner

is the one evening each week when residents can count on being able to gather and share anecdotes about the past week with friends and acquaintances. Another vital function of Family Dinner is to introduce members of the surrounding community to the Farm's residents, operations, and values. In particular, Mosey, who is one of the Farm's founders and co-owners, felt that Family Dinner functions to educate attendees about the importance of local agriculture, vegetarian cuisine, and the healing properties of sharing a meal with others.

Visitors typically begin arriving by 7:00 p.m. and continue to do so throughout the evening. Guests usually bring dishes they prepared ahead of time, although some guests bring ingredients to cook after arrival. The Farm's residents often begin preparing their dishes just as the first guests arrive and dinner commences once the cooking is finished, typically after 9:00 p.m. and occasionally after 10:00 p.m. The number of attendees at Family Dinner ranges from as little as four to as many as forty individuals. The most prominent factor affecting attendance at Family Dinner is the passage of the seasons. Attendance is greatest during the summer and fall when the greatest number of crops are in season. The menus of some Family Dinner gatherings are dominated by particular vegetables that are in abundance, such as basil, leeks or figs, which has spawned the Fig-stival.

In the present exploration of Family Dinner, I am describing the Farm's unique cultural context including many of its customs, behaviors, language, values, artifacts, and leisure practices. This exploration of the Farm is facilitated by the narrative of Aunt Kathy's participation in a Family Dinner gathering, which functions to encapsulate many of the prominent features of the culture. In many respects, Family Dinner resembles communal meals that occur in a variety of contexts. Consequently, I have chosen to highlight several features of Family Dinner that may distinguish it from other types of communal meals. In addition to

describing Farm's physical and social setting, the following narrative explores norms of physical contact, the commensal dimension of Family Dinner, and the function of conviviality within the context of Family Dinner. I conclude the present inquiry with an interpretation and discussion of the implications of Family Dinner as a context for informal leisure education.

Data Generation, Analysis, and Representation

My exploration of the Farm entailed living in a small "pop-up" style camper on the property from July through November. In keeping with traditional ethnographic methodology (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2005; Wolcott, 1999), participant observation was the primary method by which I generated data. During my months at the Farm, I spent time planting, harvesting, weeding, and doing the many other chores that contribute to a farm's productivity. I also spent numerous hours playing, cooking, cleaning, eating, and talking with members of the Farm community. As I participated in and observed events, I composed field notes from which to create more elaborate depictions of my experiences at the Farm. In addition to my field notes, I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven of the Farm's residents and core community members. These interviews served as a means to contrast my own characterizations to those of the community's members.

Analysis of my data occurred in three stages and was guided by Wolcott's (1994) concept of transforming ethnographic data. The initial phase of data analysis consisted of composing descriptions of the Farm and its inhabitants. My field notes were composed of elaborate, detailed descriptions of the Farm's physical environment and inhabitants. These descriptions served as the basis of my future depictions of my experiences at the Farm. The next phase of my analytic process involved methods of comparing and sorting the data identify salient patterns and themes (Charmaz, 2006). Field notes and interview transcripts were reviewed and the process of open

coding was used to label portions of texts containing significant information. Subsequent to the coding process and guided by my research questions, I compared the resulting codes in an effort to identify commonalities. Related codes were then consolidated into categories that described major themes within the data.

The final phase of the analytic process involved assembling the data into a narrative form. The present analysis takes its inspiration from that which Polkinghorne (1995) called *narrative analysis*. As opposed to comparing multiple stories in an effort to cull out certain commonalities, this analysis will construct a coherent story from my unemplotted field notes and research journal. Specifically, I have drawn on field notes that were composed in response to my participant observation of numerous Family Dinners held at the Farm. This particular narrative is responsive to the first of three research questions that guide my study of the Farm, which asks that I describe the customs, rituals, language, values, artifacts, and leisure practices, that characterize the unique culture that exists at the Farm. To do so, the following narrative takes the form of a "tale," meaning that the exact sequence of events it describes is fictitious (Van Maanen, 1988). However, this tale is carefully constructed using field notes that were created in reaction to actual events and functions as an amalgamation and encapsulation of the experience of Family Dinner. Similar approaches to the analysis and representation of lived experiences may be found in Johnson and Samdahl's (2005) exploration of misogyny in a country-western gay bar and Glover's (2007) investigation of racial privilege in the context of children's baseball.

<div align="center">***</div>

Auth Kathy and I walked up from the hoop house garden towards the picnic tables that sat at the back of the house. Mosey, one of the Farm's residents and co-owners, came walking out of the Large Garden just as we reached the picnic tables.

"Mosey, this is my Aunt Kathy," I said.

"Welcome to the Farm, Aunt Kathy!" Mosey set down his plastic grocery bag of peppers and eggplants and extended his arm around Kathy's shoulders and squeezed her close. This hug had clearly caught Aunt Kathy off-guard just as I knew it would. Mosey was a big, jovial guy, and Aunt Kathy was not a hugger…of people or trees. She was a New Jersey native and preferred the more curt and formal interpersonal interactions of her home. As soon as was possible, Aunt Kathy stepped out of Mosey's embrace. I was concerned that her body language would create an awkward exchange, but Aunt Kathy filled the breach.

"Thank you for having me to dinner," she said with a genuine smile.

"Of course. Everyone is welcome, especially if you're Dr. Fun's aunt," Mosey nodded his head towards me. The Farm's residents reveled in the fact that I studied leisure. Additionally, because they had all been given pseudonyms, they felt that I should have a nickname as well.

"Mosey is an interesting name," Aunt Kathy observed. "Is that a family name?"

Mosey looked at me and smiled. I explained to Aunt Kathy that in order to protect their identity each participant had been given a pseudonym, or fake name. In the spirit of collaboration, I had allowed each participant to choose his or her own pseudonym.

"Mosey was the name of my first dog and Shoshone was the first street I lived on, so I'm Mosey Shoshone" he explained.

I chuckled. "What would yours be, Aunt Kathy?" I asked.

"Well let's see. I guess it would have to be, uh…Lucky, Lucky Rollingwood," she proclaimed.

Mosey and I laughed. "That's definitely a keeper," Mosey offered as we walked in the house.

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Cultural Practices

My analysis of the data yielded numerous cultural norms and practices. I have chosen to highlight the following as being most relevant to the present study.

Norms of Physical Contact

Hugging and other forms of casual physical contact such as impromptu back massages are often exchanged between members of the Farm community. Virtually every community member and visitor is greeted and wished farewell with a hug. Among good friends and long time community members, hugs may last as long as ten seconds and involve tight squeezing and rubbing of participants' backs. To receive an impromptu neck and shoulder massage while sitting and conversing with other community members would not be unheard of or considered inappropriate. As evidenced in the excerpt above, the casual nature with which hugs are given can be disconcerting to visitors.

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Pointing to Mosey's bag, I asked what was for dinner. As he thought, we followed Mosey's lead and headed towards the back door of the Farm house.

"Some sort of sesame-eggplant-bell pepper-tofu stir fry. I haven't really decided yet to be honest." Mosey held the door for Aunt Kathy and me as we entered the kitchen and dining room area of the house.

Upon entering, I scanned the dining tables and kitchen. The dining area to our right was open to the kitchen and separated from the family room by a two-and-a-half foot tall brick wall. The dining area sat at the back of the house and was lit by the remains of the sunlight that poured in through a large picture glass window. Two large dining tables that sat end-to-end

served as the focal point of the dining area. The table nearest to the kitchen was approximately six feet in length and had been stained a medium oak brown color. Further from the kitchen sat the larger table that was a darker walnut color. The two were surrounded by a hodge-podge of benches and mismatched wooden chairs. Except for a green ceramic bowl filled with roma tomatoes and a few crumbs, the tables were clear.

I turned to survey the kitchen that we stood in. The kitchen layout was a basic square with an exterior wall as one of its sides and another side open to the dining area. The remaining three sides were composed of cabinets, countertops, and a sink, range/oven, and refrigerator. The counters were covered in all manner kitchen accoutrements including cutting boards, a food processor, a toaster over, a drying rack, and a large plastic container into which compostable materials were deposited. The three walls of the kitchen were covered by a collection cabinets whose doors had been removed and that contained all manner of dishes, utensils, and a small collection of vegetarian cookbooks.

Despite the clutter, crumbs, and compost bucket, the kitchen and dining area were actually pretty clean by Farm standards. Nonetheless, I considered the museum-like state of cleanliness that Aunt K kept her house in and knew that she was cringing at the sight of the open compost bucket on the counter. I trusted that Aunt Kathy would not comment on the kitchen's cleanliness. I placed my six pack of beer on the "community shelf," which is the lowest shelf in the fridge, and told Aunt Kathy that she could put the hummus down on the table nearest to the kitchen.

"Can we help with dinner?" I asked Mosey.

"Sure. Why don't you slice up these Ping-tung Longs. Aunt Kathy, would you mind slicing these peppers?" Mosey asked.

"Happy to, dear. But first you must tell what a Ping-tung Long is." Mosey grabbed a couple of wooden cutting boards from behind the food processor and a two large knives from the drawer to the left of the refrigerator.

"A Ping-tung Long is this." Mosey produced an eight inch long eggplant that was a maroonish purple color.

"I've never seen anything like it," Aunt Kathy exclaimed.

"Delicious," was Mosey's answer.

Aunt Kathy set about cutting on the counter space to the left of the fridge. I grabbed my eggplants and utensils and began slicing them at the nearest dining table. Mosey grabbed a package of tofu from the fridge and set about draining and pressing it.

"Will this work, Mosey?" Aunt Kathy asked by pointing to the few pieces she had sliced. Without looking Mosey said that whatever she did with those peppers would be just fine with him.

Just as we settled into our working rhythms, a powerful, joyous shriek came from outside. This proclamation of arrival was quickly drowned out by Bella who began barking at the top of her lungs.

"Bella, Bella, Bella," Rowdy said as he entered the back door. Rowdy was followed by Bernie, Lila, Haley, Adam, and two more dogs, Otis and Luna. This group delivered dishes of food, six packs of beer, and bottles of cheap red wine. I exchanged hugs and greetings with everyone and introduced them all to my Aunt Kathy. She preempted the hugging by extending a hand to shake. Her handshake strategy was effective with everyone except for Rowdy who said that he was "a hugger." Rowdy's broad grin and bright eyes overcame any objections Aunt Kathy may have had. At five foot eight and 150 pounds, Rowdy was only an inch or two taller

than Aunt Kathy. Though relatively small in stature, Rowdy's bearing and demeanor betrayed an abundance of potential energy and enthusiasm. As he unpacked his ingredients onto the counter, Rowdy questioned Aunt Kathy about her origins and intentions. As she began to speak, Rowdy came to a halt and focused all his attention on Aunt Kathy's story. He stood with his feet apart and alternately rubbed his shaved head and goatee as she spoke.

Minutes passed and other friends and acquaintances arrived. The recycling bin beside the front porch began to fill with empty beer bottles and the volume level in the house rose. By 9pm, our group had grown to about twenty-five people and the collective noise forced us to "lean in" to hear our conversations. The stereo in the corner was playing some roots reggae that filled in the audible nooks and crannies around our conversations. As was our custom, Adam and I stayed near the dining table so that we could eat and talk at the same time. Adam stood implacably as we talked and sipped from our beer bottles. His Midwestern accent was tinged with twang and difficult to place for those who did not know his origins. Adam wore a short sleeve, rodeo-style shirt with snaps instead of buttons. That such a retro-styled plaid shirt might have resembled clothing styles worn by Adam's grandfather was fitting to the agrarian nostalgia that accompanied Family Dinner.

Adam and I compared notes about the relative burdens of graduate assistantships and his list of favorite rivers to paddle in western North Carolina. By this point in the evening, the dining room table had been filled with all manner of dishes. A large ceramic bowl filled with homemade salsa sat next to the hummus I had made. Bernie, one of the co-managers of the CSA, and his fiancée, Lila had made the salsa. Lila is a ceramic artist, so the dark blue and brown bowl in which the salsa sat was undoubtedly one of her creations. The tomatoes, onions, garlic, peppers, and cilantro that sat in the bowl had most likely all been grown on the Farm. Next to the salsa

sat a platter of thinly sliced and toasted pieces of French bread that were covered with a basil-walnut pesto and a thin slice of roma tomato. I could not help myself from devouring three of the pesto crostinis. Beyond the pesto rounds, sat a platter of bruschetta. When tomatoes and basil are in season, the Farm's residents and visitors eat a lot of bruschetta, pesto, and salsa.

Within an hour, I had finished off two ESB's and was well on my way to filling up on appetizers. "I'm going to get some air on the porch," I explained to Adam. "If I don't stop snacking, I won't be able to eat dinner." Adam agreed. He grabbed a couple beers for us from the fridge. I looked over at Aunt Kathy who had finished her prep duties and was conversing with Mosey. He was in the midst of sautéing some tofu, while talking with Aunt Kathy. I was relieved to see that she did not need my company, so Adam and I adjourned to the porch.

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After another twenty minutes, Mosey was finished cooking and his and every other dish had been placed along the center of the two dining room tables. Shortly thereafter, George and Harry emerged from the hallway that led to the house's bedrooms. George was strumming his banjo and Harry was playing one of his many guitars. They were playing and replaying a short refrain from a bluegrass tune that I had heard many times. As they walked around the family room and to the far side of the dining room, people ceased their conversations and formed an oblong circle around the tables. People began to clap their hands and gyrate to the beat of the music. After about thirty seconds, Harry and George stopped playing and we all grasped each other's hands. I held hands with Adam on my right and Alisa on my left. I looked across the circle and saw that Aunt Kathy was holding hands with Bernie and Haley.

In a loud voice, George asked what was for dinner tonight. Wendy stepped forward and pointed to a bowl that contained baba ganouch that had been made from ping tung long

eggplants grown on the Farm. Rowdy pointed to a glass bowl and explained that it contained a corn, bean, and tomato salsa that utilized tomatoes and onions that were both grown on the Farm. Mosey described his eggplant, pepper, sesame tofu stirfry that contained ingredients that almost all came from the Farm. Haley pointed to some veggie chili that contained peppers, onion, tomatoes, and garlic from the Farm. There were crostinis topped with pesto made from Farm basil. The roasted butternut squash came from the Farm as did sautéed onion and summer squash mixture. In addition to the dishes that contained ingredients from the Farm, there was some wild rice, my hummus, and Hank's peach enchiladas that he explicitly explained contained nothing from the Farm and that were not in any way shape or form "good for you." Laughter and a brief pause followed as the group collectively assessed whether the menu had been completely accounted for.

"What are you thankful for tonight?" Harry said aloud as he looked to the person on his right. She responded by saying that she was thankful for the "cooler weather." The next person said "good food," and the next said "good friends," and "rain" and so on until it reached Aunt Kathy who said "the hospitality of strangers!" After everyone had answered, Harry looked at Mosey and asked if had something he wanted to say. Mosey said that he was thankful for this collection of people at this moment. He recalled when he and Rowdy (co-owners of the Farm) had sat on the front porch two years ago and hatched the idea of creating a sustainable community. Every Family Dinner eaten at the Farm is a realization of that dream. Finally, he said that he wanted to welcome Aunt Kathy to Family Dinner and that she should know that she's welcome to Family Dinner any time. Aunt Kathy thanked him for letting her join them. The circle finished when we all squeezed hands and Rowdy said, "Let's eat!"

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Dinner Circle

Having participated in more than twenty Dinner Circles, I have observed that virtually every instance contains the following features: circle formation and hand holding, thanks-giving, a menu recitation, a welcome, and a closing.

Circle formation and hand holding

Dinner Circle is usually initiated by a core resident of the Farm such as Mosey, Wendy, Bernie, George, or Rowdy. Once all of the dishes have been placed on the table, one of the core members asks for everyone to form a circle around the dining room tables. If most of the individuals in attendance have been to Family Dinner before, they will most often grab each others' hands without any prompting after having been asked to form a circle. If a large number of the attendees have not previously been to the Farm for a meal, one of the core members of the Farm community will usually prompt everyone to hold hands by saying something such as "people [will] have to hold hands for this part of things" (Wendy, field notes, 08/04/07). Instruction to hold hands is most often given at harvests festivals or celebrations that include a large number of individuals who not previously eaten a meal at the Farm.

Welcome and thanks-giving

Dinner Circle serves as an opportunity to officially welcome individuals to the Farm and the meal. Once individuals have formed a circle around the dining tables, one of the core members of the Farm community, though not necessarily the person who called for circle, will welcome and/or thank attendees for coming. At this point in the evening, first-time attendees may be publicly introduced and welcomed by those in attendance.

In addition to welcoming newcomers, one of the primary activities undertaken at every Dinner Circle is the giving of thanks. Once again this process is often initiated by a core member of the Farm community. Consider the following excerpts related to this practice:

> Wendy called us all into a Dinner Circle and asked that we hold hands. We encircled the two dining room tables and did so. Wendy paused for a second or two to scan the scene of people who had collected. *She asked that "we go around [the circle] and name something that we're thankful for."* (field notes, 09/19/07)

On several occasions, this process of thanksgiving has been accompanied by music. As can be seen in the excerpts listed above the topics that individuals give thanks for are varied. Giving thanks for tangible items such as food, people, and weather is common. Equally common are comments that give thanks for intangible concepts such as love, friendship, and hospitality.

Menu recitation

In addition to giving thanks, a recurrent component of every Dinner Circle is a recitation of the food items by their makers. Due to the shared nature of the meal, menu recitation serves to inform all attendees of the various ingredients used in each. This serves the practical function of ensuring that individuals with allergies or strong food preferences are aware of what they will be eating. Additionally, as Wendy described below, the menu recitation serves to bolster the Farm's communal identity in relation to food.

> Seeing as we are a farm we're pretty proud of our food and we want to be able to eat more of what we grow and of what's locally grown and be more sustainable…. And since we're heading in that direction and we can do more of that it's more and more exciting. (Wendy, interview, 01/08/08)

When describing one's dish, emphasis is placed on an ingredient when it originated at the Farm itself or another local farm. Descriptions highlighting local ingredients are often met with vocal affirmation from other attendees. The manner in which ingredients from the Farm are proudly declared accords such dishes a certain status with in the context of Family Dinner. In so doing, menu recitation functions to bolster the collective identity of the Farm.

Closings

Dinner Circle often concludes with a recognition or activity of some sort. Examples of closings include a coordinated clapping or squeezing of hands, the collective singing of a verse, or often a moment of silence. As with the invocation of the Dinner Circle, the closing is often initiated by a resident of the Farm or a long time member of its community. For example, Rowdy closed Dinner Circle in the following manner.

> He encouraged us to all let go hands and do as he did. He proceeded to rub his hands together in a quick circular motion. We all imitated him and as I did my hands began to warm. He said that we should continue this for a second more and then clap our hands together quickly, which he did and which we quickly followed. He joked that we had done the right thing, but that the clap was supposed to be together. So he proceeded to rub his hands again and this time as he went to clap, so did we and all of our claps occurred almost spontaneously which produced a satisfying sound. (field notes 08/15/07)

A closing such as the one described above further adds structure to the practice of Dinner Circle. It signals to participants, especially first time participants, that this portion of the evening is concluding and that eating may begin. Closing activities add an additional measure of structure and ceremony to the gathering, which in turn contributes a sense that Family Dinners are special or out of the ordinary.

The Structure and Function of Dinner Circle

In discussing the structure and function of Dinner Circle, several long time participants including Mosey, Wendy, George, and Bernie, explained that Dinner Circle encourages participants to be intentional about their consumption of the food. "[Dinner Circle] is about setting intention….Our society does not encourage us to think about [food consumption]. It sounds kind of cliché, but realistically, you don't have to think to consume," Bernie explained. In other words, Dinner Circle signals that what is taking place is different, a meal experience that stands apart from the often hurried, perfunctory consumption of food. In contrast, Dinner Circle encourages attendees to "present themselves" to one another and to "acknowledge where our food comes from and how we feel about that." As opposed to mindless consumption, Dinner Circle is meant to encourage intentional and deliberate consumption. In this way, Dinner Circle also creates a temporal boundary that signals the "official beginning" of Family Dinner.

Related to its facilitation of intentional consumption, Dinner Circle also functions to replace many participants' childhood mealtime religious rituals. "A lot of us come from families where we held hands and prayed around the table, and [Dinner Circle] is definitely not very dissimilar to how we grew up," George explained. Every participant interviewed acknowledged that while Dinner Circle is not overtly religious, the themes of thanksgiving and connection have spiritual undertones that may substitute for traditional religious blessings. Bernie captured this idea when he explained that through Dinner Circle "people are connected through the food, the location, and the agrarian ideal that a lot of us are reaching back towards." Adam elaborated on this idea when he relayed the thoughts of a farmer he knows "who said that food was his religion." To paraphrase, at some point every living thing becomes food for something else and is therefore connected to and dependent on everything else. Through the act of eating,

individuals are expressing their fundamental connection to other organisms of all shapes and sizes. For participants, most of whom do not participate in organized religion, this connection is performed and embodied during Dinner Circle through the acts of holding hands, giving thanks, recognizing food and its origins, and intentional eating.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

I have referred to Dinner Circle as a focal practice because it is *practiced*—it is a behavior that is repeated each time that Family Dinner occurs, whether there are four or forty people present. Dinner Circle is *focal* because it serves as both a temporal and physical node of the experience of being a part of the Farm community. Dinner Circle is a coming together, a recognition of a collective. Individuals arrive at the Farm, they snack, they drink, they mingle, in short, they *develop connections*. After the circle, dinner is served and people settle into their clusters to talk and eat. After dinner, people clean and then they depart. Thus, Dinner Circle is the point in the evening when people are encouraged to recognize their connection to one another. Dinner Circle is the choreography of a set of behaviors that teaches participants that they are participating in an event that is special when compared to other meals.

In her seminal work on the socio-cultural aspects of food consumption, Mary Douglas (1984) observed that food creation and consumption are largely social phenomena. This social conceptualization of food consumption contrasts sharply with analyses of food and its consumption as being merely a physiological, (i.e., calorie counting). The act of eating, even by one's self, is fraught with numerous social norms that situate individuals and groups relative to one another. In light of its inherently social dimension, Family Dinner may be understood as a distinctive feature on the American gastronomic landscape. When compared to America's penchant for fast food consumption (Paeratakul, Ferdinand, Champagne, Ryan, & Bray, 2003),

features of Family Dinner such as the physical contact, performance of Dinner Circle or the status afforded to local food are distinctive social markers within contemporary American foodways.

Given the social nature of food consumption, there are at least two important aspects from which Family Dinner ought to be examined. As suggested by its very name, Family Dinner is inherently commensal, meaning it is an intentionally shared dining experience. The manner in which the meal is shared corresponds to some degree with the social relations of the individuals sharing the meal (Douglas, 1984). For example, a meal that is interspersed with conversation between friends may last considerably longer than a meal consumed amongst strangers in a food court or cafeteria. An analysis of the manner in which the meal is shared will begin to elucidate the way in which Family Dinner attendees purport to relate to another. In addition to its commensal dimension, Family Dinner reproduces various social discourses and movements related to food origins, cultivation, and production. Specifically, the discourse and practices related to Family Dinner align closely with the Slow Food and local food movements.

Commensality

As mentioned above, the preparation and service of Family Dinner occurs in a "potluck" fashion. As evidenced in the present tale, attendees typically prepare dishes in their own homes and bring a portion large enough to share with several individuals. The cumulative effect of these preparations is usually two large dining tables filled end-to-end with more than enough food to feed every person in attendance. As a social phenomenon, potluck dining must be understood in contrast to more formal dinner parties in which a host(ess) prepares a meal in its entirety and guests arrive empty-handed. Potluck dining has been traditionally favored by those of lower socio-economic status due their inability to provide food for more than their immediate families

(Madden & Finch, 2006). Thus dinner parties have been the domain of the affluent, or those who aspire to be so. As has been the case for thousands of years, elaborate meals or feasts are often meant to highlight the status and wealth of the host or hostess.

The potluck format of Family Dinner evades the very practical issues of having to calculate and provide food for a large number of people. Implicit in the potluck format is the material logic that if every attendee brings a dish that will feed several individuals, then no one will go hungry. However, the potluck format also aligns Family Dinner with the solidarity of lower class leisure. Potluck meals imply a mutual, but diffused obligation to provide food for every other person in attendance. Instead of highlighting one individual's status, potlucks in general and Family Dinner in particular signify an equality of status amongst attendees. The potluck format is generally in keeping with the Farm members' discourse related to creating and egalitarian community.

Despite this communality, potlucks must be distinguished from genuinely communal meals. Communal meals are those which are prepared, served, and consumed by tightly knit social units such as monastic communities. Certain intentional communities, both past and present, have utilized communal meals as focal points of their communal lives (Andelson, 2006). In addition to food preparation, residents of such communities often contribute labor and/or money to communal enterprises such as farming or livestock husbandry. As opposed to the potluck, which could be understood as an assemblage individuals who have chosen to commune with one another, a communal meal should be understood as reflecting an essentially collective identity. In contrast to a communal meal, attendees at Family Dinner may use their dishes to simultaneously express their individuality and commitment to the shared values of the Farm.

This dual function contrasts with manner in which a genuinely communal meal subordinates individual express in favor of group solidarity.

Informal Leisure Education

As the amount of time available for leisure activities increased during the twentieth century, public agencies increasingly felt inclined to educate the individuals regarding the constructive use of leisure. This paternalistic approach to leisure education emerged first as a facet of public education and was later appropriated by the newly professionalized field of recreation and leisure services administration (Goodale & Godbey, 1988). The phrase "leisure education" continues to be associated with the administration of public and not-for-profit leisure services (e.g., municipal parks and recreation departments, YMCA) and especially in the context of therapeutic approaches to recreation and leisure programming.

Recognizing its association within bureaucratic and programmatic settings, I apply the term leisure education to Family Dinner with the intent of broadening its conceptual boundaries. As opposed to bureaucratic contexts, Family Dinner represents a type of informal, grassroots approach to leisure education. The goals, objectives, and learning outcomes of a traditional leisure education program plan are not present at Family Dinner. Nonetheless, Family Dinner features numerous mechanisms for educating and socializing attendees into its foodways. As opposed to a public leisure education program, the structure and function of Family Dinner more closely resembles the Slow Food organization and the activities of its *convivia*. *Convivia* are small gatherings, analogous to chapters for other organizations, at which Slow Food members and guests gather to share their appreciation of food and its cultivation.

Founded in 1989, the Slow Food organization was founded by a group of left-wing college students intent on reviving and preserving the traditional foodways of their native region

of Piemonte. With the eloquent and charismatic Carlo Petrini at its helm the organization

flourished and today claims in excess of 80,000 members spread among 850 *convivia*. Slow

Food's philosophy states,

> …that everyone has a fundamental right to pleasure and consequently the responsibility to
>
> protect the heritage of food, tradition and culture that make this pleasure possible. Our
>
> movement is founded upon this concept of eco-gastronomy – recognition of the strong
>
> connections between plate and planet. (Slow Food International Web Site)

Slow Food pursues its mission and philosophy via its local chapters known as convivia. Its

education takes place through meals, tastings, tours, and cooking demonstrations that showcase

particular food items and/or producers. In all of its activities related to food consumption, special

emphasis is placed on the sensuality and conviviality of eating. By cultivating an appreciation for

artisanal and heritage foods, Slow Food hopes the eating public will learn to value and in turn

protect such products and producers. However, as its philosophy suggests the cultivation of taste

and of an appreciation for the sensual and convivial aspects of eating are not merely means for

preserving agricultural biodiversity, but ends unto themselves as they result in happier

individuals and communities.

Given its philosophy and *modus operandi*, similarities between Slow Food and the Farm

are obvious. Though not articulated as prominently or cogently as Slow Food's philosophy, the

Farm also pursues an education of taste with its attendees to Family Dinner. Mosey explained

that one of the functions of Family Dinner is to demonstrate to people that they can eat a healthy

and delicious vegetarian meal. He acknowledged that Family Dinner may be the only time each

week that some participants sit with others and intentionally share a prepared meal. In describing

the purpose of Dinner Circle, George explained that it functions in part to create "an intent to

enjoy the food" being served. In that regard, the actual choreography of circling, holding hands, reciting a menu, and giving thanks is a process of educating attendees regarding the activity of eating. If a greater degree of intentionality can be understood to enhance the pleasure of eating, Dinner Circle can be understood as a form of "education for pleasure."

To the extent that Family Dinner is understood as a type of informal leisure education similar to a Slow Food *convivium*, it is susceptible to many of the criticisms leveled against the Slow Food movement generally. In her review of Slow Food, Leitch (2003) highlighted the extent to which the organization has commodified nostalgia for a "simpler way of life" and its food products. In so doing, Slow Food has through its convivia created hegemonic discourse related to the consumption of food. This hegemonic discourse manifests in Slow Food's endorsement of products and producers, which in turn has economic and material benefits for that which it endorses. Similar to leisure education efforts more generally, "taste education" implicitly creates a moral schema in relation to food consumption. Such a moral schema is socially constructed and must therefore be maintained through reproduction and enforcement. In so doing, this form of education must be accountable for its use of power to shape behavior.

Food Knowledge and Social Status

As with other social processes, eating and education for eating are capable of conferring social status to groups and individuals. In his exploration of the phenomenon of taste, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) examined not only the domains of so-called high art, (i.e., painting and music) but also those ubiquitous fixtures of mass culture, such as food consumption, that are also fraught with status implications. As with numerous consumptive activities, Bourdieu argued that food consumption was partially a process of signification in which individuals exhibit cultural knowledge.

> Consumption is…a stage of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes explicit mastery of a cipher or code….A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded. (p. 2)

An individual's ability to decode and consume is affected by that person's education related to the code under scrutiny. Bourdieu described this process of educating for consumption as the accumulation of *cultural capital*. This conceptualization of the process makes possible an analysis of consumption as a process which is imbued with power and status implications. Thus, while food preferences are seemingly democratized and innocuous, knowledge of food consumption and cultivation is undoubtedly a form of cultural capital.

As is evident at Family Dinner, knowledge of food origins, especially when such knowledge is the product of farm labor and cultivation, bestows the user of such knowledge with status and a level of acceptance into the Farm community. The use of such capital was illustrated vividly at a Family Dinner to which I brought my friends Kevin and Alex.

Kevin is averse to virtually all vegetables, so I suggested that he eat before attending Family Dinner so as not to go hungry. I assured him that his tastes would not prove problematic as I had witnessed other members of the Farm community abstain from eating at previous dinners for various reasons. To my surprise, however, Kevin's non-participation in the evening meal proved to be a source of tension throughout the evening. That evening's dinner features a carrot tasting that was being done to decide which two of five varieties would be planted that season on the Farm. Upon being invited to taste the carrots, Kevin explained his aversion to all things vegetable, which left Mosey with a perplexed and partially disgusted look on his face. Throughout the evening, conversations touched on the carrot tasting, Pollan's (2006) book *The*

Omnivore's Dilemma, and the coming season's planting plan were discussed. Kevin's lack of

cultural capital related to food consumption and origins excluded him from all such

conversations. In contrast, Alex is a self-proclaimed "foodie" and readily participated in all such

food conversations. Alex sampled the carrots and offered his feedback. He also shared anecdotes

from a period during which he lived in France and his adventuresome experiences in a foreign

cuisine. While Kevin sat on the periphery of the group, both metaphorically and literally, Alex

had parlayed his cultural capital to occupy a prominent social position within the evening's

affairs.

Kevin and Alex's differential treatment exemplifies the function of food knowledge or

cultural capital within the Family Dinner setting. A significant number of conversations that take

place at Family Dinner have food cultivation and consumption as their subject. To participate in

such conversations, an attendee must possess a basic knowledge of the food item or process

being discussed. As Bourdieu (1984) might have conceptualized the issue, an individual must

possess a basic knowledge of the code in order to participate in the de-coding. If an attendee,

such as Kevin, summarily dismisses the decoding process in general, that person is precluded

from any status that might have been afforded by such capital.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

I contend that Dinner Circle is a vital behavior for constructing the concept and discourse

of community at the Farm. Individuals collect in a variety of contexts everyday to eat meals

together. Cafeterias, food courts, and parks are exemplary of such gatherings. However, such

haphazard gatherings would not constitute "authentic communities" within many contexts,

especially at the Farm. As Bernie explained, such gatherings are typically just "mindless

consumption" of calories and involve no mutual obligations among participants, aside from an

obligation to not bother others. In contrast, participants come to Family Dinner precisely to commune with friends and acquaintances and to make new friends. Family Dinner is predicated on the obligation to prepare food and to assist in the cleaning that follows. While ostensibly functioning only to thank, celebrate, and inform participants, I contend that Dinner Circle also functions to recognize the intentionality and obligation that underlie the gathering. In doing so, it reproduces the Farm's discourse related to community that this place is special and welcoming; this place is based on mutual obligation and sacrifice. If forced to discuss instances where community manifests itself, I believe that a member of the Farm community could easily point to Dinner Circle as an embodied instance of community.

As opposed to much of human history, the act of eating in contemporary society involves an immense number of choices. That being the case, Bell and Valentine (1997) cautioned scholars that eating cannot be understood as simply the consumption of calories. Aside from all of the material and economic issues related food production, eating is an act filled with social, cultural, and political implications (p. 3). As with most consumptive practices in the post-modern era, choices about eating involve negotiating numerous discourses related to health, body image, cultural sophistication, animal cruelty, environmental awareness, etc. The commensal dimension of eating, which is who one shares a meal with, also exposes individuals and groups to numerous social discourses. The sharing of a meal is seen as being socially significant, so who one chooses to share a meal may necessarily entail the performance of a certain identity.

In the case of the Farm, participation in Family Dinner, especially ongoing participation, has less to do with simply consuming a meal than with subscribing to a certain discourse and identity related to the importance of communal connections and local food. In the case of the Farm, the localized discourse surrounding Family Dinner involves statements about

unconditionally welcoming participants, valuing locally produced food, the importance of mutual obligation and participation in work, the value of physical contact, and the enduring nature of community. That these statements align with the Slow Food philosophy indicate the extent to which food cultivation and consumption is simultaneously a local and global concern.

Without ignoring the important role that organized leisure services play in contemporary society, one must acknowledge that the majority of leisure experiences take place in the private domain. Consequently, I contend that a greater proportion of scholarly inquiry needs to be devoted to examining and fostering private, grassroots efforts to rediscover the importance of leisure for the well-being of individuals and communities. Activities such as Family Dinner are exemplary of such phenomena.

<div align="center">***</div>

Dinner proceeded and the rest of the evening was largely unremarkable. I sat next to Aunt Kathy on porch at a table with Mosey, Adam, Haley, Bernie, and Lila. Aunt Kathy quizzed Mosey and Bernie about the Farm's organization and operations. Despite having described the Farm's operations to many thousands of people, Mosey and Bernie were patient and deliberate in the description of the various tasks that went into cultivating the Farm's produce.

Around 10:30pm, Aunt Kathy I left the table and collected some dishes to bring to the kitchen. We set our dishes on the counter and I asked Hank, who was washing at that moment, if he would like some relief. He said sure so I stepped in and began washing some plates.

"Did you enjoy your dinner?" I asked Aunt Kathy.

"Wonderful. I've never had tofu before, but it was delicious. It really absorbed the sesame flavoring of Mosey's sauce. Hank's peach enchiladas were tasty as well."

"Yes, you'll have to get Hank to give you his secret ingredient to that recipe," I teased.

I finished washing the plates and silverware that were on the counter and asked Aunt Kathy if she was ready to leave.

"'Fraid so. I've got to get up and get on the road in the morning," she said. "I'll go say goodbye and then we can be on our way."

I collected our hummus dish and Aunt Kathy and I walked out to the front porch. I announced that we were leaving and everyone wished us good night. Before he could get up, Aunt Kathy had walked around to Mosey and given him a big hug around the neck. Mosey thanked her for coming and reminded her that she was welcome at the Farm any time.

We navigated the darkness and found our car again. Back on the road, I could tell Aunt Kathy was brooding over something as she is rarely quiet.

"So did you have a good time tonight?" I asked with a certain self-satisfaction.

"Those weren't really hippies, you know," Aunt Kathy exclaimed. I could only shake my head in disbelief.

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CHAPTER FIVE

PLAYIN' FARMER: EXPERIENCES OF WORK AND LEISURE ON A

COMMUNAL FARM[1]

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[1] Dunlap, R. To be submitted to *Leisure Studies*.

Abstract

The ascendance of the service economy and the casualization of employment are integrated in ways that change the experience of both work and leisure in contemporary society. Although such changes have been widely documented, the present study examines the interrelation of work and leisure for members of a small communal farm. Using an ethnographic methodology, this study describes the manner in which farm labor takes on characteristics that are often associated with the concepts of both work and leisure. Not surprisingly, farm labor was found to be physically demanding and intimately connected to weather conditions. Despite or because of its demanding nature, farm work was often approached with a playful attitude and consistently exhibited flow-like characteristics. Additionally, work on the Farm necessitated a continual learning process that was often kinesthetic in nature. Finally, given the importance of labor to the Farm culture, work functions was a form of currency that was capable of conferring community status. In contrast to a job that is pursued merely for income, farming is conceptualized by participants as an activity that facilitates meaningful personal and social. Such an approach to their labor, defies typical characterizations of work and leisure as dichotomous concepts and experiences.

INDEX WORDS: Work, Leisure, Habitus, Ethnography, Flow

A Tuesday Morning in July, Rural Georgia

I snoozed it twice, and then turned it off when it buzzed again at 6:10 p.m. It was still dark underneath the forest canopy, but apparently, I was the last one in my little corner of the forest to wake up because the birds were "talking" incessantly and a small rodent of some sort was running laps around my camper. I rolled out of my bunk and landed heavily on my feet. As I did so, the camper shook violently and for a split second all surrounding animal activity came to halt.

I breathed deeply and was overcome by an overwhelming feeling of nasty. It had been raining when I went bed last night, so I had zipped up my canvas windows, which had transformed my little pop-up camper into a tepid steam bath. I threw open the door and stepped forth in my boxers and hiking boots, feeling gross and vaguely like Shrek the Ogre might when stepping out of his cottage. Walking deeper into the forest, I strode confidently over to my favorite patch of poison ivy and peed on it, knowing well that peeing on poison will kill it over the course of a few weeks. Walking back past my camper, I stood at the forest boundary for a moment and surveyed the surrounding fields and pasture. The Farm house was some seventy feet away on the top of a small rise and its shape was beautifully silhouetted by the rising sun. I could just make out someone, probably Wendy, sitting on the back steps eating something. On the off-chance that Wendy could see me better than I could see her, I thought it wise to return to the camper and put on some clothes.

By 6:55 a.m., I was fed, caffeinated, and slathered in sunscreen, so I left my forest abode and walked up to the picnic tables that sat on the backside of the Farm house. Today was a Tuesday and those were harvest days at the Farm. Having only lived at the Farm for a few days, this was my first harvest day and I was eager to make a good impression. In other words, this

was my long awaited first opportunity to "play farmer." Wendy had said that she and Bernie

would be starting at 7am this morning in order to get a jump on the heat. Not being a morning

person, I was quite pleased to be reporting for duty a few minutes before 7:00 a.m. Not a bad

way to start off my farming career I thought to myself.

<center>***</center>

<center>A Review of Relevant Literature</center>

In response to the evolving capacity of labor saving technologies, numerous twentieth century scholars predicted optimistically that wage labor would cease to be prominent feature of the American social landscape (Seabrook, 1989). If technological prowess were capable of satisfying society's basic material needs, individuals' energies could be devoted to leisure. In the wake of such a transformation, society would then be challenged to realize leisure's potential. Unfortunately, the twentieth century's predicted leisure revolution has yet to be realized in the early twenty-first century. Indeed, work for compensation endures as one of the most salient features of life in the postmodern world (Critcher & Bramham, 2004). While many employment sectors have witnessed dramatic changes, for example the casualization of employment arrangements (Beck, 1999), work continues to be a coherent domain of life experience from which individuals derive meaning. In other words, individuals continue to invest untold amounts of time as well as physical and mental energies into cultivation of their careers. Indeed, Critcher and Bramham (2004) contend that instead of waning, the prominence of wage labor has actually eclipsed that of leisure.

If the significance of work in society has generally not been diminished, this has also been true of one of the oldest occupations, namely farming. However, as with other industries, the nature of farming has changed dramatically. At the close of the nineteenth century, most of

America's meat and produce were cultivated domestically on thousands of small, often family-owned farms. However, immediately following World War II farming underwent a technological revolution that dramatically altered the manner in which food was produced in the United States. Under the tutelage of the academic field of crop science, farmers began increasing their yields with the application of artificial herbicides, fungicides, and petroleum-based fertilizers. Centuries old farming practices quickly gave way to technological innovation and farming became an industry dominated by a few multi-national corporations. As opposed to serving local communities, multi-nationals such as Monsanto or Archer-Daniels-Midland have standardized crop production in order to serve a global market.

The scale and influence of industrial agriculture has resulted in numerous environmental problems, including the destabilization of ecosystems from the excessive use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Existing in the shadow of multi-national operations, small-scale farmers, such as those at the Farm, see themselves as combating the ills of industrial farming by recreating an agrarian lifestyle that is predicated on an ethic of stewardship. As opposed to simply being an occupation for which one is paid, the lifestyle of a small-scale farmer is a form of social activism. Such an agrarian lifestyle presents leisure scholars with an interesting counterpoint to the segmentation and routinization of contemporary work and leisure experiences (Rojek, 1995).

Farming and gardening are undergoing something of a renaissance thanks in part to popular writers such as Wendell Berry (2002) and Barbara Kingsolver (2007). Their portrayals of the small, family farm extol the importance of local farming for fostering a sense of place. Farming is portrayed as reconnecting individuals to the land and the seasons as well as our nation's agrarian heritage. Finally, in contrast to typical wage labor, farming and gardening offer

adherents meaningful work in which workers are intimately connected to the fruits of their labors. Whether pursued as a vocation or leisure activity, small-scale farming and gardening are described as activities that compensate for the alienation of urban culture (Berry, 2002) and the alienating effects of wage labor (Stormann, 1989).

Overall, members of contemporary society report that they are suffering from increasing economic and time pressures (Schor, 2006). An overall decrease in the percentage of Americans engaged in stable, full-time employment has contributed to a general feeling of distress. Part-time employment is rarely accompanied by the sorts of benefits, such as health insurance and pension, which contribute to workers' overall security and well-being. Added to these insecurities are increasing pressures to engage in consumption-intensive activities, such as television and movie watching, eating out, and shopping for personal goods. Functioning synergistically, these factors have resulted in Americans working more hours and generally feeling less satisfied with the quality and quantity of time devoted to leisure (Schor, 1992, 2006; de Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2001).

Scholarship on the work-leisure relationship has obviously tended to conceptualize them as being oppositional social domains. Work is typically portrayed as instrumental and alienating, while leisure is understood as a space of personal expression and freedom. Analysis of the two has traditionally portrayed leisure as compensating for the perceived deficits of one's occupation, or alternatively as a continuation of the dominant features of an individual's work (Veal, 2004). However, the work-leisure binary was troubled by Csikszentmihalyi's (1991) introduction of the concept of flow. As a characterization of individuals' experience, the flow concept defies socio-economic conventions of work and leisure. Thus, as Delle Fave and Massimini (1988) described the contrasting experiences of flow in contemporary and agrarian work contexts, it becomes clear

that such a segmented portrayal of work and leisure may not be applicable in the lifestyle of small-scale farm, such as the Farm.

As suggested by earlier scholars (Thomas, 1964), the segmented domains of work and leisure were probably not applicable to pre-industrial societies. As opposed to being conceptualized as social domains in their own right, work and leisure were facets of an all-encompassing agrarian lifestyle in which activities may or may not exhibit characteristics of that which is conceptualized as work and leisure in cotemporary society. Delle Fave and Massimini's (1988) investigation articulated the "blurring" of these conceptual distinctions by describing the flow experiences of individuals engaged in agrarian occupations, such as farming, animal husbandry, and crafting. Consistent with the characteristics of flow theory generally (e.g., parity of skill and challenge, perceived freedom, intrinsic reward, distortion of time perception), such occupations offer inherent challenges that are more likely to facilitate flow experiences.

> In such conditions, as in most preindustrial societies, everyday activities are closely connected to clear goals and essential functions: Farm and animal husbandry are necessary for biological survival, social interactions are necessary to keep the fabric of mutual support and sociability in working order…. (p. 196)

The authors argued that in contexts where work offers such flow experiences, leisure ceases to take on a compensatory functions, as it did for participants working in office environments. Stormann (1989) echoed these observations when he said,

> Industrial society must adopt the position that life's meaning and purpose can only be realized in responsible forms of work….It must be realized that work is the paramount means of self-discovery. If work is not transformed accordingly, then the rush to find meaning in tourism, consumerism, and hedonism will have catastrophic results. (p. 28-29)

Thus, there exists an argument that the pursuit of meaningful leisure activities may in fact result from a paucity of meaningful work opportunities.

Delle Fave and Massimini (1988) seemed to have suggested that the general malaise associated with Schor's (1992) work-and-spend lifestyle vanishes in the context of a freely chosen lifestyle that offers meaningful and challenging work opportunities. In light of such an assertion, the present study is generally concerned with describing nature of work and leisure experiences of individuals living and working on the Farm (a pseudonym). As suggested by Delle Fave and Massimini (1988) and Stormann (1989), if individuals associated with the Farm find their work more meaningful, might the pursuit of contemporary leisure activities decline in importance for them? The present manuscript pursues this line of inquiry by examining my theoretical interest in this topic, followed by a description of my research methodology. The manuscript then focuses on the salient features of work and leisure on the Farm and concludes with a discussion of implications of such features for theorization and future research. Throughout this manuscript, narrative vignettes drawn from my experiences living at the Farm are used to showcase the experience of work and leisure within farm life. As opposed to simply functioning as entertaining segues, these vignettes have been carefully constructed using field notes and interview transcripts to represent the lived experience of farm life.

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Wendy emerged from the Farm house with a wad of plastic grocery bags and a pair of sharp kitchen knives in hand.

"Morning!" I said.

"I'm surprised to see you this early," she replied.

"You said 7:00 o'clock yesterday, so here I am."

"Well congratulate yourself because you're earliest volunteer we've ever had." Wendy walked directly past me towards the lower garden. I grabbed my water bottle and hat and scrambled to catch up. "We're going to harvest some arugula first thing," she said. We walked up on the garden and she quickly pulled back the eight foot tall deer fence and proceeded to the end of a row. She squatted next to a row of leafy greens and I stepped to the other side of the row and squatted as well.

She looked up at me. "So this is arugula," she said motioning to what looked like an eight inch tall, leafy green mohawk that extended for forty feet. "And this is how you harvest it."

She reached down grabbed a handful of leaves and efficiently cut them about two inches above the ground. After depositing her handful, she grabbed the other kitchen knife and deftly flipped it over so that she held its blade and presented me with its handle. The ease with which she handled the knife reminded me of my friend Andre's assessment of his ex-girlfriend. "Careful, that girl 'ill cutch-oo," he said.

I grabbed a couple plastic bags and walked down to the other end of the row. I figured I would work towards her and not get in her way. I sat down and back on my haunches and began slicing. My concentration alternated between making good clean slices and taking care not to slice my fingers. The result was a shaggy, uneven trail of arugula stubs. I looked down to see Wendy's progress and quickly realized she was covering more ground. She paused, grabbed a few leaves and took a bite. Apparently satisfied, she continued. I grabbed a leaf and popped it in my mouth. "Whoa," I thought—firm, almost crunchy and spicy with a hint of bitterness. "Good", I thought, but definitely not breakfast food.

I continued slicing and scooting, scooting and slicing, until Wendy and I met. I handed her my full bag and she added it to her two bags. After depositing the bags of arugula back at the

picnic tables, I followed her on to the largest of the Farm's three gardens where she said we would pick some basil.

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Nostalgia for an Unknown Past

My desire to "play in the dirt," as my grandmother calls it, is inspired by nostalgia for a past I have never experienced. I did not grow up on a farm. I did not wake at the crack of dawn to feed the chickens before walking to school. None of my weekends as a teenager were spent picking tobacco, cotton, strawberries, or milking cows. However, such experiences figure prominently both in previous generations of my own family and the history of the United States. Indeed, as the generation that grew victory gardens during World War II passes away, fewer and fewer Americans have had any connection to the cultivation of their food. This distance from the cultivation of food is not in keeping with America's cultural heritage (Kingsolver, 2007). Thus my contrived feelings of nostalgia are fueled by writers such as Kingsolver and Wendell Berry (2002) who extol the values of locality and farming. Just as Emerson (1903), Thoreau (1897), and Whitman (1888) did more than a century ago and the Nearing's (1970) a generation ago, Berry (2002) and Kingsolver (2007) have espoused the meliorative properties of nature and the importance of cultivating a measure of self-reliance through gardening.

Intent on reclaiming my own familial and national agrarian legacy, I began cultivating a small kitchen garden several years ago. My first garden featured a few tomato and pepper plants and was only modestly successful. Over the span of the next four years, I became more attentive and knowledgeable and as a result my plants yielded more produce. However, my efforts in the garden have always been largely experimental, educational, and playful. Not surprisingly then, I eagerly accepted the opportunity to spend five months living, working, and researching a small,

organic farm in rural Georgia. In addition to living in an idyllic location for a few months, this study afforded me the opportunity to participate in the local food revolution (Kingsolver, 2007) and "play farmer." In other words, I had the opportunity to observe and participate in the workings of a small-scale farm without investing the same financial, physical, and emotional resources that the owners must. The enthusiasm and romantic notions about farming that I brought to my study are worth noting as they shaped my understanding of what it means to live and work on a farm.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

"I'll take your knife," she said when we reached the big garden. She sheathed my knife in a holster on the side of her shorts. I thought for a moment that perhaps I should have known to bring a knife. Do farmers always carry their own knives just like chefs? After all, cultivating and cooking food are simply two stages in a larger process, or as Wendell Berry famously said, "eating is an agricultural act."

"So here's our basil," Wendy said while pointing down the row. A row of bright green basil plants stood about two feet tall. "This is the Genovese," she said pointing to the plants in the row in front of us. "And this is the Scarlet." She pointed to a half-row of dark crimson plants. She bent towards a plant and I knew it was time to receive instruction.

"So what we're looking for is the youngest, most tender leaves." She grabbed the top of one plant and slid her fingers underneath a cluster of four leaves that all sat at right angles to one another. "These are the youngest. To harvest them, just pinch them between your thumb and forefinger like this." She pinched off the leaves in a cluster and dropped them into her bag. "You can also go a little lower on the plant if you want, but if you go too low, the stalks get woody."

I reached down and felt the stems near the bottom. They were indeed thicker and stiffer. "Does harvesting them make them stiffer?" I asked.

"Exactly," she said. "These plants probably only have one or two more harvests in them before they become too woody to yield good leaves." She handed me a bag and told me to work the row we stood in front of.

"Mornin," a low-pitched voice came from behind us.

"Shit," Wendy exclaimed.

Bernie was standing right behind us and had apparently walked all the way across the field and right upon us without our notice.

"Morning, Bernie. How are you?" I asked.

"Tired." He rubbed his face and vibrated his lips as if her were shivering.

Bernie and Wendy were co-managers of the Farm, but unlike Wendy, Bernie did not live on the farm. It was already 7:45 a.m. and I was glad to see that even a full-time farmer had trouble getting up from time to time.

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Ethnography: My Methodology

In September 2006, I began visiting the Farm and establishing relationships with its residents. Over the course of the following five months, I participated in social activities and volunteered my labor in an effort to establish rapport with members of the Farm community. Having received the blessing of its residents, I began living on the Farm in July 2007 and describing its unique cultural context.

Research Context

This study took place during the summer and fall of 2007 on a small thirteen-acre farm in rural Georgia. During the latter half of the twentieth century, the Farm, a pseudonym, was maintained as a cattle ranch. However, in mid-1990s, the Farm was purchased by an individual who was intent on converting it into a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm. During this phase of its existence, several acres of the Farm's pasture were converted into plots for crop production. Unfortunately, the Farm's owner during this period was unable to realize his dream of establishing a community supported agriculture farm. Additionally, the owner built a two-story, log-cabin style house in which to live and support his farming operations. The Farm's acres are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape with its longer axis is oriented from East to West. Approximately two-thirds of the property is composed of fields and pasture, while the remaining third is covered by an oak-pine-hickory forest.

Similar to their predecessor, the Farm's current owners purchased it with the intent of establishing a community supported agriculture operation. This goal was finally realized during the spring and summer of 2007. Consistent with the burgeoning interest local food, CSA farms offer consumers an alternative to the scale and impact of industrial agriculture operations by interfacing local farmers directly with consumers. CSAs have shareholders, as opposed to customers, who purchase a "share of the farm" for which they receive regular deliveries of seasonal produce. The first year of any business venture entails significant risk; this is especially true for farming operations, which are at the mercy of pests and precipitation. However, the Farm's first season was a resounding success and it provided food for thirty-six shareholders for a total of fifteen weeks. In its second season, the farm has grown to serve more than forty shareholders and has experimented with new crop varieties.

Data Collection

My exploration of the Farm entailed living in a small "pop-up" style camper on the property from July through November 2007. In keeping with traditional ethnographic methodology (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2005; Wolcott, 1999), participant observation was the primary method by which I generated data. During my months at the Farm, I spent time planting, harvesting, weeding, and doing the many other chores that contribute to a farm's productivity. I also spent numerous hours playing, cooking, cleaning, eating, and talking with members of the Farm community. As I participated in "farm life," I recorded my experiences and those of my participants by composing field notes. While numerous texts exist to guide the data collection process, the composition of field notes is arguably both an art and a science. Ethnographers must carefully balance the competing necessities to both participate in and document a given situation. While in the midst of an activity, harvesting vegetables for example, I would retreat to a quiet place in which I could capture verbal "jottings" of my experience on a digital voice recorder. These jottings consisted of significant words or phrases that I would subsequently use to type expanded field notes. To the extent possible, my field notes captured the events I observed and participated.

In addition to my field notes, I generated data in two other forms. I periodically recorded my subjective reactions to events in a researcher journal. This journal served as a useful means to monitor the intersection and interaction of my dual roles as a resident and a researcher of the Farm. Additional data were generated by conducting both formal and informal interviews with members of the Farm community. As circumstances allowed, I conducted informal ethnographic interviews, in which participants were engaged in a focused conversation about a topic related to my research agenda (Spradley, 1979). As opposed to more formal interviews, the data from such

interviews materialized in my field notes. Although not typical of traditional ethnography, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with seven of the Farm's core community members/residents. These interviews utilized a focused interview protocol and were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Both sets of interviews served as a means for contrasting and comparing my own characterizations of the Farm to those of its long term residents and members.

Data Analysis

Analysis of my data was guided by Wolcott's (1994) concept of transforming ethnographic data and occurred in three stages: description, analysis, interpretation. The initial phase of data analysis consisted of using my field notes to compose elaborate, detailed descriptions of the Farm, its inhabitants and their focal practices, rituals, and interactions. The next phase, systematic analysis, consisted of a process of reading, coding, and sorting the data in order to identify salient patterns and themes (Charmaz, 2006). I began with a process of open coding in which portions of text containing significant information were labeled with a short word or phrase. The result were a list of codes that were compared to one another and similar codes were consolidated into larger categories in a process called axial coding. Several of the resulting categories identified larger themes within the data that were subsequently used in representation. The third phase of the analytic process involved interpreting significant analytic themes in light of relevant scholarship.

The analytic process concluded with Polkinghorne's (1995) method of narrative analysis. As opposed to dissecting and comparing multiple narratives, Polkinghorne's narrative analysis involves the construction of a coherent narrative using unemplotted data. The narrative form, involving character and plot development as well as resolution, provides contextual meaning for

data that are less meaningful when isolated. As opposed to whimsical flight of imagination, creation of the narrative entails a painstaking process of construction using field notes and interview transcripts.

> If major events or actions described in the data conflict with or contradict the emerging plot idea, then the idea needs to be adapted to better fit or make sense of the elements and their relationships. The development of a plot follows the same principles of understanding that are by the notion of the hermeneutic circle. The creation of a text involves the to-and-fro movement of parts to whole that is involved in comprehending a finished text. (p. 16)

Thus, primary consideration is always given to the data where they conflict with plot development.

The narrative constructed from this process resembles that which Van Maanen (1988) a "research tale." The research tale does not describe an exact sequence of events as they occurred. However, given their strict dependence on research data, tales cannot be considered fictitious either. Indeed, the present narrative describes actual events that were augmented to represent the richness of my experiences at the Farm. Additional examples of such scholarship within leisure studies can be found in the work of Johnson and Samdahl (2005), Parry and Shinew (2004), and Glover (2007).

<p align="center">***</p>

Wendy set about harvesting the Scarlet basil and Bernie joined me on the row of Genovese. After several minutes, he asked if he could show me something. He moved down the row and grabbed a plant that we had not gotten to. "When you go to pluck a bunch, instead of grabbing just the leaves on top, reach down the stem and pinch it off where it meets the next set of leaves. You see?" He demonstrated. "When you get it there, it grows back bushier. Also pinch

off anything that flowers." He pointed to a small vertical shoot of light green and white blossoms that shot up from some of the foliage. He pinched it and tossed it.

"Got it," I said. I moved on a little frustrated by Wendy and Bernie's conflicting instructions. I moved down the row plucking and tossing leaves into my bag. Pluck, toss, pluck, toss. For a moment I lost myself in the action and moved efficiently down the row. My flow was interrupted by Bernie's voice again.

"I'll take that," he said abruptly pointing to my plastic bag that was almost full of basil. "You should only fill the bag about halfway because the basil can actually bruise under its own weight."

"Sorry." "Sorry?" I thought to myself. What the hell was I apologizing for? I didn't know anything about picking basil.

We reached the end of the row and turned to walk back towards the other end. Bernie stopped halfway down and turned to Wendy. "Are we pickin' this hard?" he asked. She said she thought we should. Bernie immediately grabbed a plant near my knee and explained that "picking it hard" meant that I should go after the leaves that he was pointing to at that moment.

Those leaves didn't look any different than the ones Wendy had told me not to pick. "Damn it," I thought. "Besides the ones on the top of the stems, how do I know which ones you want?" I asked in exasperation.

"Just follow me and watch," Bernie explained. I crouched beside him. Bernie was small, perhaps weighing 140 pounds, and he fit easily between the rows. I knelt carefully beside him so as not to fall into the basil or tomatoes behind me. He scooted down the row on bare feet and I followed clumsily in my large, leather boots. As he worked, I sat closely watching which leaves

he chose and exactly how he picked them. I looked carefully to see the difference between the plants he picked and those I had picked earlier. I resolved to get this right next time.

By 8:30 a.m., we had finished picking and had seven half-filled bags of basil. Standing at the end of the rows, I realized that we were in a race—not with each other but with the rising sun. The temperature had increased markedly and the sun was only a few fingers above the horizon. I put on my sunhat and took a drink of water in preparation for what was to come.

During the next several hours a total of five more volunteers arrived. We split our workforce and moved methodically from one row to the next, from tomatoes, to cukes, to eggplants, to peppers. By 11:00 a.m., the sun's rays had become so intense as to begin bleaching the green out of the landscape. Not coincidentally, we finished collecting our harvest about this time and moved down to the house's garage. Over the course of the next several hours, we cleaned and sorted our harvest in preparation for its pickup. Around 12:30 p.m., the first CSA members arrived to pick-up their weekly allotment of fresh produce. Having finished our duties, the rest of us were free to leave.

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<div align="center">Significant Cultural Aspects of Communal Farming</div>

Having been carefully composed from my field notes and transcripts, the preceding and following narratives encapsulate many of the important characteristics of Farm life, especially related to work. Following is an explication of the more salient features of work on the farm including the concept of "playin' farmer," working with the weather, the physicality of farming, and learning by watching and feeling.

"Playin' Farmer"

Of all the individuals associated with the Farm, only Wendy and Bernie devoted their full time and attention to its cultivation. Even Rowdy and Mosey, the Farm's two co-owners, had other jobs that occupied the majority of their working hours. All six of the Farm's residents and many of its CSA members contributed several hours of labor to its operations each. Additionally, members of the extended Farm community who were under no formal obligation would volunteer a few hours of their time in exchange for some earnest thanks and a bag full of tomatoes or eggplants. The Farm's operations could not succeed were it not for the contribution of such volunteer labor. However, besides Wendy and Bernie, and Mosey and Rowdy to some extent, the rest of us were just "playin' farmer."

Those of us who only worked on the Farm for a few hours a week often reveled in our tasks. Many individuals enjoyed the ability to pursue a task, such as harvesting vegetables, that yielded visible and immediate results. By donating a few hours of time, volunteers were able to "get their hands dirty" and participate in actual activities that assisted in cultivating food from seeds to something that would be fit for the dinner table. As Bernie explained, "people enjoy working on the Farm because it reconnects them to an agrarian lifestyle that is part of our heritage." Additionally, the Farm's fields functioned as informal, agricultural classrooms for many of its volunteers. Volunteers often encountered vegetables that they had never seen or heard of, such as the long, curly-q Striped Armenian cucumber, which looked as if it had been designed by Dr. Seuss. Volunteer laborers also explored topics such as favorable growing conditions, useful soil amendments, and proper harvesting techniques. For curious individuals, such as Philip and Jennifer who joined the CSA with the intent of learning about organic farming, the Farm served as a laboratory of farming techniques.

Thus, as opposed to Wendy and Bernie, the Farm's volunteers did not have a significant financial or emotional investment in the success of the Farm's operations. Volunteers could easily tolerate a few hours spent toiling in the heat and humidity of a Georgia summer. However, for Wendy and Bernie factors such as the heat and the physical toil were not novelties, but rather realities of their occupation.

Working with the Weather

Farmers eat, sleep, and breathe the weather. Literally, they sleep when it's dark, eat the fruits of their labors, and breathe the hot, humid air of their "outdoor offices." Given this intimate relation of farming and weather, farmers' schedules are largely dictated by seasonal and daily weather patterns. As illustrated in the narrative, Wendy and Bernie often began their work days at 7:00 am in an effort to complete as many tasks as possible prior to the hottest portion of the day. The heat, often measured in mid to upper nineties, and the humidity, often near 100%, in central Georgia meant that heat stroke was always a possibility for individuals working on the Farm. Wendy, Bernie, and their volunteers often moved indoors by 11:00 a.m. or noon to avoid the summer heat. Tasks such as processing produce for pick-up or composing the CSA's weekly newsletter could be pursued during the mid-day hours. These mid-day retreats, which may last until 2:00 or 3:00 p.m., were also times for eating lunch and taking a nap. Whereas napping "on the clock" is prohibited in most workplaces, the farming life not only accommodates, but often requires such midday *siestas*. The contrast between agrarian and urban lifestyles is evident in the imposition of *modern* work hours in contemporary Greece. A midday nap has been common in Greek culture for centuries due to its warm Mediterranean climate and agricultural heritage. However, in an effort to standardize Greek working hours with those of continental Europe, the

Greek government has taken steps to abolish midday napping. As is evident from Wendy and Bernie's schedules, the seemingly unorthodox midday nap has a very practical purpose.

In addition to the daily weather cycles, Wendy and Bernie adjusted their work schedules to the seasonal cycles. For example, Wendy described the effect of the day's length on her schedule.

Now in the wintertime,…I'll work from nine to five because it gets dark at five thirty. Which is refreshing. So many people are bummed out that it's wintertime and it's dark at five and I'm like, yes, that means I can't work anymore. I also work inside, but I've been taking that as a cue that I need to take a break….But in the summertime when it's light from seven until nine, then you work from seven until nine….

The manner in which daylight shapes Wendy's work schedule contrasts with those of other indoor work environments in which individuals may be completely unaware of the weather. In the absence of a window, members of corporate America can work under perpetual fluorescent lighting without the sun's "interruption."

Finally, the success of the Farm's crops is inextricably tied to the weather conditions. The Farm's hoop house, a structure composed of a metal skeleton onto which hung a polyethylene plastic covering, served to protect young plants during the shoulder seasons of spring and fall. During these seasons, the sides of the hoop house had to be raised and lowered twice a day in order to maintain a consistent temperature within.

If the weather is bad then you have to go out [to the fields] and it doesn't matter if it's midnight, and it doesn't matter if you had plans. And it can be really frustrating because [the weather] determines what you're doing in that you have to pay attention to the weather and you have to pay attention to the plants. (Bernie, interview, 3/4/08)

As Bernie explained, regardless of other engagements, someone has to be available to attend to the Farm's crops in the event of inclement weather. Erratic weather events such as an early season frost, which happened in April 2007, can kill or weaken both crops and produce. In such instances, Wendy, Bernie, and the Farm's other residents may work late into the night to protect crops by covering them with protective fabric. Such instances highlight the Farm's dependence on the weather as well as the insulation of most occupations from such whimsy.

Physicality of Farming

As is evident in the narratives, the summer's heat and humidity compound the physical exertion of every task performed at the Farm. As described by Wendy, some of the more mundane tasks such as weeding, picking, and planting can be the most demanding due to their repetitive nature.

I didn't have any fantasies that farming wasn't hard physical labor. I suspected that it would be and it is. It's not anything more than I can handle, but it is a lot of lifting and a lot of bending. I have to say that the bending, having to be bent over and crouch down for hours at a time is really the thing that takes the most toll on my body.

Farm work also necessities numerous load-bearing activities such as hauling buckets of produce or pushing wheelbarrows full of mulch. Finally, farm workers are often called upon to assist with minor construction and landscape projects, ranging from fence building to digging irrigation lines to building greenhouses.

The unique physical demands of farm work were a novelty for many of its volunteers, who were school teachers, professors, health care workers, etc. Even those individuals who considered themselves to be "in shape" found themselves with sore legs and lower backs after an afternoon spent picking or planting. In addition to physical strain, volunteers had to contend with

the frequent sting of fire ants that hid beneath vegetable foliage. Some volunteers such as Lila and Philip had to contend with topical allergic reactions to an unknown type of plant foliage. While many volunteers and CSA members engaged in regular exercise, their occupations often did not require any significant physical activity in the outdoors. For example, Marianna, a CSA volunteer who had worked several seasons as a wilderness leadership instructor commented on the intensity of the heat and humidity during her first visit to the Farm.

Learning by Watching and Feeling

Similar to my experience, many volunteers arrived at the Farm in hopes of learning as much as possible about the art and science of farming. Learning in most workplaces and in classroom settings typically utilizes audio-visual mediums and symbolic language. In contrast, learning on the Farm often took place kinesthetically, through touch and motion, and involved an immediacy of action and consequence not present in many learning environments. As illustrated in the narrative, verbal instructions were used; however, such instructions were often precursors to the learning that would take place via action. An instruction as seemingly simple as "pinch with your thumb and forefinger," often required practice to perfect. Many volunteers were coached to avoid pinching off the ends off of beans or cucumbers, which in turn rendered them less valuable to consumers, which would in turn hurt the Farm's profitability. In addition to knowing how to harvest produce so as to preserve its attractiveness, many harvesting tasks on the Farm required one to develop a sense of touch for qualities such as ripeness (e.g., tomatoes) or tenderness (e.g., lettuces). Similarly, many tasks required one to develop a visual acuity. For example, the foliage of many crops successfully camouflages the underlying produce, which requires the harvester to practice spotting the produce. Purple beans and green General Lee cucumbers can be particularly hard to spot, especially when one is trying to harvest them in a

timely manner. Finally, a harvester must also become attuned to worthiness of any particular piece of produce for sale or consumption. Despite seemingly explicit instructions, one must develop the ability to identify a tomato that has one too many splits or blemishes to be sold at the local co-op grocery.

In the ways described above, farm work is more similar to other trades that require dexterity and kinesthetic judgment, such as cooking or playing an instrument professionally. For example, in discussing his future plans for the Farm, Rowdy explained that he wanted to build a timber-framed house on the property. In pursuit of this project, Rowdy spent time apprenticing the unique construction skills necessary for timber frame construction. Similarly, kinesthetic skills and knowledge were often utilized on the Farm in the maintenance and construction of the hoop house, the irrigation system, or the tractor. In contrast to occupations that revolve around the exchange of information, farming and other similar endeavors emphasize the acquisition and performance of certain kinesthetic skills.

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Tuesday Evening, Two Weeks Later

I plunged my shovel into the dirt at my feet.

"That's about all the fun I can stand for one day," I thought to myself. I plodded over to the riding lawnmower that sat five feet away and just out of the sun's reach. I removed my gloves and hat and threw them on top of the lawnmower's cab. I threw my leg over the seat and sat down. My head was light and fuzzy. I took a long drink from my water jug and slouched into the driver's seat.

"Well that sucked," I thought. I took the moment to wallow in self-pity. In spite of my sarcasm, I surveyed my work with a certain admiration. I had just excavated an eight foot long,

two foot deep, and one foot wide trench that contained a water pipe. The pipe and its above ground spigot were being redirected in order to improve the lower garden's water supply. It occurred to me that there is something gratifying about seeing the immediate results of one's efforts.

I wondered however, what had I learned from this venture? How to dig a hole in Georgia red clay? Nope, I knew quite a bit about that already. After prematurely breaking the pipe that I was meant to replace, I did learn how to shut off the water main without being bitten by the black widow that lived in the pump house. This did not, however, bring the same satisfaction as some of my other farm chores. All in all, this exercise felt a little like Paul Newman famously having to dig, fill, and re-dig the same hole over and over again in the movie "Cool Hand Luke." "What…we've got here…is…fffailure…to communicate!" Okay, that's a little dramatic, I thought. This wasn't however, what I wanted to be doing. I wanted to be doing something related to farming. I wanted to be learning about how to fight off pests or when to plant garlic or anything that would be useful for my future farming endeavors. Today was Tuesday and other folks had been harvesting today, which would have been fine with me. I had to remind myself that some farm work was pure, undeniable drudgery, and that when it came down to it, farm work was just that—a contribution to the farm, not a personal tutorial. I guess farming was a little different than I had imagined.

I looked down at my hands. Despite having worn gloves, portions of my palms and the inside surfaces of my thumbs had been rubbed raw. Gloves can do little to protect a pair of soft hands from hours worth of shovel work and what seemed like buckets worth of sweat. The thermometer ventured into the mid-nineties today and it had felt hotter than that. It didn't help

matters that I was wearing long pants and a long sleeve shirt, but that was the bargain I made

with myself in order to avoid wearing sunscreen.

"Heeelloo," I was interrupted from my martyrdom by Wendy's approach. "Would you

like to help me with something?" she asked.

Was "no" an option, I wondered to myself. Undoubtedly it was an option, but for the

sake of my research and maintaining my relationships, it was not an option I wanted to

investigate.

"Sure," I explained. I dismounted and joined Wendy in her walk towards the picnic

tables.

"Digging holes is thankless work, isn't it," Wendy offered.

"Indeed it is," I conceded. "On the bright side though, I think I've perfected my hole

digging technique."

We reached the tables and I set my jug o'water down. "So what's up I asked?"

"Well, since the sun has started to set a little, I thought we might play with some bees if

you're game," Wendy explained.

Do huh? I thought.

Taking my silence as confusion, not trepidation, Wendy offered an explanation. "One of

our hives has swarmed."

"That doesn't sound good," I offered.

"Actually, it's fine," she said. "When a new queen arrives in a hive, the old queen may

die, or she might leave and take a swarm of bees with her. That's what's happening over there."

Wendy pointed to an eight or nine foot long piece of tree branch that lay on the ground about

thirty feet south of where we stood. I scanned it for a moment and found a black, writhing ball of

insect life wrapped around a portion of the branch that was slightly propped in the air. The swarm looked to be about nine inches in diameter and was roughly spherical in shape. "Wow," was all I could muster in response.

"Yeah, pretty cool, huh."

"So I guess they're outta here. Well good luck to ya!" I yelled towards the swarm.

"Actually, we can capture them and start another hive if we're lucky. Think of it as franchising your bee hives," she explained.

"Oh reeeaaallly. Well how do we go about doing that?" I asked.

Wendy led me over towards the hive and she crept about five feet from the swarm. I stood just behind her. I now noticed that one of the white bee-keeping boxes was lying on the ground not far from the swarm. "Well, if I can trim the branch down so that it will fit in the box, we can drop it in there and then, in theory, the swarm should start building combs and adopt it as they're new home."

"Uh…so what's my role in all this?" I asked. I had never worked with bees and I didn't see any fancy protective gear lying around to use.

"Oh, I just thought you'd like to watch. I only have one set of protective gear and remember, bees can sense fear, so you probably don't want to mess with them," Wendy smiled.

"Good point," I smiled back.

Wendy took off towards the garage and I retreated to what I considered be a safer distance of nine or ten feet from the swarm. I studied the bees in more detail. Though a few bees orbited, most of them, perhaps a thousand, were crawling all over each other like some sort of enormous insect football huddle. Obviously bees are not claustrophobic, I thought. The swarm was pretty compact, but in constant motion. The contrast of its size and activity level made the

swarm seem less threatening, even a tad mesmerizing. For a moment, I considered getting closer, but then decided I'd wait for Wendy.

She returned just that moment decked out in long pants and a long-sleeved, protective tunic and helmet. I chuckled. Wendy smiled back through the mesh covering that enclosed her pith helmet. She waddled side-to-side to exaggerate the suit's goofiness.

"Awesome," I declared. "You look like you're ready for some bee wranglin'."

"Yep. Watch and learn," she quipped.

Wendy walked slowly, but deliberately over to the branch on which the swarm was swarming. She cautiously stepped over to the opposite side of the branch's with a hacksaw in her right hand. She knelt cautiously and grasped the branch with her left hand. She was preparing to cut on the thicker portion of the branch, the side which had been closest to the trunk when it had still been attached to the nearby tree. She placed the saw's blade against the branch's bark and slowly began pulling it back and forth. As she did, the branch vibrated, violently it seemed, but in reality probably shook less than an inch from its starting position. As Wendy pushed and pulled, the swarm's noise level rose noticeably. After fifteen or twenty strokes, she had cut through the bark and begun to penetrate the branches inner layers. The noise level continued to elevate. In an instant, Wendy stopped. I looked at her, but she didn't seem to be coping with a sting or any sort of pain.

She stood up and took two steps back. "The bees don't like the saw," she declared. The understated tone of her comment helped diffuse the tension.

"I'll have to agree with you about that," I said.

"Do you think I could cut it with the loppers?" she asked.

I studied the branch for a moment. It was about three inches in diameter at the spot she had been sawing. Hundreds of hours spent hauling and lifting had given Wendy lean, but muscular shoulders. "Yeah, I think you could do it with the loppers."

Wendy returned a couple minutes later with the loppers. In the meantime, the swarm's noise level had subsided a little.

"Alrighty," she said as she walked back to the branch. Wendy bent her knees, opened the loppers and carefully placed the blades in line with the gash she had sawed into the branch. She cocked her elbows outward to produce a swift and powerful cut. She quickly brought her hands inward resulting in a satisfying "sshnopp," which was in turn greeted with the loudest buzzing yet produced by the swarm. For the most part, however, the bees stayed put. Wendy quickly grabbed the portion of the branch without bees and dragged it way. "Nice work!" I declared. Wendy had momentum at this point and after taking a moment to survey her cut, she stepped around the swarm and easily lopped off the other end of the branch. Her arboreal surgery left the bees swarming on a portion of the branch that was no more that a foot long. Wendy quickly cleared the branches and then considered her next move, placing the swarm inside the bee box. She grabbed the box and moved it within six inches of the swarm. Dispensing with the loppers, she closed in on the bees, shifting her weight from one foot to the other as she inspected the relative suitability of either side of the branch for grabbing. I watched closely, perhaps holding my breath. My childhood diet of horror movies had trained me to expect that just as Wendy bent to grab the branch, the swarm would unleash a massive attack on her helmet. Thousands of little bees would sacrifice themselves in order to destroy the "blond giant" that threatening their home. Perhaps they would target the red-headed giant after destroying the blond menace.

Imagine my surprise, not to mentioned the bees', when Wendy swiftly and deftly raised the branch and lowered it into the box. In an instant, Wendy had dropped the lid on top.

Wendy stepped away from the box, removed her headgear, and stared at her handywork for moment. A few curious bees zipped back and forth around the box.

"Nice work," I said.

"Thanks. Things were a little sketchy there for a second," she said. Following her lead, I walked back to the picnic tables and she began to remove her protective gear. The sun was receding below the tree line and twilight was taking hold of the Farm.

"That was really cool. I've never spent any time around bees before," I explained.

"Bees are really interesting creatures," she offered. "And they're incredibly productive. We harvested eight gallons of honey from our boxes back in the Fall."

"Whoa," I exclaimed. We sat on the picnic bench and stared at the bees and the fields beyond. I inhaled and momentarily regained some perspective on the farming life. I didn't appreciate ditch digging any more than I had at the start of the day, but I was reminded that the Farm could be a fascinating place to work if one was open to the breadth of its experiences. Indeed, I had gained and undoubtedly would continue to gain a more nuanced impression of the nature of farm work.

Eeeee-aaahhh!!! A stabbing, electric pain in my calf brought my awareness back to the moment.—Aaaahhh!!—Another and another. Before I knew it, I was running from the picnic tables towards the house.

"Beees?!?!" Wendy screamed loudly as she passed me on our way to the house.

Within seconds I was on the steps that led to the back door of the Farm house. Bathed in the kitchen's light, I hitched up my pants leg.

"Shit!!!" I exclaimed as I frantically swatted fire ants off my calf. I stripped off my boot and sock and obliterated ten or fifteen of the little monsters. "Shit, shit, shit!" Tiny pink welts had already formed that would sting for the next hour or two and itch for the next two weeks. Wendy emerged from the backdoor to the house and offered me a large cup of water. I immediately dowsed my calf and the coolness of the water brought fleeting relief.

Wendy chuckled softly above my head. I looked up to find her doubled over, hands on her knees. "I thought the swarm was coming to get us. I had no idea what was going on," she said.

"Me neither," I agreed, "…no idea, whatsoever."

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Educational Nature of Farm Work

As demonstrated in these two narratives, work on the Farm was accompanied by perpetual adaptation and learning. Whether it was a process as mundane as knowing when a tomato is sufficiently ripe for harvest or how to transplant a hive of bees, Wendy, Bernie, Mosey, Rowdy, and the other farm workers encountered novel tasks on a daily basis. Wendy grew up in a household with a tradition of gardening, however she and Bernie confessed to learning most of what they know about farming "on the job." As opposed to gardening, which occurs on a much smaller scale, farming requires significant planning regarding variables such as the number of plants or the timing of planting in order to yield the desired amount of produce. Although, recommendations exist to guide such decisions, local conditions at the Farm ensure that the planning process is one of trial and error.

Unlike the classroom in which learning is stimulated by a system of rewards, "farming education" is essentially experiential in nature. The consequences of one's actions on the Farm are occasionally immediately visible, though it may often take many weeks to realize the results

of one's actions. For example, members of the Farm experimented by moving different crops to different gardening plots. They predicted that certain crops would do better when planted in the lower garden, which was a tad bit cooler than other portions of the Farm. Such experimentation often yielded intelligible conclusions, but sometimes it did not. For example, during the summer of 2007, hot peppers did not produce and the cause was not immediately obvious.

Learning and adaptation on the Farm was facilitated by that which Wendy called "the community of farmers." Indeed many of the Farm residents' friends and acquaintances were farmers or gardeners. As such, conversation at social gatherings often revolved around farming (see Chapter Four), especially its challenges. Far from maintaining a competitive or proprietary stance, neighboring small-scale farmers readily cooperated by sharing information, equipment, and even labor in an effort to assist one another. As George explained, the Farm was part of a "community of farmers" who shares values as well as knowledge related to the mechanics of small-scale, organic farming. The result of such cooperation was an extended network of professional practitioners.

In addition to learning related cultivation, the Farm also yielded lessons related to personal growth. Bernie explained that volunteers on the Farm learned not only about how food is cultivated, but about their connection to nature via their food.

There's a connection to people and nature through the food that they are getting from [the Farm]. And when they come out and have an enjoyable, caring interaction with me,…it connects them more with the land and makes them want to come back out more [often]….We were talking before about industrial culture and people being …outside of nature and this is their opportunity to come and experience it and experience this interface of where science has told them that there's like humans and then there's nature. Well here on the Farm we see

that that's not the case. We are cultivating nature in order to feed ourselves, and now we are eating this stuff and it's becoming our bodies. You realize that I am not separate from nature because…I am made out of nature. You start to realize how comical the whole distinction is.

Mosey corroborated Bernie's sentiment by explaining that the Farms serves as a classroom for educating the local population about the benefits of local, organic agriculture.

Additionally, Wendy explained that Farm work taught her "life lessons" that she had not found in other jobs. Farming has taught her to "let go" of the desire to control everything in her working life. As discussed previously, an unexpected early season frost threatened the Farm's spring crops. Despite their efforts, Wendy explained that the Farm's residents had to "make peace" with the prospect that they would lose a percentage of their crops and produce. In a similar respect, Wendy explained that she and Bernie had to learn when to stop working. "You just have to get used to the fact that you can't do everything that you want to do," she explained. Such a concern speaks to what typically described as the relative balance between a person's work and leisure.

Playful Approach to Farm Work

Upon explaining to Bernie for the first time that I studied leisure, he exclaimed that he and everyone else who worked at the Farm tried to "keep their work fun." When queried later about this, he explained that he found it imperative that he and others kept the general tone of their labor light and lively. Wendy echoed his sentiments saying the she tried to bring a "playful approach" to her work in order to not get "bogged down" by the number of tasks to be performed. Such a playful attitude manifested itself as joking amongst volunteers who were working side-by-side. Consider the following,

Six of us spent time picking Roma and cherry tomatoes as well as some purple and Italian

flat beans. The purple beans are a dark purple, which are somewhat fantastic looking. In fact,

Philip commented that they looked as though they had been designed by Willy Wonka.

Wouldn't it be fun to grow a garden with only purple vegetables, Wendy suggested. Beans,

lettuce, basil, eggplant, potatoes, okra, beets—all of these and many more are either purple or

dark burgundy. (field notes, 7/17/07)

As described, conversation often accompanied work. The topical range of conversation was large

and may or may not include the tasks at hand. As Bernie explained, by sharing work tasks one

could learn a lot about others in a short period of time.

Impromptu games, such as volunteers racing one another in their harvesting tasks also

exhibited playfulness. A popular game among volunteers was cuke-ball. During the portion of

the summer when cucumbers were abundant, games would be played in which cucumbers,

"cukes," would be used as bats for smashing rotten tomatoes or peppers. Rotten produce was

also a favorite item for throwing around the fields. Numerous compost piles had been established

in the fields and workers would take aim and thrown rotten pieces of produce across the field

towards these piles. Such examples reflect a general tone that was taken with work tasks at the

Farm. Such a playful attitude supports Delle Fave and Massimini's (1988) claims regarding the

facilitation of optimal experience while engaged in farm work.

Labor as Currency

Although not immediately obvious during my time at the Farm, it became apparent farm

labor was a form of currency that could be used to achieve status and belonging within the Farm

community (see Chapter Six). As discussed previously, the list of farm work tasks was

seemingly endless. As Wendy explained, the overwhelming nature of farm work elevated labor

to being the most valued contribution to the Farm, as opposed to monetary contributions.

> With the farming community there's a lot of things that need to get done, and either you have
>
> to pay somebody to do them or you have to do them.…If you get money it may or may not
>
> be put towards a certain project. But if somebody is working physically on the project it's
>
> getting done.

Money is a form of financial capital that must be converted into labor. In other words, labor is

valued for the immediacy of its application. In turn, the literal fruits of individuals' labors are

eventually converted back to financial capital when they are sold to shareholders.

In a related aspect, labor is more readily recognized as contributing to the Farm's goals

than financial contributions. Although not discounting the idiosyncratic nature of personal

relationships, an individual who volunteers time in the fields will integrate into the Farm

community more quickly than one who simply pays for his or her share in the CSA. Bernie

described the manner in which working in the field facilitated entry into the Farm community.

His lengthy explanation characterizes the sentiment of many of the Farm residents

> The members who paid and picked up their food and never came out and volunteered, I felt a
>
> fairly shallow connection with.…I enjoyed my interactions with them when they came to
>
> pick up their food, but it was not as satisfying as deep or as rich as my connection was with
>
> the people who even just came out once or twice [to volunteer].…I might say that there is
>
> something more tangible and more rewarding about people who shared with their labor. And
>
> maybe that's because money is a form of currency or energy that we are used to exchanging
>
> these days. Certainly not as personal as when you are working with someone side by
>
> side.…It opens up the interaction in a meaningful way that I can't really articulate. But

there's an honest exchange of compassion. Call it love, connection for sure… I will get to

know a little bit about them, know what their life is outside of this small interaction that I

have with them. They'll get to know how small my life is outside of this farm. But you

know, we connect with each other.

In a practical sense, labor facilitates a connection between individuals that is not made possible

by the simple exchange of money for food. From the perspective of an individual such as Bernie,

who's livelihood is tied to the Farm, an individual's contribution of labor, standing side-by-side

with him in field, exhibits a form of support that is very "tangible" and meaningful.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

Rojek (2006) has advocated for the use of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984) as a means to

understand the social positioning of individuals *vis-à-vis* work and leisure patterns in

contemporary society. As discussed previously, one of the most prominent features of the

habitus of contemporary society is the segmentation of its domains from one another, especially

work and leisure. Seemingly obvious, this patterning is illustrated when individuals leave their

homes and head to "the office" where the trade their time for compensation. In contrast, leisure

and recreation occur away from the office and on individuals' discretionary time. The *habitus* of

work and leisure are considerably more nuanced and reflect the arrangement of power inequities

in contemporary society. However, a simple characterization such as the one offered above

serves to distinguish work from leisure—except in the case of contexts such as the Farm.

In their review of the interrelations of work, leisure, and family life in contemporary

society, Critcher and Bramham (2004) concluded that "despite all the real changes, especially in

the cultural and leisure industries, the basic contours of daily life—of work, family, and

leisure—have remained remarkably recognisable[sic]" (p. 49). While this is undoubtedly true for

the majority of wage earners, it may not be true of farmers as well. The thoroughgoing nature of farming is a drastic counterpoint to the work, leisure, family divisions that characterize most of society.

As discussed above, farming, especially when one lives on the farm, can be an all-encompassing endeavor. Wendy, Bernie, Mosey and Rowdy among others often had difficult time disengaging from farming tasks, especially during the spring and summer seasons. It was not uncommon for Wendy and Bernie especially to engage in farm-related work from sunrise until sunset.

> We'll have lists of things that we need to get accomplished…, but we're really self regulated. It's a nice thing to know…and sometimes we work really late because that's what we have to do [because] we're both hard workers. And so, [the workday] stretches longer than might be desired sometimes but, we do what we decide that we need to do. It's nice to be in charge of ourselves and empowering in a lot of ways.

Thus, the *habitus* of the farming lifestyle fails to conform to the patterns of more conventional employment. Additionally, to the extent that farming tasks such as harvesting are capable of inducing flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Della Fave & Massimini, 1988), they take on characteristics also associated with leisure experiences. As described, farming exhibits many of the characteristics that resemble active leisure or recreation pursuits. Similar to rock climbing for example, farming demands that participants learn kinesthetically and develop physically. As with birding, one of the nation's most popular recreational activities, farming facilitates and requires an intimate knowledge of the natural environment. In these ways, farming experiences obfuscate the conventional segregation of work and leisure experiences.

If farming tasks provide participants with autotelic experiences, such tasks may also provide participants with a sense of vocational purpose. When asked to describe their reasons for pursuing farming as an occupation or volunteer pursuit, most participants discussed the personal meaning derived from their work. Bernie echoed many participants' comments when he described his motivations for farming.

I think that for me farming is definitely [about] re-connecting. My first thought is primarily with land and nature, plants and animals. The more I get into it though, the more I realize that it's not a solitary endeavor and that it connects me to people as well.

Adam, a farm volunteer, was even more explicit when he explained that by eating food from the farm, "the food becomes a part of us," thereby explicitly connecting individuals to the Farm and the land. This connection is furthered by individuals' stewardship for the land. Thus, individuals' reasons for farming are aligned with a sense of purpose beyond simply earning a wage. As Delle Fave and Massimini (1988) suggested finding such meaning in one's work may preclude the need for compensatory leisure activities.

The sense of purpose and meaning described above must be qualified relative to the economic realities of farming. The Farm members' economic security and comfort likely make possible their enjoyment of farming activities. Indeed, having the capability to choose to engage in an activity is a prerequisite for autotelic experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Millions of individuals across the planet are engaged in a lifestyle of subsistence farming that is necessitated by poverty and deprivation. Thus, the meaning derived from farm work may be contingent on individuals' material and economic security.

As discussed in the third vignette, members of the Farm community pursued activities such as disc golf that resemble more conventional leisure and recreation activities. Such

activities clearly engage participants with physical challenges that may be flow inducing. However, given the physical and logistical challenges inherent in farm stewardship, activities such as disc golf can be understood as more similar to participants' work activities as opposed to compensating for perceived deficits. The Farm Olympics illustrated the personal importance of farm labor in the lives of individuals and the collective farm communities in attendance. The Farm Olympics is an informal and friendly competition that takes place every December between members of the Farm and three other CSA farms located across the country. In addition to disc golf, the Olympics feature competitive activities such as weeding, harvesting, mulching, and cooking the Farm's produce. When asked why the Olympics involved activities that would be often considered work, Mosey explained,

> We want them to be here to spread this connection and this kind of movement that we've talked about—getting back to agrarian ideals….People like coming here and…this kind of public outreach of really building a sense of community in the sense that we do. And I would say that the reason the Farm Olympics had to be farm related is to connect to the actual farm and to give people a sense of participation—to give them a sense of participation in this agrarian experience. Plus we are proud of what we do.

Thus, even an activity, such as the Farm Olympics, that is recreational in nature, is fundamentally a showcase of participants' pride in their vocation. These characteristics support the assertion that leisure activities may be less prominent in contexts that offer meaningful work opportunities.

Escapist leisure activities are often pursued as panaceas for the shortcomings of contemporary society, especially alienating careers (Rojek, 1993). However, leisure education and advocacy should not detract from the need to facilitate rewarding vocations on a societal

basis (Stormann, 1989). The experiences of members of the Farm community suggest that challenging and meaningful work experiences may lessen the need for compensatory leisure experiences. If farm work tasks exhibit characteristics typically associated with leisure, for example, autonomy, challenge, expressiveness, they confound the necessity of a work-leisure dichotomy. Experiences of the Farm community suggest that in the context of a farming lifestyle, such a dichotomy ceases to be meaningful and that concepts of work and leisure dissolve organically into one another.

<div align="center">***</div>

Sunday Afternoon, Late December

I stood on the southern end of the Lower Garden next to Hank. Hank was one of the Farm's good friends and neighbors. He sported a thick, bushy white beard and long white hair that portrayed the image of the proverbial mountain man. No one knew his age, but everyone was reasonably sure that Hank was the Farm's eldest member. We stood patiently, beers in hand, presiding over forty foot long rows of dirt. To the uninformed observer, we might have looked a little goofy standing alone in an empty field of dirt. Actually, even for folks who knew what was going on, this entire afternoon probably seemed like a pretty goofy affair. Hank and I had been selected for and were awaiting our opportunity to serve as judges for one segment of the Relay Race at Farm Olympics. Specifically, we were preparing to officiate the leaf mulching portion of the relay. Pairs of competitors from each of the four teams were supposed to spread leaf mulch on the empty rows before us.

"Here they come," Hank said in a calm, deliberate tone that belied the frenzy of activity that was about to engulf us.

I turned to witness two young men burst from the woods behind me at a full sprint. The deer fence which surrounded the Lower Garden forced the runners to circle around and enter

the opposite side of the garden. Bernie was in the lead, followed by his partner from the Farm, Skippy. Skippy was a friend and former resident of the Farm who was competing on its Olympic team. Each of them grabbed large paper bags filled with leaves that sat on the far end of the field. Bernie ran straight down the row towards me and tossed a bag at my feet. He quickly ripped the bag from top to bottom on two sides, so that it unfolded onto the ground, exposing its leafy contents. "One," I counted in my head as Bernie sprinted to the opposite end of the field to grab another bag. "Two," I thought as Skippy quickly dissected and spread his bag behind Bernie's. At this point, spectators and competitors from other teams had entered the field and Hank had begun measuring their efforts.

Hank was counting the team from California and I began counting Island Team in addition to the Farm Team. In addition to the Cali Team, Hank had also begun counting the Blue Ridge team. Each of these teams represented farms located in California, North Carolina, and the Caribbean Islands. Members of these teams were competing in the annual Farm Olympics, which were held every December. The three-day event was comprised of a series of competitive and non-competitive events that celebrated the culture of small-scale, organic farming. The relay was the final competitive event of the weekend. The Farm Team led the overall competition, but the Islands Team was a close second. Previous events included a privet pull, a multiple choice "farm knowledge" quiz, an open fire cook-off, a coffee sack race, and two rounds of disc golf. The competitive events were interspersed with musical performances, meals, and informal socializing.

"HOW MANY?!" Bernie screamed bringing me back into the moment. He and Skippy were nearing the end of their row and wanted a count of how bags they had laid down. One, two…four…six…ten.

"Thirteen," I screamed. Each team was supposed to deposit eighteen bags of leaves and the Farm Team, my home team, was clearly in the lead. I looked over and counted the Island Team's bags...only nine.

"Sixteen...seventeen...that's it!" screamed Bernie. He and Skippy dropped their last bags and took off running towards the Hoop House Garden. There they would tag the next section of their relay team, who would begin harvesting twenty "row feet" of lettuce as fast as possible. With the potential for sliced fingers, I was certainly glad to not have been judging the lettuce harvest. I turned to check the Island Team's progress.

"Sixteen!" I screamed to their competitors. They quickly deposited two more bags and took off in the direction of the Hoop House Garden. Within seconds, all of the competitors had vanished and the small crowd of spectators began to follow.

Hank and I were alone again in the Lower Garden. "Whoa," I said looking over at him. He smiled back. "These people take their fun pretty seriously, don't they?"

"You got that right," I agreed.

He tipped his cup back and drained its contents. "What do ya say we go lighten that keg up a little?"

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CHAPTER SIX

CREATING COMMUNITY AT THE FARM: A CONTESTED CONCEPT[1]

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[1] Dunlap, R., & Johnson, C. W. To be submitted to *Journal of Leisure Research*

Abstract

This ethnography explores the competing concepts of community that are deployed within the context of a communal farm. Residents of the Farm articulate oppositional concepts of community that are based on familial and instrumental relationships. The concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are utilized to better understand the manner in which these discourses manifest themselves in the lived experiences of Farm residents. The contradictory nature of these conceptualizations suggests that the concept of community cannot be treated as a monolithic reality within scholarly inquiry.

INDEX WORDS: Community, Leisure, *Gemeinschaft*, *Gesellschaft*

9:00 p.m., A Tuesday Evening in July

"Has anyone seen George?" The screened door had not even—thwacked—before he finished his question.

"Nope."

"Not since this morning."

"I told him we were meeting tonight at nine." Mosey sounded mildly annoyed as he stood in the middle of the kitchen. Mosey had been working on a home remodeling project for the past week and he now looked as if he had just come from the job site. His blue jeans were dusty and stained and his orange t-shirt had seen better days. Mosey took out his mobile phone and disappeared into the hallway that led back to the house's bedrooms.

His tone added to my anxiety about this meeting. Mosey had called me yesterday afternoon and informed me that we were having a "family meeting" tonight. He didn't say what the meeting was about, but I had a feeling it had something to do with me. I found myself at the Farm largely as a result of George, our missing member. For several years as a graduate student, I had entertained the idea of studying a community for my dissertation, and George, who was a friend of a friend, had provided me with the opportunity to do so. Knowing of my interests in community, George had casually suggested that I consider visiting the communal farm that he and six others called home. As a result of this serendipity, I attended my first Family Dinner (see Dunlap, Chapter Four) and immediately embraced the idea of exploring the Farm for my dissertation study. In particular, I believed the Farm offered a unique context to describe how groups of individuals who purport to be a community manifest that concept in their daily lives. Having spent the better part of the last six months persuading the Farm's residents that my study would be worth their while, I had finally moved out to the Farm about a month ago. I was

pursuing ethnographic research, which entailed living on the Farm in a small camper and to the extent permissible, participating as a member of the Farm community. During my short stay at the Farm, I had not knowingly exchanged so much as a cross word or grimace with my new neighbors. Perhaps tonight's meeting was the result of having violated an unspoken rule or norm of communal behavior. Regardless as a member of the community and as an ethnographer, I welcomed this opportunity to explore the Farm's communal norms.

I turned back to Wendy who was sitting across the table from me. "You were saying?"

"I was saying? Oh yeah, I think this is the simplest bread recipe I've ever made. You don't even have to knead the dough." Wendy passed a worn piece of white paper to me that contained hand-written instructions for making bread. "Feel free to make a copy," she said.

The Farm was actually a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm and Wendy was one of the co-managers of this operation. As opposed to funneling their harvest into the industrial agriculture system, CSAs such as the Farm sell fresh organic produce directly to local consumers. CSAs utilize a seasonal shareholder system in which individuals purchase a "share in the farm" at the beginning of the growing season and in exchange they receive a large, weekly delivery of produce. In cooperation with Bernie, Wendy gave her full energies to the Farm's prosperity.

Mosey returned to the kitchen. "I didn't get George, but I've left him a message. We won't wait for him, so if you all want to get started with dinner, go ahead. I'm going to grab a quick shower and then I'll join you." Mosey disappeared from the kitchen again.

The Farm house's upper floor is explicitly divided into public and private spaces. Its public spaces consist of the kitchen, dining area, and family room, all of which are open to one another. The public spaces connect to the house's private spaces, the bedrooms and bathrooms,

via a long hallway. The kitchen is roughly a ten-by-ten foot square that is framed on three sides by cabinets and appliances. The kitchen's contents are an eclectic and organic mix. Its dishes are a transient collection of pieces that are added to and subtracted from in wake of every social gathering at the Farm. The upper cabinets' doors have been removed for ease of access and their shelves are filled items such as vegetarian cookbooks, spices, and a sizable collection of unlabeled glass bottles containing untold liquids. The kitchen's appearance is unpretentious and bespeaks a life of continual and communal use.

The kitchen opens onto the house's dining area in where Wendy and I sat. Loosely separated from the house's family room by a two-and-a-half foot tall brick wall, the dining area is dominated by two large wooden tables. The table closest to the kitchen is approximately six feet long and three feet wide and built of solid wood that has been stained to a light oak color. Sitting end to end, the other table is almost eight feet long and as wide as its companion. This table is also solid wood and stained a dark walnut color. Each is covered in a patina of tiny dents and scratches, giving one the impression that if tables could talk, these two would have some good stories to tell.

Wendy rose from the table and set about slicing a loaf of bread. "This is George's bread, but I'm going to trade him for a portion of the loaf I just bought. I want to use his before it gets stale since it's older." Wendy's comments suggested that in addition to serving as a witness to this transaction, I was also being recruited to affirm the wisdom of her decision. I had not been at the Farm very long, but I knew already that food, its ownership and use, were ongoing topics of negotiation amongst community members.

I turned to look out the dining area's large picture window that framed the sun as it set behind the Farm's gardens and forest. The heat of the day had begun to dissipate outside, but

lingered on in the house. The overhead fan provided relief and distraction; however, I found it comfortable to move as little as possible. I took a moment to enjoy the setting sun and the scene before me. The tables contained an issue of National Geographic, various pieces of a recent newspaper, a cookbook entitled Asparagus to Zucchini, a large ceramic bowl full of roma tomatoes, and a bottle of olive oil that contained a sprig of rosemary.

By nine-thirty Mosey had cleaned himself up and the three of us were sitting at the walnut colored table sharing a plate of bruschetta. The tomatoes, basil, and garlic in the bruschetta had been grown at the Farm. The basil's tanginess, the roma's sweet acidity, the garlic's bite, and the subtle sourness of the bread combined to create an experience that was definitely greater than the sum of its parts. We sat in silence for a moment, the only sounds those of toasted bread crunching between our teeth. I was heating a dish of chickpeas and couscous on the stove, but would have been content to feast exclusively on bruschetta for my dinner. As we quietly savored these "fruits of the Farm," the scent of a pizza heating in the oven began to fill the room.

Mosey finished his bruschetta, washed it down with some Red Stripe, and looked over his glasses at me. "Okay, let's get down to business."

***

Introduction

As leisure services agencies struggle with the pressure to emulate the process and efficiency of corporate service delivery (Coalter, 1990), they also, often unwittingly, struggle to understand whom they serve. Whereas corporate entities typically market to individual customers, leisure service agencies have traditionally claimed to serve whole communities via their individual members (Hunnicutt, 2000; Stormann, 1996). Similarly, leisure scholarship has alternately focused on psychological investigations of individuals' experiences and sociological

explorations of community (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Ambiguity over whom a leisure agency serves and what phenomenon leisure scholars' study is not simply a logistical concern, but rather speaks to a fundamental tension related to the concept of community itself. Is community simply an aggregation of independent individuals whose competing interests must somehow be satisfied or is community a larger social entity on which individuals depend and from which they constitute their identities? Community is often spoken of in vague terms that fail to articulate its social corporeality. For example, sound bite statements such as "public parks are good for communities" fail to articulate exactly who or what community consists of. The vagueness of such a euphemism discourages critical discussion by glossing over the diversity and potentially competing interests of actual collectives (Joseph, 2002). Whether operationalized for study, community is often implicitly portrayed as 1) a geographically bounded space, 2) a collection of individuals, or 3) a quality of relations between individuals. Of these conceptualizations, only the third suggests the existence of cultural values or norms that may be constitutive of individuals' identities. Such questions and the articulation of their answers have implications not only for the design and delivery of leisure services, but also for the study of leisure as a cultural phenomena.

Despite a resurgent interest in community as a topic of scholarly inquiry throughout academia, few scholars bother to elaborate the criteria that actually distinguish a community from any other social phenomenon. As Creed (2006) argued, this tendency to gloss over the concept may actually obscure, rather than illuminate, that which scholars' wish to understand. He wrote,

What actually defines a group of people as a community is rarely, if ever, specified, and even when it is, the proffered definitions are rarely adopted by others. This is because the term has become part of the commonsensical way we understand and navigate the world. Community

does not *need* defining, and this is precisely why scholars need to pay attention to it. Such

common notions reveal the taken-for-granted understandings of the world that are so

internalized and routinized as to escape comment and specification. It is essential, then, to

look inside this seemingly transparent term and discover the associations that are, as it were,

hidden in plain view. (p. 3-4)

Creed's admonition demands a more nuanced engagement of the concept of community. An

exclusively deductive approach, entailing the application of exogenous concepts to an

idiosyncratic context, only further obscures the concept of community by shifting the act of

description to second order concepts (i.e., social capital). What is required by Creed's charge is

the empirical description and interpretation of social phenomena that purport to be community or

are labeled as such.

In light of such a claim, the task of the present manuscript is to describe and interpret the

manner in which individuals associated with a communal farm, define the concept of community

for themselves. What cultural norms and practices, especially leisure practices, do participants

identify as being constitutive of community at the Farm? How do those features of the Farm's

micro-culture contrast and compare with relevant scholarly conceptualizations of community?

Finally, how might the unique manifestation of community at the Farm contribute to more

nuanced conceptualizations of community in future inquiry?

In pursuit of these questions, I begin by examining relevant scholarship and theory

related to the concept of community, especially within leisure studies. I proceed with a

description of my ethnography, detailing my methods of data collection and analysis. The final

portions of the manuscript contain descriptions of the competing and often contradictory

conceptualizations of community that were articulated by residents and friends of the Farm

which allow us to discuss implications of these conceptualizations for future scholarship and research. All of these elements are accompanied by a narrative that has been interwoven throughout the manuscript. This narrative has been carefully constructed from field notes and interview transcripts, to represent the community members' (often competing) conceptualizations of community as expressed in/through their norms and practices.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Mosey and Wendy sat across the table from me. Mosey and I sat opposite one another and in many respects we are the opposite of one another. I am five foot nine and he is well over six feet tall. Mosey has a mass of brown, wild, curly hair which is complemented by a short goatee. My hair is short, straight and red. Mosey is tanned; I am fair and freckled. With his rimless glasses on, Mosey looks like reincarnated beatnik sans turtleneck. Wendy sits to his left and catty-corner from me. Her height at the table reflects her shorter stature, perhaps five-four or five-five. She has straight brown hair that has been streaked by the sun with honey brown highlights. Her long hair would fall well below her shoulders were it not put up in a ponytail. Her tank top exposes Wendy's petite, yet muscular physique, which no doubt the result of hours spent picking, planting, and hauling. Several slices of pizza sat in front of Mosey. Wendy and I both had plates of chickpeas and couscous.

"As the first order of business, I move that Wendy be made to conduct the meeting," Mosey declared."

"Second," I exclaimed.

"Objections? None, great, motions carries. Wendy, next item on the docket?" Mosey asked.

"Hey!" Wendy objected.

"Just kidding," Mosey raised a hand as if protecting himself from attack. "Seriously, though it does always seem as if I'm put in charge."

"Tough," countered Wendy.

"Okay, then." Mosey turned his attention to me. "In the past we've had little orientation meetings when new folks arrive at the Farm."

"Okay," I agreed.

Mosey and Wendy were seated across the table from me. George, Rowdy, and Bernie were not present for a variety of reasons. When I had been told earlier that the "family meeting" would only consist of Wendy, Mosey, and me, I suspected that the meeting was not really about family; in actuality, this meeting was really about me and my newly established residence at the Farm.

"We think that beginning this dialogue early on makes our little community function more smoothly. So we're going to go over some ground rules tonight," Mosey explained.

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Theoretical Perspective

As I began a scholarly inquiry into the topics of community and leisure, I found my personal longing for community reflected in the popular scholarship on community. Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) and Bellah et al.'s *Habits of the Heart* (1996), both of which enjoyed popular and critical acclaim, described the declining health and vitality of American communities. In particular, Putnam's dire assessment of America's communal health has generated enormous levels of scholarly interest related to the topics of social capital and community (Portes, 1998). Leisure scholars also took notice of Putnam's work and have offered numerous conceptual assessments of the potential for leisure services to affect the health and welfare of American communities (DeGraaf & Jordan, 2003; Glover, 2004a, b; Glover, Shinew,

& Parry, 2005; Hemingway, 1999; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005). Throughout such scholarship, community is often described in abstracted terms that fail to elaborate on the theoretical relation between individuals and a larger collective. Rather, scholars proceed with discussions of concepts such as "community health" (Arai & Pedlar, 1997, p. 168), "democratic values" (Glover, Shinew, & Parry, 2005, p. 76), or a "cohesive community bound by the principles of civility" (Hemingway, 1988, p. 90) that treat community as an abstract and monolithic concept. Of the leisure scholarship on community, I wish to address two pieces in particular that exemplify contrasting vision of community. The first, Hemingway's (1988) reinterpretation of leisure in classical Athens, was published prior to the social capital fad in leisure studies (see Blackshaw & Long, 2005), meaning prior to the release of Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000). The second is Arai and Pedlar's (2003) critical review of the treatment of recreation and leisure as being essentially private goods. These pieces have been chosen for their contrasting portrayals of the manner in which individuals and communities are related.

A seminal piece of scholarship in the recent spate of work related to leisure and community is Hemingway's (1988) "Leisure and Civility." He began by debunking the popular interpretation of classical leisure as purely contemplation. To latch on to Aristotle's description of leisure as contemplation was to ignore the overriding importance of the *polis* in the lives of ancient Athenians. While contemplation was an essential component of leisure, the life and leisure of Athenian citizens revolved around the *polis*. As an arena for public discourse on topics of practical reason (*praxis*), leisure served to inculcate citizens with the civic virtues that sustained participation in the political affairs of Athens. Hence classical conceptualizations of leisure cannot be divorced from the fundamentally relational character of ancient Greek life.

For its members, the Athenian *polis* can be understood as a constitutive community. Indeed, banishment from the *polis* was considered one of the more severe capital punishments in ancient Athens and it was "inconceivable that…a human being could live well outside the *polis*" (Hemingway, 1988, p. 188). Not surprisingly, Hemingway (1988) argued that the leisure practice of gathering to converse about social and political affairs was viewed as essential to the health and welfare of both the individual and the city-state. For Hemingway, "the *polis* offers one of the great counter-examples to the isolation and fragmentation of modern society" (p. 188). Far from functioning simply as a history lesson, Hemingway offered the *polis* as a prototypical form of constitutive social organization from which contemporary society may learn numerous lessons.

In their review of contemporary communitarian thought, Arai and Pedlar (2003) also addressed the extent to which leisure may or may not contribute to social isolation and fragmentation. They contend that contemporary portrayals of leisure treat it as an essentially individualistic experience. The focus on the individual contrasts with conceptualizations of leisure service delivery from the Progressive Era that treated these as "public goods" with the potential to inculcate a community with values of democratic citizenship. In this way, recreation and leisure were understood as "central to the common good and to community" (p. 186). In light of this heritage, the authors lament the current emphasis on the promotion and sale of leisure's benefits to individuals, which in turn deemphasizes the concept of a common good.

As an alternative, Arai and Pedlar (2003) drew on the work of Etzioni, Putnam, and especially Borgmann to articulate a communitarian approach to conceptualizing recreation and leisure. In doing so, the authors advocated a vision of community that "is simply the creation of space for individuals to come together" (p. 199). In particular, they envisioned communities

formed around focal practices, such as gardening or mountain biking, which liberate individuals from traditionally oppressive community structures such as church, family, etc.

In the work of Hemingway (1988) and Arai and Pedlar (2003) one finds subtle, but significant contrasts in conceptualizations of community. Hemingway's *polis*, which was treated a prototypical community, is fundamentally constitutive of its members' identities. This vision of community contrasts sharply with that of Arai and Pedlar, which described essentially autonomous individuals who are free to associate with whomever for mutual benefit. To better understand the interrelationship of leisure as phenomenon with important sociological implications, these conflicting conceptualizations of community demand empirical exploration.

A final strand of scholarship that requires attention is Joseph's (2002) explication of the manner in which the concept of community itself functions to consolidate social power inequities. "The term *community* is [used] to refer to social practices that presume or attempt to enact and produce identity, unity, communion, and purity,…and a diverse range of oppressions, including but by no means limited to genocidal violence" (p. xviii-xix). In this sense, Joseph was referring to the nationalist sense of community that fueled genocidal practices in the Nazi regime and the apartheid policies of South Africa. Specifically, the term community is used to construct particular identity categories with characteristics that simultaneously exclude certain individuals while including others. The exclusivity of community is most prominent when an individual or small group purports to represent the interests of a larger collective. This phenomenon arises in Glover's (2004b) exploration of social capital amongst community gardeners. Within the context of a larger revitalization effort, leaders of the neighborhood association claimed to represent the interests of all residents within the neighborhood community. Ostensibly for the purposes of neighborhood revitalization and community building, neighborhood leaders, who were

predominantly white, pursued a community agenda that failed to represent the interests or social contexts of the neighborhood's residents of color. The divisiveness of community occurs not only in the context of traditionally oppressive relations, such as economically privileged whites and individuals of color, but also within the midst of traditionally marginalized enclaves. Johnson and Samdahl's (2005) exploration of misogyny with a country-western gay bar revealed the manner in which gay masculine identity was deployed in an attempt to exclude lesbian patrons from the bar's community of patrons. Similarly, within her own work, Joseph (2002) described the use of the discourse of "the gay and lesbian community" to exclude competing identity categories such as bisexuality or ethnicity. In this way, statements about "the gay and lesbian community," "the neighborhood community," or other forms of community function to universalize community identity and exclude individuals who fail to conform to such characteristics. Understanding that the concept of community may function detrimentally, the task of the community scholar is to explore the manner in which lived experiences intersect with both contextual and scholarly conceptualizations of community. To that end, the present study endeavors to explore a lived reality of community by exploring the manner in which members of the Farm manifest concepts of community through their cultural norms and practices.

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With the stated intention of keeping the Farm community functioning smoothly, Wendy, Mosey, and I spent the next half hour sharing laundry lists of our personal pet peeves related to communal living.

"If a bedroom door's closed, don't even bother knocking," Mosey explained.

"Buy some toilet paper every once in while," Wendy implored.

"Don't eat my leftover pizza," Mosey asked.

"Oh, that's just wrong," I agreed.

"Thank you!" Mosey said with vindication.

Mosey explained to me that the kitchen fridge utilized a system of assigned shelves for each person. The lowest shelf was the "communal shelf" and food items placed on it were free for the taking. We all agreed that "direct communication" regarding disagreements was most appreciated. Additionally, as one of the CSA co-managers, Wendy explained that she especially did not appreciate people using tools without asking.

"Unless you want to use the weedeater or the lawnmower," Mosey said with a snicker.

Having shared these thoughts with one another, we settled back into our dinner. That wasn't so bad, I thought to myself. I assumed incorrectly that the "business" portion of the meeting was over.

Mosey finished a piece of pizza and paused for a moment. He pushed his plate to the side, leaned forward, and crossed his hands on the table. "Generally, we have all gotten along pretty well here, which I think is largely because we all respect each other. However, when we've had disagreements in the past, I've been called upon to act as the landlord, which I suppose is because I'm one of the Farm's co-owners. However, one of the few issues that folks have argued about is the use of public space here in the house. In that role, I sometimes have to 'keep the peace' by explaining who can use the house and when they can use it. I don't know if you've noticed, but when I get home in the evenings, I'm usually pretty tired and don't really feel like socializing. I think other folks feel the same way and so we ask that folks who don't pay to live in the house, not hangout in its public areas unless something social is going on.

So I know that you've been cooking in the house for the last few weeks, but if you could do your cooking in the camper that would help keep the house open for everyone else."

Mosey paused.

His words hung in the air as I tried to grasp their meaning.

"I'll help you set up the stove in the camper if you need some help," Mosey offered.

I paused for a second not knowing quite what to say.

Was I shrinking? I thought.

It felt at that moment like I was actually shrinking in size if not in status. I resisted the urge to become defensive. I also resisted the urge to explain how my relationships with everyone at the table had just been commodified within a matter of seconds. I was at that moment struggling to reconcile my dual roles as a researcher and a human being who was trying to be a part of the Farm community.

"That's okay. I don't think the tank has any propane," I explained. "I'll pick some up next time I go to the store."

"Will this be a problem as far as your research goes?" Wendy asked.

She had immediately picked-up on the inherent problem created by excluding me from the house.

Of course this affects my research! I thought.

Calm down. If you make a big deal out of this, you might banish yourself from the entire community.

"Um…As long as I'm kept in the loop regarding what's happening socially at the Farm, I don't suppose that will be a problem. However, I will need to spend some amount of time in the house in order to create an adequate description for my fieldnotes," I explained.

Just then, Bella, Mosey's dog, stood up in the family room and started barking at the front door.

"That shouldn't be a problem," Mosey conceded, "especially if it's done during the day when we're gone."

Just as Mosey finished his sentence, the front door opened and George walked in.

"Did you get my message?" Mosey asked immediately.

"I'll be right back," George said as he dodged the question and walked into his bedroom.

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<div align="center">Methodology</div>

In an effort to examine the Farm as a unique cultural context, I utilized an ethnographic research methodology for this study. Due to its emphasis on contextual description, ethnography facilitates the analysis of cultural norms and values that are not possible using other research methodologies. In particular, ethnographic methods of date collection, such as participant observation and ethnographic interviewing, allowed me to identify the different conceptualizations of community present at the Farm.

Description of Context

To say that I chose to study the tightly-knit collection of people living at the Farm is not exactly correct. After a six-month long "courting" process that entailed going to Family Dinners and volunteering in the fields and conversing with its individual residents, it would be more accurate to say that I was chosen by the Farm. Having received approval from its residents in June, I began living on the Farm in a small pop-up style camper in July 2007.

Physically, the Farm is a thirteen acre rectangle whose longer axis extends from East to West. Two thirds of the land is composed of fields and pastures, while the remaining third is covered by an oak-pine-hickory forest. The Farm's physical center is anchored by the Farm

house. The two story house is built "log cabin" style and contains four bedrooms, three

bathrooms, and a large garage in addition to kitchen, living, and dining areas. The house also

functions as the social center in which its six permanent residents live. The six individuals form

the core of an extended network of as many as fifty individuals who spend time at the Farm on a

weekly basis.

The Farm's social network is extended further by its role as a community supported

agriculture (CSA) farm. CSA farms offer consumers an alternative to the scale and impact of

industrial agriculture operations by interfacing small-scale, local farmers directly with

consumers. As opposed to customers, CSAs have shareholders who purchase a "share of the

farm" for which they receive regular deliveries of seasonal produce. As a CSA operation, the

Farm provided food for approximately fifty shareholders. Thus in addition to full-time residents

and friends, the Farm's extended social network may have been as large as sixty or seventy

individuals.

Data Generation

Given the need for rich, contextual data on communities, an ethnographic methodology

seemed best suited to the task. As is customary of ethnography, I endeavored to become part of

the context under study, all the while acknowledging that I could not fully shed my identity as a

researcher. From July though November 2007, I lived on the Farm in a small pop-up style

camper. In keeping with traditional ethnographic methodology (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, &

Lofland, 2005; Wolcott, 1999), participant observation was the primary method by which I

generated data. In my role as a participant observer, I spent time planting, harvesting, weeding,

and doing the many other chores that contribute to a farm's productivity. I also spent numerous

hours playing, cooking, cleaning, eating, and talking with members of the Farm community. In

order to document my experience of "farm life," I recorded my experiences and those of my participants by composing field notes. As have countless other ethnographers, I struggled to balance the competing necessities of participation and documentation. To that end, I would periodically break from an activity, harvesting produce for example, and retreat to a quiet place in which I could capture "jottings" of my experience. These jottings consisted of significant words or phrases that I would speak into a digital voice recorder and subsequently use to type expanded field notes. While acknowledging their inherent partiality, I used my field notes to capture the events I observed while living at the Farm.

In addition to my field notes, I generated data in two other forms. I periodically recorded my subjective reactions to events in a researcher journal. This journal served as a useful means to monitor the intersection and interaction of my dual roles as a resident and a researcher of the Farm. Finally, I generated data by conducting both formal and informal interviews. As events warranted, I conducted informal, so called ethnographic interviews, in which I engaged a participant in a focused conversation about a topic of related to my research agenda (Spradley, 1979). As opposed to more formal interviews, the data from such interviews took the form of field notes.

Near the conclusion of my five-month stay at the Farm, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with six of the Farm's residents, including Mosey, Wendy, and George. These interviews utilized a focused interview protocol and were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Both the ethnographic and semi-structure interviews served to bolster the trustworthiness of my subsequent representations of the Farm by contrasting and comparing my own experiences with those of its primary residents.

Data Analysis

In analyzing my data, I utilized Wolcott's (1994) three stages of data transformation: description, analysis, interpretation. Using field notes, research journals, and interview transcripts, I began by composing detailed descriptions of the Farm and its inhabitants. Guided by my research questions, my analytic process commenced with decisions about what elements of my experience at the Farm would be included in the descriptions. Analysis continued with a process of reading, coding, and sorting the data. Through the open coding process, I bracketed significant portions of data with a descriptive word or phrase. The resulting collection of codes was compared and consolidated based on commonalities, a process known as axial coding. The resulting code categories, "communal food practices" for example, were subsequently interpreted in light of extant scholarship.

The final phase of analysis entailed constructing the data into a narrative representational format. Using Polkinghorne's (1995) unique iteration of narrative analysis, I carefully crafted the present narrative from the unemplotted data of my field notes and interview transcripts. In doing so, I identified and brought meaning to prominent themes within the larger field of data. Far from being *inspired* by the data, the narrative results from a "recursive movement" between the data and narrative. Polkinghorne (1995) explained saying,

> Evolving a plot that serves to configure the data elements into a coherent story requires testing the beginning attempts at emplotment with the database. If major events or actions described in the data conflict with or contradict the emerging plot idea, then the idea needs to be adapted to better fit or make sense of the elements and their relationships. The development of a plot follows the same principles of understanding that are by the notion of

the hermeneutic circle. The creation of a text involves the to-and-fro movement of parts to

whole that is involved in comprehending a finished text. (p. 16)

While the narrative may or may describe events exactly as they occurred, it should not be

considered fiction. As described by Polkinghorne, the narrative takes on the format of that which

Van Maanen (1988) termed a "research tale." Such a tale is carefully constructed from the data

in order to encapsulate the salient features of numerous events within the textual space of one

narrative. Thus, the purpose of the narrative is not simply to report findings, but to configure

unemplotted data in such a way that they induce meaning from the phenomenon under study

(Polkinghorne, 1995). Examples of such analyses in leisure scholarship can be found in the work

of Johnson and Samdahl (2005), Parry and Shinew (2004), and Glover (2007).

Trustworthiness

In order to preserve the fidelity of my descriptions and the integrity of my conclusions, I

have taken several steps to preserve the trustworthiness of my representations of the data. Often

referred to as member checking, I made my field notes and interview transcripts available for

inspection by Farm residents. Recognizing that my depiction of events is inherently partial and

biased, member checking also served as a means to improve the honesty of my data generation

efforts. Additionally, I maintained a research journal that served a repository of my subjective

reactions to life on the Farm. Reviewing my research journal served as a means to recognize the

extent to which my dual role as researcher and resident often conflicted with one another.

Finally, in an effort to interrogate my characterizations of the Farm and its residents, my research

advisor and co-author reviewed my data, continually questioned my relationship with the farm

and its residents and visited the Farm himself.

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George sat down on the same side of the table as Mosey and Wendy, leaving me by myself opposite them. He pulled a half-eaten burrito wrapped in aluminum foil and some tortilla chips from a white paper bag. He and I exchanged greetings.

"So what's going on?" he asked.

"We were just going over the rules of the house with Dr. Fun," Wendy explained. My fellow residents had nicknamed me Dr. Fun in light of my graduate work in leisure studies and in reaction to their own pseudonyms..

"Yeah, in an effort to keep our little community functioning smoothly, we're sharing our pet peeves with one another," Mosey added.

"Okay," George said as he ate.

Still stinging from my ejection from the house, I attuned to Mosey's use of the term community and decided to pursue it with him. "Related to the whole point of this conversation, let me ask exactly what you mean by community?"

"What?" he asked.

"You said this was a little community and I'm just curious what exactly makes the Farm a community?"

Wendy spoke up. "That's a good question. I'm not sure what the official definition of a community is, but I assume it has something to do with people coming together and working for a common purpose. And I know part of our purpose is the whole CSA operation and feeding people and that's a purpose."

"That's interesting," I commented wondering how I might cautiously proceed to stimulate the conversation. "So everyone shares in the goals of the CSA and contributes to its operations?"

"Everyone contributes differently." George answered.

"What do you mean by that?" I asked.

"Well, some people contribute with actual labor, some with money, some people contribute both," Mosey explained.

"Can someone be a part of the community if that person does not contribute anything to the Farm? What if someone only showed up at Family Dinner, but contributed nothing to the operations of the Farm. Would that person be a part of the community?" I asked.

"Well, let's keep in mind that everyone who comes to Family Dinner brings a dish, so they're contributing to the community in that sense. However, I would argue that ironically you can come to Family Dinner and not be a part of the Family," Mosey explained.

"So what is the Family exactly?" I asked.

Mosey thought for a second. "Well, there's a large group of people who are out here on a weekly basis, but then there's a group of people who make up the core, the heart of the Farm and that's the Family."

"Who's a part of the family?" I asked.

"Everyone sitting here is definitely a part of the Family. Rowdy and Bernie and Lila are definitely members of the Family. There are some folks who've lived here in the past, who don't live here anymore, but who are definitely a part of the Family—Skippy for example. Then there are folks who are a part of the extended Family, like Hank. Hank is like an uncle," Mosey explained.

"Yeah, and then you have a bunch of cousins, like Sam and Mack and Eve," George offered.

"The thing is though, that all of these people, especially those folks in the core Family, are really like family. They may not be blood relatives, but I know if I ever need anything, I can depend on these people. They don't take the place of my actual family, but they're an addition to that family," Mosey explained.

"So those people who are a part of the Family, they feel a certain obligation to one another?" I asked.

"Just like any other family," Wendy chimed in.

"If George needed something for instance, I would do whatever I could to help him without expecting anything in return."

"Exactly," Mosey agreed.

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<div align="center">Competing Conceptualizations of Community</div>

As Sandel (1992) argued, individuals manifest their beliefs about community through their daily actions. Given this assertion, what can one learn from the preceding passage about Farm members' conceptualizations of community? I contend that members of the Farm community articulate two coexisting and contradictory articulations of community. The first of these conceptualizations is the Farm's members being a similar to a family, and the second of these treats residents as independent tenants and contributors to a for-profit venture.

The Farm as Family

Farm residents often referred to themselves as being a family. As referenced in the narrative, residents and core members were thought of as members of the immediate family, while neighbors and individuals in the extended social network were referred to as being a part of the extended family. George captured this sentiment when he described his relationships with

the Farm's residents by saying, "we might not be blood-related, but we're family. I feel like I have brothers and sisters." In fact, the Farm hosts a Family Dinner every Wednesday evening in which residents, neighbors, and friends partake in a potluck-style meal (see Chapter Four). In describing this meal, Bernie explained that it possesses "a nurturing, loving aspect" that is often associated with family.

The metaphor of family was also extended to individuals outside of the Farm's immediate residents. As discussed in the narrative, close friends and neighbors of the Farm were thought of and referred to using kinship terminology such as cousin, aunt, or uncle. The term "tribe" was also occasionally used to refer to non-residents who were closely affiliated with the Farm. Being based on kinship ties, the tribe metaphor is consistent with the Farm's emphasis on family relations and obligations. The metaphor of family or tribe is significant because it implies a connection to others that is not predicated on an exchange for mutual benefit. As described in the narrative, residents of the Farm are willing to offer assistance to one another without any expectation of compensation.

In many ways, this Farm Family resembled a rural counterpart to Ethan Watters (2003) concept of the "urban tribe." Watters contended that the networks of friends had begun to take on the social support functions traditionally associated with families. Similar to the Farm's Family Dinner, Watters's tribes engage in rituals that delineate insider-outsider states. Further, such tribes usually share social and living space just as did the Farm's members. Similar to family membership, tribe members' obligations to one another were not based on cost-benefit calculations, but were portrayed as being an entitlement of membership. This contrasts with numerous other relationships that are based fundamentally on mutual benefit.

The Farm as an Association for Mutual Benefit

Despite referring to themselves as family, Farm residents also often described the manner in which their relationships were based on mutual benefit and rights. In her description of the term, Wendy explained that community was "people coming together and working for a common purpose," which at the Farm was the cultivation and sale of food. However, not all contributions to the farming operations were equally valued; the relative impact of individuals' contributions conferred differing status with the Farm community. Bernie described the effect of differing contributions saying,

…the paying members are contributing an important form of energy towards the perpetuation of the Farm….Now the people who pay and work are contributing more energy than the people who just pay…and I appreciate those people immensely…. The members who paid and picked up their food and never came out and volunteered, I felt a fairly shallow connection with.

Bernie went on to explain that he developed a more intimate connection with those individuals who shared in the Farm's labor on a weekly basis. Thus, an individual's acceptance and status within the Farm community was predicated on that person's contributions to its operations. This contrasts sharply with familial relations in which membership and status are not dependent on individuals' contributions.

Residents of the Farm also contributed to this common purpose by paying rent in exchange for living space. As Mosey explained, "when it comes down to it, the mortgage has to be paid." Just as differing contributions to the CSA entailed different levels of community status, so too did differing contributions to the Farm's expenses entail differing degrees of privilege. Such a system of regulation and control highlights the rights-based nature of certain relationships

on the Farm. The payment of different amounts of rent entitled individuals to different degrees of access to the house.

As discussed previous, this rights-based approach to understanding interpersonal relations also governed the use of food and the maintenance of privacy within the house. The consumption of other people's food was a source of on-going tension. As discussed in the narrative, the exchange of food items was carefully regulated and a shelving system was used in the refrigerator to demarcate individuals' food items. Additionally, residents' bedrooms were understood to be private spaces and individuals were not to be disturbed while in their bedrooms. Such careful regulation of food and space is more closely related to the norms of behavior associated with landlord-tenant relationships as opposed to those of the family.

Implicit in the landlord-tenant relationship is an underlying system of legal protection. If either party to a landlord-tenant relationship fails to meet its obligation, the other party has the ability to protect its rights via judicial remedy. For example, were a resident of the Farm to fail to pay rent, he or she could be evicted. Such a rights-based approach is wholly incompatible with the familial metaphor discussed earlier in which conflict is resolved by members based on an ethic of care.

Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft: Community and Association at the Farm

Descriptions of the Farm as a family or as an association of individuals for mutual benefit are difficult to reconcile. Where family is stereotypically inclusive and nurturing, exchange-based relations are typically instrumental in nature. While these incongruent conceptualizations of community manifest themselves within the Farm's discourse on community, they are also prominent within the scholarly explorations of community. One of the more influential dichotomies underlying scholarly efforts to describe community is Ferdinand Tönnies

articulation of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* and they seem useful here to explore the competing discourses of community at the Farm.

Set against the backdrop of nineteenth century German industrial transformation, Tönnies's (1887/1955) *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* described the transformation of Germany from a nation of small, agrarian communities (*Gemeinschaft*) to a society of urban, industrial centers (*Gesellschaft*). As is also typical of contemporary community scholarship, Tönnies looked backwards to a past that was simpler and more wholesome. *Gemeinschaft* modes of living and thinking were rooted in the organic structure and function of the family and its household. Defined family roles and hierarchy provided order, stability, and unity to individuals' lives. Additionally, membership in and identification with the family unit provided individuals with an experience of belonging and contributing to an entity that was greater than the individual, the collective family unit. Consider Tönnies's characterization of the manner in which community resources may be appropriated by individuals,

> According to the way of thinking of the *Gemeinschaft*, that which we regard as the use of the common land for the payment of special services to the community, as such, is also regarded as a use of the *common good* for the immediate needs to everyone. (emphasis added, p. 70)

Thus one of the primary functions of the family is the creation of a mode of thinking that recognizes and embraces a *good* that is *common* to both the individual and the community. The unity, stability, and self-sacrifice of the *Gemeinschaft* community stood in opposition to that which Tönnies called *Gesellschaft* or association.

As opposed to unifying organization of the family and the village, *Gesellschaft* thinking necessitated that individuals behave in their own best interests, rather than those of a collective. Where the interests of individuals coincided, collective arrangements would prosper. However,

In the *Gesellschaft*,…we find no actions that can be derived from an *a priori* and necessarily

existing unity; no actions, therefore, which manifest the will and spirit of the unity even if

performed by the individual; no actions which, in so far as they are performed by the

individual, take place on behalf of those united with him[sic]. (Tönnies, 1887/1955, p. 74)

Thus individual behavior is always self-interested and typified by the market-based, exchange

relationship. Where business and law have evolved to protect individual interests, their existence

further insures the alienation of the individual from any sort of unity.

Despite not being explicitly discussed, Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft*/Community and

Gesellschaft/Association are prominent within the Farm's behavior and discourse related to

community. As with other families, the creation and maintenance of the Farm were based on

close friendships, especially the friendship of Mosey and Rowdy, the Farm's co-owners. Related

to their ownership of the Farm, Mosey and Rowdy took on the role of its patriarchs. While

decision-making at the Farm was often facilitated by consensus, Mosey and Rowdy would

cautiously impose their will in conflict situations. As with the *Gemeinschaft* family, the presence

of such hierarchical roles brought a degree of stability and order to the Farm. References to the

Farm as a family invoke the *Gemeinschaft* concept and suggest that residents must contribute to

a common good that supersedes the interests of any particular member. Contributions to the

greater good are exemplified in comments such as that made by Mosey, that in actions such as

cleaning, one must contribute "an extra 10% of effort" to keep the Farm functioning smoothly.

Statements such as this suggested that the Farm family/community embodied a social reality that

superseded its individual members. In this way, the family and *Gemeinschaft* concepts are

constitutive of individuals' identities. As a constitutive identity category, use of the family

metaphor implies that membership cannot be revoked; once a member of the family, always a member of the family.

The presence of the *Gemeinschaft* concept in the Farm members' discourse does not preclude the presence of the *Gesellschaft* concept as well. From the protection of individuals' privacy and food to their contributions of rent, many of the residents' relations were predicated on rights-based entitlements. With reference to the use of space, Tönnies stated specifically that "individuals' spheres of activity and power are sharply separated, so that everybody refuses to everyone else contacts with and admittance to his[sic] sphere; i.e., intrusions are regarded as hostile acts" (p. 74). Thus in exchange for rent, residents were given a room and as described above its sanctity was inviolate. Rent paid for one's room and access to the house could take the form of money, labor, or a mixture of the two (see Chapter Five). The currencies of money and labor were carefully regulated as some individuals were under no obligation to contribute labor, George, while others exclusively contributed labor for residency, Bernie. The self-interested nature of *Gesellschaft*-based relationships is present in residents' descriptions of their contributions to the Farm's operations. As discussed in the narrative, the *Gesellschaft* concept is especially prominent when members discuss their rights to space and privacy, privileges related to the use of space in the Farm house, and obligations to pay rent.

How might these seemingly dichotomous and contradictory concepts coexist within the Farm's discourse on community? Indeed Tönnies (1887/1955) understood the two concepts to be antithetical to one another.

<center>Discussion</center>

As is evident from the narrative, the Farm's residents utilize numerous and conflicting conceptualizations of community in their day-to-day lives. In certain situations, Farm residents

are thought of as "unencumbered selves" (Sandel, 1992) who freely associate with one another and are entitled to certain privileges based on their contributions of money and/or labor. At other times, residents speak of each other as family for whom they would provide assistance without consideration of compensation. The contradictory nature of their discourse is not exceptional, but is illustrative of the complex and ambiguous nature of lived experience.

In his deconstruction of the community concept, Creed (2006) contended that both scholars and lay people tend to be selective and romantic in their descriptions of community relations. In other words, individuals draw attention to those aspects of their relationships that support their preferred characterization of community. In this way, the concept of community has a normative function that fundamentally influences its capacity to describe a phenomenon. Thus, when members of the Farm describe themselves as a family, they have chosen to highlight aspects of their relationships that support such an assertion. However, these familial or *Gemeinschaft* notions of community are never reconciled with the instrumental or *Gesellschaft* landlord-tenant relations. Thus these two conceptualizations remain partitioned from one another in the Farm's discourse of community.

As Friedman (1992) argued, individuals are prone to vacillate between thinking of themselves as being fundamentally independent and inter-dependent. Indeed, as opposed to the *Gemeinschaft*-style communities of previous societies, individuals in contemporary society are faced with unprecedented opportunities to find and create communities. Such is the case for members of the Farm who created, rather than inherited, its social structure. The constructed nature of the Farm community allows its members to pick and choose disparate and sometimes contradictory concepts such as "family" or "tenant" to describe their relations to one another. To the extent that their community is socially constructed, such a contradictory view is possible.

Such incongruent concepts may lead to conflict or tension as was the case when I was excluded from the Farm house during certain times of day. Such tensions might be threatening to its continued existence were it not for the fact that the Farm is a "community of choice" (Friedman, 1992). Individuals freely choose to associate with the Farm and its contradictory discourses of community. Despite its use of a familial discourse, the Farm cannot claim to be a *Gemeinschaft*-style community. The use of such language amongst individuals who are not related by kinship merely highlights the extent to which individuals can exercise autonomy in constructing their individual and communal identities. For example, in contrast to previous eras during which individuals inherited the occupations of their parents, Wendy, Bernie, Mosey, and Rowdy have all come to the Farm without any previous farming experience and subsequently constructed their identities as farmers. Being a community of choice, individuals have chosen their identities as residents or members of the Farm family. Having not been born into "the Family," its members can easily abandon such an identity as soon as they please.

Communities of choice, such as the Farm, are consistent with Arai and Pedlar's (2003) belief that community can serve as a space in which individuals re-create themselves. By focusing on a focal practice (Borgmann, 1992), such as farming, individuals are able to partially re-create their identities through the Farm community. Such a conceptualization of community focused around specific practices disrupts monolithic references to community, especially those which treat community as a geographic space (i.e., neighborhood, village, city). Such a geographic conceptualization of community is often implicit when scholars refer to the potential for recreation and leisure activities to serve as mediums for community development. However, when conceptualized as being fundamentally matters of choice, geographic communities make

less sense. Scholarly inquiry that examines the intersections of leisure and community must be more explicit in its description of the type of community being discussed.

My experiences at the Farm suggest that *Gemeinschaft* conceptualizations, that is concepts of community as being wholly constitutive of identity, are not useful for understanding the manner in which collectives function in contemporary society. Consistent with Friedman's (1992) arguments, contemporary society makes possible, even necessitates, that individuals select from and perform a myriad of identities that are in turn connected to numerous collectives. As described, members of the Farm can freely move between the identities of farmer, family member, and tenant, just to name a few. This performativity of communal identity supports Arai and Pedlar's (2003) preference for conceptualizing communities as being fundamentally re-creational. Aside from a few organizations such as the military or the clergy, contemporary society is devoid of social structures analogous to the Athenian *polis* that are capable of subsuming every facet of individuals' identities. This is not to imply that social collectives do not try to impose identity characteristics (Joseph, 2002). Indeed as described throughout this manuscript, residents of the Farm endeavor to shape behavior by constructing the insider/outsider identity of Family member. While this Family metaphor intimates a *Gemeinschaft*-style community, its ability to influence behavior is limited. If banishment from the ancient *polis* was tantamount to death, leaving the Farm and its Family is considerably less dramatic.

Conclusion

Through the context of a Family Meeting at the Farm, this study has reviewed the manner in which members of the Farm manifest their understandings of community in daily life. Members of the Farm commonly describe the Farm community in two ways: 1) as an extended

family and 2) as a collection of individuals pursuing a common purpose. Once elaborated, these two descriptions of community relate closely Tönnies's concepts of *Gemeinschaft*/community and *Gesellschaft*/association. I contend that when such competing conceptualizations of community exist together, they highlight the essentially performative nature of communal identity. As opposed to being universalizing and constitutive of individuals' identities, communities are formed by choice. As suggesting by the narrative, the Farm's community is more accurately a community *of* farming that revolves around the focal practice of its farming operations (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). The more closely one is associated with these operations, the more prominent one is within its community.

Similar to Glover's (2004b) explication of competing interests within a community garden, this study highlights the nuances and competing discourses that constitute a community. As suggested by Creed (2006) at the outset of this manuscript, such descriptions of community indicate the need for scholars to articulate the nuances of the communities they wish to study. Understood as a collection of competing interests, scholars must be more cautious in articulating the manner in which leisure is experienced by "communities."

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Several weeks after our Family Meeting, I sat in the shade near my camper with Philip, a shareholder in the Farm's CSA and a participant in many of its social activities. We were enjoying a few minutes of stillness after a morning spent working at various farm chores. Philip inquired about my research and I spent a few minutes describing ethnographic methodology as well as my research questions. I explained that I was interested in describing residents' ideas about what constituted community.

"I think this is the ideal community," Philip responded.

"What makes it so?" I asked.

"People are living their visions here. They live out their ideals about the way they want to treat each other and the land," he explained.

"Are those visions shared?" I asked.

"I think the great thing about this place is that everyone's vision, even if it is different, is respected here," he countered.

"But can this really be a community, if everyone's vision is radically different from one another?" I pushed.

Philip paused for a moment. "Well, basically everyone who is a part of the Farm community cares about and contributes to its operations. Some people contribute time and labor, some people give money."

"For the sake of argument, can a community like this one be made of people whose motives for belonging are primarily selfish? In other words, is it a community if we're all contributing in the hopes of getting something, like a basket of food, in return?" I asked.

"Well, that makes it sounds kind of cold. I think most everyone out here contributes because they want to be a part of something larger than themselves. You know what I mean?"

"An idea, a vision of some sort?" I questioned.

"Yeah, exactly. I think people want to be a part of the Farm and they do that by contributing their energy in the form of work or money. In return, the Farm feeds them with its fruits, so to speak. I never take any food from the Farm unless I put in a full day's work here each week. I feed the Farm, it feeds me. You see what I mean?" he asked.

"Uh…yeah. I guess so."

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CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS LEARNED

Both during and after my fieldwork, I have realized the extent to which this project has been a learning process. The manuscripts from this study will undoubtedly contribute to leisure scholars' understanding of community. Equally important though, are the methodological and scholastic lessons I have learned related to the design and execution of research projects. With these considerations in mind, the following chapter summarizes both the substantive and methodological lessons learned throughout my study of the Farm.

The Farm: A Place Apart

The fundamental task of this study has been the description of the Farm's micro-culture. Despite being engaged with its surrounding town and population, the Farm's cultural practices set it apart from its surroundings by seeking to recapture what Bernie called "our nation's agrarian heritage." In many ways, the life of the Farm revolves around its farming operations. Therefore, Chapter Five described the nature of work on the Farm and the resemblance of farm work to certain leisure activities. One of the more prominent leisure activities at the Farm was a weekly meal called Family Dinner. Chapter Four described Family Dinner and the numerous customs and norms that typify this unique meal. Finally, Chapter Six described explored the behaviors and discourses that residents and members of the Farm used to articulate their competing visions of community.

Playin' Farmer

Notwithstanding George's characterization of the Farm as a "playground for adults," the Farm was a work-centric context. As discussed in Chapter Five, however, the nature of the work being pursued is different from that found in most employment contexts. Different from the alienating tendencies of typical wage labor, many of the Farm's core members closely identified with their farming efforts. Instead of being simply a means to earn money, Farm work is also understood to be a form of social action and pedagogy. Given the dominance and profitability of large-scale industrial agriculture in the United States, the creation and stewardship of a small, organic farm ought to be understood as a somewhat precarious venture. As opposed to competing with agri-industry, local, small-scale farming is meant to address the alienation that exists between consumers, farmers, and food. Additionally, by serving local customers and using organic practices, the Farm displaces the environmental impacts of industrial farming. While reducing its impact on the environment, the Farm simultaneously educates its CSA (community supported agriculture) members by nurturing their curiosity about organic farming practices.

The immediacy and physical challenge of such work also distinguished it from other work contexts. These characteristics of farm work often facilitate autotelic experiences for workers (Delle Fave & Massimini, 1988). Although such experiences are rewarding for full-time farmers such as Wendy and Bernie, they seem more meaningful for volunteers who "play farmer" at the Farm. For these individuals, the autotelic nature of farm labor may contrast sharply with their work and/or life in general.

In the manner described above, the Farm may function as an adult *play*ground in the sense that it allows individuals to play at being a farmer and in turn play with their identity. For example, by working at the Farm and conversing with its residents, individuals learn to

participate in an ongoing discourse related to vegetable cultivation. Volunteers such as Philip and Jennifer, who initially knew little about the farming, began participating in conversations about issues such as the weather or pest management at the Farm. Such conversations displayed their knowledge of farming issues to visitors and new CSA members. As illustrated in Chapter Five, if the *farmer identity* is a series of performances that are choreographed for particular contexts (Goffman, 1959), then the Farm functions as a unique stage on which individuals learn how to be farmers.

Cultivating Identity

If the farm work allows individuals to play with the farmer identity, then Family Dinner primarily serves as the venue in which visitors first witness the performance and mystique of the farmer character. During Family Dinner, the seemingly perfunctory practice of eating was constituted by a discourse that praised both farmer and food. In particular, Farm-grown produce occupied the pinnacle of an informal food classification system. As Wendy explained, "we're proud of our food" and we "want to talk about it." Specifically, Dinner Circle's practices of thanksgiving and menu recitation function to celebrate the Farm's operations.

In this environment, visitors are exposed to the heroic figure of the farmer in the form of Wendy or Bernie, and to a lesser extent Mosey or Rowdy. Through their farm work, these individuals are portrayed as being intimately connected to the land and capable of producing a significant proportion of the food they consume on a daily basis. Nurtured by the work of contemporary authors such as Wendell Berry or Barbara Kingsolver, the farmer as a character is steeped in American mythology reaching back to the lives of Founding Fathers such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. Thus, the farmer archetype may also be attractive to the extent that it reconnects individuals to their national heritage. Influenced by this performance,

attendees to Family Dinner are exposed to the possibility of also participating in this identity by purchasing a share of the CSA or volunteering to perform farm labor.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Family Dinner also serves as a space in which to practice and learn about the benefits of a slower pace of life. The length and convivial nature of the evening is a subtle but deliberate means of educating attendees about the benefits of engaging mealtime as a leisure activity. For participants, Family Dinner functioned as an experimental kitchen in which individuals could not only try out new recipes, but a new way of consuming meals altogether.

A Contingent Vision of Community

Of the many phenomena I encountered at the Farm, perhaps none were as intriguing as participants' formulations related to the concept of community. As discussed in Chapter Six, community manifested itself in different ways depending on the context. With regards to the farming operation and its accompanying labor, community was articulated as individuals contributing to "the greater good" of the Farm's operations and profitability. In contrast, when related to the use of space in the Farm house, community manifested itself as the exchange of goods and services between self-interested actors. The partitioning of these conceptualizations was especially intriguing because it managed a functional tension between individuals' personal interests and those of the farming operation.

The first of these conceptualizations, which is most closely associated with Tönnies's (1887/1955) *Gemeinschaft*, facilitated a discourse in which the Farm was constituted as a place with norms that were different from those of the rest of society. As a *Gemeinschaft*-style community, the Farm was a family in which its members cared for and supported one another as an expectation of membership. Family membership extended to the land itself and its flora and

fauna. In this way, the Farm was understood as *a place apart*, a refuge from the instrumentality of the larger society.

In contrast to the *Gemeinschaft* formulation, residents' understanding of their rights within the community suggested a preference for the *Gesellschaft* conceptualization of community (Tönnies, 1887/1955). The *Gesellschaft*-style iteration of community portrayed members of the Farm as autonomous and self-interested, similar to the manner in which shareholders are treated in the context of any economic venture. As discussed in Chapter Six, the *Gesellschaft* conceptualization manifested in discussions related to the payment of rent, the use of space, privacy, and the use of food.

These incongruent conceptualizations functioned to simultaneously preserve the idea that the Farm was different from the rest of society, while also compromising with the necessity of market-based relationships that characterize society at large. Although the deployment of these concepts is largely functional, their inconsistency may occasionally produce tension as is highlighted in the narrative of Chapter Six. Individuals (myself included) may question the extent to which exchanged-based or *Gesellschaft* conceptualizations preclude the possibility of family-like or *Gemeinschaft* conceptualizations of community. As described by Tönnies, the *Gemeinschaft* community is a type of social cosmology for individuals, which provides stability and order to the social universe. The pluralistic nature of contemporary society necessarily precludes the acceptance of such all-encompassing concepts. As Friedman (1992) argued, individuals are confronted with an abundance of identity choices in contemporary society, and consequently individuals deploy different identity roles in response to particular contexts.

The ostensible contradictions between the *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* concepts that occurred at the Farm reinforce Creed's (2006) assertion that community is fundamentally

conceptual and normative. Conceptual contradictions persist because these conceptualizations are contingent on context. In a given context, each concept was meant to shape behaviors such as the harvesting of produce or the payment of rent. Thus neither concept was or is capable of fully describing the essential features of community at the Farm.

Re-creating Leisure

If intentional communities such as the Farm endeavor to create an alternative vision of society, they also necessarily re-create the many phenomena that constitute society, including leisure. Discussions related to the concepts of work and leisure do not figure prominently in the everyday life of the Farm. However, as discussed in Chapter Five, the nature of work at the Farm troubles the strict dichotomy between work and leisure that is taken for granted in society at large. In doing so, the experience of work at the Farm suggests that where work is experientially engaging and meaningful, the work-leisure dichotomy ceases to be a useful conceptual system for making sense of social arrangements (Stormann, 1989).

As discussed in Chapters Four and Six, the identity of farmer is performed and celebrated at the Farm through farm work and Family Dinner. The performance of identity through leisure activities at the Farm echoes the previous work of leisure scholars (Kivel, 2000; Johnson & Samdahl, 2005; Shaw & Kleiber, 1995). To the extent that all of its members perform the farmer identity, the Farm functions in opposition to the professionalization and industrialization of agricultural in general. Thus, my experiences at the Farm support the assertion that the performance of identity in leisure contexts can also function to resist social power inequities (Wearing, 1998). As discussed previously, identity is performed contingently depending on the context. Similar to the contingency of these individual performances, this study described the manner in which communal identity is contingently performed. Depending on the issue being

addressed, the concepts of community at the Farm alternated between emphasizing the

instrumentality of relationships or the sacrifice of individual interests for the achievement of

common goals. Leisure activities such as Family Dinner emphasized the *Gemeinschaft*

communal identity while glossing over the *Gesellschaft* aspects of community at the Farm. The

fluidity of these visions of community further illustrates the fundamentally a normative function

of the concept of community in society (e.g, Glover, 2004; Johnson & Samdahl, 2005).

When considered as a larger phenomenon, the Farm clearly typifies the manner in which

intentional communities wish to recreate an alternative vision of society. As described in the

preceding chapters, this re-creation took place in a holistic manner, affecting not only leisure, but

other social domains such as work and living space. The interconnectedness of these social

domains reminds leisure scholars that in seeking to understand the nature of leisure in

contemporary society, it is difficult to parse leisure experiences from the organic and

interconnected nature of lived experience.

<div align="center">My Journey as a Scholar</div>

As mentioned previously, this study was a profound learning experience for me,

especially related to the conduct of ethnography. My execution and subsequent reflection on this

study have influenced my thinking about the nature of ethnography, the importance of

interviewing relative to ethnography, and the potential benefit from completely immersing

oneself in the study context.

Ethnography or Ethnographic

Readers may debate the extent to which this study constitutes ethnography or is merely

ethnographic in nature. Wolcott (1999) felt that in order to constitute ethnography, a researcher

must be in the field long enough to engage in *research play*. In other words, he argued that one

must be in the field long enough to encounter facets of the research/cultural context that would have initially been viewed as irrelevant. Wolcott's concern was that ethnography might be conducted too hastily and with such a precise focus that researchers would not "discover" phenomena that may only appear relevant after having been thoroughly immersed in the context.

My study was the product of five months of intense data generation during which I lived at the Farm on a part-time basis. Prior to these five months of intense data generation, I began attending Family Dinners and getting to know the Farm's members as early as fall of 2006. After the period of intense data collection, my interactions with the Farm continued sporadically until March of 2008. In total, I participated in and observed the events at the Farm for approximately twenty months. No doubt this timeline would be considered too brief by many anthropologists, including Wolcott. Nonetheless, I believe, based upon my knowledge of ethnography, that I offer a strong characterization of the Farm and its unique cultural practices. Consequently, I contend that the preceding manuscripts should be evaluated on their merits as opposed to their conformity to arbitrary benchmarks.

Semi-Structured Interviewing's Importance

In the initial design of this study, I gave minimal consideration to function and importance of semi-structured interviewing. As opposed to the staged performance of an interview (Roulston, 2006), I felt participant observation would be sufficient to address the contradictory nature of lived experience. Indeed, I still strongly value participant observation, but have also come to appreciate the complementary benefits of semi-structured interviewing. If conducted after an extended period of participant observation and rapport building, semi-structured interviews are useful for exploring sensitive topics in a more thorough manner than might have otherwise been possible. For example, during the course of my semi-structured

interviews, I was able to explore the potentially sensitive topic of privacy and the use of space in the Farm's house. Had I not observed the division of the house into public and private spaces, I would not have been able to effectively probe participants' interview responses related to this topic.

This interplay between participant observation and semi-structured interviewing highlighted the extent to which interviewing is a contingent interaction between situated actors. In other words, no matter how incisive the question or how skillfully it is asked, the interviewer's identity plays a crucial role in the interview's execution. Had I not been seen by the Farm's residents as a person who was acquainted with its norms and customs, I would have undoubtedly been treated differently and generated different data.

Studying a Place Apart

When constructing an ethnography of a group of people, often in a faraway location, anthropologists have traditionally moved to the location and immersed themselves in it for a year or more. This time of immersion results in a complete separation from the researcher's "home" culture and total immersion in the new culture. This type of radical relocation facilitates a singular focus on the tasks of data generation and analysis. In order to continue my graduate studies and assistantship, I was unable to relocate in such a drastic manner. The close proximity of the study context to my home was convenient for both personal and professional reasons, however, it also created undue stress by allowing my time to be split between the competing demands of data generation, academic responsibilities, and home life. This arrangement was unavoidable given the circumstances, however, I also feel that an exclusive focus on data generation would have been less challenging and allowed for a deeper immersion in the study context.

Implications for Future Research

As discussed previously, this study encourages scholars to be cautious in their use of *Gemeinschaft*-style conceptualizations of community. To argue that such communities can exist in contemporary society is a contentious claim at best. This is not to suggest that scholars should avoid historical analyses of community or that contemporary society does not have significant lessons to learn from previous eras. Indeed valuable lessons may be learned from historical contexts such as the Athenian *polis* or an eighteenth century New England village. However, the wholesale endorsement of such mythologized contexts may be unduly influenced by nostalgia.

The absence of such essentialized *Gemeinschaft*-style communities does not diminish the potential for research on community. Individuals and collectives will continue to use the label of community to support their efforts and justify their social arrangements. However, good community scholarship requires a dissection of the reflexive manner in which groups construct the concept from their lived experience. In other words, collections of individuals will selectively highlight the aspects of their experiences that conform to their vision of community. In turn, these iterations of community are used to influence the behavior of individuals. Elucidating mechanisms of community discipline may enhance the agency of individuals who participate in such communities.

Communities of Advocacy

Given the manner in which the Farm uses its mission and advocacy to influence the behavior of its members, I am interested in exploring the ways in which other collections of individuals use the concept of community to discipline the behavior of their participants. As Arai and Pedlar (2003) suggested, individuals often commune around particular activities. As has

been illustrated at length by this study, eating is an activity around which individuals often construct communities.

As discussed in Chapter Four, individuals around the world have been communing around the table with the assistance of the Slow Food organization. Founded in Italy in 1989, Slow Food has worked to address the homogenization of cultures around the world by preserving and promoting traditional foods and foodways. This mission is pursued through *convivia*, which are the local chapters of Slow Food members. Members within a *convivia* gather on a monthly basis to learn, share, and consume heritage food products that are local to their area of residence. The hope is that by re-introducing individuals to the "pleasures of the table," they will preserve that which they enjoy. Similar to the Farm, though broader in scope, Slow Food and its *convivia* hope to reshape the manner in which food is cultivated and consumed.

Despite its seemingly innocuous purpose, Slow Food is not without its detractors. When founded, Slow Food portrayed itself as a movement to preserve cultural heritage against the homogenizing influences of globalization. However, as it has matured, Slow Food has developed the ability to bestow commercial success on food items and producers via its endorsement. As described by Leitch (2003), critics of the movement claim that such endorsements have been unduly influenced by commercial interests and political alliances. In short, Slow Food has struggled to judiciously exercise its influence over the commercial fate of products and producers.

On a more intimate level and similar to the experiences of Alex and Kevin in Chapter Four, the members of Slow Food *convivia* create "communities of taste." As has been described in this study, community identities are performed and such performances utilize certain social norms. *Convivia* membership is voluntary; however, communities of taste undoubtedly utilize

norms of behavior that function to control the behavior of members. For example, membership and participation in Slow Food activities is relatively expensive. Exploration of the Slow Food movement would undoubtedly examine the manner in which financial, cultural, and social capital are utilized within the context of participation in a *convivium*. In this way, Slow Food provides an additional leisure context in which social advocacy is juxtaposed with social power inequities.

The contrast between advocacy and power may also be present within the bicycle advocacy movement. In addition to being a means of transportation, cycling is a form of informal recreation that is fraught with numerous political tensions. Bicycles and cyclists are typically marginalized by governments in most municipalities in the United States. In response to such marginalization, cyclists often coalesce into communities of advocacy within their respective locales. The most popular form of bicycle advocacy in the United States has been the Critical Mass movement. Critical Mass consists of periodic group bicycle rides in which riders try to increase their visibility by intentionally slowing automobile traffic. Critical Mass riders often break traffic laws and occasionally put themselves in danger in order to "clog" traffic. The illegality of Critical Mass has resulted in frequent confrontations with law enforcement, most notably in New York and San Francisco. In response, a companion movement known as Courteous Mass has evolved to promote lawful bicycle advocacy. Courteous Mass also endeavors to increase cyclists' visibility via large group rides. In contrast to its Critical predecessor, however Courteous Mass riders obey all of the traffic laws and avoid unduly clogging traffic flow.

My interest in Critical and Courteous Mass is multi-faceted. Similar to the Farm, I am interested in the norms of these advocacy communities and the manner in which they shape the

identities and behaviors of their participants. As previously illustrated, the Farm uses its mission to influence the behavior of its members by rewarding individuals' contributions of labor to its farming operation. Similarly, the missions of these cycling advocacy movements may also be used to discipline and influence the behavior of riders. In particular, the format of Critical Mass rides suggests that riders may be attracted to the illegality and perceived deviance of the activity. In this way, Critical Mass may be perceived as "fighting against the system" to affect political change. Consistent with its focus on obeying traffic laws, Courteous Mass is likely to be perceived as "working within the system." Similar to the manner in which the Farm maintained contrasting visions of community, I am particularly interested in the competing visions of advocacy that are articulated when Courteous and Critical Mass coexist in communities (e.g., San Francisco, New York, Athens, GA).

Despite their differing approaches, each of these movements occupies liminal space within society. While not being illegal, bicycle riding is effectively excluded from the transportation infrastructure of most municipalities. Therefore, bicycles and their riders occupy spaces that lie literally and metaphorically in between that which is legitimate and that which is illegitimate, also known as being liminal. In this sense, these advocacy movements are similar to the Farm. The Farm exists on the geographic and social margins of society to transform the manner in which Americans grow and eat their food. Though not being as geographically removed, bicycle advocacy movements also pursue an agenda of social transformation while existing in a marginal space.

Finally, I am interested in bicycle advocates' conceptualizations of their ethical obligations to other individuals within their cities or towns. When participating in Critical or Courteous Mass events, for whom are cyclists riding? Are their advocacy efforts strictly for the

benefit of cyclists, or the benefit of every person within a particular geographic area? Such beliefs may affect and be affected by participation in Critical as opposed to Courteous Mass events.

Parting Thoughts

As Wendy, Bernie, and other members of the Farm reminded me, work on a farm is never-ending. When the sun sets at the end of the day, a farmer must make peace with what has been accomplished. Similarly, I must learn to be content with what has been accomplished in this study. Not surprisingly, this dissertation introduces more questions than it dares to answer. As is appropriate for a dissertation, it has also devoted a greater proportion of its pages to description as opposed to analysis and interpretation. As a consequence, I am eager to further explore the scholarship of community and to begin designing research that better utilizes the many theories of community. For the moment though, I must be comfortable with what has been accomplished.

Just as attendees to Family Dinner all head their separate ways at the conclusion of the evening, so too have I parted from the Farm. I last attended Family Dinner in March of 2008 and have since only talked sporadically with the Farm's members. The events of my life (e.g., dissertation writing, assistantship responsibilities, job searches) have effectively discouraged my attendance at Farm activities. This parting has affected me in different ways. The stress of having to divide my time between the Farm and competing responsibilities has vanished. However, I miss the connections I made with various people as well as with the land itself. Through my work on the Farm, I felt as if I contributed in a small way to its mission. The Farm has entered its second season as a CSA and I am disappointed to not be contributing to its success.

As described above, this study has yielded numerous scholarly findings regarding the nature of community as it manifests in the lives of individuals. Having been the instrument of

data generation, many of these findings had a personal as well as scholarly dimension. As I have cautioned scholars to do, I shed some of my romantic notions about community. Having participated in several group living situations in the past, I was fully aware of the messiness, literally and figuratively, that accompanies sharing spaces with others. My experiences at the Farm simply reinforced this knowledge. No matter how noble a group's aims, it must still confront the reality of living in a shared space; a reality that often entails fun and laughter, but also occasionally tension and conflict.

Notwithstanding the realities of community living, I have been inspired by life at the Farm. The Farm's co-founders and co-owners, Mosey and Rowdy purchased the Farm in the hopes of creating a unique community of individuals. Over the course of several years, they have recruited others to share in and actualize their vision of community. Embodied in the Farm, their vision has been largely realized. As discussed at the outset of this study, I came to the Farm out of personal search for community. Though not always what I expected, I have been inspired by the Farm's example and will continue participating in communities that strive to remake society for the better.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

01-08-08
Interview Protocol
The Farm
9am

Interview with Wendy

Policies
Description of the Interview and Its Purpose. I have observed a good many things at the Farm and I've begun to form my own meanings about them. The purpose of the interview is to see how my ideas jive with what you think about these behaviors at the Farm. So I might ask some questions that sound stupid, please humor me.
We're tape recording for purposes of transcription and analysis.
Destruction of tapes by Dec. 31, 2009.
Everything you say and your identity will be kept confidential to the extent that you allow it to be. You have authorized me to use data in educational and conference settings, so if you choose to reveal identifying information during the interview it is fair game.
You're not compelled to answer any questions. You can stop the interview at any time without explanation.
Tell me if you need to take a break.

Family Dinner

Family Dinner has been a feature of the Farm's existence since I have had contact with the Farm. In your own words can you tell me what Family Dinner is and how it came to be?

Who comes to Family Dinner?

I have observed that what I call **Dinner Circle** is an ever present feature of Family Dinner. Dinner Circle usually consists of some sort of 'call to gather,' a giving of thanks, a description of the menu, occasionally music, and often a closing of some sort. How did Dinner Circle develop and what purpose does it have within Family Dinner?

Can you describe the importance of locally grown food for both Family Dinner and the Farm in general?

I've always commented, most of the time in jest, that family dinner occurs so late. What causes family dinner to last so long and dinner to be consumed so late in the evening?

Can you discuss the **significance** of family dinner in the life of the Farm.

Work & Leisure

You and I have talked in the past about work at the Farm. Can you describe how work at the Farm is different from some of the other jobs that you've had?

When I met Bernie for the second time he asked me what I was studying at the Farm and I told him. He told me straight away that y'all try to mix some fun in with the work. Do you feel that way, and if you do can you describe what exactly he meant by that?

When I signed on to live at the Farm, Mosey asked that I contribute 16 hours of work at the Farm each month, which I was eager to do. It seems like other members of the community have similar expectations. Can you describe the importance of members contributing labor to the Farm community?

> I've observed that some people are exempted from work contributions, people such as George. Why might some people be exempt?

How is leisure different at the Farm from other contexts you've lived in?

Community

Is the Farm a community? What makes it so?

> If so, what type of community is it?
> > Or
> How would you describe the Farm community to an outsider?

Are there any particular philosophies that guide the Farm community? Authors? Books?

Space

I want to talk for a moment about the arrangement of space at the Farm. How is it that certain people came to live in the rooms that they do?

How many other people have lived at the Farm and where have they lived on the property?

Is there an expectation that different people will have different levels of access to the house?

Has this division caused friction in the past? How did that manifest itself? How was it handled?

Conflict

Can you describe some points of friction that have arisen at the Farm in the past?

How did those things get resolved?

Gender Roles

Is your identity as a woman treated differently at the Farm than at other living situations?
> Or
How are gender roles expressed differently at the Farm as opposed to other places you've lived?