"... community art serves as a catalyst for developing community because it is both the setting for group solidarity building and the symbol of group identity."

CREATING COMMUNITY

Art for Community Development

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Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 29 No. 3 June 2000 357-386

This study examines the relationship between community art and community development. Using data gathered from community-art projects in two Denver neighborhoods, the study describes the community-art process as a ritualistic setting for social interaction and documents the construction of neighborhood community. The author identifies the emergence of the social bonds of solidarity and collective identity that occurred as a result of bringing neighborhood residents together, providing a shared goal, and setting a common mood for the purpose of designing a community symbol. Drawing from traditional models of community, the author concludes that it is possible to generate gemeinschaft *in settings where* gesellschaft *prevails by using community art as a tool for transforming a social realm. The author uncovers the unique characteristics of the community-art ritual that contribute to its effectiveness at building community and also discusses several policy implications for using community art to address social issues.*

Throughout the United States, communities and organizations are enhancing their efforts to address social issues by using the arts. Publicly and privately, the arts are being recognized as assets that promote healthy communities and are gaining support as resources for intervention and prevention efforts (Booth 1995). At the federal level, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities is focusing on the importance of the arts for disadvantaged children. According to First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton,

> We see too clearly how an erosion and a breakdown of our most cherished institutions have resulted in a fraying of the whole social fabric. We know that the arts have the potential for obliterating the limits that are too often imposed on our lives. We know that they can take anyone, but particularly a child, and transport (him/her) beyond the bounds that circumstance has prescribed. (Weitz 1996, 7)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: First, I would like to thank my husband, Dehan Davis, for his commitment to my success. I also would like to thank Jim Downton, Patricia Adler, Dennis Mileti, Fred Pampel, and Susan Stein for their tremendous support of my development as a sociologist. In addition, I would like to express my appreciation to Alice Fothergill, Joanna Gregson, and Jennifer Lois for their helpful comments and to the reviewers at the Journal of Contemporary Ethnography *for their significant contributions to the theoretical development of this study. Finally, I wish to acknowledge Rob Benford for his encouragement and insightful feedback. Please direct correspondence to Department of Sociology, University of Colorado, Campus Box 327, Boulder, CO, 80309 (e-mail: lowes@colorado.edu).*

In addition to an emphasis at the federal level, the National Endowment for the Arts, along with state and regional partners, is helping future generations realize their potential through opportunities for creative expression by financing art projects such as Dancing into the Future of Maryland and Creative Entrepreneurs of Louisiana (Costello 1995).The Arts and Prevention partnership between the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the National Endowment for the Arts represents an effort to involve artists and art organizations in substance abuse prevention programs (Costello 1995). At the state and local level, grassroots organizations like Project YES, Youth Envisioning Social change (MacNeil and Krensky 1996) and Break the Cycle are combining arts, service, and action to ameliorate social problems.

With the arts being used throughout the country to address social issues, questions have emerged regarding the useful qualities of art, the effectiveness of art as a tool for community development, and the appropriateness of using art for problem solving and capacity building. Research on community art is relatively new and scarce. A recent report on arts and humanities programs across America revealed that the arts "offer opportunities for children and youth to learn new skills, expand their horizons and develop a sense of self, well-being and belonging" (Weitz 1996, 6). Nina Felshin (1995) documented case studies of how activist art, characterized as a collaboration among artists, public participants, and media technology, addressed social and political issues in order to bring about social change, while Julia Gallagher (1995) challenged public art's effectiveness at addressing social problems. Another analysis, which took a systematic approach to examining art as a social-change tool, explored the impact of a community-art project on community systems (Jones 1988). According to Jones's evaluation, the artist, sponsoring organization, arts community, and local community were affected positively by using art as a catalyst for community development. Helen Wositzsky (1997) also discussed the positive impacts of the use of art for community-recovery projects to help communities rebuild following environmental crises. Although these studies have illustrated some aspects of the relationship between community art and social life, their use of sociological theory was relatively weak, and none used existing models of community or interactionist theory.

Whereas there has been little empirical research on community art, there has been significant theoretical reflection on the sociological nature of art. Becker (1982) elaborated on the nature of art by identi-

fying the social construction involved in its production and consumption. According to Becker (1982), the cooperative and collective activity involved in making and appreciating art is an "art world" (p. 1). By virtue of the complexity of interaction that occurs in constructing art works and their subsequent value, Becker deemed art worthy of sociological inquiry. Dewey also examined art and meaning. Rather than focusing on the interactional processes of production and consumption, he emphasized art's inherent quality of cultural symbolism. According to Dewey (1934), art is both given by and represents the community that is its context. Fromm (1955) expanded on the significance of art by defining "collective art" as a ritual essential to building a sane society. According to Fromm (1955), "Collective art is shared; it permits man [sic] to feel one with others in a meaningful, rich, productive way" (p. 302). He saw it as a fundamental part of life, the key to transforming "an atomistic into a communitarian society" (p. 303).

Consistent with Fromm's interest in the sociological significance of collective art, this paper explores the function of art for community development. I address the question of art's role in community development by describing the community-art process as a distinct setting for social interaction and by identifying the characteristics of community art that build community. To examine art's impact on community, it is important to define community. Community sociologists have proposed definitions that focus on the location of residents and their activities (Parsons 1951), similarities among people (Park 1952), and interdependence and reciprocity among group members (Bellah et al. 1991). To clarify the construct, Hillery (1955, 1982) and Sutton and Munson (1976) sought to identify common elements among the numerous and varied definitions of community. I use Hillery's (1982) clarification of community as "a social group inhabiting a common territory and having one or more additional common ties" (p. 31). For the purposes of my research, common territory is a neighborhood demarcated by geographic boundaries, and common ties are interconnected or cohesive social relationships. Drawing from Christenson (1979), Homans (1950), and Wirth (1938), I use community sentiment to represent the social fact of community at the neighborhood level; community sentiment is the subjective measure of positive feelings that group members have for each other and their community (Christenson 1979).

I begin by describing my methods for gathering data through a participant observation study of two community-art projects. I organize

my analysis by using the concepts of solidarity and identity as a framework. While discussing solidarity and identity, I elaborate on the elements that contribute to their emergence and growth and illustrate how they signify the development of community sentiment. Lastly, I discuss how community art is a sociological phenomenon that influences the development of community and identify the characteristics of community art that effectively alter the social realm. I conclude by exploring some policy implications for using art to address social issues.

SETTING AND METHOD

The settings for my research were the Showtime Public Library and La Raza Elementary School. These locations served as gathering places for two low-income Denver neighborhoods, Showtime and La Raza, which were involved in community-art projects sponsored by Neighborhood Cultures of Denver (NCD). NCD is a local nonprofit organization that strives to be a catalyst by using art to create a sense of community. The organization works in partnership with communities, artists, and others to recognize and enhance the strengths and potential of individuals and groups who live and work in neighborhoods. As a result of NCD's sponsorship, two works of community art were produced. In Showtime, the neighborhood produced a 3'4" × 10' permanent mural in the Showtime Public Library. The mural included sixty ceramic tiles created by neighborhood residents that represented a circus theme. The mural was produced by Showtime residents in honor of their neighborhood's history of housing circus animals during the winter. They created tiles of clowns, trapeze artists, circus animals, and other circus images. At the dedication ceremony, approximately fifty men, women, and children joined the celebration.

In La Raza, a multigenerational play dramatized Latino culture as a "Tree of Life," using poetry, drama, music, and dance to share traditional stories. The play began with a senior generation of women performing a traditional indigenous ritual, a song in the Nahuatl language, and a poem in Spanish. Adult women and men then shared the *Statement of Harvest*, a traditional indigenous dance, and the narration of a poem about "el hupil" (the wrap). They were followed by young girls doing the indigenous doll dance and then boys and girls telling the Zapotec legend of how the rainbow was born. The children completed

their piece of the performance by singing "De Colores." Lastly, teenage girls danced a combination of modern dances. The first two performances were presented to 750 elementary school children. During the third and final presentation, approximately 100 men, women, and children from the neighborhood attended.

The study population was a purposive sample of residents from the two neighborhoods. Typically, neighborhood residents learned about the art projects from advertising or word-of-mouth. They chose to participate because of their interests in culture, education, family, or fun. Participation in the art projects was voluntary, and the total number of residents involved was approximately 100. Most of the participants were female. At Showtime, 51 percent were Anglo, 27 percent were Hispanic, 7 percent were Asian American, 6 percent were Native American, 2 percent were African American, and 7 percent were other.[1] At La Raza, all of the participants were Hispanic. The participants' ages ranged from 4 to 65 years old. At Showtime, 36 percent were under 12, 8 percent were 13 to 17 years old, 1 percent were 18 to 21 years old, 21 percent were 22 to 40 years old, 27 percent were 41 to 60 years old, and 8 percent were over 61. At La Raza, 46 percent were under 12, 14 percent were 13 to 17 years old, 26 percent were 22 to 40 years old, and 14 percent were 41 to 60.

My interest in art's capacity for developing community evolved out of my work as an evaluation consultant. In January of 1997, NCD hired me to evaluate the impact of their community-art projects. As a result, I became intrigued by the creative process and how the opportunity to be engaged in community art appeared to evoke an intensely positive experience of community among participants. In keeping with the evaluation principles of co-construction (Stein 1996), I enlisted an evaluation team of nine people, which included the NCD Executive Director, an NCD board member, an intern from NCD, an artist from La Raza, a community organization representative from Showtime, an independent artist, an independent community organization representative, and an independent representative from a state development agency. The involvement of the independent team members helped offset the potential for bias in data collection and reporting that could have resulted from NCD's participation on the team and my acting as a paid consultant.

As a result of my authorized status from NCD, I gained entrée to the project sites on good faith in an active membership role (Adler and Adler 1987) as the project evaluator. This role allowed me to be on-site

at any time and gave me permission to ask questions, observe openly, and take field notes in an unobstructed manner. My role as evaluator gave me the rare opportunity to be present for face-to-face interactions, yet exempted me from participation in the creative process. At Showtime Public Library, the project involved hands-on workshops to create their permanent mural, and at La Raza Elementary School, the project required rehearsals of poetry, music, and dance for their dramatized storytelling. Both groups met weekly for three and one-half months for two to five hours each week. Although I frequently was invited to participate in the activities at Showtime, I maintained a peripheral role in order to record my observations in detail. During the activities, I stood at the back of the room or roamed the tables offering assistance. At La Raza, my peripheral status was enhanced by my non-Hispanic ethnicity, which was a block to participation in their expression of Latino culture. I easily remained in the audience with the groups who were waiting to rehearse their parts in the play.

The sources of my data included field visits, focus groups, and evaluation reports of participation statistics. From June through October 1997, thirty field visits were conducted by members of the evaluation team. In addition, an evaluation report was completed by each artist and neighborhood organization at the midpoint of the process and at the completion of the art projects. I also conducted focus groups for each neighborhood at the middle and end of the experience and for the artists and neighborhood organization representatives on completion. The focus groups lasted one to two hours and included questions about participation, community, and culture. For example, focus group participants responded to a variety of questions including what they learned during the art project, how the art project was meaningful to them and their community, and how the art project affected their understanding of similarities and differences in the community.

Following the principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I conducted a preliminary analysis of the data and discovered a meaningful conceptual organization for the process and outcomes. I then coded the data for further analysis using Non-Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing (NUD*IST). Field visits, focus groups, and evaluation reports were transcribed and then transferred into NUD*IST, where I reviewed the documents and placed specific data into the appropriate concept of the organizing framework.

COMMUNITY ART

Community art is a form of public art that is characterized by its experiential and inclusive nature. With community art, artists work with nonartists in grassroots settings, creating art in the public interest (Raven 1993).

> It is the neighborhood or community participatory spirit that is unique to community arts. The role of the . . . artist is to engage the individual or group in the process of art, and to stir something within the individual about his individual and/or collective being. (Flood 1982)

Thus, community art is distinct in its collaborative nature, involving individuals in a collective, creative process. By observing the design and implementation of the art projects, I identified distinct elements of the community-art process. The steps involved setting the stage, outlining a framework of possibilities, matching neighborhood interests and artistic experience, making decisions, and expressing creativity. There were three artists facilitating the creative process. Aida and Consuela were Hispanic women in their mid-fifties who were experienced in drama and dance, respectively. Jerry was a European-American man in his forties and was a visual artist. (I created pseudonyms for all individuals mentioned in this study.)

At the onset, the artists set the stage for informal, cooperative, and enriching group experiences. The artists designated what to do and how to do it, thus defining the nature of the social interaction (Blumer 1969). Statements by the artists like, "If it is fun, creativity naturally will evolve" and, "With art, if we share, we learn" laid the foundation for openness. Occasionally, neighborhood residents were reminded by the artists that "Getting to know each other and community building is what this is about." Consequently, the interactions among group members were playful and relaxed from the beginning.

The art projects began as possibilities outlined by the artists and neighborhood organizations. In order to set the creative process in motion, the artists presented the neighborhood residents with a framework of form and media to be used in the art projects. For example, at Showtime the framework was some type of mural made of mixed media. At La Raza, the artists presented the possibility of a play as a cultural representation incorporating dance and narration. The possibilities were based on the artists' areas of expertise, the neighborhood

organizations' knowledge of the neighborhood, and the resources available for the art project.

The next step was to match neighborhood interests and artistic expertise. The artists began by asking residents to share their opinions about the proposed framework or to brainstorm their own ideas for the projects. At La Raza, for instance, Aida shared that "The community members wanted special, important things to the heart. For example, pottery, weaving, Nahuatl song." Given their expertise, Aida and Consuela then explored how best to match neighborhood residents' interests and project resources to reshape the art project. They took into account things like the actual number of people wanting to participate and the amount of time available to learn and rehearse. At Showtime, the neighborhood residents explored different media, such as ceramics and mosaics, and brainstormed ideas for their theme.

Using a loose model of consensus, the artists empowered the neighborhood residents to choose the content and media for their community-art projects. During the decision-making process, the artists created a balance between focus and flexibility by returning the group to realistic options and responding to their suggestions. At Showtime, neighborhood residents decided to focus on the theme of the circus and to use ceramic tile. At La Raza, neighborhood residents chose an intergenerational expression of culture using poetry, drama, music, and dance. The inclusive decision-making process allowed them to feel ownership and to be invested in the work. Jerry observed that "Consensus is difficult, but better than democracy because democracy creates a minority that can become disenfranchised." Thus, by being encouraged to participate at the fundamental level of design, neighborhood residents felt accountable and responsible for the community art. The sense of responsibility that resulted from inclusive decision making contributed to the success of their art projects (Weitz 1996).

Once the neighborhood residents collectively decided on the content and medium, they creatively expressed themselves through the art. They were encouraged to make the creative expression mean something to themselves personally. For example, when interpreting the theme of the circus, an older woman drew a clown, a young boy drew a wagon wheel, and a teenager drew an elephant, as illustrations of what the circus meant to them. In the play, the costumes of traditional women's wraps (los hupils) were designed by the women wearing them. As records of personal history and the teachings of their ancestors, the wraps were

embroidered with memories from the women's lives. The teens creatively expressed themselves by adding their own steps to the modern dances. Erica, who was fourteen, declared, "I like Consuela's patience. She shows us how to do things, but she lets us come up with our own ideas."

The cycle of matching interests and expertise, making decisions, and expressing creativity occurred throughout the art projects. Ongoing laughter and smiles revealed that neighborhood residents were happy and having fun. The atmosphere consistently was friendly and supportive. Group members openly communicated ideas and shared their work. Andrew, a sixteen-year-old Native American from Showtime, observed that, distinct from the constraints and judgments of other group experiences, the artist encouraged him to express himself and "had us show things (to each other) so we didn't feel stupid." Overall, neighborhood residents were attentive, hardworking, and focused when they arrived to work on their projects. Regularly, there was a great deal of activity and enthusiasm, and sometimes there appeared to be chaos. As both projects neared completion, the anticipation and excitement grew. Jana, who was a white woman in her seventies, explained that "The creative process feels like magic because this (raw materials) becomes that (a work of art)." Another woman in her forties declared, "Art makes us all young!"

SOLIDARITY

As a result of coming together to create art, neighborhood residents developed solidarity in the Durkheimian sense of linkages ([1893] 1964). Distinct from traditional models of discrete solidarity, the sense of solidarity that emerged reflected relationships of loose attachments with limited linkages (Wellman 1979). In other words, informal connections based on one or more common experiences or interests emerged among participants. The community-art projects provided neighborhood residents with both a shared interest and a structured opportunity to interact socially, thereby allowing them to discover additional connections and to solidify social bonds. Working together on the projects, although for relatively brief periods of time, offered an experience of community life that inspired feelings of belonging and unity. Roslyn was an elderly, retired woman from Showtime who stated that

"The real treasure is coming together, the community. I was skeptical at first because I saw all of these individuals. Then we became a group and connected. It's like magic." While interacting with each other, the key elements of building relationships, providing support, and communicating about common concerns were essential to fostering feelings of interconnection. This is consistent with Cable and Degutis' (1991) findings that communicating about shared perceptions of issues and developing friendship networks enhanced solidarity.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Community members developed relationships while working together. The opportunity to communicate and interact with one another allowed for positive family interaction, facilitated neighborhood friendships, and fostered connections across social boundaries.

The majority of neighborhood residents came with family members to participate in the art projects. Some families had as many as three generations present, and most families included mothers with their children. There were three fathers who actively participated in the art projects. Doing community art together provided time to learn from each other, to express love, and to communicate positively. For example, during one tile-making session, a sister helped her brother generate some new ideas about how to paint his tile by teaching him how she mixed colors. At a rehearsal, Jake, a forty-five-year-old Hispanic father of three boys, sat holding and hugging two of his children while practicing his lines. One son asked, "What does it mean?" and Jake then explained the cultural background of the story. Physical interactions such as holding and hugging were common throughout the art projects. Children sat on parents' laps while working, and siblings embraced each other while waiting to rehearse.

Family members also regularly supported one another with praise and encouragement. The following discussion among Deb, a thirty-seven-year-old Hispanic mother, her Anglo husband Dan, and their four young sons, one to six years old, illustrates positive communication:

Dan: These are all great! Where's yours, Josh?
Josh: (shows his tile of spiders)
Deb: Wow!

Dan: Great job! You got the corners of the circus. . . (then walking around to other tables to see other people's art). That is just great. Josh, look at her tile. Jeremiah, look at this.

Coming together to do community art provided a forum for quality family interaction. The significance of the opportunity was illuminated by Shelley, a thirty-three-year-old Hispanic mother of three, who shared, "I don't spend enough time with (my girls) and this is something we can do together."

In addition to positive family interaction, neighborhood friendships were started and enhanced during the months of working together on the projects. Many stated that building friendships counted among the most important things that happened during the experience. One woman in her forties observed, "It brings people together; some people haven't met until now. I've met other people, made new friends." Community members attributed the ease of meeting people to the "lightheartedness" of the activities encouraged by the artists. Several mothers valued the "great friends they met," and their young children also declared that the "new friends and playing together" were the most important part of the experience. At La Raza, the teenage girls "got closer to friends. We all got the same shoes, the same outfits. Spent a lot of time practicing." On completion, May, an American activist in her forties who attended the art project with her daughter and son, lamented the end of the friendship-building process: "I met Roslyn here. . . I'll miss this, being with people, coming together. Society isolates us so much."

It was clear that building friendships reduced feelings of isolation and disconnection. The relationship building also bridged racial and generational boundaries. Although most of the friendships that developed appeared to be intragenerational, there was a great deal of intergenerational interaction. Roslyn described the activities as a "combination of youth and older people. We've laughed with the younger (people) and I'm sure they've laughed at us." Community members shared experiences, ideas, and art with each other while working together. For example, when the theme of the circus was chosen at Showtime, an elderly woman told her story of going to see the circus performed in tents near a local river as a child. Shelley subsequently observed, "The kids got to see how the elders see the circus (referring to a drawing of circus tents). (It's) a diverse representation of a shared experience." The art projects

were a common experience that young and old could share as a starting point for meeting and learning about each other (Perlstein 1998).

The generations learned from each other in many ways. Some teenage girls valued the fact that "the adults helped us out, typed out (the choreography of) the dances. The adults would correct us." In addition to adult and youth interactions, the older children interacted with the younger ones throughout the art projects. Aida observed that

> Though there are large age differences, participants understand each other. The teens help with the younger ones. This is emphasized in the schools and in the culture. . . support across ages, traditional relationships like a large family.

For example, the older children mentored the younger children with their parts, offered suggestions for tile making, and helped with their costumes.

In addition to fostering connections among different age groups, community art also facilitated relationship building among neighborhood residents from varied ethnic backgrounds. The following conversation highlights the sense of coming together at Showtime:

> Roslyn: We are all nice people. We are all Americans. The Vietnamese and Hispanic kids are lovely. There was a feeling of unity and spirit of people.
> Esther: Culture doesn't matter. We all worked together.
> Jana: Unity and equality. Nobody is different; we are just here being artists.
> Shelley: When you see art, you don't see colors (races). We need a commitment to stay together.

PROVIDING SUPPORT

In addition to establishing and enhancing relationships while working together on the art projects, neighborhood residents nurtured their connectedness by providing support for each other. The demonstration of support by helping, sharing, and encouraging each other revealed the general interest in accomplishing their collective aims as an interdependent group of individuals. "We started as individuals. But there was lots of support from one another, and we had unity as a group. We went from individuals to a community of individuals," observed Jana.

There was a spirit of camaraderie among the neighborhood residents as they assisted one another's successful participation. "(In the beginning) we didn't know each other's first names, but the project promoted helpfulness and helping," declared one neighborhood resident. The help ranged from teaching each other to watching each other's children. Lupita, a sixty-two-year-old Hispanic woman, observed,

> I found a lot of understanding people who will show us the steps. We start out as friends and become family. We have one family at home and one at school (referring to the location of the art project).

Young children demonstrated to one another how to do correct movements and use paints. Dancers worked with those who missed rehearsal. "We know more about each other and support each other. One for the other one. Counting (the beat) for each other," stated an adult dancer. Adults rotated watching children whose parents rehearsed and assisted each other's children with ceramic glazing instructions. At La Raza, a group of elders helped the entire play by covering for lost cast members who had to withdraw from the project due to a scheduling conflict. They learned their parts in only two rehearsals.

While working together, neighborhood residents were generous with their art, their ideas, and their materials. At Showtime, they would share their work and ideas with the group in order to get feedback and to generate inspiration. In addition, neighborhood residents shared paints, worked with limited supplies together, and found things for each other. At La Raza, young girls shared costumes with each other.

Community members also regularly encouraged each other's participation. Throughout the months, there were moments of discouragement and frustration. For example, when a drawing did not turn out, an older woman helped a young girl wash her tile and her tears, telling her to, "Work through it. Most art is from accidents anyway." During times of sharing work or rehearsing, many adults encouraged the children to show their drawings and to do their parts. When teaching the dances, Consuela worked with the performers as needed and encouraged them to learn their parts as best they could. Community members also actively encouraged one another's work by giving acknowledgment and praise. Fernanda, a fifteen-year-old dancer, said that she learned "Not to judge, (but) to help out and make someone feel better." The artists helped foster this noncompetitive atmosphere by openly celebrating accomplish-

ments and efforts throughout the creative process. After the first round of ceramic tiles had been fired, the following exchange occurred among neighborhood residents while looking at the finished products:

Jerry: (while giving a "high five" to a young boy) Good job!
Casey: They all turned out neat. Wow that's good!
May: This is going to put my (tile) to shame.
Noreen: No, it's gonna be famous, May. It's a one of a kind.
Willie: (to another little boy) I wish I'd done that one.
Shelley: Look at that! I love your tiger! Your tiger turned out great!

While working on the play, neighborhood residents attended to fellow performers. During the final dress rehearsal, for example, there was a row of ten children lying with their heads propped on the stage watching their elders rehearse. Applause also acknowledged accomplishments along the way. A significant moment came when one of the fathers successfully remembered his lines for the first time and the rest of the cast cheered.

COMMUNICATING COMMON CONCERNS

While engaging in community art, neighborhood residents had the opportunity to communicate about various issues of importance. By talking about their concerns and experiences, they discovered shared definitions of the situations in their neighborhoods. Several different issues emerged as common community concerns. These included peace, cultural understanding, family responsibilities, youth involvement, isolation, and financial hardship. Thus, by having the opportunity to express and discover common concerns, neighborhood residents identified collectively shared experiences and enhanced collectively felt sentiments of solidarity. Casey, May's eleven-year-old white daughter, pointed to feelings of interconnection by observing, "It is not all gangs, violence, everyone claiming sides. People do care about community. People do participate and care, instead of stereotyping." Several others concurred that "there is a sense of coming together that causes pride, and therefore care. Having a sense of pride in something to develop a sense of unity."

Neighborhood residents were in agreement about many of their concerns. When discussing community issues, Deb of Showtime summarized her perceptions of the neighborhood:

> We all see things differently, but we all want peace. . . . I can see graffiti and have wanted to move out, but I've learned to work on it. We can't afford to move out, so we're working to change things. A common thing is peace here.

Several children also expressed a desire for peace and "getting along with others better."

By coming together to work on the art projects, teaching about and understanding culture also were identified as common interests. The Hispanic parents shared the belief that it is a parental responsibility to teach children and to meet the needs required of the current generation without abandoning or forgetting tradition and culture. The *Statement of Harvest* that they included in the play illustrated the importance of cultural heritage.

> Ah, how nice the newly harvested work looks. The earth is abundant and the skies full of good rain. Each time that we pick the corn, we continue to complete the promise that came from our great grandfathers, grandfathers, and fathers. And now, as the father of my children, it is my responsibility to teach them. Their generation is very different. Now they must go to school, educate themselves, and prepare for the future. I need to help them grow and further themselves. But without abandoning our traditions and without forgetting their native land. Because although they will become grown men, they should not ignore the strong roots in the tree where our life has been planted.

In addition to the importance placed on understanding their own cultural traditions, neighborhood residents wanted to facilitate cross-cultural understanding. At La Raza, they did this by having the play in both Spanish and English. At Showtime, the neighborhood residents represented a cross section of ethnicities interacting with each other to produce what they called a "diverse representation of a shared experience." Thus, through group discussion and decision making, neighborhood residents identified cultural understanding as a common concern that significantly affected the design of their art projects.

Balancing and fulfilling family responsibilities was an important issue among many participants. In addition to teaching children, parents identified being with them, transmitting family values to them, and working to support them as important concerns. Many of the adults also expressed concern for neighborhood youth and their involvement with

alcohol and drugs, gangs, and graffiti. One child at La Raza believed the art project helped address the issue of "drugs. . . this is something else to do." Most of the adults, however, were disappointed with the lack of involvement by teenagers and wished they could get more teenagers involved. The following exchange at Showtime illustrates the common interest in youth:

> Jana: Teens seem bored—this would be something to look forward to, to keep them active and involved in the community.
> Roslyn: I wanted a lot more kids involved. If they participate, they'll have pride in the project and there will be less graffiti. We should include more kids. Develop a sense of unity.
> Shelley: If kids can climb on roofs at midnight, what can we do to get them interested? There are cultural differences and you have to break through barriers yourself. My kids want to sleep until 10:00 a.m. but too bad. . . . The kids will come back to the library and see the tiles, and it will hit them later when they are older.

Working on the community-art projects also brought forth the issue of overcoming isolation. For the children, feelings of isolation stemmed from "being made fun of " by other children. Jana shared an older perspective, "It helps not to be so isolated in my own house and neighborhood. . . I can venture out and see that people are friendly." Another woman observed, "Society isolates us from the generations," alluding to frustration among senior citizens who felt forgotten by society. When asked to participate in the play, one group of seniors declared, "It's about time someone invited us to participate."

Lastly, neighborhood residents shared common concerns over financial hardships. Several mothers worried about how welfare reform regulations would impact their family schedules if they were required to participate in job training in order to continue receiving their benefits. Jake also shared his challenges of managing child care as a single parent of three.

IDENTITY

In addition to being a forum for building neighborhood solidarity, the community-art projects fostered individual and collective identity. Identity development is the emergence or growth of feelings and ideas

about oneself or one's group. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the concepts or categories that individuals identify for themselves are constructed through the process of social interaction (James 1890; Mead 1934), and an individual's self-impression can be changed through face-to-face interaction (Adler and Adler1989). Whereas the individual defines self as a reflection of social processes (Cooley 1902), the group constitutes "who we are" as categories, values, and norms distinguished by social contexts (Gamson 1992; Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994). Distinct from solidarity, which is a feeling of connection through association, collective identity represents a deeper level of cohesion. Collective identity is an expression of the nature of group cohesiveness and the commonality shared among individuals within the group. Given that the individual and the collective are influenced by and influence each other, it is relevant to examine both individual and collective identities as they relate to community development.

Community art provided the social context and interaction for identity development to occur. The groups identified and expressed their identities through the symbolism of the projects, while individuals expressed themselves in relation to the collective themes. Specifically, Showtime neighborhood residents made individual tiles in keeping with the collective theme of the circus, and La Raza neighborhood residents performed individual parts for the theatrical representation of Latino culture. By learning methods of creative expression and getting community response to their creative efforts, many individuals altered their individual identities by enhancing or expanding their definitions of self (Weitz 1996). These alternations, or "identity changes that are not as drastic as conversions" (McAdam 1989, 745) of identity, represented the effect of group participation on the individual. Having individuals come together to reflect and create based on a shared experience also fostered the emergence of collective identity. As a result, group members defined their neighborhoods as communities to which they belonged, based on culture or sense of place. Collective identity was expressed as Latino culture at La Raza and was grounded in neighborhood history at Showtime.

INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

Through the face-to-face interactions during the community-art projects, individuals experienced changes in self-perceptions in the areas

of awareness, creative self-expression, and self-esteem. Consistent with Maxine Greene's (1995) findings that ". . . the arts, in particular, can release imagination to open new perspectives, (and) to identify alternatives" (p. 18), the community-art process allowed individuals to discover new ways of seeing and doing things. Community members became more open-minded as a result of discovering ideas that were unfamiliar and unknown to them prior to their interactions with each other. "It opened my mind to see how different people see different things rather than being set in ways," observed one woman. At Showtime, for example, Jerry asked for "no judging or laughing at each other when sharing work," emphasizing that "What other people think and interpret is just as important." As a result of such exercises, neighborhood residents expressed amazement upon seeing how differently each person drew representations of common concepts like "soft." By being exposed to different interpretations and varied meanings, neighborhood residents became more aware of possibilities outside of their own frames of reference. They were able to imagine and consider perspectives other than their own.

Exploring possibilities also resulted in heightened levels of creative self-expression. One of the artists surmised, "Resistance to art in general is from the challenge of going from words to art, from verbal to visual." Through the process of learning different creative skills and developing the confidence to share themselves and their work, neighborhood residents were able to actualize their creative ideas and to express themselves through art. In one exercise, neighborhood residents examined and drew what was important to them in their lives. The variety of creative representations ranged from ice cream and toys for the children to rock bands and telephones for the adolescents to world peace and open space for the adults. Whether drawing, making mosaics, or practicing lines, they were encouraged to express themselves. One woman shared, "It opened different horizons, tapped into different parts of creativity that haven't been expressed since school." Regina, a La Raza mother with one child in her twenties, observed that "I have learned to talk and express myself more. I was very timid and shy."

Community art also provided a unique opportunity for young people, typically younger than twelve, to express themselves verbally and artistically on a par with the adults. The youth appeared to value sharing and having others respond to their work. Willie, who was a six-year-old Native American boy participating with his two brothers, did not show

his work during the early sessions at Showtime. He completed the art project; however, by holding his tile up for others to see and smiling, his shyness was overcome by his delight at the public's reaction to his clown. By learning new methods of self-expression and receiving positive responses, individuals added creative dimensions to their self-concepts and discovered new ways to represent themselves to others.

In addition to generating individual awareness and self-expression, the process of learning and doing things with other neighborhood residents led some people to develop higher self-esteem. The more positive interpretations and feelings about themselves stemmed from individuals perceiving others' reactions as a reflection of self and self-worth (Cooley 1902). One observer stated, "Self-esteem is enhanced because an expression of me, through art, is validated as a thing of value, therefore I feel more valued." Several neighborhood residents spoke about heightened feelings of worth as a result of their involvement with the art projects. When reflecting on their experience, three La Raza women exchanged the following statements:

> Maria: I was feeling worthless, like nothing, now I have self-confidence and self-worth.
>
> Marissa: We have been told that we were worth nothing, but when we come to school and talk to each other and share the good strength we see in each other, we recognize the qualities in each other and help (each other) really do something for (ourselves) and (our) kids. We just need encouragement.
>
> Regina: If I have pride, I can be proud for my daughter and she will be a better person.

Other neighborhood residents experienced increased confidence and pride. "Art shows that it is possible to make an idea a reality. . . a powerful metaphor that impacts thinking," observed Jerry. Stories, such as overcoming fear to get on stage and overcoming nervousness to speak publicly, compelled many neighborhood residents to declare, "I did it!" Throughout the process, neighborhood residents were encouraged by the artists and each other to be proud of their creative efforts. Maria, a forty-year-old mother of three, chose to participate in the art projects "to show my kids that they can do it, too." After completing the art project, she declared, "I am proud of my daughters, and they are proud of me."

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

While social interaction helped individuals to enhance and expand their definitions of self, the activity of coming together to do art also resulted in the development of collective identity as a type of group membership based on a shared aspect of community life. Through the process of community art,

> a way of speaking of an expanded community . . . takes shape when diverse people, speaking as who and not what they are, come together in both speech and action to constitute something in common among themselves. (Greene 1995, 155)

Each group of neighborhood residents recognized and named their commonality. Community members defined themselves based on two distinct orientations. One neighborhood expressed a collective identity based on the common reality of their culture as shared values, beliefs, and behaviors passed through generations with a similar history and geography. Individuals in the other neighborhood expressed their "we-ness" based on their sense of place, defined as a "locality of felt significance" (Pred 1983, 49).

By examining and expressing their common culture, the community-art project at La Raza demonstrated an awakening and celebration of a collective Latino identity. For these participants, community art served as a "communicator of culture." Nadia, who was an elderly, Hispanic, first-generation immigrant, shared that by "honoring (our) culture. . . the community really liked it. . . giving us the opportunity to awaken the memories of our culture and to pass those on to our kids." The dramatized storytelling reminded them and educated others about the values and beliefs of Latino traditions. According to Aida, "Anything has a story about it in Mexican culture. Everything is an artistic expression." Therefore, the practice of storytelling and the content of the stories themselves represented their shared heritage. Using their costumes, dances, and legends, they demonstrated traditional and modern Latino culture. For example, the script explained historical dress:

> In the woman's wrap, all of our history is recorded as is the teachings of our ancestors. The one I wear is engraved with all the sufferings and all the happiness that I had during the first forty years of my life. These six

> red flowers represent the hearts of my grandmothers, my mother, and my three sisters who have already died. . . I'm already embroidering another wrap with many other things that I have lived. When I die, they will dress me with both wraps, one over the other. And when I arrive in heaven, God will already know how to judge me.

From the script, the children agreed that they "learned the history behind us. Learned the roots where we came from. A tradition is never forgotten." Juan, Jake's eight-year-old son, discovered "the legend of how the weather came to be. In school, we don't talk about legends and this is a good age to start doing this."

The four-generation, bilingual expression of Latino culture symbolized the collective identity among neighborhood residents by celebrating a common history. Marissa, a thirty-five-year-old mother of two young girls, observed,

> The schools celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day but never focus on Hispanics. . . Cinco de Mayo happens outside the school. . . we can be seen and recognized as much as the other races and celebrate that.

Together, the neighborhood residents expressed appreciation and pride in their heritage. The recognition and delight within the community could be observed by the audience's clapping to the Mexican Hat Dance and singing "Guantanamera" and "De Colores" with the performers. Aida said, "It doesn't matter if you are poor or from a big family. The messages of the project are something to be proud about." At La Raza, the source of their pride and cohesion was the identity they shared based on their common culture.

The second way neighborhood residents expressed their identity was by distinguishing a sense of place. At Showtime, neighborhood residents discovered a collective identity that like their shared perception of the neighborhood, "includes all different groups." Fulfilling a cross-cultural desire to unite, they collectively identified with the history of the neighborhood. Out of their interaction, neighborhood residents distinguished their commonality as neighbors and gave the neighborhood particular value and meaning as a place (Tuan 1977; Milligan 1998). They shared information and did research that led them to discover that "this whole area is rich in (circus) history." They also discussed stories about the neighborhood, telling about Mr. Showtime's owning local

houses and circus grounds in the area. One woman had heard that the cottonwood trees in the neighborhood were large because of elephant manure.

Coming together around the location and history of the area was meaningful to neighborhood residents for a number of reasons. They reflected on the importance of the community-art experience during a focus group.

> Esther: People in the area now know where Showtime came from. We learned from others. I've lived here a long time and it took me a long time to put two and two together. . . Showtime and the circus.
>
> Roslyn: It's possibility. We light little lights (of hope) and keep bringing people together. We just need an arena to express this.
>
> Noreen: We finished the project and it's for the whole neighborhood. It's meaningful because people from the community (did) it.

Ultimately, collectively identifying with the place symbolized by the circus theme signified the importance of the neighbors' shared experience. "Circus history relates to all unanimously. The feelings for the circus are cross-cultural, cross-economic, international," observed Jerry. African American, Asian American, European American, Hispanic, Native American, and Vietnamese neighborhood residents uncovered a collective identity that transcended structural differences to define themselves as a cohesive group.

DISCUSSION

The NCD community-art projects resulted in the development of community for the Showtime and La Raza neighborhoods. Out of the interaction, residents constructed neighborhood community that was demonstrated by the common ties of solidarity and collective identity. Solidarity among the participants emerged as they built relationships, provided support, and communicated about common concerns. Individual and collective identities also evolved. Individually, participants increased their personal awareness, enhanced their creative self-expression, and improved their self-esteem. Collectively, neighborhood residents discovered and expressed their cultural heritage and sense of place. Community sentiment emerged as evidence of the neighborhood

community that had been built by introducing community-art projects to facilitate the development of interconnection and cohesion among participants. Both the performance and mural art projects were similarly effective.

The data reveal that intimate-secondary ties, which occur in secondary settings and are characterized by warmth, rapport, intimacy, belonging (Wireman 1984, 2-3), and uniformly positive emotional ambiance (Lofland 1998, 59), dominated the community-art experience. Given that social realms are fluid territories that are defined by the dominant relational form (Lofland 1998, 14), it is reasonable that in a neighborhood where residents felt isolated and disconnected from one another, the emergence of intimate-secondary ties transformed their sense of community.

This research furthers sociological understanding of community development by identifying a specific communal activity that is effective in creating community. Drawing from traditional models of community, Tönnies (1967) defined *gemeinschaft* as being characterized by private, organic relationships that share common interests, while *gesellschaft* is characterized by public, independent relationships operating out of rational self-interest. Three types of gemeinschaft exist, namely kin, neighborhood, and friendship. It is only when these three coexist that the ideal gemeinschaft exists. While the majority of community research supports Wirth's (1938) analysis that with greater size, density, and heterogeneity, community sentiment expressing gemeinschaft lessens (Christenson 1979), this research supports Christenson's (1984) findings that both gemeinschaft and gesellschaft can be present in contemporary societies. During community art, neighborhood residents developed and recognized solidarity and identity, thereby broadening the gemeinschaft of isolated family units to include neighborhood and friendship ties. These findings show that social organization is not solely a function of structural variables, but also a function of the nature of social interactions (see also Stoddard 1988; Wilson and Baldassare 1996) and suggest that it is possible to generate community sentiment in settings where gesellschaft prevails. Christenson (1979) found that the conditions for the existence of community sentiment vary in urban and rural settings and that Wirth (1938) overlooked the role public services play in fostering gemeinschaft for urban residents. My findings suggest that community art is another possible source of the conditions for gemeinschaft to occur in predominantly gesellschaft

settings. Out of these findings, community art emerges as a distinct sociological experience capable of transforming social realms.

Consistent with Fromm's theory that collective art is a ritual capable of transforming society, I offer empirical evidence that the collective activity of community-art projects can transform gesellschaft to gemeinschaft. Community art provides a ritual framework for social interaction by bringing individuals together, providing a shared goal, and setting a common mood for the process of designing a community symbol (Durkheim [1912] 1954; Collins 1988). Inherently, community art is art in the public interest designed in a public setting through a group process. By coming together in the esthetic experience of community art, individuals discover and produce collective meanings that are symbolized by the art itself. The nature of the creative process is a form of ritual interaction that results in the production of a community symbol that in Durkheimian terms, is sacred. Thus, community art serves as a catalyst for developing community because it is both the setting for group solidarity building and the symbol of group identity.

The data suggest several essential elements that make community art a distinctly effective ritual for fostering gemeinschaft in settings where gesellschaft prevails. First, the coming together for the purpose of doing art is a structured interaction in a public setting that uses an inclusive decision-making process. Second, not only is there a shared goal of creating art together as an outcome, but there also is an explicit process goal of building community. Last, the common mood is lighthearted and playful. Interactions are defined to be collaborative, cooperative, and nonjudgmental. Consequently, the nature of the interaction is open and relaxed.

The connection between art and community development has been demonstrated to some degree by Jones (1988), Mark (1994), and Overton (1987). Jones explored the community-building potential of the arts and Overton found the arts and "human beings creating the human community" (1987, 28) to be intrinsically linked. My research is consistent with Jones's (1988) findings that community-art projects enhance awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage and with Mark's (1994) analysis of performance art's ability to provide reinforcement of group identity. I provide a more comprehensive understanding and theoretical analysis, however, by distinguishing the community sentiment that emerges to be the intimate-secondary ties of solidarity and collective

identity. I also expand on Overton's (1987) findings and existing research by providing empirical support for Fromm's theory, which identifies ritual as the link between community art and community. Lastly, I uncover the unique characteristics of the community-art ritual, previously unidentified, which contribute to its effectiveness at building community.

The positive findings of this study support the continued investment in and use of community art for community development. They also offer hopeful and useful information to address the "radically anemic" state of neighborhood community in many areas of American cities (Lofland 1998, 11). In addition, my research may have important policy implications. Although the distinction between ideal types of community is not inherently value-based, the social bonds of traditional community are tied to positive social outcomes. Consequently, it is reasonable to hypothesize why community art appears to be useful for addressing social issues both proactively and reactively (Felshin 1995, Weitz 1996, Wositzsky 1997), and how community art could ameliorate social problems.

Distinct from structural and ecological models that conceptualize community in terms of functional interdependence, I conceptualize community development in purely relational terms (see also Lofland 1998). My approach is similar to empowerment models of community development that intrinsically link the social order of community relationships with the social action of problem solving (Freire 1973; Bhattacharyya 1995; Grayber, Haywood, and Vosler 1996). According to empowerment models, solidarity (Bhattacharyya 1995) or identity (Grayber, Haywood, and Vosler 1996) must be combined with agency (the capacity to define and order one's community) in order for change to occur. This study suggests that the development of community represented by the sentiments of solidarity and identity could be a basis for neighborhood residents to organize and to act to address social problems. For example, the community-art process provided several key components, specifically participation structure, supportive relationships, and egalitarian values, which are essential for empowering communities to address shared issues such as poverty (Grayber, Haywood, and Vosler 1996). The development of interconnected and cohesive social relationships can serve as a framework where "new neighborhood systems emerge, (and) existing ones are strengthened" (Grayber, Haywood, and Vosler 1996, 75). In addition, "taking part in the production of col-

lective meanings" (Bhattacharyya 1995, 63) during the community-art process fulfills the fundamental principle of participation that is essential for people to act as change agents to address problems in their neighborhoods.

The development of community as a result of the community-art process may also serve as a protective factor. According to social control theorists, the likelihood that individuals will commit deviant behavior is directly related to the existence of weak or severed social bonds (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Sampson and Laub, 1993). The social bonds represented by the presence of solidarity and collective identity may diminish the likelihood that criminal behavior will occur. According to Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997),

> At the neighborhood level, the willingness of local residents to intervene for the common good depends in large part on conditions of mutual trust and solidarity among neighbors. . . . It follows that socially cohesive neighborhoods will prove the most fertile contexts for the realization of informal social control. (Pp. 919)

Community sentiment may also serve as a developmental asset that contributes to positive youth development (Search Institute 1995). In particular, concerns about youth well being and youth violence may be addressed by community art geared toward young people.

Clearly, the possibilities I have hypothesized regarding community art's usefulness for addressing social issues depend on the continuation of neighborhood community. The fluidity of social realms suggests that community can exist in moments and for varying lengths of time. Consequently, while community sentiment was strong throughout the community-art process, it is unclear how long the sense of community is likely to remain. It would be helpful to conduct a longitudinal study to assess the degree to which community sentiment is maintained after the completion of the community-art projects and to determine what, if anything, is required to maintain the intimate-secondary ties that are established. Neighborhood community may differ in longevity based on the type of community art that fostered it. For example, the mural, or other permanently installed art, may be more likely to serve as a reminder of solidarity and identity. Permanently installed art may also be more likely to encourage future social interaction. Any longitudinal analysis of community art's effectiveness in developing and maintaining

community should examine differences in lasting impacts among various types of community art.

Despite the limitations of short duration and narrow geography, this study informs community sociology. The data are significant because they enhance the understanding of how to develop community, substantiate community art's role in community development, and suggest the possibility of community art's usefulness as a tool to address social problems. My research shows that it is possible to use the ritual of community art to transform a social realm. Future research could expand my analysis by examining multiple sites.

NOTE

1. Throughout my research, I use the categories that community members self-reported or identified for themselves when speaking.

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