"Do it for your Community!"

Activism and engagement in a low-income historical African-American community.

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Abstract

The subject of this thesis is construction of community analyzed through activism and engagement in a low-income, historically African-American community called Eagle. Eagle community is located in an affluent suburban city called Falls City in a state bordering Washington D.C.

The main argument will be that construction of community in Eagle occurs on three levels. The first level is Eagle's history. Eagle has a unique history. The community is an original African-American settlement in a white affluent suburban town. The neighborhood's origin dates back to the late 19th century. The history of the neighborhood has continued to be marked by the collaborative effort between Eagle and white Falls City residents who fought together in the Civil Rights era of the 1960s to rebuild the then deteriorating neighborhood.

The second level of community is Eagle as a physical place. The buildings of Eagle seem to represent Eagle as a community, and as a concrete marker of Eagle's unique history. The physical room will be viewed as constructive for residents and non-residents' engagement in Eagle.

The third level of community is located in various types of activism and engagement. These efforts are political and non-political and consist of both Eagle residents and Falls City residents. The one common ground between the different efforts seems to be an end goal of neighborhood preservation of Eagle. Individual efforts, as well as group efforts will be described and analyzed. Special attention will be given to the historical and contemporary domination of female leaders in Eagle as women seemed to initiate and carry out neighborhood engagements. Current efforts and collaborative efforts between Eagle residents and Falls City residents are influenced by the history and the place of Eagle, as well as the efforts themselves being constructive for Eagle as a neighborhood.

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Introduction and Chapter Layout

I have for a long time been interested in African-American history and its cultural elements. The focus of inquiry in my Master thesis is the construction of community in Eagle, an African-American, low-income enclave in a predominantly white, affluent neighborhood. I became familiar with Eagle community when, as a teenager, I lived in a suburban area in the U.S. called Falls City in Maury County, where also Eagle is located.

Community or place-making processes in Eagle will be explored at three levels. The first is Eagle's unique history, which will be described and analyzed as important for place-making in contemporary Eagle. The second level is community through the physical room of Eagle, as a concrete neighborhood with its townhouses and signifying buildings, influencing the residents' attachment or disengagement to the place. The third level is activism and engagement as a process of negotiation between residents and non-residents of Eagle. In the thesis, activism will be seen not only in the traditional sense of fighting for a specific cause, but also in the context of involvement in the community, or volunteerism in Eagle. Special attention will be given the female leaders of Eagle as they seemed to initiate and execute community engagements in Eagle and thus constructed the community on basis of their efforts. Community involvement seemed to occupy a great part of place-making in Eagle. This is why I use the term "engagement" interchangeably with "involvement" and "activism", as it captures a broader sense of people's interactions relating to Eagle.

In the fieldwork for my Master thesis, I intended to study the lives of African-Americans in a ground-level context. I felt that studying the low-income, almost exclusively African-American Eagle community, surrounded by affluent white neighbors, would be a unique opportunity to bring another perspective to anthropological studies on black[1] Americans.

African-Americans have received attention in particular in urban anthropology field studies. Urban anthropologists study the complexity of inner city lives and the minority populations living here. One famous example and pioneering study was done by Ulf Hannerz (1969). Hannerz writes about the culture of poverty and how socioeconomic differences seem to stratify and disable African-Americans in the ghetto districts in the cities. Such a view is now

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[1] I will refer to ethnic group and race simultaneously through the paper, even though I abstain from a race thinking myself. My use of the word 'race' will be due to its 'emic' importance in the U.S.

criticized as being too static (Charles Valentine 1971 in Gregory 1998:10). I understand this to mean that the culture of poverty seems to show African-Americans as one homogenous mass, helpless against socioeconomic structures in society. Cultures of poverty theories are now discarded, and the field of African-American studies has become broader to show the diversity among this minority population, for example focusing on lives of middle-class black Americans and interaction with other ethnic groups (Anderson 1990, Gregory 1998). In line with the trend of studying African-Americans' multiplicity, I did not intend to study African-Americans in an urban setting, but rather in a suburban setting, and I used newer monographs actively to prepare myself for studying black, low-income Americans in their interaction with white, wealthy neighbors.

My fieldwork in Eagle took place from January to July 2008. When I arrived in the field, I had planned to study Eagle and its residents only. I did not expect to study Falls City residents except from the perspective of Eagle residents, as I wanted my study to be exclusively about African-American life experience. This, however, turned out not to be feasible. Most Eagle residents were highly skeptical of my research plans, and did not open up to me initially. Also, I fairly soon realized that Eagle residents were influenced by their affluent surroundings to a greater extent than I had expected. Many Falls City residents were involved in activities related to Eagle. They were friendly and helpful, and very engaged in Eagle as a community. I came to realize that I had to include these outside activists as a part of my field. However, I still wanted the focus to be on Eagle, as the activism was centered on the community, and because some Eagle residents eventually opened up to me and included me in their daily lives. It also appeared that inter-ethnic relations were important in interactions among residents and non-residents.

Activism and engagement thus became my main focus. Accordingly, I considered the field of Eagle to go beyond the borders of the townhouses. Activism included both black and white people based on common engagements and activities. However, status differences of ethnicity, class and gender seemed to create tensions in some activism settings. At other times, such differences did not seem to matter, thus creating a more homogenous communal expression between outside and inside activists.

These different elements were confusing at first, but after a while, I began to see them as part of the place-making processes of Eagle. My main research question became: W*hat are the*

place-making processes in Eagle? Underlying questions were: *What is the significance of place in Eagle? How is community constructed in Eagle? What types of activism and engagement are found in Eagle, and what is their significance?*

The answers seem to be found both in Eagle as an African-American community and in negotiations made by inside and outside residents and their activism and engagement in the neighborhood. These negotiations are based on Eagle's history as well as contemporary engagements in Eagle, and seem to be contributing factors in shaping the community of Eagle. Despite the main focus being on place-making and interaction among African-Americans and white Americans, the thesis also deals with African-American identity construction in a black minority group in a white majority setting, and how this attachment is made and remade by its surroundings through the significance of place.

During my fieldwork in January – July 2008, the effects of the emerging financial crisis were already beginning to be felt. The gas prices went up, the dollar rate went down, and job started to be lost. Also, the real estate market had started to collapse. Many Falls City residents, being well off financially, could escape the most negative effects of the crisis. Eagle residents, however, were beginning to feel the effects of job losses as I left the field.

In chapter one I describe the Eagle community, including its physical layout, in more detail.

In chapter two on method I discuss the methodological processes and challenges I faced in getting to understand place-making processes in Eagle. I started my fieldwork thinking that I was going to study only Eagle and its residents. However, I came to realize that my field was wider than I first thought, and I ended up studying place-making in Eagle as it was made and unmade by both Eagle residents and non-residents.

In chapter three about history I describe the historical context which seems to have shaped Eagle.

In chapter four on the construction of the community of Eagle, I describe place-making at a different analytical level. The main purpose of the chapter is to show how an attachment to place is done and undone in Eagle. First, I describe how a sense of community is connected to

the construction of physical room in Eagle, and how the historic events described in chapter three has shaped this sense of togetherness constructed between residents and non-residents of Eagle. I then connect the attachment of place to thought processes of Eagle residents and Falls City residents, and show residents and non-residents make and unmake the community borders by their statements and actions. I use phenomenological theory as well as monographs with a special focus on construction of community and place-making.

Chapter five on female leaders focuses on how women of Eagle seem to be actively engaged in the community compared to the men of Eagle. Five different case stories of female inside and outside activists are presented. In contrast to Steven Gregory (monograph from Corona, New York 1998), where women are portrayed as organizers rather than leaders of activism, I argue that in Eagle, women seemed to be both organizers and leaders. I use arguments from other New York monographs and some feminist theory which seem to support my argument.

Chapter six on activism describes more thoroughly the current types of engagement which seemed to dominate and/or influence the field during the period of fieldwork. I use the New York monographs which focus on neighborhood activism such as Sanjek (1998), Gregory (1998), and Ricourt and Danta (2003).

Chapter seven is a summary of the different findings about place-making and community activism in Eagle in my fieldwork research. I also present a few thoughts about how to proceed from these findings in future ground level research on activism and neighborhood engagement, perhaps especially among minority populations.

Chapter 1: Eagle Community

Introduction to Eagle

In this chapter I will present the layout of Eagle, as well as the different arenas which will receive focus in this thesis. Arenas are here defined as concrete places, and include the townhouses, the Recreational Center of Eagle and the neighborhood church, Eagle African Methodist Episcopalian Zion Church (AME Zion). In these arenas the different organizations crucial to community engagement meet. I intend to show how these arenas are included in the construction of place. The chapter also describes the physical characteristics of the arenas which will be analyzed at a more abstract level in the next chapters.

Socio-geographic and economic features.

Eagle community was founded in the aftermath of the Civil War. The founder was Henry Eagle, an emancipated slave, who bought 50 acres of land and got other freed slaves to follow suit, constructing an exclusively African-American community consisting of townhouses. They were without electricity, and had one single water-well serving the majority of the residents.

Eagle now consists of one hundred townhouses on ten acres of land. Twenty-five of the townhouses are owner units, whereas the remaining seventy-five are rental units. Four hundred people live in these townhouses. Eagle has a unique structure in the sense that it has a combined entrance and exit, making it appear somewhat closed, with the feel of a gated community. The entrance is from Chesapeake Bay Road onto Eagle Drive. Chesapeake Bay Road is a main road in Falls City. The part of the road passing Eagle used to be part of the original thirty six acres of land that Henry Eagle bought. The closest bus stop for Eagle residents is opposite the entrance to the community, across Chesapeake Bay road. Unlike most Falls City residents, who rarely use public transportation, many Eagle residents depend on buses to get to work, to the grocery stores and to the shopping malls. There is no pedestrian sidewalk along Chesapeake Bay Road, which is heavily trafficked. Until a few years ago, neither was there a safe way of crossing Chesapeake Bay Road from the Eagle community entrance to the bus stop at the opposite side of the road. In chapter 5 on female leaders, I will explain the activism leading to the crosswalk to the bus stop being constructed.

Eagle Drive leads up a small hill, with the townhouses on each side as you proceed upwards. In the center of the community is the rental office to the east, as well as a Laundromat. At the top of the hill to the north, which is regarded as the heart of the community by some, lays the homeowner section and the recreational center. A small playground lies to the north of the recreational center. Surrounding Eagle on both sides are wealthier townhouse communities. The three communities interact little with each other.

In the 20th century, Eagle community came under threat from gentrification processes and county regulations, as the surrounding areas developed into an upper-middle class suburb. In the 1960s, the townhouses had become rundown, and plans were developed to renovate the area by building stables for a nearby recreational park instead. That would have meant the end of the Eagle community. However, concerned Falls City residents, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, decided to aid the community in their midst. These activities resulted in the townhouses being renovated, and the county establishing itself in Eagle by constructing and running a recreational center. These events will be explained in greater detail in the next chapters, as well as the interactions between Eagle residents and outside residents and activist groups that are crucial to understanding the dynamics of engagement in Eagle.

Eagle is not far away from Washington D.C. In the U.S. the average income is about $50,000. Encompassing Eagle is Falls City. It is among the top ten wealthiest districts in the U.S.[2] The median income in Falls City in 2007 was about $154,000 a year. I have not been able to map out an average income in Eagle per 2008, but in 1968 there was about a $5,000 difference, with Falls City residents earning about $9,317, while Eagle residents had an average income of $4,420 (Dilts 1968, journalist writing about Eagle), a disparity which has probably increased throughout the years.

Falls City, which encompasses Eagle, is a suburban town with about 47,000 residents. Almost 36,000 of these are white, whereas the entire black ethnic population (or racial population as it is referred to in the U.S.) is estimated to be around 2,000. Eagle with its four hundred residents comprises nearly a quarter of the black population in Falls City.

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[2] All demographic data is from the U.S. Census 2000 (URL 1).

Some Falls City residents I talked to seemed to believe that Eagle was a crime haven, and ridiculed the residents' wish for a renovated community center. They asked why the Eagle residents needed their own center, when there was a bigger and better equipped center three miles down the road. They also questioned whether there were greater needs which county budget money should be dedicated to. Most of the people who made such remarks had never been inside Eagle, and based their impressions on local newspaper articles, which tend to focus on crime in Eagle. The crime level was in reality low[3] in Eagle. This was well known to Eagle residents, and to the Falls City residents who were familiar with the neighborhood of Eagle.

I think that the stigma of crime and drug infestation attached to place is partly a result of Eagle's position as a historical African-American settlement in the affluent area of Falls City. I did witness some drug use, but only in the form of casual use of marijuana among teenagers, which is not uncommon in Falls City either.

People of the neighborhood

Eagle is not only the name of the community, but also the surname of many of the families living there. They are descendants of the community founder, Henry Eagle. Besides the Eagles, two other families are numerous, the Hawks and the Potters. I heard kids exclaim that they were related to "everyone" and that "everybody was their cousins". I also heard sniggering remarks of "kissing cousins" in discussions of close relations between family and relatives[4]. Many families still live together under one roof in the same townhouse, making the relations probably closer than most Americans are used to having with the extended family.

The African-Americans are still the dominating group in Eagle. However, some of the newer residents are not African-Americans, but from Africa, the Middle-East, and South America. Some conflict existed between the African-Americans and the newer residents, but these conflicts did not seem to surpass a stage of avoidance and a little bickering from time to another.

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[3] I learned of crime-rates based on statistics and conversation with a police-officer serving the district.
[4] If there were any romantic relations between biological relatives, is unclear. It may only have been a joking matter between residents.

The Recreational Center

One arena where Eagle and Falls City residents interact is at the Recreational Center of Eagle. The Recreational Center is the arena where most of the activities of the neighborhood occur. It is a county built and financed facility which offers various recreational activities, with a specific focus on children. Many activists also use the center as a meeting place for their organizations and groups, due to the center's position as a focal point, and a gathering ground of the neighborhood. Several of the residents were employed at the center during my fieldwork.

The Recreational Center has not been renovated since it was built in 1975. It is a matte white building located on top of the hill of Eagle Drive. It is surrounded by some rental houses and the homeowner section of townhouses on each side, as well as the oak woods of Falls City park area, in the background. The architecture reveals its origin from three decades ago. There are two sculptures, one on each side of the stairwell leading to the center entrance. One of the sculptures shows the grand old lady of the community, Edel Jefferson. She is a deceased activist of the Save Our Eagles (SOS) Foundation, a former activist organization. Edel Jefferson today stands as a well-known matriarch of the past. Also depicted is Harriet Heigl, another well known Falls City activist, as well as the founder of the SOS movement. Both of these organizations' activities will be described in greater detail in the next chapters. The other sculpture shows an older man and a younger child sitting down and talking on a staircase. It is said to symbolize the past and the future coming together, representing what has passed, through a history of settlement in the late 19th century, resistance and victory in the 20th century, and yet more resistance, as well as the hopes and dreams made and to be made in the future of the community (Uly 18.12.2002). For many, these dreams consisted of greater hope for the children in terms of safety and education, as well as a new community center.

In the main hall of the center was a pool table, two fuzz-ball tables, a ping-pong table and an air-hockey table. All of these were broken for the most part. There was also a computer room with four computers; two of them in working condition. They were intended for homework and partial internet access. There was also a room intended for use for a preschool program. Finally, there was a weight room, mostly used by young boys trying to 'beef up', or middle aged women going for their weekly workout every Monday. In the gym, there was padding on

the walls, because the gym was so small, the children might hurt themselves during 'rough play' on the basketball court.

The center is a county facility, intended to be open to the public, including the outside community. The county authorities had an expressed goal of getting Maury residents to take part in the activities at the center, however with little success. The center is rarely visited by anyone outside of Eagle community, partly due to the newer, better equipped recreational center a few miles away in Falls City.

Community organizations in Eagle.

Residents, non-residents and activist organizations were all engaged in various ways in causes aimed at benefitting the Eagle community. A sense of Eagle being an important place and arena seemed to be a common denominator for the people involved. Eagle seemed to be permeated by an activist spirit, ignited by strong women from the outside community, who led two of the protest activities which will receive focus throughout the thesis. It was, in fact, striking that predominantly women, rather than men from Eagle, got involved in community work aimed at improving conditions of the place, and preserving it for future generations.

The first activity with a specific focus on the wellbeing of Eagle that I was introduced to was the Partnership of Excellence (POE). POE was a gathering of women from different school administrative positions in the district, and employees of the Recreational Center, hospitals, YMCA, libraries, the police department and residents of Eagle and Falls City. They gathered about once a month to discuss the welfare of the community. POE was, however, unsuccessful in planning and executing community events in Eagle, which will be discussed in chapter four on community and in chapter six on activism.

Through POE, I was introduced to other organizations aimed at improving the conditions of Eagle. Kate Hodgens, a board member of POE, introduced me to activists who had participated in the former Save Our Eagles program (SOS). The movement was established in the civil rights era of the 1960s, with the sole aim of rebuilding the rundown townhouse community of Eagle. I was also eventually introduced to the leader of the SOS movement, Harriet Heigl. She filled me in on the activities of the movement, and gave me a well-rounded view of the history of Eagle.

Another organization I got introduced to was Action in Maury County (AIM). AIM members were from neighborhood religious societies, and the organizational ideology was based on a thought of bringing power back to the people and making them take charge of their own lives. AIM was a community organizing affiliation with a multi-religious base as the common denominator. The main organizer was Lydia Nixon. At the time of the fieldwork, AIM was involved in Eagle community to improve and renovate the Recreational Center. However, this was put to a brief stop in January 2008, when budget funds which had been promised towards immediate renovation were pulled from the county budget. From January through July, AIM's sole purpose was to return these funds to Eagle and three other affected recreational centers in other historical African-American neighborhoods. I was fortunate enough to observe this campaign, which will receive particular focus in the thesis.

The Neighborhood Church

Eagle African Methodist Episcopalian Zion Church (AME Zion) is the largest religious society of Eagle community, and another central arena in Eagle. The church is the one most closely connected to Eagle as a place, due to its long history of 104 years in the neighborhood. Many, but not all residents were members of the church. It was a small white, wooden building in need of a paint job. AME lies about half a kilometer east of the townhouses, cut off from the neighborhood by Chesapeake Bay Road. Its placement outside the residential area made it more accessible to residents from Falls City. However, I almost never saw people from outside of Eagle attending services there, indicating that it was indeed a neighborhood church. An upwardly mobile ethos permeated the congregation, like in Ricourt and Danta (2003:84). The children were encouraged to pursue higher education, and the value of community work and caretaking was emphasized in sermons.

The church had been active also in the SOS program during the 1960's, and had functioned as a meeting place for the activists. An activist spirit seemed to be enduring in the church. AME Zion was founded in the early beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement, where the black preachers had separated from the white Methodist church and founded their own church.

Many churchgoers were from the Potter family of Eagle. Most of the regular attendees were older residents. A few other families were also present for the most part. There were almost never any teenagers or young adults present. I would, on average, count about thirty-five to

forty in church, in addition to all those who worked for the church such as church servants, the choir, the band and the reverend. The choir usually consisted of around twelve to fifteen people every Sunday, and had, according to member Larhonda, strenuous rehearsals every Tuesday. Here the very spirited leader Larry Reynolds would make them, repetitiously, sing songs he had written, until he was satisfied

AME Zion was a member of AIM alongside the other congregations. After service, Larry Reynolds would update the church members on AIM's activities. Besides being a choir leader at AME Zion, Larry Reynolds was an AIM leader as well. He was always the Master of Ceremony at the rallies I attended, indicating that his part in the organization was very central. Neither he nor the reverend Tyrone Philips was Eagle residents, but they were both very prominent in the community in promoting causes such as Action in Maury County. Mary Anderson functioned as the church secretary and would tally the people present in church every Sunday. The church seemed to be a significant place for many Eagle residents. The majority of Eagle residents attending church, attended the AME Zion church instead of other churches in the neighborhood.

Chapter 2: Method of fieldwork

Access to the field

In this chapter I will look at the methodological processes and challenges I faced in understanding place-making processes in Eagle.

My first meeting with Eagle as an anthropological field was on January 9th 2008. I was nervous and excited at the same time. Upon my arrival in the U.S, I had been met with prejudiced comments from friends from the affluent Maury County, seemingly based on newspaper articles focusing on brawls and alleged, but not confirmed rumors of Eagle being a drug pocket in Falls City. My friends' comments went along the lines of Eagle being a drug community, and the ghetto of Falls City. One girl also exclaimed: "Oh my God, Ingrid! You are going to get shot!" I did not expect to be shot, but I still was anxious.

A white, male affluent friend from Maury County drove me over to Eagle to start the fieldwork. I had been to Eagle before my fieldwork started, but that was several years earlier, and I did not know what to expect now. However, the neighborhood was like I remembered it from previous visits, peaceful, yet lively at night with children running in and out of the local Laundromat. "This is not a ghetto!" was the reaction of my friend, who had never been to Eagle before. "If you want to see the ghetto, I'll show you the real ghetto[5]!" These statements summed up my impressions as well. I saw a father and son walking together in the street, and another man loading a truck. My first impression was that Eagle was still a vibrant and family oriented community. By vibrant I mean in comparison to the empty streets in the affluent Falls City, where people seemed to stay inside their houses at nighttime no matter if it was January or July.

A couple of weeks after this first meeting, I was acquainted with the Community Center for the first time. Despite being met warmly by some of the staff, I was met with indifference by most of the staff and center users. As the center staff was mostly residents of Eagle and

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[5] This friend worked in what I have been told is one of the poorer districts of Maury County. He felt like his workplace was in one of the 'real' ghettos of the county. What truth there is to that statement, I do not know. Based on a firsthand impression, however, his workplace did seem less affluent than Falls City, which of course is not surprising, based on the position of Falls City as one of the 10 wealthiest cities in the U.S.

definitely informant material, this made me frustrated. Although I had read about Geertz and his "cold" welcome in Bali (1973), where people treated him and his wife with indifference, I had hoped and expected to be met more warmly by the "locals". I started to fear that the fieldwork would be more difficult to accomplish than I had thought.

I made several attempts at reaching out to the residents. I put up posters around the neighborhood and handed out flyers. I was introduced to people and I expected a "snowball" effect" of being introduced to more and more people through networking (Frøystad 2003:45, my translation). I hoped to get to know people through their family relations. I even got help from reverend Tyrone Phillips at AME Zion Church. He made an announcement at Sunday service on my behalf, stating my purpose of visit, and that I would appreciate people sharing their story[6] about Eagle with me. I also approached several people, practically begging them to talk to me. After a month, I was experiencing the life of the community as an observer. I had acquired a volunteer job at the Recreational Center, yet I did not feel like I was any part of it. I felt like an outsider to the residents, and I saw the neighborhood through an outsider view.

I worked at the Recreational Center every day, but I mostly talked to the children of the community here. Laquisha Henderson, an employee at the center who eventually became one of my informants, said that maybe because the community is a family oriented one, it is harder to get to know people. I think she meant that the families kept to themselves and solved problems among themselves. This was also an opinion shared by other outside informants and seemed to have some elements of truth to it. People of Eagle were friendly, but not past the stage of politeness. They expressed interest in my research topic and thought it was great that research on Eagle as a place was being done. Yet they did not want to be a part of the research themselves.

I met Debbie Anderson early. Debbie was the non-resident manager for the Western District of Maury County, responsible for the daily operation of all recreational centers in the County's Western Region. She had a great interest in Eagle's center. Debbie introduced me to the center staff and got me involved in POE, where I found many informants who provided

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[6] This was his almost exactly his use of words, and I thought it was wonderful that he used these words, rather than say that I wanted to interview the residents or "research" them. I think his appeal made people open up to me, eventually.

me with lots of background, history and their opinions on the neighborhood. I also met other people who were currently involved in Eagle, and who in turn introduced me to people who had been involved in Eagle in the past.

I was also introduced to Lydia Nixon, another non-resident from Falls City. She was the main organizer in AIM. She approached me one day I was volunteering at the center, and wondered who I was. When I told her I was an anthropologist doing research on Eagle, she immediately wanted me to attend an AIM rally occurring later the same week. The meeting was focused on a decision by the county council to withdraw budget funds intended for immediate renovations and upgrades of Eagle community center. I now became introduced to activism centered on the Recreational Center.

This involvement became a turning point in my research. It became easier to relate to people in Eagle, as many started to regard me as a fellow activist. My presence was fairly easy to notice, as I attended church services and activist organization board meetings and activities. I also worked at the Recreational Center, every afternoon from Monday through Friday. It seemed as though this familiarity was what people of Eagle needed to see and feel to let me slightly into their lives. I came on friendly terms with several of the residents, and obtained a personal level of acquaintance with a handful of people from the neighborhood. These few people became the closest informants I had throughout the fieldwork. After they understood that I was genuinely interested in the neighborhood, they let me into their lives and joys and sorrows.

My access to the field at this point was through the Recreational Center, through the POE board, AIM, and through inside and outside residents of Eagle of varying age. Even though my access to the field had started out as very limited, it became well rounded and representative of the fluidity of boundaries, which seem to make and unmake this community. Eagle as a community seemed to comprise much more than the ten acres of land where people lived. Non-residents were involved in the community, and wanted to take part in defining what Eagle was and was not. Some Eagle residents were strongly attached to their community, while others seemed more detached. In fact, I learnt that there is nothing simple about community (Cohen 1985:29). Community is not necessarily a geographical place, and everybody in a geographical place may not feel involved with each other.

I eventually came to realize that I was getting lots of data in terms of verbal and observational statements from people who did not live in Eagle. They were for the most part residents from Falls City who had strong feelings towards the neighborhood, and were involved in Eagle, through their work for Maury County, through charity, or through other types of work, often in school administrative positions. I therefore concluded that I had to change my theoretical focus of research (Wadel 1991:130 my translation), meaning that I had to alter my initial intention of studying only Eagle and its residents.

I came to realize that I had fallen for the visual trick earlier anthropologists fell for. Because my research focus was the *neighborhood* of Eagle, I had focused on what I believed to be a bounded and somewhat unchangeable place. I had intended to acquaint myself with Eagle and its residents exclusively. Further, I had failed to see that the *boundaries* of the community were very much shaped by non-residents. I had to redefine the field, and let the supposed outsiders to the field be included in the field. The results of my research thus came to focus on *place-making processes* in Eagle, as well as on negotiations between residents and non-residents about the terms of place in Eagle through activism and engagement.

My role in the field

I think many of my informants saw me as an activist or a volunteer. Besides the job at the recreational center, I joined the POE and I attended AIM rallies, where I helped out with practical matters. Some people actually reacted negatively to this volunteer role. Two of my informants at the Recreational Center (Larhonda and Laquisha) felt that I was being exploited by the county and by AIM, and that I should be on the county payroll.

I came on friendly terms with a few of my informants. Larhonda at the center ended up becoming my entrusted companion through the days of volunteering at the center. She opened up to me about her personal life, and gave me wonderful insight into being (in her own words) a "single, struggling" African-American female family head in 2008. Her insight was useful for contextualizing the field, even if it did not directly impact the research hypothesis. Laquisha at the center helped me when I needed support with my fieldwork. She hung up research posters, made children hand out flyers to the residents, and she also made other helpful suggestions[7]. Miss Anna, the volunteer bus guard of the neighborhood, came to trust me enough to invite me to her home, something she did not do with anyone else. Her story

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[7] She was not an assistant in any way, just a helpful individual. I feel as though it would have been unnatural to have an assistant in my fieldwork.

about how she kicked her husband out of her home gave me further insight into individual fates of Eagle.

I was probably considered an outsider activist by most people in the neighborhood, though. Many people had heard of me when I introduced myself to them on different occasions. A couple of times, young people of Eagle even asked if I was an undercover agent for the CIA or the police. This may have been because young, white females did not usually go in and out of the community every day. I continued to feel as a bit of an outsider through the whole fieldwork experience, never being completely immersed in the fieldwork experience, as some argue that the anthropologist should be (Hastrup 1995:19-22). Despite the gradual acceptance of my presence, I never was considered a community member of Eagle.

 Being distant to the field seemed to be an efficient tool for the data collection. Keeping an analytical distance and still being an active participant observer gave me a different type of insight to the neighborhood. I activated my "outside gaze" (Frøystad 2003:52 my translation) and kept a reflective distance from both inside and outside residents involved in the place. I felt like I understood the dynamics of the place in a more critical manner than if I had become more immersed in the neighborhood, or chosen to see the neighborhood from the angle of an outside participant only.

Who were my informants?

I had about 20 close informants. My study, however, is of hundreds of people, located within the different arenas of activism and community engagement. I came into contact with people in the neighborhood, at the center, the church, board meetings and AIM rallies. The people were young and old, residents and non-residents, black and white Americans and immigrants.

A common denominator between my close informants was that they were almost exclusively women. All the employees at the recreational center were women, all the regular attendants at the board meetings were women, and most people involved in the neighborhood were women. The exceptions were the neighborhood church reverend Tyrone Phillips, the director of Christian education and AIM leader Larry Reynolds, and a few male county employees who gave me insight into the recreational program offered at the community center.

Language challenges.

In retrospect, I could possibly have given more thought to issue of language. English is close to a first language to me because I have lived in Falls City for almost seven years. I took for granted the nuances and hidden codes unveiled in the language (e.g. Hoëm 2001), meaning that spoken language may convey more than what is said in a sentence. Marianne Lien writes that "banal questions are dangerous to ask. Partly because we risk making ourselves look ridiculous, and partly because it requires relatively thick skin" (2001:71 my translation). I understand this to mean that anthropologists studying their own societies often do not want to ridicule themselves by asking "taken-for-granted" questions, and so they assume that they know what the statement implies without further research. Yet, it may be precisely such questions that make informants reflect on their cultural codes and thoughts on subjects, and this may bring out the normally hidden message (Lien 2001:71).

With the exception of a few situations, I took for granted that I understood all types of spoken dialects in the field, regardless of whether it was the East Coast dialect of Falls City residents or (what I consider to be) the mild slang of the African-Americans of Eagle. I did, however, ask what certain terms, such as "cock blocker" meant. [8]. What I did not ask what phrases such as "the neighborhood being ghetto" or "the woman being to' up" means, as I assumed that I understood the meaning. However, in hindsight, I have wondered whether, if I had asked about the meaning of such terms, the responses would have given me deeper insight into self and place, for example how place shapes an experience of self found in language.

Still, I think that being fluent in the language in the field you are studying is more beneficial than not. Tying language to the informant dilemma of keeping an analytical distance to the field, made my observation part of observation participation stronger (Frøystad 2003:60), and so I feel like I was able to reflect on verbal statements with an outsider's view nonetheless.

Collection of data.

My main method of choice was the method favored in anthropological fieldwork, participant observation (Frøystad 2003:41). The opportunity to volunteer at the recreational center gave me the ability to work at the center and participate in the employees' everyday life. I could also withdraw and observe when I needed to, because I was not on the payroll. I would bring

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[8] Cock-blocking means to stand in the way of somebody who is trying to flirt with another person. In other words, you are interfering with their flirting.

a notebook and jot down a few field notes, and then write more extensively using a combination of field notes and head notes when I came home at night.

At activist rallies, I was probably seen more like a participant than an observer, and I sympathized with the case of getting the recreational center renovated. That was the closest I came to immersing myself in the field (Hastrup 1995:19). This was, in my view, unproblematic though, because I was able to distance myself in between the rallies, which did not happen regularly and occurred with long intervals in between.

At POE meetings and in church I was solely an observer. I am neither religious, nor did I necessarily support the causes the board discussed. This made it easier for me to distance myself from the agendas of the different arenas. However, I did consider the church services I attended among the most beautiful experiences of my life. I appreciated the messages of the sermons such as: "(…) being a real man and still taking out the trash" and "(…) focusing more on the inner beauty rather than outer beauty". Also, the gospel music was beautiful, and brought tears to my eyes about every time I attended Sunday service.

I conducted five formal conversations. I agree with Howell when she states that anthropologically based interviews as a main method can quickly become poor sociology (Howell 2001 in Frøystad 2003:33 my translation), because of what I understand as anthropologists not having proper interview training. However, I felt that the formal interviews I conducted were strategic ones, like Sanjek (1998:9). Most of the interviews took place at the end of the fieldwork. They did more to illuminate the knowledge I had already acquired about the field, rather than distort it. For the interviews I did use a tape-recorder on occasion, and sent them to the interview objects for review and approval afterwards. I also did one phone interview because my informant was travelling at the time I wished to conduct the interview with her.

I also found secondary sources to be illuminating in telling a story about the field. "[Text] analysis is directed at locating those spaces in society through which the written products of a particular society gain meaning in anthropological terms and thus enhance the anthropological endeavor" (Archetti 1994:26). The newspaper articles and statistics I found did seem to highlight certain elements in the relationship between Falls City and Eagle, showing Eagle as a more distanced 'place in place' located in Falls City. Statistics and other numerical facts are

used scarcely. I collected a great deal of material such as life story interviews, pamphlets, maps and such, which Harriet Heigl had produced and accumulated through her engagement in Eagle, and which she had made public at the local historical society.

Research limitations

My main problem was initially that I did not get the access to the field that I had expected. I did not get enough interaction data (Wadel 1991:134-135, my translation) or information on how Eagle residents communicated with each other, because Eagle residents would not let me into their lives. I solved this problem by redefining the field to include both residents and non-resident somehow involved in the neighborhood. "During the fieldwork, [I assume that most fieldworkers] have been forced to do several adjustments regarding theory/hypothesis, terms, method and what could be "data" (Wadel 1991:174 my translation)". My problem of extending the field as greater than initially intended was not unique, and I understand this to be a normal development for most anthropologists in the field.

One possible limitation may have been that I did not get comprehensive access to the home zones of Eagle. I was inside four of the one hundred townhouses during my fieldwork. Still, living with your informants may be a part of participant observation most anthropologists are not lucky enough to indulge in. Unni Wikan consoles herself after she is unable to live in her informants' conditions. "In theory all anthropologists perform participant observation. In reality, most of us observe far more than we participate" (1996:185, my translation). I also felt that I had observed more than I had been a part of activities, at many occasions throughout the fieldwork. Also, the lack of access to the private sphere did indicate that people in Eagle were somewhat guarded, which was interesting to study in terms of the relationship between residents and non-residents of Eagle. Finally, the field I ended up studying did not require full access to people's homes. Arguably, it was not necessary to visit every townhouse in Eagle to study the arena of activism and community engagement.

Another possible problem was that I had few male informants. Men were present, they were in the arenas I studied, they talked to me, but I did not develop a close relationship to men living in Eagle. The male informants I had were non-residents, involved in the neighborhood through church or the county. Yet, I believe that my findings would not have been much different with more male informants. "The gender dimension positions us and gives us different possibilities and limitations" (Wikan 1996:188, my translation). My position as a

female may have placed me in the universe of Eagle I had access to. I did most of my fieldwork in the daytime, when many men possibly were at work.

The lack of access to the male sphere demonstrates the difficulties in trying to determine what the field should look like, and who should be represented. As Fredrik Barth stated: "Both topic and method must be allowed to develop in response to the concrete situation of fieldwork and the findings that accumulate" (1981 in Wadel 1991:127). This statement can be understood as indicating that both the researcher, the people under the researcher's lens and the research situation mutually influence each other, and determine the outcome of the data collection. The female view is probably what is most important to the case of engagement in Eagle, and is perhaps most illuminating for the day time view of Eagle. Men's disinterest in the matter will be considered to be part of the place making in Eagle in the chapter to follow on female leaders.

Another matter to take into consideration is that I used to live in Falls City. I attended high school there and have lived in the area for six and a half years. This makes the fieldwork "home anthropology" (Lien 2001:69), because it is a familiar sphere to the anthropologist and calls for an evaluation of distance to the field. By studying the relationship between the Falls City residents and the residents of Eagle, I feel that I was able to keep an analytical distance to the field. It may, however, have led me to focus more on verbal statements at times, rather than what is said beyond the words, but I think that the arena of studying activism and community work allowed me to take on the role of observer and analyst.

"Us" versus the "Others"

According to Gullestad, a researcher's friends can see too much contrast between the environment being studied and the environment apart from the research (2001:59 in Stokka 2008:33). This contrast, initially, could possibly pose a problem for me and my research, as my friends commentaries about Eagle referred to at the beginning of the chapter may have indicated. My old friends from Falls City reacted to me as a white female studying the poor African-American neighborhood of Eagle. Their ignorance of the neighborhood was transparent in their statements about the place.

I did, on the other hand, never feel like an Eagle resident. I stepped into the field as an advantaged white female from Europe, and whether I wanted to or not, this barrier created a

distance between me and the residents of Eagle. "The anthropologist, as a foreigner, is inevitably an anomaly from the native point of view" (Briggs 1970:42). I think this is correct in my case as well, as my persona did not represent normalcy in the neighborhood. People knew I came from a foreign country, and this may have contributed to their reluctance to include me in their everyday lives. To make use of the betwixt and between position of fieldwork, I have tried to be as critical as possible when writing about the two different ethnic groups in question. Still my views and life as a liberal, educated person may have distorted the interpretation of the data, thus possibly being open to criticism.

I have tried to stay away from an "exotification" of the African-Americans in Eagle. While differentiation between the two ethnic groups is important for the analysis of fieldwork, it is equally important to not portray the two neighborhoods as fitting into a binary model where working-class and middle-class is distinguished and making it appear as though African-Americans have their own "culture" in a static, unchangeable society. Such a binary model can arguably be discussed as presented in monographs of black Americans (Anderson 1991 in Gregory 1998:140). The relationship between residents of Eagle and Falls City was not merely determined by different income levels. I have throughout the thesis tried to portray a process-oriented view (e.g., Barth 1966), indicating all the influences present in place-making, such as the outside forces, the inside forces, ethnic relations and negotiations, historical influences and contemporary change patterns. It did however appear as members of the two ethnic groups distanced themselves from each other in various ways of place-making. This will be taken into consideration as well.

Ethical considerations and final thoughts

I have not revealed the true names of Eagle community and Falls City, nor their precise location. The only indicator I have kept public is that Eagle is located in one of the states adjacent to Washington D.C., and close to D.C. as well. Eagle's proximity to D.C. is important because it indicates in what region of the country Eagle is located, and thus the kind of socio-economic environment that encompasses and affects the community. Everything else such as street names, family names etc. are fictitious. I think Eagle would be very easy to locate if I gave away its geographical location, and because I disclose detailed information about informants, it would be unethical to do so.

To protect my informants, I have kept their identities anonymous and altered information where it could possibly reveal a person's identity. Some of my informants have had the opportunity to review the material I have written about them, and comment on it. I have tried to be as true as possible to slang and wording of statements made by my informants, even where I have been forced to guess the spelling of the slang words, and their implied meaning.

Chapter 3: History of Eagle community

In this chapter, the history of Eagle will be described. It will be argued that an appreciation of Eagles history is part of the place-making process, and seems to enlighten the activism and engagement going on in contemporary Eagle. A relationship between Eagle and Falls City seems to have been first initiated in the mid twentieth century, and reflects already visible socioeconomic differences. These differences were further illustrated as the relationship is continued on and reinforced through processes of activism and community engagement. Maury County will also be described as an arena which is at first neglectful of Eagle, but gradually engages itself in the community for example by the building of a public recreational center in the neighborhood.

Early settlements

Eagle community is one of the earliest African-American settlements in Maury County. Eagle was founded by an emancipated slave, Henry Eagle, in the initial period of the Great Migration of African- Americans leaving from the South to the North, in pursuit of what they hoped was a less segregated life (Gregory 1998:23-24). In the late 1800's Henry Eagle bought 36 acres of land at an auction and led other emancipated slaves to follow suit. The neighborhood nearly comprised fifty acres at its largest, but it was always a poor neighborhood.

Falls City was in the late 1800's a middle class city. In the early to mid twentieth century, predominantly white Americans started moving into Falls City and started buying the land and property around Eagle. Later, land speculation and county regulations led the neighborhood of Eagle to decrease in size until it became the ten acre low-income housing area it is today. This process can be viewed as a gentrification process, where the African Americans were the original owners of the land, but were driven out by wealthier white Americans who wished to move into the place of interest (Anderson 1990:1-2). The African-Americans were the originators of the place, but had to move out due to higher taxes and lack of financial resources. Also their residences did not comply with Maury County regulations

which were more suited for wealthy Falls City residents (Dilts), possibly because the houses of Eagle did not fit naturally into the affluent white socioeconomic space Falls City had become.

The history of Eagle is grounded in an understanding of the neighborhood being essentially African-American. It is still mainly inhabited by African-Americans, though this is starting to change. In analyzing the place as affected by identity politics, it seems natural to use a power perspective as well, in understanding the subordination part which seems to follow a view of identity politics.

Eagle community was a segregated neighborhood until 1958, when schools were desegregated. The community had a separate school for its children, and the residents were banned from country clubs around the area, with the exception of being employees at the clubs. The neighborhood was deteriorating. The regulations of Maury County enabled the county to take control of the land, once the townhouses could be condemned. Residents did not have clear title to the land, causing confusion as who had ownership of the land where Eagle is situated. The park and planning commission had plans of creating a greater park area beyond the great forest lying behind Eagle. The overcrowded townhouses of Eagle had several families living under one roof. These houses were going to be demolished, and horse stables intended for use in the park area, were going to be put up instead. Also, the land property of Eagle, which at this point comprised about fifty acres, was very attractive for "(…) speculators who were eyeing the land for high-cost housing" (Dilts). This seems to indicate that the pressure against Eagle was twofold. One the one hand, the park and planning commission was exercising an increasing protectionism towards preservation of land. The pressures of gentrification from land speculators were on the other hand, pressuring the neighborhood just as hard. The consequences seemed to be that the neighborhood was falling apart because of outside interests that were not intended to include Eagle as a neighborhood in the increasingly richer Falls City.

Identity politics will always involve a type of power relationship, often involving one major ethnic group dominating a minor ethnic group (Foucault 1983:221, in Gregory 1998:13). The residents' loss of land seems to be part of the negotiation of who holds power in Falls City. "Time and history, the diachronic media of culture, are so deeply imbedded in places as to be inseparable from them as inseparable as the bodies that sustain these same places and carry

the culture located in them" (Casey 1996:44). As can be read out of the quote, history and time almost always signify the place in a profoundly intricate way. These factors can be argued to have been significant in establishing Eagle as a place as well. The foundation of the place by the emancipated slave signifies African-Americans as the original land owners with a special attachment to land. Like a myth, it seems like this foundation is "(...) part of the conceptual repertoire" (Archetti 1994:18) of Eagle. It defines Eagle as an African-American place. This is also evident in the several families in Eagle who are direct descendants of Henry Eagle. Of course the name itself is part of the attachment process. Henry Eagle's settlement seems to be a symbolic[9] marker, as it reflects the free man's right to own land, and mirrors the right to do so for African-Americans.

Judging from its history, it seems clear that an African-American identity was part of the foundation of the place. Identity making can be understood as a three way process, negotiated by the agency of my informants, ethical views as well as historical views (Gregory 1998:11). The residents can be viewed bearers of a black identity negotiated through their living in Eagle. Residents of Eagle are therefore tied to their ethnic identity and living in Eagle structures a way of thinking among the residents.

This thinking related to being African-American is highlighted by the history of the ethnic group and can thus be structured to a higher level of nationalistic thinking for minority group in general. African-American nationalism was for the most part structured in the civil rights movement, where black solidarity became a driving force to reinforce collective thinking within the group (Hill-Collins 2006:128) It seems to become a driving force for some of Eagle's residents today, when it comes to getting involved in the community, judging by for example the constant references to Martin Luther King Jr. at activist rallies, and maybe more subtly, by the references to fairness and "achieving what is right" for minority groups at the same events.

Finally, an ethnic identity also negotiates the relations between the outside and inside community of Eagle and Falls City. To be tied to an ethnic identity can be argued to be inescapable for African-Americans whereas it is a matter of choice for white Americans who can wear labels such as "Italian American" as they wish (Mary Waters 1990:199). Therefore

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[9] In describing symbolic attachment to land I use symbolic in the simplest semiotic form, meaning that a symbol is a thing standing for something other than itself (Seymore-Smith 1986:273)

it may be seen as involuntary that Eagle and its residents are labeled black and perform as a black community, as the residents are inextricably tied to a label based on skin color and history.

SOS: A signal to the outside world.

*"People were dying to get involved" (*Harriet Heigl).

The Save Our Eagles foundation (SOS) was initiated in 1964. It was in the middle of the era of black consciousness, the engagement of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and peaceful resistance. Television now enabled all U.S. citizens to see what was going on in the South with the lynching and angry mobs, as well the resistance made towards the so-called Jim Crow laws, the laws of segregation in the Southern U.S. states. The quote above was from Harriet Heigl, the Save Our Eagles founder. She was trying to explain why residents from affluent Falls City wanted to get involved in the attempt to renovate the black enclave of Eagle.

> The civil rights movement describes a period in U.S. history when large numbers of ordinary people and organizations mobilized to destroy the legal segregation and second-class citizenship of African Americans, Latinos/as, Asian Americans, and indigenous peoples encoded in federal and state laws and enforced by the proliferation of violence at all levels of society and in every region of the country. The purpose of the civil rights movement was to secure economic and political equality, empowerment, and democracy. (URL 2)

The Save Our Eagles movement was part of the Civil Rights Movement, as its goal was to create change and fight for equality by using peaceful resistance at a local level. The Jim Crow segregation laws where exercised to a certain extent affecting the Eagle community, although this is something residents do not like to talk about today.

Through my conversations with old activists, it seems clear that SOS was an activist movement as well as a political involvement between Falls City residents and the county, renegotiating the place of Eagle in Falls City. The expressed goal was to rebuild the community, thereby challenging the county policies structuring it. A hidden goal was a wish to create change in an unjust system. By rebuilding Eagle, the gap between the two communities would be less visible, and segregation and inequality as experienced in the

relationship between the segregated black enclave and the white upper middle class Falls City would decrease.

Harriet Heigl explained that the beginning of the SOS movement was her desire to get people in Falls City involved in the Eagle community. She wrote a letter of concern in a local newspaper, and managed to get seventy-five people to attend the first meeting[10]. There were county politicians, democrats, republicans, housewives, wealthy residents, as well as Eagle residents. Other attendees were civic leaders, church leaders, county employees and other residents of Falls City. After making the decision to create a concerned neighbors' organization, the focus became creating a solution to the lack of water in the community. The one water well in the neighborhood was run by the county. It suffered from several breakdowns, which led to many of the residents as well as the AME Zion church of Eagle having no water supplies at times. This illustrates the lack of power Eagle had as a community, compared to the rest of the city. SOS was able to convince the county to solve the problem of the broken sewer. The power to persuade the county did not seem to be a given, and it was probably enabled because of the affluent and powerful members in the organization. In some cases, the members were county representatives themselves.

The second post on the SOS agenda was a garbage campaign, where the entire neighborhood was cleaned up in a couple of weekends. In relation to the trash removal campaign for the youth in Corona, New York, Gregory speculates that it may reformulate the appearance of a public black space away from notions of (....) pollution and disorder (...) [and] (...) poverty and blackness (Douglas 1966 and Gilman 1985; cf. Conquergood 1992 in Gregory 1998:125). This seems to fit the image of the cleanup campaign in Eagle as well. The area of Eagle was being cleansed of its litter, as well as abandoned cars that Falls City residents had dumped in the neighbourhood. With this cleansing, a new image of Eagle was born as a clean place, slightly more up to standard. Eagle had also taken a stand of not readily accepting the power of domination exercised by Falls City residents as a waste site. In a sense, Eagle residents were building community among themselves through the trash campaign. They were working together to create a clean place to live. As a community, Eagle was taking a political stand of fighting back against the unequal distribution of power.

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[10] The people at the meeting have been referred to as neighbors of Eagle, but it is unclear whether they were Eagle or Falls City residents.

The SOS membership grew to one hundred and fifty people, half of these Eagle residents, and the other half Falls City residents. After the cleanup program and the establishment of a tutorial program for the children of Eagle, the SOS committee now focused on the greater need of the community, which was the deteriorating standard of the townhouses. The renovation was finally given an informal approval after the activists marched down to City Hall in Stonehenge, where Falls City residents and Eagle residents stood together and protested the unfair treatment of the African-Americans of Maury County. Two weeks later U.S. Department of Housing provided a grant towards the complete renovation of the housing area.

Upon winning the cause of complete rebuilding of the neighborhood, the SOS movement created Eagle Community Development Corporation. The agenda stated by the corporation was the intention of creating low income housing by selling off most of the fifty acre property, except for a sixteen acre lot intended for the building of houses (Dilts). A letter of intent aimed at the residents was formulated by the committee. In it was expressed that all the houses needed to be bought up and sold in order to create the possibility for low income housing. The outside community seemed to come in and define the needs of Eagle; they structured the layout of the place, and indicated how people should live through community housing rules.

In the newspaper clippings and the community board flyers I have studied from the time period of SOS; it is striking how absent Eagle residents' voices are. It is hard to indicate whether or not they approved of the creation of a community development corporation. Harriet Heigl, the leader of Save our Eagle, told me that despite losing a lot of land already to land speculations, many Eagle residents felt like their land was stolen when she and the community board committed to selling the land to create a low income housing neighborhood. There seems to be some truth in this statement, as older Eagle residents would often remark to me that the community used to be bigger. They would gesture and describe how far the community had stretched. The loss of land seems to be an important part of the history of these older residents, and can perhaps be compared to Native-Americans and their loss of homeland.

The townhouse design was done by a Yale-educated architect, who had to consider all the demands from the corporation, the building regulations for low income housing, as well as the

hopes and demands of the residents for their new homes. The intention was to build the houses separate, in order to give the residents more space, but this was prohibited according to the low income housing regulations. Townhouses with small individual garden plots ended up being the solution, and the residential area ended being ten acres instead of sixteen. What is left of the fifty acres of Eagle seems to be the memories, as reflected in the statements of older residents.

The construction of the townhouses began in 1968, a couple of weeks after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. The groundbreaking ceremony marked the activism, which had begun with tiny steps four years ago, when the houses were of tar paper and with tin roofs. The ceremony united all the activists working together tirelessly towards the goal of rebuilding the community. Blacks and whites of Falls City stood together and watched the state secretary speak of the cause which had been won through much hard work.

A year later, in April 1969, the residents were able to move into their new homes. The residents continued to live as before, with several families under one roof in the now one hundred townhouses. Twenty-five of these houses immediately became owner houses, whereas the rest were rent controlled. The Eagle Development Corporation now changed status to become a community board. Harriet Heigl continued to serve on this board for several years afterwards. Guidelines were established with rules such as "If you leave you door open, you are not just wasting your electricity bill, but your neighbors' as well" and "You need to pay your rent every month". The guidelines indicated what needed to be done in order to keep the harmony for all parts of the community and called out for solidarity between the residents.

The SOS movement seems to have been the only option available for the residents of Eagle to achieve a better housing standard. The residents knew that they were living in terrible housing conditions, compared to their wealthy neighbors, but seemed unable to act or do anything about it. It is a problem that their voices in the historical record are silent. The activists I spoke to from Eagle only indicated that they were happy to be helped. Yet, Harriet Heigl confessed that she knew that several of the residents then felt that their land was being stolen by Harriet and the other housewives. Still, nobody expresses this view today. The view seems to be that Eagle residents were unable to act on their own.

Despite the good intentions of the affluent activists, the outcome of events may have laid a foundation for a further unequal power relationship between the two neighborhoods.

> If the construction of identity is a political process, implicating a range of social, economic, and cultural practices and locations, it is a deeply historical one as well. For not only are social identities transformed over time, but they are also grounded in social relations, experiences, and commitments that endure over time. People recollect and rework the past through social practices of memory that bring the meanings of the past to bear on conditions in the present. These practices of memory shape the foundation of collective identities (Gregory 1998:13).

According to such a view, an Eagle identity can be argued to have been influenced by recent past events, creating a standard for place making. In a way the relationship now established between the two neighborhoods, was one where the affluent patrons from the outside community entered the community, shaped it by selling and rebuilding the neighborhood, and took control by entering the community board and creating low income housing. The outside residents established a view of Eagle as a poor community, unable to exercise the influence needed to create change on its own. Eagle residents similarly expressed the view that they needed help, because the townhouses would then be renovated with support from their white neighbors.

The situation seems to overall represent the meeting between different interests as represented by the residents of Eagle, Falls City, the county, land speculators and conservationists. The intersections of difference of gender, class and ethnicity (Ortner 1998:8) are here clearly represented in all aspects. The different aspects are mutually interdependent of each other, yet can be separately emphasized at different occasions (Ortner 1998:9). It was interesting how the old activists would choose when to emphasize ethnicity and when not. The ethnic aspect seems to lie as a sometimes surfacing feature and other times as an underlying current in the story. It is played out verbally when arguing for civil rights, while underplayed when the residents work together. It was never emphasized that the leadership organization was mostly white, whereas there was only one black spokesperson, Edel Jefferson[11], who always spoke on behalf of Eagle's interests. It was never mentioned either, that the persuasion and negotiation of the county and park and planning committee was done by the outside activists only.

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[11] Edel Jefferson is diseased, but is always the person quoted in the historical articles. I also found a lot of biographical information on Mrs. Jefferson at the Historical Society in Maury County.

Class seems to matter when it is compared how much capital was available to use for the two different groups. According to Sherry Ortner (1998:7), a "castification" of the middle class has occurred under the effects of late capitalism in the U.S, causing the differences to become clearer between those who earn more money than others. It is possible to view the access to social and economic resources as symbolic capital, or informal power (Bourdieu 1996:264-265, in Bugge 2002:225). Residents of Eagle and Falls City clearly illustrate such a cultural economic differentiation of access to capital resources. The Eagle residents lacked financial and social capital and were unable to take charge of the unjust situation themselves. The Falls City residents, on the other hand, seemed to possess both types of capital, and were thus able to influence the situation of Eagle in the direction they saw fit. They could persuade the conservationists of the park committee and the county to change their plans, based on their influence and ties within the county. They were able to act before speculators were able to buy the land. Thus, while the community of Eagle became signified by their lack of resources, the validity of the resource access many Falls City residents enjoyed was strengthened by the victory of AIM.

Finally, gender is considered in the greater aspect, of this being a cause led by women. "When cooperative relations between established whites and newcomers began to form [in neighborhoods of significant ethnic difference], it was women from these two groups who nurtured them" (Sanjek 1998: 373). In Harriet Heigl's case, she not only nurtured such interracial relations with Eagle residents, but shaped them from the beginning. She was a pioneer of her time, taking charge and leading the cause, yet she was still marked by the gender relations of her era. When the history is spoken of today, it is emphasized how the women's role was influential in creating change, yet in the newspaper clippings of the 1960s, the women's role is played out as being engaged homemakers, with an organizing role. However the engagement of the women seemed to set the standard of the leadership to persist in the years to come in Eagle. Harriet, Jenny and Mary became and continued to act as spokespersons on behalf of the community. They were also able to present their vision and set the standard for needed community action in the time to come.

The greater significance seems to be that certain power relations were put into effect after this initial interaction between the neighboring communities. (...)[P]ower relations and discourses, like the social agents who inhabit and shape them, have complex and layered histories that project social meanings and relations through time, contouring the political and cultural

spaces in which people act in their "presents" (Gregory 1998:106). Such a construction of a mindset as to who had the power, seemed to place a lot of symbolic capital or informal power in the hands of wealthy Falls residents. These residents were, with their symbolic capital of wealth and social connections, able to influence county politicians to enable renovation of the community, as well as create a base for Falls City residents to stay involved in Eagle. The activism, may also, however, be seen as establishing an activist spirit in the place of Eagle, creating the urge to unite with the neighbors and fight back, when needed. The "(…) political space (…)" (Gregory 1998:124) created by the activism of AIM seemed to unify Eagle and Falls City residents. This further seemed to create certain standards, as to who stayed involved in Eagle in the years to come.

Early leadership was dominated by white Falls City residents, but with its agenda of improving conditions for the poor African-Americans in rundown townhouses, the Save Our Eagles movement is included as part of the civil rights movement. Eagle resident Mary Anderson has held secretarial and leadership positions in the community since her childhood. Her cousin Jeanie Hawk teasingly refers to it as "Mary being involved in everything". She started off by keeping scores for the church sponsored sports events, and then found herself the secretary of the SOS movement at adult age, which she describes in a similar accidental manner as Harriet's acquiring of the leadership position in the same organization. She explained that the original secretary, stopped showing up at the meetings, and so Mary became secretary after this. She was dedicated to this position and attended all meetings and rallies, which finally led to victory for the cause and the total rebuilding of the community. Her relationship to Harriet was established during the movement, and has been a friendship rather than a collaborative effort. They still keep in contact with each other, even if Harriet is not an active protagonist for the community anymore.

Mary did for the most part position her engagement around work related to church activities. Gregory writes that black women in Corona, New York, tended to organize their activism around church based activities as an alternative to the male based activities of engagement in black politics (1998:54). It may therefore be argued that Mary found herself a place in SOS as well as her local church, in order to get involved in her community as a female of her time. She still continues to hold the position of secretary in Eagle A.M.E. Zion and (among other things) she keeps a thorough tally of whoever is in church any given Sunday.

The two founding acts, of the construction of the neighborhood and the reconstruction of the neighborhood, are concrete markers of Eagle as a place. The events negotiate the terms for Eagle's existence, and have led to the appearance of Eagle today. A third marker can be seen as being the building of the Recreational Center. They appear to be what Anthony Leeds refers to as "conjunctures", which are short term events with political-economic implications, grounded in the past and affecting the present (1980 in Sanjek 1998:10-11). Eagle was founded as a black community, yet was reconstructed by a dominating white community board. Through such a view it might to possible to give perspective to time and space as experienced in Eagle, and how they affect class and power relations today. As Anna Tsing writes:

> Place making is always a cultural as well as political-economic activity. It involves assumptions about the nature of those subjects authorized to participate in the process and the kinds of claims they can reasonably put forth about their position in national, regional and world classifications and hierarchies of places" (2002:464)

This once again turns the analysis back to the earlier point in this chapter of Eagle residents being identified as African-Americans living in an area defined to outside residents through its minority label. Despite the exclusive African-American residency disappearing somewhat throughout the years, a definition of their place will according to Tsing's place making definition always be according to how African-Americans are defined by the greater society.

The Recreational Center

In the case of Eagle, it is not only Falls City residents and Eagle residents who determine what the neighborhood is and is not. Also the local government plays a part in the place-making of Eagle, through building and zoning regulations, and budget control. I have earlier in this chapter referred to county regulations making the housing situation in Eagle harder in the 1950s. Today, the locus of control exercised by the county government is mainly through the budget control in funding and operating the Recreational Center. A recent example of the county's control was the withdrawal from the budget of funds intended for immediate renovation of the recreational center.

The Recreational Center in Eagle began construction in 1974 and was completed in 1975. It was supposed to serve the entire Falls City area, with multiple leisure activities for residents and non-residents to partake in. Some of the initial activities were sports, dance classes,

weight loss programs etc. It did, however, turn into a facility serving the African-Americans of the area, with many travelling from other predominantly African-American neighborhoods (including Washington D.C.) to hang out. Eagle was an eventful place in the 1970's, with basketball and football tournaments and outdoor barbeques in the summer. The center was a natural focus of the neighborhood.

The Recreational Center in some ways works as a crossing point between Eagle and Falls City. Without the center, Eagle might have felt more enclosed from the outside world, because of the enclave like structure. The center is also where most of the Falls City residents involved in Eagle come when they have errands in Eagle.

Final thoughts

The two major events which seem to have shaped Eagle are the establishment of the neighborhood in the aftermath of the Civil War, and the activism in the 1960s leading to the renovation of the townhouses and the construction of the Recreational Center.

One outcome of the SOS movement's work seems to have been the establishment of strong female leadership and collaboration across intersections of difference. However, the power distribution did not seem to be equal between Falls City residents and Eagle residents. Eagle residents' voices were absent in the many newspaper clippings of the time. The creation of the new housing community was based on premises and connection of the Falls City residents involved. This may have laid an unequal foundation for the years to come in Eagle, and seems to impact the place-making processes and the community engagement even today. Unequal power relationships seem to have been established between the two places, arguably also a sign that a possession of cultural capital was necessary to create change in the neighborhood.

The bonds established between the low-income Eagle community and the affluent suburban Falls City seems to structure their relationship also in the future. Both Eagle's history and the later developments seem to give the community a solid basis to continue being an almost exclusively African-American neighborhood also in the coming years. However, the events of building and rebuilding the neighborhood can also be seen as conjunctures which are short-term events with long-term effects. These events led to the county settling its position in the neighborhood further, by building the Recreational Center and controlling its financing and

operation. If the present non-resident engagement in Eagle were to diminish, the possible future effects on Eagle are unclear.

Chapter 4: The Construction of Community in Eagle.

In this chapter I seek out the meaning of community in Eagle and how it leads to involvement and non-engagement in community activism and engagement. Community will be treated as a fluid concept, meaning that its borders are negotiated by residents of Eagle and outside activists and residents of Falls City. Community in Eagle does not seem to be set in a rigid way. Yet, the concept also has concrete substance through different arenas of the neighborhood. Certain events also seem to have influenced what the neighborhood looks like and feels like to its residents and non-residents. It also seems that a negotiation between place and people constructs community, and that the negotiation is constructed and deconstructed through an attachment to place. I attempt to show how the notion of place leads to the preservation acts for the neighborhood to be discussed in the following chapters.

Community as a concept and physical room

Community is a well discussed term in contemporary anthropology. It is both contested and defended. On the one hand there are anthropologists who think of new and improved ways to incorporate community into their concepts of groups of people with perceived boundaries towards the outside world (e.g., Howell 2002:86). On the other hand there are anthropologists who criticize the study of "boundedness", for example: "Anthropologists once set out to study "communities"; they thought they could find society and culture within a relatively narrowly defined social space" (Tsing 2002:471). Implied in this statement, is that anthropologists no longer study communities as bounded entities with an easily isolated way of living.

Yet, it is hard to discard a thought of attempting to study an isolated unit, if the object of study is a concrete neighborhood. As explained in the chapter on method, I realized that the makers and un-makers of place in Eagle were both residents and non-residents. A certain notion of togetherness in Eagle was apparent to the outside world. Still, when I got to know residents and non-residents of Eagle, I realized that it was not this simple.

I met former Eagle residents who did not attach themselves to the neighborhood, despite their several years of residence. I also met Falls City residents who visited the neighborhood several times a week, and felt committed to the place despite their non-residence status. I got to know residents who meant that these non-residents did not know enough about the place to try to influence its residents' actions. I also got familiar with shaping events leading to the

construction of the townhouses. It was as if the community borders seemed to flow in all directions, and community in Eagle seemed to indeed go beyond a restrictively defined space of townhouses.

The lack of boundaries in a contemporary understanding of community, however, cannot be analyzed through an exclusive postmodern analysis, focusing on a perceived blurriness of borders. This is also a main point made by Tsing (2002). Rather, the complexity I met in the field can be concretized. A separation of terms was present in people's definition of where they lived. People acknowledged a geographical and socioeconomic separation of Eagle as a tiny ten acre low-income housing community, whereas the surrounding area was defined as one of the top ten wealthiest in the U.S. Finally, people seemed to a certain degree to attach and define Eagle through the arenas, or physical rooms that were encompassed by the buildings of Eagle.

Community in the physical room of Eagle

The uniqueness of the community was first and foremost concretized through the reconstruction of the townhouses, thus maintaining the spirit of the place as an African-American settlement. What was unique seemed to be that the African-Americans of Eagle had actually been able to preserve their housing community, compared to many other black housing communities throughout the U.S. lost to redevelopment in the mid-twentieth century (Gregory 1998:58-66). The physical place of Eagle was in this sense also a product of activism. Eagle seemed to reflect what the residents are capable of when they set their mind to it, as well as symbolize support from the outside residents of Falls City.

A phenomenological approach is one way of looking at the mutual influence between people and place. In particular what is also referred to as the 'dwelling perspective', where the lives lived in a place is left as an enduring record of past generations, influential for the generations to come (Ingold 2000:189). Dwelling can also be helpful in looking at the case of Eagle, and may be understood as meaning that people affect the place they live in, as well as being influenced by the power of place and its record, mostly present in its history. The history of Eagle seems to portray the neighborhood as an enduring place, reflecting a mutual influential process between the space[12] that comprises Eagle and the people as influential agents

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[12] Ingold (2000) rejects notions of space and place as he attempts to rethink the ecological perspective of or not. To talk of boundaries assumed by space and place is to fall into the trap of talking of a division of landscape which according to Ingold, doesn't exist in the landscape. For the purpose of this paper, I will still use

affecting the space. An example of this mutual process is found in the activism of the 1960's, influencing the community today through the people old enough to have been involved in the Save our Eagles activism. Older residents are able to associate the landscape with what it used to be and look like, and compare it to what the community is now.

The townhouses of Eagle significantly represent community for older residents by proving what amount of work can be done in mutual solidarity. Older residents have formed an attachment to the place, based on what the community used to look like before its renovation with Save Our Eagles. Dwelling for them can therefore be seen as the rise from the ramshackle houses of the 1960s, which they themselves helped demolish, to the new houses representing future and hope and more acceptance as residents of Maury County. By winning the struggle against Maury County in the 1960s, older residents formed community and affected the lives to come. Now, the houses may be thought to affect residents as a practical community symbol standing as testimony to past actions.

The church also possessed power to assemble, as it was the meeting place for many Eagle residents. Historically, the church was founded in fighting for civil rights, and this was evident by the sermons which seemed to focus on taking power back by getting an education and fighting together as a group. The church was also a main promotion site for the AIM cause, as several of the church members were directly involved in AIM as leaders and spokespeople.

The church is a symbol and represents community in the concrete landscape of Eagle. It had been part of the community since the building of Eagle in the late 19th century. The church also in a way represented the wider Eagle of the past, as it is located outside Eagle's current residential area due to the land being sold to finance the redevelopment of the townhouses. The church is divided from the residential area by Chesapeake Bay Road, and stands as a concrete symbol of the community Eagle used to be by possession of land. It is also an indication of the lack of power possessed by Eagle residents, who were dependant on the SOS movement to get the county to finance a pedestrian crossing, as described in chapter three. The Eagle community has still not been able to obtain safe pedestrian access to the church.

distinctions of space and place, as I am studying boundaries in terms of the construction of community, and my informants use notions of boundaries in their everyday conversation. anthropology which he regards as too influenced by the "Decartesian" split of soul and mind and further human and environment. Everything in the landscape affects everything, whether human or non-human, alive

Many of them walk down Chesapeake Bay Road to go to Sunday service, a short but dangerous walk as there is no actual sidewalk, only the shoulder of the road. Eagle residents in this sense are cut off from their neighborhood church as a result of the historical events described in earlier chapters.

The Recreational Center plays an important part in the negotiation of place-making with its assembling power, which also brought outside residents into Eagle. AIM, POE, and the community board in Eagle for renters and owners all used the Recreational Center as their meeting place, in some sense reflecting the Recreational Center as a place where outside and inside activists meet and create a common space.

Eagle's power of place: embracing community

The seemingly overlapping and often collaborative efforts of Eagle residents and Falls City residents create place in Eagle. Their diverse efforts seem to fit a definition of community where an emphasis is placed on use, interaction and negotiation among agents (e.g. Barth 1969, Cohen 1985; Gregory 1998). The notion of community in Eagle seems to exist beyond the concrete markers of the townhouses to the organizational situations of activism, community activities, and statements and interactions by people. "[P]ourousness of boundaries is essential to place" (Casey 1996:42). From this perspective the different arenas and activities rather than merely Eagle's physical room generate a sense of Eagle as a place and its boundaries. In shifting the understanding of neighborhood from connotations of attachment and firm placement, it can be argued that this notion can be easily replaced with terms such as 'place' and 'space'. This does not necessarily imply geographical boundaries.

The construction of community in Eagle can be defined through agent participation in matters concerning Eagle as a place and an actual neighbourhood. Yet, the human agents of change did not necessarily reside in the immediate neighbourhood. It seemed like most of the leaders in matters concerning Eagle as a place, were outside residents of Eagle, often belonging to the affluent Falls City. They were people who seemed to organize the actions to be taken on behalf of Eagle. An insider/outsider perspective of the agents who define Eagle as a place will be used in constructing the view of Eagle presented in the remainder of this chapter.

The construction and reconstruction of the townhouse community, as well as the building of the recreational center, are other examples of events depicting Eagle's historical timeline as

one marked of "conjunctures" of significant "before" and "after" actions (Leeds in Sanjek 1998:10-11). The buildings of Eagle are the physical environment of Eagle, and are as already mentioned symbolically very central in the building of the community. This makes it possible to include outside activists in a community definition in Eagle. By standing together, and looking past the socioeconomic differences of being from Falls City or Eagle, the residents and non-residents constructed community together by building it.

> Some symbols are so unclear that they exist largely in the terms of their symbolic boundaries (...) their *range* of meanings can be glossed over in commonly accepted symbols and allows adherents to attach own meanings to it (…) they share the symbol, but not necessarily its meanings (…) (Cohen 1985:15, emphasis in original)

Cohen implies that people may not necessarily agree upon the meaning of a symbolic concept, yet the symbol itself has a gathering function. It is important to bear in mind the fluidity of the concept of togetherness, yet even in conflict to acknowledge the presence of community. As mentioned by the incongruence on the building of the new townhouses between residents and white leaders of Save our Eagles, togetherness in Eagle seems to have been created by several conflicting visions competing between what Eagle should be and should not be, yet there is an inherent acknowledgement of the community inside and outside activists as created through rallying for the renovation of the community.

This definition of community makes it further manageable to deal with the observations of people inside of Eagle as well as outside in Falls City, creating dimensions of what Eagle is and is not by their statements and actions. It means that what is said and done does not necessarily have congruence, yet people stood together as "we" in the activism in Save Our Eagles: "[P]lace included space and time as part of its generative power" (Casey 1996:43) The activism of Save Our Eagles seemed to create a space for community in Eagle, not reliant on residents status, but yet reliant on the status of Eagle as a place gathering residents and non-residents who believed in Eagle's right to exist as a unique historical community in Falls City.

By standing together more than fifty years ago, activists from Falls City and Eagle built community together in not only a symbolic way, but also in a pragmatic manner. A notion of historical African-American community overlaps between different meanings of the term which seemed to have started with the establishment of SOS. Even if this idea of togetherness

is sometimes a weak link between the two places, unity seems to persist as outsider activism for Eagle continues to exist in for example Action in Maury County.

People's "insider" and "outsider" negotiations: attachment to place in Eagle.

Community has traditionally been viewed as a symbol which in its obscure meaning marks similarity as well as difference, within and outside its borders (Cohen 1985: 12-13, Howell, 2002: 86). This makes it possible for members in a community to view each other as equal and united within what they consider their community. It also enables the agents to discriminate against and distinguish non-members as marked outside the symbolic boundaries of the community (Cohen 1985: 21). In some situations it seems as that community in Eagle implied an 'us vs. them' conceptualization with thoughts of boundaries and distinction separating people in Eagle from "outsiders" as well as sometimes including people somehow engaged in the neighborhood as "insiders". Other times Eagle residents seemed detached from community as outside and uninvolved. One example of an inclusive community is the already mentioned common solidarity of AIM members creating community based on cause rather than physical place.

A different example is the Recreational Center employees who as residents separated themselves from the outside activists to some degree. When the outside activist women of the Partnership of Excellence (POE) tried to get the young boys hanging outside the center to come inside the center instead, reactions came from the employees at the recreational center who were also Eagle residents. Larhonda exclaimed to me one day, as one of the ladies was out trying to get the boys to come inside: "[the boys] only come in here, if it gets too cold or hot outside!" She seemed to think the energy spent on projects to get the kids involved, were for the most part focused wrongly, or just plain annoying. "Ingrid, they not gon' come in here! They want to stand there outside. Besides, they ain't doin' no harm to nobody (…)". She seemed to think that the boys should be left alone, and would tell me how it was the same thing she had done as a teenager. As teenagers Larhonda and her friends also stood out there"… [j]ust hanging out and chillin'…" In other words, they stood around and talked without bothering anybody.

Larhonda seemed to want to convey by her statement that she knew what the boys were doing out there, whereas the women of the Partnership of Excellence did not. She indicated a perceived togetherness with the boys which the women of POE could not understand and

would view in terms of their understanding of what hanging out means, which seems to translate to loitering in this case.

Larhonda's critique of the POE women may also be viewed from a dwelling perspective. By her critique of the women from Falls City, she implied a deeper commitment to place than she felt that Falls City residents could possess. These women did not "(...) know what was going on in the community" according to Larhonda. What may be read from her statement, and also from negative attitudes outside residents were met with from other Eagle residents, is perhaps the feeling of outside intrusion attempting to occupy space in Eagle in a manner threatening a perceived close understanding of place. "Local knowledge (...) comes down to an intimate understanding of what is generally true in the locally obvious; it concerns what is true about place in general as manifested in this place" (Casey 1996:45 emphasis in original). The outsider intrusion may have been a threat to place for these individuals, viewing outsider involvement as a challenge to their truth and knowledge of Eagle intricately locked with their enduring resident status.

This may have also been the case for the young men always hanging outside the community center, day and night. They were mostly high school teenagers, and I and everyone else would see them loitering there, when they should have been in school. For many outside activists, it was a travesty that the boys were not in school. Several Falls City residents' involvement in Eagle was focused on getting the boys inside the recreational center. These attempts were met with apathy and sometimes laughter from the boys. It may have also been the boys' way of expressing that their possession of place was deeper than the women trying to get them in, as they controlled and occupied the place as residents, and thus controlled place and space in Eagle. "Familiarity with the land, being able to read and decode its signs allows individuals to know 'how to go on' at a practical level of consciousness or one that may be discursively formulated" (Tilley 1994:26). Because the boys were familiar with their surroundings, they possessed its knowledge and could not be told to relocate by outsiders unfamiliar with the place.

In following a dwelling perspective, it can further be argued that a spirit of place is locked in the construction of Eagle, influencing how some inhabitants think and act around their place. Edward Casey writes:

> (...) A place is generative and regenerative on its own schedule (...) from it experiences are born and human beings return to it for empowerment (...) power [of place] consists in gathering these lives and things, each with its own space and time into one arena of common engagement (1996:26).

Construction of place can be seen as tied to a protective basis aimed at conserving Eagle. For example, when I asked Mary Anderson why she would walk outside the community center and pick up trash every day, she simply replied "Because I love my community!" She was also in a sense dwelling in the community, affected by the past she had been a part of shaping as an old activist in the Save Our Eagles movement, as well as being shaped by it by aiming for its preservation. Mary seems to attach a similar meaning to keeping the community clean as was shown in Eagle's history with the trash-removal campaign to cleanse the community of a "polluted" image. Mary and her generation remember what it was like to not have indoor electricity and water, and the smell of kerosene attached to the clothing which became a brand mark of Eagle children before the renovation, according to old activists. She in some way revises an image of Eagle residents as dirty, as she aims to keep the community clean.

Another example of attempted, yet failed, trials to create interactive community can be found in the struggles the rental organization of Eagle experienced at their activities. The rental office seemed to have problems engaging the residents in their housing situation, meaning that it was not just a matter of outside activists such as the women of the Partnership of Excellence struggling to get Eagle residents involved. The rental organization would arrange meetings for the renters in Eagle twice a year. At these semi-annual meetings there was food, door-prizes and the opportunity to talk to police, bail attorneys, county employees and the Eagle board about matters that could involve the Eagle residents somehow. The community board which consisted of Mary Anderson among others was present, and at the meeting I attended, they were supposed to elect a new board member. There was hardly anyone present at the meeting, and the rental director expressed concern about this. After exclaiming that they could not vote on a new board member with so few renters present, she asked what could be done to get people to come to the meeting. Low attendance seemed to be a regular problem. No real responses were given, except a few joking comments of a sporting event being on that particular Wednesday.

Judging by the lack of enthusiasm about the rental meeting it could be said that people lacked knowledge of their ability to influence what went on in their community on a regular basis.

This seems to make the construction of community less related to living in the housing community, than activism and engagement among older residents such as Mary Anderson, who were involved in efforts such as the community board among other things. It may be that there existed a difference between being a renter versus being a house owner like Mary was. Being a house owner is a stake of a tangible kind and may indicate a certain control of your surroundings as well as a success, or a "story of progress" and a sign of middle-class identity (Gregory 1998:56). Many Eagle residents expressed a desire to own their own homes, perhaps seeing homeownership as a sign of progress and upward mobility. This was hard to pursue with the high monthly rent, constricting the ability for residents to put away money towards homeownership. It may then also be said that being a renter and being an owner in Eagle were two different realities, as renters were more constricted and could not influence their housing community as much as the twenty-five owner residents were able to.

One final example of the difficult attachment some Eagle residents seemed to harbor towards the sense of community was the activities organized at the Recreational Center. The employees at the Recreational Center, who were for the most part residents, also seemed to distinguish themselves from the other residents, by being involved in their community through their job at the Recreational Center. At this job they were involved in the community by working for the children's wellbeing in Eagle. This work will be more specifically discussed in chapter six. The resident employees viewed their work as community involvement. Larhonda made it clear that she did not understand why people of Eagle would not participate at community wide events supported by the Recreational Center, such as Black History Celebration, dances, and Sports Programs. The recreational employees claimed to try everything to get residents to join their events, but usually were disappointed.

There was, however, one exception to the low attendance at Recreational Center events, the planned barbeques. As Larhonda told me one summer day before a Recreational Center arranged cookout: "At the barbeque tomorrow, don't you be scared when you see all the niggers coming in here (…) you'll see people you didn't even know lived here!" Apparently events involving food were better opportunities to meet Eagle residents than other events arranged in the community. Sanjek calls planned community happenings "public rituals events":

> (...) they [public ritual events] marked special occasions or purposes, occurred in central or symbolically transformed locations, and broke the flow of ordinary events

with formal behaviour including invocations, speeches, music, processions, dance and the sharing of food. They were planned and enacted rather than spontaneous, and they sorted and positioned those present into organizers, participants, and audience (1998:8).

According to Sanjek, planned events can be seen as markers in everyday lives, or breaks from the ordinary, giving people a possibility to come together in an arranged setting. As events involving food in Eagle seemed to be events to attract a crowd community in Eagle was to some extent created through the sharing of food. Larhonda's predictions were fulfilled. Many people I had never seen showed up at the cookout, and stayed throughout the evening, eating, drinking and dancing to the beats and music of the hired disc jockey. This was, with the exception of a few AIM events, the most crowded activity I participated in, during my stay in Eagle. Perhaps the low-key atmosphere and the promise of nothing except for plenty of food and good music was what was important for many Eagle residents to assemble and show community solidarity among each other. In any case, the women working at the Recreational Center can be viewed as the organizers with the ability to assemble the residents or participants, based on their local knowledge of what the residents wanted and needed to join in at community events.

Final thoughts
The construction of community in Eagle seems to be determined by both outside and inside forces, and is negotiated on many levels and by many people. The foundation of community though seems to be grounded in the community's historical beginnings, seemingly conceptualizing what the community was and where it came from. History has continued to play an important role as the civil rights movement was initiated and Eagle became involved in the movement through the Save Our Eagles foundation.

Further, the physical room of Eagle seems to represent an important dimension in the community of Eagle. The townhouses, the church and the recreational center are all part of the landscape of Eagle, and represent what Eagle has become due to activism and community building by "conjunctures", historical events in the timeline of Eagle. The physical landscape stands as a reminder of the past - of interactive collaboration between Falls City residents and Eagle residents - as well as the physical symbol of community constructed in the building and rebuilding of Eagle.

Another dimension of community seems to be found in the sometimes confusing attachment and detachment people made to the place of Eagle. Community and solidarity was formed across the physical room of Eagle, as seen in the activism shared between Eagle and Falls City residents in the SOS movement. Contemporary engagement of AIM for the purpose of renovating Eagle's recreational center crosses the multi-religious borders of AIM's members. Yet, it does not appear that community is taken lightly in Eagle as residents attach and distance themselves from outside and inside residents, as well as residents showing little community solidarity by disengaging themselves in community wide events, such as the renter association's meetings.

However, one important exception seemed to be the low-key events planned by the Recreational Center involving food. It seemed like an atmosphere that demanded nothing except the opportunity to gather and have fun and eat was most attractive to Eagle residents, and this is also where I felt the strongest community bond as Eagle residents sat together over a hotdog or two, exchanged stories and laughter, and danced.
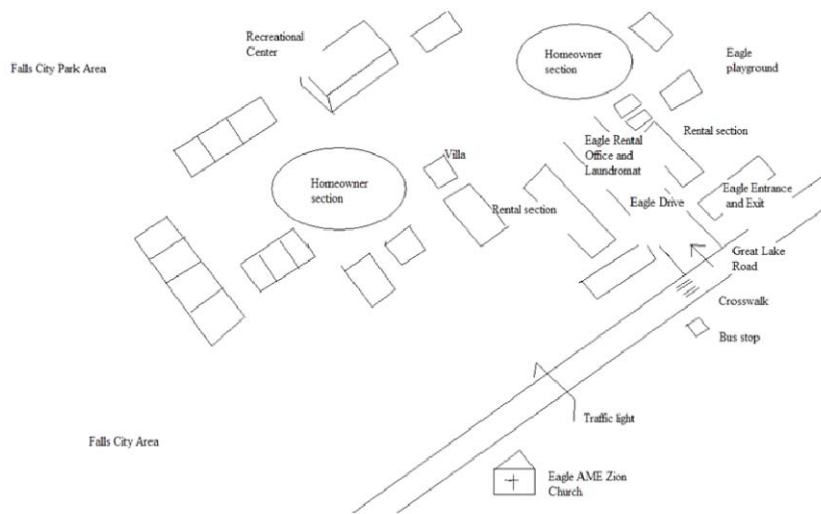
Image 1 Eagle map drawn by author

Image 2 Eagle AME Zion Church

Image 3 Eagle at winter time

Image 4 AIM Meeting

Image 5 Barbeque at the Recreational Center

Chapter 5: Leaders and Organizers. Women of Eagle

In this chapter, female leaders in Eagle and their role in civic work and politics will be discussed. I will introduce five women through their life stories, who have all been a part of community shaping in Eagle, and stand as leader figures in Eagle because of their engagement.

Theoretical outline

Reasons for successful female intersectional collaborations will be analyzed and discussed; as such collaborations in Eagle seem to result in "bridging relationships". By "bridging relationships" is meant that these women's meetings were signified by intersections of difference (Ortner 1998:10), specifically class and ethnicity. Yet these boundaries are crossed because the women unite through common interests and grass root political goals in preserving the community. Also, the seemingly inactive men in Eagle will be analyzed based on other leadership literature, and discussed with regard to why they remained passive.

Individual stories of key women leaders of Eagle will be presented. Life story interviews bring out the individual and traditional in a person's life, and may help the anthropologist to place that person's story in the context of the society she is studying

> (…) One person's story may help illuminate the greater social field, because the person is now in a setting where she is placed between the society she lives in and the outside, represented by the anthropologist (…) The forces which seem to steer our decisions are never under individual control, but always found in the social setting of our societies, which will again influence the way we think and speak. The life history interview is one methodological strategy in picking up on these forces (Mintz 1979:24-25).

The background and history of some of the women in the organizational network of Eagle seem to bring out similar complexities in forming bonds towards a common goal (Sanjek 1998:374-375). Their stories can illuminate quick questions as to who gets involved and why, as well as show the wider implications of these processes. Also, an antagonistic female activist, reasoning against many of the efforts made in the community, will be discussed in order to show how and why critical voices may be raised in civic efforts, and demonstrate that there are different voices and opinions in the community.

A woman's work? Civic duties analyzed

Female contribution to civic activities and politics has been described in the social sciences as an organizational role compared to an executive position. For example, one female activist in Corona, New York viewed her role in a community organization as an organizational one compared to a leading function, which traditionally has been attributed to men in an organization in Corona (Gregory 1998:133). It is possible to think of such traditional female organizational role as being the backbone for activism, enabling that activism to happen and seeing it carried through by delegated tasks. The men on the other hand, can be seen as representing the muscle of activism in the public appearance. In this sense, men represent the execution of the activism, as well as delegation of tasks. This view can be argued to be part of a male model of activism. The "power-of-domination" framework (Hill-Collins 2006:21) implies that men's work has been connoted with aggressiveness and use of force in activist work.

Women on the other hand, have been viewed as executing a more passive role in activism. Women have tended to stay away from tactics of force and rather use resources of any kind, for example networks, available to achieve a desired outcome. This tactic is also known as a "resource mobilization" framework. The power of domination framework is usually viewed as a political model, whereas the resource mobilization model is viewed as a non-political one (Hill-Collins 2006:21-22). It may also be read in correlation to the view of female activists as having passive and organizing roles in activism, whereas the men are aggressive and forcefully carry the activism through. Further it is also possible to think of the "(…) technical and analytical problem (…)" (Ardener 1975:1) anthropologists have had with describing both men and women's viewpoints in traditional anthropology. Male viewpoints have been easier to come across, and have been related to as the normative viewpoints in society. Female voices have more rarely been heard, and have appeared to be muted in traditional ethnographies (Ardener 1975:2). It is therefore possible that female activism and leadership has been read out of a traditional thought of leadership, explicated by men. Interesting for this case is that this explication does not seem to find ground in Eagle.

In contrast to what Gregory described in Corona, women in Eagle seemed to be both organizers and forceful executers of community activism. By this is meant that it was mostly women who delegated tasks, performed the delegated tasks and executed them in the course of community work. Women were public faces of the activism and represented the

organizations outwards towards the local and the wider public. They were also political in the manner they went about making things happen, even if they were not being politicians in a traditional manner. The women did for example not accept the county's plan to demolish Eagle's townhouses in the 1960's, and exerted influence on county politics in order to assist the Eagle community in moving towards the welfare level of the neighborhood.

The activism of Eagle can be viewed in terms of women of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds coming together and collaborating. Such differentiating factors could have been disablers of collaboration, but have instead been a resource for these women to come together and solve shared problems. An important point is thus that different barriers of class and ethnicity are being crossed and negotiated through community work, and that the women are the enablers in crossing these otherwise stratifying boundaries of difference. In other words, the women seem to reevaluate the differences through an explicated common goal of Eagle's wellbeing.

The seemingly "muted" men. Where are they hiding?

The men of Eagle seemed to possess a more passive role in the organizing and enactment of the community activism. At the protest rallies arranged by AIM in 2008 that I attended, men were present in the audience, they engaged in conversations about the cause of renovation of the Recreational Center, and agreed that it was a cause well worth fighting for. The turnout of men and women in the audience seemed to be approximately the same. Yet, these men seemed to lack the organizational power that the women possessed. The only men active in AIM was the pastor of Eagle AME Zion Church, Tyrone Philips, and the choir leader from the same church, Larry Reynolds. Reynolds was an AIM leader and functioned as master of ceremonies at the AIM activities. Philips also spoke at a rally. These men seemed to execute a "spokesperson role" for the organization, where they were speakers at the rallies, and would encourage people of Eagle to get involved in the AIM activities.

Contrary to traditional portrayals of gender relations in anthropological literature, it seems as though the men of Eagle remain muted in the landscape of activism. The reasons for their lack of involvement may be varied, and are of a speculative kind, since few men are included as informants in the fieldwork. One consequence may be that men's contribution to activism in Eagle goes for the most part unnoticed. Another reason may be that a lot of the community work took place during daytime, when many of the inhabitants of Eagle worked, leaving

mostly the women who either worked part time, nighttime or not at all with the time and capacity to community involvement. This seems to be similar to the situation in Queens Ricourt and Danta describes, where the men were inactive in community work because they were the breadwinners of the families and had long work hours (Ricourt and Danta 2003:99).

Still, there were adult men in the neighborhood during the daytime as well, who did not involve themselves at the center, or otherwise in the community, so this cannot be the only reason. As we have seen, there has been a historical tendency for African-American women, rather than men, to get involved in community work. Women have been involved in what they tended to regard as the non-political framework of the community, where they may work together across ethnic boundaries in order to secure the safety and future of their communities (Hill-Collins 2006:21-22; Sanjek 1998:299, 374-375). Men, on the other hand, tend to involve themselves in networks where there is personal gain and influence to achieve (Sanjek 1998:375), which may be interpreted as being the more traditional political methods, such as political leadership for example.

In Queens, Latino men seemed to involve themselves more in political campaigns concerning their home country (Ricourt and Danta 2003:99). There is a possibility that the men of Eagle did not care to get involved in the neighborhood politics because they would not gain from it personally, or because they did not care enough about the community causes to actively engage themselves. Perhaps, their identities were much more shaped by other activities, at different times and in different realms, which are not accounted for here.

The women fighting for Eagle together

Both resident and non-resident women have been part of forming what Eagle represents today. The first woman I will present is Harriet Heigl and her creation of the Civil Rights Movement SOS. Her work in Eagle can be seen as crucial for building a base for community work.

The story of Harriet Heigl and the SOS movement

Harriet Heigl was a 75 year old Jewish woman with a cascade of white curls and an endearing, yet determined persona when I met her. She was originally from further up North, and moved to Maury County after being married to her husband from the surrounding area. She was a mother of three children, and an educated teacher with a Bachelor's Degree from a well respected school a little outside Maury County

Female collaboration seems to have begun with Harriet Heigl in the 1960s when she wanted to get involved in charity work. Harriet got aquatinted with Eagle community in 1964, when she drove into the neighborhood looking to do some volunteer work for the community. This was arguably, the first interaction of significance between the two neighborhoods of Eagle and Falls City. The movement resulted in Eagle and Falls City coming together in order to save Eagle's townhouses. Harriet recalls:

> What happened was [because of the] historic time. All the civil rights activities were happening down south and this just was a very little community and people wanted to do something. This surfaced as an effort, people wanted to join in because they wanted to[pause]…they wanted to make a difference [pause]…

As an American female in the 1960's, Heigl did not intend to take on a activist leadership role. She described how she was basically thrown into the role of a leader, when she initially had pictured a more organizing role.

> [I]n February, I called a meeting, so that someone was gonna stand up and say: "'I'll lead this cause" (...) I wasn't that old and I was terrified to talk in front of people. Dr. Pritchard said he would do the speaking for me, if I told him what to say and then Dr. Pritchard became the president, he was the minister of a Presbyterian church in Falls City and he became the president of Save Our Eagle and I kept raising my hand to say 'you have to include this' [chuckles]

Harriet's expected division of labor, where she performed an organizing role rather than a leading role, was not the outcome of the events to follow. Her leadership of SOS seemed to be based on precisely those organizational skills toned down by Gregory in his study of Corona. For instance, Harriet recruited a great supportive base of prominent Falls City residents as well as Eagle residents. She got them together on a weekly basis, and usually gathered them in the AME Zion church in Eagle.

The SOS protest activity was a long process, and lasted for several years before the results started to show. Harriet recalled how she suddenly found herself running around the entire

area of Falls City, trying to get signatures declaring clear title to the land for the residents. It turned out that generations of unofficial and official buying and selling of land had made it very difficult to track down the owners of the land, a phenomenon called "heir property". A difficult question for the SOS activists became "Who owned the land?" Harriet followed residents around during their daily routines in the search for titles, which they based on what people told them. She needed residents' signatures of approval of sale and reconstruction. She also organized door-to-door actions in the neighborhood. She was very much involved in persuading the county to discontinue their plans of removing the entire neighborhood in order to build the planned horse stables.

The success of the SOS movement is arguably not likely to have happened without Harriet Heigl and her tireless efforts to promote wellbeing in the Eagle community. Sanjek describes some of the female civic leaders in Elmhurst-Corona as organizational leaders (1998:373). For Sanjek, these women were leaders precisely due to their organizational skills. Their skills enabled them to perform and execute tasks, and gain supporters in the process towards a common goal of bettering the neighborhood of Elmhurst-Corona by solving issues affecting the common grounds. Heigl will be treated here as a leader because she was able to recognize the problem, create a movement with followers, participate and follow through to the solution.

Weber describes three forms of leadership, bureaucratic, traditional, and charismatic. The first two forms of leadership are grounded in a legal structure of a society or in a hierarchal type of leadership, whereas charismatic leadership seems to be tied to the rise of leadership based on personal qualities, and more situation based, rather than based on structures in a society (Seymore-Smith 1986:36). It seems like Heigls type of leadership can be tied to Weber's "charismatic leadership" as "rooted in the need to meet ongoing routine demands" in everyday activities. "The mission of its bearer (…) is directed to a local, ethnic, social, political, vocational or some other group, and this means that it also finds its limits at the edge of these groups' (1968:1112-13 in Ricourt and Danta 2003:100). In other words, this style of leading has its origins in situations and occurrences found in most people's lives, which are in need of practical, often ad hoc solutions.

Harriet seemed to employ such a charismatic and organizational type of leadership. She contributed to shaping communities based on similar criteria laid out by Sanjek and Weber. She acknowledged concrete problems on the ground and gained support for their causes. Also,

she enabled meetings and friendly relations with women and men of Eagle through formulating their common causes, thus constructing togetherness. They further seemed to use a tactic of charismatic leadership and organizational skills in order to delegate tasks such as distribution, survey teams, and meeting places, enabling the execution of protest activities to be performed. Sometimes, these women would speak publicly, other times; they would delegate these tasks as well.

Heigl can also be argued to act as a bridging personality between the two neighborhoods, Falls City and Eagle. She was able to create the already mentioned networks with residents of Eagle, especially the women, in uniting towards the common goal of the safekeeping and building of the community. Yet, she was well known beyond Eagle, and was a prominent resident of Falls City. Harriet's role was a political one as well, even if it was not a formal bureaucratic role. The relationship between Eagle and the county was one distinguished by subordination in an era of segregation. The political role was thus a negotiation of power relations between the county and Eagle residents, in a manner similar to the civic activism of Corona, New York, where the residents fought against unequal treatment in city regulations (e.g. Gregory 1998:13). In Eagle, the unequal distribution of power was forced by government and county regulations. Harriet and the followers of SOS succeeded in redefining these regulations to benefit Eagle.

"(...) [O]ne should be prepared for more female leadership as America's majority-minority transition unfolds" (Gans 1988:11 in Sanjek 1998:372 and Braudel [1967] 1988:3-210 in Sanjek 1998:10-11). These predictions were made in the late 1990s and seem to have been realized as the story of Eagle unfolds. Eagle and Falls City women create networks among each other, connect to each other as females and achieve results. These relations cannot always be argued to have been great ones, and has been portrayed as an unequal one between the two neighborhoods. Yet it seems like a historical type of resonance in relations to time and space (Fernand Braudel [1967] 1980:3-210 in Sanjek 1998:10-11) has been present in the aftermath of SOS, creating a type of historical bond between the two neighborhoods.

Mary Anderson. The matriarch of the community or a great gatherer?
Some of the female activists, such as Mary Anderson, had been involved long enough to have been a part of the SOS movement, and thus already had well-founded connections with

women of Eagle whom she had worked with throughout the years. Mary Anderson is a lifelong resident of Eagle, and her activism and engagement in the community has been nearly life-long as well. She is known by everyone in the community, and for many, she seemed to represent a type of mother figure, or matriarch. In almost all the newspaper clippings of Eagle there was a mention of Mary, often portraying her as a type of spokeswoman on behalf of the community. She was also mentioned to me by several people, in the beginnings of my fieldwork, as a person I must speak to.

Even though the years were beginning to catch up to Mary at her 73 years of age, her spirit remained youthful and passionate when it came to Eagle. She was a tall, slender woman with grayish curls, and every time I met her I was struck by her walk which seems to signal a statuesque appearance.

Mary expressed to me an explicit attachment to Eagle as a place, for example through her trash collecting efforts outside the Recreational Center. She also seemed to represent power by her status as a homeowner. She is attached to her home, and has more influence of her living situation as a homeowner. She seems to further reflect the type of mutual bonding that may occur between people and place, referred to as the power of place, as previously discussed in the chapter on place (Casey 1996:28). "The ensuing understanding [of place] reflects the reciprocity of body and place (...) and of both with culture (...) (1996:45). Mary's commitment to Eagle is one which empowers her as an individual as well as her giving back by empowering it with her dedication to the place.

Mary is a board member of the homeowner's association in Eagle, and one of the people in charge during the board meetings for the renters and owners in Eagle. She would, however, speak as a citizen at these meetings, rather than as a member of the board when she raised concerns about the young boys hanging outside the recreational center loitering and doing nothing, with her references such as "-My heart breaks when I see these young boys", speaking as always, of a deeply founded commitment to the community and its spirit. She seemed to be everywhere at once with all her engagements in the community.

However, her efforts were slowed down during the period of fieldwork. Her husband had fallen ill, and she had to cut back on many of her assignments to take care of him. Still, she did not let her "self-defined" duties towards the community become obsolete, and she

acquired help from her cousin Jeanie with many of the tasks AIM wanted her help with. She also remained a present spirit at most of the meetings arranged by AIM and POE, as she usually managed to attend most of the meetings and help out with some of the tasks, even with a sick husband at home.

Even though she has mostly held clerical and organizational positions in the community, she will be argued to be a leader here. Her outspokenness of community issues seemed to be taken seriously in the outside and inside community. She was constantly referred to when people wanted things done in the community, which is the way she got into contact with Lydia Nixon of AIM.

> I got involved when Lydia came to me. She went up to the office up there and the [manager of the rental office] gave her my name, up in the office. And, so we went in the office, and um…she was talking about how she watched two young mothers trying to get across Great Lake Road with they strollers and the babies, and they couldn't get across, they chicks, they was crossing and saying and sayin' "here come another car" and they kept on it, so finally she said [pause]. She came up in here and watched, and then she went to the office and she told [the manager] about it and [the manager] gave her my name and she called me to meet her at the office, so I went in. She told me what she wanted and I um…I suggested a light. So, we started out with a light. So, we asked if we could get a light for down there, they said no, because it was too close to the other light down here. But we had asked for the light before [the neighboring community] was built (...) But down there, were they built those houses, they put the light there. And they told us it was too close to the light there. And I said, we don't want to go for a crosswalk, let's start with a light first, so uh…we got a light cross walk. Only reason, I uh…That's how I got involved with AIM…

Mary's role in the community seems to be that of a "warden" or a neighborhood protector (Sanjek 1998, Ricourt and Danta 2003:21). She seemed to speak on behalf of the entire community of Eagle and raise concerns of the community publicly. She seemed to have an unofficial nomination as a "go-to-person" in the community, as exemplified in the story about the cross signal. Mary thus was part of bridging the relationship between Falls City and Eagle, in a similar manner to Harriet. Her role as a well respected member of the neighborhood and an official member of the community board further enabled this relationship. The rest of the story also seems to show her concern for the place:

> (…) They told me "come and speak at AIM". They had one of those big nights out there. That's the first time that I was asked for, so I made a speech at AIM and uh…then [a county employee] He was the head...and some of his [colleagues] worked for him came to me that night, "give me your phone number", I gave them my phone

number and they called me and after that they called and wanted to get together to come out and see…And uh…they called and said they was coming out to check it out to see with the crosswalk. And uh, they saw some cars zooming past the school buses and that kind of stuff. So, he said he was going to come out, survey and sit in here, so next thing I know they put a cross walk there and then, the next time, you couldn't see the crosswalk, until you got up there, so then they called, and uh…I called them and I said "Now, the people drive on the cross walk before they realize there's a cross walk. They couldn't see for it both ways. Because before they popped up over that hill, they couldn't see that crosswalk, and they had to come up that hill and they couldn't see it, because I told them the light blinded people. The sun, when it come up, that's the way it is, and uh…so we was talking about it in the meeting over at River, and I told them about the Western District recreation, I was on that board too. And um [pause]...I told them about it, and we had a target plan, a person would come to all our meetings and he would say "that is a dangerous stride and uh…you're on it before you even realize it" and I said "We can't get a light, can we get a flashing light up there?". That came through, but I though the light wasn't working and we went to see [the county council member's secretary] and I told him that the light wasn't working. He wrote it down on a piece of paper and them went to the [council member's] office and told them the same thing and um [pause]. Nobody told me that the light was working and so, he wrote it down on a piece of paper and then they say the light working next [chuckles] I stayed too late, I was told it wasn't working. They came out there and inspected, they did…and then….we got the push button.

This story serves as an example of the dedication and time Mary was able to put into efforts of bettering the community. She was able to recognize the problems and create solutions to them. With the recognition that there was a problem of crossing the street safely from the exit of Eagle Drive to the bus stop on the other side of Big Falls Road, the idea of a street light was made immediately. When this was turned down by the county government, due to another streetlight being in too close proximity already, she did not hesitate to find a new solution. This resulted in the pedestrian crosswalk signal as well as the new collaboration between the community of Eagle and the AIM movement. In this sense, Mary can also be argued to be a bridging personality between the two neighborhoods.

The resulting collaboration with Lydia Nixon of AIM seems to represent networking and further more crossing of boundaries. Female civic engagements and leadership has been discussed as intensifying in New York of the 1980s (e.g. Sanjek 1998, Ricourt and Danta 2003). Women have been presented as being more actively engaged in the protection of their community over time, as compared to men. This has led to many women taking on civic responsibilities and commitments to a greater extent than men, but maybe just as important, it has led to interethnic collaborations between for example black and white women (Sanjek 1998:374-375). Ethnic differences can in the case of Mary and Lydia be seen as important in

relation to the crossing of ethnic boundaries between black and white Americans, in a similar manner to traditional theoretical lines where ethnicity exists through the differences negotiated in the meetings between people (e.g. Barth 1969, Cohen 1985). The meeting between the women served as a buffer between the intersections of difference allowing the women to join forces and collaborate despite differences of ethnicity and class, and instead meet at what appeared to be a gendered understanding, a bridge between borders of difference.

Lydia Nixon

Lydia Nixon was the main organizer of AIM, the community organizing association fighting for renovation of Eagle community. She was a white Falls City resident similar to most outside activists, but originally came from a state further West. She had become a community organizer because of her wish to help children protect their future, in a similar manner described as being "motherwork". She was a younger woman in her early 30's, slender with brown mid-length hair, and seemed in similarity to Harriet and Mary to be a winning person who not only bridged generational gaps, but age and gender gaps as well. An important difference however, is that she was a paid activist, as the organizing role was an occupation, whereas Harriet and Mary were volunteers.

Lydia's first meeting with Eagle was through the above mentioned incident where she got involved by getting AIM involved in the fight for a crosswalk connecting Eagle to the bus stop on the other side of Big Falls Road. This was the first victory gained in collaboration between AIM and Eagle. AIM decided to further engage itself in Eagle through the fight for the renovation of Eagle Recreational Center, which will be more thoroughly described in chapter six. Lydia appeared to be a well-liked person in Eagle, as she was able to persuade many Eagle residents to involve themselves in AIM, as well as connect Eagle as a neighborhood to the AIM organization, based on her initial collaboration with Mary Anderson.

Lydia seems to be a reflection of the mutual and historically grounded relationship between Falls City and Eagle. Her leadership represents an intersection between two communities coming together for a mutual cause. Lydia's leadership transcends differences of socioeconomic means between Eagle and Falls City, as well as ethnic relations. The differences are then negotiated and enable the women to move past their differences. This is

also suggestive of a characteristic of the charismatic leadership and even has some similarities to what we know as Big Men leadership in Melanesia (Sahlins 1963, in Seymore-Smith 1986:24). This similarity may be found in a link of attaining leadership based on personal and group prestige. This winning personality is what gives the Big Man authority, despite the lack of formal leadership (ibid). Lydia can therefore in a sense be seen as rising as a leader figure based on her popularity and personality being well-liked in Eagle and in Falls City.

"People depend on others to help them decide which experiences to forget and which to remember and what interpretation to place on experience. People develop a shared identity by identifying, exploring and agreeing on memories." (Thelen 1990:xii in Gregory 1998:13). The community constructed is based on the needs of Eagle as a neighborhood, which has been a historical type of need in the eyes of many citizens of Falls City and in Eagle itself. Through such a historical need for action, leaders like Lydia rise to the occasion as a gathering type of personality who get the inside and outside residents together as activists.

On the basis of her job, Lydia possessed influence beyond charisma, and seemed to possess many of the qualities of an organizational leader as described by Sanjek (1998:373). She involved herself in defining needs and then worked to get support from the AIM members of the different congregations for the cause. Her ability to form networks and connections between the neighborhoods, the congregations, and seemingly, with the county, was another indicator of her organizational abilities. Finally, she was great at gathering many supporters for the AIM cause, compared to for example the Partnership of Excellence (POE) described in the prior chapter, who struggled to meet local interests. Lydia and AIM were successful at spreading the word about rallies, meetings and projects, and getting both residents and non-residents involved. Lydia had an ability of building troops. Lydia's involvement was an organizational form of involvement, whereas other forms of community engagement in Eagle were more informal and aimed at the immediate wellbeing of Eagle's residents. Miss Anna seemed to be a representative for such an informal engagement.

Miss Anna

Anna Phillips ended the school year 2007/2008 by being awarded recognition by a local elementary school for her outstanding services to the community. Since her retirement 15

years ago, she has been a voluntary school bus safety officer for all the children from elementary school up to high school, in Eagle as well as two other communities. For the last fifteen years, she has gotten up at 5 in the morning to make sure the children from Eagle will get on the bus safely in the morning, and get off safely in the afternoon. Anna is another woman who seems to take charge in the community, by doing duties that won't necessarily be done without her efforts.

Anna described to me a type of intimate relationship between herself and the community in our conversations. All the children and many of the adults know her as Miss Anna. She told me she had worked for the government as a secretary until 1997, but what exactly her job position was I do not know. She lives alone in one of the townhouses, and is not related to the Eagles or Andersons. She had a husband up until a certain point, but she said that "He beat me up, so I kicked him out". She had several children and grandchildren, but when I asked her how many, her reply was "So many that I can't even count them anymore".

Her motives for being a volunteer bus guard in her seventies seemed to be both altruistic and somewhat self-fulfilling, at first indicating that the safety of the children was most important to her. When pressed, however, she admitted that the guard duty kept her busy and moving around as a retiree.

Miss Anna would repeat stories several times of how she would stop cars from driving too fast. She would then write their tag numbers down and report them to the police. She also had an unpleasant story of a man driving into the neighborhood trying to lure some of the children into his car, but whom she efficiently stopped by threatening to report him to the authorities. She told me that she felt like a mother to the children of the community. Sometimes she even claimed to feel like a grandmother as well. She referred to a few of the children as her grandchildren, but they later told me that she was not their biological grandmother, but rather their baby-sitter.

She would often complain about her volunteer work as well. She did not like getting up as early as five am, yet she had no intention of leaving her duties. A few perks possibly made the guard duty more pleasant. Miss Anna said she received clothes, gifts and food from the residents in the communities. Even more important to Miss Anna, however, was the respect she felt that she received. Miss Anna would emphasize to anyone who would listen that she

had the respect of all the children in the community. Even the boys hanging outside the center would acknowledge her and greeted her in the afternoons, which they did not do with many other adults. She also claimed to have the respect of the adults in the community, which may have been an interior motive of staying on the guard duty as well. Miss Anna in this sense may have been a type of bridging the generational gap in the community, speaking to and being friendly with many of the teenagers and young children of the community, as well as the adults. She was a very colorful person, and even though she came off as a bit eccentric at times, she did actually seem to enjoy the respect she claimed to have.

She may even have been a kind of gatekeeper for the community, outwards to the outside community of Falls City, constructive of the space Eagle comprised. She would stand at the entrance to the community every day in order to greet the school buses as they drove into the residence area. Many people of Falls City, who were familiar with Eagle as a neighborhood, but unfamiliar with its geographical area, would mention her as their association with the neighborhood. They would see her when they drove by in their cars, and associate her with the neighborhood. She was even nominated for an award by the police department, probably due to her reports of speeding drivers. In a way, she served as an informal tool for the police, as she protected public safety with her work.

Miss Anna's work for the children and the community seems to fit into the category of community work, which has been suggested to be African-American women's preferred type of activism. Community work is engagement on behalf of your group of people, with an underlying thought of fighting for the entire group's collective identity rather than fighting for individual rights (Hill-Collins 2006: 123-160). This seems to fit the image Miss Anna portrays of her own work. Even though she enjoyed the perks and benefits that the guard duty gave her, it was never the first thing she would mention about her job. Community work of this type has never been considered to be traditional activism in any conventional way, and has thus never been politicized by more traditional activists such as feminists, or by other African-American women who did not think of themselves as activists (Hill Collins 2006: 142). Anna never referred to herself as an activist either, so this seems to fit the informal and muted image as well. She realized that her work benefited the community, in the way that the children were safer in the mornings when getting in and out of the buses, and in a way, she guarded the future of the community with her work.

Miss Anna's attitude of nurturing the children, and also her references to being a mother or grandmother to the children, can also be considered to be a type of community work called "motherwork". "Motherwork" consists of a cluster of activities that encompass women's unpaid and paid reproductive labor within families, communities, kin networks, and informal and formal local economies (...) Some women choose to become the "mothers" of their community, while others are put into it" (Hill-Collins 2006: 131-132). This type of work has been viewed as non-political by Western feminists especially, because it seems to suppress the individual rights of women, and focuses rather on protecting the future of the group (of African-Americans) (2006:142) Here, however, it will here be argued that although "motherwork" may not be political in the traditional manner of wanting to create change in the community, it is nevertheless political in the sense of benefitting the community by increasing the safety and protecting the citizens. Miss Anna can be seen as a protagonist in the community, cooperating with the authorities, and using the means available to her. In her case, the means consist of the time available to her as a retiree, and the possibility of volunteering as a bus guard for the school district.

Miss Anna seemed to represent the overlapping relationships between the two different places, on what may be considered, the most basic level. Her bridge was of a different type, as she connected the outside world to Eagle. By her action as a volunteer bus guard, and her presence as a gatekeeper of Eagle, she signified the place, and reminded people of the neighborhood on a daily basis. She acted like a bridge between Eagle as a place and the outside world. She also stood in a "betwixt and between" position by standing guard at the gate of Eagle, and being a resident here, yet she also possessed the ability to report to the authorities. In a sense she had one foot in both worlds. She connected the neighborhood to the authorities by her informal relationship to the police. She possessed a certain power by putting on the volunteer guard vest and thereby "wearing" the ability to report the speeding drivers or conspicuous characters, in a different manner than other citizens. Drivers knew that she would not hesitate to report them, so they rarely did speed past her. Her leadership thus seems to be focused as a protective kind, where the children's safety is in center. Her leadership in a way represents the ability to reproduce community and place by safeguarding the children in the crucial moment they get on and off public transportation in the morning. Another community activist who focused on the children's wellbeing was Larhonda Potter.

The antagonist: Larhonda Potter

During a formal conversation, forty-seven year old Larhonda, a full-size, beautiful loudmouth woman was trying to summarize her feelings about possibly losing her job as an employee at the Recreational Center:

> (...) You just have to make due what you have. That's how I feel. I don't know. If I was the type of person that had a lot of money, if I didn't have to live from pay check to pay check I wouldn't know what to do. Because I've been struggling all my life, you know. Struggling with relationships, you know, I failed my relationship with my husband. I failed both of the relationships I've had in my life. You know, struggling with relationships, struggling with friends, struggling for living from pay-check to pay-check (...)

Larhonda seemed to have already started the process of self-reflection which she would, without a doubt, go through if she did lose her job as a center employee, which was a possibility she feared when a new management took over daily control of the Recreational Center in Eagle. As this team was fully staffed, Larhonda did not see herself fitting in under the new management anymore. That she went through such a self-reflection, and saw the quest to keep on to her work as a struggle, can be interpreted as a result of her already suffering much hardship in her life.

Larhonda had been a resident of Eagle for years. She had four sons, as well as four grandchildren, whom she raised in foster care, because her son was in and out of prison, and the mother of the children was "no good". She lived in one of the rent controlled townhouses with her mother and the grandchildren. She was divorced from her husband, and had no "male friend" at the time of fieldwork, something which seemed to bother Lydia a lot, as she reflects on in the above quote. Becoming pregnant in her teens, she had always had two jobs or more to support herself and her family. She never had a fulltime job though, and at the age of 47, she worked as a para-educator in the school system in the daytime and two hours, four days a week, at the Recreational Center in Eagle.

Larhondas involvement in the community was as an employee of the Recreational Center, which served as a gathering point for the children of the community. This makes her a type of "motherworker" in a similar manner to Miss Anna, though with an entirely different outlook on bringing in help from the outside community.

Larhonda seemed to represent an antagonistic community activist. As previously mentioned, she criticized the women in POE and their involvement in Eagle. She also criticized the work of other outside activists such as AIM and other county employees and their efforts at the Recreational Center in Eagle. As discussed in chapter four about community, she felt that these women did not possess knowledge of the community, a knowledge she seemed to feel was available to those residents who lived in Eagle and were there on an everyday basis.

Her views were somewhat supported by some of the other center employees, for example in agreeing that Lydia of AIM could be meddlesome at times. They accused her of wanting to take over control of the center, and expect chores of them. Still, such views were generally kept within the center. For the most part, the residents seemed to both care and appreciate the work of the activists and women from Falls City who were involved in the community work. It seems as though she and the women at the center attempted to draw a type of boundary between Eagle residents and Falls City residents. A deep knowledge of the place and the people in it could not be attained, unless you were a resident there.

Larhonda's story and self-presentation is important to understand the implications of county politics. Her voice can be said to represent the other side of community engagement, in other words, the critical voice. By this I mean that she seemed to review the occurrences and promises of change in the community in a negative light. Larhonda viewed herself as an involved individual in the county, despite her lack of presence at most AIM initiatives, her negative attitude towards most POE suggestions, as well as the experience she had as a county employee. As a long-term resident, she had witnessed promises of change at the center from the county at several occasions, but had yet to see those promises made by county politicians fulfilled. Most importantly perhaps is that she did not believe that the AIM victory of the unprecedented funding would result in renovation of the Recreational Center. She explained that the center had been promised renovations on several occasions throughout the years, and that she had given up hope on ever seeing this happen.

When I confronted Lydia with Larhonda's viewpoint, all she said was that "-There is really nothing I can do or say to make them [referring to employees at the recreational center] change their viewpoints". It seemed as though she was familiar with the negative attitude of the employees. Even though I saw her promote AIM the same way to Larhonda as to others, it seemed as though she relied on the support of other residents instead, such as Mary and the

young AIM leaders, who positively responded to her and acted for the cause. A hidden question here may be why Larhonda and others in the community did not respond positively to outside involvement. The answer may lie in Larhonda's views on the center renovation. Change is not going to happen. Processes at the community center took a long time to happen. A new director had been promised to the center since the departure of the last director a year and a half ago, and was still not hired upon my departure from Eagle. County regulations may therefore be viewed by the Eagle population as something which does not occur rapidly.

In some ways, Larhonda also represented the seemingly "muted" voices of Eagle, who could appear apathetic and disengaged in their community. She also seemed to represent the renters who were silent in the community debate. As a renter, it can be argued that you do not possess as much control of the situation as you do as a homeowner. Larhonda voiced an opinion of people finding the outside activists' engagement to be interfering in their daily affairs, and also as a misunderstood type of involvement. As Sanjek writes "Only a few will become active members of [block, tenant, co-op, and civic associations], but along with neighborly ties these are the residential frontlines in bridging ethnic and racial borders" (1998: 369). He does not mention why everybody will not get involved, but voices like Larhonda's help shed some light on the situation.

More important, perhaps, is that Larhonda represents the opinion of those dissatisfied with the outside engagements in the community. She seems to wish a type of closing from the outside, and let the neighborhood deal with their problems on their own. She would emphasize differences between Falls City and Eagle rather than bridge it. Since the community work as well as civic activism is often expressed as a need to be grounded at the level of grass root activism to stay in touch with the community (Sanjek 1998:166), it follows that every voice in the community deserves to be heard and paid attention to, as they may be understanding something about the community that the activists are not. Larhonda's hardship in life and her feelings about the community seemed to be reflected in her statements, and not without reason. Larhonda ended up losing her job at the center, which probably did not mitigate her feelings towards the county.

Final thoughts

The five women's life stories represent different aspects of female civic leadership in Eagle. They represent a wide range of activities, yet they are united by their care for and interest in

Eagle as a place. Community engagement, no matter what shape it arrives in, from organization to execution, from appraisal to criticism, shapes the community. When the majority of players are female this also seems to shape the community to a great extent. The women in and outside of Eagle created relationships and steered the direction for the work needed in the community. In line with what Sanjek predicted, female leadership seems to have become increasingly prevalent in Eagle. The women become increasingly visible as the community needs become greater and they work together to protect the future of the community. However, future collaboration must be based on the needs of the men – the other half of the resident population - as well. It is therefore important to gain an understanding at the ground level of what the critical voices are saying about what seems to work in the community engagement and what does not work. What is an analytical problem for anthropologists seems to be a practical problem in the real world, and should be addressed for the future strength of the community.

Chapter 6: Activism and Engagement in Eagle.

In this chapter I will describe the different organizations, already described here to a certain extent, more thoroughly, and mention a few community activities which are not very successful. I will also go beyond the bridging relationships described in this chapter and delve more deeply into the intersections of difference which sometimes converge smoothly and at other occasions seem to conflict between Eagle and Falls City activists.

It has been argued so far that place-making in Eagle to a great extent rests on foundations made by Eagle activists in the mid-twentieth century. In this final chapter, I will go beyond the leadership issue and look at some of the particular activities in contemporary Eagle. The different engagements will be described and analyzed according to the success rate the projects have had in Eagle. It seems that the most crucial foundational context for engagement in Eagle was the Civil Rights Movement. This foundation will be viewed as a key backdrop to the current activism and community work ongoing in Eagle today. Important as well are the connections and ties formed between Eagle residents and Falls City residents in the earlier bridging relationships described in chapter five. In this chapter, the categories of ethnicity, class and gender will be further analyzed as playing an important intersecting role as to whether and to what extent different engagements in Eagle succeed or not. Such status categorical differences between Eagle residents and Falls City residents are still prevalent and dominating in contemporary Eagle, and seem to determine interaction in the different activist settings.

Theoretical outline

It is possible to view place-making in Eagle as founded on the thought of freedom and emancipation following the liberation of slaves in the 1860s. Henry Eagle's emancipation led to the possibility of founding Eagle, which further may be associated with the ideal that freedom and protection of the individual's rights is part of the building block of the community. It is also possible to discuss the Emancipation Proclamation as inspired by the same liberal ideals which inspired the Declaration of Independence, and the humanistic science. In contemporary Eagle, such a foundation can be argued to inspire the community activities of today as they seem to aim at the protection of the free individual rights.

Collective efforts in Eagle consisted of successful attempts to bring about change in county policy, which began with the civil rights movement in the 1960's. Activism inspired by the civil rights movement is seen today in the efforts of community organizing in Eagle, and of constructs patterns of activism for residents of Eagle and Falls City. The civil rights model, described more thoroughly in chapter three, can be viewed as a crucial backdrop to what can be observed in contemporary Eagle activist engagement.

The boundaries of difference, where the inhabitants of Falls City and Eagle seem to meet each other, will receive an extended analysis in this chapter. The monographs from Queens (Sanjek 1998, Gregory 1998, Ricourt and Danta 2001) seem to be descriptive of the "melting pot" problem in New York and the U.S. in general. In New York, people of diverse ethnicities live together in an enclosed city space, and face neighborhood challenges related to these differences. Such meetings between the two ethnic groups of Eagle and Falls City seem to face similar challenges which are sometimes successfully solved and sometimes are unsuccessful.

Formal and informal political activities

In Eagle there seems to be three different levels of engagement, ranging from formal to para-political activities, as well as informal politics. Some of these involvements highlight the meeting between residents and non-residents, and emphasize the boundaries of ethnicity, class and gender. Such distinctions will be further analyzed as intersections of difference (Ortner 1998:10). These intersections seem to indicate who is involved in Eagle, who is not involved, and also, what the consequences of meetings and negotiations between activists are. The different levels of engagement are found in arenas for social action in Eagle.

In this chapter, I will look more deeply at AIM's endeavor to save the Recreational Center. AIM, which seems to me to be the most formal political engagement in Eagle, is a community organizing association. Political involvement in Eagle is described through a focus on negotiations between citizens and county politicians. "Politics refer to a diverse range of social practices through which people negotiate power relations." (Foucault 1983:221, in Gregory 1998:13) These citizens are fighting at a local or grass-root level, reflecting the struggle of determining who holds power. It seems as if the goal of Action in Maury County was to create specific change in the community by changing county politics.

Less formal is the Partnership of Excellence board, which consists of both professional and concerned women (and a few men) who get together on a monthly basis to discuss the welfare of Eagle community. This board can be viewed as a para-political activity. Para-political activities can be viewed as civic politics, which can include individual efforts in a neighborhood raised on a basis of "problems that are important to us" in the particular place (Sanjek 1998: 257), which I understand as being place-based efforts by residents in the place.

Para-political activities can also include participatory activities such as community boards, civic organizations and school boards, etc. (Sanjek 1998:375).This involvement may not necessarily be political in the sense of bureaucratic decision-making, but may still exercise some influence over legislative and budgetary processes. The Partnership board interest was the immediate welfare of children in Eagle, and it cooperated with the county's Recreational Department, which followed the legislative and budgetary decisions structuring and determining the Recreational Center's activities. Also, a few members pursued individual efforts for the neighborhood. However, the Partnership seemed to be the least successful arena for social change, as Eagle residents were not meaningfully involved in the board, compared to other arenas of community work. Non-residents seemed to direct the agendas of this group.

The least formal engagement seemed to be found in the many activities of the Recreational Center. Through this arena, it seemed like activism and engagement performed by the employees and volunteers was not based on political involvement. As with the Partnership of Excellence, the main focus seemed to be the immediate welfare of the Eagle residents, the children in particular. The women working there were concerned with creating a safe haven for the children of Eagle, rather than involving themselves in the bureaucratic processes of negotiating the terms of the recreational center's existence and structure. However, at the Recreational Center, a debate as to whether keep the Center an enclosed neighborhood space or to attempt to open it towards other county users was raging internally during the fieldwork period.

Action in Maury County

As we have seen, AIM is a community organizing association whose current program during the fieldwork period was the renovation of Eagle Recreational Center. Although there does not seem to be a collective definition to community organizing, there is an inherent understanding of "(…) mobilizing people to work together to solve a shared problem. It is

essentially a process in which people organize themselves to take charge or control of their situation and, in doing so, develop a sense of ownership of their community" (URL 3). In community organizing, leaders are designated, rather than emerging as natural leaders in the situation. However, the appointed leaders are often people who possess certain qualities similar to that of charismatic leaders discussed in chapter 5, as these individuals are often popular in their communities or possess public speaking talents.

An attitude of fairness arguably established by the civil rights movement seems to prevail in AIM. An ideology of peaceful resistance lies as a further backdrop of the foundation. The inequality between Falls City and Eagle is still prevalent, when geographical and socioeconomic features are compared. These differences were mentioned by leaders and organizers when they were speaking up for Eagle at rallies for the renovation of the Recreational Center. They spoke of the needs of the historical African-American housing communities and emphasized that their needs were stronger than those of Falls City. A fight against this injustice may be said to guide AIM's resistance towards the county decision to withdraw budget funds intended for renovation of Eagle Recreational Center. The perceived injustice also seemed to be communicated when comparing the Eagle Recreational Center with Falls City Recreational Center. Falls City Recreational Center was more fully equipped and a newer building than the Eagle Center, which seems to symbolize the imbalance of means available to the two places.

AIM seemed to be the organization in Eagle most directly involved in political activism. On May 15th, 2008, unprecedented funds of twenty million dollars were given for immediate renovation of the community centers in four historical African-American communities in Maury County, one of them being Eagle. At the straw vote, which is the informal vote on the county budget by the county council, a full funding for immediate renovation was unanimously adopted. AIM's members were ecstatic. The activists were inside the county council, and people were whispering excitedly and mouthing the words "Yes!" as they left to discuss the good news.

AIM had been fighting for the cause of the community centers for six months through peaceful rallying and protest activities, since the county withdrew the funds from the budget in January. The AIM organization's structure consisted of members from several congregations and communities of Maury County fighting for the immediate renovation of the

four recreational centers. The main organizer of AIM, Lydia Nixon was a highly educated woman who also had a personal interest in community politics, and so her interest gave her a basis for systematic structuring of community organizing.

One initial tool of pressure was to recruit county council member Robert Denkins to fight for the renovation together with AIM, as well as having him advocate the cause to the other council members. Denkins and a few other county council members then attended a big rally in Maury County in April, where they listened to the concerned residents and activists of Eagle speak about the needs of the recreational centers in question. Eagle resident Jeanie Hawk spoke about her upbringing in Eagle, and how the rebuilding of the houses and the eventual building of the Recreational Center was a turning point for Eagle resident's lives. Young leader Brianna Douglas spoke about the tiny gym, the broken toys and the limited time they could spend at the center due to restrictive opening hours. The politicians did not make any promises at the rally, and snuck out a back entrance avoiding contact with the activists at the rally. This angered AIM members, but also made them put more pressure on the other council members. With council member Denkins on their side, speaking their cause to the council, they still needed four more votes to get the majority of votes from the nine member county council. The members increased their pressure by sending emails to the individual county council members.

Including council member Denkins in their struggle was effective. All council members voted yes on the inclusion of the funds in the county budget. Denkins praised the efforts of AIM during the straw vote. The four centers ended up not only receiving seventeen million dollars as had been the previous suggestion in the budget, but three more millions, making the total twenty million dollars, which surprised most of the activists involved. AIM had successfully protected and negotiated the conditions of the community through their involvement.

AIM also arranged "teach-ins" at the different recreational centers, so that members and others could educate themselves on the needs of the centers. The AIM members walked into the centers and inspected all the rooms to see what faults and needs there were, and finally spoke of these together. This may have been a strategy enabling the members of AIM to address the council members with assertiveness as to what the needs of the recreational centers were. This method of the community defining its needs seems to be a direct approach of influencing the political decision-making process, as activists and residents were able to

speak directly to the council members about what should be repaired and upgraded at the centers.

AIM leaders were appointed. Two young girls and Larry Reynolds, the church director, had gone through leadership training and represented Eagle community at AIM rallies as spokespeople. Also, Jeanie Hawk and Mary Anderson were both asked to become leaders, as they were lifetime residents with a long history of engagement in the neighborhood. Being a leader was a volunteer task, whereas being an organizer such as Lydia was a paid job. However, as argued in the previous chapter, it seems as though the organizer Lydia was actually the true leader, as Lydia, through her charisma, did the delegation of tasks, gathered people, and also spoke at rallies.

To become a leader, the appointees went through training programs with an explicit agenda of educating spokespeople on behalf of the communities represented by AIM. These programs were workshops where the appointed leaders were thought effective leadership strategies and were enabled to lead AIM campaigns. Many leaders came from the communities of the underserved recreational centers, but also from religious congregations. These leaders were coached by AIM to speak about the causes of action, and to gather support from the population at large.

At the AIM rallies, Larry Reynolds was the Master of Ceremonies, and would spark up the crowd by reciting Obama campaign slogans and using rhetoric easily understood by all members of the crowd, such as "He dissed[13] us" (speaking of the county council leader who withdrew the budget money) and "We will not accept…business as usual" (referring to excuses made by the county politicians regarding the budget). Larry Reynolds was, as mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the few male leaders representing Eagle. His status as a male church employee seemed to make him a valuable asset to the AIM's agenda, as he became a spokesperson for the men of the community. He was well known as the Sunday school teacher in Eagle, as well as the church choir leader.

The leaders were educated in the organization's ideal of taking the power back to the people. The younger leaders were given the task of speaking directly to the politicians or speaking of

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[13] 'Dissed' is slang for disrespected

their experiences at the community center. For example, at one rally Brianna Douglas looked sharply at county council member Robert Denkins and said: "Excuse me, Mr. Council Member, but can you look me straight in the eyes when you're talking to me?" Outspoken and non-hesitant, Brianna let Denkins know that she did not respect the hierarchy he tried to create by not looking at her when speaking to her. Even though it was a tongue-in-cheek comment, there was a sense of seriousness to the comment as well.

As an organization, AIMs values reflect a type of Civil Rights model for its ways of protest. Citizen's rights were the highest priority and also quality of life issues, affecting the local neighborhoods of Maury County. At rallies, it was pointed out that the activists were not fighting for a cause, because of the violent connotations, but they were rather leading the cause towards a solution. A rhetorical language was used, with an emphasize on justice lying in the power of people, and that the number of participants helps build this type of power, as well as their ability to say for themselves what worked for their community. There were also frequent references to Martin Luther King under the AIM rallies.

This seemed to be a winning approach, as the AIM organization was successful in getting the residents of Eagle involved in their cause. At the biggest rally for the renovation of the center, there were 1050 people present from the different Action in Maury County congregations and communities, and the biggest section of the audience was from Eagle[14]. Lydia and the appointed spokespeople of Eagle had been successful at promoting the rally and gathering support for the cause of renovation. This seems to indicate that their message went through to the people of Eagle, perhaps based upon the winning influence of the charismatic spokespeople.

Most importantly however, was that Action in Maury County stood out as a successful political activist organization in Eagle, with its strong supportive base and well-organized activities. It was an arena of social change which united residents and non-residents in the cause of the community, and the organization was able to downplay the intersections of difference between the members, which could otherwise have become problematic. An important aspect of the success of the organization is probably the appointed leaders representing the communities.

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[14] In fact, when tallying of Eagle residents was attempted at the rally, it was quickly given up because there was "too many people of us" as the person in charge of counting put it.

The Partnership of Excellence.

POE seemed to be an organization where differences between outsider activists and residents were more apparent than in the case of AIM. Some Falls City residents became involved in Eagle through POE. This board, as already mentioned in chapter one and four, consisted of almost exclusively Falls City residents, who would gather at Eagle recreational center to discuss the well-being of Eagle and how they could mentor Eagle students. It was not very successful though, as most of the causes discussed by POE were never followed through, or were in fact met with indifference by Eagle residents.

The reasons for the POE members' engagement were varied. The women of POE were caring and nurturing, and felt that the best way to help the community was to protect the children. Their sole focus was activities aimed at protecting the children's future and ensuring them education and work. Many of the women of POE were probably influenced or inspired by the Save Our Eagles (SOS) movement. A few of the members had been in SOS, or were old enough to be familiar with the specific details of the story. Some of the women expressed opinions closely related to a model of civil rights activism, where the necessity of staying involved in the neighborhood came from the neighborhood being poor, similarly to the SOS activists. A few of the women were good friends with the older women of the neighborhood.

Eagle residents were seldom present at POE meetings. Mary was present at a couple of meetings, while Jeanie Hawk (her cousin) and Miss Anna were present once. Residents were urged to be more involved in the board, and the need to do so was expressed by Mary and the other board members. Yet, at the meetings I attended, from January through June, no other residents did.

POE was a female arena, similar to many other arenas of social change in Eagle. Every meeting would begin the same way. The director of the county department, Western Region of Recreation, a male, would start the meeting by summing up ongoing events affecting the Recreational Center in some manner, and then he would leave about half an hour into the meeting. He would often be the bearer of bad news decided on county level, which affected the Recreational Center. On several occasions, his news were related to a further delay in the hiring process of a new Center director or different budget cuts or delays affecting the

upgrades of different facilities in the center. His messages would be highly criticized by the members, exclaiming that the community was neglected and that it was a disgrace that such delays occurred. The director's position seemed in some ways to be similar to the "muted" men of Eagle discussed in the previous chapter. His role seemed to be more of a messenger than a participant in the board, as he would do the news brief and then leave. He was also a minority at the POE table, being the only male. Besides him, I remember two other men being present at one meeting each throughout the six month period of fieldwork.

Following his departure, the women would discuss the causes and concerns they had about the community. Because most of the women were employed in school administration, the discussions were usually school related or Community Center related. The women would generally discuss school performance by the neighborhood children, and try to develop activities which could improve their motivation to learn, and could be arranged at the center. Most of the ideas the women had, were aimed at getting the children into the center, which to them was a goal in itself. One major topic at POE meetings was the low attendance at the tutoring program offered at the Recreational Center. Different ideas, such as educational games were proposed as to what could get the children to come into center during the tutoring period. Other suggestions were also focused on getting the children into the center and involved with educational activities.

The biggest project POE tried to implement during the first half of 2008 was a combined job and school fair. At the first meeting in January, frustration over students' lack of attendance at the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)[15] were discussed. Coaching sessions was voiced by some of the school administrators. This led to a discussion about whether such a focus on college was necessary, and that maybe there should be a greater focus on more practical vocations. This is how the idea for a job fair was born, where teenagers and adults of the community could learn about different types of vocational training such as plumbing, carpenter's schooling, iron work, etc.

A committee was formed, responsible for contacting organizations or businesses that might be possibly interested in giving their support. Institutions such as schools and college-bound programs became a part of the program, and they planned to have representatives at the fair.

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[15] Standardized test for college admission in the U.S. The test is usually taken in the 11th grade.

Information on how to complete general education development programs[16] were to be given, as well as online schooling programs. The fair was planned to be arranged in May. Also, it was important for the board members to spread the word to Eagle residents, but attempts to do so never occurred.

As many other projects planned by POE, the job fair did not proceed as planned. First, the plan was for the job fair to be part of an already planned community day in August. This was thought to attract as many people as possible from Eagle, ensuring a great attendance by Eagle residents.

Then there was a shift in management at the Recreational Center. The so-called Teen Team came in and took over all planned activities for the center in June. The team was to be responsible for all activities carried out at the Recreational Center, thus generating a shift in activities now focused more towards older children. The Teen Team group was hired by the county, and consisted of almost thirty employees from the county recreational department. This new initiative was probably motivated by a wish to get more teenagers and children to use the center, and to keep it open for the general public. The Teen Team promised that they would handle the job fair as a part of their responsibilities, and also started controlling the POE board and the agenda to be discussed at meeting. After this takeover, the job fair was not mentioned again and it was eventually cancelled.

This was the most prominent case of a POE planned activity, never to be executed. It was not the only one however. Other activities such as poetry evenings, photo clubs, board game events and such, were other enthusiastic suggestions by the board members, never carried out.

The Recreational Center's activities

The Recreational Center employed women of the neighborhood. Through their work there, these women were able to promote what they saw as the common good of the community, with a focus on offering diverse recreational activities for residents. Successful activities popular among children of Eagle were often planned by the Recreational Center employees.

Many of the women who worked at the center saw themselves as engaged in their community. Laquisha Henderson, for example, was the only non-resident to work there, but she was

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[16] General Education Developments testing (G.E.D) are alternative tests for individuals who have not previously earned their high school diploma. The tests lead to an equivalent diploma upon completion.

actively engaged in getting the children of Eagle to engage themselves in their neighborhood. "Do it for your community!" she shouted friendly at the children at one occasion, when she was trying to promote an upcoming AIM rally, and attempted to encourage the children to promote the rally to their family and friends as well. Most of the center employees avidly promoted community events and center happenings. Thus, the center was an excellent arena for the employees to show their neighborhood engagement.

The women were all county employees who were in charge of overseeing the activities at the Recreational Center. They also planned and executed activities and took the children on different fieldtrips, for example during spring break when the children had a week off from school, but the parents did not necessarily have time off. The employees were all caring and nurturing individuals, who seemed deeply committed to the children of Eagle.

The purpose of the center was to offer a variety of recreational activities ranging from sports to art classes, and as with other such centers, was meant to bring residents from the whole county into Eagle. After the 1970's it seemed to occupy a natural place in Eagle, functioning as a gathering place for residents and visitors from other African-American enclaves in the district. In the 1980's and 1990's, things started to change. Eagle went from being a "hotspot" to an alleged "drug haven". There were rumors of marijuana and cocaine dealing in Eagle. This led to increased police activity, initiation of drug awareness programs and a decrease in visitors to the community. Whether these rumors were true or not is uncertain, even though police statistics indicate that it was not the case, as there were few drug arrests made in the 1980's and 1990's. What is certain is that the center was becoming more of an enclosed space, used by residents only.

During the fieldwork, the Recreational Center offered few activities, and these seemed to attract Eagle residents only. Among the activities offered was an after-school program with tutoring help, an art class, a basketball class, a sports program, a health class and a mentoring program for pre-teens. All of these activities were aimed at children. For the adults, there were a few exercise classes available. Users of the center were almost exclusively Eagle residents[17]. At the time the center did not have a director, nor had there been one for about a year and a half. The hiring process was delayed several times due to reasons such as hiring

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[17] There were a few Falls City children who came to the center to play basketball during the basketball class. They were the only exceptions to the common view of no outside visitors.

freezes, bureaucratic processes, non-qualified candidates and so forth. Furthermore, the physical conditions of the center, unchanged since the 1970's called for complete renovation of the center, a demand increasing among residents and outside activists alike.

All of the employees[18] at the center except Laquisha Henderson were Eagle residents. Many of them had worked at the center for a decade or more, and started working as teenagers when the center was newly opened. Because Eagle is a tight knit family community most of the employees were related to many of the children who used the center. Larhonda Potter, for example, was grandmother to some of the children, as well as extended cousin to several others. These familiar bonds had been known to dominate and define the way things were managed at the center. Laquisha said that many of the children did not listen to her and told her that she could not tell them to do anything, because she was not family. This was referred to as a problem by Maury County's Recreational Department.

The employees were for the most part involved in arranging or overseeing the different activities, such as the tutoring, art class and exercise classes. The women were also involved in arranging different activities for the community at large, such as community day, cookouts in the summer, summer camp, activist rallies for AIM, community board meetings and also rental parties. The focus of the activities was based upon what the children of Eagle wanted. The different activities did nothing to indicate that the center was anything but a facility for Eagle residents.

One consequence of the new management by the Teen Team seemed to be an attempt to steer away from neighborhood centered activities. Several employees were fired or relocated after the new management took over. The employees had the choice of working at another community center in the district or losing their jobs. This meant that employees, who had worked at the center for up to a decade or more, now would have to travel far away to the widely spread other community centers of the district, or lose one of their part-time income sources. Most of the employees chose to relocate, as the financial situation in the U.S. was getting more difficult, with the early impacts of the financial crisis.

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[18] They were six employees who were employed on a part-time basis during the fieldwork period. Not all of these were employed throughout the entire time-period.

Analysis of the structuring of activities in Eagle

"Civic politics [begins] with actions by individuals who, on their own, approached others about "problems that are important to us" (Sanjek 1998:257). In other words, collective problem solving often begins at an individual level. In Eagle, many collective efforts seemed to pool together based on individual efforts for the community. These individual efforts seemed to be a common denominator between the community activities already described, yet the differences were more prevalent.

The various organizational activities differed in success in Eagle. One reason AIM was so successful may have been because its organizers expressed a goal of putting power in the hands of the citizen. They had a leading rule of "never doing to others, what people can do for themselves". An implicit belief that people could take charge of their own lives seemed to lie behind this ideology. This ideology was also visible in the drive of the organization, with a focus on gathering as many followers of the cause as possible, and also encouraging people to speak up for themselves.

The rhetoric of AIM was probably appealing to the involved residents of Eagle. By reminding people of what had been done in the past by SOS and through peaceful resistance, the task of achieving the desired results probably seemed easier because it had already been done. The message delivered by AIM leaders and organizers, who appealed to community and common efforts, may have worked especially well with Eagle's African-American residents, who had been brought up with an agenda of protecting their rights as African-Americans, learned through the activities of the Civil Rights Movement.

Another reason for AIM's success may have been that there seemed to be a difference between frontstage and backstage leadership (Goffmann 1959:96-98, my translation). There seemed to be a difference between the organization's outwards representational leadership, and the structural leadership. The spokespeople, or leaders, of AIM were the front stage leaders or the façade representing the organization to the outside world. Some of the leaders were already established people of status in the neighborhood, and had contributed individually to Eagle's wellbeing in the past, such as Mary Anderson (even if she was not officially a leader). These people were pooled together for the common good, reflecting a well respected leadership to the outside. The organizers, on the other hand, were the backstage leaders, making sure that the leaders spoke about the agenda of AIM, and acted according to

the organization's guidelines. The organizers acknowledged that their cause perhaps resonated stronger if the spokespersons on behalf of the causes were from the communities with the needs, and so they made this the basis for leadership training.

One reason POE was unsuccessful in executing their planned activities may have been that the board was too Falls City dominated. Also, the planned activities were never brought outside the realm of POE's sphere, making it seem like POE was too insider based. The ideas of the members usually remained at the idea level. Neither was the suggestions presented to the residents of the community, never giving the residents an opportunity to voice their opinion on matters discussed in the partnership's forum. The official formalization of POE's ideas remained muted in an official setting. The ideas were thus only discussed in what appeared to be the private setting of the POE sphere.

Differing interests of outside activists seemed to affect the Recreational Center activities to a certain extent, and the results may have appeared chaotic and without real purpose to the users of the center, predominantly the children of Eagle. This may have been a reason why the residents acted with indifference towards the activity attempts of the partnership. On the one hand, there are women arguing that the community needs more activities centered towards Eagle. The discussion on whether the center needed to reflect more openness towards the county may have been confusing to residents who were unfamiliar with such an agenda. It may also have been a reason why the activities of the board stayed at the informal level. With the lack of face-to-face communication with the residents, there was no real way of implementing many of the ideas or suggestions, making them useful to the community, or perhaps exercising influence on local decision-making.

The Community Center was in many ways a tool for the AIM members and POE to utilize. The arena possessed a gathering ability which could be used successfully as it reached out to the residents who used the center. AIM used the center as a base for meetings and also to spread the word in the neighborhood about their work, while POE used the center for their meetings and also attempted to execute most of their activities here. Maury County was, however, the main force in control at the center, and structured the leadership and the activities there. Some of the activities were very popular, such as the art classes and the sports programs, while other activities were not, such as the tutoring program and exercise classes, where only a few attended regularly.

Some of the differences in how successful the arenas were at gathering people may have been determined in the meetings between residents and non-residents, or intersections of difference. These differences seemed to illuminate what tools for success for community work in Eagle worked or not.

Intersections of difference.

As seen in the discussion on female leaders in chapter five, gender was one determinant in bridging relationships across categorical differences of ethnicity and class in Eagle. These relationships sometimes seemed structuring for interactions in the arena of social action in Eagle. Sometimes these interactions showed that differences between outside and inside activists were emphasized, other times these differences were concealed and unspoken of.

It seems that apparent differences between wealthy and poorer members in AIM were hidden, or not spoken of, in activist settings. Intersections of difference converged smoothly based on the common interests of AIM and Eagle of fighting for the same cause. Yet it also seems like the intersections can be separated at a second glance. In the case of displaying or downplaying ethnic differences, the organization seemed to appeal to such differences in an ad hoc manner. "Only in so far as cultural differences are perceived as being important, and are made socially relevant, do social relationships have an ethnic element" (Hylland-Eriksen 1993:12 in Harper 2002:183). Ethnic elements could thus be related to as unimportant, yet the differences were played out when necessary for the cause. By collectively organizing the four historical African-American enclaves of Maury County with great needs, there were no doubts as to which were the ethnic groups with needs in the county. "These communities are underserved" was the message the activists sent the politicians. What is implied in the message is that the communities were underserved because they were black communities.

It seems as though ethnicity was used as a card to play out when needed, but held back at other times. It is precisely this fluidity of the concept which is so interesting. Talking about race was not a subject of everyday conversation, yet when the goal was to emphasize differences it became a part of the political structure. The concept of ethnicity was prevalent, as it was a common denominator between all the different communities fighting for renovated recreational centers, yet the message was concealed in clever rhetoric.

In the case of POE it seems like intersections of difference were mostly unspoken of, yet it seems like the board members' conversation clearly indicated that class and ethnicity were supposed barriers for Eagle youth in succeeding. Ethnicity or race can be seen as identity creating relations, where differences within groups and between groups are negotiated through processes and meetings between groups and is located in the boundaries of social differences (Barth 1969:15). Ethnicity as a boundary seemed to cut through some meetings between activists from Eagle and Falls City, even if it was mostly unspoken of and ignored in everyday situations. Racial thinking can arguably be viewed as a differential factor which is sometimes downplayed, yet it seemed to matter a lot in many of the meetings between residents from the two neighborhoods. This seems to be illustrated by many of the meetings between the women of the partnership and the residents of Eagle.

For POE members, the dropout rates from high school[19] seemed to confirm a view of Eagle students' school performance. This may have lead to the support system being created by the board members as one where class differences stood in the way of Eagle students succeeding after high school. The different intersections of class and ethnicity here seem to meet in an uncomfortable, rubbing manner indicated by the women's discussions on the non-present Eagle youth. Rarely mentioning ethnicity, the ideas of the partnership seemed to be fumed by an expectation that Eagle students would act upon statistically proven behavior, and drop out of high school. The solution was thus, as shown by the job fair idea, to place the teenagers in

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[19] Despite the high school principal who founded the Partnership, announcing that all high school seniors (12th grade) were graduating the school year of 2007/2008, a viewpoint among the Partnership's members seemed to be that students from Eagle had a higher drop-out rate from high school than from the rest of Falls City. The only statistics available showed that 7 % of the students were African-Americans (URL 4).

blue-collar occupations. This may not have been a bad idea, but again a lack of communication existed between the board and the community, disabling the idea's execution.

The difficulties of planning and executing activities indicated that the connection between the board and the community was lacking. Because they were not able to get the message of their planned activities out to the neighborhood, the differences between the women of the board and the poor black high school dropouts on the fence stood out very clearly. Class may be related to these circumstances, making the relationship between the women of POE and the residents of Eagle difficult to establish in terms of cooperative relations. Being a black low-income earning woman seems to connote a different life experience compared to being a white, upper middle class woman (e.g. Carby 1982:212-235). These women have completely different everyday experiences, which may affect community work. This may further affect how the recipients of the message of activism will react. Perhaps many Eagle residents did not feel that the Partnership members could relate to their everyday life.

Another type of inequality seems to be found in the experience of being a young, poor black man in Eagle as compared to being black and white females. The experiences of the individuals in the ethnic group can be thought to influence who is involved, who is not involved and why. Leading lives as American black females or black males can be viewed as different experiences related to the degree of discrimination they experience in society. Black males may feel that they are stereotyped as criminals, and black females are stereotyped as single struggling mothers (Hill Collins 2006:25). This stereotyping may lead to apathy among the stigmatized individuals in the group, and further emphasize a sense of hopelessness they may feel in the struggles in everyday life. Such lack of hope may also have contributed to causing young Eagle men not to get involved in their community.

One interface of conflict between inside and outside interests at the center today, is the county's attempts to keep a certain control of the center as a county facility, rather than as a neighborhood spot. This was a view which contrasted the activity planning of the Partnership that focused solely on the residents of Eagle and their supposed needs, indicating that the focus needed to be on Eagle.

The struggle for space can also bring back the discussion to the power of place in Eagle (Casey 1996), as described in chapter four on community. Residents, and especially those

who worked at the recreational center, seemed to view the center as an enclosed place, or a neighborhood arena of embodied knowledge for Eagle residents. On the other hand, county employees at the recreational center and county regulations seem to work towards opening the enclosed space of the center. Outside activists may be seen as intruders who violate the local familiarity, or a type of local knowledge shared by Eagle residents, when these outsiders bring their activities which aim to alter the familiar space of the center. It may be seen as a warning sign from Eagle residents that they wish to control their own environment on their own terms.

Final thoughts.

In this chapter the effects of place-making has been analyzed at a practical level of contemporary activism in Eagle today. The different types of engagement found in AIM, POE and the Recreational Center were varied, but all possessed a focus on the wellbeing of the place. A common denominator seemed to be an inspiration drawn from the Civil Rights Movement, which still influences current activities in Eagle today. Also, I have attempted to show that differences between Eagle and Falls City residents still structure the activism, but perhaps differently, as some of the attempts are successful, while others are not.

The levels of the formality in the activities vary, as AIM seemed to be most formal while the recreational activities at the center seemed to be least formal. AIM's activities are focused on change-making processes at the local political level, and can be described as the most formal level of organized activities in the community. POE is a less formal arena for social change as a para-political activity, as the ideas discussed in this particular forum would follow county guidelines, but to not usually reach an execution level. The Recreational Center activities are the least formal activities, as they were not aimed at creating political change, but rather occur as a result of decisions made at the local political level.

In all the activities, there seemed to be a meeting of different interests through the intersections of difference to be taken into consideration. In the case of AIM, these differences were more or less smoothly concealed and brought to light when needed. The official leadership, or role of spokespeople, was carried by people of status in Eagle, so AIM's struggle was represented as a neighborhood cause. POE's activities seemed to employ more colliding differences, as the board consisted of mostly Falls City women who did not seem to meet the interests of Eagle residents. POE seemed to be the least successful activity focused on the specific wellbeing of Eagle, as residents for the most part were not present at the meetings and indifferent to the ideas planned by the board. The differences between

residents and non-residents of Eagle were illuminated in the case of POE. At the Recreational Center, the negotiations of difference seem to be found in the debate between the county and the residents as to how the center could be opened up more towards Falls City residents. The power struggle in the case of the center seemed to illustrate the county's desire to uphold county regulations and keep the center an open space, versus the residents' desire to keep the activities neighborhood based and enclosed.

The focus in this chapter has been collective efforts, yet it is important to keep in mind the base which is the individual efforts pooling together for the common good in the neighborhood. The individual efforts may not always be successful, but they are however always based upon an ideal of altruism.

Chapter 7: Conclusion.

It has been interesting to write this thesis, not least because the point of departure was different from the point of arrival. I assumed that I would be studying an enclosed neighborhood, and I took time in realizing the many influences by non-residents which in reality were part of the place making process. As my informants provided me with insight into this greater and more complicated field of place-making, I was fascinated by the different nuances, and also by seeing how the field determines itself.

As I realized that the thesis would be as much about outside activists as about activists in Eagle, complicated identity-making processes started coming into play. The differences between being from Eagle and being from Falls City were transparent at first glance, yet when I talked to people in and outside of Eagle, it was clear that belonging to a place was determined by many forces.

Community in Eagle encompasses the physical place of the neighborhood as the concrete markers of the buildings of Eagle located in the townhouses, the Recreational Center as well as Eagle AME Zion Church. The history of Eagle was in a sense a physical symbol of the neighborhood as an original black settlement in Maury County. Also, residents of Eagle, particularly older residents seemed to attach a belonging to the community based upon the buildings as many of the older residents had been a part of the process of rebuilding the community, and seeing the townhouses become renovated, in a sense revitalizing the

neighborhood. The buildings of Eagle seemed to determine the neighborhoods place in Falls City by its unique history.

Community activism seems to be another way of isolating who is attached to place, and who is not. Older residents of Eagle had been involved in the activism of Save Our Eagles in the 1960's, and so preservation of place was part of their belonging to the neighborhood. However, a research outcome seems to be that community activism is not something all residents will engage in. I was struck by the seeming apathy among most of the residents in Eagle, and their lack of interest in engagement in their own surroundings. I questioned why some residents from Falls City would seem more engaged in the community than its own residents.

Falls City residents began their involvement in Eagle in the 1960's with the Save Our Eagles foundation. Before this, the community was neglected by the neighborhood, and it was rapidly deteriorating. Yet, with the success of the SOS movement, the foundation for a collaborative relationship was laid between the two places. Outside activists such county employees, old activists from Save Our Eagles and Action in Maury County (AIM) are today in the community on a regular basis, fighting for the preservation of the community in their own way.

Many residents of Eagle seemed to meet the outside involvement with either disinterest or annoyance. I saw the boys outside the center meet the suggestions made by women of the Partnership of Excellence with polite shrugs, or just ignore the people talking to them on several occasions. I noticed how residents would normally not attend community meetings, with the exception of a few AIM rallies. Their silent manners seemed to speak for themselves, yet some residents would offer me insight into why many residents did not attend the different organized activities. One reason for the seeming apathy may be a thought of the outside activists not knowing what was going on in the neighborhood, and so they could not relate to the experience of being from Eagle.

Still, there were occasions where the residents did seem connected to place, for example the Action in Maury county rallies, where a majority of Eagle residents were present. This may speak positively for the organization, or maybe for the cause itself. Renovation of the community center was a hope of many in the neighborhood, and so they would get involved.

Yet, the organizing skills of Lydia and the other AIM leaders probably also contributed to people's engagement, making the residents believe that they needed to stand up for themselves or no one else would.

Also important to the thesis is that women were leaders and organizers in the place. What Gregory found in New York (1998) was not the case in Eagle. Women took charge, and created a space of activism by their different causes. Some of them were very successful, others were not. The ones who were successful were the ones who distributed the power among the residents, such as Lydia Nixon of Action in Maury County, or built bridging relationships between themselves and the outside community, such as Harriet Heigl and Mary Anderson. Even when their suggestions were unpopular among some residents, for example when Harriet was accused of stealing land from the residents, these women had the support of many of the residents. Other activists, such as the Partnership of Excellence, were well-meaning, but did not seem to reach out to the residents in the same manner.

The reasons for the engagement versus non-engagement in community may be partially explained through the neighborhood history, as well as structures of power which makes it harder, yet not impossible to implement change in place. Maury County exercises the right to create and perform legislative and budgetary regulations throughout the county, and often these regulations have affected Eagle neighborhood in unwelcome ways which are difficult to change and to negotiate for residents who do not necessarily understand the legislative and budgetary processes, and therefore feel inept to try and create change themselves. That structures of inequality between the two places of Falls City and Eagle existed seems difficult to deny, based on the differences between the places, including the socioeconomic ones. This may be why well educated outside residents who possess cultural capital were able to take charge in Eagle and lead causes of grass-root activism aimed at creating change at the local level.

I think that future research on grass root activism and local politics can benefit from more in depth ground level research. Such research may pick up on the multiple nuances, leading to the reasons why people do or do not involve themselves in changing and affecting the place they live in. Such research may enlighten the situation of place-making to a greater degree, which also tells a story about the American context.

I believe that it is important to keep in mind that the context studied in this fieldwork was a minority population within a majority population. This may not be unique, but the socioeconomic differences between the two places of Falls City and Eagle seem to illuminate the context of being a poor minority in the U.S. Eagle residents were not, however, among the poorest African-Americans, as there were only a few residents on welfare in the neighborhood. Still, the contrast between the tiny townhouses and the grand mansions of Falls City speak a little part of the story of the socioeconomic differences between the two places. What these differences do not speak of are the nuances of belonging to a place and not belonging. These differences are uncovered to a certain extent here, but are far too numerous and complicated to be unveiled in one attempt.

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Appendix I: **List of abbreviations used in the thesis**

AIM	Action in Maury County
AME Zion	African Methodist Episcopalian Zion Church
POE	Partnership of Excellence
SOS	Save Our Eagles

Appendix I: **List of abbreviations used in the thesis**

Appendix II: Main informants

Mary Anderson *73 years old. Eagle resident. Neighborhood activist affiliated with Save Our Eagles (SOS), Action in Maury County (AIM), Partnership of Excellence (POE), Eagle Community Board and Eagle AME Zion Church.*

Harriet Heigl *75 years old. Resident of Falls City. Founder of Save Our Eagles (SOS)*

Laquisha Henderson *27 years old. Maury County resident. Functioning director and employee at the Recreational Center.*

Lydia Nixon *32 years old. Main organizer in Action in Maury County (AIM)*

Anna Phillips *("Miss Anna") Circa 70 years old. Neighborhood activist. Volunteer bus guard.*

Larhonda Potter *47 years old. Resident of Eagle. Employee at Eagle Recreational Center.*

Larry Reynolds *35-40 years of age. AIM leader. Director of Christian Education at Eagle AME Zion Church.*