Shared Heritage: An Anthropological Theory and Methodology for Assessing, Enhancing, and Communicating a Future-oriented Social Ethic of Heritage Protection

Angela M Labrador, University of Massachusetts Amherst
SHARED HERITAGE:
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY AND METHODOLOGY FOR
ASSESSING, ENHANCING, AND COMMUNICATING A FUTURE-
ORIENTED SOCIAL ETHIC OF HERITAGE PROTECTION

A Dissertation Presented

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2013

Anthropology
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My work was inspired, informed, and supported by an exceptional network of individuals who deserve much recognition. I offer my thanks to all of you!

To my dissertation chair, Elizabeth Chilton, who was with me every step of the way, offering encouragement and practical advice while finding opportunities to further challenge my skills. From Hadley to Eleuthera and back again (and again!), Elizabeth has been a caring and committed mentor whose success in developing the Center for Heritage & Society (CHS) has been nothing less than inspiring.

To my dissertation committee members for your patience and guidance. I was enriched by the many courses and conversations I’ve had with each of you. To David Glassberg for welcoming an anthropologist into his public history seminars. To Krista Harper for providing me with a “fertile” testing ground for my digital methodologies. And to Martin, my advisor throughout my graduate career, for his ever-thoughtful mentorship, which is distinctive in his selfless promotion of his students and his piercing, and often unrepeatable, bits of wisdom that leave my brain buzzing for days. From the heights of Enchanted Rock to the streets of Dublin, thank you for the adventures!

My dissertation research was made possible by two generous grants. The Hadley Photovoice project was funded by a Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant and the One Eleuthera Web Portal through a research assistantship with the Center for Heritage & Society, which was supported by the Sand Dollar Fund.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the unnamed informants who graciously gave their time and trusted me with their thoughts and visions. In Hadley, I thank the members of the Selectboard, Historical Commission, Community Preservation Commission,
Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, Assessor’s Office, Town Clerk, and Parks & Recreation Department for their accessibility. To the Senior Center, Goodwin Memorial Library, Parks & Recreation, North Star Academy, and Porter-Phelps-Huntington Museum for hosting events and connecting me to community members. Special thanks to Claire Carlson, Marla Miller, Janice Stone, and Susan Lisk. I especially recognize the late Alexandra Dawson’s tenacity and activist spirit. A huge thank you to Town Administrator David Nixon, who generously served as guide and counsel and whose door was always open. Lastly, to the photographers I was honored to work with: Eli Catlin, Kelly Erwin, India Meyer, Emily Remer, Jesse Shotland, Janice Stone, and Debbie Windoloski—your creativity made this project magical! In Eleuthera, I thank the many inspirational people and organizations who comprise One Eleuthera, especially Michele Johnson, Gacintha Gordon, and Shaun Ingraham. I also thank my CHS travel companions, Elizabeth Chilton, Neil Silberman, Whitney Battle-Baptiste, Elizabeth Brabec, and Pedro Soto for helping me to remain composed in the face of travel hiccups.

To the many other UMass community members who ushered me through graduate school including Mitch Mulholland, Neil Silberman, and Alan Swedlund. To Lisa Wegiel and Shelley Bellor for their behind-the-scenes work. To my colleagues and friends, especially our summer student writing group: Liz Braun, Heidi Bauer-Clapp, Juan Florencia, Valerie Joseph, Sophia Kalo, Boone Shear, and Christopher Sweetapple. To Linda Ziegenbein and our Whitmore coffees. To my dear friends, Siobhan Hart and Katie Kirakosian, for our experiences of archaeological ethics at the trowel’s edge and during our adventures abroad. To Christopher Sweetapple, Quentin Lewis, and Juan Florencia—because of you I can now play the bass, albeit still rather slowly and not
necessarily on beat. A very special thank you to Valerie Joseph, who shared in the ups and downs of dissertating: from lunches over the wobbly tables at Earth Foods to the emails she sent from Carriacou, I couldn’t have been blessed with a more compassionate, supportive, and perceptive friend.

To my past mentors, especially David Reed, Joan Delplato, Barbara Resnik, Fran Mascia-Lees and Christopher Lindner, your influences in information technology, art history, law, design, anthropology, and archaeology are all represented in this work. Barbara, I send you this color, the darkness of Chauvet, Christie’s color of memory.

I am especially grateful for the guidance and support of Neil Silberman, whose friendly intellectual sparring pushed me to develop my research beyond where I could have gone alone. I shudder to think what my long distance bill would be if Skype wasn’t free considering the many hours I’ve spent talking his ear off. From discussing the nitty gritty of my research to brainstorming new cases for community-based heritage praxis, Neil has always been enthusiastically receptive and constructively critical. It has been an absolute honor to be developing this work further with him and Gustavo Araoz.

Finally, to my family for believing in me without fail, especially my mother for being my buoy as I moved progressively northeast. My nostalgia is further fed by the very real comforts that she has always provided on and between my trips home. Most of all, to Jacob for always supporting me, making me laugh, and keeping everything in perspective. It’s an understatement to say I couldn’t have accomplished this without you.

Although inspired by many, any errors in this work are my full responsibility.
ABSTRACT

SHARED HERITAGE:
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY AND METHODOLOGY FOR
ASSESSING, ENHANCING, AND COMMUNICATING A FUTURE-
ORIENTED SOCIAL ETHIC OF HERITAGE PROTECTION

FEBRUARY 2013

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A common narrative in the late twentieth–early twenty-first centuries is that
historic rural landscapes and cultural practices are in danger of disappearing in the face of
modern development pressures. However, efforts to preserve rural landscapes have
dichotomized natural and cultural resources and tended to “freeze” these resources in
time. They have essentialized the character of both “rural” and “developed” and ignored
the dynamic natural and cultural processes that produce them. In this dissertation I outline
an agenda for critical and applied heritage research that reframes heritage as a
transformative social practice in order to move beyond the hegemonic treatment of
heritage as the objects of cultural property. I propose an anthropological theory of shared
heritage: a culturally mediated ethical practice that references the past in order to
intervene in alienating processes of the present to secure a recognizable future for
practitioners and prospective beneficiaries. More specifically, I develop (1) an ethical
framework for shared heritage practice that values social tolerance and future security,
(2) a model for the critical assessment of a heritage protection strategy’s potential for
supporting a shared heritage ethic, and (3) a methodology for scholars, heritage advocates, and community leaders to realistically enact shared heritage. I document two case studies of rural residents implementing heritage protection strategies in the face of suburban and tourism development in Hadley, Massachusetts, and Eleuthera, Bahamas, respectively. I engage with these case studies at three distinct levels: (1) locating and critiquing the potential for a shared heritage ethics in the attempts to preserve private agricultural land in Hadley; (2) developing and applying a community-based heritage inventory assessment in Hadley; and (3) modeling an internet-based communications system for supporting shared heritage development in Eleuthera. Taken together, this dissertation offers an anthropological model for documenting and analyzing the discursive and material productions of cultural identities and landscapes inherent in heritage resource protection and a set of methods that heritage professionals and practitioners can apply to cultivate shared heritage ethics.
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CHAPTER 1

AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF SHARED HERITAGE

“There is no there there”¹

A common narrative in the late twentieth–early twenty-first centuries is that historic rural landscapes and cultural practices are in danger of disappearing in the face of modern development pressures. However, this narrative may be at least partially based on an ideological construct that wrongly objectifies such heritage. Efforts to preserve rural landscapes have dichotomized natural and cultural resources and tended to “freeze” these resources in time. They have essentialized the character of both “rural” and “developed” and ignored the dynamic natural and cultural processes that produce them. Rather than approach heritage as discrete sets of resources to be managed, in this dissertation I call for publicly-engaged and place-based models for cultural and natural heritage protection as a means to build social cohesion and sustainable socio-economic relations. In doing so, I propose an anthropological theory of shared heritage: a culturally mediated ethical practice that references the past in order to intervene in alienating processes of the present to secure a recognizable future for practitioners and prospective beneficiaries.

Hegemonic understandings of heritage and property have challenged scholars and advocates to acknowledge and support the social ethic that lies at the heart of shared heritage. In this dissertation I outline an agenda for critical and applied heritage research that reframes heritage as a transformative social practice (rather than the monumental relics of civilization) and challenges prevailing understandings of the private property

¹ Subheading quotes Gertrude Stein’s famous declaration upon visiting her childhood home as an adult (Stein 1993:298 [1937]).
regime. This agenda will explore alternative social relations sustained through property relations. My research follows a seismic shift in the social sciences and humanities to understand more reflexively how such research is embedded in wider sociopolitical contexts and how the power dynamic has often privileged the researchers’ interests over their research communities. Some contemporary scholars and community advocates have sought to destabilize expert knowledge, urging the development of community-driven, participatory models of heritage protection, which respect the substance of heritage identities and the diversity of heritage values (Ashworth et al. 2007; Graham and Howard 2008; Labadi and Long 2010; Silverman and Ruggles 2008; Smith 2006). Thus, I do not limit my research goals to the abstract theorization of shared heritage; I also concentrate on developing practicable methods to engage community members and scholars in shared heritage development.

I have a deep personal interest in this research problem, not only as an anthropologist and heritage “professional,” but also as a witness to my rural hometown’s transformations under the dual pressures of suburban and tourism development. I grew up in a northeastern Ohio township, which is nestled between the infamous urban metropolis of Cleveland, the idyllic countryside of Amish farms, and a 100-year old seasonal tourism enclave containing two major amusement parks. As a child, the city seemed far away from our town’s open fields, dairy barns, and 4-H shows. The amusement parks were thriving destinations that supported many local businesses, including my family’s. Today, the city has steadily expanded to our town’s borders, marked by its characteristic suburban sprawl of McMansions and Big Box stores. The shiny happy landscape of touristic amusement has since crumbled, leaving behind a new open “field” of empty
parking lots, collapsing roller coasters, and vacant storefronts. These may well be clichéd transformations that evoke my own clichéd, nostalgic response of sadness and wistfulness for what once was. But, this common narrative deeply affects many residents of previously “undeveloped” towns and rural landscapes and speaks to the importance of our childhood memories and attachments to certain places (Chawla 1992).

I acknowledge and even cherish my romantic nostalgia, but I am careful not to tread into the territory of what Boym (2002:49) terms “restorative nostalgia” in which the past becomes a “perfect snapshot.” Rather, I try to maintain a “reflective nostalgia” (Boym 2002) in which I consider my memories and related emotions as emblematic of a larger, meta-narrative concerning the nature of cultural change and the significance of heritage. Furthermore, I consciously fight the urge to adopt an ironic, detached, or even cynical attitude toward the future of modern development in rural areas. Instead, I seek to emulate the romantic idealism of Gibson-Graham’s (2008) “ethics of thinking,” which calls for scholars to create a new, hopeful ontology of agency, change, and potentiality in the field of community development.

In the subsequent chapters I document two case studies of rural residents implementing heritage protection strategies in the face of suburban and tourism development in Hadley, Massachusetts, and Eleuthera, Bahamas, respectively. I engage with these case studies at three distinct levels: (1) locating and critiquing the potential for a shared heritage ethics in the attempts to preserve private agricultural land in Hadley; (2) developing and applying a community-based heritage inventory assessment in Hadley; and (3) modeling an online content and constituent management system for supporting shared heritage development in Eleuthera. Taken together, this dissertation offers an
anthropological model for documenting and analyzing the discursive and material productions of cultural identities and landscapes inherent in heritage resource protection and a set of methods that heritage professionals and practitioners can apply to cultivate shared heritage.

**Evolving Concepts of Heritage**

**Defining Heritage**

Heritage confounds definition (Graham et al. 2000; Harvey 2001, 2008; Lowenthal 1985). For some, heritage may bring to mind treasured relics of Western civilization such as Gothic cathedrals, Classical Greek architecture, Italian Renaissance paintings, or ancient Egyptian pyramids. Additionally, heritage is often associated with seemingly timeless national icons, pastimes, and monuments such as the British flag, baseball, or the Eiffel Tower. For others, heritage may be connected to more personal concepts of familial inheritance, patrimony, and tradition. The vastness of semiotic ground that “heritage” covers, along with its nebulous nature, brings to mind U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stewart’s famous test for identifying pornography: “I shall not…attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced…and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it” (378 U.S. 184 1964). A typical person may not be able to define heritage concisely or intelligibly, but give them a camera, and they’ll be shooting pictures of “heritage” in no time.

This “I know it when I see it” nature of heritage is due to its symbolic qualities (Peirce 1998). That is, heritage doesn’t simply represent something else or carry an inherent meaning; rather, it indicates a particularly meaningful relationship between its
referrer and referent (Peirce 1998): namely, one of inherited belonging. For example, the Liberty Bell is an icon, which to many U.S. citizens, symbolizes American freedom. When framed as heritage, the Liberty Bell indexes an historical sense of identity founded in freedom that Americans share. There is nothing inherently American about a bell, nor are there freedom-like qualities that bells possess. Rather, the particular artifact of the Liberty Bell has been invested with significance not shared by other bells through a historical sharing of narratives that associate the bell, the American people, and the ideal of freedom in a distinctive way (and which is not an entirely subconscious process).

Heritage is a measure of significance; objects identified as heritage carry this meaning and are dependent upon individuals to continue to value and share that meaning with others. This is what Araoz (2009a, 2011) means when he refers to heritage as “vessels of value” or when Gracia (2003) identifies cultural tradition as “new wine in old skins.” The Liberty Bell, as a heritage object, depends upon the continued use of its indexical qualities; without these investments of significance, the Liberty Bell will revert to being just a bell.

Although heritage may be difficult to define, its capacity to index a historical sense of group identity and belonging makes it a highly effective tool for cultural groups to deploy when demarcating external boundaries and internal hierarchies (Ashworth et al. 2007; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). Heritage is an excellent way to objectify cultural entities and to order the world’s complex social system of interrelated processes into Wolf’s (2010:6) famous “global pool hall in which the [social] entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls.” For instance, the development of national heritage gave substance to and ideologically legitimated the arbitrary geographical
groupings of people during the rise of nation-states (Anderson 1991; Ashworth et al. 2007; Graham et al. 2000; Silberman 1990; Trigger 1989). The creation and deployment of national heritage re-ordered ethnic groups into new cultural groups while minimizing internal diversity and emphasizing external difference.

Because of this capacity, heritage can be confused with the broader and related concept of culture. The differences between the two concepts are nuanced, inviting an abstract epistemological discussion along similar lines of explicating the differences between history and social memory. In this dissertation, I distinguish heritage from culture by its requirement to index or symbolize a *shared historical sense of belonging*; that is, heritage must reference the past in some way and distinctively denote a group’s shared future. Understood in this way, heritage is an element of cultural process. Furthermore, while the concept of heritage was popularized and professionalized in the modern era, I agree with Harvey’s (2001) assessment that heritage has long been a part of human cultural experience.

**Theorizing Heritage as Cultural Process**

In recent decades, anthropologists, historians, and cultural studies scholars have critiqued the hegemony of an “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006), which over-values the monumental material culture of nation-states, the importance of preserving “original fabric,” and the experts’ role in presenting heritage to the public (Alanen and Melnick 2000; Araoz 2009b; Ashworth et al. 2007; Bouse 1996; Labadi 2005; Morgan et al. 2010; Mitchell 2008; Waterton et al. 2006). The authorized heritage discourse inscribes “The Past” as an objectively knowable realm, often under threat from the elements of time and the hands of the non-initiated (Smith 2006). Preserving the relics of
the past for posterity (e.g., “Saving the Past for the Future”) has been the profession of expert caretakers trained in material conservation, archaeology, architecture, historic preservation, museum studies, Classics, and similar disciplines since the birth of the nation-state and its attendant archival institutions (Nora 1989).

However, a new wave of scholars, many trained in these same disciplines and influenced by postmodern, poststructuralist, and postprocessual theories, have questioned the validity of the authorized heritage discourse and have offered an alternative lens of theorizing heritage as practice, rather than as object. I contribute to this emerging body of interdisciplinary literature, which theorizes heritage as a discursive process that concerns cultural identity in the present in reference to the past (Assmann and Czaplicka 1995; Graham et al. 2000; Harvey 2001; Smith 2006; Urry 1990; Weiss 2007). This process is contextually tied to specific places and historic moments (Chawla 1992; Glassberg 2001; Groth and Bressi 1997; Marcus 1992; Petzet 2009; Tilley 2006; Tuan 1979; Turgeon 2009). Scholars have shifted attention away from the traditional focus of monumental artifacts and original fabric toward the creative cultural production and existential relations humans make with others and the environment at the heart of heritage (Malpas 2008). Additionally, some have outlined how the objectification of heritage threatens to further alienate communities and entrench power relations, stressing the importance of practitioners over professionals (Brockington et al. 2008; Dicks 1999; Gulbrandsen and Holland 2001; Harvey 2001; Jacoby 2001; Morgan et al. 2006; Steinberg 1994; Walbert 2002; West 2006). Thus, heritage protection is being reassessed and imagined as an active form of community development and civic engagement and in ways that acknowledge the interdependencies of natural and cultural resources and tangible and
intangible elements (Alanen and Melnick 2000; Brown et al. 2005; Carlarne 2006; Corsane et al. 2009; Melnick 2000; Mitchell and Buggey 2000). Viewed through this lens, the velvet rope and glass case are no longer esteemed symbols or metaphors of heritage protection.

That is not to say that a new model has clearly replaced traditional heritage preservation strategies. In fact, the re-theorization of heritage as a dynamic component of cultural life has inhibited the adoption of a single solution to heritage safeguarding and presentation. Examples range from the competitive inscription of heritage destinations and “brands” via the World Heritage List (Cleere 2011; Labadi 2005) to experimental forms of community consciousness-raising at sites of conscience (Layne 2008; Sevcenko 2010). Today, the heritage industry is booming, and the need to assess these protection strategies to inform continuing efforts to safeguard heritage is perhaps more important than ever as communities discover the economic incentives to develop their heritage as commodities. A particularly ironic challenge is that heritage safeguarding seems even more important once communities learn to view their heritage as heritage. That is, heritage protection programs can and often do transform heritage resources into objects primed for economic development and exploitation, which in turn makes their safeguarding yet more imperative (e.g. Brockington et al. 2008; Labadi 2008; Silberman 2007, 2013; Wilson 2009).

**Theoretical Framework of Shared Heritage**

In theorizing heritage as a social process, I am not as concerned with what heritage should be or should look like, but how we should practice heritage. Similarly, I am hesitant to distinguish between “practicing heritage” and “protecting heritage” since
this leads to the objectification of heritage and an implied and misleading distinction between those who *have* heritage (typically the ethnic “other”) and those who *save* heritage (typically the heritage professional). Moreover, if the ethical goal of shared heritage is to practice heritage in ways that essentially protect heritage (as social process), reifying such a semantic distinction hinders this thesis and my attempts to “reframe” the hegemonic ontology of the authorized heritage discourse (Gibson-Graham 2006, 2008; Smith 2006). Rather, there are many modes of practicing heritage; for instance, a Navajo drummer practices heritage through his performances and sharing his craft with others, which sustains the measure of significance his community identifies in the drumming as being historically Navajo. Likewise, a museum curator practices heritage by commemorating Navajo drums in an exhibit that legitimates this historical narrative of shared identity. The two practices are not equal (and indeed can serve also to exoticize, marginalize, or essentialize the targeted heritage), but they are practices within a range of contemporary action. However, for the sake of semantic clarity, I tend to use “practice” and “protect” in slightly different ways, denoting different positions on this continuum of heritage practice. When I refer to practicing heritage or heritage practitioners, I refer to a less self-conscious maintenance of heritage values as continually created culture, typically by “insiders,” and more in keeping of the definition of heritage within the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2003). When I refer to heritage protection, I imply a more self-conscious (i.e. recognizing heritage as *heritage*) intervention or revival of heritage significance by heritage insiders and outsiders, which
is often, but not necessarily marked by objectivist rhetoric regarding authenticity. Ideally, the two concepts merge into a reflexive ethical practice.

In this dissertation I develop a social theory of heritage practice into an ethical framework of “shared heritage” (Natsheh et al. 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d; 2008e, 2008f; Ya’ari 2010). I understand shared heritage as a creative cultural strategy that anticipates the future while fostering an ethos of coexistence. Central to this framework is my recognition of two performative aspects of heritage: (1) its capability to intervene in or perpetuate alienating conditions of modernity; and (2) its capacity to unite and divide communities—to instill love and hatred. When approaching the question of how we should practice heritage, I start by making a case for the synchronous human need for heritage as being the fundamental basis of our ethics, rather than singularly focusing on the substance of heritage. In the following sections, I unpack these two features further: the anticipatory strategy of heritage as a means to intervene in alienation and the complications of a moral imperative for community coexistence.

**Heritage, Alienation, and Ontological Security**

The proliferation of heritage discourse in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries marks the modernist anxiety over a perceived loss of control over one’s environment, social relations, and identity, which I associate with Marxist and post-Marxist conceptualizations of alienation (Fromm 1961:47; Marx 1983:131–146 [1844], 1990:163–177, 716 [1867]; Ollman 1971). This concept has been theorized in a variety of ways: scholars of collective memory have observed the alienation process as resulting in a form of collective amnesia (e.g. Berman 1982, Huysen 1995; Jacoby 1975, Terdiman 1993, Yerushalmi 1982 as cited in Olick and Robbins 1998) or cultural forgetting (e.g.
Brockmeier 2002; Connerton 2009; Ricoeur 2006; Turgeon 2009), wherein subjects no longer relate historical events to their own lives or engage in nostalgic yearnings for romanticized pasts (Boym 2002). Scholars who approach the concept from a spatial dimension refer to the phenomenon as displacement or placelessness, wherein increasingly mobile citizens of global societies are challenged to form and maintain place attachments (Glassberg 2001; Malpas 2008; Tuan 1980). Recently, a group of Australian psychologists (Albrecht et al. 2007) has theorized this in the form of a new mental illness, “solastalgia,” a “psychoterratic” cousin of nostalgia, which presents as a form of anxiety caused by massive, unexpected changes to one’s environmental landscape.

I build upon this body of literature by exploring the interrelationships between social behavior, cultural knowledge, space, and time at the heart of alienation. At its most basic level, I understand alienation as the experience of a temporal discontinuity with regard to an expected dominion or range of action. When conscious, the experience of alienation is of a rupture with past expectations of future agency within one’s world. In other words, the unanticipated change to one’s physical surroundings, material culture, or social relations interferes with people’s familiar strategy for managing such change.

Some individuals anticipate and intervene in the potentially alienating side effects of their social conditions and ensuing cultural change by engaging in heritage, by which I mean the active “investment” of significance individuals make in a vast range of tangible and intangible resources, cultural practices, and landscapes through which they identify a shared temporal continuity. By engaging with their heritage (e.g. through creation, commemoration, celebration, communication, etc.), social actors establish a sense of control discursively and materially by bridging perceived or expected temporal ruptures
between past, present, and future (Gracia 2003; Grenville 2007; Lowenthal 1975). By framing specific cultural practices and values as inherited traditions that they are obligated to pass to future generations, participants create a sense of routinized constancy that relieves anxiety about the uncertainty of the future (Giddens 1990:98; Grenville 2007; Hawkins and Maurer 2011; Padgett 2007). Historically, heritage preservation has been treated as the solution to the effects of alienation. However, I propose that it is both a symptom of and coping strategy for the same process (Labrador 2011a). Rather than propose heritage protection as a panacea, I ask: What are the common interests in heritage protection? How are they served? And for whom?

The preservation of the objects of heritage is a self-referential technology of anticipation that marks a heightened sense of anxiety toward alienation and a perceived failing of heritage-as-practice. This is akin to Williams’ (1973:120) assertion that “A working country is hardly ever a landscape.” When the people are not alienated from their land, the need for the ontological category of “landscape” is unnecessary since the meaning of landscape connotes “separation and observation” (Williams 1973:120). When the heritage process is effectively producing what Giddens (1990) terms “ontological security” the need to objectify and discuss it as such lessens. Thus, when communities begin discussing their cultural and natural heritage as heritage, I posit that alienation has occurred and is anticipated.

My conceptualization of heritage contributes to the emerging body of interdisciplinary heritage literature that theorizes heritage as a social process that concerns cultural identity in the present in reference to the past (Graham et al. 2000; Harvey 2001; Smith 2006; Urry 1990) and that is contextually tied to specific places and
historic moments (Chawla 1992; Glassberg 2001; Groth 1997; Marcus 1992; Tuan 1980; Turgeon 2009). Contemporary heritage scholars (Bollmer 2011; Harvey 2001; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Labadi 2010; Lowenthal 1998; Mitchell 2008; Prosper 2007; Smith 2006) have honed a critique of the hegemonic discourse of heritage as object-oriented, backwards-looking, and focused on the built environment, and have offered a substitute theory of heritage-as-practice, which embraces those aspects of cultural knowledge and production that are transmitted through time and space. Anthropologists, environmental historians, geographers, and cultural theorists have made important contributions to the critique of dominant heritage discourse, outlining how the objectification of heritage threatens to further alienate communities and entrench power relations (e.g. Brockington 2002; Dicks 1999; Gulbrandsen and Holland 2001; Harvey 2001; Jacoby 2003; Morgan et al. 2006; Steinberg 2003; Walbert 2002; West 2006). While the old approach bounds heritage objects in space and time, heritage-as-practice attempts a more relational and dynamic view, but with this comes a paradox. In order to make sense as heritage, memory communities must maintain temporal linkages with the past to preserve a sense of identity over time, but because cultural practices and natural processes are transformative, heritage and heritage landscapes are also changing over time. Thus, we find ourselves in the midst of an exciting paradigm shift—rather than thinking about how heritage and cultural landscapes can be preserved, we are considering how communities’ abilities to practice heritage and inscribe landscapes can be protected in ways that allow for both continuity and change (Araoz 2009b).
My research moves beyond filling a gap in the anthropological literature on heritage. In shifting the research focus away from heritage objects toward heritage as a social practice that mediates cultural identity, materiality, and social relations, I contribute to a theory of heritage as a transformative action that is directed toward the future while referencing the past and recognizing the interdependencies between natural and cultural resources. The past-focus of heritage narratives has obfuscated the future-oriented goals of heritage practice. I refocus attention on these goals and their material and cultural effects. I join other scholars (e.g. Araoz 2011; Brockington et al. 2008; Gulbrandsen and Holland 2001; Holtorf 2012; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Jacoby 2003; Smith 2006; Steinberg 2003; Turgeon 2009; West 2006) who have been changing the field’s guiding question from whether heritage protection successfully “salvages” or “preserves” threatened resources to: How does heritage protection produce new meanings, landscapes, and social relations? And how are heritage resources and their associated communities transformed in this process? In this dissertation, I take these theoretical developments one step further by outlining practical methods that heritage practitioners, including government officials, private practitioners, academic professionals, and community organizers can adapt and apply for their own needs.

Communities and Commons: Tragedy or Opportunity?

The model of shared heritage that I develop in this dissertation relies upon two problematic terms: community and commons. Just as Smith (2006) identified an “authorized heritage discourse” that constitutes a narrow and hegemonic understanding of heritage, I acknowledge that dominant understandings of “community” and “commons” may undermine the ethical goal of shared heritage, if not make it untenable or illogical.
Therefore, I explicitly engage with these terms to destabilize their meanings and to invite an openness about how shared heritage can be a medium for experimenting with alternative forms of community and commons.

“Community” has become a buzzword that conjures a romantic nostalgia for a pre-modern past that never was (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Creed 2006a; Joseph 2002; Waterton and Smith 2010). Creed (2006a) comprehensively outlines the genealogy of this nostalgia, tracing it to evolutionary theories of social development wherein “community” became synonymous with pre-modern peasant societies and today serves as “a cosmopolitan replacement for a lost rural idyll” (2006a:23). The term has come to signify a lost past, one that is absent from present modernity, and one that we must pursue to have a better future—without literally going back to our peasant roots (Creed 2006a:25–26; Waterton and Smith 2010:6). As the nostalgic object of desire, the “traditional” character of the community is made ever more exotic, reifying its binary opposition to modernity (Joseph 2002:xxxii). It has been suggested that the increasing absence of (or threat to) that “traditional” character in modern life has ironically spawned an explosion of “traditional” community rhetoric (Gibson-Graham 2006:122; Waterton and Smith 2010:6–7).

Yet Waterton and Smith (2010) contend that the trope of community and community engagement has become an unreflexive solution to social problems rather than a methodological problem. More troubling, they charge that the objectification of “community” in heritage discourse “has rendered communities, as much as their heritage, as subject to management and preservation” (Waterton and Smith 2010:11; emphasis in original). Hart (2011) outlines three typical community-engaged heritage models that fall
short of their political goal of empowering community members and their relationships to their heritage: “single stakeholder,” “top-down,” and “marginalizing multivocal.” A better alternative may be to treat “community” as a political process rather than an object of study or engagement (Crooke 2010; Hart 2011). Furthermore, the goal of shared heritage is not to build consensus around a single heritage narrative, but to encourage an ethical framework that values the synchronous need for many heritages and a critical awareness of the dangerous uses of heritage.

I turn to the commons as a potential model for such a framework. The commons refers to a complex property system in which multiple stakeholders share an interest in sustaining a targeted resource (Bollier 2001:2). Common ownership includes a spectrum of resource management strategies that are neither solely Lockean (i.e. liberal private property ownership) nor state-managed socialist property ownership (Agrawal 2003:244). Stakeholders entrust each other with securing the future coexistence of their common interest in the property asset and must collectively manage their individual stakes. This framework maps well to my conceptualization of shared heritage ethics, which prioritizes the sustainability of heritage [significance] and the synchronicity of heritage practice.

Unfortunately, the dominant attitude toward the commons in the United States remains one of cynicism, codified by Hardin’s (1968) article, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” which claimed that any common pool resource would inevitably be over-exploited due to man’s natural instinct toward self-interest and self-preservation. This powerful narrative of liberal private property ownership seems to course through much of American politics, especially in rural areas. However, two discursive openings give hope to successfully and seriously wielding the commons as a pragmatic model. First, in the
realm of public policy, environmentalists have successfully argued that common property management of natural and renewable resources is more efficient and economical than purely market-based or state bureaucratic management (Agrawal 2003:246). Second, in an oral history project that I conducted (Labrador 2011a), I found that citizens in one rural New England town discussed liberal concepts of individualism and personal freedom in ways that revealed and emphasized interdependencies within their social networks, suggesting that although rural residents may value private property rights, they also recognize a broader social context in which family and neighbors share a common interest.

These openings in the contemporary hegemony of property rights invite experimentation with alternative arrangements of property arrangements and exploitation of the recent shift in moral philosophies of property ownership—away from the moral rights of individuals toward corporate ownership that assumes its own risk (Gershon 2011; Hirsch 2010; Raymond and Fairfax 2002). A spate of experiments in community-managed environmental resources and community economies is cited by Agrawal and Gibson (1999) and Gibson-Graham (2006), respectively. Rural America is host to a variety of these experiments including farmers markets, community gardens and coops, common meadows and fisheries, community-supported agriculture programs, and public-private partnerships for agricultural development. I argue that such experiments constitute a new iteration of the commons and offer exciting opportunities to constitute community through an ethical framework of shared heritage modeled on the commons.

Heritage protection strategies are part of a historic lineage of legal logic concerning the organization of social relations around material and immaterial resources.
Recent legal scholarship (Carlane 2006; Harding 2009; Mahoney 2002) has explored how these strategies influence policies and jurisprudence in the United States, and a timely interdisciplinary study by Fairfax et al. (2005) traces this history with land conservation for environmental purposes and its current impacts on land tenure. Recent case studies within anthropology have begun to critique how such policies impact citizens’ environmental activism (e.g. Gulbrandsen and Holland 2001; Shoreman and Haenn 2009). However, this research has not considered cultural heritage resources in the same light, nor has it theorized the feedback loop between heritage protection, land tenure, and cultural identities within communities seeking to “preserve” their lifeways and landscapes.

I advance research about the social ethos of property regimes by suggesting that private land conservation is creating an iteration of the commons within the American private property regime and, thus, an exciting opening in the ontology of private property in America. On one hand, I refute Hardin’s (1968) model of “the tragedy of the commons” by proposing that a property ethic may sustain shared rights and responsibilities toward common-pool resources within fee simple (i.e. absolute) landownership. I build upon scholarship that suggests that commons are not antithetical to Anglo common law (e.g. Baviskar 2008; Bollier 2001; Donahue 2001, 2004; Ostrom 1990) and that political agents employ a range of strategies to negotiate alternative social relations within hegemonic systems (e.g. Gibson-Graham 2008). Rather than ask whether land conservation and its attendant political discourse is doomed within private property regimes, I reframe the questions to: What variation in social relationships have individuals negotiated within the private property system? Do agricultural conservation
programs serve to protect the cultural practices that produce and inscribe the targeted
cultural landscapes? Does private land conservation allow for the dynamics of cultural
change and diversity of cultural values that serve an engaged heritage protection model
that values social cohesion?

**Research Goals and Case Studies**

**Objectives and Research Questions**

In this dissertation I develop (1) an ethical framework for shared heritage practice
that values social tolerance and future security, (2) a model for the critical assessment of
a heritage protection strategy’s potential for supporting a shared heritage ethic, and (3) a
methodology for scholars, heritage advocates, and community leaders to enact shared
heritage on a realistic scale. To do so, I draw upon two case studies of rural communities
engaged in heritage protection: (1) a state-run agricultural land conservation program in
Hadley, Massachusetts; and (2) a grassroots coalition for community development in
Eleuthera, Bahamas. Hadley offers an example of a specific heritage protection strategy
that has been in progress for 28 years within an actively agrarian community that is
experiencing the pressures of suburban development. I use the Hadley case study to
assess the potential for shared heritage within the popular private land conservation
movement. Eleuthera presents a fledgling, island-wide initiative to organize heritage
protection in the face of tourism development pressures on a relatively undeveloped
Caribbean island. I use Eleuthera as a test bed for experimenting with digital tools for
organizational capacity-building to support shared heritage on a larger scale. Both share
in a similar struggle to plan for development in ways that bring economic opportunities
while maintaining their rural identities and their landscapes’ rural character.
Central to this dissertation is my theorization of heritage as a social process and a call for publicly-engaged and place-based approaches to heritage protection organized around the social ethic I refer to as shared heritage. In framing a shared heritage ethic, I shift the research agenda from the question “what is heritage” (or its more insidious relative, what is authentic about this particular heritage) to “how should we practice heritage?” What is the common interest in heritage practice and protection? What are the many values that associated communities hold with regard to their heritage? What shared responsibilities do community members assume when practicing heritage? What decision-making strategies regarding the future sustainability of their heritage do communities employ? How are conflicting values or expectations mediated?

In calling for public engagement, I identify in my own research ethic the need to foreground community knowledge and the importance of taking an active part in heritage protection strategies. However, “community” is a loaded term and there is no single, knowable “public.” Therefore, I remain observant of the following questions: how is community constituted through heritage practice? What are the boundaries of affiliation? What are the benefits and costs of affiliation?

In valuing place-based models of heritage protection, in which local knowledge, context, and issues are foregrounded, I acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and that shared heritage manifests in various permutations. More specifically, I favor the recognition of local distinctiveness in heritage practice and protection strategies. However, I also acknowledge that spirit of place operates at multiple scales; for instance, diasporic communities may not be physically local to a place to which they feel strong associations. Perhaps heritage resembles an ecological system in which, for instance,
Finally, I challenge traditional binaries that have structured heritage discourse and alienated heritage, namely nature/culture and public/private. In this dissertation I ontologically reframe these binaries by presuming their mutual constitution. In doing so, I find common ground for advocates who have traditionally been distinct if not at odds, such as historic preservationists, nature conservationists, and economic developers. Additionally, I identify a more nuanced array of civic rights and responsibilities and accountability frameworks.

Cultural Landscape Protection in Rural New England

In my first case study, sited in rural Massachusetts, I explore the relationships among cultural values, conservation practices, and the landscapes and social relations inscribed therein. Agricultural land conservation is a fertile site to theorize how cultural landscape protection can contribute to social cohesion and sustainable ecologies: agrarian land tenure challenges the conventional binary of nature/culture that has divided heritage resource protection strategies. The protection of agricultural land provokes advocates to consider how to protect working, cultural landscapes rather than preserving a pristine “nature” or frozen-in-time “history” (Alanen and Melnick 2000).

In the United States over the past thirty-five years, states, counties, and municipalities have developed agricultural land protection programs, which depend upon a complex web of cooperation among landowners, governments, and private land trusts to purchase development rights on farmland (Sokolow and Zurbrugg 2003). Although U.S. property law has traditionally challenged historic preservationists and environmental
conservationists in securing targeted properties, recently, private land conservation has surged. According to National Land Trust statistics, the rate of such conservation triples every five years (Aldrich and Wyerman 2005).

The preferred and fastest growing strategy for agricultural land protection in the United States is the negotiation of conservation easements with private landowners (Bernstein and Mitchell 2005), which can be a powerful, legal means of community intervention on behalf of heritage resources. Although easements have been used for at least 400 years under Anglo common law, conservation easements represent a significant departure from precedent (Harding 2009). Traditionally, property law has incorporated temporal limitations on rightholders to restrict future interests in property and support a free market among the living (Harding 2009). However, conservation easements are permanent, granting a perpetual right of restriction to the holder, which is maintained even if the parcel of land changes hands. Landowners must be provided with a persuasive incentive to voluntarily convey a perpetual easement. An array of tax incentives and purchase programs have arisen; yet, some research indicates that landowners are motivated by a strong sense of place and intergenerational obligation when conveying a perpetual easement (Bernstein and Mitchell 2005). I query this further and explore how private land conservation can enable community members to engage with a social ethic of shared rights and responsibilities beyond their own property boundaries, and thus be a constructive tool for shared and sustainable heritage practice.

Conservation easements have emerged at the forefront of cultural landscape protection strategies for several reasons. First, easements create social relations similar to those found in a common property regime without wholly forfeiting the private rights of
the fee simple landholder, which are foundational to the American property ethos.

Second, the emphasis upon public-private partnerships in agricultural protection programs and the retention of fee simple rights are easier to accept in rural communities, who are traditionally wary of government intervention (Rome 2001; Shoreman and Haehn 2009). Finally, the new precedent of perpetual restrictions marks a heightened sense of anxiety toward the impending loss of the local and the familiar, which I suggest is a reaction to processes of alienation central to modernist subjectivity. I propose that agricultural land protection is one of many tools used to establish a sense of control over one’s cultural identity in the future by tying it to past and present practices. Negotiating an easement goes beyond securing a short term financial benefit; by seemingly purchasing the promise of a perpetual future of agrarian land tenure, participants are intervening in a march of time perceived to be threatening to the cultural and economic viability of rural life and landscapes. Whether this intervention combats or further entrenches alienation is an important matter of historical and methodological inquiry and a central concern of my research (West et al. 2006).

Traditionally, academic scholarship in the fields of archaeology, historic preservation, and heritage has focused on the objects of heritage and the resulting protection strategies have further alienated heritage resources from communities (Gulbrandsen and Holland 2001; Jacoby 2003; Steinberg 2003; West 2006). I refocus the theoretical dialog on the cultural practices that give meaning to such resources and explore the potential for agricultural land protection to intervene in processes of alienation by engaging landowners in a shared property ethic regarding historic resources and landscapes. In this case study, I combine ethnographic field methods with the
analysis of visual and spatial data to explore the following research questions: (1) What are the common interests or alliances in agricultural land conservation programs in rural areas? (2) How do such landscape conservation programs support or threaten these shared interests? (3) How do such programs affect community members’ property relations and the social and material production of their heritage landscapes?

**Coalition-building for Heritage Development in the Bahamas**

My second case study focuses on the community development work of the One Eleuthera Foundation on the island of Eleuthera, Bahamas. Whereas threats to Hadley’s agricultural heritage are primarily attributed to suburban sprawl and the economic hardships of farming in America, the people of Eleuthera grapple with another pressing international heritage threat: tourism and its associated development. The combination of numerous failed tourism developments with the current economic downturn has prompted some Eleutheran citizens to initiate an extralegal framework for long term planning. Seeking to build consensus around primary planning objectives, One Eleuthera is a membership-driven organization that builds capacity among the island’s diverse stakeholders to develop the island’s economy in ways that draw upon, but don’t alienate, the island’s shared heritage resources (Ingraham and Johnson 2011).

Eleuthera is an analog for many contemporary communities struggling to find the balance between economic development and natural and cultural heritage protection. Many citizens are motivated by development plans that result in jobs, educational and economic opportunities, and infrastructural improvements. Most of the island’s heritage-focused special interest groups don’t prioritize these goals; furthermore, they rely upon private, philanthropic funding to serve their distinct missions (e.g. coastal reef
preservation, sustainable agriculture, community access to books and the internet, historic architectural preservation, etc.). In many cases, the people who can afford to support these special interests are not the ones who may directly benefit from economic development and may even see such development as opposing their specific interests (e.g. preserving viewsheds, maintaining “quaint” villages, protecting marine resources). As more special interest groups emerge and their projects are promoted to wider audiences via websites and social media, access to the philanthropic sector becomes even more competitive as an increasing number of non-profit organizations vie for donations from the same sources.

One Eleuthera attempts to mitigate these conditions by recognizing the shared interests in heritage development as a means for economic development. That is, the goal isn’t unbridled economic development, but identifying the range of Eleutheran heritage supported by the variety of special interest groups and working together to plan ways in which investing in those resources will bring economic, educational, and social opportunities to the citizens of Eleuthera (Ingraham and Johnson 2011). The organization relies upon a multi-tiered membership system in which non-profits, businesses, and individuals can become voting members with certain rights and responsibilities. One Eleuthera will work with its members to develop and promote projects around which fundraising campaigns can be strategically organized to optimize member support and prevent further dilution of the philanthropic market.

My contribution to One Eleuthera is the development of an online, interactive portal to support their initiative and coalition-building designed to work with existing social structures rather than imposing an external and irrelevant communicative model.
The One Eleuthera Web Portal is a centralized, digital hub for the coalition and its member organizations to present information, engage their publics, and manage their constituent and development data. In this case study, I combine ethnographic data with information architecture concepts to explore (1) how to model a shared heritage information domain and (2) how to implement the model to support shared heritage development among a variety of stakeholders and competing interests.

Methods

Assessing Shared Heritage Potential in Private Land Conservation

For the purpose of my first case study, I implemented a multi-faceted ethnographic approach to document and assess the social ethic of agricultural land protection in Hadley, Massachusetts. I identified three basic dimensions for data collection: property assets, stakeholders, and ethics (i.e. shared social values and their subsequently informed actions). By “triangulating” (Glesne 1999) three research methods: document-based research, participant observation, and Photovoice, I designed a methodology to efficiently gather relevant, compelling data and to build veracity among qualitative data sources.

Archival Property Research and GIS Documentation

In order to document the targeted landowners, properties, and their values within the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program, I conducted archival property research at the Hadley Town Hall. My initial goal was to compile a complete record of all protected parcels, including their landowners, their size and locations, their monetary values, the date of the restriction, and any information available about why the property was selected for the program. Upon starting my research, there existed no single,
computerized inventory of APR property; rather, the Hadley Conservation Commission maintained a table of restrictions in Microsoft Word with a handwritten addendum, which they cross-checked with a spreadsheet of select properties prepared by a local land trust and an outdated printout provided by the state. Unfortunately, the Conservation Commission had already identified various discrepancies among the datasets. The county’s Registry of Deeds maintains the definitive record of agricultural preservation restrictions, but although their records are online, they are not easily aggregated (as one must access each deed individually). Similarly, the assessors’ records were only available in print-form, and were filed by map and lot number; because multiple parcels are often included on a single APR, these records were only useful as secondary references. The Conservation Commission maintains carbon-copies of nearly all APR applications submitted in Hadley, which provide a wealth of information not available via the assessors’ cards or deeds, including open-ended questions regarding the applicants’ reasons for pursuing an APR.

I cross-referenced each dataset and transcribed the APR applications to compile a master inventory, which I turned over to the Conservation Commission upon completion. I created a relational database in FileMaker Pro to manage these data. The dataset was particularly challenging to represent because each application relates to multiple parcels and multiple deeds. While these relationships allowed me to model the complex mosaic of assets, stakeholders, and values, I simplified the dataset considerably when exporting my findings as a series of spreadsheets to the Conservation Commission.

While I considered the deed the ultimate authority on any given restriction, deeds use a particular legalese to describe properties (i.e. metes and bounds), which are not
used by landowners nor assessors, who tend to use map, parcel, and lot numbers. Thus, managing spatial data was essential to accurately cross-reference the deeds’ property identifications with the assessors’ and APR applications. I began by using a hardcopy set of the assessors’ maps for the 4,000 parcels in Hadley, identifying metes and bounds described in deeds with the lot divisions and landforms on the parcel maps. This step resolved numerous conflicts between the various datasets. Following this manual cross-check, I procured a digital shapefile from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) of all 4,000 Hadley parcels. Using ArcGIS, I integrated my restriction data with the PVPC shapefile. I created a layer of all APR restrictions, and I modeled a second representation using the APR closing date to create an animation of the spread of APRs across the landscape over time. These shapefiles were also donated to the Conservation Commission.

**Participant Observation and Informal Interviews**

During February 2010–December 2011, I documented the culture and politics of heritage conservation in Hadley by attending a range of public and private meetings (e.g. Selectboard, Town Meetings, Historical Commission, Community Preservation Commission, strategy meetings, private fundraisers, etc.), observing daily activity in the town hall, dining at a local lunch counter, and conducting informal, opportunistic interviews with political gatekeepers, advocates, and residents in town. This participant observation allowed me to establish a cultural baseline for heritage and property ethics in town while documenting insiders’ perspectives on cultural landscape and rural heritage values.
Photovoice

In addition to the tacit values I recorded through participant observation, I implemented a Photovoice project to document and generate explicit expressions of heritage values. As outlined by Wang (1999, 1997) and Harper (2009), Photovoice combines documentary photography, ethnographic focus groups, and public exhibitions to provide a forum for publicly-engaged, participatory research around public policy issues. I was compelled by the potential for the visual art of photography to get at the sensual dimension of cultural landscape values that other qualitative and quantitative methods can only describe, and in this I found similarities to the research plan proposed by Glassberg (2001) to document communities’ sense of place.

During October–November 2011, I worked with a group of seven volunteer photographers I recruited through local schools, the town hall and its committees, invitations sent to specific advocates and landowners, and word of mouth. I assigned the group six documentary assignments, and over the course of five meetings, we reviewed and discussed photographs each individual selected to share. During December 2011, I held three public focus groups with older residents in town, who were identified through my previous research and through a chain sample compiled via personal referrals from key social network “nodes” I identified in town. During November 2011–January 2012 I designed an online photo exhibit at http://www.hadleymaheritage.org (see Appendix A for reproductions of the photos from the online exhibit) and during January–February 2012 designed a print exhibit that incorporates select ethnographic findings, which was displayed at the Hadley public library during March–April 2012 and rehung at the Porter
Phelps Huntington Museum May–June 2012 (see Appendix B for the interpretive brochure that was available at both exhibits).

Through Photovoice I moved my research beyond observing heritage to providing a platform for creating and commenting upon heritage in a way that foregrounds local participants’ knowledge, which I understand as a goal of applied research under Gibson-Graham’s (2008) model. Additionally, Photovoice served as a more accessible mode of public dissemination for the theoretical component of my project to local stakeholders. The importance of recording and disseminating the range of community members’ values, desires, and anxieties is paramount to giving voice to those who may not have direct roles in agricultural land conservation practices. My intent with the exhibits was to explore non-essentializing notions of rural heritage in ways that celebrate the active practice of articulating rural community identity in an inherently unstable social field (Joseph 2002).

**Data Analysis**

Over the course of the three phases of this project I analyzed a range of data sources (documents, individual and focus group interviews, public political practices and speech, and visual media) following two main analytic methods—critical discourse analysis and cultural landscape interpretation. Following Waterton et al. (2006), I use critical discourse analysis to identify in language-based sources how heritage and its associated property relations are being discussed, managed, and in turn, enacted by participants in a field of power relations. The majority of non-language-based data in my study, such as the photographs produced by the Photovoice stage of research and the physical practices inscribed in the land were gathered secondarily through my research.
partners and participants. In these sources, I focus my analysis on the “environmental perceptions” (Glassberg 2004:28–29) of cultural landscapes, applying critical discourse analysis to the ways in which research participants interpret the visual representations and physical qualities of the landscape. I supplemented these data with my own primary observations of the landscapes of Hadley and people’s interactions with them.

Photographers were identified by name (at their request and to attribute copyright) while focus group participants and other interview subjects were identified by codes and general descriptive categories (e.g. gender, old-timer/newcomer, farmer, etc.). In reviewing my field notes, interview transcriptions, and photographs, I identified emergent categories and noted self-imposed themes (such as the photography assignments). I organized these descriptive codes through a networked taxonomy of intent/anticipation, meaning/value, and practice/action themes that I maintained in a separate code index. I applied these codes to my interview transcriptions and field notes using TAMS Analyzer to identify patterns in the tacit and explicit social ethics of cultural landscape protection.

**Community Coalition-building for Shared Heritage**

In order to develop an internet-based tool that helps to constitute a community of shared heritage practice among a dispersed network of stakeholders, I adopted an anthropological approach to information architecture methodology used in the computer sciences for interactive website development. My methodological goal in building the One Eleuthera Web Portal was to design the technology in an informed manner, so as to leverage existing social networks and communicative media. Many software projects suffer from the “if you build it they will come” mentality, which often results in
ineffective and unpopular products. Rather, I preceded my development with ethnographic knowledge domain discovery and modeling, outlined below.

**Knowledge Domain Discovery**

First, I conducted exploratory research on Eleuthera’s heritage “information ecology” (Morville and Rosenfeld 2008:694) during two week-long fact-finding trips to the island in March and July 2011, followed by online research and strategy meetings. Following Morville and Rosenfeld (2008:700–702), I adopted a multi-faceted research framework to identify the three basic dimensions: context, content, and users, of the associated “knowledge domain,” which is a term used in computing to refer to a specific ontology tacitly shared by insiders (Witten and Frank 2000).

To document the domain’s context (Morville and Rosenfeld 2008:700), including the goals of One Eleuthera and its members; the island’s economy and the project’s funding strategy; the local, regional, and national politics of heritage development; and the available technology and staffing capacity, I conducted background research and assisted with a series of stakeholder workshops, interviews, and tours (Chilton et al. 2011). In order to assess the current and potential content to be supported by the One Eleuthera Web Portal, I conducted “heuristic evaluations” (Morville and Rosenfeld 2008:723) of members’ current websites and print media and identified potential content entities from the ethnographic field research. Finally, to understand the user dimension, I developed hypothetical use cases and personas for current and target audiences I identified through strategy sessions with One Eleuthera board members and in the ethnographic field research.
Knowledge Domain Modeling

While conducting knowledge domain discovery, I iteratively modeled the knowledge domain to inform an information architecture strategy. This methodological step included planning for the portal’s administration after the completion of my dissertation work; technology strategy; management model; and the navigation, metadata, and content structure and systems (Morville and Rosenfeld 2008:802–807). I documented these strategies in a white paper, diagram, and budget which I provided to One Eleuthera.

Ethics

In outlining an applied anthropology of shared heritage, I recognize an ethical obligation to support and protect shared heritage and to understand the implications of my research upon communities’ heritage practices. The purpose of my research is not simply to study heritage but to join practitioners in their ethical landscape and provide practical tools for intervention. However, since my research critiques the authorized heritage discourse and the preservation strategies it has traditionally engendered, I needed to explore new modes of heritage practice and protection. In other words, deconstructing the authorized heritage discourse is only a first step. But, I also wanted to avoid constructing a new heritage discourse that is just as universalizing as the old. In order to think (and act) my way through this quandary, I drew upon the ethical strategy of Gibson-Graham’s (2008) “ontological reframing,” which is an implementation of Sedgwick’s (2003) “weak theory.” Ontological reframing is an epistemological ethics, meant to guide the researcher away from structural frameworks (i.e. strong theory) toward recognizing the creative potential of everyday ethics. As a weak theory, ontological reframing shifts authority away from the researcher and her typical [academic] domain while opening up
an optimistic landscape of novel possibilities (Gibson-Graham 2008). Gibson-Graham’s seminal case study (2006) chronicles their ontological reframing of the concept of “the economy.” Rather than accepting the hegemonic understanding of capitalism as an overly-deterministic and closed system in which revolution or co-optation are the only options, Gibson-Graham (2006) posited that capitalism is an open field in which normal individuals routinely experiment with economic relations that could be classified as counterhegemonic. The authors reframed the ontology of capitalism as a dynamic and creative ground of social ethics while documenting their own struggles with adapting their academic and post-structuralist perspectives to accommodate an unorthodox recognition of multiple “alternative economies” synchronously existing within Western capitalism. As I understand it, ontological reframing is a way to counter hegemony without creating a new hegemony. In other words, it disavows universally accepted, dominant notions with an inquisitive and creative openness—without filling the vacuum with new universalities.

In addition to adopting ontological reframing, I followed more conventional professional ethics with regards to working with human subjects and sought Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the qualitative research I conducted with Hadley residents. I prepared formal consent forms for semi-structured interviews with town officials and heritage advocates, volunteer photographers, and focus group participants, as well as photo release forms for photographic subjects. The semi-structured interviews underwent local IRB human subjects review, while the Photovoice components underwent expedited review (due to the inclusion of minors and the receipt of external
funding). Protecting participants’ identities and dignities while accurately representing their thoughts and actions was my foremost concern.

The question of anonymity in both cases was challenging. Typically, ethnographers adopt pseudonyms for people and places. However, in place-based heritage research that focuses on cultural landscapes, I found that obfuscating my case studies’ locations would be awkward and unwieldy. My descriptions would make it easy enough to discover the location’s true identity, and in both cases, advocates were proud of their work and their landscape. West (2006:xiii–xxi) offers a tenable blended approach (i.e. naming the small village, NGOs, and all participants who requested their identity be maintained, and protecting those individuals requesting anonymity) that is self-aware of the politics of the ethnographic project and balances the goals of applied research (i.e. assessment and practicable policy recommendations) and anthropological ethnography (i.e. critical engagement with cultural knowledge production). I followed West’s approach and refer to the real locations of both case studies and use the actual names of certain stakeholders, such as the Hadley photographers, who specifically requested that their identities be revealed, and Shaun Ingraham and Michele Johnson, the documented founders of the One Eleuthera Foundation. I chose to obfuscate all other identities, and while local residents may be able to deduce some identities by their position in town politics, I was careful to not link such identifications with explicit ethnographic findings.

Roadmap

In this dissertation, I present two case studies and three “products” that form a portfolio of critical and applied anthropological heritage research. Throughout the dissertation I engage with the ethics of shared heritage. In Chapter 2 I outline my
assessment of shared heritage potential in private farmland preservation in rural New England in the form of a peer-reviewed research article published in *Heritage & Society* (Labrador 2012). I demonstrate my knowledge of several fields of scholarship including heritage studies, anthropological theory, and environmental history and contribute to theories of alienation, heritage as social practice, and the social aspects of private property. Drawing from this literature, I document my own approach to shared heritage and apply this framework to assess the potential for conservation easements on private farmland in Hadley, Massachusetts.

In Chapter 3 I build upon the Hadley case study and present the second element of my portfolio: the community-based Photovoice project, which demonstrates my on the ground methodology of a place-based and community-engaged survey of heritage landscape resources and values. My methodology reflects my blending of cultural anthropology and archaeology into a place-based, cultural landscape ethnography as well as my ability to curate visual and text-based ethnographic data for public dissemination.

I present my second case study and third portfolio element in Chapter 4: a web portal for shared heritage development in Eleuthera, Bahamas. In this chapter I document my ability to translate socially-engaged and ethnographically-informed heritage advocacy models to accessible online environments for community developers. The resulting internet and communications technology was the first of several proposed projects that form the basis of a larger partnership between the UMass Amherst Center for Heritage & Society and the One Eleuthera Foundation to provide practical information and tools for community activists to engage with their constituents around shared heritage development.
Finally, in Chapter 5, I conclude by reflecting upon lessons learned, outlining future research directions for an applied anthropology of heritage, and providing recommendations for the further development of shared heritage ethics.
CHAPTER 2

AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION AND SHARED HERITAGE PROTECTION²

A growing number of heritage professionals and advocates are experimenting with more holistic models of heritage protection: moving away from treating heritage as discrete sets of resources requiring expert management to imagining heritage protection as a form of community engagement around issues of cultural identity, material and ecological sustainability, and shared values (Ashworth et al. 2007; Corsane et al. 2009; Lehrer 2010; Mitchell and Diamant 2001; Natsheh et al. 2008a; Perkin 2010; Reap 2009).

For those who work toward the protection of cultural landscapes, this has meant an emphasis on the integration of cultural and natural resources, the livelihoods of those who create the landscape, and the multiplicity of values that associated communities share (Alanen and Melnick 2000; Aplin 2007; Brown et al. 2005; Carlarne 2006; Glassberg 2004; Lowenthal 2005; Melnick 2000; Mitchell and Buggey 2000; Mitchell 2008; Prosper 2007; Resnik et al. 2006). Rather than freezing place and culture in time, such approaches are ideally processes by which communities actively reproduce themselves as a singular multiplicity (i.e. a unique social entity dynamically constituted by diverse perspectives), infuse their cultural landscape with further meaning and life, and make ethical decisions based on future sustainability and access.

However, a frequent tension in community-based heritage safeguarding is between protecting or entrusting the commons (the shared heritage of a community and its future progeny) and the economic incentives to act on behalf of private interests (Acheson 2006; Baland and Platteau 1996; Graham et al. 2000). Indeed, the obstacles can seem insurmountable for achieving democratic and collective forms of place-based heritage protection under the present neoliberal economic regime (Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Gaffin 1997; Igoe et al. 2010; Weiss 2004; West 2006). Many case studies focus on global multicultural urban environments (e.g. Daher 2005; Ennen 2000; Henderson 2008; Lu 2009), Indigenous communities (e.g. Ampudia and Miro 2009; Greer 2010; Hemming and Rigney 2010; Prangnell et al. 2010; Smith et al. 2003; Powell 2000; West 2006), and unique sites that attract tourists and World Heritage status (e.g. Breglia 2005; Evans 2002; Hitchcock 2002; Klimpke and Kammeier 2006; Wiesmann et al. 2005); yet, small town America may also be an excellent laboratory for developing community-engaged heritage protection models and weaving them into the everyday political habits of community members. This is particularly true with regard to agricultural traditions and land tenure patterns threatened by industrial, commercial, and residential development.

There is a growing sense of urgency in rural American towns that traditional agrarian livelihoods and landscapes are in critical danger: between 1982–2007, over 23 million acres of farmland was lost to development, with New England states seeing among the highest concentrations of farmland loss (American Farmland Trust 2011; United States Department of Agriculture 2009). These statistics not only have implications for growing urban populations and national food security, but they are also felt on a local level as a threat to a shared heritage as historical farming communities
(United States Department of Agriculture 2009). However, past land management programs in rural America, such as the clearance of agriculturalists to create public parks, forests, and water supplies and the regulation of hunting, fishing, logging, and irrigating, have historically alienated citizens from their property, making these communities hostile toward top-down, technocratic approaches to conservation and preservation (Gaffin 1997; Jacoby 2001; Steinberg 1994; Worster 1992). Today’s heritage protection models must work creatively within the private property regime to balance individual rights with a shared ethical responsibility toward the common good.

Current judicial interpretation and implementation of Anglo-American private property law pose major challenges to community-based heritage protection because it grants exclusive rights to private landowners to individually decide whose and what heritage to protect and how (Carman 2005). Moreover, property values are based upon “highest and best use” scenarios that maximize profit, rewarding the extraction of resources rather than their conservation (Freedgood 1992). Finally, common law precedent has traditionally restricted future interests in property to support a free market among the living, making it difficult to critically plan for the sustainability of heritage landscapes unless one maintains fee simple (i.e. absolute) ownership (Harding 2009:296). Under such a framework, narratives such as the “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin 1968) have gained normative status, making it difficult for professionals to recognize and legitimate a host of alternative modes of landscape protection that communities have implemented and woven into their cultural heritage or to imagine new strategies for community-based heritage protection (Gibson-Graham 2006).
Yet, despite this—or perhaps in response—official heritage landscape protection in the United States is gaining momentum, resulting in an array of new legal tools, granting of perpetual rights, and complex public/private partnerships (Bernstein and Mitchell 2005; Bray 2010; Davidson 2009; Fairfax et al. 2005; Freedgood 1991; Harding 2009; Mahoney 2002; Merenlender et al. 2004; Sherman et al. 1998; Shoreman and Haenn 2009; Sokolow and Zurbrugg 2003). Many of these efforts are directed at the working cultural landscapes of rural communities, like that of the subject of the case study examined in this article, Hadley, Massachusetts. Private, non-profit land trusts are brokering the purchase of development rights on agricultural lands between private landowners and local and state governments, often using federal and state funds, local property taxes, and private donations in a single transaction. This emerging, complex array of stakeholders, finances, rights, and responsibilities offers fruitful ground on which to explore and implement modes of heritage protection that serve as forums for ethical practices of community-building and sustainable stewardship.

A New Paradigm for Heritage Safeguarding

The safeguarding of rural heritage and cultural landscapes, a process that occurs within the wider hegemonic context of global capitalism and neoliberalism (Guldbrandsen and Holland 2001; Shoreman and Haenn 2009), is enacted by social agents who are capable of—and do—experiment with ethical relationships that contest this hegemony—whether consciously or not. Heritage safeguarding can thus be a transformative process even as it discursively attempts to “preserve” its targeted resource—generating new ethical communities that must continuously challenge and reconcile contradictory forces. Thus, as Fairfax et al. (2005) note, private landscape
protection in rural America is resulting in complex mosaics of stakeholders, assets, and rights and responsibilities. This decentralization is not necessarily bad, but may in fact contribute to a new iteration of legal and economic commons, which holds great potential for a shared heritage model for the safeguarding of cultural landscapes. The call for new models of heritage protection challenges us to move away from simply purchasing land to place under public management and look toward complex frameworks where rights and responsibilities are actively shared and contested across a wider spectrum of stakeholders.

**Shared Heritage**

I join many contemporary scholars in favoring community-based models for shared heritage protection since such ethical models combine an ethos of coexistence with anticipatory strategies. By “anticipatory strategies” I mean the discursive practices that people engage in to allay anxiety and formulate action with regard to prospective social and material change. In considering community-based heritage to be one such strategy, I refer to Grenville’s (2007) examination of social actors’ use of heritage as a tool for enabling ontological security in an uncertain present with regard to the future. By framing specific cultural practices and values as inherited traditions that they are compelled to pass to future generations, heritage practitioners create a sense of routinized constancy that relieves anxiety about the uncertainty of the future and affirms the continuity of shared identities (Giddens 1990:98; Grenville 2007; Hawkins and Maurer 2011; Padgett 2007). Although the comforting effect of ontological security is often understood in individualized, psychological terms, Noble (2005:114) asserts its fundamentally social nature as “a relationship of power in a social setting…the ‘fit’ we
experience in relation to the spaces we inhabit and the practices we perform.” This sense of belonging necessitates internal and external validation by other people and our material surroundings and legitimates a sense of self that is essential to empowering one’s social agency (Noble 2005). It is my contention that within a shared heritage model, the potential of heritage to provide ontological security can be the basis of establishing ethical social relations that extend into the future, rather than celebrating the content of the (past-oriented) heritage narrative (Labrador 2011a). Furthermore, because one group’s ontological security may come at the expense of another, shared heritage models must value the synchronicity of multiple senses of belonging.

The conscious implementation of heritage discourse, as in this case, the attempt to preserve “endangered” rural landscapes, marks an attempt to re-appropriate control over one’s existence in the future and reformulate the social process of heritage as an act of creation as well as of static commemoration. Rather than freezing heritage in time, these preservation attempts generate new material products, which Wobst (1999:120) refers to as “material interventions.” Whether these interventions are successful or contribute to further alienation is an important matter of historical inquiry (West et al. 2006). Yet the immediate challenge is to protect working, cultural landscapes without objectifying heritage practices—to empower local and associated community members to act as responsible stewards, motivated by a sense of agency based out of a position of ontological security rather than fear and social exclusion.

**Protecting Agrarian Heritage Landscapes in the U.S.: A Massachusetts Case Study**

Landscape preservation in America has a long history; citizens have been purchasing land for conservation purposes on the private market since the late 1700s.
(Fairfax et al. 2005; Jacoby 2001). As philosophies of governance and property rights have changed over the years, so to have the agents, targets, and tools of land conservationists. Today, nonprofit land trusts are playing a leading role. As of 2005, nearly 6.25 million acres had been conserved by nearly 1,700 private land trusts across the United States (Aldrich and Wyerman 2005). Today’s most popular land protection tool is the conservation easement, which grants the holder the right to prohibit certain activities on realty owned by another entity in perpetuity (Fairfax et al. 2005; Merenlender et al. 2004; Raymond and Fairfax 2002). Such restrictions run with the land title, passing on to all future owners. Most states have launched programs that target the permanent purchase of development rights on agricultural lands, providing financial incentives to landowners to maintain a parcel in productive farming forever (Sokolow 2006; Sokolow and Zurbrugg 2003).

This research focuses on the state-run Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program in Massachusetts, established in 1977, and specifically how it articulates with property relations and cultural landscape values in the small western Massachusetts town of Hadley (approximate population 5,000), whose agricultural landscape on the eastern banks of the Connecticut River was recently listed on the World Monuments Fund Watch List (2010). The analysis is based on interviews, public meetings, private strategy sessions, oral histories, and the statistics and narratives accompanying successful application cases to the APR program. The goal was to better understand what motivates participants in the program and what values lie at the core of the broader social ethic that supports the program and its farm community. I found the Massachusetts APR program to be an encouraging example of a state-supported heritage protection initiative that
potentially taps into a deep sense of pride in place, work, tradition, and community. In what follows, I outline how the program works, how it is enacted in Hadley, and the challenges that lie ahead.

**A Promising Framework**

In Massachusetts, landowners apply to the APR program, and each application is reviewed by the municipality’s conservation commission and state’s regional APR office to insure that the farm business and its land meet specific criteria. These reviewing bodies then prioritize applications based upon degree of threat, likelihood that the land will continue to be productive, and whether the farm’s municipality has instituted officially recognized support programs such as farmers markets or right-to-farm bylaws (i.e. local ordinances that explicitly protect agricultural practices that may otherwise be deemed nuisances to residential or commercial neighbors such as increased noise, odor, dust, and traffic). For successful applications, the property is appraised by a third party under its highest and best use (typically single-family residential or commercial use); the difference between this fair market value and its value as farmland becomes the price of the restriction that the state is willing to pay under the program. Following negotiations, the state purchases the restriction, which is recorded in the county’s registry of deeds. In turn, the present landowner (and acting on behalf of all future landowners) surrenders his or her right to develop the property for non-agricultural purposes. The landowner receives the payment as a lump sum, often from the state itself, although land trusts can

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3 Typically, easements grant rights, but because such agricultural restrictions and conservation easements deny rights to the landowner, they are understood as “negative easements” by property theorists (Bernstein and B. A. Mitchell 2005; Bell and Parchomovsky 2008; Mahoney 2002:Footnote 32).
provide bridge loans or contribute to the state’s purchase, and municipal governments can also contribute and become co-holders to the restriction. Following an APR closing, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture is responsible for completing site inspections and reviewing proposals for farm improvements to insure that the goals of the APR are being upheld.

During the program’s early years, it was common for the state alone to purchase the restriction; in more recent years, municipal governments are expected to contribute to the sale (typically 10–20%), and land trusts have increased their involvement as well. While land trusts rely upon private grants and contributions, local governments raise their funds in a variety of ways. In Hadley, funds are appropriated from several different accounts, including tax revenue generated through the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and the town’s Transfer of Development Rights bylaw. Both are innovative ways that local governments engage residents with planning decisions and incentivize the protection of the town’s character and its open space (e.g. farmland, recreational areas, and wetlands). Moreover, there already exists a baseline for democratic decision-making in small New England towns (fewer than 6,000 people) such as Hadley that still practice direct democracy through open, annual town meetings in which every registered voter has an equal say on a number of financial and planning issues, including appropriations for heritage protection.

The CPA is Massachusetts legislation (M.G.L. ch. 44B 2000) that allows local governments to create a Community Preservation Fund by imposing a surcharge on real
property taxes. The fund is allocated in specific ratios to historic preservation, open space conservation, and affordable housing projects. Citizens must vote to enact the CPA and may continue or revoke it after every five years. Upon adoption, a committee is created, drawing representatives from relevant municipal boards including the historic commission, conservation commission, housing authority, parks and recreation, and planning. Upon adoption, local governments are eligible to receive annual distributions from a statewide CPA trust fund to supplement local revenues. Each year, the CPA committee must hold at least one public meeting where they present planning priorities, hear public project proposals, and assess the merit of these proposals. Upon voting to support a proposal, the committee lists the project and proposed costs on the town meeting warrant, where town members vote whether to finance the project from their CPA fund. This legislation has created a clear path for creative citizens to initiate their own heritage-related projects, which are scrutinized by both municipal representatives and their own peers, who share in the projects’ financial investment.

While the CPA relies upon tax revenue from all landowners, the other important municipally managed tool, the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) bylaw, targets specific parcels and works best in communities with a clear master plan (State of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs 2011). The Hadley Master Plan (Perley et al. 2005) identified the preservation of open space as a priority, citing a 1,000-acre loss to commercial and residential development between 1971–1999. The bylaw empowers the local government to propose tradeoffs to prospective

4 The surcharge is not applied to the first $100,000 of assessed realty value; thus, the CPA doesn’t apply to “low-income” properties.
developers or current landowners who hold rights to property in valued open spaces to develop in more suitable areas identified in the master plan. Current landowners receive special exceptions to swap land between zoning districts while prospective developers make cash contributions to the town government, which the town sets aside in a TDR Credit Bank to fund future conservation easements such as agricultural restrictions. This effectively swaps open space from the commercial district to the agricultural district, controlling undesirable sprawl by geographically concentrating commercial realty or residential subdivisions. Because Hadley has a clear commercial corridor along State Route 9, the town has been able to wield the TDR bylaw successfully, raising nearly $340,000 in cash contributions, which have been used to assist with APR purchases valued at over $3,000,000 (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission 2011).

Motivations and Values

The success of the APR program in Hadley is regionally recognized (Patrick et al. 2009). Hadley’s international exposure by the World Monuments Fund focuses on the landscape of the Great Meadow, whose property bounds reflect a 350 year old vestige of an open field Anglo farming system and is testament to the deep connection that residents have with their landscape and the history of farming in town. But, it wasn’t until 2004, 20 years after the first Hadley APR was negotiated, that advocates prioritized the Great Meadow for the APR program. More commonly, patchworks of parcels across the entire

5 In fact, the first owner of Great Meadow property to apply to the APR program in 2002 warned in his application that development was imminent in the Meadow and feared “the beginning of the end” for this farming area. But, the property was identified as a “lower priority” by the conservation commission due to the lot’s “strange configuration” and distance from other protected parcels.
town have been protected in arrays that were individually opportunistic and likely reflect social networks of aging farm families. 

All APR applicants complete a multi-page form that includes an open-ended question concerning the “degree of threat” to their property. Out of 74 applications, 41 respondents addressed this question. The most common answer applicants gave cited financial reasons (54% of responses), including estate settlements, retirement, foreclosure, or divorce. Nearly as common (44%) were answers that indicated an impending threat from adjacent development or existing offers from residential developers. One applicant wanted to protect his property from private development and eminent domain, citing an unwanted past land-taking from the state. A few of these answers referred to the local state university as a development threat, although it wasn’t clear whether applicants were fearful of the university itself, or whether proximity made the property more attractive to outside development (both explanations are plausible). One applicant wanted to prevent recreational or commercial (boating) use of the property. Applicants were less likely to phrase their answers in the positive, but when they did, they affirmed their desire to maintain productive soils in farming and preserve open space (22%), pass the farm on to heirs (5%), protect wildlife (2%), and to protect the public water supply (2%). An ambivalence or distrust of the younger generation by their elders was apparent in a response that read, “…to protect the land from future generations.” Although it is possible the respondent meant to write “to protect the land for future

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6 When mapping the gradual spread of restricted parcels across town, I observed a cluster effect in which neighboring properties were more likely to be preserved than properties isolated from others. Further research is required to determine to what extent this was due to farmers’ social networks or to the strategy of the APR program’s gatekeepers.
generations,” such ambivalence was echoed anecdotally to me by a farmer recalling how his nephew declared that a subdivision would look “beautiful out there” (on his cornfields). The takeaway was a sentiment that the younger generation has no interest in farming and prefers to pursue more lucrative careers.

These largely apprehensive personal concerns are supplemented by the local conservation commission’s justifications for supporting the application, which take a broader, utilitarian view. The most common value listed was soil productivity (56% of 43 responses), followed by the potential to create sizable clusters of adjacent, protected parcels (37%). The next category of values concerned social and lifestyle traditions that were prized by the community (28%). Family farms, multi-generational farms, farmers who have farmed “their whole life,” successful agricultural businesses, and “well-kept” farms were explicitly praised and offered as moral justification for the commission’s support. Less commonly cited were development threats (19%) and the historic value of the land (such as land in the Great Meadow) (16%). Scenic views and wildlife habitat, local food sufficiency, and water supplies were also referenced, although less seldom. In one case, the application was supported to prevent “inappropriate recreational use” (i.e. RV/trailer camping near the waterfront).

The personal and public significance of farmland properties as revealed in the APR applications thus primarily concerns issues of financial stability, zoning, environmental effects, history, scenery, and what makes for “good” farms and farmers. Beyond its direct financial function, the program can be seen as a forum for expressing values and implementing planning goals in a language that links such decisions to the town’s farming heritage. Most often, the success of the program is promoted in terms of
the quantity of acreage saved, but this benchmark obscures a more important standard: to what extent does the program successfully enable the maintenance of a shared heritage?

Many Hadley farmers share an ancestral connection to the land, but not necessarily a direct bloodline to the celebrated Yankees of the colonial era. A lot of Hadley farmers are descendants of Polish migrant farm laborers from the early twentieth century (Hardin 2009). Their place attachment simultaneously celebrates their Polish-American identity and transcends ethnic boundaries, finding connection through the continuation and adaptation of labor practices and land tenure that maintain Hadley’s historic landscape. In other words, the quiet maintenance of a shared heritage of family farming and husbandry (not a particular, essentialized vision of colonial-era New England farming) is what produces the valued landscape and what contributes to the community’s success in leveraging the APR, CPA, and TDR programs. Thus, the programs’ success should not simply rest on the number of acres preserved, or the nostalgic images that are seemingly reinforced by that number, but the extent to which community members are able to maintain their labor practices and land tenure in ways that stitch the past, present, and future together.

**Challenges for Sustainability**

Although the APR program, its attendant public fundraising tools, and the open town meeting governance model offer a promising framework for shared heritage safeguarding, the program is not without its challenges, especially with regard to financial and social impacts on future generations. The purchasing of development rights by definition affects the equity available to future farmers of the parcel, thus placing a burden upon the present landowner to reinvest in their property in ways that could benefit
future farmers. In reality, payments have primarily been used to pay off past debts, mortgages, and taxes. However, between 50–60% of farmers do put at least part of their payment toward farm reinvestment, a wise tactic since they no longer have the ability to subdivide their property and quickly liquidate it as they normally would have done in the face of financial trouble (Sherman et al. 1998; Wright 1988).

In fact, preliminary studies have shown that farming actually intensifies on parcels under easement since farmers are under greater pressure to achieve economic success without selling pieces of their land to high-bidding developers (Sherman et al. 1998; Wright 1988). Here we can catch glimmers of neoliberalism at work—shifting the public support of farm labor from a protectionist framework to a market-based rationality by shifting risk to the property owner and incentivizing increased productivity and profitability on more concentrated pieces of land. Ironically, this shift has occurred under the Farm Bill, a landmark piece of legislation signed by President Reagan in 1985, which extends billions of dollars annually in public subsidies to farmers with the requirement that they participate in government-funded land conservation programs. The history of how the nation’s iconic neoliberal president signed a huge government subsidy program is complex, yet partially tied to an inherent contradiction in neoliberalism: market failures require strong state intervention (Harvey 2005). A global grain market crash, failure of soil improvement programs, loss of wetland habitats, and the North American Free Trade Agreement’s restriction on unqualified commodity-based subsidies all contributed to the need for reform (Fairfax et al. 2005:174–175). Although Reagan had originally pushed for large decreases in public agricultural subsidies, which were unsuccessful, the 1985 Farm Bill and its “Freedom to Farm” successors still incentivize neoliberal agency by
shifting the discourse away from protectionist logic toward market rationality (Coleman et al. 1997). Farmers now enter into production-based contracts with the government whereby they accept more risk in exchange for a decrease in federal oversight of what and how much they plant (Coleman et al. 1997:466–468). Combined with funding decreases in the conservation management programs, some argue that the Farm Bill does more environmental damage than good (Fairfax et al. 2005:177). Thus publicly funded conservation easements, such as restrictions on agricultural land, represent a complex, and not-completely-understood tangle of protectionist politics, neoliberal property mores, and market-based economics (Bray 2010; Davidson 2009; Raymond and Fairfax 2002).

So, there is, perhaps paradoxically, an even greater need for better conservation practices on land that is under a conservation easement. Further interdisciplinary research into the legal, economic, and social impact of such programs will contribute to a better understanding of how farmers and their advocates interpret these contradictions and enact new forms of property ownership. If farmers don’t receive additional support to finance and implement such practices, such programs could usher in an unintentional era of salvage farming—that is, an increased intensification of agricultural resource extraction on parcels of land until they are under-productive, after which the state may rescind the easement, and the landowner could sell to a developer. The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture has already identified this as a problem, implementing the APR Improvements Program, which assists farmers with business planning and subsidizes farm improvements while balancing issues of resource conservation and environmental sustainability.
A parallel to this situation in the efforts of UNESCO to facilitate the conservation of cultural and natural heritage can be drawn from Cleere’s (2011) critique of the World Heritage List as shortsightedly focused on the present listing of many properties with little regard to their future protection. Within the land conservation world, success is often communicated in terms of the quantity of acreage preserved—much like the growing numbers of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. But, the effect of World Heritage List inscription isn’t necessarily better management of the resource’s future sustainability but for a more intensive use of the resource among contemporary populations (Carroll 2008; Shafer and Inglis 2000; Usborne 2009). So the questions remain: Do private land conservation programs engender broader ethical engagement with heritage protection? Or do they allow us to make exceptions to the rule, and thus only further normalize business as usual? Does voting to “save” a parcel of farmland change how a residential homeowner thinks about or values her local heritage?

Relevant to these questions is the effect such programs have on costs of living and their potential for pricing farmers and farmhands out of their own town. Recent studies have demonstrated that conservation easements raise the property values of adjacent parcels, and farmers have reported frustration with overly rigid terms on restricted property (American Farmland Trust 2005; Sherman et al. 1998; Wright 1988). One reported that a prospective buyer “wanted to build a house for herself and one for help, and was refused” (Wright 1988:8). Subdividing small parcels of farmland for residential use by family and laborers is traditional practice in rural America, proof of which is visible on Hadley’s landscape and printed on parcel maps. In fact, this is a concern cited by those who do not participate in the program and the reason behind the
only revocation of an APR in Hadley (which requires a specific act of the state legislature—no small feat, but not impossible). If farmers can’t easily build homes on their own property, and the value of adjacent residential parcels has risen as a consequence, can they or their laborers afford to live near their farms?7

Finally, issues of inclusion and access need to be better addressed in the APR process to achieve the ethical goals of shared heritage. Some Hadley farms employ seasonal, non-resident laborers, including Jamaicans and Haitians, whose voices are completely absent from the conversation and whose labor isn’t represented in the familiar public commemoration of New England farm landscapes. Although farmers employing these laborers may recognize their hard work, there is a clear divide between Hadley citizens and these workers that produce and maintain the landscapes they value. Recognizing the essential value of their labor is a preliminary step; engaging them as political stakeholders is a more challenging, but necessary one. Another important act of inclusion would be to encourage younger voices in the conservation process and debate; the ambivalence that landowners expressed toward the younger generations invites engagement, not only or even primarily to create a new generation of farmers, but to

7 This is exactly the challenge in inner city environments, which are vastly underserved by present land conservation programs. When land trusts purchase lots to convert into community gardens for low income residents, they risk improving the property so much so as to attract the very development that threatens their efforts (Fairfax et al. 2005:238), ushering in gentrification and ultimately displacing the residents they meant to serve. In response, some groups have formed community land trusts, incorporating affordable housing development with their conservation efforts as a way to support the symbiotic relationship between property assets and their associated social agents. I encourage advocates to consider how the Massachusetts Community Preservation Act can be leveraged to create projects that explicitly blend the goals of historic preservation, affordable housing, and open space conservation (rather than keeping them as separate quotas to fulfill).
better support the intergenerational transmission of cultural values and represent future interests in the town’s protected heritage landscapes.

**Conclusion: Thoughts for the Future**

The purchasing of conservation easements allows focused control to be exerted over private landowners without looking too much like top-down governmental regulation. Securing a conservation easement prevents the property owner from exercising her right to disregard a perceived common interest in the property asset in the future. But the issues of who speaks for the common interest and which citizens are not engaged in public planning decisions pose grave weaknesses to the publicly avowed goal. Does a perpetual restriction leave enough room for the dynamics of cultural and environmental change inherent under the new mode of protecting heritage as practice? What are the long-term environmental and social implications for intensifying farming on restricted parcels? And how are we intervening in the grand myth of the tragedy of the commons—or reinforcing a Lockean morality by offering financial rewards for doing something that the greater society believes shouldn’t be done in the first place (Fairfax et al. 2005)?

Simply procuring a perpetual easement doesn’t guarantee heritage protection. But, participating in such a program can play a part in cultivating a shared social ethic that balances rights and responsibilities among common interests in the future security of targeted assets, related social agents, and associated tenure practices. Early evaluations of such programs have reported that landowners are motivated primarily by a sense of “personal attachment, stewardship, and community ethics” (Sherman et al. 1998). While there are venues for advocates to engage with their specific interests (e.g. land trusts,
history museums, conservation commissions, historical commission, recreational departments), there are few coordinated efforts to build public coalitions between these interests around explicitly shared heritage goals. I suggest that such a coalition is necessary to provide an integrated framework for a wider range of stakeholders to articulate shared goals and common interests.

The commons are a compelling model for such an ethical and political framework. The commons refers to a property system in which multiple stakeholders share a set of rights and responsibilities to tangible and intangible property assets (Bollier 2001:2). Common ownership includes a range of resource management strategies that are alternatives to liberal private property ownership and state managed public property ownership (Agrawal 2003:244; Carman 2005). Successfully managed commons share several characteristics: a system of collective rule, transparent regulation, and dispute-resolution; heterogeneity of resources; an ethic of social equity; and an objective of the sustainability of the property asset (Agrawal 2003; Bollier 2001:24–26; Ostrom 1990:90). Stakeholders entrust each other with securing the future coexistence of their common interest in the property asset. Individual stakeholders are “free” to utilize, form attachments, and invest meaning into their share of the property asset so long as they don’t endanger the future of the common interest. This ethical emphasis upon the stewardship of the resources held in common aids the formation of trusting relationships and ontological security. Furthermore, communities are actively and continuously constituted through the implementation of a commons and its attendant ethics (Gibson-Graham 2006:135).
Unfortunately, the dominant understanding of the commons remains one of cynicism, perhaps best codified by Hardin’s (1968) article, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” which claimed that any common pool resource would inevitably be over-exploited due to man’s “natural” instinct toward self-interest and self-preservation, an assumption fundamental to liberal philosophies of private property ownership. However, the environmental sector has been successful at justifying the commons in public policy arenas, arguing that common property management of natural and renewable resources is more efficient and economical than purely market-based or state bureaucratic management (Agrawal 2003:246).

Fundamental to the potential role of heritage to reinforcing ontological security is the ability for current generations to pass cultural knowledge to the next generation. Farming communities in many rural enclaves see themselves as an aging and dying breed as younger generations look toward urban markets for prosperity. This is a familiar challenge for rural communities, but it is playing out in a historical moment in which we have supposedly become critically aware of the importance of food security and the beneficial role local agriculture may play. This is a great opportunity to adjust how we economically and culturally value the work of agriculturalists and to intervene in the neo-colonial relationships we have with rural markets and their laborers.

Participants in state agricultural preservation programs such as Massachusetts’ report overwhelming satisfaction with how such programs help them plan for the future and to leave a legacy on the landscape. This is in part because such programs emulate some of the ethical goals of a commons, placing emphasis upon shared responsibilities and future sustainability, which contributes to ontological security. Furthermore, these
programs gain considerable traction when participants adopt heritage protection programs as an extension of their existing heritage ethic. This means that the best time to implement a heritage protection program is at the peak of heritage activity, rather than at its nadir. The task before us is evaluating whether this ontological security is constrained to the present generation at the expense of the future, or whether such cultural landscape protection approaches are flexible enough to enable future generations to cultivate a sense of belonging to the landscape and each other while also empowering them to inscribe new meanings and adapt to changing environmental and socio-economic conditions.
CHAPTER 3

PICTURING SHARED HERITAGE

Heritage commemoration and preservation are often treated as desirable ends in themselves by professionals, stakeholders, government officials, and advocates. However, these often strictly circumscribed activities, fueled by modernist anxieties, can actually contribute to further alienation of heritage assets and practices from memory communities and stakeholders if they are not seen in a wider social context of evolving collective memory and consciousness. I argue that orienting interventions toward the process of engaging shared heritage ethics (rather than particular heritage properties) creates a “political imaginary” (Gibson-Graham 2006) in which participants engage with heritage as a creative cultural strategy to deliberately and deliberatively address the very alienating forces or effects that make nostalgic approaches to the past so seductive (Boym 2007). In this chapter I continue my discussion of the Hadley case study and present my participatory approach for enacting Gibson-Graham’s (2006) three-part methodology of ontological reframing, rereading, and creativity. My approach seeks to redefine the ends of heritage, not as momentary commemoration or decay-halting preservation, but as the continuation of a vital and transformative social process.

**Hadley at 350: A Timeless Anniversary**

The year 2009 was both a milestone and an amped up microcosm of normative heritage commemoration practices in the town of Hadley. Throughout the course of the year, Hadley residents and boosters celebrated the 350th anniversary of the town’s establishment by Anglo settlers (Miller 2009). The anniversary was marked by a series of 70 events (not counting repeat performances) that included concerts, dances, and parties;
original dramatic performances; parades; tractor shows; fairs and exhibits; farm, garden, and studio tours; hikes; a golf tournament, 5K road race, and decorating contest; lectures; feasts; and fireworks (Thayer and Miller 2009). A range of documents, artifacts, souvenirs, and monuments were produced to materially memorialize the anniversary, the town’s heritage, and the commemorative events themselves. Perhaps no artifact epitomizes the self-referential qualities of heritage commemoration better than the hard cover, full color, *Town of Hadley 350th Anniversary Commemorative Book* (Thayer and Miller 2009), whose 125+ pages and 240+ images chronicle the year’s activities; list numerous volunteers, individual donors, and business sponsors; and advertise presumed commercial underwriters.

In addition to memorializing the civic dedication of its authors and supporters, the *Commemorative Book* documents the range of heritage assets and social values that are recognized by contemporary Hadley residents and boosters as the official components of the town’s historical agricultural identity. Furthermore, it embodies the un-ironic memorialization of the commemorative process itself through which the townspeople of Hadley proudly celebrated their community, their place, and their continuity. Although not as elaborately linear, nor as progressively-minded as the early twentieth century civic pageants that Glassberg (1990) has documented, the *Commemorative Book* records a year-long pageant of “small town” pride in the face of the continuing drama of urban encroachment and cultural change. Each event, actor, and heritage asset is connected through a single narrative that distinguishes Hadley and its residents as proud rural celebrants and successful preservationists.
Entering the community in the wake of the celebration, I found citizens who were primed to discuss heritage and its protection, and I certainly benefited from the momentum of the 350th anniversary. Considering the vast ground that the festivities covered, my challenge was to document and engage with the community’s social ethic in a way that wouldn’t simply parrot the values of the anniversary celebrations, but would produce new data about Hadley’s heritage practices and understandings. Rural identity and farmland preservation were recurring themes throughout the 350th events; for example, the float that Hadley contributed (to represent itself) to the 250th anniversary parade in the neighboring town of Amherst (celebrated in the same year) was decorated with hay bales, farm produce, a tobacco barn, and “Preserved Farmland” road signs (which mark parcels of land under agricultural preservation easements in both towns, see Figure 3: Preserved Farmland sign and its visually redundant context. (Photograph by author)). Throughout the *Commemorative Book*, numerous photographs captured images that conveyed an image of a vibrant farming community living in historic colonial homes on rich meadows nestled between the winding river and tree-covered hills.

Although the anniversary marked the passage of time, the images evoked in the commemorative events suggested that the town’s environment and identity were timeless. The *Commemorative Book*’s contents were organized by the seasons, implying a cyclical, rather than linear, temporal passage of community life. Narratives and presentations focused on continuity rather than change, and when artifacts of yesteryear were produced (e.g. antiques, carriages, old fire pumps, re-enactors’ costumes) they served to enhance the appeal of the rural scenes rather than seeming to be temporally incongruous. Yet
throughout the speeches, scripts, slogans, and letters documented in the book, people were implored to remember: to reflect on the past, to make it an unforgettable year, and even to project these memories into the future. As Casey (2011:186–187) explains, “Commemoration not only looks forward in looking back, thereby transmitting deferred effects of the past, it affirms the past’s selfsameness in the present by means of a consolidated re-enactment, thus assuring a continuation of remembering in the future.”

This dissonance between the timeless narrative of heritage identity and the contemporary concern with the passage of time is a product of the paradoxical nature of heritage as both symptom and coping strategy of the alienating forces of modernity: “It is as if the ritual of commemoration could help to patch up the irreversibility of time” (Boym 2007:13).

Official commemorations—like that of Hadley’s 350th anniversary—emphasize essentialized and timeless identities; they tend to mask the local variation in people and places as well as the dynamics of historical and cultural change. Furthermore, if commemoration serves to maintain a sense of temporal continuity, is the fervor of the commemoration proportional to the underlying anxieties felt when a community is confronted with the passage of time and the modernist effects of temporal discontinuity? And could this be observed in Hadley? According to Nora (1989), the objectification of heritage marks the loss of a living heritage ecosystem (i.e. *milieux de mémoire*) (see also Boym 2007; Connerton 2009; Lowenthal 1985; Ricoeur 2006; Williams 1973). The resulting “sites of memory” (i.e. *lieux de mémoire* [Nora 1989]) and their attendant process of preservation compress time and space while simultaneously distancing us [of the present] from them [of the past] (Harvey 1989; Lowenthal 1985). Born from anxiety over forgetting, memorials help us remember certain things while permitting us to forget
others; they “conceal the past as much as they cause us to remember it” (Connerton 2009:29). These preservation practices often “preclude other uses” of heritage resources (Lowenthal 1985:xxiv), further alienating us from a living heritage ecosystem. In these ways, commemoration and preservation often mark an end point: not only of a typical heritage project, but of the un-objectified integration of the heritage asset in the fabric of ongoing social, material, and ethical life.

**Photovoice: Beyond Commemoration and Inventories**

How then to move my ethnographic inquiries beyond the context of the 350th commemoration in Hadley while engaging with the same narrative themes of rural heritage and its protection? In *Sense of History*, Glassberg (2001) addresses a similar problem while studying New England town character: how to document distinctiveness of place and the creative process of place making in the face of clichéd, timeless, and essentialized views of New England people, landscapes, and identity. He cites the effectiveness of photography to elicit a broader range of memories and values that comprise residents’ sense of place and suggests that community photography projects paired with public meetings may expand the survey of relevant assets and sites and, when paired with historic photographs, could elicit more discussion around cultural change (Glassberg 2001:159–161).

Glassberg’s suggestion for public history research is consistent with the usage of photographs and visual media as part of qualitative research in anthropology, sociology, and psychology (Harper 2002). His emphasis upon public (group) meetings is similar to the participatory action research method, Photovoice, recently developed by Wang and Burris (1997; Wang 1999) to collaboratively document cultural attitudes and lived
experiences within the field of public health in order to craft more effective healthcare policies. Photovoice has also been employed in anthropology to document environmental values and issues among marginalized populations and to communicate these issues with policymakers (Harper 2009).


Photovoice has three main goals: to enable people (1) to record and reflect their personal and community strengths and concerns, (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about personal and community issues through group discussions of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers.

Photovoice further democratizes documentary photography by empowering everyday folk to frame their own images in reference to a given issue, and in doing so define what is of significance and should be included in public discourse. Furthermore, because the documentary photographs become prompts in facilitated focus groups, they potentially become objects of critical reflection rather than an archive of routine commemoration. In the three-step process of photography, ethnography, and public interpretation (typically in the form of an exhibit) I found an integrated method for moving beyond the baseline heritage resource inventory toward creating a deliberative space for shared heritage ethics.

Photovoice’s three step process also corresponds with the three part ethical methodology (ontological reframing, rereading, and creativity) outlined by Gibson-Graham (2006) in their participatory action research project of enabling a “politics of possibility” for economic development. Their ethical project seeks to counter hegemonic perspectives and relationships across two domains. First, as action researchers, they are primarily concerned with performatively contesting the hegemony of global capitalism, which obscures the existing and potential variation in economic relationships that can
survive (and even thrive) within capitalism. Second, their treatise contains a meta-critique of academic theory and method; that is, in order to achieve the first project, academics must counter their own disciplinary reliance upon “strong theory” and deconstruction (i.e. techniques that replicate or reify the closed epistemology of hegemony) in order to effectively identify alternative economic frameworks (Gibson-Graham 2006). In both domains, the point isn’t to comprehensively explain or “domesticate” phenomena, but to expand the field of potential so that informed, creative action can be taken (Gibson-Graham 2006:37). When applied to the realm of heritage, creating a heritage “imaginary” means reframing the ontology of heritage to allow us to think and act untethered by an “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006). It encourages rereading heritage narratives and symbols to uncover hidden or obscured values, meanings, or memory communities and to de-essentialize existing ones. It creates contexts for thinking and enabling alternative heritage ethics while remaining critically cognizant of the hegemonic discourse.

In Hadley, I designed the Photovoice project with these principles in mind. During the photography component, I engaged local expertise to collaboratively reframe the ontology of heritage in Hadley in three ways: (1) by combining individuals who have different levels of involvement and affiliation with the town’s official heritage structures; (2) in utilizing a visual medium to directly engage dimensions of perspective, scale, and composition, which aren’t normally self-identified in casual speech; and (3) by assigning particular photography prompts to expand preconceptions about heritage (i.e. what is considered heritage) and to challenge participants to imagine others’ perspectives or document that which is not physically manifest today (i.e. photographing the future).
reframing step deliberately shifted power away from my academic expertise. However, I wouldn’t classify my role as simply a facilitator (a role that professionals tend to turn toward in community-engaged projects). Rather, the step was collaborative: iteratively engaging participants’ local knowledge with my academic perspective to widen the semantic (and symbolic) frame of reference for both domains. The process of interpretation and rereading was done at three main points throughout the project: (1) at each of the five photography group meetings, we would discuss the most recent selection of photographs; (2) at the three focus group meetings, participants spoke to and about the selected photographs in relation to specific ethnographic questions I posed; and (3) in my own analysis of the photographs and ethnographic data I collected. Finally, I sought to imbue the project with creativity throughout by linking tools and minds in new combinations to imagine possible outcomes and strategies for addressing threats to Hadley’s heritage and the attendant ethical issues that were identified during the project.

That this project is about creating an “imaginary” and enabling an ethics that reframes heritage as a means to deliberatively address alienating social forces, my implementation of Photovoice is but one component of an ongoing political process. My project isn’t the last step in creating shared heritage, nor is it the first. For as problematic as heritage commemoration and preservation can be to the vitality of a living heritage ecosystem, they are the efforts of an active group of people who are (for the most part, at least in Hadley) well intentioned in their interest in their community, their landscape, and their cultural traditions. Their values and the responsibilities they shoulder (often voluntarily) are the foundations for building shared heritage, since the project of shared heritage is place-based and context-specific. In Hadley, the 350th was an important event
for many participants, and the project of creating a heritage imaginary is not to tear down
the work that has gone on before, but to work together transforming existing knowledge
and value systems to enhance the vitality of the heritage ecosystem. This work need not
be trenchant or serious—while the public exhibit of Photovoice material provides points
of access to disseminate ideas to others in the community, it was also an enjoyable
community event that celebrated people’s work and input. My experience in Hadley
suggested that such activities play important roles in building ethical communities.

**Rereading Rural Heritage in Hadley**

In this section I present my analysis of the photographs and ethnographic data I
collected during the Photovoice component of my research. As explained in Chapter 1, I
recruited a team of seven photographers who lived, worked, or attended school in Hadley.
Although I initially preferred that only residents participate, I expanded my definition of
“community member” to incorporate people who may be identified as “outsiders” by
those living in the community, namely four teenagers who attended an alternative
learning center in Hadley but who live in surrounding towns. During the research
discussed in Chapter 2, I learned that the threshold for obtaining insider status in town is
more complex than one’s street address. Several informants introduced themselves in
similar (somewhat facetious) form: “I’ve lived in Hadley for 25 years, so I’m just a
newcomer.” Typically, multiple generations afforded insider status, but even an
informant who descended from one of the town’s original Anglo settlers didn’t claim the
coveted “old-timer” status. On the other hand, a farmer who recently moved to town and
implemented several progressive and atypical farming programs is well esteemed and
treated as part of the “old-timer” group. In that these labels and their assumed differences
in perspectives are masked in official Hadley heritage commemoration, I expanded my criteria for participation to consciously include these differing points of view among the photographers and their photographs.

Similarly, I crafted the documentary photography assignments to engage with themes that were absent or obscured in official heritage commemoration and presentation in town: notably, the perceived differences in perspectives and values between outsiders and insiders; the active threats to heritage in town; and the temporal dimension of cultural change (i.e. picturing past, present, and future contexts for the town’s heritage). The six prompts in order were:

1. Hadley’s heritage is…
2. My Private View
3. An Outsider's Perspective
4. Endangered
5. Gone but not Forgotten
6. Hadley's Future

The photographers were not given the full slate of prompts at the beginning of the project so that they couldn’t curate their photographs for future prompts. Eighty-seven photographs were officially released to the project by the seven photographers and two photographs were contributed by two online participants via the project’s participatory web-based exhibit (Labrador 2011b; also see Appendix A).

The Trained Eye: Photography, Landscape, and Memory

The bus passed over the first monument. I pulled the buzzer-cord and got off at the corner of Union Avenue and River Drive. The monument was a bridge over the Passaic River that connected Bergen County with Passaic County. Noon-day sunshine cinema-ized the site, turning the bridge and
the river into an over-exposed *picture*. Photographing it with my Instamatic 400 was like photographing a photograph (Smithson 1967:52; emphasis in original).

Robert Smithson’s 1967 photoessay, “A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey,” satirizes the nostalgia of landscape touring through an unemotional blow-by-blow account of his self-guided tour of the “monuments” (e.g. steel bridges, concrete highway abutments) of modern Passaic (Lippard 1997:54; Rasor 1994). His recollection of encountering the Union Avenue Bridge (quoted above) refers to the body of visual knowledge we bring with us when viewing the environment, which enables us to appreciate the view as a scene (i.e. a “picture” or landscape). Although poking fun at the compulsion and redundancy of tourist photography, Smithson’s photograph of a photograph represents the preconceived notions we have of what constitutes a photographic landscape and how our eye has been trained by previous imagery, including paintings, photographs, film, advertisements, and even other landscapes. Moreover, it hints at the complicated interplay between landscape, photography, and memory (see, for example Baer 2000, 2002; Huddleston 2002; Schama 1996; Stilgoe 2005; Wells 2011).

Cosgrove (1985), citing the research of Kenneth Clark and J.B. Jackson, traces the idea of landscape to Northern Italian Renaissance artists who created a new art form that applied the developing geometrical theories of perspective to depict space in a way that spoke to the emerging bourgeois mercantile class. From its beginnings, landscape painting was a “visual ideology” (i.e. a “way of seeing” [Berger 1990]) that objectified the world in a way that granted the viewer’s eye a God-like perspective and was legitimated by scientific principles of spatial arrangement (so that the representational form becomes interpreted as “realistic”) (Cosgrove 1985; Snyder 1980). This aesthetic development occurred synchronously with major advances in European cartography,
exploration, and colonial expansion, and the changing philosophies of subje
cthood and property during the 16th–17th centuries are reflected in the new perspective granted to the viewer of landscapes: an individual, separate (and distinct) from nature, who can look [down] upon the world and ideally survey the order man brings to the chaos of nature (Casey 2002; Cosgrove 1985; Williams 1980). Thus, landscape art reflected and reified the social relationships between humans and between humans and the environment. The idea of landscape quickly moved beyond the framed canvas to the real world, enabling the appraisal of certain views as scenic as well as their artificial design and creation; a visual ideology that lives on today (Cosgrove 1985).

The genealogical roots of landscape stress a static representation of space and time; change is difficult to depict in the landscape painting genre, which is why Cosgrove (1985:57) critiques spatial sciences (such as geography) for having assumed this ideological feature. However, the integration of environmental sciences in the humanities and social sciences bred new perspectives on landscape in the latter half of the twentieth century. For instance, the development of environmental history and processual archaeology directed points of inquiry toward the historiography of human adaptation to the environment and the material vestiges of the feedback loop between humans and their ecosystems. Landscape was seen as a dynamic setting for human action and cultural and natural change with many possible points of intersection. These scholars contributed a temporal dimension to the landscape concept. More recently, postmodern turns in geography, history, and archaeology stress the experiential dimension of landscape: the phenomenology of transforming space as place and a critique of landscape as a cultural
construct inscribed on the environment. In short, postmodernism added a subjective subjectivity back into the frame of landscape.

Contemporary scholars of landscape blend the temporal and experiential dimensions to focus on memory and the ways in which human activities are inscribed on the landscape. For instance, Tilley (1994) stresses the contingent aspects of memory and place: we remember within spatial and temporal contexts just as we experience places within space and time. Landscapes thus accumulate these layers of activities and experiences to be accessed via our memories in the present moment of observation and inscription; as Lowenthal (1975:6) observes, “the past is not only recalled; it is incarnate in the things we build and the landscapes we create.” In turn, we rely upon “the past,” in the form of both collective and individual memories, to make sense of contemporary landscapes (Lowenthal 1975).

Our minds’ eyes have been trained to view our environment as landscape and to interpret landscapes in spatial and temporal terms. When Smithson observed Passaic’s Union Avenue Bridge, he identified picturesque qualities on the basis of the “visual ideology” of landscape (Cosgrove 1985) and a shared lexicon of visual cues that signal the monumental: the conscious memorial of history in the penumbra of the forgotten past. Yet, what of Smithson’s photograph of a photograph? While photographers project the visual ideology of landscape through their viewfinders, photographs themselves are not simplistic reproductions of reality. Rather, photographs are “traces” of their subject matters: “Unlike any other visual image, a photograph is not a rendering, an imitation or an interpretation of its subject, but actually a trace of it” (Berger 1980:50). Photography “fixes” the subject matter in time, at the instant that the photographer chooses (Berger
Photographs don’t simply capture the world as is; photographs record the observations of the photographer in time and space.

Although easy to assume that a photograph depicts reality—through its capturing of a moment of light, it in fact, does not. When Smithson remarks that the monument looks like a picture, he is referring to the visual ideology of landscape; however, when he feels like he is taking a photograph of a photograph, he is referring to the visual lexicon of photography—not reality. Photographs depict their subject matter in particular ways that human vision cannot reproduce. First, photographs are framed; that is, there is an imposed and finite border, unlike human vision, which is “unbounded” (Snyder 1980:505). Second, our eyes are incapable of focusing beyond the center of our view, whereas photographs depict a sharpness of focus and delineation among objects across their entire plane (Snyder 1980:505). Finally, the color of photographs can range far beyond the human eye’s capabilities: from monochromatic sepia to high contrast hyper color (Snyder 1980:505).

Thus, when photographs evoke memories and speak to us of the past, they do so not because they reproduce what we have seen before with our own eyes, but because they represent what we anticipate we should have seen (Berger 1972, 1980; Snyder 1980:509; Sontag 1977). A photograph carries meaning both in terms of what is shown and what is absent: “A photograph is effective when the chosen moment which it records contains a quantum of truth which is generally applicable, which is as revealing about what is absent from the photograph as about what is present in it” (Berger 1972:181). In other words, we take for granted that the photograph represents a moment in time (i.e. the mechanically-aided observation of the intersection of space and time), and we
comprehend photographs in terms of our personal and collective memories, much as we do with landscapes. In this way we can find both presence and absence congruous and incongruous with our expectations (as derived from our memory banks). Viewing a photograph is like encountering someone else’s memory trace: the extent that the depicted subject is congruous with our own expectations is in part a measure of the alignment of shared memory. Much like Nora’s (1989) lieux de mémoire and Connerton’s (2009) memorial, photographs represent certain remembrances while marking what we have forgotten: “All photographs are there to remind us of what we forget….Because each one of us forgets different things, a photo more than a painting may change its meaning according to who is looking at it” (Berger 1992:192). As Berger observes, the “arrested moment”-ness of some photographs speaks to the alienation of the viewer from the historical context depicted (Berger 1980:57).

Among the Photovoice images of Hadley, perhaps the two that best capture this phenomenon are Jesse Shotland’s Fresh Sweet Corn (2011; Figure 1) and Local Pump (2011; Figure 2). Taken in response to the first assignment, “Hadley’s heritage is…,” Shotland’s photos consciously play off of the dissonance between visual reality and photography to evoke memory. Fresh Sweet Corn depicts a private farm stand selling corn. The image is a grainy black and white with a soft focus directed toward the center plane of view, which is emphasized by the circular vignette applied to the border. A similar treatment is given in Local Pump but with a subtle color effect meant to evoke vintage Kodak film.
Both images are purposefully nostalgic; the 1940s font on the sign in *Fresh Sweet Corn* and the boxy mustard-colored gas pump aid the effect. The viewer might not even
notice that Shotland has manipulated *Fresh Sweet Corn* to erase modern artifacts such as telephone and electric wires. Their absence completes the photograph regardless of whether the wires would truly have been present during the time period referenced. The graininess and soft focus are meant to lessen the hyper-real focusing capabilities of photography. The desaturation of color, especially in *Fresh Sweet Corn*, evokes nostalgia through its reference to earlier black and white media, but also evokes memory through the paradoxical effect Berger (1992:192–193) theorizes:

> The sharper and more isolated the stimulus memory receives, the more it remembers. The more comprehensive the stimulus, the less it remembers. This is perhaps why black-and-white photography is paradoxically more evocative than colour photography. It stimulates a faster onrush of memories because less has been given, more has been left out.

Shotland parodies vintage/retro photographic techniques to transform contemporary landscapes as historic. Asked to photograph Hadley’s heritage, Shotland self-consciously created a memory trace of a memory trace by removing detail from his contemporary photographic observation to allow our memories to fill in the rest. The present day subjects: an active farm stand and a newly installed gas pump, are thrown backwards in time, and Shotland uses his medium to play on our learned visual ideologies of landscapes and photography to capture a perceived continuity of Hadley’s rural heritage. Both Smithson and Shotland layer photographs in photographs. However, whereas Smithson opted for a starkness to satirize the monumentalizing of the steel bridge and its wooden sidewalk—a sweeping away of the curtain to reveal the alienation of modernity, Shotland chose a creative playfulness to engage collective memory—a deliberate erasure to cajole the mind to connect the temporal dots between Hadley’s past and present. For those who recognize the two landmarks that Shotland memorializes, the
images bring a smile—a slow nod of recognition—a bit of laughter once they realize that’s So-and-So’s new gas pump—a faster nod—that’s it—and isn’t that something.

Heritage, Distinction, and Branding

When presenting my dissertation prospectus, a committee member wondered whether the Hadley photography project would elicit redundant images of the same iconic scene: a tobacco barn and its plowed fields. The commenter had good reason to wonder since the scene is familiar to anyone who drives the streets of Hadley and was oft-repeated in 350th literature, parade floats, and on the Preserved Farmland road signs erected across the town (Figure 3).

![Preserved Farmland sign and its visually redundant context. (Photograph by author)](image)

Figure 3: Preserved Farmland sign and its visually redundant context. (Photograph by author)

As though to prove this point, two photographers, in response to “Hadley’s heritage is…” took virtually identical photographs (Figure 4–Figure 5). Not only did they photograph
the same scene of a tobacco barn, plowed fields, and hills in the background, they
photographed the same barn, from nearly the identical perspective (Windoloski chose to
“frame” her image with a nearby tree while Remer stepped away from the tree to snap her
photo; the women were not together at the time).

Figure 4: Old Barn. (Photo credit Debbie Windoloski / Hadley 2011)

Figure 5: Forever Farming at the Base of the Mountain. (Photo credit Emily R.C. Remer
2011)
Interestingly, while the photos are similar, the photographers have chosen to emphasize different, and somewhat contradictory features embedded in the scene in their photographs’ titles (see figure captions). Windoloski’s title focuses on the tobacco barn, which has fallen into disrepair as seen with the missing slats, overgrown vegetation, and a third hole in the roof that has gone unpatched. The barn signifies the passage of time—a rural quaintness—a romanticism that is further evoked through the tree branches that form a natural vignette around the scene. Meanwhile, Remer’s title focuses on the persistence of farming, as represented by the recently harvested field next to the barn. The scene simultaneously speaks to the history of farming and its present day reality in town.

These slightly differing perspectives represent differing takes on the paradoxical interplay of nostalgic timelessness and the ever-present material evidence of the passage of time that picturing heritage can present. While heritage connotes continuity, it must do so by speaking in temporal terms; that is, continuity must be marked across time, and thus must incorporate enough difference so that the similarity can be recognized against the backdrop of changing historical contexts (Wobst 1999:128). For continuity to be recognized, it must refer to the past and the present (and imply the future)—within itself. Lowenthal cites T.S. Eliot’s description of this intertwining within historic narratives: “a sense of timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and…temporal together” (1975:11). The photographers’ choice for motif of a recently harvested field and the old barn mixes past and present in an agreeable and iconic way in the public memory of Hadley.
The other photographs that comprise answers to the prompt, “Hadley’s heritage is,” are fairly consistent in their depictions of rural life and landscape. Of the sixteen images curated by the photographers for the online exhibit, six are of agricultural landscapes, two are of farm buildings, and four depict memorials (three in a cemetery and one historical marker). There is one image of a historic church and one image of an old brick building that still serves as a potato packing plant (although the photographer entitled the piece *Abandoned*). One photograph is a macro view of a cicada on a cornstalk. Finally, one photograph depicts a family picking tomatillos on a farm.\(^8\)

Like Smithson’s (1967) encounter in Passaic, the photographers recognized these scenes as “pictures” that represent Hadley’s heritage, incorporating both present practices (e.g. plowing fields, picking produce) as well as vestiges of earlier times (e.g. ruins of tobacco barns, gravestones). The similarity between the photos points to some of the unconscious ways in which community members learn to recognize their heritage in a fairly standard range of visual tropes, and how this has been successful in Hadley to the extent that two photographers, one who has lived in Hadley for much of her life and one who recently moved to town, can share a nearly identical view. To share a conscious, “official” heritage memory, one must learn the standard heritage lexicon of a place—eyes must be trained to recognize the elements that, when brought together, form the “distinctive” landscape of past and present mingling together and pointing toward a

\(^8\) This is the only photograph in the final selection to show people, which represents an unintended bias due to the IRB’s requirement to gather signed photo releases from all identifiable photographic subjects (and the photographers’ discomfort in collecting such signatures).
future. And, within the traditional, didactic heritage paradigm, one must associate that lexicon with one’s own sense of belonging to the place and its community identity.

In this way, heritage is similar to a trademark, and is one reason why it lends itself to easy commodification as part of place-based marketing strategies. A trademark, such as a logo, holds value not in any natural claim that a company can make to it (e.g. originality), but in the investment in what U.S. law identifies as “goodwill,” that is, the extent to which the trademark comes to signify the company’s identity (248 U.S. 90 1918; Desai 2012). A strong trademark is one that immediately invokes the company’s reputation in a consumer’s mind; the worth of the golden arches of McDonald’s has little to do with the aesthetic qualities of a rounded yellow M, but a lot to do with the reliability and familiarity of the sensory experience of consuming, say, McDonald’s fries when compared to Burger King’s or your mother’s. Goodwill is created through repetitive transactions with the consumer that reinforce the brand’s distinguishing characteristics (compared to the competition) while maintaining a high threshold of internal homogeneity in order to provide the consumer with an assurance of predictability in future transactions. 9 This is similar to how the social process of heritage produces ontological security and why the gravitational pull of standardized heritage lexicons can be so great, especially as the objects of heritage become commoditized.

Hadley residents share a well-defined lexicon of what constitutes their town’s identity as identified in the Photovoice photographs, focus group interviews, and my ethnographic observations around town. These include rural landscapes, scenic views, 

9 See (Ritzer 1999) for a deeper theorization of this process and a discussion of its broader social impacts.
natural beauty, the interplay of people and their landscape, a strong sense of community, the practicality of citizens, open space, a small-town atmosphere, and agricultural traditions and products. Yet, these features rarely stand on their own; in conversation, they are often discussed in contrast to other places to highlight and legitimize their distinction. If Hadley is rural, then one would assume that a more densely populated, cosmopolitan locale is both different and less desirable (Hummon 1990). In other words, community identity must be distinguished from the “Other,” i.e. the often stereotyped and essentialized image of those communities which are seen to pose the greatest risk to the integrity of one’s own (both in the threat to the home community’s distinguishing characteristics as well as from the intrusive arrival of new people and alien memory communities).

I found that this “Other” was close at hand; Hadley residents discussed their neighboring (and “daughter”) community of Amherst more often than any other geographic locale outside of Hadley (Figure 6). Amherst, which was originally part of Hadley, has a greater population density than Hadley due to the presence of the University of Massachusetts and Amherst College within the town’s borders. According to census statistics, Amherst’s population density expanded dramatically in the second half of the twentieth century and now has seven times more people and 16 times greater population density than Hadley. In contrast to Hadley, Amherst has a distinctive town center with a concentration of commercial and civic buildings. Although not an urban
metropolis by census standards, to Hadley residents, Amherst represents urban and suburban traits when compared to how they recognize their own town’s rural character.\textsuperscript{10}

While Amherst is also very active in open space and farmland preservation, Hadley community members focused on elements of Amherst that represented contrast with their own town. For example, folks complained about the perceived differences in public works, civic services, high taxes, and farmland:

Informant 1: And in the winter, the minute you cross the town line, you’re hitting pothole after pothole after pothole. It cost me $900.00 and some odd bucks because I broke all kinds of springs and hammers. And the minute you come to Hadley, not one pothole anywhere. Roads are plowed, they’re well taken care of. That’s the big difference.
Informant 2: Yeah, absolutely.

\textsuperscript{10} For an in depth ethnography of perceived rural, suburban, and urban character traits and associated values, see (Hummon 1990).
Informant A: I went to the Amherst Post Office today. I can’t believe it. It was about 8:45, the line was forming; the window wasn’t open.
Informant B: I know. But the lines—always the lines.
Informant A: I couldn’t understand it.
Informant C: Don’t ever go to the Amherst Post Office. … I think they are terrible.

Informant: [recounting a conversation had with friend from Amherst]
“Every time I drive through Hadley, I curse Amherst.” He said, “Why don’t we have that here?” You know, they’re paying twice as much in taxes as we are.

Informant: It would be like Amherst or Northampton that’ve lost all their farms.

Informant: We’re not in Amherst, fortunately.

Community members also spoke of misconceptions that Amherst residents had of Hadley (making fun of Amherst’s “cosmopolitan” attitude toward its “provincial” mother), such as this story told about a new coffee shop that opened in Hadley:

Informant: We are at the Esselon Café. You know, it’s really a cool place. It was with people from Amherst, I think; and they looked around and they said, “This is too good for Hadley.” [Laughter from group]

While these conversations focused on perceived differences, the subtexts of the stories didn’t dwell on the perceived failings of Amherst, which were accepted as part of its essential character. Rather, they served as cautionary warnings of elements that shouldn’t be allowed to invade, replace, or dilute the distinguishing characteristics of Hadley. In other words, the differences that community members focused on in their neighboring town represented risks to their own shared identity.11

The power of official heritage to shape local identities depends upon its internal “legibility” and its clearly marked boundaries between “us” and “them” (Scott 1998; Glassberg 2001 for similar examples of this conscious differentiation within other Western Massachusetts neighborhoods.)
Yúdice 2003). Thus, heritage can be a socially constraining force, especially as heritage elements are objectified to signify identity and belonging (and perhaps even more so as that objectification is solidified through the commodification of tourist attractions, “local” products, and souvenirs). As elsewhere, nonconforming elements of Hadley’s heritage are ignored, veiled, or projected on to external places such as Amherst.

While the issue of *what* belongs in Hadley is often confronted in contrastive language with neighboring towns, the issue of *who* belongs in Hadley is less often discussed. Residents recognize old-timers and newcomers as two basic groups of community members. Newcomers remain outsiders until they learn how to negotiate recognition from the established members of the community:

Informant: Boy, I can remember…when we first got here, our tax bill seemed high, and Albert Williams\(^{12}\) says, “Go call Robert Fleming.” So Robert came over and says, “Look. Go see the assessor. Tell them I sent you.” We went down with our tax bill…and he said, “Oh are you the ones with the kids? You live next door to Albert, next to Ida.” Here, the tax bill was cut in half.

But, not every newly arrived resident seeks old-timer status; some—particularly those with strong family or ethnic ties on which they depend for economic and cultural survival—may even find strategic use in remaining outsiders. Such was the case with a successful member of a newly arrived ethnic community:

Informant: His name was Henry—let me tell you about him…we didn’t have a record of the occupation of his [business]. … So I went to see him and he says, “No speak English. No speak English.” Two weeks later, I’m at East Mountain waiting to tee off; there’s only two of us. So they bring in the third to join us and it’s this—it didn’t hit me at first, but he’s speaking perfect English, you know, two great giant Big Berthas in his bag and stuff, and he says, “Well, my name is Henry. I own the [business] in

\(^{12}\) All names have been changed.
Hadley.” And I thought, “You son of a bitch,” you know. Two weeks ago he couldn’t speak English. [Group laughter]

Henry’s story is humorous in how he skillfully manipulated his identity in differing social contexts with the members of the town bureaucracy. But for the most part, outsiders are unwanted and community members communicate this in various ways:

Informant 24: I once saw a bumper sticker that said, “Now you’ve seen Hadley”
Informant 35: “Go home” or something.
Informant 24: “Go home,” “Go Away,” or “Don’t come back.”

…
Informant 40: That’s great. Somebody told me they should have a trailer park at one end of town and a bad, rundown cemetery at the other end.

Informant 24: That’s great.

When community members questioned this position, they were met with tension and attempts to shut down conversation:

Informant U: I have a mixed feeling. I think it’s a great town to live and I welcome at a limited pace [chuckle] so few families coming in. The schools can only take so much and the infrastructure at the water treatment plant. So growth has to be slow. But I don’t like that we’ve kept out working people. I don’t like it that there’s no affordable housing so that a guy who’s a mailman, or a cop, or a teacher can’t afford to live in the town…
Informant V: How do you do that?
Informant U: By having smaller houses, probably smaller lots, and maybe even apartment buildings. Hadley doesn’t allow apartment buildings, you know, unless you’re a—
Informant: V: I guess.

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13 This statement, which was implicitly understood by the focus group participants, implied that by placing undesirable landscape features that stereotypically symbolize rural blight on either end of the town’s major thoroughfare, visitors would be dissuaded from venturing further into town or consider moving to the town. Ironically, such features (e.g., an adult video store and a “dead mall”) used to bookend the town’s east-west thoroughfare of Route 9, which has since been revamped (the video store removed and replaced with a new town welcome sign and a more commercially-successful set of malls). However, this was not commented upon in the context of the tongue-in-cheek suggestion.
Informant U: So that’s nice for the White folk, but it’s not necessarily good for the community at large. I know it’s uncool to say that, but I kind of wish they were—
Informant V: Yeah. All of this has been discussed over the last 50 years, you know. … Everybody’s entitled to an opinion and someone will have an opposite opinion of what you’re saying.
Informant X: Can we move on?
Informant V: Yes!

The group that is generally perceived as most alien to Hadley, and the people least discussed, are the “transient” farm laborers, many of whom are of African descent from the Caribbean and are either seasonally housed on the local farms or are bused in from more urban/diverse towns in the region such as Holyoke and Springfield. While these workers are essential to the maintenance of the active farmland that Hadley community members cherish as part of their heritage, they are rarely (and certainly not publicly the entire time I was in the town) recognized for their contributions to the vitality of the community.

One local farmer broke this silence with me one day when he introduced himself to me as a “farmer” and then corrected himself: “Well, we’re more like Southern plantation owners—we get Jamaicans to do all the hard work.” He pointed to his rotund stomach and self-deprecatingly explained that things have changed: he’s gotten fat from not doing the “hard work.” He then lamented the increased mechanization of farming as well as the reliance on chemicals and pesticides—nostalgically, farming just isn’t what it used to be.

Throughout my research, Hadley informants identified the heritage of their town in terms of distinction and difference—that is, by what their heritage consists of as well as what it doesn’t. The redundant imagery of the tobacco barn landscape, as exemplified by two nearly identical photographs taken by longtime and new residents, signifies that
which is present and cherished, and also represents a shared recognition of that which is (or should be) absent: exurban sprawl, immigrants, and migrant farmworkers who remain outside the frame of the photographed landscapes. In this case, the camera provided a conduit for the communication and interpretation of collective memory, and as the resulting photographs were discussed, participants relied upon the concept of distinction to identify and discuss their heritage identity. While on the surface distinction appears to revolve around difference, it is as much reliant upon similarity. The tobacco barn landscape is distinct because viewers perceive it to be rare elsewhere and unusually prominent in Hadley. Yet, this heritage distinction is also a reflection of community members’ anxieties about how their landscapes and identities change throughout time.

**Place and Placelessness**

One day, a few years before beginning this dissertation project, I was driving in Hadley and came to an intersection. Four completely flat parcels of land were laid out around me at a perfectly square 4-way stop sign. The yellowing stalks of corn were what my mother would call, as tall as an elephant’s eye (by the Fourth of July). A nineteenth century farmhouse stood at one corner next to a red gambrel barn. In a flash I was at the corner of Washington and Munn Roads back in my hometown in Ohio. In that one moment I nearly believed I could turn left and reach my old high school or turn right and find my best friend. While the moment passed, I was left with a residual fondness for that corner in Hadley where my eyes no longer saw the mountains in the distance and instead remembered the Western Reserve landscape of my childhood.

This experience speaks to the power of our place attachments and the ways in which we view present landscapes through the lens of our personal and collective
memories. While heritage mediates group identity and belonging, memory mediates place, making space knowable and familiar. Thus, in considering an ethics of shared heritage, the significance of place (i.e. “spirit of place” [Turgeon 2009]) should not be essentialized as what it is not, nor should it be determined only by the acknowledged “old-timers.” Rather, it should be measured in terms both personal and collective by the ever-changing assemblage of associated community members.

While the tobacco barn landscape is a publicly valued “place” of Hadley, officially emblematic of the town’s heritage distinction, and therefore exhibits little variation in public renderings, places of personal significance in Hadley exhibit the widest variation. In this realm, Hadley community members were encouraged in various stages of my research to form their own associations and values based on personal memories.

When asked to take pictures of “My Private View” in town, photographers snapped a range of images. In order to capture the personal aspect of these views, some photographers moved away from the scale of landscape to the macro scale of elements on the landscape. For instance, India Meyers’ *A Foggy Morning* (2011), *Clover* (2011), and *Through the Grass* (2011), as well as Eli Catlin’s *Milkweed* (2011) and *Milkweed 2* (2011), and even Emily R.C. Remer’s *Bird Landing* (2011), focused on small details such as blades of grass or dew on milkweed within larger landscapes to signify what they claim as their own perspectives in Hadley—and that their personal attachments are formed on a more intimate scale. Many of these images, especially those taken by teenagers, were taken on or near the Rail Trail, which serves bike commuters and recreationalists. The only two interior photographs also belonged to this set: Emily R.C.
Remer’s *Check it Out!* (2011), which looks out on Hadley through the window of the library and Kelly Erwin’s *Inside North Star* (2011), which captures an unusually quiet common space in her school building, an effect aided by the soft focus and exposure of her photograph.

These private views differ sharply and suggest the conscious exclusion of eligibility of intimate private memories from the wider public heritage imaginary (the standardized lexicon of which was dutifully illustrated in the series of photographs taken for the theme “Hadley’s heritage is…”). For instance, Janice Stone’s *Woods Path* (2011) is rather nondescript, as is Remer’s *Bird Landing* (2011). The most divergent of all these images, however, was Jesse Shotland’s *Wing Wong* (2011), which shows the storefront of a Chinese restaurant in town of the same name. For Shotland, Wing Wong is his favorite place in town—it’s where he goes to get a good, cheap meal, and he has a fond attachment to this place and an accumulation of memories. But, this subjective, individualized perspective was clearly not shared by many viewers of the photos. To most, the standard, conventionalized images were the only appropriate ones for this theme. One woman even remarked to me at the exhibit about what a “shame” that place was [to Hadley].

To many insiders, Shotland’s *Wing Wong* belonged in another set of images: those that depicted “An Outsider’s Perspective.” These photographs mainly consisted of images of Route 9, the major commercial and commuting thoroughfare that bisects the town. This commercial strip is often seen as Hadley’s “Other” within. Five images showed cars driving on Route 9: Eli Catlin’s *A Long Night in Town Goes by Fast* (2011), India Meyer’s *Lights* (2011), Jesse Shotland’s *Hello and Goodbye* (2011), Debbie
Windoloski’s *Heading to the Mall* (2011), and Janice Stone’s *Traffic and Commerce* (2011). Kelly Erwin captured the bus commuter’s perspective on Route 9 in her *Waiting for the Bus* (2011). Commercial establishments were also pictured such as Emily R. C. Remer’s *The Walmart Strip* (2011) and Janice Stone’s *Joe’s Pumpkin Patch* (2011), which shows a Disney-fied version of a U-Pick pumpkin stand at Trader Joe’s. Kelly Erwin’s *We Are Bigger than We Look* (2011) was a tongue-in-cheek commentary: the commercial sign is in a prominent location on Route 9, and while it is meant to denote the size of the advertised nursery, Erwin uses it to comment upon how outsiders miss out on the true extent of the town. This was verified by focus group participants:

Informant 1: Most people don’t know the rest of Hadley exists.
Informant 2: It’s true.

Informant: As Bernie said earlier that about 75% of people don’t realize that there’s anything beyond Route 9, and I think most of us hope that it continues to be that way.

Thus if the tobacco barn landscape is the emblematic symbol of placeness in Hadley, Route 9 is the emblem of placelessness, so much so that Glassberg used a photograph he took of Route 9 in Hadley to represent contemporary theorizations of placelessness in *Sense of History* (2001:119). Prevailing critiques (Augé 1995; Harvey 1989; Miles 2010; Soja 2011) cite placelessness, the inability to “develop and sustain an authentic sense of place,” (Glassberg 2001:118–120) as a syndrome of American commercialization and link it to their assertion that Americans lack a historical consciousness. The commercial landscape is primarily viewed in negative terms as sprawl (when occupied) or blight (when abandoned). Yet Shotland’s *Wing Wong* is incongruous with shared landscape values surrounding place and placelessness in Hadley. Although several businesses in town are fondly thought of (e.g. a popular Polish lunch
counter, the local watering hole, a “pretty cool” coffee shop), the locally-owned Chinese restaurant represents a generic placelessness that most community members don’t value both because of its alien cultural and ethnic associations and because of the assumed sameness of Chinese restaurants everywhere.

Ironically, it is that sameness that give commercial landscapes their distinctive power to superficially dilute place-based identity: architecture, parking lots, and the shopping experience are faithfully reproduced wherever they occur (Augé 1995; Miles 2010). When you walk into a Target in Hadley, you might as well be walking in to the Target that sprang up down the street from my childhood home in Ohio. The reproduction of design across the landscape may provide welcome and predictable experiences to visitors, and perhaps even signify a shared sense of national or regional identity, although increasingly that identity is more likely to be brought about by shared roles as consumers rather than citizens (Miles 2010; Putnam 2001). Thus, while place is mediated by memory, so is placelessness. The generic qualities breed such familiarity that their distinction melts away. This was captured by Eli Catlin in his photograph, *Could Be Anywhere* (2011) (Figure 7), which depicts a hotel along the Route 9 corridor. Catlin cleverly exposed the photograph in a way that obscured all geographically identifiable data such as license plates and even the hotel’s name. This leads me to suggest that placelessness may not be the opposite of place, but represents those values and embodied practices that are consciously excluded by official memory communities in their lexicon of place and heritage. Catlin’s hotel is meant to be a home away from home—recognized and experienced the same in Texas as in Massachusetts, and in this way it is anything but one’s own home.
Towns resist placelessness through planning bylaws such as requiring design reviews to attempt to blend the commercial landscape using particular architectural elements. For instance, the hotel in Catlin’s photo exhibits the symmetry, rooflines, neoclassical columns, paint color, and paned windows that comprise Hadley’s design guidelines. But, as previous critics have noted the decontextualized architectural elements, when mashed in with the logistics of contemporary commercial design, form a postmodern pastiche that parodies historic architecture as a theme park might (Klingmann 2007; Venturi et al. 1977). Adding a cupola to a hotel doesn’t create place; as one informant noted, having a “colonial style” Walmart doesn’t change her opinion that it’s a blight on her landscape. Nor do those people who wield the design bylaws feel they have much of an impact on the real issues:
Informant 7: Then we say, “You can—it has to be this color. It has to do this,” and then they put a building that looks like the [local business]. And we’re—you know.
Informant 8: But, what can you do?
Informant 7: And we only have so much that we can do. And then, there’s the [new building going up]…
Informant 8: …Just what we need [sarcastically].
Informant 7: It looks awful, but we don’t—we can’t say, “No, you” we can’t say, “we hate this. We don’t want you to be here.” … All we can do is say, “It can’t be this color, and it can’t be too tall, and it can’t be—the lights, blah, blah blah.”

Hadley community members have a complicated relationship to the placelessness of Route 9 that reveals how placelessness, like place, is culturally constructed, mediated through memory, and maintained through a shared ethics. In fact, following Gibson-Graham’s directives for rereading, I suggest that Route 9’s placelessness is critical to enabling and sustaining a shared heritage ethics in town. Whereas the neighboring town of Amherst provides a foil on which Hadley community members can project the undesirable and threatening elements of their own identity, Route 9 is undeniably within their town’s boundaries and is of central focus to outsiders who view their town. Thus, the Route 9 corridor presents an opportunity for Hadley community members to confront their history of making the Route 9 landscape and to actively discuss the internal values represented by Route 9’s placelessness. In other words, Route 9 pushes the heritage issue in town because it provides evidence that threats to the community’s ethics are not simply exerted by outside forces (e.g. outside developers), but are part of complex histories that implicate community members. Rather than omit it from local heritage commemoration (such as the 350th) as non-heritage or non-place, Route 9 should be reintegrated into such narratives.
Conversations about Route 9 were the most passionate that I witnessed—more so than the enthusiastic discussions of what makes Hadley special. The Route 9 corridor is both actively embraced as that which makes the rest of Hadley possible and actively disowned as part of the town’s character—oftentimes by the same person within the same conversation.

Informant: What commercial development has done for Hadley is it’s made their tax rate so attractive to people in Leverett and Amherst and other places that would’t think of living in Hadley move to Hadley, so you have to balance…it’s all on Route 9 and there it is, and the rest of the town is pretty much like it was 50 years ago, pretty much. So, it’s a balance. You either wanna pay Amherst taxes or you have Route 9 commercially developed.

Informant: It’s a trade-off. I think it worked well for Hadley. If Hadley hadn’t allowed this [Route 9] to go on, there wouldn’t be farms here….It’d be like Amherst or Northampton that’ve lost all their farms.

Informant: If all you focus on is Route 9, you’re not looking at Hadley. That is not Hadley. It’s a part of Hadley, a small part.

Informant: …they know that Route 9 is not Hadley.

Informant 1: I was driving down Route 9 yesterday, I guess, maybe today, I don’t know, and I—there’s a whole stretch now that’s just a big mess ….And I thought, well now, just take this whole road, just take it, and build it up and let it be what it is. And I didn’t feel that way. I’d never felt that way….I remember [a former selectboard member] saying, “Well, it doesn’t matter if they build these malls….And you can let them. It doesn’t matter, because then it’s already done. And now, it keeps the part where we are nicer, so they won’t build.” And I thought—I hadn’t really thought about that, but I haven’t forgotten…Well, that’s what’s happening. Route 9 is developed….But I don’t think [the businesses] pay enough taxes…

Informant 2: …They use our resources tremendously.

Informant 1: Yeah.

Informant 2: I don’t think they give back equally.

Informant 1: Not that much.

Landscape and place are dynamic, socially-produced concepts; yet, so too are the commercial, “supermodern,” landscapes of placelessness (Augé 1995:78).
Informant: So there was the mall and then there was the new mall, and then there was the dead mall, and then there was the mall of the living dead, and then a whole new generation of these malls going through these different phases.

Such commercial non-places (or every-place) provide an important counterpoint to the standardized lexicon of rural place-making. That is, non-places are not vacuums of place, they are ever-present signifiers and reminders of that which should remain absent but in their presence prompt anxiety and social tension. Non-places are highly fraught and socially loaded places. In a shared heritage ethics, this tension between the nostalgia of place and the anxiety of non-place (and the corresponding senses of belonging and disassociation) should be centered in public discussion rather than conveniently outside of the photograph’s frame (as in the *Commemorative Book*) or dismissed as “not Hadley” (as claimed in the focus groups).

**Hadley’s Future Heritage: Eden and Apocalypse**

Community members use heritage to anticipate the future in ways that quell insecurities about the unknown. The continuity of shared memories, identities, and places provides a sense of security and a roadmap for ethical choices. Just as one person finds the small town atmosphere of Hadley comforting, another can experience it as a stifling “boondocks,” and yet another can experience this entire range of emotion in one lifetime as one informant recounted who returned to his hometown to retire. Whereas Wing Wong is Shotland’s special place, to others, it’s representative of ethnic intrusion or the undesirable elements of the placelessness of Route 9. Similarly, views of the future incorporate fears and hopes that aren’t shared by all and attest to how the alienation of modernity, often theorized as an external threat, is not experienced as a single essential
reality by individuals—despite the official heritage imaginary that sees past and future as moral opposites.

The difficulty of publicly expressing less dualistic, personal views of Hadley’s changing identity was made clear when the volunteer photographers were asked to capture images of Hadley’s future. They were at first stumped, being attuned to heritage representations that freeze time to preserve a timeless, clearly defined essence. Not to mention the greater challenge of how one can fix in time that which has not yet occurred. This presented a much larger task than the previous assignment, “Gone but not forgotten,” for we more readily see traces of the past than we see harbingers of the future. But, a shared heritage ethics implies a moral imperative to liberate ourselves from essentialized images of “the past” that are somehow more authentic or authoritative than the historical conditions that truly threaten to undermine the cultural, social, and economic foundations of community-building. Doing so will enable an ethics in which the heritage imaginary is an inclusive and expansive space of hope rather than an exclusive and contracting space of reaction and fear. Our future’s past, the traces of our future memories, identities, and places are present in our contemporary material surroundings and creative capacity. Wobst reminds us that our materialities are our “products and precedents” for our behavior (1999); the future, in a way, is inscribed now.

In this light, the photographs of Hadley’s future heritage could be categorized in two camps: optimistic and pessimistic. The optimistic images represented symbols of hope, continuity, and adaptability. Eli Catlin’s Finn (2011) depicts a young child cradling an adult-sized guitar, indicating an intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and Emily R.C. Remer’s Teach Your Children (2011) implicates the educational system and
parents in her command. India Meyer’s *The Youth* (2011) depicts a group of teenage girls walking down Route 9 holding hands: symbolizing the bonds that are maintained among her peers, upon which the future rests (even amid the placelessness of Route 9!). Several photographs depicted farmland under active preservation or prioritized for future preservation efforts such as Janice Stone’s *Vision of Future Great Meadow Protected from Development* (2011) and Emily R. C. Remer’s *Forever Farmland* (2011). Emily R.C. Remer’s *We Support Local Agriculture —Be a Local Hero* (2011) emphasizes continuity and community values coupled with instructions. Janice Stone’s *Future Farms—APR and CSA* (2011) speaks to the capacity of Hadley’s farmers to adapt to changing conditions—from integrating solar panels on tobacco farm roofs to reconfiguring risk management through community-supported agriculture.

While optimistic visions offered directives, pessimistic, dystopic images were warnings. For instance, Kelly Erwin’s *Empty Parking Lot* (2011) and Eli Catlin’s *Caution* (2011) question the limits and implications for further development of Route 9 with Erwin’s photo reminding residents of the life cycles of malls and dead malls. Janice Stone’s *Future Solar Farm* (2011) shows a sheep pasture slated for development by the University of Massachusetts Amherst, whose towering dormitories loom over the otherwise peaceful view in the background. Along the same lines, Windoloski’s *Disappearing Bucolic Views* (2011) echo Catlin’s image of endangered land in *For Sale* (2011).

The dichotomy of ethical directives and warnings was captured nicely in Jesse Shotland’s *Wasteland / Paradise* (2011) (Figure 8). In this diptych, Shotland shows two images of the same view of a soccer field, corn field, and housing project. Through
photo-manipulation, Shotland expresses divergent paths for the landscape’s future. In this way, Shotland de-essentializes the march of time and the progress of modernity (which underwrites alienation) by posing the two futures as possible, and perhaps implying that it could go either way—whether by chance or human intervention is left to the viewer to imagine. Shotland’s diptych pictures the potential of the future in landscape form. In this way, he playfully inverts our visual ideology of landscape and photography to enable us to imagine forward in time rather than back. His image invites creativity about how we plan to arrive at the Paradise view and actively avoid the Wasteland and reveals that every landscape holds the capacity to change in ways toward place and placelessness—and that these views may in fact be different matters of perspective within an ethical framework rather than material difference.

Thus, the Hadley Photovoice project demonstrated the central heritage-related concerns and desires of a rural community experiencing persistent and sometimes painful social and economic change. The project attempted to dig deeper than the official heritage imagery canonized in the Commemorative Book, which both marks the alienation of a living heritage ecosystem and masks the dynamism of the lived experiences of ongoing social, material, and ethical life. By combining photography with public ethnography, the Hadley Photovoice project documented the complex intertwining of landscape values, collective and private memories, emotional attachments and disassociations, and community identity boundaries. These meanings are often transmitted through standardized heritage lexicon, which inscribe distinction upon the landscape. However, this distinction relies upon presumptions and identifications of
differences and similarities that carry social implications for those who intrude upon or unwittingly cross such boundaries.

In “rereading” Hadley’s heritage—both in images and conversation—I found that the landscape most explicitly distanced from the town’s official heritage was also ambivalently regarded as the means to maintain those elements that were most highly valued as distinguishing characteristics of Hadley’s heritage. The “non-place” of Route 9 was not a vacuum of meaning nor the antithesis of Hadley’s placeness but a highly fraught locus for place and identity to be delineated, contested, and reproduced. Thus, shared heritage ethics must incorporate the future of such “non-places” into discussions of and plans for the future of any place’s heritage. Doing so may not only address the sustainability of such economic relationships (e.g., that the taxes collected from Route 9 businesses are only able to support heritage conservation efforts in other parts of town as long as those businesses are successful) but also transform the anxiety, fear, and resentment associated with non-places into a healthier regard of landscape, identity, and heritage as holistic and historically-contingent concepts. Such a transformation may be necessary in supporting an ethics in which the future becomes a creative and hopeful space that welcomes internal difference and distinction and the publicly interpreted past accrues many facets as community members publicly interpret or communicate their personal experiences in light of collective memory.
Figure 8: Wasteland / Paradise. (Photo credit: Jesse Shotland 2011)
CHAPTER 4
MOBILIZING SHARED HERITAGE FRAMEWORKS

The pink sands, tropical climate, and turquoise waters of the rural Bahamian island of Eleuthera\(^{14}\) have attracted casual tourists and more permanent vacation homeowners for several generations. However, such tourism has not generated a stable nor profitable economy for local residents and has impacted property relations, access to traditionally public landscapes and resources, fragile natural resources, and the maintenance of cultural traditions. In response to the threat of tourism development pressure, Shuan Ingraham and Michelle Johnson formed a non-profit community organization, One Eleuthera, in 2012 to build capacity for community-engaged sustainable development projects that make use of the island’s cultural and natural resource base. In order to support One Eleuthera’s community building agenda on an island where stakeholders, advocates, and resources are dispersed and not well integrated, I designed and developed a web-based information and communication system for public education, engagement, and fundraising. This online system was the first of several projects proposed by the Center for Heritage and Society in partnership with One Eleuthera following several exploratory visits to assess the islands’ cultural heritage needs (Chilton et al. 2011). One of the strategic goals of the partnership is to shift the focus from a narrowly defined tourism development agenda to a broader heritage development agenda, which certainly includes tourism (but not exclusively so). In this

\(^{14}\) The Bahamas is an archipelago of over 700 islands and cays. Most of the population is centered on the islands of New Providence (home of Nassau) and Grand Bahama (home to Freeport). The rest of the islands are referred to as the “Family Islands” (previously referred to as the “Out Islands” prior to independence).
chapter I summarize the current state of tourism development on Eleuthera and in the Bahamas, the major challenges of tourism development in the region, and the creative response to these challenges in the One Eleuthera initiative. I then describe how internet and communications technology (ICT) can support community development initiatives in keeping with shared heritage ethics using the case study of my design and development of the One Eleuthera Web Portal.

Tourism on Eleuthera: “Like a state within a state”

Some put on Sandals
Exclusive vandals
It’s a scandal
The way they operate
Building brick walls and barricades
Like a state within a state.

For Lucians to enter
For lunch or dinner
We need reservations, passport and visa
And if you sell near the hotel
I wish you well
They will yell and kick you out to hell.15

When the cruise ship drops anchor at Princess Cays in southern Eleuthera in the Bahamas, it looms over the horizon in nearby Bannerman Town, once a thriving port and the site of a former plantation whose land was willed to its enslaved laborers and their descendants upon Emancipation. While thousands of tourists are shuttled to the private beach owned by Princess Cruises, a handful of locals open their colorful “shacks” and wait for the tourists to browse their wares (Figure 9). However, to reach the local merchants, cruise goers must exit the all-inclusive island paradise of sand, sun, surf,

booze, food, and souvenirs through a chain link fence and walk past security guards to
the small cluster of wooden stalls (Figure 10). Although outside the gate, local merchants
are still observed and shut down if they offer goods (e.g. alcohol and tobacco) that
successfully compete with the resort. For those tourists intrepid enough to exit the gates,
they must show picture identification to reenter, a formality that prevents locals and non-
Princess Cruise guests access to the beach. When a small research team from the
University of Massachusetts Amherst attempted to enter the resort from the Bannerman
Town access gate, the security guard denied access, informing us that beyond the gate “is
not Eleuthera—it’s Princess Cays,” implying that we were gazing upon a separate,
sovereign land.

This “state within a state” phenomenon was recently critiqued (1994) in Rohan
Soen’s winning calypso of St. Lucia’s Carnival King. Soen observes that amid the all-
inclusive resorts in the Caribbean, locals feel “like an alien—in we own land” and grow
disenchanted with the enclosure of traditionally (and legally) publicly accessible beaches
it really success? If we gain ten billion—But lose the land we live on.” Indeed, many now
wonder whether the economic potential of tourism lauded by UNESCO and international
development banks outweighs its environmental and social effects (see review in Crick
1989).

In the shadow of a mega cruise ship carrying potential consumers, a quick drive
through neighboring Bannerman Town reveals a dearth of economic opportunities,
symbolized by the end of the copper lines at the access road to Princess Cays: the utilities
were not funded to be extended further south at the time of the Princess Cays
Figure 9: Vendor booths outside of Princess Cays, South Eleuthera. (Photo credit: Elizabeth Chilton 2011)

Figure 10: Security Gate, Princess Cays, South Eleuthera. (Photo credit: Elizabeth Chilton 2011)
Figure 11: Map of Eleuthera with inset of southern tip. Orange star is Princess Cays and yellow star represents approximate location of the original Bannerman Town (now marked as north of Princess Cays). Note cruise ships anchored off shore. (Images compiled and edited by author from Google Earth and Google Maps)
development. Ruins of houses abandoned within the last generation dot the landscape, and a shrinking population struggles to maintain their generational titles to their settlement’s land.¹⁶ Once the most bustling port on Eleuthera, today, one informant claims that Bannerman Town is officially abandoned and only has succeeded to maintain its settlement through a bureaucratic accident when road crews erected the Bannerman Town settlement sign too far north in neighboring Millars (effectively wiping Millars off the map). Amid the impoverishment, it is no surprise that the siren’s call of tourism development is tempting despite any negative social or environmental impacts, or even amid the evidence of uneven economic growth.

The resort model of Princess Cays follows the widespread success of all-inclusive tourism destinations developed since the late 1970s, and which has grown to become the most successful sector in the industry (Pattullo 2005:95–96; Wood 2000, 2006). The all-inclusive operates much like a cruise ship at sea: importing goods and services that are served within the gates, and therefore generating revenue within the resort, which enables

¹⁶ Land title in the Bahamas differs fundamentally from American property law. The Bahamian government holds title to 70% of the 100,000 square miles of land spread over 700 islands and cays (Drosdoff 2005). Some if not most private land is owned under generational title, which is handed down, without freehold (i.e. fee simple) title or documentation, within families and may be transferred among and between families through ad hoc titles and contracts (Drosdoff 2005). These titles can be challenging to defend and affect many Family Island residents who often leave their ancestral land for urban centers (Gibbs 2010). Further complicating matters, Bahamian property boundaries are naturally unstable due to the archipelago’s marine environment and climate. As of 2005, the IADB approved a $3.5 million loan to fund the creation of the nation’s first central land registry on the two most populous islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama and a comprehensive national land policy to assist with central land planning and administration (Drosdoff 2005).
the resort to control the flow of money (and people) back into the local sector.¹⁷ In the Bahamas, very little tourism revenue flows back to the local market: in 1994 a senior tourism official suggested that leakage (i.e. the loss of foreign exchange to taxes, imports, profits, and wages) was as high as 90%, meaning for every dollar earned in the tourism market, 90 cents went offshore to foreign interests (Pattullo 2005:52). Statistics compiled by the Caribbean Tourism Organization from 2002 confirmed that the Bahamas suffers the highest leakage among Caribbean nations at 85% (Karagiannis and Witter 2004:139). Considering that tourism accounts for 60–70% of The Bahamas’ GNP and 50–60% of its labor force, the high rate of leakage technically qualifies Bahamian tourism as an offshore activity (United States Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs 2012; Karagiannis and Witter 2004:150). While guarded and gated compounds lend the impression that tourism operates as an exclusive enclave within a state, the economic reality is that Bahamian tourism operates as a parasitic foreign market upon a dependent state. The market quickly grows larger than its host country, which hemorrhages potential revenue while suffering the contextual/place-based environmental and social effects.

The growth of tourism in the Bahamas and its reliance on foreign imports has been simultaneous with a decrease in domestic exports, a move originally intended to shift the country away from its colonial economic structures (Crick 1989:319). This is especially apparent on Eleuthera, which used to be an agricultural breadbasket in the

¹⁷ Historically, cruise ships, like the Titanic, were novel forms of transportation; however, the modern cruise ship (1966–present) is now a floating paradise of consumption that minimizes the desire for offshore attractions and returns passengers to their dock of departure (Ritzer 1999:18–19; Weaver 2005). Thus, onshore and offshore tourism business models appear to be converging on the goal of all-inclusive “containment” as discussed by Weaver (2005).
Bahamas and a thriving exporter of canned pineapples at the turn of the twentieth century (Bounds 1972). Agricultural production declined in the Bahamas following the nationalization of the sector after independence in the 1970s and the mandated destruction of all citrus crops on Abaco in 2005 following a devastating citrus canker outbreak (a loss of $60 million annual GDP) (Citro Source 2005). Today, agriculture and fisheries account for 1.2% of GDP, an underdeveloped market that holds potential for establishing linkages with the tourism market and decreasing dependency upon foreign foodstuffs (United States Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs 2012; Karagiannis and Witter 2004).

Ruins of grain silos and community packing plants across the island speak of a time, not too long ago, when subsistence and industrial agriculture employed Eleutherans. Contemporary informants within the industry complain that the younger generation prefers to look toward urban markets for employment, citing the stigma attached to farming as the work of slaves. Much like in rural communities across America (e.g. Hadley, Massachusetts), the outflow of the younger, local labor force on the Bahamian Family Islands is supplemented with an inflow of lower paid and socially marginalized workers such as Haitian immigrants. Although the agricultural and fishery sectors could be developed to mitigate leakage of tourism revenue, there is a lack of capacity and historical social stigma among local populations and points of distribution to exploit this opportunity and a xenophobic attitude toward migrants who could fill a labor gap.

\[18\] The inflow of illegal Haitian immigrants who squat on “undeveloped” land on Bahamian Family Islands such as Eleuthera has partially fueled the development of new legislation such as the 2010 Land Adjudication Bill, which enables Bahamians who hold generational title to land to more easily defend their right to title in the face of illegal squatting (Gibbs 2010).
Most recently, rumors of large agricultural development projects primarily backed by China have aroused fears that the pattern of Chinese investment seen on the urban islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama will spread to the rural Family Islands (Nicolls 2010; Smith 2010). For instance, the $2.6 billion Baha Mar project, advertised as the Bahamian “New Riviera,” on Cable Beach is funded by the state-owned Chinese Export-Import Bank (Baha Mar 2012; Todd 2012). But, instead of creating new jobs and demand for supplies within the local market, the China State Construction Engineering Corporation has imported thousands of Chinese laborers to build the 900+ acre complex (Todd 2012). Therefore, when China recently announced investment plans on rural Abaco, local residents grew fearful of a large inflow of Chinese peasants with pundits (e.g. Smith 2010) drawing parallels to Chinese agricultural development initiatives in Africa where imported workers cultivate valuable arable land (see Rotberg 2008). Such a development model represents yet another undesirable system of economic “containment” and local revenue leakage.

On Eleuthera, local residents see the need for economic development but are wary of the established patterns of tourism development and the emerging model of Chinese investment. The material culture of tourism’s short term boom and bust cycles is readily apparent across the island: from the ruins of the Rat Pack era Potlatch and Castaway Clubs to the more recently abandoned Club Med, the stalled Sky Beach resort with its “moonscape” limestone environment, and the Arnold Palmer golf course where the untended fairways offer golfers a rough lie at best. Such ruins stand testament to the insidious “tourism area life cycle,” in which the planned or natural obsolescence of particular resorts gives way to newer resort areas and more luxurious facilities.
(Papatheodorou 2004). Furthermore, the complex history of colonial power relations eerily haunts modern development efforts across the Caribbean region—the postcolonial era of Chinese development is yet one more chapter in the foreign extraction of resources and revenue using an imported and socially marginalized labor force (Pattullo 2005; Rotberg 2008). Locals want and need jobs but are cautious of the mounting evidence of the negative impacts of tourism and other foreign development projects on local economies, environments, and social relations (Karagiannis and Witter 2004; Kempadoo 1999; Pattullo 2005). Eleutheran informants repeatedly told my UMass colleagues and me they didn’t want to become another Nassau (i.e. an urban, mass tourism, “spring breaker” market), but struggled to articulate what a preferable mode of tourism would look like on their island.

**Challenges in New Tourism Models**

**Social Science Criticisms of Mass Tourism**

This is how the islands from the shame of necessity sell themselves; this is the seasonal erosion of their identity, that high-pitched repetition of the same images of service that cannot distinguish one island from the other, with a future of polluted marinas, land deals negotiated by ministers, and all of this conducted to the music of Happy Hour and the rictus of a smile….All of the Antilles, every island, is an effort of memory; every mind, every racial biography culminating in amnesia and fog. (Walcott 1992)

The alienating effects of the mass tourism industry in host communities as well as its role in placating the alienating symptoms of modernity as experienced by tourists are well-documented and critiqued within three broad frameworks in social scientific literature: political economy, representation and ideology, and social process (Crick 1989). Contemporary political economic treatments of Caribbean tourism tend toward neocolonial critiques that compare the power structures and economic consequences of
international tourism to colonial plantation societies (e.g. Davis 1978; Harrison 2001; Kadt 1979; Mowforth 2009; Pattullo 2005). Such critiques contextualize statistics such as the Bahamas’ high revenue leakage rates in terms of the structure of tourism under global capitalism wherein neither host economies nor their consumers profit, but foreign and local elites who, much like colonial plantation owners, are typically removed from the frontline of social and material exchanges within the market (Britton 1982; Cornwell and Stoddard 2001; Crick 1989). Furthermore, these researchers cite the lack of national capacity among postcolonial countries to adequately cope with the central planning and policy issues of tourism including property and water rights and environmental and cultural resource conservation (e.g. Mathieson and Wall 1982). These sources document the structures of economic and political inequalities that continue to plague international tourism in postcolonial nations such as the Bahamas and argue that mass tourism has not lived up to the lofty ambitions of postwar intergovernmental and development agencies.

Sociologists, anthropologists, and other cultural theorists have engaged with representations and ideologies produced and reproduced within tourism, including critiques of the conspicuous consumption of tourists (Turner and Ash 1975; Urry 1990), the limits to educational benefits of tourism (Brameld 1977), and the myths constructed through tourism that serve to further alienate tourists from hosts and hosts from their own identities (Barthes 1972; Baudrillard 1983; Crang and Travlou 2009; MacCannell 1999; Minea and Borghi 2009; Pi-Sunyer 1989; Urry 1990). Studies in this vein that concentrate on the Caribbean and the Bahamas in particular explore how the region’s colonial past forms the basis of a marketable, exotic pastiche of a timeless fantasy world for tourists rather than the contemporary lived realities (or historical experiences) of host
communities (Palmer 1994; Saunders 2003; Strachan 2002). Such discourses serve to further entrench racism, inhibit cross-cultural exchange, and hinder the presentation of diverse (and realistic) cultural and place identities (Cornwell and Stoddard 2001; Montero 2011; Palmer 1994; Saunders 2003).

Finally, studies that focus on tourism and its social and cultural impacts critique how cultural traditions are commoditized through tourism (Crick 1989; Stronza 2001), thus potentially contributing to their erosion (Crystal 1989; Greenwood 1989; MacCannell 1999), involution (De Jong 2007; McKean 1989; Swain 1989), or preservation (Brown 1984). Critiques emerging from within the cultural heritage field analyze the unintended consequences of international cultural heritage promotion programs such as the World Heritage List, which ostensibly promote cultural heritage distinction and protection (Cleere 2011; Di Giovine 2009; Labadi 2005). Other sources explore impacts on land tenure, cultural understandings of the natural environment, and ethics concerning resource conservation (Davis 1997; Honey 2008; Mansperger 1995; West 2006; West et al. 2006). However, Stronza (2001) contends that such studies suffer from a myopic focus on impacts at the local, host community scale to the detriment of understanding social impacts upon tourists and their origin communities. More nuanced research is emerging on the effects of tourism among increasingly transnational populations (Coles and Timothy 2004; Kelner 2010), including the Caribbean diaspora (Scher 2007; Stephenson 2004), and transnational second home owners (Hall and Müller 2004).
Alternative Tourism Models

The above review is just a representative sampling of the plentiful and still accumulating critiques of mass international tourism, critiques that have informed experiments in alternative tourism models during recent decades. Two leading alternative models: ecotourism and heritage tourism are briefly described here, followed by the more general “community tourism” model. Such alternative models envision tourism as a means for securing sustainable economies, environments, and cultures and typically prioritize local community participation. Alternative tourism models are now commonly integrated into sustainable development initiatives such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization’s Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative launched in 2002 (United Nations World Trade Organization 2012). The operationalization of alternative tourism models faces a number of challenges and are now the focus of what could be considered a “second wave” critique in tourism studies (e.g. Apostolopoulos 2002; Burns and Novelli 2008; Richards and Hall 2000; Richards and Wilson 2007; Singh et al. 2002; Williams 2004) and associated publications (e.g. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, and Journal of Ecotourism).

Selling the Adventure of Wilderness: Ecotourism

Ecotourism has emerged amid the context of a growing awareness of ecological and environmental issues since the late 1960s and is currently a thriving industry (Fennell 1999; Wight 2001). The term refers to tourism that features natural resources as the basis of leisure activities as well as a model for integrating the conservation of natural resources into the historically extractive tourism market (Fennell 1999). Although wilderness has long attracted tourists (e.g. Brown 1997), a distinction is typically made
that ecotourism includes some form of environmental education and “low impact” ethic alongside the promise of adventure and recreation (Fennell 1999). Local people and interests figure into many ecotourism models as stakeholders in local economic and environmental issues, with rural ecosystems affected more than urban environments. However, like popular labels such as “organic,” “natural,” and “green,” there is no single standard for identifying or assessing ecotourism.

Similarly, there is no single profile for the ecotourist, who is presumed to differ from the “typical” mass tourist by a desire to move beyond the pleasure resort and directly engage with the natural environment in a benign way. Because the definition of ecotourism is slippery and is used to refer to a wide range of nature-oriented tourism, identifying ecotourists and their characteristics and motivations are challenging. Anglophone ecotourists may represent a higher income bracket; however, Wight (2001:40) complicates this by presenting variation in ecotourism activities across classes, especially among American ecotourists. For example, higher incomes correlate to sailing and scuba diving while lower incomes correlate to camping, preferences that evoke Bourdieu’s study (1984) of how such preferences are culturally mediated and signal social capital. Generally, statistics are consistent in identifying ecotourists with at least some college-level education (Wight 2001:40), which may explain the presumed correlation with higher income levels. Furthermore, ecotourists generally spend more money on their trips than mass market tourists (including comparisons made at single destinations) but also demand higher value from destinations (Wight 2001:45). These “higher class” (both in terms of income and social standing) tourists are more attractive to
many destination communities and service providers than the stereotypical mass market tourist.

Although ecotourism promotes a sustainable ethos, reviews have been mixed about whether it engenders more sustainable relations on the ground. Honey (2008) presents several case studies wherein ecotourism offers welcome economic opportunity to residents in or near nature preserves or presents a more profitable and less environmentally damaging path than other extractive industries such as mining. However, she also notes that ecotourism doesn’t necessarily build capacity at the local level for the active management or participation in the trade and is often carried out in nations that lack comprehensive policies for regulating environmental conservation and planning (Honey 2008:445–446). Furthermore, ecotourism maintains its private enterprise imperative to produce profit with no guarantee of improvement in leakage rates from the domestic economy (let alone “fair” distribution of income at the local level). Finally, Butcher (2008) suggests that an overemphasis upon local community participation in ecotourism has not empowered more political agency in the environmental and economic arenas but rather has contributed to the erosion of associated political institutions at the national level.

Ecotourism is making inroads on the Bahamian Family Island of Eleuthera, which is advertised as undeveloped and boasts beaches, coral reefs, natural limestone formations, and underground and underwater caves. For example, the recently opened Leon Levy Nature Preserve in Central Eleuthera, privately funded by the Leon Levy Foundation and operated by the Bahamas National Trust, is the first national park on the island and is designed as a research center and ecotourist attraction. The fragile marine
ecosystem of the Bahamas is an attraction to ecotourists but not necessarily resilient to increased visitation (no matter how lightly one treads). Thus, the Bahamas has strengthened its environmental policies in response to the United Nation’s Agenda 21 (1992), the international sustainable development mandate associated with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 1992) and the Millennium Development Goals. Major environmental legislation has been introduced in the past 20 years, as well as mandatory environmental impact assessments for development, a national coordinating body to assist with conservation and development issues, and a national action plan (SENES Consultants Limited 2005) to comprehensively manage and mitigate development impacts on biodiversity, land use, and nonrenewable resources (United Nations 1998).

**Selling Culture and Place: Heritage Tourism**

A second, fast-growing sector of the alternative tourism industry is heritage tourism, which includes cultural and creative tourism. In heritage tourism, local cultural identities and spirit of place are marketed and developed into visitor experiences (Dicks 2004; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Robinson and Smith 2006; Timothy and Nyaupane 2009). Although the resources of the authorized heritage discourse (Smith 2006) have often figured prominently in tourism such as in the nineteenth century Grand Tour, today’s heritage tourism includes such traditional attractions as well as a range of tangible and intangible resources of vernacular cultures around the world. Timothy and Nyaupane (2009) identify several major, non-mutually exclusive types of heritage tourism: religious (e.g. pilgrimages to sacred sites), diasporic (e.g. descendant communities returning to ancestral or associated lands), living (e.g. tourists visiting
“intact” folk communities in rural villages or exploring culinary or craft traditions in urban and rural areas), built (e.g. visiting a historic urban center), and archaeological. Thus, heritage tourism covers a lot of ground and appeals to a range of tourists, although the stereotypical heritage tourist mirrors the ecotourist: white, middle class, educated, and willing to spend more money (Robinson and Smith 2006:5). Like its environmental cousin (i.e. ecotourism), contemporary heritage tourism is based within the sustainable development model and promotes “pro-poor” planning, community participation, and a heritage conservation ethos.\(^\text{19}\)

Whereas ecotourism relies upon the physical environment to create tourism experiences, heritage tourism, in commodifying cultural resources has more leeway in the creative construction of its attraction. Furthermore, the changing conceptualization of heritage as contemporary social practice has led to a slow emergence of conceptualizing cultural resources as \textit{reproducible} rather than \textit{non-renewable/non-replaceable} (Ashworth 2002; Richards and Wilson 2007). Although cultural “authenticity” is a main attraction to heritage tourists, the commoditization of heritage resources is a complex, transformative process that may have little to do with host communities’ contemporary uses of the past and which may reflect the limits of tourists’ willingness to experience others’ cultural values (Ashworth 2002; Dicks 2004; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; MacCannell 1999; Robinson and Smith 2006; Timothy and Nyaupane 2009; Urry 1990). For instance, Ashworth (2002) presents three case studies in which the commoditization of cultural identity proves transformative for host cultures to the extent that tourism becomes

\(^{19}\) Examples of this can be accessed via the World Bank’s Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Resources website (2011).
enmeshed with local heritage practice—for better and worse. Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) detail the ways in which an “identity economy” grants marginalized groups opportunity to transform their alienation from majority society into a means to generate revenue (e.g. Ashworth’s [2002] example of Newfoundland translating its folksy “backwardsness” into an attraction for tourists nostalgic for yesteryear). However, such practice may come at a high cost of further entrenching stereotypes, inequalities, social exclusion, and poverty (Ashworth 2002; Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

In the Caribbean, heritage tourism offers an alternative (or at least an addition) to the mass tourist attractions of sun, sand, and sea. However, in that the region’s colonial history features morally reprehensible acts such as the massacre of Indigenous peoples, the enslavement of Africans, and the indenturing of East Indians—vestiges of which are embedded in present power relations and cultural geographies—heritage tourism in the Caribbean is a tricky business to say the least. Archaeological sites such as slave plantations and historically satirical cultural spectacles such as Carnival hold potential as “sites of conscience” (Sevcenko 2010) that offer cross-cultural opportunities to engage with universal moral issues. However, they also may be transformed into venues for reproducing colonial power relations in postcolonial contexts (Cornwell and Stoddard 2001). For instance, sex tourism across the region capitalizes on particular cultural values, stereotypes, and colonial histories and may be considered a form of “backroom” [bedroom] heritage tourism (Gmelch 2003; Kempadoo 1999; Scher 2011). Scher (2011) argues that heritage tourism in the Caribbean serves neoliberal governmentality: a decentralized nation-building in which citizens “perform” certain state-legitimated and market-driven identities to the detriment of creative capacity. Although promoted as local
and unique, heritage tourism has the paradoxical propensity to globalize and standardize cultural practices.

Heritage tourism is of particular interest in the Bahamas with efforts ranging from Coca-Cola’s “Love My Bahamas” campaign to beautify downtown Nassau (making it “friendlier” to tourists [Boal 2010]) to the development of Clifton Heritage National Park where recent Miss Universe contestants “walked in the footsteps of the Lucayan, the Loyalists and Enslaved Africans” (Clifton Heritage Authority 2010). The latter hosts the last publicly accessible plantation site on New Providence, which was preserved following a grassroots movement that eventually aided the opposition party in regaining control of Parliament and passing the Clifton Heritage Authority Act in 2004 (Pateman 2011). Although the Bahamas passed an antiquities act in 1998, it does not carry heavy penalties (relative to major tourism development projects), protect underwater resources, nor provide adequate funding for preservation activities across the archipelago. However, the antiquities act has aided the centralization of a heritage site inventory for planning and protection purposes and expanded government interest in the development and promotion of heritage resources for tourism (Pateman 2011).

**Selling for Ourselves: Community Tourism**

Community tourism emphasizes local participation, values, and benefits in tourism development regardless of whether the tourism “product” is focused on the local environment, heritage, or neither. Case studies and critiques of community tourism unsurprisingly focus on the challenges of working with communities: challenges shared in ecotourism and heritage tourism models. These challenges include recognizing communities as heterogeneous entities (rather than the presumed homogeneity often
attributed to “the local community”) with differing and changeable power structures that
effect membership, authority, and decision-making (Boyd and Singh 2002; Butcher 2008;
Hall 2002). While “community” is used to semantically signal a progressive or friendlier
form of development, communities are political entities that are not inherently
benevolent, nor are community members’ political experiences within the community
identical or mutually beneficial (Butcher 2008; Creed 2006b; Hall 2002; Joseph 2002).
Thus, tourism development has the likely potential to affect community members
differentially along existing relations of power.

More biting critiques of community tourism accuse the rhetoric as tokenistic,
effective public relations, or a sham “cover” for first world hegemony in developing
countries (Butcher 2008; Mowforth and Munt 1997). In other development projects,
community participation is a practical, instrumental tactic to efficiently and economically
complete construction (Butcher 2008; Hall 2002). Butcher (2008) criticizes the popular
tourism development discourse among non-governmental organizations that promote
social cohesion as masking an underlying shared ideology of neoliberalism that runs
counter to the NGOs’ intended radical agendas. For instance, by focusing exclusively on
local communities (and at the local political scale), citizens are deterred from intervening
or participating in state or federal institutions, further diminishing their capacity. Thus,
the pervasive usage of loaded terms such as “sustainable,” “local,” “participatory,”
“democratic,” and “social cohesion” should be critically assessed in terms of their
operationalization at multiple scales.

Such criticism should not negate community-based approaches to development
but should inform them. Because tourism development has the potential to impact
economies, environments, and societies at a number of levels, participation should be at multiple scales, including national, regional, and local, and should include multiple sectors, such as government, professional, and lay. Successful community tourism models will require a combination of top-down and bottom-up political interventions. Participation implies an onus on the actor to engage with a development project; however, for some, this onus may be too burdensome as it requires a commitment of time, energy, and perhaps money. Furthermore, participation is constrained by issues of access and education. All of these factors point to the importance of building capacity across multiple scales and sectors to support meaningful and fairly distributed participation.

Tourists as Stakeholders

Much emphasis is placed upon the rights of host communities in alternative tourism models; however, what of the rights and stakes of tourists? The Manila Declaration on World Tourism (United Nations World Tourism Organization 1980) expands the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights statement that all humans should enjoy rest and leisure time and be free to travel. In particular, the Manila Declaration underscores the belief that tourism can be a tool for enacting world peace in that it promotes international cooperation and moral education for participants. Acknowledging the interests and ethical responsibilities of tourists and integrating their stakes into ongoing community-engaged tourism development initiatives can expand the beneficial potential of such development—moving beyond economic and internal social dynamics to cross-cultural relations that more fully achieve the “shared” component of shared heritage ethics.
Community Capacity Building for Shared Heritage Development

One Eleuthera Initiative

It was a proposed development project on Lighthouse Beach at the southern tip of Eleuthera that broke the proverbial camel’s back in 2009. After observing the boom and bust cycle of failed, halted, or shrinking resorts on the island, including Club Med, Cotton Bay, Potlatch Club, Arnold Palmer’s Beach Front Inn, Cape Eleuthera, Sky Beach, Whale Point Club, and the recent (2008) failing of the Lehman Brothers backed Rose Island project just northeast of Eleuthera, residents were ready to take action when the government approved plans for a massive, foreign-investor backed development on Lighthouse Beach. The site is home to a unique ecosystem and range of archaeological resources and is an important cultural landscape for contemporary South Eleutherans. The proposed development project attracted a range of advocates: from local residents concerned about issues of public access and economic stimulus to environmental and heritage conservationists, who formed Friends of Lighthouse, a concerned citizens’ group. Friends of Lighthouse then hired Michael Singer Studio to assess potential impacts and alternative development models for South Eleuthera that would protect the cultural landscape of Lighthouse Beach. The resulting report, “A Shared Vision for South Eleuthera,” (Michael Singer Studio South 2010) outlined a plan for sustainable development on the southern end of the island, identifying a range of current resources and planning priorities, including building capacity in the cultural, agricultural, and environmental infrastructure as well as improving networks among the dispersed settlements on the island.
Seeing the need to expand the vision of the Singer Report to the whole island, Shaun Ingraham and Michele Johnson formed the One Eleuthera Foundation (OEF), a nonprofit community development organization to organize, promote, and fund planning and capacity building for sustainable development across the island. The foundation formally organized in 2012 and focuses on economic development that enhances the island’s cultural and natural assets, including branding Eleuthera as an eco- and heritage tourism destination (Ingraham and Johnson 2011). OEF is member driven, engaging the existing community development organizations, heritage advocacy groups, and educational institutions scattered across the island as well as remote partners who share a stake in Eleuthera’s future. OEF recognizes the existence of a diverse array of human, cultural, and natural resources across the island that could benefit from a collaborative network organized around unifying sustainable development principles. As such, OEF serves as a possible model for shared [cultural and natural] heritage initiatives in other places confronting the challenges of conventional tourism development noted above.

**The Potential of ICT: The One Eleuthera Web Portal**

I was introduced to OEF through my research assistantship at the UMass Center for Heritage and Society (CHS) when the center was contacted by Shaun Ingraham in October 2010. Ingraham was seeking collaborations with academic institutions that could provide information and tools for heritage conservation and development programs on Eleuthera. I accompanied Elizabeth Chilton and Neil Silberman on an initial assessment of heritage assets and potential for collaboration with OEF in 2011. In our report we proposed three actions to lay the groundwork for a partnership between OEF and CHS guided by a strategic vision of community-based elicitation and management of heritage
protection and sustainable development (Chilton et al. 2011). Our first proposed action was the creation of a web-based information system to provide a digital analog to OEF’s local initiatives. This information system would be the conduit and repository for additional CHS-led projects on the island, including an assessment of vernacular architecture and landscape undertaken in 2012, and a study abroad program currently being planned.

My vision extended beyond a simple website; I saw a need for an online collaborative space to serve the goals of capacity building: the creative enhancement and transformative interfacing of available resources, meaningful projects, and committed communities (Senteni and Johari 2006). I proposed the One Eleuthera Web Portal as an information and communication technology (ICT) to support community articulation around sustainable heritage development planning and capacity building and outlined three design goals:

1. **Public presentation and education**: To provide the coalition and its member organizations with an intuitive and cohesive interface to present material for public interpretation without having to create their own website or learn HTML.

2. **Public promotion and community stakeholder engagement**: To allow client organization, community stakeholders, and the "general public" to access content and engage with each other.

3. **Fundraising and community mobilization**: To coordinate constituent data, run online fundraising campaigns, accept online donations, manage events, send mass emails, and manage grants made to OEF members.

**Networking Dispersed Stakeholders**

ICT’s most obvious potential lies in its ability to quickly and cheaply communicate information across vast physical and social networks. One Eleuthera’s
stakeholders are widely dispersed, including residents in local settlements, diasporic workers and students in Nassau or further abroad, government officials on the island and in Nassau, vacation home owners who spend part of the year on island, members of US-based academic institutions who conduct field schools on island, tourists from around the globe, heritage advocacy NGOs with initiatives in the Caribbean, and potential investors in tourism development on the island. By providing centralized access to information across such a diverse and dispersed group, the web portal can generate a sense of openness and complement the metanarrative of One Eleuthera: that a cohesive community exists (Alakeson et al. 2003). Furthermore, ICT enables a global conversation—the web portal is meant to move beyond top-down publication of information to incorporate bottom-up and lateral online dialogue, including diverse voices and creating a sense of inclusion (Alakeson et al. 2003).

Reaching dispersed stakeholders via online networks depends upon their access to digital tools. Such access cuts unevenly across political and class lines and is known as the “digital divide.” Rural and impoverished areas have less physical access to technology while disabled people and internet “illiterates” (e.g. in the U.S. this disproportionately includes Latinos, senior citizens, and adults without high school education) are hindered by issues of interface access and proficiency (Alakeson et al. 2003; Zickuhr and Smith 2012). According to statistics compiled by the United Nations’s International Telecommunications Union (2010), 43% of Bahamians and 74% of Americans used the internet. However, mobile penetration flows in the opposite direction: 125% in the Bahamas compared to 89.86% in the United States (in other words, many Bahamians have more than one mobile device).
Stakeholders in countries such as the U.S. that enjoy deep broadband penetration will have easier access to a web-based system. However, the deep mobile penetration in the Bahamas suggests that digital technologies such as short message service (SMS, aka “text messaging”) could bridge the physical network divide. Additionally, websites should be optimized for mobile devices when possible (e.g. fitting smaller screen displays, limiting data transfers such as large images, and providing an easily-navigable main menu). Reaching individuals who are marginalized on the basis of disability, proficiency, or disinterest will require more than adding a technical protocol. These populations should be reached through other modes of communication while working to extend access to those who are interested as an OEF project. Such initiatives are already in process by OEF members such as the South Eleuthera Mission, Rotary Club of Eleuthera, and Island Journeys.

ICTs enable information proliferation, which can lead to a glut of information and make it difficult to filter relevant data or identify meaningful information. While many can relate to the explosion in junk email and internet-based advertising, unintended consequences of information proliferation include the breakdown of trusting relationships. For instance, the access to online medical information including professional, corporate, and lay websites, has contributed to the erosion of patient trust in doctors (Alakeson et al. 2003:62–63). On the other hand, the ability to access consumer reviews on sites like Angie’s List, Tripadvisor, or Yelp can not only provide useful information, but build trust among consumers and accountability among providers.

A main challenge for the One Eleuthera Web Portal is to generate meaningful content for and by OEF stakeholders. My design objective was to remove as many
barriers as possible for potential content authors and to teach the teachers (i.e. provide
training that trickles down among stakeholders). This includes implementing “what you
see is what you get” (WYSIWYG) tools, which make it easier for non-technical experts
to publish content without knowing how to write hypertext markup language (HTML),
the basic source code which web browsers interpret for display. In addition, online
information media currently used by OEF stakeholders can be identified so that web portal data can be “pushed” or “pulled” to maximize coverage and inclusion (e.g. pushing event announcements to a Twitter feed or pulling comments from a Facebook wall).

**Maintaining Linkages to Place across Space**

ICT usage is popular among transnational and diasporic populations to maintain
ties to home and to identify and reproduce ethnic communities in their adopted home
nations (Adams and Ghose 2003; Brinkerhoff 2009; Graham and Khosravi 2002;
Valentine 2006). Adams and Ghose (2003:416) use the metaphor of “bridgespace” to explain the role that ICT plays in collapsing time and space to bridge the gap between one’s present and past: “[Bridgespace] is a set of connections between here and there, in both a geographical and a cultural sense, like a rail yard or an airport” (emphasis in original). The infrastructure of ICT supports two way communication across the bridge, which enables both conservation (i.e. the preservation of an ideal, essentialized cultural identity) and innovation (i.e. the transformative incorporation of other cultural elements) (Adams and Ghose 2003). Thus, the One Eleuthera Web Portal is an important tool to maintain the stakeholder status of diasporic Eleutherans, including workers and students. Because many of these people hope to return to Eleuthera later in life, incorporating their values and voices into OEF-based conversations about Eleuthera’s future ensures the
relevance of planning activities to future populations. Additionally, bridgespace is a useful metaphor for understanding the potential of the web portal to include tourists and vacation homeowners in maintaining a link to Eleuthera and deepening their ties to the island.

**Enabling Empathy-based Ethics**

The value of coexistence promoted in shared heritage ethics relies upon empathy; that is, the significance of heritage as a means to instill hope and ontological security among modern humans should be empathetically recognized and inform ethical practices. Christie (Alakeson et al. 2003:38–40) summarizes four areas in which ICT can enable empathy: the expansion of open forums for debate and knowledge exchange, the ability to simulate alternative representations of reality to explore shared problems (e.g. climate change) or imagine utopias, the creation of digital tools for conflict resolution and scenario planning, and the ability to “virtually” meet (e.g. using online video conferencing) and overcome previous barriers of geographical access. Communication frameworks that enable feedback loops can generate empathy across common interests and accountability to other community members (Alakeson et al. 2003). Thus, the One Eleuthera Web Portal should offer stakeholders an opportunity to provide “peer review” on OEF initiatives and incentivize organizational members to creatively plan mutually beneficial projects. Furthermore, the engagement of those stakeholders who are not seen as community insiders such as tourists, vacation homeowners, and American academic partners can engender more trusting relationships and ethical behavior that are consistent with the idealistic goals of community tourism and sustainable development. And creating empathy implies a reciprocal relationship; the goal should be to appreciate ways
in which we are all tourists and all natives somewhere and to someone (and to have such understanding inform actions both on Eleuthera and away).

Although early critiques equated the disembodied nature of online communication with impersonality and inauthenticity that would serve to further alienate modern subjects, more recent research reviewed and contributed by Valentine (2006) suggests otherwise. Rather, such researchers frame ICT as a communicative environment that provides a context for a wide range of human interactions (Adams and Ghose 2003; Valentine 2006). For instance, the immediacy of email means we can give kneejerk responses that we may regret later; on the other hand, because we aren’t engaged in a physically immediate conversation with the recipient, we can also choose to reflect upon our response before engaging. The One Eleuthera Web Portal complements those relationships that OEF builds on the ground; its online environment should be moderated in the same spirit of building community and sharing experiences.

**Mobilizing Obligation**

The One Eleuthera Web Portal is designed to help build community through networking dispersed stakeholders, maintaining ties to place, and creating space for empathy. Such community building should lead to mobilizing a sense of shared obligation to community interests among stakeholders. That is, the web portal is a conduit for community action, providing ways that stakeholders can “get involved” with OEF and its initiatives. For instance, volunteer opportunities, events, and membership drives provide points of access to OEF and its member organizations and mobilize human resources among the broader OEF stakeholder base.
Additionally, fostering financial support through charitable giving and patronage helps to expand OEF’s resource base, which is then distributed as grants to OEF member organizations and OEF collaborative initiatives. The web portal can provide both a mechanism to solicit and process financial support and a dependable source of feedback to donors on the projects they have funded to show the material and social effects of their gifts. Currently, the philanthropic economy on Eleuthera is quite strong but based on limited sources. Thus there is considerable competitiveness for the support of donors among the island’s many nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Coordinating development activities in terms of scheduling fundraising campaigns and collaborating on mutually beneficial projects can help to ease the sometimes disruptive competition amongst organizations that share similar goals and maximize the value of donors’ gifts. However, many organizations tend to keep their patrons’ identities quiet and some patrons also wish to remain anonymous to other charities. Thus, despite its potential for coordination, OEF could be seen by some as pursuing a monopoly on the island’s philanthropy market. ICT can assist with some of these issues but not all.

**Information Architecture of the One Eleuthera Web Portal**

In this section I outline the information architecture of the web portal, which refers to an information system’s structural design, organizational and navigation systems, and usability features (Morville and Rosenfeld 2008). I also refer to my work designing the web portal’s graphic identity and configuring its software environment. My approach to information system development is shaped by my anthropological training; that is, I approach my “clients” as an ethnographer would, recognizing that their knowledge domain is a mixture of explicitly defined information (e.g. their
organization’s mission statement), implicit ontologies that participants take for granted (e.g. office jargon), and habitual performances (e.g. workflows). I favor an iterative and adaptive workflow that is informed by the organization’s needs and feedback throughout the development process. Ideally, the client becomes a collaborator in the workflow as we refine the organization’s mission and information system’s goals (described above). The following sections will describe particular construction stages of the portal that were informed by a shared heritage perspective and reflect system requirements for similar ICT: (1) articulation of user personas and needs; (2) design of the site’s information structure; (3) development of the graphic identity for the user interface; (4) software development; (5) user training; and (6) project launch. Although presented sequentially, my workflow was a bit more organic, roughly following a two-phased, iterative cycle (Figure 12) of discovery (i.e. stakeholder consultation to elicit needs), design, implementation, and review.

Following consultations with OEF and their stakeholders regarding the needs of their users, I began planning the web portal by crafting a set of user personas and associated needs. User personas are fictional characters that represent certain segments and interests of an online community and are used to enable empathetic (i.e. user-based)

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My preference is consistent with recent developments in software development and project management philosophies including the “bazaar” (Eric Steven Raymond 2000) and “agile” (Beedle et al. 2001) models, which emphasize bottom-up, incremental development among teams of collaborators to more efficiently cope with the challenge that a system’s knowledge domain is incompletely known (or ultimately unknowable) until it is used. That is, an optimal software project cannot be wholly pre-planned and should anticipate change and adaptation to end users’ needs as expressed throughout (and after) the development process.
design, while simplifying and organizing stakeholders’ requirements (Castro et al. 2008; Dayton 2003). Following consultations with OEF and their stakeholders regarding the needs of their users, I began planning the web portal by crafting a set of user personas and associated needs. User personas are fictional characters that represent certain segments and interests of an online community and are used to enable empathetic (i.e. user-based) design, while simplifying and organizing stakeholders’ requirements (Castro et al. 2008; Dayton 2003). Information architects use personas much like how anthropologists craft the characters that people their ethnographies: they are based on real people yet are generalized in ways that aid in the compelling and clear communication of otherwise complex contexts of human experience. Personas necessarily collapse variation
in user preference and behavior and are representative of essential user types rather than descriptions of actual users. Following unstructured interviews and workshops with OEF staff and stakeholders, I created the following hypothetical user personas to guide my design decisions.

Table 1: User Personas for the One Eleuthera Web Portal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>OEF Staff</td>
<td>Renee is married, middle aged and wears multiple hats. She works as a part time OEF staff member and juggles a few other jobs as well. She has two cell phones and checks her email frequently. She knows how to use a word processor but doesn’t use the computer for much else besides internet access and correspondence. She is often asked to report immediately on data such as event registrations or donor pledges. She is not interested in writing a lot of content for a website and prefers to work outside of the office and with people in the community. She shines at organizing events and getting people involved. However, she often overcommits and is frazzled. She doesn’t feel she has the time to sit down and really learn a piece of software comprehensively and draws upon her colleagues for help when she forgets how to do something.</td>
<td>• Publish content about OEF quickly and easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Track donor information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Organize events and manage mailing lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Moderate all content to verify substance and vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintain history of email correspondence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Work in tandem with other staff members who work remotely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Manage the collaborative projects OEF is funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Access training resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>OEF Member</td>
<td>Sheila is married, middle aged, and wears multiple hats. She spends much of her time working for a nonprofit organization that is focused on community wellness. She is a Rotarian and is involved in many volunteer activities in her settlement. She is focused on building a strong donor base for her organization while delivering services to her stakeholders. She believes in the One Eleuthera message but is unsure what membership will mean for the organization. She does not want to share her donor data,</td>
<td>• Easily publish a profile of her organization, including the organization’s logo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Link to current online content her organization publishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Connect with a larger user base to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Darryl** | **Local resident** | but she welcomes the opportunity to post information about her organization on the OEF web portal and accessing a larger pool of resources and prospective donors. She is very interested in the potential of collaborating on OEF grant-funded projects and has a few ideas for grant proposals already. She uses Microsoft Office products quite a bit and used Raiser’s Edge as a standalone development database in the past, but its license is too expensive for her present organization. She’s open to learning new software as long as it doesn’t take up too much of her time and benefits her organization directly. | expand her organization’s volunteer and donor network  
- Collaborate on OEF grant-funded project with other OEF members  
- Use affordable donor tracking tools  
- Access training resources |
| **Mary** | **Vacation home owner** | Darryl is middle aged and runs his own business out of his home. Income can be unsteady, but he is well connected in his social network and can access opportunities when necessary. He is savvy and resourceful. His family has generational property on the island and he has several family members in Nassau, some with government connections. He attends all of his settlement’s homecomings and serves on the homecoming committee, often helping with the bar. He enjoys socializing and helps his family and friends, but doesn’t volunteer beyond his settlement’s circle. The OEF message sounds good but isn’t sure what it offers him. | • Learn more about how OEF can benefit him.  
• Learn about events where he can socialize and have fun.  
• Find a low stakes/low effort way of supporting OEF if he finds it worthwhile – perhaps helping with a future event. |

Mary is a senior citizen “snow bird,” who flies south to Eleuthera in the winter and spends the summer and fall on Long Island, New York. She is a patron of the arts, often spending the evening in Manhattan to attend the theatre, opera, or gallery openings. She worked in PR for many years. She and her husband have been visiting Eleuthera for 30 years now and feel like it’s their second home. She has a tight-knit social group of other second homeowners on the island, and she enjoys chatting with them about gardening, theatre, books, and benign US political banter at their informal dinner parties. She gives money to the local library on Eleuthera and attends the library’s fundraising events. She

| **Mary** | **Vacation home owner** | Mary is a senior citizen “snow bird,” who flies south to Eleuthera in the winter and spends the summer and fall on Long Island, New York. She is a patron of the arts, often spending the evening in Manhattan to attend the theatre, opera, or gallery openings. She worked in PR for many years. She and her husband have been visiting Eleuthera for 30 years now and feel like it’s their second home. She has a tight-knit social group of other second homeowners on the island, and she enjoys chatting with them about gardening, theatre, books, and benign US political banter at their informal dinner parties. She gives money to the local library on Eleuthera and attends the library’s fundraising events. She | • Learn about what her community’s needs are.  
• Find other venues on the island where her pet interests (i.e. the arts) are being supported.  
• Find events where she would feel welcome to attend.  
• Learn about projects in her area of interest where her money could have a tangible impact.  
• See how her |

| **Mary** | **Vacation home owner** | but she welcomes the opportunity to post information about her organization on the OEF web portal and accessing a larger pool of resources and prospective donors. She is very interested in the potential of collaborating on OEF grant-funded projects and has a few ideas for grant proposals already. She uses Microsoft Office products quite a bit and used Raiser’s Edge as a standalone development database in the past, but its license is too expensive for her present organization. She’s open to learning new software as long as it doesn’t take up too much of her time and benefits her organization directly. | expand her organization’s volunteer and donor network  
- Collaborate on OEF grant-funded project with other OEF members  
- Use affordable donor tracking tools  
- Access training resources |
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• Find events where she would feel welcome to attend.  
• Learn about projects in her area of interest where her money could have a tangible impact.  
• See how her |
also gives money to a handful of U.S.-based charitable organizations. She likes that she can see her money get put to good use at the library on Eleuthera—her money seems to go a bit further down here. She is very fond of the local Eleutherans and thinks they’re very “friendly,” but she doesn’t have many Bahamian friends. She is supportive of social causes that help the island’s people but does not want to see the island change from the quiet, undeveloped “paradise” she values.

**Kendrick**

College student abroad

Kendrick is a college student on New Providence studying software engineering. He is in his final year of school and is looking forward to finding a job. Most of his family is back on Eleuthera, but he has an aunt and uncle in Nassau and plenty of friends. He returns to Eleuthera for holidays and big events and misses home. Although he would consider taking a job on Eleuthera, most of the work is in Nassau right now, so he expects to stay in New Providence. He aspires to make a good salary and enjoy the finer things in life. He’d like to return to Eleuthera one day but doesn’t know where the next years will take him and is really focused on making money and making the most of his 20s.

- Stay connected to what’s going on on the island, including learning about big social events planned at holiday times.
- Learn about human resource opportunities on the island.
- Connect with other Eleutherans who are on New Providence and may offer economic opportunities for him.

**Mark & Maya**

Tourists

Mark and Maya are in their early 30s and live in Chicago. They have done a bit of traveling after college, including hiking in the rain forests of Costa Rica and whale watching in Alaska. They are interested in a Caribbean vacation but want to get off the beaten track. Mark scuba dives and Maya enjoys museums. They don’t want to be around spring breakers, but they also want a bit of a social atmosphere and to get a taste of an “authentic” Bahamas. They’re not sure what Eleuthera has to offer and have been leaning toward Andros because it’s so undeveloped. However, Maya is interested in a more culturally immersive experience where she can meet local people and perhaps volunteer with a community organization.

- Learn about what the island offers for eco and heritage tourism.
- Learn about volunteer opportunities for eco and heritage tourists.
- See pictures of people and places on the island.
Figure 13: One Eleuthera Web Portal Site Architecture
Information Structure

As illustrated in Figure 13, the One Eleuthera Web Portal has three main structural levels. Level 1 contains the public face of the website and would be what users such as Darryl, Kendrick, Mary, and Mark and Maya would use to gain access to relevant information. Such content has been divided into four streams: informational (i.e. more static content about OEF and Eleuthera in general), action-oriented (i.e. how to get involved or support OEF), news (i.e. more dynamic content about OEF), and social media (i.e. content pushed or pulled via external digital media such as cell phones or Twitter). Level 1 should look and act like a professional website but its content will need to be published by non-expert users such as Renee. Level 3 contains the back office tools for OEF staff to manage community development data. Because OEF doesn’t have a single office that houses all staff members, the tools should support a dispersed network of staff who need place-independent access and to know what they have each been working on (i.e. the tool should support self/meta-documentation of the workflow).

Finally, Level 2 sits between 1 and 3 and utilizes features from both levels to form communities of practice that would include users such as Sheila, Darryl, Kendrick, and Mary. I have identified two main content streams: member groups (i.e. organizations that have become OEF members, pledge to support OEF, and gain access to OEF benefits such as presence on the web portal) and project groups (i.e. collaborative development initiatives funded by OEF that bring together tangible resources, OEF members, and volunteers). Member groups and project groups each have their own landing pages, blog, and followers (i.e. people who express an interest in receiving content updates). To incentivize OEF members to collaborate on meaningful projects, project groups have
access to more features, such as private and public forums as well as the ability to plug into Level 3 features such as event management and fundraising campaigns. Project group forums can facilitate stakeholder feedback on project planning and implementation.

Figure 14 illustrates the site map for the web portal, which defines the navigational structure for accessing particular content nodes. To read the flow chart, begin in the top left corner at the home page. There are three content groups accessed directly via the home page. The blue box at the top represents forms, feeds, and social media that users access to connect with OEF; for instance, from the home page, users should be able to (in one click) contact OEF, signup for a newsletter, or find OEF on Facebook. The aqua box directly beneath the home page represents featured content that takes up prime real estate on the home page (above the fold/scroll); that is, dynamic content that OEF wants to direct users’ attention to most. I’ve given four hypothetical content nodes to illustrate its utility such as profiling a featured member, project, upcoming event, or promoting a recent news item. To the right of the aqua box is a light green box that represents primary navigational links or what should appear in a main menu on the home page. These are meant to be exclusive categories of content that direct users to all content within the site, represented to the right in the main content box.

Some content, such as blog articles, are meant to be automatically pushed to external media such as OEF’s RSS, Facebook, and Twitter feeds. Some Level 3 content could be pushed via SMS to mobile phones including event and volunteer announcements. Other mobile-phone related content could include matrix barcode integration (e.g. QR codes) with the web portal at heritage sites or even geo-referencing content to appear when a user is in the physical vicinity of a relevant site. The site should
also support user-driven content syndication (i.e. “Share this” links) via email and popular social media outlets.

**Graphic Identity and User Interface**

The One Eleuthera Web Portal needed a graphic identity that matched OEF’s mission. As a community development organization, I advised that its identity should be friendly, accessible, fresh, inspiring, hopeful, and professional. I also advised that the aesthetic evoke the cultural and place identity of Eleuthera. I wanted the design to reflect that One Eleuthera is composed of a wide range of organizations located across the entire island, in Nassau, and in the U.S. The site needed to instill confidence in the creative mission that from many we form one community with a common interest.

I began with peer market research, identifying several model websites in terms of aesthetic and their coherence in design and mission. These websites included large private foundations such as Ford Foundation (http://www.fordfoundation.org/), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (http://www.gatesfoundation.org), and W.K. Kellogg Foundation (http://www.wkkf.org/); smaller religious, community, or cultural organizations such as R.U.4.Children (http://www.ru4children.org/), Sower of Seeds (http://www.sowerofseeds.org/), Chapeltown Development Trust (http://chapeltowndt.org.uk/), Housing Works (http://www.housingworks.org/), Help your Habitat (http://www.helpyourhabitat.org/), and Mission First (http://www.missionfirst.org/home); the Caribbean-oriented foundation 1Love (http://www.1love.org/); the multidisciplinary “collaboratory” of HASTAC (http://hastac.org/); and the heritage promotional site of Duchy Originals (http://www.duchyoriginals.com/). In studying and sketching these websites, I identified
common elements that make up a visual lexicon for community-oriented websites so that I could aesthetically situate the One Eleuthera web portal within the sector but also distinguish it from other sites.

Figure 15: One Eleuthera Web Portal Home Page Wireframe.

I sketched four sets of possible wireframes of the home page and landing page designs. Wireframes are simplified schematics of a page layout and help to map the essential content identified in your architecture and site map without getting bogged
down in graphical design choices. I chose the best of the four to digitize (Figure 15) using Adobe Illustrator on a standard 960 pixel wide grid system of 12 columns (Smith 2011), which would guide my full color mockups (Figure 16).

Figure 16: One Eleuthera Web Portal Home Page Mockup.
I created my mockups using Adobe Photoshop and followed an iterative process with two rounds of design review of the home page, landing page, member profile, and project profile pages with the director of OEF, Shaun Ingraham. I refined my wireframe to organize content in a more efficient and pleasing manner. I defined a color palette drawn from photographs Elizabeth Chilton and Neil Silberman took during field trips to Eleuthera as part of the Center for Heritage & Society and OEF partnership projects. The page background and header and footer bars are meant to represent the ombré effect of the sky and sea meeting on the horizon (Figure 17). The orange is the complementary color to turquoise, a combination I observed while on the island (Figure 18) and which also evokes an energetic and creative feeling of joy. I chose modern and clean sans-serif fonts with high readability and a roundness that lent a friendly and accessible feel.

Figure 17: Sky and sea ombré inspiration from Eleuthera. (Photo credit Elizabeth Chilton 2011)
I designed the feature content as a dynamic slide show with four slides that automatically rotate but can also be activated by the slide button on the left of the slide image. The slide image contains a link to the featured content node. This arrangement keeps the featured content “above the fold” without pushing the rest of the content too far down the screen. The rest of the content identified on the site map was arranged on the grid system.

Finally, I integrated Google Map features into the design with the intention that each member and project group be geo-coded so that users such as Darryl, Mary, and Mark and Maya could find resources and venues across the island and so that OEF
member organizations could advertise where they are located in relation to other resources. I entitled the map "Explore Eleuthera" to invite users to click on the map.

**Software Development**

I organized software development into two phases according to OEF’s priorities:

Phase 1 included Level 1, Level 3, and the public facing and geo-referencing for Level 2;

Phase 2 included the complete build out of Level 2 (to follow further community testing and assessment after Phase 1). I developed the site using the content management system (CMS), Drupal 7 on a LAMP stack (Linux operating system, Apache 2 web server, MySQL database, and PHP language). Drupal is an open source CMS with a thriving user base and developer community; according to its website, as of May 2012, “826,008 people in 228 countries* speaking 181 languages power Drupal”\(^1\) (Buytaert 2012).

Drupal is a framework for website development: it offers a graphical user interface and an application programming interface (API) that developers can use to build compatible “modules” to add site features and implement graphical “themes” to brand their site and arrange content according to their own specification. Website content, termed “nodes” in the Drupal world is stored in a backend database. Thus, the API is separate from the content, unlike in “static” HTML where the website content is integrated with the markup language (Figure 19). This enables the use of a graphical user interface (Figure 20) to edit website content as rich text (like in a word processor), while the API dynamically processes the content into web browser-accessible HTML. Additionally, it enables web

\(^1\) The unusually high country count is attributed to the Drupal community’s respect for the self-identification by Fourth World peoples and populations in disputed territories of their country.
developers to design new features without impacting the website content. All website code was maintained and documented using the Git version control system.

Figure 19: Directly editing website content in HTML.

Figure 20: Editing website content in Drupal 7.
Modules are the building blocks for adding features to a Drupal site. As open source software with a thriving community of practice, Drupal’s website offers over 10,000 community-contributed modules, many of which are actively maintained by collaborative groups of volunteers. I developed the One Eleuthera Web Portal using a suite of over 70 modules, which I configured to work together to achieve the proposed architecture.

While I can’t discuss every module, I mention two sets of modules that comprise the basis of our community engagement and mobilization strategy. First, I used the Organic Groups suite of modules to build the Level 2 architecture, which enables each OEF member and project to have its own “site within a site” and supports a bottom-up, on the fly (i.e. “organic”) identification of group membership and content publication. In other words, an OEF member organization such as CHS should have its own set of collaboration and communication tools that they can easily administer and add users to without being a system-wide administrator for the entire web portal. Likewise, their settings, tools, content, and users wouldn’t interfere with other members’ settings. For example, each member organization could have its own blog, discussion board, mailing list, chat room, or wiki. Individual users such as Sheila can be granted group-administrator status to moderate these activities while users such as Kendrick and Mary could subscribe to an organic group to gain access to the group’s specific tools. The multidisciplinary online “collaboratory” of HASTAC (www.hastac.org) uses Organic Groups in much the same way to build collaborative communities of practice around thematic topics. This implements Sheila’s (i.e. OEF member users) needs while delivering focused content of value to users like Darryl, Kendrick, and Mary and inviting
them to follow and participate in Level 2 content. Additionally, the voluntary membership into organic groups respects the many interests that comprise the OEF community and avoids an information glut of publishing all content to all individuals. However, such structure can entrench special interest communities at the detriment to building cross-group, common interests. While digital tools can offer some antidote, such as suggested content links that can bridge groups, the responsibility to provide creative linkages between the member organizations falls to humans: that is, the OEF staff and project leaders. I suggest that OEF staff craft content for Level 1 of the portal that highlights and promotes such linkages. Additionally, project groups (discussed above) are meant to build such bridges by providing space for members to collaborate on practical applications to accomplish common interests (e.g. a heritage conservation trail project involves multiple member organizations who would be party to the project group).

Second, I used CiviCRM (http://civicrm.org/), which is an open source constituent relationship management system (CRM), to build the Level 3 features. CiviCRM is popular among non-profits and public-private partnerships oriented toward civil society engagement. CiviCRM allows OEF staff users like Renee to manage events, organize fundraising campaigns, maintain archival histories of correspondence with donors and volunteers, send mass emails, accept online donations, and generate development statistics (e.g. LYBUNT/SYBUNT reports). As open source software, it doesn’t carry the burden of annual license fees like commercial CRMs, and because it is web-based, data are stored “in the cloud,” meaning they are available from any computer or mobile device with a broadband connection. Thus, OEF staff aren’t tied to a physical computer terminal to access OEF constituent data, nor are they passing around copies of
Microsoft Excel spreadsheets with sensitive donor data. Finally, CiviCRM is self-documenting, which means that it archives transaction-based (i.e. time-coded) actions such as email correspondence and content edits and supports task management. Used effectively, such an architecture enables Renee to assign a particular task like following up with a particular donor to a fellow staff member, who can log in, see the task on his dashboard, read the history of correspondence between Renee and the donor (without logging into Renee’s personal email account) and follow up with the donor via email or phone.

Finally, I integrated Google Analytics in the web portal so that OEF can track its site statistics such as visitor demographics, page visits and pathways, and search contexts. Such statistics informed a self-assessment I conducted at the conclusion of Phase 1 development in April 2012 to inform strategic recommendations for Phase 2 development.

**User Training**

I trained a core group of OEF staff over two weeks while on site in Eleuthera. I spent one week conducting general workshops on Level 1 and Level 3 content publication and data management with five participants. I then spent one week intensively training a new local webmaster who took responsibility for administering content publication and providing local support to OEF staff and members. Phase 2 training, to commence summer–fall 2012, will include training workshops among OEF members in Level 2 features and more intensive training with the webmaster to hand over all upper-level administration for which I have been responsible (e.g. site backups, security updates, feature enhancements, theme revisions, and bug fixing).
Project Launch

The One Eleuthera Foundation and its Web Portal (http://www.oneeleuthera.org) publicly launched Earth Day weekend, April 20–22, 2012, amid a number of events co-sponsored by The Nature Conservancy, the Bahamas National Trust, and a number of OEF member organizations. The event represented a framework for capacity building across multiple sectors, including national policymakers and administrators, non-governmental advocacy organizations including local community development groups, vacation homeowners who patronize community and heritage development causes, and local residents seeking sustainable economic development. The event was covered by local and Nassau-based newspapers and radio stations and received wide publicity throughout the Bahamas. Its opening served as a first step in the widening shared initiatives of the One Eleuthera Foundation.

Conclusion

The Web Portal is designed to serve as a conduit for learning about the events and the collaborative initiatives in progress at the time of launch, including a conservation and heritage trail that traverses the entire island and incorporates many of the resources identified by Michael Singer Studio South (2010) and the Center for Heritage & Society (Chilton et al. 2011) as well as OEF member organizations.

The web portal serves as a platform to create a “community of practice” (Wenger et al. 2002) committed to a common interest in sustainable economic development and guided by my theorization of shared heritage ethics, which emphasizes an empathetic understanding of the instrumental effects of the social process of heritage in instilling hope and security in an imaginable future. As such, it incorporates design principles that
are user-centered and “agile,” recognizing that community is in process and that content and attendant feature needs will change over time as the community grows and adapts to its conditions. It creates public and private spaces across a dispersed network of stakeholders to access meaningful information and provide feedback on active initiatives, enabling dialogue and accountability. It also serves practical purposes, streamlining staff members’ tasks and helping them to focus on work beyond the computer monitor. Finally, the web portal fosters different levels of participation for stakeholders across multiple sectors and at multiple scales, allowing stakeholders to claim and name a stake rather than prescribing it. In that sense it is a possible tool to begin to address the core problems of the traditionally dominant cultural tourism paradigms.

The OEF Web Portal also addresses the challenges of alternative tourism development models by assisting OEF’s mission to build linkages across the niche “markets” representing nature (e.g. ecotourism), culture (e.g. heritage tourism, historic preservation), and community (e.g. education, public health wellness, entrepreneurs). Furthermore, it links stakeholders across sectors, including public administration, private business, non-governmental community organizations, and the citizenry. And it expands the boundaries of community by identifying the many, synchronous scales at which community and heritage are practiced, including local residents, vacation homeowners, and members of the Family Island diaspora. Mobilizing community through ICT is more than publishing a website or e-newsletter: it requires interfacing the range of available physical and human resources to create meaningful collaborative projects and ethical responsibilities based in shared interests. ICT can aid the development of shared heritage by networking dispersed stakeholders, maintaining intangible linkages to places and their
inhabitants, enabling empathy-based ethics, and mobilizing obligations to common interests. As such, ICT can be a constructive and practical tool for complementing, extending, and enhancing shared heritage development efforts on the ground.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have outlined some basic principles of an anthropology of the social ethics of heritage in order to move beyond the hegemonic treatment of heritage as the objects of cultural property. Toward that goal, I have presented two case studies: rural cultural landscape conservation in Hadley, Massachusetts, and rural community tourism development in Eleuthera, Bahamas, and produced three “products” as illustrative examples of such an anthropology: in Chapter 2 I present the draft of an academic research article identifying heritage commons that was eventually published in the peer reviewed journal of Heritage & Society (2012); in Chapter 3 I discuss a methodology for creating a heritage “imaginary” (Gibson-Graham 2006) using Photovoice; and in Chapter 4 I detail my development of ICT to support the capacity building of communities of shared heritage practice. These case studies focus on two contemporary and major threats to rural livelihoods around the globe: urban encroachment and tourism development. The products represent three skill sets integral to an anthropologist of heritage: theorization for and dissemination to academic audiences, publicly-engaged and place-based elicitation methods for qualitative data, and unique interdisciplinary tools that have practical use for our informant-collaborators.

The Ethics of Shared Heritage

In the two case studies I have presented in this dissertation, I have consistently conceptualized heritage as practice, rather than heritage as commemorated “Past” or discrete resources to be managed. Though my methods differ in the cases of Hadley and Eleuthera, my objective has remained the same: to facilitate community-based reflection
on the past and future in places where the socio-economic transformations of modernity and globalization have threatened collective memory and living heritage ecosystems with commodified nostalgia and essentialized identities. Longing, fear, and feelings of powerlessness in the face of economic instability and cultural change inhibit the ongoing constitution of contemporary communities as meaningfully evolving socio-political entities (Gibson-Graham 2006). In this dissertation, I have attempted to illustrate that the practices of self-reflection and creatively and critically imagining beyond the hegemonic “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006) can offer an alternative ethical strategy that values the process and instrumental effects of heritage in our lives and instills senses of belonging and agency.

**Constituting Communities of Shared Heritage Practice**

In the case study of the One Eleuthera Web Portal discussed in the preceding chapter, I present a practical application of shared heritage ethics to the field of sustainable rural development using internet and communications technology (ICT). Such an application requires reframing the subject of ethical practice from “the local community” or “the stakeholders” to the mobilization of acts of community through capacity building. In other words, communities of shared heritage practice are constituted through their ethics; they are not predefined, static entities in and of themselves. While some public heritage projects engage “the local community” or “multiple stakeholders” or try to encourage “stewardship” in heritage protection efforts, such frameworks seldom recognize that communities are dynamically constituted by social practices, and most essentially by their ethical practices. The object of “One Eleuthera” is consciously and
constructively creative: by participating in the foundation’s network, community is articulated around shared values as expressed and enacted by coalition members.

ICT designed around the principle of building communities of ethical practice serves as a “bridgespace” (Adams and Ghose 2003) to network dispersed social actors, maintain linkages to place across space, enable empathy within the network, and to channel obligations to support the common interests. ICT is particularly effective at building linkages across multiple sectors and at multiple scales, which helps to support more meaningful and more evenly distributed participation across specific interests, expertise, and experience. These design features are key components to constituting communities of shared heritage ethical practice that draw upon the capacities of a more diverse range of participants and heritage resources.

For rural areas facing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism development, building shared heritage communities of practice expands the range of potential for creatively developing alternative modes of community tourism and economic opportunity that value the future of heritage. When applied to the Bahamian Family Island of Eleuthera, a shared heritage framework expands the field of potential participants to community interest groups; public officials; private practitioners, donors, and developers; and non-local entities who may not initially or primarily consider heritage in development projects. Rather than prescribing the heritage narrative or object to be valued in development, shared heritage frameworks bring heritage practice to the surface of larger dialogues about economic opportunities, community livelihoods, and sustainability. When integrated in this way, heritage doesn’t have to be continuously
framed only in light of its needs for protection and defense but as a source for opportunity and creativity.

**Creating Heritage Imaginaries**

As I have documented in the cases of Eleuthera and Hadley, heritage nostalgia and alienation can feed a potentially paralyzing illusion of a more desirable “Past” that has been undermined by the socio-economic realities of the present. However, this can alternatively serve as an impetus to creatively imagine and act toward a new future, when it inspires a reflective, collective discourse on the crucial questions of agency, place, and identity. “Rereading” (Gibson-Graham 2006) heritage narratives and the contemporary visual lexicon to identify those values, resources, and actors that are absent or lie beyond the picture frame helps to reveal highly fraught areas of concern and potential sources of anxiety and conflict. In the case study of Hadley, Massachusetts, the commercial corridor of Route 9 superficially appears as the epitome of placelessness: a blight on the landscape and a vacuum for the significance cherished in “spirit of place” studies (e.g. Turgeon 2009). However, the documented collaborative rereading of Route 9 in Chapter 3 suggests its fundamental role as a site for heritage values and identities to be delineated, contested, and reproduced. This site of tension can be more productively centered in heritage discourse rather than excluded or framed in purely negative terms. Moreover, the retelling of and reflection of Route 9’s history, retold by many older residents in town and reacted to by other community members, provides opportunity for residents to confront the internal political dynamics and ethical choices that rural community members make to produce and inscribe the prototypical landscapes of rural blight. Thus, landscapes such as the mall along Route 9, whose life cycle of “mall…new mall…dead
mall…mall of the living dead” can counter the hegemonic narrative of urban encroachment as an external force descending upon and marching through helpless rural towns to leave behind static non-places. As such sites are reread to be part of the heritage milieu, perhaps planning resources such as heritage inventories will expand to include those places that were once beyond the frame of the heritage photo.

In Chapter 3 I outline a methodology for rereading heritage narratives and lexicon using Photovoice to elicit participants’ emic heritage values as well as how they believe their community is perceived through outsiders’ eyes. Through engaging volunteers in group-based photography assignments and discussions, I created a space where participants’ knowledge was foregrounded (over my own “expertise”) and transmitted to each other. In this creative atmosphere, participants were encouraged to explore the gamut of their heritage milieu: from reproducing nearly identical prototypical views of their collective memory to creating original and sophisticated images representative of their hopes for their town’s future. By sharing these images with focus groups and through gallery exhibitions, I attempted to elicit qualitative data beyond that which was produced in the course of normative heritage commemoration and to empower participants to give photo and voice to their heritage values. Such creative participation is integral to creating the type of “political imaginary” Gibson-Graham (2006) calls for to move beyond the strong theories of leftist progressive politics and academic deconstruction.

The shared heritage ethical framework I propose in this dissertation revalues the ends of heritage as the continuation of a transformative and vital social process rather than the commemoration or preservation of particular heritage resources or narratives.
This reorientation creates the space for communities of shared heritage practice to creatively imagine heritage as a strategy to address the greater alienating forces that cause personal economic and geographical alienation—and ultimately comprise the physical threats to the protection of heritage itself. It also affords a process for strengthening ontological security. Thus, I have tried to expand my research focus beyond the past and the present to explicitly include the future as well, a broadening of perspective that some contemporary heritage scholars are also adopting (e.g. Graves-Brown 2012; Högberg and Holtorf 2012; Lowenthal 2005; Spennemann 2012). Furthermore, I distinguish myself from other heritage scholars by developing both theory and methods aimed at social ethics (rather than specific heritage objects or types) that a range of stakeholders can creatively adapt and apply in their own contexts. Doing so moves the research project beyond critique and deconstruction into a practical and imaginative realm where hope can begin to enter the frame and provide an antidote to the cynicism rampant in critical studies of alienation and globalization. In Eleuthera and Hadley, heritage has been reframed by advocates as part of the means to enhance and protect livelihoods that residents and visitors perceived and experienced as under threat by the larger social forces of globalization. The goal of this dissertation has been to theorize the potential of this reframing of traditional heritage practice and to document some practical and possible methods of application (though certainly not the only ones) through which new heritage identities and futures can be created by community members themselves.

**Identifying Heritage Commons**

Throughout this dissertation, I have emphasized that heritage be conceived as a dynamic collective interest, not an inventoried set of discrete cultural markers or
resources that compose a static collective identity. Communities of shared heritage practice and the imaginaries they create to expand their inherited ontological and ethical frames can contribute to the ontological security of community members by emphasizing shared responsibilities, as well as rights, and future sustainability, rather than “restorative” nostalgia (Boym 2002) or cynical angst. These principal values correspond to ethical work on other types of commons in which individuals entrust each other with shared interests of their own and future generations (Agrawal 2003; Bollier 2001; Gibson-Graham 2006; Ostrom 1990). Although hegemonic understandings of commons (e.g. Hardin 1968) render them ineffective or doomed in the face of human “nature” or the ethical culture of global capitalism, such alternative and counterhegemonic social organizations do exist within globalized societies (Gibson-Graham 2006). In fact, the environmental sector has successfully popularized such ethics and lobbied for their inclusion in some public policy arenas (Agrawal 2003).

In Chapter 2, I argue that perpetual agricultural land conservation restrictions are creating a new iteration of commons in Hadley, Massachusetts. While I question the long-term sustainability of the program, I recognize the program’s potential as a more effective model for shared heritage protection of cultural landscapes. Its public-private partnership balances the long-revered American values of liberal private property ownership with a public interest to protect valued landscapes and attendant land use and products. By levying taxes that can be used to support the publicly funded program (both at the state and local levels), landed community residents share in the program’s success and pledge their commitment. Those landowners who voluntarily take part in the program receive such funds in exchange for their future development rights without being
forced to change their current labor practices. And government agencies still apply their expertise to usher landowners through the program and monitor that the responsibilities of managing the commons are being shouldered properly.

Programs such as this one that enable the protection of shared heritage shouldn’t freeze place and culture in time but focus on the continuation of meaningful practices that constitute heritage, and by proxy, community itself. Rather than promoting singularity in form, content, and perspective, such programs should celebrate and channel diverse resources, meanings, and opinions toward shared interests in order to achieve the dual moral aims of shared heritage (coexistence and future-oriented security). The point in Hadley isn’t to preserve a single farm or type of farm, but to, as an ethical community, support and safeguard the continuation of a way of life and its attendant values amid cultural change. Thus, while programs such as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program offer hope, they are not a panacea for all of the challenges that face rural communities. However, heritage programs can certainly play an important part—especially when they help to expand the discourse of heritage protection to encompass natural and cultural, tangible and intangible, and public and private resources.

Furthermore, programs that enhance or put democratic or other consensus-based political systems in place (such as a local heritage council or community initiative) to manage common assets leave a legacy that can more easily adapt to changing heritage development and protection needs.

**A Future Research Agenda**

My theorization of shared heritage ethics is one contribution toward a broader research agenda that counters the hegemony of the “authorized heritage discourse”
(Smith 2006) by conceiving of heritage in more abstract, dynamic, and holistic ways.

There remain many important threads to take up in the literature as well as further research needs to expand and revise my conceptualization of shared heritage. I outline several research needs, below.

**Assessment of the Shared Heritage Ethical Framework**

While I have outlined multiple features of shared heritage ethics, more work remains to be done in revising these features in terms of measurable indicators that can be used to assess the capacity of a given shared heritage program. Doing so will make shared heritage and its values-based ethics more practical to apply for those beyond academia, such as public officials and private practitioners working within pro-poor development and human rights frameworks where monitoring and evaluation of programs are key. Additionally, such work will concretize the impacts of shared heritage in a way that my present research only hints at.

In order to conceive of such indicators and impacts, more longitudinal studies of shared heritage models in action are needed. The Hadley, Massachusetts, case study I present offers such an opportunity as the program is now old enough to see the transfer of property and shared interests to a new generation: how will those interests be interpreted and shouldered by this younger generation? Will the benefits be experienced in the same way by those who do not receive a direct financial incentive? How quickly do shared interests shift in rural communities such that the common interest identified in the 1970s remains relevant? Will the regulations that protect heritage today remain loose enough to allow for the cultural dynamism and creativity inherent in a vital cultural heritage ecosystem? While One Eleuthera is just getting off the ground at the time of my writing,
the history of tourism on Eleuthera is much deeper. To what extent will One Eleuthera comprise an alternative and collaborative planning strategy in the face of consolidating and increasingly insular tourism development models? Is One Eleuthera’s temporal frame for community development longer, and thus more practically sustainable, than tourism development plans? Such questions will get at the practical temporal framework of the future-orientation of shared heritage ethics as applied.

In addition to longitudinal studies, further work that deals laterally across more diverse and explicitly-identified segments of expert and lay communities will contribute greater understanding of the “shared” component of shared heritage ethics. Where are the limits of social groups’ compassion for others’ needs for heritage? How can such compassion and empathy be fostered? What skill sets are needed for heritage professionals to foster such ethics? In Hadley, how can seasonal farm laborers be incorporated into the heritage narratives and practices that are clearly celebrated and valued in town? Moreover, how can they be meaningfully involved in planning discussions and other political entities in town? Relatedly, how can such political entities, in which retirees are over-represented, be more generally accessible to those of working age in the lower and middle classes in town? In Eleuthera, the same question in its inverse could be asked: how can the older generation be more actively involved in One Eleuthera’s efforts, and can One Eleuthera offer a point of intergenerational skill and knowledge sharing? Can One Eleuthera leverage ICT in a way that bridges different social groups or will it regress to channeling communication along entrenched social boundaries?
Multi-, Inter- and Trans-disciplinary Research

As models for heritage safeguarding grow more complex, the need for other disciplinary perspectives and expertise increase. Heritage is already a multidisciplinary field in which archaeologists, historians, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, ecologists, landscape architects, architects, artists, art historians, lawyers, and others bring their theories and methods to bear. More integrative work is needed that places such theories and methods in conversation with each other. For instance, in Chapter 4 I attempt to integrate anthropology, information science, and software engineering perspectives to create a practical tool for shared heritage development in Eleuthera, Bahamas as part of a larger collaborative project between the One Eleuthera Foundation and the Center for Heritage and Society. Creative combinations of disciplines in collaborative teams can offer novel conceptualizations and tools. For instance, in Hadley, long-range regional planning and public policy, economics, ecology, agriculture, public history, and cultural anthropology can contribute to a more holistic evaluation and adaptation of the agricultural preservation program to more sustainably meet the common needs for cultural landscape protection in town. In Eleuthera, the seeds of such collaborations are just being planted, for instance possible collaboration between ecologists, ethnobotanists, archaeologists, landscape architects, and public health could integrate the newly opened Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve into contemporary heritage practices focused on traditional healing using “bush medicine” and move beyond its conservation and education mission. Ideally, such collaboration will lead to new transdisciplinary research models, a goal being worked toward around the world by the new academic research entity, the UMass Amherst Center for Heritage and Society;
academic programs such as the Heritage Studies Programme at Linnaeus University, the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University, Center for World Heritage Studies at University of Minnesota, and Center for Heritage Resource Studies at University of Maryland; and professional organizations such as the Association of Critical Heritage Studies.

**Alienation and Ontological Security**

In my theorization of shared heritage, I suggest that heritage protection is both a symptom and coping strategy for the alienating forces of modernity and globalization. This provocative suggestion merits further exploration. Current research (e.g. Graves-Brown et al. 2012; Harrison and Schofield 2010; Holtorf 2012; Holtorf and Piccini 2009) on contemporary (late twentieth–twenty-first century) material culture and heritage protection as heritage may provide a fruitful venue for such explorations. How have we learned alienation as a process and how do we mistakenly enact alienation through those very strategies we have crafted to ameliorate its effects?

Finally, my research on shared heritage presumes that ontological security is a positive attribute, but under what circumstances does such a drive for security become numbing or constraining and cause negative effects? In other words, when does ontological security become a tattered security blanket that we need to let go of? To what extent does some existential anxiety fuel positive ethical choices?

**There is Always a “There There”**

That my dissertation presents and promotes an integrated theory and ethical framework of heritage and heritage protection, the entire exercise has been one of meta-ethics. At its heart, this research assumes that the ethics engendered by the “authorized
heritage discourse” have led to detrimental consequences for heritage resources and their associated communities of practitioners, memory keepers, stewards, diasporic groups, and general observers. Traditional, essentializing heritage practices, far from softening the impact of change and enhancing a sense of continuity have often contributed to further alienation from our environment, each other, and ourselves. It is not enough to commemorate and preserve heritage objects; heritage is not an object, it is a socially mediated practice that people use to index their identity and cultural values. Critique and deconstruction of heritage narratives and their hidden ideological implications is only a first step toward constructive social action once the ideological curtain is torn away. I argue that we must work toward constructive modes of applied academic research that offer real utility to our collaborators and ourselves in the realm of identity formation, collective action, and community evolution. Such research represents a hopeful stance that can widen the field of possibility in ethical heritage practice. Above all, in this dissertation I have sought to demonstrate the intellectual and practical potential of using our pasts to confront processes of alienation and to create desirable futures through new approaches to heritage practice and collective memory.
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