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***“Social Theory, Appalachian Studies, and the Challenge of Global Regions: The UK  
Rockefeller Fellowship Project, 2000-2005”***

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## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

### **SOCIAL THEORY, APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL REGIONS: THE UK-ROCKEFELLER FELLOWSHIP PROJECT, 2000-2005**

**Betsy Taylor, Lynne Faltraco and Ana Isla**

From 2002-2005, several interdisciplinary programs at the University of Kentucky (UK) sponsored a fellowship program for Appalachian activists and international scholars working to build strong communities. Over three years, the program awarded seventeen fellowships to scholars and citizen leaders who are at the leading edge of global innovation in new models for partnership between communities, academics and government in community-centered and participatory planning. Fellowships were equally divided into two “tracks”—one for activists working in the Appalachian region, another for scholars from the Southern Hemisphere or “the global South”.

Worldwide, local communities face similar problems as economic globalization hits. Global markets pull jobs and capital around the world at dizzying speeds. How can communities protect their economic, cultural and ecological health when jobs, young people and natural resources keep heading over the horizon? We believe that people in widely scattered, local struggles are capable of envisioning new solutions to these global problems but they need spaces where they can come together to learn from each other. Our dream was to use

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the resources of a public, land grant university to create these kinds of spaces. This dream became the UK Rockefeller Humanities Fellowships, "Civic Professionalism and Global Regionalism: Justice, Sustainability and the 'Scaling Up' of Community Participation," with the central goal of bringing people together from around the world to "connect the dots" between their struggles.

Reflecting this spirit, this chapter was written collaboratively: Two of the coauthors were fellows of the Rockefeller Fellowship Program: Lynne Faltraco was an "activist fellow" from western North Carolina, who is a key leader in the citizen movement against mega chip mills, and who has advocated for a sustainable forestry that builds vibrant, equitable, rural communities in Appalachia. Lynne is also co-editor of this current volume, Ana Isla was also a participant in the program and was an "academic fellow" looking at the narrow environmentalism of "sustainable development" programs of mining, biotechnology, ecotourism, and carbon sinks in Central America. Originally from Peru, she is now based in Canada. The third co-author of this chapter is Betsy Taylor, who was one of three UK faculty co-directors of the fellowship program (along with Wolfgang Natter (Geography and Social Theory), Herbert Reid (Political Science and Appalachian Studies). Betsy starts this chapter with an overview of the program and then discusses some of the "lessons learned" with a focus on what might be useful to academics trying to plan similar programs on campus. Ana then talks broadly (theoretically) about some of the challenges and possibilities for building solidarities between the global South and global North. Finally, Lynne provides some practical advice on how communities can make use of universities.

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## **THE ROCKEFELLER FELLOWSHIP PROJECT: AN OVERVIEW**

The Rockefeller Fellowship Project arose out of a concern that too much in community/academic partnerships is “one-way” — focused more on changing communities, rather than changing academics. Too many academics think of public service as “outreach,” as if the resources and wisdom are on campus and need to be taken out. Our program emphasized what the folklorist Mary Hufford calls “inreach” — bringing a diversity of public concerns into the heart of campus life to shake up the academic status quo and to make university resources directly available to activists.

Inreach creates spaces within campus life where community and scholarly voices can come together in equal and mutually enriching ways to build common purpose and to connect ideas with action. After many years of working on community/academic collaborations out in communities, the fellowship organizers wanted to start a program that could bring the community perspective and leaders onto campus.

If there is one phrase that summarizes what we were trying to do--it was "to build conversations across communication gaps." We had learned that the best way to ask the best questions, and come up with good answers, is to get many voices and perspectives in critical dialogue with each other. At the heart of our fellowship program, was the hope that it could break down some of the divides that make it hard to have good conversations. We wanted to bridge divides between: a) activists and academics; b) the global South and the global North; c) activists that worked on single issues (culture, forestry, water, economics, labor, and others) and those trying to build multi-issue coalitions; and d) different disciplines and specializations, especially the big divide between the humanities and the sciences.

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The program demonstrated, with great success, that a research university can be used as a site from which to create a “hybrid public space” designed to break down the above barriers. Regional analysis and action was central as a strategy for understanding globalization. Regional analysis keeps one close to local realities while enabling useful comparisons between different parts of the world. Activist fellows struggle with global impacts as rural Appalachian economies collapse when textile mills, timber or coal jobs flee, illegal drugs move in and the youth move out. But, as our conversations deepened, the phrase recurred – “there are many ‘Appalachias.’” The parallels were striking—between the ethnic minority “Middlebelt” in Nigeria, the “Seven Sisters” in northeast India, indigenous Andean communities and others.

At the heart of this program were the fellows themselves. Each fellow came to UK’s Lexington campus for a three to six months residence to accomplish a project of their own design. Over its three years, the UK Rockefeller Humanities Fellowships attracted a remarkable group of 17 fellows. Each year, we had four to seven fellows, with the fellowship money equally divided between activists and scholars. The fellows were astonishingly prolific—producing popular education manuals, multimedia productions, and scholarly publications of all sorts, as well as rich new partnerships and networks.

Anybody who knows about social and environmental justice movements in Appalachia over the past 20 years will recognize names of many of the eleven activist fellows, as well as the citizen organizations they represent—including the Highlander Center (Tennessee), Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Appalshop (Kentucky), and the Concerned Citizens of Rutherford County (North Carolina), and ACENet (Ohio). The six international fellows have done distinguished work as scholars, journalists and public intellectuals on how to build

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democratic collaboration between communities, academics, media and government to promote equity, democracy or ecological stewardship. Our international fellows came from diverse interdisciplinary scholarly institutions the Madras Institute of Development Studies, the Centre for Policy Research and the Asian Development Research Institute (all in India), Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria, the University of Western Cape (Zimbabwe and South Africa), and Brock University (Peru and Canada).

Central was the concept that democracy must be built across “multiple scales” simultaneously. The program was designed to link local, regional, national, and global levels of public action, discourse and imagination. It built rich social bonds, debates and collaborations among our very impressive fellows and across the diversities they represented. The fellows participated in dozens of public forums, field trips and discussion groups created by the program which attracted hundreds of local citizens and civic organizations, representatives of Appalachian social change groups, students, scholars, culture workers, journalists and interested others. These crosscutting civic webs and conversations culminated in a powerful, wrap up conference which brought fellows back to campus.

The wrap-up conference demonstrated the commonalities underneath the many differences among our group. Our program cultivated conversations about the global resonances of seemingly local struggles. For instance, there was a striking dovetailing of themes on a panel “Globalization and Inequality” in our wrap up conference in the spring 2005, where on the surface, issues might look disparate. Amelia Kirby, an activist fellow from Appalshop, a very creative media collective in eastern Kentucky, started the panel and talked about the growth of privatized prisons in Appalachian communities desperate for steady jobs in

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a collapsing rural economy, the global prison industry, prison abuse, and racism. Ana Isla talked about her research in Central America on globalization, ecotourism, neoliberalism and U.S. military/drug policy--examining displacements of local communities and informal economies particularly damaging to women. Joan Robinett, an activist fellow from Kentucky (see Chapter 3 in this volume on Dayhoit) looked at her current work with a community-driven Listening Project in Harlan County on illegal drug abuse and other issues of civic revitalization and collective trauma, part of another Rockefeller funded community arts project collaborative with Southeast Community College. Herbert Reid, co-director of the project, ended the panel and talked about North/South inequality, corporate globalization and the myth of progress.

Dramatic interconnections and resonances emerged between these seemingly different topics. There were direct connections between: the global jobs crisis; projects promising jobs and prosperity; large amounts of public money leaving local economies and profiting global industries; government corruption, civic distrust, and the undermining of local economies; globalization and the growth of drug and sex trades; environmental damage; loss of local knowledge; threats to family structure; inflammation of identity clashes of class, race and gender; detention, surveillance and insecurity; human rights' abuses linked to inequality, police violence, and militarization; and cycles of trauma, violence, displacements, denial and forgetting. These linkages were sometimes quite specific—as in direct connections (of people, institutional culture and management models) between military detention practices abroad and privatized prisons industry in the USA. In a recent book, Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor discuss these linkages in detail, drawing on examples from the UK Rockefeller fellowship program and from community-based struggles in many parts of the world (Reid and Taylor

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2010).

The impacts of the program flowed out from a “campus around the world” as the fellows took their projects back to diverse efforts to reclaim and re-imagine community, democracy, justice and ecological sanity. There were seven types of direct impact from our fellows’ projects. First, some fellows helped create “new public spaces” to empower the disempowered or bring diverse political actors together into new alliances and public action. Second, some fellows worked to nurture “counter publics” and “alternative civic networks” to create the civic preconditions for new social movements or alternative institutions. By ‘civic’ we mean those informal webs and networks through which citizens engage each other in their real everyday lives—to try to work together for the common good. Third, fellows enlarged existing, or created new, “spaces of imagination” to steward memory and imagine new futures and solidarities—in art, storytelling, drama, critical journalism, documentary film, and music. Fourth, many fellows created alternative educational media and popular education tools (citizen manuals, films and shows, and workshops). Fifth, several fellows continue to serve on important government advisory boards (national and provincial) or testify to legislatures on pressing public issues. Sixth, several fellows have been directly involved in electoral politics or citizen lobbying. And last, seventh, fellows continue to work for institutional transformation of academe, expert organizations, journalism or regulatory bodies.

Likewise, the program had strong impacts on students. Fellows reached many hundreds of students through guest presentations in classrooms, and in several dozen campus and public forums sponsored by the program, as well as during field trips hosted by grassroots Appalachian social and environmental organizations. At least a dozen graduate students were

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directly shaped by the fellowship program. Each year, the UK faculty co-directors taught an advanced, transdisciplinary graduate seminar that created a forum for resident fellows and students from many disciplines to put academic social theory on "globalization from below" into dialogue with perspectives and voices emerging from transnational civil society and activist literatures about corporate globalization. Over 70 faculty members actively participated in discussion groups, roundtables, field trips, and presentations.

### **REFLECTIONS FROM BETSY TAYLOR, PROGRAM CO-DIRECTOR**

The UK Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship was a good beginning. But, we were definitely "going against the grain" of academic life. We learned a lot about the institutional barriers to "civic professionalism" and community-based research. Here are some lessons learned from our mistakes and difficulties for anyone interested in building similar programs. Looking through the eyes of the community activist fellows, we could see how strange a university is, in many ways bureaucratic and alienated, with faculty under wearying time and work pressures. Mentoring and community-building were important to ameliorate the tendencies towards coldness and bigness in university life.

There were large differences of world-views among all involved. For instance, some of those coming from the Global South were struck by how disconnected U.S. media and citizenry seem to be from on-the-ground realities elsewhere.

To bridge radically different worlds, it was crucial to cultivate critical reflection, openness and trust in our events and conversations. After some trial and error in the first year, we settled into a system that worked well. The co-directors met with each fellow upon arrival,

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to share food, to plan and to build relationships. Each fellow was paired with a co-director who coordinated their mentoring and support systems. Different fellows expressed quite different needs. The mentoring models included: regular (usually weekly) meetings between fellow and co-director; advice about people and resources on campus so that the fellow could independently make connections; social events to bring people together; formal "reading and discussion" groups (including faculty and graduate students with relevant interests) which met weekly to discuss the fellow's ongoing work and brainstorm ideas and share readings, screenings and presentations for critique and discussion of their films, manuals, and projects. Fellow-to-fellow learning and debate was crucial. We selected the location of their offices to maximize collegial exchange with like-minded people. In addition, crucial mentoring, hospitality and networking were generously provided by regional citizen organizations especially the Highlander Center and Appalshop.

Activists were hungry for this time to reflect, for freedom from crushing scarcities of money and time, for insulation from the demands of people in need and the pressure of immediate problems demanding practical solutions and for time to concentrate and go deeper. While it was exciting, it was not easy, to transcend differences between global South and North and activist and academe. Differences in language took constant work and will need much more work. Differences in perspective and ideology took time. One of the best parts of the fellowship program was that it provided time in which to build conversations, empathy and trust—bringing people together in ways that were personally compelling, rich and, often, transformative.

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This program was only possible because of the many years of earlier scholarship and civic professionalism that self-consciously built intellectual and collegial connections across disciplines, and with grass-roots civil society. It demonstrates that formal programs for transdisciplinary collaboration and place-based scholarship are essential to larger societal goals to nurture "public scholarship." The UK Rockefeller Humanities Fellowships program was a project of the UK Committee on Social Theory, received crucial staff support from the UK Appalachian Center and had close intellectual links with UK Appalachian Studies, UK Environmental Studies, UK Geography and other units with strong interdisciplinary orientation. The Advisory Board included three regional civic leaders and 13 senior UK faculty from Anthropology, English Geography, Philosophy, Political Science and Sociology. By almost any measure, our program had remarkable successes. However, there were areas where we came up against deep structural problems. Many activist fellows, for example, face daunting financial scarcities, despite their splendid credentials. There are just not enough jobs out there for people doing truly grassroots work. We believe that there are glass ceilings for grassroots activists if they do not follow narrow professionalizing and specializing paths, and hyper-groom themselves for donors. For the co-directors this program took more time, work and care than the typical academic program, as well as wry recognition of what academic status and reward systems cannot see. We learned a lot about the ways in which universities are like outsized ships that do not easily turn. Yet the joy of the work, and our comradeship with each other compensated for the lack of professional recognition.

**REFLECTIONS FROM ANA ISLA, FELLOW, 2002**

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To start with I have borrowed from Moraga and Anzaldúa (2002) some thoughts to locate myself. I was born in the rainforest of Peru but I am living in Canada. Living in Canada, as a Canadian citizen, I am the “other” (for Canadians) but at the same time I am the “them” (for Latin Americans). Latin America is my land and Canada is my country. I do not feel that I have been a traitor to the geopolitical borders that divide nations of people. My sense of place is on the American continents. Because of that I do not have borders and all the issues of the American continents are my issues. I have a large space to go, from Patagonia through Argentina and Chile to the North West Territories, in Canada. I must inhabit many “*mundos*” (worlds). I have been bridging all these as I go back and forth, showing that whether the ‘discoverers or imperialists and their children’ want it or not, we are all in symbiotic relationship and that we live in a state of deep interconnectedness.

In my academic work, I identify with eco-feminism. Eco-feminism elaborates on non-wage women’s household work that is often not recognized as work; and links it with peasant and Indigenous Peoples’ subsistence production which is subjected to underpayment, non-payment, discrimination and exploitation. Most women’s households and peasants and Indigenous Peoples combine income from various sources, one of which is their “subsistence” activity. According to Mies (1998), Mies and Bennholt-Thomsen (1999) and Salleh (1994) all of them are producers directly concerned with provisioning - the production and maintenance of food and life. They are exploited by capital, not through wages, but through their product, which was taken from them with little or very low compensation (Mies 1998); Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen 1999; Salleh 1994). These colonized areas are ruled by violence such as

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rape and domestic violence in the case of women; genocide of Indigenous people and peasants; and ecocide of nature.

Here is an example on how this framework operates in Latin America. Since the 1950s, when the Cold War and economic development coincided, the U.S. reorganized Latin America social relations into a money/power dynamic backed by military dictatorships. As a result, millions of South and Central Americans were killed or forced into exile. Since 1982, with the debt crisis, neo-liberal economic development further reorganized all our ways of being. For those of us who survived, these are like the Auschwitz times for the Jews; because over the span of two decades (1970 - 1990) the Cold War and economic development killed over 1,000,000 women and men, wage-workers, non-wage peasants and Indigenous People (Castaneda, 1994). Since the 1990s, the numerous “Truth and Reconciliation Commissions” in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Peru among others in the region speak volumes about this tragedy. Since 1990, with the environmental crisis, the political ecology of sustainable development uses conservation as another instrument of colonization and subjugation of Latin America’s nature, women, peasant and Indigenous people’s work (Isla 2003). As biodiversity and women’s non-wage labor comprise the support system that local communities use for survival, this war on subsistence rights expands destitution. Consequently sustainable development, in the form of economic growth and narrow environmentalism, increases global monetary transactions while destroying local life systems and dispossess millions of local community members (Isla 2000), while global warming proceeds unimpeded.

Women and men in the North and South have more in common than they think. Policy makers in the North and local elite in the South are passing the economic costs of economic

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growth onto the non-waged poor women, peasants, Indigenous peoples and nature.

Consequently, in both the global North and South societies and cultures are disintegrating.

Despite that, both empowered and dominated women and men, are very well equipped to take up the case for themselves and other living beings. Yet it is not just Latin American lives and livelihood at stake here; the natural environment is equally being decimated.

### **REFLECTIONS FROM LYNNE FALTRACO, FELLOW, 2003**

In 2003, I participated in The Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship Program at the University of Kentucky. My own project was entitled “Bridging the Gap-A Resource Manual for Local Rural Communities” and it gave me the opportunity to develop a manual that could be used throughout the region. The manual was an effort to spotlight expertise and skills in various academic communities and thus, to help make the talent available in academia more accessible to rural communities. The Bridging the Gap manual sought to bring academia and citizen activists together through this shared source and resource. I’ve come to realize over the years (see Chapter 7 with Conner Bailey) that universities have many resources and a vast body of knowledge which potentially can be invaluable to community members. This expertise, knowledge and factual data can help communities build credibility while acquiring knowledge themselves; this, in turn, empowers local communities and helps them solve problems of environmental integrity and sustainability. While there are so many things I wish I had learned years ago, now I realize that education and knowledge promote power for all citizens by putting issues into some sort of perspective. And while academics have access to resources and both empirical and theoretical knowledge, citizens have "real life" personal,

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community and organizing experiences, as well as other forms of professional and issue-oriented expertise that can also contribute to building understanding, building alliances and taking action.

In compiling the manual, I partnered with faculty from the Department of Forestry at the University of Kentucky, attended classes and participated in classroom activities in the Anthropology, Forestry, Political Science, and Sociology Departments. Talking about my personal community experiences provided students and academics with a citizen perspective on rural community. In my talks, I encouraged those in forestry to look beyond the statistics and "board feet" of lumber and consider the human element. To my surprise, some of them had never thought about community before! This established a new connection and I believe my participation provided different methods for addressing community and forestry-related issues. Through this process, I believe I started to help bridge the gap, in one small measure between universities and communities. Universities and their forestry departments, that are entrusted with the job of educating and training young adults in forest management, need to perhaps better link the timber industry with a neighborhood, especially when there are repercussions from building a wood processing facility in that particular community.

From my office interviews with university faculty, I started to compile this resource manual to help connect university faculty with community leadership. Often academic resources are not available to communities and, it was my view, these needed to be more accessible. The purpose of this manual was to spotlight scholars' contact information, departments, brief biographies, fields of expertise, education, experience, research interests, types of classes taught, professional organizations and honorary societies, honors and awards, consulting experience, their past resources for citizens, and their community activities. The last two, available resources for citizens and their community activities are very important for citizens and community activist and were highlighted within the manual. If an

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academic has a history of being involved with citizens and community activities, citizens are more likely to feel that they may have a vested interest and genuine concern for their neighborhood and community. It is my experience that university faculty that have a history of working with communities tend to have a better ability to understand and appreciate the struggles and challenges that so many communities endure.

So, how would a citizen use this manual to access and potentially partner with university faculty members? Let's say, a community group was dealing with bad timbering methods that were adversely impacting local water quality. In this case, the community group would be able to use the manual index to find a list of possible community-oriented academics that have conducted research in this area and subsequently, have expertise on timbering, water quality, and Best Management Practices. They could find available contact information by turning next to the directory of university faculty and staff. They could then contact a particular faculty member either by telephone or email to schedule a time to talk. When meeting with university personnel, to get the most from the meeting, the manual advises that preparing and prioritizing a list of questions in advance will lead to a more productive session and also shows respect for the other person's time. The manual even suggests that after the meeting that sending an e-mail or note of acknowledgement may lay the good groundwork for further follow-up conversations and possible partnerships and collaborations down the road. Finally, there was also a section on other resources that are available to citizens including information on various agencies, citizen contacts, consulting firms, organizations and suggested publications.

The outcome of my fellowships resulted in the distribution of this resource manual to community-based and non-governmental organizations, citizen activists, academics, agency officials, industry representatives, private landowners, loggers, legislators and the media throughout the central and southern Appalachian region. Communities were encouraged to pass "Bridging the Gap" on to other organizations, activists, and concerned citizens. Community by community this could

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create and develop a platform to share a myriad of resources and knowledge which could help communities.

In my view and experiences, it is often difficult for citizens to access accurate and easy to understand data to support their campaigns. One of the pitfalls of working in the grassroots arena is that corporations and other power brokers tend to demean citizens by saying that they are not experts and cannot possibly understand the science and technology behind their decisions. They often justify this by launching into a technical jargon that few community residents can understand. Yet, when sympathetic academics, other experts and citizen activists come together, there is the potential for new methods and models to evolve that generate a more democratic and more participatory dialogue that can help move us forward towards more sustainable and livable communities. Knowledge empowers the community to put the industry, science and technical jargon into critical perspective. Let's face it, many community people tend not to learn from books and the professional literature, but from their own experience. They tend to build their strategies mostly by trial and error. Yet, many times, when a community, finally realizes, for example, that a chip mill or other extractive industry is being built in their neighborhood, it is often too late to reverse the decision. This Fellowship Project provided me with the ability to compile a resource manual that perhaps could be used by communities throughout the region to help citizens identify possible effective partners earlier on in their own struggles and organizing activities. I thought that by spotlighting the expertise and skills of academics that are sympathetic to communities and community-based research practices and participatory methods that other partnerships could form. It is my view and experience that developing long-lasting respectful relationships and partnerships can help build sustainable rural communities and can help local citizens define and "democratically take back" their neighborhoods, quality of life and achieve environmental sustainability.

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## **SOME FINAL THOUGHTS:**

We believe that it is crucial to build new models of partnerships between activists and academics to grapple with the depth of problems that we face in the Twenty-first Century. Our knowledge systems have become hyper-specialized, and disconnected from reality. In real life, problems and solutions are multi-causal. However, our traditional university system is, itself, like a huge extractive industry that mines data, sorts it into specialized categories, and then sucks it out in disciplinary silos that deposit information far away from the reality of real communities. Community members usually understand that their problems and solutions are holistic. Local knowledge tends to see the connections between economic, cultural, political, civic, environmental challenges and opportunities. Joan Robinett, one of our UK Rockefeller fellows from Harlan County (see also Chapter 4 in this volume) often talks about the importance of "connecting the dots" between issues. However, it is almost impossible for government agencies and academic experts to connect the dots between issues. The great Kentucky essayist/poet, Wendell Berry talks about "one-eyed experts." There are too many experts and government bureaucrats that are well trained to close their eyes to the complexity of real life -- focusing only on the small area in which they specialize.

Once the "Humpty Dumpty" of real life has been shattered into specialized issues, it can be impossible to reassemble. Knowledge becomes displaced and disconnected from real beings and communities, as they actually exist over time. How can a community make informed decisions about what path to take? What is a community to do when they face the backside of factories headed to China, or politicians courting the money (or bribes) of chip mills, toxic waste dumps, pork fed highways, mountaintop removal, oil rigs, etc.? How can

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they evaluate the forces that are coming at them? How can they clarify what they want and know? How can they decide democratically what they want their community to be like in 100 years? How can local communities build trans-local solidarities and alliances?

Communities and academics need to find more powerful models for building partnerships. We believe that such partnerships are crucial to reclaim and rebuild our knowledge system, so that it connects better with our policy system. Healthy government policy must be community centered. It should emerge from democratic debate among citizens -- especially those directly affected by issues, or those most at risk. It should be able to connect highly specialized knowledge with place based knowledge -- so that theory is grounded in real-life. It should "connect the dots" between issues, and open conversations across divides of economic class, gender, ethnic and cultural diversity. It must be sophisticated in multiscalar analysis-- able to move with suppleness between the perspectives of local "first responders" as well as across regional, national and global levels. Lynne first introduced this excellent term in describing her grassroots organization. The rest of us picked it up— demonstrating the kind of infection of ideas that happened again and again in the synergisms of our ongoing conversations as we struggled to name important, emerging realities which still lack adequate language.

It seems that our current knowledge and policy systems are crippled, unable to rise to these challenges. Why? In large part, these problems are caused by the barriers that separate the wisdom of communities from the resources of experts and government officials. These barriers have been a long time in the making -- going back at least 100 years to the formation of professional associations, and, the growth of government bureaucracies and universities

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vulnerable to being "captured" by corporate or other powers. Fundamental questions of power are revealed in the current movement to rebuild the connections between higher education, real-life, community action, particular places, democratic public debate and collective action.

Recognition of new opportunities for alliances makes this an exciting time. There are many different movements tending in the same direction. Service and action learning programs are exploding around the U.S. -- getting college students off the campus, volunteering for community action, learning civic skills, developing values of service to others and to the public good. In many academic disciplines, there are movements growing for what some call "public scholarship," research and teaching devoted to serving the public good. In addition to this, we join many who strive for "civic professionalism," professional development that is immersed and engaged in civic life, the informal webs of everyday action and networking through which citizens communicate and act to take public responsibility. Perhaps most importantly, many citizen organizations are taking on scholarly tasks as they try to protect local communities and environments. For instance, there is a proliferation of citizen driven "watches"-- forest watches, watershed watches, bird watches, neighborhood watches, and etc. Such community-based knowledge systems have often arisen because of lack of government resources or academic care. Many of them are doing better work than so-called "experts" at monitoring community quality of life, and helping communities get useful knowledge.

These movements point in the same direction, but they are not yet well enough connected. Adriana Kezar is very right when she says that we urgently need to create a "meta movement" which brings together community-based movements with academic-based movements, opening the possibility to create a "new vision for the public good" and a "more

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diverse democracy" (Kezar 2005). If we cannot create this meta-movement, the social charter that has been the historical basis of our democracy might collapse. The UK Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship Program was, itself, designed to build bridges for this sort of meta-movement. We thought of it as something like building "civic infrastructure," webs of civic networks, languages, skills and mutual knowledge that transgressed the barriers described above.

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