

History, Healing, and Hope: Reconceptualizing Crisis Renewal Theory by Developing a Model for Marginalized Communities

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Abstract

This study of two severely-affected, historically-marginalized communities expands current understanding of the crisis renewal theory by revealing the complexity of being prospective in the aftermath of a school shooting and following the devastation of a major hurricane. For the American Indians on the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota and the African Americans in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans, history and group antecedents defined the crisis and complicated the sense-making process. This study proposes a model to reflect the established crisis renewal theory (Figure 1); followed by a community model of renewal (Figure 2) as an alternative perspective.



Figure 1. Model of organizational renewal discourse



Figure 2. Model of marginalized community renewal discourse

Keywords: crisis, renewal, Red Lake shooting, Hurricane Katrina, culture, community, marginalization

1. Introduction

On March 21, 2005, Red Lake Indian reservation in rural Minnesota experienced a school and community shooting rampage that left 10 people dead and 7 wounded (“Troubled Teen,” 2005). Another tragedy struck on August 25, 2005, as Hurricane Katrina devastated the southern coast of the United States (U.S.) leaving in its wake over \$81 billion in damages and an estimated 1,800 people dead (U.S. Department, 2008). Although unrelated, these events have serious implications for crisis communication and organizational renewal as it relates to marginalized populations.

Scholars seeking alternative approaches to image restoration (Benoit, 1995a) and other dominant post-crisis communication approaches have developed a discourse of renewal (Seeger & Ulmer, 2002; Seeger, Ulmer,

Novak, & Sellnow, 2005; Ulmer, Seeger, & Sellnow, 2007). Companies such as Malden Mills, Cole Hardwoods (Seeger & Ulmer, 2002; Ulmer, 2001) and Odwalla (Reiersen, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2009) experienced devastating organizational crises, yet not only were able to survive, but to focus on positive aspects of the crisis and dedication to various stakeholders and publics. As a result, their respective crises became renewing experiences.

Recent work also acknowledged a dominant focus on organizational rhetoric and managerial bias in crisis analysis for the field of crisis communication (Heath, 2010; Ulmer et al., 2007; Waymer & Heath, 2007). Case examples and the rhetoric of powerful organizations and groups, ultimately concerned with reputation and/or profit, have dominated crisis communication studies (see Benoit, 1995b; Benoit & Brinson, 1994; Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997; Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Cowden & Sellnow, 2002; Seeger & Ulmer, 2001, 2002; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000). While some scholars focused on crisis communication with historically marginalized, underserved, or at risk communities (see Falkheimer & Heide, 2006; Lachlan, Burke, Spence, & Griffin, 2009; Lachlan & Spence, 2011; Williams & Olaniran, 2002), their studies did not address renewal discourse or the experience of renewal. Consequently, the application of crisis communication theory, particularly the discourse of renewal, has been limited to top-down or dominant perspectives.

The Red Lake, Minnesota, school shooting and Hurricane Katrina had profound implications for non-dominant and arguably marginalized groups, the American Indian population on the Red Lake Reservation and the African American population in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans respectively. These populations were underrepresented in the dominant coalition of decision-makers and communicators. Moreover, marginalized communities often encounter unique challenges not addressed in organizational literature related to crisis communication and require adaptive and organic responses that are culture-, history-, and situation-bound.

Crisis communication literature is heavily dominated by organizational perspectives. More recently, renewal theory has emerged as a hopeful and opportunistic, if not prescriptive, explanation of crisis experience driven by ethical leadership rhetoric and action (Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger 2011). While this theory was developed based on organizational response to crisis; the potential impact, relevance, and importance of renewal to underserved, at-risk, and/or marginalized communities experiencing crisis could be profound. Specifically, if a crisis can serve to foster a renewing experience for an organization, and the rhetorical strategies and actions associated with that experience have been identified, then how might historically marginalized communities, experiencing a crisis be affected by a similar renewing opportunity?

Focusing on the experiences of the Red Lake and the Ninth Ward communities, as examples of marginalized groups or subaltern fosters understanding of the complexities and unique experiences of historically marginalized groups during and after a crisis. The subaltern are generally associated with marginalized populations that constitute groups outside of mainstream society or the dominant coalition; group(s) empowered by superstructures (Spivak, 1988; McHale, Zompetti, & Moffitt, 2007). If crises can be opportunities to grow and renew, then scholars must consider how or whether this idea and theory applies to communities and cultural groups. Uncovering the critical and cultural implications of crisis renewal theory has the potential to move the field toward a more holistic and mindful approach to risk and crisis communication theory, models, and practices.

2. The Cases

2.1 Red Lake

On March 21, 2005, a teenage boy initiated a shooting rampage on the Red Lake Indian reservation in Red Lake, MN, that left 7 people injured and 10 dead, including the gunman ("Troubled teen," 2005). This event marked the second deadliest school-shooting behind only the 1999 Littleton, CO, Columbine High School shooting that left 15 dead (Smith-Sanders, 2007). The day's events unfolded as follows.

Gunman Jeffrey Weise shot and killed his grandfather and female companion at his grandfather's home (Hughes, 2005). Then, Weise, wearing his grandfather's police issued gun belt and bullet-proof vest ("Troubled teen," 2005) and driving his grandfather's squad car proceeded to Red Lake high school, arriving at 2:49 p.m. (Hughes). Security guard Derrick Brun confronted Weise. Weise shot Brun twice, killing him. Weise then followed a teacher and group of students, who were attempting to flee, into a classroom and within a minute and a half shot and killed the teacher and five students. For approximately five minutes Weise continued to roam the halls shooting randomly into the classrooms, injuring more students, although not fatally.

At 2:57 p.m. Weise exchanged fire with tribal police officers that had entered the school (Hughes, 2005). Weise was hit in the arm, leg, and lower back. He retreated into the classroom where he earlier gunned down 5 students

and a teacher and killed himself. In all, Wiese fired approximately 45 shots, mostly from his grandfather's handgun—8 from his grandfather's shotgun in the school.

Located in northern MN, 120 miles south of Canada and 240 miles north of Minneapolis-St. Paul, the Red Lake reservation is the most populous reservation in MN. Over 5,000+ members of the Red Lake Chippewa Band and 91 others call the reservation home (U.S. Census, 2008; "Troubled teen," 2005). Red Lake is one of the poorest reservations in the state ("Troubled teen," 2005).

Historically, relations between the Red Lake peoples and the mainstream culture have been tenuous at best, and have been hindered by incidents of violence and conflict with surrounding non-Native communities ("Victims of Red Lake," 2005). When the shooting surged the small community into the national spotlight reporters and investigators inundated the area, traveling and interviewing freely within the reservation. However, overwhelmed and cautious, the tribe employed its authority over the media (Coleman, 2005), essentially limiting access to the community and its people (Kenworthy & O'Driscoll, 2005). At the same time, Native American's across the country were outraged by the President Bush's silence (Connolly, 2005). Consequently, an artificial divide between outsider and insider perspectives materialized and nurtured further suspicion and misunderstandings between the community and outsiders.

Tensions increased when 16-year-old Louis Jourdain, son of the Red Lake Tribal Chairman, Floyd Jourdain, Jr., was arrested a week after the shootings in connection with the incident ("Tribal Chairman," 2005). L. Jourdain was suspected of helping to plan the incident and expecting to assist in its execution (Davey & Ruethling, 2005). While the community was trying to make sense of the tragedy and outsiders were trying to understand tribal reactions, rituals, and healing traditions, support was pouring into the Red Lake community. For these reasons, many saw this crisis as an opportunity to bridge the divide between the Red Lake tribe and surrounding communities (Gunderson, 2005).

2.2 Hurricane Katrina

Late in August 2005, the national weather service issued a warning indicating that the category 5 (the most powerful) hurricane barreling down on the southern, gulf coast of the United States posed a potentially catastrophic threat (Brook & Copeland, 2005). Safety officials and President Bush urged people to leave the area, including over 485,000 people of New Orleans, a city at risk for flooding due to its sub-sea level position. While freeways and roads were gridlocked with those attempting to flee, others waited in long lines at refuges, such as the Super Dome, set up by the city as a "last resort" (Brook & Copeland, para. 7).

From August 28 to August 30, 2005, winds and rain pounded the city of New Orleans, destroying buildings, infrastructure, and homes. Even before the storm hit, low-lying areas outside the levee system were engulfed by high tides (Swenson & Marshall, 2005). As the storm ravaged the city, rising tides and a 21 foot high wall of water set off a chain reaction initiating breaches at numerous points along the levee system. By August 31, 2005, two days after the storm began blowing ashore, over 80 % of New Orleans was under water (Swenson & Marshall).

While an estimated 80 to 90 % (Wolshon, 2006) of southern Louisiana residents were evacuated, the 10 to 20 % remaining disproportionately represented the elderly and poor (Elder, 2009; "Katrina: Racial," 2006). Of those remaining in the city, over 1,800 died (U.S. Department, 2009), while survivors were stranded on rooftops and in makeshift refuges with limited or no water, transportation, or food ("Katrina: What," 2006). Rescue and relief was slow to mobilize on local and federal levels, with many residents left to fend for themselves for days and weeks. Recovery and assistance efforts were scrutinized and criticized by the media as well as U.S. and world publics who expected quicker mobilization and more effective rescue efforts (Brown, 2006; Troutt, 2006).

In the weeks, months, and years following this natural disaster, speculation and accusations abounded relating to slow response and ineffective coordination of federal and local rescue, relief, and recovery agencies. Central to such speculation and accusations were issues of race and class (Brown, 2006; Featherstone, 2005). Essentially, public opinion supported the notion that delayed and inadequate response and evacuation procedures hinged on the fact that the population most "at risk" from this crisis was poor and black (i.e. Brown, 2006; Troutt, 2006). While this study does not aim to prove such a connection, it does aver to uncover potential critical and cultural implications associated with particular (i.e. standardized) communication patterns, strategies, and practices related to the crisis.

3. Conceptual Framework

3.1 Crisis and the Critical Project

Weick (1988) explained crises as "low probability/high consequence events that threaten the most fundamental goals of an organization" (p. 1). Crisis communication, then, is communication about and during the crisis and

post-crisis period. Crisis communication has the power to define a crisis, construct a particular reality, and foster a specific experience depending on how the crisis is framed through organizational discourse and action. Crisis communication literature abounds with associated explanations and theoretical underpinnings (best practices, image restoration, crisis stages, and models). The focus of this study, however, is on the potential of crisis renewal theory, which has been developed as framework for ethical, prospective, and effective organizational rhetoric (Ulmer et al., 2011), to translate to a community setting, particularly a marginalized community.

This project expands the organizational application of renewal theory by using a critical and cultural lens to uncover risk and crisis communication in community settings, particularly marginalized communities, a perspective relatively nonexistent in the literature (for exceptions, see Littlefield, Reiersen, Cowden, Stowman, & Long Fellow, 2009; McHale, et al., 2007; Waymer & Heath, 2007). We explore the crisis renewal model's potential for bridging the gap between critical theory and scholarship and risk and crisis communication scholarship. Through efforts to build a theory of renewal and other crisis communication models that account for the critical project, we can move toward suggesting risk and crisis theories that are moral, ethical, and responsible to society, citizens, and the democratic process.

While our review of the critical project here is particularly focused, our goal is to provide a foundation for understanding the need for such a project and to provide grounding for the discussion and conclusions. Accounting for the critical project requires acknowledgement of the subaltern and power structures. Spivak (1988) explains the subaltern as a group not fully integrated into the dominant society and subsequently lacking resources available to others. The ability of the subaltern to affect their circumstances is limited by their powerless and voiceless position on the boundaries (at best) of society. Spivak warns against speaking for or defining a collective voice of the subaltern, which in turn validates their subordinate position, essentially reifying the superstructure. McHale et al. (2007) explained by contrasting the subaltern with superstructures: "While some groups benefit and are empowered by the superstructures, others the subaltern are rendered relatively powerless and voiceless" (p. 380).

To this point, the subaltern to Gramsci (1992), workers lacks agency and voice because of its position in the social structure. In this study, while cognizant of Spivak's warning, the voice of the subaltern is sought in order to expand crisis renewal theory. To guard against reifying the superstructure, a mosaic of voices, acknowledging differing perspectives within relatively heterogeneous groups, were sought and included within each extended narrative.

McHale et al. (2007) developed a hegemonic model of crisis communication that "recognizes the dynamic struggle between voices with various levels of power and the important ideological implications resulting from competing voices in crisis communication" (p. 374). The authors used Gramsci's work to develop their theoretical model, specifically "the social negotiation of reality (public debates over the facts) and the hegemonic struggle for dominant ideology (public debate about what is right or acceptable by voice with varying degrees of power)" (p. 374).

Similar to McHale et al.'s (2007) findings, this project uncovered the struggle of reality construction and public ideology as situated within hegemonic structures and models of crisis communication. McHale et al. argued that the linear, prescriptive models dominating current crisis communication literature must give way to more culturally adaptive and descriptive models, an argument supported by others (see Littlefield et al., 2009; Sellnow, Ulmer, Seeger, & Littlefield, 2009; Waymer & Heath, 2007). They purported that their model complemented the field by not locating "all power to respond and to manage a crisis in the organization but also locates it in the audiences and all kinds of institutions that relate to it" (p. 378). The hegemonic model holds great utility when ideological issues are paramount to a crisis, when what is right or wrong is in question (McHale et al., 2007).

3.2 Crisis Renewal Model

Forms of renewal discourse move beyond image restoration strategies and management-centered theories that focus on shifting blame, salvaging a reputation, and minimizing profit loss. The renewal model focuses on the future and is rooted in a provisional rather than strategic response (Ulmer et al., 2007). Hurst (2002) described renewal as reconnecting with and revitalizing the core purpose and values of an organization. Ulmer and Sellnow (2002) wrote renewal is seen as "an optimistic discourse that emphasizes moving beyond the crisis, focusing on strong value positions, responsibility to stakeholders and growth as a result of crisis" (p. 362). Embracing a "new normal" or adjustment of norms following complete system failure (Turner, 1976) appears to be significant to the renewal process. Ulmer et al. (2007) defined new normal as "a change in an organization's or community's approach and belief system for organizing or living" (p. 182). Crises expose failures and weaknesses in

organizational systems and thinking and subsequently enlighten alternatives if organizations are mindful and willing to adapt. Part of being mindful is recognizing opportunities for renewal within crises.

3.2.1 Renewal Formulae

Reierson (2007) drew from the literature to synthesize conditions and properties that constituted or defined renewal. These categories drawn from the preliminary work of Benoit (1995a, 1995b), and adapted from Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer (2003), Seeger and Ulmer (2001, 2002), Ulmer (1998), Ulmer and Sellnow (2002), and Ulmer, Seeger, and Sellnow (2007) included: Corrective action; organizational transformation, restructuring, and change; positive emphasis in discourse over cause, blame, and culpability; focus on rebuilding and the future; strong company and leadership ethics and morals; commitment to and strong relationship with stakeholders; leader plays pivotal role in creating meaning of crisis; and quick resolution of monetary and legal issues.

3.2.2 Four Salient Characteristics

Ulmer et al. (2007) identified four salient characteristics of renewal discourse represented in their renewal model. These characteristics provide a framework for analyzing an organization's renewal discourse in crisis situations. Within this framework, the discourse is: 1) *provisional as opposed to strategic*; 2) *prospective rather than retrospective*; 3) *capitalizes on the opportunities embedded in the crisis*; and 4) *is leader-based*. Reierson et al. (2009) found that renewal characteristics ebbed and flowed, functioning at various capacities as required by the unfolding crisis. Over time, complexities, while inherent in crises, functioned to solidify a renewal experience if an organization responded in consistent, ethical ways.

3.2.3 Four Theoretical Components of the Discourse of Renewal

Ulmer et al. (2011) expanded their discussion of renewal by organizing theoretical components that they identified as: 1) Organizational learning, 2) ethical communication, 3) prospective rather than retrospective vision following the crisis, and 4) effective organizational rhetoric. The authors explained that organizations prospectively should communicate lessons learned as a result of the crisis during the post-crisis phase. Additionally, ethical communication involves behavioral patterns and communicative norms prior to, during, and following a crisis. Maintaining positive stakeholder relationships building a reservoir of goodwill, an instinctive or provisional response, and providing information for significant choice constitute components of ethical communication. A prospective vision involves optimism and focuses on opportunities. Finally, effective organizational rhetoric involves leaders framing or "structuring a particular reality for organizational stakeholders and publics" (Ulmer et al., 2011, p. 219).

3.2.4 Examples of a Prospective Focus

Sellnow (2010) explored BP's communication following the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and subsequent oil spill, the largest in U.S. history. Sellnow explained that following the crisis BP initially failed to show adequate and appropriate leadership, complicating the potential for renewal. In spite of this, a change in leadership provided an opportunity to renew a prospective focus and emphasized corporate social responsibility through long-term dedication to clean-up, restoration, and emotional wellbeing of the Gulf coast. These actions, with consistent effort, supported a renewal process. Additional examples of a prospective focus following a crisis include the rhetoric of Aaron Feuerstein and Milt Cole, leaders of Malden Mills and Cole Hardwoods, respectively (Seeger & Ulmer, 2002). Both companies experienced devastating fires that easily could have meant their demise. However, both leaders immediately indicated a desire and commitment to rebuild their companies, and followed with actions that improved and streamlined their operations. Similarly, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York, Cantor Fitzgerald founder, Bernie Cantor, pledged to rebuild the firm even after losing two-thirds of his employees (Ulmer et al., 2007). In each of these examples, the focus of organizational and leadership rhetoric was on the future how the company could and would move forward—thus, creating a model or path for supporting behavior (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Ulmer et al., 2007).

3.2.5 Renewal in Alternative Contexts

While crisis renewal studies originally focused on organizations, scholars have explored alternative contexts for renewal, such as communities and cultural groups (i.e. Littlefield et al., 2009; Reierson, 2009; Veil, Sellnow, & Heald, 2011). They argued that the unique characteristics and needs of a particular group may be at the forefront of successful renewal. Littlefield et al. (2009), for instance, identified particular rituals or traditions important to the renewal experience. Moreover, meanings were embedded in historical events and emerged from cultural perspectives. Similarly, Reierson (2009) found that history and group antecedents played an important role in defining and making sense of the respective crises in the Red Lake, MN community following the 2005 school shooting and in the Ninth Ward community following Hurricane Katrina.

Veil et al. (2011) argued that non-discursive symbols, such as memorials, functioned within or in collaboration with a discourse of renewal. As revealed in the example of Oklahoma City following the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, memorials exemplified a renewal experience by revealing a prospective vision that focused on optimism, learning opportunities, and shared values. Veil et al. also found healing as a component of the community renewing experience.

Littlefield et al. (2009), Reiersen (2009), and Veil et al. (2011) concentrated on the renewal experience within communities: Veil et al. revealed the importance of a prospective vision for a community with the capacity to transform their situation (Oklahoma City); while Littlefield et al. (2009) and Reiersen (2009) found complicating factors or complexities to crisis renewal (as currently understood) in marginalized communities. These studies supported further exploration of the idea of renewal within communities, particularly marginalized communities, in order to develop a more robust understanding of the experience.

3.3 A Model of Organizational Renewal

The literature related to organizational renewal is represented as a model reflective of an organizational discourse of renewal (see Figure 1). This model reflects that the characteristics of renewal, leadership ethics and stakeholder relationships, function throughout the various stages of pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis in order to sustain a renewing experience. Corrective action, provisional discourse, prospective vision, and opportunity focus operate as rhetorical and action outputs during crisis and post-crisis. Finally, structural and procedural changes emerge as concrete and enacted examples of the learning characteristic of the renewal process. The outcome of organizational renewal is not only strengthened characteristics that influence the renewal process (leadership ethics, stakeholder relationships), but also organizational changes that reflect learning and opportunities realized.

3.4 Problem Statement

The literature revealed that renewal in organizations, as currently defined and understood, is leader-focused, ethical, prospective, and provisional; while capitalizing on opportunities in crisis. However, how historically-marginalized communities perceive and articulate (or not) such characteristics during and following a crisis has yet to be fully studied. A more developed understanding and model of community renewal is needed to create an increasingly inclusive and robust appreciation for this phenomenon in crisis communication. Thus, the present study focused on the potential manifestation of a prospective focus following crises in historically-marginalized communities with the following research questions:

RQ1: How is a prospective focus manifested following a crisis within a historically-marginalized community?

RQ2: How do antecedents and group histories of historically marginalized groups affect the renewal process following crises?

4. Case Study Methodology

Organizational and risk and crisis communication scholars use case studies to encourage vicarious learning and generalization through cross-case comparison. Particularly, the renewal model emerged and progressed through case analyses (Seeger & Ulmer, 2001, 2002; Seeger et al., 2005; Ulmer, 2001; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2002). Yin (2011) identified the relevance of case studies when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are posed. Further, while critics dismiss case studies claiming they lack rigor or are difficult to generalize, Yin (2009) and others have argued their utility in exploring and understanding complex phenomenon in real-world contexts with potential for generalizability. The present study represents a single-case designation, in that each case was chosen strategically to meet criteria distinguishing it as relevant to marginalized community status; as well as a multiple-case design allowing for more thorough and generalizable discussion and implications for the renewal theory (Yin, 2009). Stake (2000) acknowledged that a “case study is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry” (p. 436).

Traditional concerns of research, such as reliability and validity, are equally important in case study research (Yin, 2009). In the present study, internal validity resulted from pattern-matching, explanation-building, and time-series analysis; while external validity was found in replication and logic comparing the individual cases. Reliability was supported through case study protocol and the use of a case study database.

4.1 Data

Print media coverage and radio texts constituted the data selected for study (see Table 1). Collected media coverage was limited to two national newspapers per crisis (*New York Times* and *U.S.A. Today*); two regional newspapers (Minneapolis *Star Tribune* and Fargo, ND *Forum* for Red Lake; *Times Picayune* and New Orleans *Post* for Katrina); and relevant local media outlets. Media and print sources were collected from online databases

such as ProQuest Newspapers and *LexisNexis*. The time frame for retrieval in each case was the end date of the initial crisis through the immediate post-crisis stage until saturation, but did not extend past one year from the initial onset of the crisis. The resulting database consisted of roughly 300 articles, texts, and documents and 1,200 pages of printed text. The researchers confirmed the inclusion of a thorough representation of relevant publics/voices by coding only information that was directly quoted or attributed to an individual or spokesperson for each crisis along with saturation of emerging themes within each group.

Table 1. *Sources of data for comparative analysis of Red Lake and Hurricane Katrina*

Media	National	Regional/Local	Other
Red Lake	New York Times	Mpls Star Tribune	MN Public
	USA Today	Fargo Forum	Radio
Katrina	New York Times	Time Picayune	
	USA Today	New Orleans Post	

4.2 Procedures: Data Analysis

Case studies use varied analytic techniques, however, Yin (1987) explained that data analysis “consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining evidence to address the initial propositions of the study” (p. 105). Specifically, the researcher must set priorities and rationale for what data to analyze. Yin identified three dominant techniques for analysis: “pattern-matching, explanation-building, and time-series analysis” (p. 105). Analysis involves immersion in the data and rigorous thought processes. Sufficient evidence must be presented to support a researcher’s interpretations and alternative interpretations must be considered.

In this study, general theoretical propositions guided data analysis, which allowed for focused attention on data relevant to the guiding research questions (Yin, 2009). First, the researchers developed a case study database and narrative detailing each of the two cases. Second, the researchers approached the data with a focus on explanation building as an analytic strategy. Including two cases resulted in a cross-case analysis in addition to explanation-building within each case.

The analysis process involved three major stages: The first involved creating narratives from texts based on direct quotations of members from affected communities. The direct quotations were sorted and organized in grid format for each internal group sub-set. These direct quotations revealed a picture of the *emic* sense-making (Weick, 1988) process involved in each of the respective crises. Second, researchers reviewed these narratives to determine which, if any, tenets of renewal theory were present. This deductive process involved entering the data in search of renewal characteristics operationalized through terms reflective of the four salient characteristics of renewal (Ulmer et al., 2007): provisional, prospective, opportunity focused, and leader driven. This process allowed the researchers to consider more holistically, the experience of renewal (or not) of the identified communities and compare and contrast that with organizational experiences of renewal that have been reported in the literature and used to develop a theory of crisis renewal. Then, the researchers reviewed the organized data to find and analyze instances and responses specifically related to RQ1 and RQ2, operationalized through attention to mentions of prospective focus (e.g., future, rebuilding) and group antecedents and history (e.g., past experiences, traditions) respectively. During this process, the researchers used Owen’s (1984) thematic technique, which identifies a theme based on recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness to establish if and how a prospective focus and group antecedents functioned in the post-crisis discourse.

5. Analysis

In response to RQ1, the data revealed challenges to a prospectus focus in community renewal that confounded the current organizational model of renewal. The communities of the Red Lake and Hurricane Katrina crises focused their rhetoric on community strength, heritage, or traditions; references to healing; historical mistreatment and compensation entitlement; and limited governmental rhetoric in the aftermath of their respective crisis. Each community spoke about the need for larger systemic change at both the local and national levels. However, both generally situated the responsibility and power to effect such change in the hands of the dominant coalition and superstructure, namely the federal government.

The communities involved appeared to maintain an identity tied to historical segregation, mistreatment, and/or vulnerability. Red Lake member, Lee Cook said following the crisis, “You take the chains off, but we still carry

them around with us—the feeling that we are not efficient, not self-reliant, that we have no work ethic” (Haga, 2006, 54). Some Red Lake members blamed outsiders, particularly the federal government for destroying the tribal way of life and creating the reservation. Others felt tribal members’ lack of accountability and the tribe’s failing social and economic systems were to blame. Comments from community leaders reinforced the tensions of reliance and mistrust. Tribal Chair, Floyd Jourdain, Jr. stated, “We have been offered help directly from the president of the United States. We are getting letters from all over the world, people wanting to give money” (Haga, 2005a, 21). After initial promises, monies were slow to matriculate. Lisa Spears, self-governance coordinator, said, “After 3/21 we thought the money was going to be there” (Haga, 2005b, 2). “We thought people in Washington, D.C. were being more receptive” (Haga, 2005b, 3).

Similarly, Lower Ninth Ward residents spoke of problems caused by the larger system(s), over which they had no control. Community members expressed reliance on and expectations of assistance from government entities. One former Ninth Ward resident explained, “It makes me wonder what is taking so long to rebuild and bring the people back. It makes me angry” (Filosa, 2005b, 32). Resident Howard Peterson believed federal agencies, “should be trying to repair the city” (Konigsmark & Hampson, 2005, 4).

In general, each community impressed that they expected to be lifted out of the crisis and life circumstances by others, namely the superstructure, that they often blamed for their problems. The groups spoke of change and resistance, but contradicted those efforts by situating the power for change within the superstructure, consequently complicating the renewal process. Thus, their inability to fully manifest prospective vision within their respective discourses confounded the renewal process in both communities.

5.1 Common Community Vision

Complimenting the existing model of renewal, the data from these cases revealed the importance of a common vision and community cohesiveness to the renewal process. While strong leadership is important to renewal, leadership alone cannot drive the process. Rather, renewal needs community support. For instance, in Red Lake many of the youth and a few community leaders pushed for a positive future outlook and spoke of systemic changes in the educational system and youth programs that would address the root of tribal problems. For instance, Superintendent Desjarlait said, “. . . we’re going to overcome this. We’re going to heal and we’re going to be better” (Robertson, 2005a, 26). However, mixed within these efforts was rhetoric of dissent, of long-standing clan conflict within the tribe, of division among regions of the reservation, of resentment and anger for the killings and (lack of) punishments of those involved, and of pessimism for a future free of drug, alcohol, depression, and violence. Bill Lawrence, Red Lake member, believed, “Sovereignty maintains a status quo of unemployment, poverty, civil rights abuses and social dysfunction” (Haga, 2006, 50). Such individual and collective voices undermined the process of healing and ultimately, renewal.

Similarly, in Hurricane Katrina, renewal was complicated not only by a retrospective focus (on mistreatment and segregation), but by a community divided between pessimism and optimism, and between members returning and others abandoning. One Ninth Ward resident said, “I’m gone. I’m through” (Filosa, 2005a, 4). Resident Michael Robinson stated, “It’s hard to believe I lived back there. I don’t think it will be no more” (Filosa, 25). Residents were fearful. Pheobe Garfield explained, “Every time it rains, we’re going to be nervous and scared...Why should we live like that? This is it. Goodbye” (Filosa, 38). Another resident remembered Hurricane Betsey in 1965 and believed survival of the community was possible. Leon Vaughn said, “We made it then, and we’ll make it now. We’ve just got to find everybody so we can build it back up” (Rudd, 2006, 8). Resident Jamar Franscoise also believed in the community, “All we have left is the spirit of this community. All of our material things are gone. But I know now it’s not about that, it never was” (Rudd, 17).

Thus, community renewal may require more than a strong leader to identify a prospective vision within a given crisis in order for renewal to occur. A common vision conducive to renewal should include hope for the future. However, without the support of the entire, if not majority of, a particular community, the likelihood that a leader can instill renewal via prospective discourse is diminished.

5.2 Importance of Heritage and Community Identity

In contrast to the top-down perspective of current renewal model, the Red Lake community members spoke extensively about the importance of tribal culture, rituals, and strength. Substantial discourse revolved around the strength of families, the importance of healing ceremonies, and connection to and teachings of tribal ways. Many within the tribe believed that renewed importance and emphasis on the tribes’ heritage and traditions would heal the community and lead them out of crisis. Upon returning to school, student Zachary Kingbird acknowledged the eagle (a bird sacred to the tribe) statue in the school hallway, “I believe it was watching over as many people as it could that day. I drew strength from it today” (Burcum, 2005, 4). Elder Larry Stillday explained that

providing support to grieving and angry community members was important for the entire community, “We need to look ahead and help those deal with their pain and prevent aggressive behavior. Within our culture we have survived some great tragedies in the past or we wouldn’t be here today” (Collins, 2005b, 10). He continued, “We are survivors” (Collins, 11). Stillday believed he saw “the spirits come here in these young people who want to revitalize the traditions that we have” (Burcum, 2006, 36). Jourdain said, “When all the agencies and crisis counselors go away, we’re left here. Our best bet is our own native brothers and sisters will be here with us” (Haga, 2006, 65).

In the Lower Ninth Ward, discourse emphasized the heritage of a community built from the roots of segregation with a focus on family. This heritage was important to those that wished to return and its’ preservation paramount. Many felt that if their community was lost, so too would their heritage be and with it their identity. Being from the Lower Ninth Ward carried “street cred” and assumed survival skills. Resident Michael Robinson explained, “There used to be a saying, ‘I’m from the mighty Nine, I don’t mind dying’ . . . Well, right now, I could say the 9th [sic] Ward is dead” (Filosa, 2005c, 23). Beverly Ladmirault was adamant the lower ninth should be rebuilt, “All my sisters and brothers, we all live here” (Filosa, 2005b, 15). Others saw ways to renew their livelihoods. Muffler shop owner, Mark Brink, explained his plan, “I’m going to focus on recycling the catalytic converters and do mufflers on the side” (Filosa, 27). This discourse reflected strong community and family bonds within the Ninth Ward.

A unique juxtaposition of invoking the past and a group’s heritage in order to make sense of the crisis and be able to move forward was revealed. Renewal for a community, particularly a marginalized or culturally unique community, might depend on connection to and preservation of heritage and identity. Community renewal might involve renewed emphasis on heritage as a foundation for moving forward.

5.3 Group History, Antecedents and Associated Problems

In Red Lake, community members appeared to focus on problems on the reservation, including: poverty, depression, violence, drugs, alcohol, and a history of mistrust in the federal government. Tribal Chair, Floyd Jourdain expressed skepticism, “We have to seize any opportunity that is out there. We’re going to have to aggressively go after anything that can help [because] we have a limited window. In three years, we’ll be forgotten” (Haga, 2005a, 24). Lee Cook, Red Lake member and Director of American Indian Resource Center at Bemidji State University explained, “We lost most of our land, our way of life. We buried ourselves in alcohol and despair” (Haga, 56). Principal Dunshee spoke about the reality of adversity for many youth on the reservation, “They’ve dealt with a lot of adversity already in their young lives. It’s sad to say tragedy is not a stranger to many of our families and they’ve had to work through some things in the past” (Collins, 2005a, 31). The fact that youth on the reservation are particularly at risk became part of community discussion following the crisis. Tim Sumner, adviser to the youth council believed:

it come from the parents not having jobs and have no will to get up in the morning. So then their kids sleep right in with them. Then they wake up, get high with them, you know, then they’re content with that. So I think if there are more jobs on the reservation, in the community, the parents would have more responsibility. Then it would trickle down to their kids. (Robertson, 2005b, 14)

Tribal elder Tillie Colhoff said of the educational system, “They push our kids through. I’ve worked up there. They could not read. They could not spell and something has to be done” (Robertson, 2005c, 2). These perpetuating problems, based on historical circumstances surfaced with force following the shootings.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, themes of systemic racism and poverty associated with those most hard hit emerged. Ninth Ward resident and pharmacy owner Rouston Henry explained how more affluent communities would more likely succeed in rebuilding, “You have doctors and lawyers and your successful entrepreneurs in Eastover. Here you had just hard-working people. You had your mechanics and waiters down here, people not used to working the system” (Rivlin, 2005, 16). Another Lower Ninth Ward resident, Steve Ringo, responded to Mayor Nagin’s request that communities decide on a collective vision for rebuilding. He said, in the Lower Ninth Ward, “People don’t have the same training and background and schooling and experiences at working the system” (Rivlin, 9). School teacher Linda Wallace believed that superficial fixes like streets and housing would not support recovery if the school system were not fixed, “It had the most pathetic, disgusting educational system” (Nasser, 2005, 29). Lower Ninth Ward resident Cathy Chandler also felt social systems were key to recovery. She explained:

If you’re going to go back and nothings changed except that we got rid of the water and started rebuilding Bourbon Street and Canal Street, whoop-de-do. If I go back, what job is going to be there for me? . . . If we could

get more policing, if jobs opened up, if the drug situation wasn't totally out of hand, if the murder rate changed, yeah, we'd come back. (Nasser, 3)

These communities appeared to organize around social issues related to their historical circumstances. Their respective issues based on group antecedents came to define the victims and recovery process. Once again a prospective focus was complicated. However, transcendence or identification with these issues, focused on social change initiatives related to particular higher values, provided a sense of purpose for the communities. Accordingly, for a community, identification with a higher issue/value set/cause might be an important element to the sense-making process and ultimately, conducive to renewal.

6. Discussion

The analysis revealed that renewal theory based on organizational experiences and the subsequent organizational model of crisis renewal was not sufficient to provide an accurate picture of a community renewal experience, particular to marginalized communities. A model that includes cultural heritage and past traditions in crisis and post-crisis contexts would enable communities and cultural groups to have more meaningful and renewing experiences. While such attention to group antecedents, heritage and history complicates a prospective focus, these elements appear to be central to the sensemaking process of such groups; and therefore, a community renewal model must account for and validate this phenomenon. Communities might use their shared history and heritage to build cohesiveness that solidifies group membership and investment in rebuilding the community. Additionally, while organizational renewal might be leader-driven and defined; in communities, a common vision and a focus on healing and higher values appeared to be key components to community revival and potentially renewal. To generalize, this common vision might be born out of a clear understanding of and connection to historical circumstances, heritage, and identity. For marginalized communities then, fostering a renewal experience may well start with establishing a connection to the past in order to define a vision for the future. As such, we propose a model of community renewal relevant to historically-marginalized populations (see Figure 2).

This model depicts the influential role of healing, a common vision, and strong leadership (spiritual, cultural, elected, or appointed) on fostering a renewing experience in the various stages of a crisis. The community response revealed through discourse (e.g., role of heritage in sensemaking, focus on higher values, opportunity focus, and focus on rebuilding and future) may not depend solely on the presence of a strong leader, common vision, and community healing, but also on antecedents and group history, thus revealing complexities that may sustain or complicate a renewing experience for historically-marginalized communities. In contrast to organizational renewal that reflects learning through structural and procedural changes, for historically segregated, marginalized, and vulnerable populations, moving through pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis stages may provide the opportunity to heal old wounds and address fundamental, possibly systemic, problems. Learning, then, may include learning ways to change societal systems, which perpetuate the vulnerability of these communities.

For such groups and communities, the focus following a crisis may be on healing, which subsequently becomes a prerequisite condition for renewal to commence. Red Lake tribal members in particular seemed to focus on community healing following the crisis. Renewal rhetoric focused on renewing the connection to tribal ways and heritage and on initiating change that would improve youth circumstances. Likewise, for Lower Ninth Ward residents, healing old wounds of segregation and mistreatment as a result of a fundamentally racist social system that they, and many others, believed perpetuated social ills including poverty, violence, and drugs, became a focus of their discourse. Perhaps healing, as uniquely defined by a given community, is necessary before renewal can be considered or embraced by historically-marginalized groups. These cases support such a claim.

While a prospective vision was complicated by a focus on historical circumstances and underlying social conditions, more optimistic members of each community often revealed in their comments elements of prospective discourse. Even then, however, these members drew on their heritage and shared history to define a better/renewed future. What these cases revealed is that healing and validation of past grievances appeared to be preconditions for hope for the future and for the strengthening and rebuilding of a given community. Consequently, communities, scholars and practitioners might consider how pre-crisis planning and communication might foster a post-crisis experience of renewal.

7. Implications and Directions for Future Research

Based upon the findings of this study, crisis renewal models must define common elements that explain and inform both organizational and community responses to crisis. However, such models must be appropriately flexible in order to account for the uniqueness of particular situations and the complexities associated with crises. In response to RQ2, the importance of historical context, culture, and a common vision within a community's

crisis and post-crisis experience emerged as major themes in the discourse of the marginalized groups identified in this study. How and in what way these elements supported and fostered renewal must be considered more closely, particularly to inform those who engage in and study renewal. The development of similar, yet contrasting models of renewal also requires further discussion.

7.1 Crisis Renewal Model and Community Renewal

A prospective focus is challenged by the importance of history to group and individual identity and to defining a renewing experience; as such, this dimension of renewal may be a more complicating factor for communities than for organizations. Within an organization, the CEO or leader has the greatest level of authority over their employees; and can remove the employee if s/he fails to respond to initiatives or discourse the leader deems necessary for the organization to move forward. In contrast, because leader(s) in marginalized communities are in their positions of leadership due to the support of their constituency through election or appointment, they are not as able to look past or disregard the community's history when their identity and members' identities are intricately and intimately tied to dramatic systemic antecedent events. Therefore, a path or model for forward-looking thoughts and behaviors is more difficult to define and articulate. Given what we know from organizational studies of crisis renewal, dwelling on the historical situation and negative aspects of a crisis (i.e. who to blame) reduces the likelihood of renewal. This study reinforces the existence of complications for marginalized communities when following a renewal model based on organizational parameters, specifically when historical mistreatment was responsible for the community or group vulnerability to the crisis in the first place. In order to renew, marginalized communities must heal, in order to heal they must grapple with and validate past grievances. They may even use their history and heritage to define a common vision for renewal. Importantly, crises may provide a catalyst for engaging in the critical reflexive processes necessary for healing and subsequently renewal.

This study further defined a model of community renewal. This model considers a common community vision as necessary for the renewal experience to manifest itself. When communities and groups internally are divided as to where they want to go or how they should move forward, the resulting tension causes conflicts and complicates efforts by members to move past the crisis and rebuild. This contrasts with organizational crises where a leader, generally in a legitimate position of power, can set the path for the organization with little challenge. A centralized power structure and clearly appointed leader provides legitimacy for the leader's interpretation and framing of the crisis. Community leaders might not have this degree of autonomous power. Within a community, leadership is not always as clear (for instance cultural leader, religious leader, or elected leader) and a leader may not maintain the same legitimate power to influence or frame a crisis. So while an organizational model of renewal considers renewal discourse as originating with leadership, a community model must account for community sentiment and democratic principles. Within communities, differing values, beliefs, and ideas apparent before the crisis, have the potential to be accentuated and exacerbated during the crisis. Furthermore, community members may have differing experiences related to the crisis; for example, being a direct victim verses being peripherally affected. Consequently, while an organization has the benefit of centrally-developed values and mission to inform and influence crisis framing and response, a community does not necessarily have this same benefit. Therefore, the renewal process is complicated by the need for a common community vision for renewal, a vision that may meet with resistance based on personal beliefs, values, prior experiences and experiences related to the crisis.

Within the scope of this study, the challenge for each community was to find values and hopes for the future strong enough to mobilize a response that could overcome naysayers and encourage behaviors and discourse conducive to renewal. While community leaders, whether cultural, elected or appointed may influence the definition or development of a common vision, this vision must be profound enough to instill hope and gain support of a majority of community members. In this way, the vision encourages community transcendence of the crisis.

While a prospective vision was challenged and met with complexities in the cases explored here, a common community vision that encompassed what Veil et al. (2011) described as a prospective vision (optimism, learning opportunities and shared values) might function to overcome through integration, identified challenges such as group antecedents, historical circumstances, and cultural identity tied to history. If this challenge is met, renewal has the potential to unite a community that may have been previously divided.

Additionally, renewal in the context of communities and cultural groups needs to consider cultural values, traditions, and heritage as part of the process. Organizational crises provide opportunities for organizations to redefine themselves and change necessary processes and procedures. However, in communities, redefinition

might not be appropriate or desired. Communities, particularly those whose identity and meaning is based on strong cultural connections, heritage, and history, may wish or need to maintain and strengthen such ties following a crisis as part of the healing process. Renewal for communities, then, may be based on strengthening connections to cultural values, traditions, and heritage. This may be similar to companies reconnecting with core values and mission following a crisis in order to define a path forward. If communities can use reconnection in a similar way to define a path forward, they could support the renewal process. What communities (and their respective and variant leaders) might do is establish a common identity that is historically, situationally, and culturally bound, as a place from which to define a community vision for moving forward and embracing opportunity for renewal.

7.2 Practical Implications and Future Research

First, crisis communication scholars must look beyond current models and theories and develop more culturally-sensitive approaches. Organizational models can provide insight, but should not be used solely as models of effectiveness for community settings. We must understand *emic* experiences through a model or lens created from insider perspectives. Including cultural groups in discussion, dialogue, and research with the goal of understanding experiences and interpretations of culture, events, and history as well as collaborating on the development of crisis communication models, is paramount to the growth of the field.

Second, practitioners should consider messages that connect with a community's culture and traditions; and therefore, must understand the unique heritage and identity of a given group. Direct and integrated contact and experience is a valuable way to learn about a culture. Further, members of a culture or community should be involved in message creation and resource development related to crises and crisis communication. Moreover, communication, particularly in post-crisis, might connect with higher values or a social cause that recognizes historical circumstances while providing an opportunity or vision for moving forward. In this way, practitioners could facilitate a common vision supporting long-term systemic change and facilitating renewal.

Future research should undertake the following three things. First, scholars should explore additional cases of marginalized populations or communities affected by crisis in order to build a better understanding of the unique role of culture, traditions, and heritage in post-crisis experiences. Second, future research should continue to develop and explore the community renewal model presented in this study. This particular model was based on the experiences of two historically marginalized communities. It would be noteworthy to explore non-marginalized communities to compare and contrast the experiences with those used to develop the model presented here. This application will provide for a more robust understanding of community perspective of crisis and contribute to the development of more culturally-competent and community-based models and theories. Finally, crisis communication scholars should explore leadership in community crises and the influence on renewal in contrast to organizational leadership. This study revealed the importance of a common community vision, potentially challenging the role of the leader to frame a crisis. History, identity, and legitimacy of position might play a significant role in how a leader influences post-crises experiences of renewal.

Several limitations were noted in the present study. First, the use of text as data had limitations. While texts have been shown to provide more factual details and knowledge than other types of electronic media, provide greater balance between expressive and informative elements of news than broadcasting, reach more of the public than might a television broadcast at any given time, provide a more logistic picture of the events that transpired, as well as compliment other news broadcasts the public may be watching (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007), using texts as data meant that no direct contact was made with members of the affected communities. This limitation could be overcome in future studies by interviewing individuals within marginalized communities to gain their understanding and inclination toward messages of renewal. Second, related to the first limitation is the presence of news values in media texts used as data. While we acknowledge that local, regional, and national outlets differed to some extent in the nature of their coverage of these crises, by focusing on direct quotations or attributed comments, this and future studies minimize the value impact on the analysis and focus more precisely on identifying and explaining the characteristics of renewal evident in the discourse. Finally, as researchers, we were outsiders and therefore did not share the historical experiences of those in the communities we studied nor did we have the same knowledge of the setting as an insider would possess. This limitation reinforced the need for methods that engage the community in future crisis communication studies.

In summary, when the discourse of renewal originates, takes hold, and fosters positive change, community leaders must be sure to establish a common community vision in order to move forward prospectively. This vision must acknowledge and address the need for systemic changes. While the cultural aspects of renewal largely have been overlooked by previous scholars, this study provided examples of how awareness of the

cultural history and antecedents affected the ability of community leaders to confront the optimism and pessimism expressed by members of their communities following a crisis. When scholars share a more robust understanding of renewal as it occurs within communities, they will be better able to contribute to the effective management and recovery following disasters and crises.

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