

Social Capital, Community Resilience, and Faith-Based Organizations in Disaster Recovery: A Case Study of Mary Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church

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Because governmental structures put in place to mitigate disaster risks and aid communities in the disaster recovery process have, at times, proven to be inadequate, reliance on other types of organizations is necessary for some communities to survive. Although there are a number of different actors that played a role in the reestablishment of communities within New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina took place, the Mary Queen of Vietnam (MQVN) Catholic Church is a prime example of how a community-based organization stepped in to address the needs of its community. This article examines how MQVN garnered social capital within its surrounding community to pursue successful community development in the absence of and opposition to governmental support and political resistance. This article will first review the government failure and decrease in civic trust that fostered a robust third-sector response in disaster recovery and redevelopment. Then, using social capital theory, the article supports the notion that civic distrust and confidence is derived from government and institutional performance, rather than increasing individualism or declining social trust. Finally, implications for federal disaster policy and third-sector disaster interventions are proposed.

KEY WORDS: social capital, Hurricane Katrina, faith-based organizations, disaster recovery

In August of 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, flooding 80 percent of the City of New Orleans (Associated Press, 2005). Until Superstorm Sandy, this disaster was seen as the most destructive natural disaster to impact the United States in recorded history. The disaster illustrated the social vulnerability of urban populations living in hazard prone regions, serving as a vivid reminder to developed nations that regardless of a nation's level of development, their communities are still vulnerable to severe natural phenomena. Moreover, the disaster illustrated that a community's vulnerability to disasters was not only a product of the built environment's varying resistance to disasters and a community's physical proximity to hazards, but also a byproduct of social dynamics that contribute to the vulnerability of populations (Cutter et al., 2008; Miller & Rivera, 2008). The subsequent effects of these social dynamics, when placed under the pressure of a severe natural disaster, illustrates to both the directly affected communities and the rest of the nation, that organizational,

governmental, and private sector arrangements designed to mitigate detrimental disaster affects are inadequate (Gunter & Kroll-Smith, 2007), and that the public's reliance on governmental structures can be more detrimental to the success of community survival than self-reliance (Miller & Rivera, 2008; Rivera & Miller, 2010).

As a partial byproduct of the public's realization that governmental structures put in place to mitigate disaster risks and aid communities in the disaster recovery process were inadequate, reliance on other types of organizations was necessary for some communities to survive. Although literature on disaster response and recovery among local communities has tended to view the disaster activities of community members as latently embedded in their social interactions, which are reasserted in times of disaster (Moore, 1964; Wenger & Weller, 1973), this is not always the case. Rivera (in-press) maintains that when communities have chronic experiences with disasters, disaster-cultural characteristics can emerge that not only guide social behavior within disaster contexts, but also in times of normalcy. As such, these manifest disaster-cultural attributes not only guide how specific communities interact with third-sector and governmental organizations in times of extreme adversity, but also throughout their continued day-to-day operations. Therefore, organizations and the communities in which they exist offer important insights into how some communities survive and thrive, which provides a lens through which to examine the factors that contributed to a community's resilience in the face of disaster. Even though there are a number of different individuals, organizations, and actors that played a role in the reestablishment of communities within New Orleans since the Hurricane took place, the Mary Queen of Vietnam (MQVN) Catholic Church is a prime example of how a community-based, faith organization stepped in to address the needs of its community in the wake of the disaster, but also fulfilled embedded communal expectations that had developed among community members' previous experiences with disasters and the organization's role in the community's normal day-to-day existence.

This article draws on secondary source data to examine *how* MQVN, a prominent faith-based organization, garnered social capital within its surrounding community to pursue successful community development in the absence of governmental support, and, to a certain extent, in the presence of political resistance. This article will first briefly review the government failure that fostered a robust third-sector response. Then, the authors highlight the important, yet under researched, role of faith-based organizations in fostering social capital, and community resilience in the face of disasters. The article uses a case study of the MQVN to explain the organization's ability to pursue community redevelopment initiatives in the aftermath of disasters when resources are restricted and local political structures are at odds with neighborhood priorities.

Government Failure, Third-Sector Response, and Faith-Based Organizations

Overall, the response to Hurricane Katrina highlighted the ineffectiveness of all levels of government to deal with disaster response. After numerous hearings

and a review of more than 500,000 pages of documents, the U.S. House of Representatives (2006) investigation concluded that “Katrina was a national failure, an abdication of the most solemn obligation to provide for the common welfare. At every level...we failed to meet the challenge that was Katrina” (p. x). The failure of government at this magnitude had a significant impact on the community, and civic trust more specifically. Following the hurricane, ABC News (2006) conducted a survey in which respondents were asked “Thinking about your trust in government to help people in need, did the hurricane strengthen that, weaken it, or make no difference?” Nearly 61.7 percent of the respondents from Orleans Parish indicated that their trust in government was weakened. On the other hand, the same survey highlighted that the hurricane strengthened “trust in fellow man” for 67.7 percent of Orleans Parish respondents (ABC News, 2006).

Due to the slow response and confusion of responsibility, communities affected by the storm relied on alternative mechanisms, namely voluntary organizations, to address their needs. While reliance on nonprofit organizations is not a new phenomenon in disaster recovery (Bolin & Stanford, 1998; Eikenberry, Arroyave, & Cooper, 2007; Gibbons, 2007; Nickel & Eikenberry, 2007), Katrina served as a symbol of “eroding state capacity [and the] growing expectations for nonprofits and NGOs to assist and even play a leadership role in disaster response” (Eikenberry et al., 2007, p. 161). In fact, the *Final Report of the Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina* highlights the significant role charitable organizations played in response and recovery (U.S. House of Representatives, 2006; see also Eikenberry et al., 2007; Patterson, Weil, & Patel, 2010; Simo & Bies, 2007). While the report highlights the significant role of nonprofit organizations, such as the American Red Cross, Simo and Bies (2007) note that most large charitable organizations were not involved in the long term recovery efforts; rather “smaller local organizations stepped in ... and organized key local collaborative partners to get done what was needed” (p. 136).

Gibbons (2007) writes,

“...interventions from nonprofit organizations may be particularly crucial when government agencies cannot respond to individual needs, during periods of confusion or intermittent formal support, and through the ongoing recovery period following emergency interventions. Throughout the process, nonprofit organizations and volunteers play key roles in mitigating effects of the initial disaster and preventing subsequent crises” (p. 203).

Bolin and Stanford (1998, p. 228) also note that community-based organizations are essential to disaster response as they are responsive to the diversity of needs in the local community and have the capacity to empower people in the community to engage in the process of redevelopment. Given the potential value of community-based organizations, this article attempts to examine

how these types of organizations garner community trust via social capital, and thereby foster development that is both a responsive and empowering process.

More specifically, faith-based organizations have the ability to play an important role in the response to and recovery from natural and manmade disasters. It has long been observed that individuals turn to religion and faith-based organizations following catastrophic events. Disaster victims, in addition to the general public, not only use religion and spirituality as a coping tool in a variety of settings (Banerjee & Pyles, 2004; Bankoff, 2004; Gillard & Paton, 1999; Greene, 2002; Lawson, 2010; Schmuck, 2000; Smith, Pargament, Brant, & Oliver, 2000; Yates, Chalmer, St. James, Follansbee, & McKegney, 1981), but also as a way to explain and understand disaster events (Chester, 2005; Hutton & Haque, 2003; Kroll-Smith & Couch, 1987). Psychologically, faith-based organizations and the spiritual services they provide have been shown to lower levels of anxiety and depression (Schuster et al., 2001; Trevino & Pargament, 2007) by providing a positive world view, personal empowerment, a sense of control, guidance for decision-making, and social support (Koenig, 2006) which have been shown to be critical sources of community resilience in the aftermath of disasters (Alawuyah, Bell, Pyles, & Runnels, 2011; Koenig, 2006; Weiss, Saraceno, Saxena, & van Ommeren, 2003). However, less is known about the tangible services these types of organizations supply to disaster victims, and how they are able to become successful vehicles for community disaster response and recovery (Cain & Barthelemy, 2008).

According to Cain and Barthelemy (2008), there is a lack of empirical literature on the role of faith-based organizations in the aftermath of disasters, citing Smith (1977 and 1978) as the few pioneering works in the field. Since the middle of the twentieth century, scholars have observed that local religious congregations are frequently first-responders following a disaster, and that the organizations themselves provide a significant amount of aid (Aderibigbe, Bloch, & Pandurangi, 2003; Moore, 1958; Smith, 1977, 1978; Wisner, 2010). In addition to the spiritual support these organizations provide, they are also known to collect and distribute food, clothing, money, furniture, and other physical goods (Moore, 1958), provide temporary housing, case management, and other direct human services (De Vita, Kramer, Hall, Kehayova, & Triplett, 2008) in an effort to enhance individuals' chances of recovery. In reference to recovery at the community level, various faith-based organizations, and religious traditions subscribe to world views that emphasize the role of social justice and compassion that allow faith leaders the opportunity to speak out publicly about policy matters related to disaster recovery and community reestablishment, similarly as many of these organizations have lobbied for social justice in relation to issues of poverty (Wisner, 2010). However, the mechanisms through which these organizations are able to accomplish these activities, when other organizations fail, require more critical understanding and attention.

Faith-Based Organizations, Social Capital, and Community Resilience

Although the United States follows secular doctrine that places religion outside the scope of government, religious institutions continue to play a prominent role in the community development process. According to Foley, McCarthy, and Chaves (2008), of all the civic institutions that exist within American society, churches tend to be the last organizations to leave declining neighborhoods, which gives them a competitive advantage for becoming community members' outlet for addressing social problems. Additionally, churches tend to be the most common institutions within many communities (Graddy, 2008). Because of their predominant presence, these institutions can utilize existing infrastructure and network relationships (i.e., buildings, human resources, community connections) in the provision of social services, which is a common practice (Foley et al., 2008). Historically, prior to the twentieth century, religious groups and organizations were virtually the sole providers of social services in the United States (Cnaan, 1999). Moreover, due to these organizations having continual membership that tends to supersede geographic boundaries, they have great potential in building broad-based community coalitions to pursue policy change, but more importantly local community development agendas that seek to progress the social conditions of their surrounding communities (Foley et al., 2008), which can be more successful for aiding their constituents than some other service providers, such as governmental agencies (Griener, 2000). As Ritchie and Gill (2007) maintain in reference to technological disaster recovery, churches afford the "ontological" security of safety and continuity when secular institutions and agencies are negligent in providing even basic needs.

In this tradition, Taylor and Chatters (1988) describe the role of pastoral care, which refers to the mobilization of a church's resources (i.e., material, spiritual, emotional, and informational) to aid individuals and families in crisis, in addition to dealing with more day-to-day social problems. Although pastoral care is usually associated with the minister of a specific church, pastoral care can be provided by lay church members as well. According to Wimberly (1979), pastoral care is the all encompassing notion that incorporates and expresses the supportive features of the church. Pastoral care can take the form of an exchange of material, emotional, and spiritual assistance, as well as providing information and advice, among not only members of the immediate congregation through face-to-face interactions, but non-congregants through a diffusion of these resources through secondary social networks. Additionally, pastoral care not only tends to benefit in-group members, but members from the larger community through a church's formal programs (Taylor & Chatters, 1988). For example, formal programs that aid the larger community can take the form of food and clothing programs, visiting programs to the sick and isolated (Taylor & Chatters, 1988), breakfast programs for youth, daycares, and addiction and abuse counseling. Pastoral care therefore provides both direct and indirect benefits to the larger community at the same time as establishing normative expectations of assistance and reciprocity among church (Anotoucci, 1985) and community members. Frazier

(1974) maintains that because churches tend to be completely financed, built and controlled by community members, pastors and lay members assume a unique position within the community that implicitly seeks to pursue community development initiatives.

One of the characteristics that strengthen faith-based organizations' success in the provision of social services to communities is their access to volunteers, which allows these organizations the opportunity to provide more services, in addition to allocating more time to each specific benefactor of social services (Graddy, 2008). In Printz's (1998) study of religious congregations in Washington, D.C., it was found that 230 local congregations utilized a volunteer force of about 20,000 individuals. Moreover, in Cnaan's (1999) study of 113 religious congregations in six cities, volunteers dedicated on average 148 hours a month to each service provision program. Because these organizations have a robust staff with which to dedicate more attention to benefactors, they are also more capable of being responsive to their clients. According to Graddy (2008), faith-based organizations are more willing to conform services to an individual's needs, which is different than governmental service providers that expect clients to conform to the offered program (Sherman, 2000). Congregations located in poor communities adopt intensive and prolonged interpersonal engagement as a primary service provision strategy, which allowed the success of service provision to be continually assessed overtime (Bartkowski & Regis, 1999). Continual assessment allows for these organizations to more easily adapt to changes, inefficiencies, or ineffectiveness because they can become aware of problems early in the service program, as opposed to after the program is over; thereby, making changes throughout the program's duration, which increases the service's effectiveness and overall success.

Although Putnam (1993) finds that church involvement is inversely related to participation in civic associations, this does not necessarily mean that involvement in church initiatives do not spillover into actions contributing to community development. Grassroots movements that have yielded substantial social change within communities, and even whole societies, are not new phenomena. These movements that begin as church involvement or volunteerism tend to eventually, either deliberately or coincidentally, extend into more traditionally defined practices of civic engagement that progress not only the faith-based organization's agenda, but also the community in which it resides (Candland, 2000; Escobar, 1997). In Harvell's (2006) study of African American women who attended or were members of churches in Philadelphia, it was found that about 90 percent of respondents were associated with at least one outside association, and the average number of associations that respondents reported being active in was about 3.9. In comparison, a national survey of women found that women on average report membership in associations outside church at about 3.8 (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 2001). According to the Harvell (2006) most women that are church goers become members of small or community-based associations, which are effective as sociopolitical mobilizing entities that provide various opportunities for one-on-one interpersonal interactions that help establish social capital

(Friedman & McAdam, 1992). Moreover, involvement within a number of local community associations seems to be deliberate and in pursuance of solving social problems of the community.

Recent studies of faith-based organizations and their involvement in community action and development have emphasized their importance in the development of social capital (Warren, 2001; Warren & Wood, 2001; Wood, 2002). According to Brown and Brown (2003), church attendance increases trust and obligations among peer congregants because social interactions occur in a setting where people tend to share common worldviews and religious outlooks. These types of interaction tend to result in the formation of social networks and specific forms of social capital have the potential of manifesting in the form of civic engagement in general, and social action more specifically. Although it has been argued that the establishment of these types of social networks can be potentially exclusive, restricting wider community cohesion (see Annette, 2011), this is not always the case. Warren and Wood (2001) illustrate how faith-based community action can not only produce forms of social capital that bring together inter-faith organizations and political networks, but also how it can provide the basis for developing a political culture that is democratic. Moreover, Duval-Diop, Curtis, and Clark (2010) illustrate through their case study of Churches Supporting Churches (CSC), an inter-denominational organization of national and local churches in the New Orleans region, how faith-based organizations are capable of breaking through ideological boundaries to advocate for policies that best meet the needs of vulnerable communities in the disaster recovery process. Specifically, this organization strives toward enabling and building the capacity of churches to act as agents for social change and redevelopment within their respective communities, which is also manifested in their strategy to help pastors and other church members become policy advocates by connecting them with local, state, and national officials that can influence community disaster recovery and broad community redevelopment practices (CSC, 2007).

Social Capital

Generally, social capital refers to the connections between individuals, such as social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that come about in tandem or as a result of these connections (Putnam, 2000). More specifically, the concept of social capital focuses on the cultural values, and attitudes that encourage citizens within a community to cooperate, trust, understand, and empathize with one another (Newton, 1997) and is therefore generated through social systems (Newton, 2001). Coleman (1988) explains that social capital can be viewed as a resource that community members draw upon to facilitate and accomplish mutually beneficial interests. Members of these networks are drawn into social structures that are typically characterized by high levels of outstanding obligations and effective sanctions to ensure that the community adheres to their obligations (Leonard, 2004). As such, the results of these relationships can be tangible, such as the creation of a city hall produced

through voluntary action (Newton, 1997); but they can also be intangible, such as through the continuous provision of food from a community common (Ostrom, 1990).

Arguably, one of the most important aspects of social capital is social trust. Through sustained, repeated interactions both social capital and social trust can develop, often in tandem. For Fukuyama (1996), social trust is the culmination of expectations that arise within a community where regular, honest, and cooperative behavior occurs, which is based on mutually shared norms in relation to the other members of that community. Williams (1988) furthers this explanation by emphasizing the “thick” trust that is produced through intensive, frequent contact between people, which often occurs between people of the same tribe, class, ethnic background or even religious congregation. Communities of these kinds are generally socially homogeneous, isolated and exclusive, and are able to exercise social sanctions in order to reinforce thick trust (Coleman, 1988). The presence of thick trust reinforces the notion that an individual should forgo their self-interests and act in the interests of the collective (Coleman, 1988). According to Coleman (1988) this type of norm is reinforced by social support, status, honor, and other rewards that generally contribute to individual work that is focused on the public good.

Mechanisms of Social Capital

There are different types of social capital that have the ability to help develop relationships between members of social networks. Understanding the different kinds of social capital is important because communities vary in their ability take advantage of networks due to their overall inclusive or exclusive characteristics. For example, communities that have a diverse abundance of social networks are stronger in their potential ability to confront poverty and social vulnerability (Moser, 1996; Narayan, 1995), resolve conflicts (Schafft, 1998; Varshney, 2000), and have access and take advantage of new opportunities (Isham, 1999). Alternatively, in communities where there is an absence or weakness of social ties, social networks are more constrained in their ability to take advantage of progressive community opportunities. As Wilson (1987, 1996 see also Woolcock & Narayan, 2000) highlights, poor communities and/or neighborhoods tend to be actively excluded from certain social networks and institutions that can be used to better the community’s social quality. According to Briggs (1998) and Holzmann and Jorgensen (1999), the poor tend to illustrate close-knit ties and thick trust that allows network members to develop bonding social capital that they are able to leverage to “get by,” but, as already stated, they lack the more diffuse and extensive bridging social capital developed by the non-poor to “get ahead” (Barr, 1998; Kozel & Parker, 2000; Narayan, 1999).

Conceptually, bonding social capital refers to the interpersonal dependence that is often present among people who tend to associate in small groups, local communities, and other settings over time (Wuthnow, 2002). Social capital of this

kind does not depend on, and in some way is isolated from, the collective's external ties to other external actors, but on the internal structure and networks of individuals within the community that create cohesiveness and facilitate the pursuit of collective goals (Adler & Kwon, 2002). According to Putnam (2000), bonding social capital often occurs among homogenous populations, and the factors that promote its development, such as thick trust and solidarity, ultimately restrict the community from reaching its full potential. Although in relatively wealthy communities, economic capital gives members access to cultural and social capital thus yielding access to greater financial resources, Bourdieu (1986), Matthews (1983) and Richling (1985) demonstrate that simply having bonding social capital (even in affluent communities) tends to result in economic under-performance in relation to communities that exhibit other types of social capital.

Whereas bonding social capital focuses on strong social networks derived from individual face-to-face interactions among members of a group, bridging social capital focuses on the relationships that group members have with non-member individuals or groups and the networks that derive from these relationships. These interactions are usually characterized by networks *between* groups of people that are not alike in some socio-economic or demographic (i.e., differing by ethnic group, age, gender) way (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). According to Portes and Landolt (1996, see also Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999), bridging capital is important because it overcomes divisiveness and insularity and encourages not only tolerance of other groups, but also cooperation that is useful in addressing large-scale social problems. Bridging capital is also more difficult to establish and maintain because it necessitates that people seek relationships beyond their immediate social interactions and that there are institutions capable of fostering cooperation among heterogeneous groups (Wuthnow, 2002).

Finally, linking social capital refers to the relationships between the community and higher formal institutions (Mignone, 2003, 2009). According to Szreter and Woolcock (2004), networks developed in this way are characterized by communities or community organizations interacting across explicit, formal, or institutionalized power or authority gradients. In addition to governmental agencies, linking social capital refers to the networks that manifest between community members and market agencies that have direct and indirect influence within the community (Talbot & Walker, 2007). The presence of these types of social networks allows for the potential of agenda setting at the local level to be more easily communicated and accepted by higher political officials, which potentially allows for local community initiatives to receive broader influential support. Evans (1996) maintains that particularly poor communities have difficulty accessing political elites in an effort to pursue social welfare projects within their communities because they lack the linking social capital that gives them access to political and economic actors that can both directly and/or indirectly influence the progressive trajectory of their communities (see also Dale, 2005).

Community Resilience: Enhancing the Benefits and Reducing the Risks of Social Capital in Disaster Recovery

Community resilience is the ability of a community to effectively respond and adapt in a crisis; the ability to recover and return to normalcy. Not all communities recover from a disaster. Only some are able to rebuild their neighborhoods and resume their daily lives. Understanding how some communities are successful, provides insights into how to foster disaster resistance in the future (Rivera & Miller, 2011). In the context of disasters, utilization of social capital is a key element for fostering community resilience, or the ability of a community to “bounce back” post-disaster (Aldrich, 2010, 2012; Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008; see also Cutter et al., 2008). Social capital is a resource that can be “called on in a crisis” (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 226). Aldrich (2010) highlights that the social networks that form the foundation of a community’s social capital serve three primary functions in fostering community resiliency in the wake of a crisis: facilitating information dissemination, enhancing community organization, and motivating community engagement in rebuilding efforts. Though it should be noted, social capital can also have negative affects in the disaster recovery process (Aldrich, 2012).

One benefit of social capital is information. In reference to a specific actor, social capital fosters access to broader sources of information; thereby, improving the information’s quality, relevance, and timeliness (Coleman, 1988). For example, people have the ability to gain access to information about job opportunities (Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997), innovations (Rogers, 1995), and mobility opportunities (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). In reference to disaster information dissemination, social capital within predominately poor and marginalized communities has the ability to increase information diffusion about evacuation orders, response efforts, and vulnerability, which can decrease overall losses in a specific location, when traditional government sources of information are inaccessible or not trusted (Aguirre, 1988; Morrow, 2000; Peguero, 2006; Perry & Greene, 1982; Perry & Lindell, 1991; Perry & Mushkatel, 1986; Rogers, 1992; Yelvington, 2000; see also Banfield, 1958). Conversely, because the development and maintenance of social capital requires considerable investment, actors tend to perform cost benefit analyses based on the level of emotional and/or other investment into maintaining a social network or interaction, and the quality of information yielded by that investment (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Therefore, when informational benefits are not advantageous to actors participating in a relationship social capital and trust can break down, leading to further distrust and isolation. This is particularly evident with linking social capital in reference to racial and ethnic minorities’ reliance on information about disasters and disaster aid where a historic lack of governmental concern and marginalization has both physically and psychologically isolated these populations to the point where they distrust information from formal government authorities (Banfield, 1958; Kasperon, Golding, & Tuler, 1992; Peguero, 2006; Phillips & Ephraim, 1992).

According to Adler and Kwon (2002), influence, control, and power characterize another kind of benefit of social capital. Power benefits allow specific actors to achieve their goals more easily (Adler & Kwon, 2002). In disaster recovery, influence and power are illustrated by the way in which local political and business entities are capable of securing government allocations and contracts that place them in a more advantageous recovery position in relation to other less powerful actors (Chtouris & Tzelepoglou, 2011; Chu, 2010; Medury, 2010). These types of benefits are most commonly synonymous with increased levels of bridging and linking social capital where formal and informal multilevel relationships are present. However, in some circumstances power benefits associated with social capital may trade off against informational benefits. Ahuja (1988) maintains that while an actor may gain informational benefits by having various contacts, which also have many contacts, a specific actor's direct contacts will be less dependent on the specific actor than if they had fewer contacts. According to this paradigm, it is more advantageous, in reference to reaping power and influence benefits of social capital, to have smaller networks that are composed of more influential individuals so that more direct relationships can be maintained, as opposed to having to rely upon intermediaries to maintain relationships.

Lastly, although one could discuss a plethora of other benefits to social capital, for the purposes of this discussion, increased solidarity is one of the most important aspects that can come from the development of social capital. As a byproduct of developed bonding social capital, strong social norms and beliefs have the ability to encourage compliance with local rules and customs, which reduce the need for formal controls (Adler & Kwon, 2002). In reference to disasters, bonding social capital contributes to the development of disaster subcultures, which over time allow local communities to develop values and norms that are directly associated with the natural environment where they reside (Miller & Rivera, 2008; Rivera, in-press; Wenger & Weller, 1973). This illustration of bonding social capital allows these communities to better resist and recover from natural disasters (Moore, 1964) because they have not only developed social networks that are supportive of each other in emergency situations, but they also strengthen the solidarity of the community to deal with the detrimental subsequent effects of disasters, especially when more formal structures, such as governmental actors, are unreliable (Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 2002; Peacock, Morrow, & Gladwin, 1997). Although solidarity would seem extremely advantageous to any community, the characteristic can also be detrimental. In disaster situations, a community's solidarity that has developed through closed social networks makes it difficult for new members (i.e., migrants or immigrants) to benefit (Lateef & Melvin, 2010). Moreover, solidarity that develops from bonding social capital can be detrimental to the larger society in that it can contribute to the development and perpetuation of unethical behavior (Foley & Edwards, 1996).

Although there are various benefits and risks associated with social capital, in the aftermath of disasters the potential benefits of developed social networks cannot be underestimated. Moreover, the role that faith-based organizations play

in a community's recovery from disaster situations is also important to understand due to the way that these organizations utilize various forms of social capital to pursue their interests. As such, the following case study of Mary Queen of Vietnam (MQVN) church demonstrates the various ways in which a faith-based organization can directly utilize its social capital and draw upon the communities established social trust in order to redevelop its congregation's residential community in a responsive and empowering manner.

Case Study

Methods

Mary Queen of Vietnam (MQVN) was selected for this case study because of its recognition by both scholars and the general public. An exceptional amount of literature has been written on the church, yet little of the literature has sought to explain *how* the organization used and further cultivated the social networks and trust within its community in the midst of, and in reaction to, political confusion and governmental unresponsiveness. Thus, this analysis uses the case of MQVN to illustrate *how* social capital is utilized by an institution, thus empowering civic action. Moreover, due to the amount of extant literature on this organization, this case study is produced through the analysis of secondary sources and interview reports.

Although the presence of social capital is paramount to the analysis of this case, in order to explain how faith-based organizations are able to use social capital to pursue disaster recovery, the mechanisms, or types of social capital, must also be determined to be present. Therefore, the ways in which community members and leaders use social networks to pursue goals is extremely important to determining what type of social capital is employed by these organizations. For the purposes of this study, bonding social capital is observed if community members and/or leaders utilize close social networks (interactions with community members) in order to pursue community redevelopment objectives. Bridging social capital is observed if community members and/or leaders utilize informal relationships with individuals and/or groups outside the case study community in order to pursue recovery goals. Finally, linking social capital is observed if community members and/or leaders use formal vertical relationships (i.e., with federal and state government officials and ecclesiastical leaders)¹ in order to pursue community redevelopment objectives or goals. Again, since this study only seeks to observe the presence of these types of social capital and how they are used, not the level or intensity, these indicators are sufficient for making observations.

New Orleans East and Mary Queen of Vietnam Church

Hurricane Katrina struck the city of New Orleans on August 29, 2005. It created a storm surge that broke and overtopped levees causing about eighty

percent of the city to be flooded. The largest impacted section of the city was New Orleans East, which comprises almost two-thirds of the city's territory, where neighborhoods experienced flooding between five and twelve feet high (Urban Land Institute, 2006). Prior to the storm, about 20 percent of the city's African American population resided in this section of the city and median household incomes were above the city's average; however, the city's White population perceived the area to be "ghetto" even though the location's socio-demographic composition did not substantiate this social classification (Johnson, 2003). In the far-eastern end of the New Orleans East section is a neighborhood called Versailles (Figure 1), which in 2000 was inhabited by 10,699 individuals, 50.9 percent African American and 43.3 percent Asian (predominately of Vietnamese heritage; of which one-third was foreign-born). Outside of areas such as Los Angeles, San Jose, and Houston, the Versailles neighborhood had the most densely populated concentration of Vietnamese in the United States (Airriess, 2002). Additionally, before the hurricane, most of the neighborhood was middle class homeowners. According to Leong, Airriess, Li, Chen, and Keith (2007a), the average household income in Versailles was \$20,753 for African Americans and \$32,000 for Vietnamese Americans.

The majority of Versailles' Vietnamese community is Roman Catholic (80 percent), and a large proportion (60 percent) traces their ancestry back to two Catholic dioceses in North Vietnam (Airriess, 2002). Within Vietnam, these two dioceses were characterized by villages where priests organized agricultural activities and provided various social services that fostered an environment conducive to the development of social cohesion and action (Haas & Nguyen, 1971). According to Haas and Nguyen (1971), individuals native to these villages regrouped in South Vietnam under the leadership of their respective priests to pursue an anti-communist insurgency agenda after the 1954 Geneva Agreement

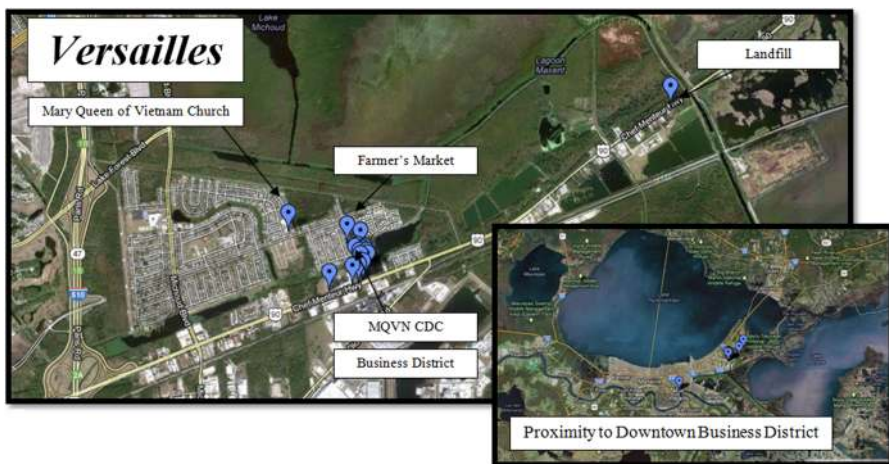


Figure 1. Map of Versailles.

*Source: Google Earth.

split Vietnam. With the fall of Saigon, groups of individuals began migrating to New Orleans as refugees with the help of the New Orleans Associated Catholic Charities (Zhou & Bankston, 1998), and established an ethnic enclave in what is today called the neighborhood of Versailles. Since their initial migration, a tightly networked community with a distinct sense of place has developed—one where many residents refer to their neighborhood as a “second homeland” (Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2009a). Therefore, even prior to the occurrence of the disaster, the Catholic Church’s institutional structure functioned not only as a source of identity and solidarity, but also as a fosterer of social capital development within this Vietnamese community (Airriess, 2002; Bankston & Zhou, 1996).

Acting as a physical and spiritual center for this community is Mary Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church (MQVN). Approximately all of the 4,000 residents that lived within a 1-mile radius of the church prior to the storm were members of the congregation. Additionally, prior to the storm, MQVN played a significant role bridging the gap between secular and religious life. According to Chamlee-Wright and Storr (2009b), “Before Katrina the church served as the community center, providing space for after-school tutoring, English language instruction, Vietnamese language classes, youth leadership development, and business development” (p. 446). Due to the church’s dominance over the physical and social landscape, many neighborhood residents considered its senior pastor at the time, Father Vien Nguyen, to be the leader and spokesperson of the community. According to Chamlee-Wright and Storr (2009a), Father Vien’s leadership role primarily stemmed from the authority he held within the hierarchy of the church structure; however, his personal character, exemplified in his willingness to interact sometimes defiantly with city officials, reinforced his status. As will be discussed below, the pastoral power that Father Vien exhibited (Airriess, 2005; Rose, 1996) allows him to speak for the community as a whole, but more importantly is characteristic of Vietnamese Catholicism where the church is perceived as the primary social institution and responsible for the welfare of congregation members (Airriess, Li, Leong, Chen, & Keith, 2008; Phan, 2001).

Prior to the hurricane making landfall, a majority of Versailles Vietnamese residents evacuated. According to Airriess, Li, Leong, Chen, and Keith (2008, p. 1337), almost 94 percent had evacuated from the storm, and about 95 percent of those had done so by automobile. Although only a small percentage of surveyed Vietnamese respondents indicated that they received information about the storm’s approach through the church’s network (5.3 percent), Airriess et al. (2008) blames the diminished information sharing about evacuation between congregation members on the timing of the storm. Since evacuation efforts took place predominantly on the Friday and Saturday before mass, information transmission did not occur at levels that could have been expected if mass had been able to occur before the storm hit. For the 200–300 neighborhood residents that did not evacuate, MQVN provided sanctuary from the storm. Moreover, after the storm passed, Father Vien contacted the Saigon Radio station in Houston to inform them that, while most Vietnamese residents had evacuated before the storm,

many that stayed were safe at the church (Airriess et al., 2008). This message was then relayed to a similar Californian radio station. The sharing of information through the use of bridging and linking social capital networks eventually resulted in the National Congress of Vietnamese Americans (NCVA) gaining access to this information. When the NCVA gained access to this information, the organization setup a website facilitating the posting of emerging information generated by MQVN to be accessed by family members of neighborhood residents, in addition to other interested parties (Airriess et al., 2008).

When most of New Orleans was still just attempting to understand what was transpiring after the disaster, Father Vien decided to hold mass for the 300 residents that had either not evacuated or had returned to the Versailles neighborhood just 5 weeks after the storm. This was symbolically important for the neighborhood. Due to the widespread damage inflicted by the storm and subsequent flooding, it was uncharacteristic to witness 300 people in one place when the rest of the city was a comparable ghost town (Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2009a). Versailles' black residents were also invited to worship, and thus MQVN "became an important gathering point for black community leaders..., those whose churches and community centers had been all but destroyed. So, too, the MQVN would provide a temporary religious home for black parishioners" (Tang, 2011, p. 124).

In addition to reestablishing bonding social capital at the local level with available community members, Father Vien took it upon himself to attempt to reestablish the presence of the community by bringing prior members back. Since the majority of Vietnamese evacuees had been scattered to sites in Houston, San Antonio, Atlanta, in addition to a number of other locations, Father Vien traveled from site to site in an effort to connect with members of his congregation, and organize the return of community members as soon as they were allowed back into the city (Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2009a). Upon hearing that Mayor Nagin of New Orleans had announced that people could return to New Orleans, Father Vien convened a "Return Committee" in Houston where he appointed community leaders and members of the church Pastoral Council. This council was an executive committee of lay leaders in the church that were responsible for difference zones in New Orleans East (Li, 2011; Vollen & Ying, 2008). According to Father Vien (as cited by Li, 2011), the creation of the Return Committee was primarily enabled by the institutional structure of the Church itself: "In the Catholic Church, it's very clear who is the leader and there's no question...who would be responsible and who people would follow. That helped tremendously." As a result of Father Vien's initiative and utilization of bonding social capital, by Katrina's second anniversary about 90 percent of residents in the community surrounding MQVN had returned, whereas only 45 percent of residents had returned to New Orleans overall (Leong et al., 2007a). Those that did not return tended to be renters, fisherfolk, infirmed elderly and skilled workers whose employers had relocated out of the city (Airriess et al., 2008). By February 2006, 25 percent of the businesses that were present prior to the storm had reopened, which was over double the percentage of re-opened businesses in New Orleans

East overall in the same month (Williams, 2006). According to Chamlee-Wright and Storr (2009b), “[Versailles] came back faster and more robustly than virtually all other neighborhoods in Orleans Parish, even those with similar levels of flood damage, and those that were considerably more affluent” (p. 430).

In addition to providing shelter to people that did not evacuate, the parish council adopted a neighborhood zone administrative structure that was brought and modified from Vietnam. This body developed a local action network for social organizing, information exchange, and rebuilding that the community was in need of. According to Airriess et al. (2008), groups were assigned different tasks of repairing houses, administering tetanus shots and healthcare, and purchasing food and preparing meals (Hauser, 2005). These efforts strengthen the social cohesion and capacity for coordination that existed in the community prior to the hurricane. Moreover, the ability of the church to provide services to congregants established a system of norms and values indicative to bonding social capital that contributed to MQVN’s ability to organize the community to confront political obstacles to their community’s survival.

The provision of shelter to non-evacuees and the first group of returnees made MQVN the center of recovery activities for the community. The decision to hold mass so soon after the disaster also served to establish the church as the central political actor in the community’s return (Joe, 2005). Although the first mass specifically catered to the spiritual needs of the returning congregants, it also served as a form of political resistance. According to the recommendations made by the Bring New Orleans Back Commission, large segments of the New Orleans East were to be converted into green space, and residential redevelopment moved elsewhere. According to Li (2011), the Versailles neighborhood in New Orleans East went from existing as an isolated community before the storm to one that demanded and expected to have a voice at the table. In response, MQVN organized congregants to attend the downtown meeting of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission in November 2005. At the meeting, 25 percent of the attendees were ethnic-Vietnamese (Campanella, 2006) and were represented by a pastor of the MQVN church. In the public forum, the pastor questioned the top-down decision-making process that did not seek public participation for a community development plan that would affect so many people (Williams, 2005). This top-down plan that was supported by city government, but was primarily developed by an outside entity, the Urban Land Institute, deliberately attempted to reduce the power of local resistance (Judd, 1998). In an effort to shame the city into leaving the community alone, the church organized parishioners to speak with the media about how city government was trying to keep them from reestablishing their community. Tang (2011) highlights how political resistance created further solidarity among the Vietnamese and African American members of the community; writing, “in the weeks following the storm, representatives from both communities would support each other on the political front, as each demanded greater state accountability” (p. 119). This example of bonding social capital between the church and congregants, in addition to bridging social capital between co-ethnic and non-co-ethnic institutions, exemplifies the potential

benefits of social capital in general (Li, Airriess, Leong, Chen, & Keith, 2010). According to Li et al. (2010), this situation launched the community from a position of political invisibility to hypervisability, making subsequent community action more effective.

In addition to general organizing, Father Vien took initiative in pursuing the neighborhood's community development agenda. Because the community was attempting to resist the city's plan, city officials had deliberately rejected requests to restore electrical service to the community, which would subsequently allow for more people to return to their homes. Therefore, instead of engaging with the government, Father Vien engaged with the local power company, Entergy, directly; bringing with him pictures of the community's redevelopment activities.

So I had those pictures to show him [a representative of the power company]. He said, "those I get. But now we need a list." And so we went and got what he asked. We called our people to put their names down and their addresses...So within one week, I went back to Lafayette, we went back to his office, I said, "Well, the city has 500 petitioners." So the first week of November, we had power. And we were the only people with power (Father Vien as cited in Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2009a, p. 5).

This individual act of initiative by the church's leader enabled the community to continue to redevelop in pursuant of their own objectives; however, the city still continued to attempt to restrict the community's redevelopment that was in opposition to its plan.

Similar to the way in which the city attempted to block reestablishing the community's electrical supply, city officials also made it difficult for the community and church officials to open a FEMA trailer park. In this regard, Father Vien and Father Luke helped the community secure land owned by the archdiocese, and negotiate an agreement with FEMA to open the park; however, gaining the permit from the city to open the location was more difficult.

[We acquired permission from FEMA] on the 19th of October. We got the legal [documentation], and then we did the paperwork and brought it to the mayor's office. We had our people call...the mayor. We had the archdiocese in the discussion. The mayor refused to sign it...And so I called the archbishop, because he was on the [Bring New Orleans Back] commission. So I called the archbishop and told him that unless the mayor signed it on that day, we will set up a tent city because my people are living in moldy homes waiting for that. And so...that evening, the archbishop called me and said, he said that he did it. [The mayor] signed it. [But FEMA never received the signed documentation from the mayor's office.]... So I called the archbishop and asked him to contact the mayor and have the mayor fax it to his office... but nothing moved for a whole week (Father Vien as cited in Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2009a, p. 6).

According to Chamlee-Wright and Storr (2009a), the city eventually granted the permit for the FEMA trailer park, but only under pressure to avoid a media scandal that a tent city would generate as winter months began to approach.

Finally, as another method to destabilize the vitality of the community, in April 2006 the city decided to open a landfill approximately one mile from the community. According to Father Vien (Vollen & Ying, 2008, p. 227):

The pit that they're dumping into is thirty feet deep, and they were going to fill it up and pile it up to eighty-five to one hundred and five feet tall and then cap it with three feet of dirt. That would be one of the highest structures in New Orleans East. That would be our skyline, our mountain.

As a result of this decision, the definition of what it meant to be part of this community changed. Because the proposed landfill would not only affect the ethnic-Vietnamese neighborhood, but other predominately African American neighborhoods in the area, identity bridging social capital and status-bridging social capital had to be developed. According to Allen (2003), the development of these forms of social capital was vital to the landfill's opposition because environmental justice movements tend to be successful when they cross cultural and ethnic boundaries and bring in advocates from outside the local community. Therefore, the website, *Save New Orleans East: Citizens for a Strong New Orleans East*, was created and posted through the MQVN's homepage in order to inform potentially affected parties about what was going on. The organization named Citizens for a Strong New Orleans East (CSNOE) was formed, and published a booklet that attempted to spread the message that the landfill would not only affect the prospering Vietnamese neighborhood, but all other surrounding neighborhoods as well (CSNOE, 2006). Supporters of this organization included both local and national Asian American organizations (i.e., Asian American Justice Center, Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, National Alliance of Vietnamese American Service Agencies, and Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans), inter-faith religious institutions (All Congregations Together, Catholic Charities, MQVN and the African American-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference), homeowner and business associations, and environmental groups (Louisiana Environmental Action Network and Sierra Club; Li et al., 2010).

According to Airriess et al. (2008), the utilization of these social networks were significantly the byproduct of the MQVN's pastor attending various meetings and rallies organized by Black community groups to protest "right of return" issues in addition to the absence of school and health facilities for the poor. Moreover, MQVN congregants had also helped several local African American churches (see also, Tang, 2011). These efforts laid the foundation for bridging and linking social capital that could be used to fight the landfill's proposed location. As a result of a demonstration of 400 people that took place at

City Hall on May 10, 2006, Mayor Nagin temporarily closed the landfill; however, he reopened it soon after winning his reelection with an executive order.

As another example of the benefits of bridging social capital, the deputy director of the White House's Asian American and Pacific Islander Initiative was sent to Versailles neighborhood to help mediate a meeting between local opponents of the landfill and local, state, and federal officials in late June 2006 (Russell, 2006), after US Representative Michael Honda (D-CA), then US Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), and US Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) had placed heightened interest on the situation at the national level (Airriess et al., 2008; Li et al., 2010). Although the Louisiana Legislature and US District Court ruled that the landfill be kept operational, the landfill eventually closed on August 14, 2006 when the mayor's executive order expired. Ironically, this came after Mayor Nagin and Recovery Chief Dr. Blakely announced that Versailles would be one of seventeen other zones in which the city planned to stimulate investment for renewal (New York Times, 2007).

As both a part and result of this community development process, the Mary Queen of Vietnam Community Development Corporation, Inc. was founded in order to institutionalize public participation within the community development planning process of both the Versailles neighborhood, and the City of New Orleans in general. At the neighborhood level, the MQVN church, and later the Community Development Corporation (CDC), organized both community members and outside organizations in order to maintain their community's survival, in addition to rebuild their community according to the vision they themselves developed. According to Li et al. (2010), what differentiates this community from many other redevelopment projects in ethnic and immigrant communities is that it was, and continues to be, almost entirely based on the initiatives of the community itself with strong leadership from local religious and civil organizations. To date, the Mary Queen of Vietnam CDC, in tandem with the MQVN church, continually organizes people to be participants in the larger city's planning process, in addition to the local planning process that is still evolving (MQVN CDC, 2012). MQVN was able to facilitate, through the leadership of pastors, people's right to return to their homes (Leong, Airriess, Li, Chen, & Keith, 2007a, 2007b), attracting prior and new businesses to the Versailles neighborhood (Airriess, 2006; Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2009b; Li et al., 2010), and increased inter-ethnic cooperation and residency, which had previously been limited (Tang, 2007).

In terms of economic development, MQVC along with the CDC fostered and continues to encourage the development of its ethnic businesses within Versailles, creating specialization in product supply that is difficult to get outside the neighborhood (see Figure 1 for location of business district in proximity to downtown New Orleans and MQVN church). As noted above, the business community returned faster to Versailles than other areas of New Orleans (Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2009b; Tang, 2007; Williams, 2006). According to the MQVN CDC (2012), the business districts robust redevelopment is partially due to the CDCs ability to coordinate programs, such as "hosting and organizing

small business loan fair with five lenders present and over 35 small businesses in attendance” as well as the organizations ability to help “[Versailles] business owners to secure over \$2M in capital to rebuild or expand their businesses.”

According to Waldinger, McEvoy, and Aldrich (1990), the relatively small population size of this commercial enclave offers a range of goods and services characteristic of a local ethnic market that primarily supports adjacent and spatially concentrated residential customer preferences. This arrangement provides the opportunity for both the market of specialty ethnic products as well as social networks that promote a customer base, thereby contributing to the development of space (such as a business district) conceptualized as a resource (Kaplan, 1998). This cluster of ethnic companies is, as Porter (1995) writes, “linked together through [its] customers” (p. 57) and is successful because of the “unique local conditions” (p. 57) that foster competitive advantage. In this way the neighborhood can be marketed as a unique resource where specialty items can be purchased, in addition to where tourists can experience a culturally unique atmosphere. Although currently there has not been a great deal of marketing around the notion of making the Versailles neighborhood a Viet Village or the Asian Quarter of New Orleans as a mechanism for expanding the tourism industry’s presence in the neighborhood, the community’s utilization of bonding social capital and communal values has contributed to economic clustering that has the potential of furthering the community’s economic development.

Policy Discussion

The case of Mary Queen of Vietnam church illustrates the potential capacity of faith-based organizations to cultivate various forms of social capital in an effort to successfully pursue community development agendas. Moreover, the case illustrates how effective local faith-based organizations can be at delivering social services in general, especially under circumstances of crisis when traditional welfare service providers are limited in their ability to operate, which coincides with other research of the use of faith-based organizations in disaster response and recovery (Ealy, 2010; Koenig, 2006; Pant, Kirsch, Subbarao, Hsieh, & Vu, 2008). The potential of these types of organizations to provide social services more effectively than their governmental counterparts is not a new concept, and has been highlighted in the last three presidential administrations. Therefore, it is important to consider how the government can facilitate more opportunities for these organizations to contribute to poverty stricken communities in such a way that benefactors are capable of further developing their communities.

Historically, the federal government has made attempts at broadening official support for faith-based organizations, even though ideals represented in the constitution regarding the separation of church and state seem to currently restrict policies from expanding. Under President Clinton, the Personal Responsibility Work Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was implemented in 1996 to reform the welfare system, but it also lay the ground work for religious organizations to begin to access federal funds (Cnaan & Boddie, 2002). Among a number of other

items, this law encourages state governments to involve organizations from the faith sector in the administration of public programs for the poor. Within Section 104 the law permits, but does not mandate, federal agencies and subnational government to use federal funds to partner with sectarian institutions whose primary purposes are worship and evangelism and faith-related agencies to deliver welfare and related services to the poor (Smith & Sossin, 2001). As part of this law, the Senate proposed and was able to pass a provision, which came to be known as Charitable Choice that was designed to remove barriers of faith-based organizations in receiving federal funding. This provision allowed faith-based organizations to compete for funds while maintaining their religious nature; however, funds must be used for public services and the clients they serve must not be discriminated against on the basis of religion (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013).

After George W. Bush took office, he issued a series of executive orders that expanded on this initiative, creating the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI; Gilman, 2007; Roberts-DeGennaro, 2007). This office worked to facilitate support for faith-based communities across governmental departments (Formicola et al., 2003). According to the White House (2008), the Bush administration used its influence to incorporate the FBCI into all federal efforts designed to address human need (see also Formicola et al., 2003). Monsma (1996, p. 190; Owens & Yuen, 2008) maintains that the purpose of the FBCI was to create "...new opportunities to privatize the delivery of public services, thereby increasing competition in the delivery of those services and, many are convinced, saving money, and improving efficiency." Therefore, support for this plan did not necessarily revolve around religiosity of the state, which was a major emphasis of opposing parties, but a neo-liberal policy for cutting back welfare state spending and limiting the power of the state in this regard (Olasky, 2000). Moreover, in addition to faith-based organizations having to compete against each other for funding, thereby enhancing competition of this sector, they also compete with other nonprofit community-based charities, which enhances competition and efficiency across sectors (De Vita & Palmer, 2003).

The results of these initiatives seem to be inconclusive, due to the limiting number of faith-based organizations participating in federal programs that allocate funding for service provision. One reason for this is reflected in faith-based organizations' favorability of opportunities. According to De Vita and Palmer (2003), within Washington, D.C. responses to the initiatives were associated with the size of a congregation, its denomination or affiliation, theological views, and past experiences with the government. Moreover, their observations support Chaves' (1999) findings that larger congregations and "mainline" denominations are more likely than other groups to favor and take advantage of these initiatives. One main reason for this trend is attributed to organizational capacity issues. Larger congregations typically work with lawyers to develop grants and contracts with government agencies, have large staffs dedicated to the implementation and reporting of programs, and generally have more resources that enable them to leverage these organizational characteristics. Smaller congregations on the other hand, need funding from the government to

simply expand their capacity in order to make them competitive in the funding application process, let alone the reporting phase of the project that tends to require additional accounting and technical skills. Along these lines, large proportions of the Compassionate Capital Fund have been spent primarily on building the organizational and human capacity of faith-based organizations to manage and report on federal funding monies (Fischer, 2004; Sherman, 2002).

Another challenge that has appeared in reference to faith-based organizations taking advantage of federal funds is their fear of what taking funds would mean for their organization. Many churches perceive the monies that are available through Charitable Choice as a way for government agencies to suppress their congregations' political participation and advocacy in reference to social justice for the poor, which would ultimately result in them working against the people they want to aid in their respective communities (Owens, 2004). Therefore, clergy fear that public funding will engage governments too deeply into the affairs of their congregations, which results in them avoiding these funding opportunities (Jeavons, 2004). Owens (2006) finds the clergy's fear of government entanglement as important in explaining their likelihood of a faith-based organization and their congregation to seek public funding to provide social welfare services. The most significant aspect of this dimension is the clergy's fear of the government's involvement in religion itself, with the odds of congregations led by fearful clergy applying for government funding dropping by 62 percent. In reaction to this finding, Owens (2006) suggests that the government should consider reinstating the requirement that congregations applying for funds incorporate separate nonprofit organizations, which could reduce government entanglement and help reduce church-state fears. Although Owens (2006) believes this would potentially increase the proportion of congregations pursuing public funding, it may have the opposite effect, placing yet another obstacle in the way of funding, when considering the organizational capacity of many of these organizations, which is why this requirement was previously liberalized.

Finally, when organizations have the capacity to pursue federal funds, and they are not restricted by apprehensive clergy most organizations do not know about the funding opportunities that are available. According to Sager (2007), few religious leaders or communities are aware that government funding is available to them at the state level. This is partly due to the fact that states are not required to implement any part of the FBCI other than they may not discriminate against faith-based organizations during funding decisions. However, in states that have been more amenable to faith-based organization and public partnerships, the position of faith-based liaison (FBL) has been created. These individuals are given the policy goal of aligning faith-based organizations to the public social service sector with little guidance on how to accomplish this goal (Loconte, 2002). Sager (2007) maintains that unlike most other policy changes that have occurred in social service provision in which professionals develop specific rules and guidelines around practice, there is currently little infrastructure at the state level in place to support the implementation of faith-based initiatives. Moreover, few FBLs have budgets that allow them to directly fund faith-based organizations;

therefore, they rely on providing information to faith-based organizations about available funding and helping faith-based organizations access their capacity to receive government grants (Sager, 2007). FBLs attempt to provide this information through the facilitation of conferences aimed at organizational leaders and personal networking. Most conferences are open to the public, but publicity for these events is usually limited. Logistical information about these events tends to be received by organizations that have previously contacted the state about faith-based initiatives, or by groups that the FBL personally knows.

In reference to personal contacts, FBLs tend to have strong ties to their own religious community, which they rely upon to spread information about grants, conferences, and other information regarding the possible role of small faith-based organizations in government-funded social services. Because there is such a direct reliance on the social capital of these specific individuals for the provision of information about grant opportunities to faith-based groups, the groups in which these individuals interact with regularly have a better chance of both knowing about opportunities and receiving funding (Sager, 2007). As Hilton (2008) points out, although the efforts of one individual can be instrumental in one community, relying on social capital to reach hundreds of religious organizations within the same state is simply impractical.

One organizational example of how faith-based organizations have been able to develop both horizontal and vertical relationships with government, but also with constituent communities, is the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD). This organization has developed specifically in response to the challenges present in faith-based and government interactions. Primarily, this organization fosters communication in order to foster communication, coordination, education and training, and leadership development through seminars, meetings, and regional conferences to help guide regional voluntary relief organizations (Koenig, 2007). In addition to developing the capacity of other faith-based organizations, state VOADs work with government EMS agencies in an attempt to make disaster response activities more effective. Although more than half of the voluntary organizations that are part of NVOAD are primarily religious, other nonprofit organizations have also become members. Moreover, the success of this organization to both provide information to faith-based organizations, but also services in times of emergency, has encouraged the development of other similar organizations, such as Action by Churches Together (ACT) and Church World Service Emergency Response Program (CWS).

Due to these policy arrangements, the majority of faith-based organizations seem to require both linking and bridging social capital in order to gain access to the resources, predominantly informational, needed to find out about funding opportunities that could help them provide social services and pursue other community development agendas. At the very least, for those faith-based organizations that have FBLs interacting within their already developed social network, linking social capital is needed for the interaction between the organization and governmental entities in order to acquire funding for social service programs. Therefore, the federal government should develop incentive

structures that would better facilitated the implementation of these faith-based and public partnership opportunities. These incentives could be in the form of tax deductions or abatements, whose funds could be used to finance fulltime FBLs. Moreover, state governments that have a vested interest in seeing these initiatives succeed need to invest more into their FBLs so that they have the needed support to accomplish their goals. In reference to the role of social capital specifically, states should mandate that their FBLs not only utilize the bonding and linking social capital that they have already developed through interactions within their own congregational communities, but track how they are expanding their social networks with other religious groups and denominations, so additional development of bridging and linking social capital can take place.

Conclusion

While there are limitations to generalizability of the single case approach, Eikenberry et al. (2007), note that “it is clear from past and recent experience that nonprofits and NGOs (and other private organizations and citizens) will respond to disasters—with or without government approval. Thus, we need to assume this and plan for it” (p. 167). While these authors go on to highlight the failures of large NGO interventions, the general statement is valid; nonprofit organizations, including faith institutions are a valuable tool for disaster response and recovery. In this light, the MQVN case not only provides a potential model for how community-based organizations can pursue community redevelopment goals, but also the potential importance of faith-based organizations in community redevelopment beyond simply therapeutic outcomes.

Future research should extend the scope of the analysis to include how faith institutions of differing denominations, or in different communities, engage in disaster response and recovery. In general, much of the disaster response following Hurricane Katrina was led by neighborhood and community-based groups, such as MQVN. As Eikenberry et al. (2007) and Brand and Seidman (n.d.) highlight, different communities and organizations were more effective than others, resulting in an inequitable recovery process. A comparative analysis of those organizations, particularly faith-based organizations, that were successful with those less successful would allow us to tease out the particular mechanisms of social capital that lead to community resilience in the wake of a disaster. Additionally, as Rivera (2014) suggests, empirical analyses between faith-based organizations and other formal disaster response and recovery agencies and organizations should be performed in order to better evaluate the benefits of utilizing certain mechanisms, such as social capital, within the disaster recovery process so that organizations legally responsible for such activities can be more efficient in their activities.

Methodologically, future research and conceptual discussions should seek to better measure social capital among case communities more rigorously from a qualitative perspective. Although there has been a significant number of academic articles that seek to more effectively measure social capital empirically through

the use of survey instruments, there are a very limited number of studies that seek to enhance the measurement of social capital through more qualitative means, such as through ethnography or second-hand accounts of information. This measurement shortfall is problematic because the communities that conceivably utilize social capital the most in order to overcome adversity, are also the most socially isolated and marginalized communities within the United States, which tend to self-select out of responding to formal survey instruments especially if they feel there will be no tangible benefit from their participation. Therefore, in order for researchers of social capital to obtain a more accurate understanding of how social capital is utilized by communities, we need to develop measures of social capital that can be better applied to the analysis of qualitative data.

Finally, faith-based organizations also have the capacity to empower community members to take action, thereby changing local government. While Newton (2001) notes that “the relationship between social trust and social capital (or civil society), on the one hand, and political trust and political capital, on the other hand is not simple or straightforward” (p. 211), MQVN shows how organizations can foster social trust and empower their constituents to take action and redeveloped and rebuild their communities in the face of governmental neglect (and resistance). In Versailles, the work of community-building and development did not end with the development of its commercial district, the rebuilding of homes, or with the successful shut down of the landfill. In 2008, Anh “Joseph” Cao unseated a nine-term incumbent, and became the first Vietnamese American to serve in the United States House of Representatives (Krupa, 2008). MQVN has also led to increased community involvement (protest and dialogue) in numerous political arenas; including discussions about how to respond to the BP Oil Spill (MQVN CDC, 2012). As Newton (2001) states, “Social capital and a developed civil society helps make good government possible, and good government helps sustain social capital and the conditions of civil society” (p. 211), which facilitates the development of *community development regimes* (Harris, Forthcoming). According to Harris (Forthcoming), a community development regime is defined by “alliances between higher-capacity nonprofits, including faith-based organizations, and some combination of state government, federal agencies, and major philanthropic organizations...” that seek to evade traditional community development decision makers, such as elected officials or even the broader community electorate, that may pose challenges to more local or narrow development initiatives that emphasize use value as opposed to exchange value. As such, this case study highlights how, community-based, faith institutions can empower their communities to take action, and over time work to address what they deem is broken and untrustworthy about their local, state, and national governments.

Note

1. Ecclesiastical leaders are used as an example of formal relationships along a vertical continuum because of the hierarchal structure of the Catholic Church that enforces formal bureaucratic relationships among organizational members.

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