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PLANNING ACROSS DIFFERENCES: COLLABORATIVE PLANNING IN THE
CALIFORNIA CENTRAL VALLEY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Planning across Differences: Collaborative Planning Processes for the California Central Valley's Future

Dissertation Abstract
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This dissertation examines the intersections between difference, participation, and planning processes. Rooted in scholarly conversations about deliberative democracy, collaborative planning, and nonprofit organizations in civil society, this research considers how planning practitioners can better plan across difference. Through case study research, this dissertation examines a collaborative planning process conducted by a nonprofit organization. Unlike more conventional participatory planning processes, the organization utilized scenario planning. Exercising their position in civil society, participation in the process was not open to all community members and the organization carefully selected a diverse set of participants. Findings from this research project indicate that this process, by moving away from a strict definition of rational discourse, focusing on multiple futures as opposed to a single, utopian future, and deliberately bringing together a broad cross-section of community members allowed for participants to speak freely and learn from one another's perspectives and experiences. Experiences of process participants also demonstrate the degree to which cultural backgrounds shape participation in and expectations of planning processes. While there remains no clear answer in how to represent and respond to cultural differences in planning processes, the experiences of the organization, program staff, and community participants help scholars and practitioners move closer to planning across differences.

For anyone who has ever wondered "What if…" in hopes of making the world a better place.

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Chapter 1: April 15, 2008

Before dawn I stand outside a Spanish-hacienda style home, waiting for Great Valley Center (GVC) Research and Media Director Peter Samuels. I sip hot tea desperate to take the chill out of the air. Despite its well earned reputation for scorching summers, I have quickly learned spring in the California Central Valley requires a jacket, one I wistfully left behind in my snow-covered Illinois home. Peter arrives and I hop into his car, attempting to curtail my enthusiasm about the day's activities. The previous day Peter warned me he is not a morning person, and our day is starting at 5:00 A.M.

Preparations for car behavior are the norm for trips with GVC staff. These staffers are well acquainted with long road trips and each has different techniques to contend with the isolated and frequent trips across California's Central Valley. This morning I am looking forward to one of Peter's road trip strategies – Starbuck's. He knows each one up and down Highway 99 and wants to explore the latest addition to the 99 in Turlock.

In the back seat of Peter's car, I notice boxes filled with GVC educational materials. I ask about the boxes. Peter laughs and says I should see Megan's and Rafa's cars, they travel with even more materials. I poke around them noting the familiar documents housed at the GVC office in Modesto. The materials all support the organization's mission to support the Central Valley, raising awareness about the status of and related challenges and opportunities in the Central Valley. In many ways, the staff's daily lives resemble something more of the life of traveling salespeople rather than the daily lives we often ascribe to regional planners. They spend little time behind a desk. And, rather than selling a product, they are sending a message – the Central Valley faces serious problems and its people need to take immediate action. Covering 100-200 miles

for a single meeting and cars always packed with materials, the GVC staff members take their mandate to forge a regional identity seriously.

Today's trip includes a presentation of the GVC project at the center of my dissertation research, the Valley Futures Project (VFP). Peter has been involved with the project since its beginning in 2001. Its purpose was to provide accessible, personal narratives about plausible ways the future of the Central Valley might unfold. Though the formal dissemination of the project materials concluded in 2004, in 2008 Peter is still responding to requests to present the project materials. The presentation today reflects one success measure of the VFP. One of its broadest goals was that the materials would be incorporated into area curricula. In this instance a collection of leadership training groups in Tulare County invite the GVC to present the project materials each year. Their goal is to educate upcoming county leaders about the interconnection of issues in the Central Valley.

I am especially excited about watching the presentation and ensuing discussions. After two years of reading about, discussing and researching the project, this is the first time I will observe the project presented for its intended audience. I first uncovered the VFP while researching a book project at the beginning of my doctoral studies. I was looking for innovative applications of a planning process, scenario planning, in a regional planning context.

My interest in this planning process stemmed from my passion about working in culturally diverse communities, learning how to plan across difference. I saw scenario planning as a contrast to traditional planning processes such as strategic planning, visioning, and consensus building. From my perspective, these more conventional

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processes created unifying statements, plans, policies, and projects that implied full agreement from large communities. Relying on aggregate voting or the development of weak consensus, these kinds of agreements seemed incongruent with my anthropologic training and lived experience as a mixed race person. Supporting cultural differences in a place seemed to imply the need for multiple plans, visions, or policies. Singular plans or visions about the future seemed to risk the suppression, not embracement, of difference.

Certainly communities did not have such simplistic understanding about the complex social fabric in which they participated. Certainly the complexity of communities could not result in such simple agreements about their future. And certainly the future warranted the presentation of such complexity, something that went further than what I saw in many planning documents.

Scenario planning seemed to offer planners the opportunity to consider and represent the multi-faceted forces shaping communities. I saw this process, with its emphasis on understanding the multiple ways futures could play out, as creating space for the representation of different cultural groups' values and beliefs. I also believed that the process could allow communities to recognize that people do not always agree on future paths and demonstrate that a given path would affect people differently.

Despite its emphasis on incorporating a diversity of perspectives and downplaying universal agreement, the application of scenarios in the planning profession has skipped over these key components. Most widely used in the regional planning community, a diversity of perspectives is often obtained through large public input sessions. Instead of utilizing the dialogic process described in the business literature, regional planners ask

community members to vote on various issues. The product is often land-use maps, not the broad narratives created by corporate scenario planners.

Once the scenarios are created in planning practice, they are treated as alternatives. The convention of selecting a single plan is pervasive in planning and local governments. When I saw the VFP web site, it seemed to draw more heavily from the corporate sector approach while placing it in the context of regional planning. Working through their web site, I was not disappointed. Four plausible futures were presented. Character driven narratives replaced land-use maps; social equity, not land-use, drove the future of the southern portion of the Central, the San Joaquin Valley. And as I would learn later, small, hand-selected groups of community members developed the scenarios. They were created via the large public input sessions dominating planning practice.

I wondered if such a small grouping of people could work together and truly listen to and learn from one another. This kind of small group work had been promoted in the planning and policy literature as offering important opportunities for community members to build new relationships, or heal fractured ones. These kind of small listening sessions would allow for people, especially those in multicultural communities, to develop shared ideas about the future, or so scholars argued.

Drawing from these scholarly conversations, I specifically questioned: How had participants experienced these workshops? What cross-cultural learning had occurred? How had participants changed their attitudes or behaviors based on their participation? What were the specific process components that supported this learning or change? What were the attitudes of the organization about diversity? How was the organization's

position as a nonprofit organization impact their work? These questions framed my point of entry into researching the VFP.

To answer these questions, I conducted two field trips to the GVC office in Modesto, California. My goal was to contextualize the organization, understand the project and its impacts, and explore the experiences of the community members who participated in the development of the SJV scenarios. The first field trip occurred during the summer of 2007. I spent 6 weeks working out of the GVC, collecting VFP documents about the project. Because a large portion of my work focused on a project conducted in the past, I felt working in the GVC offered me the opportunity to understand the present day workings of the organization, observe discussions about other projects and their relation to conceptions about diversity, and engage in more informal conversations with the staff members present during the VFP. I hoped by working in the organization on a nearly daily basis, staff members would continue to reflect on the project, remembering more than they might during one or two interviews.

Further, in 2006 the GVC entered a partnership with the University of California, Merced. Though they maintained their own nonprofit organization status (501c3) and board of directors, this relationship meant the once nongovernmental, private organization was now integrally tied to a public institution. With GVC staff hired as UC staff and all finances merged into the UC system, the staff now functioned as in a fiscal, procedural, and bureaucratic environment akin to many city and county planners. Because I believed that working in an NGO context allowed for the flexibility and innovation necessary to respond to culturally diverse communities, I expected that the staff might be able to illustrate this.

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The second field trip took place from April 2008-May 2008. During this trip I concentrated on painting a broader picture of the organization, understanding its links to the Central Valley. This field trip allowed me to observe several presentations of the VFP materials, something that had not happened previously. From these trips I constructed a narrative about an organization, in a particular moment of time in a specific place that had used a process to bring a diverse group of people together. These people were unique community leaders, and coupled with the characteristics of the organization and the scenario planning process, they offered insights into exactly what it might look like to plan across differences.

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Despite Peter's warning about morning, we end up chattering away and we have traveled the 137 miles from Modesto to Visalia, in Tulare County, before I realize it. During the Tulare Leadership Training Day, I watched Peter bring the GVC's message of the dire situation of the Central Valley to life. His reputation as an effective, knowledgeable, and entertaining presenter proved true. I observed as Tulare County residents watched short movies about two possible futures for their region, *Rosa's World* and *New Eden*. True to all reports about the presentations, people in the audience had much to say and did not always agree with one another. Some were visibly shaken.

But what had really disturbed them? A Latino population becoming the majority; the uncertainty of the future; a sense of powerlessness? And what did watching these materials do for them in the long term? What did all of this knowledge about the possible futures of the Central Valley and the role of social strife really mean?

On our way north from Visalia back to Modesto, Peter and I discussed the presentation. I asked about his perspective on audience comments and his rationale for decisions he made as a facilitator. Working in the car is another given for GVC staff members. During my field visit I conducted formal interviews, participated in project planning, and even drafted future scenarios for the GVC from inside a vehicle. And so Peter and I swapped ideas about how to handle facilitation sessions, the role of facilitators, and discussed the continued interest in the VFP. We spent a good amount of time discussing specific comments about race and ethnicity and how people in the room responded to them. Late that evening, Peter dropped me off at my temporary home. I spent the rest of the evening reflecting on the complicated role that GVC staffers play and what implications this had for other planners working in culturally diverse communities.

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In the pages that follow I document the VFP project, its impacts and the experiences of one of the scenario development teams as well as the GVC staff involved in the project. For the organization staff, the VFP demonstrates one of their many attempts to build regional planning capacity. Yet this is only a partial telling of the VFP. Like many planning projects, there are multiple intentions built into a single effort. In this case, the importance of reflecting ethnic, racial, and class diversity became an equally important part of the tale. Planning across a region goes hand in hand with planning across differences, at least for the GVC.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the literature related to planning processes and participation, cultural difference, and diversity and their intersection with civil society. I pay specific attention to theoretical discussions about deliberative democracy and

communicative planning, difference, and social justice and the role of nonprofit

organizations. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology I employed. Chapter 4

includes a description of the 'case.' It chronicles the Valley Futures Project and history of

the Great Valley Center. Relevant facts about the Central Valley and California are also

included.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 analyze the findings of the case, expanding the theoretical

conversations brought up in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 examines how the GVC manages dual

organizational identities to influence its political arena. The impact of the VFP helps

demonstrate that balancing these identities allows the organization to achieve part of their

agenda, especially connecting disparate people, while sometimes weakening their ability

to make direct changes in the region. Chapter 6 looks at the experiences of the VFP

workshop participants. Their experiences demonstrate that an emphasis on intersubjective

understanding as opposed to the building of specified consensus allows participants

greater opportunities to learn from one another. Chapter 7 builds on these experiences

and examines how cultural differences shaped how participants perceived, participated in,

and learned from workshops. In this chapter I argue for attention to be placed on the

multiplicity of ways that difference influences planning processes. Chapter 8 concludes

with implications for future research for planning scholars and recommendations for

planning practitioners working in culturally diverse communities.

This is not a story about a single process that will solve planners' diversity

'problem.' Nor is it a story about the singular importance of nonprofit organizations.

Instead, it is a constellation of ideas drawn from the people, process, and place where

difference was viewed, not as a problem to solve but an integral part of the present and future.

Chapter 2: Planning, Difference, and the Nonprofit Organization

2.1 A cacophony of voices

As global forces engender increasingly socially diverse urban and regional spaces (Appadurai 1996), United States local governments must respond to rapid demographic change. This occurs in places with long histories of unresolved discord with existing racial and ethnic groups. Foregrounding these issues, present day city planning perpetuates the marginalization of non-White communities through societal attitudes about race, power, and privilege.

Government planners' commitment to democracy, public participation, and justice demand that local governments act with these competing voices and perspectives, while attempting to address the profession's own role propagating social inequality. City planning practitioners rely on a variety of techniques to accomplish this. Most commonly public participation, often through some kind of planning process or public hearing, takes place. However, the efficacy of this participation, especially in restructuring existing planning practices, is described as unclear at best (Harwood & Zapata 2006).

To research planning practices in such highly diverse communities, multiple areas of theoretical knowledge provide important insights. Just as no single process will plan every community, no single disciplinary area will support interpretative research into the socially constructed world of difference and its intersection with participatory democracy. Thus, this research makes use of multiple theoretical conversations to better understand the on the ground realities of planning practice. This chapter examines the theoretical underpinnings of these processes and related discussions about cultural difference and social justice. It also considers the role of the nonprofit sector in shaping

the deliberative practices in which planning is grounded.

2.2 Defining planning practice

The practice of planning involves a myriad of professionals and community members. Some of these professionals are planners with degrees from city, urban, and regional planning programs that work for municipalities, county offices, and mass transit districts. Other planners work for consultants whose practice largely consists of contracts from these government planning offices. Additional professionals involved with planning practice include lawyers, engineers, property developers, advocacy groups, and community development organizations.

Implicit in this description of planning practice is that planning is a government activity. Thus the practice of planning revolves around the activities of local, metropolitan, and regional government. Planning activities, including the created plans, in this description occur under the auspices of government. Yet the purpose of the planning profession does not set forth such a limited interpretation of the practice of planning.

Planning itself is a human behavior. Businesses make plans for the future; families make plans for the future. If managing future change is seen as the crux of planning practice (Friedman 1987), then it would seem to follow that recognizing the actions and contributions of the different kinds of planning taking place throughout a community would be beneficial (Healey 1997; Hopkins 2001). Limiting discussions and examinations of planning practice to what occurs solely in relation to government activities limits the field's ability to effectively plan and understand itself theoretically.

Further plans, in the early development of today's planning profession, were originally developed by non-government coalitions or organizations committed to grand visions of ordering urban and regional space and the people living within the place. Adopted and implemented, to varying degrees by local governments, plans such as the Plan of Chicago 1909 and A Regional Plan of New York and its Environs 1929 demonstrated the complex relationships necessary to create and gain public approval of a plan (Yaro 2000).

This dissertation embraces a broader description of planning practice than is common in planning scholarly conversations today, one that acknowledges the multiple players and organizations planning for their future and incorporates the multiple voices in a community. This view of planning builds on work by Hopkins and Zapata where multi-vocal planning is treated as reality (Hopkins 2001; Hopkins & Zapata 2007). It also dovetails on Healey's (2007) institutional description of planning activities and Castells' (1996) work on network societies. It differs from Healey and Castells in that it moves the focus of planning via government intervention to the planning conducted by multiple groups and organizations. Such a move not only describes the realities of planning for communities' futures, it addresses the present-day political-economic realities in which future orientated actors operate in spatial areas (Healey 1997; Hendriks 2006a; Mansbridge 1999).

2.3 Collaborative and Communicative Planning

Such planning might be described as collaborative planning. Collaborative planning serves as an alternative to previous planning process models such as rational

planning, advocacy, and physical master planning (Fainstein 2000). Collaborative

planning emphasizes the importance of bringing community members together to

deliberate about planning decisions and to create institutional structures to broaden

community participation and input in shaping their futures (Healey 1997). A corollary

conversation has taken place in political theory where deliberative democracy is posited

as an alternative to aggregate voting where community members deliberate, usually

around specific policy decisions, about what collective action should be taken (Dryzek

2000; Gutmann & Thompson 1996; Mansbridge 1999).

Both collaborative planning and deliberative democracy incorporate discussions

about 'micro' deliberative spaces such as consensus building, policy forums, citizen

juries, visioning exercises, etc. as well as the 'macro' deliberative sphere (Hendriks

2006b). Macro deliberative practices are "…where people engage in open public

discourse via associations, social movements, networks and the media" (Hendriks 2006b:

493). Hendriks describes the macro deliberative sphere and its intersection with civil

society,

> Macro theories of deliberative democracy emphasize the informal and
> unstructured nature of public discussion. Under this conception civil
> society plays a role in informal political activities both outside and
> against the state (2006b: 487).

The underlying current between collaborative planning and deliberative

democracy is the belief that inclusive, uncoerced deliberations between community

members will result in better, more just public policy (Dryzek 2000; Gutmann &

Thompson 2004; Warren 2007). In addition to these outcomes, deliberative forums are

also believed to create more engaged community members (Gutmann & Thompson

2004; Rosenberg 2007), generate social learning (especially cross-cultural learning)

(Dryzek 2000; Walsh 2007), and develop trust between members that carries over to other forums (Booher & Innes 2002).

There are various divisions within collaborative planning that complicate its meaning, in both planning theory and as a planning methodology. In discussions about planning theory, Fainstein (2000) emphasizes the division between those scholars drawing from American neopragmatism as reflected in the work of Rorty and Dewey versus those drawing from Habermas' communicative rationality and action.[1] Brand and Gaffikin (2007) point to discussions that treat collaborative planning as an overarching theory of planning practices while others describe collaborative planning one of many communicative planning theories.[2] Brand and Gaffikin (2007) also point to Healey's reliance on both critical theorist Jurgen Habermas and post-structuralist Anthony Giddens. They argue that who is the point of philosophic departure, Habermas or Giddens, is not that important. They see much of these social theories as overlapping (Brand & Gaffikin 2007). However, Healey (2003) views much of the misinterpretation of her conception of collaborative planning as stemming from not recognizing the importance of Giddens in her work over that of Habermas.

The position of Habermas' communicative action has important implications. The scholars writing from the communicative perspective draw from Habermas and his communicative action. Scholars following the Habermasian tradition focus more on micro deliberative forums, such as visioning and consensus building workshops.

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[1] Habermas' 'ideal speech situation' will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.
[2] I use the term 'theory' loosely here. Whether collaborative planning can and should be described as a theory has been a matter of much debate (Brand & Gaffikin 2007; Healey 2003; Huxley & Yiftachel 2000). What the 'correct' description of collaborative planning theory is not germane to this discussion. As Brand and Gaffikin (2007) summarize "it should be acknowledged that it is debatable whether it is a theory in the strict Popperian sense of explanation that permits falsifiable prediction or more like a normative framework designed to describe and guide practice" (p. 283).

Those in planning drawing more heavily from Healey's, and thus Gidden's work, are instead thinking about larger deliberative systems, as described by deliberative democrats Mansbridge (1999) and Hendriks (2006b). Part of the confusion between these two conversations is that collaborative planning scholars are *also* concerned about specific micro forums, especially when considering issues of power and their relationship to the macro deliberative space. Micro deliberative forums occur within the larger deliberative system, or discursive spaces. However, I see it as a misreading of the collaborative aspects of this planning literature to treat the communicative arguments as subsumed within collaborative planning. Their ideas interact and overlap, but not all of their claims are the same. In this framework, one might take Innes as emblematic of *communicative* planning tradition, with her emphasis on deliberative, micro forums and Healey as representative of *collaborative* planning, with her emphasis on the broader deliberative, institutional system.

The focus of this dissertation was originally on the claims of communicative planning as a planning methodology. As I have deepened my understanding of collaborative planning, I have realized that long term I am conceptually more interested in the work of collaborative scholars. Still, the initial research on VFP serves as a vehicle to explore communicative planning and its intersection with collaborative planning, especially in thinking about planning in culturally diverse communities. In the next chapters, the VFP in conjunction with the activities of the GVC helps me examine and refine the claims in both collaborative planning and communicative planning.

2.3.1 Critiques against communicative planning theory

There have been numerous critiques against communicative planning. Those most damaging come from those planning scholars concerned about power, difference, and inequality. In the corollary conversation occurring in political theory, those scholars writing against deliberative democrats have been dubbed 'difference' democrats, such as Iris Marion Young. These difference democrats are equally concerned about the implications and claims of deliberative democracy that follow critiques against communicative planning, and to a lesser extent collaborative planning.

These critiques, in planning and political theory, come from various perspectives. Fainstein (2000) emphasizes that those planning scholars drawing from this communicative tradition fail to address the structural issues that perpetuate injustice. Central to Fainstein's and other scholars' critiques against communicative planning (Sandercock 1998; Young 1999, 2001), focusing on the procedural aspects of discursive spaces does not necessarily lead to more just outcomes or help achieve a more just city.

Other criticisms point to the impossibility of putting Habermas' theoretical ideals into actual application.[3] His theories are widely viewed as weakest on the question of power (Flyvberg 2001). The influence of power is immense and the range of discussions and perspectives about it wide (see Follett 2003; Foucault 1972, 1977, 1988-90; Lukes 2005; Young 1990). While the nature of these discussions varies they generally describe

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[3] Habermas (1996) has responded to these charges arguing that his work is indeed theoretical and that he never intended for his work to be diluted into a how-to manual for creating an ideal speech situation.

the ways that people have or utilize power over another. Follett (2003) dubbed this 'power-over' to distinguish it from other kinds of power she considered productive.[4]

'Power-over' can take different forms and manifest itself through relationships. Sometimes this kind of coercive power can be explicit, such as threats of violence if someone does not vote in specific way. Much power is less overt. Lukes (2005) classified power relationships into three dimensions highlighting the varying manifestations of power ranging from agenda setting to the role of language, or discourses. Power thus ranges from more obvious acts of governing institutions to the less conscious enactment in daily practices and language. Foucault is probably the best known scholar when discussing the ephemeral characteristics of power. His and Habermas' views on power have been put together as they relate to understanding and governing society (see Flyvberg, 2001; Kelly, 1994). Regardless of where one falls along this debate, whether one is thinking about political power, material power, or discursive power, the ability to simply design out power seems at best naïve, and the most debilitating to the creation of Habermas' ideal situation.

An example of one of these power critiques, and most germane to this case study, focuses on the ability for people for different cultural backgrounds to deliberate together each found acceptable (Young 1999, 2001). Many interpretations of Habermas' ideal of what such a discourse would look like focus its description as 'rational.' Critics have argued that an emphasis on rational discourse reconstitutes inequalities as many marginalized communities are accustomed to different communicative modes (Healey 1997; Young, 1999). Thus claims for rational arguments are seen as separated from

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[4] Follett's (2003) concept of 'power-with' and its relation to collaborative planning and the deliberative sphere will be discussed in the following chapter.

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historical context and rooted in the belief in the ability for people to overcome power relationships to reach decisions for the common good (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). These ideals reinforce Anglo American, Protestant, and White conceptions of progress, community and diversity (Forsyth, 1995; Harwood, 2005; Healey, 1997; Lipsitz, 1999; Roediger, 1999). This results in planning processes where differences in opinion are downplayed for the sake of agreement in seemingly objective activities where dominant groups are enabled to achieve their own agendas (Helling, 1998a; Hopkins, 2001; Hopkins & Zapata, 2007). These processes do not support planners working in socially diverse places where different values, lived experiences, and expectations of government create complex webs of community and unpredictable, uncertain futures (Healey, 1993; Sandercock, 1998, 2000). Young (2000) argues for, and Dryzek (2000) accepts, the inclusion of storytelling, rhetoric, and greeting as communicative forms within a deliberative process. This moves communication in deliberative forums beyond the argumentatively rational only.

Highly structured, rational debate is not only implausible; it is not as productive as disagreement and contestation argue these scholars. Some collaborative planning processes, and related consensus-building and visioning processes, can be useful tools to bring people from different backgrounds together (Healey 1997; Helling 1998a, 1998b; Innes 1996, 2004). Unfortunately these efforts too often simply assemble perceived representatives of social groups without careful consideration of the form and function of their differences. These processes focus on reaching agreement on a specific topic or issue, even the participants agree only on something superficially (Young 2000).[5] Conflict or points of disagreement are downplayed (Connolly 1991; Honig 1993; Mouffe

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[5] The role and meaning of consensus will be addressed in Chapter 6.

2000). And, for difference democrats, contestations between group identities are how democratic decisions are reached.[6] Difference and power planning scholars make similar arguments (Sandercock 1998; Flyberg 1998). The fights between groups are the very stuff that makes democracy strong for these scholars. Often when working with groups separated by deep ideological or value based ideals, there is no issue to build consensus around, no vision to construct, and no agreement to reach about the subject matter at hand.

But as the debates about power and cultural difference reveal, a more pressing question rises to the surface about communicative and deliberative forums. What are their explicit and concrete purposes? Is the purpose to reach agreement to take action through deliberation and democratic means (however those are contextually defined)? But, if the purpose of bringing community members together to discuss broader issues takes on a different intent – be it social learning, spurring civic engagement, or developing broader policy frameworks, perhaps there is a different output of deliberations.

An alternative outcome of deliberative forums emerges from the planning literature. Here the products of deliberation, or in the language of Healey (1997) collaborative planning processes, "should cultivate a 'framing' relation rather than a linear connection between policy principles and the flow of action" (p. 289). She offers a useful distinction between policy making and planning, where planning is a kind of

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[6] This type of pluralism should not be wholly conflated with the great identity politics debates that emerged in the 1980's and 1990's. Largely along the lines of race, ethnic and national origin identities, these political debates drew overlapped with the radical pluralists that different groups constituted the whole of the United States. Identity politics, however, largely centered around the idea that individuals had the right to maintain a cultural group identity based on race, ethnicity and/or national origin. Pluralism casts a much broader net, arguing that different ideas and perspectives exist along a variety of spectrums and those ideas should be accepted. Because identity politics featured heavily around groups the nation has been historically uncomfortable with addressing (i.e. Blacks, immigrants), the level of contention surrounding ethnic and racial group rights reached a fevered pitch by the mid-1990s. These debates drew into question the claim the U.S. had in projecting an identity that was multicultural, plural or both.

policy making but looks specifically towards the future and tries to connect different

kinds of policy activities (Healey, 1997).

Thus, plans become more like frame-setting guidelines that link together the

complexities of a neighbourhood, city or region. Hopkins (2001) echoes a similar

sentiment describing the necessity for plans when future decisions that have yet to be

made must play out before taking action. For Hopkins (2001), plans should be created if a

cluster of decisions are inherently interdependent, indivisible, irreversible, and cannot be

foreseen ('imperfect foresight'). At the core for these planning scholars plans become a

way to address the complexity and uncertainty when planning for the future in a specific

geographic location (Hopkins & Zapata, 2007). Dryzek (2007) also points out that

deliberations do "not have to be tied closely to policy decisions" (p.243). Important

possibilities, especially when considering cultural difference and power, emerge when the

focus of deliberations shift from highly specified policy decisions to multiple, future

based plans.

2.3.1.1 Scenario planning as a micro deliberative space

Scenario planning, as practiced in the corporate sector, might support this

planning in multiplicity. Unlike visioning or consensus building, scenario planning

embraces differences in values and opinions by emphasizing the multiple way futures can

unfold over time. Scenario planning emerged as a wartime defense technique, but did not

gain currency until Shell Oil Company utilized it to successfully weather the 1970's oil

crisis (van der Heijden, 1996; Xiang & Clarke, 2003). Since then, the process has become

more widely practiced in the private sector, seeing the development of an international

consulting firm, the Global Business Network (GBN), who specializes in helping firms, industries, and now not-for-profits utilize the technique.[7]

Instead of focusing on how to reach a specific goal, such as in strategic planning, scenario planning in this tradition asks the more fundamental question, "what if…?" The purpose is not to identify a goal and chart a path to reach that goal per se. Rather, the point is to consider the issues and forces shaping your organization or region and identify how you can respond to things that happen in the future. Acceptance of the uncertainty of the future and the multiple directions in which the future might head are pivotal components to the process. Scenario planning is most appropriate when thinking about the long-range future (15-20 years out), when there is a great deal of uncertainty about issues, problems and solutions, and when there is a high number of disagreeing community members (Avin & Dembner 2001; Hopkins & Zapata 2007; van der Heijden 1996).

Scenarios are developed by selected members of the community. Scenario planning asks community stakeholders and planners to work collaboratively to identify plausible ways the future of their community might unfold (Avin & Dembner 2001; Ogilvy 2002; van der Heijden 1996). Through storytelling and empathetic listening, scenario planners believe that they and the participants develop shared meanings about key community issues and about one another (Kahane 1998, 2004). Shared meanings differ from decisions about action reached in consensus building. Here, the first step is to help people develop a common language about their community, regardless of their level

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[7] Scenario planning, in a different form, has become popular in land-use and transportation planning (Avin & Dembner, 2001; Xiang & Clarke, 2003). However, its application in these contexts has deviated from its original practice in the corporate community in several distinct ways (Hopkins & Zapata 2007; Smith 2007).

of agreement.

Futures are generated from the local knowledge of participants who are selected to represent a wide variety of perspectives in the community (Scearce & Fulton, 2004; Smith 2007). The final output is a series of narrative based stories that describe four plausible futures of a region roughly twenty years later. This stands in contrast to planning applications of scenario planning where land-use map scenarios are created and treated as alternatives where one is 'selected' as 'preferred' (Avin & Dembner 2001; Hopkins & Zapata 2007). Here futures are created by the expertise of participants and then displayed through narratives (Ogilvy 2002; Ogilvy & Smith, 2004a; van der Heijden 1996; Wack 1985).

As a tool for working in diverse communities scenario planning differs from other planning processes in three main ways. First, the robustness of the scenarios depends on the diversity of the group deliberating about the future (Ogilvy 2002; van der Heijden 1996). Only a range of scenarios that seeks out the most marginalized of groups meets the dual goals of effectively charting plausible future change and representing the multiple voices of a community (Scearce & Fulton 2004). Second, scenario planning also leaves all scenarios in play. Unlike visioning or consensus building, scenario planning does not pretend to select a future. This allows for multiple futures to be left in consideration. Third, scenario planning, along with the resulting scenarios provide space for people to discuss different perspectives about the future and experiences in the past and present. Through the deliberations about the future, community members learn from one another, humanizing conflicts and understanding different experiences (Kahane 1998, 2004; Ogilvy 2002). This space becomes an opportunity for cross-cultural sharing. Scenario

stories become heuristics for community leaders to share with their constituents (Kahane 2004). Scenarios thus become continuing tools for education about the different perspective's people offer. They can also influence the deliberative sphere as their stories as used by others or used as guides by leaders.

2.4 Working through cultural difference

Scenario planning is described as being ideal in highly diverse communities (Avin & Dembner 2001). Because it does not force agreement on a preferred future the scenarios represent multiple perspectives on the future and acknowledge the role that previously unheard voices can play in shaping the future. The process should, at a minimum, allow community members who participate in the development of scenarios to hear different and new perspectives. At its best, scenario planning might offer planners a new process to plan across cultural differences. But, what does it mean to plan across differences?

2.4.1. Cultural difference

I use the phrase 'cultural difference' to reference specific scholarly discussions surrounding 'cultural' and 'difference.' Here, cultural refers to the abstracted systems of meaning in which individuals exist. These are systems constructed through interactions with other people and exist at multiple scales and in multiple spaces. People function collectively to form specific cultural groups. These groups are often identified as various racial, ethnic, religious, national, geographic and linguistic groups. Most individuals also participate in multiple cultural groups, making the task to "co-manage spaces" even more

complex (Healey 1997). Such a description of cultural draws on such planning theorists as Peattie (1987), Healey (1997), and Grant (1994), all anthropologists turned planners. Following anthropologist Appardurai (1996), I rely on the word cultural as opposed to 'culture' to emphasize the dynamic, complex systems in which people live. Culture, instead implies a closed, static system.

The word 'difference' refers, generally to those identifiable distinctions between people. Closely linked to difference is the concept of diversity. In planning practice this is the term reflects an attitude similar to that of 'culture,' a belief that people can be placed into discrete categories along a range of variables. Though diversity is traditionally used in practice, the term difference captures the more complicated, nuanced reality of cultural differences. Difference can be thought of as reflecting a movement towards recognizing the socially constructed world in which planners work, while diversity emphasizes the more static representation of cultural groups and treats diversity as a problem to fix. I will use these words together throughout this document. They are not synonyms, but do overlap in their recognition of the multiple cultural groups living together.

My interest in cultural differences is two-fold. The first part focuses on how different cultural groups think about and enact concepts essential to planning practice (i.e. government, participation, democracy). Given that people conceive of these concepts in different ways, what implications are there for U.S. planning practice in light of increased representation of cultural groups in places and a national rhetoric of honoring diversity? I am specifically interested in how cultural frameworks shape planning processes and corresponding theories in creating planning processes. The purpose of communicative planning theory is to support the creation of planning processes where participating

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community members do so equally (Healey 1997; Innes 1995). I consider how this fundamental principle is challenged when some community members do not start from the same starting points conceptually.

Cultural differences can emerge in planning processes and practices that hamper the ability to communicate and make decisions collectively or collaboratively (Harwood 2005; Healey 1997). In the context of the communicative planning and deliberative democracy literature, much of this conversation focuses on the differences between the global north and south, questioning if the normative claims and goals of the deliberative democratic agenda are shared or can be achieved (He & Leib 2006). Similar questions can be raised in the increasingly transnational and multicultural United States. Research on immigrant and historically oppressed ethnic and racial groups in the U.S. demonstrate that various cultural groups have differing conceptions and ideas about democracy, government, participation, and policy (Harwood 2005; Qadeer 1997; Sanchez 1993). This raises important challenges for creating deliberative forums that truly encourage planning across difference.

As Young (1990), Sandercock (1998), Appadurai (1996), and others argue focusing on difference for its own sake is problematic.[8] Like these scholars, I am concerned about 'differences that matter.' Differences that matter, and warrant attention, from their perspective are those differences along the lines which people have been exploited, marginalized, or oppressed. Thus, a focus on cultural difference would be incomplete without consideration of the historic marginalization, exploitation, and oppression of people by cultural differences, and the related political and economic explanations for their positions. In planning, this means considering people who have

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[8] This reaction responds, in part, to postmodern discourse on difference.

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been consciously removed from planning decision-making activities because of what makes them different – be it race, class, gender, national origin, citizenship status, etc. In the United States, the most pressing differences continue to be along the lines of race and ethnicity.

These two threads of difference map on to the distinctions between planning and political theorists who align themselves with difference democracy versus deliberative democracy, as discussed in the previous sections. Thus, my research thus sits at the intersection between planning scholars interested in creating more equitable planning processes (i.e., Healey (1997), Innes (1996), Forester (1999)) and those interested in developing more just planning outcomes (i.e., Sandercock (1998), Davidoff (1965), Flyvberg (1998)).

2.4.2 Responding to cultural differences

The typical city planer does not know how to engage different social groups, let alone address the often disparate issues raised by them (Healey 1992; Sandercock 1998). Despite years of participatory rhetoric and scholarship on collaborative and communicative planning, little headway appears to have been made in effectively representing or responding to the interests of marginalized groups within various planning processes (Healey 1997; Sandercock 1998; Umemoto 2001).

Complicating things further, people may inhabit multiple, different groups. Such identifiable groups are not static and new groups emerge regularly. Groups interact, impacting one another and changing their own form. This does not result, as once believed, into a melting pot. But it does reinforce the fluidity of individual and group

identities and attributes. This means that difference cannot be something that is solved, but must be lived in and continually reconsidered.

I identify two approaches in public planning to working in diverse communities. One focuses on integrating marginalized voices into common typical government planning practices, as reflected by the earlier discussion on communicative planning theory. This set of activities attempts to bring multiple perspectives into planning deliberations and has focused on increasing opportunities for participation by stakeholders and community members in planning processes (Fischer & Forester 1993; Forester 1999; Healey 1997; Innes 1996). Storytelling is probably the most well known and most accepted practice and its role has been well documented (Eckstein & Throgmorton 2003; Forester 1999; Mandelbaum 2003; Sandercock 1998).

The other approach concentrates on developing planning capacity for groups not automatically represented or visible in government planning activities (i.e., insurgent, advocacy scholars). The former places the onus on government planners to develop processes and techniques for reaching hard to reach populations (Sandercock 2000). The latter concentrates on equipping these 'outliers' to advocate for themselves. In both settings there remains an assumption that government planning practice should adjust to absorb or respond to the interests of these 'others.'

Yet there has been limited research on the development of culturally sensitive planning processes that are rooted in the perspectives of non-Whites. Some planning scholars and practitioners have been examining the way differing cultural backgrounds shape responses to land-use policy and explain differing conceptions parks (Hood 2003; Low et al. 2005) and front yards (Davis 2000). This work helps set the stage to consider

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how differing cultural backgrounds could shape planning processes that are built on public participation. This is the next step in responding to our culturally differentiated communities. It moves beyond a perspective that focused on how 'we' can make 'them' fit into our world view. Instead, such research would help to deconstruct the cultural underpinnings of how planners practice and support the creation of multicultural planning processes.

2.5 Civil society and the role of nonprofit organizations

Part of this deconstruction could be supported by examining the rich array of activities occurring in civil society that shape our democratic practices. A better incorporation of the activities in civil society into planning conversations would also enrich our understanding of how planning happens, as not all planning happens in or around government intervention. It might also offer new perspectives, techniques and attitudes about how to work in culturally diverse communities. The arena of civil society includes nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and for-profit organizations as well as non-classified or loosely organized groups of people as well as individuals.

2.5.1 Parsing out civil society

Civil society, also referred to as the independent, volunteer or nonprofit sector, is a collection of organizations, associations and social movements that shapes the way democracy happens in the U.S. (Warren 2004; Frumkin & Imber 2004; Boris & Steuerle, 2006). The emergence of the profession of planning owes itself largely to the civil organizations such as the Regional Plan Association of New York and the Commerce

Club of Chicago (Yaro 2000). Civil society is "best conceptualised as an 'arena' where distinct 'kinds of activities' occur across a range of private, political and civic associations and networks " (Hendriks 2006b: 489 citing from Young 2000: 160). Hendriks, again drawing from Young, goes on to emphasize the importance of these interactions to create relationships within communities and expand the opportunity for participation (Hendriks 2006b; Young 2000). From Hendriks's (2006b) perspective, this means that civil society includes the private sector into theoretical consideration but maintains an exclusion of state based institutions and private organizations committed solely to market activity. Despite the influential role and burgeoning of civil society, the influence and effect of these actors and organizations, however, is often under theorized, especially in the context of deliberative democracy (2006b).

The interest in theoretically accounting for civil society in deliberative democracy furthers arguments to link the micro and macro deliberative spaces. Mansbridge (1999) emphasizes the importance in accounting for the multiple avenues in which deliberation occurs. Her 'deliberative system' accounts for the range of activities, from everyday talk between community members to government decision making. This perspective seems like a more realistic, and persuasive, description of what is taking place in communities (Fung & Wright 2003). A deliberative system builds on Habermas' two track model for institutionalizing deliberative democracy, where government decision making bodies would be supported or influenced by non-governmental deliberation (Elstub 2008; Habermas 1996; Hendriks 2006b).[9]

Hendriks (2006b) wants to push these concepts further with what she describes as an "integrated deliberative system" (p. 499). By this she means seeing the deliberative

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[9] See Hendriks (2006b) for a detailed summation of these arguments and their interrelationship.

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system "as an activity occurring in overlapping discursive spheres – some structured, some loose, some mixed – each attracting different actors from civil society" (Hendriks 2006b: 503). These arguments, to some extent, overlap with Healey's (1997) work on institutionalism. Healey's argument for an institutionalist and communicative approach to planning emphasizes the importance of accounting for the multiple actors in places and an array of spaces where decisions are made and opinions are formed. They also interact with Forester's (1999) work on the importance dialogue and deliberation play in the everyday practice of planners. I am especially interested in Hendriks' (2006b) question about "how can structured deliberative arenas work together with some of the more unconstrained, informal modes of deliberation operating in civil society" in the context of a broader, integrated conception of deliberative democracy and collaborative planning (p. 502-503).

This broader conception of civil society and the attempts to incorporate its importance in deliberative democracy and collaborative planning, certainly acknowledges the complexity of activities occurring, and the importance of the range of kinds of actors contributing to it. It, however, risks overlooking the unique roles and opportunities NPOs may posses in shaping democracy. In this dissertation, I build on these discussions to account for and include civil society in planning and policy discussions. I also examine the attributes of NPOs as they relate to creating planning processes and shaping public opinion to explain the opportunities and challenges for NPOs in influencing political decision making. From this point forward, I use the terms civil society and NPOs interchangeably.

Max Lerner (1983), pointing to the origins of the nation, described the U.S. as a "nation of joiners," referring to the early civic society groups that would become today's NPOs. In the mid 1800's, French scholar Alexi de Tocqueville (1840, 1969), now famously wrote about the American commitment to helping one and another and "forever forming associations" (p. 513). The underlying philosophy of a strong civil, civic or volunteer sector is reflected by one label often applied to it, the 'independent' sector. Here people, largely through formal or informal organizations, have the opportunity to respond to issues they identified as important or warranting attention without the interference of the government and removed from the influence of the market.

Thus, the independent sector was originally differentiated from government and market activities by its intention, charitable activities, and its relation to profits - none are distributed to shareholders or individuals. Based on the various theoretical explanations about how and why the NPO sector exists, Frumkin (2005) distinguishes between demand and supply side explanations as "whether it [the NPO sector] can best be understood as a response to unmet demands or whether it is taken to be an important supply function that creates its own demand" (p. 20). Distinguishing between supply side versus unmet demand depends in part on the activities conducted by the organization.

A special legal status, and tax category, was created for charitable and social welfare organizations for the purposes of federal exemption known as 501c.[10] Today these organizations conduct a wide variety of activities. From social service provisions to watchdog groups to religious organizations to Washington DC think tanks, nonprofit organizations create spaces for U.S. community members to gather, serve and act with and for one another.

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[10] 501c will be elaborated on in detail later in the chapter.

2.5.2 NPOs and democracy

NPOs, as part of civil society, are considered important to the functioning of democracy. Putnam (1993) drew attention to the importance of participation in civil society to the democratic life in Italy. NPOs are argued to help create a better democracy (Warren 2004; Frumkin & Imber 2004). NPOs are also seen as vital to filling the void left by government and the market (Frumkin 2005).The underlying thinking that NPOs are positioned to further democratic ideals follows from their organizational structure and societal position. The role of NPOs in creating a better society reflects the belief that this independent, or third, sector can address issues, especially social and environmental issues, where government and the market fail (Frumkin & Imber 2004). Because they are not driven by profit maximization, NPOs can address specific issues, causes, social movements, etc. that they identify as important. NPOs are mission driven making their primary objective is to serve their own mission. Often this mission is created by a person or group of people with a shared concern about a specific issue or vision for their community. Thus, NPOs are often formed around shared values. People are able to participate in or join on their own accord, without coercion (Frumkin 2005).

Interest in NPOs has risen in the last thirty years as the number of NPOs has grown dramatically. This growth has been attributed to a number of reasons including from the roll back of state services and the availability of increased government funds to NPOs, raising the importance and kind of role that NPOs play (Takahashi & Smunty 2001; Frumkin & Imber 2004; Boris & Steuerle 2006). With citizens less able to turn to the government for social support and non-citizens barred from almost any social welfare

programs, NPOs social service agencies have become essential to the daily lives of many

U.S. residents. The kinds of roles nonprofits have taken on have also expanded. Beyond

providing direct social services, NPOs operating as think tanks, advocacy, and religious

groups have taken on a more prominent role in shaping communities (Boris & Steuerle,

2006; Frumkin, 2005; Reid, 2000).

A strong nonprofit sector is also believed to support the civic value of diversity

and pluralism (Frumkin 2005; Hendriks 2006b; Fung 2006). From their ability to provide

voice to the voiceless to the multitude of issues and actors their heterogeneity reflects, the

NPO sector can be described as a place where a community's cacophony of voices can

mingle. Warren (2004) builds on this, identifying three key functions for NPOs to support

a healthy democracy:

> 1) "*Developing the democratic capacities of citizens*"; 2)
> "…serve…*public sphere* functions by developing and communicating
> information to the public, providing groups in society with a public voice,
> and, more generally, providing representations of difference and
> commonality in ways that underwrite and focus public deliberation"; 3)
> "serve *institutional* functions, by providing representation and voice
> within the institutions of government, means of resistance when formal
> representation breaks down, alternative venues of governance...and even
> serving as alternative venues of politics by serving to resolve conflicts and
> coordinate policies across sectors and even across national borders" (p. 38,
> emphasis in the original).

The roles that Warren describes here offer a range of abstracted activities NPOs

can take. They also point to varying positions NPOs hold within the democratic,

deliberative sphere. His description brings up questions raised earlier in this chapter. At

the core, this description of the activities of NPOs in democracy asks how should they

shape democracy. While some NPOs choose to operate on the outer margins of the

political arena, others take on a more explicit advocacy position.

But, NPOs have an uncomfortable relationship with the concept of advocacy (Reid 2000; Boris & Streuele 2006). Advocacy can refer to a range of activities. Reid (2000) points to:

> sorting through definitions and use of 'advocacy' clarifies discussions about the role and behavior of nonprofits as social and political actors, nonprofit impact on governance and citizen participation, and the scope and rationale of regulation for nonprofit political activities (p.1)

Pressing questions such as what is considered advocacy? For whom does an organization advocate? And *to* whom? What are the most effective ways to advocate for a set of issues? These are questions that have been raised since the 1960's (see i.e., Davidoff 1965 and Piven & Cloward 1978).

Historically, part of this tension comes from early conceptions of NPOs as charities and as independent from the political arena. If an NPO's role is conceived of providing services to the most needy in society, why should they necessarily be involved with public decision making? This perception of NPOs is of course simplistic. The relationship between NPOs and advocacy comes to a head in their legal tax status as a 501c, where their activities in the political arena are carefully regulated. The various 501c tax statuses will be discussed in Chapter 5 about the context in which the Great Valley Center operates.

2.6 Conclusion

In the chapters that follow I discuss the application of scenario planning by a NPO that explicitly incorporated cultural difference into its scenario narratives. I sought to understand how community members who participated in the development of the scenarios experienced the process. How was cultural difference treated in conversations?

How were power inequalities addressed? I also wanted to understand the attitude the organization and its staff had about cultural difference. Were differences something to be resolved, or suppressed? How were beliefs and attitudes about cultural difference incorporated into the institution and its programmatic activities? I took these questions, among others, to conduct field research in the Central Valley. My overall goal was to further how planners could plan across difference.

Chapter 3: Researching Difference

3.1 Locating self

I take as my point of departure that difference is something to be valued. I believe that good planning processes and plans will reflect careful consideration of the differentiated ways futures impact community members. This perspective is largely shaped growing up as a mixed-race person.[11] My immediate family reflected the ideal of the U.S. melting pot, with a Mexican American father and Anglo American mother, and the achievement of the U.S. dream, where my father became the first in his family to graduate college. While I enjoyed my comfortably middle class life, I grew up between an extended Mexican American, Spanish speaking family that had struggled with poverty and an Anglo American family that was financially well off. Interactions with extended families taught me that there were multiple ways of understanding the world as well as showing me that discrimination existed in reality. Poverty and racism were not relative, though interpretations and experiences certainly could be.

Such an upbringing also drove my interest, and willingness, to explore "what if…" questions with endless patience and imagination. I devoted many childhood hours contemplating, "What if the Aztecs and Spanish Conquistadors had forged different relationships," and "How would the world be different if the early U.S. colonists and the Native Americans they first encountered had understood one another's conceptions about

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[11] I use the term race here deliberately. Latinos are now commonly described a racialized ethnic group. My experience in San Antonio Texas, and the language I grew up around, emphasized the racial component of that label more than the ethnic side. I was viewed as and described by others as a 'mixed race person.' Though I am light skinned, especially after years living in the U.S. geographical North, many of my formative years were spent as a person who shifted between brown and white skin, literally.

land and property?"[12] Planning, as thinking about the future, allowed me to apply this

questioning to thinking about futures of difference.

3.2 Methodology

My interest in how to plan across cultural difference and the relationship(s)

between such concepts as difference, collaboration, and civil society in relation to this

question seemed best addressed within a research methodology rooted in qualitative

inquiry. My broad research question was: How can planners deliberate across

differences? I started this inquiry with questions related to the VFP and the claims made

in communicative planning about the opportunities for social learning and relationship

development. I was specifically interested in whether these things took place across

cultural differences. If such learning and relationship development had occurred, I

wanted to know how they had happened. How did the process allow for social learning

and relationship development across differences to unfold? How did the organization

think about cultural differences and how was this manifested in the project? What were

the characteristics of the VFP participants? For all three of these questions, I also queried:

What, if anything, differentiated the process, organization, and participants from research

usually presented on these topics?

My original training in social-cultural anthropology instilled in me a commitment

to Geertz's (1973) 'thick description.' I selected a case study approach to explain and

understand the VFP. Case study research encourages in-depth research into a specific

place, project, or problem (Creswell, 1994; Flyvberg, 2001, 2004; Stake, 1995; Yin,

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[12] My childhood questioning was apparently not that unique. Orson Scott Card explores questions of a similar vein in *Pastwatch: The Redemption of Christopher Columbus* (1996).

2003). I felt that case study research would help me answer my research questions while respecting the interpretive tradition of anthropology that had drawn me to social inquiry.

My case is considered instrumental as my interest in it is largely research driven (Stake 1995). It is also intrinsic in that I discovered the case and found it interesting on its own merit.[13] This case is unique or extreme in that there are no other cases like it and revelatory in that it provides the opportunity to research something previously unstudied (specifically the role of an NPO in conducting futures planning with specific attention to cultural difference).[14]

3.3 Methods and data collection

I conducted two trips to Modesto, CA to conduct research and collect data. The first took place from June 30, 2007 – August 16, 2007; the second from April 1, 2008 – May 27, 2008. In total I spent fourteen weeks working out of the GVC and living in Modesto, California. The first field trip concentrated on documenting, contextualizing, and understanding the VFP and GVC from the perspectives of GVC staff members, VFP consultants, and workshop participants. The second field trip assessed the outcomes of the project.[15] Though the first field was more specifically tied to the research questions discussed above, findings during the second field trip proved germane to these questions as well and are also included in the following chapters. As I used materials from each trip, I include details such as interview totals from both.

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[13] As discussed in Chapter 1 I found the case when conducting research for a book project on scenario planning. My interest in the process of scenario planning was largely driven by the belief that the process might be more useful when planning in diverse communities than other pervasive planning processes.
[14] Flyvberg (2001) would also describe this case as an extreme or deviant case.
[15] This fieldwork was funded by a grant from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

3.3.1 Participant observation

Given that the process at the focus of the study, and the workshops conducted as part of the process occurred a few years earlier, I relied on a number of qualitative research techniques during the trips. I relied on participant observation, interviews, and archived materials to construct my understanding and description of the project. As a participant observer I worked out of the GVC. The organization supported my research activities by providing me a computer, a telephone, and access to their staff and equipment. In return I agreed to share my research findings and participate in activities when relevant. I also provided technical support in the way of GIS expertise, demographic analysis, university course development, and scenario writing. I saw myself, in Stake's (1995) language, as a teacher, advocate, evaluator, biographer, and interpreter, depending on the situation.

Functioning as a participant observer allowed me to observe interactions between staff and better understand ongoing projects. Central to my research, I wanted to understand how much the VFP reflected the organization's ideals. Was the VFP an anomaly? Were attitudes about difference unique to the process or central to all GVC activities? Most importantly, how did conceptions of diversity and inclusiveness function in the organization and other projects?

The organization as it exists now differs in several key ways from the organization in which VFP unfolded. Staff changes, funding losses, and the retirement of the previous director and founder all meant the organization functioned differently than the GVC during the years of Valley Futures Project (2002 - 2004).[16] Despite these

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[16] The founder and first GVC president, Carol Whiteside, was still in charge of the organization during my first field trip.

changes, from discussions with staff members I believe general attitudes in the overall environment and attitude of the organization remained the same. The recent transition of the GVC from an independent non-for profit organization to an entity within the University of California, Merced in 2006 also provided for rich reflection on the distinctions between working in nonprofit versus public work environments.[17] During my first field trip fourteen people worked at the GVC. During the second field trip, a total of thirteen people (with 3 new people) worked in the GVC.

While at the GVC, I attended weekly staff meetings, collaborated on planning related projects, and attended regional planning meetings and presentations of or related to the VFP. Participating in meetings and attending presentations allowed me to develop relationships with staff and obtain outside perspectives about the organization. Staff meetings proved to be an indispensable way to learn about ongoing programs and build rapport with staff members. At these meetings, a number of conversations related to race and ethnicity and gender as well as references to the VFP occurred.

Lastly, during my second field trip, a number of GVC staff offered to host me. I accepted the offer of Carol and John Whiteside to stay at their home. Carol was no longer working at the GVC, creating space for us to interact as housemates as well as giving me considerable informal conversational opportunities with Carol to reflect about the GVC and VFP. This living arrangement also allowed me to obtain a better understanding of

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[17] Under the merger the GVC maintained its own 501c3 status and independent board. The staff became employees of the UC system and all money was merged into the UC system. This meant that the staff and all financial activities became part of a public, government enterprise.

Carol beyond her public persona, adding contextual understanding to decisions Carol

made while running the GVC.[18]

3.3.2 Interviews

In total I conducted formal interviews with 30 people. This count does not reflect

multiple interviews with the same people or the copious informal conversations I held

with GVC staff about the project or organization. Formal interviews were held with GVC

staff, VFP consultants, VFP SJV scenario workshop participants, and VFP partners.

3.3.2.1 GVC staff interviews

I conducted informal and formal interviews with several staff members. These

interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one hour, when conducted formally (9 staff

members were interviewed formally). During these conversations, I sought information

about the work of the person, their home town and issues related to diversity. As most of

the staff has lived in the Central Valley for the majority of their lives, discussions about

their hometowns helped me learn more about the places that comprised the Central

Valley.

Staff members who participated in the VFP process were asked much more in-

depth questions about the project and its outcomes. With staff members who did not

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[18] The decision on how and whether to locate a "host family" is a matter heavily discussed in work on anthropology (Gottlieb & Graham 1993). I took this decision as seriously as if I were living in a small village in a foreign land. I also encountered many of the same complexities that anthropologists report in their research. I was living with a high profile community member. In the context of the GVC I was living with the founding president emeritus. How would this impact my relationship with the new GVC president? Would people who were wary of the GVC projects be willing to be interviewed by me? Remuneration also proved complicated. John and Carol would not accept payment for my lodging and also provided a number of meals for me, especially dinners. I interpreted this as them seeing supporting my activities as a student and as an extension of their identity as community benefactors. To return their generosity I house and dog sat for two weeks.

participate in the VFP, I asked about their impression of the projects, its goals, and its outcome more generally. The purpose for this line of inquiry was to fill out as much of the project timeline as possible. I also wanted to understand the perspective of and experience of the staff members had had with the process. One integral staff member for the VFP had relocated to the east coast. I conducted a phone interview with him. A total of four VFP GVC staff members were interviewed.

3.3.2.2 Consultant and organizational partner interviews

I also conducted on-site interviews with two of the consultants from the Global Business Network (GBN) in San Francisco. In addition to their reflections, they also provided me with copies of to materials used during the project. These materials included GBN notes taken during each workshop.

I interviewed people from organizations using the VFP materials in their own activities. I spoke with ten people from four organizations that had made or were making use of the VFP materials. I also observed three of these organizations using the materials in their own settings.

I interviewed people from organizations working with the GVC on current regional planning activities, such as the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Project and the San Joaquin Valley Partnership Project. While nothing is directly quoted or referenced from these interviews, I report them here because some of their comments, especially about the

GVC informed my analysis and findings. The count of people formally interviewed included above (30) does not include these additional 5 people.[19]

3.3.2.3 VFP scenario workshop participant interviews

Working at the GVC and talking with VFP and GBN staff during the first three weeks of my field stay allowed me to develop a more nuanced understanding of the San Joaquin Valley, the GVC, and the VFP. I determined early on to focus on the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) portion of the VFP.[20] The decision to focus on the SJV portion of the project was driven by proximity (the organization is located within it), the perception from organization staff that the project had been most successful there, and the primacy of race, ethnicity and class as drivers of the deliberations.

From the information gathered from interviews and document review, I developed a set of open ended questions I wanted to explore in more detail with SJV workshop for participants. I developed questions related to social learning, relationship development, and civic engagement. I also asked questions designed to understand how participants experienced cultural difference and power. These questions were driven by claims in the collaborative planning and deliberative democracy literature about impacts of participation in these kinds of workshops (see Table 1 for a list of questions for the VFP participants).

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[19] One of the assessment activities for the second fieldtrip was to examine how the GVC was participating in present-day regional planning activities. These interviews did not touch on the VFP and only examined the GVC in relation to regional governance projects.

[20] The VFP was divided into three sub-regions: the San Joaquin Valley (SJV), the Sacramento Valley Region, and the Upper, or Northern, Valley. The SJV was the largest geographic area and the location of the GVC office. Per interviews with the GVC staff, the VFP had been most active, and from their view successful, in the SJV. The SJV scenarios also focused most directly on the issue of demographic change, the driving issue of this research project.

I decided not to ask people directly about their racial and ethnic background. I wanted to see if they would invoke this on their own accord. My rationale was to see for whom racial identity was explicitly discussed and to determine retroactively if there were any patterns to this. This decision was made after reviewing the literature on critical whiteness studies that indicates that Whites tend to not see themselves as racially marked, while non-Whites will often discuss their ethnic and racial identity (Lipsitz 1999; Roediger 1999; Yancy 2005).

The questions I developed were intended to serve as discussion starters. In some cases, I did not need to cover all the questions. Research participants often provided relevant information without being prompted. I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews (Rubin & Rubin 1995) with thirteen of the original twenty-six participants in the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) portion of the project.

The way in which participants were selected to participate in the VFP is discussed and analysed is Chapters 4, 5, and 6. In short, twenty-six community leaders were asked to participate in two, two-day workshops to discuss the future of the Central Valley. I attempted to contact all twenty-six original participants. I solicited participation via email, hard letter and phone. Seven participants were either not available or not interested in participating in this study, though I did make contact. Three of these participants moved out of state, two were not locatable, and two declined to participate. In one instance a person insisted they had not participated in the workshops (they had, other participants and the GVC staff remembered him/her). In another instance I was unable to communicate directly with a participant who had relocated out of state. Via communication with his former organization's secretary he expressed that he/she had not

been that involved in the project and offered suggestions of other people with whom I

might speak. From the remaining twenty participants, I was able to conduct interviews

with 13 participants.

The 13 participants I interviewed differed demographically from the original

twenty-six participants. The workshop profile included a mix with four women and 65%

white participants. The GVC attempted to recruit more women, but were unable to do so

for many of the traditional reasons (i.e. child care, multiple positions/jobs). There was an

explicit attempt to bring a number of non-White participants into the process. My

interview pool included only one woman, slightly worse than the overall representation in

the actual workshop group. I was able to make phone contact with an additional woman,

but after a series of back and forth phone messages, she stopped returning my calls.

The participation of non-Whites in my research proved quite interesting. Here, the

overall percentage of Whites dropped to 46%. Why had this occurred? Looking closely at

the professional backgrounds of the people who had not participated in my research, most

worked in the private sector and had either moved from their jobs and/or the region. The

people I did interview, White, Latino, or Hmong, were all either Central Valley natives or

had been living in the region for well over twenty years. Part of my nonparticipation

pattern reflected migratory trends of the private sector. Interestingly many of these

private sector VFP workshop participants were approached to participate because of the

role of their *organization* in the Central Valley. The people I interviewed were largely

recruited because of *their* role in the community.

Interviews with SJV VFP participants lasted from one hour to two hours with the

average running about an hour and 30 minutes. The interviews were generally conducted

at the place of business of the participant, although a few took place at restaurants or coffee shops or participants' homes. Given the regional scope of the Valley Futures project, I covered approximately 200 square miles of area during the interview process. Extensive notes were taken during the interview process and then typed up with reflective comments following the interview. My interaction with VFP participants was limited to one in-depth interview and email communication. These participants were bought together across a large region only for the purposes of participating in the project. As a normal part of their lives, their paths rarely, if ever crossed.

Simply interviewing these 13 people provided uniquely challenging. I have conducted field work in other places, but contending with the sheer size of the region and air pollution added additional issues. I sometimes had interviews scheduled that were two to three hours apart. And my first fieldtrip, when all of the VFP scenario workshop participants were interviewed, was scheduled during the hottest time of the year, when ozone levels and air pollution are at their worst. As an asthmatic, I quickly discovered I would never be able to live in the region I was studying.

The interviews I conducted with VFP were explicitly embraced an explicitly interpretative tradition (Bernstein 1983; Hajer and Wagenar 2003; Yanow 2000). I sought to understand the experience of VFP participants, often working to push beyond the conscious story they most easily accessed about the event (Berstein 1983). While many of the GVC and GBN staff member interviews focused on 'data abstraction,' by contrast I worked to co-create meaning about the experience of people who participated in the SJV workshops. I attempted to come to an understanding with my participants about their

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experiences while also accepting that multiple views about events, issues, and values would be offered (Bernstein 1983, 2002).

I believe that the GVC hosting me gave me credibility and encouraged people to participate in my study. All of the VFP workshop members that I interviewed also spoke highly of the GVC. I also think participants wanted to talk about the process and provide feedback to the organization, something that will be expanded on in later chapters.

I interviewed all but two of the original non-White participants. I believe I was successful in obtaining interviews with this group for multiple reasons. All but one of the original non-White participants worked for either nonprofit organizations or government agencies. In addition to being from the Central Valley, they were also committed to address social justice issues. I think they saw participating in my interviews as a continuation to their public service. I also believe my Latina heritage provided me greater access to the six Latino participants. Again a sense of commitment to supporting a community (in this case the Latino community at large) was likely at play.

3.3.3 Review of archived materials

During my time in the field I obtained all available documentation about the project. This included meeting agenda notes, evaluations of dissemination activities, nomination forms for scenario workshops, and correspondence between the GVC and workshop participants. Some of these materials came from the GVC; others from the consulting firm, the GBN. I also obtained a copy of the focus group reports conducted by a PR firm in Fresno about the VFP videos.

3.4 Analysis, Interpretation and Write-up

From these materials I constructed a narrative and timeline about the VFP. In the creating the narrative of the VFP scenario development and dissemination phases, I attempted to create an 'accurate' picture of what happened. This portrait is described in Chapter 4. Not all of the perspectives related to project were the same, even within the GVC staff. For instance there are multiple stories remaining related to project rationale and intention illustrated by archive materials and from interviews with GVC staff members. I attempt to provide a coherent story about the GVC and VFP while not suppressing the multiplicity of perspectives.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present the main analytic work of this dissertation. Each builds on different theoretical arguments for reasons addressed in Chapter 2. The work presented in Chapter 5 draws most heavily from my participant observation at the GVC and GVC staff interviews. It is augmented with information from interviews with VFP workshop participants and consultants and people from outside the organization. The analysis relates closely to the theories examined – whether challenging or supporting them. Chapter 6 is based on a combination of VFP workshop participant interviews and GVC VFP staff and consultant interviews. It examines claims of communicative planning theory and offers an 'evaluation' of what the VFP tells us about this theory.

The interpretations in Chapter 7 are the most abstracted from the data. The research design of this project was originally focused on understanding cultural difference in the context of communicative planning, as a planning method. While difference was at the forefront of the research, the emphasis of the research focused on how difference was considered, enacted, and responded to in the VFP workshops. As the

project grew, I realized my participants were also telling an important story about how cultural differences shaped their experiences in the workshops, especially in relation to what they took away from the project. Readings on critical race theory had prepared me for this and helped me interpret these results. But, as I did not enter the project with this frame in the foreground, the interpretations in Chapter 7 are guided much more by commentary from the research participants, my experience as a mixed race Latina, and mapped on to some critical race and cultural studies theory.

3.4.1 Analytical framework

Interpretation is central to this research as is reflection. My early training as an anthropologist helped prepare to observe people and their interactions and begin to interpret what these interactions might mean. Working as a planner equipped me to understand the interconnections between peoples' work and their political relationships. Lastly my biracial background, specifically my Latino and White ethnic heritage, allowed me to unpack cultural meanings and values behind research participant's statements. It also helped me develop relationships quickly with the VFP research participants – a Latino participant and I bonded over a shared upbringing in San Antonio and the legacy of the pecan shelling migrant trail; a White participant was pleasantly surprised when I used "ya'll" just as his Southern mother had done. As my upbringing taught me that the world is socially constructed, I readily understood that there would not be a 'single' truth to find. Rather, there would stories to interpret and new stories to construct.

Throughout all of the analyses, the analytical frame was on cultural difference – how it was enacted, considered, understood, etc. Following Stake's (1995) advice I relied

on an interpretation of individual instances, or perspectives, as well as an aggregation of

instances to determine what was most meaningful to the project. I did this during the

while in the field by reviewing notes I had taken and writing reflective journal entries

about what I thought I saw taking place around me. In practice this meant, in the case of

the VFP participants, if all but one participant said the same thing I would still generalize

to the process participants (i.e. thinking the GVC had not followed up well after the

project). Equally interesting could be topics only one person touched, depending on their

own background (i.e. only woman) or the topics related to the literature (i.e. seeing

iterative dialogue without direct policy implications as useful).

Once I returned to Champaign I concentrated on interpreting my materials. By

reading interview and other field notes, reviewing archived project materials, and

reviewing literature on central topic areas, I looked for various interpretations, patterns,

and linkages between data (Stake 1995). I also worked back and forth between the data I

collected and germane scholarly conversations. This to and fro allowed me to reflect

carefully on the meaning of the materials I examined. My goal was to understand what

difference meant, which differences mattered, and how difference was enacted.

3.4.2 Constructing difference

I started field research with an idea of what differences would matter when

planning in the Central Valley and that these differences would manifest themselves in

the VFP. In the U.S. race has been a significant point of difference. From readings about

and visits to California, I anticipated that race would have been an important historical

division between people. With a history similar to my own home state of Texas, I

believed differences between the racialized, ethnic Latino populations and Whites would be most pronounced. I also expected there to be tensions around immigrants and immigration status (legal or undocumented) and Asian populations, especially the Hmong community. I expected educational backgrounds and class status to also shape experiences, perspectives, and points of view, but I anticipated these differences to be highly intermixed with ethnical and racial backgrounds.

Theoretically I was not only interested in differences that had a legacy in historical inequality. Cultural frameworks shape the way that people interpret and interact in the world, as discussed in Chapter 2. This often happens subconsciously and can lead to misunderstandings that can hamper deliberation and collaboration. Thus, I was interested in differences between professional practices, such as people working in the nonprofit, for profit, or government sectors. I was also committed to allowing differences that I had not considered to emerge from the research process. One example that I identified early on from interviews was between living in rural versus urban areas. Another included geographic location in the SJV (north versus south).

In this dissertation I focus on this prism of difference between Whites and Latinos. The decision to focus on difference as it emerged through ethnicity was related to protecting research participant's confidentiality. For instance, I decided not to report on experiential differences that also emerged between people from rural and urban backgrounds or different industry sectors. There were not enough of research participants from any of these groups to guarantee their confidentiality. The larger numbers of Latinos participating in the VFP allowed me to better protect confidentiality.

3.4.3 Protecting participant confidentiality

One of the most challenging aspects of writing about the research has been protecting participant's identities. The two sets of research participants most central to this research project, the VFP scenario workshop participants and the GVC staff members each presented unique challenges. In both cases I have made decisions that I believe best protect the identity and relationships of the participants while not compromising the integrity of the research.

The list of participants in the VFP scenario workshops is included on all SJV materials. I do not identify those people that I interviewed to better protect confidentiality. More complexly, the original 26 participants were selected because they were unique leaders who came from specific ethnic, professional, and geographic backgrounds. Revealing almost any information would make their identities fairly easy to identify when compared to the publicly accessible participant list. Instead I refer to the perspectives of VFP workshop participants in a number of ways. I generalize to the VFP participant group as a whole or divide them into ethnic/racial groups (White and Latino). I also use pseudonyms for all quotes or long participant stories. I selected pseudonyms that indicate either White or Latino heritage. The actual participants' names, first and last, all reflect their ethnic heritage.

In preparing this dissertation I made a strategic decision on how to represent two research participants from the VFP scenario development workshop. A Hmong community member participated in the VFP, the only non-White and non-Latino. How would I represent his views in a breakdown between racial and ethnic backgrounds? Should I rely on the generic label of non-Whites to cover the Latinos and Hmong person

together? But, was placing him in a group with Latinos denying his presence and participation or protecting his identity? He knew part of the reason he had been asked was because his ethnic background was Hmong and he worked in the Hmong community, something of which he was quite proud. After reflecting on this and reviewing his interview with the other interviewees, I decided his responses were congruent enough with those of the Latino respondents to feel comfortable including his responses with the Latinos, giving him a Spanish pseudonym.

In order to protect the identity of the woman from the VFP workshops I was able to interview, I found myself needing to make a decision similar to that involving the Hmong participant. She spoke about her struggles as a woman early in her profession, but she did report any apparent gender related differences during her participation. As I wrote the following chapters, I found keeping her identity protected was too difficult if I left her name female. I finally changed her pseudonym to a traditionally male name. I did not read this woman's responses as dramatically distinct from the men I interviewed. Her responses overlapped quite well with the White men, and she was also White.

I made these decisions primarily to protect participant confidentiality. Thus, the justification for grouping together the Hmong participant with the Latino participants and the female participant with the White men was an ethical one (Stake 1995). However, with whom to group them (i.e., Hmong with Latinos versus Whites) was driven by previously conducted research on race, ethnicity, immigration, and gender (Friedman 1995; Twine 1997; Yanow 2002).

Protecting confidentiality was also an issue within the GVC staff. With only four main VFP project team members, and only two working at the organization during my

first fieldtrip, who said what will be fairly obvious to the other VFP staff members.

Because one of these project members was the GVC president at the time, I struggled to

protect the relationships of subordinate staff members whose interpretations of the VFP

or the GVC work that contradict that of the former president's views. This carried

through with other GVC staff that provided invaluable information on the organization

and the Central Valley, especially as it related to difference.

There were four GVC staff members integrally involved with the VFP. I

interviewed all four formally, though two had moved on to other jobs. In presenting the

perspectives and experiences of the two remaining GVC staff members who worked on

the VFP I took two different approaches. For the GVC president, who led the VFP

project, I have used her actual name. As a former public official, Carol was comfortable

being named and some of the views she shared dated back to her time as mayor of

Modesto. She gave frequent public speaking engagements as GVC head. In instances

where I identify something as coming from Carol, it was after I had heard her say

something in staff meetings or at speaking engagements, even if she originally or also

said it during an interview where confidentiality was assured.

The other staff member has been given a pseudonym. While any GVC staff

member would recognize his/her identity reading this document, obscuring his/her

identity in printed documents provides better protection from her/him as a planning

practitioner. For both of these participants, I allowed them to review sections of this

dissertation and provide feedback on quotes attributed to them as well as comment on my

interpretations. Some discussion of the VFP is described as being from the perspective of

a GVC staff member or multiple GVC staff members, with no names provided. This

helped obscure the comments that the four VFP GVC staff members provided me from one another. This was done especially where perspectives conflicted. When I reference VFP GVC project staff and offer only one viewpoint, at least two staff members offered that perspective and no one said anything to discourage such an interpretation.

I followed a similar rationale when discussing the GVC beyond the VFP. In this document, I generally refer to the staff as whole when discussing the GVC to help address additional confidentiality issues. Where people have been named who did not work on the VFP, they have been given pseudonyms as well. Their presence in this document as named people adds contextual depth to the project and creates a narrative quality for the research, something case study research demands (Flyvberg 2001, 2004). People constitute organizations, making it important to determine when an organization itself can be described one way or another. In order to describe the organization as a whole behaving in a certain manner, I needed to hear multiple staff members demonstrate that behavior, see it manifested in project rationales, or organizational literature, and not hear more than one staff member express strong opinions against such an interpretation. Reflecting the multiplicity of individual identities that create an organization's identity, I chose to follow grammar rules for plural nouns when referring to the GVC, instead of single nouns.

3.5 Conclusions

Qualitative inquiry helps researchers better understand, in this instance, a particular case. Through this case we can make inferences about other cases. This research informs how planning scholars think about planning process and difference. It

also sheds new light on how planners operating outside of the government function. By examining this one instance of scenario planning by a NPO in a highly diverse ethnic community, planning practitioners can reflect on how to improve their own practices and planning scholars can rethink their claims related to collaboration, civil society, and difference.

Chapter 4: The Valley Futures Project

The Valley has become not only the richest farmland in the history of the world, but also home to well over one hundred languages…

Gerald Haslam, Central Valley Native and Author

If current growth patterns persist, the landscape of inequality in rural California will become more pronounced in the future, as labor-intensive agriculture, fueled by immigration, produces profits on one side and poverty for farmworkers on the other.

Taylor & Martin, UC Davis Faculty

One of the greatest threats to agriculture is urbanization.

Great Valley Center

4.1 Futures

Blistering Sun. Fertile soil. Economic Opportunity. Worker exploitation. A region of endless contradictions, the California Central Valley encapsulates the famed opportunity for prosperity in the United States, and the exploitation on which this prosperity is based. Contemporary Central Valley history traces back roughly 120 years when early U.S. settlers began damming off natural waterways to homestead land for beaver hunting. Unintentionally they created what some have dubbed the best and most unnatural soil in the world. As agriculture replaced beaver trapping, people came in mass to work the land. Mexicans, Chinese, Okies, and now a predominantly pan-Latino population have toiled in sun-bleached Valley fields where wealth has been held by a precious few.

Unfortunately inequality is just one of the Central Valley's challenges. With rapid population growth consuming agricultural fields and abysmal environmental, economic, and demographic indicators, the Valley's future is bleak. Who will lead the region through this maze of interconnected issues is more concerning where the soon to be majority population, Latinos, are both overrepresented in negative community indicators

and underrepresented in leadership positions. This chapter chronicles the efforts of one organization, the Great Valley Center, to address the challenges of the Central Valley through a regional planning project – the Valley Futures Project.

4.2 The Central Valley

Spanning over 42,000 square miles and home to 6.5 million people, the Central Valley is a long valley located in the center of California. It stretches more than 400 miles from tip to tip and is as wide as 75 miles across. The Central Valley is commonly divided into two smaller valleys in statewide and national reporting. The San Joaquin Valley runs from Stockton to the southern edge of the Central Valley. The Sacramento Valley, includes the state's capital Sacramento and stretches north to Redding.

Organizations including the Public Policy Institute of California, the Great Valley Center and some community members, divide the Valley into thirds, wishing to emphasize the distinction between the Sacramento Metropolitan Area and the northern Central Valley Counties not in metropolitan region. Here the Sacramento Valley is split into the Sacramento Valley Metro Region and the North(ern) or Upper Northern Sac Valley. With the increased interest in regional planning, and specifically the writing of a regional plan for the Sac Valley eight county metropolitan region, a three region subdivision will likely become the standard. See Figures 1 for maps of the Central Valley including the three subregions and major cities.

The Central Valley has historically been an agricultural and ranching community, helping California earn its reputation as the breadbasket of the nation. Historically there have been few urban areas. Originally settled by a combination of Spanish, later

Mexican, and European-Americans, Central Valley residents learned early that, when nurtured properly the land could produce a wide range of crops. Today some 220 crops are grown in the Central Valley. Dairies also constitute an important part of the Valley's agricultural economy. In 2003, twenty percent of all Central Valley jobs were related to agriculture (See Figure 2). Finally, oil supports the southern most part of the SJV. While agriculture still dominates the Valley's economic activities, storing waste and hazardous materials, prisons and other economic activities most Californian communities do not want have become increasing contributors to the economy. See Figure 3 documents the economic structure of the region.

Central Valley residents, especially in the San Joaquin Valley, experience high poverty and unemployment rates. Air quality ranks as some of the worst in the country. Historic inequality, especially around race and ethnicity, test leaders working to community challenges. Rapid urbanization threatens farmlands and fragile eco systems.

There is little to romanticize about the hard life of Valley residents, historically or presently. Steinbeck's (1939) *The Grapes of Wrath* illustrates the desperation of depression era migrants from the Midwest United States who moved to the Central Valley for farm work. It also documents their poor treatment by farm owners and residents. More recently, *There Will be Blood* (Anderson 2007) documents the early brutality of oil drilling in the 1800s. What these fictional pieces demonstrate is that Valley life is hard and those not in positions of power often lose the most.

Like many agricultural communities, the present day Central Valley struggles with rural development and poverty. Glimore's *Golden Gulag* (2007) places the current global economic struggle in Central Valley, tying together the related issues of inequality,

economic development, and crime. The Valley faces a number of challenges including high unemployment, limited white collar or high skill jobs, and low-educational attainment. Coupled with continued environmental degradation and threats to ecological stability, poor air quality and access to water remain serious unresolved issues for Valley communities (See Figure 4 for air quality indicators). The critical situation SJV residents face was highlighted in a 2005 Congressional Research Services report where the SJV was described as being in as dire a situation as the Appalachia region faces (Cowan 2005).

These issues do not affect the population proportionally. Latinos carry the brunt of these community problems. Many Latinos are either farm workers or are the direct descendants of farm workers. [21] Some have become farm owners as well. Latino political activists, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, began their campaign for better treatment of migrant workers in the San Joaquin Valley. Their activities through the United Farm Workers of America resulted in a national boycott of grapes, a principle commodity in the San Joaquin Valley (Ferriss & Sandoval, 1997; Levy & Chavez, 1975; Pérez, 1996).

Despite the gains made on behalf this and other civil rights activities, Latinos, especially Latino migrant workers and their immediate descendents continue to suffer from unequal access to resources and exploitation. Some, but not all, of these migrant workers are undocumented immigrants making their way from Central America and Mexico. Whites I interviewed pointed to the national debate on these out-of-status residents in creating a more hostile and negative environment for the whole Latino population. Yet the achievement of the Latino community could not be more important.

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[21] See Roedgier (1999) for a detailed account of how whites moved from low-skilled jobs up the economic ladder while racialized minority groups stayed at the bottom.

Comprising nearly half of the population of the San Joaquin Valley, Hispanics are expected to constitute the majority of Central Valley residents by 2040 (See Figure 5).[22] Their success is integrally linked to future success of the Central Valley.

Despite its low educational attainment to high environmental degradation ratings, the Central Valley is, conversely, one of the fastest growing regions (Public Policy Institute of California 2006). The Valley's population is expected to more than double in the next fifteen years, placing increased development pressure on some of the nation's most fertile and productive agricultural land (Great Valley Center 2006). By 2040 ten million more people are expected to call the Central Valley home (Fraker 2000). See Figure 6 for population projections. Part of this growth will come from natural increases while others will move to the region for employment. Some growth will come as the result of build-out conditions and housing prices in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas (Public Policy Institute of California 2006).[23] The SJV, where 40% of Valley residents live, will house the majority of the region's growth.

Where these ten million people will live is unclear. Perhaps the more relevant questions is *how* they will live - Will they adopt more rural housing patterns or huddle together in gated subdivisions? Will their children attend local schools or be carted off to private schools with their commuting parents to the Los Angeles and Bay Areas? How they choose to integrate with existing Central Valley residents remains unclear.

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[22] The distribution of the two major ethnic groups in the Central Valley (White and Hispanic) vary geographically. The SJV is considerably more Hispanic (42%) while the Upper North Valley is considerably more White (70%).

[23] How the 2008 economic recession will shape these growth estimates is unclear. One school of thought argues that the growth projections are for 50 years and will accommodate shocks to the economic system. Others emphasize that natural growth rates are unlikely decline.

Despite being aware of the challenges facing the Valley life long and multi-generational families stay rooted in their Valley communities. They are optimistic about the future and the possibilities for their home (Public Policy Institute of California 2006). "The Central Valley is going through an amazing transformation," says PPIC survey director Mark Baldassare. "Residents are definitely feeling the stresses of growth but, at the same time, seem to believe they are part of something big, forward-moving, and promising" (Great Valley Center 2006). From the slower pace of life to tighter knit communities, many people choose to stay in the Valley. Some are ancestors of original farming and ranching settlers in the Central Valley, making the region home to multiple generations of family members.

For me traversing the SJV brought back vibrant reminders of my native south Texan landscape. With rusting cars in junkyards visible from the highway to dried summer grass, I was struck by a place similar to my childhood home of San Antonio, where the intersection between livelihood and living was not deeply divided. I saw a place that appeared to not be focused with a particular kind of tidiness or neatness one often equated with suburban living. And similar to San Antonians, the driving force to stay in the Valley is simply family.

Convincing others that there is something to value in the Central Valley, besides for cheaper housing prices when compared with the coastal areas, has been tough. Politically the Central Valley has been overshadowed by California's coastal communities. Central Valley leaders have struggled to obtain funding from state resources. This is in part because of the sheer population and economic dominance of the coastal region. It is further complicated by perceptions held by coastal Californians about

their Central Valley counterparts. Many non-Valley Californians do not understand why people continue to live in the Valley (Haslam 1993). I heard these attitudes expressed repeatedly when I told Californian colleagues and friends I would be conducting my dissertation research in California. Excited they would say "Where!" I would respond, "The San Joaquin Valley." Person after person would respond, "Why would you work there!?!"

The debates about the opening of a University of California (UC) in the San Joaquin Valley demonstrate the embedded assumptions about and resistance to interacting with the Valley. Finally opened in Merced in 2005, this is only the second UC campus opened outside of the coastal regions. Many Coastal Californians could not understand why a school was needed in what they described as a desolate agricultural region (see Argetsinger 2003; McKinley 2006). Yet some Central Valley residents believe the future can change.

4.3 The Great Valley Center

One organization helping to pave the way for change in the Central Valley is a nonprofit organization called the Great Valley Center (GVC).[24] Founded by former Modesto mayor Carol Whiteside in 1997, the GVC's mission "is to support activities and organizations that promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of California's Great Central Valley" (Great Valley Center 2007). This mission corresponded into developing a regional understanding of the Central Valley by leaders and community members, raising the profile of the Valley in state politics, and responding to the needs of the region. The work of the GVC has included a strong public

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[24] The Central Valley is also sometimes referred to as the "Great Central Valley."

relations campaign highlighting the positives of the Valley. One of the GVC bumper

stickers simply states "Value the Valley," an attempt to combat the negative perceptions

that residents themselves have of their communities while also making a visible statement

to Californians outside the Central Valley.

Originally funded with entrepreneurial funds from the David and Lucile Packard

Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation and the William, and Flora Hewlett Foundation

at its peak the GVC housed over thirty staff members. Described as part policy think

tank, part program development, the center supported activities ranging from leadership

training programs to regional indicator studies. Supporting agricultural activities and

bridging the digital divide demonstrate the GVC's commitment to reaching multiple

populations in the region. Much of the GVC activities have concentrated on bringing

actors on specific issues together and providing topic specific trainings. The GVC is

known for its annual conference where organizations, elected officials, and community

members gather to share program ideas and learn from one another's efforts and its early

programs that provided Central Valley nonprofits with additional grants to build

nonprofit institutional capacity. The other quality people see in the GVC is the creation,

interpretation, and dissemination of research and data about the Central Valley.

The GVC staff attempts to practice what they preach. Concern about the

environment and reuse of historic buildings meant that when the GVC moved from their

original basement accommodations in a traditional office building, they refurbished an

old church using recycled goods for much of the work. The GVC brand includes a

commitment to broad community representation in all programmatic activities.[25] Early

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[25] Part of the rationale for this is to encourage the development of relationships between and understanding of people from differing backgrounds. The other incentive is political pragmatism. Whiteside recognized

programs sought to include multiple ethnic groups.[26] Acknowledging the vital role

Latinos play in the region the GVC developed programmatic activities to reach and

empower Latinos. The organization believes increasing the planning capacity in and

leadership of various parts of the Latino community is essential to a socially just,

economically stable, and environmentally responsible future for the SJV, where Latinos

are most concentrated. Committed to the importance of place-based identities the GVC

includes staff members from throughout the SJV and other parts of the Valley as well.

As priorities shifted for the supporting funding organizations, the GVC was

forced to reduce its programmatic activities and staff. In 2006 the GVC merged with the

newly established UC Merced. The GVC maintains its own nonprofit status and board of

directors. All GVC staff are now employees of the UC. This transition has allowed the

staff to reflect on the differences between working in a more flexible environment and a

more bureaucratic one. According to staff, in the former, more control over projects,

shorter timelines for decision making, and fewer rules allowed for staff to work more

creatively and spontaneously. Less program funding also went to overhead support. Their

observations are akin to comparisons between working in the corporate sector versus the

government.

In 2008 founder Whiteside retired and David Hosely, who served as president and

general manager of KVIE Public Television which broadcasted across the Central Valley,

took over. As of April 18, 2008, seventeen staff members carry out the GVC's mission.

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that only by reaching all sectors of the region, would the center's message gain traction. She also knew that early by-in from various groups early on to specific projects or ideas will ensure greater success. While this is a basic political concept, Whiteside did not shy away from it in the way that many planning directors might. Where non-White representation is missing, she acknowledged it verbally and pushed to find people and questions why people are not involved.

[26] As is common in workplaces, most management staff is White.

Primary programmatic activities include a partnership with energy giant PG&E to

promote energy efficiency and clean technologies, transitioning to sustainable

agriculture, leadership training programs, and regional governance activities.

4.3.1 The GVC and Regionalism

The GVC sees demonstrating the interconnections of the region and working

together to meet common challenges as the greatest strength of the area, and the goal of

regional planning. This organizational priority has been clear from the foundation of the

organization. In their 2003 Annual Report the connection between regional land-use

planning and the Central Valley's future:

> The strategic work of the Great Valley Center represented in this annual
> report represents a belief that the people who live here, all of us, can
> shape our common future by making intentional, informed decisions with
> a long term vision. But we all have to share in the decision making and
> the difficult choices to ensure that we all share in the benefits of the
> Valley's growth and development. We can build communities that work:
> a diverse economy with good jobs, effective education, and balanced use
> of our natural and social resources.   (1)

Yet regional planning and governance would not occur on its own, especially in

the context of a politically conservative Central Valley and with community residents

across the political spectrum deeply frustrated with state government and weary of local

government. Another level of governance, this time at the regional scale would face

intense scrutiny. During one interview with me, Whiteside explained that as mayor she

gained an appreciation for the importance of training current and future leaders, of

engaging in them in thinking about their communities, and how they could contribute.

The importance of land-use planning was self-evident for her. With the rapid and

unchecked growth occurring in the Valley, she could see they were heading quickly

towards urban sprawl and had limited of time to get this under control. As Shigley (2007) noted land-use and equity planning face up-hill battles in the Valley. This meant from the GVC's organizational philosophy, strong leadership would be required to address these issues while also educating the public about the Valley's future. Training leaders on the importance of regionalism was a framing part of many GVC activities.

4.4 Valley Futures Project (VFP)

This frame influenced the Valley Futures Project (VFP). The VFP brought such leaders together to deliberate about how the future in the Central Valley might unfold. From their deliberations, a set of plausible scenarios about the future would be created and then disseminated to promote civic engagement and spur action along a broad set of issues of concern in the Central Valley. For the GVC, one of early goals of the VFP was to promote interest in regional land use planning and governance. See Table 2 for a complete list of VFP goals.

The VFP emerged from one of the GVC's flagship projects, its regional indicators report, that started in 1999. The indicators reports are an annually produced series that provide in-depth statistical analysis of how a particular issue, such as the economy, has been changing in the Central Valley. The GVC staff hoped that tracking statistics would help organizations and community members see the conditions of and changes within the region. The GVC staff felt that disseminating this information could motivate people to take an interest in changing the current trajectory of the Valley. As discussed earlier, these indicators reflect a region in crisis. Early on presentations of the indicators material fell short of some staff expectations. Audience members appeared uninterested in, what

for staff were haunting descriptions of the present state of the Central Valley. The indicators consistently reflected a region in deep economic and environmental distress facing a transition from a majority White to majority Latino population. Yet little excitement or conversation was generated by the stark portrait they painted.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the statistics, or "hard data," were not enough to motivate people to take action to respond to the dire situation the region faced. The GVC staff had to start thinking outside the box to encourage people to think about the future, and a regional one at that. Whiteside learned about an organization, the Global Business Network (GBN) that appeared to have a unique approach to thinking about the future. The approach supported one of the GVC's principle modes of operation. The GVC staff repeatedly described their role as an organization that shares information and promotes dialogue about key issues, but does not advocate one solution. The GVC staff believed that by giving people all the information necessary to make a good decision, people will make the 'right' one. From the organization's perspective, if you created processes with well researched information and brought together people to discuss the various perspectives of an issue, they would make the best decision. For the GVC, this meant finding approaches that, in the language of one staff member, were not "dogmatic" and did not "force ideas and information down people's throats."[27]

The GBN scenario planning process, with an emphasis on discussion during the development of multiple plausible futures, seemed like the ideal approach. And instead of focusing on the science of future projections, the GBN emphasized the fiction by creating fictional narratives about the future. If statistical reports were not reaching people, perhaps stories about the different ways the future could unfold would.

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[27] This organizational position will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

The GVC also knew, based on organizational experience and historical events in the Central Valley, they also needed a way to approach community members that acknowledged the multiple populations, experiences, and realities of people living in the area. Historic racial and ethnic tensions between Whites and Latinos had now been further complicated by continuous immigration from Latin America and Southeast Asia. Latinos and immigrant groups continued, and still continue, to face major gaps in accessing education and economic opportunities in the Valley. Realizing justice and equality for all residents of the Valley remains an important, and unmet, goal of many Central Valley community members. The GVC recognized that any process attempting to talk about the future, must incorporate the legacy of inequality and oppression rooted in the past.

An underlying component of the GBN scenario planning process included a heavy emphasis on diverse perspectives in the room for the early deliberations about the future. This meant brining as many different points of view together in the fewest actual bodies possible.[28] The diversity of the group from within the Central Valley would be rounded out by "outsiders" from other parts of the county and in unconventional fields, such as the arts.[29]

The GVC met with the GBN on September 11, 2001 to begin discussions about a possible scenario planning project for the Central Valley. From there, they laid out a schedule to conduct the process. To begin, the GVC conducted three scenario planning

[28] During an interview with me, Whiteside indicated that the head GBN consultant pushed her much further than she originally wanted to go in terms of diversity. Here the concern about too much diversity was not discussed in terms of race or class, but rather attitudes and professional expertise. Whiteside hoped this project would produce support for regional planning and governance and the broader the group swept, the less likely this would occur. Whiteside followed Olgivy's advice and ended up with a different product than she expected. The implications of this will be discussed further in later chapters.
[29] In the SJV component of the project this person was Joel Garreau, author of *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (1992).

processes in the three Central Valley sub-regions (the San Joaquin Valley (SJV), the

Sacramento Region, and the North Valley). The processes included two workshops. Each

workshop lasted two days. The workshops were held at area hotels or retreat centers.

During the workshops, the facilitators from the GBN along with GVC staff supported

discussions held by workshop participants. Discussions were held between the all group

members as well as in small breakout groups. See Figure 9 for a timeline of the project.

The workshop participants were invited community leaders. Consistent with a

view point that people inhabit multiple identities across multiple places (Healey 1997;

Sandercock 1998), the GVC brought together a unique group of people who reflect the

ever changing faces of a community. Reviewing the list of participants in the SJV reveals

a group of people working at a range of organizations (businesses, advocacy, farmers,

educators) as well as ethnic groups (White, Latino, and Southeast Asian). Deliberately

selected to reflect different geographic areas of the SJV, participants were also from as

the northern part of the valley to the most southern area. Various education attainment

levels were also represented.

Figure 7 displays how GVC staff were thinking about representation across the

lines of professional diversity. Note the categories (elected officials, teachers,

environmentalists) and the number of dots under each. I could not determine if the dots

indicated the relative importance of that category or the desired number of people from

that category that would be represented. Also note on the side the numbers 30-35. This

number was the maximum number of people that could participate in the workshop and

allow for fruitful conversation according to the GBN. The GVC had their work cut out

for them in achieving the breadth of occupational diversity they wanted while also

incorporating the representation across ethnic/racial groups, geographic area and gender they desired.

Deliberating, story telling, and empathetic listening sat at the center of the series of workshops as selected participants decided what issues and forces shaping their present would continue to shape their future. In the first workshop, the groups identified issues as internal or external to their contextual control. Once the major issues were identified, they were collapsed into two major, intersecting axes. This created four quadrants where specific scenarios were developed.[30] This Cartesian plane sits at the center of the GBN process, forming a scenario matrix. This matrix is used to frame the scenarios. See Figure 8 for an example

In the SJV case, the east/west axis captured external events with great consequence to the region including national economic activity and climate and weather changes. The north/south axis, often referred to as 'social cohesion,' refers to the issues of internal control for the region. These issues emphasized relationships between ethnic groups, educational attainment, and technological innovations. From these groupings, four scenarios were developed: *Toxic Gold, New Eden, Rosa's World*, and *A Tale of Two Valleys*. Each reflects its quadrant position as a relationship between the two axes (i.e. high/high, low/low, high/low, low/high). Thus, Toxic Gold describes what happens in the SJV when negative externalities occur in mass but positive internal events unfold.

Identifying and developing the scenarios took roughly a year. The scenarios then needed to be developed into compelling and contextually relevant character based narratives. The motivation to have character driven narratives reflected the GVC's concern that the stories needed to resonate at a personal level with people. Their lessons

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[30] This is the typical GBN approach for building scenarios.

in the more technical and jargon steeped indicators reports demonstrated the importance

of connecting data with lived experiences. Specific references to the local communities

and nuances about the characters were added to give the stories more authenticity. A brief

summary and explanation of each scenario proceeds the fictional, character driven

stories. See the appendix for a copy of the all the scenario texts from the SJV region. A

sample of one of the summaries follows:

> "Rosa's World" is a San Joaquin Valley of unfulfilled potential, civil unrest and all-but-forgotten dreams.
>
> The reason? Wholesale social disinvestment has brought the Valley to its knees. By this point in time, the impacts of a crumbling education system, environmental neglect, a workforce unprepared for global competition, and ethnic unrest have battered the San Joaquin Valley beyond repair.
>
> In this story, it's 2025 and we follow the two decade odyssey of a family in a deteriorating San Joaquin Valley.   Great Valley Center 2003

 A sample of the Rosa World's story follows:

> **GOODBYES**
>
> On July 13, 2025, it was hotter than hell as the scorching summer sun beat down on the solitary figure near the gravesite in the dusty cemetery outside Visalia. Rosa Perez —Dr. Rosa Perez—was weeping, partly for her mother who lay beneath the brown grass and partly for the realization that the dream that had brought her parents to California more than twenty years ago would never be realized.   Great Valley Center 2003

Once completed, the GVC turned its attention to disseminating the stories. Their

hope was that the stories would generate considerable discussion, and concern, about the

various future directions of the Valley, most of which were not positive. Internally

organization staff aspired to having their message would reach and impact so many

community members that people in the local 7-11 would be discussing *Toxic Gold* versus

Rosa's World.

To achieve this outcome, the GVC developed a multifaceted mass media campaign. Responding to multiple media access opportunities, the GVC made scenario pocket books, radio broadcasts, an interactive DVD, and web site. The booklets, radio spots, and website include all four of the scenarios from each region. The DVD includes two of the stories about the future, the two most dramatic juxtaposed over one another. The radio recordings and stories on the web were also created in Spanish, the region's second language.

To ensure the scenarios were reaching their target audiences, the SJV scenarios were presented to focus groups conducted by a public relations firm. These focus groups were split by ethnicity (White and Hispanic) and age (younger and older) to provide feedback about the movies and stories. The focus groups confirmed that the messages, in their multiple forms, were reaching multiple people in the audiences. People walked away feeling as if one story spoke to their experiences.

The GVC also developed a facilitators' training package. Recognizing their staff limitations and hoping to increase interest in the project, the GVC aimed to train people outside the GVC to lead discussions about the scenarios. A high school curriculum was developed to motivate youth interest in the project. Youth leadership programs play an important role in GVC activities as well. Area newspaper participation in and support of the project resulted in special paper inserts of the stories along with graphics developed by the newspapers in English and Spanish.[31]

Primary dissemination of the materials relied on GVC staff holding small, facilitated group meetings. After introducing the concept of the project, the discussion leader would play two of the radio formatted stories that were not included with the

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[31] Two newspaper editors participated in the scenario development workshops.

DVD. The leader would then ask for audience reactions, allow for processing of the information and then play the DVD. After the DVD, more discussions were held. At the conclusion of the meeting, packets including the scenario booklets and statistical data about the region are distributed.

Facilitated meetings and direct presentations of the scenario materials began in 2003 and continue today, though the project has formally concluded. Media hits reached approximately 3.7 million, including newspaper articles by reporters as well as letters to the editor and opinion editorials from community members. The GVC staff estimates having conducted presentations of the materials over 150 times, with audiences totaling roughly 7,000 people. Some organizations request presentations each year, having incorporated the materials into leadership and youth training programs.

4.4.1 Outcomes[32]

The VFP has had many impacts, some intended and others unexpected. See Tables 2 and 3 for a list of projects goals and a list of outcomes and their relation to the goals. Most notably, as of the spring of 2008, the GVC was still receiving requests for presentations of the scenario materials. Nearly three years after the conclusion of the project, its shelf life does not appear to have an expiration date. People still write into the local newspapers using the scenarios to argue various issues. Post discussion surveys generally revealed positive responses to the discussions and the stories, especially the films.

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[32] The findings in this section include the reflections of GVC staff and workshop participants as well as my analysis of newspaper articles, review of survey data, interviews, and organizational structure.

Unfortunately, fingerprints are not visible and there is little direct evidence that the VFP impacted many government decision makers or government decision-making processes, one of their top priorities.[33] Whiteside emphasizes her belief in the less tangible measures of impact, something common in these kinds of projects and a persisting challenge for nonprofit organizations in general. Whiteside described the GVC as having their "fingerprints" marked on various activities. Their name might not be prominently located within the project, but the ideals, values, and attitudes the organization promoted over the years are clearly present. Whiteside pointed to this in the change of attitudes about regional planning in the SJV. The SJV is presently undertaking two regional planning activities, SJV Blueprint and the SJV Partnership. Participants in the SJV workshops echoed the importance of clearly articulating futures.[34] Even if it could not be "proven," the GVC believed the project had helped support a shift in the willingness of community leaders to consider the importance of regionalism.

Another issue potentially limiting the direct influence of the VFP on planning and policy making was connected to the people who participated in the development of the scenarios. One GVC staff member commented that they would have included more actual policy decision-makers in the process if they could do it over again. That people participating in the discussions around the development of the scenarios gained the most from the process is not surprising. Much of the writing surrounding the benefits of scenario planning emphasizes the opportunity for people to rehearse various responses to

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[33] One decision maker did report using the various scenarios to think through policy decisions. Another person involved with one of the Central Valley Blueprints described the benefit of one decision maker participating in the scenario development workshop. From the perspective of the Blueprint staff member, the decision maker was previously seen to be major possible road block in pushing an innovative regional land-use and transportation plan forward. After participating in the VFP scenario workshops, this decision maker felt that his voice had been heard on the issue he was most concerned about and appreciated its representation in one of the scenarios. He then stood in support of the given Blueprint.

[34] Developing catchy, memorable titles for each story is part of the scenario building practice.

a given future (Ogilvy 2002; van der Heijden 1996). Participants in the SJV workshops echo the importance of clearly articulating futures. One commented that one of the benefits of the process was giving a name to what was going on around them. Other participants noted that events forecasted in specific scenarios are unfolding, five years later still using the names of the scenarios.

Yet, from my research, perhaps the biggest hurdles the organization faced in being able to make clear links to the disseminating the VFP and its impacts in the region related more to the selection and utilization of mass media. While the project was carefully mapped out through the development stage, beyond the dissemination campaign, the GVC did not have a clear concept of what would happen next. There was a significant disconnection between the notion of generating discussion and believing that it would lead to collective action. The GVC hoped that the redundancy of the materials (i.e. on television, radio, in newspaper) would help generate the spark needed for action.

Mass media campaigns can be time consuming and often offer limited direct measures of behavior change. Drawing from the public health and education evaluation literature on methods for testing and measuring change could help organizes better anticipate the capabilities of such media and help focus expectations (Griffiths and Knuston 1960; Randolph and Viswanath 2004). Yet, part of what makes the VFP unique reflects the organizational commitment to presenting as much information as possible. Fields like public health utilize mass media campaigns to change single and clear behaviors. The VFP materials were instead geared to make people think and reflect on the issues raised. In copious feedback forms, people participating in VFP discussions described their intellectual benefit of the materials. Thus the GVC succeed in raising the

level of discussion about the future of the Central Valley but faced challenges in moving on to the next steps of direct action or behavior change.

The GVC also did not realize the degree to which actions, whether led by local decision makers or demanded by community members, needed coordination from an organization. The GVC values its non-partisan position and its reputation as an organization that works across issues. Further organizing would also have countered the organization's goal of motivating people to act for themselves. At the same time, the organization could have considered its coordinating role with groups such as the community leaders who developed the scenarios.[35] Some critics of the GVC point to its lack of an organizing presence as a fundamental weakness of organization. How the GVC positioned itself as an NPO will be discussed in much greater detail in the following chapter.

4.5 Conclusions

For people close to the project such as GVC staff and the SJV scenario development team, the project failed to live up to many expectations. People are not discussing the scenarios in the region's 7-11s; there was no dramatic movement to action. Many people never heard about the project or the organization. Yet, the VFP has important implications for regional and collaborative planning. And, some of the GVC staff described some of their most noteworthy discussions as resulting in smaller groups of people huddled together in parking lots following conversations. For one staff member, the indication of a good presentation was marked by how many people stuck around to continue informal conversations. Thus the measure of success has shifted from

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[35] The decision not to play more of a coordinator role was related to both fiscal and prioritization issues.

easily recognizable and dramatic shifts in behavior to more local and deep indications, an

important lesson for planners.

While the VFP did not reach all its goals, other goals and objectives were

obtained through several key components:

- *Integrating discussion with media* – Using the media materials in larger discussions has become one of the main markers of success for the project. The scenarios often serve as discussion starters for various regional planning discussions. The movies create an active learning environment where participants become excited and concerned about the future of their community. This leads to questions and serious discussions about future challenges and relationships between issues.
- *Creative futures planning* – Planning for the future can be more art than science and the GVC embraced this, encouraging people to think about one future without closing the door on others. This created an environment for discussion that gave people space to reflect and discuss without making decisions or competing for their own interests. The GVC also complemented their stories with statistical analyses about the region. Though the indicator series presentations fell flat and the scenario discussions took off, during scenario presentations people never failed to ask for "data" to "prove" the veracity of the present and plausible futures.
- *Multiple media outlets* – The various media forms allowed GVC staff to respond efficiently and rapidly to various information requests. The size of the booklets allows them to be easily be carried and disseminated. The web site encourages continual use of the project. The movies made the realities of the story more obvious to participants and generated discussion. The radio messages kept the stories in the public's mind. Translating materials into English and Spanish allowed multiple publics to access the materials and demonstrated the commitment of the GVC to the Spanish speaking community.
- *Accessibility for continued usage* – The movies and web site especially have encouraged continued and repeat usage of the materials. Close to five years after they were completed, the materials are not dated. The GVC continues to update the web site and receives requests for materials across the country.
- *Representing multiple publics* – By telling stories of multiple futures, the GVC created space for the multiple lived experiences in the Valley. Pre-dissemination focus groups, divided into White and Hispanic viewers, found different stories compelling or more realistic. When asked why a person found the scenario stories useful, people most commonly responded that at least one story was their story.

The VFP accomplished a number of things, some challenging, others confirming

the conventional wisdom of planning. In its success as an education and outreach tool, the

VFP underscores the need for a new kind of planning – one that recognizes how to reach

a multi-cultural public and educate them on the issues their communities face. Shifting

discussion to action never proves easy, and the profession of planning often appears

paralyzed by trying to maintain its neutrality. The GVC tried to walk a line closer to

advocacy, but still could not stir the cry to arms it wanted.

The tension between motivating action around a clear set of ideals and

encouraging people to think, reflect and discuss seems to summarize well the challenges

the GVC faced in reaching its ambitious goals. Perhaps most saliently, the VFP as a

unique example of a collaborative planning process gives planning scholars and

practitioners important insights into the normative ideals of collaboration, deliberation,

and democracy and how they relate to power, difference, and participation. I will unpack

these concepts in relation to the VFP, the GVC, and SJV workshop participants in the rest

of this dissertation. In the next chapter, I consider further the relationship between

promoting collaboration while attempting to motivate action as a nonprofit organization.

Chapter 5: Visible Fingerprints

5.1 Fingerprints

The smell of Mexican food fills the GVC's Great Hall. I sit next to Peter, the only person I know thus far at the GVC, and in the language of anthropology, my principal informant. As one of the only remaining supporting staff members at the GVC who worked on the Valley Futures Project (VFP), Peter's willingness to carve out time for me is essential to my project. As other staff members fill the room Peter introduces me to the (mostly) friendly faces I will get to know in the coming months. This is my first week of fieldwork and it has coincided with a staff meeting and going away celebration for a team member.

Carol, GVC President, starts the meeting by asking everyone to give one word to describe why the GVC is great. I learn later this has been a recurring staff meeting exercise known as the "word of the day." It is meant to encourage creativity and reflection by the staff members. As people share their thoughts about what makes the GVC great (very few stick to the one word instruction), people project enthusiasm about the organization.

At the end of the staff meeting, after everyone shared their project updates, one staff member discusses the organization's reputation and visibility. "I just get so frustrated when other organizations don't recognize what we've done, especially on their own projects" expressed one staff member, "I mean is it asking too much to get them to acknowledge us?" Carol responded that she thinks of the impact of the organization was best described as "fingerprints." She went on to explain that people might not be able to

see the GVC's influence in a project or on a decision prominently, but if you looked

closely enough you could the GVC's presence, left lightly behind, but still present. These

"fingerprints" could be seen in activities across the Central Valley and reflected GVC

ideals and goals.

Carol used this fingerprint description of the GVC's impact throughout my first

field trip. This, along with other phrases such as describing the GVC as "nimble and

flexible" and measuring impact of projects through "moving the needle" were stock

phrases Carol used to reinforce the organization's identity, internally and externally.

These "CWisms," as one staff member affectionately referred to them, served as

touchstones for the GVC staff to recall their purpose. The phrases described how the

organization envisioned itself and staff members could often be heard using them

between themselves and in discussions with other organizations.

These phrases helped provide consistent messaging about the organization. Such

messaging was a key component in creating the GVC brand. But these phrases also

pointed to important internal complexities and seeming contradictions within the

organization's identity. I began to observe these complexities through discussions about

the Valley Futures Project (VFP). Peter described the VFP scenarios as being

unapologetic in having a point of view. And yet the organization staff members often

described the GVC as "an impartial disseminator of information." When I asked Peter to

about this he said that "the GVC believes in giving the full story. We want to present all

sides of the information and be impartial in that regard. But, we recognize we have a

point of view. We're not trying to hide that."

Understanding how various staff members at the GVC operated somewhere

between "impartial" and having a "point of view" was perplexing to me. Certainly the

staff members could see how these positions could be in contradiction with one another.

Was subverting the specificity of the point of view a political strategy? Was the

organization simply more effective as an impartial source of information? And, what did

it mean, within this organization and in the Central Valley at large, to be impartial and yet

also have a point of view? Working within the GVC, how these seemingly divergent

positions could coexist made sense at one level. But, understanding what their

embracement meant to the organization at a more nuanced level seemed vital to my

research project. In other words, what were the implications of these dual positions?

Unpacking these questions proved integral to understanding the VFP, a project

with a goal of promoting regional planning. Understanding the dual positions the GVC

occupied shed important insight into seeing how the organization could influence its

political arena, reaching its cacophony of voices, without compromising its position as a

non-partisan nonprofit organization (NPO). NPOs have historically played an important

role in shaping democratic practices. Yet their position is one of inherent contradiction.

The GVC's story, especially in relation to the VFP, reveals how NPOs take on multiple

positions that they view as internally consistent to navigate their political communities. It

also highlights how such maneuvering simultaneously strengthens their sphere of

influence while limiting their claims to effectiveness.

5.2 A Nonprofit Organization's Identity

The GVC reflects the complexity of the nonprofit sector outlined in Chapter 2. According to Frumkin (2005) NPOs can generally be described as public-serving institutions, volunteer serving institutions, or social service providers. Defying a clear classification based on its programmatic activities, the GVC is still best described as a public-serving NPO in its principal activities. Though it has volunteers, its activities are meant to further educate the public on issues related to the geographic scope set forth in its mission, the Central Valley, thus emphasizing their role as a public-serving organization.[1] Their other programmatic activities include leadership training programs and data dissemination and analysis. These activities focus on the creation of civic leaders and engagement and their larger activities of promoting regionalism. As state and federal government funds have become available for those activities, the GVC has worked to fill a specific space they see as lacking from current government activities – regional governance.

In reflecting on the VFP, one scenario workshop participant stated, "Really the point of the project was to look more regionally. The GVC was always clear about the need to not just look at the SJV but all the Central Valley." The driving idea behind the VFP was the promotion of regional governance. There has been little to no regional governance in the Central Valley, and a general resistance to the idea in the politically conservative region (Shigley 2007). A handful of highly specialized boards and commissions exist primarily concentrating on environment monitoring and these have been mandated by the state government.

But as the GVC has pushed for regional coordination, are they, in Frumkin's

(2005) language, fulfilling an unmet demand, as many NPOs, especially social service

NPOs do? Simply because there is limited regional coordination between county and

local municipal actors, does not imply that there is a demand for this. Frumkin's

discussion about supply side explanations for the existence of NPOs offers better insight

into the development of the GVC as well as its present day challenges. These

conversations emphasize the importance of social entrepreneurship, venture philanthropy,

and leadership in the creation, maintenance and identity of these NPOs.

5.2.1 Innovation & venture philanthropy

The foundation of the GVC depended on the entrepreneurial funds from

philanthropic organizations interested in promoting social entrepreneurship. Venture

philanthropy emerged in the 1990's as the business sector recognized the fiscal

opportunities of investments in small, start-up computer companies. Simultaneously, the

political arena began emphasizing the importance of returns on social investments.

Together these transitions, and the take up of discourses about investment, opened up the

door for a new kind of philanthropy (Frumkin 2004). Here, instead of funding single

programs or declining to provide fund NPO overhead, a growing problem for running

stable NPOs, philanthropic organizations interested in venture philanthropy "builds on

the venture capital model and offers longer term support and larger amounts of

unrestricted financial support" (Frumkin 2004: 104).

This kind of funding allowed the GVC to begin operation comfortably with the

knowledge it had financial security for three years. The nature of this funding, in that it

was conceived of as a business model, mattered to some of the GVC staff as some of the staff highly desired the creation of an NPO that looked, in tone and feel, more like a business. For some GVC staff members moving away from the stereotype of NPOs as being poorly managed and chaotic in structure was important to how they engaged in their daily work. Many took pride in developing products that were described by themselves and others as high quality and that did not look like materials often produced by NPOs. Some staff members believed that developing higher quality materials associated more commonly with corporations would add more credibility to their activities, a sentiment shared by venture philanthropists (Frumkin 2006).

Part of venture philanthropy puts a great deal of attention on the NPO leader (Frumkin 2006). Whiteside fits the profile of a social entrepreneur. With a strong vision for what her community could be and how she thought they could there, Whiteside mirrored Frumkin's description of social entrepreneurs as "drawn to the sector by visions and commitments, social entrepreneurs bring forward agendas that often operate independently of immediately obvious and enduring community needs" (Frumkin 2005: 21). Whiteside's belief in the role of regional governance in the Central Valley's future is emblematic of her agenda for the GVC.

Her positive reputation across the Central Valley was referred to repeatedly in interviews with community members as one of the major reasons the GVC was taken seriously to start with.[2] A VFP workshop participant, Hugo said "The GVC and Carol Whiteside have a tremendous reputation. They are people who have put us the map so to speak. They have given us notoriety." Her success in securing foundation support to start

the GVC demonstrated that she was able as a leader to convince others that there was a particular kind of work that needed to be done in the Central Valley.

Appearing like a business can have its downfalls. Tim, another VFP participant said, "I guess I just see them as a profit making group. They start more studies and get more studies from that. It's just odd to think of them as a nonprofit. I'm sure the person who runs that center is making a nice little salary." While this comment brings to mind a more conventional conception of a NPO, one that serves unmet social needs, this participant's statement reinforces the conflicting expectations of what it means to operate as an NPO.

NPOs can be seen as places of innovation (Frumkin 2005). In a rising era of privatization, many of these arguments echo the rationale for market drive organizations to address previously publicly held goods such as public utilities. Yet, the market often fails to address some of the most pressing societal challenges such as homelessness, crime and poverty. Removed from the bureaucratic demands of government opens up spaces for exploration and experimentation (Frumkin 2005). Not being held accountable to the public interest allows for flexibility in program activities and methods (Frumkin 2005). This creates opportunities for creativity in problem definition and solving (Frumkin 2005). The startup capital and the organizations position as an NPO allowed it to test out new ideas. The GVC could think of itself as a place of innovation, and behave accordingly. Not restricted by government regulations, the organization could be, as Carol frequently said, "nimble and flexible" in their program management. In reflecting on the transition to becoming part of the UC Merced, one staff member said, "We've lost, you know, our ability to be nimble and flexible. I'm a 'no' person now. I tell staff they

'can't' do stuff. I used to be a 'yes' person. It's just not the same." As will be discussed in Chapter 6, this space of innovation played an important role in the VFP scenario workshops.

5.2.2 The ideology of impartial advocacy

The GVC's participation in the political arena is perhaps the most important component in fully understanding the GVC, and in turn, the impacts of the VFP. In defining the GVC, staff members would frequently describe the organization as part think-tank. They identified themselves an organization similar to the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) or Washington DC think tanks, conducting research and disseminating data analyses about critical to the Central Valley. The vision of an organization that would then both conduct research and also conduct programmatic activities to reach particular ideals around civic engagement and leadership became an important aspect of the GVC identity to many of the GVC staff as well as its supporters.

For some community groups, there was, however, frustration at the non grassroots, non political advocacy tenor of the organization. Josué summarized the public identity of the GVC, and its associated tensions, well, saying,

> [The] GVC is seen differently depending on your perspective. Some
> groups had a negative view of the GVC. They [the GVC] are only a policy
> group and some people want them to be going out into the community
> more, you know organizing and stuff. But the GVC is consistent about
> their message. They are who they say they are. They are a think tank that
> can get a conversation started. We're working with them now, but they're
> not about grassroots and that's that. What they do, they do well.

Another participant, Paul, reinforced this challenge stating, "They've had to struggle between being an activist group and an information gathering organization. They can't be

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beating up on local politicians in their position." For the organization, though what was the drive to promote an image of impartiality?

5.2.2.1 Legal status and participation in the political arena

The GVC's status as a 501c3 organization, or NPO, could helps explain why they did not participate directly in political activities such as lobbying or campaigning. The GVC is classified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a 501c3. Legally, 'advocacy' is something regulated by the IRS. Advocacy is defined by the IRS and is divided into two categories – political activities and legislative activities (i.e. lobbying). What an NPO is permitted to do within these two arenas depends on their legal tax status as granted by the IRS. NPOs are usually either 501c3 organizations or designated as 501c4 organizations.[3] These two different organizational and legal statuses granted by the IRS denote the amount of time and resources committed by the organization to active political engagement.

Broadly stated, 501c3 organizations spend fewer resources on advocacy, thus making their activities considered more 'charitable.' The formal name for 501c3 organizations given by the IRS is "chartiable" organization. This status allows them to not pay taxes on their activities as well receive tax-deductible contributions. A 501c4, on the other hand, may devote its entire mission to advocacy. These organizations, dubbed social welfare organizations by the IRS, still qualify for tax exemption but donations no longer qualify for tax-deduction.[4]

Any 501c3 organization is prevented from participating in: 1) campaigning, endorsing or influencing the election for any specific candidate; 2) contributing financial

resources to any political campaign; 3) publishing materials or speaking about an upcoming election in a way that can be interpreted as partisan; 4) conducting lobbying activities (i.e. contacting an elected official over a piece of legislation) that are deemed substantive within the total scope of their activities or expenditures (Internal Revenue Service 2009). All 501c3 organizations are permitted to participate in some lobbying activities. The IRS provides "tests" to help organizations determine if their lobbying activities risk violating their status as a 501c3.[5]

The 501c4 organizations are instead permitted to engage in lobbying activities related to their mission as a social welfare organization. These organizations are still strictly limited as related to their activities with political campaigns. While they may engage in some political activities, these activities are subject to taxation. These organizations can still not directly or indirectly participate in campaigns for elections to public office.

Many NPOs that are classified as 501c3 organizations express concern about participating politically in their communities for fear of losing their 501c3 status (Reid 2000; 2004). This has issues has presented itself at the local level especially, where smaller NPOs do not have access to the latest information on IRS rules or lawyers to decipher the sometimes confusing, and intimidating, tax code (Center for State and Local Policy 2009). Their concern is warranted. The IRS posts a list of all 501c3 organizations that have lost their status, a list more prominently featured on their website than documents detailing prohibitions against lobbying and political activities (Internal Revenue Service 2009). NPOs can be reported by any community for concerns about overstepping the lines dedicated by the IRS as a 501c3. And, the complexity of the IRS

code is well-documented (Maskell 2008; Reid 2006; Boris & Steuerle 2006). NPOs are

understandably hesitant about how their activities might be construed. Research has

found this concern does shape their actions (Berry & Arons 2003).

That NPOs fret over-stepping their legal boundaries in the political arena reflects

the conflicting ideals about their activities. Viewed as independent from the influence of

government and as charitable in their intent, many people believe NPOs should not have

active influence over political decision making. The recent debates around the role

churches in advancing political agendas, causes, and endorsing elected officials reflect

the concerns of how far an NPO with a 501c3 status should be able to go in advancing

their mission in the political arena.

Yet, 501c3 organizations are *not* restricted from participating in public decision

making. Some national organizations, such as The National Trust for Historic

Preservation, have attempted to educate their local parents through brochures that

articulate exactly what a 501c3 *is* permitted to do in the context of political and

legislative activities (see, e.g., Center for State and Local Policy 2009). Their purpose is

to encourage NPOs to engage with their political communities on issues that matter to

them. They produce newsletters and draw on resources from organizations and

researchers trying to support nonprofit activity in the political arena.

While many staff members took pride in their nonprofit status, few ever invoked

their legal status when discussing decisions about programming activities. And when

talking with key staff members about this, they pointed to being aware of the range of

activities they could conduct within the broader political arena. The decision to not

engage directly in the political arena thus became one of political strategy.

5.2.2.2 Political strategy

The GVC clearly promoted an ideology, and they were comfortable with that. In the case of the VFP there was a clearly preferred option, something the GVC staff openly acknowledged. Of the four scenarios - *Rosa's World, Toxic Gold, A Tale of Two Valleys* and *New Eden* - the only one painting a pleasant portrait of a future SJV is New Eden (See Appendix 3 for the scenario text). The other three describe serious consequences to the economy, environment, or social structure in SJV if ongoing or possible other trends prevail.

The GVC staff described this kind of work as part of the organization's ideology that involve providing people with the most, and best, information on a possible issue. They believed that if people had the best information they would, in the language of one staff member, make the "right" decision. Often this "right" decision corresponded with what the GVC believed should happen.

What the organization shied away from was then organizing people to take political action around these "right" decisions. Part of this disconnection between openl social organizing was articulated by Josué's comments earlier about the GVC not being a grassroots organization. For the GVC, a central part of their mission was to educate people and provide leadership training. In turn, staff hoped people would be able to fight for themselves and their beliefs.

Here the organization was managing a slippery slope between disseminating information, maintaining a kind of impartiality they also believed in while drawing attention to general issues. As a think tank, they envisioned disseminating information

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that other groups and individuals could utilize to take political action. Organizing people around specific policy issues or endorsing policy positions was something else, it was advocacy. From their perspective, as a nonprofit think tank, the organization would not state positions about specific policy decisions. The GVC thus saw as "advocacy," something directly political and often partisan. Fischer (1995), citing Rothman (1968), describes this perspective of organizing as a "social action efforts is grassroots based, conflict orientated, with a focus on direct action, and geared to organizing the disadvantaged and the aggrieved to take action on their behalf" (p. 53). The GVC instead saw their work as non-adversarial and were, at least at times, willing to wait for action. The emphasis on accepting a measure of organizational impacts that were described as fingerprints exemplified that.

As discussed previously, the Central Valley is also a political conservative region, the GVC were promoting a topic – regionalism - they knew would be a tough sell. How they chose to position themselves in the political arena was crucial to the development of their reputation as a reliable organization. Thus, the decision to operate as an impartial organization with a point of view was a matter of political strategy. Yet, staying out of the political fray also served to meet the personal values of some of the GVC staff members.

During my second field trip, the importance to the staff about not functioning as social organizers was illustrated during a staff meeting. As part of my contribution to the GVC, I helped the new GVC president develop scenarios for the future of the GVC. Part of this work included discussing with the staff the possible directions for the organization. One scenario I co-created with the president foresaw an organization

actively engaged in lobbying and political activities. I used the word "advocacy" to

describe this possible future GVC. This term was met with widespread dislike. The

majority of the staff did not want to work for an "advocacy" organization. For them, there

was a messiness and duplicitous aspect to the idea of advocacy in which they did not

want to partake.

The strong reaction to the word "advocacy" surprised me. From my perspective

the GVC was clearly advocating for certain things, whether they were directly involved

in the political arena or not. Part of the staff reactions emphasized the political strategy in

staying directly out of the political arena. One staff member described their concern with

advocacy by pointing to agricultural partners that turned to the GVC because they were

not politically involved. According to this staff member, these agricultural groups were

wary of other more prominent organizations concentrating solely on agricultural issues

because they were viewed as pushing a particular political party platform or specific

policy issues (i.e., agriculture conservation or land-use easements). Through this

conversation, I began to understand that advocacy, for the staff, was tied to politics in a

highly specified way that was seen as undesirable by the staff for both strategic and

personal reasons.

Reid (2000), in her effort to clarify the use of the term "advocacy," points out

that it might be met with less resistance than "terms like civic and political engagement,

words like social action, political action, public voice, social capital, mobilizing, or

organizing" (p. 9). And, throughout the GVC literature the term "civic engagement" is

used repeatedly. One of the expressed purposes of the VFP was to promote civic

engagement. Civic engagement was, however, seen as something different that advocacy,

something that was seen as enhancing the community without comprising the political

impartiality of the organization.

In sum, the appearance of impartiality lent credibility to the organization

externally. Internally a stance of impartiality matched the belief system of many staff

members, something Frunkin (2005) points to as a driver for many people who choose to

work in the NPO sector. Impartiality, internally and externally, did not mean that that

organization was devoid of opinions or perspectives. Rather, it meant that it would not

engage directly in the political or lobbying. Any positions taken would be on broad

issues. While this might be frustrating to some community members, such as those that

Josué referenced, it gave the GVC access to a broader set of community members. But,

by not engaging publicly in the political arena, what would the tangible impacts of the

organization be? As Paul continued his earlier comments about the challenges the GVC

faced in being an activist organization and an information gathering organization, he said

"But if you gather information, you have to do something with it."

5.3 Influencing the deliberative sphere

The GVC envisioned the VFP creating a "spark" of energy about the Central

Valley. And they hoped through their dissemination campaign people would organize and

take up issues. Yet, with their emphasis on broad issues and lack of engagement around

specific policy decisions, people did not come together as the organization had

anticipated. The scenarios pointed to broader issues and raised questions about how these

issues, such as social inequity, population growth and agricultural land-use consumption,

would impact the community. Their goal was to promote civic engagement around these

issues and push collective action about making the future better. As discussed in this and previous chapters, assessing whether the project actually achieved was problematic. The snowball effect the organization desired and the rise to action that the GVC envisioned did not occur. And, fingerprints cannot always be readily found, especially if you do not know where to look for them.

This does not, however, mean that the outreach had no effect or did not influence people's thinking or even actions. In post-viewing surveys, people who watched the scenarios reported learning about regional interconnections, the seriousness of the state of the SJV and better understanding the importance of the Latino population. They also reported the scenarios and following discussions as an intellectual experience, pushing them to think about things in ways that had not thought of before. People also used the scenarios in letters written to the newspaper editors to argue for various policy positions.[6]

But moving to direct action in visible form, for scenario workshop participants and people who participated in the small group discussion, did not follow. The scenario booklets included lists of possible action items. Yet, through interviews with the scenario workshops, the importance of having a coordinating organization support possible actions rose repeatedly to the top as being one of the missing links in the project.

When I shared these critiques with the GVC staff, they reinforced their purpose as an information disseminator and as being an impartial body as part of their rationale for not playing an organizing role or catalyst for direct action. They wanted to empower people through knowledge, and through that knowledge a spark would emerge. The GVC staff hoped this information would percolate through the regional political arena and

would prompt people to take action. According to Habermas (1996) wanting to empower civil society while shaping the political arena is a dual role that NPOS, as members of civil society, take on. While this strategy emphasized the organizational philosophy and was linked to their interest in capacity building, it created problems in reaching their larger goals of community action.

5.3.1 Measuring impacts

Scholars working on collaborative and communicative planning and in deliberative democracy are well aware of the hurdles to understand the impact of deliberative forums and planning processes (Rosenberg 2007; Warren 2007; Dryzek 2007; Mansbridge 2007). While civil society has largely been conceived of as contributing to the democratic quality of communities, its direct influence on public policy, decision making and planning is far less clear. Part of this has been attributed to issues related to measurement.

Some argue that only through long-term network and social agent based analyses will the influence of these processes and the impacts of NPOs be fully realized (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Takahashi & Smutny, 2001; Weisbrod, 1997). Much of what scholars have demonstrated thus far focuses on social learning, civic capacity building and relationship development that can occur by participating in deliberative forums. Development of professional networks and relationships are also frequently pointed to (Booher & Innes, 2002; Healey 1997; Forester 1999). By participating in communicative planning processes, participants build trust with one another (Kahane 1998, 2004; Innes 1995). Sometimes this can help nurture new relationships (Booher & Innes 2002), while

other times they can mend previously fractured relationships (Harwood & Zapata 2006).

The development of these relationships can help make future collaborations function

better (Booher & Innes, 2002) or increase efficient communication between organizations

(Simeonova & van der Valk, 2009). Other research looks at social learning (Frumkin

2005; Dryzek 2007; Gutmann & Thompson). Some argue that bridges between cultural

groups can be created in these forums (Walsh 2007). Despite some of the short-term

gains that this body of research points to, far less is understood about the long term

effects of participation in these activities (Rosenberg 2007).

Scenario planning as a deliberative process faces similar challenges in

demonstrating impact. Kahane (2004) emphasizes the reflective comments of community

members involved in the scenario development portion of the project, emphasizing what

they learned and how they changed their attitudes. Kahane argues that this kind of

learning and change is not linear and cannot be measured casually. The scenarios instead

serve as a touchstone for community leaders to articulate plausible futures and redirect

strategic efforts. Creating research projects that demonstrate this is challenging, work that

Dryzek (2007) encourages in deliberative democracy.

The GVC VFP staff members are acutely aware of these challenges. Reflecting on

the VFP Whiteside said, "I just can't believe with all the newspaper hits and all the

attention and all the outreach that those discussions about the future of the Valley didn't

do something to how people think about the future and planning for it".[7] Beyond their

internal knowledge, the organization wants to be able to say it has done things. For now,

the leaving of fingerprints has been enough, but establishing itself as a go-to organization

in the Central Valley means being able to claim credit for specific activities.

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The importance of this has been made especially clear in the pursuit of funding. This challenge is not restricted to the GVC or the VFP. An ever present challenge in the NPO sector, demonstrating the efficacy of these organizations in responding to their identified social issues has plagued the sector (Flynn & Hodgkinson 2001). But, as previously discussed, demonstrating the influence of NPOs on civic engagement and public decision-making has proven especially challenging (Dryzek 2007; Warren 2007; Hendriks 2006b). Venture philanthropy, in its attempt to reverse the trend of programmatic funding only where funders believed they would be able to document results, sought to address the problem of measuring impacts through an influence on the language and ideas behind the concepts such as return on investment, scaling up and committed contributions to a single organization (Frumkin 2004: 101).

Unfortunately for the GVC, as the funding priorities from the original foundations moved away from venture philanthropy, they found themselves struggling to demonstrate the impact of their programs to continue their work. And when the original venture philanthropy money failed to produce a self-sustaining institution, the GVC began to scramble to demonstrate the utility of their programs to potential grant makers. This was especially the case with the VFP. With its focus on broadly conceived of civic engagement, and a weak development of outcome measures, assessing the impacts of the VFP proved challenging. Some of the impact measures they created, such as number of media hits estimated through newspaper distribution, allowed the organization to point to the nearly million people who likely saw the materials. It did not, however, allow them to argue about how the viewed materials influenced perceptions about regionalism or spurred civic engagement. This does not mean that the organization was doomed to fail in

its pursuits. Rather I see this as a direct commentary on how the academic community is failing to support NPOs and those public and private agencies committed to a collaborative, deliberative future. Without robust methodologies and analytics for these kinds of activities, organizations conducting them will be pushed to the margins.

In some cases, like many NPOs, the GVC has had to adapt its mission to fit foundation funding priorities. The venture philanthropy funding allowed for fewer social service like projects, such as the VFP, to be conducted. But even within the VFP, the interests of the foundations drove some of the goals of the project. This helps explain the multiple stated purposes of the project.

The impacts of the VFP in the SJV community, or its deliberative sphere, are detailed in Chapter 4. The challenges in reaching some of the more salient, as well as ambitious goals, have been discussed in this chapter, starting with the inherent problems with trying to assess impact in this case, many of which the GVC could not have resolved. Another challenge complicated the GVC's attempt to demonstrate the influence of the VFP - scale. Yaro (2000) discusses the challenges of measuring the influence of the New York Regional Plan Association (RPA), an organization similar in structure and position to the GVC. Though widely respected, much of its work is conducted through back door political channels and negotiations. Like the GVC, the RPA, is an NPO and stands in a position were drawing clear lines of impact are challenging.

In sum, the GVC could have developed specific outcome measures for social learning and pedagogical outcomes for dissemination activities. However, the GVC was fighting an uphill battle in trying to demonstrate the outcomes from a deliberative *and*

regional process. Researchers are still trying to develop methodologies to support assessment of this kind of work.

5.3.2 Missed areas of influence

In the VFP, there were two significant areas of impact. First, the GVC did not see the participants in the development of the scenarios as the primary sphere of influence, despite its emphasis in the scholarly literature (Healey 1997; Booher & Innes 2002; Rosenberg 2007). Put differently, the GVC did not see the participants as the primary people whose views should be shaped or as the primary disseminators of their message. As discussed above, Kahane (1998, 2004) emphasizes the importance of participants in the scenario workshops as the primary people who in turn disseminate the social learning and messages created during the forums. Participants from the scenario planning workshops repeatedly said one of the major disappointments from the project was the lack of continued engagement by the GVC.

In retrospect, one of the GVC VFP staff members regretted that they had not more involved more people in central decision making positions in the workshops, acknowledging how much the participants had obtained from hashing through the Central Valley's futures. Another wished they had known the importance, as demonstrated through other scenario planning projects, of developing and supporting relationships with workshop participants. During interviews with the GBN consultants involved with VFP, they emphasized the importance and opportunity of the social learning, relationship development and bridge building during scenario workshops in previous projects.

It is not clear why this did not fully translate to the GVC staff working on the project from the beginning. Part of the explanation may be found in the consulting firm, the GBN, who conducted the process focused on the *creation* of the scenarios. They are not generally involved in the *use* of the scenarios (see Hopkins & Zapata 2007 for examples that distinguish between creation and use). While they believed in the importance of the scenario planning workshop relationship and social learning development, the GBN consultants pointed to unique components of the project when compared to other projects they had conducted.

Unlike other scenario planning processes outside of the private sector, there was not a center point of conflict or specific (common) trigger issue that brought the community members together. In other processes, such as those focused on health or environmental hazards, participants had already known one another, often in adversarial capacities. In the case of the VFP, the GVC was the actor trying to generate concern about the entire region. The GBN staff described the situation as the community needing to have energy created about the VFP challenges, as opposed to other processes they had conducted where the participants were already, in some cases, fiercely engaged on issues.

But, even if the GVC staff had fully appreciated how pivotal the scenario workshop group could be in spreading their message, their organizational ideology would likely have hampered their ability to fully unleash the power of the scenarios. Because of the size of the region, there were also limited opportunities for participants to reinforce these relationships through professional or social networks. Without an organizing body to help catalyze the energy from the workshop participants, or guide the energy created by dissemination campaigns, little could be provided.

VFP participants were all frustrated with the lack of follow-up by the GVC following the workshop. Few people from the workshops knew what had happened with the scenarios. Others were disappointed the group was not involved more in the dissemination campaign. Still, some of the workshop participants saw themselves as equally at fault. Josué took part of the responsibility for this saying,

> But we didn't get the word out, and that was also our fault. It was a wonderful process but the follow through for participants afterwards wasn't there, on our end and their end. There really wasn't any one to take the lead and go around and keep it going. This was the missing pieces – everything in Spanish and someone to dedicate to the effort.

Some VFP workshop participants had been excited about taking their energy to the political arena, something encouraged by the GVC. Paul said, "They talked about having a reunion. They thought about trying to use us as a lobbying group, you know all going in a van together to Sacramento and focus on specific issues." This did not happen, in part because of the staffing issues, prioritizing the dissemination of the scenarios, and, perhaps most saliently, because of the GVC's ideology.

I see the GVC and the VFP as emblematic of the challenges NPOs face in trying to influence their political communities. The GVC staff wanted to shape their region, but by playing the role of mediator, not through political advocacy or activism. This decision did give them greater access into multiple communities within the region that might not otherwise communicate (i.e. farm owners and farm worker advocates). Many staff members believed that the fingerprints the organization left would slowly shape the community. Fingerprints imply presence and point to possible actions taken.

Fingerprints also reinforce invisibility. Only after dusting do you know they are there. And whether this will be enough for the GVC staff and the region in which it

operates is unclear. Without focusing on broader areas of concern and not engaging on specific policy areas, the GVC would not have the access to the range of community members that participated in the VFP. And, it was precisely the ability to convene such a diverse group of people that brought me to the Central Valley. It is to their experiences in the VFP scenario development workshops I turn.

Chapter 6: An Ideal Speech Situation?

6.1 From Modesto to Kern County

I park my car in a large, treeless cement lot. Within thirty seconds of walking across the lot I am sweating. I pause to wipe my fogging glasses and notice the oil derricks to my right, a vast field of them. As I have travelled south on Highway 99, conducting interviews sprinkled across the San Joaquin Valley with Valley Futures Project participants, I have slowly moved from burgeoning crop fields to dusty expanses of land rich in energy resources. I am now in the southernmost tip of the SJV, where the sun burns strongest and poor quality air collects at the foot of mountains, in the Valley's basin.

Part of the challenge the GVC faced in uniting the SJV is also recognizing its significant differences throughout the region, geographic and other. What drives the economy in Modesto may have little to do with economic drivers in Bakersfield. And what plagues the health of the people in San Joaquin County might not match the pressing concerns about the pungent air of Kern County. Considering difference in this region demands contemplation across a sometimes unruly set of dimensions. Race, class, gender, profession, geography, length of residency – the list, especially at this amassed scale could be overwhelming.

The GVC set forth to help community leaders identify where their issues and concerns matched as well as conflicted. Through the VFP this could occur through the identification of over-arching issues that interrelated as opposed to specific policy recommendations. Teaching people that what happens in Bakersfield did matter to the

future of people living in Modesto, a distance stretching 200 miles, was a central

component of the project. At this moment I am en route to see what one person,

Donovan, who participated in the VFP scenario development workshops, learned through

his participation.

In the course of our conversation Donovan was supportive of the GVC. He also

expressed concerns about the VFP. Much of his frustration stemmed around the outcome

of the process. He said, "The process was interesting but we didn't end up with a [public]

plan. It's like it lists everything that's wrong, but so what? What are you going to do with

that?" In explaining his own perspective, he said "I'm from the background where you do

the SWOT and then build consensus. You know, you've got to decide what the things

that are the most wrong in place."[36] And yet, while he spoke about his concerns, he

eventually paused and said "But maybe you just can't do that [build consensus] in the

SJV. I mean how many commonalities are there from Kern County to Modesto? We

don't even have the same watershed!" This last comment highlighted just what the GVC

was up against in promoting regionalism.

But, Donovan also subtly underscored the limitations of a consensus building

approach to planning. While building consensus is often seen as essential to the

development of a plan, its central role in planning processes has been criticized for

downplaying difference and exacerbating political power imbalances between process

participants (Young 1999). Further such a strict interpretation of consensus in planning

processes can limit the opportunity for these processes to foster civic engagement,

promote cross-cultural learning and develop or mend professional relationships and

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[36] SWOT refers to Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT), a common starting point in planning processes.

networks. Scholars often herald these opportunities as being important, if not pivotal, reasons to bring community members together to deliberate (Dryzek 2007).

6.2 Clarifying Consensus

Throughout interviews, VFP participants frequently described the process as "professional," "well-done," "educational," and "interesting." Fulfilling one of the GVC's project goals, one participant stated that he was "humbled by the enormity of the challenges of the entire Central Valley, let alone the SJV" that emerged from their discussions. Another went further, saying "It scared me. . . It was like a fire alarm went off." Participants felt the discussions were "well-facilitated" and found people "open" to one another's viewpoints. As one participant described it, "there was mutual respect and an openness of sharing opinions." Most reported learning from one another. But what had created a deliberative space where people could communicate so openly, without constraint? One of the most salient components repeatedly emerged – the downplaying of consensus for an emphasis on intersubjective understanding.

The consensus orientation of planning is demonstrated by visioning processes that produce one vision of how a community should look and plan-making processes aimed at producing a single plan. Theoretically many of these processes, described by communicative planning theory, take their point of departure in the work of Habermas on communicative rationality.[37] Habermas developed his theory of communicative rationality to locate rationality within interpersonal communication, as opposed to other forms of rationality (Habermas 1984, 1987). Part of his framework focused on creating a

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[37] The purpose of the following discussion on Habermas' work is not to account for or resolve the multiple interpretations of his work. Rather, my interest is on how Habermas' work has been used within planning and political scholarly conversations.

discursive space where all participants could contribute, freely and equally, and

concentrates on the procedural aspects of democratic deliberations. Habermas'

framework offers a theoretical means to develop spaces where this kind of conversation

can unfold. Central to this is his 'ideal speech situation.' His earlier work outlined the

following parameters to achieve this:

> 1. Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.
> 2a. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.
> 2b. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.
> 2c. Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires and needs.
> 3. No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in (1) and (2). (1987: 86)

If these rules can be implemented then participants should be able to freely

communicate and the 'force of the better argument' will prevail. He believed that by

creating guiding principles of how a discursive space should operate, people would be

liberated to rationally argue and reach intersubjective understanding.

This last component, the reaching of intersubjective understanding, is one of the

more confusing aspects of Habermas' work as incorporated into the planning literature

and practiced by planning practitioners. The reaching of intersubjective understanding

should simply be understood as two interlockers acknowledging one another's

perspective (Dryzek & Niemeyer 2006). As an ideal, two people who did not previously

see where the other was coming from, through rational debate and argumentation, can

now see the perspective of the other.

This intersubjective understanding is often confused with the notion of consensus.

Consensus in this circumstance is mutual understanding. It is not an agreement that one

person is right, nor is it agreement to act. In the planning literature, scholars such as

Booher and Innes (2002) often move directly to this as the underlying purpose of many planning processes. To be sure, Habermas does see the overarching goal of a discursive space as reaching agreements about what policy arenas are of priority or even to advance action about specific policies (Rosenberg 2007). However, reaching inter-subjective understanding does not, alone constitute this. It is one part in these larger goals, and might unfold in various arenas. Consensus might imply agreement to act or it might indicate agreement about values or it might mean reaching understanding about a participant's perspective. In planning, its usage points to agreement to act. The assumption is so pervasive that planning scholar Susan Fainstein declared that the "planner's primary function is…to assist in forging a consensus among differing viewpoints" (Fainstein 2000: 175).

A focus on consensus, as opposed to inter-subjective understanding, poses specific problems in planning processes. Consensus-building processes focus on the creation of *one* course of action. This leaves them open to the marginalization of others' beliefs (Mouffe 1999; Young 1999). Consensus, where consensus equates agreement to act, may constrain the ability for participants to speak freely. Thus, the consensus driven nature of many deliberations can exclude or marginalize other voices. Consensus downplays disagreement and difference, resulting in the creation of a false sense of agreement (Young 2001). And, as Donovan's earlier comments emphasize, consensus may simply not be possible in geographically large and diverse communities.

Alternatives to consensus based work do exist. One of these is the scenario planning process that the GVC decided to use in the VFP, where four futures would be identified as plausible. But, what would such a process accomplish? If the purpose of

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bringing people together to deliberate to shifts away from specific policy decisions or recommendations? What does this shift achieve and how can it be described? Donovan was clearly frustrated by not creating a single plan to promote. But, could such a process create a space to address concerns about consensus driven processes, especially in relation to the incorporation and recognition of cultural difference? Would it mean that no agreement would be reached? And, as Donovan had said, "What are you going to do with that?" referring to the four scenarios.

Dryzek and Niemeyer (2006) offer a good starting point. They argue that policy and planning processes would be better served to distinguish between consensus and 'meta-consensus.' Here, 'meta-consensus' is the reaching of inter-subjective understanding and the reaching of agreement about other participants' perspectives. 'Meta-consensus' allows for discussion about the acceptance of someone's viewpoint as valid, without implying your own agreement or willingness to act on it. The GVC's selection of a scenario planning process meant that they would not end up with a land-use, comprehensive, or master plan. Instead, four futures were identified as plausible. These four scenarios reflected the deliberations that the VFP workshop participants conducted. This meant that the deliberations, and their overriding goals, took on a different tenor from deliberations focused on agreement to act or agreement on as set of priority issues.

Shifting the focus of deliberations away from reaching consent to act, such as described in the most binding forms of consensus building, to reaching inter-subjective understanding, the door opens for the other, important outcomes of deliberative forums such as social learning and increased civic engagement. These were the underlying goals

of the VFP. Dryzek (2007) suggests a broader examination of deliberation not tied to specific policy decisions when exploring the social learning and creation of better citizens through deliberation. Walsh (2007) examines the role that these kinds of discursive spaces can create bridges across cultural differences. He also suggests distinguishing between venues were the focus is on reaching inter-subjective understanding as being places of 'dialogue.'

Walsh (2007) emphasizes the importance of dialogue as opposed to deliberation in furthering those ideals related to cross-cultural education and relationship formation. In her research, deliberation focuses on debate and is tied to the development of specific policy recommendations. Dialogue, instead, fosters cross-cultural learning and relationship building. Dialogue thus promotes the sharing of ideas, stories, and perspectives concerning issues within a community. This focus on dialogue, as distinct from deliberation, creates an opportunity for participants to reach meta-consensus as opposed to an agreement to take action on a specific issue (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2006).

Walsh's conception of dialogue programs generally fits the VFP process. The VFP participants were not debating or arguing about specific policies. They were instead encouraged to share their ideas and listen to one another. Yet, the purpose alone was not just listening, nor was it to learn about one specific issue (such as the dialogues Walsh describes). The goal of the workshops was to develop four scenarios about how the SJV's future might unfold. These scenarios would then be used to promote civic engagement and inform decision makers. The participants were expected to use their lived experiences and what they learned from one another in creating these futures.

The development of four scenarios, as opposed to a single vision statement or plan created a different kind of deliberative space. This meant a number of things to those participating in the VFP sessions. First, with no single policy issue to focus on, there was nothing to potentially fight over. Participants were asked to use their expertise as community residents and professionals to think about how the future might unfold. This meant that their expertise was being valued and incorporated even when people sometimes disagreed or had incongruent opinions. Many of the Latinos in the room offered negative views of the future along various dimensions, whereas Whites painted a more positive future.[38] Instead of people having to argue which view of the future was right or more accurate, these contending views of the future could be each incorporated.

Removing this end goal helped support an environment where participants felt encouraged to speak their mind. Without worrying about having to agree about what kind of action should be taken or whose issue was most pressing, participants reported feeling less pressure to protect their own interests and were more willing to listen to other people's ideas. This effectively meant that there was no 'better argument' that would win out. Participants were allowed to simply deliberate about the issues put before them. In turn no one in the room felt that any person or affiliation threatened them, literally or figuratively, when making a decision.

Donovan specifically addressed the concept of consensus, saying: "We didn't come to consensus—that wasn't the purpose of the project. We didn't create a [public] plan so this wasn't needed." But, participants found they could reach agreement on broader issues, reaching Dryzek and Niemeyer's (2006) meta-consensus. One participant

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[38] During interviews, many White participants described the process as depressing as they learned more about the different lived realities in the room and reflected by the people there. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

felt that "most people tended to see all the issues and agree that they were important."

Another pointed to the group's general agreement that the Valley was facing serious

challenges. Thus, while one participant said "it was okay to disagree" on the degree that

one issue threatened the SJV's future, the participants could recognize that an issue was

important or agree on broad action ideas.

6.3 Creating a Deliberative Space

The VFP scenario workshops constructed a kind of deliberation, or dialogue, that

allowed for participants to express their perspectives more freely than if the sessions had

been organized around a single plan or policy issue. Part of this was created by focusing

on the identification of multiple futures, a unique quality for scenario planning. But

through interviews with the participants, other reasons were offered to explain this 'ideal

speech situation.' In discussing why the deliberations had been successful in creating an

open, unconstrained dialogue with a diversity of represented perspectives, participants

pointed to a number of characteristics of the process, ranging from the capabilities of

facilitators to the integrity of the GVC.

Most participants also referred to qualities in themselves and other participants,

such as a willingness to share stories, listening skills, and an interest in learning from one

another. The self-confidence of participants was noted by a number of fellow contributors

as an important component to creating an environment in which people shared

experiences and listened to one another. One participant emphasized the importance of

self-assurance within in the participants, saying, "I think that if you want to learn

something you will. But it's also really about yourself and how you validate yourself. If you have self validation then others will listen to you."

6.3.1 Leadership skills

The importance of self-confidence was also specifically linked to the participation of people traditionally seen as coming from marginalized backgrounds. One participant explained that he was grateful that "there was this one guy, from Place X, and he was talking about housing, and it was good he wasn't afraid to speak his mind. There were cultural issues that I didn't know about before that he explained to me." Speaking about participants working with marginalized communities, one participant stated, "I think the organizational and community-group people didn't have a problem voicing their opinion. They all came from vocal groups that were comfortable in their own self and believed what they said to be true." In other processes, activists or community members do not necessarily have that opportunity or capability to tell their stories (Sandercock 1998; Young 1999, 2001).

The GVC wanted to ensure that people would be willing to speak their mind. Reflecting on the group, one participant said "they [the GVC] wanted an intelligent and creative group of people to develop the scenarios." The organization specifically sought community leaders. Its conception of community leadership was broad: it simply sought people who were involved in their communities and could speak to a variety of issues. The GVC's emphasis on leadership meant that the participants saw one another as contributors to their communities from the onset of deliberations. This set the stage for reciprocity and mutual respect (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Mansbridge, 1999; Walsh,

2007). Even five years after the deliberations were completed, the participants

acknowledged their respect for one another, which was evident in their tone and

expressions. The selection of people with leadership qualities helped ensure that

participants would bring knowledge as well as self-assuredness to the table.

An emphasis on recruiting community leaders meant that, as one participant

described, the "average Joe was not there." There is certainly a danger in this kind of

recruitment, one that threatens to recreate a kind of elitism that such strategic recruitment

is meant to avoid. Yet, the benefits of bringing together diverse leaders for the goals of

this project appear to outweigh the potential downfalls.

6.3.2 Selecting participants

The emphasis on leadership was developed during the GVC's participant

selection process. Strongly countering the scholarly dialogue around participation and the

openness of deliberative forums, the organization selectively invited people, placing the

onus on themselves to recreate the SJV region's complexity with only 26 participants.

Statistical sampling was not used. They used their expertise as planners, analysts and

political actors to determine who needed to be in the room.

The emphasis placed on diversity during recruitment, discussed above, was part

of the GVC's ideology, but it was also important to the scenario planning process. An

integral component to the success of the scenarios, according to interviews with GBN

consultants, is the breadth of perspectives offered by people in the room. During one

interview with a GVC staff member, s/he recalled GBN pushing the GVC to identify an

increasingly diverse set of people, one that went beyond even their own conception of diversity.

To accomplish this the GVC hand-selected community members to participate in the scenario development. The GVC disseminated calls for nominations for participants in the project. The only requirement for consideration was that a community member could be described as a community leader. A number of GVC staff members emphasized the flexibility of what constituted a community leader – pointing to range of activities from elected officials to running a twenty person NPO to owning a farm. Nominees filled out an application form indicating their interest in participating, and the GVC turned down some people who were interested in participating. This was done to increase the kinds of representation in the room while also keeping the group small, a critical component of micro-deliberative forums. Where there were overlaps in representation and identity, people were not invited to participate.

Because the GVC wanted a wide range of views present in the room, it constructed a broad definition of diversity. Reviewing the list of participants in the SJV reveals a group of people working at a range of organizations (businesses, advocacy, farmers, educators). Participants were also sought across the SJV. Different educational and class levels were also invited.

Special attention was placed on racial and ethnic diversity. Historic racial and ethnic tensions between Whites and Latinos had now been further complicated by the continuous immigration from Latin America and Southeast Asia. Latinos and immigrant groups face major gaps in accessing education and economic opportunities in the Valley. The GVC recognized that any process attempting to talk about the future, must address

the legacy of inequality rooted in the past. Where nominations did not fill the desired spectrum of diversity, the GVC identified possible participants and invited them to join the process.

The organization also sought to bring people into the room that did not share their ideology. This had three implications, from the GVC VFP staff perspective. First, it meant that people who had been actively engaged with the organization were not necessarily included, a potential problem from maintaining long term relationships with supporters. Second, this meant the staff was bringing together a number of people they did not know. Would these participants be willing to participate in open discussion? What kind of issues would they raise? What were their personalities? This level of uncertainty in designing the process worried the staff as they wanted to have a productive conversation. Finally, in reflecting on the scenario development forums, one staff member expressed concern that there were certain voices missing from the conversation because they had limited knowledge about what exactly people would offer.

6.3.3 The function of diversity

The GVC worked to represent the community's diverse social fabric from their local knowledge of the community. To achieve the full spectrum of diversity it envisioned, the GVC recognized the multiplicity of societal positions individuals inhabit. The organization focused on people as individuals with unique lived experiences and encouraged participants to draw from the multiplicity of their experiences. No one was asked to represent a specific organization or social group, though participants clearly recognized unique parts of their identity in relation to other group members. One

participant said he "felt like I was part of the group, like I wasn't the 'token' even though I was obviously the only Asian there." In thinking about representation, another participant commented that in the VFP "you did not represent a group, whereas you do in the other kinds of processes." Participants were encouraged to speak experientially from their occupational, geographic, class, and ethnic backgrounds. Focusing on the individual and the multiplicity of their collected identities made participants feel included and their perspectives valued. Such focus helped the participants avoid the possible traps involved with asking people, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, to act as representatives of their group.

The VFP participants repeatedly pointed to the diversity of the group as a strength of the process, appreciating it for various reasons. According to one participant:

> it was a touchstone—the diversity. You just get in your own group and
> lose sight of all the diverse interests that are out there. But when you get
> all those people in one room—the labor people, newspaper people,
> activists—at first you're just thinking everyone is all over the place, but
> people realize over time that we have the same desires. We might go about
> it differently, but we all want a safe place for our families.

For another, the diversity provided an opportunity to learn about newcomers: "There's a value of that kind of diversity. Speaking for myself, I'm fourth generation here and I haven't moved very far. . . . But that's a lot different than a Mexican family who came here without anything." One participant said, "You just get with your own kind all the time, you're isolated from other people and you just don't know what their life is like. You have to hear their experiences to understand them". As one of them described in reflecting on other stakeholders, "they were the kind of people you would want in a room thinking about the tough problems the Valley faces."

The workshop participants were willing to listen, think creatively, and share ideas. All can be described as community leaders in various roles and invested, emotionally, socially, and financially, in the future of the Valley. Multiple participants reported increased understanding about the perspectives of people from backgrounds they didn't understand or did not have much experience. Learning moments did not happen for all participants, and as one participant deftly pointed out, "when you put a bunch of mature, well intended people in a sanitized, well facilitated situation of course people are going to learn from one another. It's kind of like going to college again." This participant served as a good reminder of the inorganic nature of this kind of process, cautioning planners to use caution when championing the outcomes of these kinds of deliberations.

In essence, the GVC did what Fung (2007) suggests. He argues to recruit voices from marginalized backgrounds to participate in a process, and to do this strategically. By doing this, they could also "redress power imbalances by focusing on [these imbalances] directly" (Walsh 2007: 55). For the GVC, this meant recruiting a larger group of Latinos than generally participated in community or government deliberations. Latinos were underrepresented in SJV government positions, overrepresented in negative demographic and economic profiles in the SJV, and yet will soon be the majority population of the region. Many of the White participants pointed to the issues raised by Latino participants as the most important learning opportunity of the process. Much of this learning occurred through the sharing of stories.

6.3.4 Telling stories

Participants were also encouraged to speak in whatever manner felt comfortable to them. No conditions were placed on the way they shared or presented information. One participant explained that he thought his role was to "make vital contributions and give information that would not have otherwise been offered. There would also be an authenticity to what you were saying, a degree of truthfulness in the stories you shared." Thus, storytelling played an integral role in the process. Participants recounted to me stories shared by other participants. One of the most powerful stories was one participant's account of the lack of clean drinking water in her hometown. For some this story was shocking; they were unable to believe that communities in their region had no access to such a basic need. For others a sense of empowerment occurred when hearing a story from their own background shared with the larger group.

The turn to story telling is not new in planning. Forester (1993, 1999) has demonstrated the value to practitioners who listen to stories from their community members and change their practice. Sandercock (2000) has examined the importance storytelling can play in shaping planning decisions. Her findings in planning processes in the United States and Australia reinforce that stories can inform and transform (Sandercock 1998, 2000).

Thus the relaxation of communicative rules Dryzek (2000) and Young argues for in these micro deliberative forums might not appear as dangerous as it seems to scholars concerned with maintaining strict conceptions of rational discourse.[39] Allowing for various communicative forms within deliberative processes has become one way of

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[39] Dryzek 2000 outlines guidelines for the inclusion of speech acts including stories, testimonies and greetings.

addressing power. This concern has been especially of interest to those working in and with marginalized communities. What a rational argument might look like varies tremendously from one community to another. The kind of argumentation originally expected by communicative planners privileged those from White, Western, upper middle class, college-educated people (Young 1999). Providing a mechanism to ensure all facets of a society have a seat at the table simply does not guarantee that everyone speaks the same literal or metaphoric language. Nor does it provide for the various ways in which people present or learn information.

6.4 Operating in civil society

While the VFP process participants pointed to visible components of the process that helped create an unconstrained dialogue, the GVC was also aware of the importance of their status as an NPO in helping create that space as well. In Chapter 5, the organization's positioning in civil society has been discussed. There are specific decisions that the GVC made during the VFP that were permissible because of this positioning.

The GVC's VFP took place outside the auspices of any government agency, mandate or upcoming policy decisions. They were not an NPO formed to conduct a multi-government actor regional planning process. They were not commissioned to respond to a pressing issue of interest to any governments. Instead, the GVC was acting on issues they defined as critical to the region that governments, especially local and regional entities, were not acting on. Their decision to pursue a regional planning and governance and agenda was to help spur the government to begin taking action.

What this meant in designing their deliberative space was that participants could come to the table without the concern about whose political power was greatest. This created an opportunity for members to speak freely without immediate concern about whose issues would be taken up and given priority. The lack of connection to government activities, be it advisory or otherwise, also reduced the pressure on participants to ensure that they were either adequately representing the interests of others they might be perceived to represent. Deliberative democrats often refer to these kinds of deliberations as low-stakes situations (Warren 2007; Fung 2007) where there is little direct impact, no accountability and no concern for who wins out if a given course of action is approved. While the quality of the deliberations, especially participants' heightened sense of commitment to the truth, might be of concern, research on deliberative spaces indicates this is not the case (Fung 2007). When people feel committed to the process and are given a safe, private space to deliberate the quality of their deliberations may actually increase. And, such a space, closed to the public, seems to have been created during the VFP scenario workshops.

This flexibility also meant that the GVC could structure the process to achieve their goal. Their concern was not about a specific policy issue and they did not have to consider the public interest when accounting for staff resources and time. The public interest broadly refers to who government decisions are justified and measured. Plans, policies, and projects must be seen as in the best interest of the common good of society to be adopted or implemented (Friedman 1987; Forester 1989; Campbell and Marshall 2000; Bollens 2002). One of the primary interests for the GVC in conducting the VFP was to develop scenarios that addressed growth management and emphasized the need

for regional governance. The outcome of the project, instead, took a much broader view of the future, incorporating social issues such as education and ethnic inequality as well as economic concerns such as economic diversification and the robustness of the agricultural community. In reflecting on the project, one GVC staff member said that the GVC was encouraged by the GBN consultants running the scenario deliberations to "follow the process." This meant inviting in an even broader configuration of diversity than the GVC envisioned and moving away from a focus on regional land use planning.

Allowing the participants to collectively define 'the problem' helped promote an open dialogue and promote social learning. For one participant this "made me see that you have to talk about the social stuff to work with planning. Planning has to address these things to deal with the physical stuff." The presence of people who worked on "social stuff" meant that these issues continued to rise to the top instead of land-use and transportation issues. Equality, a central issue for so many participants in the room, would play a central role in creating the future of the SJV. In the end this led to the creation of scenarios centred on what the group dubbed 'social cohesion' How well the SJV community responded to social inequality through the creation of social cohesion would be critical to how the future of the SJV played out.

Operating in civil society also meant that the GVC could carefully select participants. Nothing required the GVC to have their process open to the public. In the case of the VFP, this hand selection, especially in the area of ethnic and racial diversity paid off, with many Latinos and one Hmong participating in the process. Their participation had some White participants wanting more. One participant said, "the reality is that Hispanics are a huge part of the community and their presence should be

shown. You know, it would have been be of value to hear from someone who was here illegally. To learn about their life and challenges would have been of great value." Closing planning processes conducted by government agency certainly poses challenges and creates avenues for abuse.

However, that the GVC was able to recruit a diverse group, along many dimensions of difference that matter in the SJV, confirms the importance of targeted recruitment. It also highlights the importance of diverse representation at the beginning of a project, as opposed to the public input stage only. Had their been few Latinos in the room, the issues related to equality, such as housing, job training and environmental injustice would have likely been placed to the side.

6.5 Conclusions

A diverse group of community members came together in the VFP to consider what their region might be like in 25 years. They shared stories, listened to one another's experiences, and deliberated about the possibilities. Conducted by an NPO, the organization and participants had the ability, such as selecting participants or not speaking publicly, that government operated processes do not have. These components helped create a dialogic space that participants considered relaxed and open. Other components of the process and organization also helped this occur. The selection of diverse community leaders offset political power struggles by creating mutual self-respect between participants and incorporating traditionally marginalized community members. The emphasis on storytelling also meant that people could participate on a more equal playing field.

Many opportunities emerge—from creating more just policy to fostering civic engagement—when a diversity of community members are brought together to deliberate about specific issues. Of course Fung (2007) highlights that not every deliberative forum can accomplish everything and different designs will accomplish different goals (Fung 2007). In the VFP downplaying debate for discussion allows participants to focus on hearing one another. But, dialogues do not need to be completely devoid from policy and planning outcomes. Rather, dialogues that produce multiple outcomes could inform policy and plan makers. Such dialogues could do more than create policy options. Instead, they could help create multiple, plausible frames from which planning and policy makers could work from and consider in their policy making.

But where did that leave Donovan, who was perplexed by the lack of a single plan to promote and the de-emphasis on consensus? Donovan was not the only person who expressed frustration with this aspect of the process. And as discussed in the previous chapter, every VFP participant I interviewed was acutely disappointed with the lack of what they described as "action" following the workshop series. To better understand Donovan's frustration and the challenge of action in the VFP, I turn my attention to the persisting and resurging role cultural difference played in this planning process.

Chapter 7: Difference and the Planning Process

7.1 Where are the *chicas*?

The GVC staff is updating one another about their projects. I am attending another staff meeting, this time in the conference adjacent to the president's office. Four weeks into my first field research trip and I have adjusted to the ebb and flow of staff meetings. Marta begins her update about the launch of a science camp for high school students she is overseeing in the town of Pixley. The town is a largely Latino community and the site of technology transfer programs for the GVC.

 The project is off to a great start, from her perspective, with a good deal of turnout. Unfortunately, she informs the staff, there only young men participating in the program. Carol expresses concern about the lack of Latinas in the program. Marta concurs. Staff members begin to speculate about why there are only young men. Some staff members wonder if the young women in the community are loaded down with house work. Others speculate that perhaps the young women are not encouraged to study the sciences. Interestingly, the only people offering opinions are the White staff members. Latino staff members sit silent.

7.2 Inviting difference

What would it look like for planners to respond to cultural differences in planning processes? The last two chapters have touched on this, demonstrating the opportunities, and corresponding, dangers NPOs have in building civic society. The VFP shows the intersection between organizational, participant, and process characteristics that can

support a conversation rich in social learning. The GVC, in following the process and its participants, placed the Latino community in the spotlight in the four scenarios, highlighting social inequality. Yet the discussion held at the staff meeting discussed above demonstrates the complexities and range of attitudes about cultural differences.

In many instances, the GVC reflected many of the ideals of working in cultural differences. People worked hard not to pigeon hole various ethnic groups. Staff members were frank about their internal limitations in reaching out to various cultural groups. Some questioned if their efforts should be placed on providing social services, especially for marginalized communities. Planning in communities of difference requires creativity, risk taking and the willingness to be critical about one's own work. And, the GVC often attempted this.

This does not mean that they always succeeded. Engrained attitudes about cultural difference do not vanish. On one occasion, when discussing the search for a new GVC staff member, someone on the search committee commented that they could not find anyone from the "ethnic community," referencing the entire non-White community. And assumptions were sometimes made about who could, or could not, speak Spanish. Yet most of the GVC staff were open to critique and discussing these issues with me.

The early goal of civil rights leaders, the promotion of a color-blind society, has been critiqued for creating an environment where Whites fear or escape seeing that race has been played and continues to play a foundational role in the U.S (Lipsitz 1999; Spanierman and Heppner 2004). In such a color-blind society the willingness to acknowledge that difference matters and think about how you are participating in it can be a huge accomplishment.

This means the GVC also did not see diversity as a problem to solve. Rather it was an important and valued component of the region. And, they recognized the dynamic nature of cultural groups. For instance, the organization understood the complexity of the Latino population. In the scenario narrative exert presented earlier, a character name Rosa Perez was introduced. As the story unfolds we learn that Rosa is from El Salvador, not from the more common point of immigration, Mexico. According to GVC staff, this choice was deliberate, intending to educate people about the multiple faces of the Latino population while also raising awareness about future demographic projections.

The GVC staff were willing to take risks, and as one VFP workshop participant described it "ask the tough questions" in the VFP. As the organization consciously created a diverse group of people to participate in an intimate series of discussions, they had unknowingly selected an approach that attempted to educate its participants about one another as much as anything else. As discussed in the previous chapter the cognitive gains that VFP workshop participants made were around social equity issues and topics centered at cultural difference.[40] Other knowledge obtained centered on understanding the complexity and interrelatedness of issues and one another in the SJV's future. These participants were community leaders, many who had been to leadership training workshops as well as cultural diversity and gender training. Almost all had been taught the importance of listening to one another and developed skills that equipped them to active participants in the workshops.

But, the GVC had invited in difference, at least some dimensions of it, and it worked to various degrees. One of the most powerful stories was one participant's story

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[40] A number of participants also discussed learning about serious environmental issues. Interestingly, Whites tended to point to learning about cultural or equity based issues when asked directly. Latinos tended to point to environmental issues when asked directly.

about the lack of running water in her hometown. Numerous participants recalled this story during interviews. For Whites, the story shocked them; for many Latinos a sense of empowerment occurred in hearing their own story told. Almost all valued the importance of sharing stories, though in most cases it was Whites who were 'learning.'

The storytelling approach in the scenario planning process, discussed in Chapter 6, was another way of incorporating difference. This more conversational approach to planning has important implications for planning processes. Alberto stated, "the scenario workshops were like *pláticas*. And we just need to be doing that all the time. Having *pláticas* and letting people know what we think about things." *Plática* simply means conversation, or dialogue. This comment reflects a shared view of the importance in approaching planning as an iterative, ongoing dialogue, not as process with a clearly demarcated beginning and end point. Culturally Latinos spend a great deal of time simply sitting around and talking, with neighbors, friends and colleagues. Politics are a frequent topic of conversation (de los Angeles 2006; Hardy-Fanta 1993). The Anglo social etiquette of not talking politics at the dinner table is a foreign concept for most Latinos.[41] Many etiquette guides reinforce this (see Rhodes 2009 and Post 2005). These guides reinforce the emphasis on White cultural conceptions of "civility" and conflict avoidance in social gatherings.

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[41] Some deliberative democrats focusing on 'everyday talk in the deliberative system' would object to this generalization, arguing that people do discuss political events, whether directly or indirectly, in almost all social settings (Mansbridge 1999; Walsh 2004). Still, the avoidance of political discussions in etiquette guides is pervasive (See Rhodes 2009 and Post 2005).

7.3 Culturally differentiated experiences

The GVC made conscious choices on how to incorporate cultural difference into

the VFP. The scenario planning process also encouraged participation from people in

unique ways that countered conventional wisdom, and potentially addressed challenges

about how to work with difference without suppressing it. All of the VFP participants

were community leaders, interested in learning about their region and the people in it.

7.3.1 Rethinking practices

Latinos discussed taking information they learned or conclusions they had drawn

from their experiences and incorporating it into their professional practice and personal

lives. For Josué:

> It's made me not pass judgment so quickly because of the side of an issue
> you come from. I hear them out. I found out over the last several years that
> certain ways of thinking, to make headway you have to show how to make
> benefits. It reinforced need to not just come in with what you don't want
> but to come in with an alternative that gives them options. It makes you
> want to negotiate more.

Josué was not the only Latino who found himself rethinking how to move forward on an

issue. Hugo described how the process had shaped his work as an activist, stating:

> I'll think twice before calling foul. Yes I know we've got to stop
> pesticides, but the livelihood of farmers would be hurt and that would hurt
> the farm workers and then that hurts the mom and pop shops and that hurts
> the mechanic in town. The complexity of issues and relationships and the
> web that surrounds them is present now.

Hugo had taken to hear the complexity and interconnections that drew people

together and had rethought when he should use his activism. He said that he

previously would have been one of the first people calling people together to

protest a farm, refinery or manufacturing plant. But, now he waits a little while

longer before striking a position and organizing people to protest.

Juan went the other direction, saying:

I obtained a better perspective from the process. I challenge people more
than ever before. I encourage people to talk about racial issues and
demographic changes. There was one situation that was I was in where
someone made a joke that included a Mexican and he worked for a bank. I
didn't talk to him publicly, but went to him privately after the meeting and
told him I didn't think the joke was funny and hoped that wasn't the
position of his bank. I'm just not going to take it any more. He seemed to
get it. Will he make that joke in front of me again? No. Will he make that
joke? Maybe. We'll see, I didn't get invited to his birthday party this year
[shrugs shoulder] but…It's really about a huge ignorance of people here.

For Juan participating in the VFP fomented what had been an ongoing transition in his

life. Juan felt that this transition had been unfolding for some time, describing it as "the

process seemed like an awakening. It was part of a life process. I was already quite angry

and challenging people, but it really came to the fore front." Around the time of the VFP,

he had simply "just had enough." During the VFP workshops he had been able to "call

people on stuff." In finding his voice, and his limits, he moved to pushing people along

areas of race, even willing to risk exclusion from social circles to express his opinion,

such the birthday party he mentioned. At the same time, because of the willingness of

participants to listen to him, he expressed respect for the other participants and enjoyed

participating in the process.

While many White participants reported learning about specific issues, such as the

polluted water, few described changes in their daily professional practices or personal

lives. A number of Whites reported feeling that they had gained a better appreciation for

what Latinos in the SJV were experiencing. Paul described his experience, saying:

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> There was lots of discussion about the Hispanic influence on things. There were lots of Hispanics in the group and there are facts about how the population is growing but getting to hear the every day stories, well it was an eye opener. Hearing about one man talk about his efforts to organize his community, that really mattered.

Paul was also one of the few Whites who reported that this kind of learning opportunity had shaped his daily life. He went on to say:

> I think I'm more tolerant about it [diversity]. My personal feeling is that they had a lot of good points, and you shouldn't categorize. But that gets lost people sometimes when you in the paper about 6 guys beating up an old lady and their names tell you, you know.

Tim who initially said he learned "nothing" from the process, eventually said, "It made me see that you have to talk about the social stuff to work with planning. Planning has to address these things to deal with the physical stuff." He saw that even if believed that physical growth and development issues such as water supply were the dominating issues to the SJV there was a place for discussing more socially orientated issues. Commenting on the whole process, Tim said:

> You gotta start somewhere I suppose and if overall the process is to study growth, well what a better way to start. Throw lots of ideas on the table. You need to be aware of were you're going down the road. Crime and education might not impact growth per se, or you could deal with growth without dealing with them, but if you're aware from the start you might end up with a people in a better place.

Such gains by whites should not be overlooked. However, few Whites connected this learning with specific changes in their professional behaviour or personal interactions, whereas almost every Latino did. Even where White participants, Tim and Paul, indicated that what they learned affected them, only Paul felt that his behaviour had changed. Perhaps historically marginalized populations have adopted strategies to further their own efforts, regardless of what other groups might do.

In this case, Latinos may be more flexible in their practices because they have

been disadvantaged, taking any opportunity to learn and change how they operate.

Whites, on the other hand, may have no incentive to do anything beyond listen and learn,

especially in a process not designed to explicitly make changes in people's behavior. In

the position of power, they may have the privilege of not consciously changing their

behaviour based on their new knowledge gains. Latinos instead may always be looking

for learning opportunities as ways to improve their work. After multiple generations of

this, these attitudes may be also as subconscious for Latinos as Whites.

7.3.2 Experiencing Race

During the second workshop, the participants reviewed the draft scenario

materials. In their discussion, the participants noted the prominence of social inequality,

and the forecasted growth of the Latino population reflected in the scenarios was

discussed. From the transcript I reviewed, the conversation appeared contentious.[42] I

asked VFP participants about the discussion:

> During the second workshop you started by reviewing drafts of the
> scenarios. A conversation then followed about the growth of the Latino
> population and its representation in the scenarios. Do you remember the
> conversation and if so what can you tell me about it?

Latinos vividly recalled the conversation, discussing details about it, the

tenor of the discussion, and what they thought the discussion reflected about

racial attitudes in the group. Many Latinos had been frustrated by aspects of the

conversation and some became agitated in revisiting it four years later. White

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[42] The transcript was shared with me on the condition that I not directly quote from it to protect the integrity of the conversation. During interviews I asked participants about the conversation. I did not refer to any specific statements any interviewee made. I, however, did know who had said what.

participants, on the other hand, either barely remembered the discussion or had no

recollection of it. Samples of the quotes follow. In the case of the Latino

participants, some of the quotes have been reduced to read more fluidly. The

White participants' responses are largely presented in their entirety. For the White

responses, I removed one to two statements where the statements were non-

sequitur.[43]

7.3.2.1 Latino responses:

Miguel immediately recalled the conversation:

> My impression was, well I took it as a personal criticism. That conversation
> echoed the exact sentiment I was talking about earlier. I think it was the character
> of the participants that prevented it from blowing up and a respect of the opinions
> that were present. I think the ending response was that Hispanics are 50% of the
> Valley. They're growing and ignoring this growth would be a disservice to what
> we have been asked to do in this process. It's the future of the valley and it's
> happening…But the woman who said that comment in the beginning, I think she
> was just, well she was offensive and she was offended that a minority viewpoint
> would take such a center stage. I remember thinking 'this is almost inconsistent
> with our work' and wondered why she was here. But that was her viewpoint and
> if that's you point of view, there's not much to say. I thought about saying
> something to her but chose not to.

Miguel vividly recalled the conversation and was immediately launched back into

it. I had not shared with him the opening statement to the conversation, but he knew

exactly what conversation I was talking about and he was visibly worked about it. I asked

Miguel why he did not say anything to the woman that offended him and he said that if

they had been working in their smaller groups he might have said something. But, he felt

that saying something could otherwise add to the "bigotry" and that he did not want to

disrupt the flow of the conversation.

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[43] I attributed the disconnected sentences for White respondents as related to wanting to try and answer the
question positively somehow and please me as an interviewer.

Josué also discussed the forecasted growth of the Latino population:

The main piece from that conversation was that we're [Latinos] right on the border of being the majority and it's like 'now you know how it feels and it doesn't feel that good. You're experiencing what we've been feeling for a long time.' There were a lot of comments about that. I'm surprised it didn't end up getting that out of hand. There were lots of Latinos in the room who didn't feel their perspective was being validated. It really reminded me of when people get upset because you're speaking Spanish in the room. They don't want to not be in control. They don't want to left out. They're afraid you're saying something bad about them. And that's what their afraid of. They won't be in control and they won't know what's being said.

Josué connected the conversation with history of Latino and White tensions, referencing an often heated debate over language. He also linked the comments in the conversation with fear of what might happen.

Juan echoed the belief held by Josué and other Latino participants that fear of a growing Latino population would lead to violence against Whites is what was driving White participants' comments. Juan stated:

We talked openly about the concerns and fears about this [Latinos becoming the majority]. I wanted to know to whom is this an issue and why? It's only an issue if we make it an issue. I wanted to know what if we didn't make it an issue. It's really about the fear of the unknonwn. I felt like 'what do people think, once the Hispanics become the majority they are going to rape and plunder them.' They're afraid of the change, like we're going to take some revenge on them. They [Whites] just didn't know how to handle this. I just keep saying our similarities outweigh our differences.

But unlike Miguel, Juan found himself wanting to "challenge" the people in the room and force them to articulate their concerns. Five years later, Pedro remembered what Juan said during the conversation:

One thing I thought was interesting was that Juan said "Why is the Latinos becoming the majority significant? Why does this matter? Why was this a big deal?" I thought this was a great question. To whom does this matter and why? And I don't think there was a satisfactory response to this question.

These Latinos brought up many issues through their comments. Their responses reflected

anger, frustration and in some instances even graphic images of violence. Their message

becomes even starker when compared with White participants.

7.3.2.2 White responses

> I'm not sure but what I do know is that I never thought much about the about that
> representation. I mean we all know that Hispanics are going to be the majority
> and they should be represented.   *Paul*

> Don't remember the conversation but I never thought it was heavily towards
> them. The reality is that Hispanics are a huge part of the community and that
> presence should be shown.   *Hank*

> No, I don't remember it. [pausese] I do remember two of the stories going that
> way.   *Donovan*

> I just vaguely remember it. My feeling about the Latino orientation is that they
> will be the majority in the not so distant future and we need to prepare everyone
> to be in leadership positions.   *Jason*

> No, not really but again it's an example of focusing too much on the social stuff. When
> looking at it from a growth perspective doesn't matter about race, creed, or color. It's so
> much more about getting along.   *Tim*

Whites did not really recall the conversation, if at all. But Paul, Donovan, and

Jason described being comfortable with a Latino presence or emphasis in the scenarios.

Each discussed the importance of including and working with the Latino population.

Through this and other comments they made, they conveyed an understanding, from a

human equity perspective as a well as pragmatic reality, that addressing Latino inequality

was critical to the SJV's future. Tim's response reflected his ambiguity with addressing

what he viewed as social issues in the process. Earlier in this chapter I shared Tim's

comments that he knew that you have to address social issues, but in talking about the conversation about Latino representation, he struggles to maintain this perspective.

7.3.2.3 Juxtaposing the responses

There are a many important issues that these responses raise. I will address a few of the ones most germane to this research project. First, what does it mean that a discussion experienced so viscerally to Latino participants left little impression on White participants? While conducting interviews, I found myself wondering what Miguel, Josué, Juan, and Pedro might think about this. I expected their response would not be surprising.

As Latinos, they bear the burden of consciously encountering race (Lipsitz 1999). And their lived experiences have, as mine, taught them Whites have the privilege to experience raise subconsciously (Yancy 2005). Whites, even if empathetic to social inequality and the nation's legacy of racism, can remove themselves psychologically from the damages of racisms at least consciously (Lipsitz 1999). The emphasis placed on living in a color-blind society encourages Whites to function as though everyone is treated the same and that racism is a thing of the past.

The marked differences in reactions between Whites and Latinos also brings up questions about the facilitation of the process, a process almost all participants described as constructive and well facilitated. As Pedro had said earlier, "I don't think there was a satisfactory response to this question," referring the conversation. The discussion was not resolved, and White participants did not offer any responses to Juan's question. For Juan, as discussed earlier, it was enough to raise the questions.

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Miguel and Josué also expressed surprise that the conversation did not get out of hand. Of course, how out of hand it could have gotten or for whom is incredibly hard to imagine. Had Whites experienced the intensity of emotions that Latino participants recalled? It seems unlikely given White participants' lack of recollection about the discussion they would have reacted strongly. Still that, at least what appeared to be a precarious situation was averted, demonstrates that the process supported a safe space for people to go beyond simply share stories but also express anger and frustration.

But what constitutes a good deliberation? As detailed in Chapters 2 and 6, a good deliberation can mean a lot of things. And, part of that measurement is related to the purpose of the deliberative process. The VFP was not a process about working out tensions about race, rather it offered participants the opportunity to learn about or express tensions related to race. And, for some participants, it was not about even changing a person's perspective. Tim explained, "It wasn't about changing viewpoints, but hearing them." Yet for Hank hearing different viewpoints and being willing to change your perspective was a central component to the process. He said:

> I get upset when I hear people coming in with firm 'no' attitudes. And there is a difference between being willing to really listen and change your mind and just listening. Being willing to change your mind is critical. You know I'm stubborn, but I'm willing to listen and change my mind. That's part of the process, being able to change your mind.

This makes the outcome of the conversation the participants had about the Latino presence in the scenarios even more complex. Should the facilitators have attempted to guide the conversation to more of a resolution? I thought of this question later, after reflecting on the responses of participants. If someone, as Miguel felt, had made an offensive statement, how could that have been addressed constructively? Was it enough

to allow people to air their opinions? In many ways Latinos were asking Whites to begin "working through whiteness" by asking that they examine the motivations behind their concern about an upcoming Latino majority (Levine-Rasky 2002). Something of this nature can be addressed in a workshop, but perhaps this kind of conversation serves as the catalyst for follow-up conversations specifically about racial inequality.

7.3.3 Valuing Uncertainty?

Many White participants described feeling "depressed" or "hopeless" leaving the process. Jason said, "it was discouraging as you looked at potential scenarios. . . . I walked out feeling discouraged." Noah stated, "[they] were all very negative. You needed to have hope." For Whites, the experience of hopelessness often emerged in relation to the lack of either policy outcome produced in the process or agreement about a positive, or utopian, future to work toward. The emphasis on uncertainty and plausibility in the scenario-planning process troubled some participants. Noah felt that they should instead be "leading to go somewhere that is good and deciding how we are going to get there." Noah's interest in charting a course to reach a specific destination, such as utopia, runs counter to the scenario planning approach that asked participants to acknowledge that they had limited control over the future and recognize the possibility of a negative future. Some of the White participants felt more strongly about not reaching agreement about a single scenario to work for, or perhaps, against. Donovan said, "We had four scenarios and, really, what are you going to do with that?" Leaving multiple futures in motion left some of the participants with a sense of incompletion.

Latino VFP participants did not use this language in talking about the process. They appreciated the reality, no matter how stark it was, that the scenarios described. In focus groups with community members the GVC conducted to scenario the SJV materials, Latinos commented that the scenarios were an acknowledgment of their lived experiences. And, Latino VFP workshop participants also enjoyed the acknowledgment and multiplicity inherent in the future. While many of the participants appreciated the emphasis the VFP process placed on dialogue, Latinos pointed to the value of an approach that did not produce public policy, as Alberto's earlier suggestion to hold *platicas* demonstrates. These kind of civic dialogues and listening sessions have been conducted elsewhere (Gastil and Levine 2005). That Latinos specifically see the value in talking indicates that these kinds of iterative conversations might be especially valuable in Latino communities or communities with Latino populations.

Components unique to the scenario planning process might fit well with Latino populations. But there appear to be components of the process that unsettle Whites. Perhaps a better understanding of why this occurred can help planners seeking to unpack the White, Western underpinnings of deliberative democracy as well as collaborative and communicative planning to support the construction of truly cross-cultural processes.

7.4 Issues Raised in Disseminating the VFP

The VFP scenarios were turned into character based narratives. They were intended to be provocative, to serve as a catalyst for conversation, and hopefully action. In developing the scenarios, the GVC worked to incorporate as many diverse perspectives as possible. But in their dissemination campaign, they faced many obstacles

in incorporating the Latino population fully into the project. At the time of the project, there was no one assigned to the project who spoke Spanish, preventing the organization from conducting dissemination activities in Spanish language dominant forums. Some of the Latino community leaders who participated in the scenario development were never made aware that the later scenario materials had been translated into Spanish. And the most accessible component of the VFP, its web site is still only available in English.

The prominence given to the Latino population in the scenarios generated conversation about the serious challenges the Latino community faces. I observed one presentation of the materials that was part of a series on leadership training, the presentation I begin with in Chapter 1. There were many Whites and Latinos in the audience and a productive conversation unfolded about how to increase educational attainment in Latino households. Latinos spoke freely about the value placed in their own households on work over education. Whites asked how they could be of assistance.

In another presentation, this time in a community dialogue in the town of Visalia hosted by a coalition between faith-based organizations and the local newspaper, the scenarios were read by actors and personalized further to fit the city better. The audience was largely white. In small group discussions, audience members raised concern about the lack of diversity within their own conversation. This prompted the coalition to give serious consideration as to why they failed to attract Latinos into their efforts.

While these discussions, stimulated by the VFP scenarios, placed attention on the existing relational and structural gap between Whites and Latinos and allowed people to discuss this openly, the discussions also unveiled just how many challenges planners face in responding to attitudes and lack of knowledge about different cultural groups. During

the same leadership training session where Latinos and Whites were able to openly

discuss reasons for why Latinos faced such a serious educational gap when compared to

Whites, one participant demonstrated how deeply embedded assumptions about can run.

After one Latina had spoken about what she saw as an educator, a White audience

member asked her how she had been able to work her way out of poverty, what was

different about her family that had pushed her to attend college. She paused for a

moment, and then said "Uh, I was not in the same situation, my father was a college

professor."

Reviewing the comments of the Latina carefully, there was nothing in what she

said that referenced she grew in a low-income background. And in fairness to the White

participant, the two previous Latino/as who had spoken referenced their own challenges

in growing up in low-income households. Still, during an interview with the main

leadership trainer after the discussion, she agreed that the White woman had simply

assumed the Latina had been from a low-income background. The trainer both

acknowledged this happened frequently in Tulare County and regretted she had not noted

it herself to address. And in the Visalia dialogue, there was an emphasis put on trying to

get "them," Latinos, to join the dialogue as opposed to considering why Latinos had not

attended in the first place.

Coupled with the surprise many of the White community leaders experienced

during the VFP workshop presentations hearing about the some of the truly dire

circumstances in which Latinos are working and living begins to paint a picture of a

White SJV community not in touch with a significant portion of their future. One of the

most troubling discussions I observed involved a Bakersfield businessperson who asked

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the GVC to participate in their annual strategic planning retreat. The GVC presented

overall Valley trends and then showed the scenarios.

Later in the day, after hearing experts speak specifically about the growth of the

Latino community and how the company should be thinking about capturing this

emerging market, small groups discussed how they might accomplish this. The small

group in which I participated, consisting of five White men who all but one had been in

Bakersfield for over forty years, expressed great surprise over the sheer presence and

growth of the Latino population in their city and in their county, Kern County. Many of

their ideas were more sophisticated than one might expect, especially given their surprise

at this "new" emergence of a Latino population – discussing scholarship programs,

employee recruitment and retention, job fairs in addition to more basic ideas such as

advertising in Spanish. And, they appeared sincerely excited about outreach opportunities

from an economic and social perspective.

What concerned me about their reaction was that Bakersfield is only thirty

minutes from both the cities of Delano and Keene, also in Kern County. Delano is where

young civil rights activist, Cesar Chavez pushed a local grape boycott to national

attention for farm worker rights in 1966 (Ferriss & Sandoval 1997; Levy & Chavez

1975). Keene is where he and Dolores Huerta headquartered the United Farm Workers

(Pérez 1996). Yet these men were reacting as those Latinos had started moving into their

region in the last ten years. This could be interpreted as a disconnection between city life

(Bakersfield's population is roughly 350,000). But, I believe the response of these

businessmen about the growing Latino population, coupled with the ones discussed

directly above reinforce the claims of critical whiteness scholars that white identity is

inextricably bound up with 'blindness' to color (Crocker et al., 1994; Kincheloe et al. 1998; Spanierman & Heppner 2004; Twine 1997). There is a need and ability for Whites to distance themselves from the legacy of racial and ethnic inequality (Lipsitz, 1999; Roediger, 1999; Solomona et al., 2005; Yancy, 2005).

7.5 Conclusions

Planning in multi-cultural communities requires new practices to reach the profession's democratic ideals about participation, justice and diversity. The historic presence and rapid growth of the Latino population across the U.S. places this cultural group at the center of these discussions. The VFP offers insights into how planners can develop more effective planning processes that go beyond simply incorporating Latinos into traditional planning activities. The experiences of Latinos in the VFP demonstrate that they have different expectations, motivations and outcomes from participating in planning processes. The challenge, thus, to planners working with and in Latino communities is to deconstruct the processes they currently employ to create new techniques that reflect the cultural perspectives and experiences of Latinos. This changes the tenor of the conversation from how can we recruit *them* to how can we change ourselves.

Chapter 8: Implications for Theory, Practice, and Future Research

8.1 Conclusions

I began the research for this dissertation interested in how planning could better plan in multi-cultural communities. I saw the need for the development of cross-cultural planning processes. For me this meant input sessions that went beyond trying to incorporate the 'other' into existing U.S. institutional structures. I saw those structures as created by culturally White elites, resulting in the exclusion of those that not fit that profile. I did not, nor do I now, believe the best way to address this institutionalized exclusion is through a complete dismantling of current planning and policy practices. Rather, I believe understanding existing activities in their cultural context and incorporating the cultural practices of other groups would advance the normative planning goal of 'co-managing shared spaces' (Healey 1997).

In selecting the GVC and the VFP as the focus of my dissertation, I hoped I was choosing an organization that believed in the importance of cultural diversity and a project that demonstrated it. I saw the application of scenario planning as on opportunity to capture not only the multiple ways the future could play, but to also represent the myriad of (diverse) actors that would shape it. Before arriving in Modesto, California I steeled myself for the disappointment I knew could exist – tokenism of and rhetoric about cultural diversity.

As discussed throughout Chapters 4-8 I instead found an organization trying to think about cultural diversity in sometimes simplistic and at other times uniquely advanced ways. From political pragmatism to social justice to a civic virtue, the cultural

mosaic of people who called the Valley home was never far from thought. This did not

always correspond with actions taken by the GVC, and certainly there were people

working within the organization that displayed attitudes sometimes incongruent with an

organization devoted to cultural difference. But, from diversifying its own staff to

ensuring broad representation at its annual conference at the organization's expense, the

recognition that the Central Valley's diverse present was also its future was incorporated

into much of the GVC's framework.

The results of this research indicate that conventional planning processes and

concepts, such as visioning and consensus building, are more culturally appropriate for

White communities. Their receptiveness and utility in Latino communities, specifically,

are limited. Additional research in other non-White communities would help determine if

this is specific to Latino communities only or has implications for developing planning

processes in other multi-cultural communities. Ongoing debates about transferring these

processes in developing countries around the world indicate that it will. Between the

process it selected, the attributes of the workshop participants, and the characteristics of

the organization, much has been learned in the contexts of planning scholarship and

practice.

8.2 Theoretical implications & future research directions

Within the scholarly conversations discussed throughout this document, there are

many implications for advancing these conversations as well as areas for additional

research. The minimized role of political power in the VFP scenario workshops creates

an opportunity to refine our goals for communicative and deliberative forums. Is the

primary purpose of these forums issue identification? Are we more interested in social

learning? Is the purpose of deliberation to reach decisions for collective action? Do we

want to motivate civic engagement? Or, develop professional networks? While all of

these possibilities are discussed in the literature, the VFP indicates that if political power

stands as the largest threat to creating open dialogue, then forums not centered on

government actions might be better opportunities to fulfill the other goals of deliberative

forums.

If such dialogue centered forums are created, who should conduct them? NPOs

seem to be well positioned to conduct such discussions, especially in light of the current

distrust of government activities. While such dialogues might focus on building bridges

across cultural groups or in enhancing civic capacities, NPOs are not limited in their

positions to influence the broader political arena. While their vital role in collaborative

planning and deliberative democracy is acknowledged, there is limited theoretical

accounting of what they do and how they do it. This research confirms that NPOs have an

ambiguous relationship with advocacy and that this contributes to a weaker theoretical

understanding to how they do, or even should, shape public decision making.

But, this project also demonstrates that sometimes not directly engaging in the

political arena is a strategic choice that enhances a NPOs' credibility. Unfortunately for

researchers, this makes demonstrating the impacts of NPOs in the deliberative sphere

more challenging. Only through conducting research on the various activities conducted

by NPOs, directly and indirectly, will we be better positioned to understand and support

them as actors in planning.

And, NPOs can serve as a place for innovation, even challenging pervasive conventional wisdom. One strategy the GVC employed, countering decades of scholarly discussions about the importance of transparency and open participation, was the careful selection of process participants into a closed series of workshops. What implications does this have for publicly conducted planning processes? Should planners be rethinking open calls for public participation at each stage of their processes? Should they instead be thinking about a strategic selection of community members for the start of the project? While this happens to some extent by the creation of advisory groups, do planners have the capabilities to assemble a better representation in these groups than self selection into them generally does?

Finally, how do we begin to move beyond a focus on difference vis-à-vis power? From how the importance of family manifests to the way that social networks are maintained, research in various fields tells us about the profound role that cultural backgrounds play in how we communicate and relate with one another. The experiences of the VFP scenario workshop participants tell us that cultural backgrounds shape the way people participate in and learn from planning processes. Additional research is needed to better understand what implications this has for planning activities that exist in multi-cultural societies. Existing research should be guide the development of explicitly cross-cultural planning processes. Follow-up research needs to be conducted on whether cross-cultural processes can be developed and what effect they have on cultural bridge building, social learning, and the creation of socially just plans and policies. Long term research is necessary to determine whether deliberative forums have lasting effects on people along a variety of believed points of impacts.

8.3 Practitioner Implications

This research does not just have implications for planning scholars. Practitioners can also learn from the GVC and its VFP. Some of these opportunities are detailed in Chapter 4. Building on the discussions in chapters 5-6, I offer additional issues for practitioners to consider.

In the context of regional planning, especially in predominantly rural areas, an institutional framework should be created to support networks and relationships. One of the major challenges the GVC faced, both in its day to day work and the VFP, was related to the sheer size the area. Relationships formed during the VFP scenario workshops were not maintained because people lived and worked quite far apart from one another. The only way to nourish these relationship was through an organization, government or otherwise, to support them. If regional issues matter in a community, some sort of institutional framework will need to be developed to support the development of regional decision making.

Current planning processes are linearly sequenced with a clear start and end date. Planners should instead think of planning as an iterative process, especially in the thinking about developing relationships within their community members. The VFP dissemination campaign had an end date. Yet, as of my last visit in May 2008 the GVC was still receiving calls to have presentations about and receive copies of the scenario materials. Some organizations had incorporated the materials into annual meetings; others had just heard about the materials for the first time. The VFP is still teaching people and sparking conversation.

The VFP SJV workshop participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining relationships. When the GVC did not keep up their communication with them, they expressed frustration. The GVC missed an opportunity to mobilize a set of community leaders around core issues because they did not maintain contact. One of the Latino participants underscored the importance of an iterative relationship for planning, as well as a dialogic one, when he commented that community members should be coming together routinely and just talking about the issues that mattered to them along with elected officials.

In trying to respond to multicultural communities, a number of issues immediately surface from this research. How planners think about difference or diversity matters. If it is viewed as a problem to be solved this can lead to tokenism or the suppression of difference. Seeing difference as an accepted and valued component of communities, one that needs constant attention and understanding can change things greatly. Instead of focusing on unobtainable utopian futures or forcing weak consensus in multicultural communities, this research demonstrates that planners should consider the multiple, *plausible* realities and work to represent the differentiated effects plans have in communities and more effectively plan across differences.

Table 1. SJV Stakeholder Interview Questions[44]

Question	Purpose	Relation to scholarly conversations, where applicable (CPT = Communicative planning theory, DD= deliberative democracy, CRT=critical race theorists.)
Participant background information		
Can you tell me a little about your background? If you're not from the Valley, how long have you been here? What brought you here?	Background information for participant profile, migration patterns, longevity of Valley residence, rapport building	N/A
Where do you work and what is your position?	Background information for participant profile, determine change in employment from 2002, area of professional expertise	N/A
When you participated in the scenario planning workshops where did you work and what was your position?	Background information for participant profile, role in organization (authority), confirmation of information provided by GVC	N/A
Did you attend both workshops?	Memory trigger (only participants who attended both workshops were listed as official participants), rapport building	N/A
Have you participated in other multistakeholder activities?	Determine experience in multistakeholder activities, explore comparisons where relevant	CPT and DD argue that learning in these forms will have a cumulative effect and over time change behavior.
Project participation, general themes		
What sticks out to you about the workshop?	Conversation starter about project, major aspects that are identifiable	N/A
Why do you think you were selected?	Determine how participants view and describe themselves	N/A
Why did you want to participate?	Motivations for participation, determine context of project/mindset of participants, establish	Consensus building scholars believe that people will be more likely to participate if the reputation of the convening organization (or

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[44] The table reflects Stake's (1995: 25) table on developing topical information questions about the specificities of the case. These are not the same what Stake describes as the 'issue' questions driving the case study research.

Table 1 (cont.)

	why project was appealing	organizer) is good.
What do you think the purpose was of the project?	Determine how participants viewed and understood the project	N/A
What did you feel was expected of you as a participant? How was this communicated to you?	Determine perceived and experienced expectations, specifically interested in whether people felt they were speaking for a group/organization or for themselves	Forester (1999) argues that people should be seen as individuals, yet deliberative democrats (Gutmann & Thompson 1996, 2001) believe that people should be seen as representatives. Critical race theorists (Lipsitz 1999) and planning participation scholars (Sandercock 1998) argue that people from under-represented groups carry the burden of representation of a group while those from majority, privileged positions are allowed to speak as individuals.
How would you characterize your interactions with other participants?	Description of interactions in the room (i.e. hostile, polite); determine if people experienced interactions differently;	CPT and DD believe that only through mutual respect for one another's positions will deliberation be effective.
How did you interactions with group members change throughout the workshops?	Explore whether relationships changed through interaction with one another	CPT and DD argues that participation in deliberative forms will increase social capital, inter-subjective understanding and developing long-term working relationships.
How do you feel your perspective differed from other peoples' in the room?	Establish how the participant viewed themselves as distinct in relation to others in the room	N/A
How did people respond to your comments?	Determine if the participant felt listened to, explore whether participant's viewpoint was respected, well received, ignored, etc.	CPT and DD believe that only through mutual respect for one another's positions will deliberation be effective.
What were the differences in perspectives, ideologies, or ideas that stuck out most?	Explore what kind of differences mattered within workshop	Difference is contextually determined.
Did you learn about any particular issue, perspective or attitude you were that familiar with before?	Explore what was learned	CPT and DD argue that people will learn about issues through deliberative forms

Table 1 (cont.)

How has learning about that issue, perspective or attitude influence you (professionally, socially, familial)?	Explore the impact of things learned	CPT and DD argue that learning in these forms will have a cumulative effect and over time change behavior.
How did the process allow this learning to occur?	Explore specific characteristics about the process that are relevant to learning	CPT and consensus-building in particular, identify specific characteristics that make deliberative spaces learning spaces.
How did participating in the process strengthen or change pre existing beliefs?	Explore what ideas and beliefs were discussed, determine if discussing changed or enhanced beliefs, explore how this occurred and why	CPT and DD argue that learning in these forms will have a cumulative effect and over time change behavior.
Project participation, specific events		
During one conversation, there was a conversation about the representation of Latino issues and characters in the scenarios. Do you remember this conversation? If so what do you remember about it? How did you feel about it?	Explore to whom this conversation struck deeply (per Valley Futures staff this conversation was heated and described as the most intense of the workshops), what stuck out to people (notes from the conversation have it moving all over the place)	CRT and whiteness scholars argue that perceptions and reactions to racial topics will be recalled differently for Whites and non-Whites.
During one discussion, the term underclass was used. Do you remember this term? Either way, what does this term mean to you? Who is the face of this underclass?	Establish whether the term stuck out to people, how memorable was the conversation, explore different meanings and uses for term; second question to explore if underclass is referring to specific gendered or racialized group	CRT and whiteness scholars believe that whites often use marginalizing nomenclature without awareness (or conscious intent).
Reflection questions		
Do you maintain contact with any of the participants?	Determine if any relationships were formed during the process	CPT and DD argues that participation in deliberative forms will increase social capital, inter-subjective understanding and developing long-term working relationships.
What did you gain from participating in the process?	Establish what participants felt they gained	N/A
What would you have done differently?	Identify what participants disliked about the process	N/A

Table 1 (cont.)

What are your perceptions of the GVC?	What do different people think about the institution, how did their participation in this event change their thinking about the institution, what are unique qualities of the organization that might be relevant to the project	N/A
Any other comments or thoughts?	Open invitation for participants to share otherwise missed information	N/A

Table 2. Valley Futures Project Goals[45]

1) Create regional view of and conversation about the future of the Central Valley by raising awareness of regional interconnections and the relevance of regional action
2) Identify and generate responses to regional population growth and related changes in land use, transportation and demography
3) Motivate community members to take action on key issues through dissemination of information about the Valley's future
4) Inform local decision making on regional issues
5) Develop mechanisms to feed regional outcomes to state decision makers

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[45] This list differs slightly from the goal listed compiled by Cummings (2007) and is based on field research, interviews, VFP documentation and the moving target goals of the project over its duration. Cummings' (2007) program goals include: "1. engage a larger audience in issues of infrastructure investment and long-range planning; 2. present new information about the impact of current decision making on the region's future based on tracked indicators; 3. build a regional foundation that can support a statewide transportation planning process; 4. create a regional framework of potential outcomes to feed into the statewide planning discussions; and 5. support decision makers in questioning their broadest assumptions about the way the world works so they can foresee decisions that might be missed or denied" (p. 248).

Table 3. Valley Futures Project Outcomes

Outcomes	Examples	Expect-ed	Comments	Goal(s) Supported
Merging into curriculum /trainings	Leadership program utilizes materials annually to educate upcoming leaders on regional interconnections and challenges. Educator uses materials in community college course.	Y	The amount the materials have been incorporated was not as much as hoped, especially given the development of a high school curriculum guide. Still where it has occurred, the materials are highly regarded and learning outcomes high.	1, 4
Invited presentatio ns	Talks given from 2003 – present using materials at meetings ranging from Chambers of Commerce to firm retreats	Y	Probably the most successful part of the program, these facilitated discussions that feature the scenario movies are still requested. Though the GVC hoped community members would become distributors of the information, the role of the organization in continuing to disseminate the information and play an organizing role in the conversations.	1, 2, 3
Citizens using informatio n	Letters to the editor using information to argue point, home-hosted session where Valley Futures materials were used to help encourage residents to lobby for environmental position	Y	Here the GVC hoped to make a big impact, encouraging people to even host their own at-home facilitated discussions without GVC staff. The other hope was that community members would take the information and move forward on specific policy issues. This happened only in a limited capacity. The materials have been used, however in numerous letters to the editor and op	1, 2, 3, 4

Table 3 (cont.)

			eds.	
Mass media in	Local newspapers running four scenarios, Newspapers localizing scenarios for smaller community use	Y	The participation of numerous English and Spanish language newspaper was across the Central Valley was tremendous in helping the GVC reach its ambitious wide-audience. Newspapers even contributed their own artwork and frequently wrote corresponding editorials about the pieces. Some of the willingness for newspapers to be so supportive reflects the inclusion of newspaper editors in some of the scenario workshops as well as the broad GVC network.	1, 2, 3, 4
Long shelf life	Continued requests from area organizations for VFP materials and presentations, local organizing using materials five-six years after their development in their own projects	N	One of the most successful components of the project has been its continued use. Only now are the foretold events of the scenarios unfolding, and in reality many of them are taking place. The long-shelf life of the project is attributed to the broad-representation of community leaders who helped developed the scenarios. This ensured at least some of the stories would be plausible and all the stories would resonate with some people. The multi-media formats, especially the web site and DVD, work as excellent pedagogical tools.	1
Groups reformatting	Collation groups take regional scenarios and make	N	The most recent outcome from the project, NGOs are using the materials to	1, 2, 3, 4

Table 3 (cont.)

for own work	them relevant to a single city or county for their own purposes		help jump start their own activities. The scenarios serve as a way to frame the complexities of regional futures into digestible nuggets of information. The GVC's willingness to share information and not push for visual credit has been useful in encouraging these to take the scenario stories and make them their own.	

Figures

Figure 1. Various Images of The Central Valley and its subdivisions from Great Valley Center 2003

Figure 1a. Aerial image of the Central Valley and major CA cities

Figure 1 (cont.)

Figure 1b. The Central Valley Three Subregions

The Northern Valley

The Sacramento Valley Region

Modesto

The San Joaquin Valley
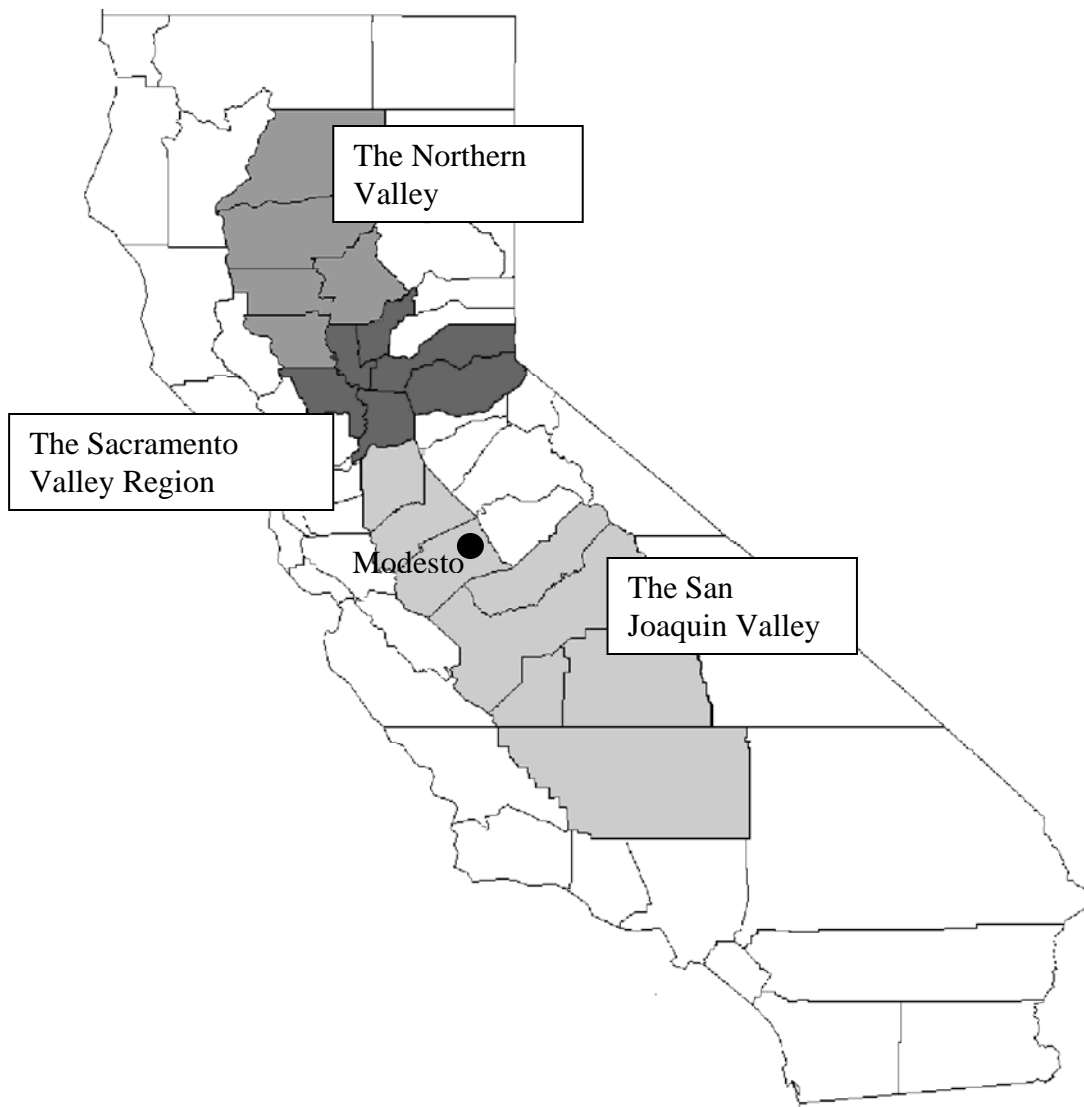
Figure 2. Agricultural Jobs 2003 in Central Valley from Great Valley Center 2005

Agricultural Jobs in the Central Valley and California as a Percentage of All Jobs
2003

	All Agricultural Jobs	Direct Ag Jobs	Ag Business Jobs
Central Valley	20%	8.5%	11%
California	5.8%	2.5%	3.3%

■ Central Valley ■ California
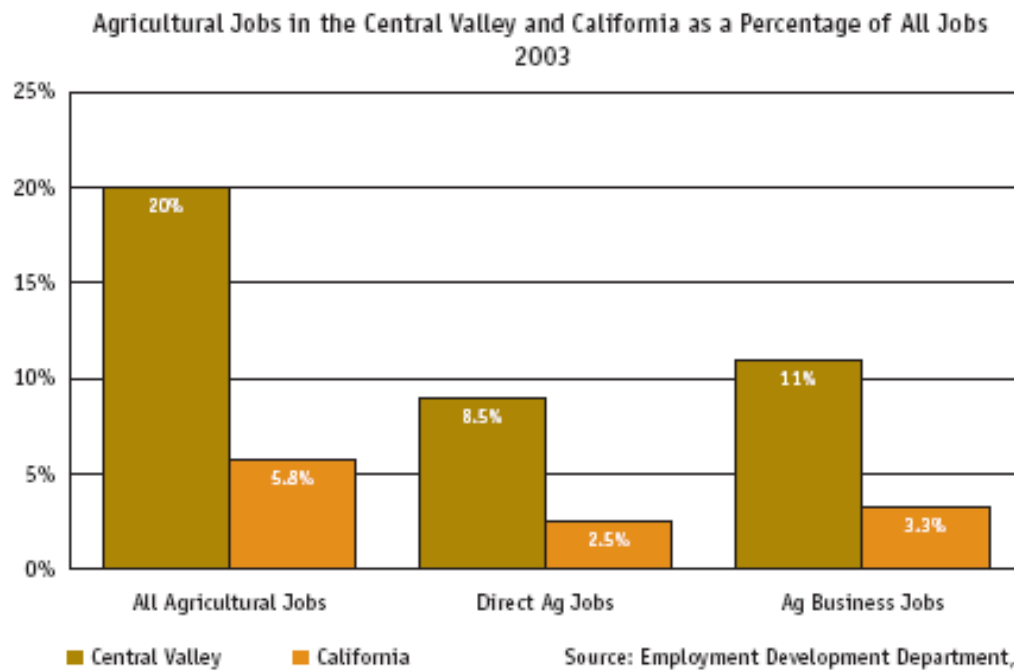
Source: Employment Development Department,
Labor Market Information Division

University of California, Davis

Figure 3. Central Valley Industry Employment in 2003 from Great Valley Center 2005

Industry Employment in the Central Valley
2003

Natural Resources & Mining
0.4%

Farming
8.5%

Construction
6.4%

Government
22.9%

Manufacturing
7.4%

Other Services
3.2%

Trade, Transportation
& Utilities
17.4%

Leisure & Hospitality
8.1%

Educational &
Health Services
10.1%

Information
1.7%

Professional &
Business Services
9.0%

Financial Activities
5.0%

Source: Employment Development Department
Labor Market Information Division

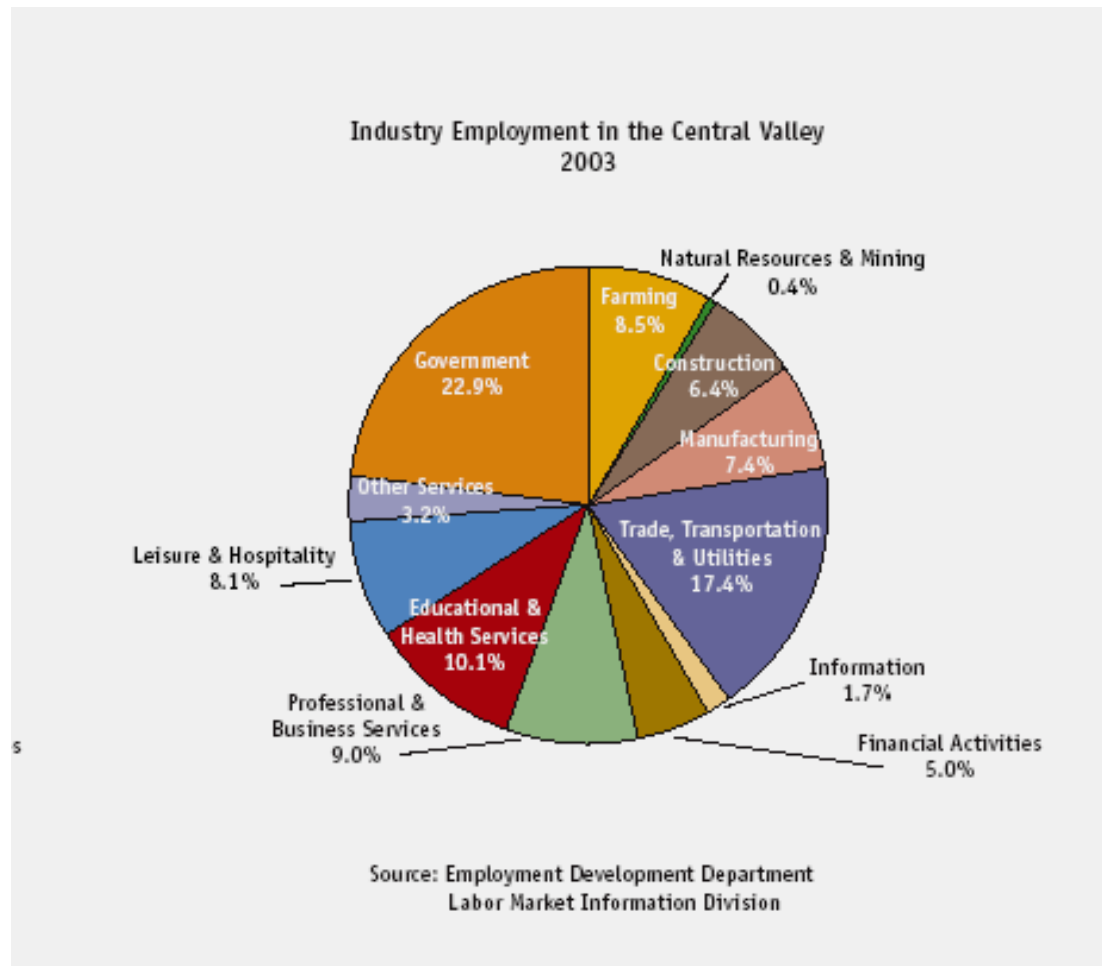**Figure 4. Air Quality Measures from Environmental Protection Agency 2007**
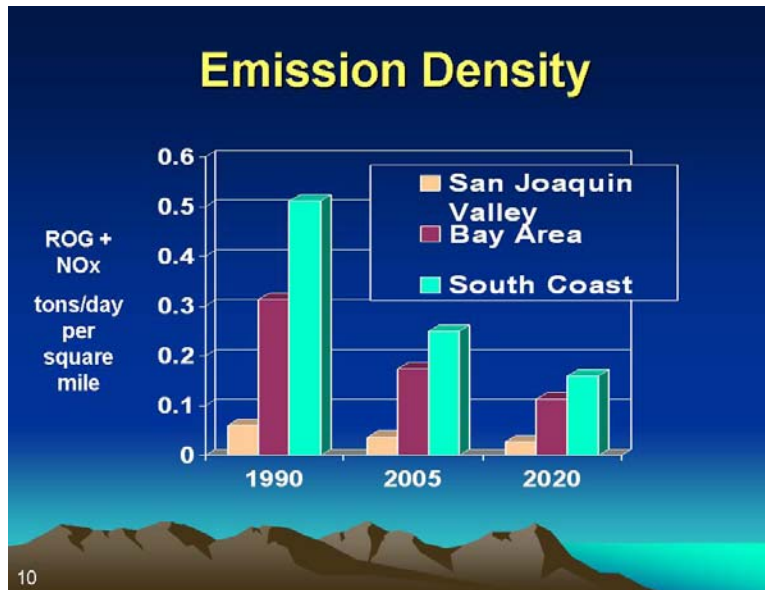
Figure 5. Percent Population by Race/Ethnicity 2040

Central Valley Percent Population by Race/Ethnicity 2040

Legend:
- White
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Other

(36% White, 47% Hispanic, 9% Asian, 8% Other)

Figure 6. Central Valley Population Projections

Data Source: State of California, Department of
Finance, 2007.

Figure 7. GVC VFP Meeting Notes of Workshop Participants Types. Date unknown.

Figure 8. Scenario Matrix for the San Joaquin Valley from Great Valley Center 2003
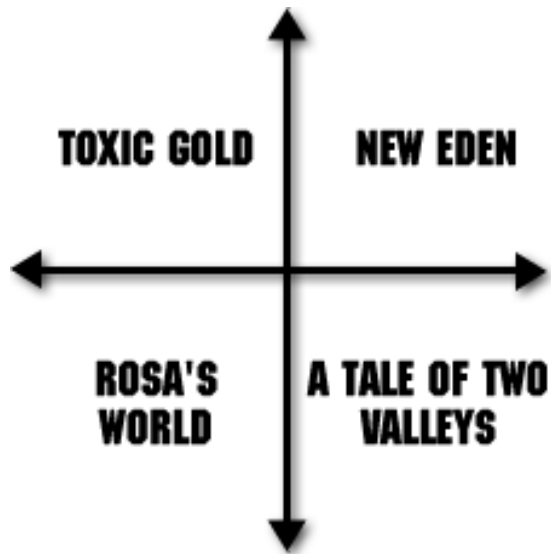
Figure 9 Valley Futures Project Timeline

Sept. 11, 2001

May 17-18, 2002
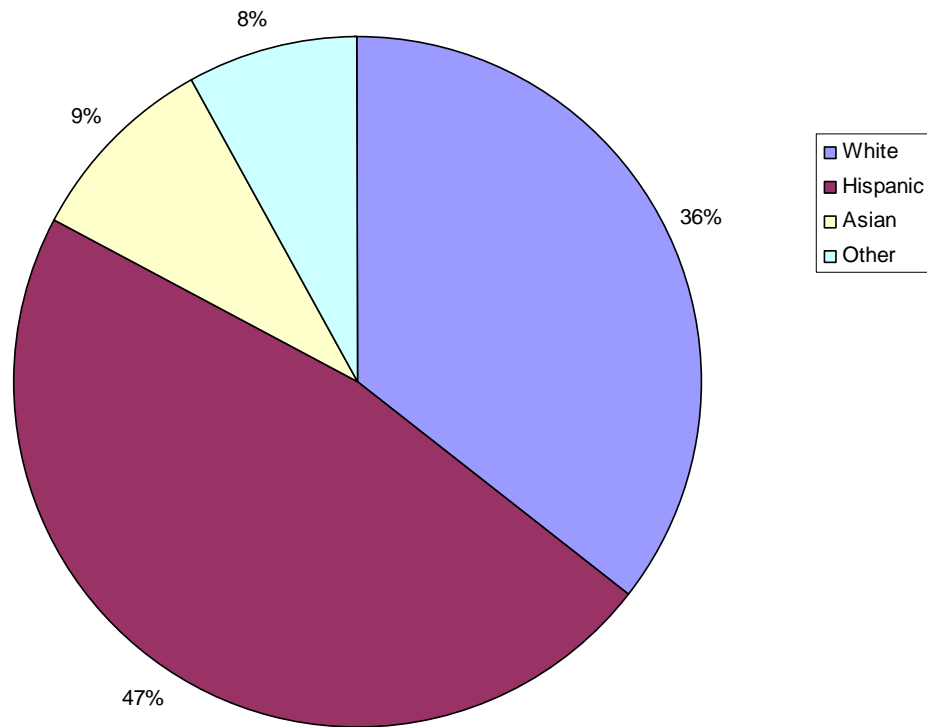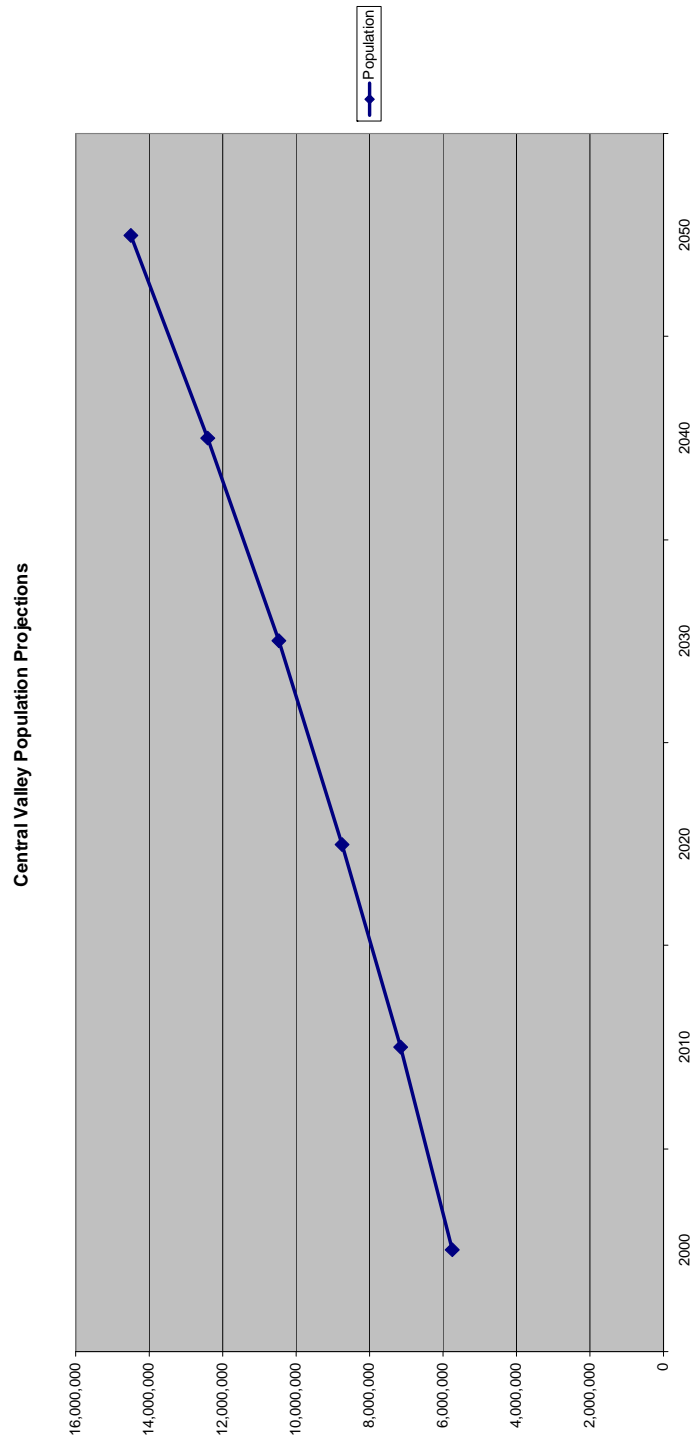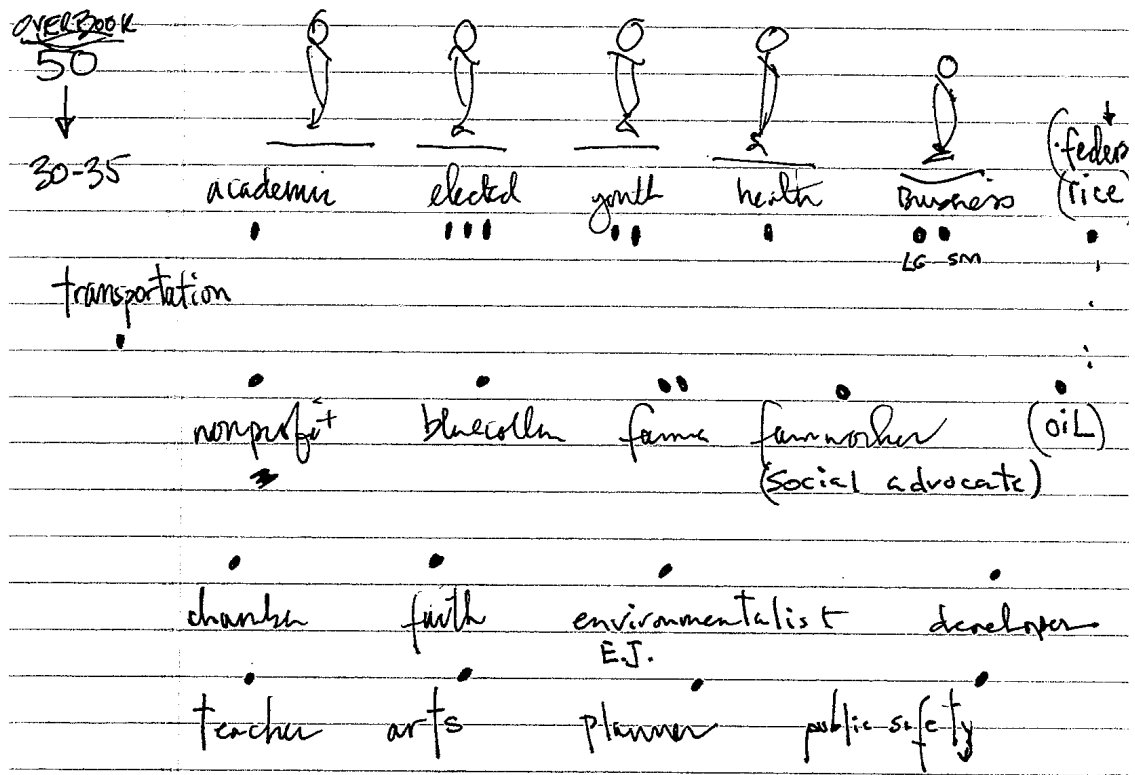June 5-6, 2002
June 20-21, 2002

Fall 2001-
Spring 2002

Sept. 6-7, 2002
Sept. 13-14, 2002
Sept. 20-21, 2002

Winter 2003

May 14, 2003

Winter 2004

Spring/summer 2003

Aug. 29 –
Sept. 1, 2003

Fall 2001-
Spring 2002

April 6-13, 2003

GBN stakeholder
interviews

GBN fleshes
out scenario
stories

SJV
Sac Valley
North Valley

Modesto Bee
Runs SJV scenarios

Chico Enterprise-Record
Runs NV scenarios

**GVC develops
outreach tools &
begins dissemination
campaign**

GVC recruits
workshop
participants

2nd set scenario
development workshops

Formal
dissemination
concludes

North Valley
SJV

Sac Valley

GBN submits scenario story
sketches to GVC for fictionalization
and contextualization

VFP premieres all outreach
tools at GVC annual conference

**GVC – GBN
launch meeting**

1st set scenario development
workshops

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**Appendix A – Valley Futures Project San Joaquin Valley Scenario Stories from
Great Valley Center 2003**

TOXIC GOLD

In "Toxic Gold", it's the year 2025 and we listen as a grandfather and grandson have breakfast at a coffee shop in Corcoran, California. They describe a San Joaquin Valley that has captured the market for prisons and dumps not wanted by the coastal areas of the state out of economic desperation and short term thinking. The economic development strategy 'worked', but the region also paid a price.

CORCORAN, CALIFORNIA (2025)

A GOOD IDEA?

"It seemed like a good idea at the time," said Arthur as he cut into his short stack of buttermilk pancakes at a Corcoran coffee shop. "Taking in the wastes of the Bay Area and Los Angeles. The pay was good, and it provided employment. The so-called experts said we needed to 'diversify our economy.' 'Relying on agriculture alone' would make us vulnerable.

"But, let me tell you something", the old man continued while pointing a fork with a piece of bacon stuck between its tines, "Dumps and prisons are not all that diverse. Waste is waste. Just try 'adding value' to sludge. Might as well try to rehabilitate a serial rapist."

"The thing was, we had the space and they didn't. So when the landfills in Southern California topped out and they started looking around for new sites, our backyards looked a lot emptier than theirs. And God knows we needed the money. We actually fought over who would be 'lucky' enough to store hazardous wastes."

"I don't know what you're complaining about Granddad, it worked", responded Ned, Arthur's 28-year old grandson, while rolling his eyes. "We wanted the state tax dollars to build schools and housing and hospitals for our sick folks. It all made a lot of sense."

"Well, it seemed to make sense—if you went back to the last century when the prison industry started to boom out here in the valley. 'Bring us your criminals,' we said to the cities on the coast. 'We will house them. We'll keep them away from your daughters and your cars and your cash. We will look after them, and we will gain tax revenues and jobs and business for our cement factories in the process.'

"So we built big prisons in Madera, Corcoran, Delano, Avenal and Wasco, not to speak of Stockton, Tracy, Atwater, and Coalinga. And once we saw what a good business that was, it seemed to make sense to leap on the bid that Intel put out for storing its toxic wastes."

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Ned finally interrupted his grandfather's lecture, "Wait a minute Grandpa, Kings County got that contract and 250 jobs in the bargain. Then Lawrence Livermore Labs got approval for a federal grant for a spent plutonium facility, and after that, Intel sweetened its offer with a pledge to fund a research campus near UC Merced. That kicked off its own little building boom: more houses, more jobs, all in the service of building a 'center of excellence' around waste management and recycling."

Arthur shook his head and smiled sadly.

"Yeah, well . . . the words sounded nice-much nicer than the stuff they were actually talking about. But 'recycling' and 'sustainability' were words that my generation was learning from kids like you. You brought them home from school, and got us to sort our whiskey bottles and beer cans from the rest of the garbage."

"Hey, what's the big deal. This is the just the Valley. Everywhere can't be pretty like Monterey, you know," said Ned as he sipped his coffee. "Anyway, if recycling could work for aluminum cans, why not for ex-cons and toxic waste?"

"Let me ask you something College Boy. How many of your friends do you know that grow up wanting to be prison guards? Where's the career ladder? 'Stay around here, sonny, and, if you're lucky, maybe you'll end up as the top dog, the warden.' What a joke. Same thing with hazardous waste. Devote your life to taking care of them and sooner or later the rot leaks into your soul."

"But we did grow souls with all that money," Ned replied. "We built schools and colleges and hospitals with the money that came from the prisons and the waste dumps and all the jobs and housing that went around them. Those prison guards got a damn fine income once their lobby went to work in Sacramento."

"But then some of those dumps started leaking." Art replied. We noticed peculiar pockets of cancer. People started joking that the Valley might glow in the dark, but it was the glow of money."

"Right," said Ned. "That's what I mean. Unemployment was way down from what it had been. There was money in dumps, and there was even more money in clean-ups from the mistakes."

"Sure. Lawyers got rich on class action suits. Plaintiffs got rich when they won the suits. But what are you going to do with the money when your friends are dying and your real estate values are dropping and your kids are leaving home because they can't stand the stench?"

"Waste management isn't what it used to be, Granddad. It's a lot cleaner now, more scientific. We really can recycle minerals by mining and refining the landfills. This is what I've been learning about over at UC Merced."

GET OUT, KID

"Get out, kid. Garbage is a dirty business, no matter how green the money. No wonder organized crime cornered the East Coast on garbage back in the 1950s. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and garbage to garbage. I don't care how clean and scientific they make it sound over at that 'center of excellence' at the university. Major in managing a dump, for human or hazardous wastes, and all you'll be is a high-class garbage man. And it will rot your soul. Take your education and your degree and get out of this place. There may be work here. But it's not a good life."

"Granddad, I like the Valley. It may not be pretty but it pays OK. So I think you're going to have a hard time getting me to leave."

"Well then find some better way to make a living. They say there's money in cows, in dairy farming."

"So you want to see me shoveling cow pies instead of toxic wastes?"

"I've heard that the warehousing business is doing just fine up north—warehousing and trucking."

"And what are we going to do with all the traffic and the truck exhaust?" asked Ned.

"Well, you can figure that one out over at that fancy-schmancy 'center of excellence' of yours, the one where they're teaching you how to handle toxins and poisons and all that stuff."

"Storing toxic wastes may sound like a dirty job to you, but somebody's got to do it. To me it sounds more like it's cleaning up the dirt. And the money makes for a lot better life than what I could support in LA, besides," Ned smirked, "who's going to stay around to recycle you and your crusty old bones?"

"Nice one," Art snorted.

"Rosa's World" is a San Joaquin Valley of unfulfilled potential, civil unrest and all-but-forgotten dreams.

The reason?

Wholesale social disinvestment has brought the region to its knees.

In this story, it's 2025, and a crumbling education system, environmental neglect, a workforce unprepared for global competition, and ethnic unrest have battered the San Joaquin Valley beyond repair.

Read on as we follow the two decade odyssey of a Tulare County family surviving in a deteriorating San Joaquin Valley.

A DAUGHTER SAYS GOODBYE

On July 13, 2025, it was hotter than hell as the scorching summer sun beat down on the solitary figure near the gravesite in the dusty cemetery outside Visalia.

Rosa Perez —Dr. Rosa Perez—was weeping, partly for her mother who lay beneath the brown grass and partly for the realization that the dream that had brought her parents to California more than twenty years ago would never be realized.

In 2002, Manuel and Carmen Perez said goodbye to their neighbors in their village in El Salvador, and set out with their three children for the United States.

For years they had heard that California's San Joaquin Valley was a land of opportunity. It was a difficult journey: first through Mexico, across the border near Mexicali, through the Imperial Valley and over the Tehachipis to the Great Central Valley.

Three weeks after leaving their home, they arrived in Ivanhoe, a small farming community in Tulare County where one of Manuel's cousins had moved four years earlier. Life there wasn't easy, but it was better than the life they had left.

Their new home, an old garage, was hot in the smog of summer and cold in the fog of winter—but still better than the shack they left in El Salvador. Both Manuel and Carmen found jobs in the fields, while the kids, Ramon, Maria, and Rosa, enrolled in school for the first time in their lives.

THE VALLEY'S ECONOMY CRUMBLES

Within a few years, though, things began to change. The promise of an education for the Perez children turned into an uphill struggle against a public education system that was crumbling from neglect, political bickering, and economic recession.

With tax receipts down and energy costs up, there weren't enough dollars in California to fund improvements in many of the state's schools, roads, and infrastructure.

What money that did exist disproportionately went to school systems and roads on the coast, and especially to the suburbs.

In the neglected districts of the San Joaquin Valley, gangs gained such strength that parents started pulling their children out of the public schools. Charter schools, parochial schools, even home schooling looked like better alternatives than subjecting their children to violence and intimidation.

Between 2008 and 2010, the Valley public school system passed a turning point, a point of no return such that salvaging the existing system was no longer an option. The state stepped in to take over control of the school system from the lowest performing local districts, and set up trade schools pushing vocational education ... but even that wasn't enough.

The economy was so weak that there were no "vocations," no jobs, for those who graduated from the new schools. The Valley was trapped in a vicious cycle in which employers, alarmed by the failure of the school system, were pulling out faster than new employees were graduating into the workforce.

A FAMILY STRAINED

At their wits end, Manuel and Carmen found it difficult to keep their family together. Two months after her 14th birthday, Rosa moved in with a family of second generation Mexican merchants, Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez.

Rosa's sister, Maria, wasn't so lucky. Maria got pregnant at 13. Lacking consistent prenatal care (in part because the nearest clinic was not served by public transit and her parents 15 year old Chevy truck was temperamental at best) and struggling with asthma due to severe air pollution, Maria lost her child after

draining the meager savings that Manuel and Carmen had scraped together.

Maria died a few years later in a domestic dispute.

Then in 2014 Manuel lost his job when his employer, San Joaquin Farms, filed for bankruptcy. Manuel and Carmen had wanted to help Rosa with her education, but now that was impossible.

Inspired by one of her teachers in the parochial school Rosa attended with the Rodriguez children, Rosa set her sights on a career in medicine. She won a full scholarship to Fresno State, and would eventually go on to UCLA for her medical degree.

But her hard-won path toward success was the rare exception. Everyone in the San Joaquin Valley was suffering the ravages of recession, drought, and inadequate efforts by state and federal governments to relieve their suffering.

POLITICAL UNREST

As for Rosa's brother, Ramon never caught the educational updraft his sister rode. Instead he found himself swept up into gang culture and lured toward the narcotics underground.

But his friends weren't petty criminals. They were more interested in fighting for justice for Latinos who had been left behind by the California Dream. Recruited in a bar in Bakersfield, Ramon and his friends became active in a political underground that would surface in a wave of deadly class riots in 2021.

Once class tensions flared into violence, most of the remaining Anglos, Sikhs, Hmong— everyone and anyone who could—fled to the coast or to the Sierras. Pummeled by years of social and economic disaster, the San Joaquin Valley now looked like some of the poorest parts of Mexico.

Before pulling up stakes and moving on, the last of the Valley's power brokers had enriched themselves by buying water at $75 per acre foot and selling it at $2,000 per acre foot to private interests in the Los Angeles Basin—just like the movie Chinatown's water wars all over again, but without Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway. Now it was just

more of the same corruption that had been undermining the interests of people like Manuel and Carmen Perez for decades.

RIOTS

Emboldened by the nakedness of the injustice, Ramon and his cohorts built a network of guerillas that extended north into the United States,

continuing the influence of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the Zapatistas in Chiapas.

In 2022, increasingly alarmed at what seemed like a full-blown revolution, the federal government sent troops on a scale unseen since the urban disturbances of the 1960s to restore peace in the San Joaquin Valley.

But there wasn't much left to fight over.

Most of the farms had shut down for lack of management, water, and workers. Lacking the cover of big city streets or dense rain forests, Ramon and his compañeros had no place to hide from the low-flying helicopters and high-tech search and surveillance equipment. Their uprising was quashed in weeks and Ramon, lucky not to have been killed, found himself looking at twenty-five years in prison at Corcoran.

BITTER END: WAS IT WORTH IT?

Back in Tulare County, Rosa's mother found that she had contracted breast cancer. They said it was from pesticides that had penetrated into the water system.

Rosa knew enough to know that there was nothing that she or any of her colleagues could do to combat a cancer that was in its advanced stages. As Rosa comforted her mother during her final weeks, she reassured her mother that she and Manuel had not made a mistake moving the family from El Salvador to the United States.

But as she stood by her mother's grave in the hot Valley sun, Rosa, despite her accomplishments, was not so sure.

A Tale of
Two Valleys

A Tale of Two Valleys" takes place in 2025 and portrays a future for the San Joaquin Valley characterized by an increasing wealth gap, geographic separation and privatized services for those who can afford them. This is tempered only by a small, slowly emerging Latino middle-class.

In the story, it's graduation day at the University of California, Merced, and the commencement speaker is explaining to the Class of 2025 that they are the best hope for the region.

GRADUATION DAY 2025

Rafael Hernandez had all the right credentials to talk about the plight of poorly educated Latinos facing the "digital divide" that kept the fruits of technology beyond the grasp of so many. Born in Mexico, educated at Berkeley and then UC Davis, the successful, agricultural entrepreneur was a natural choice to give the Commencement Address to the University of California, Merced's graduating class in 2025.

As he stepped to the microphone on the outdoor podium overlooking Lake Yosemite, he surveyed the Class of 2025. Parents and relatives continued to trickle into the stadium due to traffic snarls that had become commonplace throughout the region. (As anyone could tell you, for the last 15 years, elected officials and planners had been playing a game of transportation catch-up they could never win.)

This year's class, like last year's, was predominantly of Latino descent. By this point in time, the Valley's Anglo population was more than used to being in the minority.

"Congratulations Class of 2025. You have come a long way. You and your families should be proud. While I recognize this is a day for celebration, here at the outset I am pressed by conscience to admit that while listening to Chancellor Woodall's gracious

opening remarks, I scanned your happy faces and I realized you here today are the exceptions and the journey for our community is far from over. I should warn you, I may step on some toes this afternoon. But I cannot, in good faith, let what I am about to say go unsaid.

"The good news of course, the wonderful news, is that once again today, the great American dream of education is fulfilled. You have worked hard, and you're entitled. Your adventure is just beginning. To all the students sitting here, and all the parents and grandparents who sacrificed to make this possible, I know I speak for everyone in saying that we honor you and offer you our most sincere congratulations.

"But my friends, as you leave the gates of this fine university this afternoon realize you are entering a Valley where many go without, earn too little and even fight to breathe.

"Friends, parents, alumni, distinguished graduates of the Class of 2025, I have one sobering question: Where did we go wrong?"

REGRETS

"Could we have taken a right turn back at the turn of the century? Is there a way out of the two-tiered society we have here in the San Joaquin Valley? Let's look back for a moment at our recent history to see whether we can learn from our experience.

"Now, most of you are too young to remember the excitement generated when Hewlett-Packard announced that it would open a plant just down the road in Los Baños. Hundreds lined up for the new jobs, but very few of us gained employment. No, the jobs went to people with college degrees and, at that time anyway, too few of our people were even going on to college.

"All too often we thought that a high school degree would be more than enough to get a job. After all, who needs a college degree to clean houses or flip hamburgers or pick cotton or peaches? Then some of the farm jobs started to disappear. High technology came to the farm with the invention of the automated strawberry picker and other tools that put people out of work. By 2010, the unemployment rate in much of the San Joaquin Valley hit 28%, even as the rest of the country was enjoying a boom economy and the Valley's high-tech industry was taking off.

"Agri-business became more mechanized. What with the increasing application of biotechnology and new farming techniques, everyone needed a college degree to be a farmer. By 2010 many of the jobs that migrant workers used to fill had been exported back to Mexico, so those who had come north for work, brought their families, and re-located their lives here in California had neither homes to go back to in Mexico nor jobs here in California.

WALLS AND EXCLUSION

"That's about when the gated communities started raising their walls. The split between 'The Two Valleys' was announced in The Merced Sun-Star in a series of articles in 2011. They published the statistics-the low test scores of Latinos in the public schools and the high SATs of the those graduating from mostly private schools; the immense differences in incomes for different ethnic groups. That series of articles should have been enough to spark the political will to do something about the problem, but, as usual, nothing was done.

"Throughout the next decade the white and rich got richer, the poor and dark got poorer. Why? Why was it so difficult for many of us to climb on the gravy train of the growing California economy? Was it racism? Were we purposely excluded? Was it Latino culture that placed less emphasis on education than most European or Asian cultures? I meet too many well-educated Latinos—even as over-educated as myself—to be willing to accept that our culture limits our academic performance. Was it the nature of the new technology, which demanded more education than did industrial technology? Or was it all of the above?"

TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL?

"One of my teachers, Manuel Castells, used to talk about the 'black holes of informational capitalism.' That's the way he described the new pockets of poverty in both developed and developing worlds.

"Information technology worked to lift the rich ever higher, but unlike industrial technology, jobs using information technology require a lot more than a high school education. After missing the train of information technology, the poor and uneducated sank even deeper into a relative poverty that was greater than what they suffered prior to the introduction of information technology.

"His argument was pretty simple: Industrial technology was a tide that lifted all boats. Henry Ford hired a lot of immigrants who barely knew English. With only a high school education, they could go to work on the assembly line and earn a pretty good wage, enough to raise a family and buy a house in Flint or Dearborn or Detroit. Not so for Mexican immigrants to the San Joaquin Valley.

"A high school education wasn't enough to gain admission into the information elite, so most Mexican immigrants had to settle for low-paying service work or jobs in the fields

that paid much less than those industrial jobs on the assembly line, most of which have been exported anyway. And every time one or two Mexican-Americans climbed up the educational ladder to join the info-elite, five or ten more immigrants came across the border to replace them at the bottom of the pyramid.

"We need to know whether Castells was right, because the story is not over. We now find ourselves in a society that is deeply divided. No one knows better than you, who are now graduating from college, how difficult it is to straddle the Two Valleys. On the one hand many of you see your parents and your uncles and your cousins living in the barrio and laboring in low-paying jobs. On the other hand you see your white classmates playing tennis and driving their cars off campus to go skiing in the Sierra on the weekends. And, let me say this, it is not their fault if they want to have some fun!

THE TWO VALLEYS

"But you also find it hard to blame the kids in the gangs who paint their initials on the high gates of those walled communities. What do they have to look forward to in a society that seems to want to deny them any opportunities to break out of the barrio?

"Nevertheless, you are crossing the great divide. You of Latino origins who are gaining your graduate and undergraduate degrees are our best hope for healing the wounds that our society is suffering.

"But, we have a great challenge and a great opportunity facing us here in the Valley. California is on its way toward becoming the first majority Latino state in the union. We will elect more Latinos to Congress. We will change the face of electoral politics in the United States.

"We must step up to the responsibilities that will be vested in us by the power of our numbers. Or we will remain, in effect, an underclass of under-educated, underemployed peasants. Sure, some of your parents attended college. Yes, we are beginning to see a Latino middle class in California. But you know as well as I that class divisions in California remain closely tied to race and racism, both between Anglos and Latinos, and among middle-class Latinos and other new immigrants.

"These are harsh words. But these are harsh times. You all know about the white and the able fleeing from Fresno and Bakersfield. You all know about the pitched battles between the gangs and the police. You all know about the roving bands of unemployed and the growing fear of coastal Californians who no longer want to risk traveling in the 'wilds' of our Valley.

"We cannot allow this rift between the Two Valleys to continue. We must find ways to heal the divide and grow a civil society that joins light and dark, rich and poor, in a way that reduces the distances among us.

"Well, Class of 2025, this has been a somber talk, I'm afraid. But as I look at your beautiful, young faces here in front of me today, I speak for many in my generation who hope a season of renewal for the Valley is ahead of us. You are our last best hope. I wish you well."

"New Eden" says it all. Who would have believed that in the span of two decades the San Joaquin Valley could mature into a region with clean air, a diverse economy, a strong agricultural industry, and a highly educated workforce? All the components of an enviable quality of life are here.

In this story, it's the summer of 2025, and Graciela Rodriguez, the new mayor of Fresno, is giving her inauguration address explaining how the progress the Valley has made over the past two decades occurred.

INAUGURATION DAY

It's June 22, 2025 and the conclusion of a special mayoral election brings us to the courtyard outside Fresno City Hall in downtown Fresno.

Fresno County Supervisor Peter Pappas is concluding his opening introduction for the newly elected mayor of Fresno, now California's 3rd largest city. Given this impressive political base, observers are already speculating on the new Mayor's gubernatorial prospects.

". . . and without more ado, it is my distinct honor and privilege to introduce my good friend and the new Mayor of the Best Little City in U.S.A., Graciela Rodriguez!"

"Thank you. Muchas gracias . . . gracias . . . thank you . . . For your applause and for your support. I am humbled and recognized I would not be on this podium today if it were not for you . . . and the history we share not just as a city, but as a Valley."

"Today, as I stand here, it is clearer than ever to me today that this should be a day of celebration for your achievements. As we stand here in the bright sunshine of the present, it's so easy to forget the past, and the hard work that's led up to today. So let me take a moment to remind us.

IT WASN'T EASY

"How many of you remember how hard life was back at the turn of the century? How many of you remember how quiet our voices were? So few of our parents had jobs

outside of agriculture or low-paying services.

But there were some. There were some who overcame prejudice, who bucked the stereotype of the poor, uneducated Mexican immigrant. There were some who stayed in school and got their education and started businesses. It wasn't easy.

"It certainly wasn't easy during the long three years of drought which decimated crippled crop production to levels unseen in more than two generations".

"It wasn't easy when unemployment shot up to depression levels."

"You remember Congress voted billions in relief, but with a twist. Do you remember how they said that half the money had to be channeled into diversifying the Valley economy?

"With all due credit to the President, he said he didn't want to throw good money after bad and watch taxpayers money get blown away in the next drought.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE WITH EDUCATION

"Yes, we had help, but we rose to the challenge. Many of you and many of your parents found your voices. You marched on Sacramento and you demanded improvements in education, from pre-school programs to better primary schools and middle schools and high schools, to new branches of the University of California system.

"Fresno's, the Valley's -- California's entire system of public education needed a major makeover and, with your insistence, it happened.

"We changed the way teachers were recruited and trained so we could meet students 'where they were.' We got rid of tenure so that incompetent teachers couldn't keep their jobs forever. We even brought in specialists from Monterrey Tech to show us a student-centered, service-oriented curriculum that spoke to Mexican-Americans.

"It took time to educate a new generation of sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of Mexico on American soil . . . but when it came time to build a diversified economy in the San Joaquin Valley, a new generation of highly educated workers was ready to meet the challenge, Mexican-Americans, African-Americans, Central Americans, South Americans, and Anglos as well, some who stayed put, and others who chose to come here because of the growing opportunities this region has to offer.

"As you know, we didn't stop doing agriculture . . . but we did it differently, with more biotechnology and less water. We didn't stop using water; but we found it in new places,

from ice-bergs, from careful use and conservation, from de-salination, and from fog. We didn't stop using energy, but we learned how to depend less on oil and gas and more on hydrogen and wind and solar.

VALUE ADDED JOBS AND SKILLS

"We got smart and efficient and very profitable. Our jobs were no longer low-tech, low-pay, and low-value-added. Instead we learned how to farm in ways that are now setting a new standard for the rest of the world.

"But high-tech farming was just the half of it. With the benefit of an increasingly skilled workforce, and the support of a booming California economy that needed a place to grow, the non-agricultural half of the San Joaquin Valley became a newer, better blend of Southern California and Silicon Valley. Seeded with venture capital looking for new places to go, and fertilized by a work force that was well educated and ready to go, the Central Valley took off.

"Growth was a challenge. It had to be managed. We didn't want the traffic congestion that had become so bad in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. We didn't want the air pollution. So we invested in public transportation: high-speed rail, light rail, and regional airports.

REGIONAL CITIES

We created "regional cities" that avoided the traditional inequities of rich suburbs and poor downtowns. We linked the centers and the peripheries and improved living standards for all.

"We learned from the mistakes made by our neighbors on the coast. We didn't remake our Valley in their image. We built our Valley in our own image, one that borrows from the best of our Mexican heritage and grafts it to the best of California. Our hybrid culture and economy is vibrant and strong.

"We now have the leading fuel-cell car manufacturing facility in the world, a major reason why we've been able to clean up our air. Kicking the hydrocarbon habit started at home, by getting the gas guzzlers off our own roads. From Tulare to Taft, our universities boast the most advanced programs for research into agricultural biotechnology.

"Who would have believed that the number of new movies coming out of the Universal Español studio in Visalia is fast approaching the number coming out of Burbank. Our trade with Mexico and the rest of Latin America is robust and well balanced.

"And still we have not abandoned the strong agricultural heritage that brought so many of our parents here in the first place. Still we have the best combination of soil, seasons and sunshine anywhere in the world, but now we have learned how to steward this valuable resource by practicing sustainable agriculture.

ISN'T IT AMAZING?

"Isn't it amazing what a little education will do? But it was more than just little education, wasn't it? We rebuilt the schools, and then the schools rebuilt us, and then we rebuilt the Valley. It's a pretty good story we can tell our children today. And now they have the opportunity to build lives to hand on to their children.

"In closing, over my term, I will be guided by the sense of purpose, principles and judgment you have demonstrated day after day to improve both Fresno and the Valley. This office is an honor. And I will give it my all. Thank you so very much."