Chapter 3
Engaged Archaeology: Whose Community? Which Public?

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> *The concept of dualism … the traditional and the non-traditional … provides a framework within which to understand the problem archaeology faces … what is considered custom may be more a consequence of this conceptual dichotomy than of any similarity to actual pre-colonial society.*
>
> – Daniel Miller 1980

In this discussion, I treat community archaeology as a subset of public archaeology and consider the issues of community archaeology as a preamble to discussion of wider issues engendered by archaeologists attempting to orient their efforts to a public sphere. The most undertheorized aspect of community archaeology is the idea of community itself. Although archaeologists often discuss the competing concerns of various interest groups, such groups are either regarded as subgroups of a single community or as competing communities, but the term community is defined with a description of a particular set of people or simply left undefined. Here, I problematize the concept of community on three fronts: (1) any individual belongs to multiple communities; (2) community archaeology frequently reifies imaginary communities, which have been created by the archaeologists; and (3) community archaeology needs to consider not only descendant and local communities, but also those communities with political and economic power.

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Defining the Community in Community-Based Archaeology

Community archaeology has different origins in the USA from its origins in Britain. In the UK, where archaeology's intellectual home has been in history, people's interest in what they find in their gardens has always been considered legitimate. Everyone identifies archaeological remains with local as well as national history and often with cultural, if not exactly, biological ancestors. Amateur societies and community museums are common and have been for many decades. It is not coincidental that the television show *Time Team* originated in Great Britain, where, despite its slow pace and authentically modest discoveries, it is quite popular and has spun off several similar and related programs.

Although there is a sharp divide between academic archaeologists and the British public, public archaeology, which is identified with cultural heritage management, is practiced mainly outside the academy and emphasizes technical skills applied to discovery over research design and theoretical orientation. Public archaeologists are portrayed in the media as blue-collar laborers as much as college professors and do not distance themselves from the public with jargon or complex interpretations. There is a natural connection between public and community archaeology, since interested local groups are simply subsets of a larger, but similarly, interested public. Of course, there are community and national controversies over the disposition of archaeological resources, but repatriation and preservation of sites in English contexts are not areas of dramatic racial or cultural contestation, since the museum curators and site stewards more or less share the heritage of the people whose material and human remains they control.

The situation has been quite different for British, European, Australian, and American archaeologists practicing outside their own nations, where the connection of the past to national heritage has been controversial. Archaeologists of European descent digging in Egypt and India might claim historical connections with the people whose ancestors they research, but do not usually share their cultural identity. In areas, like Mesoamerica, South America, and Asia, historical connections are mostly unrelated to European research questions. This situation is much closer to the practice of archaeology in the USA, where professionals for the most part have practiced as strangers in their own land.

Archaeology began in the USA with the investigation of ancient indigenous cultures; although historical archaeology has grown, most U.S. archaeologists still focus on people whose history they do not share and whose descendants continue to be an economically and politically oppressed minority. Consequently, archaeology's home has been in anthropology, traditionally the study of "other cultures" outside the context of western history. Americanist archaeologists have emphasized expertise over engagement, since their claim on the past is academic rather than personal. What ordinary citizens find in their gardens is considered private property, but more likely valued as treasure than heritage. Indigenous history is regarded as only a minor preamble or small subset of national history. Indian communities have only recently begun to be included in archaeologists' concept of the public.

Ascherson notes that American archaeology sees responsibility to the public as one of the many responsibilities of an archaeologist, whereas public interest has long been fundamental to any archaeological work in Britain, where archaeology has become more overtly "about 'now' than about 'then'" (2007: 51). But this divergence is much more recent in the practice of archaeology by British archaeologists working outside England, where most research was, by definition, colonial. And neither the processual positivist stance in the USA nor the postprocessual relativist stance of British archaeology has problematized the concept of community or been very clear about who constitute public archaeology. In effect, the same assumptions about the nature and relevance of "communities" to heritage conservation and management are made in the USA and Great Britain and the rest of Europe, albeit for different reasons. Ideas about historical continuity of a discrete population, perpetuation of traditional culture, ideological and economic conservatism, and resistance to change are not usually carefully examined before being used to define community membership and authenticity.

As Marshall (2002: 216) comments: "Communities are seldom, if ever, monocultural and are never of one mind. They are aggregations of people who have come together for all kinds of planned and contingent reasons. There are therefore many ways in which the community relevant to a particular archaeological project may emerge. None is unproblematic and in many cases the interest community changes over the course of a project."

In reality, any individual is a member of multiple flexibly bounded communities, and negotiating personal loyalties and distributing personal resources among various groups are some ways of describing ordinary life. Implicitly defining a community as an integrated organism with a coherent structure and discrete boundaries that contain a finite group of people is an intellectual echo of an earlier phase of archaeology when the prevailing paradigm was cultural evolutionism. As far as generalizations go, it is probably more accurate to expect that communities with unchanging traditions and impermeable boundaries are unusual and may be a response to oppression.

The fact that individuals are commonly members of multiple communities is a key point, since such crosscutting experiences and allegiances can make negotiations easier and refocus a competitive inclination to an emphasis on commonalities and cooperation. Government officials born in the village where the archaeologist wants to work, professional archaeologists with indigenous heritage, families with close relatives living in several towns and villages, and international tour guides who own local businesses all may play key roles in structuring a positive framework for research, preservation, and the interpretation of archaeological resources.

The history of many developing nations is a history of colonization, oppression, exploitation, and marginalization of indigenous groups defined by outsiders or even forced into "communities." In 1978, the people of Aguacate, Belize, who speak Kekchi did not think of themselves as Maya (R. Wilk, personal communication, 2000); this is a "community" created by colonialism. In the communities of developing nations, opportunity for economic improvement and even survival is often better for those who turn away from their community and its past to participate in

colonial "development." In this situation, the past seems useless and humiliating, and continuity with the past becomes an acceptance of poverty and exploitation. As the forces of globalization enforce the boundaries of modernity by reifying tradition, they also conflate marginalization, ignorance, and poverty with tradition and ethnicity (Warren 1998). Parents in economically marginalized communities lose their children to urban jobs and children become ashamed of their poor and traditional parents. Both pride in heritage and the creation of local jobs can alleviate this situation, not as an attempt to reinter the past but as a way forward.

When archaeologists equate continuity of cultural descent with authenticity, they contribute to an oppressive construction of tradition and community, in which indigenous or local claims to the right to manage and interpret the past entail some sort of ethnic posturing in the present. This is not to say that ethnicity is externally imposed, but that external forces are given an undue influence on the form it can take to be recognized as authentic, and people are limited in how they choose to recognize and deploy their traditions.

Beliefs about the homogenizing influence of globalization along with unexamined beliefs about community life in the past have made archaeology the last refuge of authenticity. In the service of tourism, cultural preservation, and ethnic pride, archaeologists have supplied a steady stream of reconstructed pasts that reference the present, believing it is the other way around. Strategic essentialism has empowered some groups, but some archaeological reconstructions that emphasize cultural continuities oppress the living. The government of Belize recently challenged the land rights of a group of Q'eqchi Maya partly on the basis that the sort of agriculture they practice is not traditional but paradoxical also because archaeologists have convinced the public that traditional Maya agricultural strategies caused their civilization to collapse. Failure to practice the sort of agriculture archaeologists have identified as authentic supposedly disqualifies their claim to be Maya, whereas traditional Maya agriculture disqualifies them as stewards of the land. Never mind that the archaeological reconstructions and the ethnographic characterization of Maya agriculture were both wrong (Wilk 1985, 1991). Clearly, the past and its traditions are better regarded as protean, both for the sake of accuracy and for the sake of descendant communities.

Various authors have shown that local reaction to global pressure is rarely a matter of simple absorption, no matter how profound the pressure applied on a community to "change with the times." In fact, globalization has in many cases increased the visibility of local traditions and even – as discussed by Nevins and Nevins (2007) – resulted in their construction, as well as the intensity of local commitment to them. In the words of Schadla-Hall (2007: 76), "a desire has become increasingly apparent for people to assert and demonstrate their identity and origins in a clear and comprehensible way." On the other hand, the terms of debate about modernity and globalization do globalize. "Making heritage legible," as Bauer (2007) notes, requires fitting it into a framework of predefined features and contrasts through which local achievements are defined in global terms. This sort of distinction is the same process visible in the spread of beauty pageants; local ideas of beauty may not change and in fact may be exaggerated as political resistance to the hegemony of western ideals of appearance. But in order to resist, globalized characteristics of

female beauty are countered by different coloring, measurements, and talents, not different categories of evaluation (Wilk 2004a, b). And either way, women, communities, and archaeological sites become commodities.

Community-engaged archaeology probably cannot avoid reifying imaginary communities; by defining a community as a bounded coherent group, we also define the terms that local people and descendant groups must use in order to have a voice in the management of heritage. By helping local people develop a community infrastructure to deal with tourism and opportunities for development, we may be helping them assimilate into the modern world system and narrowing their avenues of expression. But we may also be imposing a framework of traditions with little resonance for the people involved and little consonance with the past. Economic oppression not only makes people wary of outside interference, but also unable to reject any possible opportunity. This is not to say that people do not need infrastructure, defined communities, and ways to use the world system to work effectively for social justice, but that the definition and manipulation of these categories should not be exclusively in the hands of outsiders.

Shepherd (2007) makes the extremely important point that the maintenance of local authenticity requires staying on the margins of the global economy and accepting the paternalism of world powers in order to survive. In China, but also in the USA, the countries of the former Soviet Union, and almost any other nation state, ethnic diversity is being domesticated according to global definitions of "otherness." Through the Chinese government's promotion of the tourist industry in Tibet, Tibetan culture is denatured of its radicalism and resistance by being constructed as an artistic performance (Shepherd 2007). Shepherd sees a culture being overwhelmed by the condescension of tourists who attempt to photograph mystery and spirituality or, even worse, find entertainment in the traditions they consider charming and cute. Inadvertently, these visitors are acting to reposition Tibetans' perception of themselves and the meaning and value of their reified and commoditized community.

There are several ways to rethink the idea of community. McDavid's (2002, following Rorty 1991) concept of a "historically situated, pluralistic, *contingent* conversation" suggests the possibility of a conscious construction of a community developed around a heritage project. Bauer (2007) has employed the concept of "terroir" – a reference to the material continuity notably visible in the archaeology of long inhabited places. He poses this concept as a counter to the ostensibly homogenizing effects of globalization, which he rightly sees as a force that is not as unique to human experience as modernization theorists claimed. But it also serves to undermine simplistic assumptions about cultural continuity as the primary authenticating factor for local traditions. Somehow, despite centuries – or in some places millennia – of innovation, migration, and conquest, local practice references the past. Without being ecologically reductionist, Bauer has echoed Alexander Pope's famous line, "In everything respect the genius of the place," suggesting that in tracing the succession of inhabitants of any landscape archaeologists can divine a continuity in local genius that is not the equivalent of ethnic fossilization. Similar thoughts have been very much on the minds of globalization theorists of the past few years, and the study of food from whence Bauer takes his term "terroir" is quite a useful lens for focusing an interest in the conflicts and accommodations between tradition and

change, domination and resistance, and the local and the global. How new ingredients are reinterpreted as traditional and local foods become global fads is interesting not only because the process is not what the modernists expected (Wilk 2009), but also because these processes can be shown to be ongoing from deep in the human past (Pyburn 2008a). In the dance between the local and the global, it is the dance, not the community, that is continuous and traditional.

The Q'ekchi healers of southern Belize have created a professional organization (Naturaleza 2003) patterned after organizations of wealthy nations, such as the American Medical Association (AMA) and the British Medical Association (BMA). This new institution arose out of the healers' concern that their skills were being disregarded and disrespected in favor of medical practice that is too costly for ordinary people to afford and for which they have no access to training. Their fear is the loss of their knowledge, which is still needed by people who can afford nothing else, and are also being denied the education they need to offer better care to their patients. They are willing to share their skills and knowledge; they do not understand why western-trained healers are unwilling to do the same.

The Q'ekchi healers are following an age-old strategy of syncretism to preserve their cultural heritage and serve the needs of their people. This is a strategy that can be seen in any culture; it might even be argued that this is what culture is *for.* They are defining themselves as a community and making an effort to preserve their chosen traditions, but in a context they have determined that makes sense in their present context. Over a period of roughly 3,000 years, Maya speakers authored a variety of systems of production, consumption, land tenure, commerce, and *heritage* (it is what the hieroglyphic inscriptions are all about) as sophisticated as anything the colonial powers imposed from Europe. One primary use of heritage has always been to construct a bond with other people – or to sever one. Both uses are evident on stele from the Classic period. This does not mean that Maya speakers are "living in the past" as National Geographic would have it, but that like any very long-lived group Maya people use heritage to address the present and construct their future as best they can. So while the Q'ekchi healers are creating a bounded community, they are also claiming a bond with other communities of healers which they have chosen for themselves.

The upshot of this is that archaeologists need to get out of the business of authenticating culture and community traditions and to be very conscious about how we employ the rubric of community to any local or descendant group. While data pertinent to these issues can sometimes help communities establish a beachfront in the battle for human rights, the same archaeological "facts" that help one community can hurt another or turn sour in the long run. The issue to be considered by archaeologists must always include a consideration of the needs of multiple communities, and it is likely that archaeologically based knowledge is more appropriately deployed in the service of democracy than in the service of essentialism. Even if archaeologists fail to problematize the meaning of "community," members of the public do not, and by failing to do so, archaeologists run the risk of unwittingly playing into the hands of one faction or another, when taking a more consultative and knowledge-sharing approach could have a more positive outcome. A good place to begin is to *ask* people if they consider themselves members of a community, in which other communities do they belong and participate, and how do they define their memberships.

This clarifies the second problem with community archaeology already mentioned: that a focus on "the" community makes it easy to forget that descendant and local communities need to be understood ethnographically for engaged archaeology to work. Often, the communities that we really need to understand anthropologically are those that wield the most political and economic power, such as government officials, school boards, multinational hotel chains, USAID missions, and archaeologists themselves. Like the local groups we usually refer to when we talk about stakeholders, these communities of wealth and authority have traditions and normative behaviors that can be analyzed with anthropological research and better understood as a means of promoting understanding across cultural divides. For example, explaining to people where archaeologists derive their ideas about the value of the past, their beliefs about science, and their passion for preservation can humanize our intentions and even make us more sympathetic to a skeptical audience.

Finding a Public for Public Archaeology

In an important essay, Matsuda (2004) constructs the theoretical framework archaeologists need for developing a "public sphere" for archaeology. Following Habermas (1989), he points out that archaeologists generally use the term "public" in two ways: first, in reference to people in general who are not trained practicing archaeologists and second, in contradistinction to private interests, a group whose rights to scientific knowledge and cultural resource preservation are upheld by state authority. While engaging with an interested lay public suggests democratic decision making, the charge to do archaeology for the good of all human beings actually vests authority in archaeologists as vectors of state regulation by positing that a generalized good lies beyond the grasp of nonspecialists.

Both uses of the term belie archaeologists' tendency to set themselves apart from other interest groups. By setting ourselves apart from nonspecialists, we often fail to see our professional interests in the context of many other competing and probably equally legitimate interests in the material remains of the past. This is the unexamined attitude that leads archaeologists into believing that explaining themselves to the public is doing the public a favor, when it is more likely that archaeologists who engage in public discussion and democratic debate are in the long run doing a favor for themselves. Paraphrasing George Orwell, archaeologists tend to see themselves as more equal than other members of the public.

This attitude also robs archaeologists of the ability to see the utility of multiple overlapping communities within a public. Not only can archaeologists do a better job of seeking consensus by working with interested individuals who participate in several communities, they can also better engage a public by accepting that they are also part of the public. When archaeology is constructed in opposition to collecting, religion, entertainment, or descendant communities, we lose sight of how our practice not only affects, but even creates impermeable boundaries around potentially antagonistic groups.

Unlike Matsuda, most archaeologists rarely bother to define "public" at all, but instead make broad assumptions about the characteristics and tastes of a generalized audience. Rather than attempting to educate nonspecialists and improve general knowledge about archaeological research and the politics of heritage and human rights, archaeologists typically behave more like journalists than academics by pandering to an imagined audience. Attention and approval are seen as more valuable than (or at least prior to) knowledge and scientific honesty (Holtorf 2008); e.g., Indiana Jones looting, stomping stereotyped indigenous people, patronizing women, and heroically overcoming the exigencies of daily life outside the wealthy west is an acceptable icon because his portrayal of archaeology as adventurous and fun lures students. Publicizing finds that coincidentally have value in the art market, and interpretations of the past that justify the status quo and promote blaming the victims of the modern world system for the environmental deterioration and resource conflicts substitute for education because real information is "too boring."

The success of *Time Team* (Schadla-Hall 2007) suggests that the public tolerance of tedium is much greater than most archaeologists believe. Furthermore, exit interviews of museum visitors indicate that at least some members of the public are quite interested in the actual practice of archaeology and in the more mundane aspects of the past. Even more interesting is the observation that the ordinary people with unexceptional educations who constitute "the public" in many parts of the world are very interested and knowledgeable about the politics of community, ethnicity and tradition, and the role of heritage in local identity.

It might be better to address the interests and expectations of the public by asking people what their interests are than by making assumptions that may actually create expectations. In my own experience, I have found that while people expect archaeologists to boast about treasure, they respond with great enthusiasm to evidence of the heroism, compassion, intelligence, and aesthetic sensibilities of ancient people. An ancient recipe grips a middle-class American audience more than a jade necklace. On the other hand, it is not necessarily a bad idea to create some expectations, especially those that do not promote political violence, elitism, gender stereotyping, and blaming the victims of the world system for the environmental problems of today. Imagine what a different world it would be if the public looked to the past, and to archaeologists, for solutions to social problems rather than the fatalistic expectation that the past was only a prelude to the worst of the present.

The term "public" can actually be broken down into multiple audiences with differing interests and expectations. While it is clearly important to identify expectations in order to communicate with people, even if the goal is to change them, it is not always necessary to meet them. To a significant extent, visitors to museums and archaeological sites, lecture attendees, television audiences, and magazine subscribers are seeking knowledge, not simply titillation. As Matsuda notes, the consuming public is not necessarily uncritical and passive (Samuel 1994, in Matsuda 2004: 73), and that we urgently need "detailed analysis … to clarify how the public work with and negotiate archaeological information, as well as how they assimilate or reject it according to their social circumstances" (Matsuda 2004: 73). Modern pedagogy, recognizing that the expectations of students have been shaped by the entertainment standards of

television, is replete with methods for sharing information that are successful because they are engaging and not boring, but still teach something (Burke and Smith 2007). But archaeologists should consider whether in the final analysis it is not better to be a little dull than to reinforce the worst stereotypes of the modern world. It is certainly bad to turn off the public to archaeology, but some alternatives are worse.

I have argued elsewhere (2008b) that archaeologists are best suited to present themselves, whether to a public or to each other, as educators. This may be seen as using the "deficit model" (Merriman 2004: 5) of the public, if taken to suggest that the public has no concept of the past and only certain people have legitimate knowledge of the past. However, this need not be the case if archaeologists acknowledge educators as one segment of several types of public and define education as a strategy for sharing useful knowledge. Archaeologists do believe that their knowledge of the past has legitimacy and value, since most have spent a considerable portion of their lives acquiring it. Like any other interest group, archaeologists have the right to speak their opinions as convincingly as they can and the responsibility to share important information. People with alternative interests and expertise have the same rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, and refusal to engage civilly with divergent perspectives is more likely an indication of condescension than respect.

Respecting the Heritage of Archaeology

It is certainly true that community involvement and public engagement have only recently begun to be practiced with any consistency, and although the idea of community archaeology is not new as Marshall (2002) points out, the explicit emphasis on sharing control of archaeological resources with local communities is relatively new. But most archaeologists underestimate the amount of community-oriented archaeology that was done and the degree of commitment and intellectual rigor applied to public outreach before the present generation. In fact, archaeologists have frequently jeopardized their careers by paying too much attention to the social context of their work and not enough to their scholarly progress up the tenure ladder. What has always been true, and is still true to a significant extent, is that community engagement has shared the low status in academic circles of applied anthropology or sociology and in many quarters is still generally not considered to be archaeology at all. Consequently, much of what has been done remains an unremarked and unpublished part of archaeology's oral history.

In 1980, Daniel Miller published the results of a settlement survey of the Solomon Islands in *Current Anthropology* titled *Archaeology and Development.* He worked over a large area, which included several islands, and talked to living communities along the way. His project was a public archaeology project, not the first one but certainly one of the most impressive and extremely precocious in its explication of the need for alliances between archaeologists and various other interest groups and the need for local people to be involved in decision making about heritage management. Several well-known scholars published responses in the journal that were

slightly skeptical, but for the most part roundly approving. The strange thing about this article is how little it has been acknowledged. Whether or not archaeologists were concerned with their impact outside their field, it seems clear that they did not want to be seen as concerned.

Nevertheless, similar studies have gradually increased and publication has exploded in the last 10 years; for example, Maya archaeology and heritage have been discussed by Cojti Ren (2006), Ehrentraut (1996), Euraque (1998), Fischer (1999), Hasemann and Lara Pinto (1993), Healy (1984), Hervik (1999), Joyce (2003), Luke (2006), Montejo (2005), Mortensen (2001, 2005), and Tercero (2006), and this is not an exhaustive list. In Australia, scores of archaeologists have successfully fought alongside Aboriginal people to win the right of Aborigines to control the archaeo-logical record of their heritage (Greer et al. 2002; Smith 2004). Archaeological anthropologists have studied living communities' relationships to archaeological research and heritage in Alaska (Hollowell 2006), Greece (Hamilakis 2007), and Brazil (Bezerra 2003) to name a few. In 2002, the Community Archaeology issue of *World Archaeology* (34(2)) organized by Yvonne Marshall brought together an important set of papers and had a galvanizing effect on the discipline. A look at the lineup of papers presented at the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) in 2008 gives a testimony to the explosion of awareness and activism by archaeologists who are ever more willing and able to discuss these issues (WAC 6 2008).

The accumulated wisdom of all these efforts is considerable, but the emphasis still tends to be placed on the originality of each study rather than on increasing a useful bank of knowledge. A similar situation can be seen in the recent emphasis on public anthropology, undoubtedly a good thing, but which seems to turn its back on the accumulated wisdom of applied anthropology. Serious attention to previous work by both archaeologists and applied anthropologists would certainly remind archaeologists to ask (1) "When this development or preservation or local museum project is complete, where will the *real* money go?" and (2) "What communities that identify themselves with the issues are addressed in this project, how do these communities overlap, and how do they define their stakes?"

The economic structures of local communities are a product of both culture and history and reflect both varieties of greed and philanthropic efforts toward someone's idea of equity. It goes without saying that such structures are often in need of improve-ment. It is time to move away from the implicit assumption that once upon a time everyone was nice to each other (or everyone was venal or everyone was guilty or innocent) or that respect for impoverished indigenous communities facing globaliza-tion entails preserving their primordial innocence or restoring a unified past.

The A Horizon

For public outreach and community collaborations to work, they have to be embedded in local culture and answer needs to be other than just "preservation" or "tourism" in an abstract sense. What communities is the museum for? Local? Indigenous? Descendant? Tourist? What Public is the target audience? Children? Visitors?

Looters? Wealthy community leaders? Poor or disadvantaged people? The reason that outreaches projects' fail is that they are designed to solve problems that do not make sense to the people they affect with strategies that depend on outside investment and pressure. All too often, the archaeologist is trying to "help" a local community that is not really a community as much as it is an economically marginalized class to do something people are not interested in and do not understand (Bezerra 2003). So every community collaboration and public outreach project has to begin with ethnographic research to figure out how to achieve the project's goals. If the goal is preservation, then archaeologists have to be willing to explain their perspective and negotiate with people who will be affected by the "preservation" to come to an agreement about what exactly should be preserved and for whom. Preservation has many definitions.

Tourism is often a very good thing for archaeology and for communities, but not always. It takes some planning and some ethnography to make sure that it actually helps the right people, not just foreign investors, and sends the right message, not just the glorification of ancient violence or ancient kings, but the promotion of other types of human achievement that make people want to be part of a community and willing to engage with archaeologists and other visitors. The ancient Maya has been sold by archaeologists and Hollywood as a community that was once brutal and warlike, so now people regard living Maya people as the descendants of an evil culture that failed. This is utterly untrue; the Maya had achievements beyond anything most people can imagine, but all the public is told is what tourists are supposed to want to hear. And Maya people continue to be stigmatized. This may entertain tourists by giving them what they expect, but the long-term impact on either tourist economies or the standard of living of Maya speakers does not appear to have been positive.

At this point in history, it is clearer than ever before that those who make no effort to make things better are not less guilty than those who try even if they fail. If social scientists have learned anything about people in the last 100 years of research, it is incumbent upon us to try to use it and to share it. One of these discoveries is that there is no single way to create a community nor has there ever been, though some strategies have undoubtedly worked better than others.

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