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3 Nov 2016
ENVS 400

Outline I (Draft)

Title: Love Thy Neighbor (Or know them, at least) *title will probably change

Background:

Crisis response/community organizing

- State-level documents discussing preparedness, move towards neighborly interactions
- 90% of rescues during an earthquake are neighbor-initiated
- Likelihood of first responders to be overwhelmed/unable to get to your neighborhood

Social capital

- Solnit (2009) and Lo and Cheung (2009)
- Social capital leads to resilience and faster recovery of community post-quake
- Household response may be influenced by peers, therefore it could be beneficial for less-prepared people to be exposed to more-prepared people
- Collective action: coordination and communication between community members now will enhance that ability in the event of a disaster

Resilience

- Davidson (2010) on aspects of resilient communities: accumulates resources, has destabilizing forces to maintain diversity, dynamism and novelty
- Agency: individual and collective, and the ability for people's voices to be heard in some way

Case study: Christchurch, NZ (and Lyttelton Timebank as a Trusted Organization)

- Epston (2014) community responses to the earthquake
- Ozanne et al. (2013): Lyttelton Timebank's role in facilitating connections

Place

- Place vs. space: connecting people with where they live could lead to more commitment and dedication towards maintaining it and helping to rebuild it if it is destroyed, leading to faster recovery

Third place/Trusted Organization

- Third places as important hubs/nodes of activity that have the potential to direct people to resources or people in the event of a disaster
- Eller et. al (2015) collaboration between sectors to efficiently utilize resources, the role of voluntary non-profits in disaster response

Utopia/Dystopia

- Solnit (2009) discussion on how disasters often result in a more equal and helpful society since hierarchies and boundaries are demolished along with the infrastructure. People have a common cause and tend to help each other: is this at all possible to start facilitating, or at least to extend the effects of, when a disaster strikes?

What is Nextdoor, and how does it fit in?

- Review of Oldenburg's (1999) eight characteristics of third places: Neutral ground, leveler, conversation as main activity, accessibility and accommodation, the regulars, a low profile, the mood is playful, a home away from home
- Nextdoor as a trusted organization: although it is an app, people have to live in the area to join, therefore there is more potential for people to meet face to face as a result of this app.
- Easier, farther reaching, and longer-term than knocking on neighbors' doors

Framing: To what extent can trusted organizations enhance the resilience of community networks before a crisis occurs?

Situated Context:

Portland, OR, Collins View

Justification for situated context

- Small enough to be walkable but large enough to encompass a significant amount of resources, both social capital and material aid
- Convenience: my access to the specific neighborhood I am a part of, and my ability to participate in and observe these interactions

Methodology:

Focus Question: What kinds of relationships are currently being formed between neighbors, and are they helpful or harmful in facilitating connection?

Nextdoor post classification

- Trust building vs. trust-eroding
- Informational vs. controversial/emotional
- Insiders vs. outsiders

Survey

- This survey would be a follow-up to my initial, more qualitative analysis of the community posts on Collins View.
- It would be more Likert-style, asking neighbors how they perceive their neighbors and the Nextdoor, on a scale of 1-10. This survey would be able to get at more of the trust-building/eroding aspect of the relationships I'm interested in, since it's difficult for me to measure that with only the posts.

Results:

- My results will most likely include a vignette of certain highly-trafficked posts to illustrate the kinds of relationships being formed. This will probably be followed by some analysis and further explanation of the kinds of relationships I saw being formed.
- I will also include a more quantitative account of which posts got the most "thanks" and replies, to illustrate what kinds of interactions garner the most community interaction
- The survey will be a way to connect what I noticed and what neighbors actually think.
- Analysis of Oldenburg's third space characteristics and how Nextdoor stacks up

Discussion:

Nextdoor

- Discussion and review of the major types of relationships I saw being formed, and how that affects disaster preparedness: ultimately, is this app helpful or harmful?

Disasters

- I am hoping that this work can be applied not only to natural disaster, but social crises as well. Any time an area is overwhelmed with activity in so far as the first response is occupied elsewhere, it would be extremely useful to have a network of people ready to help each other and to create a more self-sufficient community.

References:

I have quite a few references already, but due to the highly interdisciplinary, somewhat theoretical nature of my thesis, I'm sure I will come across many more! Here are the top ten (of many) sources so far.

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