

THESIS

RESILIENCE FOR ALL/RESILIENCIA PARA TODOS: ACHIEVING JUSTICE FOR
LATINX COMMUNITIES FOLLOWING THE 2013 COLORADO FLOODS

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ABSTRACT

RESILIENCE FOR ALL/RESILIENCIA PARA TODOS: ACHIEVING JUSTICE FOR LATINX COMMUNITIES FOLLOWING THE 2013 COLORADO FLOODS

Environmental justice arose out of people’s and communities’ needs to address concrete problems of inequitable environmental exposures and contamination. However, resilience scholarship has largely failed to engage with the environmental justice (EJ) literature, and resilience remains a highly contested term that fails to adequately address issues of vulnerability and power. A holistic view of EJ—community-based and focused on distributive, procedural, and recognition elements of outcomes and practices—helps assess justice aspects of resilience-building, especially when used in conjunction with a community capabilities focus. I build on these points by arguing that an EJ framework provides an ideal lens through which to explore social justice in community engagement around resilience-building to climate-related events. This study uses data from a critical discourse analysis, semi-structured interviews, and a multi-dimensional environmental justice (EJ) framework coupled with Matin et al.’s (2018) concept of “equitable resilience” to explore how Latinx cultural brokers and resilience practitioners in Boulder County, Colorado are making disaster preparedness and community resilience-building efforts more just and equitable following a devastating flood event. Most importantly, I find that cultural brokers’ participatory and inclusive form of community-building work—and the community that emerges from such work—*is* resilience. I also find that, although Boulder County resilience-building efforts are moving toward more just and equitable practices, cultural brokers and resilience practitioners face systemic and institutionalized barriers to fully realizing

distributive, procedural, and recognition justice and increasing community capabilities. Lastly, I show that cultural brokers use small but powerful acts of counterstorytelling, or *testimonios*, in predominantly white spaces to expose and unsettle entrenched power structures. An EJ framework used in conjunction with the concept of equitable resilience can help resilience and disaster practitioners assess and improve their resilience and disaster preparedness programming and efforts. This study also contributes to the disaster and community resilience scholarship by providing a new way to evaluate community resilience-building efforts using a critical EJ-capabilities lens. This approach addresses issues of distributive, recognition, and procedural (in)justice as well as attending to underlying power imbalances and inequality that can limit community capabilities.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The concept of resilience—and relatedly, community resilience—has been widely adopted in policy circles as an aspirational goal for communities. Resilience has become a policy buzzword and approach for better equipping communities to respond to climate change impacts or to address vulnerability to various shocks and stressors. As Mark Neocleous has cynically remarked, “[r]esilience’ has in the last decade become one of the key political categories of our time. It falls easily from the mouths of politicians, a variety of state departments are funding research into it, urban planners are now obliged to take it into consideration, and academics are falling over themselves to conduct research on it” (2013: 2).

As Neocleous’s remark indicates, resilience has had a mixed reception in academic literature. Many scholars have advanced the use of greater community resilience as a desirable outcome for communities, supported by an abundance of frameworks, metrics, and indicators. At the same time, resilience has been critiqued as a normative concept that fails to address issues of environmental injustice, especially related to vulnerability and power (e.g., Matin et al. 2018). In light of this, critical scholars have called for a repoliticization of the concept across contexts that will address, rather than ignore, the politics of resilience. For instance, Eakin and colleagues (2017: 186) call for greater attention to the “socio-political infrastructure,” or the “social and political norms, values, rules, and relationships that undergird and structure the myriad decisions made by public and private actors,” when planning for urban resilience and locating sources of vulnerability and risk. Such an approach, they argue, reveals the underlying preferences, values, and assumptions of different actors in framing environmental problems and their solutions. Such attention to the normative aspects of resilience-building, and viewing resilience-building as

inherently political, will lead to a more just and equitable conception of resilience that accounts for underlying power imbalances and differential access to resources, attends to the structural causes of vulnerability, and foregrounds the understandings and goals of community members in environmental decision making.

In the context of climate crisis, debates over resilience are especially critical and urgent. Climate change, disasters, and the production of vulnerability are closely linked (Emrich and Cutter 2011). Therefore, social scientists must ask who benefits from climate change adaptation and resilience-building measures meant to mitigate the effects of climate-related disasters (Barrios and Battle 2018) and how community members are engaged in creating just adaptive measures (Fothergill and Peek 2004). Critical theoretical traditions, such as environmental justice, provide a useful lens through which researchers and practitioners can assess issues of equity and justice regarding community resilience-building and disaster preparedness (Caniglia and Frank 2017; Meerow et al. 2019). Although environmental justice as a framework began as a social movement rooted in concerns about the distribution of environmental harms, it has expanded to encompass three primary concerns: the *distribution* of environmental goods and bads, cultural *recognition* of marginalized groups, and environmental decision making supported by democratic *procedures* (Agyeman et al. 2016; Schlosberg 2012). A climate justice lens (Schlosberg and Collins 2014) focused on community capabilities further enriches assessments of distributive, recognition, and procedural justice.

While more participatory approaches try to integrate procedural and recognition justice in climate disaster contexts, findings remain mixed about whether community members benefit from this level of involvement (Few et al. 2007; Moon et al. 2017; Wilson et al. 2018). Resilience-building in practice often serves to reify existing vulnerabilities and inequalities

(Caniglia and Frank 2017; Tierney 2015). Most research findings suggest that despite a move towards democratic forms of engagement, resilience (and relatedly, climate adaptation) are firmly embedded within neoliberal governance regimes characterized by a devolution of state responsibility for individuals' wellbeing to local governments, NGOs, the private sector, and individuals themselves (Reid 2012).

Utilizing a multi-dimensional environmental justice lens that includes distributive, recognition, and procedural justice, combined with a community capabilities approach, I examine how and if marginalized groups are recognized and meaningfully involved in climate change adaptation and disaster planning, particularly regarding resilience-building efforts. Specifically, I use critical discourse analysis to examine how a US community—here, the City of Longmont, Colorado's Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos (RFA/RPT) process and the Boulder County, Colorado Cultural Broker Resilience Program—is working to recognize and engage marginalized populations to create community resilience building solutions. I ask whose goals are reflected in those proposed solutions, and to what degree they represent notions of procedural, recognition, and distributive justice. That is: how just, equitable, and inclusive are climate resilience efforts and plans in this case? To address these questions in context, I present a case study of resilience-building activities in Boulder County, Colorado, in the aftermath of the devastating floods of 2013.

The case of cultural brokering work in Boulder County resilience-building

Longmont, Colorado, located in Boulder County, was one of the cities hardest hit by the 2013 floods—floods that some researchers have since linked to anthropogenic climate change (Pall et al. 2017). Following this disaster, the City, along with Boulder County, received a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Development Block Grant, the

funds for which were administered through the State of Colorado’s Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), to develop resilience-building programs. One initiative, *Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos* (RFA/RPT), was established to explore breakdowns in communication, as well as barriers to access of government services and community resources, experienced by monolingual Spanish speakers in the Longmont Latinx community after the 2013 floods. During the RFA/RPT process, interviews and focus groups were conducted by a coordinator—a Latina cultural broker—hired by the City of Longmont and Boulder County to identify specific communication failures and barriers this community faced in accessing services.

The goal of the RFA/RPT process was to discover Latinx community members’ barriers to accessing government resources during the disaster and in the flood recovery period, focusing primarily on monolingual Spanish speakers, bilingual youth, and Latinx cultural brokers. Findings published in a project assessment report from these initial outreach activities stated that this population—because of its ability to weather persistent struggles associated with immigration (undocumented or otherwise), discrimination, threat of deportation, and racism—is “already resilient”. However, a salient theme emerged during the interview and focus group processes: the current political milieu meant that many individuals in this community felt vulnerable not as a direct result of exposure to weather-related risk factors. Rather, they felt anxious about accessing services that might increase their vulnerability and expose them to harm such as deportation, loss of employment from missed work, and safety risks posed by traffic conditions during inclement weather (again, exposing them to law enforcement). It is important to note that, according to the report, the community does not self-identify as vulnerable, but rather that they have been excluded from accessing community resources. This kind of

marginalization represents a lack of recognition and procedural justice, which can lead to increased risk and vulnerability (Cutter et al. 2012; Fothergill and Peek 2004).

The RFA report notes that, during past disasters, attempts at warning Latinx community members did not take into consideration important factors such as distrust or fear of law enforcement, and therefore these attempts were unsuccessful. One solution to addressing barriers identified during the RFA/RPT focus group and interview process was to identify trusted community members that act as “cultural brokers” and engage them in creating culturally competent methods of communication between the Latinx community and local government and community organizations. The use of cultural brokers in building community resilience to future disasters should create what Walker (2009) calls safe “spaces of fair process,” or spaces for procedural justice, where people have ample opportunities to authentically participate in making decisions and have access to useful, translated information. Cultural brokers would act as representatives for Latinx community members whose access to planning processes and government resources would normally be restricted due to language and other cultural factors; economic factors, such as inability to participate in decision making processes due to work or family obligations; and political factors such as lack of access to resources due to undocumented immigration status.

In response to the RFA/RPT report findings, Boulder County developed the Boulder County Cultural Brokers Resilience Program (CBRP) and hired a full-time employee to administer the program. The CBRP’s mission is to engage individuals acting as cultural brokers in their communities and provide professional development and a support network of resource sharing for these individuals (Mosaics 2020). The goal of the program is to “advance racial

equity and social justice” for communities of color in Boulder County and surrounding areas (Cultural Brokers Resilience Program 2022).

Background

On September 9, 2013, it began to rain. Over the next week, the Colorado Front Range—an urban corridor in the State of Colorado along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains—would receive record amounts of rainfall. Fourteen Colorado counties were affected, over 18,000 people were evacuated, 10 people would lose their lives in flood-related incidents, and over a thousand people were declared missing at one point (Colorado DHSEM 2014; Uccellini 2014). The floods were described variously as “catastrophic,” “unprecedented,” “devastating,” and “biblical” (this last description came from a National Weather Service warning; Memmot 2013). Hour-by-hour media reports would document the devastation as water swept away cars and roadways, helicopters airlifted people from rooftops, and local governments issued orders to shelter in place. Some towns were entirely isolated when roads became impassable or were washed away. Many people were displaced for months afterward. Some were never able to return to their homes.

Of Colorado’s Front Range communities affected by the extreme weather event, Boulder County, Colorado, the county in which this study is situated, was hardest hit. The county received up to 17 inches of rain over a seven-day period in a location whose average annual rainfall is 17-19 inches (Yochum 2015). In the year preceding the floods, areas in and around Boulder County experienced severe wildland fires, which exacerbated flood effects when denuded hillsides were unable to accommodate the amount of precipitation falling. On September 14, 2013, Boulder County was designated a FEMA Federal Disaster Area, making it

eligible for federal disaster aid funds. The county received \$33 million in state and federal reconstruction grants (Gochis et al. 2015).

Foothills United Way, a local nonprofit organization, created the Foothills Flood Relief Fund which raised over \$5 million. The nonprofit also helped initiate a multi-jurisdictional Long-Term Flood Recovery Group (LTFRG) to manage the fund. The LTFRG was comprised of federal agencies, state officials, local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders (Long-term Flood Recovery Group n.d.). The LTFRG aided in flood recovery by performing a Boulder County unmet needs assessment, prioritizing projects, connecting flood-affected residents to recovery resources, coordinating volunteer efforts, and allocating disaster relief funds for immediate and long-term recovery needs.

A subcommittee of the LTFRG, the Long-Term Community Resilience Initiative, was formed to focus social aspects of flood recovery and build “a culture of resilience” in Boulder County (BoCo Strong 2016). The group hosted a series of 22 neighborhood conversations to gather lessons learned from flood-impacted communities. They also performed a county-wide resilience assessment to “develop and apply a common resilience approach” across the county by sharing lessons learned and developing best practices and to identify challenges to building resilience (BoCo Strong 2016). The assessment report, *Putting on a Resilience Lens*, identified several barriers to resilience for Spanish-speaking communities, such as economic disparities compared to white residents; a lack of engagement with and support for undocumented residents; cultural and linguistic gaps that isolate racialized groups from the broader community; emergency warnings that were only in English and a lack of bilingual first responders; and a difficult-to-navigate legal system. The assessment’s recommendations to address these gaps

included an increase in bilingual government services and increasing education, outreach, and marketing to Spanish-speaking communities.

Crucially, the assessment also found that cultural brokers were an integral component of community resilience-building. As trusted community members, cultural brokers have relationships with community members—including undocumented Latinx residents—and connect them to resources. The *Putting on a Resilience Lens* report defines cultural brokers as those individuals that “actively seek opportunities to create bridges and increase networking and communication between minority communities, public agencies and private organizations” and notes that “the trust and respect they hold in both settings makes them critical in resilience work because they raise issues that, in their absence, often remain unsaid” (BoCo Strong 2016: 42).

In 2016, the City of Longmont, which is situated in Boulder County and has a large Latinx population relative to the rest of the county, received a State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) to implement the RFA/RPT effort. Longmont implemented RFA/RPT in partnership with BoCo Strong, and the effort was a response to the *Putting on a Resilience Lens* assessment recommendation to better engage and support Spanish speakers in Boulder County. The CDBG-DR was part of a state-wide Colorado Disaster Recovery Resilience Planning Program which was initiated to assist communities with recovery efforts following a series of devastating wildfires and the 2013 floods. The purpose of the grant was to “increase resilience capacity in hard-hit areas” by “[b]uilding a web of local connections among individuals (esp. underserved or vulnerable populations)...” (State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs 2019: 12).

As the RFA/RPT report notes, the process was initiated to “identify barriers and create a bridge between a vulnerable sector of our Latino population [monolingual Spanish speakers],

community resources and local governments in the City of Longmont and Boulder County” with the goal of “identify[ing] barriers, develop[ing] recommendations that would be more inclusive of this segment of the community and create space for representation from this underserved portion of the community” (City of Longmont 2017: 2). A Latina cultural broker coordinator was hired to lead the process, which included interviews with flood recovery practitioners and focus groups with Latinx bilingual youth, monolingual Spanish speakers, and bilingual cultural brokers. In August of 2017, the RFA/RPT team released a report that grouped community-defined barriers to resilience into six major themes: lack of connection to resources for both family and community needs; lack of dissemination of information in multimedia channels; lack of Spanish language in all forms of communication; lack of access for job opportunities, health issues, insurance, education, financial transactions and general institutions; lack of safety and trust; lack of connection between community members and institutions (City of Longmont 2017: 15).

The report also highlighted the critical role played by cultural brokers—often city or county employees, trusted community members, or the children of monolingual Spanish speakers—in navigating flood recovery resources because they were otherwise inaccessible to this group. The report highlighted the need to “[f]inancially recruit, reward, and retain cultural brokers in local agencies and community” (City of Longmont 2017: 19). This is a crucial act of recognition for the often unpaid and unrecognized work performed by informal cultural brokers within agencies and organizations, and those embedded in communities.

Since the release of the RFA/RPT report, several actions to hire, reward, train, and retain cultural brokers has followed. Following the recommendation from RFA/RPT, Boulder County created a full-time paid Cultural Broker Resilience Program Supervisor position. In addition, the

county, through the efforts of the Cultural Broker Resilience Program Supervisor, has implemented the Cultural Broker Resilience Program (CBRP), the Mosaics project, and BoCo ¡SUMA! The CBRP provides professional development opportunities to cultural brokers and aims at creating “a common understanding of the cultural broker’s work by supporting existing efforts in organizations and groups that focus on serving diverse communities” and has a focus of advancing racial equity and social justice through the support of cultural brokering work (Boulder County 2022). The Mosaics project convened focus groups comprised of formal and informal Latinx cultural brokers from diverse backgrounds to develop *Promising Practices* to guide the “recruitment, retention, and rewarding of Latinx cultural brokers” (Boulder County 2020: 2). Promising practices are “a hybrid between best known practices and their adaptation to a culturally competent context that is *informed by the individuals who will be affected by their implementation*” (Boulder County 2020; emphasis added). Importantly, the Mosaics project created a definition of Latinx cultural brokering using focus group input:

Latinx Bi-cultural Brokers in Boulder County are community partners who bridge diverse cultures and reduce current or potential conflict by co-creating, with the communities they serve, innovative strategies for change in areas of mediation, resource sharing and navigation, mentorship, and the promotion of culture for civic engagement and public participation in advocacy and activism (Boulder County 2020: 2).

Lastly, the BoCo ¡SUMA! project is a community-led communications tool intended to create equitable access to resources and information sharing for cultural brokers and the Latinx community in Boulder County and surrounding areas.

Each of these resilience-building efforts around the Latinx community in Boulder County has had a positive impact in creating more just and equitable spaces in which to build Latinx—and other marginalized—community members’ resilience. However, as will be discussed in the

findings and analysis section, significant institutional and structural barriers, and power imbalances, remain.

Roadmap for What Follows

With this context in mind, this thesis examines a few particular components of resilience-building and environmental (in)justice in the context of floods, programs for cultural brokering and increasing resilience, and places for institutional and programmatic changes. To address these topics, I ask the following research questions:

To what extent do resilience-focused programs such as the Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos process and the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program utilize environmentally just practices and processes? How are cultural brokers as members and representatives of the Latinx community meaningfully consulted about defining resilience on their—and their community's—own terms?

More specifically, my analysis focused on the following sub-questions:

1. What spaces, if any, have Latinx communities created to further equitable and just resilience-building efforts?
2. What discourses surround resilience-building activities in Boulder County and how—and to what degree—do they appear to be shaped by the broader social, institutional, and historical contexts in which they are embedded?
3. How has the allocation of power and resources shifted as a result of the RFA/RPT process and through the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program?

Below, I review relevant literature on resilience, focusing specifically on community resilience and the need to center issues of equity and justice in resilience-building. I also review how and why to use a critical environmental justice-capabilities lens, combined with a critical discourse

analysis approach, to address issues of equity and justice in resilience-building contexts. I follow Martin et al.'s (2018) conception of “equitable resilience” as “a form of environmental resilience which takes into account issues of social vulnerability and differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources...., starts from people’s own perception of their position within their human-environmental system, and accounts for their realities, and of their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future” (198). This definition recognizes the fundamental link between humans and their environment while addressing the need to attend to the socio-political aspects of resilience. It is also a call to recognize sources of unequal risk and vulnerability, and to support community members’ goals for building resilience, including addressing power imbalances in the resilience-building process. I then outline my study design, including the methods used in this study. Next, I present my findings and analysis. Most importantly, I find that cultural brokers’ participatory and inclusive form of community-building work—and the community that emerges from such work—*is* resilience. I also find that, although Boulder County resilience-building efforts are moving toward more just and equitable practices, cultural brokers and resilience practitioners face systemic and institutionalized barriers to fully realizing distributive, procedural, and recognition justice and increasing community capabilities. Lastly, I discuss potential limitations of the study and suggest directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to situate Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos and the Boulder County Cultural Brokers Resilience Program in a broader discourse on resilience, I examine the historical roots of resilience as it moved from the natural sciences into the social sphere. This is important because as resilience has traveled from the natural sciences to the social realm, it has retained some of apolitical biases. In addition, I provide a brief overview of environmental justice. I focus on the shift from early EJ scholarship – primarily concerned with distribution of environmental goods and bads – to more recent multivalent frameworks that account for: access to environmental decision making processes (procedural justice); recognition of individuals and communities as equal partners in decision making processes and recognition of structural power imbalances that result in their exclusion (recognition justice); and a concern with individuals' and groups' capacity to transform resources into functioning and flourishing (capabilities).

Origins of resilience

Resilience as a concept originates from materials science and mathematics, where it describes the capacity of a material to return to its original form after physical deformation (Callister 2001). Later ecological definitions follow C.S. Holling's conceptualization (Briske 2017; Holling 1973). Since Holling's original definition of ecological resilience, the literature has seen a proliferation of definitions and attempts to catalogue them (e.g., Brand and Jax 2007; Davidson et al. 2016; DesJardins et al. 2015). The meaning remains nebulous and poorly defined, however. Myers-Smith et al.'s (2012) meta-analysis found that in 234 papers on resilience, 66% did not provide a definition of resilience and 71% did not cite a source for the term.

In an attempt to increase interdisciplinarity around resilience, some researchers have advocated for an understanding of resilience as a boundary object that facilitates dialogue between researchers, policymakers, and managers (Brand and Jax 2007; Tierney 2015; Pickett 2004). Even with the ambiguity of the term in the academic literature, its widespread and varied use outside of the academy has practical implications for communities tasked to become more resilient.

Community Resilience

The concept of community-level resilience has developed from two separate strands of literature: social-ecological systems science, and community health and psychology (Berkes and Ross 2013). An era of “command-and-control”, top-down management of environmental systems led to a growing realization that humanity’s failures to include their own activities in the natural resource management equation had resulted in many unexpected and undesirable impacts for ecosystems and resource-dependent communities (Holling and Meffe 1996: 329; Folke 2006). Conceptions of resilience shifted away from ecosystems as stable or tending towards equilibrium to a view of ecosystems as adaptive and responsive to change (Folke 2006).

Consequently, researchers began to promote more holistic ecosystem management approaches, accounting for human activity in natural resource management strategies (Briske et al. 2017). This “social-ecological systems” (SES) perspective recognized the complex interactions of environment, economics, and cultural influences on management outcomes (Liu et al. 2007). SES definitions conceptualize resilience in terms of a system’s ability to change and adapt to disturbances while maintaining essential functioning (Berkes and Ross 2013; Caniglia and Frank 2017). Adger (2000) argued that, especially in natural resource dependent communities, market forces driving resource management can reduce the resilience of both

communities and the ecosystems in which they are embedded. The SES view provides a more holistic notion of resilience, but this perspective has also been criticized for focusing too much on biophysical drivers and outcomes and undertheorizing the social (Brown 2014; Meerow et al. 2019).

The community health and psychology literature focuses on individuals' resilience to adversity, abilities to build capacity, and exercise agency (Brown 2014; Brown and Westaway 2011; Coulthard 2011; Folke and Ross 2013). Related research focuses on individual wellbeing and happiness, which has led to a number of indices such as the World Happiness Report and the TRIO index for human wellbeing (World Happiness Report 2018; Summers et al. 2014). This focus on measuring and cataloging human happiness and wellbeing has carried forward into community resilience scholarship and practice where it has had significant implications for community resilience-building efforts as discussed below. While these two literatures developed in parallel, recent efforts to bring them together under the community resilience framework grew out of a desire to "socialize" resilience (Brown 2014: 110).

Community-level resilience frameworks and indices have proliferated and represent efforts to measure and quantify resilience at that scale (for a recent review, see Brown et al. 2018). These frameworks and indices are often deployed by practitioners to track progress and measure success of community resilience-building efforts. These metrics are meant to be generalizable across many contexts, thus expanding their usefulness; however, their indiscriminate application on the ground has had significant implications for communities. One-size-fits-all frameworks and arbitrary measurements of resilience can lead to greater vulnerability for communities, particularly because they are disconnected from community needs (Ruszczuk 2019).

Definitions of resilience as an essential property of communities remain popular in the literature and in policymaking (Meerow et al. 2019). However, analysts have argued resilience is best seen as a process or approach, rather than a goal or static attribute, when addressing issues of equity and justice (Matin et al 2018; Estêvão et al. 2017). Matin et al. (2018) define their “equitable resilience” approach as one that “takes into account issues of social vulnerability and differentiated access to power, knowledge and resources, starts from people’s own perception of their position within their human environmental system, and accounts for their realities, and of their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future” (198). Viewing resilience-building as an approach or process, then, necessarily foregrounds community engagement. However, public participation processes are also not a panacea—which I discuss further under the section about environmental justice—and community remains a highly contested concept.

Uncritical applications of the term “community” in community engagement homogenize populations and mask internal power imbalances and tensions that can lead to greater resilience for some and increased vulnerability and disenfranchisement for others within a “community” (McDonnell 2019; Titz et al. 2018). McKinzie’s (2017) comparative study of two post-disaster communities illustrates how failing to account for long-term effects of disasters on communities can paint an incomplete picture of recovery processes, often related to inadequate considerations of individuals’ multiple and overlapping identities or variation within communities (see also Browne 2015). McKinzie also highlights the importance of historicity in disaster contexts, showing how past racist policies structured disaster recovery; policies including segregation and the creation of “sundown towns” explicitly excluding Black people from living within their

borders. Therefore, resilience-building efforts would benefit from clearly defined notions of “the community” in community resilience.

In this context, mainstream conceptualizations of resilience have not adequately engaged with power and its various impacts, sacrificing the chance to make important insights that could be useful to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. Therefore, to draw attention to how notions of resilience have been used apolitically to elide power imbalances, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners should engage more critically with the concept of resilience. Specifically, issues of justice and equity should be foregrounded in community resilience-building and adaptation efforts, rather than uncritically applying generalized frameworks and indices.

Resilience and vulnerability in a disaster context

Disasters often reveal existing social inequalities or throw them into sharper relief (McKinzie 2017; Browne 2015; Matthewman 2015). It is widely accepted that so-called ‘natural’ disasters do not result from natural causes (Browne et al. 2020: 295; Hoffman and Oliver-smith 1999), and disaster vulnerability is not an inherent property of communities (Fothergill and Peek 2004). Rather, disaster vulnerability is produced and reproduced within contexts of social inequality (Browne et al. 2020: 295). For instance, in a longitudinal study of persistent wealth inequality following multiple disaster-recovery cycles, Howell and Elliot (2019) demonstrated that damages sustained during a disaster event positively correlates with an increase in wealth inequality. This effect was even stronger when individuals received FEMA assistance, indicating bias in resource allocation that disadvantages those most in need. This difference was most noticeable along the lines of race, education, and homeownership (Howell and Elliot 2019). As these findings indicate, then, participatory interventions in a disaster context should better

address underlying structural causes of vulnerability and increased risk to climate-related events. Browne's (2015) example of African American communities in New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina mirrors the findings of Howell and Elliot (2019). She finds that years after the initial devastation, communities of color who were abandoned during and after the hurricane remained impoverished, fractured, and neglected while the circumstances of elite communities were often improved (Browne 2015). Browne (2015) also highlights how the actions of the "recovery culture," or those organizations that respond to disasters can inadvertently cause prolonged suffering and recovery times for the "wounded culture," or those communities impacted by disaster.

Spatial and temporal scales also matter in disaster research. Scholars have noted that disaster research often focuses on disaster response and recovery to the exclusion of pre-disaster preparedness, especially concerning socially vulnerable populations. Fothergill and Peek (2004: 105) recommend that researchers further explore how risk is perceived by low-income communities, how they prepare for (or fail to prepare for) disasters, and how they respond to disaster warning communications. Disaster preparedness must also occur at relevant spatial scales in order to produce appropriate interventions. Weisser et al. (2014: 112), note that there is little focus on "how the 'global' idea of adaptation is made 'local' by a multitude of actors in a diversity of sites all over the world".

Ruszczuk (2019) examines a case of post-disaster resilience work in Nepal that highlights all the pitfalls discussed above: tensions involved in post-disaster resilience-building when it is externally funded; the use of externally imposed frameworks and indices of resilience; and the dangers of failing to recognize the power imbalances that exist within communities, including those resulting from multiple, overlapping axes of marginalization. The author concludes that:

Only by asking questions such as ‘whose resilience is important?’, to ‘what event or hazard?’, ‘whose lens is being used to examine resilience?’, ‘who impacts on resilience’, and listening to and comprehending the power relations, the range of scales involved, and the complex intersectionality between those scales, can resilience as a concept be used to benefit those who need to be more than resilient subjects. (2019: 834).

The author’s example makes clear a need to bring an examination of politics and power to any resilience-building activity. Therefore, sociologists and others studying disaster resilience should adopt a more contextualized view of resilience-building that explicitly engages with the underlying causes of vulnerability, such as fair participation in resilience-building measures; attending to power relations and varying and often conflicting agendas and political projects; and questions the coherence of “community” in community resilience and whether measures actually reflect the needs and desires of the communities and individuals they seek to “make resilient”. Explicitly engaging with these underlying causes of vulnerability before disasters occur can improve outcomes afterward (Caniglia and Frank 2017). These interventions should occur at appropriate scales and account for socio-political factors and embedded inequalities that can significantly impact how communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. This points to a need for participatory measures to account for the underlying causes of inequality and vulnerability throughout the disaster cycle, especially in the preparatory phase.

Repoliticizing resilience discourse and practice

The ecological foundations of resilience’s conceptualization helped shape its current uses in important ways. Resilience as an ecological goal has manifested as a structural-functionalist approach, where society is viewed as a self-correcting complex system of interlocking parts always tending toward equilibrium or adapting to change without loss of basic functions (Caniglia and Frank 2017; Matin et al 2018; Tierney 2015). On the other hand, psychological perspectives promote viewing individuals as adaptable and capable of becoming resilient

(Bankoff 2019; Reid 2012; Tierney 2015). Individuals' perceived failures to adapt or become resilient are viewed as personal deficiencies, lending a (Western) moral orientation to the process of resilience-building (Chmutina et al. 2016; Reid 2012).

These perspectives, in combination, suggest that with social-ecological systems seen as self-correcting and individuals seen as self-securing, interventions become unnecessary when disruptions occur. Yet, importantly, critics note that when conceptualized this way, resilience as a policy goal articulates seamlessly with neoliberal ideals and policy goals, such as an elimination of government protections and social safety nets, privileging free markets, privatization of resources and services, deregulation of industry, and devolution of governance to non-state actors or lower levels of government (Malin and Kallman 2022). Local governments, communities, and people are expected to become resilient—that is, self-reliant—and thus, responsible for their own security (e.g., Bankoff 2019; Moon et al. 2017; Reid 2012; Tierney 2015). Further, according to this conceptualization of resilience, the most efficient way to implement capacity-building and disaster recovery efforts is to entrust these activities to non-state actors—often with devastating results for local communities rivaling those suffered in the disaster event (Browne 2015; Imperiale and Vanclay 2020; Klein 2007; Ruszczyk 2019; Tierney 2015). Resilience remains, then, a highly contested term that fails to adequately address issues of vulnerability and power (Eakin et al. 2017; Matin et al. 2018; Meerow et al. 2019; Reid 2012; Tierney 2015).

As the climate crisis worsens, many commentators have called for a radical re-centering of equity and justice concerns in resilience and adaptation planning and a repoliticization of the term that critically interrogates its status as a taken-for-granted public good (e.g., Klinsky et al. 2017; Meerow et al. 2019). Matin, Forrester and Ensor (2018) note that as the term 'resilience'

becomes widely embraced by policymakers and practitioners, it risks becoming depoliticized. This precludes resilience from considerations of justice and creates tensions around who has a legitimate “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1996: 158). Béné et al. (2017) conducted a literature review examining the policy discourses around urban resilience and concluded that urban resilience, as it is used in academic and policy contexts, rarely engages with social justice.

Julian Agyeman has noted that in striving to become more resilient, sustainable, and smart, cities have focused more on “becoming” than “belonging”; that is, focusing on what practitioners and experts think resilient (smart, sustainable, etc.) cities should look like, rather than focusing on making cities more just and inclusive for all inhabitants (Boone 2020).

Recognizing that resilience is a normative concept entangled with political goals across contexts is necessary if resilience is to move beyond an apolitical and empty buzzword. A more critical engagement with the concept of resilience opens the possibility to more closely scrutinize the social and political work that resilience *does*.

Using a critical environmental justice lens to explore community resilience

Caniglia and Frank (2017) observe that resilience scholarship has largely failed to engage with the environmental justice (EJ) literature. They attribute this lack of engagement to resilience’s origin in the natural sciences, which has placed it outside of the purview of critical scholarly traditions broadly (as noted above), and EJ scholarship specifically (57). I build on these points here by arguing that an EJ framework provides an ideal lens through which to explore social justice in community engagement around resilience-building to climate-related events. Specifically, a holistic view of EJ – community-based and focused on distributive, procedural, and recognition elements of outcomes and practices – helps assess justice aspects of

resilience-building, especially when used in conjunction with a community capabilities focus from climate justice.

Environmental justice arose out of people's and communities' needs to address concrete problems of inequitable environmental exposures and contamination and only later developed into a robust academic field (Szasz and Meuser 1997; Mohai et al. 2009). In the EJ context, civic involvement has often taken the form of activism. Indeed, EJ activism mobilized to address environmental and health concerns in communities whose residents were predominantly people of color (Agyeman et al. 2016; Čapek 1993, Schlosberg and Collins 2014). Scholars usually locate the inception of the movement in the 1982 protests over toxic dumping in Warren County, North Carolina, when 414 demonstrators were arrested while protesting the siting of a toxic waste facility (Agyeman et al. 2016), though the movement can be traced back further, to active organizing like that done by the United Farm Workers. Early acts of defiance against environmental injustice sparked foundational research studies (US GAO 1983; UCC Commission for Racial Justice 1987; Bullard 1990), which have co-developed alongside a growing EJ movement in communities of color and poor communities (Čapek 1993; Schlosberg and Collins 2014).

EJ research began as part of the effort to systematically demonstrate the existence of inequalities in toxic siting (Agyeman et al. 2016: 326; Mohai et al. 2009). Scholars used statistical and spatial analyses to show that toxic waste facilities were more frequently located in low-income communities of color rather than in more affluent, white communities (Agyeman et al. 2016; Čapek 1993). In an early environmental racism study in the U.S., Mohai and Bryant (1992) found that in six out of nine communities, race was a more significant predictor of proximity to environmental hazards than income. This patterning was later corroborated on a

global scale, leading to the worldwide expansion of environmental justice as a research agenda and a social justice movement (Mohai et al. 2009; Schlosberg and Collins 2014). Hundreds of studies have now shown that that communities of color and/or poor communities are disproportionately burdened with environmental ‘bads’, lack access to environmental ‘goods’, and face consistent exclusion from meaningful decision-making roles (Mohai et al. 2009; Roberts et al. 2018). In the context of resilience and disaster responses, then, similar exclusions and procedural inequities mirror these well-established patterns.

As I alluded to earlier, participatory processes for environmental decision-making remain problematic. The focus in EJ scholarship on procedural justice has been a crucial avenue for scholars to highlight the tensions inherent in participatory processes. Represented as fair and democratic, participatory approaches are prone to exclusionary practices and cooptation. Many environmental decision-making processes call for public participation; however, meaningful opportunities for participation often do not materialize in practice (Fischer 2003). Bankoff (2019) has argued that inclusion of vulnerable populations in decision-making is often performative and amounts to nothing more than the “vantriloquization of villagers’ needs” (Mosse quoted in Bankoff 2019: 229). Fischer (2003) notes that participatory principles are often “enshrined in official environmental documents”; however, community engagement does not always happen in practice (260). To address and learn from these shortcomings, social scientists can better analyze and center issues of procedural justice when evaluating processes that support resilience-building in communities.

Justice scholars have offered several criteria to be used when evaluating participatory justice. Walker (2009), in arguing for procedural fairness in environmental justice issues, has noted that the degree of success in achieving justice at a participatory level should be gauged by

the degree to which such practices are observable on the ground, “as realized rather than discursively represented” (Walker 2009: 627). Shrader-Frechette (2002) argues for a distributive and procedural approach to addressing issues of environmental injustice characterized by a principle she calls “prima facie political equality,” which assumes political equality among individuals. However, unlike some deliberative democratic theorists who have taken a more hands-off approach regarding this assumption, Shrader-Frechette argues that the burden of justifying the equality of procedures rests on those who would advocate for practices that lead to unequal environmental outcomes (Shrader-Frechette 2002: 24).

Hunold and Young (1998) offer procedural and substantive criteria that should be considered when evaluating environmental decisions. The authors argue that substantive criteria decrease the likelihood that powerful interests will dictate outcomes, leading to more just environmental outcomes (Hunold and Young 1998: 91). In a disaster resilience decision-making context, policymakers and practitioners can adopt similar substantive criteria linked to an environmental justice frame. Procedural justice as it appears within an EJ framework is specifically meant to curtail injustice and inequality in environmental decision-making, which can include disaster preparedness, response, and recovery contexts. Solely focusing on procedural justice, on getting people to the table, does not go far enough. Approaches that increase procedural justice should be augmented with solutions that seek to improve recognition justice and consider a community’s capabilities to implement resilience and adaptation measures.

Fraser (2003) argues for a conception of recognition that is explicitly linked to distributive justice concerns. More specifically, she argues that recognition be viewed in terms of status. This conceptual move allows for an analysis of the way in which claims about the distribution of resources are based on the (de)valuing of group or individual based on social

status. In addition, recognition-as-status shows how some groups are viewed as equal participants—or not—in social interaction. According to this view, misrecognition represents “social subordination in the sense of being prevented from participating as a peer in social life” (Fraser 2003: 27). Therefore, as Schlosberg (2007) asserts recognition and respect form the basis for procedural justice.

A capabilities approach has also been incorporated as a component of the broader EJ framework under climate justice, which examines the unequal environmental impacts associated with climate change, including who will be (and has been) most impacted, who has the responsibility to act, and who has the capability to mitigate the impacts of climate change (Mohai et al. 2009; Roberts and Parks 2006; Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010; Schlosberg and Collins 2014). While the climate justice paradigm arose out of EJ, there is considerable disagreement between the two paradigms regarding what the appropriate scale of concern should be. Climate justice researchers argue that EJ principles focus too closely on local concerns, such as NIMBYism (Schlosberg and Collins 2014: 368), when climate change is a global issue with no boundaries (Mohai et al. 2009). Yet, EJ advocates believe climate justice brackets concerns about the production of vulnerability and inequality in favor of focusing on mitigation and protection (Schlosberg and Collins 2014: 368). Critics also argue that resilience and adaptation associated with climate justice have become depoliticized and therefore obscure issues of institutionalized inequalities (Hayward 2014; Matin et al. 2018). Schlosberg and Collins, in arguing for a greater focus on climate rather than EJ, nonetheless concede that “the concern with the local makes sense with a turn toward the impacts of climate change and adaptation” (Schlosberg and Collins 2014: 368) because adaptation measures must ultimately be implemented at the local level.

The climate justice paradigm has led to an emphasis on individual and community capabilities, or the ability to turn resources into functioning and flourishing (Nussbaum 2003; Schlosberg and Collins 2014; Sen 1979), arguing that concerns over recognition, participation, and distribution do not go far enough. Instead, there must be a focus on whether individuals and communities have the capacity to meaningfully participate once they are included, or to carry out actions decided upon in participatory processes (Sclobig et al. 2015). Schlosberg and Collins (2014) argue that adaptation “has been framed as a way to bridge environmental justice, climate justice, and social justice for the vulnerable more generally” (368). In addition, they argue that EJ’s approach to adaptation is “thoroughly engaged with particular issues of participation, impacts on culture, and the capabilities communities need to function” (Schlosberg and Collins 2014: 369).

Environmental justice views that incorporate capabilities approaches offer compelling frameworks to adopt when evaluating resilience-building and adaptation activities on the ground. This more intersectional and multi-scalar view retains a focus on the local where adaptation measures must be implemented, maintains a critical concern with the historical production of vulnerability and injustice (as well as of normative aspects of adaptation and resilience), and it encompasses issues of recognition, distributive, and procedural justice as well as individuals’ and communities’ abilities to access and shape decision-making processes and carry out measures needed to become more resilient.

Cultural Brokering

Much of the early literature on cultural brokering originates in anthropology and was used to refer to individuals that mediated interactions between colonial powers and subjugated populations (Geertz 1960; Jezewski 1995; Eversole 2018: 1). Cultural brokerage was

conceptualized in early writings primarily as a self-interested activity; however, as Baron (2021) notes, this notion of self-interested cultural brokerage was complicated by further research in applied and medical anthropology that revealed cultural brokers act in both self-interested ways and in mutual interest with those for whom they are brokering (Baron 2021). Baron (2021: 63) offers a succinct summary of brokering in a contemporary context (in their case, public folklore) and what it might involve: “Brokerage entails intervention and multiple mediation with long-term consequences that shape the identities of both broker and brokered. Self-interest and mutual interests are always present along with the interests of disciplines and institutions. Asymmetries of authority are accompanied by overarching framing by the broker” (63).

In a contemporary context, cultural brokers are often trusted community members embedded within the community they serve. From this vantage point, they act as an interface between formal government agencies, community organizations, and community members. According to Eversole (2018: 5), “cultural brokers often play a central role as enablers of communication and relationship building across cultural divides” by “navigate[ing] the spaces of incomprehension (or miscomprehension) between social groups, often in order to create advantage: for themselves, their organization, and/or their community” (3). Wolf (1956: 1076) notes that this “Janus-like” quality results from cultural brokers’ ability to face in both directions simultaneously, so to speak, to mediate the different, often conflicting needs of the social groups and official agencies.

Medical anthropology and healthcare scholarship produces a considerable amount of recent cultural brokering literature. In the field of health care, nursing professionals often must act interpreters or advocates for minoritized groups (Arias-Murcia et al. 2013; Baron 2021: 67). Clingerman notes in the case of nurses, “cultural competence from a social justice perspective

advances thinking beyond recognition of conditions, disadvantages, and inequities that affect vulnerable groups of people” and “acts as a floodlight on culture and contexts...and encourages exploration of relationships between actions...that give unfair advantage or disadvantage to members of one group more than members of another group” (Clingerman 2011: 338).

Medical anthropologist Mary Ann Jezewski (1995) used a grounded theory approach to identify common attributes of culture brokers discussed in the healthcare, anthropological, and business literature. From these sources, she developed an insightful model of the way in which nurses-as-brokers provided culturally competent care by mediating conflict and communication breakdowns between physicians and patients from historically marginalized groups. This dynamic was especially helpful in helping the author understand the ways in which multiple “intervening conditions” such as stigma, power(lessness), political factors, culture sensitivity, cultural background, communication, and economic factors interacted to facilitate or exacerbate conflict (Jezewski 1995: 26). Another goal of culture brokers in the nursing context was to keep patients connected to the health care system and the resources it provides (Jezewski 1995: 23), providing a culturally legible link between clients (patients) and resource providers (physicians). Importantly, these examples from healthcare highlight that cultural brokering is often an informal role that is taken up by many individuals in varied contexts. Eversole (2018) argues that it is important to recognize that “cultural brokers can be observed in settings where cultural groups come together,” and while “these functions may be more or less prevalent, specialized, or institutionalized,” cultural brokers and cultural brokerage is found across a variety of cultures and settings (2).

Anthropologists such as Browne (2016; 2015; 2013) have written extensively on the role of cultural brokering in a disaster context. As Browne (2015) notes, cultural brokers play a

crucial role in disaster recovery, both in the period immediately following a disaster and in long-term recovery. Her ethnography of a large African American family navigating the recovery process following Hurricane Katrina is one of the few long-term studies of post-disaster recovery. She finds that culture—including the meanings, rituals, and resources shared by a group of people—is critical to building and maintaining community resilience (Browne 2016; 2015; 2013). Conversely, and just as important, is the insight that the tightly knit nature of groups bound by culture means that trauma is cumulative not only within the individual across time as the stressors encountered during the post-disaster recovery process accumulate; trauma is also cumulative across members of a cultural group so that suffering is compounded within “wounded cultures,” or those impacted by a disaster (Browne 2015: 192; 2013 n.p.). This suffering can be alleviated or exacerbated by those who are part of the “recovery culture,” or the organizations and institutions involved in an official capacity in disaster recovery efforts (Browne 2015: 24, 192; 2013 n.p.). Therefore, cultural brokers are a vital part of the recovery process because they, as Browne notes, “[understand] enough about two worlds to translate essential information across the divide [between the “wounded culture” and the “recovery culture”]. When successful, this translation fosters both the trust and the communication necessary for recovery to take place” (Browne 2015: 38).

These findings link to the Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos and the Boulder County Cultural Brokers Resilience Program context in important ways. Boulder County sees cultural brokers as bridges between the Latinx community and various governmental agencies and the services they provide, demonstrating the “Janus-like” quality of cultural brokers to stand in two worlds: that of the agencies and organizations working to build resilience for Latinx and other socially vulnerable populations, and the communities in which they are embedded and

serve. Like Clingerman's (2011) example of nurses' ability to provide culturally competent care to vulnerable migrant and seasonal farm workers, individuals who are intimately tied to Latinx communities in Longmont are more able to provide culturally competent bridging functions between those communities and local government agencies, community organizations, and resources. In this way, Latinx culture brokers can play not only a literal language translation role, but can translate and characterize the cultural values of, and specific challenges faced by, community members they represent, a key aspect of gaining recognition justice for socially vulnerable populations.

Concluding Remarks

A recent study found that extreme rainfall events following wildfires like the conditions leading to the 2013 floods in Colorado will only become more common in the Western U.S. due to climate change (Touma et al. 2022). Approaching resilience-building using a critical and multivalent EJ lens that considers its procedural, recognition, and distributional aspects, and the ways in which they intersect and interact with one another, can help us determine on whose terms community resilience-building happens and who benefits, or loses, in the process of resilience-building. Such a line of questioning should also take into account the capabilities communities and individuals possess (or lack) to meaningfully participate in environmental decision-making processes.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This research uses two qualitative methods to address my research questions: critical discourse analysis and in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Ravitch and Carl (2016) explain the aim of qualitative research as an “attempt to understand individuals, groups, and phenomena in their natural settings in ways that are contextualized and reflect the meaning that people make out of their own experiences” (36). Further, Carter and Little (2007) state that qualitative research is research that “asks open questions about phenomena as they occur in context rather than setting out to test predetermined hypotheses” (Carter and Little 2007: 1316).

Qualitative research is most appropriate for this study because I am interested in exploring how individuals embedded within larger institutional contexts are working to create greater resilience for communities, how those individuals understand their roles in this capacity, and how struggles over meaning manifest in this context. The way resilience-building is constructed through discourse and practice reflects power struggles over the meaning of resilience; that is, resilience for whom, what, when, where, and why (Meerow and Newell 2019)? These struggles may or may not result in distributive, procedural, and recognition justice in the resilience-building process. Taking a qualitative approach best addressed my research questions helped me determine whose priorities and preferences are reflected in resilience-building efforts (Eakin 2017).

Critical discourse analysis

Epistemological background

As the literature review showed, resilience (or presumed lack of resilience) in disaster contexts have largely been presented as technical and normative problems, often framed in

apolitical language. In policy arenas, resilience efforts can be treated as one coherent approach, and resilience as a trope is fast becoming an empty buzzword. However, as Hajer (1995) has noted about environmental discourse broadly—in which I include disaster resilience—while disaster resilience may present a coherent narrative about a specific environmental problem on the surface, beneath it tends to be fragmented and contradictory with many “conceptual holes and political ambivalences” that reflect different actors’ understandings of, and concerns over, the environmental problem at hand (1).

Critical discourse analysis focuses on uncovering taken for granted assumptions and naming power relations, a powerful tool to analyze resilience-building discourses and practices. Importantly, critical discourse analysis (CDA) draws attention to relations of power and domination among social groups (van Dijk 1993: 254). Thus, as van Dijk notes, CDA asks the analyst to take an “unabashedly normative” stance (van Dijk 1993: 253; see also Fairclough 2011: 7) when analyzing unequal power relations and social problems with an aim to create social change and achieve social justice for marginalized groups (van Dijk 1993: 253). In the case of resilience, analyzing resilience discourse allows denaturalization of ‘resilience speak’ and exposes its underlying normative assumptions that materialize as the (re)production of social inequality and disparities in environmental risk and disaster outcomes.

The CDA approach used in this study follows Sharp and Richardson’s (2001; see also Cheek 2001; Hajer 1995) Foucauldian understanding of discourse as encompassing both *texts* (speech, documents, and other communicative aspects, as well as ideas and metaphors) as well as *practice* (Bourdieu 1991; Sharp and Richardson 2001: 196). As Sharp and Richardson (2001) argue, to provide a fuller account of policy processes, it is important to move beyond texts to explore the multiple and messy aspects of policymaking (Sharp and Richardson 2001: 194; Hajer

and Versteeg 2005), including how different actors attach meanings to environmental problems, like disasters and their aftermath, and frame and adopt proposed solutions, such as community resilience-building.

In developing this approach, Sharp and Richardson (2001:195) also draw on environmental and planning policy analysts such as Maarten Hajer—specifically on that author’s analysis of policymaking surrounding acid rain in Europe (1995)—and Bent Flyvbjerg’s analysis of a large-scale planning process in the Danish city of Aalborg (Flyvberg 1998). Importantly, the approaches to researching policy and planning in this tradition are part of the “argumentative turn” in policymaking, which takes a critical, post-positivist, social constructionist approach in the analysis of policymaking. Researchers using this approach foreground issues of power and politics in how problems are framed and what policy solutions are proposed (Fischer and Forester 1993; Hajer and Versteeg 2005; Leipold 2019; Lincoln and Guba 1994). Discourse analytical approaches see policy framings and struggles as socially co-produced in that they create particular social objects and subjects or subjectivities and shape the field of possible policy solutions by “render[ing] some objects knowable and governable, and others not (Leipold 2019: 446; see also Fairclough 2009; Hansen 2006).

The ontological and epistemological position taken by CDA allows for an analysis of power within social relations. As Kress (1989: 449) argues, “the notion of the ‘constructed subject’ permits us to bring power into accounts of texts and their production in the fullest way.” One of the primary critiques of resilience approaches is that they (re)produce subjectivities—usually along the lines of a resilient-vulnerable dichotomy—which then become the objects of policy solutions. Furthermore, resilience approaches tend to reinforce the status quo, often leading to the reification of injustices and social inequalities. Because CDA asks “how power

and identity are legitimated, negotiated, and contested toward political ends” (Luke 1995: 12), I use this method in this study to interrogate power and (in)justice within resilience-building efforts as actors struggle to define resilience and vulnerability, and influence the allocation of resources within the field of resilience-building.

Lastly, CDA is methodologically eclectic (Leipold et al. 2019; Leotti et al. 2022), reflecting a diverse array of disciplinary and theoretical approaches. The approach to CDA used in this study borrows from social theorists like Bourdieu (1991) and Foucault (1970), who emphasize the inherently social nature and situated practice of discourse as occurring in specific historical, social, and cultural contexts. Bourdieu in particular rejected purely “semiotic” approaches to discourse that rely solely on the analysis of language-in-use to the exclusion of social practice. This leads to a decontextualized analyses of texts as internally coherent representations of social phenomena divorced from social practice (Bourdieu 1991: 4); rather, texts (discourses) reflect the specific histories, institutions, and social structures in which they are embedded. In addition, I align with this tradition in viewing language as structured by a larger social milieu, and as having the ability to (re)produce social realities. That is, I treat discourse as social and political practice (Bourdieu 1991; Fairclough 2013; 2019). Lastly, Bourdieu and Foucault viewed discourse, knowledge production, and power as inextricably linked. Discourses both constrain and enable what can be thought, discussed, or known about an issue (Bourdieu 1991; Foucault 1973). Therefore, it is important to explore how particular discourses around resilience-vulnerability become authoritative or gain the status of ‘truth,’ whose voices are represented in a discourse and whose are excluded, marginalized, or silenced, and who benefits from a specific discourse and how.

Selecting texts for analysis

My analysis takes as a starting point the Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos (RFA/RPT) report generated following the grant funded RFA/RPT community engagement process and the documents cited in that report. I examined publicly available documents such as local government and nonprofit reports; government resilience, hazard mitigation, and other plans; grant applications, and official meeting minutes. I also analyzed website content, videos from the RFA/RPT website, relevant videos from the City and County's YouTube channel, and podcasts directly related to RFA/RPT, the city and county's resilience-building efforts, and the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program. Lastly, interview participants sent me documents or pointed me to information they thought would be relevant. These were also included in the corpus.

Using a CDA approach, the goal of my analysis was to identify the discourses surrounding community resilience-building activities, focusing primarily on those related to cultural brokering and the RFA/RPT process. My goal was to uncover underlying organizational motivations—and thus power structures—shaping these activities. Importantly, I directed analytical focus toward the particular identities constructed within resilience discourse and used critical EJ framework discussed above to identify whether distributive, recognition, and procedural (in)justice, as well as consideration of communities' capabilities to access resilience-building processes and resources, was present in the texts.

Document analysis

Of the texts examined, 63 were selected to form the corpus for the CDA because they directly discussed the RFA/RPT process, the CBRP, or cultural brokering to achieve community resilience or equity goals; discussed interventions aimed at marginalized or vulnerable populations in the context of resilience-building, crises, or disasters; or discussed resilience-

building after the 2013 floods. Texts were read, watched, or listened to several times and coded manually using a deductive approach guided by the EJ framework discussed above. Literature definitions from the EJ literature for distributive, procedural, and recognition justice and community capabilities were compiled and distilled to create a description for each that were used in the coding process. I then selected “typical exemplars” (Saldaña 2016: 28) from the data that best represented each code and included these in the codebook alongside each code and code description. Inductive coding using an Initial Coding approach (Saldaña 2016: 115) was used to, as Saldaña (2016) suggests, “provide...analytic leads for further exploration” (115). Saldaña (2016: 115) also notes that this method is useful when coding a variety of data sources, as I did for this study. These codes were provisional and evolved as I moved through the data analysis process. The final codes represented a mixture of deductively generated codes informed by the dimensions of EJ and inductively generated codes that emerged from the data.

The development of themes was also an iterative process. I began with Martin et al.’s (2018) definition of equitable resilience and divided the definition into three criteria for equitable resilience: 1) Accounting for issues of social vulnerability and differential access to power, knowledge, and resources; 2) Starting from people’s own perception of their position within their human-environmental system; and 3) Accounting for people’s realities and for their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future. I reread the coded interview transcripts and codebook and grouped codes based on the three equitable resilience criteria. I wrote analytic memos concurrently with coding and theme identification to critically reflect on the analytical process, gain new insights, minimize bias, and make connections in the data (Saldaña 2016, 43). It was through the coding, grouping the data into themes (Ryan and

Russell 2003), and the analytic memoing process that I arrived at the final grouping of themes presented here.

Semi-structured interviews

Rationale and approach

Qualitative interviews are appropriate when the research questions would be best answered through exploratory and descriptive knowledge (Hesse-Bieber 2017). In addition, qualitative interviews are appropriate when the goal of the research is, among other things, to develop detailed descriptions and when describing processes, such as the RFA/RPT process (Weiss 1994). Data collection using qualitative interviews allow the researcher to uncover and highlight subjugated or marginalized knowledges and allow for the exploration of areas or social experiences that are underexplored (Hesse-Bieber 2017).

In-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed me to expand on and gain nuanced, subjective understandings about the RFA/RPT process. I was able to deepen my understanding of the barriers to resilience-building faced by the Latinx community as identified in the RFA/RPT report. Interviews also helped me learn more about agency perceptions of marginalized community members' experiences of the 2013 floods and what prompted the City of Longmont and Boulder County to engage the Latinx community through the RFA/RPT process. Interviews provided an opportunity to further explore the challenges encountered by resilience practitioners and cultural brokers implementing resilience practices following the 2013 floods and the RFA/RPT process.

Sampling approach for semi-structured interviews

Because my goal was to interview people directly involved in the city and county's resilience-building efforts, especially those directly connected to the RFA/RPT initiative, I did

not focus on achieving generalizability to a population or try to reach theoretical saturation. Rather, I used purposive network sampling centered on a single significant case to select interview participants (Ravitch and Carl 2016: 140). Berg (2001: 32) notes that purposive sampling is appropriate when the aim is to ensure the interview sample includes participants who display specific attributes or are representative of a specific group. Likewise, Ravitch and Carl (2016) argue that purposive sampling is appropriate when the goal is to select participants that are uniquely positioned to answer the study's research questions because—as is the case with this study—they possess relevant knowledge of, or experience with, a phenomenon of interest (140).

Purposive network sampling allowed me to identify key individuals directly involved in the development and implementation of RFA/RPT process, the creation and implementation of the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program, and resilience-building efforts in the city and county generally and provided a way to cross-check the data that emerged from the CDA. I reached out to these key individuals via email using an IRB-approved recruitment script. In addition, following a snowball sampling approach (Berg 2001: 33), I asked each interview participant for the names of other people I should talk to who were directly involved in the RFA/RPT process and resilience-building initiatives that resulted from that process. Following these approaches, I quickly reached the point at which no new individuals were identified. I sent each of these individuals an interview request via email using the IRB-approved recruitment script.

Five individuals selected using the methods described above agreed to participate in an interview. Interviews took place in a location of the participants' choosing and ranged in length from 30 minutes to two hours. Interview questions were broadly structured to elicit information about the different aspects of justice in the EJ framework, participants' views about the concept

of resilience generally and community resilience specifically, and to allow participants to discuss aspects of the RFA/RPT process and CBRP program they thought significant. Because all interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, participants expressed a preference to conduct interviews virtually using Zoom videoconferencing software. Interviews were audio recorded using a voice recorder and transcribed with the help of Otter.ai transcription software.

Semi-structured interview data analysis

Interview transcripts were read and reread several times and coded using the deductive and inductive approaches outlined above in the CDA data analysis section. Again, I wrote analytic memos concurrently with coding and transcribing to critically reflect on the analytical process, gain new insights, minimize bias, and make connections in the data (Saldaña 2016: 43). Interview data collection, transcribing, and coding happened concurrently and iteratively alongside the CDA corpus analysis. Representative interview quotes and examples from the text corpus were selected and categorized under each code in the codebook and theme as I developed themes based on the equitable resilience criteria (Matin et al. 2018; Ryan and Russell 2003; Saldaña 2016: 28).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: EQUITABLE RESILIENCE THROUGH AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LENS

My analyses show that each criterion of equitable resilience is addressed to some degree through resilience-building efforts in Boulder County and the City of Longmont. Yet, this is due in large part to the invisible labor of various members of the Latinx community. In particular, I find that the work of cultural brokers is the primary means through which recognition, procedural, and distributive justice, and increasing community capabilities for Latinx and other marginalized communities are realized. Most importantly, I find that cultural brokers' participatory and inclusive form of community-building work—and the community that emerges from such work—*is* resilience. Cultural brokers create resilience in two important ways. First, cultural brokers actively build equitable resilience by creating community, building bridges across diverse groups. Second, cultural brokers—and through them, other community members of the Latinx and other marginalized communities—create resilience by engaging in small but powerful acts of storytelling that disrupt dominant narratives.

I also find that there appear to be institutional shifts toward more equitable resilience-building outside of the CRBP, primarily through the departments directly involved in disaster management and resilience-building. However, the data show that institutionalized power imbalances and differential access to resources remain problems at more systemic levels. Procedural, distributive, and recognition injustices underpin these imbalances.

In this chapter, I link each criterion identified in Matin et al.'s (2018) definition of equitable resilience to the distributive, procedural, recognition, and capabilities dimensions of EJ to illustrate the ways in which the RFA/RPT process and the CBRP realize each dimension of justice (or not) and enhance capabilities for marginalized communities (or not). In the following

sections, I present my thematic analyses, using representative quotations from texts and interviews to explore the research questions above.

In the first subsection, I discuss the four themes that emerged under the first criterion of equitable resilience, “Accounting for issues of social vulnerability and differential access to power, knowledge, and resources.” *Social vulnerability* (Theme 1.1) demonstrates how socially constructed vulnerability manifests and is addressed by cultural brokers and practitioners in Boulder County resilience building efforts. *Differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources* (Theme 1.2) highlights issues of access and how cultural brokers’ work can correct these inequities and achieve more just outcomes in the communities they serve, as well as identifying barriers to equitable access and their justice implications. *Intersectional understandings of social vulnerability and impacts to access* (Theme 1.3) shows how cultural brokers approach issues of access using an intersectional lens. This strategy enables them to gain access to resources and achieve distributive and recognition justice for marginalized communities. *Additional challenges to achieving distributive justice* (Theme 1.4) discusses the challenges and injustices faced by cultural brokers and practitioners in the contexts of resilience-building and disaster planning and recovery efforts.

The second subsection introduces the themes that emerged under the second criterion of equitable resilience, “Starting from people’s own perception of their position within their human-environmental system.” *Setting the foundation for recognition and procedural justice* (Theme 2.1) highlights the groundwork of resilience practitioners following the 2013 Boulder County floods. This work provided an important foundation for procedural and recognition justice by building inclusive and participatory approaches to resilience-building that prioritized communities’ experiences and local knowledge. *Procedural and recognition injustice: Excluding*

Latinx Perspectives (Theme 2.2) illustrates how Latinx and other marginalized perspectives can still be excluded from resilience-building and disaster planning, response, and recovery despite earlier community-driven approaches to resilience. The third theme under criterion two, “*We are resilient*”: *Creating resilient subjectivities, resisting vulnerable identities* (Theme 2.3) highlights the ways that cultural brokers and the communities in which they work resist being labeled vulnerable, and instead draw attention to the ways this community is already resilient.

Lastly, under the third criterion of equitable justice, “Accounting for people’s realities for their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future,” I show how cultural brokers struggle to legitimate cultural brokering work and local expertise, as well as the emotional toll cultural brokering can take. *(De)valuing the life experiences of cultural brokers* (Theme 3.1) demonstrates how the lived experience and local knowledge of cultural brokers is often disregarded or devalued by agencies and organizations. This lack of recognition and respect limits cultural brokers ability to participate as full decision-making partners in resilience-building efforts. *The emotional labor of cultural brokering* (Theme 3.2) discusses the emotional toll and difficulties cultural brokers face as they attempt to mediate between two worlds. “*The arch-enemy of Google Translate*”: *The skill of transcreation and recognition justice* (Theme 3.3) highlights the often unrecognized skill and expertise that undergirds cultural brokers’ ability to make two cultures “mutually intelligible” (Browne 2015). Lastly, Theme 3.4, *From a deficit to an asset lens: Latinx testimonios and recognition justice* demonstrates how small but powerful acts of storytelling and bearing witness, or *testimonios*, by Latinx cultural brokers can shift the balance of power in primarily white spaces, leading to greater procedural and recognition justice for marginalized communities. Table 4-1 provides a list of themes presented in the analysis.

Table 4-1 Equitable resilience criteria from Matin et al. (2018) and representative themes that emerged during qualitative data analysis

Criterion 1: Accounting for issues of social vulnerability and differential access to power, knowledge, and resources		
	Brief description of theme	Representative quotations from the data
Theme 1.1 Social vulnerability	Demonstrates how socially constructed vulnerability manifests and is addressed by cultural brokers and practitioners in Boulder County resilience building efforts	“The disparities that they knew have been around for not just 10 years, 50 years. They hadn't invested in getting rid of those disparities. And then a crisis comes. The pandemic. And literally in a meeting, I was like, ‘Look, we as cultural brokers, we're getting sick, we're dying.’” - <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i>
Theme 1.2 Differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources	Demonstrates how issues of differential access to power, knowledge, and resources manifest and how cultural brokering work can correct these inequities	“And they [grant funder] knew that the trusted voices, those cultural brokers, are better at doing the outreach and explaining why is this important. So, they provided grants to six organizations, \$10,000 grants, specifically for census outreach so that they could hire a cultural broker [in each undercounted community].” - <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i>
Theme 1.3 Intersectional understandings of social vulnerability and impacts to access	Demonstrates how cultural brokers’ work represents and promotes intersectional thinking to gain access to resources and recognition for marginalized communities	“And it took a little bit of convincing because initially they were very tied to race and ethnicity. So, we'll fund those Latino organizations, we'll fund African American organizations. And then I said GLBTQ. And they're like, ‘Well...’ [in uncertain tone]. And I'm like, ‘Well, they're not all white.’ And there's many reasons why in the GLBTQ community, not only are there disparities, but disconnect. And they were like, ‘Okay. We get it.’ So, they invested. And they said, here's this money, hire a cultural broker to just focus on outreach and education.” - <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i>
Theme 1.4 Additional challenges to achieving distributive justice	Highlights challenges and injustices cultural brokers and practitioners face when trying to create transformative change in their communities	“Typically, grants want to resolve an issue that has had long standing inequities and systemic racism with a one-year grant or a three-year grant. Tell people they need to invest in us five, 10 years if they want to begin to see impact and change.” - <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i>
Criterion 2: Starting from people’s own perception of their position within their human-environmental system		
	Brief description of themes	Representative quotations from the data
Theme 2.1 Setting the foundation for recognition and procedural justice	Demonstrates how practitioners created a strong foundation for procedural and recognition justice in resilience building efforts before the RFA/RPT process and the implementation of the CBRP	“And really what crystalized it for us is we decided to do the community engagement thing and go out to all the flood-impacted communities, and listen. And what we heard was loud and clear...those connections—connections with neighbors, connections with service organizations and nonprofits, connections with local government—the folks that have those connections fared better during the disaster and during the recovery.” - <i>BoCo Strong member speaking in a video</i>
Theme 2.2 Procedural and recognition injustice: Excluding Latinx perspectives	Illustrates how Latinx and other marginalized groups’ perspectives are systematically excluded from resilience building processes	“I’ve got a conversation with some...folks and they’re asking me to get funding for translation for their group, and can I bring...an equity lens...And it’s missing the whole point. Like, what are you going to do with translated docs? And I saw even in [RFA/RPT] when I ended up meeting with folks...I met with their whole board. And I said ‘This is a group of white people who don’t have any bi-cultural, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, diverse experience, and you want me to translate for you? And then what?’”

		- <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i>
Theme 2.3 “We are resilient”: Creating resilient subjectivities, resisting vulnerable identities	Illustrates how groups labeled “vulnerable” are contesting that identity and demonstrating the ways in which they are already resilient	<p>“The word resilience to me means ‘what we are’. Our community, our people, who for one reason or another, all of them valid, left the country where they are from. That entire process is resilience.”</p> <p>- <i>Cultural broker speaking in RFA video</i></p> <p>“Instead of really using the language of communities that have been pushed away from local government, communities who have been hurt by, communities who’ve been damaged by, we [society] just call people ‘vulnerable’.”</p> <p>- <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i></p>
Criterion 3: Accounting for people’s realities and for their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future		
	Brief description of theme	Representative quotations from the data
Theme 3.1 (De)valuing the life experiences of cultural brokers	Demonstrates how the lived experience and local knowledge of cultural brokers about the communities they serve is often disregarded by agencies and organizations	<p>“The reality is that there's still a lot of oppression and issues in our system, so I was not able to just come in and work right off the bat. I spent a couple of years really experiencing... I had to be a janitor, I had to do other things that were not aligned with [my] level of education... [T]hrough systemic oppression, I was still seen as a person that was not in these spaces.”</p> <p>- <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i></p>
Theme 3.2 The emotional labor of cultural brokering	Illustrates the “Janus-faced” nature of cultural brokering that requires cultural brokers to mediate between two worlds, and the unrecognized emotional toll of brokering work	<p>“But I don't think people understand. Not just a sense of obligation, but the pull, because I work for [organization], but I also work for my community. And they both have expectations. And sometimes they're aligned, and sometimes they're not. But I am also a human being who this is my community. And I don't think that people understand how that impacts [us].”</p> <p>- <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i></p>
Theme 3.3 “The arch-enemy of Google Translate”: The skill of transcreation and recognition justice	Illustrates the complex process of <i>transcreating</i> between different contexts in which cultural brokers operate and how this labor is (or is not) recognized	<p>“It's the arch enemy of Google Translate.”</p> <p>“If I go back to the community and say, ‘Hey, the County's saying this. You have any questions? No? Good. Do that.’ People are gonna be like, ‘yeah, see ya.’”</p> <p>- <i>Cultural broker interview participant</i></p>
Theme 3.4 From a deficit to an asset lens: Latinx <i>testimonios</i> and recognition justice	Demonstrates how cultural brokers use small but powerful acts of storytelling to disrupt dominant narratives and reclaim group identities and narratives and how this has begun to achieve recognition justice for flood-affected communities	<p>“I was at a resiliency meeting of BoCo Strong, and we’re sort of patting ourselves on the back, you know, the good work we did with our alert warning. And [a Latinx cultural broker] up in the back...raised her hand and was like, ‘Hey look...I have first-hand knowledge that there were several people, Spanish speakers, in the community that did not go and answer the door because of fear of law enforcement, and the notification didn’t go through.’ Basically, I was like quit patting your back buddy. We missed some folks”</p> <p>- <i>Boulder County Emergency Management staff interview participant</i></p>

My findings point to gaps between the goals outlined in RFA/RPT report when compared to other texts related to the CBRP and institutional practices that continue to (re)produce injustices. Importantly, critiques raised by interview participants (Latinx and not) were quite sociological and systemic – most often leveled at shortcomings of institutions, processes, and systems rather than individual practitioners. Interview participants were aware of the ways historical and contemporary racist, exclusionary practices continually shape unequal outcomes for Latinx and other marginalized communities in times of crisis. As one interview participant observed:

How I look at it is we are at where we're at now, because of the system that we designed. This is not an accident. This is a system, this is an approach and a way of living and operating that we have very consciously designed. And it's created these consequences and results. And so, we need to kind of reel back and really reflect on that and be intentional about how we want to alter that if we're going to...significantly address the climate crisis and the underlying issues that created it. And so, some of those underlying issues around racial inequity. The power dynamic that the government has with the community...the past harms we've, we've created in community. When I say community, I'm really talking about, again, those underserved underrepresented lives, because people who look like me [a white male] know how to work the system, they have the time to engage in the system, they have the relationships. It's those folks that are more vulnerable and...aren't as engaged. Not their fault. You know, this to how the system has been designed.

This quotation highlights a key and consistent observation made across interviews: the challenges to becoming resilient faced by the Latinx and other marginalized communities are rooted in structural inequalities. Everyday discourse and practices are constrained by and reproduce these structures, especially when those working to create more equitable and just outcomes do not control resilience discourses (e.g., the power to define resilience), do not have access to decision making processes, are excluded from positions of authority, or lack the political power to bring about substantive change.

The data presented below indicate Latinx cultural brokers—both informal and working as part of the CBRP or other efforts—have created space to engage in resilience-building not only for Latinx communities, but for other marginalized communities as well. My data also demonstrate the difficulties faced by disaster and resilience practitioners when tasked with implementing equitable and just versions of resilience on the ground, while simultaneously working against the inertia of sedimented histories of unjust and inequitable practices. Despite these difficulties, and in large part due to the physical and emotional labor of formal and informal cultural brokers, my data indicate there has been a small but perceptible shift in the balance of power and the allocation of resources toward marginalized communities in resilience-building, climate change adaptation, and disaster preparedness. Lasting change will require broad shifts in the way institutions value cultural brokers' work. This includes recognizing and valuing their lived experience as authoritative sources of knowledge about community needs, and recognizing cultural brokers' expertise as practitioners of transcreation—a skill that requires making a plurality of communities legible to one another, to create more equitable, just, and resilient communities for all.

Criterion 1: Accounting for issues of social vulnerability and differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources

There are four themes presented under the first criterion. Each of these themes reveals how distributive, procedural, and recognition justice are embedded within the first criterion of equitable resilience. The unequal distribution of harms experienced in times of crisis speak to differentiated access to power structures, meaningful access to information—which is especially relevant in terms of communication failures during times of crisis—and a lack of recognition of the way in which historical disparities are reflected in current and ongoing social vulnerabilities.

These continued disparities in social vulnerability and access become painfully apparent in times of crisis like the current COVID-19 pandemic, and result in adverse outcomes in terms of community capabilities.

Social vulnerability (Theme 1.1) describes how socially constructed vulnerabilities manifest in the context of disaster and resilience-building in Boulder County, how cultural brokers as members of the communities they serve are also disproportionately affected in times of crisis, and how cultural brokers and resilience practitioners are working to address these vulnerabilities. *Differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources* (Theme 1.2) illustrates how cultural brokers' work results in increased allocation of, and access to, funding to under-resourced communities. *Intersectional understandings of social vulnerability and impacts to access* (Theme 1.3) demonstrates how the intersectional approach used in cultural brokering work in this context results in greater access to resources. Lastly, *Additional challenges to achieving distributive justice* (Theme 1.4) highlights the challenges and injustices cultural brokers and resilience practitioners face when trying to create transformative change in their communities.

Theme 1.1 Social vulnerability

Social vulnerability as a barrier to creating resilience emerged as a prominent theme across the RFA/RPT texts and in interviews. It is well-established that disasters are never “natural” and disaster-related vulnerability is socially constructed and is usually rooted in histories of inequality and unequal power relations (Browne et al. 2020). These points are crucial to understanding the experiences of the Latinx community and other marginalized groups in this case study. Social vulnerability takes many forms for Latinx community members, especially monolingual Spanish speakers and individuals without documented citizenship status. The

RFA/RPT report highlights the daily uncertainty and fear faced by immigrant communities. Distrust of law enforcement and other emergency personnel was a major barrier to reaching Latinx community members during past crises like the Four Mile Canyon wildfire in 2010 and during the 2013 flood. The anti-immigrant political climate during the Donald Trump presidency led to increased distrust of law enforcement and emergency responders, which threatens the safety and wellbeing of Latinx community members regardless of immigration status.

Language barriers help shape social vulnerabilities in key ways. Latinx and other community members for whom English is not a first language are put at risk when emergency communications are only in English or are not delivered through communication channels familiar to the community. As the RFA report explains, Spanish speakers shared stories of being trapped during the 2013 flood because they did not receive warning messages and were not aware of rising waters. The RFA/RPT focus groups revealed that Latinx community members did not open the door to emergency officials during past emergencies for fear of exposing themselves or family members without documentation status to deportation. Interview participants recounted these past failures to reach Latinx community members during emergencies. As one interview participant recalled:

After the flood, and during the time that ... Resiliency for All [was taking place], there was a fire in the foothills. And I was ... in a meeting with the City of Boulder and the other emergency responders. And they said ... 'Oh, yeah, we came down and we started to knock on doors and tell them that they might have to evacuate. And we had an area that people weren't responding'.

The interview participant explained it was unknown to emergency responders at the time that the area was home to primarily low-income, monolingual Spanish speakers. A cultural broker later found out that residents were not answering their doors because law enforcement were knocking

on them in the middle of the night yelling “police” rather than “emergency,” leading residents to believe they—or an undocumented family member—were at risk of arrest and/or deportation.

Emergency responders and cultural brokers are now collaborating to map areas of high social vulnerability. As one emergency management official explains:

And it was this reality moment of we knew we had gaps in our language messaging, getting it out, and there are always areas to examine in that sort of response. And so I started working with [cultural brokers] very closely. Went through the process, starting building resiliency in some of our tools in EOC [Emergency Operations Center], and that was the start of my involvement with Resiliency for All. It was pretty much going, ‘How do we build bridges and connections to other sectors of the community where we don’t have that connection?’. And we knew gaps existed, but this lit a fire of going, ‘We really want to make that connection,’ starting with the Latinx community. But expand it further to think about how we go to different cultures and geographies, connecting resources and bridging information to those communities that are most vulnerable.

As this interview participant notes, social vulnerability mapping exercises—especially those involving cultural brokers as trusted members the community—play an important role in locating non-English speaking or other populations that may lack reliable access to emergency information, or who may not respond to emergency warnings out of fear generated from contexts that exist *prior* to emergency situations. In addition, it reinforces the role of cultural brokers as trusted experts in their communities that can work alongside emergency responders to provide culturally competent disaster preparedness to reduce long-term suffering and facilitate recovery after disasters.

Cultural brokers can face stark social vulnerabilities in their roles as well, though these are often invisible or unrecognized. For instance, one cultural broker explained during an interview that the Latinx neighborhoods in which she works and lives continue to face elevated risks during disasters like flooding, wildfires, or the COVID-19 pandemic due to deeply entrenched disparities that hit these communities harder. On top of that, cultural brokers working

in these communities are also at greater risk because they are frontline workers during emergency response situations—a fact not always recognized. The interviewee observed: “The disparities that they knew have been around for not just 10 years, 50 years. They hadn't invested in getting rid of those disparities. And then a crisis comes. The pandemic. And literally in a meeting, I was like, ‘Look, we as cultural brokers, we're getting sick, we're dying.’ We had an amazing gentleman in our community who died in December. He was an awesome cultural broker.”

Systemic solutions can help address these multi-layered disparities. Engaging cultural brokers in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery can lead to better outcomes for marginalized communities. Communication during crises must not only be translated; it must be delivered through familiar channels and by trusted individuals. Community-led vulnerability mapping prior to disaster events further ensures effective communication during times of crisis. While cultural brokers are invaluable resources to communities in times of crisis, it is often not recognized that they are frontline workers and so are placed in harm's way while performing brokering work – but without the same preparation or protection emergency personnel receive. Therefore, addressing these particular vulnerabilities would also strengthen cultural brokers' capacities and their ability to help generate resilience at multiple levels.

Theme 1.2 Differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources

One goal in the REA/RPT initiative was to identify Latinx community members' barriers to accessing information about government resources during the recovery period following the 2013 floods in Boulder County. It was for this reason that cultural brokers were engaged to provide a bridge between government resources and the Latinx community, particularly monolingual Spanish speakers and individuals with undocumented citizenship status. In this

way, Latinx cultural brokers advocate for the reallocation of resources from the local government to Latinx communities. This has not only occurred in the context of resilience-building, nor only in the Latinx community. Since the RFA/RPT process began in 2016, cultural brokering has started to gain recognition as an important function within other socially vulnerable communities like the LGBTQ+ community, seniors, and individuals experiencing homelessness. This approach can meaningfully enhance procedural equity for groups that have been systematically excluded from making decisions and other important processes. For instance, cultural brokers have expanded participation and representation in decision making processes that allocate important financial resources to traditionally under-resourced communities. The CBRP works to increase collective, cross-cutting capabilities through the (re)allocation of resources and by increasing participation in decision making processes. This in turn can increase resilience at multiple levels, from individuals to communities.

In another example, during the 2010 and 2020 US Census processes, Latinx cultural brokers performed outreach to ensure Latinx community members filled out and returned census questionnaires. Cultural brokers were an integral part of the 2020 census process. In 2020, the City of Longmont, Boulder County, and other local government and nonprofit partners implemented the 2020 Census Complete Count Campaign. The campaign's Collaborative Impact Report states the goal of the campaign was to “assure that all of Boulder County’s residents, especially those who have been historically undercounted, completed the 2020 Census” (Boulder County 2020: 1). The campaign focused on recognizing populations that can be undercounted, including monolingual Spanish speakers, other communities of color, low-income residents, individuals experiencing homelessness, students, and others. Cultural brokers—defined as “trusted members” of each traditionally undercounted community (*ibid.* 1)— were incorporated

into the administration of local government census programs and provided education, outreach, and assisted with self-response.

Cultural brokers secured funding from the Community Foundation Boulder County for education and outreach to several historically undercounted groups, in part due to their embeddedness within communities. As one cultural broker put it, each one of these groups already has informal cultural brokers embedded in the community that are continually working to connect their communities—whether seniors, people experiencing homelessness, or other communities of color—to important government support resources, albeit often in unrecognized and unpaid capacities. Cultural brokers provide more than translation services for official communications, in other words. They are trusted members of the communities they serve, and so they can act as conduits for bringing their communities a bit more power and procedural equity. They create and disseminate messaging in culturally appropriate ways that resonate with their communities, increasing the likelihood that actions desired by local government agencies will be adopted by communities. Conversely, cultural brokers speak the language of government agencies and funding organizations. Discussing the 2020 census, one cultural broker said:

We cannot have communities that are under-counted. In the 2010 census, the undercount that we had was children under five. So that impacts early education dollars. So, they [the Community Foundation Boulder County] knew that. And they knew that the trusted voices, those cultural brokers, are better at doing the outreach and explaining why is this important. So, they provided grants to six organizations, \$10,000 grants, specifically for census outreach so that they could hire a cultural broker [in each undercounted community] ... And it took a little bit of convincing because initially they were very tied to race and ethnicity. So, we'll fund those Latino organizations, we'll fund African American organizations. And then I said GLBTQ. And they're like, 'Well...' [in uncertain tone]. And I'm like, 'Well, they're not all white.' And there's many reasons why in the GLBTQ community, not only are there disparities, but disconnect. And they were like, 'Okay. We get it.' So, they invested. And they said, here's this money, hire a cultural broker to just focus on outreach and education.

This is an example of cultural brokers' work to achieve distributive and recognition justice for communities in which they work and live. By facilitating census participation, cultural brokers ensure government funding is allocated to meet communities' needs, especially for those functions that support community capabilities.

Theme 1.3 Intersectional understandings of social vulnerability and impacts to access

The data (including those presented above) also highlight how government agencies and funding organizations can (mis)recognize or conceptualize social vulnerability as primarily existing along a single axis of identity, and so design interventions aimed at a single group. That is, this view lacks an intersectional approach to social vulnerability. In discussing how organizations and institutions need to consider intersecting, diverse, and context-specific needs both across and within communities, the same cultural broker noted:

I think the cultural brokering, the biggest thing is we need to help people understand that it's not just about race and ethnicity. Here in in Boulder County, it applies to the mountain communities. They have their own culture, they have their own norms, they have their own cultural brokers ... I'm now doing some work with homeless folks in one of our parks...and they're street outreach. They're cultural brokers. There are cultural brokers for seniors, for youth.

Unidimensional approaches hinder not just social vulnerability assessments but also related access issues. The cultural broker mentioned above went on to explain that Latinx community members' barriers to accessing information and resources are barriers many marginalized communities have in common. However, lack of access manifests differently across different contexts and even within the same community. For this reason, cultural brokers' bridging work needed to address social vulnerability and to enhance access to resources, goals and outcomes that will vary within and across communities. But cultural brokers' embeddedness within, and familiarity with, communities' diverse vulnerabilities helps them identify intersectional needs – and the importance of information-related aspects of procedural equity.

The same cultural broker continued: “You can really take each one of [the barriers identified in the RFA/RPT process] and really become very detailed, but most immigrants from any country will say that. Most people that are dealing with disparities, even if they've been here for generations, low-income families, will say we don't know where to get the information ... And that's where the relationship is so key.” This cultural broker's observation demonstrates that cultural brokers as embedded and trusted members of the communities they work with have a more nuanced understanding of intracommunity difference. This recognition of within-community differences enables them to see the ways in which essentializing approaches to resource distribution excludes certain individuals. By bringing this understanding to discussions about programming and processes, they can achieve procedural justice for overlooked or misrecognized community members. More focused and inclusive programming and processes enhances community capabilities toward functioning and flourishing.

More broadly, this cultural broker also saw a need for an intersectional approach that fosters collaboration between researchers and practitioners *prior* to releasing grant funding. After all, well-meaning but under-informed calls for research or economic development proposals may mean to pool knowledge and resources. But they fail to adequately connect already existing, but fragmented, efforts:

I was actually asked to come and present on Resiliencia para Todos. And then there was someone, a professor from CU [University of Colorado, Boulder], who was presenting on resiliency of the homeless, and then someone else on seniors. And I'm like, ‘Why didn't you pull us all together prior to completing [the state-funded grant] so we could share?’ Because within the Latino community, I have elders, I have [homeless] people ... But the State of Colorado said, ‘Who has ideas?’. Which, again, that's how grant [funding works]. ‘Who has ideas? Here's the issue: vulnerable populations.’

The quotations above underscore the important role cultural brokers play in drawing attention to *intersectional aspects of social vulnerability*. Marginality operates across multiple,

intersecting identities (Crenshaw 1991). Thus, it is crucial to recognize how overlapping identities uniquely shape experiences of exclusion, oppression, and discrimination within and across communities. In this way, cultural brokers add community-based and nuanced understandings of social vulnerabilities in the contexts of funding and programming goals. This role of cultural brokers is an important path to achieving recognition, procedural, and distributive justice as well as increasing capabilities for communities and individuals that might otherwise remain disconnected from resources and excluded from decision making processes.

Theme 1.4 Additional challenges to achieving distributive justice

While accessing grants can prove vital for resilience-building efforts, calls for grants and the timing of grant cycles can ultimately discourage just, community-engaged efforts to build more resilient systems for all communities. Grants provide vital sources of funding for communities addressing disaster vulnerability or resilience-building, but competitive application processes don't always foster collaboration. Siloed efforts often operate in parallel to one another without the opportunity to share strategies and lessons learned. Yet, moving away from siloed approaches will allow programs and communities to conceptualize what creates resilience in more inclusive, holistic ways. Programs such as University of Boulder Colorado's Natural Hazards Center—which is mentioned by the cultural broker in the quotation above—and organizations like the Culture and Disaster Action Network (CADAN) have become key in bridging the academic-practitioner divide and fostering this kind of collaboration.

Grant cycles rarely align with the time it takes to create transformative change in communities with long histories of discrimination and oppression. As one cultural broker observed: “Typically, grants want to resolve an issue that has had long standing inequities and systemic racism with a one-year grant or a three-year grant. Tell people they need to invest in us

five, 10 years if they want to begin to see impact and change.” Boulder County is progressive by many standards. However, there is a long history of discrimination against the Latinx population. For instance, one Boulder County media outlet—*The Boulder Weekly*—ran a series of news stories under the theme “Eracism” that detailed the little known history of the Latinx population in Boulder County, the contributions Latinx communities have made to Boulder County’s economic success, and the acts of violence and discrimination committed against the Latinx community, including harassment by the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan and the fatal car bombing of six Chicano student activists from the University of Colorado, Boulder (later called “Los Seis” (Dodge and Dyer 2013)). Taken together, the quotation above from the Latinx cultural broker and the erasure of Latinx history in Boulder County—as well as other under-recognized communities—highlights the need for funders to invest long-term in correcting the systemic and ongoing discrimination that contributes to increased vulnerabilities to risks and hazards, and to do so in a way that captures the multiple intersecting realities of community members.

Funding often comes with strings attached. As mentioned in the literature review, funders have pre-defined notions of resilience and often require grant recipients to meet specific metrics. These metrics are commonly evaluated using indices meant to capture whether community resilience has been achieved in the timeframe prescribed by the funder. Yet, these metrics and indices are infrequently community-defined. Moreover, indices based on quantitative metrics may fail to capture the lived realities of community members – the very folks meant to become “more resilient”. Conversely, programs that are community-led may lose their grounding in community needs when program evaluators try to quantify program success, as one cultural broker discussed:

It's really interesting, because when we started the [community-led] intervention program, it came from the community. So, it was the community that came to us and said, 'We need your help'. And then when we began to gather folks to try and build a more holistic system, we had some success, but then it was a very short-term investment. And I think that one of the things is they...sometimes when things bubble up from the community, and we start addressing it, then they [funders/government] want to apply the quantitative [measurements]. And that's usually where I see that it either stops it, or it becomes another product, because it's forgotten its roots. And the roots are when it bubbles up from the community.

This quotation demonstrates the tension between creating community-led change and measuring results in a way that is intelligible to funders and decision makers. This cultural broker recognized the value of quantitative measurements when evaluating program success and communicating program performance to decision makers, but they also underscored the importance of qualitative measures, like the quality of community cohesion, which is difficult to capture quantitatively. As they observed: "I know that typically we want to have quantitative stuff to show that we've had success. But how do we value the qualitative stuff, which is the relationships that, especially in times of emergencies, are so crucial?". The community capabilities and procedural equity aspects of environmental justice highlight communities' needs for self-determination, including determining the course and purpose of interventions implemented to meet community-identified goals. Allocating resources to interventions is just only if communities have a seat at the table to make decisions at multiple phases. Equitable inclusion in every phase of program development can help transform those resources into community-led strategies that enhance their functioning and flourishing – but on their own terms. Attempts to quantify the success of programs—program evaluation—is another significant area where Latinx cultural brokers and community members are excluded from participatory processes, as will be discussed further in the next section.

In this section, I highlighted how cultural brokers, in partnership with disaster management personnel and other resilience practitioners, have made important progress toward increasing the equitable resilience of Latinx and other marginalized communities. From the perspective of recognition justice, cultural brokers are assisting hazard mitigation practitioners to map areas of high social vulnerability. Disaster management personnel are also working with cultural brokers to create more culturally relevant modes of communication to use in times of crisis. This allows for recognition of groups that have been historically and currently marginalized and made invisible. Further, cultural brokers work to deepen decision makers' and funders' understanding of social vulnerability as occurring across multiple axes of identity. This deeper understanding has led to the allocation of outreach and education funds to several marginalized groups—a move toward greater distributive justice. Furthermore, utilizing an intersectional lens has highlighted where collaboration can have a greater impact on increasing community resilience. In response to my first and third research questions, this opening of new participatory spaces indicates an improvement of procedural justice outcomes through increased recognition of inter- and intracommunity needs. Increasing participation and representation can lead to more equitable and just allocation of resources in resilience-building efforts across the county.

In this section, I also pointed to challenges to decreasing social vulnerability—and thus, resilience—for communities and the cultural brokers that work with them. Cultural brokers are frontline workers, so they are at greater risk of harm while performing the work of brokering in crisis situations—a fact not always recognized by agencies and organizations. Challenges related to resource access include the misalignment between funding cycles and the timescales needed to create lasting and substantive change, especially in communities grappling with long histories of

racism and other forms of oppression. While communities may be able to direct resources to an issue they have identified as important, community-led interventions can be undermined and uprooted by the imposition of outside evaluation metrics. I examine the importance of community-led resilience-building more in the following section.

Criterion 2: Starting from people’s perceptions of their positions within their social-environmental context

Across the texts and interviews I analyzed, three key themes emerged that link to the second criterion of equitable resilience. The second criterion emphasizes the way in which positionalities and subjectivities across social and environmental contexts influences equitable resilience. The themes under this criterion underscore interdependent nature of the four dimensions of EJ. Procedural justice requires recognition and respect (Fraser 2003; Schlosberg 2007), can determine the distribution of resources or negative disaster outcomes, and underpins the ability of communities to turn resources into flourishing and functioning. These themes, then, center on listening to communities’ understandings of what makes them resilient—or presents barriers to resilience—by including the perspectives of socially vulnerable groups in all stages of program and policy development.

Theme 2.1, *Setting the foundation for recognition and procedural justice*, discusses how early post-flood resilience efforts set an important foundation for deep listening practices and community-led resilience planning. The RFA/RPT process was informed by these early practices. However, when resilience-building moved into the context of the Latinx community, it became clear that historical and current patterns of institutional marginalization reproduce vulnerable communities’ exclusion and prevent full participatory parity—the core issue demonstrated by Theme 2.2, *Excluding Latinx perspectives*. While various city and county plans

call for cultural broker engagement, and the city and county have engaged some in these activities in practice, significant challenges remain to incorporating the perceptions of marginalized community members through cultural brokering. Furthermore, framing Latinx communities as vulnerable both misrecognizes this communities' inherent strengths and invisibilizes the institutional factors—especially at higher levels of decision-making—that exclude socially vulnerable populations and reproduce vulnerability. This is the issue highlighted by Theme 2.3, *“We are resilient: Creating resilient subjectivities, resisting vulnerable identities.”* Importantly Latinx cultural brokers expose power imbalances by resisting this vulnerability framing and draw attention to the root causes of vulnerability by locating them in broader social structures. This theme also shows how Latinx cultural brokers and community members resist the identity of “vulnerable populations” and instead frame their communities as already resilient.

Theme 2.1 Setting the foundation for recognition and procedural justice

Prior to the RFA/RPT process, BoCo Strong—a partner in the process—established resilience as an important boundary object around which flood recovery projects were framed. Through an assessment of unmet needs in Boulder County performed by the Colorado Long Term Flood Recovery Group (LTFRG), a series of 22 neighborhood conversations took place to document communities' lessons learned. These conversations informed best practices for community flood recovery and highlighted the importance of focusing on social aspects of flood recovery. As a sub-committee of the LTFRG, BoCo Strong formed to focus on building social capital, social networks, and a culture of resilience throughout the county. The group's mission centered on the recognition that disaster recovery efforts most often focus on rebuilding physical infrastructure to the exclusion of rebuilding social infrastructure. The group—comprised of government agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and others—worked as a bridging organization to

coordinate resilience-building activities across multiple communities and took on functions, such as building social networks, that often fall outside of the purview of government.

Even with all this deliberative consideration, though, resilience remained a contested term. In a YouTube video of the 2015 BoCo Strong Summit, Boulder County Disaster Recovery manager, Garry Sanfaçon, explains that the BoCo Strong sub-committee initially:

wrangled with the ‘R’ word. As you could imagine, resilience is a tricky slope. It’s like some of those other words that we’ve embraced in our culture over the years. And we spent too long trying to define it, and eventually let go, and, you know, basically came to the conclusion that...we’re trying to create a community that is resilient and adaptable, that learns from its [disaster] events. It’s able to grow, and not just survive but thrive. And really what crystalized it for us is we decided to do the community engagement thing, and go out to all the flood-impacted communities, and *listen*. And what we heard was loud and clear...those connections—connections with neighbors, connections with service organizations and nonprofits, connections with local government—the folks that have those connections fared better during the disaster and during the recovery. And so that became our rallying cry.

This quotation demonstrates the difficulty involved in defining resilience, especially across communities and contexts. In the end, BoCo Strong used resilience as a sensitizing concept to guide discussions and allowed communities to lead the conversations. In this way, BoCo Strong provided a space for communities to define what resilience meant to them, and BoCo Strong as part of the LTFRG gave community voices a platform to shape resilience practice. Individual community members and communities do not always have the political power to create change through direct action. An effort like BoCo Strong can play vital roles in empowering communities to realize multiple forms of EJ because this kind of organization – comprised of government agencies, nonprofit, and business representatives with the authority to drive community resilience-building efforts – can be used to ensure that community needs expressed during participatory processes are included in higher-level recovery and resilience planning efforts. In other words, organizations like BoCo Strong do important bridging work to realize

procedural equity, here by helping assure that knowledge gained during participatory processes may actually shape policy- and decision-making. Creating these spaces also helps represent the diverse socio-environmental contexts people experience in disaster recovery and gives these perspectives a chance to be meaningfully incorporated within resilience-building efforts, per Matin et al.'s (2018) suggestions. There are problems inherent to community-based participatory processes—like holding meetings at times and in languages that ensure equitable access for all interested parties. But BoCo Strong's neighborhood-level, charette-style engagement was a more democratic model of flood recovery than typical government- and expert-driven, top-down approaches. It was also a replicable model. The RFA/RPT process, which originated in part from BoCo Strong flood recovery efforts, centered upon this 'learning through listening' process in the form of focus groups with community members.

These neighborhood resilience conversations allowed members of the LTFRG via BoCo Strong to learn from communities' experiences. The meetings literally met communities where they were which can increase procedural justice. The information gathered about people's understandings of resilience were then incorporated into BoCo Strong's county-wide resilience assessment, *Putting on a Resilience Lens* (2016). The RFA/RPT process arose in response to recommendations in that assessment to "Provide emergency warnings and first responder services in English and Spanish" and "Commit to meaningful, quantitative targets for bilingual services" (BoCo Strong 2016: 28; 71). The BoCo Strong assessment found that while one in three people in Boulder County had attended a public meeting in the year prior, only 7% of representatives serving on county boards and commissions were non-white. Yet 20% of the county's population identifies as non-white (BoCo Strong 2016: 24). This indicated a clear need to seek out diverse viewpoints in resilience-building and to support non-white communities in

gaining access to participatory spaces where resilience was being discussed, defined, and implemented—important aspects of recognition and procedural justice.

Theme 2.2 Procedural and recognition injustice: Excluding Latinx perspectives

BoCo Strong’s listening and learning approach was influential for the Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos process. However, in the context of resilience-building in Latinx communities, significant barriers to recognition and participation—especially at the design and evaluation stages of program development—remain. These barriers reflect institutional constraints that must be addressed at high levels of decision-making—such as at top levels of local government and the state—that recognize and incorporate cultural brokers as full partners in procedural processes at every stage of program and policy development. For example, the 2017 RFA/RPT report discussed the State of Colorado Resiliency Framework and noted that none of its focus areas included Latinx communities and perspectives in the development of the framework. As the report asserts, “upon discussions with practitioners [about the development of the framework], it became increasingly evident that this sector of the community has not been fully included in the conversations around most of this diagram [outlining the resilience issue areas identified by the state] ... The commitment must come from decision makers around Boulder County and the State of Colorado to institutionalize and implement programming and policies to include all voices” (City of Longmont 2017: 6). Furthermore, in reflecting on Boulder County-created plans, the RFA/RPT report notes that although the notions of “inclusion” and “outreach” are mentioned in several of these plans, they are not meaningfully incorporated. In fact, a community assessment revealed that County services were still inaccessible to Latinx communities and other marginalized populations at the time the RFA/RPT process took place (City of Longmont 2017: 3).

Despite making important inroads through the RFA/RPT process, CBRP, and other efforts to promote cultural brokers as skilled experts, this disconnect persists with the result that Latinx perspectives continue to be excluded from multiple organizational and programmatic aspects of resilience-building efforts. This is in part due to cultural brokers being rendered invisible by more formal organizations, or the failure to recognize brokering work as such. Further, the very communities needing more structural supports are often the ones providing and utilizing cultural brokers. Cultural brokers are heavily relied upon to create bridges between Latinx communities and broader efforts through outreach, education, and providing bilingual services without being involved in front-end program and policy development. This early engagement is crucial in ensuring interventions are community-led, and thus address gaps and needs as community members define them. This is highlighted by the description of cultural brokers' role in the COVID-19 pandemic response Boulder County Community Services' 2020 Community Action Report:

In 2020, following the onset of COVID-19 in March, CBRP focused on building community capacity in a culturally competent way. The mission is to increase resiliency for all historically marginalized, underserved and underrepresented community members in the county. Cultural brokers' work has been incorporated in the county's pandemic recovery efforts by giving disenfranchised and traditionally underserved populations of Boulder County a seat at the table. The community working groups in conjunction with cultural brokers lend their expertise, experiences, and present county policymakers *a different view to consider when making important policy decisions during the pandemic recovery.* (Boulder County 2020, emphasis added)

This quotation highlights cultural brokers' abilities to increase recognition and procedural justice in decision-making by identifying and verbalizing barriers to capacity-building *as communities see them.* While cultural brokers are described in documents as essential to producing culturally relevant communications, providing culturally specific insights on issues, and navigating community programs and accessing government resources, their exclusion from the early stages

of program design reifies top-down planning approaches that don't adequately incorporate community perspectives.

Similar language around cultural appropriateness and the engagement of cultural brokers appears across a broad array of City of Longmont and Boulder County policy documents geared toward increasing resilience, equity, inclusion, diversity, and climate and environmental justice across the county, again implying that cultural brokers are able to bring communities' viewpoints and concerns to decision making spaces, thus increasing the likelihood that programs will meet communities' needs. These documents acknowledge communications should be culturally appropriate and cultural brokers should be engaged to ensure this is the case. For instance, the Longmont Electrification Feasibility Committee and Path to Carbon-free Buildings Work Plan, which is part of Longmont's broader Just Climate Transition Strategy, notes that effective messaging to increase awareness should be "culturally relevant" and bilingual distribution of messaging should be "culturally appropriate" (City of Longmont 2021: n.p.). Similarly, the Longmont Equitable Carbon-Free Transportation Roadmap notes that a cultural broker should be hired as a way to "embed equity" in transportation strategies outlined in the plan. The cultural broker in this case would "assist in implementation and community engagement" (City of Longmont 2021: 11).

The language in these documents is telling. While bi- or multilingual distribution of communication about government programs is a key step toward more inclusive resilience-building, climate adaptation, or just climate transition strategies, it is not enough to ensure just and equitable outcomes. Including cultural brokers late in various processes – at the implementation stage of a program to assist with community engagement – implies a unilateral and potentially extractive process that views cultural brokers as messengers and marginalized

communities as clients. The point made in the document about distributing bilingual information is a simple but powerful example of the way in which *distributive* concerns alone cannot address broader issues of environmental injustice. Distributing goods, here accessible information, does not necessarily transform those goods into outcomes (capabilities) that enhance resilience or wellbeing across communities. It also may not emerge from equitable relations or true participation across groups. Translation and the roles of cultural brokers therein provide clear examples. For instance, a cultural broker I interviewed explained that translation of materials is ineffectual unless a comprehensive system of support for the target community was previously built into the program:

I've got a conversation with some...folks and they're asking me to get funding for translation for their group, and can I bring...an equity lens...And it's missing the whole point. Like, what are you going to do with translated docs? And I saw even in [RFA/RPT] when I ended up meeting with folks...I met with their whole board. And I said 'This is a group of white people who don't have any bi-cultural, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, diverse experience, and you want me to translate for you? And then what? I'm not going to be there...So how are you going to respond if somebody really called your Spanish language flyer? What are you going to do with that?' There's all these different pieces. So, I think that's the knee-jerk reaction. Well, okay, we translated and then we're done. Check.

These findings suggest that efforts like this require more extensive and ongoing organizational and institutional support if communities want to build equitable resilience and just climate adaptation. These efforts would help make space for recognition justice of cultural brokers and Latinx communities, while also creating opportunities for long-term procedural equity.

The Boulder County Office of Emergency Management 2021-2026 Hazard Mitigation Plan states that lack of access to “culturally appropriate” disaster preparedness resources has hampered recovery for low-income and monolingual Spanish speakers. This is a problem, the document suggests, that can be remedied in part through a “more robustly supported cultural

broker network” (Boulder OEM 2019: 19). Critically, this plan also names racism, colonialism, and other historical sources of inequality as “the root causes of climate change, environmental injustice, and racial inequity” (Boulder County 2019: 10). As another representative example, the County Floodplain Management and Transportation System Resiliency Study and Action Plan (2019), created in part as a response to transportation difficulties caused by the 2013 floods, states that “the assessment should work with cultural brokers to identify risks and stresses and should include mapping of communities with access challenges” as part of identifying low- and moderate-income resiliency needs in the assessment of transportation systems (46). This implies a community-driven approach to mapping social vulnerabilities in socio-environmental systems *as communities perceive them*, the primary focus of the second criterion of equitable resilience. This is a procedurally just approach that recognizes vulnerable populations as full partners in decision making. Putting this community-generated information into practice through risk and hazard mitigation practices has the potential to lead to greater distributive justice by reallocating resources to communities that would otherwise be more adversely impacted during a disaster. However, a couple major issues of recognition injustice emerge in the language and context of these reports: the lack of recognition for the labor that goes into cultural brokering and the reliance on vulnerable communities to provide those cultural brokers in the first place.

While the discourse in the texts discussed above points to more involvement of cultural brokers in city and county-led resilience-building measures, interviews indicate additional problems with these plans. Specifically, opportunities for procedural equity remain constrained: there remains a lack of recognition and meaningful opportunity for cultural brokers, and community members beyond them, to participate in the formative and evaluative stages of program development. These limitations to meaningful participation make it unclear whose

versions of resilience are being adopted in plans and put into practice – a key element of procedural and recognition injustices in these contexts. As one cultural broker explains:

And, and I've said this: brokers are perceived as frontline. Give information to go up [to government leadership]. Well, what if cultural brokers were at the table from the beginning of the assessment of an issue, to the development of a plan, to the evaluation? Because I think the evaluation is a really important piece... That's where we get to really truly either put on the shelf lessons learned, or implement those lessons learned.

An important aspect of equitable resilience begins with individuals' perceptions of their location within the socio-environmental context. Cultural brokers call for recognition and inclusion not just in discourse, and not just as messengers, but to act as equal participants in program development, implementation, and evaluation. Interview participants indicated that cultural brokers are still often not at the table when important program decisions are made. These decisions affect Latinx and other marginalized communities and brokers' exclusion from them represent important procedural and recognition injustices. Another illustrative quotation from a cultural broker demonstrates this pattern:

To me, and this has evolved depending on where I've been and what system I've been in... I still believe that the leadership, the folks who have the authority to make decisions, whether it's funding, allocation of resources, choosing who our speakers are, nominating our board members. [I believe] if we [cultural brokers] are not in those roles, and those seats, then we really... we end up being in a sub-committee with no voting rights. [We end up] really just being tokenized to be the equity stakeholder group on a decision that's already been made and the funding's already been allocated. So, to change that dynamic, cultural brokers, bilingual, bicultural people, have to be in—actually *in*—the process. Not afterwards. Not two years later. Not three years later. But from the very beginning. And there's still a lot of... power holds in systems.

This powerful observation shows that, although cultural brokering and cultural competency are embedded in discourse as an important way of increasing equity across the city and county, these roles are often reduced to that of consultation in practice. As one cultural broker points out:

“systems tend to mine people for information. But how do we value that information? And how

do we include them [the community]. Our greatest teachers are the community. The community is the greatest teacher.” Cultural brokers recognize—and attempt to gain recognition for the fact that—communities are experts in their own lives. True procedural equity in resilience-building would acknowledge, as this cultural broker points out, the knowledge present in communities that stems from community members’ lived experiences of the barriers and inequities they face *and* the inherent resilience that already exists in marginalized communities.

Perhaps the clearest example of cultural brokers’ efforts to elevate the concerns of the Latinx community in Boulder County, and work toward procedural justice in those spaces, was through the initial Resilience for All/Resiliencia para Todos initiative where cultural brokers (at that time mostly informal and unpaid), along with mono- and bilingual Latinx community members (both citizens and those without citizenship documentation), and bilingual youth were given a platform and a safe space to identify barriers they perceived as inimical to the community’s resilience. These barriers were documented during focus groups and interviews, communicated to local governments at the city and county level through the RFA/RPT report—which provided specific recommendations for addressing barriers to resilience—and placed on a public-facing website for the RFA/RPT process. Cultural brokers also provide presentations to local government agencies and decision-makers to raise awareness of the value of cultural brokering and to deepen the understanding of what brokering work entails (e.g., it isn’t simply translating forms).

Most importantly for the second criterion of equitable resilience, the safe space of fair process (Walker 2009) created by RFA/RPT empowered socially vulnerable Latinx community members, such as monolingual Spanish speakers, bilingual youth acting as cultural brokers for their families and communities, and/or undocumented community members, to define barriers to

recovery *as they perceived them*. Notably, RFA/RPT led to the creation of a full-time, paid Cultural Broker Resilience Program Manager position. This is a key example of distributive and recognition justice because the county recognized the value of cultural brokers and allocated budgetary resources toward financially rewarding this important work.

RFA/RPT seems to have created some recognition of the barriers faced by the Latinx community and in gaining recognition for cultural brokers. Various City of Longmont and Boulder County plans, official meeting minutes, and other documents mention the need to embed, hire, or recognize the value of cultural brokers' perspectives and labor, and the need to engage vulnerable or marginalized communities in city and county programs. However, as the previous interview quotations indicate, there is a lack of recognition and opportunity to participate in the formative and evaluative stages of program development. This is significant in terms of achieving equitable outcomes because, as Schlosberg (2007) argues, recognition and respect are at the root of procedural justice. Just and equitable decision making requires equal participation at all stages of program development. This, in turn, requires the recognition of cultural brokers as equal partners in decision making and respect of cultural brokers' lived experience and knowledge of their communities as authoritative.

Theme 2.3 “We are resilient”: Creating resilient subjectivities, resisting vulnerable identities

The ways individuals define what it means to be resilient, or conversely vulnerable, is the second theme I discuss within the second criterion of equitable resilience. Matin et al. (2018) note that subjectivity is an important aspect of resilience studies since, as those authors note, “while subjectivities provide the object of study, the concept also provides the means to understand the values and institutions through which groups become socially differentiated, political identities are formed, and governance practices evolve” (200).

The discourse embedded in resilience and hazard- and disaster-related documents often creates a dichotomy between vulnerability and resilience or some other category, such as “disaster-ready” or “prepared”, indicating a preferred state. Importantly, it is clear from the RFA/RPT report that the Latinx community—at least those engaged through the RFA/RPT process—*do not self-identify as vulnerable*. As the report states: “once we were able to share stories of resiliency and overcoming obstacles, *it became abundantly clear that this sector of our community is resilient*. The challenge now is to help people move away from basic needs to consider long-term preparation” (City of Longmont 2017: 6; emphasis added). As I noted under the first criterion, vulnerability is socially constructed and is often rooted in social inequality, not an attribute inherent to communities or individuals.

Framing communities as vulnerable is ahistorical and represents a form of erasure and, as Marino and Faas (2020: 36) have argued, a form of violence. Labeling Latinx and other marginalized communities as vulnerable misrecognizes and devalues the resilience that already exists in these communities. This is made clear by Erendira Juarez, a Community Liaison for the Community Foundation Boulder County when she explains the following in a video on the City of Longmont’s RFA/RPT website [translated from Spanish]: “The word resilience to me means ‘what we are’. Our community, our people, who for one reason or another, all of them valid, left the country where they are from. That entire process is resilience.”

The Latinx community is already resilient due to—and despite—the daily structural injustices and inequities they face. For instance, one of the cultural brokers I interviewed stressed the importance of distinguishing between vulnerability and those *made* vulnerable through processes of exclusion and disenfranchisement:

When [RFA/RPT] started, it was around natural disasters. For me, it was an important opportunity to show the reality those of us in the Latino community

experience everywhere as far as barriers and lack of access to local government. Those organizations and institutions throughout Boulder County. Instead of really using the language of communities that have been pushed away from local government, communities who have been hurt by, communities who've been damaged by, we [society] just call people 'vulnerable'.

This quotation is crucial in pointing out that the vulnerability experienced by the Latinx and other marginalized populations is indeed structural and institutionalized; in part the result of living in a society in which harm is unequally—and predictably—distributed along lines of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other intersecting axes of marginalization and oppression. The frustration expressed at the tendency of agencies and organizations to use a vulnerability framing is echoed by that of the cultural broker in the previous section on intersectionality. That individual also discussed the State of Colorado-funded grant aimed at helping “vulnerable” populations and the way this elided the underlying structural issues leading to vulnerability.

It is important to attend to the ideological work that discourses of resilience and vulnerability do. The struggles of Latinx community members to resist being labeled vulnerable highlights the fact that resilience is relational, hierarchical, and an inherently normative concept. Vulnerability is often an ascribed characteristic, usually applied to an individual, community, or object by the same entity that has developed the policy solution to “make” that thing labeled “vulnerable” more resilient. Hansen (2006) has discussed this dynamic in the foreign policy field where policy actors use processes of differentiation and processes of linking in an attempt to stabilize identities around which policy is formed. Hansen (2006: 2006:19) uses the example of women and men to illustrate how positively linked attributes of women as “emotional, motherly, reliant, and simple” are used in juxtaposition to attributes of men; a juxtaposition that facilitates the negative process of differentiation. Hansen (citing Derrida) argues that “[I]anguage is...a

system of differential signs, and meaning is established not by the essence of a thing itself but through a series of juxtapositions, where one element is valued over its opposite” (17).

However, the identities created in policy through processes of linking and processes of differentiation are inherently unstable, and thus, contestable. This is especially true when socially constructed identities contain contradictions that can be exploited to flip the narrative. Following Foucault (1977), Hansen (2006) argues that “[l]anguage’s structured yet inherently unstable nature brings to the fore the importance of political agency and the political production and reproduction of discourses and the identities constructed within them” (21). This instability and contestable nature of policy-constructed identities was underscored in an interview when one cultural broker said, “it’s really switching looking at our communities that we consider vulnerable, but they are the most resilient. And switching from [a] deficit [lens] to [an] asset [lens]”. During our conversation, this cultural broker emphasized that the personal journeys of many immigrants and children of immigrants, as well as other individuals pushed to the margins by structural inequities and their day-to-day struggles, represents resilience rather than vulnerability. They discussed the importance of the RFA/RPT process in drawing attention to this fact, especially through the public-facing video produced as part of the RFA/RPT process and featured on the City of Longmont’s *Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos* website (City of Longmont n.d.).

Fraser (2003: 27) argues that recognition justice should be treated as an issue of social status. According to this view, misrecognition represents “social subordination in the sense of being prevented from participating as a peer in social life” (Fraser 2003: 27). To label these communities as vulnerable is an act of misrecognition and symbolic violence. It reifies already existing hierarchies and devalues the experiences and experiential knowledge of these

communities. Furthermore, it implies vulnerable communities should be the target of resilience policies rather than full participants in crafting those policies to increase community capabilities. The RFA/RPT report states that one of the groups engaged for the RFA/RPT process were “Spanish speaking community members” because they “know the impediments to accessing resources in our local community and know their own needs” (City of Longmont 2017: 10), emphasizing the expertise that is present in the Latinx and other marginalized communities.

Discourses and material conditions are also mutually constitutive in that discourse reflects material social structures, and social structures are given meaning in and through discourses. Therefore, policy discourse becomes the field in which decision makers articulate identities and construct definitions of a problem and recommend policies around (socially constructed) identities as the most appropriate solution to that problem. In this sense, the way we talk about communities and individuals matters because policies as they are developed—with or without community input from the start—heavily impact on the lives of communities. Hansen (2006: 8) notes that policy elites’ ability to speak authoritatively on a policy subject is due in part to their institutional location, but also “*knowing* about a particular issue” (Hansen 2006: 8, emphasis in original). The author contends that analyses of policy texts must attend to whose knowledge and what kinds of knowledge are considered authoritative. Cultural brokers—and the community members they represent—must be able to define their resilience and the root causes of their vulnerability on their own terms. It is important to repeat here again Schlosberg’s (2007) assertion that *recognition*—of cultural brokers and community members’ expertise—and *respect*—of different ways of knowing and different kinds of knowledge as authoritative—are the basis for procedural justice.

The second criterion of equitable resilience asserts that equitable resilience emerges from people's perceptions of their positions within their social-environmental context. This view is closely aligned with notions of recognition and procedural justice. Recognition justice demands a recognition of the structural inequities that exist in relation to marginalized cultures and identities in the context of environmental decision-making (Schlosberg 2007: 60). Environmental justice activists have long demanded recognition of the fact that structural factors place poor communities and communities of color at greater risk of environmental harm—including during disasters. Furthermore, recognition demands in an EJ context center on the right to bodily self-determination. Thus, recognition of communities' perceptions of harms and their preferences for particular solutions for those harms are at the root of recognition justice. Providing meaningful access to processes and procedures to achieve the goals of recognition justice represents procedural justice. In order to meaningfully engage with decision-making processes, communities must be given full access—from design, to implementation, to evaluation—to the policy- and decision-making processes that impact on their lives.

This section emphasized the importance of incorporating communities' needs *as they define them*, at times through cultural brokers that are trusted community members with authority to speak on behalf of communities. I argued that while official documents talk about embedding, engaging, or hiring cultural brokers, these documents often relegate cultural brokers to a consultation role, or only call for their involvement in the implementation stage of a program. It is unlikely that this strategy will reflect communities' needs since they are not given the opportunities to meaningfully participate in a program's formative stages, nor in program evaluation where lessons learned can be put into practice. Lastly, I showed how Latinx community members are resisting the label "vulnerable" by highlighting the many ways in which

Latinx and other marginalized individuals are already resilient despite the daily oppression and discrimination they face. In this way, Latinx community members are achieving recognition justice.

Criterion 3: Accounting for people’s lived realities, and of their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future

While the 2013 floods in Boulder County highlighted disparities in disaster risk and vulnerability, issues like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis—and the need to include culturally competent climate mitigation and adaptation strategies—continue to pose challenges for building equitable disaster resilience for Boulder County Latinx and other marginalized communities. The most salient theme from document analysis and interviews related to the third criterion of equitable resilience was the lack of recognition of Latinx cultural brokers’ lived experiences as legitimate sites of knowledge production about Latinx communities’ needs—and the consequences that can have for socially vulnerable groups. This included excluding cultural brokers as authoritative sources of information in policy and program planning and evaluation stages, and a lack of trust in cultural brokers’ understanding of communities’ needs; issues discussed in Theme 3.1, *(De)valuing the life experiences of cultural brokers*.

Cultural brokers also experience a lack of recognition when it comes to the emotional labor involved in cultural brokering work. Furthermore, there is a lack of recognition of the realities of bilingual and bicultural brokering work. Cultural brokers’ labor is in high demand because of the growing non-white population in Boulder County. Long working hours and emotionally demanding work are significant stressors for those serving communities through cultural brokering. Theme 3.2, *Emotional labor of cultural brokering*, and Theme 3.3, *“The arch-enemy of Google Translate”*: *The skill of transcreation and recognition justice*, provide

evidence of this devaluation and misrecognition. Cultural brokers by definition mediate two worlds and must inhabit both while sometimes feeling like they don't fully belong to either, as is the case when the specific culture(s) are not their own. Furthermore, the tremendous skill and knowledge required to make two cultures mutually intelligible is often (erroneously) seen to be a simple act of language translation. Lastly, Theme 3.4, *From a deficit to an asset lens: Latinx testimonios and recognition justice*, shows how cultural brokers use small but powerful acts of storytelling, or *testimonios*, to disrupt the dominant narratives about marginalized communities. These acts of bearing witness and speaking truth to power have created real change by revealing and unsettling structures of white privilege.

Theme 3.1 (De)valuing the life experiences of cultural brokers

In previous sections, I showed that agency documents—especially those with an equity focus—point to the need to engage cultural brokers. I argued that this potentially signals a growing appreciation for the role cultural brokers play in increasing equity and resilience for marginalized communities. Importantly, though, my data highlight some serious inequities regarding recognition of cultural brokers' lived realities and some consequent power imbalances. My data show that while there seems to be a genuine appreciation for the value that cultural brokers bring to policy processes and programming, the lived experiences of cultural brokers are not always valued as highly compared to other forms of knowledge. Cultural brokers highlighted several instances where their judgement went unheeded only to be validated later when a situation they had cautioned against came to pass, or when another individual verified for themselves information provided by a cultural broker. Furthermore, cultural brokers sometimes viewed the knowledge they possessed as less authoritative than official or Western scientific knowledge—a clear instance of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991). For instance, during my

interview with a highly accomplished Latinx cultural broker, they discussed the perceived legitimacy and value of academic knowledge as opposed to community-based experiential knowledge possessed by themselves and other cultural brokers. Even in this situation, where the individual focused on how to incorporate academic data, the value of the stories they can tell about community experiences and knowledge systems were downplayed and minimized. They said:

When we did the Latino Task Force, the biggest lesson I learned was that if it's not in an assessment, black and white with numbers, and you know, that I have to learn how to do both. And that's where really for me when I talk to folks that are doing research, that's what I need. I need you to help us put it in a language that academia and institutions can understand. There's no way that I have the skill to write and to put this together so that it makes sense, so that our stories, our experiences, make sense in academia and also in the systems, in the institutions. And so that's why ... we need you all [referring to academic researchers]...but we need to have that connection where the information...in the stories are being written with authenticity, even when they're turned into numbers, and they're turned then to anonymous comments, that they are authentically real.

This particular cultural broker has been an invaluable force for change in their community, having dedicated over two decades of service to the Latinx community. We also have the same level of educational attainment. However, they recognize that in order to participate in the system, they must adhere to status quo procedures of knowledge production and representation. For example, official reports that use quantitative measures, as the cultural broker alludes to here. This experience is a salient example of recognition injustice and of the way in which cultural brokers can internalize oppressive structures and practices that value some forms of knowledge over others or dismisses lived experience outright as the following quotation from another highly educated cultural broker demonstrates. They also shared this story with me in the context of having to work their way up despite having an advanced degree:

The reality is that there's still a lot of oppression and issues in our system, so I was not able to just come in and work right off the bat. I spent a couple of years

really experiencing—I had to be a janitor, I had to do other things that were not aligned with [my] level of education. So that’s what also gave me the perspective—a bit more of a frontline perspective of the experience of the Latinx community. There’s that disjunction of, I’m not technically illegal. I’m not technically an immigrant, for legal purposes, I have citizenship. But through systemic oppression, I was still seen as a person that was not in these spaces.

The previous two quotations underscore the pernicious nature of institutionalized symbolic violence and misrecognition in the Bourdieusian sense where systems of oppression become naturalized and accepted as “the way things are”. This clearly has important implications for recognition justice. As noted previously, misrecognition and a lack of respect (in the manner of Fraser 2003 and Schlosberg 2007) has significant repercussions for procedural justice as well. If the knowledge—formal and experiential—cultural brokers bring to bear is consistently devalued or delegitimized, it is unlikely their perspectives, and those of the communities they represent, will be taken seriously at high levels of decision- and policymaking. Arenas in which the most impactful funding and programming decisions are made about communities’ needs—for resilience-building, for disaster preparedness and recovery, and for the broader climate change adaptation and just transition work the city and county are currently undertaking.

While cultural brokers did not discuss acts of overt racism during the interview process, they mentioned several instances where their knowledge and lived experience were not trusted. Recall the earlier discussion of fear and that cultural broker’s observations about Latinx individuals refusing to open their doors when emergency tried to reach them in the middle of the night. The cultural broker went on to say:

And I said, ‘Did you know that that’s low-income housing?’ And they’re like, ‘No.’ I’m like, ‘Yes.’ They’re like, ‘No.’ I’m like, ‘I know that that’s low-income housing. Did you know that the majority of the folks there are Latino? And that there’s a lot of monolingual [Spanish speakers]? Not all, but there’s a lot. And did you know that on the other side, you have a senior housing, and there’s a lot of

folks that are disabled?’ And they're like, ‘No.’ ... This was at the end of the week. I had been in a meeting at the beginning of the week with the Latino community. And I had individuals that said, ‘*No vas a creer que paso.*’ [You won’t believe what happened.] ... Okay, what happened? And they said, ‘the police came, and they were knocking on our door at midnight, and we didn't answer because we didn't know what was going on.’ I had heard from the community; I tell the emergency responders. They're like, ‘nah.’ I'm like, believe me. Check it out. ... I know you don't believe me. I think a couple of weeks later, we were doing a presentation with [County agency] to cultural brokers, and I spoke about the fire and people not knowing. And a woman who works part time for [County agency], who is a Latina, raised her hand and said, ‘I live in that housing. I didn't answer the door because my husband's undocumented, and you knock saying policía?’.

This representative quotation illustrates the way in which cultural brokers’ intimate knowledge of their communities may be dismissed and highlights the considerable oversights that result.

This is not just an instance of recognition injustice. It increases risk in vulnerable communities and undermines the purpose of having embedded and engaged cultural brokers. As was mentioned earlier, emergency management practitioners have since begun partnering with cultural brokers to map areas in which socially vulnerable populations live.

Agency personnel I interviewed spoke highly of the work that cultural brokers do. They acknowledged the inherent value of cultural brokers in representing the needs of the communities in which they are embedded. However, there is a disconnect between what was clearly expressed as genuine admiration and cultural brokers’ stories about being dismissed, such as these. These stories are rooted in implicit bias that dichotomizes “objective” and “subjective” knowledge and devalues experiential knowledge in relation to technical and/or scientific knowledge. While social scientific research has supported the value of experiential (traditional, Indigenous, local, etc.) knowledge, this realization has yet to be widely accepted in powerful institutions like academia.

While there appears, then, to be a shift occurring within systems or institutions as far as seeing value in cultural brokers' work, many relevant, powerful institutions still lack clear understandings or processes for authentically engaging with that work. This is underscored by the quotation above, and in this cultural broker's observation:

There's the willingness, there's some understanding, but we're still working on developing that capacity for... all the systems to recognize the value [of cultural brokering]. Because they partially recognize it, but they don't know how to engage with it. So there's a fine line between tokenizing and real transformation. So a lot of people are saying like, 'Oh, yeah, we're working with cultural brokers.' Who are they? 'Well, this person talks Spanish.' Well, it's more than that. And *we're* talking from the Latinx perspective. There's *whole* different layers. We're developing capacity within the Nepalese and the AAPI [Asian and Pacific Islander] community, the African American community. And their whole notion of culture brokering has a whole different experience. It's a whole different game.

The value of local knowledge and a focus on community-driven change is integral to cultural brokering work. In line with Marin et al.'s (2018) third criterion of equitable resilience, cultural brokers are deeply connected with the realities of the communities they serve and recognize their communities' need for a change in circumstance that will shift power imbalances—goals that can be fostered through cultural brokering work in conjunction with procedurally just policymaking practices. The Boulder County Mosaics Report (2020), a public-facing report highlighting and elevating the work of cultural brokers in the county, notes this about cultural brokers:

The spectrum of experience within this group of individuals place them in different fields in which they can have the biggest impact in their communities. The common denominator within this group of individuals is having a lived bicultural experience, rather than an academic understanding of diversity and cultural competency. This experiential knowledge provides them with emotional understanding and empathy toward the communities they serve.

However, the broader context in which cultural brokers and other marginalized communities are situated does not consistently value cultural brokers' lived experiences as sources of authoritative

knowledge. This lack of recognition can limit full participatory equity since lived experience and experiential knowledge are not always valued on par with academic knowledge, as this excerpt implies. Lived bicultural experience also embodies a tension—literally for cultural brokers—of living in two worlds. The next section explores the lack of recognition of cultural brokers’ bodily experience in terms of this contradiction.

Theme 3.2 The emotional labor of cultural brokering

Textual and interview data suggest a lack of recognition of the difficulty faced by cultural brokers in navigating their bridging roles – as agency or organization representatives and as members of the communities for whom they provide paid or unpaid, recognized or unrecognized, brokering services. Cultural brokers discussed how they are pulled between two worlds while not fully belonging to either. This back-and-forth requires code-switching—behaviors that have been shown to be detrimental to individual wellbeing and require a significant amount of emotional labor (Durkee et al. 2019; Hewlin et al. 2009; Walton et al. 2015). As one cultural broker noted:

I think there’s another aspect of cultural brokers that I don’t know if research under[stands]. How do we—and I have been involved in a lot of crisis situations in the communities from very small to big—but I don’t think people understand. Not just a sense of obligation, but the pull, because I work for [local government agency], but I also work for my community. And they both have expectations. And sometimes they’re aligned, and sometimes they’re not. But I am also a human being who this is my community. And I don’t think that people understand how that impacts [us].

Cultural brokers’ bridging work is arguably one of their most important and effective roles and skill sets – it is often the only link between agencies and more marginalized communities. But when the emotional aspects of that work are ignored, this represents another kind of recognition injustice. Bridging two worlds is exhausting work, and when that is not recognized and valued even as their experiential knowledge is de-valued, cultural brokers can experience othering in the context of powerful institutions. Unless these systemic issues are addressed, cultural brokers may

burn out more quickly than they can be replaced, given the likelihood of growing demand. Cultural brokering work is in increasingly high demand as Boulder County's and the City of Longmont's populations become more demographically diverse.

As discussed earlier, the Boulder County 2021-2026 Hazard Mitigation Plan expressly names racism and colonialism as the background against which current disparities in exposure to hazards plays out. It also states that “the root causes of climate change, environmental injustice, and racial inequity are the same and are due to *colonization and extraction of natural and human resources to benefit of a few* (Boulder County 2019: 12; emphasis mine). Care must be taken to avoid the reproduction of racial and colonial oppression by failing to recognize the way in which extractive social relations continue to be reproduced—for instance by overburdening cultural brokers and failing to recognize the physical and emotional labor involved in cultural brokering work.

Theme 3.3 “The arch-enemy of Google Translate”: The skill of transcreation and recognition justice

In previous sections, I touched upon the complexity of translation. Translation is another site of tokenization or disrespect for cultural brokers. Translation is often misrecognized and devalued as a modest administrative function. It is seen as a straightforward conversion of government or organizational communications from one language to another. According to this logic, translated communications are then disseminated through official channels using traditional communication routes. Such a viewpoint elides the skill and process of negotiation that must occur in creating the “culturally competent” communications that many official documents call for.

As was highlighted above, emergency communication to Spanish-speaking communities was singled out as a point of failure during the 2013 flood response. The BoCo Strong and

RFA/RPT efforts also recognized the importance of providing important information in multiple languages; however, as those sources point out, this involves delivering messages in culturally appropriate ways. Cultural brokers repeatedly spoke about the unrecognized labor that goes into the translation process—or as they often referred to it—the process of *transcreation*. When I asked one cultural broker how they would describe transcreation, they replied jokingly that “It’s the arch enemy of Google Translate,” explaining “literal translations don’t work.” This cultural broker went on to explain that, during the COVID-19 crisis, cultural brokers had to *transcreate* COVID-19 messaging by researching and “outsourcing” information from multiple countries of origin, representing the diverse populations residing in Boulder County. Borrowing the format of messages from those countries’ websites or other media sources, cultural brokers then combined phraseologies or framings from countries of origin with the information the county wanted relayed. This work involves translation but then a largely unrecognized and unappreciated form of cultural brokering and contextualization, too. This transcreated messaging is subsequently delivered using methods legible to different communities:

So what helps me connect, it's not the same thing that helps the person from another culture... What helps in the country of origin, and in the host country, specifically for an immigrant community, it's not the same. [D]uring COVID, we had to outsource information from countries of origin, to look at the message, and say, ‘I’m not gonna use what I see in the web pages in Nicaragua, Uruguay, in Mexico, Puerto Rico,’ because it’s a different message from the one I’m seeing in Boulder County. But I’m using language from those countries, and I’m using their campaign strategies, with this other message to create a new one.

This cultural broker also equated the process of transcreation with code switching: “[i]t’s just different combinations that sort of land you into a different mindset that helps you [in] *transcreation*, or code switching. Because if the county calls me and tells me, ‘I need you to deliver this message, here are the bullet points.’ If I go back to the community and say, ‘Hey, the county’s saying this. You have any questions? No? Good. Do that.’ People are gonna be like,

‘yeah, see ya.’” They discussed the time it took them—even as a Latinx person—to develop deep relationships of trust in diverse, Latinx communities. This extra trust-building work, and the unrecognized labor that goes into it, are often “off the clock”:

But before they [community members] can share [what their needs are], there has to be trust, there has to be connection. And very specifically, there has to be capacity building on both sides for the system to listen to a whole different point of view, for the person to be prepared to slightly shift the way they communicate, so someone can meet at the middle. That takes months and even years of construction and building that trust...sometimes it takes you like a full year of trust building before they are able to open to you. So those are the kind of things that cultural brokers negotiate.

It is again important to draw attention to this critique of “the system” because it underscores the fact that, in day-to-day interactions, cultural brokers and practitioners work side-by-side to address communities’ barriers to resilience; however, there are significant structural and processual constraints to institutional change like institutions built on systems of extraction and systems and processes that don’t privilege lived experience as authoritative knowledge. These systems—systems that promote extractive labor relations and invalidate experiential knowledge—take a toll on cultural brokers’ wellbeing.

While it may appear that official communications are delivered sporadically as they are issued from an agency or organization, cultural brokers embedded as trusted members within communities are continuously facilitating communication between communities and agencies and organizations. As one cultural broker noted about the COVID-19 pandemic: “I was placed on the [COVID vaccine outreach effort] and they [agency/organization staff working on COVID vaccine response] literally came ... and they said, could we borrow [you]? And we’ll reimburse you a certain amount. By the time they got around to that, the bulk of my work [in the community] had been done.” This quotation speaks to the way in which the bulk of cultural brokering work is made invisible because it often happens outside of normal working hours or

official job duties. A fact further underscored by another cultural broker's observation that some cultural brokers spend 10 to 20 hours per week performing cultural brokering work, making it nearly equivalent to an unpaid part time job in addition to the paid work they may do.

Furthermore, this points to agencies' and organizations' immense reliance upon cultural brokers' (often unpaid) labor in connecting socially vulnerable groups to basic resources. Taken in the context of Martin et al.'s (2018) third criterion of equitable resilience, these points indicate the need to account for cultural brokers' lived realities and a need to address the imbalances of power that underpin the invisibilization and devaluation of cultural brokering work.

Communications may also be translated per a requirement in a policy or according to a recommendation in a plan or other effort that calls for bilingual communication. But unless someone can deliver the message in a culturally appropriate way, the materials and the message are never delivered, at least not in useful ways. Speaking about the RFA/RPT effort when the RFA/RPT team was collecting information about communication issues, one cultural broker explains: "when we were doing our research, we'd [ask] people ... 'do you have information in Spanish?' And they'd say, 'oh yeah, it's in a closet because we have no one who's bilingual, bicultural, and can go out there and distribute [it] and do the outreach and the engagement.'"

These examples demonstrate how the act of translating associated with brokering work is misrecognized in terms of the skill and labor required to produce culturally competent communications. However, translation, or transcreation, can also be used as a tool to disrupt—at least momentarily—power hierarchies. One cultural broker discussed what happened when asked to translate a highly technical PowerPoint presentation for a flood recovery event in a majority Spanish-speaking community:

And then when we got to the Spanish speaking, the mobile home park ... I had to learn about water and the force of water. I mean, I'm not an engineer. But I had to

translate the PowerPoint into Spanish, so that it makes sense. And so what I did was, we did the meeting in Spanish. We used our talk system so that if you were an English speaker, we interpreted from Spanish to English, respecting that the majority of the community was Spanish speakers. Knowing that this community was less likely to be connected to resources, I had the resources there. I had the folks that provided food, the folks that were working on housing, the folks that could work on mental health. I had tables there so they could immediately connect with them. Instead of in a community where they have more access and resources where I might say, here's a card for this person, you go out and [make the connection]. I knew I had to have [the resources there]. I had directors and all these folks. I said okay, you know what, we're going to interpret from Spanish to English. That in itself makes a world of difference. When someone at a high level has to be the one that is dependent on someone telling them what is going on right now.

This counter-example is critical to the third criterion of equitable resilience. The act of placing white elites in the position normally occupied by monolingual Spanish speakers demonstrates cultural brokers' ability to gain recognition for their—and their communities'—lived realities by upsetting the power structure, if even for the brief time of this community meeting. In addition, this example demonstrated to the white members of this audience the gap in participatory equity that likely exists even when translation services are provided. These counter-examples of reclaiming power and creating spaces for recognition justice are so important that I now turn to more sustained examples of the disruptive potential of these strategies, especially in the context of Matin et al.'s (2018: 198) third criteria for equitable resilience-building that requires accounting for people's "lived realities and their need for a change of circumstance to avoid power imbalances into the future."

Theme 3.4 From a deficit to an asset lens: Latinx *testimonios* and recognition justice

One way Latinx cultural brokers are talking truth to power is through storytelling. Critical race theorists and practitioners have long recognized the value of lived experience and counterstorytelling—writing (or speaking) that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted

premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority—in achieving more just outcomes for people of color (Delgado and Stefancic 2017: 171). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) have argued that discourses and narratives about racialized groups are at least as impactful for outcomes as are (in their case) laws because, as the authors note, “they supply the background against which [laws] are interpreted and applied” (50). Cultural brokers see the ability to shift perceptions about Latinx and other marginalized populations as an important aspect of the brokering work they do. This section explores more deeply the way in which Latinx cultural brokers’ counterstorytelling, or *testimonios*, disrupt narratives of vulnerability, emphasize the skills they bring to resilience-building, and raise awareness of the toll that cultural brokering work can take on individuals’ wellbeing. Perez-Huber (2009: 644) describes *testimonio* as “often told by a witness, motivated by a social and/or political urgency to voice injustice and raise awareness of oppression.” Moreover, testimonios are often told as “an expression of a collective experience, rather than the individual” (Perez-Huber (2009: 644). Thus, testimonios are *social* expressions of *collective* experience meant to bring *recognition* to groups’ experiences of inequity or injustice.

Testimonio played an important role in RFA/RPT when, in a public meeting about the flood recovery, a cultural broker spoke up to disrupt the narrative that Boulder County emergency response actions had benefited the community equally:

It would have been 2014-15, maybe even later, we had a small fire right outside of the City of Boulder, called the Sunshine Canyon fire...I was working with [another individual involved in the Boulder County flood response] and a group called BoCo Strong, which was a flood recovery group originally. And I was at a resiliency meeting of BoCo Strong, and we’re sort of patting ourselves on the back, you know, the good work we did with our alert warning. And [a Latinx cultural broker] up in the back...raised her hand and was like, ‘Hey look...I have first-hand knowledge that there were several people, Spanish speakers, in the community that did not go and answer the door because of fear of law enforcement, and the notification didn’t go through.’ Basically, I was like quit patting your back buddy. We missed some folks.

In this case, a cultural broker's counterstory or *testimonio* disrupted a narrative that flood response was universally successful. By challenging this narrative, this cultural broker called for recognition of the experiences of those in the Latinx community that hadn't received flood warnings, were trapped by floodwaters, and who experienced considerable difficulties in accessing recovery resources following the flood. This *testimonio* was an important moment in gaining participatory access and recovery resources for the Latinx community members who were most impacted by the flood.

While it appears the CBRP is effective in bridging the divide between Latinx community members and government resources, brokering work is arduous, and, as noted earlier, the complexity of bridging cultural divides involves far more than simple translation services. These *testimonios* about the community's suffering and cultural brokers emotional struggles lend a human aspect to disaster recovery and resilience-building work that is not captured by resilience-building metrics and indices. In the process of gaining recognition for the demanding nature of brokering work, *testimonios* also disrupt power imbalances. Latinx cultural brokers can use their positions within organizations and institutions to testify to the ways in which their communities experience various forms of exclusion and oppression.

Latinx cultural brokers have used counterstorytelling, or *testimonios*, not only to achieve more just and equitable outcomes for Latinx and other marginalized communities, but also to disrupt and begin to change the narrative around what resilience and vulnerability mean. Importantly, cultural brokers spoke of how they worked to change perceptions about the Latinx and other marginalized communities from deficit-focused to asset-based. As one cultural broker states about her work to secure resources for the Latinx and other communities: "It's funny, because when we can attach dollars to communities, value switches. Again, it's that deficit to

asset lens because we're perceived as a deficit. And once they see there's dollars, there's a different level of attention.” Another cultural broker echoes this sentiment and further illustrates how community members reject the vulnerable stereotype and create space for self-determination; a key move to disrupting the erroneous narrative that these communities are inherently vulnerable and reclaiming that narrative to highlight the resilience and self-sufficiency that has always (necessarily) existed in structurally marginalized and under-resourced communities:

If I come in, blazing, and it's like, ‘this is it, we're gonna better the community!’ And they're like, wait, wait, wait. What are you talking about bettering the community? We don't know you. We have been doing this on our own, and now you want to help. It's like, ‘help me with what? I've been doing this on my own.’ And you're like, oh. So they break your deficit lens, and replace it with an asset based community development lens where they are experts on their needs, and also in what they want to bring to the system.

These quotations demonstrate how cultural brokers—and community members—use counterstorytelling to disrupt notions of vulnerability and replace them with stories of resilience. This section also illustrates how cultural brokers disrupt significant structural power imbalances through *testimonio*, elevating lived experience as an authoritative form of knowledge about community needs. In this way, Latinx cultural brokers increase participation through occupying and demanding recognition in spaces of white power. In the case of the cultural broker who spoke out at the flood recovery meeting, this act gained recognition for the RFA/RPT effort, led to the community vulnerability mapping, and brought injustices faced by Latinx community members during the flood to the fore. RFA/RPT, in turn, opened a space of fair process where Latinx community members could share their testimonios with decisionmakers through cultural brokers. Once decisionmakers saw the value of cultural brokers in disaster preparedness, disaster

response, and recovery work, they authorized a full-time cultural broker position—an example where Latinx cultural brokers increased distributive justice for Latinx communities.

Concluding Remarks

The data and analysis presented in this chapter demonstrate how the City of Longmont and Boulder County, in partnership with organizations like the Community Foundation Boulder County, are creating more equitable versions of resilience for marginalized populations in the city and county. It also reveals important gaps. Under the first criterion of equitable resilience, “Accounting for issues of social vulnerability and access to power, knowledge, and resources,” my analysis highlights how cultural brokers are drawing attention to the socially constructed nature of vulnerability and working with local government agencies to address issues that lead to decreased resilience in marginalized communities. I also demonstrate how cultural brokers’ work is increasing access to spaces of power, knowledge—including the ability to contribute to knowledge creation—and access to financial and other resources. At the same time, there is often a gap between the rhetoric advocating for greater participatory justice in resilience-building by recognizing the work cultural brokers do, and the reality of how inclusive these processes are, especially in the program development and evaluation stages.

Cultural brokers’ use an intersectional lens to broaden the number of communities included in resilience efforts. This is one way the CBRP is addressing issues of participatory, recognition, and distributive injustice and increasing community capabilities through the (re)allocation of resources. However, resources like grant funding and increased collaboration in resilience building efforts are constrained at an institutional level by grant cycles and narrowly defined funding criteria. Grant cycles do not often align with the timescales that are required to

create transformative change in communities with long histories of oppression and discrimination. Resilience funding criteria may not account for intersecting identities and overlapping oppressions thereby failing to include some groups or activities within the scope of resilience funding opportunities.

Themes highlighted under the second criterion of equitable resilience, “Starting from people’s own perception of their position within their human-environmental system,” showed how a strong foundation was created early on for procedural and recognition justice in resilience-building activities in Boulder County; a foundation that made participatory and inclusive efforts like RFA/RPT possible. While RFA/RPT represented a crucial turning-point, Latinx and other marginalized perspectives continue to be systematically excluded in ways that have important justice implications in the context of resilience-building. Cultural brokers and resilience practitioners are collaborating to address institutional barriers. However, similar to Browne (2015), I find that a top-down paradigm shift is needed to support bottom-up efforts to create multi-cultural and multi-lingual resilience-building. From the perspectives of recognition and procedural justice, this paradigm shift would include reframing existing narratives around resilience and vulnerability—something cultural brokers’ work is already doing—and broadening notions of whose knowledge counts as authoritative.

This last point was central to the themes that emerged within the third criterion of equitable resilience, “Accounting for people’s realities and for their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future.” Cultural brokers’ lived experience, and the lived experiences of the communities they serve, are often not seen as legitimate sources of knowledge, especially when placed alongside technical and/or scientific expertise. Katherine Browne’s (2015) work in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina provides an important example of

how expert knowledge and disaster recovery “playbooks” are often privileged in disaster recovery contexts over local expertise, needs articulated by the community, and local cultural understandings of what disaster response, mitigation, and recovery entail. This disjuncture is an important driver of how quickly and completely a community recovers after a catastrophe. Bridging this divide is the important work cultural brokers do. My analysis shows that cultural broker expertise—their knowledge about and deep understanding of the communities in which they are embedded—often goes unheeded. Furthermore, the labor and emotional toll cultural brokering work entails often remains unrecognized. This misrecognition has important justice implications under the third criterion of equitable resilience. Recognizing the lived experience and local knowledge of cultural brokers as knowledge commensurate with technical or scientific expertise is an important step in shifting the balance of power. There are signs that this shift is occurring. The examples of cultural broker *testimonios* leading to change shows how small but powerful acts of storytelling in spaces of white power can lead to more just and equitable outcomes for marginalized communities.

My findings underscore the fact that the different dimensions of justice must be considered separately, but they are also deeply entangled. For instance, environmental justice theorists like Schlosberg (2007) have argued for the irreducibility of different dimensions of justice. While there has been a longstanding tradition, primarily centered on the work of John Rawls, of collapsing the various dimensions of justice into one (often distributive), many theorists have shown in practice that social justice struggles include calls for each dimension separately. As Schlosberg (2007) has pointed out, EJ struggles provide empirical evidence that people’s lived experiences of injustice occur along the lines of distributive (the distribution of benefits, resources, and harms in society), procedural (full and meaningful access to decision-

making processes and information), and recognition (of individuals as full participants in social interaction) justice and capabilities (the capacity to turn other aspects of justice into collective functioning and flourishing). Each is critical for achieving equitable resilience.

Distributive, procedural, and recognition justice and community capabilities are also interrelated in such a way that the presence or absence of one dimension has implications for the others. Fraser (2003) has argued that recognition lies at the heart of distribution struggles. Schlosberg (2007) and Fraser (2001) have argued that recognition underpins procedural justice. Schlosberg (2007: 157) also notes that procedural justice is viewed as a prerequisite to recognition justice and capabilities. The efforts to build more just and equitable resilience, disaster preparedness, and climate change adaptation measures in the City of Longmont and Boulder County call attention to the difficulties faced by individuals tasked with meeting this goal for cultural brokers and practitioners alike. This study illustrates how barriers to achieving equitable resilience are underpinned by the intertwined nature of distributive, procedural, recognition, and capabilities dimensions of injustice.

As my findings and analysis show, resilience barriers manifest in a number of ways. Capabilities can be limited by a lack of inclusion in participatory processes or by barriers to self-determination. Participatory processes may be more open to citizens, but this does not account for individuals categorized as non-citizens. A failure to account for (recognize) multiple intersecting identities or modes of discrimination may mean that programs and funding opportunities aimed at reducing inequalities for one group are less effective at achieving their goals overall. A lack of recognition of lived experience as a legitimate form of knowledge limits the political space cultural brokers and other marginalized community members can access.

Agencies and organizations seeking to increase recognition and participatory justice around resilience-building efforts must recognize that participation is not just “embedding” a cultural broker in a plan whose direction has already been determined and relegating them to a consulting role or limiting their involvement to education and outreach. These components are crucial for program success, but do not necessarily reflect (recognize) the needs of the communities that agencies and organizations seek to serve. Procedural justice requires that marginalized and disenfranchised groups be recognized as full participants in decision-making processes. They should be included in setting priorities for how funds will be allocated, making decisions about what communities need, having a seat at the table when interventions are designed, being included in the implementation (currently the primary stage at which cultural brokers are engaged), and involved in program evaluation. As the earlier quotation from one of the cultural brokers interviewed pointed out, program evaluation is “where we get to really truly either put on the shelf lessons learned, or implement those lessons learned.” This quotation reflects the need for two-way engagement between agencies and organizations and marginalized communities so communities can turn resources into the capacity for flourishing and functioning.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Revisiting the research questions

In this section I return to my research questions, discuss some study limitations, and offer suggestions for further research. I also link my findings back to the literature reviewed in chapter two. The overarching research questions guiding my research were:

To what extent do resilience-focused programs such as the Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos process and the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program utilize environmentally just practices and processes? How are cultural brokers as members and representatives of the Latinx community meaningfully consulted about defining resilience on their—and their community's—own terms?

In order to narrow the analytical scope, I focused on the following sub-questions:

4. What spaces, if any, have Latinx communities created to further equitable and just resilience-building efforts?
5. What discourses surround resilience-building activities in Boulder County and how—and to what degree—do they appear to be shaped by the broader social, institutional, and historical contexts in which they are embedded?
6. How has the allocation of power and resources shifted as a result of the RFA/RPT process and through the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program?

Below, I review my findings in the context of each question, drawing on my major findings to illustrate.

What spaces, if any, have Latinx communities created to further resilience-building efforts?

Resilience for All/Resiliencia Para Todos was the catalyst for the Cultural Broker Resilience Program. Since the RFA/RPT process, Latinx cultural brokers have continued to draw attention to the barriers to resilience faced by Latinx and other marginalized community members. Latinx cultural brokers have used an intersectional understanding of social vulnerability to advocate and secure resources for Latinx and other marginalized and disenfranchised communities in Boulder County and the City of Longmont. While cultural brokers are recognized as valuable contributors to resilience-building in discourse, the conception of their role in resilience-building is too limited in scope to ensure what Fraser (2001: 27) calls “participatory parity”: the establishment of formerly misrecognized parties as peers capable of engaging as full partners in decision-making processes.

A wide array of Boulder County and City of Longmont documents state the need to engage and embed cultural brokers in resilience-building, disaster mitigation, and climate change adaptation work. While documents call for cultural broker engagement and embeddedness—actions that would imply fair procedural processes—the proposed role of cultural brokers in plans and other documents was often limited to one of consultation or education and outreach. While these functions are undoubtedly important, procedural equity according to an environmental justice framework requires that affected communities be included as full decision-making partners throughout any process that can affect the capacity of the community to achieve resilience on its own terms. Recognition of racialized and minoritized groups, such as the Latinx community in this context, is also key to their meaningful involvement in decision-making related to equitable resilience. As environmental justice scholar David Schlosberg argues,

“redressing misrecognition means eliminating values and practices that impede participation, making political and social decision-making institutions and practices more inclusive, and broadening the definition of acceptable communication in that decision-making” (2007: 157). In order to achieve the space needed to build equitable resilience, Latinx cultural brokers involved in these efforts have had to continually fight for their inclusion and recognition.

The last point about broadening the definition of acceptable communication in decision-making is especially salient in the case of cultural brokers *whose lived experiences are the expertise they bring to decision-making*. Thus, lived experiences must be valued—and, again, *recognized*—by decision makers at every level of government and across the political sphere as legitimate sites of knowledge production about communities’ needs. It is only through the realization of recognition justice and respect that Latinx cultural brokers, and those from other disenfranchised and marginalized communities, will be able to achieve just and equitable resilience outcomes for their communities. One way practitioners can elevate Latinx cultural brokers’ work is through valuing Latinx and other communities’ acts of storytelling as an important site of knowledge production on par with technical and professional expertise in disaster and resilience-building contexts. This is an act of recognition and respect that gives concrete bearing to the platitude “communities are experts in their own lives.”

What discourses surround resilience-building activities in Boulder County and how—and to what degree—do they appear to be shaped by the broader social, institutional, and historical contexts in which they are embedded?

Resilience-building discourses in Boulder County interrelate some with resilience-building initiatives at the state level, but as Davoudi et al. (2019) note, dominant resilience discourses and situated resilience practices are often at odds. Resilience discourse often presents

itself as coherent, apolitical, and top-down. Resilience-building in the Boulder County context illustrates that official resilience definitions, plans, and policies exist—and that these to some degree reflect discourses of resilience at the state level. Yet, resilience as it is discussed within communities and enacted on the ground is negotiated, fluid, contested, and creatively deployed by different actors, including Latinx cultural brokers. Most importantly, cultural brokers’ inclusive, collaborative, and intersectional approach to building community—and the community that results—*is resilience*. Communities that are connected, well-resourced, inclusive, and have access to knowledge and decision-making spaces—even if mediated through cultural brokers—are more able to cope with crises. As Browne (2015) and Norris et al. (2008) have persuasively argued, community resilience and capabilities are much more than the sum of the resilience and capabilities of its individual members.

As I discussed in the literature review, resilience discourse is frequently aligned with liberal values such as self-sufficiency and individualism. Furthermore, it often reflects capitalist market logics that are antithetical to an ethic of care and reciprocity. It was clear from interviews with cultural brokers that they viewed cultural brokering in the name of community resilience as community care work meant to foster collective continuance, which Whyte (2014) explains “is a community’s aptitude for being adaptive in ways sufficient for the livelihoods of its members to flourish into the future ... [it] can be seen as a community’s fitness for making adjustments to current or predicted change in ways that contest colonial hardships and embolden comprehensive aims at robust living” (601). For instance, in an interview, one cultural broker discussed how they use the concept of resilience as a means to gain recognition for the struggles and barriers their community—and all marginalized and disenfranchised communities—have had to overcome, to change perceptions of these communities from being societal deficits to assets, and

from vulnerable communities to inherently resilient communities. They also use a resilience-building frame to acquire resources to increase community capacity and wellbeing. Far from being an instrument of neoliberal ideology, as some critics have argued, this example highlights the work of political resistance that resilience can do.

How has the allocation of power and resources shifted as a result of the RFA/RPT process and through the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program?

As I discussed above and in the findings and analysis, RFA/RPT has resulted in recognition of the barriers to resilience faced by Latinx and other marginalized communities. The RFA/RPT process had many productive outcomes in the direction of equitable resilience, including the creation of a full-time paid Cultural Broker Program Manager position, the Cultural Broker Resilience Program, cultural broker training, and the expansion of a cultural broker network. It has also expanded participatory spaces for several marginalized communities and has resulted in those communities receiving grant and government funds for resilience-building work. However, as I discussed in the findings and analysis chapter, and under the first research question above, significant challenges remain to correcting entrenched power imbalances. These include a lack of recognition of the labor involved in brokering work; a lack of recognition of the emotional toll brokering work can take; the lack of meaningful participation in program development, implementation, and evaluation; and differential power imbalances stemming from long histories—and the continuation of—social inequalities rooted in racism and other forms of discrimination.

Study limitations

There are two important limitations to this study. First, due to time constraints and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, I opted not to engage in participant observation for this study.

This would have undoubtedly given me a better sense of how resilience was being discussed in different government and political spaces in Boulder County and the City of Longmont, resulting in richer data. Second, this study would have benefited from using a critical policy ethnography or Foucauldian genealogy approach that traced the evolution of resilience thinking in the city and county by carefully connecting the dots between local resilience discourse and practice and resilience discourses at the state, national, and international levels, in addition to situating these discourses in broader historical and political contexts. As Sharp and Richardson (2001) note, such detailed examinations of the dialectic between policy shifts and the material outcomes requires a significant amount of time. So much so that this detailed sort of examination may be better suited for a dissertation or project with similar scope.

Further research could undertake a participant observation or ethnographic approach to examining resilience discourse and practice in the context of Boulder County's resilience-building activities. A more detailed examination of the origins of resilience discourses and the way in which they have shifted over time, and to what effect, would also be a fruitful direction for further research.

Concluding links to the literature

“Resilience is everywhere; it is the idea and the encounter. It is the root and the branch. It is a travelling concept, a conceptual ‘rhizome’ that has risen to prominence in debates about how we seek to understand, manage and solve the wicked riddle of uncertain times.” (Rogers 2016: 13)

“The account of the world constituted by development agencies concerned with building resilient societies is one that presupposes the disastrousness of the world, and likewise one which interpellates a subject that is permanently called upon to bear the disaster. A subject for whom bearing the disaster is a required practice without which he or she cannot grow and prosper in the world. The human here is conceived as resilient in so far as it adapts to rather than resists the conditions of its suffering in the world. To be resilient is to forego the very power of resistance.” (Reid 2012: 76)

The passages above speak to the ubiquity of the term *resilience* and to the power dynamics inherent in typical perceptions of resilience. In previous chapters, I've reviewed the vast body of literature about resilience, most of which is aimed at those whose task it is to “make things resilient”, from infrastructure and people to communities, cities, and environments. This literature offers frameworks, metrics, and indices for conceptualizing and measuring resilience. A newer literature has developed around critiquing resilience as a (normative) concept and as an approach that is one if not all of the following: neoliberal, top-down, conservative, techno-managerial, asocial, apolitical, and exclusionary. However, there is little in the academic literature that speaks to those living on the receiving end of resilience interventions – the people or communities expected to “become” resilient. This research sought to fill that gap by offering those communities charged with becoming resilient a potential path forward that is equitable, just, and shaped by them. It has also sought to better understand the constraints faced by resilience and disaster management practitioners in implementing community resilience. As is demonstrated by Garry Sanfaçon's quotation about BoCo Strong's struggle to define resilience, the reality of resilience is never as coherent as a simple definition might suggest.

My research suggests that one approach to achieving equitable resilience is through government and political support of community care work like that performed by cultural brokers. Importantly, states working alongside cultural brokers and the communities they serve can use an environmental justice framework in the development, implementation, and evaluation of resilience, climate adaptation, and disaster preparedness programs. Environmental justice (EJ) movements and scholarship have become multi-issue, including growing into a robust movement for, and body of literature about, climate justice. As Ryder (2017) has illustrated, climate change-related disasters are also an issue of environmental justice. EJ has also moved beyond a primary

focus on distributional justice. Procedural and recognition justice, as well as community capabilities, are now widely recognized as essential components of EJ (e.g., Schlosberg 2007; Schlosberg and Collins 2014). Responding to Pellow's (2018) call to pursue a critical environmental justice that drastically reduces individual's dependence upon the state, I show that the state, at least at local levels of government, can be harnessed to approach resilience-building using an ethic of care that supports the populations it governs.

Through the Cultural Brokers Resilience Program, cultural brokers in Boulder County are building networks of resistance that challenge the neoliberal, atomizing discourse and practice of top-down resilience-building that places responsibility each individual to become more resilient. In her work on transversal politics, intersectional and Black feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins (2002, 2017) argues that activist spaces that are fluid can bridge the concerns of disparate groups. Using a strategy of flexible solidarity and transversal activism can create broad networks of resistance that advocate for more just and equitable responses to crises (see also Yuval-Davis 1999). Through flexible solidarity, Collins (2017) also highlights a need to attend to the internal workings of movements and potential power imbalances and different forms of oppression that can exist within activist communities. Cultural brokers in Boulder County and the City of Longmont advocate for flexible solidarities (Collins 2017) that approach resilience-building through an intersectional lens. This approach insists that none of our cities will be resilient unless every community within any given locality is given the resources, participatory access, recognition, and respect to build resilience capabilities. This participatory and inclusive form of community-building work—and the community that emerges from such work—*is* resilience.

Lastly, this study highlights the importance of those individuals who straddle two worlds and are able to *transcreate* across the often invisible divide between what Browne calls the

“wounded culture”—those socially vulnerable groups harmed by disasters—and the “recovery culture” (Browne 2015) or “rescue culture” (Browne 3013). These are the agencies and institutions brought in to assist communities immediately following a disaster and tasked with rebuilding communities during the weeks, months, and years following a catastrophe. As Browne’s (2015) long-term ethnography of a large, multigenerational African American family illustrates, cultural brokers are critical to ensuring the disaster recovery process is free from unnecessary and prolonged suffering for socially vulnerable groups. By recognizing that hurts accrue across communities (Browne 2015) and that communities represent a complex social fabric that is more than the sum of its individuals (Browne 2015; Norris et al. 2008), practitioners can leverage the insights and expertise cultural brokers bring as mediators between multiple cultures to disaster mitigation, preparedness, and recovery.

I would like to include a cautionary note on the concept of community. As I discussed previously, accepting communities as internally coherent can be problematic because power imbalances exist within any community, regardless of how tightly knit it appears from the outside, and defining a community is an inherently exclusionary act that draws boundaries between groups. Relatedly, as a researcher, I recognize my part in reifying the boundaries of the communities described here as I have accepted them as described by my study participants. Therefore, the communities described here should also not be accepted as always already formed and unproblematic. Community membership is fluid, reflects current power dynamics, and who belongs and who does not can be highly contested and shifts over time.

It is my hope that this research project will contribute to a broader understanding of the pitfalls involved in accepting the concept of resilience as *prima facie* beneficial and unproblematic. In addition, I hope this study proves useful to the County in critically assessing

and improving their resilience programming and efforts as well as contributes to the scholarship around resilience-building by providing a new way to evaluate community resilience-building efforts using a critical EJ-capabilities lens coupled with critical discourse analysis that addresses issues of distributive, recognition, and procedural justice as well as attending to underlying power imbalances and inequality.

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AND ACRONYMS

BoCo Strong: A sub-committee of the LTFRG that formed after the 2013 Boulder County floods to focus on building social capital, social networks, and a culture of resilience throughout the county. The group’s mission centered on the recognition that disaster recovery efforts most often focus on rebuilding physical infrastructure to the exclusion of rebuilding social infrastructure. The group—comprised of government agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and others—worked as a bridging organization to coordinate resilience-building activities across multiple communities and took on functions, such as building social networks, that often fall outside of the purview of government.

CBRP: Boulder County Cultural Brokers Resilience Program. A program that arose from needs identified during the RFA/RPT process. The mission of the program is to engage individuals acting as cultural brokers in their communities and provide professional development and a support network of resource sharing for these individuals (Mosaics 2020). The goal of the program is to “advance racial equity and social justice” for communities of color in Boulder County and surrounding areas (Cultural Brokers Resilience Program 2022).

Equitable resilience: Following Marin et al. (2018: 198), equitable resilience is “a form of environmental resilience which takes into account issues of social vulnerability and differentiated access to power, knowledge, and resources...[and] starts from people’s own perception of their position within their human-environmental system, and accounts for their realities, and of their need for a change of circumstance to avoid imbalances of power into the future.”

Environmental justice framework: The framework used in this thesis is informed by the multi-valent, or multi-dimensional, view of environmental justice (EJ) that conceptualizes EJ as composed of four analytically discrete but closely interrelated aspects: *distributional justice*, or the equitable distribution of environmental goods and bads; *procedural justice*, or equitable access to meaningful information and decision-making processes; *recognition justice* is the view that all individuals impacted by environmental decisions and/or their consequences should be recognized as peers in decision-making processes; and *capabilities* (or *community capabilities*) as the capacity or ability to turn resources gained through a more equitable allocation of resources and access to decision-making processes into flourishing and functioning.

LTFRG: Long-term Flood Recovery Group. Multi-jurisdictional group initiated by Foothills United Way to manage disaster relief funds received from FEMA following the 2013 Boulder County floods. The LTFRG was comprised of federal agencies, state officials, local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders (Long-term Flood Recovery Group n.d.). The LTFRG aided in flood recovery by performing a Boulder County unmet needs assessment, prioritizing projects, connecting flood-affected residents to recovery resources, coordinating volunteer efforts, and allocating disaster relief funds for immediate and long-term recovery needs.

Misrecognition: Misrecognition is a concept with a number of theoretical sources. Fraser (2003) and Schlosberg (2007) contend that misrecognition results from a lack of respect, or a failure to accord equivalent social standing to others as equal participants in social life. Pierre Bourdieu's conception of misrecognition is also relevant to this study in that his view explains how systemic modes of oppression become habitual and taken for granted as the way things are. Moreover, individuals internalize these un- or misrecognized systemic structures of oppression and thus

unconsciously reproduce them in daily social interaction. Bourdieu's understanding of misrecognition is particularly germane because it describes how systemic oppression can be reproduced, even by those who are well-intentioned.

RFA/RPT: Resilience for All / Resiliencia Para Todos. City of Longmont-led community engagement process initiated in 2016 and funded through a State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs Community Development Block Grant. The purpose of the grant was to “increase resilience capacity in hard-hit areas” by “[b]uilding a web of local connections among individuals (esp. underserved or vulnerable populations)...” (State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs 2019: 12). Longmont implemented RFA/RPT in partnership with BoCo Strong. The effort was a response to the *Putting on a Resilience Lens* assessment recommendation to better engage and support Spanish speakers in Boulder County.

Social vulnerability: While not specifically defined by Matin et al. (2018) in their article—and consistent with other scholars on the topic of social vulnerability—the authors recognize that vulnerability is highly relational, context specific, historically informed, dependent upon several socially constructed factors, and scale-dependent. Rather than an attribute inherent to any one individual, the social, political, environmental, and other intertwined contexts in which people are embedded creates specific vulnerabilities.