

Community Collaboration: Engaging a Diverse Community the *Kumiai* Way

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This article, based upon the author's dissertation, addresses the theme of the 2009 IAICS annual conference and advances the study by Stephenson (1979) of the *kumiai* of Hawai'i Island, a form of collaboration among diverse constituents for community sustainability. *Kumiai* are characterized by a strong collective and collaborative orientation and focus on responding to community needs during death and disasters. This unique case study focuses on the actual dialogue among members of a community who perceived that the 2003 invasion of Iraq would pose imminent negative effects to the local community. A discourse analysis of an actual community meeting introducing Project *Kumiai* revealed the enactment of the *kumiai* way and the development of a rhetorical vision addressing community sustainability. Throughout the meeting discourse, concern for collective and concern for other(s) were the predominant social relations oriented message styles. Implications for community sustainability and crisis management are addressed.

Communities around the world are recognizing the importance of effective community engagement, especially when a crisis is detected. Those affected by a crisis comprise a unique group. They share negative effects such as confusion and fear. Making sense of a perceived crisis event is crucial for community leadership. When a crisis is detected, constituents generally expect the leader to provide crisis identification, description, and explanation as well as provide direction and assurance (Coombs, 1999; Heath, 1998; Klann, 2003; Mitroff, 1988, 1994; Mitroff, Harrington, & Gai, 1996). Critical accomplishments of crisis communication include (1) rescuing and protecting constituents, (2) restoring the community network system, and (3) coordinating efforts to recover and distribute resources. However, these goals likely will not be accomplished unless constituents develop a common sense of the current situation and construct a shared vision for a preferred future.

Klann (2003) offered sound advice: communicating effectively with constituents before a potential crisis occurs will reduce anxiety, confusion, and anger. Klann (2003) acknowledged "face-to-face contact remains the most effective means of communication because it promotes emotional connection" (p. 28) and personal engagement. By allowing constituents to question, voice concerns, and share their perspectives face-to-face, leaders may guide the development of common understanding, direct collaborative efforts, and mobilize coordinated responses. A shared understanding creates "a consistency across the organization at all levels as to the clarity and usefulness of procedures and directives that the organization will bear when a crisis develops" (Klann, 2003, pp. 29-30). Essentially, effective crisis communication should establish some level of common reality among constituents for the purpose of coordinating collaborative efforts such as crisis preparation and recovery.

As a form of community collaboration for community sustainability, *kumiai* are characterized by a strong collective and collaborative orientation with harmonious and

protective relations predominate. The traditional function is to respond to community needs during disasters and death of community members. Literally translated from Japanese, it means “group-join.” Similar to “co-operatives,” the group’s shared mission is driven by constituents’ needs and by “your friends’ deeds” for the people and by the people (International Co-operative Alliance, 2006). In Japan today, *kumiai* refers to a variety of voluntary associations including labor unions, farmers’ cooperatives, women-only workers’ co-operatives, and geisha associations. Although each *kumiai* is unique, most value social responsibility, sharing and caring, group empowerment, group solidarity, pluralism, compassion, and democratic decision-making (Davis & Donaldson, 1998).

The concept of community can be characterized by common ideas/interests/values, common concerns/threats, close affinity, a social network system, and shared social rules, roles, and expectations. The people of Hawai`i form a unique intercultural community. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately 600,000 of the state residents speak Hawaiian Pidgin (Marlow & Giles, 2008). For the multi-ethnic people of Hawai`i, Hawaiian Pidgin remains the practical common language. Derived from U.S. English, the lexicon of Hawaiian Pidgin includes many words from Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Ilocano and Tagalog from the Philippines, and Portuguese languages (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii, 2009). Although Standard American English was designated the official language for professional and economic advancement (Marlow & Giles, 2008), Hawaiian Pidgin endures in most settings. It is used widely in personal-social relations and in educational, business, and political environments. Research suggests that the stronger the vitality of a shared communication code, the more likely a diverse group will survive and thrive (Bourhis, el Geledi, & Sachdev, 2007).

The people of Hawai`i have experienced numerous natural and man-made crises such as tragic tsunamis, life-threatening lava flows, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, earthquakes, hurricanes, and the devastating effects of illegal drugs. These events have produced negative effects such as loss of lives, extensive property damage, economic hardships, racial resentment, civic animosity, and community anxiety. On the Island of Hawai`i, the *kumiai* tradition has endured as a means to cope with community death and disasters. They have also provided the foundation for Project *Kumiai*. For the past seven years, Project *Kumiai* has developed into an excellent crisis management model for community networking, collaboration, and sustainability.

Kumiai of the Island of Hawai`i

The striking ethnic diversity among the residents of Hawai`i provides a unique opportunity to study intercultural relations (Hormann & Lind, 1996). In the early to mid-nineteenth century, people of different countries immigrated to Hawai`i to work and earn money on farms. They felt that they could make a fortune there, then return home and share the wealth. Most of the immigrants were males who worked on a ranch or plantation with sugar and pineapple plantations being foremost. Immigrants included Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, and Portuguese nationals. Although these immigrants came to Hawai`i to seek a better life, many experienced a sense of culture shock, isolation, and longing for familiar

ways. Many shared the feeling of being a stranger in a strange land (Stephenson, 1979). Consequently, the development of social organizations provided members a sense of belonging and familiarity. One such social organization was the *kumiai*.

The *kumiai* of Hawai'i were modeled after the traditional Japanese *buraku*, an important social collaboration between the governing organization and family units. The main function of the *kumiai* was to protect community members and support them during and after a crisis (Stephenson, 1979). This Japanese form of social relations is known as *amae* (Takeo, 1973). The *kumiai* supported members emotionally and monetarily when family members died and after disasters. After a destructive event, *kumiai* members gathered together to support those affected. Members provided food and other essentials for a needy family, completed personal chores, and repaired or rebuilt damaged structures. During the early 1920s, Japanese immigrants living in plantation camps "found it necessary to try to establish community organizations to provide what they felt were essential extra-familial functions" (Stephenson, 1979, p. 74). Subsequently, the *kumiai* provided social entertainment and recreational events as well.

The *kumiai* were considered semi-formal social associations because they featured clear rules, roles, and procedures for social engagement, a communication network structure, and a leadership system. *Kumiai* on the Island of Hawai'i were identified by cultural and/or spatial boundaries and each was considered separate and autonomous from other *kumiai* (Stephenson, 1979). The name of the *kumiai* often reflected the location or the social or economic function of the association. Differences did exist among individual *kumiai*, especially between rural plantation camps and urban neighborhood *kumiai*. Earliest *kumiai* were usually led by a Japanese male head of household. Unfortunately, with the outbreak of World War II, all Japanese ethnic organizations and language schools were required by the United States government to disband. Many *kumiai* disbanded as well, but not all. In the rural and isolated regions of the island, the *kumiai* quietly continued their practices.

Some *kumiai* requested or required an initial membership fee and annual dues and may require ownership of property in the designated location. Membership consisted of various ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds such as Puerto Rican, Filipino, Chinese, and Portuguese with Japanese ancestry predominant. As the demographics of the Island of Hawai'i changed, so too have *kumiai* membership and focus. As discussed in Marlow and Giles (2008), it is estimated that the population of the county is approximately 163,000 with an ethnic mix of 30% native Hawaiian, 23% Caucasian, 14% Japanese, and 10% Filipino. Today the Big Island's population consists of a thriving native Hawaiian population, third generation mixed-race "locals," Oahu escapees, international high-tech professionals, and "mainland" baby boomers. Since the 1970s, the *kumiai* transformed into voluntary neighborhood watch groups, housing subdivision associations, and various ethnic social clubs.

Most *kumiai* are considered as non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan (Stephenson, 1979). The tradition that constituents are responsible for the welfare of themselves, family, and community remains strong and political allegiances weak. Although contemporary *kumiai* still feature diversity in age, ethnicities, and education, the constituents hold in common many core values from native Hawaiian, Asian, and American cultures.

These shared values may include native Hawaiian values such as cooperation, unity, and balance (*lokahi*), peace and quiet (*malihia*), family commitment (*ohana*), responsibility (*kuleana*), and helping others (*kokua*). Also represented are Asian values such as belonging, harmonious relations and civility, consensus decision-making, social obligation, and civic duty. Tolerance of diversity, democratic dialogue, openness, equality, and action plans represent American values. Each *kumiai* provides a significant social identity for members and a unique framework of social interaction rules, leadership-followship roles, and ethical expectations.

Leadership is shared and rotated, and leaders receive no compensation for their service. They may gently guide or deliberately direct dialogue, sense-making and decision-making, motivate members to express good social relations, and initiate collaborative endeavors. Leaders and senior managers of *kumiai* are expected to contribute their unique skills, express empathy, enact ethical and humble behaviors, and convey a “cooperative heart” (Takamura, 1992). Now, non-married adult members, females, and constituents from a variety of ethnic, economic, educational, and religious backgrounds are assigned as leaders. *Kumiai* constituents, or appointed representatives, engage in dialogue and decision-making during group meetings. Consensus is the preferred method of decision-making.

Recently, many of the *kumiai* are focusing on community concerns and risks including coqui frog mitigation, area infrastructure development and maintenance, manufacturing and use of methamphetamine, crime and violence prevention, and community emergency response and evacuation policies (Hawaii County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2002). The importance of social entertainment is still prevalent with most *kumiai* organizing annual picnics, traditional cultural celebrations, and entertaining social games and contests.

For over 100 years, the concept of *kumiai* has endured in Hawai`i because many have adjusted to prevailing conditions and concerns. In particular, Project *Kumiai* has provided a strong social identity for the citizens of the Island of Hawai`i and has provided an appropriate and effective form of community mobilization during community crises.

Project *Kumiai*

The state of Hawai`i consists of a group of islands which are over 3,000 miles from the U.S. mainland. The largest island, Island of Hawai`i, also known as the Big Island, features one county—Hawai`i County. In 2002, Hawai`i County’s administration developed Project *Kumiai*: a social network and utilization program to keep community constituents connected, well informed, and supported during man-made disasters such as war, terrorism, and crime as well as natural disasters such as tsunami, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, and earthquakes. (Hawai`i County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2002). Project *Kumiai* emerged from the Hawai`i County Office of the Hawai`i County Prosecutor’s Office Community Empowerment Organization (CEO) and FEMA’s Citizen Corps concept. The CEO was developed to improve community planning by joining the efforts of a broad spectrum of government agencies, community groups, businesses, and individuals who share a common vision for safer and healthier communities. The CEO boundaries include the existing nine judicial districts of this large, isolated island. Each of the nine district community plans were incorporated into one

Big Island comprehensive community plan encompassing approximately 4,000 square miles. Hawai`i County is one of only 12 counties in the country and was the only one in the state of Hawai`i to operate this type of community development program. The function of Project *Kumiai* is to engage citizens in homeland security, community development and quality of life services, crisis preparedness and management, and family safety through public education, specialized training and outreach programs, and public dialogue.

At a special Hawai`i County meeting conducted in 2003, the enactment of the *kumiai* way was observed and recorded by this researcher. At this special meeting, Project *Kumiai* was introduced to constituents as a form of community preparedness for a potential crisis event. Remaining true to the basic function of supporting all members socially, emotionally, and monetarily during death and disasters, this instance of the *kumiai* way is an excellent example of community crisis management involving a diverse population.

Meeting Background

A few hours after terrorists attacked on 9/11, Hawai`i County activated civil defense procedures. It was one of the first and few in the nation to do so. Again, on February 3, 2003, Hawai`i County was one of the first to prepare for a potential man-made disaster. Earlier all levels of governments in the United States, including Mayor Kim of the County of Hawai`i, Governor Lingle, state legislature members, other mayors of Hawai`i, and the Hawai`i County Civil Defense Organization, received a communication from U.S. Homeland Security that President G. W. Bush, with approval by U.S. Congress, may authorize a military invasion into Iraq under declaration of war. Within hours of notification, Mayor Kim, who was the former Civil Defense Director during 9/11, assembled and briefed senior administrators about what many in Hawai`i would consider a serious situation. By 11:00 a.m. the same day, the chair of the Hawai`i County Council's Committee on Finance called a special meeting. According to the meeting announcement, the special meeting would allow Mayor Kim to present the "county's level of preparedness in the event of a war in the Middle East."

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possible negative impacts regarding "man-made disasters such as war and terrorism" (meeting transcription Mayor Kim), to assure the community that the county was prepared to respond for community sustainability, and to answer any questions and concerns voiced by constituents. This researcher was notified of the meeting and attended as a member of the public. Other members present at this meeting included the Hawai`i County's mayor, the committee chair, six county council members, the police chief, deputy fire chief, county civil defense director, and the research and development director. In addition, approximately 25 community members attended the meeting, including local newspaper reporters and various county employees. The participants constituted a diverse group including Asian-Americans (Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Japanese), native-Hawaiian, Portuguese-Americans, Latin-Americans, and "mainland" Americans. Age range was approximately 30 to 80 years of age. The meeting lasted approximately 60 minutes and featured 16 different speakers. The predominant speakers were the mayor and committee chair. Most council members spoke; however, two did not—by choice. Members from the audience were invited to speak, and five members from the public

audience participated in the dialogue. In summary, 12 adult males and four adult females from the community provided information and comments, asked questions, and voiced concerns associated with past disasters and the imminent declaration of war. The official video recording and a transcription of the meeting proceedings were analyzed.

Discourse and Rhetorical Analyses

Fairclough (2003) suggested qualifying discourse by focusing on themes and perspectives that frame the expressions of social reality. The principal goal of this discourse analysis was to identify, describe, and explain how community leaders effectively managed a potential crisis event. Among the many findings of the complete dissertation study (Lee, 2007), the concept *kumiai* was introduced to the researcher, and the social construction of a rhetorical vision depicting the *kumiai* way was discovered.

A frame analysis of actual dialogue provided considerable insight into the dynamics of organizing and directing collective sense-making, constructing social reality and “sustaining cohesion necessary for successful collective action” (Steinberg, 1998, p. 846). In particular, fantasy theme and rhetorical vision analyses are useful methods for analyzing discourse associated with social reality construction and the extent of social convergence. Suggested by Bales (1950), groups may construct fantasy theme chains to develop common consciousness and social realities. Bormann (1983) argued that all communities or collectives share group fantasies. Fantasy themes become “the main explanatory systems for the events” and serve “to sustain the members’ sense of community” (Bormann, 1972, pp. 398-400). A rhetorical vision may emerge from fantasy themes either from a collection of monologue discourses or from fantasy themes emerging and chaining from dialogue. Chaining may be enacted by repeating, reinforcing, elaborating, and questioning previously-expressed themes. When individuals add their themes together or accept others’ fantasy themes, a collective rhetorical vision is co-constructed.

The socially constructed rhetorical vision becomes the group’s deductive “bottom line” or inductive common consciousness for the group (Bormann, 1972). Bormann’s (1986) Fantasy Theme Analysis provided this researcher a method by which to reveal a particular community’s social reality by analyzing “the meanings, emotions, and motives contained in these rhetorical visions” (Cragan, 1981, p. 69). Related studies using this method include investigating rhetorical vision construction of the “cold war” paradigm (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 1996) and rhetorical depiction of the independent and sovereign nation of Hawai`i (Arsenault, 2005). Revealing the framing of discourse associated with collective identity and collective action during times of crises (Gendrin & Lee, 2008) adds to our understanding about the critical role of rhetorical depiction (Osborn, 1986) and symbolic convergence (Bormann, 1983). Based on the literature review, three research questions are posited:

- RQ1: What topics, themes, and master themes emerged from ongoing meeting discourse?
- RQ2: To what extent were social relations oriented message styles enacted?
- RQ3: What are indicators of the *kumiai* way?

Methods

For this study, a frame analysis was used to identify topics and “master frames” (Benford & Snow, 2000) contributing to the construction of a community’s common sense, shared promises, cooperation, consensus decision-making, and the enactment of congenial collective action (Steinberg, 1998). Text derived from a transcription of an electronic document (videotape) of the actual community meeting was the unit of analysis. A transcription of the meeting discourse, mostly in Hawaiian Pidgin, consisted of 150 discreet speaking turns. The recording units (Krippendorf, 1980) were (1) words or phrases that delineated topic frames, (2) associated themes frames, and (3) social relations oriented message style frames represented in the meeting discourse. From the meeting transcription, as well as referencing the videotape of the meeting, topics and themes for each respective speaking turn were identified.

To answer Research Question 1, “What topics, themes, and master themes emerged from ongoing meeting discourse?” topics were operationally defined as subject matter of messages. Word frequencies were calculated and significant data summarized, such as the most frequent and commonly used words. This was performed after the topic analysis; thus, the search for a priori topics did not influence the interpretation of subject matter. A word processing program was used to provide word frequencies. Next, the topics were classified into themes. Themes were operationally defined as associated and unifying topics or exclusive topics. Associated topics that were chained (continued, reinforced, questioned, or elaborated upon) among several speakers were classified as master themes.

To answer research Question 2, “To what extent were social relations oriented message styles enacted?” the social relations oriented message styles (SROMS) were identified and tabulated for each leader and the conglomerate “others” (council members, department heads, and members of the public). The SROMS were defined as message impressions associated with (1) concern for self, (2) concern for other/s, (3) concern for the relationship (Nakanishi, 2003), and (4) concern for the collective. Concern for self was operationalized as overall message impression of speaker’s attention to himself or herself. Concern for other/s was operationalized as overall message impression of speaker’s attention to another person. Concern for the relationship was operationalized as overall message impression of speaker’s attention for the association with another constituent (i.e., we = you and I, I and my employees). Concern for the collective was operationalized as overall message impression of speaker’s attention to the community of Hawai`i County.

To answer Research Question 3, “What are indicators of the *kumiai* way?” the findings from the word frequency count, the SROMS analysis, and the development of particular rhetorical vision provided answers. Frames chained in the meeting discourse were considered the building blocks that constructed the rhetorical vision which exemplifies social convergence.

Results

Significantly, the word *we* was the most commonly spoken word (245 times) by almost all speakers. According to *The American Heritage Word Frequency Book* (Carroll, Davies, & Richman, 1971) and *Word Frequency List* (2001), *we* is the sixth most frequently spoken word among Americans with the exclusion of commonly spoken words such as *and*, *a*, and *the*. The frequency of the word *we* indicates a collective group orientation. Members of a collective-oriented group, such as Asian cultures, generally emphasize *we* as an in-group affiliation indicator. People from Asian cultures “often have a tendency to use the pronoun *we* to express not only group views but also personal ones” (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998, p. 73). *We* may also indicate the acknowledgment of a shared experience or a sense of personal connection. The second most frequently spoken word in the dialogue was *I* (60 of the 219 times) and was spoken predominately by the mayor, a Korean-American, which appears to skew the rankings. *You* and *your* ranked third. In comparison, with the exclusion of the commonly spoken words, *you/r* is ranked as the most spoken American English word.

Themes later became apparent with the review of frequently spoken words such as *ready/prepare*, *terrorism*, *emergency*, *event*, and *war*, as well as *Hawai`i/ian*, *community*, *county*, *government*, *network system*, *organization*, *public*, and *people*. The word *county* was ranked eleventh and was associated with the word *government*, which ranked twenty-seventh. Additional themes emerged with the words *impact* and *needs*, *Civil Defense*, *community infrastructure*, *security*, and *sustain/ability*. From word frequencies, a theme associated with the word *hope* (ranked eighteenth) was identified. Additionally, the words *how*, *questions*, *communicate/communication*, *way*, and *water* were common. Of note, the words *safety*, *crisis*, *plans*, *support*, and *why* were rarely spoken.

Nine master themes emerged from the meeting discourse and provided the answer for Research Question 1. In rank order, these themes include (1) congenial/civil/harmonious relations, (2) disaster preparations, (3) disaster impacts, (4) community engagement and Project *Kumiai*, (5) war or terrorism, (6) ethos of the Civil Defense Organization, the mayor, and his administration, (7) hope, peace, and spirituality, (8) community sustainability, and (9) history of surviving and adjusting to disasters and crisis events. The master themes are represented in Table 1.

For each speaking turn, the presence of themes was indicated rather than the predominance or frequency of themes. A few speaking turns did not enact any of the nine themes, such as “Oh! We are actually taping this. Oh, I didn’t know that” (speaking turn #2) and speaking turns #147-150 addressing procedures to adjourn the meeting. The entries were triple-checked by the researcher for possible entry errors as well as for theme reconsideration. For each speaking turn, the number of themes represented range from 0 to 8. Most speaking turns addressed more than one theme.

Figure 1 illustrates the predominance of the congenial/civil/harmonious relations and disaster preparedness themes and the prevalence of the other master themes.

Table 1

Themes of Meeting Discourse

Rank of Master Themes	Associated Topics
1. Congenial/civil/ harmonious relations	Acknowledgment/affirmation/appreciation of other/s, agreement with other/s, concern for other/s, greeting, thank you, address other/s by personal name or professional title, <i>yes/yah, okay, sure, right</i>
2. Disaster preparations for infrastructure security	Identifying and responding to bio-terrorism, protecting and defending water supply, inter-government communication relay system, research , mitigate economic impacts, (Project <i>Kumiai</i>), planning county personnel adjustments (especially “essential” positions), first responder-hospital coordination, community relations to minimize anxiety, promote county’s trustworthiness to respond to disasters, awareness of limitations
3. Disaster impacts/negative effects/concerns	Transportation delays /loss of service: import/export goods, services, economy, tourism industry, telecommunications limitations, infrastructure/community systems vulnerabilities, siren warning, community isolation, insufficient federal law enforcement to protect/secure international borders, bio-terrorism, fear and anxiety, community vulnerabilities
4. Community engagement, involvement, co-operation, and responsibilities for social security	Social support networks, services, and organizations, i. e., government agencies, non-profit organizations, Red Cross, labor unions, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Project <i>Kumiai</i> : social network and utilization program to keep community constituents connected, well informed, and supported during man-made and natural disasters
5. War, terrorism	World War II, “Bush agenda,” “ despots,” “event and effects of war,” “military call-up,” “an attack,” terrorists, terrorism “Afghanistan,” “this type of turmoil”
6. Ethos: Civil Defense Organization, County Mayor and his administration	Credibility, competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill, pro-active, experienced, prepared, monies obtained for WMD and community preparedness, considering scenarios “A to Z,” awareness of limitations and situations “not in our control” but will mitigate any impacts, open communication among members and with the

	public
7. Hope/peace/spirituality	Want, prefer, and hope for non-military conflict, have faith we will survive because we are prepared and experienced, sense of spirituality, hope for peaceful resolution, “pray” and “envision peace”
8. Hawai`i county sustainability: community security and survival	Existing agricultural products, potential rice production, catchment water systems, road/trail systems, bio-fuel, Hawai`i “best place to be for survival”
9. History of surviving and adjusting to disasters/crisis events	Floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, World War II, dock strike, barge grounding, collapse of sugar industry, 9/11

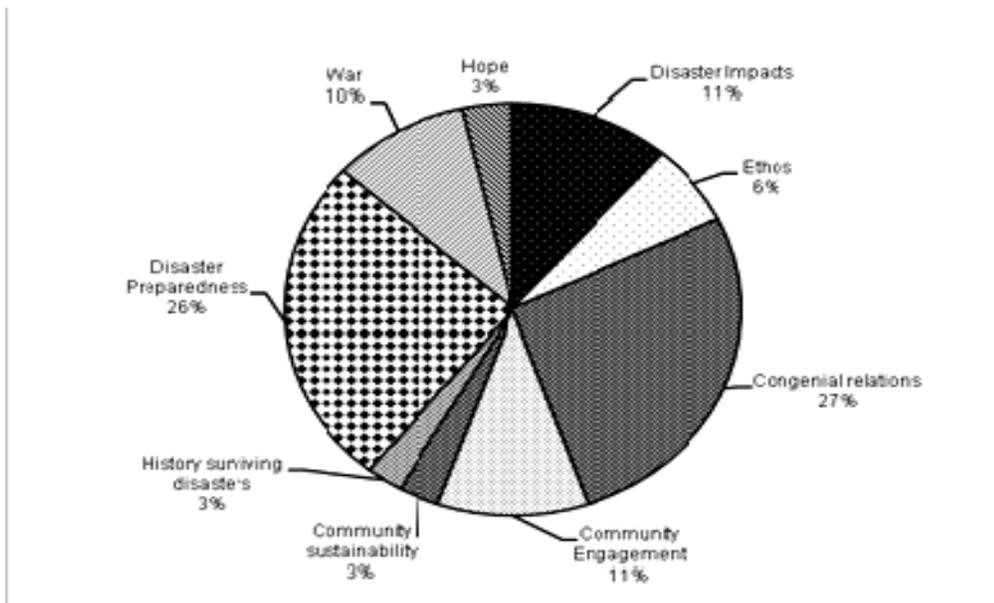


Figure 1. Master Themes of Meeting Discourse.

The following text quotations, taken from the meeting transcript, were edited for readability by using Standard American English. Examples of concern for self include: “I say that openly and I say that with a lot of pride.” (speaking turn #4); “I feel a little bit better because . . .” (speaking turn #20); “ I have two questions. Let me ask them separately, if I may.” (speaking turn #23); “I couldn’t get home that night.” (speaking turn #75); and “I’ve been out of the loop for some time now.” (speaking turn #99). Examples of concern for other(s) include: “So if you have any questions now or late . . .” (speaking turn #110); “Did you want to talk?” (speaking turn #111); “Thank you very much, Mayor.” (speaking turn #113); “. . . and you don’t feel that...” (speaking turn #126); and “. . . if those are the kinds of

things you want to bring up, you may be my guest.” (speaking turn #133). Examples of concern for the relationship include: “I can speak for myself and for the people in my district. . .” (speaking turn #20); “Thank you so much for coming before us today . . .” (speaking turn #33); “. . . those of us who are making decisions and those of the people who are emergency workers have some way of dealing with this.” (speaking turn #33); and “I’m talking about my friends in Pahoia . . .” (speaking turn #140). Examples of concern for the collective include: “[Are we] ready?” (speaking turn #1); “We have to be prepared.” (speaking turn #135); “. . . We don’t really have a choice about what happens.” (speaking turn #138); “. . . all of us have to understand” (speaking turn #140); “We definitely have enough to sustain ourselves.” (speaking turn #144).

Addressing RQ2, the SROMS of the concern for collective and concern for other/s were predominant. The criteria for identifying the type of SROMS that framed messages include indicators such as the words, *I* and *me*, *you* and *your*, and *we* and *us*, as well as the inferred meaning of the message. Table 2 indicates SROMS frequencies.

The predominant SROMS enacted in discourse was concern for collective at 41.5%. Concern for other/s was 32.5%, concern for self 21%, and concern for the relationship 5%. During the committee chair’s speaking turns (Leader A), the predominant SROMS was concern for other/s (42.5%), followed by with concern for the collective (32%), concern for self (21.3%) and concern for the relationship (4.2%). Similarly, during the county mayor’s speaking turns (Leader B), the predominate SROMS was concern for the collective (46.7%), followed by concern for self (26.6%), concern for other/s (21.3%), and concern for the relationship (5.3%). Other speakers, including department chiefs and several members of the public, oriented their messages in the following manner: 42.2% with concern for the collective, 36.7% concern for other/s, 15.5% concern for self, and 5.5% concern for the relationship. Notably, the SROMS concern for relationship was minimally represented in discourse. Throughout the meeting discourse, concern for collective and concern for other/s were the predominant social relations oriented message styles.

Four factors provide evidence of the enactment of the *kumiai* way. These factors include (1) the frequently used word *we*, (2) the master theme of congenial, civil, harmonious relations, (3) the predominance of the SROMS concern for collective and concern for other/s, and (4) the development of the following rhetorical vision: *The community collaboratively readies for war in the Middle East by preparing for likely negative impacts, developing community networks and engagement, preferring harmonious relations within the community, and hoping for world peace, not war.* This rhetorical vision was co-constructed by participants and effectively directed by the leaders. In this instance of leadership, the rhetorical vision may be broadly represented as the essence of *kumiai*. The collaborative community, directed by qualified leaders, functions to sustain the collective and support the members during death and disaster.

Table 2
Frequency of Social Relations Oriented Message Style

Speaker	Speaking Turns	Concern for Self	Concern for Other/s	Concern for the Relationship	Concern for the Collective
Leader A	41	10	20	2	15
Leader B	31	20	26	4	35
Other Constituents	78	14	33	5	38
Total	150	44	79	11	88

Discussion

The enactment of the *kumiai* way allowed the development of common knowledge, common understanding of promises, responsibilities, and expectations, as well as a shared vision of the future associated with crisis management. The dialogic and relatively unscripted nature of the meeting's discourse and the use of a common language among the ethnically diverse members provided a cooperative co-orientation and could be considered "harmonious," whereby all voices could be heard and understood and the discussions were mutually satisfying. This form of social interaction during a "crucial conversation" (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2002) was a beneficial way to encourage social convergence among diverse individuals. A crucial conversation, according to Patterson, et al. (2002), is "a discussion between two or more people where (1) stakes are high, (2) opinions vary, and (3) emotions run strong" (p. 3). According to Eisenberg (1990), "The ultimate measure of communicative success is the degree to which members establish and maintain a balance between autonomy and interdependency" (p. 160). By experiencing a shared threat, constituents who do not agree with particular beliefs, perspectives, attitudes, and issues can share some sense of collaboration by agreeing to a common end state and achieve convergence by participating in the co-construction of a shared rhetorical vision.

This discourse analysis also revealed several community values and norms representing a collection of indigenous, Eastern, and Western values and norms. This unique collection includes the Hawaiian values of *kokua* (helping other) and *kuleana* (responsibilities), the Asian values of *amae* (protective relations) and harmonious relations, and the American values of open, democratic dialogue and action plans. The norm of inclusion was clearly indicated. The meeting chair recognized all members in attendance and everyone was offered the opportunity to be an active participant. Community members not in attendance who submitted written dialogue were entered into the public record. Furthermore, those not in attendance were able to observe the proceedings by public broadcast.

Regarding this instance of *kumiai* leadership, the leaders (1) acknowledged shared values, struggles, and threats, (2) developed trust and community commitment, (3) identified resources, and (4) bestowed beneficence, generosity, and compassion. Moreover, they (5) acknowledged potential shared threats to the community, (6) supported community crisis management plans, (7) complimented the resilience of the community, and (8) directed the

collective construction of a satisfying vision for the future. Finally, (9) the leaders reframed Hawai'i County as a government organization to Hawai'i County as a *kumiai* organization, thus preparing participants for future command or consensus crisis decision-making (Patterson et al., 2008) among constituents rather than depending upon state or federal government involvement. Command method requires low constituent involvement and high commitment to the commander. Consensus method requires high constituent involvement and high commitment to the group.

The leader of the meeting, as the committee chair, expected open, honest, dialogic discussion and congenial, civil, harmonious relations. The mayor was open to questions and addressed others' concerns. All participants were encouraged to contribute their perspective "into the pool" of wisdom and that "dissension or difference of opinion must not appear in the open because the group's harmony may be damaged" (Ramsey, 1998, p. 117). The mayor and his administration were recognized as being competent, of good character, and worthy of constituents' commitment. All members, including the leaders, appeared to feel a sense of "security and relaxation that shared responsibility can bring" (Ramsey, 1998, p. 122).

Finally, by constructing a sense of "authentic hope," the leaders (10) developed an expectation that the community would continue to sustain itself and any deaths associated with this man-made disaster would be expertly and compassionately managed. The perception of hope for a positive outcome is a crucial resource for maintaining healthy individuals, healthy social relationships, and healthy communities. Barge (2003) asserted "hope is a form of discursive practice that involves co-creating discourse with others that generates new images of possibility for social arrangements and mobilizes the moral and affective resources necessary to translate image into action and belief while balancing creativity and constraint" (abstract).

Summary

This unique community recognized the need to prepare for and protect its members from a potential man-made disaster rather than depend upon state or federal assistance. Nor did they publicly blame the national government for creating this disaster that would likely cause significant threats to the community. Potential acts of terrorism and negative effects of war, especially the loss of essential community personnel, disruptions to transportation and trade, and economic hardships were acknowledged and methods of mitigation discussed. Participants pooled their perspectives, preferences, skills, and resources for the benefit of the community. They acknowledged the community's unique circumstances, challenges, needs, threats, and a deep desire for community sustainability. A shared understanding created a consistency across the community as to the usefulness of procedures and directives and the clarity of the sacrifices the community may bear.

In conclusion, an old Japanese concept, *kumiai*, may provide contemporary, democratic communities a viable method for intercultural collaboration. As a form of community collaboration and engagement, the primary function of the *kumiai* is to support constituents socially, emotionally, and monetarily during death and disasters. Constituents are considered responsible for the welfare of other members and their duty is to help themselves and others.

Kumiai leaders who appropriately and effectively instill a hopeful vision, manage routine and critical conversations, create good relations, and support the sharing of knowledge greatly enhance the group's ability to survive and thrive (von Krogh, Ichijo, & Nonaka, 2000). During times of local and global crises, the *kumiai* way may be a useful collaborative model for harmonious relations among communities and nations. A harmonious worldview encourages reciprocated respect between communities/countries, preservation of good-neighbor relations, and mutually advantageous collaborations (Daguan, 2009).

Although the findings of this study are limited to a case study and may have been strengthened by using multiple coders, the discourse analysis reveals that the concept *kumiai* requires further research; discussion regarding the transformation of *kumiai*, provides deep descriptions of the enactment of the *kumiai* way, and suggests the power of public dialogue regarding community crisis management. Additional discourse analyses of actual leadership efforts addressing crisis events will advance our knowledge and enhance our efforts for effective crisis management and community sustainability.

Author's Note

This article and the 2009 IAICS conference presentation are based on the author's dissertation titled "A *Kumiai* Project: Leadership and Social Influence in Response to a Community Crisis."

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