Jaime Hazard  
Fundamentals of Conflict Studies  
Research Proposal  

**Background of Conflict**

On Monday, August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina’s 127 mile per hour winds devastated New Orleans and led to the demise of the city’s neglected flood control system. This two-part catastrophe, caused by both man and nature, has been deemed one of the most costly and deadly disasters ever to hit the United States. The aftermath not only left the residents homeless, but they were also left disillusioned with a government that failed them on so many levels. Today, there are thousands of people still in limbo. Many homeless citizens want to return to their undamaged houses, but are being told that they are not wanted because of their socio-economic status. With every day, the homeless of New Orleans become increasingly angry and resentful of government agencies, particularly the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO). For example, in the low-income area of St. Bernard Parish, the evicted residents have broken through the barricade and are now refusing to leave. Many fear that if someone doesn’t step in, this conflict could possibly erupt in violence.

**The Proposal**

World Without Environmental Borders or Boundaries (WWEBB) is a non-profit organization dedicated to mitigating environmental and social justice issues through positive discourse and collaboration (my imaginary organization). WWEBB has always been sensitive to the social and environmental injustices present in New Orleans. Since Katrina, WWEBB has decided to increase their efforts by making sure that low-income communities are equitably treated in the re-populating process. WWEBB operates under
the belief that all citizens deserve the right to reclaim their communities regardless of socio-economic status. We believe that citizen equality and community healing will only come about through discursive collaborative processes.

WWEBB’s goal is to implement a conflict management project for the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO). Today, many evicted residents are becoming increasingly hostile towards HANO. There is a lack of communication and community input in HANO’s decision making processes, which is leading to the perception that HANO is unsympathetic towards low-income citizens. From HANO’s perspective, public communication can be daunting when citizens are angry and distrusting of every government agency. WWEBB fears that this anger and hostility may turn into violence if all parties continue to embrace this ailing course. Our WWEBB facilitators can act as the neutral party in helping to solve this conflict before it erupts in violence. In addition, compared to litigation, the facilitation process will be quicker in finding the homeless permanent living quarters.

The Facilitative Process

Our conflict management plan is a five step facilitative process. WWEBB will:

1.) Identify all stakeholders and their positions.

2.) Encourage all parties to accept collaboration instead of adversarial action by demonstrating the positive aspects of collaboration.

3.) Devise a plan and a schedule to facilitate effective collaboration sessions between all parties.

4.) Assimilate all of the collaborative knowledge into a holistic plan that incorporates all interests.
5.) Assist with implementing the agreed upon solutions.

**The Result**

The result of this project would be the generation of solutions that are accepted by all parties. This process gives all effected parties the feeling of ownership in the outcomes, leaving everyone satisfied and empowered. Hopefully, this will inspire all parties to seek out collaborative processes in the future.