

Exploring the Connections between Community Cultural Development and
Sustainable Tourism in Central Appalachia

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ABSTRACT

During the past several decades, globalization forces in general and mechanization of coal mining jobs more specifically have sharply changed the economic and social conditions of many of the coal towns in the Central Appalachian region of the United States. Efforts to identify and seek alternatives to replace the ongoing decline of their traditional way of life are deeply entangled with community identity and culture due to the historical hegemonic role and power of coal mining and other extractive industries and their critical role in forming residents' identities.

Many of the small communities in this region are pursuing initiatives to highlight their natural and cultural assets in efforts to develop tourism as a new foundation for their economies. However, to avoid tourism simply becoming another extractive industry, researchers and practitioners have suggested that these communities must develop capacity to participate in and take ownership of tourism-related decision-making processes. In an effort to examine the dynamics of one such effort in detail this study drew on Community Capacity theory as interpreted by Chaskin (2001a) to explore the relationships between Community Cultural Development (CCD) and the sustainability of tourism in a small town located in Central Appalachia seeking to transition to a visitor-based economy.

This dissertation explored whether and in what ways engaging in CCD projects and community capacity are related and identified ways such interactions influence the sustainability of tourism. Along with personal observation and a review of relevant archival data, I conducted 10 semi-structured interviews with a sample of individuals from a community cultural development organization regarding their efforts to build possibilities for sustainable tourism in their rural jurisdiction.

This study's findings contribute to the existing literature by suggesting Chaskin's framework of community capacity as an apt model for charting progress towards sustainable community-based tourism. Moreover, this research found that employing CCD methods can enhance community capacity by encouraging a sense of shared identity among the group's members and through them among a broader cross-section of residents. Lastly, this inquiry suggested that CCD contributed to the sustainability of tourism in the case study community by increasing residents' effective participation in decision-making processes concerning such efforts, encouraging locals' partnership and ownership of tourism development projects and providing space for negotiating the tourist gaze in guest-host relationships.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Since at least the late 1960s and the advent of the ongoing decline of mining, the populations of many small coal-dependent towns in Central Appalachia have fallen into economic hardship (e.g., high rates of poverty, too few and/or inadequate jobs and public services), now confront a range of social issues arising from that harsh reality (e.g., youth out-migration, rapidly aging populations, the current opioid epidemic). In response to those conditions, many affected communities are investing in their wealth of natural resources and unique cultural assets to promote tourism as a palliative, if not replacement, for their previous economies.

Tourism has the potential to reduce poverty and to boost shared prosperity among host communities, but it also, if poorly managed, could become another extractive industry. This study focused on the ways that residents in one Central Appalachian community have individually and as groups sought to assume ownership of their area's tourism-related efforts. I specifically analyzed participation in that jurisdiction's cultural activities (e.g., community theatre and story circles) to understand whether and how involvement in them affected participants' awareness of their capability to address the conditions in their community.

My interviews with 10 active participants in my sample community's collective cultural projects revealed that residents did come to perceive themselves as possessing capacity as individuals and as groups to address the challenges that have arisen in their community as its traditional economy has declined. This study also found that participants in culture-based group activities were better prepared to participate effectively in tourism-related decision-making processes in their community. Indeed, many of those I interviewed have become owners and/or partners in tourism development projects because of the information and networks they developed during their participation in cultural activities. Finally, this analysis found that community cultural activities created a space for residents to interact regardless of their socio-economic status, ideological predisposition or other characteristics; an outcome that interviewees indicated they had come to cherish.

Dedication

To my loving parents Monir and Mohammad.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Following a brief description of the changing economic and social conditions of coal towns in the Central Appalachian region of the United States, this chapter focuses mainly on how, throughout their history, coal mining and other extractive industries have played vital roles in forming peoples' identities and why finding new alternatives for the ongoing decline of that way of life is therefore deeply entangled with values and culture. Thereafter, by comparing two commonly proposed strategies (in-migration and tourism) to address socioeconomic decline in Central Appalachia, I highlight the rationale behind why many of these communities have chosen increased tourism to secure (re)development. The remainder of the chapter outlines the organization of the dissertation.

An Overview of the Problem

Globalization and Rural America

In today's globalized world, while market activities and trade continue to have profound impacts on human communities, those effects are often quite mixed in character; for instance, technological innovation, including mechanization, can lead to improved productivity and efficiency, but may also result in a loss of jobs for existing employees and/or displacement of workers (Gould, Pellow and Schnaiberg, 2004). In a similar manner, the effects of the so-called second, or neoliberal, wave of globalization, which began in 1985, on rural development have not been homogeneous (M. Woods, 2007).

The world-wide integration of capital markets has reshaped the economies of rural areas in both developed and developing countries. Globalization has accelerated growth in rural locations that can take advantage of new niche markets or offer cheap labor (Bebbington and Batterbury, 2001). Conversely, this turn in other rural communities has increased inequality or spurred decline due to a lack of individuals with appropriate skills, capital and access to resources to engage in changed and changing markets (Killick, 2001).

Since the United States is among the top 15 countries with the highest minimum hourly wage in the world today, it “does not have a comparative advantage in unskilled labor-intensive manufacturing industries” (Thompson, 2007). Additionally, rural communities, especially those farther from interstate highway system, have suffered setbacks in transportation service with deregulation of the airline and railroad industries, “[in] the past, airlines and railroads were forced to maintain unprofitable service to many rural communities; these were paid for via cross-subsidization from earnings on more profitable routes” (Thompson, 2007, p. 3). High transportation costs in remote or less strategically located areas make manufacturing that involves heavy and/or voluminous inputs less cost-effective in those locales. Flora, Flora and Gasteyer (2016) have contended that rural population and employment growth are concentrated in those counties located near major metropolitan areas. Moreover, job growth in rural jurisdictions, whether in manufacturing or services, has occurred disproportionately in low-skill, low-wage positions in personal services, leisure and recreation and retail trade. High-wage producer services are underrepresented in rural economies throughout the more developed world (Barkley, 1995; Flora et al., 2016; Kandel and Brown, 2006).

As a result, economic development has been particularly *spatially* unequal in the United States (and in many other of today’s more developed nations) in recent decades with economic

disadvantage, poverty and social exclusion being, increasingly and disproportionately, concentrated in rural regions of the nation (Economic Innovation Group, 2018; Shambaugh and Nunn, 2018). For instance, by linking upward social mobility to spatial mobility, Lichter and Ziliak found that “Appalachia or rural areas with black population concentration are less geographically mobile, which contributes both to intragenerational and intergenerational persistence of poverty” (2017, pp. 18–19).

In contrast to the “myth of rural stability,”¹ in which the norms and values of such communities are perceived to resist change (Brown and Cromartie, 2004), economic and institutional structures in these locations have shifted alongside those of their city counterparts as globalization has proceeded (Kandel and Brown, 2006). Nonmetropolitan areas have been presented with challenges as they have sought to adapt to the new economic realities that have arisen from a profound shift from production of goods to development and provision of services, an intensification of competition and the introduction of innovative production technologies and organizations (Barkley, 1995).

Some ongoing social trends have had specific effects on rural and urban environments, while others have resulted in society-wide impacts. For example, natural population decrease—the excess of deaths over births resulting from prolonged out-migration of persons of child-bearing age—has hit rural communities hard in the United States in recent decades (Kandel and Brown, 2006, p. 5). Small town populations are also aging more rapidly than those in urban areas in all of the world’s developed nations, due to decades of out-migration (rural to urban) by

¹ According to Kandel and Brown: “The term ‘rural America’ typically evokes an image of a stable cultural bedrock, a repository of unchanging structures and values, a buffer against rapid social and economic change occurring elsewhere in society” (2006, p. 4).

young people and a smaller and uneven, but consequential, in-migration (urban to rural) of retirement-age persons (Kandel and Brown, 2006, p. 5). Nonetheless, services for older adults in nonmetropolitan areas often lag those that may be obtained in more urban locations. Given the increasing life expectancies of older aged women, who live longer on average than men, this trend implies that nonmetro older females are at increasing risk of becoming socially isolated (Kirschner et al., 2006, p. 62).

To summarize, with ongoing economic globalization, in which large corporations, not nations, compete with each other on a world-wide basis for laborers, natural resources and markets, there is no particular distinction between urban and rural areas. However, the influence of corporate choices and activities on rural locations is often greater than that on urban places because of natural disadvantages arising from distance to markets and lower density populations.

Despite the absolute and perceived decline in coal mining jobs, many rural residents in central Appalachia still cling to hope that the industry will return to previous employment levels. The following section examines the reasons for such deep attachment to an extractive industry and the hurdles that poses for their capacity to imagine a post-coal identity and economy.

Appalachia and the Cultural Politics of Coal Mining

Fueling the industrial revolution, coal production in the United States increased from 100,000 tons in 1800 to 243 million tons in 1900, making America the world's leading coal

producer (Shifflett, 1991). In the late 1880s, by means of massive purchases of land² and mining rights and the laying of railroad lines, coal operators in Central Appalachia created conditions that would permit them to hire labor and create mining towns. Most such mines were located near unsettled areas with no housing available for the laborers. In addition, a lack of “all-weather roads made it necessary for the miner to live close to his work, [therefore,] small villages (often called ‘camps’) were built [by coal companies] close to each mine” (Tams, 2012). According to Shifflett (1991), mining corporations began building coal towns in the 1880s and those efforts peaked in the 1920s. They ceased completely with the advent of the Great Depression in 1929.

According to Bradbury, by 1923 there were “approximately 705,000 miners on the industry's payroll,” the highest level of such employment that would occur (1954, p. 182). Bradbury has also contended that since 1923, because of high labor costs, declining prices and increasingly severe competition (from the expanding oil and natural gas industry), coal firms have had to act persistently to find ways to cut costs and operate more efficiently. Increasing mechanization has historically been the industry’s answer to this challenge. Dix has claimed that work relations that characterized the hand-loading period (i.e., before 1923) became increasingly inefficient from the standpoint of management’s interest,

[w]orkdays of variable length, a tradition of single shifts, individual proprietorship of working places, the lack of meaningful supervision, quality control that depended on the miner’s skill, worker ownership of tools, and a generally undisciplined work force all stood in the way of rational (i.e., efficient) production (1988, p. 77).

² Shifflett has shown that with the help of lawyers, businesses and other groups, coal operators as outside capitalists bought “at prices as low as twenty-five cents an acre, or leased under fraudulent promises, millions of acres of mineral-and timber-rich land” (1991, p. 3).

Able to function 24-hours-per-day and seven-days-per week in a much more “efficient” manner, machines gradually, but at a quickening pace, replaced humans in coal mining jobs in Appalachia and elsewhere after 1923. In 2018, there were just 53,000 persons employed in the coal industry in the entire United States.

In addition to the mechanization of production, a national decrease in coal demand has also led to unemployment for many Appalachian coal miners. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), the electric power sector is the nation’s largest consumer of coal, accounting for 93% of total U.S. consumption between 2007 and 2018 (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2018). According to EIA data, since 2007, the retirement of coal-fired power plants and decreases in their utilization have risen, as increased competition from natural gas and renewable sources have reduced the market for coal. Bowen and his colleagues have contended that the impacts of decreased coal demand have “manifest most noticeably in areas with higher-cost production—like Central Appalachia” (Bowen, Deskins and Lego, 2018, p. 12). They have argued that the higher production costs of central Appalachia coal mines have arisen mainly as a result of long-term aggressive mining that has resulted in “remaining reserves [being] deeper underground and/or within thinner seams that require more units of labor to extract” (2018, p. 12). The authors’ study showed that between 2005-2015, coal mining employment in central Appalachia, dropped from 32,700 to 19,600—the highest rate of decline in the country.

All of this said, the long-term existence of extractive industries in Appalachia has shaped and still is influencing the *socioeconomic identity* of the residents of Appalachian towns. Forsyth and his colleague have contended that “individuals whose identities are based, at least in part, on the place where they reside would be more likely to engage in environmentally

responsible behaviors” (2015, p. 233), yet many central Appalachian residents still support the industry despite the destruction it is imposing on their region (e.g., environmental degradation and health issues) and the relatively few (and declining) benefits it is providing residents, especially reliable high-paying jobs.

Scholars have offered two interrelated sets of arguments to explain many Appalachian residents’ continuing support of the declining coal industry: individuals’ choice of identity and corporations’ long-time efforts to maintain their hegemonic power in the region. Lewin (2019), for example, has argued that Appalachia’s inferior relationship to the rest of the homeland—its status as a natural resource colony comprised of residents who are regarded as not quite white, and not quite American, has played a critical role in conditioning the region’s pro-coal and anti-environmental views.

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow, through extensive examination of rural communities (with populations fewer than 25,000) from across the United States, recently found that their residents perceived themselves and their way of life as held in contempt by outsiders (e.g., “elites,” especially well-educated urbanites residing in Washington, D.C. and New York whom they regard as controlling the government and the nation’s dominant culture), “[w]e think people are talking down to us. What ends up happening is that we don’t focus on the policy—we focus on the tons, the references, the culture” (2018, p. 2). Similarly, as Lewin has observed, “[m]any Appalachians feel like the federal government neglects them, and like urban America, devalues them. As a result, they tend to interpret efforts to curtail coal production as an attack on their right to economic opportunity, their role in the national division of labor, their cultural identity as rural Americans, and their moral worth” (2019, p. 51).

At the individual level, Akerlof and Kranton found that identity can explain behavior that seems maladaptive (e.g., supporting a declining industry or assuming an anti-environmentalism posture that results in the pollution of your homes and immediate environment) or even self-destructive (e.g., as with the current opioid epidemic in Appalachia). The authors suggested that the psychological effects of social exclusion (e.g., Appalachians not perceiving that they are considered to be fully white/American), in which individuals from particular groups can never fit the ideal type of the dominant culture, may lead “to perceived or real rejection and alienation” (2000, p. 738). Moreover, Akerlof and Kranton found that the continuing lack of economic opportunity (e.g., losing stable remunerative coal mining jobs in central Appalachia) may also be contributing to the choice of an oppositional identity “to bolster a sense of self or to salve a diminished self-image” (2000, p. 717).

On the other hand, Bell and York have highlighted the role of ideology and legitimation in maintaining elite rule and suggested that coal mining corporations and other extractive industries have sought aggressively to maintain and amplify the extent to which “the economic identity of communities is connected with coal as a historically critical source of employment” in order to sustain their power (and profits), even as their contribution to regional employment has continued to decline (2010, p. 111). Relatedly, relying on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony,³ Lewin has shown how the industry (as the dominant group) has constructed *coal heritage*, “a carefully curated cultural construction that emphasizes selective aspects of Appalachian history,

³ Antonio Gramsci contended that dominant groups secure consent for economic exploitation by exercising moral and cultural leadership. This requires familiarity with the “practical life” of “subordinates” and the capacity to mediate legitimation efforts through “organic intellectuals” (Gramsci and Buttigieg, 1992). Lewin (2019) has suggested that the coal industry has proven adroit on both of these dimensions.

erases those that challenge their [coal corporations] domination, and positions them as guardians of regional interests and values” (2019, p. 52).

In sum, coal mining and coal corporations especially have played a vital role in forming peoples’ identities in many central Appalachian towns. As a result, finding new alternatives to address the ongoing decline of that industry is deeply entangled with values and culture.

The following section describes two common solutions (i.e., increasing in-migration and tourism) to the existing socioeconomic challenges in Central Appalachia arguing why and how each can(not) contribute to the well-being of the residents of the region.

Amenity-Based Rural Development

Due to the ongoing economic restructuring arising from globalization and neoliberal policies, urban and rural areas, especially in developed nations, are increasingly becoming less dependent for employment on manufacturing industries and more reliant on services (Brown and Schafft, 2011; Green, 2001; Nelson, 2002), although the rate of such change is slower in rural than urban areas. Allen and Dillman (1994) have argued that technological shifts, especially the development of broadband communication and improved transportation systems, could facilitate the growth of the service sector in rural America. Nonetheless, research since they offered their contention, has suggested that their hope has not yet been realized (Brown and Schafft, 2011; Glasmeier and Howland, 1995; Malecki, 2003). Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis show that while service sector employment has grown in both urban and rural areas between 1970 and 2000, this transformation was much more likely to involve producer services in urban economies and low-wage, low-skill personal and consumer services in rural economies (Brown and Schafft, 2011; Green, 2001; Morgan, Lambe, and Freyer, 2009).

One of the development strategies to counter population and socioeconomic decline in rural America is amenity-based development, which usually translates into in-migration and tourism. As disposable income increased during the 1980s and 1990s, many Americans had more resources for outdoor recreation and for early retirement, which fueled amenity-rich areas' growth (Green, 2001). Well-off individuals, particularly retirees or "grey golds," as Brown and his colleagues (2008) have dubbed them, vacationers and certain businesses often consider the natural characteristics of rural areas to be "amenity values."⁴

Due to the amenity values that inhere in their natural geography, one of the most popular approaches to economic diversification in the Appalachian region today in an increasingly post-coal economy is promoting tourism in its various forms. Tourism is broadly perceived as socioeconomically beneficial by providing income and infrastructure to communities that have lost their primary employers. When successful, tourism can offer low capital economic growth for locally owned businesses. Another reason for rural communities to invest in tourism is the hope that it will spur an in-migration of those who first visit as tourists and elect to return to settle, thereby attracting a share of otherwise urban-based residents and potential entrepreneurs.

Amenity migration—the movement of people based on the draw of natural and/or cultural amenities (Gosnell and Abrams, 2011, p. 303) can be both a driver and implication of a response to the rural economic restructuring that has occurred in recent decades. Stauber (2001) has linked this form of migration to the decline of the rural middle class due to limited family-

⁴ Amenity values are the characteristics that influence and enhance people's appreciation of a particular area. These reflect the pleasantness, aesthetic coherence and cultural and recreational attributes of places. Many analysts consider the following characteristics of rural areas to be amenity values: the intermittent nature of most agricultural activities; open landscapes and views; a low intensity of development; feelings of remoteness and community; low noise levels, particularly at night; a high degree of privacy; daylight and sunlight access; low levels of vehicular traffic; green 'unspoiled' landscapes with indigenous vegetation (Whangari district council, 2007).

wage economic opportunities in such areas and the emergence of suburban America as the location of domestic political power.

Proponents of amenity-based development have argued that such efforts allow rural economies to attract immigrants who enhance human capital and often invigorate local community organizations and civic culture. Advocates of this strategy also claim that recreation and tourism generate positive income multiplier effects⁵ for rural areas (Brown, Glasgow, Kulcsár, Bolender, and Arguillas, 2008).

Nonetheless, several socioeconomic factors have proven to be obstacles to the realization of amenity-centered development as a viable replacement for declining industries, such as coal mining, in rural areas. More precisely, smaller population size and density, as major components of amenity values of some small towns/villages, can limit development opportunities and possible long-term sustainability of these communities in several ways.

Lower population density leads to less diversification of economic activities, which makes small towns more vulnerable to downturns. Shrinking population often also means that communities can no longer support important facilities. For example, hospital closures in rural areas are a key ongoing struggle for many such communities and their shuttering can serve as both a cause and a result of their low populations (Luloff, 2019).

Paradoxically, successful amenity-based development may eventually erode an area's original advantage, as its population size and density increase. This is especially true when mass rural tourism replaces small scale efforts (Lichter and Brown, 2011). Moreover, for some

⁵ According to the multiplier concept, through re-spending, original investments can have a greater impact on national income than the initial sums involved (Keynes, 2016).

communities, tourism and recreational development pose environmental risks to water quality and marine ecosystems, forests and biodiversity.

Amenity-based rural development also has several social impacts in small communities. Most in-migrants originate from metropolitan areas (Johnson and Stewart, 2005) and their movement to retirement destinations and other high-amenity rural areas blurs the boundaries that separate urban and rural people and places (Lichter and Brown, 2011). Indeed, as some research has pointed out, in-migrants may often attempt to reconstruct their new rural spaces to match their urban middle-class values more closely; for example, they may demand urban levels of public services (Nesbitt and Weiner, 2001).

Vacationers can build strong affective ties to rural locations that can lead to permanent residential relocation to those communities later in life (Lichter and Brown, 2011). However, whether such occurs depends heavily on the difference between the dominant rural imaginary and its actuality.⁶ The disconnect between myths about rural life and firsthand experience of those places may lead to tourist dissatisfaction and unmet expectations among in-migrants. In short, the results are diverse when “difference” becomes a consumption product. In such circumstances, *staged authenticity*, i.e., residents’ commodification of culture by creating a superficial unreal “rural life” experience for “outsiders,” is hard to avoid.

From an economic point of view, Houser and his colleagues have suggested that on the one hand, there is no future potential for coal mining’s return in Appalachia—an example of a

⁶ As John Logan has argued, rural life appeals to many because it has generally been portrayed positively in U.S. culture and media—internet, art, music, literature, television, theatre and film—not because most citizens have ever lived or worked there. This fact has allowed Americans to construct images of rurality that filter out facts related to industrial restructuring, environmental conflict, entrenched poverty, changing ethnic composition, relative underdevelopment, depopulation and growing economic inequality. In light of these facts, Logan has concluded that “a large share of what we value is the mythology and symbolism of rural places, rather than their reality” (1996, p. 26).

key income source for many rural Americans—and on the other hand, “[a]ttracting new sources of economic activity and job creation will not be easy and even at its most successful will not return coal country to peak levels of past prosperity” (Houser, Bordoff, and Marsters, 2017, p. 6)

Moreover, businesses, including tourism operations, located in rural communities do not necessarily contribute to the socioeconomic well-being of the residents of those towns, nor to the quality of their natural and built environments. The leakage⁷ and low-wage seasonal character of tourism-related jobs in such areas are among the obvious reasons for this scenario. Amenity-based growth of rural areas also may inflate local property values and taxes and displace longtime residents who can no longer afford to live in the community. Such scenarios often undermine community attachment and solidarity (Lichter and Brown, 2011). Tourist towns also often face seasonal variability in demand for community and social services, conflicts between part-year homeowners and year-round residents and limits on community carrying capacity and social service provision during peak seasons (Lichter and Brown, 2011).

Nevertheless, according to evidence from Hungary reported by Szivas and Riley (1997, 1999, 2002) tourism can be a ‘refuge’ industry in times of economic transition, e.g., for rural towns that have lost their economic base due to mechanization and/or globalization of labor. In Appalachia, this situation takes the guise of a new industry, tourism, offering positions with what residents view as low skill requirements, status and salaries (Hall, 2000). Table 1, summarizes the positive and negative aspects of amenity-based economic development in rural areas.

⁷ Refers to a condition where all or a share of the benefits from a business are not captured by its host community.

Table 1- Amenity-based development opportunities and challenges

In-migrants (Retirees)		Tourism and Businesses	
Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Voluntary contributions of time, money and expertise. Increases in house, building, real estate values and real estate tax revenues. Demand for housing professionals and suppliers. Supporting art and cultural organizations and events.	Reduced need for paid workers. Higher house/services cost due to the affluent newcomers. Increased forms of inequality. Higher level of expectations by in-migrants. Cultural/housing/political displacement (Brown et al., 2008)	Increase in employment. Diversification of economy. Multiplier effect. (Bed)Tax revenue. Increase in population. Justifiable infrastructure and services. Increased livelihoods. Enhanced community awareness and esteem about the place/culture.	Low-wage/low-skill jobs. Leakage and seasonality. Taxpayer perceptions of injustice (they are not the one using the infrastructures). Higher prices. Environment degradation. Conflicting interests. Staged authenticity.

In sum, due to the loss of their primary economic base (e.g., agriculture, manufacture and/or extractive industries), many rural communities in the United States are experiencing high-rates of out-migration, aging populations and a generally diminished quality of life. The failure of neoliberal top-down economic growth-based approaches to reduce poverty and injustice in these areas suggests strongly that non-economic factors have also been significant in this process of change and are important in development more generally (Potter, 2014a, p. 105). Therefore, adopting sustainable socioeconomic development strategies such as increasing in-migration and tourism is crucial to supporting the long-term satisfaction and livelihood of residents in this locale.

Sustainability of Tourism Development

Most models of sustainable development include communities as a cornerstone of the change process. Nonetheless, simply adding “local,” “community-based,” “participatory” or other relevant labels to projects does not necessarily secure positive change for rural residents, nor for the environment. To avoid getting entrapped in the neoliberal system in the name of

local/community-based/participation, it is vital to reflect on the goals of development projects, including who they may serve and what processes they have adopted to pursue their objectives. Community-led sustainable development requires an understanding not just of the relationship between local communities and their environments, but also of the political, economic and cultural tensions at play within those contexts (Richards and Hall, 2003).

Similar to the development discourse, in the academic literature addressing tourism and in its practice, community ownership has been recognized as a main criterion for a flourishing and sustainable industry. Nonetheless, due to the large number of actors, diverse interests and power imbalances typical of the sector, the practicality of community-based tourism has been widely questioned (Allen and Dillman, 1994; Ashley and Garland, 1994; Jones, 2005; Reed, 1997; Sin and Minca, 2014).

Empowerment as a construct is based on the concept of generative, rather than distributive power. Most current power structures are distributive, in the sense that they presuppose a scarcity of resources that must be allocated. In this view, the various actors in a community compete with each other for a share of the ‘pie’ in a zero-sum game. A generative, or positive-sum view of power, on the other hand, assumes that everyone has power, or skills and capabilities. The aim of individual and group empowerment, therefore, is to combine available capacities and actions for the common good.

Although empowerment is an implicit aspiration of most versions of ‘sustainable tourism,’ the major share of such models assume a distributive form of the construct *to* local communities *from* above, rather than encouraging it generatively among residents from within. Rather than focusing on community residents as the means and goal of development, community-based tourism (CBT) considers the vitality of that industry as its main goal. Thus,

community participation and satisfaction are viewed as tools for achieving that purpose. One result of the foundational neoliberal logic of CBT is that the community building component undertaken with such efforts is usually overshadowed by an emphasis on economic growth (Blackstock, 2005). Consequently, CBT does not typically aim to reach individuals and legitimate community members' agency and ensure their power to voice their concerns regarding tourism or stand against it in their communities. This raises a key concern: If these 'top-down' models are to be challenged, how is locally generated empowerment to occur?

Community Cultural Development

Community cultural development (CCD) has been used during the last few decades as a tool to engage populations (Goldbard, 2006, 2013) to enhance the sense of shared ties among community residents and to identify common values among a wide range of groups. This dissertation explores the process and significance of community-based cultural practices as mechanisms for encouraging individual and community capacity (Sewell, 1992), and the implications of such efforts for initiatives to develop sustainable tourism, a currently popular alternative to secure economic stabilization and growth in many of Central Appalachia's small towns. To address this goal, I investigated the processes and structures of a cultural nonprofit organization located in central Appalachia as a cross-sectoral partnership, a collaboration in which those participating have adapted community cultural development as a strategy for promoting inclusive processes and structures to address existing individual and sectoral disconnectedness. The following chapters examine the relationship between "Community Capacity" (a missing element in CBT) and local place-based "cultural activities" and whether and in what ways individual and community agency can contribute to the sustainability of

tourism as a strategy for rural development. While tourism can be examined in the context of globalization, as when neoliberal policies facilitate foreign multinationals investing in, and controlling, large resorts, this research instead examined community-based development (CBD) tourism in a rural town in central Appalachia.

Dissertation Organization

This analysis is comprised of seven chapters. The introduction chapter (1), situates the dissertation by depicting the broader socioeconomic, historic and cultural context of the study. Chapter 2 probes the existing literature on development with a specific focus on development projects in Central Appalachia since World War II. Chapter 3 examines existing theories of sustainable tourism, community cultural development (CCD) and community capacity. I explore common themes at play in community-based tourism and community cultural development, as approaches to social change, along with their theoretical relationship to residents' civic capacity. Chapter 4 outlines the study's research design, describes my epistemological stance and provides an overview of this study's research questions and methodology. Chapter 5 reports the central findings of my interviews regarding individual and civic capacity among individuals deeply enmeshed in a cultural development initiative. Chapter 6 uses my interviews to provide an account of how local residents' collective capacity can translate into sustainable community-based tourism development.

Finally, the concluding chapter (7), examines afresh the questions that prompted this study and the potential for deliberation and effective dialogue in negotiating shared values among residents in conditions such as those now obtaining in Central Appalachia. It then examines the salience of cultural activities among community members as venues for

participation as well for encouraging perceptions and feelings of belonging and openness to others. Chapter 7 also outlines potential directions for future research investigating the role(s) of cultural-based organizations in encouraging individual and collective agency and community building.

Chapter 2

Literature Review (Part 1)

This chapter sketches the several approaches to development and sustainability to provide a meta-frame for this study. After a brief description of evolving conceptions of development broadly understood, and their theoretical and substantive shortcomings, I chart how each approach I treat has shaped major development projects and policies in Central Appalachia since the 1950s. The principal aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how evolving goals and intervention strategies of development require the residents of communities to be the architects and owners of the change they desire, at least if they wish to pursue sustainability. By drawing on the Appalachian context and experience particularly, this chapter highlights the importance of community capacity in sculpting a shared development vision. In the case of Appalachia, that goal constitutes an alternative to that created by the historically dominant corporate extractive forces in the region.

The Puzzle of “Development”

Development is an ambiguous term that scholars and professionals alike have used descriptively and normatively to refer to a vision, a process or an action (Allen and Thomas, 2000) through which a society moves toward a “good change” (Chambers, 1997, p. 1743) or a “desired objective” (Sharpley and Telfer, 2015, p. 19). The concept of development in its current meaning was not born until after the Second World War, when President Truman observed in his inaugural address in 1949 that, “More than half the people of the world are

living in conditions approaching misery. [...] Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas” (Schlesinger, 2010, pp. 306–307).

The development field has been at the center of investigation and debate since, ranging from criticisms arising from post-development theorists, who view the whole concept and practice as a reflection of the West’s⁸ hegemony over the remainder of the world (Escobar, 2000; Rahnema, 1991; Sachs, 1990), to others who have examined the evolution of perspectives concerning the development project (McMichael, 2017).

The concept of development is typically applied to countries that have not yet attained a relatively high standard of living and sustained economic growth. However, it can apply to every nation in the world. In other words, developed societies, those that are technologically and economically advanced, that enjoy a relatively high standard of living and have modern social and political structures and institutions, do not cease to change or progress or, indeed, regress. Nonetheless, the nature of that change may be different in less-developed societies (Telfer and Sharpley, 2015, p. 5). Moreover, as Green and Luehrmann have remarked, “[b]ecause of the dramatic disparities within [developed] countries, they can be categorized as third world or first, depending on where we look. [...] Visit parts of its [i.e., the United States’] inner cities, the rural South, or Appalachia, and you will find the third world” (2011, p. 2). Indeed, it is not unusual to see development efforts afoot in less advanced parts of countries with relatively high macro-level Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and standards of living.

⁸ According to Green and Luehrmann, developed countries are “the rich, industrialized states of Western Europe, Canada and the United States, also known as the West (a term that, interestingly enough, includes Japan, but excludes most of the countries of the Western Hemisphere)” (2011, p.3).

Development Paradigms

Development paradigms “serve as lenses for interpreting the nature of society, the causes of poverty and the implied solutions for development practitioners” (Jantzi and Jantzi, 2009, p. 67). In other words, development paradigms seek to address questions of what and for whom a change is considered “good,” and how and why that shift can be realized in a specific context. Since the end of World War II, several overarching development frames—modernization, structuralism, liberation from dependency, post-development and alternative development—have evolved (Potter and Conway, 2011). Nevertheless, development as a multi- and interdisciplinary field of research (Potter, 2014b) has not changed “its normative concern with emancipation from inequality and poverty” (Hettne, 2002, p. 11). Therefore, as Hettne (1996) has contended, development paradigms tend to accumulate, rather than displace or replace each other. They have done so to pursue specific ideological objectives.

Modernization Paradigm (1950s-1960s)

As the Cold War competition with the Soviet Union came to dominate United States foreign policy in the late 1940s and 1950s, the U.S. used aid packages, technical assistance and sometimes military intervention to encourage newly independent nations to align with the West (Office of the Historian, 2015). In those years, development theories promoted Western ways of thinking and of doing things and development almost ubiquitously meant economic growth alone (Escobar, 2000; Hettne, 2002; Potter and Conway, 2011; Sharpley and Telfer, 2002). Modernization proponents saw poverty as the essential characteristic confronting underdeveloped nations and argued that the solution to that concern was economic prosperity.

German sociologist Max Weber's (1864–1920) ideas regarding the role of rationality and irrationality in the transition from traditional to modern society shaped Modernization theory. After World War II, with the emergence of many “new states,” scholars from three major institutions (i.e., Harvard's Department of Social Relations, the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Comparative Politics and MIT's Center for International Studies) developed and popularized Modernization theory (Klinger, 2017). This perspective essentially claimed that if poor or developing nation state governments embraced and imitated Western investment, technology and values such as entrepreneurship and meritocracy, they could achieve higher standards of living for their citizens (See Black, 1966; Lerner, 1958).

Modernization in Central Appalachia

According to Latham (2000), United States modernization theorists, policymakers and media organizations characterized American society as uniquely advanced compared to all non-European peoples and cultures. Latham has argued that proponents of this approach viewed the roots of the difference between the global South and North neither in geographical nor natural resources terms, or in light of the legacy of imperial exploitation, but rather in “the West’s ‘rational,’ ‘activist,’ ‘achievement-oriented’ social values” (2000, p. 16). Walt Whitman Rostow (1990 [1960]) and other modernization theorists of the time viewed development as a linear, universal process. They argued that when countries transitioned from traditional societies to modern ones, they would all follow a similar path (e.g., Rostow’s five stages of development). For these analysts, there were developed, democratic and prosperous economies and disadvantaged nations and the latter were assumed to evidence intrinsically deficient cultures. The question, however, then and now, was whether and how proponents of Modernization could

employ their conception to explain the underdevelopment of regions such as Central Appalachia within otherwise modernized countries.

Questioning the fundamental assumptions of Modernization Theory, and in an effort to explain that conception's internal inconsistencies, Wallerstein (1979) has argued that the capitalist world-system is far from homogeneous in cultural, political or economic terms. Instead, he has suggested that it is characterized by fundamental differences in social development, accumulation of political power and capital. Contrary to affirmative theories of modernization, Wallerstein did not conceive of these disparities as mere residues or irregularities that could and would be overcome as the system evolved (1979, 2011). Moreover, Rudolph and Rudolph (1967) rejected the idea of a deficient/traditional culture as an impediment to modernity by arguing that the misunderstanding of modern society⁹ not only excludes its own traditional features, but also misdiagnoses the traditional society and its potentials for development.

In the United States, following the Modernization agenda and to justify the existence of poor Appalachian citizens, proponents of that view blamed those people's culture for their region's underdevelopment. For instance, Shapiro (1978) has documented the "otherness" of Central Appalachia; how individuals from outside the region perceive people of this area as different from and inferior to residents of the remainder of the United States. It is worth noting, too, that during the Modernization era, there were exemplar attempts to ameliorate this negative perception and treatment of the poor in the United States. A galvanizing force for the war on

⁹ According to these authors "ideal-typical or heuristic analyses of modernity and tradition in particular historical and national setting are likely to miss [...] creative possibilities in so far as they assume that the characterological, structural, and ideological component of each are absent in the other and thereby place modernity and tradition in a dichotomous rather than a dialectical relationship" (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967, p. 8)

poverty, Michael Harrington's (1997 [1962]) seminal sociological work, *The Other America*, shed light on the lives of the poor in the United States. By making poverty visible in the modern U.S., his observations and analyses profoundly affected the way many came to view the poor and policies to assist them.

Similar to Modernization Theory, the (sub)culture of poverty model postulated that the deficiencies of identifiable lower-class subcultures constituted the most significant impediments to development. Oscar Lewis, who introduced this conceptualization, identified more than seventy cultural traits which he contended were common among the poor of all nations. He argued that once a culture of poverty arose (although he was not clear on how that came about), it created a self-perpetuating cycle, because the poor were "... psychologically unready to take full advantage of changing conditions or improved opportunities that may develop in their lifetime" (1966, p. 21). Walls has suggested (1976) that Lewis's culture of poverty model helped to justify some national programs, such as Project Head Start,¹⁰ the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)¹¹ and other social service programs launched during the 1960s.

Weller (1995 [1965]) drew on the subculture of poverty framework in his book, *Yesterday's People*, depicting a dichotomy between modern and traditional ways of life by

¹⁰ In 1965, the Office of Economic Opportunity launched the Head Start Project as an eight-week program "to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs and support the families in improving their lives"(National Head Start Association, 2015).

¹¹ The United States Department of Health Education and Welfare carried out the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 to distribute funding to schools and school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families to close the skill gap in reading, writing, and mathematics between children from low-income families and those from the middle-class. The law was a cornerstone of President Johnson's "War on Poverty" and a landmark commitment to equal access to quality education while also emphasizing high standards and accountability (Jeffrey, 1978).

describing mountain (Appalachian) people as impulsive, irrational, lazy, asocial and clearly the opposite of typical middle-class Americans. Meanwhile, while more empathetic but nonetheless still rooted in modernist claims, Ford argued that restricted social and economic opportunities had created Appalachian's "distinctiveness as people." He contended that once "the economic problems are solved, the provincialism of the Region itself will fade" (1962, p. 34). However, Ford never took into account the political, economic and social history of the region he profiled (as key factors in shaping behaviors other than culture), nor did he explain the origins of the causes of the socioeconomic limitations he viewed as the root of Central Appalachia's supposed cultural deficiencies (Billings, 1974).

Several federal programs initiated in the 1960s sought to extend the benefits of modern life to all Americans. In 1961, President Kennedy set out to address the pledge to provide help that he had made during his presidential campaign while visiting West Virginia, by proposing and achieving passage of the Area Redevelopment Act (ARA), which provided federal funding to economically struggling regions of the country. ARA's goal was to encourage localities to organize for economic development by analyzing their opportunities and developing plans for action.

Wilson has investigated the ARA program in different regions, including Central Appalachia, and contended that although some local residents "called for a more direct confrontation with corporations, greater taxes on coal and utility companies, and federal subsidies for cheaper power to lure industries," ARA officials instead focused on "job creation through resource extraction, infrastructure improvements, tourism and recreation" (2009, p. xxi). During the first two years of the Kennedy administration, "[u]nemployment and

applications for public assistance continued to rise throughout Appalachia, where joblessness was twice the national average” (Eller, 2008, p. 67).

The failure of job training programs under the ARA led to formation of a joint federal-state group, which would become the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 1963. According to Eller (2008) the ARC initially was comprised of five working teams addressing transportation, human resources, physical resources, water and the organization of a permanent commission. However, after the announcement of President Johnson’s *War on Poverty* initiative, ARC leaders decided to “emphasize infrastructure needs while coordinating [...] human development programs with those of the national poverty effort” to avoid duplication (Eller, 2008, p. 78).

As the antipoverty programs were implemented, Appalachia increasingly became the standard against which to measure government success in combating poverty. Even after the War on Poverty formally ended in 1972, “periodic investigations of [living] conditions [among families residing] in the region’s mountains continued as standard fare for television, newspaper, and magazine editors” (Eller, 2008, p. 89).

Structuralism and Liberation from Dependency (1950s-1970s)

With Modernization’s goals not being realized in most target nations, *structuralism* theorists (e.g., Raul Prebisch, Celso Furtado, Anibal Pinto Osvaldo Sunkel and Dudley Seers) suggested that major government intervention was essential for development since, compared to advanced nations, the institutional conditions for growth were less available in poor areas. These scholars adopted a Keynesian approach and argued that the only way Third World countries could achieve development was through action by the state in which governments

pushed for industrialization and reduced dependency on trade with the First World until their economies could attain necessary economies of scale. Nonetheless, this embrace of an infant industry protection stance was controversial as a policy recommendation. Aside from potential for abuse as with the other economic rationales for protectionism, even when such trade policy was well-intentioned, it was difficult for governments to identify which firms to protect. As Luzio (1996) has observed, Brazil's market reserve policy in 1977, designed to protect its infant computer manufacturing industry, failed. In fact, the sector never matured and the technological gap between Brazil and the rest of the world actually widened. Brazilian companies could not catch up to their international counterparts for at least two primary reasons: imported chips and domestically produced parts (e.g., hard disks), which constituted a large proportion of the cost of the basic processor, were costly to obtain, and national content laws forced Brazilian computer manufacturers to use domestic suppliers for inputs. However, the industries that supplied basic microelectronic inputs were monopolies and not internationally competitive and burdensome bureaucratic requirements and misguided sectoral policies limited competition and the entry of new suppliers (Luzio and Greenstein, 1993). As a result, the protected firms copied low-end foreign computers, leaving Brazil with expensive poorly made products.

In their attempt to supplant and displace structuralist thinking, *Dependency* theorists took a far more global view and postulated that development challenges arose not solely as a result of nations' internal workings—such as existing cultures, overpopulation, absence of investment or general lack of motivation of their residents—but, instead, from structures and strictures imposed by developed nations onto less developed ones (Frank, 1966, 1971; Wallerstein, 1974, 1979). Dependency scholars highlighted the weak structural position of the peripheral regions (i.e., developing countries) in the world system and proposed “a radical

political transformation within these [i.e., third-world] countries, as well as a ‘de-linking’ of their economies from the world market” as a remedy for the challenges they confronted (Hettne, 2002, p. 8).

As Kiely has pointed out, these scholars suggested that the unevenness of development so in evidence between the South and the North, “should not be confused with incompleteness, and rather show[s] how unevenness is a product of cumulative inequality, rather than being a simple residual phenomenon which will be overcome through a process of catch-up and convergence (2016, p. 2). Although Dependency theorists criticized the Modernization paradigm for its linear thinking and lack of attention to external global forces, these analysts did not differ much from Modernization and Structural theorists in how they defined development.

Central Appalachia as an Internal Colony

In the 1960s and 1970s, a number of scholars employed Dependency theory to challenge prevailing assumptions concerning “Appalachia’s supposed deficits as pictured in mainstream economic development theories and the sociological theories of modernization and the culture of poverty” (Billings, 2016, p. 57). For example, Walls applied Dependency Theory to the regions within advanced capitalist countries suggesting that, “[p]eripheral regions [e.g., Central Appalachia] remain functional for the system of advanced capitalism in the United States much in the way that poverty in general has positive functions”¹² (1976, p. 232). Walls also adopted Wallerstein’s three-tiered (i.e., core, peripheral and semi-peripheral countries) world-system

¹² Walls cited Herbert Gans’ work, *The Positive Functions of Poverty*, in which Gans sought to explain the persistence of that phenomenon by arguing that poverty and the poor perform fifteen specific functions for the rest of American society, particularly the affluent (1972, p. 275).

framework¹³ to describe the different social structures of Appalachia and their lack of a robust coalition,

[t]he possibility of attaining semi-peripheral status may preclude a strong alliance of one region with another worse off [such as] the successful move of the Northern and Southern Appalachian regions to standard semi-peripheral status within the United States while Central Appalachia remains behind (1976, p. 232).

Several other scholars have also contended that Central Appalachia constitutes an internal colony,¹⁴ given that the appropriation of raw materials and their export to core areas of the US and other global core and semi-peripheral areas, has dominated the region's economy for many decades (Austin and Clark, 2012).

Theories of Neocolonialism and Dependency have informed this internal colonization model. Scholars have applied the infrastructure of dependency, including industrial organization, patterns of urbanization and social classes to Central Appalachia and highlighted the economic exploitation and political domination by agents of absentee corporate owners of land and natural resources, especially coal mining, as constituting the major drivers of Appalachia's poverty and environmental degradation (Lewis, Johnson and Askins, 1978; Nyden, 1979). An important part of the application of the internal colonial model to Central Appalachia is its foregrounding of the destruction of indigenous culture in the process of establishing and maintaining corporate domination over local residents (i.e., Appalachians). For

¹³ Immanuel Wallerstein defined world-system analysis as “[...] a perspective that argues that the two basic elements in scholarly social constructions are the choice of unit of analysis and of pertinent temporalities. It proposes a world-system as the appropriate unit of analysis, and analyzing social constructions in historical depth”(2013, p. 1).

¹⁴ According to Pablo Gonzalez-Casanova, “[i]nternal colonialism corresponds to a structure of social relations based on domination and exploitation among culturally heterogeneous, distinct groups. [...] Internal colonialism is not only a relation of exploitation of the workers by the owners of raw materials or of production and their collaborators, but also a relation of domination and exploitation of a total population (with its distinct classes, proprietors, workers) by another population which also has distinct classes (proprietors and workers)” (1965, p. 33).

example, Lewis, Kobak and Johnson found that religion and education have proven important tools in the internal colonization process in Central Appalachia:

[...] denials of mountain culture made native children ashamed of their heritage. [...] The churches and schools taught the values of organization, planning, hard work and thrift. They legitimized the industrial process by blaming the ills of the system on the mountaineer himself [...] Although some missionaries saw clearly the exploitation, they still had great faith in the progress and the benefits of industrialization (1978, p. 145).

On the other hand, some have argued that this contention that Appalachia should be regarded as an internal colony of the United States has not been supported by sufficient empirical evidence. Walls, for example, has contended that “colonialism” was too-loose a catchword for economic exploitation better grasped by class analysis, although he praised the model’s attention to political and cultural domination (Walls, 1976, p. 232).

Wishart, in turn, opposed Walls’ criticism from a socioenvironmental viewpoint by arguing that “[l]ocally dominant classes in competition and collaboration with national elites have reproduced Central Appalachia as an extractive periphery, first building a metabolic regime¹⁵ that matured around a mode of extraction premised on super-exploitation and profits by deduction” (Wishart, 2014, p. 14). Billings has also evaluated the internal colonialism model of Central Appalachia and suggested that overall, “the colonial model—despite its misplaced emphasis on the geographical location of corporate headquarters and industry leaders—did much to capture the economic, political, and cultural impact of corporate capitalism in Appalachia” (2016, p. 61).

¹⁵ According to Molina and Toledo “social metabolism” is a perspective for analyzing the relations between society and nature through the study of flows of energy and materials (Molina and Toledo, 2014).

Economic Neoliberalism (Since the Late 1970s)

Modernization theory, by the 1980s, had become a cliché, “dismissed as a symbol of the misinformed platitudes of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson eras, in contrast to the weary wisdom of our own age” (Gilman, 2003, p. 31). On the other end, in the 1970s and 1980s, continuing Dependency relationships created the debt crisis¹⁶ in the developing world. The severity of that financial emergency led to heightened influence in the affairs of developing nations by international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Developing countries badly needed the liquidity those entities could provide (Desai and Potter, 2002). Neoliberalism began to take hold during those years. After the elections of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom (1979) and Ronald Reagan in the United States (1980) and through the IMF, the World Bank, the Maastricht treaty and the World Trade Organization (WTO), a guileless faith in free markets came to dominate world politics (Jones, 2012).

Boas and Gans-Morse have argued that scholars and practitioners use the term “neoliberalism” in a variety of ways. They have suggested that authors have emphasized at least four distinct and possibly overlapping notions of the concept: “to denote a set of economic reform policies, a development model, a normative ideology, and an academic paradigm” (2009, p. 143). As an ideology, neoliberalism draws on neoclassical economic theory,¹⁷ which

¹⁶ According to Eichengreen and Lindert, it was not until the wake of the 1973-74 oil crisis, that “money center banks raced to lend to developing countries [instead of formerly government-to-government loans in the form of foreign aid or export credits], bringing smaller regional banks as members of their syndicates in train. The volume of bank lending to foreign governments surged as OPEC surpluses and accommodating monetary policies made available an ample supply of credit...One country after another fell into arrears, negotiated new debt settlements, or both” (1992, p. 1).

¹⁷ The approach also has roots in the work of David Ricardo and his theory of comparative advantage, which called for a minimalist approach to state involvement in economic transactions (Brohman, 1996).

“treats people as atomistic individuals who are bound together only through market forces” (Brohman, 1996, p. 297). According to Harvey, “[n]eoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (2005, p. 2). The neoliberal agenda, praising the infinite power of unregulated free markets, claimed that “the Keynesian model of social democratic capitalism with its supportive welfare state, together with the trade unions and state bureaucracies, had destabilized the market system” (Potter and Conway, 2011, p. 604). As a development paradigm, those adopting the neoliberal framework encouraged the governments of countries in underdeveloped regions to welcome private investors from more affluent industrialized areas/nations. In this view, the problems of developing countries were not due to market-related concerns, but instead to irrational government activities including, foreign trade and price controls and inflationary financing of budget deficits (Lal, 1985).

Proponents of neoliberalism suggested that increasing economic freedom tends to raise expectations for political freedom and that such will eventually lead to democracy (Friedman, 2009; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992). Other scholars observed the existence of non-democratic yet market-based regimes and the increasing ceding of democratic control by government actors to market processes as strong evidence against such a general, historical proposition (Duggan, 2012; Parijs and others, 1997; Saad-Filho and Johnston, 2005).

Contemporary academic discussions of the relationship between neoliberalism and democracy have shifted to a more historical perspective that has supported these criticisms (Brown, 2015).

Some referred to neoliberalism as the ‘Washington Consensus,’¹⁸ a stance whose prescriptions echoed that ideology and which defined globalization as a process of international integration (Klak, 1998, p. 3). Neoliberalism promoted a much more assertive form of globalization during the 1980s and 1990s, opening the way for “even deeper penetration of global trade, investment and migration. Furthermore, state regulation was largely replaced by a new regulatory regime based around global institutions and treaties” (Murray and Overton, 2014, p. 271).

A major aspect of neoliberalism is its singular focus on a narrowly monetized conception of performance as economic efficiency. Using San Francisco as a case study, Fleming has argued that “neoliberal time discipline works to delegitimize the wage labor contract itself and to fracture the social arrangements of long-term, wage-based employment (2016, p. 784). Nonetheless, workers’ rights are by no means the only victims of the neoliberal focus on economic efficiency to the detriment of other values and measures. It is important to recognize that this vision and metric of performance judgment devalues every public good that is not conventionally monetized (Holmwood, 2014). As Birch and Siemiatycki have contended, the growth of this marketization ideology has shifted discourse towards focusing on monetary rather than social objectives, making it “harder to justify public goods driven by equity, environmental concerns and social justice” (2016, p. 194).

¹⁸ The Washington Consensus refers to a set of policy recommendations for developing nations linked to agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF, which included: fiscal discipline; redirection of public expenditures; tax reform; financial liberalization; adopting a single competitive exchange rate; trade liberalization; eliminating barriers to foreign investment; privatization of state-owned enterprises; deregulating market entry and competition; and ensuring property rights (Stiglitz and others, 1998).

Harvey (2005) has also described neoliberalism as a class project to impose one class's preferences on society. Similarly, Chomsky has suggested that neoliberalism as a political economic paradigm, "refers to the policies and processes whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize their personal profit" (1999, p. 7). As Wacquant (2009) has elaborated, neoliberal policy has occasioned reductions in the social welfare state and the rise of punitive workfare and has also resulted in the gentrification of urban areas, privatization of public functions and the shrinkage of collective protections for the working class (via economic deregulation). This public philosophy has also in his view resulted in the rise of a vast class of underpaid, unwarranted wage laborers, as well as the criminalization of poverty. It has also wrought mass incarceration. In contrast, Wacquant has contended, neoliberalism has proven extremely tolerant in dealing with the most wealthy in society, in particular when it comes to economic crimes committed by members of the advantaged classes and corporations such as "fraud, embezzlement, insider trading, credit and insurance fraud, money laundering, and violation of commerce and labor codes" (2009, p. 126).

Neoliberalism in Central Appalachia

The U.S. government adopted the neoliberal framework during the Reagan presidency (1981-1989) and "withdrew, suspended, or eliminated a vast number of trade barriers [...] as a means to resuscitate growth within national and global marketplaces" (Newman, 2014, p. 362). During those years the government encouraged the relocation of "inefficient" costly manufacturing to increase global competition among workers internationally and to transfer public institutions in education, health care and many other areas to the private sector (Newman,

2014). Moreover, Reagan reduced funding for social safety net programs while increasing financial support for criminal justice system interventions. The neoliberal agenda led to the use of government fiscal tools to influence the economy, professionalization of the workforce and a greater emphasis on individual, rather than structural, change (Reisch, 2013).

As a development paradigm, the rise of neoliberalism shifted existing public service programs in Central Appalachia markedly. Shortly after his inauguration in January 1981, Ronald Reagan proposed the termination of the ARC, arguing that big government and extravagant public programs were suppressing economic growth (Eller, 2008). After much pleading from governors in Appalachia to continue funding the Commission, Reagan significantly reduced funds for the agency, rather than eliminate it altogether (Bradshaw, 2015). Nonetheless, Reagan's budget reduction resulted in the termination of almost all of the ARC's programs, with the exception of highway projects (Eller, 2008, p. 207).

Jacobs and Myers have analyzed time-series regressions of U.S. income differences since the 1950s and found links between the adoption of neoliberal policies with Ronald Reagan's election and the acceleration in income inequality that began soon after he took office. The authors also concluded, "stronger unions could successfully resist policies that enhanced economic inequality only before Reagan's presidency and before the neoliberal anti-union administrations from both parties that followed Reagan" (Jacobs and Myers, 2014, p. 752). Following the same pattern as has occurred elsewhere, the neoliberal framework undermined the strength of unions and removed labor regulations in Central Appalachia in order "to control working people in service to capital accumulation" (Marley, 2016, p. 97) (Hettne, 2002; Potter, 2008, 2014; Potter and Conway, 2011). In 1984, Massey Energy (the largest coal producer in Central Appalachia) refused to sign the Bituminous Coal Operators Association contract—that

detailed an agreement concerning wages and benefits between miners and all coal operators—launching a strike by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) (Brisbin, 2002). Seeing “an increased risk of work stoppages and higher labor costs” with the new contract (Burns, 2007, p. 27), the company chose instead to close down many of its unionized operations only to reopen them later as nonunion mines. The Reagan administration not only supported Massey Energy during this UMWA strike, but also encouraged the company’s overarching effort to undermine the power of organized labor through the political manipulation of existing labor laws (Nash Jr, 2000; Piore, 1986).

The “conventional—often brutal—neoliberal extractivist operations ... are often legitimized as the most efficient growth strategies” (Escobar, 2018, p. 150). Aligning well with neoliberal economic efficiency goals, surface mining has increased in all of the Central Appalachian states (and underground mining has decreased), leading to enhanced productivity and still fewer individuals employed in mining operations (Marley, 2016). From a development perspective, the counties with the greatest surface mining (mountain top removal) have higher adult and child poverty rates, mortality rates, cardiovascular disease incidences and heart attacks compared to those with larger numbers of underground mining operations (Hendryx, 2010). From an economic point of view, “although the coal industry’s loudest defense of this practice [mountaintop removal] is that mountain people need the jobs mining supplies” (House, 2009, p. 2), researchers have found no evidence suggesting this extraction method has contributed positively to nearby communities’ employment levels (Woods and Gordon, 2011).

Many scholars and activists have criticized the key role of market entities (coal companies, for instance) in controlling the policies regarding mountaintop removal which have

led to severe environmental degradation and multiple health issues for Central Appalachia's citizens (Fox, 1999; House, 2009; McNeil, 2011; Stretesky and Lynch, 2011).

Alternative Development Paradigm (Since 1970s)

Since the mid-1970s, the search for new conceptualizations of development has been mirrored by changes in the practice of development project implementation (Hettne, 2002; Potter, 2008, 2014b; Potter and Conway, 2011). Development theorists have embraced liberating, “more human-centered and locally relevant processes” and approaches (Elliott, 2014, p. 67). Humanistic approaches to development that stress the subjectivity of phenomena and knowledge emerged in the 1970s, “with dependency theory denouncing modernization theory as crypto imperialist and modernization theorists hitting back by accusing dependency authors of being populist pseudo-scientists” (Schuurman, 2014, p. 55). The emergence of an alternative development paradigm— although some found it problematic to consider it a paradigm¹⁹ (Pieterse, 2000)—was anchored in a growing critique of urban-based, top-down, center-out neo-classically inspired development policies (Desai and Potter, 2014).

According to Mowforth and Munt, scholars and practitioners have come to realize that “conventional indicators of well-being (such as GNP) give a restricted, partial and one-sided view of development” (2016, p. 119). This development thinking placed a new emphasis on human agency, experience, consciousness and creativity (Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts and

¹⁹ Nederveen Pieterse has contended that alternative development approaches do not constitute a paradigm for four reasons; “whether [these] paradigms apply to social science is questionable; because in development the concern is with policy frameworks rather than explanatory frameworks; because there are different views on whether a paradigm break with conventional development is desirable; and finally because the actual divergence in approaches to development is in some respects narrowing” (1998, p. 343).

Whatmore, 2011). However, this rhetoric does not mean that the World Bank and most funders have abandoned their neoliberal practices and/or claims, such as requiring linear logic framework analyses.

While it did not take just one guise, the alternative development paradigm criticized the purely functional view of change that had dominated the development discourse for decades by calling for deeper understanding and consideration of the territorial (indigenous) foundations of development and change.

The Basic Needs Approach

The needs-based approach, or the provision of basic/essential needs, is one of the most famous conceptions that has arisen under the umbrella of the alternative development paradigm. It was a major focus during the 1970s. The International Labor Organization's (ILO) World Employment Conference officially launched the approach in 1976 by defining basic needs as adequate food, shelter, clothing, certain household effects, safe drinking-water, sanitation, public transport, health and educational facilities (International Labour Organization, 1976). Streeten has suggested that the essential needs approach, "starts from the objective of providing the opportunities for the full physical, mental and social development of the human personality and then derives the ways of achieving this objective" (1981, p. 335). This framework reversed the conventional practice of projecting a desirable annual rate of per capita economic growth into the future by focusing on the goal of meeting basic human needs through altering "the composition of output, the rates of growth of its different components, the distribution of purchasing power, and the design of social services" (Streeten, 1981, p. 335).

Nevertheless, in most cases, the rate of economic growth necessary to meet basic needs fully in target regions was unrealistically high by historical standards (Michieka et al., 2011, p. 91). However, the idea of conceiving of the development project as one aimed foremost at meeting the basic needs of targeted populations lived on through the adoption of specific goals, such as achieving universal primary education by a certain year or eradicating a specific illness in a defined time period. In fact, the United Nations adopted this approach when it created the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000. The Needs-based strategy also has shaped the human development approach to development (Parsons, 1977).

Basic Needs Approach in Central Appalachia

A basic needs strategy has informed many national and regional development programs in Central Appalachia since the 1970s. For example, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, has provided 15 federally funded nutrition assistance programs since 1969. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) are among the most popular of those initiatives. In analyzing the data to capture the variation in SNAP participation rates across the Appalachian region during the 1994-2007 period, Michieka and his colleagues found that the SNAP program had helped low income individuals and families in the area enjoy a more nutritious diet, yet not all of those eligible participated in the program. In any case, while participants enjoyed real gain from their involvement, they had to overcome a variety of challenges to obtain benefits (Michieka, Pradhan and Gebremedhin, 2011, p. 91). According to this study, the employment growth rate (a major component of the needs-based approach) had

no effect on SNAP participation rates in Appalachia. Michieka et al. explained this fact by arguing that the jobs created in the region during the years they examined likely did not match the skills of Food Stamp program recipients.

Another application of a needs-based or essential needs approach in Central Appalachia occurs via the national Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. Congress initiated SSI in 1972 to provide monthly cash assistance to people who are disabled, blind or elderly and have little income and few assets.²⁰ Greenstein and Shapiro (1992) have highlighted the fact that, at the national level, only 50%-60% of eligible individuals participate in the SSI program. They have suggested that there is a critical need to improve access to the initiative by removing barriers to enrollment and improving outreach efforts. For their part, Rowles and Jonsson have contended that strategies for alleviating rural poverty have only been partially successful because of a lack of “sensitivity to the realities of rural life, especially the level of resistance to assistance from outside that, at least in Appalachia, [that] is part of the historically ingrained and socially reinforced rural culture” (1993, p. 364).

Wong (2016) analyzed the spatial patterns of participation in SSI in the working-age population between 2000-2010 in the post-1996 welfare reform period in the United States. She found that due to high, long-term rates of disability, poverty and un/under-employment, “For both 2000 and 2010, most statistically significant clusters of counties with high location quotients were located in the Appalachian and south east regions of the U.S.” (Wong, 2016, p. 17). She argued that in Appalachia, where many employment opportunities are physically

²⁰ In 2019, the annual maximum Federal amounts are \$9,260 for an eligible individual, \$13,888 for an eligible couple and \$4,600 for an essential person. In the same year, the national poverty level for individuals was \$12,490 and for couples was \$16,910.

demanding and hazardous (e.g., coal mining), in cases of physical impairment, workers are no longer employable. Moreover, the limited educational attainment among a disproportionate share of coal miners makes them ineligible for jobs requiring the high analytical and communication capabilities acquired via higher education. In this scenario, disability benefits become the *only* alternative for this population. Wong has contended that while enrolling in SSI provides some degree of economic security, the post-1996 welfare reforms have not been successful in decreasing the need for government aid among working-age individuals. She has highlighted the need for policies that increase labor market participation of people with disabilities, democratizing access to education along with other policies that can promote greater equality among groups.

The Bottom-Up Approach

The bottom-up, or development from below approach, emerged in the 1970s to encourage postulated grassroots possibilities latent in regions and communities (Christopherson, 2008; Coffey and Polese, 1985; Friedmann and Weaver, 1980; Stöhr and Taylor, 1981; Stöhr and Tödtling, 1979). The unparalleled pace of the spatial re-organization of economic activity during those years had created conditions that challenged the existing top-down policy paradigm (Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, and Tomaney, 2007). Bottom-up policies in comparison with traditional approaches to development aimed to empower local actors and make them directly responsible for the design of their collective responses to development needs (Crescenzi and Rodríguez-Pose, 2011). As Stöhr (1980) has contended, and similar to the top-down development paradigm, bottom-up approaches were not simply about the level at which decision-making was to take place. Rather, he argued that genuine engagement and efforts from

below represented a change in the basic concept of development. This conception was innovative to the extent that it moved involved actors away from a monolithic idea of economic growth that encouraged competitive behavior, was external oriented and eschewed large-scale redistributive mechanisms, to the identification of societal goals through grassroots collaborative behavior and endogenous motivation.

Proponents of bottom-up approaches have argued that “threats and opportunities for the fulfillment of society’s basic needs—a primary concern of development goals—are more palpable and consequently amendable at the local level” (Matarrita-Cascante, 2010, p. 1143). They have viewed communities as the optimal scale for the examination of development-related processes and outcomes (Bridger and Luloff, 2001), essentially due to their belief that localities possess important knowledge of prevailing local conditions and are better positioned to monitor activities related to interventions than perhaps any other potential actors (Hoddinott, Adato, Besley and Haddad, 2001).

Whilst the top-down approach certainly has its limitations, so too does bottom-up development. According to Smith (2008) four fundamental critiques of the participatory bottom-up approach include tokenism, the myths of “communities” as coherent and cohesive bodies, a fundamental lack of resources (Cooke and Kothari, 2001) and an often critical lack of knowledge about the development process and how to facilitate it successfully (Carr, 2002). In many cases, localities simply lack the necessary capacities, including adequate fiscal and human resources and knowledge, to assume complete responsibility for development.

Evidence from community-based projects has shown that such efforts also suffer from the disadvantage of not being as accountable as higher-level (top-down) agencies to their members (Galasso, 1999). This is especially the case in jurisdictions with informational deficiencies

and/or those without a functioning and effective democracy (Conning and Kevane, 2002). Indeed, Platteau and Abraham (2002) have contended that community-based development tends to be ineffective in realizing its goals because its relative lack of accountability often outweighs its advantages.

In addition, a number of critics have observed that localism in development studies has tended to essentialize communities as discrete places comprised of relatively homogeneous populations or, alternatively, constituted sites of grassroots mobilization and resistance (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). Mohan and Stokke (2000) have suggested that when bottom-up development approaches focus heavily on 'the local,' they tend to underplay inequalities and power relations as well as the importance of national and transnational economic and political forces. Accordingly, these authors have advocated for a stronger emphasis “on the political use of 'the local' by hegemonic and counter-hegemonic interests” (Mohan and Stokke, 2000, p. 247). Hildyard and colleagues (2001) have similarly observed that with participatory development, grassroots organizations have often been in danger of serving as the human software for investments that occasion the least local opposition. These authors have concluded that unless participatory processes consider the relative bargaining power of various stakeholders, they will routinely be in danger of merely providing opportunities for the more powerful.

These observations do not imply an outright rejection of the local as a site for efforts to encourage political agency and ownership, but they do call for a more globalized understanding of the local that incorporates the fact that bottom-up approaches as political projects need to address dichotomous conceptions such as local/global and state/civil society in order to remain relevant. As Crescenzi and Rodríguez-Pose (2011) have observed,

the foundations of top-down and bottom-up development policies can be reconciled in a joint ‘meso-level’ conceptual framework which can serve simultaneously as a deductive justification for bottom-up local and regional development policies and as a coordination device between different policies (p. 2).

For their part, Cooke and Kothari (2001) have noted the gulf between the rhetoric of participation, promising empowerment and appropriate development, and what actually often occurs when consultants and activists have promoted such strategies. Their analysis has challenged the “populist assumption that attention to local knowledge through participatory learning” would redefine the relationship between local communities and development experts (Cooke and Kothari, 2001, p. 8). They have found that often planning processes and outcomes structure local knowledge, instead of the latter shaping development decisions. Indeed, these authors have concluded that proponents of participatory development have generally been naive about the complexities of power and power relations. While analyses of power in participation are not new, there are multiple and diverse ways that such influence manifests itself. Moreover, “articulations of power are very often less visible being as they are embedded in social and cultural practices” (Cooke and Kothari, 2001, p. 14).

Mosse, through his involvement in development projects in India, noted two sets of difficulties in the knowledge sharing process of participatory development projects;

first, platforms (farmer participatory experiments) for involvement intending to draw on lay experience and knowledge actually required a disembedding and decontextualization of that knowledge such that its judgements were no longer sound or relevant, or not adequately so. Second, there was an incommensurability in the underlying knowledge practices of the ‘patients’ (the tribal farmers) and the professionals (2019, p. 449).

Hailey’s (2001) study of NGOs in South Asia likewise showed that understandings of and responses to the needs of local communities are key elements in the success of development efforts, but he found that it was important how those were attained and used in practice. Hailey

argued that rather than formulaic approaches for getting close to communities and creating trust, the most successful strategy was NGO leaders' long-term efforts to build close personal relationships with individuals and groups in the communities they sought to serve.

Bottom-Up Approaches in Central Appalachia

Self-consciously local development initiatives in Central Appalachia, although not all of them included a self-conscious participatory component, began in the 1950s. According to Bradshaw (2015), the formation of the Eastern Kentucky Regional Development Council, a group of local political and business leaders, occurred in 1956 and its creation symbolized the launch of such an effort for the area. In 1960, the organization changed its title to "Eastern Kentucky Regional Planning Commission." The entity's reach extended to 32 counties with local elites, "representing the main centers of population in eastern Kentucky: two coal company executives, one oil company executive, an oil/gas driller, a realty [land] developer, a newspaper editor, a college president, a church minister, and a doctor" (Bradshaw, 2015, p. 28).

Despite the Commission's achievements, such as completion of the Eastern Kentucky Turnpike, its work highlighted the need to develop a broader vision for planning within the sub-regional context. More importantly, the Commission's reports made it clear that the scale of the problems in its service area was enormous and there was a need for greater involvement of government at the state and, especially, the federal levels. These analyses provided early evidence for Crescenzi's and Rodríguez-Pose's (2011) later proposition that a joint meso-level conceptual framework of development will be necessary for region to thrive.

At the national level, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA), as a part of the War on Poverty initiative, authorized the formation of local Community Action Agencies (CAAs)

and Appalachian Volunteers (AV) to mobilize all available resources to address endemic poverty (Eller, 2008; Glen, 1989). Eller (2008) has argued that changes in social science theories prompted the idea of community action as a major component of change. He has suggested that University of Chicago scholars urged social workers to focus their resources on building organizational connections, since low-income people often lacked the skills that middle-class individuals possessed to organize themselves, politicize their needs and coordinate community services (Eller, 2008).

Proponents of Community Action Agencies argued that allowing localities to determine their own priorities through what was labeled “maximum feasible participation” would lead to substantive change in Appalachia. In response to those who saw considerable potential for conflict with this turn, “director Sargent Shriver and other OEO officials insisted on administrative flexibility, regarded controversy as inevitable and in most cases healthy, and assumed that clashing interests would eventually agree to participate in a broad-based effort to end poverty” (Glen, 1989, p. 42).

CAAs did achieve some progress throughout Central Appalachia’s counties: a comprehensive survey of local conditions, development of community centers providing health, education and other services and the creation of home repair and road improvement programs. Nonetheless, reports issued in 1965 and 1966 suggested that Appalachian residents were struggling with ever worsening problems (Glen, 1989). According to Glen, analyses from Eastern Kentucky indicated that Community Action Program leaders showed little interest in practice in serving the poor or securing their maximum feasible participation in a broadscale antipoverty campaign. Indeed, as matters evolved elites’ lack of accountability impaired the overall development process, “[e]ach director in the Cumberland Valley seemed to be pursuing

his own objectives (which often amounted to no more than a higher salary), or contending unsuccessfully with a welter of old battles between school superintendents, health officials, and welfare agencies” (Glen, 1989, p. 45).

The War on Poverty funded another program, Appalachian Volunteers (AV), in 1964, through which young Americans from all over the country could join a non-profit organization hoping to improve the lives of those residing in Appalachia through “remedial academic instruction, health education, job training, and home and school refurbishing” (Kiffmeyer, 2008, p. 3). In 1967, when Appalachian Volunteer leaders realized that school-based academic projects were proving unsuccessful in addressing overwhelming problems, they concluded that, “the region’s complex political relationships operated to the detriment of those most in need of government services, the poor and the unemployed” (Kiffmeyer, 2008, p. 176).

As Kiffmeyer (2008) has described, AV leaders condemned the War on Poverty because, in their view, local government and CA program officials were taking advantage of it for their own political purposes. While AV leaders’ understanding of the poverty problem in the region shifted during this period from cultural (i.e., culture of poverty) to colonial (e.g., internal colony theory) they were not fully capable of overcoming their view of Central Appalachia as isolated and peculiar (Kiffmeyer, 2008). AV’s failure to resolve the dichotomous image of mountaineers as both victimized and uncharacteristic proved detrimental to the agency’s change efforts. Despite their difficulties in realizing their aims, many scholars have argued that CAA and AV brought young organizers into the region and provided opportunities for local leaders to develop their capacities (Fisher, 1993).

Anglin’s exploration of instances of grassroots activism in Central Appalachia in the 1990s found that, “[v]ia sustained involvement in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and

welfare rights organizations, confrontations with state and local officials over the need for school-based programs and community health clinics, among other endeavors, poor and working class constituencies sought to change oppressive social institutions and political practice” (2002, p. 566).

Fisher has contended that before the 1960s, when faced with the repressive conditions spawned by the industrialization of Central Appalachia, people demonstrated their resistance through behaviors, less visible than mass movements, such as “gossip, backtalk, holding on to one’s dialect, moonshining, open violation of game and fencing laws, and migration” (1993, p. 4). He concluded that, in that period, most of the opposition of Appalachian residents occurred to “preserve traditional values and ways of life against [the] forces of modernization” (Fisher, 1993, p. 4). The civil rights movement helped “legitimize dissent in general and the strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience in particular” and paved the way for more organized resistance in Central Appalachia after the 1960s (Fisher, 1993, p. 4). Moreover, the women’s rights and environmental movements led to national legislation from which local organizations could benefit in fighting against ecological destruction along and in the provision of economic opportunities for women. The student and anti-war movements questioned notions of national interest, modernization and progress which for a long time had justified “the destruction of the traditional way of life in Appalachia” (Fisher, 1993, p. 5). Fisher (1993) viewed these conditions as platforms for the growth of grassroots movements across Appalachia in the late 1960s, which in his view, continued until early 1993.

In a later publication, Fisher and Smith pointed out that “the [current] political climate and infrastructure for organizing in Appalachia contrasts dramatically with twenty years ago ... [The UWMA has] united with their former adversaries, the coal operators, to challenge with

bitter rhetoric and mass demonstrations the environmental activists” (2012, p. 4). Seeing no contrast, Nesbitt and Weiner (2001) viewed this trend in Central Appalachia as a continuation of attempts among residents to maintain the social values and practices of their past. The authors analyzed the conflicting environmental imaginaries of locals and outsiders (i.e., the federal government and environmentalists) and argued,

Central Appalachian environmental imaginaries [...] are constructed around historical natural resource struggles, local dependence on environmental resources for social reproduction, cultural identity, and, pleasure. ... [Those] are in opposition to what is perceived to be an ‘outsider’ imaginary which is constructed around nature as commodity and recreational consumption. As a result, local resistance to ‘development’ for some is being expressed through a grassroots populism which is linked to right-wing political affiliation and activism (Nesbitt and Weiner, 2001, p. 335).

Warning academics about romanticized general perceptions of Appalachian resistance as left-leaning progressive local social movements, Nesbitt and Wiener found that in all three locales they investigated, “some individual and collective resistance has taken the form of radical libertarian-based conservatism” (2001, p. 347).

In recent years, a growing body of literature has explored grassroots movements for environmental justice throughout central Appalachia. Bell (2010), for example, studied the major factors hindering local participation in these efforts in the coalfields, namely, declining social capital and sparse social networks, the gendering of anti-coal activism²¹ and the mining industry’s marketing efforts to portray coal as the economic backbone of Central Appalachia

²¹ Bell and Braun (2010) investigated environmental justice activism in Central Appalachia and argued that unlike women who share identities as mothers and as Appalachians to justify their involvement in grassroots activism, “the hegemonic masculinity of the region, which is tied to the coal industry,” deters men’s participation in the movement (Bell and Braun, 2010, p. 794).

and the defining element of the cultural identity of Appalachians. These factors prompted many local residents to perceive that the collective identity of the environmental movement had shifted away from how they viewed themselves.

Human Development Approach (Since the Late 1980s)

Amartya Sen (1990) introduced the Capabilities approach as a new theoretical framework about well-being, development and justice, which later informed construction of the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI).²² According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the capability approach: "purports that freedom to achieve well-being is a matter of what people are able to do and to be, and thus the kind of life they are effectively able to lead" (Robeyns, 2016). In Sen's work (1990), capabilities were not simply the result of individual abilities, but also the opportunities that a combination of those capacities and the political, social and economic environment provided. Sen (1999) argued that human development entails well-being (opportunity freedom), agency (process freedom) and justice (plural principles).

According to the UN, Human Development "is a process of enlarging people's choices" (UNDP, 2016, p. 2). This approach has sought to shift the discourse from one of pursuing material goods as its central aim to instead identifying and pursuing human well-being, from maximizing earnings to expanding individual's capabilities, from optimizing economic welfare

²² According to the United Nations Development Program "the composite Human Development Index (HDI) integrates three basic dimensions of human development. Life expectancy at birth reflects the ability to lead a long and healthy life. Mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling reflect the ability to acquire knowledge. And gross national income per capita reflects the ability to achieve a decent standard of living" (UNDP, 2016, p. 3).

alone to enlarging freedoms (UNDP, 2016). This framework is concerned with all human beings and not simply with those who are poor or those residing in developing countries.

Human Development in Central Appalachia

The importance of including all individuals in a conception of development, regardless of their country's level of economic well-being, becomes clear when one examines the statistics that show that certain sub-populations in the United States, for example, enjoy no higher—indeed, often a substantially lower—chance of reaching an advanced age than do people born in poorer regions of the globe. Wheeler and Pappas (2019) studied the HDI across United States' counties to gain a detailed understanding of the state of development (or regression) in the nation. The authors found that although the country ranked 8th in 2015 in terms of HDI globally, it contained 66 counties, located mainly in the Mississippi River Delta and the Appalachian Region, which fell into the fourth class, or “low development” category. Of the three human development criteria of health, education and income level, “[t]he Appalachian Region, particularly in West Virginia and Kentucky, falls into the fourth class for poverty rates, and varies between [the] third and fourth classes for literacy rates and food security” (Wheeler and Pappas, 2019, p. 98). Ludke and Obermiller also examined the health and well-being of residents of the Appalachian region and found that Central Appalachia had, “the largest concentration of what the Appalachian Regional Commission refers to as ‘distressed counties,’ so called for their chronic poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, and low per capita income” (2012, p. xii).

Although necessary, the existence of programs for enhancing healthcare and education are not alone sufficient to increase individuals' capabilities. In a study of White Americans living in

poorer states, Metzler has demonstrated the “mortal trade-offs” this population makes when they vote with the goal of reestablishing their racial privilege and endorse “political positions that directly harm their own health and well-being” (Metzler, 2019, p. 3) in so doing. He marshaled statistical evidence that policies promising to bolster white Americans’ status—easing gun laws, seeking revocation or curtailment of the Affordable Health Care Act or passing massive tax cuts benefitting wealthy individuals and corporations—have instead made life sicker, harder and shorter for them and, in fact, for all Americans. Metzler highlighted the importance of finding ways to shift the imaginaries of everyday people regarding social initiatives in ways that resonate or that address historically based concerns or tensions so as to avoid a continuation of this trend.

Sustainable Development (Since the Late 1980s)

The emergence of environmental consciousness in development thinking in the 1960s and into the mid-1970s, proved to be the seed of a sustainable development discourse that came to fruition in 1987 (Hettne, 1996). Rachael Carson’s 1962 book *Silent Spring* was extremely influential in drawing attention to the environmental outcomes of increasing use of insecticides in agriculture. In 1972, Meadows and her colleagues in their report *Limits of Growth* examined the complex relationships among economic growth, population and environmental circumstances, suggesting that for populations to achieve ecological and economic stability, would-be developers needed to change their practices.

Works by development scholars and practitioners in the 1970s and early 1980s prompted the UN General Assembly to realize the consequences of unlimited growth; namely the marked deterioration of the human environment and natural resources. To rally countries to pursue

sustainable development, the UN established the Brundtland Commission which, in 1987, defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”(WCED, 1987, p. 8). The Commission argued that the three main pillars of such change were social progress, economic growth and environmental protection.

One of the most striking characteristics of the term sustainable development is that it means so many different things to so many different people and organizations. The literature is rife with different attempts to define the concept (see Mebratu, 1998) and debates have erupted among those who prefer the three pillars approach (emphasizing the social, ecological and economic dimensions of sustainable development) and those who embrace a more dualistic typology (emphasizing the relationship between humanity and nature), and with others as well (Robinson, 2004).

According to Lélé (1991) a wide range of nongovernmental as well as governmental organizations have embraced sustainable development as a strategy to guide development. However, as noted, even a cursory review of the literature indicates a lack of consistency among interpretations of the idea. More importantly, Lélé has argued that, “while the all-encompassing nature of the concept gives it political strength, its current formulation by the mainstream of SD [sustainable development] thinking contains significant weaknesses” (1991, p. 607). Hopwood et al. have suggested that sustainable development has potential to address the fundamental challenges confronting humanity, yet these scholars also highlighted a need for more “clarity of meaning, concentrating on sustainable livelihoods and well-being [...], and long term environmental sustainability, which requires a strong basis in principles that link the social and environmental to human equity” (2005, p. 38).

Dempsey et al. (2011) have also noted that while a “social dimension to sustainability is widely accepted, exactly what this means has not been very clearly defined or agreed” (Dempsey et al., 2011, p. 289). In Robinson’s (2004) view, considering sustainable development as innately reformist is problematic as doing so could avoid questions of power, exploitation and equitable distribution of good and services. Echoing that concern Robinson has also contended that “proponents of sustainable development offer an incrementalist agenda that does not challenge any existing entrenched powers or privileges” (2004, p. 376). In this view, the mantra of sustainable development diverts efforts from pressing for the real social and political changes that are fundamental to securing improvements in human well-being, especially of the poor.

Sustainable Development in Central Appalachia

In gauging the possibilities for sustainable development in Central Appalachia, Glasmeier and Farrigan (2003) have suggested that the history of the region must inform efforts to use asset-based approaches to secure development (such as ARC projects). The authors identified civil rights, democratic institutions and an effective public sector as necessary prerequisites for the realization of sustainable development in the region. Glasmeier and Farrigan argued that the civic capacity of Central Appalachia is underdeveloped and they called for “more community-based development strategies that broaden the local base of participants and include new groups, citizens, nongovernmental organizations, churches, and private funders in planning for development” (2003, p.148). Wishart has argued similarly that to achieve sustainable human development, Central Appalachia needs a process of production in which, “the diverse use-values of the different parts of nature are accounted for and considered and decided on

collectively rather than remaining the narrow prerogative of the owning class who consider only their projected, and discounted for the future, profits” (2014, p. 180).

York, in analyzing what is worth sustaining in Appalachia, has suggested that, “[d]ue to high inequality in the region, an expansion of GDP may not translate into greater well-being for most people,” but sustained local and state government aid efforts supported by federal help could improve people’s well-being by reducing environmental degradation and creating a more progressive tax system (e.g., taxing the profits of environmentally damaging industries) (2016, p. 16). He suggested that by taxing polluting industries governments could invest in expanding affordable health care services and education along with improving housing, providing public space for recreation and community-building and restoring the damaged ecosystems of the region. In his view, all of these steps could lead to “an ecologically, economically and socially more sustainable foundation for people in the region” (York, 2016, p. 17).

In his analysis of development in Appalachia, Schumann (2016) argued that securing broad democratic participation in such decision-making processes is a fundamental prerequisite of sustainability. He highlighted the need to integrate a “politics from above” with grassroots democracy as a realistic strategy to secure sustainability in Appalachia suggesting that, “[c]ollaborative interactions, over time, can become sounding boards for establishing a community-based consensus about relevant sustainable futures that are in conversation with region-wide, national, and global knowledge and initiatives (e.g., transcendent human rights goals)” (Schumann, 2016, p. 28).

Conclusion

Conceptions of development have evolved since their initial introduction in 1950s. Although decidedly different in the means they have embraced to achieve a better world for all, they are nonetheless and taken together, more continuous and overlapping than mutually exclusive. The evolution that has occurred in development approaches has influenced policies and projects in Central Appalachia. Despite the undoubted positive contributions of numerous, long-term social programs (Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, SSI and so on) and development initiatives, the residents of the region today still struggle with widespread poverty, unemployment and a lack of access to quality education and healthcare services. With ever-decreasing resources as their principal industries continue to decline, widespread fear for the future with shrinking life prospects necessitates new development narratives for the region. More recent analytical approaches, which have generally viewed neoliberalism as responsible for growing inequality and environmental degradation in Central Appalachia, have called for “resistance against the powerful, the guarantors of an everyone-for-himself society and capitalist pursuit of profit” (Kothari, Salleh, Escobar, Demaria, and Acosta, 2019, p. xv). This narrative of solidarity requires a social transformation that values empathy in order to confront the currently dominant and unsustainable prevailing “xenophobic nationalism and technocratic globalism” (Kothari et al., 2019, p. xvi).

With this broad context in place, the next chapter reviews the literature on sustainable tourism (a common development strategy adopted by many post-coal rural communities in Appalachia) and community cultural development as a strategy for individuals—with clashing interests and worldviews—to attain an improved measure of solidarity and deeper empathetic understanding among themselves and thereby, across their communities.

Chapter 3

Literature Review (Part 2)

Chapter 2 investigated the evolution of development conceptions and projects in Central Appalachia and revealed a number of challenges and impediments (e.g., the hegemony of extractive industries with leaders guided by a neoliberal agenda and the need for developing a range of community capacities to assess possibilities for, and/or to maintain, positive change) to reducing poverty and injustice in the region during the past several decades. Past scholars and practitioners have called for bottom-up, sustainable development approaches for Appalachia that respect the uniqueness of the place and of its people. Their analyses inform the literature review presented here.

This chapter first briefly explores the literature on tourism-based development and sustainable and community-based tourism to highlight relevant theory and practice-related gaps and unexplored questions. Thereafter, the analysis will examine the concepts of community capacity and social capital. These constitute major components of civic capability alongside community cultural development as a framework for capacity building in communities. I proceed on the view that such competence is a prerequisite to attaining any of today's conceptions of sustainable development.

Sustainable Community-based Tourism

Tourism has been a popular development strategy since the 1950s in many parts of the world, mainly due to its promise of foreign exchange, capacity to generate employment and ability to promote economic independence (Kim, Chen, and Jang, 2006; Lee and Chang, 2008; Webster and Ivanov, 2014). Due to its potential as a strategy to promote economic activity (Sharpley and Telfer, 2002) and, in particular, to contribute to national balance of payments results (Mihalič, 2015), a majority of the studies of tourism-led development initially focused on economic growth (Alexander, 1953; Royer, McCool, and Hunt, 1974; Sadler and Archer, 1975), based on the then common belief that such would improve the quality of life of all in a targeted jurisdiction (e.g., modernization theory in development or, the old adage that “a rising tide lifts all boats”).

However, in recent decades, countries that have solely focused on the economic aspects of tourism have simultaneously experienced rising rates of social deterioration and natural resource degradation (Daly, 1990; Daly, Cobb Jr, and Cobb, 1989). Moreover, the purported developmental benefits of tourism have, “fail[ed] to materialize, benefit[ted] only local elites, or [were] achieved at significant economic, social or environmental cost to local communities” for many destinations (Telfer and Sharpley, 2015, p. 306).

In the late-1980s, several scholars critically questioned the initial support for tourism as a driver for economic growth and called for more responsible, alternative forms of such activities (Britton and Clarke, 1987; Brohman, 1996; R. W. Butler, 1992; R.W. Butler, 1990; Cohen, 1987; Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer, 2010; McGehee, 2002; Pearce, 1992; Prosser et al., 1994). Alternative approaches to tourism generally support small-scale or locally-based initiatives that attempt to bring benefits to poorer communities, minimize harm to those communities and to the

environment and aim to build good relationships between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’(Krippendorf, 1987). They also support the notion that local residents should play an active role in tourism planning and decision-making forums (P. E. Murphy, 1985) and support tourism that is fair, just and equitable (Scheyvens, 2002). However, in many cases, parallel to the sustainability discourse in the development world, a sense of outrage emerged in tourism studies concerning the misuse of nature, particularly the costs of unfettered materialism and the loss of previous culture(s) when destination communities adopted the idea of alternative tourism²³ (de Kadt, 1992).

Analysts who explored tourism as a development strategy in the wake of World War II adopted the sustainability concept as their lodestone during the 1980s and emphasized the necessity of more sustainable practices in all forms of tourism in reaction to perceived past detrimental social and environmental impacts arising from previous failures to do so. It is also worth noting that while explorations concerning the appropriate focus and strategy of tourism have undoubtedly broadened debate on the topic, critics have argued that the resulting controversy has also tended to deflect attention from the more specific questions of whether, for whom and/or to what degree tourism alleviates poverty (Harrison, 2008, p. 853).

The U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 (also known as the Rio Summit), highlighted the role of tourism as a tool to realize sustainable development through concrete non-binding actions (Dryzek and Schlosberg, 2005). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has since defined sustainable tourism as: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the

needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, p. 12).

Critics have argued that the term “sustainability” has been applied too broadly in both the development (as outlined above) and tourism discourses. Graci and Dodds (2010) found that there are more than 200 definitions of sustainable tourism, without a universally accepted one. Confusion concerning the meaning of sustainability has led some to use the terms *ecotourism* or *community-based tourism* as substitutes for sustainable tourism. While both approaches do indeed embrace the principles of sustainability to a large extent, they each refer explicitly to a certain product/process within the tourism domain (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). From another viewpoint, opponents of ecotourism have criticized it as, “a new form of ecological imperialism in which western cultural values override local cultural values and thereby oppose the principles of sustainability which (sic.) ecotourism claims to support” (Mowforth and Munt, 2016, p. 111). This dialogue suggests that sustainability is not reducible to a series of absolute tenets but, as Mowforth and Munt (2016) have suggested, and in accordance with the Brundtland (1987) commission’s original findings, is best viewed as a continuum of differing degrees of tradeoffs of its undergirding values.

The role of local communities, while unclear at the institutional beginnings of sustainable tourism and community-based tourism, became increasingly apparent in later initiatives, such as *Local Agenda 21* and many other UNWTO efforts (see UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Proponents of community-based tourism (CBT) consider it to be compatible with, and an evocation of, sustainable tourism, since CBT has the capacity to provide local societies with economic benefits (Honey, 2008; Slee, Farr, and Snowdon, 1997) and some degree of participatory justice/democratization, empowerment and sense of ownership (Aghazamani et al.,

2020; Boley et al., 2014; Boley and McGehee, 2014; Cole, 2006; T. Jamal and Dredge, 2014; Jóhannesson et al., 2003; Okazaki, 2008; Scheyvens, 2002); e.g. potential to benefit local populations while reducing tourism's possible negative consequences.

Although community-based and sustainable tourism both seek to achieve similar goals in economic, social and environmental intra-and inter-generational advancement (Cole, 2006; Saarinen, 2006; Wall, 1997) some researchers have nevertheless warned that community-based tourism is not intrinsically sustainable (Akama, 1996; Li, 2006; Stem, Lassoie, Lee, Deshler, and Schelhas, 2003). According to these analysts, an *a priori* assumption of cohesion within communities presumes tourism's contributions to sustainability and vice versa, while in reality, local populations may not be geographically bounded or homogeneous. Indeed, most are socially differentiated and diverse. As a result, similar to other community-based development projects, social exclusion, lack of participation, structural constraints to local control of the tourism industry and the challenges attending the exercise of individual and community agency have led to unsustainable results in many CBT initiatives (Blackstock, 2005).

After undertaking a critical analysis of the relationship between and gaps within the sustainable tourism and CBT frameworks, Dangi and Jamal proposed an integrated approach with a local and global perspective—*sustainable community-based tourism*—as they named it:

[B]ridging the local (CBT) and the global (ST) [sustainable tourism] are principles of good governance and justice that enable fairness and equity in the distribution and use of tourism-related resources from the local to the global level, as well as principles of community empowerment and capacity building, stewardship of natural, cultural and social goods (2016, p. 475).

Previous studies have explored the link between residents' perceptions, community participation and support for tourism development using various frames, including stakeholder

and social exchange theory (SET) (Byrd, 2007; Jaafar, Noor, and Rasoolimanesh, 2015; McGehee and Andereck, 2004). Moscardo (2008) has argued that improving residents' knowledge of tourism is the major prerequisite for increasing community participation in that form of development. However, awareness is not a sufficient condition for enhanced civic capacity for engagement in tourism discourse. Several studies have investigated the barriers to local participation in tourism/development decision-making processes and found that other than lack of information/low education levels, the costs for participants, prolonged decision-making time frames and difficulties in securing inclusivity and fair representation of all stakeholder groups are among major impediments to involvement in these processes.

In certain contexts, sociopolitical restrictions on public expression and debate and conflicts concerning tourism (e.g., discord among interested groups or negative externalities) have hindered participation among community residents (Bello, Lovelock, and Carr, 2017; Marzuki, Hay and James, 2012; Timothy, 2007; Yung and Chan, 2011). Overall, many practitioners and analysts have contended that communities cannot be said to participate in development processes unless they have built and can call on a collective capacity to do so first (Green and Haines, 2015).

Scholars have extensively analyzed the contributions of community capacity building to sustainable tourism development initiatives (Aref and Redzuan, 2009; Moscardo, 2008; Victurine, 2000) and impacts of tourism on a host community's solidarity (Huang and Stewart, 1996; Hwang, Stewart and Ko, 2012; McGregor and Fawcett, 2011). However, few analyses to date have examined the character and efficacy of methods of community capacity building in securing the development and sustainability of tourism destinations.

Moscardo (2008) has proposed a framework for incorporating community capacity building in tourism development planning through identifying stakeholders and their roles, identifying a full range of development options and creating widespread knowledge and awareness of tourism's costs and benefits so affected residents can make informed decisions. However, as she has suggested, her model manifests, "critical gaps in ... how to achieve the goals embedded in the community capacity-building approach to tourism development... [especially] mechanisms for improving community participation in tourism, including the development of partnerships, entrepreneurs and tourism leaders" (Moscardo, 2008, p.12). When exploring the ways community-based festivals in Australia evidence and enhance a sense of community and place among residents, Derret (2000, 2003) found that such public events play a significant role in the civic and cultural development of their host destinations. Picard and Robinson have highlighted the potential of festivals as, "arenas of cultural creativity whereby communities can innovate as a means of coping with moments of social crisis, [...] and as a way of innovating new markers of being and meaning" (2006, p. 14).

Community Capacity Framework

Community

The following section reviews the literature regarding components of community capacity in order to identify effective methods of addressing how it might be augmented. Community capacity building is a major factor in the sustainability of development projects, including those employing tourism. To describe community capacity building adequately, one must first characterize "community," given its wide currency and application. To define the

term, Tönnies has differentiated between *Wesenwille* (natural will) and *Kürwille* (rational will). *Wesenwille* varies in the degree of rationality it evidences and, “is derived from the temperament, character and intellectual attitude of the individual, whether it has its origin in liking, inclination, habit or memory” (2002, p. 5). *Kürwille*, meanwhile, as a product of thinking, “possesses reality only with reference to its author, the thinking individual” (p. 103) who “desires to order and define everything according to end, purpose or utility” (p.141). In this view, natural will manifests more broadly in *Gemeinschaft* (community) where traditions and sense of solidarity rule whereas rational will blooms in *Gesellschaft* (society). Since individuals’ conduct is neither wholly instinctive, nor completely reasoned in practice, all societies evidence elements of both kinds of will. As a result, this continuum (compared to polar-type formulations) is a vital notion in conducting a comparative analysis of social phenomena, including social capacities (Tönnies, 2002).

Tönnies’ ideal types of community and society have counterparts in the social sciences: Durkheim’s mechanical solidarity that “results from homogeneous beliefs and sentiments common to all members of the group” and organic solidarity that “supposedly result from heterogeneity, with different and special functions united by definite relationships” (2014, pp. xxviii–xxix), Weber’s (2009 [1947]) formal rationality (simple means-end rational calculation) and substantive rationality (in relation to past, present or potential value postulates) and Sorokin’s (1947) familistic (based on mutual love, sacrifice and devotion) and contractual (rooted in sober calculation of advantage) are among the most noted of such categorizations.

Gusfield (1975) has argued that community can refer to a geographical area that is recognizable by a set of attributes tied to its physical location or appearance, such as natural boundaries, an acknowledged history, demographic patterns or the presence and work within it

of particular industries or organizations. Nonetheless, community may also refer to social attributes and interests—such as language, customs, class or ethnicity—that inhabitants share and commonly use to designate themselves as a collective entity, regardless of geographic proximity. These criteria are not mutually exclusive and can combine, especially in older cities/towns where patterns of immigration and settlement form geographically distinct areas within which exist a unique set of sociocultural characteristics. Chaskin (2012) added a third lens through which to view communities by incorporating both social and spatial dimensions. He suggested that community as, “a political unit is a basis for representation, collective deliberation, mobilization, and actions” (Chaskin, 2012, p. 112). It follows therefore that a community exists when it acts and “is defined in these instances by the range of actors and interactions collectively engaged toward some common purpose” (Chaskin, 2012, p. 112).

According to Chaskin, an *a priori* assumption concerning identity and cohesion can lead to romanticizing local communities based on a misplaced view of some past "golden age." This penchant prevents the acknowledgment and appreciation of difference, underplays the intrinsic reality of conflict and segmentation and ignores broader questions, “of structure and agency that shape community circumstances from both inside and out, through the decisions and actions of political and market actors” (Chaskin, 2012, p. 109).

To assume that communities can and do act as collectivities is problematic in several respects. First, empirical studies have documented serious gaps in local social organization and a relative dearth of truly community oriented action (Wilkinson, 1991), especially in rural areas. Localities do act, of course, but they typically do so intermittently and primarily in reaction to perceived crises (Luloff, 2019). Even in communities that can be characterized as active, there

tends to be relatively little coordination among actors and actions; different groups pursue specific objectives largely in isolation.

Second, the available data concerning economic development efforts—an aspect of local governance efforts that surely plays an important role in strategies to create sustainable communities—suggests that leadership and participation are limited primarily to elites whose interest in development often has more to do with private profit than community well-being (Logan and Molotch, 2007). Finally, historical developments such as increasing contact with, and reliance on, extra-local institutions and sources of income and employment have eroded local autonomy. With the solidification of this trend, "... the locus of decision-making ... often shifts to places outside the community" (Philips, 1970, p. 368).

In response to such challenges, Anheier has suggested that "to achieve a healthy functioning of community the interplay between involvement and trust in civil society is central" (2014, p. 91). In this regard, Robinson and Green have observed that, "community agency and corresponding development can be seen as the process of building relationships that increase the capacity of local people" to unite and act (2011, p. 90). Other scholars have similarly contended that communities develop and their populations' well-being is enhanced when residents work together to address shared concerns and problems.

Community Capacity

Chaskin has defined community capacity as,

the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community... through informal social processes and /or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks

that exist among them and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part (Chaskin, 2001a, p. 7).

In this definition human capital consists of individual skills and knowledge that can be relevant to community circumstances. Organizational resources refer to groups and institutions that are capable of coalescing, supporting and producing services and are also able to represent a collectivity to outside actors. Social capital refers to ties or relationships within and among community members and organization employees in all sectors of the political economy that might lead to a locality's well-being. The following section discusses social capital in more detail.

In operationalizing the community capacity concept, Chaskin (2001a) contended that localities have four common characteristics: sense of community (this idea will be discussed below) among members so they are aware of the ways in which they share values and circumstances, a threshold level of commitment among some members so they are willing to act on behalf of the collectivity and individual and common capacity to access useful resources and address shared problems at both the individual and community scales.

In his work concerning democratic problem-solving, Briggs (2008) argued that there are three analytic traditions that purport to explain the role of democracy in decision-making at the local level. The first approach views democracy "as a contest among interest groups—a strategic process, mediated by some formal rules, but decided by power" (Briggs, 2008, p.7). The second view considers "democracy as an instrument for deliberation—a collective search for better answers above and beyond self-interested bargaining" (Briggs, 2008, p.7). The third perspective, which expands the two previous ones, is based on John Dewey's (2016 [1927]) work and argues that "democracy's potential is to be the fulfillment of 'community life' itself,

which necessarily includes progress on important community problems: not just authorizing government to act but acting with it” (Briggs, 2008, p.7).

Viewing democracy as problem-solving, Briggs contended that to understand what makes democracy work it is vital to study shared capacity to solve problems, “to change the state of the world through a collective action, not only to devise and decide but [also] to do” (2008, p. 8). He argued that in this light the notion of communal efficacy captures “the core concept of democracy as a recipe for collective (or ‘community’) problem solving” (2008. p. 9). He proposed that by paying attention to problem-solving one can avoid treating improved interpersonal relations as a panacea for community challenges—a charge sometimes raised against the concept of social capital (Portes, 1998).

Lasker and Weiss reviewed the literature concerning the factors that undermine collective problem-solving within United States communities and found, “the politics of interest groups, the eroding sense of community and the limited involvement of community residents in civic problem solving” to be the major hurdles at play (2003, p. 19). According to the authors “when the politics of interest groups goes too far” and winning a fight and/or beating opponents become more important than finding solutions, communities lose the opportunity of having the discourse required for identifying and addressing the complex issues confronting them (Lasker and Weiss, 2003, p. 20).

Chaskin’s community capacity framework suggests that communities can intentionally build/increase their capacity through planned interventions. Capacity building as “the ability of becoming active agents of change” (Green and Haines, 2015, pp. 8–9) therefore focuses on “developing a local capacity within communities to promote positive change, to manage change

as it happens ... to support individual well-being” and shared functioning (Chaskin, 2006, p. 51).

In defining community capacity, Chaskin (2001b) has identified social capital as one of the major pillars of the concept. He has also argued that individuals in communities that possess capability demonstrate high levels of shared purpose. The following sections briefly explain social capital and sense of community. They also provide a rationale for choosing the latter for analysis in this study.

Social Capital

In *The Eclipse of Community*, in accord with Tönnies’ and Weber’s conclusions, Stein (1960) suggested that communal relationships attenuate as modern societies become larger and more complex. This line of reasoning was similar to Simmel’s (1903) earlier analysis of urbanism, in which he suggested that urbanization and modernization lead to the destruction of interconnected, personal and long-lasting relationships otherwise characteristic of small and rural communities, replacing those connections with detached and temporary ties.

In an analysis undertaken in more recent years, Putnam has argued that the erosion of resident’s felt sense of community is the direct result of a breakdown in the nation’s stock of social capital (SC), which he defined as “connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (2000, p. 19). Many associate the concept of social capital with Coleman (1986), who had earlier contended that such ties facilitate certain actions of actors within the social structure, and with Bourdieu, who defined the term as, “the sum total of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual (or a

group) by virtue of being enmeshed in a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (1986, p. 248).

In another influential work, Putnam et al. contended that social capital serves as the key element in processes of forming and strengthening communities over time (Putnam et al., 1994). As these scholars elaborated, social capital represents a set of relationships and structures in civil society that provide resources for people to act as citizens in their community. Key indicators or manifestations of social capital include trust in one’s neighbors (Perkins and Long, 2002), willingness to engage in reciprocity (Cox, 1995) and voluntarism and membership networks (Cox, 1995; Hugman and Sotiri, 2001).

In their four-part typology of neighborhoods, Sampson and Graif (2009) found that social capital can reflect very different kinds of organization in different contexts. For example, in communities exhibiting the highest level of disadvantage, lowest affluence rates and diversity levels, the average scores of residents’ organizational involvement and sense of collective efficacy were ranked the lowest, even though leaders in these jurisdictions had actively sought outside aid. In contrast, in urban village clusters, as these authors labeled them, the communities with highest stability levels, lowest disadvantage levels and medium to low scores on all diversity indices had the highest levels of social capital among residents. Leaders in these localities evidenced the lowest levels of positional contacts and medium involvement in religious and/or school organizations, since in such communities “ leaders’ efforts may be invested instead in maintaining a cohesive and centralized structure” (Sampson and Graif, 2009, p. 1597). In contrast to Sampson and Graif’s findings in the United States, Hillier contended that in ‘battler’ neighborhoods in Australia, in which residents of low socio-economic status were fighting poverty, there was evidence of a strong sense of community. He argued that,

“whilst residents may have little money to spare for club or association membership payments, social capital is characterized by informal structures of voluntarism, reciprocity and trust” (2002, p. 62). He noted that in more middle-class neighborhoods, “typically owner-occupied residential estates and suburbs, people living adjacent may have very little contact with each other” and demonstrate low levels of social capital (Hillier, 2002, p. 62).

Pooley, Cohen and Pike (2005) conducted a content analysis of social capital definitions and concluded that the concept meant different things to different authors. Nevertheless, the three scholars contended that the three themes of connections, networks and competencies were integral to the idea of social capital across its many definitions. Ahn (2017) has also suggested that social capital is commonly asserted to be crucial for civil society and wellbeing, but he also suggested that there is no consensus on how to define and measure it. Some analysts have criticized the concept for appearing to suggest that all civic engagement will lead to increased levels of social capital that will eventually benefit individuals, the community and democracy more broadly, whereas, in fact, when unevenly distributed, social capital can potentially promote inequality, constrain individual advancement in light of membership obligations and/or lead to exclusionary practices (Daly and Silver, 2008; Portes, 1998; Portes and Landolt, 1996).

Ishihara and Pascual (2009) have also contended that the existence of social capital does not automatically lead to collective action or positive change. They have suggested that shared effort is not simply the result of rational calculation about how much to invest in collaborative efforts by individuals, but also a result of power relations and social structure (e.g., what kind of social capital is available to which group, the social distance between dominant and marginalized individuals and the character of the collective action in view).

Sense of Community

According to McMillan and Chavis, sense of community is, “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (1986, p.9). The relationship between sense of community and sustainability has been widely studied in recent years. For instance, Dempsey et al. (2009) considered sense of community a component of social sustainability. Forsyth et al. found that increases in “one's sense of community were associated with increases in willingness to protect water resources” (2015, p. 233). Holland (2004) adopted sense of community theory to argue that community gardens can be positive forces for local sustainability. For their part, in their effort to develop indicators to measure community tourism development within a sustainable framework, Choi and Turk (2011) found sense of community and place/community attachment to be key factors in building sustainability.

A strong sense of bonding, satisfying needs (both individual and collective) and exchanging resources among citizens and residents are characteristics of both social capital and sense of community. The question is whether and how the two constructs relate to each other. Perkins and Long saw the concepts as equivalents, with social capital being “observed and analyzed as a characteristic (or not) of communities or societies, rather than individuals” (2002, p. 291). Pooley, Cohen and Pike (2005) argued that to increase social capital requires strengthening the connections between and among individuals. From a psychological point of view, sense of community informs the ways that would-be intervenors can develop and strengthen interpersonal connections through “conceptual understanding of how individuals interact and relate to others in communities” (Pooley et al., 2005, p. 73). These authors

concluded that sense of community as a correlate of social capital is a robust framework “for investigating ways in which SC may be realized in communities” (2005, p. 71).

Sarason (1974) has claimed that sense of community is essential to understand the dark side of individualism, which he saw being manifested as widespread social alienation, selfishness and despair. He defined the term as, “the sense that one was part of a readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one could depend and as a result of which one did not experience sustained feelings of loneliness” (Sarason, 1974, p. 1). According to Fisher et al. (2002) McMillan and Chavis (1986) have offered the most successful effort to date to translate Sarason's call into an analytical framework. They proposed a model to operationalize the sense of community construct comprised of four attributes: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional needs. I treat each in turn below.

Membership

While they do not explain its provenance, McMillan and Chavis have argued that *Membership* is “the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness” (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Membership has boundaries (the difference between in-group and out-group) that provide individuals with the emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop (Ehrlich and Graeven, 1971). Membership also includes the attributes of sense of belonging and identification (a feeling that one belongs in a community and is willing to make sacrifices for it), personal investment (working for the community leads to feelings that one has earned a membership, which is valuable and meaningful) and a common symbol system (means of identifying who belongs to a community).

Influence

Influence is “a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members” (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 9). The authors argued that the mutual influence of a member on the community and vice versa can be challenging as this factor highlights the dynamic interplay between shared identification amidst real and continuing individual differences. Engaging in associations or in government programs yields a sharing of power that can lead at once to greater ownership of, and influence on, the community by participants, as well as to increased satisfaction and cohesion among them (Dahl, 2005; Hunter, 2017).

Integration and fulfillment of needs

Chavis and McMillan have contended that in order to maintain a positive feeling of togetherness, members should perceive a rewarding individual-group association. People enjoy helping others, just as they enjoy being assisted, and the most successful communities include associations that are rewarding for all involved (1986, p. 16).

Shared emotional connections

Shared emotional connections are centered to some extent around a common history; in which community members may or may not “have [directly] participated. ... in order to share it, but they must identify with it” (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 13). Shared emotional connections include positive experiences among members such as interpersonal relationships, spending time together, personal friendships and bonds, emotional risk²⁴ and effects of honor or humiliation on group members. Shared histories, places, time together and/or experiences

²⁴ The authors argued that the extent to which one opens oneself individually to emotional pain from involvement in community life will affect one’s general sense of community.

constitute one of the four factors of sense of community, but common emotional connections also “represent the warmth and intimacy implicit in the [sense of community] term” (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Shared emotional connections provide the impetus for people to come together in common cause in the sense of community framework (Kloos et al., 2012, p. 183). In other words, natural will (with varying degrees of rationality) informs an individual’s decision to join and maintain her/his membership in a group.

McMillan (1996) later elaborated on his argument originally developed with with Chavis concerning the importance of shared emotional bonds among community residents:

I view Sense of Community as a *spirit* of belonging together, a feeling that there is an authority structure that can be *trusted*, an awareness that *trade*, and mutual benefit come from being together, and a spirit that comes from shared experiences that are preserved as *art* (McMillan, 1996, p. 315, emphasis in the original).

In this conceptualization, McMillan (1996) rearranged and renamed the elements of sense of community he had earlier developed with Chavis (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). Those were, as noted above, membership, influence, meeting needs and a shared emotional connection. In this later version, McMillan replaced membership with “spirit” to emphasize the importance of friendship, solidary connections and expression of one’s true self in a communal setting. According to McMillan (1996) the spirit of sense of community grows with and through truth-telling, emotional safety, sense of belonging and paying dues.²⁵ He used “trust” instead of influence in his updated argument, claiming that trust is a precursor to influence. Barber (1983)

²⁵ McMillan contended that membership in a group provides advantages. He claimed that a community has the right to test members’ loyalty by expecting them, according to their capacity, to sacrifice their time, energy, financial resources, etc. if necessary. Likewise, members have the right of being “entitled” when they pay their dues.

has suggested that *trust* is fundamental to the exercise of power and therefore represents an indispensable element of every social relationship/system. Trust in Dirk's view is the "expectation or belief that one can rely on another person's actions and word and/or that the person has good intentions toward oneself" (2000, p. 1004). Hardin criticized viewing trust as "nothing more than incentive compatibility or rational expectations of the other's behavior" claiming that while necessary, shared interests are not sufficient in developing trust; what is more important is individuals' perceived value of maintaining a collaborative relationship into the future (2002, p. 5).

McMillan argued further in 1996 that communities can achieve trust that evolves into justice if they ensure several conditions: order, dispersed decision authority, authority based on principle(s) rather than person(s) and group norms that allow members and authority mutually to influence each other (1996, p. 320). Instead of "integrating needs and resources," in this fresh rendering, McMillan introduced social trades in which the value of the exchange depended on the personal risk involved in self-disclosure. He suggested that "effective communities protect their members from shame in their social exchanges" and residents in such populations give for the joy and privilege of giving (intrinsic value), not simply for getting something in the end (rational choice) (McMillan, 1996, p. 322).

And finally, he used "art" in his new model in place of "shared emotional connection in time and space," arguing that shared dramatic stories/music/symbols represent a community's values and traditions, comprise its spirit and constitute transcendent characteristics that will outlive specific members (McMillan, 1996, p. 323).

Although McMillan's revision of the four elements of sense of community added nuance to the previous version of the framework, the four factors he originally proposed with Chavis in

1986 nonetheless remain the most often cited criteria in both qualitative and quantitative studies employing the sense of community construct (Fremlin, 2012). This study adopts McMillan's later version, due to its emphasis on the interrelatedness of the four elements, and also because of the broader, more inclusive definitions of the criteria he offered.

The following section briefly reviews the literature regarding community cultural development and examines the conceptual connections between this conceptual framework and community capacity and capacity building.

Community Cultural Development

As outlined in previous sections, the interactions of residents during commonly experienced events, in addition to the characteristics of those occurrences, can facilitate or impede the growth of a community's capacity. When examining community-art projects²⁶ as ritualistic settings for social interaction in two Denver neighborhoods, Lowe concluded that it is possible for citizens to generate *gemeinschaft* (natural will) in settings where *gesellschaft* (rational will) prevails by adopting "community art as a tool for transforming a social realm" (2000, p. 357). She has suggested that the formation of social bonds of solidarity and the emergence of collective identity that resulted from neighborhood residents' gatherings offered space for the development of common group symbols. This observation suggests the close ties of such collective emotional connections to what McMillan (1996) called shared dramatic stories/music/symbols as key components of a sense of community.

²⁶ Kelly has defined community art as "a general term for a group of cultural activities which (sic.) the practitioners recognize as having common features, but whose precise boundaries remain undrawn" (Kelly, 1984, p. 1).

From another point of view, Lasker and Weiss have proposed that individual awareness of their agency is a prerequisite for strengthening civic capacity for problem solving. If people perceive themselves as possessing capacity to act (agency) they may make choices individually and collectively (efficacy) to address the forces that affect their lives they otherwise would not have conceived or selected. Culture includes art and many other forms of possible interaction, and these can produce individual “conscientization” and empowerment through a bottom-up approach (Adams and Goldbard, 2005, p. 4).

A number of scholars have argued that community-based cultural development (CCD) can serve as a means to encourage “conscious, thoughtful dialogue among individuals and groups possessing diverse values and beliefs” (Kirakosyan and Stephenson, 2019, p. 375; Meban, 2009) and thereby help populations to develop the capacity to act and to assume ownership for community change (Adams and Goldbard, 2005; Bacon, 2012; Booth, 1995; Fleming, 2007; Kay, 2000; Sharp, Pollock, and Paddison, 2005; Stephenson and Tate, 2015). By concentrating on human interactions and social stories, as Kirakosyan and Stephenson have remarked, “the arts can help groups mobilize around shared purposes, thus facilitating community change efforts” (2019, p. 388).

Cleveland has defined community cultural development as “arts-centered activity that contributes to the sustained advancement of human dignity, health, and/or productivity within a community” (2011, p. 4). Goldbard has described community cultural development as the work of community artists who “singly or in teams, place their artistic and organizing skills at the service of the emancipation and development of an identified community” (2006, p. 140). Goldbard has highlighted the role of people and places in this kind of development, claiming that, “in contrast to imposed development, where a preset notion of success leads to fairly

similar interventions in quite different contexts, with community cultural development, people's own answers to these questions shape what happens next in their community" (2015, p. 20).

By comparing the situation in community-based theatres when local residents play roles to that when professional non-local artists tackle them, Cohen-Cruz highlighted a parallel with the democratic political system: "In representational democracy people vote every few years for a professional politician to 'stand in' for them, in participatory democracy they are directly involved in at least discussions concerning policies that affect them" (2005, p. 88). As Pontious argued in the case of community mural-making, CCD not only facilitates a democratizing process where participants collectively address problems relevant to all of those engaged, but also provide artists and community members "opportunities to explore critical and creative thinking, empathy, acceptance and open-mindedness" (Pontious, 2014, p. 71).

Cocke has characterized CCD as a kind of development, "that utilizes the inherent intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and material traditions and features of a community to encourage individual agency in support of community well-being" (Stephenson and Tate, 2015, p. 136). This definition resonates with community capacity building as an ability, shared and evoked among residents, to become agents of change.

According to Fromm, "[c]ollective art is shared; it permits man to feel one with others in a meaningful, rich, productive way" (Fromm, 1990, p. 302). Leavy (2015, 2017) has contended that compared to other modes of interaction, art has the potential of connecting with individuals at a deeper level. Hence, it holds a higher prospect of spurring compassion and empathetic understanding among those with conflicting worldviews. In his classic study of Jonesville, a midwestern town, Warner (1976) recognized the strong integrative function of collective myths, symbols, rituals, rites, ceremonies and holidays. Sharp, Pollock and Paddison have investigated

the social inclusionary/exclusionary role of public art as part of a wider project addressing urban regeneration and found, as other CCD analysts have concluded, that the “processes through which artworks become installed into the urban fabric are critical to the successful development of inclusion” (2005, p. 1001). However, due to the unpredictability of both art and populations, community-based projects (as is true of virtually all development efforts) often unfold in nonlinear ways (Goldbard, 2015), such that many positive (or negative) outcomes can occur as unintended consequences of collective art practices (Stern and Seifert, 2009).

To sum up, CCD contributes to community capacity elements such as sense of community and individual and shared ability to solve collective problems in several ways. By providing opportunities for self-reflexivity and empathetic understanding culture-based community development approaches facilitate interpersonal connections and common understanding among those involved. Developing social bonds based on collective art/culture contributes to CCD participants’ sense of, and commitment to, their community. The CCD bottom-up approach esteems participants’ perspectives rather than simply those of experts and can spur individual’s awareness of their own power and agency as prerequisites for personal and collective problem solving.

Conclusion

Many post-industrial communities consider tourism a non-extractive form of socioeconomic development. Sustainable development scholars have called for community involvement and ownership of tourism-related activities and, more importantly, the decision-making processes that drive those efforts. More recent conceptual frameworks seeking to describe sustainable tourism have highlighted the importance of capacity building in supporting

and securing long-term community well-being. While a few case studies have analyzed the impact of art projects/festivals as successful tourism practices and/or mechanisms to encourage residents' engagement in tourism, the relationship between community cultural development (as a means of effective dialogue and a venue for achieving shared vision among a locality's residents) and the sustainability of community-based tourism has not yet been deeply investigated. This study examines the potential connections between the two constructs by considering their dynamics through the lens of the community capacity building framework.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methods

As argued in previous chapters, the sustainability of community-based tourism depends profoundly on a host jurisdiction's capacity. While tourism practitioners and scholars have documented the detrimental effects of a lack of a sense of community among the populations of tourist destinations, there are not many studies concerning whether and how encouraging this component of capacity within communities relates to tourism sustainability. Sense of community is a potent force that can lead residents to view themselves as a part of their locality and to be able to transcend self-benefitting choices to attain more balanced, "disembedded"²⁷ and relational understandings of the person" (Escobar, 2018, p. 84).

For a long time, colonialism, modernization and globalization have suppressed relational and place-based norms to encourage "the assumption of the self-interested autonomous individual and the businesslike and ego-clinching features it commands" (Escobar, 2018, p. 126). The question is how to kindle disciplines that facilitate the letting-go of ego-centered habits and enable spontaneous empathy. Kothari and colleagues' have contended that the answer to this concern can be found in a critical view of community as "in process and always questioning the modern capitalist patriarchal hegemony of the individual as kernel of society" (2019, p. xxxiii). Drawing from systems thinking, feminism, Buddhism and ecology,

²⁷ Based on the work of Tönnies, Karl Polanyi first coined the term "embeddedness," as an antithesis to market society, proposing that in all societies except for the capitalist one, economic exchange is embedded in social relations. In disembedded *Gesellschaft*, in which the sphere of economic exchange is "institutionally separate and motivationally distinct" (Polanyi and Dalton, 1971, p. 84) the economy is governed by laws of its own and "motivated in the last resort by two simple incentives, fear of hunger and hope of gain" (Polanyi and Pearson, 1977, p. 52).

Macy and Johnstone (2012) have suggested a framework that reconnects individuals through a wider sense of self, a different kind of power (i.e., power with), a richer experience of the community (through compassion and insight into interconnectedness) and a larger view of time. Westoby, drawing on Derrida's view of community as hospitality towards the other, has argued that,

[H]ospitality is a stance that constantly welcomes the stranger. If such an idea of hospitality is combined with the passion of not knowing, then the only possible trajectory for community development praxis is both more dialogue, opening up space for possibility, imagination, critical thinking and freedom to ask any question; and a constant endeavor to 'open' community up to those who have historically been excluded (Westoby, 2019, p. 10).

As noted above, the aim of this research was first to understand whether and in what ways participation in community cultural development activities, as one of many forms of communitarian entanglement, leads actors to embrace norms of respect, dignity, collaboration, reciprocity and empathy that are not entirely subject to the logic of capital accumulation. Second, I sought also to explore the relationship of such a worldview with the sustainability of community-based tourism in a small town in Central Appalachia. Personal observation, analysis of existing data and semi-structured interviews with a sample of individuals from a community cultural development organization regarding their personal experiences during their involvement in cultural activities in my target jurisdiction informed this study. This chapter outlines the rationale for the analysis's design and elaborates the research questions and explains the logic behind its methodology.

Research Questions

The exploration of the historical context of development in Central Appalachia offered in Chapter 2 revealed that despite the decades-long decline in coal production in the region that began soon after World War II, the industry has maintained its culturally hegemonic power by constructing a public image of coal as the economic backbone and core identity of Central Appalachia (Bell and Braun, 2010; Bell and York, 2010). Hence, the ongoing conflict among residents who continue to believe that coal will return in the face of evidence of its continuing decline and those who are searching for new forms of livelihood is often an ideological contest rather than a disagreement concerning economic growth strategies. More broadly, as Eller has contended, in modern Appalachia there is also a growing gap between “mountain middle-class and working-class people, between rural places and suburban communities, and between local families and neo-Appalachians” (2008, p. 222). As highlighted above, for an individual to become an active participant in a social movement, his or her personal identity must correspond with that effort’s collective character (Snow and McAdam, 2000). With the multiplicity of voices, incentives/objectives and values related to development evident in Central Appalachia among diverse stakeholders today, the question becomes how a population can work toward a shared vision. In other words, the issue is how a community whose residents embrace differing (and even conflicting) views towards development can develop capacity to achieve shared agreement and collectively craft steps to move toward it.

Research Question 1. To explore whether and in what ways engaging in CCD projects and community capacity are related.

In light of the fact that community capacity is a major factor in the sustainability of CBT efforts, the second research question was:

Research Question 2. If CCD and community capacity are related, whether and how such interaction influences the sustainability of tourism.

There might be a direct relation between cultural activities and tourism development (for example, community cultural events can be seen as tourist attractions). However, the main research concern in this study was to explore the ways through which collective cultural projects can affect community capacity as a pre-requisite for local residents to own, take control and assume ongoing responsibility for sustainable tourism.

Significance of This Study

While more and more Appalachian communities have begun to consider tourism as at least a part of the solution to declining or flagging local economies in recent decades, not all forms of the industry have been successful in securing economic and social benefits for their host jurisdictions. Although community-based tourism ideally guarantees residents' ownership and control of tourism-related firms, some analysts have argued that CBT is driven simply by economic imperatives, rather than by values of social justice and empowerment (Blackstock, 2005). In other words, community-based tourism has been criticized for tacitly accepting the neoliberal status quo by emphasizing the economic benefits of tourism, rather than helping to illuminate the ways through which host community residents can question structural inequalities and chart paths to address their living conditions in light of those efforts.

This study employed the community capacity building framework outlined above to investigate how community cultural development activities influence the perceived agency of individuals and localities and whether and how those perceptions and the behaviors arising from them may press community-based tourism toward efforts to ensure more just, collaborative and

inclusive public choice processes. As of this writing, no other analyses have investigated the connection between community cultural development, community capacity and the sustainability of tourism.

As a result, this research contributes empirically to the tourism and community development studies literatures. While analysts have developed a growing body of scholarship concerning the relationships between development and tourism (Mowforth and Munt, 2008; Telfer, 2009) and also regarding sustainable, pro-poor and community-based tourism aimed at eradicating poverty and enhancing social justice, there are no studies that have examined the approaches through which those aspirations can be realized. Focusing on the question of capacity, this dissertation explored the relative efficacy of community cultural development as a tool for enhancing solidarity (sense of and commitment to the community), ability to address collective problems and access to resources, at both the individual and community levels.

As a result, the findings of this study not only contribute to the tourism and community cultural development literatures, but also provide insights that may benefit economically and socially struggling communities, development practitioners, community cultural leaders and tourism planning departments. This is so because this analysis examined (and viewed) cultural activities not only as assets that may yield economic prosperity, but also and more importantly, as tools for increasing meaningful participation, effective communication and engaged meaning negotiation among multiple stakeholders.

Ontological and Epistemological Commitments

I employed qualitative research methods for this study since they meshed well with the objectives of this inquiry, which were to uncover “the meanings of a phenomenon for those

involved” by comprehending how humans “interpret their experiences,” such as, in this case, being involved in a community cultural development (CCD) project, “how they construct their worlds” and what their lived experience means to them (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 6).

Most qualitative researchers believe in an “inter-subjective world.”²⁸ In this view, both the analyst and those participating in an inquiry co-produce the knowledge such efforts yield. It follows that investigators cannot neglect their own knowledge of the social world “in the vain hope of achieving objectivity” (Barnes, 1992, p. 116). Moreover, from a methodological point of view, those embracing a qualitative approach argue that statistical logic and an experimental orientation are not appropriate to understand the meanings individuals attach to everyday life events (Barnes, 1992). Finally, in a world of multiple perceived realities, qualitative researchers deal with the numerous meanings that individuals and groups may attach to like or similar phenomena. Given this, policy interventions based on the “prescriptions of objective experts” are not politically (if not also ethically) acceptable (Silverman, 1985; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984).

Lincoln and colleagues (2011) have suggested that, overall, qualitative research is based on the view that social phenomena and human dilemmas are innately social and situational in character. Personally, I believe there are real objects that exist independently of our knowledge of their existence (realism doctrine). Nonetheless, as noted just above, I also believe there are multiple realities based on different understandings of the world (constructivism). Marrying these two propositions, ontological realism and epistemological relativism have informed my

²⁸ Refers to the coexistence of multiple realities in the context of everyday life (Berger and Luckmann, 1991, pp. 37–40)

research. I follow critical realists in maintaining that “while there is a reality independent from human agency and observation, such reality is amenable to multiple, though not equally plausible, explanations” (Zanotti, 2019). Although some have dismissed critical realism as simply positivism in another guise, many others have argued that the realist perspective, when placed into a dialogue with a constructivist view, can be of particular value for qualitative researchers (Maxwell, 2012). In addition, Agger (1998) has suggested that interpretive approaches are not incompatible with a critical orientation and that, indeed, the two overlap significantly.

For its part, and in my view, critical realism is different from positivism in at least two ways. First, in contrast to positivism, this stance embraces the confluence of theory and the theorist, calling for researcher self-awareness and reflexivity. I am committed to being self-reflective regarding the ways my background as an abled-bodied, non-white, Iranian female shapes my perceptions and likewise, others’ understanding of me. Second, while in positivist approaches analysts seek to explain the status quo in a value-neutral way, critical realists overtly question, critique and aim to change the existing state of affairs. That orientation is obvious in this analysis to the extent I have highlighted existing structural inequities and sought to understand how individuals in a specific context have addressed them to secure social change.

In scrutinizing the processes that can lead to opening social space for the exercise of agency, especially among the most vulnerable, I specifically accepted the critical realist contention that identifiable causal processes²⁹ and properties are responsible for the phenomena

²⁹ Based on Aristotle’s *aition*, Kurki has defined cause as “anything that contributes in any way to producing or maintaining a certain reality” (2008, p. 8).

I observed. Critical realists consider the social world as a complex and open system. In consequence, they do not seek to anticipate outcomes, but instead try to explain *why* and *how* a cluster of causes under certain circumstances resulted in a complex relationship or set of relationships (Zanotti, 2019). These ties and processes are not universal laws, but are instead situationally contingent (Patomäki, 2002); they are inherently imbricated in the context of which they are a part, which, therefore, must be considered an integral part of the causal process. Scholars adopting this approach do not accept existing conditions as predetermined (deterministic structuralism). Indeed, in contrast, they seek ways through which communities can become otherwise and actively work to identify spaces where prospects for change exist (Nickel, 2012).

Research Design Logic

Case Study

This research took the form of a case study. This type of analysis is often employed to gain understanding and insight into phenomena that have been little investigated or when the questions and concerns targeted for consideration are somehow simply new (Travers, 2001). Case studies are appropriate when (a) "how" or "why" questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2014, p. 5). As noted above, my research questions mostly concerned "how" engagement in collective cultural activities (as a contemporary phenomenon) may affect sustainable community-based tourism in small towns in the context of Central

Appalachia. My control, as the investigator, of the events and phenomena I examined was trivial, if any.

In choosing between single versus multiple site case research, I have opted for the former. Based on Yin's (2014) four types of designs for case studies, my inquiry was a holistic single-unit of analysis case study. The rationale for pursuing a single-case versus a multiple-case study is that by focusing on a *common* case, I sought to capture the circumstances and conditions of a prevalent phenomenon (community driven cultural activities, for example) because of the lessons it could offer about the social processes related to my theoretical interests (community capacity building and sustainable tourism). Additionally, the case I chose can be considered a critical case, due to decades of my sample jurisdiction's engagement in cultural activities in place. However, as I was not exploring specifically and solely the impact of involvement duration, the primary rationale for the form of this study was the investigation of a common case (Yin, 2014).

While single-case studies can provide deeper understanding of concerns under examination, they nevertheless come freighted with fears concerning the uniqueness of the conditions investigated and/or the researcher's ties to the inquiry (Yin, 2014). Many have argued that when analysts have the choice (and resources), multiple-case designs should be completed in lieu of single-case analyses, since the benefits of examining several scenarios may be substantial (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Nevertheless, although I searched for other suitable cases, I was not able to find a significantly different/ prominent one to justify a multiple case study, given my time and financial resources.

The phenomenon or the "quintain," as Stake (2006) has called it, which I examined in my inquiry was the involvement of community members interested in tourism in local cultural

programs and participants' potential role(s) in their community's (re)development. I investigated how such engagement may influence and, in turn, also be shaped by residents' involvement in sustainable tourism efforts. I considered carefully the cultural projects and the processes through which those have been initiated and the ways they have engaged residents, along with the contextual (social, political and economic) environment of the case.

In choosing my case, I followed those investigators who have suggested that a target selected for analysis does not need to be representative of a population; since the purpose of the research was to develop a theory and not to test one (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In this view, I selected the specific case I outline below because it was particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs. George and Bennett (2005) have argued that case selection should occur on the basis of at least a preliminary knowledge of each to ensure a robust research design. I had already acquired such knowledge about the case I opted to explore. I explain the details of why that was so below.

The Case

Patton has argued that:

the logic and power of qualitative purposeful sampling derives from its emphasis on an in-depth understanding of specific cases: information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry (2015, p. 53).

Following this logic, my case was a small town (fewer than 2,000 residents), located in Central Appalachia. Similar to many communities in that region, it has lost its primary economic base in recent decades due to the waning of the coal mining industry and is striving to develop new sources of employment in order to survive. The jurisdiction manifests a declining and aging

population, relatively high unemployment and underemployment, high rates of drug abuse among its residents and a relative lack of infrastructure and public services.

The community cultural organization I studied (I use Collective Culture or CC as its pseudonym hereafter) began its activities in 2015. It was initially a part of a larger cultural organization in Central Appalachia, but currently is in the process of obtaining 501c (3) status to become a separate free-standing nonprofit organization. The original idea animating CC's creation was to marry traditional asset-based development strategies with a community cultural development framework to spur community economic development by creating new a new narrative with and for the future of the place and its residents on which such efforts could be predicated.

I chose this community for study for several reasons. First, as an outsider (born and raised in a metropolitan area in a developing country), I was able to see a number of details and differences in the community and its choice processes that might not be easily noticed by an insider (which, I recognize, is also a relative term). As Berger has observed, it can be an empowering experience for those targeted when a researcher is perceived as "ignorant" (surely my situation as a foreign national) and respondents assume the "expert" position in consequence (2015, p. 277), especially in the study of marginalized and less advantaged populations. Relatedly, I was not yet very familiar with the dominant images and/or stereotypes of these places and communities. I hoped, therefore, to be able to offer fresh or different understandings and analysis in comparison to those culturally habituated to specific images of my selected study site.

However, and in contrast, I am aware that "being a foreigner" means that I might not have realized many cultural subtleties that a person born in the United States or from the region

I studied might automatically decode. To seek to be as conscious of this fact as feasible, I took extensive field notes to record my impressions of each data collection session, my perceptions of the context and particulars of interviews I conducted and my observations concerning their portent for the theories on which I chose to rely. This commentary played a key role in progressive subjectivity, or the monitoring of my own developing constructions, which several scholars have considered to be critical in establishing credibility (Berger, 2015; Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, 2011; Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day, 2012).

I had already entered into the proposed case community as a “student” seeking to learn for an earlier project before I embarked on this inquiry and I continued in that stance when I conducted interviews for this study. I viewed and treated my interviewees as experts. Being a female and the fact that I employ simple and straightforward English vocabulary in my interactions with study participants, helped me profoundly in developing relationships of openness with those with whom I interacted for this study.

As noted, the second reason for choosing this case was the opportunity I had to visit this town and to interview six of its organizational leaders in early March 2018 for a research paper. The individuals with whom I spoke then were collaborating on the development of a growing network of community-led organizations within and in the immediate vicinity of their locality, seeking to work together to build a culture and economy that the area could “own.” As I noted above, I have dubbed this initiative Collective Culture (CC).³⁰ Those initial interviews helped me identify two specific community building projects planned/led by CC, that encouraged me to

³⁰ Although during my interviews my interviewees suggested they were happy to have me use their real names, I have nonetheless elected to create a pseudonym for each and for their community in the hope of securing the confidentiality of their responses to the maximum extent feasible.

investigate further whether and how such efforts might relate to the development of community-based tourism, an aspiration shared by a major share of the group's members.

The most obvious challenge for me in conducting this research was my relative unfamiliarity with the culture (e.g., history, language, customs and so on) of the place I studied. I overcame this drawback to some extent through efforts to learn more about the locality and its residents by reading widely and deeply in relevant literature, watching my interlocutors' behaviors as carefully as I could, listening just as attentively and becoming involved in relevant activities whenever possible. Surprisingly and in contrast to my initial expectations, there were minimal difficulties during interviews in ensuring that I had understood what my interviewees meant to convey. I attributed this outcome principally to their kind and empathetic understanding of the limitations of my English skills. In a sense, the fact of my relatively limited English capabilities created a bond with my interviewees rather than a gulf, as I had imagined would be the case.

Data Collection

To address my study questions and to increase the credibility of my research, I employed multiple sources of information and data collection methods. Through observations, individual interviews with key stakeholders and existing documents, I examined how cultural development leaders and programs in Nolan have sought to engage community members and also identified the ways that involvement in those initiatives connected to community capacity, particularly as related to tourism development and sustainability.

Observation

I used direct observation as a tool to acquire better understanding of “human meanings, feelings, and interactions viewed from the perspective of the native members of those situations and settings” (Jorgensen, 2015, p. 8). Personal observation, as a systematic recording and analysis of information gained formally during meetings, activities and events and informally through personal interviews,³¹ helped me uncover explicit and tacit aspects of cultural activities and community involvement in, and understanding of, tourism.

Observation may raise many important ethical issues for researchers. As Jorgensen has suggested, “observers must decide how to account for being present, when and where to disclose research interests, and how much information to supply” (2015, p. 9). A key challenge with the overt observation approach, which I selected to avoid deception, is that subjects may modify their behavior when they know they are being watched and seek to portray their "ideal selves," rather than their true personas.

Although one can adopt personal observation in a limited way during brief periods to grasp a slice of life, satisfactory use of this data collection strategy for most studies requires that observers devote a year or two (or sometimes more) to the investigation of the profound and tremendous complexity of the human experience they are seeking to grasp. As a graduate student, I was not able to live or spend weeks in Nolan to observe CC members and programs continually, therefore my personal observations were based on two 2-3-day visits (some during

³¹ Yin has provided examples of observations during interviews; “the condition of the immediate environment or of workspaces may suggest something about the culture of an organization; similarly, the location or the furnishings of an interviewee’s office may be one indicator of the status of the interviewee within an organization” (2018, p. 122).

CC cultural events). As a result, I acquired something of a snapshot of members' roles, activities and interactions, informal processes and networks rather than a comprehensive description of participants' perceptions and experiences concerning their involvement in CC programs. I augmented my personal observations with semi-structured interviews and these facilitated a deeper understanding and portrayal of interviewee narratives.

Semi-Structured Interviews

As Agger (1998) has argued, critical approaches, through valorizing and legitimizing narrative as a research method, have transformed research methodology. Interviews can lead to a more nuanced understanding of participants' lived experiences. Conducting semi-structured interviews allowed me to use a pre-determined set of questions designed to elicit discussions that were directly linked to my theoretical framework, while providing me the opportunity to explore particular responses with my study participants further, as seemed appropriate.

Critical approaches aim actively to address the traditionally positivist assumption of a hierarchy of knowledge between researchers and the individuals they seek to study. I employed Rubin and Rubin's (2005) responsive interviewing method, which is based on developing a conversational partnership between the researcher and study participants. Alongside persistent reflexivity and co-construction of knowledge this approach allowed me to understand experiences through interviewees' words and stories. The follow-up questions I could ask during the semi-structured responsive interviews, provided valuable information concerning the context of my interlocutor's experiences, while encouraging respondents to discuss and raise issues that I had not previously considered.

I followed Patton's (2015) recommendation of specifying a minimum sample size based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purposes of my study. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 key informants. For recruiting interviewees in Nolan, my adviser connected me to CC's former organizer so I could ask him for a personal interview and also to refer me to other CC partners who had participated in at least one of that entity's projects that involved sustainable tourism as an animating aim. During my first round of interviews (with 6 CC members to whom I was referred in classic snowball style) and CC meeting observations, I was able to identify and connect with four additional members of the initiative who agreed to provide an interview.

Using this snowball sampling strategy to identify respondents, I interviewed the previous and current CC organizers, a local food grower, the executive director of a local nonprofit organization for affordable housing that also operated a volunteer residency program, a community center organizer with an associated social entrepreneurship food business, a theatre actor, a tourism advocate in Nolan county, a community development specialist employed by CC's parent organization, a local fire and rescue volunteer (which through his organization partners with CC to organize local music festivals³²) and an area musician.

I undertook the first interview for this research on March 8, 2018, and the last one on July 11, 2019. All of the interviews were in person in a public or semi-public venue in Nolan according to the participant's preference. Four of the interviews took place in CC's building, five in partner organization offices and one in a local restaurant. The interviews lasted between

³² Apart from the cultural events that this fire department holds to raise funds for its operations, the retired coal-miner now serving as chief of this organization helped me understand better why an individual who continued to believe the coal industry would soon return to its previous employment levels might nevertheless join initiatives such as the CC was promoting.

45-100 minutes, with the majority of them being approximately one hour in length. I obtained consent for all of this study’s participants to audio record their conversations with me. I transcribed each interview as soon as possible following its completion. I did not take notes during these conversations out of concern that doing so might change the dynamic of the interviews and/or lead interviewees to perceive that only certain responses were worth noting. However, immediately following each conversation, I recorded my impressions, themes and connections that had emerged during the exchange. I interviewed 6 women and 4 men ranging in age from 31 to 74 at the time of their interview. I assigned each individual a pseudonym and, whenever they referenced names of colleagues, friends and acquaintances, I changed those as well. Instead of organization names with which participants were affiliated, I list interviewees here by general categories or types. Lastly, whenever I have quoted from interviews, I have provided pseudonyms and the dates of the conversations for reference—for example: (Personal interview, Rachel, May 1, 2018). Table 2 contains information concerning my interlocutors.

Table 2- Interviewee Demographics

Alias	Sex	Age	Occupation	Length of residency in the county	Length of CC Membership	Interview date(s)
Brian	m	33	Community organizer	4 years	4 years	March 8, 2018
Grace	f	60	Community center organizer	60 years	4 years	March 8, 2018 July 11, 2019
Victoria	f	53	Local food grower	53 years	4 years	March 8, 2018
Samuel	m	49	NGO executive director	27 years	4 years	March 8, 2018
Nicole	f	65	Area musician	65 years	4 years	March 8, 2018
Brandon	m	74	Retired coal miner, local fire and rescue volunteer	74 years	4 years	March 8, 2018
Michael	m	31	Community development specialist	10 years intermittently	4 years	October 23, 2018 October 30, 2018
Anna	f	39	Theatre actor	Living outside the County	4 years	October 24, 2018
Emily	f	37	Community organizer	1 year	1 year	October 23, 2018
Jordan	f	37	Tourism Advocate	3 years	Not a CC member	October 23, 2018

Archival Data and Documentation

Yin (2014) has argued that archival records are created for specific purposes and audiences and are often retained in the form of data files. Examples of such information that I utilized for my study included data from federal, state and local governments such as U.S. Census information, organizational data, charts of the geographic characteristics of Nolan and existing survey results concerning the general social and economic profile of the community. When interpreting the usefulness and accuracy of these records, I fully considered the fact that most archival data has a specific purpose and audience other than my research purposes.

I also used personal documents such as my field notes journal and contemporaneous notes taken during my visits, organizational documents, such as CC meeting minutes, meeting agendas and reports of events, formal studies or evaluations related to Nolan (history, ethnographic records etc.) and CC in particular, news clippings from local newspapers or websites such as public interviews with CC members. I sought to heed Yin's (2018) advice that documents are not always accurate or unbiased and that, therefore, one should not accept them as a literal recording of events, but rather as a source for data triangulation and augmenting evidence alongside other sources.

Analysis: Thematic Coding

As a crucial aspect of analysis, coding (Basit, 2003) is nonetheless a heuristic, “an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas or algorithms to follow” (Saldaña, 2015, p. 9). To codify, according to Saldaña, is organize data in a systematic order, to classify and to categorize. Through applying and reapplying codes to qualitative data, one can group, reorganize and link information in order to consolidate meaning and develop

explanations for patterns (Grbich, 2013). The search for recurring themes in data and for frameworks that can explain those patterns shapes the analytic process (Bernard, 2011).

Community capacity (sense of community, a level of commitment to the community, ability to solve collective problems and access to resources both at individual and community level), sustainable community-based tourism and community cultural development theory as outlined in chapter three served as guides for my initial analysis of interviews. I identified possible themes based on those analytic frames and looked for recurring concepts, patterns and viewpoints related to them in my interview transcripts (Bailey, 2006). In addition, as I conducted the interviews I searched for recurring concepts/patterns. After each interview I recorded the connections and similarities I found with previous conversations. As a result, my analysis began with note taking and memoing. I coded the interview transcriptions based on the theoretical frameworks I outlined themes and conceptual points across interviews. Through an iterative process, I combined some of those ideas I initially had identified, renamed or omitted some others and added new ones. I approached the effort with Basit's (2003) counsel that one can adopt manual (versus electronic search tools such as NVivo) analysis for smaller size qualitative data sets when time and funding are limited. After coding each interview transcription, I transferred all the codes to an excel sheet where I could compare them across all of the interviews I had conducted.

Table 3 summarizes the main theories that inform this study. It also provides the definitions of those frames that I employed for this analysis.

Table 3-Theories, concepts and measuring criteria

Theory/Framework	Definition	Concepts	Definition	Criteria for Measurement
Community Cultural Development	The work of community artists who “singly or in teams, place their artistic and organizing skills at the service of the emancipation and development of an identified community” (Goldbard, 2006, p. 140)	Community Culture Development	Community as, “a political unit is a basis for representation, collective deliberation, mobilization, and actions and it is defined in these instances by the range of actors and interactions collectively engaged toward some common purpose” (Chaskin, 2012, p. 112). Culture pertains to a range of shared “values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, norms, material objects and symbolic resources” (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, and Roy, 2014, p. 9). Sustainable development “that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 8).	Effective dialogue Relationship building Empathetic understanding
Community capacity (building)	“[T]he interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community... through informal social processes and /or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks that exist among them and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part (Chaskin, 2001, p. 7). Capacity building is “the ability of becoming active agents of change” (Green and Haines, 2015, p. 8).	Human Capital Organizational resources Social Capital	Human capital is the individual’s skills and knowledge that can be relevant to community circumstances. Organizational resources are comprised of groups and institutions that are capable of organizing, supporting and producing services for the community and are able to represent that collectivity to outside actors. Social capital refers to ties or relationships within and among community members and organization employees in all sectors of the political economy that might lead to community well-being or at times negative outcomes.	Sense of community Commitment to the community Ability to achieve collective goals Access to resources at individual and community level
Sustainable Community-based Tourism	“[B]ridging the local (CBT) and the global (ST) [sustainable tourism] are principles of good governance and justice that enable fairness and equity in the distribution and use of tourism-related resources from the local to the global level, as well as principles of community empowerment and capacity building, stewardship of natural, cultural and social goods (Jamal and Dredge, 2014, p. 475).	Sustainability Community-based tourism	Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet (United Nations, 2015). “Community-based tourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the economic, social and cultural well-being of the popular majority”(Brohman, 1996, p. 60).	Community capacity in tourism decision making process Stewardship of natural, cultural and social goods

Based on the community capacity and CCD Chapter 5 explores the first research question: whether and in what ways engaging in CCD projects and community capacity are related. Chapter 6, focuses on the community capacity and sustainability of tourism to examine the second research question: if CCD and community capacity are related, whether and how such interaction influences the sustainability of tourism. The study concludes with chapter 7 which describes the relationship between community cultural development and sustainable community tourism based on the findings of chapter 5 and 6. Table 4 details the final concepts that I employed to organize chapters 5-7.

Table 4- Chapter 5-7 themes and data collection methods

Chapter		Theme	Process	Data Collection Method
Chapter 5	CCD and Community Capacity	Sense of community	Examining the relationship between CCD strategies and components of community capacity.	Semi-structured interviews Personal Observation Archival data
		Commitment to the community		
		Collective problem solving		
		Access to resources		
Chapter 6	Community Capacity and sustainable tourism	Effective Participation	Analyzing the ways through which community capacity relates to sustainable community-based tourism.	Semi-structured interviews Personal Observation Archival data
		Collaboration (versus competition)		
		Authenticity and hospitality		
Chapter 7 Conclusion		Connections between CCD and sustainable community cultural development	Drawing from the findings of chapter 5 and 6 of this study, this chapter explores the connections between CCD and sustainable tourism development in the town studied in this research.	Analysis of chapter 5 and 6 findings.

Reliability and Replicability

As I employed case study research, I sought to ensure construct validity. Yin (2018) has suggested three tactics to increase the likelihood of this outcome; multiple sources of evidence,

ensuring a clear chain of evidence and key informants review. As mentioned in the data collection section, multiple sources of data (semi-structured interviews, observation and archival records) informed this study. Yin (2009) has emphasized the importance of incorporating clear operational measures for the concepts being studied as one means by which to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research. I followed his suggestion by deriving operational measures, where possible, from those that had been utilized in previous comparable projects.

A clear chain of evidence, as a guiding principle to support research reliability allows an external observer; in this situation, my readers, to follow its derivation from initial research questions to ultimate conclusions. To establish and maintain a clear chain of evidence, I have sought to show how I derived findings (recurring themes) from the collected data (semi-structured interviews and other forms) (Yin, 2018).

In another effort to ensure that my work was trustworthy, I had the opportunity to consult with my committee chair and advisory committee members during frequent debriefing sessions. Those meetings served as a sounding board for me to test my developing ideas and interpretations, while also helping me to recognize my own biases and preferences. Lastly, in order to represent interviewee views accurately, I shared a draft of the transcribed interview I undertook with each interviewee to ensure its factual accuracy. The current CC organizer asked to change some of her original answers as she believed she had gained a deeper understanding of the organization and its members and programs in her new role than she had possessed when our interview occurred. Other interviewees accepted the transcripts without making any changes.

Similar to much other case study research, I worked toward analytical generalizability by attempting to compare systematically my study's results to the conceptions of sustainable tourism and community cultural development on whose precepts I framed this study (see table

2). As Yin (2018) has explained, analytical generalization is not generalization to a defined population that has been sampled, but to a theory of the phenomenon being studied, a frame that may have much wider applicability than the particular case studied. This form of analysis allowed me to address the framing how and why questions this inquiry posed.

Chapter 5

Community Capacity Building

This chapter examines whether and how involvement in community cultural development programs related to community capacity in the Central Appalachian town explored for this study. Drawing upon interviews with members of a cultural organization, referred to here as note above, as Collective Culture or CC, this chapter suggests how CC member interviewee perceptions and activities mapped against Chaskin’s framework of community capacity.

To investigate the impact of CCD activities on the elements of community capacity suggested by Chaskin, the interviews I undertook focused on whether and in what ways collective culture-based projects, including story circles, a dialogical performance and music contributed to study participants’ sense of community (based on McMillan’s (1996) work), perceived levels of commitment among community members, mechanisms of problem-solving and access to resources (Chaskin, 1999, p. 5).

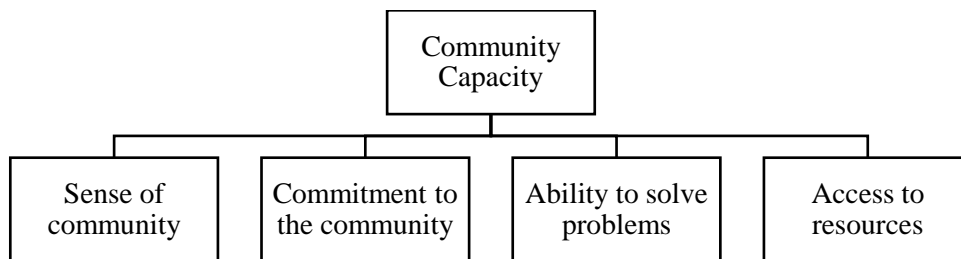


Figure 1- Chaskin's (2001) components of Community Capacity

Sense of Community

The first element in Chaskin’s community capacity framework is sense of community. As mentioned in Chapter 3, sense of community refers to a spirit of belonging, trusting the authority

structure and a perception of mutual benefit of being together that can come from shared experiences and emotional connections (McMillan, 1996). Scholars have argued that sense of community is a fundamental factor contributing to the sustainability of community-based tourism (Choi and Turk, 2011). This section analyzes different strategies the CC has employed to increase the sense of community among residents where it works to explore whether community cultural development strategies have encouraged members of the Collective to perceive a deeper bond with their broader community. Figure 2 shows the different components of sense of community and CCD strategies related to them.

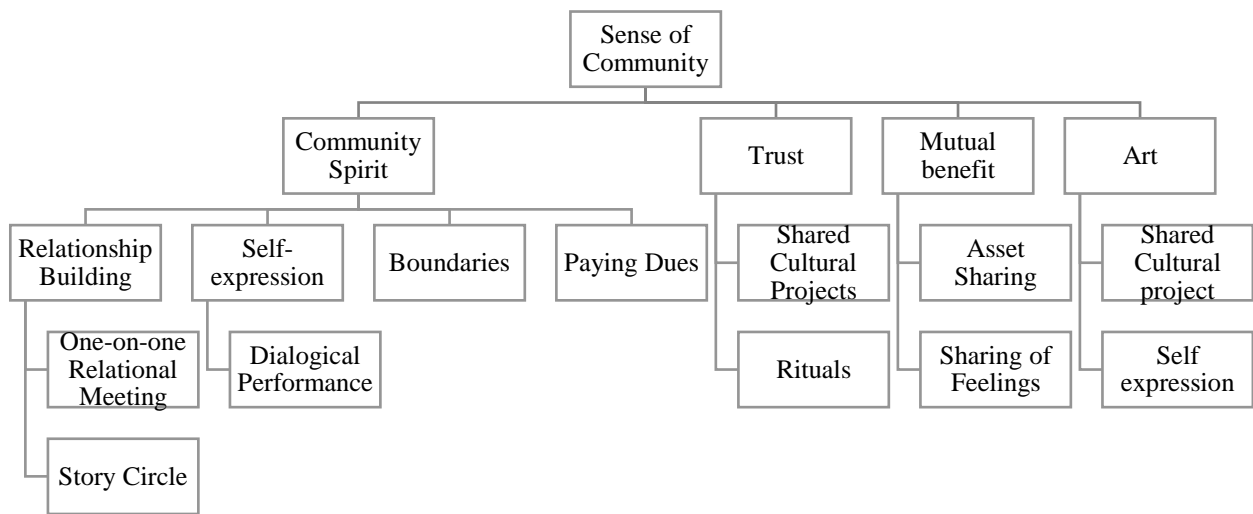


Figure 2- Sense of community components and CCD strategies influencing them.

Community Spirit

The first element of sense of community according to McMillan (1996) is the spirit of belonging together, evinced through friendships, solidary connections and expressing one’s true self outside of one’s household. McMillan suggested that the spirit of community will grow

through truth-telling, emotional safety, sense of belonging and “dues paying.” He considered membership and emotional safety prerequisites for self-expression and truth-telling within groups. Membership opens doors and secures the rights associated with a group. Members feel safe emotionally when their community is able to provide empathy, acceptance and support for them. One must note that membership has the potential to breed Othering, unless the group consciously secure its benefits to members without creating barriers to non-members.

As a bottom-up (grassroots oriented) community organizing initiative, CC leaders believe in the centrality of public and personal relationship³³ building to develop ties among individuals and power to pursue community change (Warren, 1998). The CC’s leaders have operated on the premise that efforts to secure structural change need to treat interpersonal connections among stakeholders as ends and not means (Christens, 2010). From the viewpoint of community cultural development, providing a site for ongoing dialogue offers people the opportunity to speak from the heart, to meet each other as human beings and to consider the effects that their words may have on others. As Goldbard has noted, “this path almost always leads to the possibility of a world that can contain real differences without bursting apart at the same time” (2006, p. 53). The CC has adopted several CCD methods to facilitate dialogue and build personal and/or public relationships among its members. I outline those in the next section.

Relationship Building

All CC members mentioned in their interviews that their participation in the organization’s activities has helped them develop stronger, more profound interpersonal

³³ Public relationships are civil and respectful interactions that build trust over time through collaborations to serve converging interests (Christens, 2010)

relationships with other organization members and Nolan community members. As Victoria, a 53-year old native of Nolan said, “I have learned more and know on a deeper level 100% of the members of the [CC]” (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018). Nicole, another interviewee and life-time resident of Nolan, also saw a change in the quality of her previous connections to other community members, “I really got to enjoy going to [a CC partner community center] dances [...] after my [CC membership] because you feel a stronger connection” (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018).

In his interview with me, a former community organizer of the CC, a young professional from outside the region, also mentioned meetings, trips together, events and informal dinners as venues at which CC members have spent time together and during which they developed strong interpersonal relationships, “We’re pretty close. [We have] done several long-distance road trips together that really made us close.” He also observed in our interview that members’ engagement in such activities has long-term impacts on their sense of connectedness to one another and to their broader community, “the relationships are strong enough, [and] have been strengthened [enough] through this process that folks are going to hang in with each other” (Brian, March 8, 2018). In her interview with me, Emily, the current CC community organizer, mentioned that, “Some of my closest friends and folks [...] are engaged in the [CC] work in different ways” (Personal interview, Emily, October 23, 2018). Considering one of her major responsibilities “to strengthen connections,” she claimed that CC members spend a lot of time together both inside and outside the organization, which she perceives as having brought them closer to each other (Personal interview, Emily, October 23, 2018).

Seeing Nolan as “a closed community [where] it’s hard to break in,” one of the CC members I interviewed highlighted the need for and importance of relationship building based on his experience as an outsider (despite his more than 25-year residence in Nolan),

As soon as I open my mouth, this is what I get: ‘You are not from here, are you?’ As if they do not know me! I say ‘yeah, I live in X County.’ And they say, ‘Where are you from?’ And I know where they’re going and I just kind of go along with it, ‘Well, I have been here since 1991.’ The next question is always, ‘Who is your Papaw [grandfather]?’ (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

When I asked why he and his family chose to stay in Nolan, if “*who are your people?*” is so fundamental to being accepted as a member of the community, he responded, “I like the relational aspect of doing the work and in that way [...] maybe that’s why I stayed” (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

Due to the fact that relationships may (not) develop naturally during the course of interactions, activities and events, CC actively follows community cultural development authors’ counsel to create free spaces³⁴ for members to interact and connect to each other at deeper levels, “those relationships get built intentionally through stuff like one-to-one relational meetings and story circles and they get built through collective work in mutual self-interest and those things reinforce each other” (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

One-on-one relational meetings

Isolation keeps people’s problems private/personal and prevents individuals from perceiving their shared interests with others (Christens, 2010). The CC organization has adopted

³⁴ Evans and Boyte have defined free spaces as “public places in the community... in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue... settings between private lives and large-scale institutions... with a relatively open and participatory character” (1992, p. ix).

one-to-one (or one-on-one) relational meetings as a strategy for connecting to and recruiting new members. One-to-one meetings are brief semi-structured conversations, “effecting change at both the individual and the systems level, through broadening individuals’ networks of relationships, developing new understandings of the social world, and strengthening commitments to civic involvement” (Christens, 2010, p. 886).

The term one-one-one (or one-to-one) relational meeting is commonly used in community organizing discourse and among church communities. The majority of CC members come from, and continue to participate in, a church culture, although according to data collected by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) in 2010, Nolan County, compared to the nation, had a low congregational adherence rate³⁵ (25.2%). The CC’s former organizer adopted and popularized the term one-on-one relational meeting so, as a Jew from outside the area, principals in CC could demonstrate solidarity with Christian members, while also implicitly tying the Collective’s community organizing mission of relationship-making to that of local churches.

The one-on-one conversations CC has encouraged are not exercises in small talk, nor are they interviews with one person talking and the other listening. Instead, they are conversations between two persons during which each shares their story. The meetings aim to establish a relationship among participants through telling stories. These offer a way to understand personal interests and motivations and how common interests and values might support the change both individuals desire. The goal of asking an interlocutor to share a piece of her/his life is not to develop personal friendships (although that certainly could occur as a result of the storytelling

³⁵ Congregational adherents include all full members, their children and others who regularly attend services. The congregational adherence rate is the number of adherents divided by the total population of the county (ASARB, 2010).

process), but instead to initiate or deepen a public relationship with other leaders, potential leaders or allies.

One-on-one conversations take place between the people who might want to become active in the organization and a CC organizer or trained member. The meetings occur in a place comfortable for both individuals. The dialogue's aim is to learn what issues people are most concerned about. To encourage such a conversation, the CC representative may ask a potential member to talk about a turning point in their life, or their dreams for their (personal/family/community) future.

When a CC host/initiator hears a shared interest/value/concern during the story, he/she asks open questions to help the conversation go deeper (e.g., Why did you think that? How did it make you feel?) by moving from when/who into how/why questions. Through probing questions, a one-on-one meeting, “helps you work through all the layers until you get to the heart and the passion of the person you're talking to and what truly drives them” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Osterman has observed that the relationships built through this one-on-one process “are connections that survive any particular victory or defeat on an issue” (2003, p. 45). This method not only has helped CC identify potential allies based on shared interests/goals, but more importantly, it has created a free space for people with assumed ideological differences to find common ground for personal connections (i.e., relationship as an end and not merely a means for community action/change).

In his mid-70s, Brandon, a “very conservative” native of Nolan, as he puts it, mentioned a one-on-one meeting as the starting point for his involvement in CC in his interview with me: “That's more or less how I got involved with [Brian] and once [...] he and I talked, I [was]

seeing his attitude was similar to mine, we've done a lot in the same way, but just differently” (Personal interview, Brandon, March, 2018). One-to-one relational meetings usually target leaders or those with potential leadership capacities. All the current CC members are in at least one leadership role within their organizations/groups.

Story Circles

Stories as “a fundamental aspect of human consciousness ... [are] an essential part of how we think, feel, remember, imagine, relate—and create change” (VanDeCarr, 2015, p. 4). Those employing this community cultural development methodology consider storytelling a form of artistic articulation³⁶ and expect that,

people facing social exclusion, when given the opportunity to express their individual truths in the language of their own creative imaginations, will become aware of their common concerns and common capacity to take action in their own interest and may even join together to actualize that awareness (Goldbard, 2006, p. 14).

Roadside Theater³⁷ has developed a robust methodology of story circles as a part of its work during the last five decades. These consist of a group of five to fifteen people and a facilitator who convene to share and listen to personal stories of each other's experiences. A story circle may encourage deeper levels of interpersonal relations among community members. Story circles conclude with time for the group to reflect collectively on what they have heard. In

³⁶ Scientific research has also highlighted the positive impact of stories on empathetic understanding, trust and shared action among participants. Zak (2015), a neuro-economist, found that whatever is happening in a story is happening to listeners and not just the characters, since the human brain acts more like a participant than a spectator when engaging a narrative. Moreover, researchers have found that empathy towards strangers triggers oxytocin (Barraza and Zak, 2009), which increases human's levels of trust (Kosfeld, Heinrichs, Zak, Fischbacher, and Fehr, 2005; Mikolajczak et al., 2010) and trustworthiness (Zak, Kurzban, and Matzner, 2005) as well as generosity (Barraza, McCullough, Ahmadi, and Zak, 2011; J. Barraza and Zak, 2009; Zak, Stanton, and Ahmadi, 2007).

³⁷ Roadside Theater (www.roadside.org) based at Appalshop in Eastern Kentucky, has been collaborating with communities since 1975 to collect stories as a basis for plays “that mirror back to a community its own sense of meaning and identity” (Goldbard, 2006, p. 125).

addition to personal storytelling, story circles can serve as a powerful tool for revealing collective memory and experience, as well as surfacing concerns within communities (Roadside Theater, 1999, 2014).

In Nolan, story circles helped CC organizers determine the goals the organization needed to pursue as well as the methodologies that could facilitate processes to achieve those,

as a new [mother and CC] employee my sense was that going around attending community story circles in these communities at people's libraries and schools and community centers and hearing their stories and the kind of narrative sense that they were making about their shared economic concerns led him [Brian] to start organizing around those [challenges] in more of a story-based way (Personal interview, Anna, October 24, 2018).

Four of the members whom I interviewed suggested they developed stronger bonds of solidarity during their participation in a CC story circle during a road trip to Massachusetts to meet a group of citizens there interested in their work. Victoria explained to me that on their way to meet their potential partners they conducted a story circle among the participating CC members, during which she gained a deeper, more empathetic understanding of her fellow townspeople. As she put it, there were many exclamations of, "I have never heard that story before," [and] "oh, that explains! oh I see!" (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018).

Grace mentioned that during a story circle held in one local community center she came to understand her mother's attachment to coal mining better when she heard her share her childhood story:

[W]ell, she's my mom. I've been where she is at all my life. She told us a story in that story circle that I had never heard. She told about when her family crossed the mountain from [...] County and come into the coal camp. Her dad had gotten a job in the mines and she was probably eight or ten years old, and how they drove their livestock. [...] She said that they thought they were coming to the Promised Land. It was great to hear the story, but the sorrow was

that she had three brothers who were killed in mine accidents and my little brother was killed in a mine accident, and so did they really come to the Promised Land? [...] But I might have never heard that story had we not been affiliated with the [CC] and [its parent organization] (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

This narrative reveals that many of the organizations in Nolan and surrounding communities with which CC members are affiliated have adopted (and adapted) story circles to build community and/or “to examine difference(s) across lines of race or class, to explore social challenges that people are facing in their own lives” (Working Narratives, 2015). In other words, the CCD methods that CC has adopted to create dialogue, trust and solidarity among its members have moved beyond its organizational boundaries to affect larger circles of Nolan residents. This expansion of relationships aligns with the CC mission of bringing more citizens of Nolan County into the process of imagining and building their area’s future together. This CC experience suggests that implementing a story circle methodology can facilitate self-expression among participants. I will discuss this question further in coming sections.

Self-expression

Green has defined self-expression as “signaling one’s thought, affect, or experience. That in broadest outline, is how we share our point of view” (2001, p. 15). True and actual self-concepts include those traits that are presented around close others versus most others. True behaviors refer to “who you really are” instead of “who you are during most of your activities” (Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, and King, 2009, p. 473).

During communications, people often tend to hide negative aspects of their true selves, such as socially unfavorably perceived personality traits/beliefs, to avoid disapproval (Hu, Kumar, Huang, and Ratnavelu, 2017). However, the deepest sense of true self is unavoidably

linked to growth within relationships (Jordan, 1991). Some argue that mutual empathy is the cornerstone of such ties, since authentic empathic exchange and relatedness bring clarity and genuineness to one's self and self-understanding (Batson, Ahmad, Lishner, and Tsang, 2002). Other analysts have viewed true self-expression as occurring among those in distinctive closely related groups as a result of higher levels of trust, openness and acceptance (Mengers, 2014).

Three of the interviewees mentioned how during one-on-one meetings, story circles and partner meetings they had felt sufficiently safe to express what they really believed,

I was telling him exactly what I really think about things [...] it is kind of Red Neck. You know what I am saying, 'cause it is where I come from. I try to be as refined as possible, but sometimes I just have to be real about things (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Others found the CC's openness beneficial in encouraging those with beliefs perceived as less socially desirable to feel sufficiently comfortable to share their thoughts and feelings,

[Brandon] and I are on the opposite side of pretty much every political issue. [...] But the fact is that doesn't stop us from working together. [...] That wouldn't have happened without [CC] because it allowed him to say, this is who I am. I believe in coal and Trump [...], but I don't feel threatened by these people who believe differently from me, so I am therefore able to open up my mind and think about this other possibility which doesn't obviate these other things (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

While sometimes it was possible to negotiate to achieve a common ground, in many cases members accepted their fundamental, value-based differences, yet continued to connect to each other in other ways, as Anna noted during an interview,

They are not just perceived. There are real cultural differences! [...] I would say that a couple of keys to connecting people across them is through the work of arts and cultures being used as a catalyst to activate equitable development (Personal interview, Anna, October 24, 2018).

Dialogical performance

Culture-based performances are other settings for self-expression in the CC. From the perspective of the community cultural development framework, activities such as storytelling and collecting oral histories are not only venues encouraging individuals' creative self-expression, but when combined with a performance, also can result in "the interconnection between personal and cultural forms of expression, [... These] can reshape our collective self-understanding" (Goldbard, 2006, p. 127).

The CC employed story circles and interviews with Nolan County residents of different ages and points-of-view to co-create a play about the future of the County from local residents' perspectives (pre-performance). A collection of different individuals' stories formed Act 1 (performance) of that play.

Community members performed a staged reading of the first act of the play, which led to Act 2, a conversation with the audience regarding their own stories and lived experiences. Those reflections led neatly to audience members musing on the implications of their perceptions for their everyday understanding of their lives (post performance). Cho and Trent have suggested that pre-performance discussion creates or alters the script, the performance provides the space for exchange within and between the performers and audience and the post-performance acts "as a co-reflexive member checking process" that offers the opportunity of a conversation among performers and audience members in which notions of a dichotomy between these groups are challenged and hopefully, eliminated (2009, p. 1013).

Leavy has observed that, "these dialectical methods of performance prompt discussion that gives the audience a glimpse into their roles (and how they could be configured differently), and allows silenced persons a space for expression" (2015, p. 143). The audience during and

after a performance may exchange positions with the subjects (performers) of that play as they contemplate “what it is to be them [subjects] and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes”

(Madison, 2003, p. 478). Nicole noted in her interview with me that her brother’s (another CC member) involvement in CCD projects has broadened his perspectives in many ways,

Probably the biggest surprise for me was seeing him get on stage for the storytelling performance. As long as it [the CC’s parent organization] has been there and as long as he has lived 12 miles away from it, he had never been to that building. But now he’s coming over. He’s learning about more things [and] that people think differently than him (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018).

This process aligns with what Conquergood (1985) has called “dialogical performance” where an intimate and co-created understanding forms between Self and an Other. One particular example of dialogical performance arose during my interviews with CC members, when Brian shared this observation:

You can be for coal and for Trump and be for solar energy when you act in a play at the [CC] where you are debating sexuality with a flaming gay left-wing 19-year-old, who is in a play for the first time in his life (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

The CC Boundaries

As noted above, another element that can facilitate truth telling within groups is boundaries, which encourage emotional safety and self-disclosure. Borders allay fears by identifying who can be trusted as “one of us” (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). In creating boundaries, the CC pursues,

[a] collective ability to experience deep joy, a collective ability to experience deep sadness, sorrow and loss; and a distinctive way of speaking, interacting, etc. that allows us to say this is who we are and what

we believe, [but]not in an exclusive way, but in a way that says in a word we got our thing here (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

For the most part, the CC projects and work are focused on supporting local residents and organizations to serve the people of Nolan better: “[It] has a broad class diversity, class makeup and is more of a forum for people to express themselves and the ways to deal with them [issues they believe important] (Personal interview, Michael, October 30, 2018). Another interviewee also mentioned that,

We are particularly fond of the fact that with the [CC], what we’re doing is learning to recognize and value the other communities as we would our own. [...] We are just broadening our community here and trying to raise the idea of boundaries, and think we can all work together while still remaining pretty focused with our own self-interest to project (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018).

Scholarly work on group membership has identified the common risk of scapegoating the out-group as a way of defining group boundaries (Alexander, 1986; Forsyth, 1988). To avoid this sort of implicit out-group bias (i.e., negative categorizations, feelings or ideas about people who are not part of one’s faction) the CC actively reaches out to recruit members of diverse groups (e.g., members of community centers from across the region, nonprofit and market organizations, individuals with differing ideologies etc.) to re-categorize themselves as members of the CC—as an inclusive group. This strategy alters an “us” versus “them” mentality to a more inclusive “we” orientation (Ben-Zeev, Dennehy, Goodrich, Kolarik, and Geisler, 2014; Scroggins, Mackie, Allen, and Sherman, 2016).

Paying Dues

A sense of belonging, emotional safety and truth-telling are not achieved without sacrifice and challenge. In other words, the rights of community membership come with the expectation that a community can call on its members to make bear costs of various sorts for the good of the whole, according to their capacities. While studies have found a positive relationship between paying one's dues and sense of community (McMillan and Chavis, 1986), one should also consider the effects of humiliation on community membership, when members are asked to do more than they can offer.

The CC is not a membership organization, to which individuals or institutions pay dues for a set period in order to obtain pre-defined benefits. The Collective uses the term “partner” instead of member to emphasize “the notion of populist co-creation” in building the CC (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018). However, similar to other groups, partners/members share their time, financial resources and human capital. One of the members I interviewed mentioned time as their investment in CC and the opportunities and connections coming out of its projects as their reward, “that's kind of that give-and-take a little bit, with our time as invested into it and the [the CC parent organization] would have never known that we were doing this work if we weren't a part of the [CC]” (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018). Another interlocutor, who also serves on the CC “steering committee,” commented that although spending an average of 20 hours per week for on that entity's work and meetings can be “very difficult and time consuming,” it has helped to build relationships:

If we just sit there having snacks, keeping 20 hours is a challenge, but in those 20 hours there are people with different personalities and different views and different ideas and all pretty strong, as we are getting the strongest of the leaders from each [participating] organization (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018).

The CC has tried to meet the needs of a number of members whose jobs and family situations limit their involvement to feel included, valuable and influential nonetheless. Rotating gathering places (among different partner organization) divides the driving time and hosting expenses among all members.

This section used the results of my interviews with CC members to examine whether CCD strategies were contributing to developing community spirit, the first principle in McMillan's sense of community framework. Those I interviewed perceived CCD strategies, such as one-to-one relational meetings and story circles, as strongly encouraging community spirit by building relationships and creating inclusive spaces for self-expression and dialogue. The following section investigates the role of CCD strategies in encouraging/increasing trust among CC members (and a share of other Nolan residents as well).

Trust

According to McMillan (1996), the second component of sense of community is trust. A spirit of community does not endure beyond its initial spark unless residents address the issues arising from social allocation of power (McMillan, 1996). The former CC organizer mentioned to me that after all the projects and collaborations, whether they achieve their goals or not, "what remains is the trust" that sustained interaction and involvement has constructed (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018). Another interviewee, Michael, also noted that although members of the CC primarily join based on work relationships, "there is a lot of trust and a lot of friendships [built] there" (Personal interview, Michael, October 23, 2018).

Creating a level of trust between Nolan residents and the CC has not been an easy task since, initially, many locals did not see/perceive any explicit compatibility with the initiative because “the coal people and [CC’s parent organization] were always at odds” (Personal interview, Brandon, March 8, 2018). Also, with a Jewish community organizer from outside the region who holds a doctoral degree as CC’s initial principal representative, it was difficult for people to know what exactly to expect from the organization. As one interviewee observed, “I did not totally trust him [the first CC organizer] because I didn't know him that well. He was a newcomer. I didn’t know what his motives were” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Nevertheless, adopting “art and culture as means of building mutual trust and understanding” (Goldbard, 2006, p. 193) has helped CC members connect and work together towards negotiated shared aspiration despite their deep-rooted differences, according to another interviewee, Brandon:

[T]hey found out that being a good conservative Republican is not a real bad thing because we all believe in about the same thing [...] I'm willing to work with anyone that wants to do something that will improve the quality of life in this area (Personal interview, Brandon, March 8, 2018).

The following section examines the ways culture-based projects have encouraged or spawned trust among CC members.

Shared Cultural Projects and Trust

Hardin has observed that in many trust-based relationships a, “far richer range of benefits” than material interests motivate individuals to continue their commitment (2002, p. 4).

Brandon, one of those I interviewed, viewed “giving back to the community” as a shared incentive among CC members for their continued collaboration, “We don’t like land. We don’t

like money. [...] We want to give back to our community [...]" (Personal interview, Brandon, March 8, 2018).

The CC has also worked to develop trust by evidencing positive intentions and following-through on promises and initiatives (Chen, 2010). Within the first six months of its formation, the group began several projects that many area residents perceived as important. For instance, the former CC organizer mentioned to me that the organization worked soon after it began operating to revive a community-led dance program and to restart programming for local bluegrass festivals, which had foundered due to a couple of reasons "including the collapse of the coal economy and the coal severance taxes revenue that came with it. That made it necessary for communities to work together and collaborate to build and attract resources in ways they never had before" (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018). As another interviewee, Grace, observed, "Some things that were standard, that always had happened, began to be canceled for lack of resources, we did not know what it was going to mean for the communities" (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018). She found the rekindling of cultural projects profoundly significant as they brought Nolan Community residents "joy," hope for positive change and trust in the CC's capabilities (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Brian indicated that he observed a change among CC members' level of trust after the successful initiation of these cultural efforts, "there was a kind of breakthrough [...] folks started opening up about some of the deeper stuff" (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018). These initiatives not only evidenced the CC's capability and benevolent intent to its members and other Nolan community residents, but also gradually established expectations among both of these subsets of the local population. Moreover, during the collaborations, CC members witnessed the capacity and integrity of other participating organization members. As one interviewee observed,

“I knew that I felt good about being in a group with them and I have been involved in enough work lately that I recognized that they are not [competition], resources are not competitive” (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018). Collaborators in the CC also built trust by sharing their resources as they participated in these initiatives, including information, competencies and physical assets.

Building trust is highly personal and one must first build relationships among individuals to create it and thereafter build on those ties to develop trusting connections among organizations (Murphy et al., 2012). The CC’s organizers have sought to develop ties through one-to-one relational meetings, by using story-circles and by collaborating in shared-interest cultural projects. Indeed, one-on-one relational meetings were usually the first encounter between CC organization representatives and potential members. These exchanges not only created the initial connections/ties between members, they were also fertile opportunities to seed trust. In her interview, Nicole mentioned that in her one-on-one relational meeting:

As I started to talk to them, I felt their interest in opening up to me, asking questions about what we were doing and immediately I felt their sincerity in their interest and their desire to be engaged and to learn about what was really going on in the County and to go beyond that (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018).

Rituals, CCD and Trust

One of the potential ways that cultural activities can lead to higher levels of trust among members is participation in rituals. Rappaport (1999) has compared a belief, as an internal private state, with public ritual as an external expression of acceptance and argued that participation in rituals, i.e., the ceremonies observed by an organization, convey one’s acceptance of those traditions along with acknowledging that she/he is willing to be held

accountable when breaching expectations established by the acceptance of those expectations. Participation in rituals therefore not only demonstrates one's devotion to a certain belief or set of beliefs, it also reveals "that one is committed to other individuals engaged in that tradition" (Purzycki and Arakchaa, 2013, p. 381).

One of CC's rituals is to hold regular monthly meetings. Each member hosts a gathering on a rotating basis and provides space and food. Since participants are mostly representatives of local organizations, meetings take place at those institutions' locations. Michael mentioned in his interview that members "go above and beyond expectations for food, hospitality and comfort" in hosting these gatherings by "pouring heart and soul into the events. They are more than, just, well, checking boxes" (October 23, 2018). Given the fact that most of the partner organizations have limited budgets, Michael's observation could be seen as an example of rising community spirit, of instances when individuals (and the organizations they represent) were not making choices simply on the basis of maximizing their perceived self-interest.

At each gathering, following a meal together, each member provides an update concerning the projects with which they are involved. Afterwards the community organizer shares several items (e.g., news about upcoming grants/events or projects). At the end of the meeting, the group decides on its next date to gather and who will host. Aside from bonding over food and solidifying members' relationships, these regular get-togethers promote increased trust among participants by ensuring members are aware of the status (challenges as well as strengths) of all the group's projects on a monthly basis.

CC decision-making is predicated on principles (rather than individuals) and shared norms set conditions in which members influence each other reciprocally and trust the outcomes of their deliberation. For instance, participants vote to allocate funds to different projects. Those

involved with a specific initiative under consideration are not present at the session at which their effort is discussed, so members can express their views freely and reach consensus (if possible) through negotiations, as Grace noted:

At the [CC] meeting I went outside, so that no one felt pressured and they voted unanimously, after some deliberation, because I stayed out there a while, because the total allotment of money was \$15,000 and we have all these partners and so for \$15,000 to be spent on one project was a weighty matter, but they voted to build it and then we had a lunch and a celebration for having been granted the money for the project (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Mutual Benefit(s) of Being Together

According to McMillan's (1996) framework of sense of community, once a group of residents develop a measure of spirit and shared trust, they can move to identify ways that they can benefit the community and one another by launching shared actions or supporting one another's individual efforts. McMillan has suggested that as communities start to form, members search for similarities with others. However, in more mature phases of group development the focus shifts to how participants differ. He contended that a diversity of needs and resources creates opportunities for exchange of values, resources and insights alike, among members. Trade as a component of sense of community, builds cohesiveness within groups as participants integrate their needs and resources successfully through a sustained process of negotiation suffused with trust.

In eight of the interviews, members gave examples of such relationships, such as this one from Grace: "We all support and try to help when something comes [...] there's kind of a collective pool of knowledge, skills, equipment that we have access to that we never had before

[joining the CC]” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018). As Kretzman and McKnight have noted, this kind of reciprocity is rooted in an asset-based model of community-building that “insists on beginning with a clear commitment to discovering a community’s capacities and assets” (1996, p. 23).

According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), a strengthened sense of community leads members to transcend score keeping in their trades and to begin to appreciate giving for its own sake. Many of the interviewees mentioned other members’ generosity in sharing their resources during the CC-initiated cultural events without expecting rewards/reciprocity. Michael, a community planning specialist in Collective Culture’s mother organization, noted the volunteer basis of the entity’s work and the fact that many of its members share their resources without expectations of reciprocity, “[Brandon] just made this incredible volume of food for everybody. This outpouring of support from that individual and from everybody within the [CC] to put on this event is a portrayal of what the [CC] is” (Personal interview, Michael, October 23, 2018).

With a similar experience during her visit as a community artist in a small town in England, Cohen-Cruz has highlighted the importance of reciprocity between audience and artists in community-based cultural activities;

Nearly every spectator had produced a tasty dish, setting up a sense of reciprocity such as I had seldom experienced at any event. The spirit infused the performance itself, accounting for extra generosity on the actors’ part and extra receptivity from the spectators, as a result of co-creating the evening’s pleasures (2005, p. 95).

According to McMillan, aside from this kind of asset-based exchange, a more important trade within communities is sharing of feelings. Once members perceive a level of safety, they move from communicating positive feelings about one another to voicing differences of opinion,

suggestions and criticisms. It is at this stage that community members expect to grow, learn and work safely in their social exchanges (McMillan, 1996). This sense of safety among community members arises via their acceptance of “the uniqueness and plurality of identities” (Goldbard, 2006, p. 49). Ferdinand Lewis has similarly emphasized the importance of respect in CCD projects,

The principle of respect refers to valuing community input in all matters and appreciating the lives and stories of community partners and participants in whatever way possible. [...] Respect creates the conditions in which an essential joy-in-creating is released, which in turn engages collaborators in extraordinary ways (2003, p. 6).

The CC respects cultural plurality by acknowledging different groups and generations during its cultural activities, “this idea that there is a monolithic Appalachian culture [...] or even [a single Nolan] County culture is just wrong” (Brian, March 8, 2018). An example of embracing cultural plurality in the CC is its adoption of different types of music (not merely the country and bluegrass music that are traditional to the region) during its events. Leavy has emphasized the role of music as a tool for connecting individuals “through emotional evocation that in certain contexts may transcend language, economic and other social barriers” (2015, p. 123).

Stubley has posited that the distinctive experience of music blurs our “sensations and perceptual boundaries,” and that performing music engenders a spiritual component of “oneness” among those experiencing it (1995, p. 59). During an interview, one of the CC members recalled

a time when, during a community cultural event with square dancing and a local artists' art show, one CC member sang "I am a poor wayfaring stranger:"³⁸

The place went so solid [...] It was probably close to 100 people [both CC members and other Nolan residents] that showed up for that one event, and all of a sudden we were all connected as part of that community event and it was beautiful [...] this is what we need to do! This is how you break down walls and how people get to know each other and how to get things to happen (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018).

Adorno (1997 [1970]) has proposed that music has the potential to subvert stereotypical complacent group thinking—or as he has dubbed it, false consciousness—to stimulate the potential for change in a dominant order. In Nolan, with a predominately White (more than 94%), Christian (more than 54%) population, singing a song about a stranger journeying to the promised land of "Jordan" seems to celebrate "difference both at the level of the individual and through our distinctive localities and contexts" (Higgins, 2012, p. 12). One interviewee highlighted the importance of diversity, not only among CC members, but also, and more generally, as a source of power in communities,

It's very fortunate that we do have people that differ from us. I think that's what makes us a strong country and that we allow people to think things in some respects. It can be very offensive to me, but at the same time I have to recognize it, I don't have all the answers (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018).

In the previous section regarding self-expression, several interviewees noted that some of their beliefs did not meet generally-accepted social standards (e.g., being *very, very conservative*, believing that *coal will return*, evidencing a *redneck way of thinking*), yet they also specifically

³⁸ An American folk and gospel song originating in the 1840s about a plaintive soul on the journey through life. Cazden and colleagues have identified several different variations of the song. For instance, in 1948, George Edwards changed the tune's title to "I am a poor and a foreign stranger" (Cazden, Haufrecht, and Studer, 1982, p. 293).

observed that they felt comfortable sharing their orientation and beliefs with their fellow CC members. Other participants also cited deep differences in worldviews and mindsets among members, without expressing animosity toward any of them. Instead, interviewees claimed that differences in opinions/values ultimately do not stymie collaborations in the CC. Emily perhaps expressed this sentiment best, “I think people have deep-seated frustrations and critiques and disagreements, but we have to move through them as a community” (Personal interview, Emily, October 23, 2018).

Art

The fourth and final principle in McMillan’s sense of community framework was art. He described art as a symbolized story shaped by the spirit, trust and trade among residents that represents the sublime values of a community. Viewing experience as the foundation of art, McMillan found interactions among members and the quality of those contacts³⁹ to be essential to the creation of shared stories. As he suggested, in choosing the events that become a part of their collective heritage, communities typically opt for the ones that honor their highest and most transcendent values and challenge members to pursue related ideals. In other words, a common experience that is shared among community members and has dramatic impact “may create a collective memory,” but it only becomes art/a community story when it “represent[s] the community’s values and traditions” (McMillan, 1996, p. 323). McMillan’s definition of

³⁹ McMillan considered “closure to events, shared outcome from the event, risk and sacrifice, and honor vs. humiliation” as main elements influencing the quality of contacts among members (1996, p. 322).

community art aligns with Cohen-Cruz's concept of testimony,⁴⁰ which "unites the teller with the listeners by evoking shared and dearly held higher values, creating community between speaker and listeners" (2005, p. 142). In our conversation, Brian mentioned that art is the fundamental framework of CC's work,

[a] collective ability to experience deep joy, a collective ability to experience deep sadness, sorrow and loss; and a distinctive way of speaking, interacting [...] what we're looking to do in the [CC] is to create a community like that. All of those are clearly connected to culture and it is only through such communities that reality is changed from what it is into what it could be. That's I would say, the biggest framework of what we are doing together (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018)

During the interviews, it became obvious that the coal narrative still has a prominent role in shaping Nolan county residents' shared story; "[coal] had been our only industry for one-hundred years and we were scared" by its rapid decline (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018). Seven of the interviewees claimed that the change in the coal industry has affected their lives directly. Three of the members mentioned the migration of their children or other family members to other parts of the country in search of new economic opportunities. Even those who were still employed in coal-related jobs shared concerns about the uncertainty of their economic futures.

With the decline of the coal industry during the last several decades and increasing awareness of the harm it has imposed on the area's human and environmental health, Nolan's residents have had to decide how to respond. One portion of the population, at least, is

⁴⁰ According to Felman and Donnelly, "testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding of remembrance . . . events in excess of our frames of reference" (1992, p. 5).

responding by reconsidering the coal narrative and converting it from a community story to a collective experience/memory. Six of my ten interviewees emphasized the need to find new shared stories to which everyone in the community could relate, “people know it's [the coal industry] not coming back like that, so that potential value is gone” (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018). Yet, there are a few who believe there is no need for a new imaginary since, in their view, or hope at least, “the demand for coal is coming back at a really high rate of speed” (Personal interview, Brandon, March 8, 2018).

Higgins has argued that CCD in general and community music in particular represents “a response to current social conditions, a direct comment on globalization, and a meaningful way to assist communities struggling to cope with the forces of modernization” (2012, p. 39-40). In her interview, Grace highlighted the significance of the resurgence of the bluegrass music festival project as a shared memory of good times and a potential hopeful future among Nolan residents, “When that [bluegrass festival] was revived and that event took place it was really joyful in that we had been in a place of despair when the coal industry began to crumble” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Although CC members collaborate with each other to achieve shared goals in many fields, when asked whether they had a distinct memory regarding their involvement in the effort, nine members I interviewed shared a story of their participation in a community-based art project or cultural activity. Here are three examples of those observations:

Making a play together that expresses our doubts and confusions about our future, and you have conflicting viewpoints represented fairly, can kind of set off a wave of changes in our communities to reflect on, on so many different levels (Personal interview, Anna, October 24, 2018).

A whole bunch of [CC] partners got up in front of 300 people, [...] including the president of the state Senate, and told beautiful, complicated, uncompromising truths about what's going on here and [...] spawned a whole bunch of new stories (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

I think some of the strongest memories that I have [go back to] the first thing that we did at the [...] fire department. We put on a square dance and an art show and I just get the word out in the community and eight artists showed up, the whole gymnasium was covered with beautiful pieces of art! (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018).

So far, this chapter has examined the congealing sense of community among CC members reported by my interviewees as the first element of community capacity, according to Chaskin's framework. The interviews I conducted with the Collective members suggested that the adoption of CCD methods had encouraged their spirit of community, trust, perceived mutual benefit and art (all components of sense of community proposed by MacMillan in 1996). This study's interviews suggested that CCD strategies, including story circles and community cultural performances, have encouraged relationships among diverse stakeholders from different backgrounds by providing free spaces for self-expression and dialogue among them. Interviewees also mentioned that participation in shared cultural projects and rituals has formed/increased trust among CC members and other Nolan residents alike. Collaborators evaluated their involvement in Collective Culture projects as mutually beneficial in two ways. They have better access to resources through asset sharing and second, in a respectful environment, they can grow and work collectively by sharing their views and concerns. Lastly, CC members and a share of other Nolan residents have collaborated through culture-based approaches to envisage and articulate a new story for their otherwise declining community based on their shared memories of the past and hopes for the future.

Commitment

The second element of community capacity in Chaskin's framework was, "the existence of a level of *commitment* on the part of particular individuals, groups or organizations that take responsibility for what happens in the community and that invest time, energy and other resources in promoting its well-being" (1999, p. 6). As one interviewee observed, "I think some of it has to do with a sense of calling and faith [...] we felt like this is where God would have us to live and serve and a place to call home" (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

Except for its organizer, which is a paid position, all members of the CC are volunteers. Five of the group's participants suggested in their interviews that the main reason for joining the organization was its commitment to their community's well-being. Therefore, in Chaskin's terms, at an individual level, two essential aspects of commitment were in place among those I interviewed who were active in the Collective; individuals who saw themselves as stakeholders in the well-being of their entire community and who exhibited a readiness to perform actively to realize aspirations related to that role (Chaskin, 1999).

As mentioned in the "paying dues" section above, CC members are willing to give their time, energy and resources not only on behalf of the organization, but also and more broadly, to increase the quality of life for all in the Nolan community. Interviewees shared many examples of members' generosity that related to public events that sought to increase Nolan residents' satisfaction and sense of belonging to their town rather than targeting tourists and generating revenues as a primary goal.

According to Berry and colleagues (1993), individuals who enjoy high socioeconomic status often commit to the well-being of their community in response to an immediate need/conflict. To harness such efforts as sustainable resources for social change, local

organizations such as the CC seek to provide the infrastructure necessary for organizing and collaboration among such individuals. These entities commit to increasing population well-being by securing mechanisms to mobilize residents or via organizing resources for local provision of public goods/services or, more importantly, through connecting residents with broader decision-making systems (Logan and Rabrenovic, 1990).

As a network of local organizations, the CC is committed to the well-being of Nolan in several ways. First, through CCD strategies the Collective aims to encourage Nolan residents to articulate stories “that both entertain and contribute to their well-being” (Cohen-Cruz-2005, p. 149). Second, by creating and/or deepening relationships among committed individuals, the CC helps form solidary groups that may thereafter collaborate to pursue a shared vision they develop. Both previous and current Collective organizers mentioned the catalytic role of the organization in facilitating community change in their interviews with me:

Everything we do is not going to be through the [CC]. Groups of individual citizens/organizations can do whatever they do outside of the scope of the [CC] and the [CC], if anything, is an incubator and a catalyst [... that provides] social infrastructure or/and often, the [necessary] economic infrastructure or physical infrastructure (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

I know that partners have individual projects that are happening. I think those conversations were coordinated or convened or sparked by [CC] and that's exciting, that people will move forward with individual projects. And yet, hopefully, create a sense of a larger theme in and around the County (Personal interview, Ashley, March 8, 2018).

For example, two CC members created a maple syrup production association in Nolan. Given the low price of land (and the many maple trees available) in previous coal mining areas,

this group views such production as a viable option for assisting in the revival of Nolan's economy,

Out of that [the CC] came the opportunity to think about maple syrup production in [the state]. This idea of maple syrup gets to have a hearing and resources are put into it, and there's a lot of interesting work that we're doing around that idea, not just here but statewide with the NRCS [Natural Resources Conservation Service], forestry and Extension (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

CCD theorists warn community artists that "reaching out to struggling people by doing art with them without a larger social agenda will most likely end with [...] blaming the victim" (Cohen-Cruz, 2005, p. 91). Drawing on the issues that have arisen during the story circles it has conducted, the CC has sought to help Nolan address its collective problems by organizing existing resources and/or connecting stakeholders to broader (external) decision-making systems (examples of such efforts appear in following sections).

Mechanisms for Problem-solving

The third principle of community capacity according to Chaskin's framework is collective ability to solve common problems. Chaskin (2001) proposed that communities with capacity have mechanisms in place to translate individual and institutional commitments into action when problems emerge. The ability to identify priorities and address problems, "is an important component of virtually all definitions of capacity relating to community and was the element of community capacity most often stressed by key informants" (Chaskin, 2001b, p. 297).

CC's adoption of the CCD framework has facilitated such collective problem-solving in Nolan in two ways. First, as Kirakosyan and Stephenson have contended, by encouraging civic dialogue, the CCD approach "serves as a primary means of addressing differences in values,

beliefs and ideas” (2019, p. 385). These authors have suggested that “the sentiments of solidarity and shared identity that participatory arts approaches may stimulate may prompt community members to come together to address other relevant issues they face” (Kirakosyan and Stephenson, 2019, p. 386).

Secondly, CCD strategies have helped the CC facilitate communication as a “complex process of meaning negotiation and construction” across disparate groups in Nolan (Koschmann et al., 2012, p. 335). Such efforts are required for collaborative problem-solving. Communication is not solely concerned with connecting interested groups, but is more importantly the act of deeply influencing people and the way they think about issues in a problem domain (Koschmann et al., 2012, p.322). Many scholars have argued that informal, face-to-face communication permits meaning negotiation processes (Romzek et al., 2014). For CC, this process occurs as individuals negotiate and co-construct meanings as they participate in shared artistic and cultural activities;

I think the story-circle methodology and then [...] community-based playwriting will result in that [communication]. It begins with the communication of ‘yes I am willing to be in a room with these people with whom I might have profound differences, or it could be bunch of people that I have already known.’ But we are going to sit in a circle and communicate with each other (Personal interview, Anna, October 24, 2018).

CC members have performed plays they devised themselves, rather than being represented by professional artists. As one interviewee observed, “the actors and the director [in a play about the future of Nolan] and everyone involved is from our community” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018). The collective art-making process in “The Future of [Nolan County]” play aimed to stimulate participants’ feelings of solidarity by drawing on Nolan

community members' shared identity in order to spur dialogue and action for addressing collective problems.

Brian and Samuel pointed out during their interviews that in one CC gathering, some participants claimed that paying their electricity bills was a common problem for the organizations with which they were affiliated (identifying the issue and priorities). After some research to document the scope of the issue and consultation with experts within and outside the CC, the members settled on installing solar panels as a solution to this continuing challenge. But, as it happened, this only began what turned out to be a very involved effort. Soon after making its choice, the group discovered a proposed Kentucky General Assembly bill⁴¹ that would sharply curtail residential solar panel feasibility. As the former CC organizer noted in an interview:

Everybody opposed the bill, but different people had different ways of wanting to express it and things got pretty heated. Some people said 'well, if we go attacking the power company, that's not who we are, we're going to leave the [CC]!' And others said 'well! If we don't go attack the power company, that's not who we are and we are going to leave the [CC] (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

The CC organizer and members have actively sought to avoid zero-sum discussions that weaken members' capacity to listen to each other and think critically (Swain, 2001). They have instead tried to reframe the community's collective narrative via story circles and "a lot of

⁴¹ The utility companies that lobbied for the bill argued that residential customers should not receive credits at the retail rate for the extra electricity they produced with rooftop solar panels because those customers do not pay to support the electrical grid otherwise available and to which their generated power would flow. Environmental activists, on the other hand, warned lawmakers that the industry's proposal would threaten the growing solar energy industry. The bill as finally passed in March 2019, provided a win to the monopoly utilities of Central Appalachia.

discussions afterwards” until all the members felt they could “chart a way forward that speaks to all of our values” (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

Briggs has maintained that societies are not able to overcome public problems without developing effective local/community problem-solving systems and processes. Although civic efforts at the local level are not capable of controlling all of the factors that shape the political and economic conditions of their world yet, “creative, adaptive collective action [...] includes steps to reduce risks, to gain more control over the causal factors (‘drivers’) that matter and to try new and more promising strategies over time” (Briggs, 2008, p. 16).

In the case of the electricity/coal industry’s anti-solar bill, for instance, the utility companies did secure the law’s passage on terms they found acceptable. However, legislators acknowledged the very high volume of calls/written requests from ordinary constituents opposing the legislation. The CC’s efforts (letters, op-eds) highlighting the drawbacks of the policy constituted an example of a collective, adaptive action towards more sustainable local strategies. So far, five CC-affiliated organizations have installed solar panels to produce a share of their own electricity. Nonetheless, what is more important is the development of democratic capacity among members who could respectfully negotiate the differences in their values to move towards a collectively determined objective. Reflecting on this communication process one CC member recounted:

One of the things that went out there publicly [...] was trying to pit rural [Central Appalachia] as opposed to solar [...] It was a completely bogus argument trying to get emotional support, the rural type of thing! The [CC] got together to do a response. Bringing rural folks in support of solar energy. But at the same time, [this episode] played a big part in this whole culture war type of thing [...]. In the [CC] you have coal operators and you have people whose family are/were coal miners. It's not like everybody in the [CC] is anti-coal production, right? So, we have this broad

voice, broad perspective and we kind of came to the table to talk about how we could respond. We responded in a way [...] I was probably on the first draft really wanting to cut the power companies in a strong way. But then it was tempered by the voice and modified by the voice at the end of the day. It was a better article [an op-ed published in an online regional news platform], a better response. Not everybody liked it, but in my opinion, what went out there was received really well and I think it answered the arguments better than the first draft (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

Access to Resources

According to Chaskin’s framework, the final element of community capacity is access to “economic, human, physical and political” resources within and beyond the community (2001, p. 297). Local problems are often complex and “go beyond the capacity, resources or jurisdiction of any single person, program, organization or sector to change or control” (Lasker and Weiss, 2003, p. 18). This section examines CC’s efforts to gain identify and pursue different forms of resources.

Economic/Physical Resources

As mentioned in the “sense of community” section, through building relationships and trust, the CC has been able to facilitate asset and/or skill sharing among its members. The organization helps participants identify resources (assessing their existence and character) along with ways to access them. For example, as a cultural organization, the CC has been able to connect its members to donors at various fundraising events, “we got a grant to build a brick oven [...] what happened was the money was given to [the CC mother organization] that is the

fiscal agent for the [CC]⁴²” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018). Another member mentioned that the cross-sectoral partnership character of the CC is a competitive advantage for its participating organizations when applying for funding. More, those individuals and organizations engaged have come to view these collaborations as necessary, rather than merely a positive add-on to their ongoing activities:

One way to be recognized ahead of other competitors is to be able to demonstrate successfully that you are working together and [...] because that's the image that you want to present it also becomes a real part of the belief system and you see the examples where it does benefit and you value that and understand that it is necessary (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018).

Human Capital

Chaskin viewed community members’ human capital as a contributing factor to community capacity “both through its availability as a collective resource and through specific, individual contributions” (2001, p. 298). CCD projects equip participants with skills such as “keen perception, relationship-building, flexibility, improvisation, creative problem-solving”(Goldbard, 2008, p. 2). Nicole mentioned in her interview, for example, that during cultural events, “it seems like we developed a whole new knowledge of each other by doing this, [...] we really did not know what they did until we started [...] being part of the things that they offer” (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018). Samuel also emphasized the importance of collective work and value of members’ knowledge and expertise in different fields,

If we work together from different perspectives, we can, I think, often give really good informed responses to some of the dialogue that happens statewide, nationally or [...] even here in our own

⁴² When CC gains separate 501(c)3 status, it will become fiscally independent.

communities [...] we wouldn't bring that perspective if we were in our silos responding one off. That's really one of the things that drew me to the [CC], it is just that broad perspective of folks coming together (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

Similarly, Grace noted the process of learning in the CC, “the ones who have already done it are willing to help tutor the others [...] if you're willing to share what you know then you come away with something too and the [CC] has just added a lot of richness in that way” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Political Resources

In democratic nations, political power refers to the probability that a group's claims will be incorporated in the policies of governmental decision-making (Truman, 1960). According to the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (2019), political access is the probability that if members/leaders of a group “perceive an interest affected by a future authoritative decision, the group can obtain the attentive interest of relevant decision makers.” As mentioned in the example of the proposed change in Kentucky's solar panel installation policy, the CC facilitated dialogue concerning the potential implications for Nolan of the bill. The Collective also supported member collaborative efforts to connect to relevant decision-makers to share their views. However, because of the political power and privileged⁴³ access of energy companies to legislators, the CC effort did not bear fruit. Collective Culture has facilitated political access for its members by bridging the relationship between community and governmental actors, but that has not automatically enhanced the groups' political power, “For power also depends upon the

⁴³ According to the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (2019), “Privileged access can be defined as the probability that authoritative decision makers automatically take a group's interests into account as the basis of decision.”

internal characteristics of the group and upon the tactics, techniques and skills that can be mobilized by the group” (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2019). The overarching question is whether and how adopting the CCD framework has influenced the CC’s capacity to garner and exercise political power in furtherance of the interests of its members.

In analyzing Gramsci’s political thought, Simon has contended that political theorist, politics encompassed a much broader domain of human activity than simply a struggle for state power as he “extend[ed] the concept of politics to cover any activities which are intended to change the nature of the spontaneous consent which has been built up in civil society” (Simon, 2015, p. 89). In this view, to change human relationships, and the meanings associated with those, the oppressed need to imagine a new way of conceiving themselves. The CC’s adoption of CCD and its associated methods has been beneficial in changing many residents’ perceptions of their community by unleashing hope for the future. In this sense, one may view the Collective’s members as social provocateurs of a sort, whose cultural projects aim to kindle social imagination and, ultimately, to bring many residents to revisit, and thereafter to reorganize, the social structure within which they live and work.

Conclusion

Adopting CCD has helped the CC raise Nolan’s community capacity by enhancing a sense of shared identity among the group’s members and through them among a broader cross-section of Nolan’s residents. The Collective has organized individuals and organizations towards achieving shared goals aimed at increasing community efficacy in addressing their common problems and facilitating access to externally controlled resources.

The CC has been especially successful in employing community cultural development methods to build relationships among individuals and the organizations with which they are affiliated to strengthen the sense of community among its members —based on members’ shared history, values and interests—encouraging trust among those with opposing views and providing a free space to negotiate shared aspirations among community members. The latter has proved to be one of the most prominent contributions of the CCD approach to stimulating Nolan’s community capacity to date.

Although as a limited network of local public and nonprofit organizations the CC cannot control the globalized forces of neoliberalism that de facto question the existence of “increasingly economically irrelevant” communities such as Nolan. Nonetheless, by implementing CCD strategies the organization has spurred residents’ creativity in imagining a new, shared and more hopeful future for their otherwise declining community. Members of the Collective, with their diverse values have nevertheless self-consciously participated in an ongoing dialogue aspiring to envision and (re)build communal relationships through collective identity-building processes (Kirakosyan and Stephenson, 2019). So far, the CC has been successful in bringing and keeping diverse community stakeholders in conversation and facilitating dialogue among them. It seems that the Collective’s partners have reached a shared vision regarding which “community” they serve and what they seek in the name of “development.” As Brian observed in his interview,

Culture drives development one way or the other. When you have extractive development, you have anti-democratic culture and dependent culture. If you want an economy based on collective creativity, co-creation, etc. then you need a culture of, to use [one of the CC’s members] words, ‘agency, voice and ownership’ (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

Members have been successful in identifying shared problems, prioritizing steps to attain them and accessing resources to address them. For example, three of the interviewees talked about a social entrepreneurship project in which the CC members collaborated to address a cluster of socioeconomic issues. Specifically, they cited the need to provide employment to the prison reentry population and to Nolan County drug court participants. One of the CC partner organizations assumed overall responsibility for addressing this need and other members assisted in finding grants and donors to fund the project. They also contributed to the initiative by marketing the program within their networks and providing additional cultural events (e.g., music, dance or games) to attract more visitors to support fundraising for it. Grace described this effort this way in her interview:

We were having a lot of trouble in our downtown area and the coal industry and everybody being out of work, and we had the opioid crisis, and a lot of our folks had one to jail because of that. So, we applied for an Appalachian Regional Commission grant and [...] we tried to foster some intergenerational community pride, and we were trying to get the younger folks [interested] about their heritage and so we had a series of activities that took place on weekends [...] (Personal interview, Grace, July 11, 2019).

Successful or not, pursuing these processes has helped Nolan community members engaged in them to perceive themselves as possessing capacity to confront difficulties when they emerge.

The CC is a nascent initiative (less than five years since the initial idea of its formation, as of this writing) and one cannot fully assess or predict its long-term success or influence. Nevertheless, the project's driving idea to employ the potent power of culture to bring people together, allows its members to question their deepest assumptions and to create a free space for negotiation and collaboration. In so doing, they have slowly been developing a counter narrative to the dominant, unsustainable neoliberal agenda.

Chapter 6

Sustainable Tourism Development

As elaborated in Chapter 3, previous research has suggested that a lack of community ownership is a major impediment to efforts to sustain community-based tourism. While raising public awareness of the possible positive and negative implications of tourism is a necessary step for communities interested in pursuing tourism as a development strategy, that initiative alone will not result in residents' participation in such efforts. Instead, the community's population must first possess individual and collective capacity to become engaged (Chapter 3). Chapter 5 examined the ways CCD strategies have contributed to resident capacity to participate in efforts to reposition Nolan for the future. This chapter analyzes the connections between the civic capacity galvanized by CCD methods and the sustainability of community-based tourism in that county.

The chapter's first section investigates how members related their engagement in the CC's activities to their participation in and ownership of tourism-related processes. I specifically examine the impact of CC's work to raise members' and residents' awareness and representation in tourism decision-making along with its partnership in the development of specific tourism projects. The second section examines the impact of civic capacity nurtured through CCD methods on the formation of cross-sectoral collaborations among and between CC members and other organizations involved in Nolan's tourism industry. Lastly, I analyze how Collective member capacity to embrace the unknown and willingness to participate in meaningful dialogue influences their relationships with tourists—a fundamental concern related to host and guest experience and therefore in ensuring the long-term viability of tourism-related initiatives.

Participation in Sustainable Tourism

Awareness and Representation

As noted in Chapter 3, researchers have suggested that community participation is essential in efforts to secure sustainable tourism (Simmons, 1994). However, those scholars have also found that a lack of representation and inadequate individual and community capacity were among major impediments to efforts to secure effective participation. Drawing from interviews with CC members, this section scrutinizes the impacts of the entity's work to encourage the participation of members, and more broadly Nolan's residents, in tourism decision-making processes.

Two CC interviewees said that their work in the initiative helped them become more aware of and involved in events in the Nolan community. Samuel mentioned that before joining the CC, he and the nonprofit organization he led were not a part or even aware of, Nolan community projects until they "read about it in the paper after it happened" (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018). As he observed,

Wanting to be a community partner and in those conversations, before they happened was a big motive of mine for jumping into the [CC] because what can happen there is you have broad representation of the community coming together to talk about ideas, projects, ways that we can shape our future and I wanted to be at the table in those conversations and I felt like it was a good avenue [through which] to participate (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

Echoing Samuel's point, Grace highlighted the role of the CC in connecting its members to Nolan County's tourism commission, "As [CC] partners, we became aware of [Nolan] County tourism and the things that are going on. They [tourism commission] have had a couple of

summits⁴⁴ and the number of people from the [CC] who attended was high” (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Although the commission is not a formal CC partner, many shared interests and projects have led CC members to participate regularly in tourism commission meetings and vice versa. As Nicole pointed out during her interview, “the tourism commission here is coming to our meetings. [... and] people in the [CC] are attending and participating strongly with the tourism people” (Personal Interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018). Brian mentioned in his interview that “many [CC] partners have close relationships with it [tourism commission]. If I need a tourism commissioner, I got her cellphone number and I can text her and it’s no problem. [...] And not just me, but many of us” (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, an element of an effective engagement process is that participants view their involvement as influential in making decisions. Grace, in our conversation, claimed that CC members perceive their involvement in tourism commission meetings as quite meaningful,

When they [tourism commission] have group activities within the summit and you’re brainstorming or you put your paper list and the possibilities in the County, then I feel like we have a big input into the wonderful things that [Nolan] County tourism is trying to do now (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Rather than involving only its members, the CC often solicits the involvement of a much larger portion of Nolan’s residents in its projects. As past scholarship has suggested, the capacity to engage in decision-making cannot be assured solely by the formal right to do so (Jamal and

⁴⁴ The Nolan Tourism commission holds monthly, county-wide public meetings to hear and discuss recently achieved accomplishments and future tourism development opportunities. Examples of previous sessions include discussions addressing “low hanging fruit,” including developing ATV trails, developing a brand for Nolan’s tourism and securing stakeholder input in tourism initiative planning.

Getz, 1995); residents need resources and skills to take part and those are neither automatically developed nor easily ensured. CC utilizes different arts interventions to increase residents' confidence in their capacity to participate in processes in which they can co-create schema for the future of their community:

We create the conditions for people to identify the capabilities they already had, but maybe have never capitalized on. So many people have skills, talents, leadership abilities that they are never really taught to hone and told that they're allowed to display them or maybe they're told that they're the wrong kind of person (Personal interview, Anna, October 24, 2018).

In a collaborative play about the future of Nolan County produced by CC, based on interviews with residents, one character observes that residents need to think creatively about potentially viable economic development alternatives, including tourism;

We cannot build our future on prisons, on the suffering of other people, and it makes no sense to put all our hopes in one basket again [...] Some say our 100-year coal mono-economy has now become our un-doing. We need to find a way to use the abandoned mines and restore stripped lands. [...] they have a river that people can inner tube on ("The Future of [Nolan] County" play, 2017).

Jordan, the county tourism manager, in her interview with me, said that Nolan residents have been more engaged in such decision-making since 2017, because of changes in Nolan's tourism administrative body in 2016 and the work of the CC. She added that residents participate in the Commission's monthly public meetings to share their ideas about tourism in Nolan County;

A lot of the ideas [for tourism projects] are community-driven, everyone has shown a level of excitement [during] the past year. And so, with that, a lot of changes have happened and a lot of traction has happened [...] a lot of community members [have become] very excited and very willing to share their hopes and dreams and ideas. We try to make them happen (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018).

Lastly, Jordan shared with me a share of the strategies the commission has adopted to attract a larger and more diverse cross section of input from citizens during its quarterly meetings to ensure that, “all county members from all organizations can come and share their viewpoints [...]”. One meeting, it was a morning meeting and another time was an evening meeting, so at different times we had different perspectives” (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018). Nonetheless, according to Jordan, there “were so many ideas in those meetings that we had to have back-to-back meetings to do something with those ideas” (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018). As previous researchers and practitioners have noticed, many tourism development plans are ignored or only partially implemented (Bovy, 1982). During her interview, the current CC organizer highlighted a number of the Tourism Commission’s limitations as it has sought to realize development plans,

They were doing really interesting stuff with T-shirts and planning for some upcoming events like Oktoberfest, but it also seemed like [they were] really financially under-resourced and like they were struggling to be able to achieve their milestones. My understanding was that there has not historically been a lot of support given or resources directed to a coordinated effort around tourism. One of the things that makes [CC] interesting is that it has been able to fill the gap in tourism to some degree. We also have seen a dedicated group of community members who are working very hard to promote the region (Personal interview, Emily, October 23, 2018).

The CC actively seeks to ensure that its members’ develop a balanced view of tourism. As Andriotis and Vaughan have suggested, “this balance of residents’ perceptions of the costs and benefits of tourism is a major factor in visitor satisfaction and is, therefore, vital for the success of the tourism industry” (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003, p. 172). For his part, Michael claimed that the CC, is actually more realistic than the staff of the Nolan Tourism Commission concerning such initiatives:

In those settings, tourism is presented as universally good, something we should absolutely maximize. But I think that organization [the Tourism Commission] is a body made of the more well-off parts of this community, [...]. So, I don't think there's a lot of critique within the formal tourism community, if you will, of the nature of tourism and the nature of people and their stereotypes or beliefs when they come to visit the area. But I do like the fact that [the CC] allows for conversations during which we can discuss these concerns (Personal interview, Michael, October 30, 2018).

The Community Based Tourism literature has highlighted the need for “engaging with the contested nature of community” in decision-making processes. Otherwise, CBT leads to “outcomes that build exclusive club capital rather than inclusive social capital” (Blackstock, 2005, p. 42). By acknowledging the heterogeneity of the communities in which it is working, the CC provides its members and local residents spaces (such as monthly meetings, community plays and story circles) for negotiating and achieving shared understandings concerning tourism development (and additional issues as well) in Nolan.

To sum up, the CC has been able to increase awareness and representation in tourism decision-making among its members and Nolan residents. CC members' participation in Nolan tourism commission meetings has been a positive step towards more inclusive and effective decision-making processes in this domain of public interest and action. Citizens' participation in such meetings has helped the Tourism Commission inform residents about upcoming events/projects and provided opportunities for those officials to obtain participants' generative ideas as well as consultation/feedback concerning possible programs and initiatives.

As the sustainability literature suggests, residents' awareness and perception of tourism-related development shapes the long-term prospects of such projects (Andriotis and Vaughan,

2003). Nonetheless, one must distinguish between a host community's power and control of tourism decision-making processes and citizen tokenism (Arnstein, 1969) or "induced participation" in which residents, "have a voice in the tourism development process, but they do not have power to insure that their views will be taken into account" (Tosun, 2006, p. 495). The following section investigates CC impacts on its members' and other Nolan residents' involvement in, and sense of ownership and control of, local tourism.

Community Ownership

Jamal and Getz have argued that it is possible (and vital) to address the power and authority issue within communities by involving a wide array of stakeholders and selecting a fitting convener at an early stage in the collaborative tourism planning process (Jamal and Getz, 1995). Many CC members, either individually or through their organizations, are involved in tourism. Three of the Collective's partners are community centers with locations across the County. These sponsor regular community cultural events, such as traditional dance and music festivals, that attract tourists and local visitors. In addition, a number of Airbnb and local restaurant owners are members of the CC through its downtown retail organizing group. One of the Collective's partners offers one-week voluntourism packages; "people pay us to come to work [in volunteer building tasks...]. In any given year we will have 400 people come through [this program]. They're coming to help, they're coming to work, but they're coming for experience too" (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018). Other CC partners, including farmer's market and art-based organizations, also offer tourism products and/or activities.

Although many CC members are involved in tourism projects, it is not uncommon for conflicts to arise between those individuals and groups benefiting from tourism directly and

those that are not doing so. Michael, for example, noted that “There has been conflict within the [CC] when we have brought people in, [...as tourists] it’s not unusual to have friction or maybe some conflict about the way that we feel that some outsiders perceive us and perceive the local community” (Personal interview, Michael, October 30, 2018). Brandon emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity⁴⁵ when one encounters people from other cultures:

I have never had a problem with anybody from a foreign country as long as they had ideals that don’t want to oppress me. In other words, I don’t want you to come over here from Iran and say ‘I want you to be like us’ and I would not want to come to your country and say ‘I want you to be like us.’ You got to live your life and don’t try to force it on someone else, it’s my belief (Personal interview, Brandon, March 8, 2018).

The CC has sought to facilitate a community conversation concerning tourism among those with differing ideas and perceptions to achieve a shared understanding of tourism development in the Nolan community:

The general approach to tourism that most people take here [... in the CC...] is that the major tourist commodity we have here, the major untapped asset is, authenticity. That people come here and they experience a world that you can’t just consume in the media and you participate in it. It’s a certain kind of hospitality and a certain kind of collective feeling (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

In their interviews Michael and Victoria claimed that although there are disagreements about the degrees or types of tourism development, in general, CC members and Nolan residents, including former coalminers, have a positive view towards the growth of the travel industry in their County;

⁴⁵ According to Foronda, “Cultural sensitivity is employing one’s knowledge, consideration, understanding, respect, [...] after realizing awareness of self and others and encountering a diverse group [...]. Cultural sensitivity results in effective communications, effective interventions, and satisfaction” (2008, p. 210).

I think there is a broad sense, locally, that tourism is an important component of economic development that can contribute to our economic future here and that it's one of the things that is most readily achievable or pursuable, compared to some other development strategies (Personal interview, Michael, October 30, 2018).

To analyze authentic participation, Arnstein (1969) suggested that analysts examine citizens' capacities and power and Pretty (1995) proposed degrees of local control and external involvement in relevant decision-making processes. The CC's efforts to increase community capacity (Chapter 5) target the highest level of members' participation—citizen control (Arnstein, 1969) and self-mobilization (Pretty, 1995) in development projects—including, particularly, tourism-related ones. In our conversation, Brian mentioned the significance of such approaches in avoiding commodification of culture via tourism:

The problem with commodifying is it often ends up meaning that somebody else owns the value of what you make, but if we own what we make then by all means let's [...] generate as much community wealth as we can [...] as long as the artist owns what he/she/they make (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

During her interview with me, Anna highlighted the importance of CC's work by offering examples of the extraction of culture from Central Appalachia, "you'll see plays and movies and mainstream music that incorporates Appalachian cultural heritage, music, styles of storytelling and performance. But how does that materially benefit our communities is the big question. Who benefits is always at the root of everything" (Personal interview, October 24, 2018).

As a result of individual and collective capacities developed via CCD approaches, CC members involved in tourism do not merely propose ideas at Tourism Commission meetings. Instead, many of them possess the capacity to partner with public and nonprofit organizations and access resources to realize the projects they have in mind. For example, Victoria named a

number of events she and other CC partners collaboratively produce every year, “We have a [Festival in June] that the farmer’s market runs. [One of the CC’s organization members] helped us with the catering and food, other partners helped with advertising and promotion” (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018). Michael explained the ways the CC and its parent organization have contributed to sustainable tourism growth in Nolan County; “We try to promote that [tourism ...] by [...]supporting tourism infrastructure here, hotels and lodging and restaurants and we try to actively support local restaurants and tourism draws and to cross-promote them” (Personal interview, Michael, October 23, 2018).

During their interviews with me, four CC members said that before the current Tourism Commission started its work in 2016, their organization and its partners and website were the only resources for individuals visiting Nolan. According to Brian, the present commission has utilized some of the CC’s “stuff, which we offered to them. We built the first comprehensive tourism resource in Nolan County” (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018). Nicole also mentioned that, “a lot of us have been doing some really great stuff in our county that the tourism commission now is strengthening” (Personal interview, Nicole, March 8, 2018).

The Tourism Commission views the CC and its partners as resources for planning, organizing and implementing tourism-related projects. Jordan provided several examples of such past and ongoing collaborations:

They [CC members] have been very instrumental for tourism, by building overlooks and bringing tourism into [Nolan]County. They [one of the CC partners] provide views as beautiful as anywhere else in the United States. [...] We partnered with the city and [the CC] with Mayfest and Oktoberfest, also with [Nolan]Saturday night live, where we had free live acoustic music on two ends of town. [...] We also partnered with [one of the CC’s members] with [...]an] event and helped them with marketing it to the region. Those were free music concerts every Thursday night with

performers from all over the nation [...]. That brought a lot of tourism to [Nolan] County (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018).

In summary, the CC members have developed sufficient individual and collective capacity to assume major responsibility in planning and promoting tourism events for Nolan. This capability has allowed those participating in tourism decision-making processes to shift from a consultation role to one of acting as full partners or even owners of specific projects. Their capacity to conduct civic dialogue to air and address their conflicting views has allowed CC members to achieve a shared understanding of a community-based sustainable form of tourism for Nolan. Members' sense of and commitment to their county has promoted tourism development that benefits local residents and visitors alike without compromising natural and cultural assets. Lastly, the ability to access internal and external resources has helped members to initiate and sustain valuable tourism-related projects cooperatively on behalf of Nolan's residents. The following section describes the character of those collaborations.

Cross-sectoral Collaborations

Scholars have argued that cross-sectoral collaboration⁴⁶ can prove to be a way to develop and sustain local tourism initiatives (Bramwell and Lane, 2005; Graci, 2013; Selin, 1999). While civil society organizations (CSOs) can often initiate local projects in agriculture, forestry, tourism and artisanal production (B. Taylor et al., 2017), cross-sectoral collaboration among

⁴⁶ Bryson et al. have defined cross-sector collaboration, "as the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately" (2006, p. 44).

public, private and non-profit organizations is nonetheless very often crucial for their long-term sustainability (Dentoni et al., 2016).

The CC has facilitated a number of intersectoral partnerships among member organizations and external groups to further tourism development, “we keep as wide and broad a base of relationships as we can both internally and externally” (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018). The Collective’s members who were active as tourism product/service providers before joining viewed their partnership with other organizations involved with CC as influential in their own tourism-related work.

On a practical level, CC members collaborate with each other to complement what they offer individually or that their separate organizations represent. For instance, if the fire department plans to have a musical event to raise funds, they coordinate with local community centers and the farmer’s market to publicize the occasion and to provide food. The CC and its parent organization also help partners by providing technical assistance in mounting art performances. Samuel observed that after joining the Collective and through connecting to different (non)member groups, his nonprofit organization now had more projects to offer to volun-tourists. He also suggested that by knowing what other CC members offer to visitors he can more effectively plan opportunities for his organization’s volunteer guests:

We could re-floor the stage where the musical groups perform. We could do that with volunteers. But we also bring volunteers and recommend that they check out the concert scene there and what will be happening at the farmers market on Thursdays that will be overlapping with the concert. [...] So, thinking about the tourism question, about how that works together, there are real collaborative coordinated efforts there (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

At first blush, these examples demonstrate simple pragmatic coordination between a limited number of individuals/organizations. Nonetheless, if one considers the competitive nature of tourism, especially in rural areas with a limited number of visitors, they point up the impact of the civic capacity developed through the CC as it has worked to develop long-term collaborations for achieving shared goals among members. Grace explained to me that before the Collective was created, Nolan was characterized by an infertile competition among organizations;

There had been a—I would almost but not quite—call it jealousy, an admiration and a gladness for the success of someone else, but almost covetousness. [...] When we were trying so hard and it was as if you could never really break through. We might plan something that we thought was going to be really successful and begin to publicize that. We were going to have this music function or something that would draw people with a few dollars to spend on entertainment to our place, only to find out that on that same night, maybe three other organizations were having a function that would divide the crowd that we would have had so that none of us were as successful as we could have been had we collaborated (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

The CC has helped its members become aware of each participant's goals, projects and resources along with those of a number of additional allied organizations as well. A tourism advocate in Nolan explained that they generally work with the CC “on different events or community interests through tourism” (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018). She specifically cited the Collective staff's role in facilitating collaboration between the commission and the CC's various members. For example, one non-profit member organization, which could mobilize the requisite expertise and volunteer cadre, helped developers construct five scenic overlooks in the County:

We were asked to participate in [the overlooks project], bring our experience of building [...]. That was a collaboration that came out

of [the CC] in a way, although maybe not directly, but because we were at the table in those conversations. It got us there, and I think without the [CC] we would not have been there in that place (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018).

Six of the CC members I interviewed perceived previous tourism commission leaders as ineffective in using available resources. As an example, one noted, “We have ten feasibility studies that were separately done, like \$25,000 worth of feasibility studies. Nothing ever got done with them. Some of them overlapped with others, but they were never brought together” (Personal interview, Samuel, March 8, 2018). The CC, as a network of local organizations from different sectors of the local political economy, has been able to initiate a number of community-based tourism projects in recent years by working hand-in-hand with the County’s new tourism leadership team.

Notwithstanding the potential positive benefits of cross-sector partnerships, the literature examining them to date suggests, on balance, that they are extremely difficult to realize and maintain in practice. Natural obstacles such as different “languages” and “cultures” within and between sectoral actors, dissimilar goals, values and power dynamics are among the most often mentioned challenges of initiating and sustaining cross-sector collaboration (Googins and Rochlin, 2000).

In Nolan, both the CC and the Tourism Commission evidence Gray’s definition of collaboration as, “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (1989, p. 5). The two organizations have partnered to develop many cultural tourism projects that have aimed to make Nolan County a better place to visit and to live.

Nonetheless, their views of tourism as a tool for realizing their shared goals are different. The Nolan tourism commission is seeking to draw more tourists to the region to support the local economy, “events have been driven with the goal and focus and mindset to financially help those [local] businesses” (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018). The CC, as a cultural organization with many of its members involved in the tourism industry (Airbnb/restaurant owners, cultural dance/music centers, etc.) however, prioritizes residents’ well-being and satisfaction with the place in which they live:

If tourism is the primary thing we’re working on, then we’re not developing a place for ourselves to live anymore. But, of course, there are better ways to develop tourism where you’re developing a place for yourself to live in such a way that it is welcoming and open and accessible for others to visit (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

The co-existence of these two strategies for developing tourism in Nolan has contributed to the sustainability of the industry in the County in several ways. Past empirical studies have concluded that, in many cases, community-based tourism (CBT) projects have failed to deliver financial viability due to commercially unsustainable products and/or weak market linkages and therefore, demand (Marx, 2011). Aware of neoliberal market norms and by means of its authority, the Nolan Tourism Commission assists local businesses and entrepreneurs to leverage their competitive advantages (e.g., being local, handmade, traditional) and to develop their network of potential partners in order to increase their footprint and hence financial viability. A Nolan tourism advocate, Jordan, mentioned how during one local festival the Commission supported, it banned the sale of commercially produced alcohol by nonlocal vendors:

We did not allow any outside alcohol vendor sale and we were asked by several people if they could come into town and set-up [...]. Our answer was ‘what about those restaurants that we want to promote? They sell your product. With that sell, your business is

going to benefit, but they get [a share of] the profit (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018).

The tourism office also encourages (and sometimes forces) businesses to cooperate rather than compete with each other. The Commission's holistic view of Nolan's available resources and activities helps current and future businesses to avoid duplication and to stay relevant to community's needs:

We did have a couple of food vendors [...] but we made sure that nothing was in direct competition with what somebody else offered [...]. So, everybody benefitted and we had a variety without taking away from any businesses, while actually bringing businesses downtown (Personal interview, Jordan, October 23, 2018).

For its part, the CC also works to promote an equitable distribution and use of tourism-related resources, "There are so many ways that tourism can become another extractive exploitative industry" (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2019). To avoid that possibility, the CC aims to co-create a community that is pleasant for its residents in the first place,

The [CC is] approaching economic development and tourism through the basic simple idea of people making culture together, making art, dance, music and food and agriculture together. We create more innovative ideas by putting culture at the front [...] We think about tourism as an outcome of projects that are primarily driven by efforts to improve the quality of life for people living here (Personal interview, Michael, October 30, 2018).

One can discern examples of the CC's approach towards tourism in its projects. Free annual cultural festivals by (non)local artists, the revival of a community-led dance program and efforts to restart local bluegrass festivals (mentioned in Chapter 5) have all been geared foremost to increasing locals' sense of pride in their cultural heritage, rather to attracting more tourists to the region. The weekly/monthly cultural events run by different CC members host Nolan residents as well as tourists from outside the region, with many of the occasions incorporating

social entrepreneurship components in an effort to meet the needs of Nolan County's residents more effectively.

Aside from supporting the social dimensions of tourism, the CC has also contributed to the area's environmental sustainability by leading efforts to make solar energy available across the county (Chapter 5), helping to develop a recycling and composting facility and promoting environmental-friendly tourism choices. As of the date of this writing, five CC organizations involved in tourism have installed solar panels to generate electricity. The Collective, in collaboration with the Nolan County Sanitation Department, is now working with partners to plan and develop a recycling and composting facility to generate revenue and jobs while reducing trash and improving the soil at abandoned mining sites. Lastly, through a number of its partners, the CC is promoting cycling, hiking and walking among Nolan residents and tourists on an ongoing basis; "the walking program promotes physical activity. If you walk to the farmer's market, you get \$10 to spend at the market. These are ways to promote sales for farmers and [also to] promote healthy eating and exercise habits" (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018).

Overall, the CC encourages its members to develop cross-sectoral partnerships to achieve shared goals in tourism-related projects. Members' capacity to become aware, partner and collaborate with each other and with others beyond the CC's boundaries has helped to avoid duplication/waste of resources and has led to more beneficial projects for those involved. The CC and Nolan's Tourism Commission collaboration has spurred a more sustainable, community-based tourism in Nolan. While the Commission has sought to support the economic viability of local businesses, the CC has endeavored to secure the social and environmental sustainability of tourism-related projects.

Aside from how residents perceive tourism policies and development, another factor in the sustainability of such initiatives is securing a “balanced and authentic host-guest relationship” (Wassler and Kirillova, 2019, p. 124). The following section explores the connection between the civic capacity of members and their view of and response to the authenticity challenge when it comes to the tourism gaze.⁴⁷

Authenticity and the Tourist Gaze

Derrida (2001) viewed hospitality toward the Other as the characteristic defining factor of community. He argued that there is a paradigmatic conflict within the conception of community based on those against welcoming the ‘other’ and those supporting hospitality (Derrida, 2001). Brian emphasized the importance of openness to the Other, not merely in the tourism arena, but more broadly in community development, “I think in order for the work to be, actually democratic, you the facilitator, you whatever else, have got to be ready to have your mind changed. That would be to be ready to engage in the dialectic” (Personal interview, Brian, March 8, 2018).

During our conversation Anna pointed out that there are certain perceptions among outsiders regarding residents of Nolan and the state in which their community is located concerning their perspective of strangers,

Whatever people perceive about [...] the orientation to outsiders that people have in [the State in which Nolan is located] or their feelings about tourism in general [... they need to remember] it is primarily a place where people have lost so much faith in any kind

⁴⁷ Sociologist John Urry (2002) has explained the "tourist gaze" as the set of expectations that tourists bring to host destinations when they participate in cultural/heritage tourism, in a search to experience an "authentic" experience. Urry argued that in response to tourist expectations and, often, cultural and racial stereotypes, local populations reflect that "gaze" to benefit financially.

of social infrastructure that is represented by the outside world
(Personal interview, Anna, October 24, 2018).

The CC's work through CCD methods has encouraged 'the passion of not knowing' (Derrida, 1997) by maintaining, "the lens of being open to alterity – always reaching for 'the other' which disrupts our taken-for-granted" (Westoby, 2019, p. 10). As mentioned in Chapter 5, the adoption of the use of CCD has provided the Collective's members with, "more dialogue, opening up space for possibility, imagination, critical thinking and freedom to ask any question; and a constant endeavor to 'open' community up to those who have historically been excluded" (Westoby, 2019, p. 10). A byproduct of developing such capacities among CC members is their increased openness towards individuals who come to Nolan as tourists or newcomers. Grace mentioned how members initially viewed the first CC community organizer, who was from outside the region:

[Brian...] would be kind of considered a foreigner, if you will. Because he is from the northeast part of the country, and being Jewish, and we don't have a big population of Jewish people here. He kind of came to us like a fish out of water and has just fit in like putting your hand into a glove. He has just fit in that closely. It has been very special for those of us in the [CC] to have him here and to have his perspective on things (Personal interview, Grace, March 8, 2018).

Brandon suggested that in his view traditional music festivals are great venues for meeting people from all over the world, "it was a good thing bringing all those people from Japan, from Alaska, we had foreign people. The Japanese love bluegrass music and a lot of them play good bluegrass music" (Personal interview, Brandon, March 8, 2018).

While, according to my interviewees, most of the CC members have developed a sense of openness to the Other, it is important to investigate how that social capacity influences their (re)actions when they are seen as Others. Several scholars have observed that host communities,

including the ones located in Central Appalachia, sometimes play along with tourists' expectations/mental images to profit economically (Newman, 2014; Ritzer, 1999; Tooman, 1997). In his ethnographic research in three tourist towns in the Great Smoky Mountains Newman found examples of such practices in the entertainment industry:

Drawing on preconceived notions of mountain culture, this actor [an older man who dresses in cut-off overalls] employs a variety of facial contortions in performing Appalachian whiteface for the tourist gaze. Moreover, the Smoky Mountain Jubilee relies on consumers' preconceptions of poverty and unwitting conventionalism (2014, p. 378).

More broadly, Wassler and Kirillova have argued that, "tourism, through the objectifying power of the gaze, is inherently disconnecting" (2019, p. 124). Previous researchers have suggested that the only path for tourism to serve as a tool for social connectedness (Gössling et al., 2018) in our unceasingly individualizing society is by means of an authentic host-guest interaction in which both tourists and locals embrace not knowing with openness and humility.

As mentioned in previous sections, CC members have held many conversations addressing members' and residents' dissatisfaction with the tourist gaze in the Nolan community. During our conversation, Michael observed that,

Not everybody thinks that every outsider is universally good and should be given *carte blanche* [...]to say whatever they say about people and culture and community here. There have definitely been some frustrations that I've heard expressed in [CC] meetings about some ways that tourists or visitors present themselves or present their ideas (Personal interview, Michael, October 23, 2018).

The tourist gaze, as a relational and complex phenomenon (Urry and Larsen, 2011), "alienates, stereotypes, objectifies, and ultimately, de-humanizes the gazer and the gazed in a power-struggle of interpretation" (Wassler and Kirillova, 2019, p. 124). The CC and its parent

organization try to bridge the gap between stereotypical images about Nolan County and the reality of people's lives through collective cultural works;

A big part of our media production or our performance and our organizing is rooted in the idea of the voice of people in rural, but also, urban areas, telling their first voice stories. Hopefully, face-to-face and in a way so that they can connect empathically with people who have a different mode of being, a different lifestyle, live in a different place, have different cultural contexts.[...] My experience has been that those divisions break down with experience faster than we think they will (Personal interview, Anna, October 24, 2018).

Victoria claimed that community cultural events are fertile opportunities for transcending tourist/local roles and having conversations with those from outside the region; "I'm always excited when someone comes and [...] I appreciate the opportunity to present our own story!" (Personal interview, Victoria, March 8, 2018).

To summarize, those involved in the CC's cultural work believe that it has spurred the passion of not knowing and openness to alterity among the organization's members. While the CC seeks continuously to welcome strangers, there have been moments that a number of members perceived/received comments from outsiders based on prevailing stereotypes of the region. The Collective and its parent entity have sought actively to confront this phenomenon by providing spaces for hosts and guests to transcend their assigned roles (and gazes) to form authentic human relationships. In its efforts to transform the community's gaze (e.g., Wassler and Kirillova, 2019), the CC facilitates a dialogue (e.g., through community-based performances, story circles and local media productions) to question, negotiate and make sense of existing imaginaries.

Conclusion

This chapter employed insights gleaned from interviews with CC members and other engaged public officials to examine the ways that the community capacity of Collective members' has contributed to the sustainability of tourism in Nolan County. Although the literature has suggested that participation in tourism decision-making processes can lead to locals' empowerment (Graci, 2013), this study focused on the role of participants' perceived power in their engagement and ownership of tourism. Interviews with CC members and an a tourism advocate in Nolan revealed that the entity's work has increased awareness among Nolan residents of the potential positive and negative implications of tourism development projects, policies and decision-making processes. That heightened understanding has translated into increased and more diverse resident participation in tourism commission meetings and initiatives.

Cognizant of their individual and collective capacity, CC members not only have engaged in consulting roles in Nolan tourism development they have also partnered and/or own many tourism-related projects. Membership in the CC has led many entities to organize, collaborate and coordinate in shared tourism initiatives that aim to leverage each other's products/services sustainably. The developed civic capacity of members has shifted their scattered, short-term projects into longer-term, synergetic collaborations. Collective members said in their interviews that such alliances have avoided the recurrence of previous duplications while benefitting them, tourists and residents in ways and to a degree that could not be attained by each organization offering its efforts to visitors alone.

Cross-sectoral partnerships among and between (non)members that have arisen directly from CC efforts are now contributing to the sustainability of Nolan tourism development in

several ways. First, the Tourism Commission has benefited from CC members' expertise and resources in several tourism development projects. The Commission and the CC have moved collaboratively towards realizing a more sustainable community-based tourism with one focusing on the economic viability of specific products and services local businesses may offer and the other supporting residents' well-being and preserving the cultural and natural environment.

To encourage both hosts' and guests' long-term satisfaction, the CC provides a fertile space for ongoing dialogue. Collective members can voice their concerns in that space regarding their perceptions of those coming to Nolan. The CC has sought to spur hospitality and the capacity for welcoming the Other through applications of the CCD framework. The organization acknowledges the need for spaces where the gazed and the gazer can transcend their roles and initiate authentic relationships. The CC works to provide such a possibility through applications of CCD methods (e.g., story circles, media production and community performance). These efforts have aimed to deepen self-reflexivity, develop critical judgment of one's assumptions and arouse empathetic understanding among the residents and members engaged in them.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

Despite the undoubted positive contributions of numerous, long-term social programs (Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, SSI and so on) and development initiatives, many of the residents of coal towns in the Central Appalachian region of the United States today struggle with widespread poverty, unemployment and lack of access to quality education and healthcare services. Ever-decreasing resources arising from the continued decline of principal industries has necessitated consideration of new development narratives for the region.

Many scholars have viewed neoliberalism as responsible for growing inequality and environmental degradation in Central Appalachia (Bell, 2010; D. B. Billings, 2016; York, 2016). Those analyses have called for multilevel (local to global) institutional and citizen resistance to destructive policies serving relentless capitalist pursuit of profits; the reflection and foundation of an everyone-for-himself society. In Central Appalachia, to break the hegemony of extractive industries, whose leaders continue to be guided by a neoliberal agenda, there is a need to develop a range of community capacities to assess possibilities for, and/or to maintain, positive change to reduce poverty and injustice in the region (Anglin, 2002; Eller, 2008; S. L. Fisher and Smith, 2012).

Mining has played an especially strong role in forming peoples' identities in Central Appalachia's coal towns throughout their history. Identifying alternatives to the ongoing decline of that way of life is therefore deeply entangled with values and culture. The anti-neoliberalism

narrative of solidarity implicitly requires a social transformation that simultaneously values culture and empathy in order to confront the currently dominant and unsustainable prevailing “xenophobic nationalism and technocratic globalism” in the region (Kothari et al., 2019, p. xvi).

Sustainable development calls for citizens’ involvement in, and ownership of, projects, and more importantly, and more broadly, the decision-making processes that drive those development efforts. This study examined the sustainability of tourism—as a popular socio-economic development strategy in post-industrial communities—in a coal town located in Central Appalachia through the lenses of community capacity and community cultural development. Recent sustainable tourism conceptual frameworks have highlighted the importance of social capacity building for long-term community well-being. However, the ways through which host communities can develop such capacities have been less investigated in the tourism and sociology literatures.

Community Cultural Development has evidenced success in contributing to building community capacity elements, such as empathetic understanding, by providing participants opportunities for self-reflexivity and critical appraisal of their deeply-held assumptions. The CCD approach seeks and cherishes participants’ insights rather than those of technical experts. Such efforts aim to encourage individual and collective awareness of agency and power as prerequisites for democratic community problem solving.

As of this writing, no other analysis of which I am aware has investigated the connection between community cultural development (as a means of securing effective dialogue and a venue for encouraging the development of shared vision among community members) and efforts to develop sustainable community-based tourism. This research sought first to understand whether and in what ways participation in community cultural development activities, as one of many

forms of communitarian entanglement, leads actors to embrace norms of respect, dignity, collaboration, reciprocity and empathy. Second, it explored the relationship of such a worldview with the conditions necessary for the sustainability of community-based tourism in a small town in Central Appalachia. I investigated how those capacities and the behaviors arising from them have shaped community-based tourism toward efforts to ensure more just, collaborative and inclusive public choice processes. A number of forms of data collection informed this study. Those included personal observation, analysis of existing community economic and demographic data, and semi-structured interviews with a sample of individuals involved with a community cultural development organization working in my targeted community.

Research Question 1

To explore whether and in what ways engaging in CCD projects and community capacity are related.

This study found that employing the CCD framework has helped the CC raise Nolan's community capacity by enhancing a sense of common identity among its members and, through them, among a broader, though difficult to define, cross-section of the area's residents. The CC has sought to engage individuals and organizations towards achieving shared goals aimed at increasing community efficacy in addressing their collective problems and facilitating access to external resources.

The Collective has been especially successful in employing community cultural development methods to build relationships among individuals and the organizations with which they are affiliated—based on members' shared history, values and interests—encouraging trust among those with opposing values and providing a free space to negotiate shared aspirations

among community members. The latter has proved to be one of the most prominent contributions of the CCD approach to stimulating Nolan's sense of community (a key element of community capacity in Chaskin's (2001a) framework) to date.

This study's interviewees suggested that the CC's use of CCD methods has spurred many Nolan residents to shift their perceptions of their community's future by unleashing hope that change can occur and can create new paths forward. In this sense, one may regard the CC members as social agents whose collective cultural projects have sought to provoke the citizenry's social imagination and to revisit and reorganize the social structure within which those individuals reside.

Although as a limited network of local public and nonprofit organizations the CC cannot by itself prevent, let alone control, the globalized forces of neoliberalism as those have reshaped Nolan in recent decades, that concern and awareness of it has nonetheless been key to mobilizing resident interest in discerning ways to preserve their "increasingly economically irrelevant" (in such terms) community. Meanwhile, the Collective has successfully employed CCD strategies to encourage residents' creativity in imagining a new, shared and more hopeful future for their otherwise declining (in population and in average economic and social well-being) community.

Research Question 2

If CCD and community capacity are related, whether and how such interaction influences the sustainability of tourism.

In the abstract, there are surely potential direct relationships between cultural activities and tourism development (for example, community cultural events can be appreciated as tourist attractions). However, the main research concern in this analysis was to explore the ways

through which collective cultural projects can affect community capacity; itself a precondition for residents to own, take control and undertake ongoing responsibility for sustainable tourism efforts.

Those interviewed for this study contended that CC's work has contributed to the sustainability of tourism in Nolan County by increasing residents' effective participation in tourism decision-making processes, encouraging locals' partnership and ownership of tourism development projects and providing space for authentic guest-host relationships.

This effort's interviewees reported that the CC has inspired a balanced awareness (i.e., where locals can consider both pros and cons) of tourism development projects, policies and decision-making processes among Nolan residents, including its own members. Such understanding has not only translated into more inclusive public decision-making processes, but has also supported the sustainability of tourism by providing residents clear expectations of such projects' projected outcomes.

CC's work has shifted participants' roles from service as observers or, at best, consultants of tourism projects, to partners and owners of such developments (see Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation). Engagement in the CC has led many partners to organize, collaborate and coordinate in shared tourism-related projects aimed at leveraging each other's products/services sustainably. The increased civic capacity of CC members has reconnected them as individuals through shared collective identity and goals. And their goals for County tourism projects have followed suit. Members' previously scattered, short-term plans have evolved and now often take the character of longer-term, synergetic collaborations. These tend to benefit owners, tourists and residents more, and more effectively, than previous isolated efforts had supported them.

CC's efforts to encourage cross-sectoral partnerships among and between (non)members have also contributed to the sustainability of Nolan tourism development by providing a mechanism for reciprocal exchange of expertise and other resources between private (for profit), nonprofit and public institutions. The County Tourism Commission and the CC particularly, have moved collaboratively toward a more sustainable community-based tourism with one focusing on the economic viability of tourism products and services local businesses can offer and the other seeking to support residents' sense of well-being and to preserve the area's cultural and natural environment.

Globalized neoliberal assumptions press communities and cultures to frame all of their activities in accord with the perceived dictates of the market. In terms of tourism, the capital accumulation agenda strongly encourages those interested in its promotion to promote authenticity, locality and cultural heritage as niche products that can be sold to those who seek genuineness. In this scenario, and due to their pre-assigned roles and expectations, neither the host nor the guest has the opportunity to initiate an authentic relationship.

To promote the development of authentic human relationships between Nolan residents and tourists, the CC has sought self-consciously to stimulate hospitality and the capacity for welcoming the Other by employing CCD framework to connect individuals to a wider sense of self, a different kind of power (i.e., power with), a richer experience of the community (through compassion and insight into interconnectedness) and a larger view of time. Moreover, by offering spaces (e.g., community performances) in which the gazers and their subjects of interest can transcend their typical neo-liberal commodified roles, the CC has sought to facilitate authentic connections between residents and tourists. Such practices should contribute in the long pull to the sustainability of tourism in Nolan by satisfying residents' need for sharing their

own narratives and providing tourists the opportunity to revisit their assumptions in what, at its best, can become a genuinely collaborative process.

Implications

Previous research and practice in CBT has suggested that social exclusion, lack of participation and structural constraints to local control of the tourism industry and the challenges attending the exercise of individual and community agency have led to unsustainable results in many such initiatives (Blackstock, 2005). Scholars' and practitioners have argued that one way to address such eventualities is to incorporate community capacity building in tourism development planning. However, as Mascardo has observed, "mechanisms for improving community participation in tourism, including the development of partnerships, entrepreneurs and tourism leaders" too often go unelaborated (2008, p.12).

The CC's adoption of the community cultural development framework and its associated strategies has proved beneficial in addressing a number of these challenges by increasing community capacity among its members and a share of additional actors engaged with its efforts. The Collective has worked to ensure that its members and residents obtain a balanced view and awareness of the potential benefits and costs of tourism. Those efforts have simultaneously resulted in increased resident participation in Nolan's tourism planning processes. In addition, this study's interviewees reported that the CC's members, as a direct outcome of the Collective's employment of CCD methods, are today more aware of their individual and community power. They have developed the capacity to form partnerships and to own and lead collaborative tourism projects that aim to benefit them, their community and visitors. More importantly, adoption of the CCD framework has helped the CC as a grassroots organization to reach and

work with those who had traditionally not been engaged in local public and social decision-making processes. Lastly, the CC's culture-based work has been successful in inspiring members to acknowledge structural constraints and to move collectively towards addressing the issues they face in achieving their shared goals.

What has distinguished the CC's work from other organizations utilizing a traditional asset-based development approach has been its employment of community cultural development as its organizing framework. This synthesis has so far been successful in connecting diverse groups of residents and stakeholders based on their shared values, stories and dreams regardless of their political, generational and other divides. I must note that my direct evidence concerning the diffusion of these shifted views and attitudes is limited to the perceptions of those I interviewed. I do not know how far these capacities now extend beyond the CC and its cooperating network of organizations.

Other communities can replicate CC's work of promoting a narrative of solidarity based on shared identity and empathetic understanding to counter the otherwise dominant short-term, self-benefitting ethos of neoliberalism. When successful, such initiatives should spur and support efforts to realize a sustainable approach toward community and economic development projects including, as in the present case, tourism.

Reflecting on This Study's Theoretical Framework

Previous studies have confirmed the positive effects of civic capacity on the sustainability of tourism. The majority of the literature in this field focuses on the potential outcomes of civic capacity, such as participation in tourism decision-making or planning, rather than exploring mechanisms to form/increase such capacity and/or to increase incentives for collective capability

to be translated into sustainable community-based tourism. In this study, Chaskin's (2001a) theory of community capacity proved beneficial in charting progress toward sustainable community-based tourism. This research found that CCD can encourage individual and collective exercise of elements of the community capacity framework, including sense of community, commitment to community, ability to solve shared problems and access to resources. Those interviewed for this analysis uniformly argued that employing culture as a way to remind community members of their shared history, values and goals had proven successful in enhancing participants' sense of belonging to their place and encouraged hope for the future. Interviewees also believed that CC's use of CCD had led engaged residents to imagine new possibilities for their common future.

This case study also found that CCD-nourished community capacities appeared to be supporting sustainable tourism development in Nolan. Effective participation manifested as informed and inclusive decision-making processes along with engaged residents' capacity to collaborate, partner and own tourism projects, appeared to be leading to increased "fairness and equity in the distribution and use of tourism-related resources" (Dangi and Jamal, 2016, p. 457). Additionally, CCD's contributions to residents' balanced awareness of tourism development, along with their ability to engage in authentic dialogue with tourists (i.e., the hospitality and stewardship of local culture) look set to support ongoing efforts to develop a sustainable form of tourism in Nolan County.

The principal challenge of the community cultural development framework for the analyst or user lies in the relative amorphousness of the concept. Community, culture and development are all multifaceted contextual conceptions. I sought to bound my use of the frame based on its theoretical definition, yet I found myself questioning whether to consider several

projects as exemplars of the fruits of CCD inspiration. However, seeking to understand any human/social activity using any frame with similar analytical objectives would be complicated in this same way. Relatedly, measuring the impact of participation in CCD projects on the civic capacity of those involved is surely complicated. The central elements of community capacity, according to Chaskin's model (2001a), are interrelated and will change and evolve with changing community contexts. For the most part, I relied on the perceptions of my interlocutors to make such judgments, a strategy with obvious benefits as well as limitations.

The larger question might be what the CCD framework yields that other conceptualizations of social change have not. In my view, community cultural development, by highlighting the uniqueness of human experience, culture and place, seamlessly targets key capacity building objectives such as strengthening residents' community identity and sense of belonging. Valuing everyone equally "as a member of the human community" (Goldbard, 2013, p. 58), the CCD's bottom-up, inclusive approach directly addresses the principles of civic capacity building such as targeting the most vulnerable groups and partnering with as many community members and organizations as possible to collaborate to achieve common goals.

More importantly, as the architects of the community cultural development framework have argued, the approach appears to be uniquely suited to respond to current social conditions;

The effort to counter the effects of globalization is not an equal fight. The forces of globalization have virtually unlimited capital and influence on their side. Yet on the other side we have the relentless resilience of spirit that characterizes human cultures. I am betting on the underdog (Goldbard, 2006, p. 239).

Future research

As described in my Study Limitations section (Chapter 4), I narrowed my inquiry to interviews with CC members who regularly and actively participated in CCD projects, a number

of whom were professionally involved in tourism. However, to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the adoption of the CCD framework for the sustainability of tourism, one could continue this research by interviewing other groups involved in tourism such as tourists, business owners whose livelihood depends on the travel industry, environmental preservation groups and so on.

Second, to chart more comprehensively the effects of the CCD approach on participants' awareness of their capacity as individuals and communities, future research can focus more broadly on the interplay of civic capacity and CCD among active project participants, otherwise unengaged residents and those involved by proxy (e.g., participants' family members/friends, those who access community cultural products, etc.) across varying levels and lengths of engagement. Researchers can opt for a longitudinal approach to investigate the specific effects of CCD on members' community-related capacities throughout their participation. From another perspective, multiple case studies could draw similarities and differences in CCD inputs and outcomes in varying cultural contexts.

Lastly, I imagine future inquiries could adopt other research methods, such as (auto)ethnography and/or participatory action research to acquire a closer and deeper understanding of the relationship of CCD to individual and social learning, individual and collective agential power and social change. Comparing the findings of such studies with past research could augment our knowledge of cultural interventions and their influences on humans and their increasingly globalized societies.

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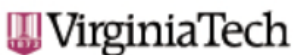
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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter (1)



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 6, 2018
TO: Max O Stephenson Jr, Neda Moayerian
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Exploring the Connection between Community Cultural Development and Sustainable Tourism in Appalachia
IRB NUMBER: 17-1221

Effective March 5, 2018, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at: <http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7**
Protocol Approval Date: **March 5, 2018**
Protocol Expiration Date: **March 4, 2019**
Continuing Review Due Date*: **February 18, 2019**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter (2)

October 15, 2018

Max O. Stephenson, Jr., PhD, MA, BA
Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance
201 West Roanoke Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Dear Dr. Stephenson:

SUBJECT: REGULATORY OPINION—IRB EXEMPTION
Protocol Title: Exploring the Connections between Community Cultural Development and Sustainable Tourism in Appalachia
Investigator: Max O. Stephenson, Jr., PhD, MA, BA
IRB No.: 18-844

This letter is in response to your request to Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB) for an exemption determination for the above-referenced research project. WIRB's IRB Affairs Department reviewed the exemption criteria under 45 CFR §46.101(b)(2):

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

We believe that the research fits the above exemption criteria. The data will be collected in a way so that the subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participants. However, any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research will not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. You have also confirmed that the results of this study will not be submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for marketing approval.

This exemption determination can apply to multiple sites, but it does not apply to any institution that has an institutional policy of requiring an entity other than WIRB (such as an internal IRB) to make exemption determinations. WIRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions. You are responsible for ensuring that each site to which this exemption applies can and will accept WIRB's exemption decision.

Please note that any future changes to the project may affect its exempt status, and you may want to contact WIRB about the effect these changes may have on the exemption status before implementing them. WIRB does not impose an expiration date on its IRB exemption determinations.

If you have any questions, or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Sean W. Horkheimer, JD, CIP, at 360-252-2465, or e-mail RegulatoryAffairs@wirb.com.

SWH:dj

B2-Exemption-Stephenson (10-15-2018)

cc: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)
Neda Moayerian, Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development
WIRB Accounting
WIRB Work Order #1-1122235-1

Appendix B: IRB Consent Form

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Exploring the Connection(s) between Community Cultural Development and Sustainable Tourism in Appalachia

Investigator(s):	Neda Moayerian (Student)	mnedal4@vt.edu / (540) 940 4354
	Name	E-mail Phone number
	Max Stephenson Jr. (Principal)	mstephen@vt.edu / (540) 231-6775
	Name	E-mail

Purpose of the Project: This study explores the experiences of members of a culture-based organization in Appalachia to understand whether and in what ways participation in cultural projects within a network of community-based activities can encourage individuals' sense of community especially with regard to development of sustainable tourism. The information gained from this study will contribute to Neda Moayerian's doctoral dissertation.

Procedures: Participation in this study is voluntary. You are being asked to participate in an interview with Neda Moayerian, a Ph.D. student in the Planning, Governance and Globalization program at Virginia Tech, regarding your views and experiences related to your involvement in projects/activities of the cultural organization of which you are a member. Neda Moayerian will ask you a series of questions should you agree to be interviewed. You can expect your conversation to be audio-recorded and to last approximately forty-five minutes to an hour. The interview will take place at the organization location or any other public place e.g. coffee house or restaurant that you may prefer. Neda Moayerian may need to follow up with you at a later point in the project with one or more follow-up questions. Should such occur, she will once again contact you and ensure your willingness and availability to meet with her.

Risks: The risks involved in participation in this study are minimal. Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. Please keep in mind that you may choose not to answer a particular question or to discontinue your interview/conversation at any time after it has begun. There are no negative consequences for declining to answer a question or ending the interview.

Benefits: The results of this study may help scholars, development practitioners and local governments (specially in Appalachia) to understand better the opportunities and/or limitations of community-based cultural projects as a potential tool for social and economic revitalization of

small communities by investigating how such efforts are proceeding in your town.

Confidentiality: The student investigator will assign a pseudonym to the town, organizations and each interviewee to protect their identity as well as the community's. She will file audio recordings, transcriptions, and interview notes under assigned pseudonyms and will password protect those files and store them separately from the identification key. The digital recordings, interview transcripts, and notes recorded during the interviews for this study will be kept for 5 years and then destroyed and during that period, only the investigators listed above will have access to them. Additionally, the Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The VT IRB is responsible for ensuring the protection of human subjects involved in research undertaken by Virginia Tech faculty and students.

The information obtained during this study may be published in academic journals or presented at scholarly meetings, but in such cases, interviewees will be identified only by pseudonym. You will never be identified personally.

Compensation: We are unable to provide any compensation for participation in this study.

Opportunity to Ask Questions: You may ask any questions you may have concerning this research and have those questions addressed before agreeing to participate. You may also ask questions at the time of your interview or later, as they may occur to you. You may contact the investigators at any time by phone or email at the contact information listed above.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators or if you need to report any concerns about this study, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at [540-231-3732](tel:540-231-3732) and irb@vt.edu.

Freedom to Withdraw: You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator(s) or Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. You are free not to answer any questions, as you may choose, without penalty.

Consent: If you wish to participate in this study, you will be interviewed. You are voluntarily deciding whether to participate in this inquiry. Your signature below certifies that you have read and understood the information presented and have decided to participate. Neda Moayerian will provide you a copy of this consent form for your records.

_____ Date _____
Interviewee signature

Interviewee printed name

Appendix C: IRB Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Neda Moayerian
PhD Candidate, Planning, Governance and Globalization
School of Public and International Affairs
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
mned14@vt.edu
(540) 940 4354

Date
Pseudonym

Introduction

- Introduce myself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Reviewing the contents of the consent form together with the respondent. Ask if there are questions about the informed consent form or if the respondent needs more time to review/sign it.
- Ask if they have any questions
- State that I will stop recording at any time if they want something off the record
- Test audio-recording device

Introductory Questions

Where are you from originally and where do you live now?
What year were you born?
What is your occupation?

Substantive Questions

Intro: I am going to ask you some questions about CC, because I am interested in learning more about how you got involved and what it is like:

1. Do you consider yourself a member of the CC? Please tell me the story of your involvement with CC (Prompt with these questions if necessary)
 - a. How long have you been involved with this initiative?
 - b. What drew you to this effort in the first place?
 - c. What are your responsibilities/role(s) related to the CC project?
 - d. Why have you remained involved?
2. Do you have friends and acquaintances also engaged with CC ? Can you describe the different relationships? (Prompt with these questions if necessary)
 - a. Did you get to know any of them after joining the CC?
 - b. How close do you feel yourself to other members? Are members willing to share personal stories/information with each other?

- c. How much time do you usually spend with other members? Both inside and outside of CC events and meetings?
3. Can you think of times when members have gone above and beyond established expectations to contribute time, money, or other resources for CC?
4. After becoming a member of CC, do you feel more/less or equally powerful in implementing change in your community compared to the time when you were not a member? Did engagement with Culture Com influence your perception of your effectiveness with other organizations? Do you have any examples?
5. On the other hand, do you believe that you personally have influence on CC's decisions? Can you share any examples? (Prompt with these questions if necessary)
 - a. Can you provide an example of an effort in which your organization and other CC entities have worked together to achieve a common goal or goals?
 - b. If so, what was/were those aims(s) and how did it/they happen?
 - c. Was the goal directly related to CC projects?

Now I want to ask you some specific questions about some of the creative work that has arisen from CC.

6. Are there examples of stories, music, performances or symbols which you have created/shared with other CC members? Then ask the next question only as necessary as a prompt:
 - a. What is the most important/memorable thing about each of the events in your view?

Tourism-Related Questions

The next series of questions will be about tourism in your town. A large number of Appalachian communities are interested in developing or expanding their tourism-related assets, including restaurants, attractions, cultural events, public parks or lodging.

7. Have you observed anything like this in your community? Do you know of any initiatives or programs going on aimed at encouraging such efforts?
 8. Are you involved directly or indirectly in tourism-related activities?
 - a. Can you describe your role and the forms of tourism you are active in?
 9. Has your engagement in CC influenced your tourism-related activities? In what ways? Have you ever participated in CC meetings where tourism was discussed? Can you elaborate on what was discussed?
 10. Are there any examples where you/your organization have changed a practice/decision about tourism for the sake of community (CC/ Nolan Community in General)?
 11. What is the decision-making process concerning tourism projects in Nolan? Who are the main decision makers?
 12. Are you aware of any opportunities, meetings, or workshops at which members of the general public have discussed their ideas regarding tourism-related activities?

Concluding Questions

- Is there anything else you would like to share concerning your experiences that you believe is important for me to know?
- Are there any issues concerning the character or consequences (so far) of the CC effort that we have not discussed and that you believe are important? If so, can you share those with me?

Wrapping Up Interview

- Thank them for their time and participation
- Offer to send them interview transcript to make sure I captured their ideas and comments accurately
 - Explain that I will correct any factual inaccuracies in the transcripts
 - Record observations, thoughts, feelings and/or reactions about the interview in my field notes.