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"APPALACHIAN INGENUITY" IN ACTION: ACTIVISTS REACH BEYOND TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KENTUCKY

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

"APPALACHIAN INGENUITY" IN ACTION: ACTIVISTS REACH BEYOND
TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KENTUCKY

This Thesis is an exploration into social change strategies in Appalachia that are alternative to conventional economic development practices and discourses. Drawing from original interviews with social justice activists in central and eastern Kentucky, I document a diversity of subversive discourses circulating in Appalachia, and I delineate models alternative to "development" that are driving action in several different communities. Through what one of my interviewees described as "Appalachian ingenuity,"[1] individuals are enacting extremely hopeful and imaginative projects, and they are conjuring unique formulations that contribute to academic theories on alternative economies, capitalocentrism, neoliberalism, postmodern economics, anti-development, post-development, and spatial strategies of resistance and liberation.

KEYWORDS: Alternative Development, Activism, Appalachia Kentucky, Alternative
Capitalism, Alternative Economics

Stephanie Ann Blessing

July 2, 2007

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[1] (Kirby 2007)

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July 2, 2007

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THESIS

Stephanie Ann Blessing

The Graduate School

University of Kentucky

2007

"APPALACHIAN INGENUITY" IN ACTION: ACTIVISTS REACH BEYOND
TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KENTUCKY

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Stephanie Ann Blessing

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Susan M. Roberts, Professor of Geography

Lexington, KY

2007

Dedicated to my grandparents,
Mabel McIntyre Blessing and Manford Alvaro Blessing,
Freda Doris Smith Burgess and Harold Dean Burgess,
through whom my Appalachian roots run deep.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION: FROM THE THEORETICAL TO THE REAL,
PERSONAL LESSONS FOR AN ACTIVIST DOING ACADEMIC RESEARCH

After a decade of personal experience with activism in the mining struggles of

eastern Kentucky, it has become clear that a search for alternative forms of economic

development in Appalachian coal fields is a key concern in the minds of Kentucky

miners, activists, professionals in social justice organizations, state and local politicians,

filmmakers, and residents living near mine sites. This desire for development is usually

articulated among activists and residents as a "lack of jobs," higher rates of poverty, and

dependency on government welfare in coal-producing counties. Activists working to end

the practice of mountain top removal mining[1] are continuously confronted with

arguments from local residents, coal company representatives, and politicians, that there

are few jobs outside the coal industry, and thus there is no alternative but to mine coal.

During my time as a volunteer organizing to stop mountain top removal mining in

Kentucky, my friends and I were constantly confronted with this struggle – jobs vs.

environment – either we allow an environmentally destructive industry to gut the

mountains of their minerals *or* we force coalfield residents, many of whom love their

communities and live on property passed down through generations, to seek work

elsewhere. It seems the only way out of this conundrum is through economic

development, but at the same time I have met many activists all over Kentucky who are

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[1] Mountain top removal (MTR) is a process of mining coal in which large drag lines, bulldozers, and explosives are used to remove the vegetation, topsoil, and successive layers of rock from a mountain to expose coal seams and shovel them out. MTR concerns a variety of activists, including environmentalists who do not want natural land, wildlife, and water sources destroyed, and laborers who lose mining jobs to the massive, highly-mechanized, and more labor-efficient machines used. MTR also affects residents in coal fields, as many experience property damage from nearby blasting, increased flooding during storms, and destruction of their natural water supplies (KFTC, 1991).

desperate to find an alternative frame due to the negative connotations of economic

development – i.e. large destructive industries owned by even larger corporations based

outside the state (or even the country), new prison systems, more flat land from mountain

top removal mining, non-union jobs that pay low wages and no benefits, and much more.

In addition, if Appalachian Kentucky *is* in need of economic development, then residents

themselves must first identify the rich local culture, history, and talents of their home as

"underdeveloped," "lacking," and in need of "alternative" forms of economic

development. These are labels easily doled out by politicians and absentee business

owners, but they are difficult identities to enact in the daily lives of miners and residents

in Kentucky.

A. Devising My Theoretical Framework and Research Topics

Because I personally witnessed so many individuals and social justice

organizations in Appalachia struggle with social change in relation to this development

framework, no other issue seemed more pressing and useful to activists as I set out to

research this Master's Thesis. Thus, the original intent of this work was to analyze and

document how activists are currently theorizing and practicing social change in central

and eastern Kentucky *outside* of a development framework. I wanted to find a large range

of examples of individuals working toward social change who did not conceptualize their

projects as "developing" Appalachia. Many of these ideas sprouted after reading what

some call anti-development and/or post-development literature from the "third world"

(e.g. Alvares, 1992; Corbridge, 1993; Cowen & Shenton, 1995; Escobar, 1995; Esteva,

1987; Esteva & Prakash, 1998; Ferguson, 1994; George, 1997; Parajuli, 1991; Scheper-

Hughes, 1995; Shrestha, 1995; Visvanathan, 1988). I have yet to read any Appalachian Studies work that compares to these texts, but I imagined that I would find activists in Kentucky with some of the same radical anti-capitalist, anti-western sentiments as what these development theorists published. Chapter II of this Thesis documents my expectations.

In chapter II, I review some of the most traditional Appalachian Studies literature on development and compare it to classic dependency and modernization theories about the "third world." Culture-of-Poverty theorists who write about Appalachia share much in common with modernization theorists – both imagine an almost deterministic cultural and economic trajectory from subsistence living to industrialized capitalism. Similarly, Colonial Model theorists researching Appalachia practice discourse that overlaps with dependency theory – they both argue that the underdeveloped state of colonized regions was caused by exploitative external colonizers. Colonial Model theorists are hopeful for a modernization of Appalachia that is not exploitative (and not capitalist), while in contrast dependency theorists bind modernization, exploitation, and capitalism together so tightly that one cannot be advanced without the others. This inconsistency points to issues of positionality that I emphasize later in the Thesis – that place is integrated into how individuals theorize social change strategies. When the Colonial Model was most popular (in the 1970s and 80s), it provided a talk in which already-angry Appalachian activists and academics challenged and subverted abusive practices of the coal industry. In this chapter I argue that even though some Appalachian Studies literature contributed to insubordination against exploitative coal companies, today those same works do not produce a discourse that adequately challenges development frameworks. Colonial Model

theorists affirm the goal of modernization, and many configure colonial capitalist powers as gigantic structures that are too powerful to overcome. Furthermore, they reproduce the assumption that Appalachia (which is homogenized along with all once-colonized countries) is "underdeveloped" and in need of development. I maintain that these can manifest into disempowering theoretical constructions. In the last section of chapter II, I compare the "development" discourse outlined in Ferguson's (1994) *The Anti-Politics Machine* to talk and practice enacted in Appalachia. I show the need for explicitly anti-development discourse (like that coming from the "third world") in Kentucky, since development projects have proven to be destructive and violent in their material effects.

In addition to searching for alternative ideas to development, in this Thesis I also want to discuss effective strategies, as activists see them, in relation to academic debates on scale, structure, and use of language. I want to put activists in dialogue with academic talk while hopefully bringing something useful to activists from academia and vice versa. According to Johnson-Odim (2001), academics need to be more proactive in providing spaces and resources where both theoreticians and practitioners can debate theory as it relates to action. Grassroots activists do not always have the tools, resources, or desire to translate their activity to the theoretical level. Both activists and theoreticians have resources to bring to each other, "because those struggling on the ground also think, debate, critique, and strategize – and more often than not, in relation to real conditions" (ibid, p. 122). This Thesis is meant to be a step toward recognizing action as theory, and acknowledging, from within academia, activists whose theorizations about capitalism and development go unnoticed. Again, as I read academic literature debating the use of words, such as economy, global, local, and capitalism, for the purposes of enacting

critical social change, I began identifying issues that I thought were pertinent to activists, according to my own experiences. I wrote chapter III of this Thesis as a way of setting up the conversations I would eventually have with Kentucky activists.

The academic debates and the theoretical tools I discuss in chapter III focus on issues that I found most useful for strategizing change. The first is concerned with the power that "the economy" and "capitalism" hold for many individuals. Critical works argue whether or not these concepts hold too much weight in the minds of activists and academics, whether they are disempowering words with which to engage, and how best to reformulate these terms or eliminate them completely. Second, I review a variety of literatures to which I hope to contribute with my own research. In these works, scholars emphasize a range of positions in the search for empowering discourses that overcome capitalocentrist notions – examples include everyday economics, livelihood strategies, autonomy, community, and sustainable development. These studies theorize the heterogeneous multiplicities that arise out of the daily lived experiences of ordinary individuals and their particular communities. I argue that none of the pieces I mention adequately challenge "development" in Appalachia or frame their work as outside of development. However, it was at this point in writing the Thesis that I began to loosen my own imaginings of what constitutes critical or radical theory. In chapter III I discuss the possibility of reformulating terms like "capitalism" and "development" such that they serve subversive, anti-capitalist and anti-development purposes – a similar move to that of Colonial Model activists in the 1970s and 80s who used their position as colonized, exploited victims to fuel their fight against coal companies. This ended up being a key tool in devising my own research contributions later on. A final academic debate that I

detail in this chapter intertwines global-local languages with conceptions of power and action. Theorists discuss whether using a scaled talk disempowers individuals from acting against perceived "global" forces. This argument is potentially crucial for activists; if scaled language does play this role in empowering individuals, then activists should strategize their talk in accordance.

B. Methods: Detailing the Interview Process

Since my research aimed to explore how activists theorize their work in relation to development frameworks, I chose to interview[2] activists in Kentucky as my main research method. The purpose of the qualitative research interview is, "to describe and understand the central themes the subjects experience and live toward […] to obtain open nuanced descriptions of different aspects of the subjects' life worlds" (Kvale, 1996, pp. 29-30). The information I was seeking is likely not expressed in any media publication, grant application, or other type of documentation, as this kind of information is not normally asked of paid activists in their official capacity. Thus, I conducted what Berg (1998) calls the "semistandardized interview," in which a number of questions are predetermined, but the interviewee is allowed freedom to digress. This method is appealing as it "offers researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher" (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 19). I interviewed as wide a range of activists as I could access given the limited time I

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[2] I voice recorded my interviews and then transcribed them afterward. The interviews lasted from one to three hours each. I conducted the interviews in settings where my interviewees felt most comfortable, sometimes at their home, a restaurant, or in their work environment. I interviewed in January, February, and March of 2007. To protect my participants, I gave them the option of making their interview anonymous, but none of them chose to do this. In return for her/his participation, my interviewees received a copy of her/his transcript to review and correct if needed.

had to complete this Thesis. I began by contacting activists I knew from organizing in the past and asking for suggestions for participants, and then asking those contacts for suggestions (or snowball sampling[3]). I interviewed individuals I knew before, but also people I had never met.

I limited the potential pool of participants to activists who live in central and eastern Kentucky, both rural and urban areas (see Figure 1 for a map pinpointing where my interviewees reside). Eastern Kentucky was a given area to search for interviewees for this project since the counties that comprise that region are geographically part of what the Appalachian Resource Commission officially defines as "Appalachia," and also because they each have a history of coal mining and mountain poverty. However, I also wanted to include interviews from activists who live in central Kentucky because so many environmental, health, and labor campaigns are tied to eastern Kentucky struggles and/or the "Appalachian" identity. For example, one of my interviewees who lives in Lexington, Kendra Adkisson, told me about her work trying to legalize midwifery in Kentucky. In the bill that her group the Kentucky Midwifery Task Force is trying to push through state legislation, Kendra admitted,

> Our whole approach is that women in eastern Kentucky don't have access to – well, I hate the whole approach, it's what we *have* to say – we're saying that women in eastern Kentucky won't be able to get to an OB [obstetrician], so we need to legalize midwifery. If we say, 'Oh, progressive educated women want midwives,' that's not gonna be a good enough reason. We have to say, 'People in desperate need of care, aren't safe in eastern Kentucky.' That's our main thing.

Even though Kendra has never lived in eastern Kentucky, and does not even have many clients to midwife for in that region, she and her group utilize the Appalachian identity as

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[3] ""Snowball" refers to the process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects" (Babbie, 2001, p. 180).

an underdeveloped, isolated place in order to advance their campaign. I recognized these interrelations in my own experience living and volunteering in central Kentucky, and thus I believed there would be many useful and unique theorizations related to "development" worth documenting. The section that focuses on Kendra's interview in chapter IV on "The Midwifery Model of Social Change," as well as other interviews, proves my assumption to be true.

At first my criterion for picking interviewees was based on whether their organization explicitly treated Appalachia as lacking or underdeveloped (I wanted organizations that did not), but once I conducted a few interviews I began picking individuals who did work that varied from the activists I already interviewed. I also only interviewed people who are working on projects that identify as Kentucky-oriented, so no national campaigns. I stopped interviewing because of the limited time I had to write, but also when I felt I had reached a sample that showed a diversity of organizing activities happening in Kentucky.

As is shown on the map in Figure 1, I ended up interviewing at six different sites, four in eastern Kentucky (Campton, Hindman, Whitesburg, and Berea) and two in central Kentucky (Frankfort and Lexington). Even though Berea is located in a county defined as "Appalachia" by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), its close proximity to central Kentucky cities complicates any black-and-white distinction between central and eastern Kentucky. I explain later that Berea takes on characteristics that sometimes set it apart from more remote areas of eastern Kentucky. Each of these locations has a unique history that contextualizes the work of my participants (the interviews themselves are analyzed in chapter IV).

I interviewed Janine and David Musser together at their home on top of a mountain in a remote part of Campton, KY – which has a resident population of 424 (Census, 2000b) and is the seat of Wolfe County. The Mountain Parkway – the main road that connects interstate 64 to most destinations in eastern Kentucky – ends at Campton. In addition, the Red River Gorge, the Kentucky River, and the Daniel Boone National Forest all run through pieces of Wolfe County, which make Campton a place frequented by tourists and in particular outdoor enthusiasts. In the last five or ten years the Red River Gorge has quickly become a renowned vacation spot for rock climbers from across the world. Parts of Wolfe County were mined for coal in the past, but after a recent wave of mountain top removal operations there is no coal left (D. Musser, 2007). Thus, it is no surprise that David's and Janine's ideas for social change center on tourism as economic development. David's project, the Eastern Kentucky Heritage Monument, is even hinged on Campton's location immediately off the Mountain Parkway; as I describe in more detail later, David has created an attraction that would funnel people into Wolfe County to see his Heritage Monument, and then disperse them throughout eastern Kentucky to consume tourist attractions there. Their ideas are based on a post-coal economy where money must be generated and circulated in *new* ways that build on Appalachia's artistic heritage and natural beauty.

From Campton, Hindman is about an hour drive deeper into the mountains and is slightly larger than Campton with a population of 787 (Census, 2000c), but activists in this town are also facing post-coal economy futures. Mike Mullins resides and works in Hindman, as the Executive Director of the Hindman Settlement School where I interviewed him. Hindman is the seat of Knott County, which is still actively mined by

both underground and surface coal operations, and as such the jobs vs. environment debate I mention above seemed much more pertinent to Mike during our interview compared to the Mussers. He brought up the frustration of that dilemma himself several times, and also spoke passionate words against mountain top removal mining. The Settlement School has a unique history as the first rural social settlement school in the US, founded in 1902 (Mullins, 2007). Mike explained to me that May Stone and Katherine Petit started the school as a boarding program for children who had a hard time accessing public education systems in the mountains. They raised their own food and lived a relatively self-sustained lifestyle with their students. Over time it changed out of a boarding school into a community-oriented educating institution with a heavy focus on local arts and Appalachian heritage; the school now houses dyslexic programs, adult education classes, and folk art workshops. Mike's ideas for social change are also rooted in this history, as he is working with other Hindman residents on economic development plans oriented around tourism of Appalachian arts. He has helped create new artisan and marketing education programs at the school, display space for local artists to use, and "incubator business" shops for entrepreneur graduates of the school (Mullins, 2007).

Whitesburg is the seat of Letcher County, and a little further southeast from Hindman. Also nestled in the hills of active underground and surface mined coalfields, Whitesburg's population trumps the other two eastern Kentucky towns at about 1,600 people (Census, 2000e). In the late 1960s, individuals from other states began moving to the Whitesburg area to serve economic development projects under the federal "War on Poverty" program. The region has a vibrant history of activist struggles from this time

period, and what came to be an important independent multi-media arts and education

collective called Appalshop sprouted from some of these efforts:

> The idea was to recruit a group of Appalachian youth and train them in media skills. The expectation was that the young people would use their new skills as a way to "escape" Appalachia. Instead, the trainees saw their media knowledge as a way to stay in the region. In looking at Appalachia through the eyes of the existing media, they saw little or nothing that reflected the reality they knew; so they began making films to document their own communities. Over the ensuing thirty-six years Appalshop has grown into a nationally recognized media center working in film, video, recordings, literature, theater, presentation of live performance, and radio. The subject matter of this work ranges from documenting traditional arts to exploring history to dealing with the social issues that affect the region today. The underlying philosophy has always been that Appalachian people must tell their own stories and solve their own problems. (Appalshop, 2007)

The founders and participants of Appalshop, as well as the local Mountain Eagle

newspaper, are actively engaged in the politics of the Whitesburg area, documenting

community struggles around coal, youth out-migration, "Appalachian" identities,

economic development, and much more. As such, contemporary Whitesburg is a small

town with a vibrant dialogue of local happenings and a pocket of four or five social

justice organizations (Szuberla, 2007). At Appalshop, I interviewed filmmaker Nick

Szuberla, who made "Up the Ridge," a movie that engages with local debates about

prison abuse and economic development, and who also co-hosts a weekly hip-hop music

and call-in radio show for the families of prison inmates called "Holler to the Hood." We

discussed how prison systems are touted by Kentucky politicians to be the solution to

rural economic development needs, and also his own artistic visions for how change

should happen. Amelia Kirby (whose father was a founding member of Appalshop) is

Nick's filmmaking and radio partner on these projects. I interviewed her separately at a

local diner at the same time as Colleen Unroe, who works for Kentuckians For The

Commonwealth (one of the social justice groups in Whitesburg). They spoke more generally about how to accomplish social change in the rural coalfields of Appalachia. Whitesburg's historic and contemporary activist community appeared to engage each of these interviewees in the details of strategizing for change.

Similarly, Berea has a history of lively political activity, but, rather than a media collective, the town's website (Tourism, 2006) explains events that revolved around Berea College. The school was founded in 1855 by abolitionist missionaries who taught Union slaves during the Civil War; it was the only integrated college in the South for forty years. Unlike Whitesburg, Berea is on the central Kentucky edge of what the ARC now defines as "Appalachia." Nonetheless, college President of the 1890s William Frost used the identity frequently to illicit funds from donors to educate supposedly isolated, impoverished mountain folk and to establish a market for traditional arts and crafts (Tourism, 2006). Today Berea College provides full-tuition scholarships to every student, admits only low-income students, and has aided in establishing multiple social justice projects in Berea (Bills, 2007). The town has about 9,800 people (Census, 2000a) and a vibrant Appalachian artisan market that reaches worldwide. The residents I interviewed volunteer and work for non-profit organizations that stem either directly or indirectly from the College (see Appendix A for descriptions). I spoke with Tina Johnson, Josh Bills, and Andri Kukas together over dinner with their young children. As I discuss in more detail in chapter IV, all three described their community as extremely "progressive" with a large number of non-profit groups and an "activist niche." Berea is a short drive from Kentucky's two major cities (Lexington and Louisville), especially compared to the other eastern Kentucky sites I describe above. Its close proximity to large cities and

vibrant activist community make it an enabled (possibly privileged – see chapter IV) site to enact social change. Thus the interviews I conducted there, and in central Kentucky towns, helped to diversify the theorizations I collected from participants.

In chapter IV I also contrast the ideas for social justice that are being formulated in coal towns to that of farming communities. I interviewed Nathan Brown in Frankfort, the headquarters of the organization for which he works, Community Farm Alliance (CFA), and also the Kentucky state capital. Later I explain that much of CFA's work is legislative; thus it is convenient to locate their main office in Frankfort. However, CFA exists to help support small family farms across the entire state of Kentucky. According to a report recently released by the organization, Kentucky currently has 88,000 farms, which puts it fourth in the nation in total number of farms and second in number of family farmers per capita (CFA, 2003, p. 5). A different report conducted by the Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention states that in 1999, of Kentucky's 91,000 farms, 85% of them were family-owned and operated (Lin, 1999). Even though these numbers are high, most farms grow Burley tobacco (and have for generations) rather than food, and as a result there is not a significant local food economy in the state; Kentucky is currently 43rd in the nation for direct sale from farm to table (CFA, 2003, p. 7). Between recent decreases in tobacco sales (quotas have been cut by 66% over the last five years (ibid, p. 5)) and competition with large corporate operations, small family farms are dying out in Kentucky. During our interview, Nathan explained several ideas for social change that focus on CFA's mission of creating a diversified local food economy to support family farms. Again, his theorizations were quite unique from my coalfield interviewees' contributions and also from Berea residents.

The final city in which I found participants for this research is also the largest of my sites (population of about 480,000 (Census, 2000d)), offering even further opportunity for varied theories of change. Lexington stands in the center of Kentucky's Bluegrass basin, "a karstic limestone plain that has fertile soils and a two-hundred year history of gentry farming" (Geography, 2007). Overtime much of Lexington's gently rolling animal pastures and crop fields were transformed into post-1950s suburban neighborhoods and shopping malls (including the largest mall in the state), but the city has maintained a character for world-renowned thoroughbred horses and elite farms (Geography, 2007). The malls and expansive suburbs of the city have spurred some of my Lexington interviewees' ideas for change. In chapter IV I highlight how Patrick Garnett's bicycle enthusiasm includes simple-living, anti-consumerist, and anti-car ideals, combined with imagined reformulations of space in which city residents are not so spread out and isolated from one another. It was appropriate for me to interview Patrick on his ideas of alternative traffic economies in the downtown area of Lexington, as it is the center and historic transportation hub of the city[4]. While Patrick inhabits these downtown streets most frequently, Alexis Cinnamond Pullen and Kendra Adkisson spend more of their time in the outer suburbs of Lexington raising children – chapter IV mentions their similar complaint that the city is too spread out. A major transportation hub and one of the US's most rapidly developing cities, Lexington is also home to several gigantic hospitals. I interviewed Alexis and Kendra together about their ideas of social change, which are based on transforming healthcare. These mothers advocate natural childbirth, breastfeeding, and use of midwifery services, as alternative social practices to

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[4] In the 1900s a trolley car network linked the downtown grid streets together, and a regional inter-urban rail system connected Lexington to adjoining county seat towns (Geography, 2007).

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those of the "male, technocratic" medical sciences practiced most frequently (Adkisson, 2007). Again, their theorizations for practices alternative from development helped to diversify my research and multiply imaginings for change.

Unsurprisingly, I ended the interview process with a huge amount of data to analyze from interviewees who expressed experiences from an assortment of activities, issues, and locations (see Appendix A for a complete list and description of my participants and their projects). They participate in both paid and unpaid work, institutionalized nonprofit efforts, direct action tactics, door-to-door campaigning, lobbying, alterations in daily practices, and much, much more. Their organizations are large and small, official and loose-knit, funded by grants[5], funded by grassroots fundraising, and not funded at all. My interviewees also vary in gender and age, but not in race; all my participants are Caucasian.

C. Analysis and Results: Unexpected Directions

I approached my research with the expectation that knowledge would be constructed in the interview process itself (rather than found), but nonetheless I was still surprised by the information I collected and with which I am still grappling. I expected my interviewees to speak directly to the academic theories I set up in chapters II and III, to be clearly pro or anti development, and to have answers that fit within the debates I had identified as pertinent to activists. However, real life experiences do not fit neatly into words or theories. In chapter IV, my analysis chapter, I let go of the debates on development, scale, economy, and capitalism which seemed so crucial before interviewing, and allow my interviewees' concerns to direct my theoretical framework.

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[5] None were funded primarily by government or private corporations.

This also means that I give credit to my participants for offering empowered, subversive, alternative discourses, even when they use terms that I would never have considered radical or revolutionary before interviewing.

In chapter IV there are numerous examples of such reformulations directed by my interviewees. Nathan Brown sees "capitalism" as a free market neoliberal type of society, but he conceptualizes local economic food systems as a grassroots configuration of capitalism – thus giving it a positive connotation as a locally-rooted, historically-specific, non-exploitative economic system. Before writing this Thesis I would never have considered neoliberal capitalist discourse to be subversive, but for this Organizer it was exactly that. There are also several tourism "development" projects in Appalachia that defy the "development" discourse I highlight in chapter II. Activists in eastern Kentucky are engaged in re-imagining development and capital circulation to fit their communities' needs and values. Chapter IV also outlines social change models that I *did* imagine to be revolutionary before interviewing, but even these ideas would not fit into the neat academic debates of chapters II and III. There are simple living models that are explicitly anti-consumerist and that are focused on nature and traffic, there are midwives and renegade activists who choose to practice their work outside institutional lines, and there are spaces of subversion imagined by my interviewees that confront urban-rural and inside-outside binaries. When I asked my participants to talk about some of the debates in chapters II and III, they were often dismissive as these issues did not seem as imperative to their social change strategies as the ones I discuss in chapter IV.

In the final chapter of this Thesis, I revisit some of the academic theories laid out in chapters II and III, in light of the lessons I learned while writing chapter IV. I

deliberate the utility of scholarly work on social change for activists working in their own

communities, including the potential uses of this Thesis. The discourses my interviewees

expressed are incredibly empowered, hopeful, diverse, imaginative, and specific to the

on-the-ground labor involved in advancing their social causes. At the same time the

discourses are not easily categorized, nor are they logically consistent, nor do they need

to be in order to continue the work my participants perform. For me, and hopefully for

my interviewees, my research was successful at accomplishing what Rose (2001) predicts

for interviews – newly constructed meanings, which produce new subjects through

discourse, and create the possibility of new worlds.

CHAPTER II.

TRAPPED IN AN UNDERDEVELOPED, COLONIZED, ALMOST-MODERN
SUSPENSION: THE NEED FOR ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES TO ADDRESS
SOCIAL CHANGE IN APPALACHIA

In this chapter I show that much of the discourse used to discuss development in

Appalachia reinforces problematic assumptions of development and limits alternative

imaginings for social change. I also point out ways in which such talk is utilized by

activists who are unhindered by discursive contradictions, thus expanding possibilities for

change. Many Appalachian theorists reproduce concepts from literature on third-world

development, and tend to keep their sights narrowed on an Appalachia that needs to be

modernized, capitalist, developed, uncolonized, prosperous, and healthily integrated into

the national economy. I review these theorists here and then discuss how development

discourses allow scholars to conceptualize problems and solutions to mountain poverty in

a way that affirms Appalachia as an "underdeveloped" place. I expose both the restrictive

character and the mobilizing power of these visions in hopes of opening spaces for

multiplicities of discourses, including non-capitalist or anti-development engagements.

My argument extends from the work of theorists who deconstruct "development."

According to Esteva (1992), even though the word "development" lacks any precise

denotation in contemporary usage, it is a term firmly seated in popular and intellectual

perception. "Development" cannot be delinked from its own web of etymological

meanings: growth, evolution, maturation, transformation toward an appropriate form of

being, movement to a more perfect form, a necessary and inevitable destiny, etc. "The

word always implies a favourable change, a step from the simple to the complex, from

the inferior to the superior, from worse to better" (ibid, p. 10). Cowen and Shenton

(1995) highlight the term's two connotations: transitively, an agent must instigate a progressive course of action; intransitively, development is an immanent process that unveils itself. Both meanings involve linear, unidirectional change over time. By association, then, "underdeveloped" is a state in which growth is not occurring; it is an undesirable position that is lacking. "[D]evelopment has connoted at least one thing: to escape from the undignified condition called underdevelopment" (Esteva, 1992, p. 7).

Appalachia has long been defined as "underdeveloped" because it lacks good schools, health care, and proper activities of production and consumption – all of which Esteva identifies as a lack only in western development terms. In the late 1800s, a distinct genre of local color fiction writers began articulating the existence of a delineated region of the United States that they considered to be exotic and strange (see Billings & Blee (2000, p. 8) for a more detailed account). Their ideas (along with others) congealed into a very real geographic and cultural identity called "Appalachia." This constructed place has taken on a variety of meanings and usages inside and outside academic literature. Some scholars might call Appalachia, "the mountainous portions of eight or nine southern states [that] form a coherent region inhabited by an homogeneous population possessing a uniform culture" (Shapiro, 1978, p. ix). For others, it is a highly diverse region that the Appalachia Regional Commission (ARC) defines as 406 counties ranging across thirteen states from New York to Mississippi and Alabama (Billings & Blee, 2000, p. 4). Regardless of one's choice in characterization, most refer to the mountainous terrain as persistently "more deeply mired in poverty and economic distress" than any other region of the US (ibid, p. 3).

An "underdeveloped" environment, Appalachia holds a unique position[6] inside the boundaries of the US – possibly the most developed, prosperous nation in the world today. Appalachian literature often couches Appalachia with "third world" countries, resulting in peculiar uses of language: some say Appalachia has been "colonized" by "outside interests" (H. Lewis, Johnson, & Askins, 1978) while others refer to Appalachians as an "indigenous population" (ALOTF, 1983). These theorists lump not only all of Appalachia but vast numbers of "underdeveloped" countries across the world into one cultural and economic "other." Here are some examples worth quoting: "people all over the world [...] have experienced this sort of "development" and consequently live in conditions similar to those found in the mountains" (H. Lewis et al., 1978, p. 2); "When the outside colonizers came to the Appalachians in the latter part of the 19th century, they found a society approximating an Asian or African country in its economic foundations" (H. Lewis & Knipe, 1978, p. 17); and together with urban ghettos and Indian reservations, "rural Appalachia could be regarded as a microcosm of the *underdeveloped* nations of the world, manifesting many of the problems and strains that are so much a part of the human condition elsewhere" (Photiadis & Schwarzweller, 1970, p. viii). This homogenization of *all* underdeveloped peoples and their "human condition" is a key problematic of the Appalachian development discourse I wish to highlight. As is repeated in this Thesis, there is a unilinear, standardized character assumed within

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[6] Shapiro (1978) proposes an interesting way in which "Appalachia" became a "region apart." He says between 1870 and 1900, after the Civil War, American citizens were conceptualizing the nation as a unified and homogeneous entity. Before this time period, Appalachia had not been identified as discrete or as any more peculiar than the rest of the newly-settled continent of America. "By the 1870s, however, the progress of civilization in America, and Americans' self-consciousness of their progress, was such that the apparent persistence of pioneer conditions among the mountain people made Appalachia seem a strange land inhabited by a peculiar people" (p. xiii). Thus, just as colonized countries were seen as exotic and "other" to North America and Western Europe, so too became Appalachia.

development discourse, ignorant of the physical locale, culture or history that situates a people and their choices for action.

The construction of "Appalachia" as a discrete region and also as "underdeveloped" has had material effects on people through poverty-alleviation programs, through social justice efforts, and on individual conceptions for what kind of change is possible. "The "idea" of Appalachia became not only a conventional literary image but the basis for public action" (Shapiro, 1978, p. xv). Government-funded development agencies such as the ARC, "sought to integrate the mountain region and the mountaineers into modern American life" (ibid, p. xiv). This government-driven modernization approach has attracted countless criticisms: development efforts provide a liberal façade for private development (Whisnant, 1980); policies such as welfare to work programs are hampered by the paucity of basic research on particularities of poor communities (Billings & Blee, 2000); policies do not concern themselves with land and resource ownership (ALOTF, 1983); programs fail to recognize the exploitation of natural and human resources that comes with the increase of high-traffic roads and railroads (H. Lewis & Knipe, 1978; Shapiro, 1978; Walls, 1978); programs need to research how to restructure society to give more power to the poor (H. Lewis et al., 1978); and the list continues. Theorists also construct solutions to what they perceive to be Appalachia's root problems; here are only two examples: outside industrialists have caused poverty and exploitation, and thus they need to be overthrown (H. Lewis et al., 1978), and, because of the culture of poverty that has persisted in the region, Appalachians are in a state of "quiet frustration" that development efforts must alter in order for Appalachians to adapt to changes in their environment (Photiadis &

Schwarzweller, 1970). Throughout this chapter I further trace out problems that arise when theorists configure "Appalachia" as a separate place that is "underdeveloped," but I also consider ways in which such discourses have had a mobilizing affect for many activists, scholars, and residents.

A. Mountaineers Need Modernization, With or Without Capitalism

One way Appalachian scholars frequently discuss development is as a modernizing project. "Modernization" is a key term that carries with it implications of how daily existence is to improve in poor mountainous regions and what this progression will look like. Similar to the term "development," modernization involves linear teleologies of emergence, but more specifically it implies development out of what is variously termed a traditionalist, pre-capitalist, subsistence, backward society into a capitalist, advanced, progressive, mainstream, prosperous society. Ferguson (1999) describes modernization as "a movement toward a known end point that would be nothing less than a Western-style industrial modernity" (p. 5). In this section I identify some main characteristics of modernization that have been both recognized and reproduced in Appalachian literature. I highlight in section 1. Culture-of-Poverty theorists who advocate for the capitalist modernization of Appalachia's supposedly pre-modern culture, and in section 2. Colonial Model theorists who are not complicit with an exploitative capitalist project but who still advocate for a cultural advance into modernization. In this second section I also recognize ways in which Colonial Model discourses mobilize scholars and activists to critically challenge exploitative practices taking place in the mountains. Many individuals talk about a progressive, modern

Appalachia that could exist without exploitation. As such, there is a break between the "development" discourses used to refer to the global south and those used by Colonial Model theorists to discuss Appalachia.

1. It's Their Own Fault: Modernizing Appalachia's Culture of Poverty

One trope of "modernization" is that traditional, pre-capitalist culture must undergo a dramatic alteration to fit an emerging modernist environment. In "An Interpretation of Economic Backwardness," Myint (1954) describes "backward" societies as, "a group of people who are in some fashion or other unsuccessful in the economic struggle to earn a livelihood" (p. 133). These "backward" people resist industrialization, thereby unsuccessfully adapting to their environment. Likewise, Ball (1968) argues that Appalachians have been defeated by their environment repeatedly such that they now exhibit "frustration-motivated behavior," in which "the young learn to anticipate defeat and to perform the subcultural rituals which reduce its impact" (p. 890). Ball describes development as a natural response to the challenges in the social and natural environment. Because Appalachians failed to defeat their surroundings, they have actually slipped backward into "illiteracy and witchcraft, poverty, squalor and ill health: [...] the Appalachians present the melancholy spectacle of a people who have acquired civilization and then lost it" (ibid, p. 889). A people not-quite-civilized, Appalachians must learn to alter their *culture* to bring themselves out of poverty.

According to Billings and Blee (2000), it was popular in the 1960s to blame the mountain region's poverty on its specifically pre-modern *culture*. Folk society was clearly linked to underdevelopment as Appalachians were condemned for being too

traditionalist, family-oriented, religious, stubborn, aggressive, and fatalistic. These Culture-of-Poverty theorists, such as Richard Ball whom I quote above, pushed for Appalachians to transform their culture to "catch up" with the rest of America. Appalachia is constructed as a previously-isolated region that modernized so rapidly, once it was finally exposed to the rest of the world, that individuals did not participate fully in the opening up of their society to the outside. For example, Photiadis and Schwarzweller (1970) argue, "Forces of modernization are reaching into all corners of the world and almost all peoples welcome them and the benefits that can be derived" (p. vii). Even though Appalachia has been incorporated into larger American society at an extremely rapid rate, the Appalachian has become "frustrated and apathetic because he cannot implement the desires which the mass media are encouraging him to have" (ibid, p. 232).

Economic modernization in specific was integral to the project of modernizing Appalachia's culture. "The economic institution is generally regarded as the dominant institution in a modern, urban, industrial society […] hence, the future well-being of Appalachia's people is dependent upon further progress in revitalizing the region's economy and in utilizing the region's natural and human resources more fully" (Photiadis & Schwarzweller, 1970, p. 82). Myint's (1954) analysis of "backward" countries is also heavily weighted on economics: "fundamentally the problem of the "underdeveloped" countries is not merely that of low or unequal distribution of final incomes but also that of unequal participation in the processes of economic activity" (p. 140). With one foot in traditional culture, economically backward people are "tardy in adopting new Western standards of wants and activities" (ibid, p. 150).

The economics needed for modernization is not only Western, but for Arthur

Lewis (1954) and others, it is also *capitalist*. Specifically, Lewis views industry as the

great modernizer and as such the capitalist industrial class is the only one trusted to

properly allocate capital. The key to the process of development is an economic

expansion in which surplus is reinvested to create new capital and extend the capitalist

sector further. The method employs more and more of the subsistence (pre-capitalist)

sector under the capitalist sector, accumulating capital surplus, and increasing capital

formation, until the labor surplus of unemployed individuals disappears (ibid, p. 151-

152). Lewis contrasts highly westernized, "trousered, educated, English-speaking men"

to the "countrymen who live in quite other worlds" (p. 147). Clearly the economic realm

is integrated with culture, and as such underdeveloped areas are more successful at

modernizing if they have a significant capitalist sector to transform subsistence culture

into an industrialized civilization.

While no Culture-of-Poverty theorist lays out an economic plan for Appalachia as

detailed as Lewis', several propound solutions that are under girded by the expectation of

a wholly new, capitalist modern era. The authors contributing to Photiadis and

Schwarzweller's (1970) collection advocate for a variety of strategies in which

government-funded development agencies might better incorporate Appalachia into the

developed nation. Programs should: act as a buffer between rapid modernization and the

psychic world of the Appalachian (Photiadis, 1970b); develop new job opportunities to

subsume currently unemployed Appalachians into the capitalist sector (Miller, 1970); not

emphasize the image of the urban-middleclass man to the rural Appalachian unless it is

immediately attainable (Photiadis, 1970a); and reform education to help counterbalance

psychic damage (Ikenberry, 1970). These suggestions could only be seen as apt if agency programs already assume that Appalachians (in 1970, no less) are in a state of cultural and economic shock at their abrupt introduction to modern capitalist society.

With a "massive influx of federal funds, the development of a regional highway system, marked improvement of local roads and transportation services, modernization of school facilities, and widespread dispersion of modern means for mass communication," agency programs were implemented to bring Appalachia out of poverty (Photiadis & Schwarzweller, 1970, p. 1). Many of the cultural and economic assumptions outlined above were, "reinforced by reform efforts that adapted settlement house programs and other urban-based strategies of benevolence and education to the task of bringing the rural Appalachian poor into the majority culture" (Billings & Blee, 2000, p. 9). According to Billings and Blee, the ARC's development projects in transportation, education, and healthcare were guided by neoclassical economic theorists (an identifier often attributed to Arthur Lewis): "Efforts to transform Appalachian personalities by modernizing Appalachian culture went hand in hand with regional economic development efforts" (p. 11). These labors have not gone uncriticized. In the next section I show that few non-Culture-of-Poverty-Model Appalachian scholars agree that capitalist expansion is needed for modernization. Instead, Colonial Model theorists view Appalachia as a region exploited and colonized by outsiders – a position that reproduces expectations for modernity in the mountains while also motivating social justice action against exploitation.

2. Progress Without Exploitation: the Colonial Model

Lewis, Johnson, and Askins (1978) disagree with Culture-of-Poverty theorists who blame the regional problems of Appalachia on deficiencies of the people and their culture, and who reinforce the need for the capitalist expansion described by Arthur Lewis (1954) above. Instead, the authors find that the undesirable condition of underdevelopment in contemporary Appalachia was *caused* by colonization from outside capitalists. They ascribe to the Colonial Model, popular in the 1970s and 80s, which attributes Appalachia's poverty to its integration with exploitative capitalist economics rather than its separation from it (Billings & Blee, 2000).

In one Colonial Model narrative propounded by Lewis and Knipe (1978), technically superior outside parties entered the isolated region of Appalachia and bought land, mineral, and timber rights from "illiterate, simple mountain farmers" (p. 17). They rapidly modified Appalachian culture and social organization to fit their own values and way of life. The industries the colonizers developed did not assimilate the economy of the region with the rest of the US, but instead kept its people isolated and alienated so as to maintain a cheap surplus labor supply. Little development occurred in local education, economics, healthcare, and other markers of progress. The colonizers continue today to exploit the natural resources and human labor of the region, oppressing Appalachians socially and psychically. Similarly, a study performed by the Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force (ALOTF) found that even if Appalachia were more integrated into the nation's economy, it would still be underdeveloped because "economic underdevelopment is associated with the external control of land and natural resources, which limits diversified growth and removes the wealth from the region" (1983, p. 64).

According to Billings and Blee (2000), Colonial Model studies, such as that performed by the ALOTF, are effective at underlining "the great extent to which land and mineral resources in Appalachia are owned by nonlocal corporate investors and the adverse effects of this ownership on local taxation, political dependency, and alternative forms of economic development" (p. 13). Colonial Model discourses were employed by activists in the 1970s and 80s to take action against exploitative practices. The ALOTF study itself was an activist-oriented work; the Task Force coordinated a team of over 60 activists, citizens and academics to conduct a systematic study of land ownership patterns in Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina and Alabama. Even today this study stands as a model for engaged, community-based scholarship and participatory-action research (Beaver, 1983; Brydon-Miller, Park, Hall, & Jackson, 1993). Furthermore, the ALOTF study led to the creation of Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (KFTC) in 1981 – a statewide multi-issue, membership-based social justice organization. KFTC's own website credits the land ownership study for the origin of the group, then called Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition:

> The study inspired public anger and led to calls to address the issues it raised. Citizens began meeting about the tax laws that exempted the coal owners and the property laws that allowed coal companies to strip mine a landowner's surface without his permission. In the fall of 1981, forty of these citizens gathered in Hazard, Kentucky and formed the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition. They vowed to attack the state tax laws, and reverse a recent law exempting coal companies from property tax on their coal holdings. More importantly, they agreed their approach to change would be direct action organizing. (KFTC, 2007)

The first battle KFTC members initiated (and won in 1988) was a constitutional amendment eliminating broad form deeds – which allowed coal companies to strip mine land to which they owned the mineral rights, even if there were property owners who

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held surface rights to the same land and who did not want it destroyed. This is just one example of many battles fought under the assumption that rural Appalachia had been colonized and controlled by outside elite coal corporations.

Even though Colonial Model discourses have been effective at mobilizing action, Billings and Blee find that they go too far in blaming "absentee ownership *per se* as the principal cause of regional poverty," and as such they overlook locally-owned coal operations that, "were notorious for low wages, job insecurity, and the lack of health and safety benefits for employees" (2000, p. 13). Colonial Modelists reinforce the assumption that Appalachian history really only began with the history of corporate capitalist industrialization in the late nineteenth century; "in retrospect, then, the internal colonialist interpretation of Appalachian poverty was no less essentialistic than the culture-of-poverty model in how it conceptualized the mountain South" (ibid, p. 14). In addition, Colonial Model talk relies on modernization and development tropes. As I discuss in more detail below, in his *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1994), Ferguson describes a relatively uniform "development" discourse that seems to be repeated among development agents the world over. Part of the procedure implicitly employed by this discourse is to "take a geographically defined part of the regional economy, treat it as self-contained […] note that it functions imperfectly as such due to its "dependence" on the whole, and blame that dependence on the geographical definition with which one began" (p. 63-64). This narrative has been partially reiterated by Colonial-Model theorists. For example, Lewis and Knipe (1978) argue that Appalachia was in a state of "virtual isolation" for at least one hundred years, inhabited by a sparse mountain-culture population that lived on "subsistence agriculture and a social organization based on

kinship" (p. 10). A "new class of people" moved into the area along with colonizing industries – chemists, engineers, doctors, managers, and other experts that were "representatives of urban culture" (p. 11). A new system of social stratification was introduced that had not been known until then. According to "development" discourse, modernization is a process that occurs when poverty-stricken, isolated people become introduced and integrated into the global modern economy through the development of new markets, major cultural alterations, and a change from agriculture to wage labor. Lewis and Knipe's story assumes this same modernizing trajectory for Appalachia. Such narratives are myths that wipe away the real complicated history and politics of a place (Ferguson, 1994, p. 56-63).

Both Colonial-Model theorists and Ferguson's "development" agents reproduce a modernist narrative, but the former condemn outside industrialists for Appalachia's failure to successfully modernize while the latter endorse industrialization as the key modernizer of traditional cultures. To return to Lewis and Knipe (1978), they appear to believe in a more equitable trajectory of industrialism but for them Appalachia's normal development path has been thrown askew by coal mining. They argue that non-mining industries invest surplus capital, creating new corporations and associations and growing a middle class of technicians and specialists, whereas in Appalachia the coal industry reinvests in mechanization techniques that eliminate jobs and save the company money, devoting little surplus to local economic and cultural development (ibid, p. 19). Lewis, Johnson and Askins (1978) find that an evolution into modernity is made further unattainable by current planners, economic developers, and government administrators who want to bring more exploitative industries into rural Appalachia. Both of these

positions are analogous to Baran's (1957) argument about European colonization of the

third world, in which he says the natural development of colonized countries "was

forcibly shunted off its normal course, distorted and crippled to suit the purposes of

Western imperialism" (p. 132). Because capitalism was used by Europeans to violently

prey on the wealth of other nations, there was no local capital accumulation; their self-

sufficiency, arts and crafts, and other important cultural riches were not replaced by

modern luxuries. Lewis, Knipe, Johnson, and Askins all problematize the lack of local

agency, local capital accumulation, and local investment in Appalachia, but similar to

Baran they still have their sights set on a developed, modernist, locally-industrialized,

unexploited state.

In their condemnation of absentee industrialists, Colonial-Model theorists

specifically point to dependency, lack of local ownership, and concentrated wealth as key

limitations to Appalachia's development. Residents are seen as agency-less, power-less,

wealth-less, and lacking in economic diversity: "the control of land by a single industry

brings with it control of jobs, helping to create dependency of workers and their

communities both on the landholders who own the resources, and the employers who

provide the jobs (often these may be one and the same)" (ALOTF, 1983, p. 66). Esteva

(1992) highlights the effect this problematic discourse has on a "colonized" people:

"Disvalue transmogrifies skills into lacks, commons into resources, men and women into

commodified labour, tradition into burden, wisdom into ignorance, autonomy into

dependency" (p. 18). By focusing on the colonizers, Colonial-Model theorists speak with

what Gibson-Graham (2002) call a capitalocentric discourse, in which capitalist

economic forces are seen as "inevitably more powerful than progressive, grassroots, local

interventions" (p. 25). At the same time, I show above how Colonial Model talk has been

used by Appalachian activists as an empowered speech that mobilizes action. This

contradiction is a theme further explored in chapters III and IV; my own activist

interviewees also proceed with social change efforts, unhindered by discursive or

theoretical discrepancies such as those I highlight here in Colonial Model discourse. My

point here is to highlight ways in which Colonial Model talk appears problematic today,

especially if there are no other empowered discourses for social change that exist

alongside it. However, I do not wish to ignore the role that Colonial Model discourse

played for scholars and Appalachian residents actively challenging corporate exploitation

in the 70s and 80s. In retrospect Colonial Model talk can be seen as disempowering and

victimizing, but decades ago it was a powerful and intelligent challenge to unfair

corporate practices.

   With the colonizers taking center stage, "the Colonial Model implies that

solutions to Appalachia's problems lie in the radical restructuring of society with a

redistribution of resources to the poor and powerless" (H. Lewis et al., 1978, p. 4). Walls

(1978) compares Appalachia's infrastructure of dependency to Latin America, in which

dependence is so internalized and institutionalized that it is difficult to overcome. Dos

Santos (1970) argues that dependency of third world countries conforms to

> a type of international and internal structure which leads them to
> underdevelopment or more precisely to a dependent structure that deepens and
> aggravates the fundamental problems of their peoples. [...] By dependence we
> mean a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by
> the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is
> subjected. (p. 231)

Lewis, Johnson and Askins admit that this model produces "despair and depression since

the "enemies" or causes of the problems are seen as giant, multinational corporations in

league with irresponsible government bureaucracies which are almost unbeatable forces," but they believe these enemies are the true source of Appalachia's problems (1978, p. 3). Other theorists challenge these disempowering constructions, and instead argue that capitalism and multinational corporations do not *have* to be seen as a giant, unified force under which development practices across the world unfold. Existing theories of particularity and contingency "bids us acknowledge that the global universal is a projection, on a world scale, of a local particularity" (Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 52). Rather than thinking of capitalism as a hegemonic structure, we can imagine it as particular subjects, gathering for particular meetings, making particular decisions, and then enacting particular practices. When particularity is imagined to carry more power than universality, local agents in Appalachia can be empowered to justly develop their own communities without first having to perform major structural alterations to capitalism. Many scholars even find that in order to enact significant social change, community actors need to think all together outside of a capitalist structure: "No challenge to the proliferating experiences of people's powerlessness succeeds when conceived and implemented inside the institutional and intellectual framework which produced it" (Esteva & Prakash, 1998, p. 20).

Colonial Modelists remain committed to modernist and development narratives, even while they call for radical restructuring of capitalism, but other development theorists blame the capitalist modernization project itself for the condition of "underdevelopment." Ferguson (1994) argues that capitalism is an obstacle to development and a cause of poverty: "a capitalist-run development project is a fundamentally contradictory endeavor [...] the purpose of a development project is to aid

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capitalist exploitation in a given country" (p. 11). Similarly, Frank (1966) disagrees with the idea that development occurs in a natural succession of stages from traditional to modern society, and instead asserts that countries have become underdeveloped via their cooptation as satellites under now-developed, capitalist, metropolitan nodes. Even more isolated sectors of the underdeveloped world have already been penetrated by capitalism, and each satellite "serves as an instrument to suck capital or economic surplus out of its own satellites and to channel part of this surplus to the world metropolis of which all are satellites" (ibid, p. 152). True economic development "can now occur only independently of most of these relations of diffusion" (ibid, p. 150).

In light of these connections between capitalism, exploitation, development, and modernity, it might be difficult to imagine a kind of development without exploitation. Ferguson (1994) spreads open two meanings of development that are frequently conflated: one in which development is a process of transition toward a modern, capitalist, industrial economy; and the other in which development is an increased quality of life, standard of living, and amelioration of poverty. He believes these two projects are in direct contradiction with each other. Perhaps there is some similar confusion in these meanings for the Colonial Modelist, or perhaps there are further possibilities within modernity and industrialization that have not been adequately explored. One clear conclusion to draw from this section is that while Colonial Modelists have provided a discourse that has proven to mobilize social change through activism, it is still an inadequate discourse for social change in Appalachia on its own today. Their talk can manifest to be disempowering, capitalocentric, and affirming of a homogenizing modernist course.

Even though modernization is referred to as a "myth" here, Ferguson (1999) is careful to point out the impact modernist narratives have in people's daily lives. For Ferguson's African informants in his own case study on this topic, the myth is a lived one: "They spoke as if their lives were suspended […] between two worlds: one modern, industrial, urban, and Western, a [...] world of money and technology, of mines and concrete and electricity; the other rural, traditional, and African, a [...] world of family and community, of grass huts, cloth wraps, and clay pots" (p. 84). When the goal of modernization is never realized, then it becomes "not only an economic crisis but a crisis of meaning, in which the way that people are able to understand their experience and to imbue it with significance and dignity has (for many) been dramatically eroded" (ibid, p. 14). Something similar could be said for Appalachia where the failure of economic development is a key concern for many residents who are unemployed, undereducated, and unable to attain adequate healthcare in the middle of a wealthy "developed" nation. In the next section I explore how the "development" discourse outlined by Ferguson materializes in Appalachian development projects. I show that there is a true need for alternative discourses.

B. The Anti-Politics Machine in Appalachia

In his *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1994), Ferguson differentiates between "development" as a social and historical transformation, and "development" as a "social entity in its own right: the set of "development" institutions, agencies, and ideologies peculiar to our own age" (p. 9). In this section I extend Ferguson's analysis to show how Appalachian development agencies perpetuate development discourse. Despite its many

failures, Ferguson says that "development" is constructed as something that is needed; problems and solutions are discussed such that projects directly apply to a community's needs. Development is not innocuous, though, and its violence hastens the need for a discourse about social change in Appalachia that exists outside of development. Historically specific political and economic interests support and maintain "development" in each geographically-particular case. In Appalachia, theorists find that government-funded development agencies have fashioned a variety of ills outlined below.

Despite the historical specificity of each development intervention, Ferguson says there is a free-floating interlocked network of expertise – unrecognized as tied to any specific context, and thus easily generalized for any given situation – that informs development plans and discussion such that they look very similar from one location to another (ibid, p. 258-259). The standard discourse is practiced by policy makers and officials who can only see how to improve conditions through their own agencies. The trajectory they assume has already been outlined above: it is a modernization project in which a geographical region is defined as isolated and untouched by modern economics, new capitalist markets are introduced, traditional agricultural society is destroyed to make way for a new life of wage labor, and the government is the competent mitigator for the transition. Earlier I detailed how Appalachia has been constructed by scholars to fit this mold, but development agents of many kinds work to acculturate Appalachia, as well.

Shapiro (1978) explains that a tendency emerged in the late 1800s to "view economic development, which had occurred independent of the planning or expectations of persons within the region, as a "natural" solution to a whole range of problems" (p.

158). However, he says there was nothing at all natural about the fact that "benevolent workers" were inaugurated into the mountains in mass after the mid-1880s. One aspect that differentiates the first organizations in Appalachia from development agents today is that Christianity and missionary work were heavy components of their development agendas.

> For at least a hundred years, individuals, groups, and agencies have tried to [...] "develop the region": the churches with their preaching stations, settlement schools, and hospitals; the United Mine Workers and other unions with their labor organizing drives and benefit programs; state and local governments with myriad policies and programs stretching back at least a century to the state immigration bureaus of the 1870s; the special programs of private organizations (especially foundations such as the Russell Sage, Ford, and others); and most recently the federal programs of the 1960s. (Whisnant, 1980, p. xv).

Whisnant (1980) criticizes the restrictive character of planners' cultural bias: development agents insist that Appalachians "mold themselves to bureaucratic conceptions of middle-class social organization and lifeways" and "accept mainstream values and idealized social, economic, and political norms as the natural boundary of feasible approaches to development" (p. xix-xx).

Walls (1978) describes a more recent example of an Appalachian development agency. The Appalachia Regional Commission (ARC) – a federal body managed by individual states, and locally enacted across multi-county lines – was to provide economic overhead capital for private enterprises, train people for skills in new industry and service jobs, facilitate migration into and out of Appalachia, and promote privately-owned industries. Whisnant refers to the ARC as "a nearly unmitigated disaster in every respect" because of the agency's

> conventional, business-oriented, status quo, pork-barrel politics masquerading as "creative federalism." [...] ARC settled for a growth-center, trickle-down,

infrastructure approach. In practice this amounted to building roads and vocational schools to serve business and industry; hiring consultants to rationalize the importation of fugitive apparel plants; paying doctors to build themselves new hospitals; encouraging socially and culturally destructive, economically marginal tourist development; and cavalierly advising people in its administratively created hinterlands to move to town if they wanted jobs and services – or out of the region if they didn't like it. (1980, p. xxi)

For Whisnant, the ARC and other agencies implemented projects that merely rationalized the "business community's" own need for wealth from the region (p. xxi). The cultural values and assumptions shared by most planners and development agency bureaucrats "set the narrowest limits upon their imagination; constricted the boundaries of their tolerance for social, economic, and political alternatives; and marked off the little that seemed to them "reasonable" or "sensible" from the much that did not" (ibid, p. 267).

Despite the clear biases described by Whisnant, development agents claim to be neutral and apolitical. It is for this reason that Ferguson (1994) names this "development" apparatus an "anti-politics machine:" "depoliticizing everything it touches, everywhere whisking political realities out of sight, all the while performing, almost unnoticed, its own pre-eminently political operation of expanding bureaucratic state power" (p. xv). Walls (1978) criticizes the ARC for claiming to be value-free, scientific, and non-controversial: "Actions taken by regional and national planners are defended as technical decisions, rather than political choices among alternative courses of development" (p. 322). Walls holds that the most important political decisions the ARC makes are non-decisions, or the things they exclude; they never consider local public ownership of natural resources or community-owned industry. Likewise, Whisnant complains that the ARC and other development agencies, "reject any approach to planned, democratic, community-based public development that promises to alter – or fails to rationalize –

established patterns of private entrepreneurial development" (1980, p. xx). In the next section I show that while several Appalachian academics criticize the effects that development has had in the region, few are wholly against development or provide alternative discourses in which social change could be discussed.

Development as Violence: The Need for Discourse Outside of "Development"

Scholars have a variety of complaints about development in Appalachia; many even consider development failures a *violent* offense to suffering communities. Despite rapid industrialization, "some of the basic problems of poverty, unemployment, poor health, and meager education" have not been altered (Lewis and Knipe, 1978, p. 12). Low incomes, high infant mortality and tuberculosis rates, low numbers of physicians, and indicators on education and housing show that, "by almost any standard, the level of living in this area is sub-standard, i.e., at the poverty level" (ibid, p. 14). Whisnant claims that the "dynamic of exploitative development" of regional agencies has resulted in the deterioration or complete absence of essential social services such as housing, transportation, communication, healthcare, and education (1980, p. xix). Development agencies were condemned for aiding in efforts to bring outside parties to Appalachia to develop the area. The Appalachia Land Ownership Task Force has outlined several negative repercussions from large-scale absentee ownership: the formation of local financial control is prevented; lack of availability of land keeps new industries or local owners from diversifying the economy; outside owners often hold land off the market to maintain possession over its resources; a proper infrastructure does not develop because wealthy owners' tax dollars do not contribute to local water, sewer, transportation, health,

and education facilities; and lack of local capital "minimizes the local funds available for housing loans, underwriting of industry and business, and construction of needed service facilities" (ALOTF 1983, p. 70).

Development programs have failed the "third world," as well, but in the interest of historical and geographical specificity, it is important to highlight the differences between violence produced by development in Appalachia and that produced in other countries. Development discourse and its strategies created "massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression. The debt crisis, the Sahelian famine, increasing poverty, malnutrition, and violence are only the most pathetic signs of the failure of forty years of development" (Escobar, 1995, p. 4). Unlike Appalachia, other nations must deal with new debt crises; between 1982 and 1990 "for 108 months, debtor countries of the South remitted to their creditors in the North an average US$6.5 billion in interest payments alone. If payments of principal are included in the tally, then each of the 108 months [...] witnessed payments from debtors to creditors of, on average, $12.45 billion" (George, 1997, p. 208). Also, without access to first-world medications, many residents in the third world experience famine, malnutrition, AIDS, and other disease to a much more severe degree than Appalachians. There is extensive documentation of the violence, war, and resistance that development has brought to specific locations across the world (Alvares, 1992; Corbridge, 1993; Parajuli, 1991; Scheper-Hughes, 1995; Shrestha, 1995; Visvanathan, 1988). This has led many development theorists to call for an existence outside of development (Esteva, 1987) or for a post-development era (Escobar, 1992).

Appalachian development discourse has not seen a similar call for an end to development. Escobar (1995) says of development in the third world,

> Even those who opposed the prevailing capitalist strategies were obliged to couch their critiques in terms of the need for development, through concepts such as "another development," "participatory development," "socialist development," and the like. In short, one could criticize a given approach and propose modifications or improvements accordingly, but the fact of development itself, and the need for it, could not be doubted. Development had achieved the status of a certainty in the social imaginary. (p. 5)

Perhaps this is the case in Appalachia, as well. Development programs continue today. In 1999, former President Clinton visited Hazard, KY, on his "New Markets Tour," which emphasized that, "Despite a growing economy, Appalachia has not shared fully in the Nation's prosperity" ("Highlighting the Need for Investment in Appalachia," 1999). Clinton encouraged private-sector investment and infrastructure: "Continued progress is needed in many of the areas that are important in the creation of a highly favorable investment climate, including education, physical infrastructure such as highways, and financial sector development" (ibid). As recent as 2002, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development made four eastern Kentucky counties eligible to share in $17 billion of tax incentives to "stimulate job growth, promote economic development and create affordable housing" (HUD, 2002). Development discourse still progresses and material repercussions result.

I have shown a variety of Appalachian development discourses to be disempowering, to perpetuate the modernization narrative, to reinforce the need for development, and to damage people's daily lives. There must be a better way to discuss social change in Appalachia. As Ferguson (1999) states, "If the people who have, in good

faith, lived out the agonizing, failed plotline of development and modernization are not to be simply disconnected and abjected from the new world order, it will be necessary to find new ways of thinking about both progress and responsibility in the aftermath of modernism" (p. 254). In the next chapter I explore alternative discourses for social change in Appalachia. Perhaps it is possible "to take heart at the possibility that the idea of forging alternatives to unfettered global capitalism may be starting to be politically viable in a way that it did not seem to be" before (ibid, p. 257).

CHAPTER III.

FIGHTING AGAINST CAPITALISM, THRIVING OUTSIDE CAPITALISM, GETTING AROUND CAPITALOCENTRISM IN APPALACHIA

In the last chapter I reviewed how theorists who explicitly grapple with ideas of development in Appalachia do not adequately contest foundational notions of economics, capitalism, and empowerment for contemporary social change. In this chapter I inspect some of the most critical works on noncapitalist economies in Appalachia and I argue that these works do not sufficiently address development. More specifically, I first discuss how centralizing capitalism and/or "the economy" can be an obstacle to imagining radical social change, but at the same time it is very difficult to de-center capitalism and/or "the economy" without reifying either. Second, I describe some characteristics of the discourses alternative to capitalism to which I contribute in my own research – they are multi-faceted, multiplicitous, specifically located, ordinary, and practical. Third, I question whether always equating development and capitalist discourses with capitalocentrism is disempowering to individuals and communities that might be re-configuring these sets of terms into noncapitalist or anticapitalist talk and practice. I then evaluate a variety of literatures on alternative discourses and economies in Appalachia; I argue that the authors of these works miss opportunities to challenge development in Appalachia, especially as a capitalocentric notion. I aim to fill this gap with my own research (analyzed in chapter IV), in which I document discourse practiced among activists in Kentucky on social change in relation to alternative development, anti-development, or even non-development frameworks.

A. Fragmenting "The Economy" Without Reifying "The Economy"

A common thread running throughout many of the theories I discuss in chapter II (modernization, culture-of-poverty, dependency, and colonial model theories) is that capitalism is a naturally dominant form of economy, or an entire system of economy. According to Gibson-Graham (2006), this conception is a main obstacle to activists and intellectuals that blocks the actualization of their transformative ambitions. Instead they demand that landscapes of economic difference and noncapitalist economic enterprises and spaces be created and revealed. A major step in performing this goal is to downsize capitalism theoretically by not conflating it with commodity production or market activity in general, thereby allowing capitalism to have an outside. Specifying and limiting capitalism is an important part of constructing and empowering alternative discourses. "Recognizing the contingency of capitalism expands the number of empirical questions we can ask and thus fosters the expansion of economic knowledge […] at the same time it multiplies points of political intervention into capitalist organizations and spaces" (ibid, p. xxiv). Manifold forms of production take center stage in this rendition of economic space.

Ben Fine (2000) makes a similar point that the idea of "economic imperialism" within academia does not adequately limit problematic assumptions of western disciplinary economics – such as rationality and individuality – imbuing them with too much power. Fine critiques the argument that economics has been colonizing other social sciences for decades. Instead, Fine says that there has always existed overlap between economics and social sciences, and to construct economics as now-encroaching

imperialistically closes off chances "to reveal opportunities for radical political economy" (p. 189).

Postdevelopment theorists are also accused of bestowing too much weight onto "the economy." These scholars enact a similar approach to Gibson-Graham in that they have "an interest in local culture and knowledge; a critical stance with respect to established scientific discourses; and the defense and promotion of localized, pluralistic grassroots movements," as they highlight and negotiate alternatives to development in the global south (Escobar, 1995, p. 215). These are common concerns among a diversity of academics and activists who are seeking development alternatives in Appalachia, as well. Nonetheless, scholars argue that even these postdevelopment theorists tend to hand over too much power to "the economy," thereby weakening alternative discourses and reifying "capitalism." In these postdevelopment reconfigurations, "Semiotic resistance eventually comes up against the hard realities of global capital and in this confrontation the cultural and social identities of local organizations may be seen to be insufficient to the task of true resistance" (Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001, p. 164). Timothy Mitchell (2002) provides pertinent commentary on how "the economy" has been constructed. He says it is usually formulated as "the totality of monetarized exchanges within a defined space," and is taken "as a material ground out of which the cultural is shaped, or in relation to which it acquires its significance" (p. 3-4). This reified understanding of economics limits livelihoods to that which exists in relation to market economic exchanges. Mitchell prefers to employ a more post-structural definition of "economics" – that is, as a concept (or set of concepts) that can be transformed. "The economy" here is not a self-contained, internally dynamic, statically measurable sphere, but it also does not occur only on the

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level of language or social imagination; rather, it is the reorganization of specific

historical and intellectual processes into a conceptual object (ibid, p. 5). This object is

usually imagined as a universalized capitalist market economy, but as I show in the next

section many post-structural theorists attempt to re-cognize "economics" by highlighting

other processes and forming new conceptual objects.

My point here is not to make an argument for or against criticisms of

postdevelopment theory or economic imperialism, but rather to highlight potential pitfalls

in carving out new languages. It is difficult to negotiate a discourse that both adequately

deconstructs already-powerful notions such as "economy," "capitalism," "structure," and

also "development" while adequately empowering the multiple fragmented alternatives

standing in opposition. This struggle is a theme that runs throughout this chapter. In the

next section I discuss postmodern approaches to empowering multiple fragmented

alternatives.

B. How Everyday Living Becomes Postmodern Discourse

Returning to Fine's (2000) criticism of economic homogeneity, he emphasizes

that postmodernism exists outside "economic imperialism" since it is concerned with the

social construction of the meaning of objects and activities. He says, "Such absences

within economics, the unproblematic universalization across time, space, and context of

its basic concepts, mean that, except in the limited way suggested, its imperialism cannot

appropriate social science with a cultural content (unless understood as imperfect

information)" (p. 193). It is not non-economists who are adjusting gradually to accept

economic imperialism, but rather it is non-economists who are proliferating new,

multiple, postmodern understandings of economics. Likewise, Ruccio and Amariglio (2003) trace postmodern moments throughout several economic discourses, highlighting the fractured and fragmented nature of new economic discussions: "It is as if written into the margins of each discourse concerning the economy are all the discourses that it is not (and cannot be)" (p. 295). Though written within academia, this postmodern discourse has a specifically non-academic flavor. Daily, ordinary men and women are learning from each other how to challenge the foundations of modern power, and they "are compelled to invent postmodern social realities to escape the "scientific" or even the "lay" clutches of modernity" (Esteva & Prakash, 1998, p. 2). Postmodernism is one of many directions in which to turn for empowering grassroots notions of heterogeneous noncapitalist economies.

One form of postmodern economics examined by Ruccio and Amariglio (2003) is what they call "everyday economics," which is a particular form of conversation and storytelling employed on a daily basis among non-academics that is incommensurate with academic economics. Both forms of economics hold moral values in their tales, but the talk used in everyday economics is more likely to personalize the economy into winners and losers and right and wrong, emphasize declarative conclusions with concrete explanations and advocacy for change, and regard the economy and its actors as paramountly interested (rather than value-free). Everyday economics includes ideas about specific people performing specific actions; for example: consumers decide when and where to buy commodities, companies plan new investments, and politicians weigh the pros and cons of bills, treaties, and agreements on domestic and international economic matters (ibid, p. 266). In contrast, academic economic discourse carries out analysis in a

general scientific way, refers to abstract systems to explain events (such as the effect of supply and demand on sale prices), and maintains a neutral scientific status as if it is outside moral values (even though there clearly *are* interested parties) (ibid, p. 268).

In a similar analysis, Gudeman (1986) contrasts "universal models" of economics constructed by anthropologists to "local models" constructed by ethnographic research subjects. "Universal models" are western[7], highly rational, assume an objectively given reality, use formal language, deduce field data from a core criteria, and thus are inherently tautologous and assume other cultures adhere to western patterns (p. 30). In contrast, "local models" are ways in which specific communities search, adjust, and make sense of their world, and which involve public communication and social transcendence (p. 37). Local models allow ethnographic subjects to model their own behavior.

These examinations of everyday economics and "local models" are important because they give weight and autonomy to the economic discourses in which non-expert, non-academic individuals engage. Recognizing non-expert economics as horizontal to and equally as valid as academic economics de-centers expert-driven knowledge, challenges the authority of such knowledge, and affronts powerful homogeneous economic notions such as "capitalism." Everyday economics has regularity and coherency, but it also gives meaning to the economic relationships and institutions within which lives are intertwined. This economics takes multiple forms – "there is not a univocal everyday economics but an entire panoply of nonacademic discourses

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[7] An interesting point to make here is that, as my examples from Appalachia show, Gudeman's "local models" of economies can be constructed in the West. Gudeman claims that western economic models do not achieve cross-cultural understanding (p. 29); however, "western" as he uses the term is not a physical location but a socially constructed classification. Perhaps there is *no* actual local community in any western society that models its own economy in "western" terms of universality, neutrality, rationality, and other highly abstract forms.

concerning economic issues" (Ruccio & Amariglio, 2003, p. 270). Above all, "everyday economics" are practices and conceptualizations that *empower* non-expert actors to invent and perpetuate noncapitalist ways of living.

In the next section, I review existing studies of fragmented economies and alternative, everyday economic discourses in Appalachia. I show that while each theorist outlines what s/he has identified as an "alternative economics" in Appalachia, none of the writers frames their subjects' discourse or practice as specifically "outside of development." I also discuss the importance and complications of this distinction.

C. Development, Anti-Development, and Non-Development in Appalachia: Must "Development" Be Capitalocentric? Must "Capitalism" Be Capitalocentric?

Since the 1980s, postdevelopment literature has emerged in which grassroots movements, local knowledge, and popular power are centralized forces in transforming development. According to Escobar (1995), "The authors representing this trend state that they are interested not in development alternatives but in alternatives to development, that is, the rejection of the entire paradigm altogether" (p. 215). He describes a "slow and painful" process of unmaking development in which development discourse is so successfully discontinued that we can no longer even entertain the thoughts that lead to current development policies and programs. Given the abundance of discourse on development alternatives I review below, it is clear that many grassroots activists interested in noncapitalist economies and social change in Appalachia would *not* be complicit with such a project. In this section I consider the consequences of rejecting development altogether. I argue that coupling development too heavily with capitalism

might silence important voices of dissent in the mountains, such as the alternative economic discourses I review in the subsections below.

Gibson-Graham and Ruccio (2001) find that Escobar's analysis of development gives too much weight to capitalism: "Development is seen to have been created and disseminated as the discourse of capitalism, and global capitalism is the system of power against which local communities and new social movements are struggling" (p. 159). The global economic hegemony of capitalism is depicted as powerful and not easily dislodged. Gibson-Graham and Ruccio believe that, "A powerful notion of capitalist hegemony situates capitalism at the center of development, thus limiting or closing off economic and social alternatives" (p. 165). The examples I give in the next section are some of the noncapitalist possibilities closed off if all notions of development are rejected.

As I state below in my review of Appalachian alternative discourses, even many of the case studies that reinforce the need for development in Appalachia treat their subject populations as already-rich cultural landscapes for local power and resistance. This is an important distinction between how postdevelopment writers theorize development in the global south, and how social change is theorized by alternative economists studying Appalachia – postdevelopment theorists find that communities constructed as in-need-of-development are simultaneously seen as deficient and undignified, while case studies on Appalachian communities said to be in-need-of-development somehow manage to maintain their rich cultural identities. In both the global south and in Appalachia, development is linked to progress, growth, and an improved condition; but it is only in the global south that underdevelopment is seen as a

subjected position in which, "power is exercised among and over the peoples of the Third World not so much through repression […] but through normalizing the condition of underdevelopment and naturalizing the need for development" (Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001, p. 161). Theorists writing on Appalachia recognize that their study populations see themselves as needing development, but the theorists do not address the implications of being "underdeveloped." Instead there are numerous examples of Appalachian activists who experience empowerment and re-subjectification through their own attempts to *develop* their communities in noncapitalist ways. In chapter II I provided a brief example of this in my discussion of how Colonial Model talk was used by activists in the 1970s and 80s to challenge exploitative capitalist practices, even though Appalachians are constructed as underdeveloped victims in Colonial Model discourse.

Similar to "development," the label "capitalist" for an economy is also said to be capitalocentric. Gibson-Graham problematize this term, claiming that when we interpret all spaces as existing in capitalism, "We risk relegating space/life to emptiness, to rape, to non-becoming, to victimhood" (1997, p. 321). They call for individuals, "to generate and circulate an alternative language of economy, one in which capitalism is not the master signifier, the dominant or only identity in economic space" (2003, p. 56). For them, it is key that capitalism be limited linguistically, and that noncapitalist spaces be explicitly named as such so that noncapitalist possibilities appear more normal and accessible.

Gibson-Graham's prescription is a difficult one with which to grapple in Appalachia. According to Fisher (1999), "historical memory and a reliance on and defense of traditional values – a strong commitment to land, kin, and religious beliefs, an emphasis on self-rule and social equality, and patriotism – have fueled many of the

popular struggles in the [Appalachian] region" (p. 207). This may not be a landscape in which "anticapitalist" sentiments can be freely expressed in a public social justice campaign without backlash. In addition, there are many different conceptions and definitions of "capitalism," some of which might be very empowering and anti-capitalist in its effects. For example, the local entrepreneurial activities I describe below might be said to be "capitalist" because they are for-profit businesses, but because they are locally-owned and operated they challenge expansive global perceptions of capitalist ventures.

In my own research, I explore how activists conceptualize social change in Appalachia outside of a development framework, but I risk overlooking important challenges to "capitalism" and "development" if I do not allow my interviewees to use either term at all. If I take seriously the post-structural definition of discourse, in which language and meaning are fluid and socially informed, then my research subjects have the potential power to redefine "capitalism," "development," and "underdevelopment" *outside* of a development framework, and in a place-specific, particular, and meaningful way. Even ignoring development altogether could be framed as "non-development" – a potentially greater de-centering of capitalism and development than anti-development discourse, if utilized as such. In Appalachia in particular these possibilities must be left open since the region shares a national history of western industrialization. There are many complex contradictory formulations of discourse that activists may utilize in their social change efforts. Gudeman (1986) states, "A people's model is their life and history, their historical consciousness, their social construction. To a far greater degree than we sometimes realize, it is part of what we call 'development'" (p. 26). He advocates for

shifting toward a community of "local modelers" in which development models are constructed and enacted by individuals in their own communities[8].

In the next sections I review several ways in which alternative discourses have been enacted in Appalachia; some reinforce problematic assumptions of development, while others ignore development completely. I show that no theorist adequately challenges development as a discourse applied to Appalachia in her/his case studies. Neglecting the opportunity to discuss development (even as "non-development") is a disservice to mountain communities that are searching desperately for viable economic alternatives to capitalist development.

1. Autonomy Among Community and Kin: the Significance of Culture and Identity in Alternative Economies

An important way in which theorists have discussed alternative economic discourse in Appalachia that they say incorporates the significance of culture[9], place, and identity is called "livelihood." According to Gudeman (1986), "The central processes of making a livelihood are culturally modeled," and are enacted through symbolic schemes drawn from features of the social world (p. vii). People secure their livelihoods in a

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[8] In my own work, I do not aim to reproduce the universal-local binary framed by Gudeman. His idea of "local models" is useful because it gives credit to everyday people for being able to theorize their own economic and social constructs, but I do not wish to romanticize the "local" as a privileged ontology, as many other theorists have done (e.g.Esteva & Prakash, 1998; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Instead, I turn to Massey's (1994) interpretation of "sense of place," in which she writes: "There is a specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations […] all these relations interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place, with that history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, both local and to the wider world [… this is] a global sense of the local, a global sense of place" (p. 156).

[9] "Culture" is a term used frequently in this Thesis. Don Mitchell (1995) is just one of many theorists who problematizes "culture," arguing that it is not a useful concept as it is employed prolifically and in conflicting forms. In order to limit the scope of this work I do not spend time discussing these issues here. Instead, I use the word variably as it is employed by the theorist or interviewee that I am citing. Often this means reifying culture or treating it as though it has definable limits, which are not standpoints I myself would argue.

variety of patterns that may not be representable as an economic totality; these might include modes of distribution, production, consumption, and social organization (p. 37). Similarly, Oberhauser, Mandel, and Hapke (2004) describe livelihoods as encompassing "the material realities and ideological processes that shape and are shaped by economic strategies in diverse geographical locations" (p. 205). They say that livelihood analyses provide conceptual frameworks that capture the dynamic, historical, and relational processes that inform the diverse ways in which people make a living and build the worlds around them. People are depicted as active agents of change within their individual circumstances; they reshape their own identities, lives, and relationships within households and communities through strategies embedded in their own "gender, race/ethnicity, class, place, and life-course" (ibid, p. 206). As I discussed in the last chapter, despite Shapiro (1978) and other theorists' attempts to deconstruct an essentialized "Appalachia," it has been produced and reproduced as a place of identification. The identity and culture of "Appalachia" is heavily incorporated into many localized efforts for social change.

In the collection *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, editor Stephen Fisher (1993) wrote, "themes of tradition, shared cultural memory and values, religion, and family appear to be more relevant than notions of class solidarity in explaining the nature of local citizen revolts over such issues as strip mining, the broad form deed, the disappearance of small farms, the flooding of people's homes, and the pollution of the region's rivers, creeks, and groundwater systems" (p. 317). He argues that people are moved to action not by abstract academic Marxist ideas, but rather by drawing upon and defending their own particular traditions, folkways, and culture. Indeed, the collection

includes several works that document the importance of Appalachian culture in social change and empowerment. One example is the relationship between music and social action.

Carawan and Carawan (1993) detail the role that mountain music played throughout the 1960s and 70s in specific social movements in eastern Kentucky. They say, "Resistance movements are strengthened by building on their own heritage and adding contemporary expressions from the new struggle. Singing together, even in the face of terrible difficulties, can be empowering" (p. 259). Social transformation, empowerment, and culture are intertwined in these narratives in which, "Appalachian coal communities have a distinctive culture. In addition to ballads, tales, and folks songs, string music, and religious songs associated with the southern mountains, songs, stories, and poems have been written to describe the specific dangers, working conditions, joys, and sorrows of coal" (ibid, p. 256). The authors highlight the relevance of culture in locally written and performed music.

None of the contributors to *Fighting Back in Appalachia* connect the important cultural expressions they document to the development of Appalachia, even though their work is a direct challenge to the assumption of development projects – that Appalachia is an underdeveloped place with a devalued quality of life. When "development" is left unquestioned in radical discourses on resistance, then even rich cultural expressions such as music can be framed within the context of underdevelopment. In a recent example, Whitesburg, KY, appeared in the *National Geographic Magazine* for its distinct local music scene. The author of the article, Brookes (2004), describes Whitesburg as "dying" with "a failing local economy, a desecrated landscape" (p. 10). He gives credit to recent

youth music concerts and old-time jam session workshops for keeping the economy alive, attracting concertgoers from hundreds of miles away to see punk/folk hybrid shows. This locally-distinct Appalachian music is attributed with the power of bringing people together; but rather than providing proof that Whitesburg is not underdeveloped, the music is instead portrayed as turning around Whitesburg's flailing economic development.

Unlike development-centered discourses, theorists claim that livelihood strategies provide ways in which culture can be recognized as a significant challenge to capitalism and development – through notions of "community" and "autonomy." According to Esteva and Prakash (1998), modernization is a capitalistic development that threatens to destroy indigenous cultures of the global south. For them, the only solution is autonomy from modernization efforts in which the "non-modern majorities" of the global south have "opportunities for regenerating their own traditions, their cultures, their unique indigenous and other non-modern arts of living and dying" (p. 5).

In Appalachia, a similar sentiment for autonomy from modernization is articulated in terms of empowerment through "community;" but since "development" remains uncriticized within the literature that documents alternatives to capitalism in Appalachia, it does not get implicated in the capitalist quest for modernization in the mountains. Fisher (1993) calls Appalachian communities "free social spaces," or "autonomous institutions deeply rooted in the experiences and values of people in local communities, [that] can produce a vocabulary of democratic action [...] rich in cultural meaning and historical memory" (p. 319). When these free spaces are threatened, resistance results. Fisher cites examples of mountain struggles that have centered more

often around the concept of community and preservation of a way of life, than around the centralized workplace of the mine, mill, or factory. Similarly, Foster's (1993) study of a 14-year dispute in Ashe County, NC, highlights the importance of regionalism in constructing local autonomy from industrializing forces. Residents battled plans for a new hydroelectric generating facility that required damming the New River and flooding a significant portion of the county's land, including farmlands that were passed down through many generations. Foster says, "The dispute became an arena in which personal worth, independence, local autonomy, economic survival, and cultural identity were seriously contested" (p. 304). Identity became spatialized according to the geography of the county itself. Local residents asserted a regional identity and a distinctive culture of freedom and self-sufficiency through letters to elected officials, a festival held on threatened farmland, displays of local crafts and foods, and an epic narrative written and performed by residents which documented the unique history and geology of the area (ibid, p. 312). "Development" is not discussed in either Fisher or Foster's work, even though they credit Appalachian communities with challenging industrialism and modernization – both of which, as I detailed in the last chapter, are heavily associated with development.

A more-extensive work that weighs culture and identity heavily in economic practices is *The Livelihood of Kin*, in which Halperin (1990) performs an economic ethnography of "multiple livelihood strategies" in several counties of northern Kentucky. She records a discourse commonly referred to among her study population as "the Kentucky way," which is "quite literally, a way of life based on ties to land and family that confers dignity and self-esteem upon rural working-class people" (p. 2). It is a

geographically-specific way that is impossible under conditions of urbanization in which people are isolated from family and land. Familial duties dominate choices for work, and kin units are often also units of production. Halperin recognizes the challenge to a universalized, non-place-specific capitalism that the Kentucky way poses. She says that labeling Appalachian people and their economic activities "capitalist" oversimplifies a complex set of intertwining relationships and processes, and she also concedes that economic activities are not exclusively anticapitalist or noncapitalist. Virtually no one among Halperin's subjects work for any single economic sector on a full-time basis for a lifetime. People hold many jobs and perform many other work tasks for which they may or may not be paid. Her subjects use capitalist economic markets without becoming completely dependent on them. This includes using wage labor when cash is required to make ends meet while also participating in second-hand markets, reusing and re-selling items, illegal sales, providing apprenticeships, owning debt-free land, and rejecting industrial jobs as providing secure livelihoods (ibid, p. 13). Halperin constructs her community as one that marginalizes the capitalist economic sector, placing local, autonomous, geographically-specific, informal markets at the center, but she does not acknowledge the relationship between multiple livelihood strategies and development. She misses the opportunity to discuss how her study depicts an Appalachian community that is not underdeveloped or lacking, but rather practicing manifold economies and developments.

Oberhauser (2002) performed a more recent study of an economic network in West Virginia comprised of sixty self-employed home-based workers who produce knitwear for regional and national markets. The knitting group, Appalachia By Design

(ABD) uses the rugged Appalachian landscape and its people to promote its image and operation. The network is a collective organization with an emphasis on participation by its members in decision-making and strategic planning. Oberhauser's analysis focuses on the (re)negotiation of gender identities in the context of "economic restructuring" in an Appalachian region where jobs are scarce. Her emphasis on gender is an important aspect of rural Appalachian informal income-generation. She says that women have historically relied on noncapitalist sectors in a multitude of diverse, socially-embedded livelihood strategies, but these are frequently ignored in essentialist constructions of Appalachia in which women are assumed to be confined to non-economic household duties. Her study also highlights empowerment and anti-capitalist rebellion as an underlying aspect of home-based work. The women in her case study refused to work menial service sector jobs, which are growing in number for women in West Virginia, and their knit work reflects the responsibility they have assumed in carving out new, alternative survival strategies that integrate strong community networks, familial domestic needs, and Appalachian identities. She draws similar conclusions about capitalism as Halperin: "The conceptualization of alternative economic practices that focuses on the plurality of economic forms are relevant to analyses of home-based work and networks because these activities do not conform to hegemonic and unifying notions of the capitalist economy, but represent the heterogeneity of economic form and practice" (p. 4). Despite Oberhauser's concern with her subjects' role in "economic restructuring," she also does not refer to their work as outside of or against "development." Oberhauser makes an important contribution to recognizing local Appalachian economies as transformative and substantive, but as long as the "underdevelopment" of Appalachia goes unchallenged

these multiple livelihood strategies are at risk of remaining at the margins of capitalist economic development.

There are a few case studies of rural residents whose work directly addresses economic *development* in Appalachia. Similar to Halperin's and Oberhauser's work, the Coalition for Jobs and the Environment (CJE, 2000) conducted research into "patchwork incomes" to record noncapitalist livelihood strategies in Appalachia. Unlike Halperin or Oberhauser, CJE does frame their work as "alternative" to recruiting large corporations and industries for rural economic development, and in this sense they recognize the threat that the patchwork economies they document pose to development. However, their discourse maintains industrial capitalist markets at the center of economic activity while the informal domains they document are marginal. CJE compiled data on income-producing activities that provide livelihoods among rural residents and their neighbors in Appalachia: "CJE affirms the ingenuity of residents who patch together many activities to produce a sustainable income while preserving and using the abundant natural resources" (p. 1). They document individuals who started their own business without loans, grew marketable plants, hand-crafted items to sell, and other activities. Their subjects learned skills in patchwork environments, as well; they took community college classes, joined workshops, clubs, associations, internet educational opportunities, mail courses, and cooperatives, and practiced experiential-based learning to piece together a knowledge base and market for their abilities. CJE confirms that "This traditional Appalachian approach to livelihood, patchworking income together, enables local citizens to gain greater control over their lives and provides a way to live in a region with otherwise limited job opportunities," (p. 13) but they frame these marginal incomes as gaining

power along the edges of a larger or more substantial economic realm of industrial

economic development. One can almost imagine the "patchwork" being assembled from

scraps discarded or ignored by the mainstream economy.

Similarly, Helen Lewis, Mary Ann Hinsdale, and Maxine Waller (1995) record

the successes of the Ivanhoe Citizens League in learning to take control of their

communities' own economic development, but the authors shortchange the League's

efforts again by constructing the mainstream capitalist economy as too powerful to

overcome. The Citizens League originally formed to recruit any large industry that might

be willing to move into their town of Ivanhoe, VA, to provide jobs, but they quickly

learned that they did not want outside capitalist economic development. Instead, "They

began to see themselves as working to develop a new model of community development

that is more self-sufficient and their role as being to educate the local IDA [Industrial

Development Authority] members, planners, and politicians about this new model of

community development" (p. 73). The League prevented the sale of industrial property,

organized revitalization projects such as parades, parties, and celebrations, secured grants

to invest locally, bought their local Jubilee Park, and other important accomplishments.

The authors recognize that participants became more knowledgeable and empowered

throughout these processes, that the "Civic League became an economic enterprise," and

they even credit the League with becoming "the biggest employer in town!" (p. 77).

However, they ultimately construct these accomplishments as marginal to the power

employed by capitalist economics. In a film interview regarding the Citizens League,

author Helen Lewis stated that Appalachian community groups can only achieve a certain

level of success in development projects before they hit a "ceiling" defined by the

bureaucratic, capitalist system within which Americans live (A. Lewis, 1997). Clearly, community development has not been constructed in this literature to adequately combat "capitalism" or "development." In addition, Lewis, Hinsdale, and Waller reinforce the notion that Appalachia is "underdeveloped" and "lacking," despite the rich tale they tell of the Citizens League's multi-faceted, culturally-informed, place-specific work.

One final example of a case study that explicitly focuses on grassroots community development in Appalachia is Seitz's (1995) *Women, Development, and Communities for Empowerment in Appalachia*. She explores how women in Southwest Virginia came together to generate income, provide labor support groups, and perform other community development efforts. She explores specifically the relationship between the daily labor of her subjects and work, family, and community; she finds that "The idiom of kinship has *not* been replaced by the idiom of the market to describe civil society" (p. 32). Women's labor is deeply embedded in "familial relationships and community values, its psychological and ideological dimensions, and the possibilities within it for revolutionary politics" (p. 28). Women also envision collective democratic citizenship according to work and family, which are really intimately related modes that reverberate upon one another and frequently occur in the same social, physical and psychic spaces (p. 28). Seitz says that her central theoretical concern is "how women may be empowered when they participate in grassroots associations that aim to further their development" (p. 3). Her study provides several meaningful lessons on how gender dynamics affect and are affected by the work performed by female activists developing their communities, but again this author has constructed her subjects as "underdeveloped" or in need of "development." Seitz even refers to Appalachia as underdeveloped like the global south –

"dependent," "peripheral," subsumed under the "capitalist structure" (p. 7). She is completely uncritical of the development literature on policy to which she says she wishes to contribute.

It is clear that the subjects of these case studies want something to change in their own communities; they are working toward what they consider to be a better economic environment or simply an improved livelihood. Even the individuals who use "development" in their discourse are usually referring to an imagined non-exploitative form of development. In the next section I review a common discourse for social improvement in the mountains – "sustainable development." Like the last few case studies cited, "sustainable development" caries potential dangers of marginalizing anti-capitalist efforts and/or reinforcing Appalachia's identity as an underdeveloped region. However, this discourse is utilized too frequently among activists in Appalachia to be ignored; it provides important examples of local empowerment in intentional efforts to strive for alternatives.

2. Sustainable Development: A Safe Start on an Uncertain Path

Many academics and activists consider "sustainable development" a viable and substantial alternative to capitalist economic development. The literature on sustainable development is prolific and diverse, thus I will not attempt to review that body of work here. Instead I provide a few ideas of how sustainable development has been conceived in Appalachia, I highlight ways in which sustainable development language has provided opportunities for empowerment for some, and I briefly review some criticisms of the discourse. My overall conclusion in this section is that sustainable development is not

enough on its own; there is a dire need for new or re-newed paths in Appalachia. At the same time, I do not wish to close off recognition of the insurgent power that this discourse has provided in the case studies I cite.

Audirac (1997) refers to sustainable development as a "postmodern alternative" constructed as a critique of modern industrial society. He says the "modern industrial worldview" includes deterministic models of science, linear economic thinking, an exploitative utilitarian view of nature, top-down centralized institutions, limitless economic growth, and capital-intensive technologies that unload high levels of pollutants and toxic wastes into rivers, seas, and the atmosphere (p. 4). The development agenda for rural areas is dominated by this destructive view. In contrast, sustainable development is backed by an emerging "ecological worldview," which includes organismic and holistic models of science, ecological holistic thinking, non-exploitative biocentric philosophies of nature, social and political concerns of pollution, waste disposal, and species extinction, a recognition of the limits to economic growth, more cooperative community-based social relations, and bottom-up cooperative partnerships (p. 5-6). However, Audirac also admits that there is an "inherently postmodern realization that there is no hegemonic definition of sustainable development, let alone a universally agreed-upon agenda" (p. 8). Nonetheless, it is clear from his description that sustainable development is commonly fabricated as an alternative (or as several alternatives) to modern industrial economic development.

This is the sense in which sustainable development is referred to in Appalachia, as well – as a place-specific alternative to environmentally destructive, profit-oriented development. Members of the Clinch Powell Sustainable Development Forum in Central

Appalachia set out to define sustainable development in practice, "because sustainability involves community and culture as much as the ecosystem, it must be unfolded by and with the people and community structures who will enact it over the long term" (Flaccavento, 1997, p. 385). After long, difficult negotiations in community meetings, the group agreed that a sustainable economy is one that: is beneficial for local people in terms of skills and resourcefulness more so than for financial gain; privileges the "local" as a unique place in which human and bioregional rejuvenation, constraints, and opportunities are intertwined; is ecologically sound, balancing diversity, community, and regeneration within the biosphere; promotes self-reliance rather than dependence on those outside the community; and lasts indefinitely, "preserving the ecosystem for future generations" (ibid, p. 387). The sustainable development focus on long-term economic, social, and environmental health is appealing to the members of the Clinch Powell community specifically because of the industry-oriented development that has wreaked such severe environmental havoc in Appalachia – namely coal mining and logging industries.

Another example of sustainable development discourse in Appalachia is Rice's (2002) dissertation, *Discourses of Sustainability*, in which the author engages with people actively struggling with ideas of development and sustainability in Ohio and Kentucky. One of the groups he focuses on, the Letcher County Action Team (LCAT), in Kentucky, adopts most of the same sentiments defined by the Clinch Powell organization. In this community, also, citizens, academics, and government officials gathered together to deliberate on the meaning of sustainability, which they defined in terms of, "*health* – healthy community, healthy economy, healthy environment, healthy individual" (ibid, p.

248). An interesting variation is that for LCAT, "the discourse of small business promotion began to conflate with a discourse of sustainability and a discourse of political resistance, such that small business creation, especially tourism, was understood in this new and emerging discourse of community sustainability as a necessary precursor to political resistance and change" (ibid, p. 89). They developed a program, "meant to instill entrepreneurial values and provide economic opportunity in the "new economy" for the youth of Letcher County" (p. 122). In Clinch Powell, entrepreneurism does not take center stage in their definition of sustainability, but all three of the group's strategies – sustainable forestry, agriculture, and nature tourism – were "under girded by a concern for entrepreneurism" (Flaccavento, 1997, p. 401). Community members participated in workshops on starting a business, getting small business loans, and linking with non-profit organizations and other entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurism is a common theme found among Appalachian community groups discussing alternative economic development. The study on patchwork incomes performed by the Coalition for Jobs and the Environment (CJE, 2000) that I cite earlier in this chapter also identifies "entrepreneurism" as a key means of economic development in the rural mountains. Likewise, members of the Ivanhoe Citizens League express similar sentiments: "We need to stress for the younger generation to go into business for themselves and be their own boss [...] it would be better if there could be locally owned businesses that would stay in the community and contribute to the long-range economic development of the community" (H. M. Lewis et al., 1995, p. 85). While entrepreneurism might be seen as a capitalistic strategy by some, the activists involved in forging these alternative discourses refer to entrepreneurism as a direct challenge to exploitative,

capitalist ventures. One LCAT member's comments on the local community college illustrates this:

> [R]ather than preparing local people to program or be creative, or preparing them to work with cutting-edge technology or techniques, they are preparing local youth for work in data and image entry. Thus, rather than preparing local youth and young adults for small, locally-based entrepreneurial development, the colleges [...] are preparing them to be plugged into the corporate, low-wage machine powered by large-scale industrial recruitment, the preferred method of mainstream economic development and state governments everywhere! (quoted in Rice 2002, p. 124)

Sustainable development is a method that has not gone unchallenged in Appalachia (e.g. Glasmeier & Farrigan, 2003). Many theorists also find that to consider sustainable development in general as an alternative to development, "is to remain within the same model of thought that produced development and kept it in place" (Escobar, 1995, p. 222). As I state several times above, pro-development models, even those formulated within community groups, reinforce the assumption that Appalachia is underdeveloped and in-need of intervention. Even more so, all of the citizens groups I mention highlight the importance of networking with non-governmental organizations, politicians, and other expert-oriented powers in order to gain clout both within and outside the immediate community. While it is difficult to forge new paths for social change in Appalachia, sustainable development continues to reinforce these problematic dependencies on professional realms.

What distinguishes the sustainable development examples I cite here from capitalist development models is that control and decision-making at the grassroots level is privileged above professional help from some other locale. This and many other aspects of sustainable development (e.g. that it requires active participation from long-term residents, that it recognizes the need to focus on culture and local assets rather than

just on economics, and that it exists in diverse forms that depend on the ideology of a specific community (Rice, 2002)) must be recognized as important opportunities for empowerment among disenfranchised members of mountain communities. While "sustainable development" is acknowledged as empowering, it should not be the *only* alternative discourse from capitalist development in Appalachia. Currently it holds a strong position as possibly *the* most powerful alternative discourse in the region. My research documents a multiplicity of discussions beyond sustainable development that provide even more opportunities to challenge capitalism and the state of "underdevelopment."

D. Local Power Alongside Imagined Global Forces

Clearly, it is a hard struggle to negotiate alternative discourses in particular communities alongside powerful ideas of global capitalist networks. As a conclusion to this chapter, here I discuss a common aspect of the discourses on social change I cite above that remains unchallenged in Appalachia – that global economic forces are often articulated as, "inevitably more powerful than progressive, grassroots, local interventions" (Gibson-Graham, 2002, p. 25). Contrastingly, some of the examples above highlight ways in which thinking of economies can liberate ideas. In my research, I take issue with structural perceptions of social change in an effort to help expand the literature within Appalachia Studies. In the next two chapters I discuss how Kentucky activists think of their possibilities for power and whether or not they feel constrained by ambiguous "global forces" since it seems to be such a common trope within the case studies on activism in Appalachia.

Rice (2002) argues that local sustainability strategies must not be enacted in isolation from a larger grassroots "globalization from below" if change is desired (p. 21). Grassroots organizations *must* network with other communities in order to affect the larger economic system: groups "must scale their efforts in this area up and out" (ibid, p. 21). Furthermore, the *success* of a grassroots organization *depends* on their ability to "scale up and scale out" (ibid, p. 31). Similarly, Fisher (1999) says it is crucial for Appalachian grassroots organizations to make connections between local problems and larger forces such that activists know that, "Local resources have been depleted and local economies gutted by national and global market forces and the actions of the federal government and multinational corporations" (p. 207). He says that in order for substantive change to occur, organizations need to be multi-issue and connect oppressions – sexism, racism, worker exploitation, etc. Making these connections raises people's awareness of their common plight within capitalism. Ultimately, Fisher is arguing for a larger movement that joins many (or all) oppressions.

Gibson-Graham (2002) are apprehensive about building a power force that could compete with the global economic structure. They find that movements trying to build a grassroots globalization from below are disabling. If organizations must upscale to a level comparable to current "capitalist" or "globalization forces" to gain the degree of power necessary to create progressive change for local communities, then activists are faced with a daunting task. Not only is it difficult to muster enthusiasm for a project so large and exhaustive, but a giant movement itself threatens to be just as imperialist as our current mode of economic relations. However, other scholars emphasize the necessity of networking, building coalitions, solidarity, and larger movements, for propelling social

change. According to Lewis, Hinsdale, and Waller (1995), when small marginalized

communities in Appalachia tackle nodes of power, people can become isolated from

others with similar struggles and easily dismissed in their own communities. The

demands of the Ivanhoe Civic League were ignored by government officials until the

group gained support from former Ivanhoe residents, friends in other towns, academics at

schools located outside of Ivanhoe, and church groups; media recognition helped, as well.

"Only when such communities become stronger, develop allies, and join forces with

similar communities can they become a political force" (ibid, p. 78). Similarly, Fisher

(1999) finds that the local character of social justice battles that have taken place in

Central Appalachia is a weakness, isolating groups and limiting them to occasional small

victories. The lines between networking and building a global movement are fuzzy in the

literature.

Based on these structural interpretations of power, in order for Kentucky residents

to have the ability to produce change in their communities, to create their own ideas of

economic development, or to operate outside of a development framework altogether,

they must conceptualize power differently. Gibson-Graham (2006) offer an alternative

version of power in which there are "community economies," rather than a global

capitalist economy. These economies are, "an ethical and political space of becoming [...]

communal space [in which] individual and collective subjects negotiate questions of

livelihood and interdependence and (re)construct themselves in the process" (ibid, p. x).

These spaces are empty until negotiated through practice and resignification. Thus, the

economic realm does not have to appear colonizing, but instead it can be "freedoms and

openings" (Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001, p. 175). The livelihood strategies I cite

above are examples that "open up economic opportunities and build social networks in impoverished areas" (Oberhauser et al., 2004, p. 207).

In the next chapter I analyze the discourse I collected when I interviewed Kentucky activists from across the state. I integrate many of the concepts discussed in this chapter to highlight the empowered speech and visions of activists in Appalachia. My interviewees signify power and possibility within varying conceptions of economy and development. In the last chapter of this Thesis I consider the utility of the scale debates (and other academic debates), detailed in this chapter, for activists.

CHAPTER IV.

"SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO BE WILD:"[10]
ALTERNATIVE SOCIAL CHANGE MODELS AT WORK

In the previous chapters I uncover gaps in Appalachian literatures on development and alternative economies. I argue that despite attempts to thoroughly analyze these phenomena, empowered notions of capitalism and economics have not been put in dialogue with development discourses in reference to Appalachia. In this chapter I analyze the interviews produced in my own research on this region. I asked my interviewees to discuss their own visions of social change, their communities, and the strategies that they attempt to enact in their daily work as both paid and unpaid activists in Kentucky. Here I organize many of their ideas for social change into "models" that are by no means exclusive or neatly defined, but rather act as discursive nodal points that bleed into each other. In the first section I discuss pro-capital creation models in which traditional "neoliberal" ideas are reformulated to serve grassroots activists who are fabricating new localized economies. I also delineate simple living models that shrink away from capital; individuals are building lifestyles and communities where economies re-center around nature, survival, and even traffic. In the second section, I discuss models that are explicitly developed outside of institutional frameworks. Midwives and renegade activists serve as the protagonists in these narratives, in which labor and daily activities are the foundation of social change. The last section recognizes the multiple imagined spaces that accompany my participants' utopian visions for social change. I explore urban-rural and inside-outside binaries in the construction of identities, which frequently

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[10] (Mullins, 2007)

open new transformative spaces of resistance. All of these social change discourses are "alternative" to traditional, exploitative "capitalist" or "development" relations.

The talk activists generate in each of these sections sometimes include terms such as "development" and "economy," but as I demonstrate below, their own formulations are unique, heterogeneous, and empowered – frequently complicating many academic theoretical assumptions that I address (and also neglect) in the previous chapters. "Development" is a term frequently utilized by my interviewees, but rarely does it align with the exploitative, capitalist, pro-modernity "development" (Ferguson, 1994) that I describe in chapter II. It is often positioned in opposition to this very "development," and instead the newly-conceived word feeds into some of the alternative visions grassroots activists imagine for themselves. In chapter III I discuss the difficulties that "the economy" adds to discourse – it is regularly reified and given too much weight. In the conversations I supply below, it appears that my interviewees are unhindered by this terminology. They utilize the word in a way already-integrated with culture, ethics, emotions, and other supposedly non-economic terrains – the economy is given no more weight than these other aspects of daily life, and yet it is still employed fluidly to communicate transformative ideas of labor, monetary exchange, and capital circulation. The on-the-ground work involved in moving social change is privileged far and above any theoretical inconsistency.

Another discursive disruption worth highlighting here contends with the term "capitalism." This word plays a key role in chapter III, and yet *none* of my interviewees employed it *at all* until I asked them to discuss it at the end of the interview. The majority of the informants either felt the term was too abstract and non-specific to be useful, or

else defined it differently from Gibson-Graham[11] and other Marxist scholars. For example, Community Farm Alliance Organizer Nathan Brown considered "capitalism" to be a free-market economy. When I asked him if he were attempting to perform "anti-capitalist" reform, he responded that it was not anti-capitalist, but "anti-corporate." Interviewee Andri Kukas and I discussed the word at length before she felt comfortable commenting on it. She positions herself as,

> falling in the camp of tactics more strongly aligned with striking certain industries. A lot of the problems coming out of capitalist way of thinking are really coming from large corporations. That's two different issues there. It's not just capitalism perhaps, but maybe this idea of corporations and there are *people* who are in charge of those corporations.

Like Nathan, she constructs corporations as being on the evil end of exploitation, rather than "capitalism."

It became clear from Andri's comments, and others, that my interviewees conceived of social problems and strategizing solutions in very agency-driven, particular, specific terms – people and actions, not ideas. "Capitalism" as a generalized, abstract enemy is useless. Theorists have pointed out the power that comes along with conceiving of reality in particulars. Leyshon and Lee (2003) give credit to anti-globalization protests, such as the ones against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in December 1999, in which regulators were successfully prevented from meeting to discuss the governance and coordination of global capitalism. These protesters draw attention to, "the fact that it requires the co-presence of global political and economic leaders to thrash out

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[11] "For us, capitalism is defined as a social relation, or class process, in which nonproducers appropriate surplus labor in value form from free wage laborers. The appropriated surplus is then distributed by the appropriators (the capitalist or board of directors of the capitalist firm) to a variety of social destinations. In this rendition, capitalism becomes recognizable as a set of practices scattered over a landscape in formal and informal enterprise settings, interacting with noncapitalist firms as well as all other sites and processes, activities and organizations" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. xxiv).

conventions and agreements for neo-liberal capitalism to continue to go on" (p. 15).

Leyshon and Lee say this temporary "spatial fix" is a "point of weakness within the

network of global capitalism," pointing out the particular actions that must continuously

be renewed, and that can thus be thwarted (p. 15).

One interviewee also spoke about particular actions and strategies when we

discussed "capitalism." He wants to effect social change through "participatory" and

"anarchist" economics.

> It's changing the way of business to where it's more local and on that scale.
> As far as the way you treat workers and stuff, it would be a very enticing
> place for people to work in. Do some kind of anarchist business, getting more
> people to be excited about work. Not working for a paycheck, but working for
> the work itself, enjoying work. If people would be more into that, then the
> way the economy would work would be completely different. It wouldn't be
> capitalist anymore. If people would be more into that, then it would bring an
> end to capitalism. (Garnett, 2007)

His approach is similar to the work Gibson-Graham advocate – building alternatives until

capitalism dissolves – but unlike Gibson-Graham this interviewee is not interested in

labeling the work "anti-capitalist" to make it visible. "When I think about the things I do,

the first thing that comes to mind isn't "capitalism." I don't really come to it thinking it's

anti-capitalist. I don't look at things and decide to do it if I can make it anti-capitalist"

(Garnett, 2007). Instead, he re-configures the downfall of capitalism through individual

"anarchist" struggles.

Even though my participants are uninterested in using the term "capitalism," the

community struggles that they are working to address are clearly connected to many of

the same ills attributed to "capitalism" – environmental destruction, non-familial work

environments, profit-driven industries, apathy for local culture and quality, polarized

class relationships, etc. They articulated a diverse range of both practical and

philosophical aspects of their social change efforts that they feel constrains and enables

their success. Positionality plays a key role in each of their mobility stories, complicating

any possibility of delineating a uniform strategy for achieving change. Most of my

interviewees also acknowledge the heterogeneity of actors and ideas at work in and

outside their own communities – for many, this multiplicity is empowering, hopeful, and

often inspiring. For example, immediately after a passionate expression of defeat, anger,

anxiety, and frustration, interviewee Tina Johnson said this about enacting social change:

> Just in everyday dealings, which is what life is, to try to remember your
> inspirations. Trying to be inspired by all those things and pass those things on.
> My friend who caught on from someone else who got it from someone else
> that you can go out to Climax and get some rockin' spring water for free. Or
> the other night she read me this poem that [a friend] wrote about peeling
> grapefruit, and I discovered how amazing grapefruits are. Through these
> people who do inspiring things, I am inspired, and also want to constantly be
> passing those things on to other people. All those really wonderful things. And
> when they're good like that, they *totally* catch on. Awesome stuff. And I
> really do think that those are the things that can fundamentally change the
> world, but it's a matter of really always actively trying to get that message out.
> We need all of it. We need all we can, people doing all these things. You
> never know where someone's gonna be inspired and jump in and do it.

My interviewees' narratives retained an empowered stance throughout our difficult

conversations on the obstacles they experience and ways in which they might be turned

around. It was apparent to me that *none* of the activists I spoke to are submitting.

A. Reformulating Economies: It's Gotta Come From the Community

The social change models I describe in this section are at odds with each other in

some ways, but also have points of convergence and overlap. Pro-capital creation models

are interested in generating and diversifying capital circulation as a means of resolving

community problems (especially lack of jobs and income). In contrast, the simple living

models work away from capital, to reduce consumption and shift the balance of society from humans to nature. However, models under both sections privilege the local realm as the site of effective change. *All* of my interviewees stress the importance of locally grown ideas and activity, but these models in particular hinge on local-scale work. The models are also centrally concerned with survival – whether in terms of finances or the substance of basic needs. On both fronts, locality and vitality, these are reformulations of economies – new imaginings for how life should function, how systems of exchange might operate, and how community relationships can exist.

1. Pro-Capital Creation Models: "Gotta Eat, Gotta Work, Gotta Eat"[12]

Unlike the other models of social change I discuss in this chapter, the ones described here are pro-capital[13] creation – they focus on generating and especially circulating money, food, and goods in diverse localized economies. My participants are striving for financial liberation and community health via thriving participatory markets, demonstrating how their idealized visions for the future intersect with what some might term "neoliberal" economic concepts, but stemming from a grassroots, anti-big-business perspective. In section a. below I trace out some of these nodes, and I utilize Peck and Tickell's (2007) "roll-back," "roll-out," terminology to delineate what I categorize as a grassroots free market ideology. In section b. I complicate these pro-capital models by contrasting the strategies employed for farming communities against those utilized in

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[12] (D. Musser, 2007)
[13] What I am terming "pro-capital" should not be conflated with "pro-capitalism." As I state in the introduction to this chapter, my interviewees were unconcerned with the term "capitalism," and thus did not articulate social change efforts for or against "capitalist" practices. Furthermore, the exploitative connotations that "capitalism" carries were absent from my interviewees' pro-capital-creation visions for the future.

coal-producing regions of Kentucky. Community organizers in both places articulate a strong historical-cultural orientation within their models of social change, but contradictions between traditions and ideas of progress produce variations in development discourses in these two areas.

a. Grassroots Neoliberalism: The Wal-Marts Are Killing Us, but Local Free Markets Might Save Us

I met with Nathan Brown, a Field Organizer for Community Farm Alliance (CFA), in what turned out to be an appropriate location for our interview – a locally-owned diner in Frankfort, KY, the capital and geographic heart of state legislation. The social change efforts that he and members of CFA accomplish often revolve around state policies that either bolster the financial viability of small-scale family-farms or limit the competitive advantage of large agricultural operations. They also pursue on-the-ground community projects to establish new localized economies, such as the Bath County Farm-to-School program and business development ventures in Louisville, both of which I discuss in more detail below. All of these endeavors fit with CFA's L.I.F.E. vision – which stands for, "Locally Innovative Food Economies – the key to innovative is that it's going to look different in Louisville than how it's gonna look in Bath County and it's gonna be different from place to place" (Brown, 2007). This goal for localized diverse economies, "goes way beyond food," and reaches to fit both necessary and luxury goods that are producible in the local community to the point "where it's just so norm and common-place that you walk across the street to get your local whatever" (ibid).

The free-local-market ideology that Nathan espouses is tinged with "neoliberal" economic discourse, but it is also clearly conceived as acting against some of the unjust

pro-corporate practices associated with neoliberalism[14]. It appears that neoliberalism[15], which Bourdieu (1998) calls a "strong discourse," has become so pervasive that activists in grassroots organizations are perhaps unintentionally co-opting the discourse and turning it around to both rail against corporations and conduct business outside corporate networks. This use of neoliberalism shows that there are manifold discourses of neoliberalism that can be mobilized for different purposes. Bourdieu himself hopes that there are opportunities for subversion and resistance within neoliberalism: "Can it be expected that the extraordinary mass of suffering produced by this sort of political-economic regime will one day serve as the starting point of a movement capable of stopping the race to the abyss?" (6).

The grassroots-local-market vision of change that Nathan expressed includes the traditional neoliberal idea that freedom is experienced via market participation – in non-alienated production, labor, and consumption. Also in line with neoliberal theorizations of the state's role in economics[16], the grassroots-local-market vision entails a "thoroughgoing *reorganization* of governmental systems and state-economy relations" (Peck & Tickell, 2007, p. 33). However, pro-corporate neoliberal reorderings threaten the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and other community members because they work to benefit only the owners and managers of large corporations, high-level government

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[14] For example, reducing labor costs, reducing public expenditures, and making work more flexible via the politics of financial deregulation (Bourdieu, 1998).

[15] It is important to note that none of my interviewees used the term "neoliberal." This framing is my own interpretation of how some of them described the functioning of idealized local economies.

[16] Peck and Tickell (2007), among others, argue against the generalized notion that neoliberalism means "less state." Instead, it only exists in amalgamations of both "roll-back" and "roll-out" neoliberalization and alongside non-neoliberal configurations – these are destructively creative processes. Examples of neoliberal policies that the authors say roll back government include: public expenditure cuts, mass unemployment in labor markets, deunionization, and structural adjustment development programs. Neoliberalization policies that roll out new government formations include: full employment in labor markets, flexibility in employment relations (rather than deunionization), and development via social capital.

officials and politicians, and other "owners of capital in their individual quest for the maximisation of individual profit" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 4). In contrast, CFA members work to reorganize business-government relationships to bolster and sustain localized communities.

Nathan provided several examples of what could be called "roll back" and "roll out" (Peck & Tickell, 2007) policies, defining the government's role under the L.I.F.E. ideology of grassroots neoliberalism. However, as Peck and Tickell point out, neoliberalism only exists in hybrid messy forms. CFA members were the driving force behind a piece of legislation that both extended state participation and rolled back government (and corporate) involvement in the growth of local economies. House Bill (HB) 611 required the state to invest half the money it made from its lawsuit against tobacco companies in 1998 (which was a way for the state to recoup the healthcare costs associated with smoking tobacco) into the agriculture industry. The health stigma now associated with tobacco has contributed to the decline of growing the crop in Kentucky, but CFA recognized the opportunity to use the lawsuit money toward, "diversifying and creating more opportunity to maintain the farms" (Brown, 2007). CFA helped draft HB 611 specifically to use new government money to benefit small, localized agricultural enterprises – a new government-business configuration was formed. Nathan emphasized how HB 611 was designed to put control of projects in the hands of local communities rather than big companies or the state:

> CFA has always put a great emphasis on local control and recognizing local assets. When HB 611 was first introduced […] one of the things we kept going to again and again as something that was non-negotiable is a strong emphasis on local control over the money and over the projects that would be funded. So, [CFA members in] each county set out and did a comprehensive

plan[17], an assessment of what they had, what they didn't have, what their strengths were, what their needs were, and that informed the funding process and the types of projects they approved in their vision. We looked at the local assets and the local needs and that shaped the kind of things we do.

Nathan also expressed his personal feelings about the desire to limit government involvement in markets (what Peck and Tickell call "roll back" neoliberalism), especially if local businesspeople are able to participate free from multinational corporate competition:

I don't feel like we live in a free market, capitalist[18] society as much as people like to think we do. In a lot of ways, the local economy [that CFA espouses] is much more true to capitalism, than subsidized national farm bill or something like that. I mean, you can subsidize the hell out of something and of course it's going to be cheap, but does that make it a free market?

It is in what Nathan called the "anti-corporate" mentality of the L.I.F.E. model that there are opportunities for government to guide policies that regulate big business (what Peck and Tickell call "roll out" policies). Nathan said that community members feel constrained in their ability to generate and circulate local capital because large corporate-owned farming businesses smother small family operations with their unfair advantage of resources. One example of legislation that benefited large farmers shows how pro-corporate neoliberalism and the grassroots neoliberalism that I am delineating directly clash. In 2004 there was a piece of legislation that CFA members lobbied their representatives against (and lost), that removed the cap on the amount of tobacco one could grow related to the acreage of land s/he owned. The elimination of the cap was a

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[17] Several of my interviewees described visioning and planning meetings among community members, such as the ones CFA organizers arranged, as a strategy for generating development ideas. These gatherings align with Bourdieu's hope for a new social order, "One that will not have as its only law the pursuit of egoistic interests and the individual passion for profit and that will make room for collectives oriented toward the *rational pursuit of ends collectively arrived at and collectively ratified*" (1998, p. 6).

[18] It is clear that Nathan is using "capitalism" here in an idealized neoliberal sense of "free market," rather than in reference to the exploitative, unequal economic system that theorists such as Gibson-Graham (2006) describe.

"roll back" neoliberal policy which assisted corporate farming outfits already equipped with sizeable acreage. Grassroots neoliberalists contested the removal of the cap because of their desire to "roll-out" policies that restrict the advantages of multinational corporations; the cap, "basically created a price support [for small farmers] just by keeping the supply down" (ibid).

Nathan's vision for diverse economies is similar in function to the ideas expressed by two of my interviewees in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky – Mike Mullins, Executive Director at Hindman Settlement School in Hindman, KY, and David Musser, Project Manager for the Eastern Kentucky Heritage Monument in Campton, KY. They, too, locate grassroots free-market economies as sites for healthy communities and freedom from exploitation (in a grassroots neoliberal idealism), but their social change efforts are concentrated on generating environments in which "social entrepreneurship" (Mullins, 2007) can thrive rather than on marshalling legislative change. Below I talk in more detail about the differences between economic development ideas for farmers versus coalfield residents, but first I highlight the similarities in these pro-local-capital circulation models.

David Musser's social change efforts include mustering financial and community support to build the Eastern Kentucky Heritage Monument[19] in Wolfe County, visible from the Bert T. Combs Mountain Parkway. The Monument consists of a stainless steel guitar, banjo, and fiddle, which would stand seventy-five feet tall, and also double as giant wind harps – the largest in the world. The site pays homage to eastern Kentucky musicians, authors, and artists, and includes an amphitheatre, information and celebration

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[19] For an in-depth description of this project and pictures, see http://www.AppalachianHeritageAlliance.org

center, and a monument trail. The purpose of the monument is to generate and circulate

capital not only in his own community, but throughout Kentucky:

> When most people want to have somethin' they think of it as an end-point
> destination. […] But our idea is the monument would be the *hook*, to bring
> people to the area, and then the focus shifts to dispersing to all of the other
> places that people can go to do stuff throughout the entire region. It's a
> staging ground for the entire Appalachian Kentucky adventure. That's a whole
> different way of lookin' at somethin'. We're not tryin' to make the money off
> of them. […] In fact, the monument will allow, will *demand* other restaurants
> be built, and will allow and *demand* that high quality restaurants are built.
> Because people coming in, […] these people are on vacation, they have
> money they want to spend, they want to eat at something good. We have
> nothing around here, but this will mean that these restaurants will have to be
> built. (D. Musser, 2007)

The capital that Musser hopes to generate is an effort to shift the jobless environments of

eastern Kentucky into new alternative economies in which outside money is filtered into

the area and then dispersed locally and maintained locally.

> One young fella, local boy, graduated from Sullivan Culinary College, and he
> told us he said, 'You know this monument goes in,' he said, 'I could have a
> restaurant like I want, servin' really good stuff, usin' local produce, and just a
> high quality place, because there would be people here that could support that.
> Without it, there's no way, I have to go somewhere else to work and do my
> stuff.' That would happen in so many different areas. (D. Musser, 2007)

Mike Mullins has been an active leader in Hindman's Community Development

Initiative since its inception in the late 1990s. Community members worked collectively

to submit a grant proposal to the state under Governor Paul Patton's administration, and

they received approval for over twenty million dollars in appropriated projects. Over the

last decade they have directed the funds towards the installation of sewage and water

infrastructure, and towards purchasing, renovating, and expanding the downtown

Welcome Center, the Kentucky Appalachian Artisan Center, at least two spaces for

incubator businesses, and the Kentucky School of Craft. They also used the grant money

to build the Knott County Opportunity Center, which contains a new public library, a branch of the Hazard Community College, an adult learning center, a daycare, distance learning classrooms for Morehead State University, and a technological center. They have yet to exhaust their funds and they have additional plans in the works, including building an amphitheater downtown. Like David Musser, the goal of Mike's social change efforts are to create local free markets in which entrepreneurs, and others, can thrive:

> There's this domino affect. If you're eventually bringing out 2-300 students who are in the School of Craft, they've got to live someplace. There's got to be additional staffing over there to teach them. You've got all the little things that go with that. You gotta have janitorial staff, you gotta have teaching staff, you gotta have administrative staff, secretarial staff, you gotta buy supplies, you gotta do all this. And when they come in here they need a place to eat, so you gonna have more eating establishments develop. People when they're driving in they gotta buy gas, so they gotta buy gas. You just start thinkin' of how that turns money over, okay. You gotta have more housing, you have housing, you gonna need more carpenters, you need more carpenters, you're gonna have to buy the lumber. I mean, it's all a domino type effect. […] So, you got all those things going that just relate to the students at the Kentucky School of Craft. Then you take those and then you say, many of those decide to set up downtown, and you have a jewelry shop, you have a woodworking shop, you have a fiber shop, you have a ceramic shop, you have these folks doing this and they've got their own business. (Mullins, 2007)

Like Nathan's vision for social change, David and Mike are each anti-big-business in the sense that they see it as impeding local capital production.

> MIKE: What's happened over the last 20 years is almost all of the small downtowns and county seat towns have died. They're becoming ghost towns. Because out on the outskirts they've developed the strip malls, the Wal-Marts and so-forth. You know, the Wal-Marts are killing, to a great extent, downtowns. I think they're making their billions and they're doing great, but Wal-Mart, they've destroyed, those little strip malls where you get in and out, get it cheaper, and all that, find it all in one place, it's just business, that's just the way it is. So, how do you keep a vibrant downtown? That's a real struggle.

> DAVID: I envision [in an ideal community] progress and jobs, but maintaining the heritage and the cultural values that make this place special.

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And hopefully the natural environment, as well. Hopefully that's not turned into a weekend cabin in every corner. And the new jobs would've been carefully thought out and planned so as to not turn it into a strip of chain stores and McDonalds and stuff.

David's concern with preserving culture, heritage, and the natural environment is another discursive nodal point between the activists I interviewed in the farmlands and coalfields of Kentucky. These values are intertwined with their expressions of love for their communities and their motivation for the work they perform. Thus, these pro-capital creation models of social change carry a heavy historical-cultural orientation, which can be both constraining and enabling. However, variations in the histories of farming regions compared to coal mining areas multiply the grassroots neoliberalism I outline above into more heterogeneous place-based models. I tease out these differences in the next section. Nathan Brown experiences a different community dynamic organizing with farmers, who are building on long traditions of shared labor in the growing fields, than organizers in coal-producing areas, who encounter resistance to imaginative, empowered development plans that break cultural-historical ties with the destructive coal industry.

b. "Don't Mess With My Culture:"[20] History and Progress Clash in the Farmlands and Coalfields of Kentucky

Nathan's discourse on farming practices distinguishes Kentucky from other farming states by centralizing tobacco in a history of family and community relations. He claims that during the "get big or get out" agricultural movement in the 1980s, Kentucky maintained a family-farm friendly environment because of its tobacco history: "Part of their culture, tradition, so much is wrapped up in tobacco just in the nature of the crop. It

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[20] A description one of my interviewees (Unroe, 2007) gave for how some life-long residents in the coalfields near Whitesburg, KY, feel about a variety of social change efforts.

was very much a communal, community-building endeavor. To go out and harvest tobacco it took a whole town to do it, there was a whole culture" (Brown, 2007). As I stated in the Introduction, Kentucky is second in the nation in number of family farmers per capita (CFA, 2003), giving Kentucky a unique, community-oriented history compared to other farming states in the US.

One project that implements the L.I.F.E. philosophy, in line with the historical-cultural framing of family farming, is CFA's Farm-to-School program in Bath County in which farmers sell their produce to a local elementary school cafeteria. The venture, "is totally external to any industry, it's just local farmers selling to local institutions without any middleman to speak of. So, the economic implications are great because the money stays in the community and more money goes to the farmers, which goes into the rest of the community" (ibid). Some of the money from HB 611 was used to build a marketing and processing facility in Bath County where farmers can clean, process, and store their produce for a nominal fee. Thus, farmers must perform more footwork than if they sold their food to a distributing agency, but Nathan says their investment is returned not only in direct income and community ties but also when children return home from school and encourage their parents to buy the foods they ate. This asset-based method to social change has multiple community and economic repercussions: "It couldn't be done without cooperation and community ties and support. It definitely takes the whole community. And it reaches the whole community. Schools are everywhere, food is everywhere. Everybody has some connection to the school. Most people will have either gone to school or have kids in the school, grandkids in the school, pay taxes to support the school" (ibid).

Even though Nathan initially referred to the Farm-to-School program as CFA's "economic development project," he does not frame it as the "developing" of a community that is "underdeveloped." Throughout our interview Nathan did not once employ such a "development" language. Instead, CFA's vision for social change builds on assets already existing in the community and promotes circulation of local goods – history and culture are quite enabling within this framework. Nathan even stated directly,

> CFA's approach is definitely oriented toward treating people as *not* "underdeveloped," especially with tobacco. It's stigmatized a lot, but CFA treats tobacco as local knowledge, local culture, very culturally-oriented and approaching agriculture and tobacco-growing as something that makes the area rich and not "underdeveloped." Tobacco is what this area is built on.

Nathan's discourse differs drastically from the conversations I had with my interviewees in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky, which points to the importance of positionality, place, and history in generating models for social change. Like Nathan, they emphasized culture, history, ties to land, and especially a *deep* love for their communities.

> MIKE: [Hindman] is the best place on the face of the earth to live. Wonderful sense of community, people who care for their families, people who care for their region to a great extent. We basically all want for our families the same thing, and that's a good place to live, food, clothing, educate 'em, and that's what folks around here are like. The opportunities are very, very minimal. So we don't have the shopping malls, we don't have enough medical facilities, we don't have recreational facilities. A lot of folks would wonder, 'Why, if you don't have those things why do you want to live here?' Well, I want to live here and I want to stay here because I don't know of any place where there are better people on the face of the earth.

> JANINE: [Wolfe County] is a great community, I mean, it really is. It's a community that has a really rich culture. And very, very family-oriented. I mean, unbelievably tight-knit families. When our kids were growing up, it was always an amazing thing that at every ball game or event there was grandparents from both sides, all the aunts and uncles, all the cousins, everybody was completely and always surrounded by their family. It's a really beautiful thing about this community.

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DAVID: And it's a beautiful place. A wild and nationally-designated wild and scenic river. We've got part of the Red River Gorge, including some of the arches.

JANINE: The Kentucky River goes through part of it.

DAVID: Yep, the Kentucky River on part of it. The wilderness area on part of it, Daniel Boone National Forest on part of it. It's a spectacularly beautiful place. There's no coal left, which is good. Of course, we don't get any coal severance tax money, that hurts. But pretty much the coal ends at the southern boundary of this county, so that's about gone. So we don't have to worry about that too much anymore.

Unlike Nathan, *all* of my coalfield[21] eastern Kentucky interviewees utilized some variation of a "development" discourse[22] in which they depict their communities as in need of help. In fact, while all of my participants in contemporary and/or historic coal-mining areas of eastern Kentucky (Whitesburg, Campton, and Hindman) employed a "development" discourse, *none* of my interviewees outside of the coalfields (Lexington, Berea, and Frankfort) used a "development" discourse to describe their communities. It appears that the talk of "underdevelopment" has been used so frequently for so many decades to refer to the mountainous regions of Kentucky that residents are employing the discourse to refer to themselves. Below I quote these interviewees extensively to get a feel for the interconnections in how they each see their respective communities. Unlike my short drive from the city of Lexington to the smaller city of Frankfort to interview Nathan, to reach the participants deep in the mountains of eastern Kentucky I traveled many hours into rural Appalachia, along both paved and unpaved roads, up and down steep hills, and behind gigantic coal trucks. Of these interviewees, I already introduced Mike Mullins and David Musser earlier, but I also interviewed Janine Musser (Director

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[21] I specify "coalfield eastern Kentucky" interviewees here because Berea is an eastern Kentucky town that is not deep in the coalfields. My interviewees in Berea did not utilize the "development" discourse that the coalfield participants used.

[22] I am using "development" here in reference the Ferguson (1994) delineation that I discussed at length in chapter II.

of Appalachian Heritage Alliance, in Campton) at the same time as David, and Colleen

Unroe (Eastern Kentucky Organizer for Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, in

Whitesburg) along with Amelia Kirby (filmmaker and radio DJ at Appalshop, in

Whitesburg).

MIKE: Hindman is about 900 people. Most of the people who live here work someplace else. There's very little economic opportunities, job opportunities around here, especially for young people, especially for young people who have an education that is limited. Of course the school system is the biggest employer. Most of the time, right now, the coal industry is on a boom cycle, so you have a lot of folks working in the coal industry. That's an ebb and flow, 6 months from now, a year from now, it could be a totally different thing. […] In Knott County the public school system has gone from the time I came here 30 years ago having 4,000 students in the system to where we now have about 2,700, about 2,500, and we're expecting in the next couple three years to have less than 2,000 students in the public school system here. So, the families are getting smaller and smaller. [...] A great number of people live below the poverty level, 35 maybe 40 percent. You have a place where educational attainment, as far as higher education, I doubt it's 15 or 10 percent of the folks have a college education. As far as the drop out rate, similar in the neighborhood between 45-50 percent of the children who start first grade here do not graduate from high school. So you have a great problem in that area. We have the blight of drugs. We have a tremendous problem with prescription drugs, especially. It's really almost destroying a generation of young people. It's the scourge of this whole region.

JANINE: There's a lot of poverty [in Wolfe County].
DAVID: Forever it was in the bottom 10 of the poorest counties in America. [… There's also] drugs, mainly methamphetamines. There's not a culture that values education. There is a lot of dependence on the welfare system, that is intergenerational that goes back a long way that is ingrained in certain aspects. […] The whole problem is there's a lack of jobs, and people, if kids had a reason to do something else.
JANINE: Lack of hope.
DAVID: Yeah, if they had the hope that they were gonna get a job, that would go further in solving the drug problem and *all* the problems of this region. It comes down to *jobs*. If there was more jobs we would solve many of the problems that we have, or you could say the problems we have are a direct result of the lack of jobs and the lack of hope of getting a job.

COLLEEN: Who's gonna bring a company here [to Whitesburg in Letcher County], you don't have good schools or sufficient infrastructure, granted I

don't think that's the model of economic development that's really gonna take root here, but it's important.

AMELIA: Not even at a company level, but on a person-to-person level. Like, schools, I think that's a huge, huge thing, that needs much more than what it's got right now. [My husband] and I are looking at our next ten years, and it will be really hard to raise kids here because the school system in Letcher County is not one that I want to put a kid in. So that's two educated people who are both from the area who want to stay here but aren't going to because there's a pretty significant missing chunk.

COLLEEN: It's interesting because the folks in Perry County [which neighbors Letcher County] that are doing community-aged planning, and they're calling it their "2020 Project," and they're trying to figure out what they want their community to look like in 20 years. And this is being led by community ministries that typically provide services for low-income people in Perry County. […] They did a whole bunch of interviews about what are the assets, what are the barriers to reaching a different kind of future and vision and they were focusing on community infrastructure, physical infrastructure, economic development, and democracy and government, as the four themes that brought everything together. I think some of the stuff that Amelia was just talking about have been part of the conversation, and I've been thinking about, well recreation is a huge issue, and part of the drug problem I think relates to a lack of recreation and a lack of good jobs. Basic things like having a place to walk or community health.

The development discourse utilized in these quotes focuses on bringing the quality of local education, healthcare, and job opportunities up to US national standards. These concerns are intimately integrated in the local identity these residents construct for their communities.

Each of my interviewees also linked their current underdeveloped state to the destruction of coal mining in their area. Unlike family farms in the farming communities of Kentucky, residents in these coal-producing regions are unable to build on the cultural-historical economy of their pastime. Instead, they must imagine new futures without coal. Several of my participants experience a great deal of animosity, resistance, or just hopelessness from community residents for pursuing such projects.

MIKE: One of the things claimed about folks from this region is they have a fatalistic attitude, you know. There's a great deal of difference between being

fatalistic and being pragmatic, okay. Most folks around here are concerned about having a job well enough to raise their kids, send them to school, and provide them the basics. They're not out here thinkin' about grandiose plans for the future. They're tryin' to get by *today*.

COLLEEN: There's a struggle I think between hope and hopelessness.
AMELIA: Uh-huh, very *much* so.
COLLEEN: Coal is such a part of the culture, tryin' to make accountability, you're not just dealing with an immediate issue, you're challenging a history and a culture and hard-working- everything's kinda tied together. [… In a rural community] if you stand up it's more visible, you're more exposed and there's the constraints or the limitations of not an abundance of jobs. But I think that something more challenging here [as opposed to other rural areas] is the dominance of *one* industry, and how that has been such an integral part not just of the economy but the culture. To say anything against- it's not like you're just working on an issue, people have to really struggle in thinking about what are the ramifications of being involved. Coal is such an emotional issue that, on whatever side you fall, it's a challenging thing, and it can create a lot of division. The folks that organized in Eolia [to stop the extension of a valley fill] back in the summer, it divided the community, and folks that were friends for twenty years don't talk to each other anymore because they fell down on opposite sides. It makes it a lot harder for people to stand up, I think.

Many of the sentiments expressed in these interviews reflect Culture-of-Poverty and Colonial Model theories that I detail in chapter II. They also carry many of the same assumptions – that Appalachia is a colonized region, that it is homogenous with the "third world," and that its long history of exploitation makes it more difficult for residents to imagine positive futures. In these narratives culture, history, and economy are so intertwined that activists find it difficult to advance alternative economic ideas without offending people who feel rooted in a cultural history of coal mining. The following quotes provide more apt examples.

MIKE: We are like a third-world nation, we are exploited. I'm sitting in a place here, we have major, major coal companies taking billions and billions of dollars out of here and putting very little back. They put some jobs until they don't need 'em and then they're gone, you see. The stock holders and all these folks are enjoying these profits and they're supporting the New York Symphony, and they're supporting the Cleveland Orchestra, they're supporting the ballet, they're supporting all these big high-fallutin' type

things, and sending their kids to all these private schools, and the wealth is being taken from here. And what do we get? We've been getting nothing for it. We're sitting here with polluted streams, destroyed mountains, and a work force that when they leave for the most part they've killed because of the rightful arm and all of that. That's what you have here.

DAVID: There's an overarching pessimism about this area. And a lot of it goes down to the whole coal mining stuff, we call it "King Coal." Coal's not king, coal's a tyrant, and always has been. And you say, 'Well, how can you let these people come in and destroy your land?' Well, it's not because people wanted to, it's because they had no choice. They were fighting against outside forces beyond their ability to fight. Times have always been hard as far as jobs, they did offer some jobs. By having coal, we were not blessed with coal, we were dammed by coal. […] There's a pessimism caused by outside forces coming in and ruining this area. That's just something that pervades the area, and you boil it right down to jobs and what can you say? Gotta eat, gotta work, gotta eat.

AMELIA: [The coalfields are] obviously in a lot of ways a really hard-hit place, and it's hard-hit not because of inherent lack in the place where we're from, but inherent wealth in the place where we're from, in the sort of external forces that have come in to extract both the physical coal and natural gas, but also the labor resources of the community. So, you've got 100 years of struggling with the impact of having external forces really taking out what you've got. And that makes it a *hard* place, that makes it a *really* hard place. I think there's a real tension between an incredibly deep and strong and powerful culture that exists here and a really deeply-rooted culture, and then a real- as if like fractures that happened to that culture as a result of the external stuff, and what that does to the community, or there are cultural responses to that.

Even though these eastern Kentucky activists see their communities as "hard-hit," and they recognize the struggle of organizing in places with volatile social justice coal mining histories, they are clearly not disempowered as a result. Perhaps it is because development discourse is so normalized in the region that new, empowered configurations of such discourse have formed. Like the grassroots neoliberalism I describe above, the development discourses my eastern Kentucky interviewees utilize are particular, community-oriented, and locally-enabling. They provide an avenue for

transformation, renewal, hope, and creativity. Mike Mullins provides a perfect example

of this empowered discourse:

> I'd rather fall flat on my face tryin' than sittin' around and bitchin' about it and not do nothin'. And I don't care how much money they put into this area here, they can't never put enough in. So, every dollar we get here to improve this community, there's no apologies. And these type of things are very, very challenging. And, you know, as I told ya I've been here 30 years. This is the most exciting thing that I've done in the 30 years I've been into this business. I think it's probably the most important thing I will do in my time as Director here [at Hindman Settlement School …] But, you know, the thing about it is, you can either dream small or you can dream big, okay. You can plan big or you can plan small. If you plan small, you're gonna get small. If you plan big, you might hit the middle. Ain't nobody gonna out-work me, okay. That's the thing. Plus, I'm not doin' it for me. If the good Lord struck me dead right now, I'm not doing it for me. I'm doing it for the future, okay, for the future generations. I have three beautiful wonderful children. Not a one of 'em live here because they cannot get a decent job here. But I want folks to be able to raise their children and have a decent wage so they can do that and the things that we do here, and develop some sort of pride in where they're from.

While my interviewees refer to common markers within the universalized

"development[23]" discourse I discuss in the second chapter of this Thesis, such as

education, healthcare, and waged-labor employment opportunities, the ideal visions they

have for their own communities deviate from the generic modern capitalist society that is

the assumed end goal of "development." Instead, the new economies they wish to

establish in their region are historically and culturally rooted (like coal), but also locally-

controlled, environmentally-friendly, and unique (unlike coal).

> MULLINS: [During community visioning meetings to develop the Community Development Initiative proposal] We decided to build on something rare, our culture, our heritage. So, we just started brainstorming. What do we want to be? Well, we're noted for our beautiful crafts, our literary heritage, and our cultural types of activities. So, in order to really have economic development, we've gotta have something to bring some money in. […] So, we start talking about the ideal of some sort of high-quality type craft development here, to help our local crafters. So all that came to the concept of the Kentucky School of Craft. […] Social entrepreneurship is when you

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[23] (Ferguson, 1994)

sustain and create a better community where you're developing not only jobs, but infrastructure relating to civic capacity. We now have a Chamber of Commerce, a Water Board, a Leadership Development Class, and various things like that that we did not have before this started, okay. So, we're trying to develop civic capacity at the same time.

DAVID: [The Eastern Kentucky Heritage Monument is] the biggest economic development project in Eastern Kentucky. It's the most far-reaching, the one with the most potential to draw on the strengths of Appalachia, change the image in people's minds from across the nation and the world about eastern Kentucky, create jobs. The feasibility study said it would create 4,300 jobs.

JANINE: It's all gotta be done respectfully so it doesn't ruin the beauty and the culture we have. There're people, mostly people who've just recently moved in the area who think, 'We should make this a Gatlinburg.' We don't want it to be a Gatlinburg, we really want it to stay the quality- There are other areas like West Virginia and even, I believe, eastern Tennessee and New Orleans is another area, but nobody is really capitalizing on being a 'living heritage' and we *are*.

COLLEEN: I think the huge thing is creating a more diverse economy. I think that's a root of a lot of the problems, and part of that is bolstering and helping small businesses get started. I don't think the model of the Toyota coming down and plopping into the community and providing 400 jobs off the bat is very likely. But there are a lot of people who are really invest in the area and love this place and want- could start a business with one or two people that could grow into a larger small business, but they don't have the resources and they don't have the skills to do that kind of thing. So I think that's part of it.
AMELIA: I think it's just, it's exactly as you said, there's no quick fix, no top-down, it's just building from the ground, that's incredibly difficult, *especially* in a low-income community where there's not disposable income to spend on this stuff that frequently small businesses might provide in a more thriving economy. High-end services. I mean, I don't have a good solution really.
COLLEEN: I think part of it is figuring out how to use the assets that we have, different ways to bolster sustainable forestry and non-timber forestry products and adventure tourism in the areas that people might actually still want to come to since there are some mountains left. Which for some people that's sustainable four-wheeling paths and horseback riding and hiking and trails and stuff like that, although we have to protect our resources if we're gonna do that kinda thing.

These grassroots development discourses arose in reaction to the same exploitative

"development" discourses of the extractive industries and outside entities that I highlight

in the third section of chapter II. My interviewees repeatedly contrasted their ideas for

economic development to such external big-business efforts that exploit the labor and

resources of the region for their own profit and then leave when it is no longer profitable

to stay.

> DAVID: A factory can come and go and they do. The factories come and go less, of course, than they used to. In the last 20 years the only reason that they came was to get a huge tax break or incentive of some kind, as soon as that was gone they just pulled out, went straight to Mexico or wherever they happen to go now. So, and everybody realizes now we're not gonna get the big factories or manufacturing jobs. It's not gonna happen.

> JANINE: We're hopeful, very hopeful, that it will really stay a place that will celebrate this culture. Because then it'll have long-term- people will want to come and see it for a long, long time if it holds its culture. Across the United States the little communities that saved their downtowns, that made their place unique, that celebrated what they were that made them unique, they're thriving. The ones that try to put the strip mall outside their town, they're not, you know, so, everything looks the same. It's important and it will be more and more important as time goes that things look like they're uniqueness is what they really are.

It is clear that the pro-capital creation models espoused by my interviewees in the

mountains and farmlands of Kentucky prioritize the generation and circulation of local

capital while also maintaining unique cultural, historical, and environmental relationships

in their communities. Their discourses forge new territory as they multiply meanings of

neoliberalism and development to incorporate these values. In the next section I discuss

social change models that are almost anti-consumerist and anti-capital, but that still

maintain many of the same values detailed here.

2. Simple Living Models: The Rebalancing Act of Sustainable Communities, Breeding in the Woods, and the Kill-Your-Car Urban Bike Scene

Like the pro-capital creation models described above, the social change discourses I delineate here also prioritize the localization and exchange of goods and services; however, this talk is more concerned with strengthening the relationships within a community rather than generating and circulating capital. In fact, the models elucidated here privilege local goods not to promote job creation, but to promote an almost isolationist environment of self-sufficiency away from external markets. As such, these interviewees are not looking to import capital, they are looking to do away with it – they have an explicitly reductionist stance on all things that they can either make themselves or that they do not *need* to survive. When their individual self-sufficiency is inadequate, they look to friends and neighbors for their goods and services (i.e. the self-sufficiency of the community whole). In this section I discuss how some of these simple living models are also economically-minded, but in a way that de-centers human activity and instead affixes nature in the middle. This results in a romanticization and/or a re-valuation of isolation and poverty, but it is clearly an anti-development approach. I show how my interviewees' talk bifurcates into distinct, but not exclusive, simple living models. I also discuss a simple living model in an urban setting that places enjoyment and traffic as the central pieces of economy, rather than nature.

Andri Kukas and Tina Johnson are both long-term residents of Berea, KY. Andri was the Nature Center Director at Appalachia Science for the Public Interest (ASPI) for a couple of years and she was involved in numerous unpaid social justice projects, but she resigned from most of these activities when she gave birth to her son. Even though Tina is helping to raise three of her own children, she maintains her job working for the

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Mountain Association for Community and Economic Development (MACED), is a

volunteer activist for three looser-knit environmental organizations, and is on the board

of Kentucky Heartwood. We met, along with their boisterous children and Andri's

husband Josh Bills (who is also an employee of ASPI), over dinner to discuss tactics for

social change.

In these simple living models, consumption is almost vilified such that

community ties can be strengthened. Even when these interviewees advocate the

circulation of local goods, it is not for the sake of building local capital and jobs (as it is

in the models above), but rather for the purpose of supporting friends and neighbors and

also for reducing the use of fossil fuels. Tina's discussion of why she no longer shops at

Wal-Mart is an apt example of how community relationships are what she favors about

her local market.

> It took me like 3 years to be able to learn to live without freakin' Wal-Mart. They're starting to offer more organic food at Wal-Mart. What all that is taking away from, is something Berea has been working a lot on, and I know a lot of other communities have been working a lot on, is still is the case that when you buy your stuff there, you're not buying from your neighbors. You're not buying stuff from the person who lives up the road from you where you can go and look at where your blueberries came from, or your wild harvested mushrooms. You know that person has put their effort into that. I love getting stuff from my friend because she peed on that corn, and that is part of her fertilizer. She literally has people who will have composting toilets and she'll go get their urine from separating out that process and she mixes it up with compfry and these other things to make this really rockin' stuff to put on her corn. By buying stuff from her I'm supporting that endeavor. I'm supporting [my friend's] hands in the ground, and to me that's the most amazing thing. I can drive 2 minutes and see her. Wal-Mart you can't do that no matter how friggin' organic it is. It doesn't even really matter if a corporation greenwashes or not, you're still not participating in the growth of your own community and the substances that we need to live that arises from your own community.

A key feature of Andri's and Tina's simple living models is a science-minded approach to cost-analysis in which nature becomes centralized rather than human activity or capital. Andri employs the concept of an "ecological footprint," which she says is a "scientific method of determining how big your footprint is on the land, how much land do you need to live off of to support your lifestyle." Andri and Tina hope for and work for a rebalancing of life on earth, such that there is a more ecologically stable environment that humans have not overpopulated and over-polluted. The balance of nature is privileged in this economy:

> ANDRI: I feel like we're really getting close to the critical breaking point of this ecosystem. The ecosystem is so diverse because you can take something out, and it'll keep going. But I feel like we're taking so many, making it so small, that the stress on the ecosystem. – I believe science when they say our ecosystems are getting close to collapse. […] What if you had pictures right in front of you, and it was like okay you can have your SUV, but all this [wilderness] is going to be cut down right now, do you still want it?
> TINA: If you had to pay for things literally with your gold. Your gas.
> ANDRI: Here's your ten acres, and you can either eat for the next ten years or you can have your SUV. What do you want to do? I think being able to show people more directly and visually and comprehensive way. It can't happen on the five o'clock news. That's too glossy. A more comprehensive education. A lot of people would make good decisions, but they don't have enough good information to know what their impacts are.

This re-calculation involves not only a re-valuation of the natural environment but also of human life. Humans are "a part of nature and not apart from it;" they are interconnected with the ecosystem of the physical environment around them (Kukas, 2007). There are implications on quality-of-life that go along with this standpoint. Andri and Tina do not think that humans should be prized above all else. Their discourse is not only a challenge to western normative values, but also to exploitative for-profit medical practices – consumption and capital are intertwined with these and are clearly vilified.

TINA: I read in a medical health magazine the other day that said 80-90% of dollars spent on healthcare in this country is spent during the last 6 months of life. It's not healthcare, it's death extension, is what we're spending most our money on. It's a pretty broken system.

ANDRI: A lot of people, they may not admit it to their family, but surely not everyone is in anguish that they're gonna die. Surely many people can accept. If it's an old age or illness thing, it must reach a point where it's just okay. When we talk about the players, who are the players. I bet if we had a town meeting, a lot of people would agree it sucked the last few months of a relative's life. A lot of people would be agreeing with what we're saying. So, who is it, who is making these choices? Especially with all these dollars spent.

As a result of their desire to simplify living into basic needs and survival strategies, Tina and Andri do not necessarily believe that what is normally defined as "poverty" is a deprived state. Similar to Esteva's (1992) anti-development writings, these simple living models recognize that "development" discourse defines poverty along specific pro-development terms; it is only in comparison to western capitalist development that other conditions of existence are considered "underdeveloped." Close to what Nathan said above about CFA's position on underdevelopment, Josh Bills (the Co-Director of the Kentucky Solar Partnership at ASPI) stated that while ASPI was originally created to meet the needs of Appalachia's "rural, underserved, or poor" population, the organization recently changed its position: "one of the aspects of the resource assessments we do is the realization that Appalachia not only has a lot of resources to be extracted from, but has a lot of resources that can be helpful to other communities, that's part of what ASPI does." Thus, rural locations in Appalachian Kentucky often serve as demonstration sites, or as recipients of grant money for, renewable energy technologies that can be used across the state. ASPI has also held workshops on how to grow ginseng in the forest, and how to sustainably harvest and sell wild medicinal herbs found in eastern Kentucky.

While simple living models of social change do not consider Appalachia "underdeveloped," there were times during our interview when Tina and Andri admittedly romanticized poverty and rural living in what they imagine to be an isolated, back-to-the-land state of existence. Since they do not live deep in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky, their position allows them to construct these idealizations. One conversation in particular is worth quoting at length:

> TINA: In a lot of ways [Appalachia] is really not deprived, but in some ways it is. In the ways that it is, from the experiences I've had in places outside of Appalachia, it is no worse. When you go to any big city you're going to have the haves and the have-nots. How you define what a have-not is I think is based on somebody's limited experience. I grew up as a have-not in southeastern Ohio. We had junk cars all over the place, my dad struggled to get by, he was abusive to my mom, he was an alcoholic, my mom lived off Social Security. One of the few things we actually had was my dad took us hiking, so we did have a connection to nature. Beyond that everything else was bad, real bad, couldn't wait to get out. […] Looking at what's called "poverty," and what's called "having resources," a lot of people are very resourceful because of that. I feel like I came out of what I experienced being extra-resourceful because I didn't have resources.
> ANDRI: […] When I go into eastern Kentucky, which I do, they seem happier than the people I'm around. Whether that's an appearance or not. They have very strong pride for their community, their family. Maybe it's not the best situation, but *where* is the best situation? I don't know.
> TINA: I read somethin' about different income levels, they interviewed people across all income levels. It didn't really matter if you made millions of dollars or if you made $1,500 a year, everyone wanted basically about 30% more. It didn't matter. That was really amazing to me. I think a lot of people who are do-gooders, especially if you're getting paid to be a do-gooder, get attached to getting paid to do stuff. A criticism I have is people not really having an attitude of, 'I want to work myself out of a job.' I really want to work myself out of a job. […] I do think a lot of the solution is in getting information about how to live a good simple life back into the hands of people, like what ASPI is doing. A lot of folks I talk to still do know how to dig a root cellar and use that to store their food. They picked it up from their parents, grandparents, and stuff. That's something we don't know how to do. A lot of people talk about the Appalachian mountains being isolated and deprived, but I think maybe a lot of that is pretty good. They've got skills that most of us don't have. I was talking to this fella who has a hole in the ground every year, and they take their tomatoes and potatoes and stack them up with straw, and put dirt over it and a tin roof over it, and they get tomatoes and

potatoes well into the winter from that hole in the ground. Don't need to can it, don't need to refrigerate it, just stick them in there and they ripen slowly and the weather keeps them ripe in there. I thought, 'Whoa! That seems pretty old to me.' I'm not taught to bury my food, but it works. Gosh I'm glad people know how to do that still. That would be a good study, how much do folks in eastern Kentucky think that the grass is actually greener? I know there's the folks who really want a Wal-Mart in their town, but I really do wonder how much others actually do want. In my own experience, too. I was raised totally redneck, but my dad really wanted us to live out away from the city, and I felt as a teenager like I was completely cut off because I was close to that it was confusing – my friend's having these things. Well, if I grew up a little more isolated from people who had things, maybe I wouldn't want them so much. I feel the opposite from the way they do. There's a whole community of people living simply and they're pretty darn happy, and there's no wanting for the Nike shoes or whatever is in fashion. I would really like to see if Appalachian folks really are happy. If there's a way of gauging happiness, I'd love to know that.

ANDRI: That's basically what it is I was trying to say. They say they're feeling like the grass is greener, well I'm feeling like the grass is greener over there because if the shit hits the fan tomorrow they're probably gonna survive. I might not. I know how to grow some of my food, but it's only what I've taught myself in the last few years. I didn't have my granny teach me anything.

Intertwined with their romanticizations, Tina and Andri also raise significant and subversive challenges to traditional notions of "poverty" and "underdevelopment." Unlike my other eastern Kentucky interviewees, Tina and Andri deconstruct standardized values of what it means to be a developed society. They imagine rural living to be more enjoyable than so-called developed regions.

Tina's and Andri's thoughts on anti-development in eastern Kentucky vary significantly from the pro-capital grassroots development discourses of coalfield eastern Kentucky residents that I emphasized in the last section. This points, again, to issues of positionality; Tina and Andri live in Berea, which they agree is "VERY progressive," with a "tremendous amount of non-profit organizations," and a significant "activist niche" (Kukas, 2007). When the daily reality of living in a thriving community of

activists is compared to the job-less environments depicted above by my coalfield interviewees, it is clear how all my participants were able to express such fractured, multiple imaginings for their futures. Andri and Tina spoke frequently about how enabled they feel by other community members who are working toward the same goals and who are implementing alternative modes of living in daily practice. Their nature-oriented simple living stances are shared within their community.

> ANDRI: I see a high degree of doing-it-yourself [in Berea], and advocating a LOT of self-sufficiency. I think in a way that speaks to you what the community has come to terms with in terms of tactics. How do we make a better place? Well, you don't just sit around waiting for other people to do it for you.
> TINA: It really is an incredible place. It's the niche, the activist niche, the trying to do things for ourselves, trying to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps, build our own place community – that's really drawn me back again and again, and it's what I really want for myself, to be able to be well-prepared for a future that's pretty uncertain, and at the same time trying to help things along in a way so that maybe it can be a little bit better than it seems to be at this point. But I *love* where I live, I *love* my community. It's really inspiring to have my people around me who are working toward the same things.

My interviewees in more remote[24] parts of eastern Kentucky are no less empowered to implement change in their communities than Tina and Andri, but as I discussed above they frequently run into resistance from fellow community members, resulting in a more individualized (rather than community-wide) activist environment for some. Mike Mullins makes this clear when he says, "I'm not your typical person you're gonna talk to in this community," and, "Ain't nobody gonna out-work me." Some might consider Berea to be a privileged space, both in terms of jobs and community atmosphere.

Though Berea residents are working collectively to foster an environment of self-sufficiency, Tina and Andri expressed two variations of this imagined idealized state

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[24] As I stated in the Introduction, Berea is a short drive from Kentucky's two largest cities, Lexington and Louisville, setting it apart from most other areas defined by the ARC as "Appalachian" counties.

during our interview – one in which the community is self-sustaining, and one in which a

single family can survive alone. The first variation of these simple living models was

well-articulated by Andri:

> Community-based anything is really the answer. You could take, for example, Eugene, Oregon, which has a great reputation. I bet if the rest of the world went away, Eugene would still be Eugene. I think their local connections and support are so strong, and they have a certain efficiency, that they could survive if the global economy stopped, they would still have food. Figuring out how to live off your community's resources is going to be a big part of that, maybe a lot sooner than later. Oil can only get so expensive before we stop shipping things across the planet. That day is gonna come, and where are we gonna be then? […] The future vision would involve public transportation. A LOT of love, in terms of people turning away from everything that's out there in the whole world and really returning to what sustains us – our friends and our family, our friends being our family. Nourishing ourselves in that way, instead of with everything it takes oil to ship from. Really what I'm talking about is part of the mission of ASPI – simple lifestyles. Where you make a choice to not take the road trip across the country just because you can, but maybe you think I should stay home and raise my garden this year. That's necessarily becoming isolationist, not in terms of experiencing third world culture by learning about it or learning about their ideas, but importing their resources and their materials – that can't go on. Localizing our resources and materials, and using ideas from around the world. Our minds don't have to be limited to our local region, but our resources need to be localized to a great degree. Food would be a huge part of that. More and more people should learn how to raise their food. So, in a nutshell, community-based initiatives, even if the idea comes from somewhere else, if the community can support it and the resources are coming from that community.

Tina introduced the more isolationist variation of the simple living models, in

which self-sufficiency becomes extreme. She stressed that she could not live this way

now because she would be neglecting too much of the work that needs to happen first,

and she also believes the world is too overpopulated to live this way; however, Tina's

vision for an idealized life is imaginative and foundation-shifting:

> Really all I want is to live in a little mud house with [the man I love] in the woods and be feral and have happy kids. That's really what I want. I want everyone to be able to be holed-up. […] I mean, I grew up in a particular society. I have no idea what it's like to be a hunter-gatherer. I've read that it

might be a really awesome thing to be. They have way more leisure time than other forms of society, that sounds great. Some of the coolest books I've seen out lately are about eating the invasives – like Kudzu, eat it. Those weird little rodents, eat them. All these things we have way too many of, go and kill them and eat them. Something I read today is that nature will live without us, but we can't live without nature. Like paying for being able to go recreate in the woods, and how more and more forest services want us to pay for services – no, it's our friggin' woods! Where we gather our essence and the more disconnected we become from that the more wrong we're gonna be. Nature doesn't care about that, we can screw up all we want and things are gonna go on. That's the biggest hope that I have. I like being here, I really do, I really, really love my life to the extent that I'm fearing death. I want to live to be really friggin' old and when I can't go on I want to take out a bridge or dam or something. I get really inspired by stuff like that, too. […] I was thinking, too, how much I really like to breed, make babies. I want to have unencumbered sex. I don't want to have to use birth control or wear condoms. It's a vision to have. I want that to happen in our society. I was thinking what prevents that from happening in society, and its population. […] If we weren't fighting so hard for our survival, if there weren't drugs for every single thing that comes along, as a result of our earth being the way that it is, that would naturally limit our population. We'd have to deal with more death. I might be able to make 8 babies but probably only 4 would survive. At the same time every time I use a friggin' condom, I *hate* it. I'm *serious* about this. I really think people should just *live* … eat and breed and *live*. That seems like happiness to me. A lot of other things we understand to be good about society doesn't need to be there for that to just happen, the way it just happens for deer or fish or wild monkeys. Their population is naturally controlled because they are a part of their surroundings, they're not battling their surroundings. When I think of how I would like for things to be, I think I'd like for it to be that way. But it's so idealistic and different from what I know I don't even know if that's right or not.

A final variation on simple living models brings us from the woods into the city. Patrick Garnett is involved in several bicycling projects in Lexington, KY – the most populated and urbanized of the places where my interviewees live. He is involved in building a local cycling subculture, which includes participating frequently (daily if possible) in "bike and beer" outings, Alleycat races, and Critical Mass – all of which are variations of biking with friends and strangers in urban car traffic. His simple living model is not nature-oriented, but rather centralizes economies of enjoyment and traffic.

Biking is the main form of transportation for many of the people involved in Patrick's community groups. Thus, an important aspect of the social change they implement is to rebalance the economy of traffic away from its car-orientation, but entangled in this desire is the simple enjoyment of riding a bike.

> People's enthusiasm to just get together as individual commuters who commute by bike to get together with like-minded individuals to have fun. Riding through traffic, especially in a town like this, is pretty stressful. You're just constantly alert, in the back of your mind you're freaking out and stressing out trying to make sure you don't get clobbered by a car. It's really nice just to get together with some folks and make it safer, riding in a group, taking up a lane, just having a good time. Enjoying the good aspects of commuting by bike.

Like the models above, Patrick relies on self-sufficiency to accomplish his daily community change efforts: "I think the resources to do anything that needs to be done are out there, and you can find them if you put the time and effort into it." For him, biking is linked to reductionist, simplification efforts against consumption (with the exception of beer-drinking, which he and his friends are sure to always do at locally-owned and operated bars):

> If a lot of people started riding bikes, there is only a certain amount of stuff you can carry on a bike even if you have a big huge platform on it, like a tricycle that can carry a lot of heavy stuff. We moved people by bike with exercycles and bikes of that sort, but not that many people are going to go grocery shopping like that. I pull a trailer behind my bike to go grocery shopping, but I wouldn't be able to go to Sam's [Club] to fill up my trailer with bulk items and stuff. So, I think people's shopping habits would change [if traffic switched to an all-bike economy]. They'd buy smaller quantities. The folks I hang out with, we definitely are not into the consumer thing. Not all of us wear that on our sleeves. It's definitely a part of it. A lot of us are young and just trying to make it by. We'll reuse a lot of bike parts, we'll do dumpster-diving, try to reuse a lot of things. A lot of people who ride their bike, one of the reasons they do it is because it uses less gas and all that stuff. It uses up a lot less of your resources. It does reduce a lot of consuming, not just on personal aspects but on a wider scale, too.

Patrick's simple living model is also community-oriented. He and several other bikers are interested in one day opening a community space in which anyone can come in and fix their own bikes for free. He is currently learning to be a welder in school so that he can eventually weld bikes in this bike shop. The purpose of the space in his future vision is not only to provide an asset for people with bikes, but also to build community: "So people can just stop by and hang out for a little bit." The construction of this alternative biking community has the possibility to reconfigure consumption patterns and therefore impact alternative economic strategies.

B. Operating Outside of Institutions: Labor-Oriented Transformatism in the Failed Age of Science and Bureaucracy

Many of my interviewees are actively engaging in social change efforts as a result of their intense and personal encounters with institutionalized science and/or bureaucracy. They associate these institutional realms with corporate greed and exploitation. As such, they are forging alternative paths to fulfill the social aims that some institutions claim to accomplish, but fail to do. In the first section below, I discuss the midwifery model of social change, in which my interviewees attempt to provide birthing and childrearing environments that are alternative to the masculinist science of mainstream medicine. In the second section I highlight social justice efforts that activists are engaging in outside of professionalized non-profit organizations. These models are all experientially oriented – the practice of giving natural birth, breastfeeding, bike riding, composting, or organizing social justice campaigns, has motivated these individuals to continue fashioning alternative means in their everyday lives. The labor of accomplishing such change is fully integrated into their descriptions of community problems and

solutions. As such, their models are highly empowered, transformative, practical, and practiced.

1. I Don't Need To Be "Delivered[25]:" The Midwifery Model of Social Change

I wanted to interview a midwife for this research because, as one of my interviewees said, "[Midwifery] comes from a wellness-based approach rather than from "illness;" you don't start with the abnormal, you start with the normal and the healthy, and you move from there whereas the medical model looks for the abnormal and problems and then goes from that point" (Pullen, 2007). Similarly, many of the development approaches to social change that I outlined in chapter II begin with identified abnormal problems in an "underdeveloped" community, and then repair treatment becomes the focus of all projects in that place rather than the already-healthy community assets. Interviewees Alexis Pullen and Kendra Adkisson expressed a midwifery model of social change that I consider to be outside of institutionalized medical science because of what Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English (1978) call the "masculinist opinion" in current medical knowledge and practice. These authors trace a masculinist history throughout western gynecological discourse. They say masculinism, "reflects not some innate male bias but the logic and assumptions of that realm, which are the logic and assumptions of the capitalist market" – self-interest, individuality, pure rationality, and a calculative intellect (ibid, p. 18). The market-medical perception includes a pathological understanding of women, in which the male is the only fully

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[25] Interviewee, Kendra, explained that midwives do not like to say that they "deliver" babies. "Deliver" implies, "that a male doctor needs to deliver you from your suffering or your state of being. Midwives just catch babies" (Adkisson, 2007).

normal sex. Here I trace out the midwifery model of social change as an approach that is outside of the medical establishment, and thus outside of "development."

From within their pro-midwifery standpoint, Alexis and Kendra illustrate a form of social change that carries with it a heavy labor burden, familial priorities, an almost-panicky sense of time compression, and of course sheer exhaustion – all of which play out on a daily basis. All aspects of their daily lives are intertwined, and thus it is no surprise that their perception of social change within midwifery stretches out in a dendritic fashion, calling for transformations in things as basic as grocery shopping, daycare, television, and eating, but also capitalist wage labor, bureaucratic and legal constraints within the medical industry, expectations of class, and other far-reaching social processes.

Kendra is a prenatal masseuse, a doula, and she is studying to be a midwife, which is an alternative health practice in which pregnancy and birth are not treated as abnormal phenomena deserving of hospitalization. Alexis is a graduate student in Public Health, and is also an active member of the Lexington La Leche League – an all-volunteer support group in which women recognize the importance of breastfeeding[26] outside the normative medical model. I met with them at a bakery during some of the few quiet hours (usually their study time) that they have each scheduled into their mornings, in between dropping their kids off at daycare and getting to class.

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[26] Alexis says many of the women who run the Lexington La Leche League have strong views against formula: "I think formula is poison, personally. I don't know that I would go so far as to say that in a meeting, especially to a new mother who is supplementing and in crisis. […] But, if you look worldwide, it's much more common in other cultures to see women breastfeeding for 2 years, and that's actually much more the norm historically in human history, in natural history, of people, is to breastfeed for extended periods of time."

Kendra and Alexis informed me of several legal and institutional restraints to practicing midwifery, giving birth at home, and breastfeeding. There are only twenty-seven states in the US that legally recognize certification for becoming a professional midwife, and Kentucky is not one of them. As such, Kendra is in school to obtain the closest legal degree, for Certified Nurse Midwifery.

> I'm just pissed off that I'm in school […] that you have to have a piece of paper to prove that you're good enough. That me being an apprentice with women who've done this for like twenty-five years and learning from them, how to have a homebirth, to me that's much better. In school, what am I gonna learn? How to read a fetal monitor, how to read an IV. It's all this stuff that doesn't apply to homebirth. But then they're going to say that I am more qualified to attend a homebirth than these lay midwives. And that sucks. But that's what I'm doing to get around it. I *hate* that. Oh, I have this piece of paper, now you're ready. Well, what about all this other training that I've done? That means *nothing*.

To her this document represents a bureaucratic rubber stamp that reinforces the masculinist medical science outside of which she wishes to operate.

Without certification, Kendra cannot attend births in hospitals if something were to go wrong during a homebirth, cannot write prescriptions for her clients, and risks going to jail and/or being legally banned from practicing midwifery. However, even when she is certified Kendra faces a difficult work schedule since women give birth at all hours, and there are only four or five midwives that serve the whole state of Kentucky.

> It sucks to be a midwife. You're on call all the time. You can't go out of town, can't have a drink on New Year's Eve. Whereas if you're at a hospital and you have a practice, you have so-and-so on call this weekend, so-and-so's on call this weekend, that's not with a midwife. And that's the beauty of it, you know you're gonna get that person. But that's why I think midwives have a lot of burnout. If midwifery was more recognized, there could be a practice of nurse midwives that helped each other out. But it's too sparse to do that, so you're always on call, and some days I'm like, especially when it's midnight and my kid won't go to sleep and she's still breastfeeding, and I think, what if somebody calls me right now? I *have* to leave. It's snowing outside, and I have to go to a birth and that really sucks. Or it's my grandfather's 80th

birthday and I can't go away for the weekend because I'm on call. And I think, you know what, I could work at Target from nine to five and just call it a day, you know!

In addition, most health insurance agencies do not cover midwives or homebirths, making it harder for midwifery to become normalized or for obstetricians with malpractice insurance to work with midwives. Clearly, midwifery is not a field that Kendra entered just in order to make a paycheck – her motivation for "catching babies" at home is tied to larger social change efforts entailed in midwifery. For her this includes working with the Kentucky Midwifery Task Force to introduce a bill into state legislation that would legalize lay midwives – a step toward altering the medical industry such that it does not adhere to the same masculinist science that considers childbirth an illness deserving of hospitalization. However, the struggles Kendra discussed the most at length during our interview were not on this legal, institutional front; instead Kendra and Alexis (who have each given natural birth) stressed the relationship between *empowerment* and homebirthing.

> KENDRA: I think there's *so* much that pregnant women don't know, because they're just kinda like cattle, herded into what you need to know at what point. And if they discover what they can do, and if they're believed in, […] I think the world would change. Any husband, partner, whatever, sees their partner go through a natural childbirth, has to have a new respect for her. I mean, it's *incredible*.
> ALEXIS: *I* have a new respect for *myself*, are you kidding?!
> KENDRA: The woman is *SO* empowered, it's the coolest thing you've ever done, and you're like, holy shit, I was *awesome*. I can do anything. […] And if every woman had that rift to their self esteem, it would be incredible.
> ALEXIS: […] The idea of social change is very important to me, it's kinda what's driven me academically and personally. Now that I've had a natural birth and tell myself everyday, oh I can do that, I gave birth without medication I can do *anything*!

The implications of empowerment do not end at giving birth: "I think if every woman could just see, even like a video, of how a birth can be, I think it would change

our *nation*, not just healthcare" (Adkisson, 2007). It is no surprise that Kendra's and

Alexis's visions of social change are intimately integrated into their experiences of giving

birth and being a mother; throughout our interview together, Kendra and Alexis were

unable and possibly even opposed to separating the daily work of motherhood from their

personal goals, career aspirations, and division of labor within their households. They

spoke at length about their hectic lives raising children, not having time to run errands,

leave the house for long periods, juggle school and work schedules, or attend monthly

organizational meetings, much less participate in a petition drive or in more traditional

forms of "social activism." As such, their motherhood motivation often carried

conflicting desires – pulling them forward while holding them back.

> ALEXIS: At least for me personally there's a really frustrating balance
> between the one side of me that wants to change things and wants to do
> things a certain way and has these really strong values, and then this other
> part of me that just is *tired* and wants to reject it and think that it's an
> uphill battle and that it's not gonna matter what I do as one person. […] I
> have that problem with motherhood in the first place, is that I just don't
> feel as dedicated to anything other than [my son]. I feel more dedicated to
> him and my desire to have another baby and raise those kids in a certain
> way than I do to any career aspirations I could ever have, than I do to
> school, than I do to *anything*.
> KENDRA: Moms have to choose… a lot of stuff. That's the main
> problem, all midwives are women. And they have kids.

As Kendra, Alexis, and I discussed societal constraints to breastfeeding and

raising children in more detail – including financial privileges and non-domestic work

environments – their feminist, labor-oriented, midwifery model of social change began to

branch out more and more, unfolding and multiplying the interconnections between birth,

nutrition, western capitalist practices, time, gender relationships, and much more. Kendra

discussed her financial privilege several times; her husband's job allows her to give

prenatal messages, attend births, study for her nursing certification, and raise her child,

on a relatively flexible schedule. As a result, she acknowledges that women returning to work within six weeks of giving birth cannot participate in the same activities that she values; "They can't breastfeed, how are you gonna breastfeed a kid?! You can't! You can't. You can't, you can't, you can't. It takes *support*, it takes somebody working to pay your bills, because you can't really, I mean *some* women do." Alexis ties work policies and social norms into what she calls "corporate labor practices" that do not support her value system. She says it is almost impossible to find a well-paid job that requires a bachelor's or master's degree and offers flexible scheduling, part-time positions, and/or acceptance for bringing a child to work: "you can't get a state job, you can't get a nonprofit job, you can't get anything that's less than thirty-seven and a half hours a week or something, you can't get anything that's less than fulltime, and you know, 8 to 5 or 9 to 6 or whatever, you can't do it!"

Expectations of gender are a *significant* aspect to Kendra's and Alexis's understandings of what constrains social change. Kendra feels that her decision to be a stay-at-home mom is not supported as a feminist decision, both women are extremely irritated that they have to continuously ask their husbands for money, and they both emphatically expressed that they do not experience a fair division of labor at home. Some of their domestic work is clearly unavoidable, such as breastfeeding, but even when both parents are working Kendra and Alexis come home to what Alexis called "the second shift," in which housecleaning, cooking, and childcare falls primarily on the mother. They described surfing the internet, reading magazines, and relaxing for a few moments, as luxuries that only their husbands are privileged to experience.

Standard medical practices across the US also support non-familial work environments, in which the burden of inconvenience falls on the mother. Alexis's pediatrician continuously pressures her to formula feed her child, which would not only allow Alexis to more conveniently leave her child alone with her husband or in daycare (in order to work), but would also align her son's bodily weight into the standardized medical growth charts (based on formula-fed children) – which he is currently not meeting. Birthing decisions are also frequently made based on work schedules and finances: "You sign up for a date, you get induced, you want your baby to be on this year's taxes so you get induced in December – I've had that happen. […] That's just ridiculous! To me that is medically irresponsible. Because you're messing with something that nothing's wrong" (Adkisson, 2007). According to Alexis, cesareans comprise some thirty percent of births in the US – the highest in the world.

Intertwined with the constraints of wage labor and capitalist-oriented[27] institutional standards, Kendra and Alexis spoke at length about more socially-driven restrictions. Breastfeeding in public and giving birth at home are not currently normalized in American culture. Alexis expressed a lot of anxiety about learning how to breastfeed until she discovered La Leche League; even the nurses at the hospital where she gave birth were not comfortable enough with her body to show her how to get her son latched on correctly. Now she faces ridicule not only from public breastfeeding, but also because her son is two years old: "I can tell you that everybody I know is like, 'You're *still*

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[27] My interviewees also recognize the profit-oriented aspect of the medical industry. They said that pharmaceutical companies push drugs for money, but also, "People are pushing fear for money, hospitals are saying, 'You'll be unsafe, you can't do that, but here you're safe, with us everything's okay.' The ad, the big billboards for the CB [Central Baptist] high-tech fetal monitors – 'Music to a mother's ears.' That's fear, that's fear" (Adkisson, 2007).

breastfeeding him?! When you gonna cut that out?!' […] I get that from my *husband*, ya know […] So, I *do* feel pressured to stop that."

Even though this midwifery model of social change carries a heavily laborious, frustrated tone, my interview with Kendra and Alexis presented very hopeful ideas of practice in both the future and present. Their visions for the future embody a "can-do" attitude, in which individuals feel empowered to choose how they participate in the daily applications of giving birth, eating, paid labor, and more. However, it might be the activities that Kendra and Alexis perform *now* that are the *most* hopeful. These women made derogatory jokes every time I tried turning the conversational focus from constraints to enablers, and expressed frustration when I insisted that they list some things that make their social change efforts easier. Nonetheless, they cited several examples of what enables them throughout the interview – things that were as everyday and mundane as their workload, which might be why they were difficult to recognize. They have access to things such as money and the natural childbirth community in Lexington (i.e. Baby Moon Resource Center), but mostly they are skilled at leaning on the social support that they *can* find and the community activities in which they *do* have time to engage.

> I don't know, I think it's more challenges than it is- I think you really have to *believe* in what you're doing. I have a lot of support from [my husband] with breastfeeding and with cloth diapering, because he thought those were really important things and really important values. Not that that meant he did any more cleaning around the house or anything [laughter]. But the fact that he *believed* in those things and was willing to accept making those choices was important. (Pullen, 2007)

They find support among family members, female friends, other people who are struggling for similar causes, and, as Alexis said, "Well, a bottle of wine a week, at

least." They are motivated to change medicine by the travesties of other women's

birthing and breastfeeding stories. Perhaps most importantly, they feel empowered

because they have performed acts considered abnormal by so many (i.e. homebirth,

midwifery, breastfeeding for years), and their personal experience teaches them that they

can and *do* change society every day.

2. "Be the Change[28]," Not the Institution: Renegade Activist Models Outside of Professionalized Non-Profit Organizations

Alexis and Kendra were not the only activists with whom I spoke that

encountered the frustration and failure of touted benevolent institutions. I did not ask my

interviewees to discuss the role of professionalization, grant giving, or any corporate type

of formulation within non-profit organizations, but since several of them work for

institutionalized groups it is not surprising that they instigated conversation on these

topics. Many academic works document changes over the last several decades in the level

of professionalization in nonprofit management, organization, leadership, and the grants

economy (Galaskiewicz, 1985; Light, 2000; Powell, 1987). Others discuss how social

justice jobs in the United States are becoming more inaccessible to those without expert

or technical knowledge; graduate degree programs in nonprofit management alone have

increased from 17 in 1990 to over 90 in 2000 (Wilson & Larson, 2002). Roberts, Jones

III, and Frohling (2005) outline a geographic frame for researching non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) that centers around "managerialism" – "a term that captures the

bundles of knowledges and practices associated with formalized organizational

management" (p. 1846). The roots of the managerial model are in the corporation, but a

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[28] (Kukas, 2007)

host of other spheres now circulate this pattern of knowledges and practices: "These are

confined to no one population or type of state apparatus but compose a field of

institutionalized expectations and instruments," which include academia, western

international affairs, environmental issues, indigenous rights, and more (Strathern, 2000,

p. 3). One of my interviewees (Johnson, 2007) contrasted her personal experience of

working for a professionalized non-profit organization against volunteering with informal

community projects, while another said explicitly, "Non-profits work like corporations"

(Pullen, 2007). According to these activists, corporate managerial models contribute to

the shape of social change in everyday life and tie up valuable resources, causing

organizations to "get a little bloaty" (Johnson, 2007). Below I detail points at which my

interviewees identify professionalization as sets of transformative practices that constrain

social justice action. However, my participants also complicate this picture by expressing

their own experience of empowerment via officialized programs. In addition, several of

the people I interviewed are actively constructing diverse alternative modes of social

action outside of institutionalized organizations. Similar to the midwifery model above,

these "renegade activist[29]" models are extremely labor-intensive as they do not have

access to the privileged resources of professional groups and they often involve

transforming normative daily practices.

　　As a result of dependency on donation funds, there has been a turn in NGO

management over the last few decades in which, "demands for greater transparency,

monitoring, and accountability have often taken the form of a micro-managing obsession

with audits, targets, and performance indicators" (Mawdsley, Townsend, & Porter, 2005,

p. 77). Under this "managerial regime known as *accountability,*" almost all NGO

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[29] (Johnson, 2007)

financial connections occupy a great deal of time and resources to appease recognized

donor authorities (Roberts et al., 2005, p. 1850). Standard accounting practices require

financial statements and annual reports based on audits undertaken by qualified

accountants. This level of bureaucratization, which can result in immense paperwork,

extra costs, and an expert workforce, has caused many to label the donor-NGO climate a

"report culture" (ibid) and others an "audit culture" (Strathern, 2000). Tina Johnson

expressed her own experience with this report culture during our interview. She has been

an employee for MACED in Berea, for several years. Tina was careful to highlight the

social relationships intertwined with monetary constraints, instead of treating economics

as a naked disciplinarian on the organization:

> I'm talking about ties to money versus being a renegade activist. MACED
> gets a lot of money. What does that do? MACED's been around for 30 years,
> they've got strong funding sources, they'll probably be around for another 30.
> Because they know how to not really kiss ass, but they know what language to
> use with the Ford Foundation. They have ties to the Kellogg Foundation. They
> can schmooze with people without it hardly really even being schmoozing
> because their ties are already there. It's like having a friend with money, and
> that person really *is* a friend. You go to them with your case, we're doing this
> and this, and you already have this credibility so you can get that money. But
> at the same time, we spend *tons* of resources. We have a three-person
> accounting team, plus another person supporting that. Just to take care of the
> finances. They all get paid good amounts of money to do so. I think about
> how the process of getting money costs so much and causes so much bloat.
> [Another organization I'm involved with is talking about applying for grant
> money for the first time] and I'm really concerned about that. Because there's
> *huge* strings that go along with all of that. Even when you get a freakin' little
> grant, you have to do a *report* on it, you know, and maintain that connection.

Mike Mullins also detailed the paperwork, assessments, projections, and reports

that he and his community members had to conjure in order to propose and then

implement their state-funded Community Development Initiative: "When you workin'

with the state you dealing with all kinds of bureaucracies on levels you can't even

imagine." He stressed the advantages of having social and political ties when rural

community members, who have no prior training on how to participate in this report

culture, are trying to tap into formalized pools of money.

> We had people in place politically who could make these things happen. […]
> We went before the legislative session, and we had the head of the
> Appropriations Revenue Committee, Senator Bailey, from here [Knott
> County]. We had a governor [Paul Patton] who we were very, very close to.
> As a matter of fact, I was his campaign chairman for Knott County here, both
> terms that he ran. The person who put together *most* of this proposal, I was a
> part of it, was like an unpaid advisor for the governor throughout his two
> administrations. He was offered to be working for the governor, but he
> wouldn't do it because he wanted to do his own thing. He was very, very
> close. He had the ear of the governor. If he called they never hesitated it went
> straight to him, you know. So, we came out of that session with close to over
> 20 million dollars in appropriated projects.

Alexis Pullen, who used to work for a large non-profit organization that provides

mental health services, explicitly tied the occupational environment that she experienced

to corporations and the non-familial-oriented wage labor that I highlighted in the last

section:

> I read this awhile back when [my son] was still little, about non-profit
> organizations originally founded by women, and they were organized by
> women, you know women's health and public services, being service roles
> and that was one of the early ways in which women got into the workforce.
> So, women were founding non-profit organizations, and they had flexible
> schedules, and they took their kids to work, and they worked around very
> family-centered organizations, but non-profits don't work like that now. Non-
> profits work like corporations. And I've had that experience personally,
> working for a non-profit. And they call it "the Wal-Mart of mental health" for
> a reason. It's because it's the only one, and it functions like a business, and
> they operate in the black, which is odd because they're a non-profit.

My interviewees do recognize the social justice benefits that result from being

plugged into institutionalized pools of money. Tina mentions that her job allows her to

raise her kids and have financial security, but also that there are resources available for

basic operation: "Having that money and that infrastructure allows things to happen so

much more easily, which allows things that are very effective to happen." Janine Musser

admits that limited funding is the number one barrier to her social change efforts,

especially for the Appalachian Heritage Alliance – a new organization that does not yet

have a funding staff and is not affiliated with any colleges with staff that can help[30]. As I

discuss in more detail later, one negative result of having such restricted resources is that

communities end up in competition with each other, reinforcing divisions along county

lines. Nonetheless, Janine and David have both been very successful[31] at obtaining grants

for art education projects on their own and with other community activists, outside of

institutionalized non-profits. They are also resourceful at mobilizing between and among

already-existing institutional assets in their community. Thus, they did not relate non-

profit organizations or the grant-giving foundation world to corporate institutions during

our interview. In fact, they spoke of social change in terms of formalized institutions

more than any of my interviewees. They described numerous projects during our

interview, including several that are federal or state funded and/or operated (e.g. UNITE,

PRIDE, and SEKTDA, all of which were initiated by Hal Rogers' administration). Here

is only a sample of Janine's and David's community involvement:

> JANINE: We've had mostly programs in the schools with students, a lot of
> community workshops and things like that, and we got involved with an old
> settlement school in our community, a settlement-type school, it wasn't
> actually a settlement school, but Hazel Green Academy. We were able to have

[30] Another one of my interviewees (Kukas, 2007) also informed me of this connection between non-profits and colleges. There is a large concentration of organizations in Berea, mostly because of their affiliation with Berea College. As a result there is a significant grants economy in Berea, and, in combination with the school, non-profit groups help to make the town a thriving progressive community. Tina's employer, MACED, and Andri's former employer, ASPI, are two of these groups. The environment in Berea serves as a stark contrast to places in eastern Kentucky coalfields where communities are at odds with each other because, "we're all competing for the same little dollars in the region" (J. Musser, 2007).

[31] Janine and David said that their success has plummeted since the World Trade Center was attacked on September 11th, 2001, and then again when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, because donation dollars are going to these relief efforts rather than to the arts community. They say the arts are struggling more than any other non-profit area.

a life-long learning center there, which was *so* great. Christian Appalachian Project, which is another wonderful organization. They've done some tremendous things. They took care of the buildings, which were falling down, and we did a programming and had just great stuff. In the summer we had Camp Crete for kids. And we did Art Meets Ed, Where Art Meets Ed, with the Appalshop crew and Foothills [Arts Organization], and that was teacher special development with families, it was really, really fun, for like 5 days we started that, and it was really fun. And all kinds of things. We had a quilt studio, a stained glass studio, pottery studio, was really a wonderful place, had a little theater with 240 seats.

DAVID: Lots of educational field trips, not only in the arts but in science and math, drama. But not just the arts, but anything educational we were into, anything we could pull off. We served 7 counties, lots and lots of kids.

Janine and David are clearly enabled by the institutional money they've been able to plug into, and without getting tied up in the professionalization of social justice that seems to frustrate so many employees for non-profits.

Like the midwives who operate outside masculinist science, many of my interviewees are actively constructing alternative paths to performing functions similar, or even what some consider more effective, to professionalized organizations. In addition to her job at MACED, Tina is also a volunteer activist with several "renegade activist" groups. Kentucky Heartwood is a social justice group that sprang from localized grassroots efforts to protect Kentucky's forests; the organization continues to operate solely off volunteer effort and locally-generated donations. Tina says she experiences much more freedom in the tactics Heartwood can choose and the public actions they can take because they are not tied to foundation money. A good example she provided contrasts how MACED is handling forest protection compared to Kentucky Heartwood. She is currently administering a program at MACED in which landowners are paid from a grant in exchange for using their land for carbon sequestration, a practice that prohibits tree cutting.

I'm really excited about doing [this program]. But then there's the inner conflict of, well, this is just allowing people to pollute. It's basically paying to pollute, and so it's that trade-off of like okay I live here and our forests are being decimated and people have no incentive at all to keep them intact. Before we [MACED] came up with this idea the best we could come up with was helping people be able to afford to do temperacy improvement to improve economic returns on long-term sustainable yield forestry. The best you could do still involved chainsaws and still involved cutting down trees and an extractive economy. That is gonna be a step in a better direction, too, but still it is all a compromise. I really *have* to be doing this stuff on the other side, this no-compromise stance[32] that Kentucky Heartwood has about protecting the National Forest. We need to raise the bar on what's happening in our privately owned forests, we need to be able to fix that.

My interviewees specified a diverse range of activities operating under renegade activist models, from tree-sitting for forest protection to asking for aluminum foil for take-home food at a restaurant rather than using Styrofoam. These activities carry a heavy labor-burden, as they often draw on limited resources and/or are unpopular alterations of day-to-day activities.

TINA: I feel like there's *way* more to be done than anyone is interested in doing. How do you get people to pick up the slack? Some Al Gore movie came out and it's basically saying just do a little bit and everything will be better. Well, nobody's doing even a friggin' little bit, nobody wants to change anything about their lives. No one wants to change a friggin' light bulb. Everyone wants their big bright lights on and their big cars and their gas guzzlers, they don't even seem to want to care about the future of our kids. Trying to figure out how in the world to get people to care is a HUGE struggle for me. And even people who do care we're all so busy, myself included, with life. That's really what I want more than anything. To be part of a huge awakening with everyone involved. I feel like that's really what it's gonna take. Right now there's a few people doing a whole lot. And that's not helping either because I feel all the time we all get fried all the time over it. Never feeling like we can do enough when we're all doing so much. We're really struggling and trying to figure out what more it is we need to do. […] I get kinda jealous, too, but not a lot, of folks who just go to work, come home, watch TV, and not worry about things. It *seems* like they're not worrying about things.

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[32] Kentucky Heartwood has a no-compromise stance on forest protection – the members of the organization agree that there should be no logging, no managed tree burning, no carbon sequestration, or any other intentional destruction of Kentucky's national forests. This position is likely too extreme to receive grant support.

ANDRI: They're so *numb*, that's why they're not worrying. It's shut-down. Not that it's not in there. […] I used to feel like I was trying to put myself out there in the community more, and now I feel like I just maybe following Ghandi's advice a little bit more. Just be the change you want to see. Let people be inspired by the fact that compost is not a huge mystery. Dump it in your yard, throw some leaves on top if you have them. You don't have to be the perfect know-it-all to be able to make compost. Just put it outside and it'll do it, it'll turn back into dirt. […] But for where I'm at in my life, I feel like I'm trying to be a pebble in the pond. I'm not going to be a boulder falling off the edge of the cliff right now.

Tina and Andri clearly express their frustration with their renegade activist work, and the need to make the effort to change simple daily practices.

Patrick Garnett does not find his own renegade efforts to be as laborious as Tina and Andri, but he did express a similar motivation for riding his bike as a practice-oriented form of social change that operates on a daily basis, outside institutional lines:

Definitely the way the biking community in Lexington works, a key goal is not to try to change some national policy to like get rid of cars and make everyone ride bikes. That's definitely not what we're thinking will happen or what we're trying to do. Yeah, I personally would like to see a change. By me attempting to ride my bike as much as I do, that's just something I personally *enjoy* doing for myself. But in a way I hope it encourages people to see that *they* can also do it, that it's easy to do. […] If we try to open up a community space, *that* might be different. Just having to deal with the financial aspect of that and trying to keep it up and going. So far right now the community doesn't have any financial commitments that are hard to worry about. Everything is still pretty individually-based. People put in what they want on an individual basis. Paying rent for a space and all that stuff wouldn't be *that* big of a *burden*, but a lot of people would have to take some serious commitment to do and make sure it's done right.

Despite the effort required, and the day-to-day commitment of these renegade activists, they continue to pursue alternative modes of social change outside of, or in between, institutionalized entities. Their narratives are clearly inspired, empowered, and hopeful examples of individuals engaging in noncapitalist forms of social action. In the

next section I discuss how my interviewees are imagining not only transformative

actions, but transformative spaces, as well.

C. We Want Shared Community Space / We Don't Want Outsiders Here / We're Looking for Cultural Overlap / We Want Our Own Identity – Multiple and Contradictory Spaces of Resistance and Liberation in Urban and Rural Sites of Kentucky

Many of my interviewees utilize subversive concepts of space either in the

imaginary futures that they envision for their communities or in the daily reality of their

lived experience. In this section I do not talk in terms of "models" like I do above, but

rather of the multiple heterogeneous spaces being mapped-out in and among social

change efforts. Some activists are attempting to bridge together low-income communities

in urban and rural settings, thereby challenging urban-rural spatial binaries. Others rely

on the reinforcement of such binaries for the success of their work. However, when

spatial divisions are used as points of identity, they can stand as significant barriers to the

work with which my interviewees are occupied. As such, many of the people I

interviewed are concerned with forging new spaces of engagement, most of which, again,

deconstruct traditional notions of urban and rural, opening opportunities for new

identities to formulate. It is clear in this section that there are multiple, contradictory

conversations taking place among activists in Kentucky – this does not appear to be

holding back any of my interviewees from taking action.

Nick Szuberla and Amelia Kirby host a radio show in Whitesburg, KY, for

Appalshop's[33] community radio station WMMT, titled "Holler to the Hood." They play

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[33] Appalshop is a multi-disciplinary arts and education center that produces original films, video, theater, music and spoken-word recordings, radio, photography, multimedia, and books. For more see http://www.appalshop.org.

hip-hop music on the air, but over the last few years the program has transformed into

mostly a call-in show for the families of prison inmates incarcerated in the nearby

Virginia prisons Red Onion and Wallens Ridge. They are also getting ready to release a

documentary film that they made together titled, *Up the Ridge*. The film and the radio

show frequently focus on human rights violations[34] in the two privately owned

penitentiaries recently built in Appalachian Virginia – these prisons are constructed on

top of reclaimed mountain top removal sites, they house inmates shipped in from all over

the country[35], and they are flaunted by politicians as a viable form of economic

development for rural areas. I interviewed Nick and Amelia separately in Whitesburg, but

they were both keen to inform me that even though their work has been framed around

prison abuse, their larger umbrella project centers on connecting low-income

communities in urban and rural spaces. Nick described the interconnections between

prisons and urban-rural places well:

> We knew that there was issues of race, there was the prisons are being used as 'economic development,' that there was an unfair power balance, that the decisions about the economics were being made outside of the community, that it's a *national* trend for rural America to have prisons as economic development. It's not just *here*, it's across the US. […] I think what we saw, the overarching theme of the work is low-income rural and urban communities have a lot in common. If you can figure out ways to bridge that- we think it's odd that we do criminal justice work all the time, but we don't think of ourselves as prison activists, we're looking at the bigger picture of rural and urban communities need to have more control about what's

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[34] Nick and Amelia did not choose to direct the program toward prison abuse. They simply inherited the time slot from a hip-hop DJ named Eight Ball who could no longer do the show. Eight Ball had been popular among the inmates. Within a couple weeks of taking over, Nick and Amelia started to receive hundreds of letters from families about human rights violations in the prisons. Over five or six years, families discovered that they could call in to the show and communicate with incarcerated loved ones over the air. Now the show is mostly calls from both families and grassroots organizers who are working on prison reform. (Szuberla, 2007)

[35] When the prisons first opened, inmates were transported mostly from Connecticut, New Mexico and Utah, but in the last couple of years they have been coming from Norfolk, Tidewater, Washington, DC, and Richmond. Nick and Amelia are able to keep track of where the inmates are being transferred from based on the location of their radio callers. (Szuberla, 2007)

happening with incarceration rates or how to deal with crime or what's economic development look like. […] What I was saying with urban is they're often at the end of that economic development, so they're kinda feeding the machine. So with urban, or at least in the criminal justice framework, is what we see is- well, rural communities have high rates of incarceration also, but you have these two kinds of low-income communities and one of the communities is being given prisons as a social-political this is what we can give you for economic development and then urban inner-city, people-of-color communities have the high incarceration rates. So, it's a natural thing to explore.

As a poet, an artist, and a person with extensive experience utilizing multiple media in his social justice work, it is no surprise that throughout our interview Nick repeatedly referred to social change efforts as a "battle of narratives," or as a "framing contest." He provided an example worth noting of how economic development has been framed:

With economic development it's the narrative is you need flat land for the region, and also youth were used as leverage to build a prison – 'We're doing this for our young people.' Well, were their voices heard, did anyone ask them, 'Do you want to be a corrections officer?' I've gone out and interviewed young people on the streets and one or two have said they would be willing to do it, but no one's excited, no one grows up and says, 'I want to be a corrections officer.'

Nick's and Amelia's frame of the commonalities between low-income urban and rural communities has several implications: it has the potential to deconstruct urban-rural binaries, almost flatten both race and space by placing class above both, and open new spaces for exploration. The way in which they discuss current economic development ventures, such the prison industrial complex, centers on abuse, exploitation, and that these are not homegrown projects coming from the community. Nick and Amelia directly contradict the dominant narrative that economic development is a saving mechanism via jobs that local people want. At the same time, their frame places low-income communities in urban and rural settings across the country in similar victimized positions

– economic development efforts are exploiting them both. Within the space they open, which is neither essentially urban or rural, white or black, Amelia and Nick place class above race and place, but their combination allows for rich, complex, and contradictory explorations of culture and identity. Here is one of many examples they provided me:

> We wanted to do a positive cultural exchange, so we brought Dirk Powell together with Danjamowf. So, a hip-hop musician together with a traditional mountain musician, and we had them make music together. We did that live [both on the air and in front of a live audience]. That ended up being- one it *blew* people's minds, two it was a lot of *fun*, but that the radio audience, which cut across both the incarcerated and the non-incarcerated, *really enjoyed* it, it kinda put a different frame about racism and racial tension and thinking about that. The prisoners *loved* it. (Szuberla, 2007)

Amelia affirmed that their plans for future projects are looking at the "cultural overlap," between rural and urban spaces. Their website, http://www.appalshop.org/h2h/, provides some interesting examples, including downloadable music from the collaboration between Dirk Powell and Danjamowf, and looped footage of break dancing juxtaposed with clogging – surprisingly, there are several visual parallels for the eye to draw. By flattening culture and race according to the dominant urban-rural binary, Amelia and Nick are actually opening up newly-textured and multiple spaces that are neither colorless nor homogenous. These are spaces ripe with resistance, as they do not fit / deny fitting dominant economic development discourses, and they are as yet undetected by mainstream cultural media.

Community Farm Alliance members are venturing into similar territory as Nick and Amelia by trying to make farmer's markets accessible to low-income urban neighborhoods in Louisville. Farmers are conscientious about the high price of local organic food, and as such CFA organizers are working with residents in West Louisville and East Downtown to bring local food to their area. Nathan explains that CFA is

attempting to bring low-income and multi-racial interests into farmers' own desires to sell

local-grown produce in a local market:

> CFA is definitely very good about having their finger on the pulse of our membership, which these days, we have such a diverse membership it's really exciting. We have farmers, we have urban members in Lexington and Louisville. Half of our membership is urban, which is crazy, and that just was unheard of [in the past]. But, it's because of the exciting work we do in Louisville and in that work we are very specific about targeting the west end and downtown. If you're gonna promote local food, you have to go to Louisville. It's the biggest market in the state. But, when you start to look at Louisville, it's glaring disparities between who has access to fresh foods already, who has access to local food, and the people that don't are the poorest. They're paying the most for their food, and those people are the ones with the worst health problems, so there's just some very glaring disparities going on that CFA tries to address. I think we're doing an awesome job, it's some of our most exciting work.

CFA's efforts create new opportunities for rural farmers (who are often financially

struggling themselves) to communicate with low-income members of urban communities.

They are opening spaces in which strangers, who are normally fractured along racial,

cultural, and place-based lines, can invent new localized economies and relationships

outside traditional binaries.

While Nick's, Amelia's, and CFA's social change efforts open spaces for new

formulations and identities, their work also contradicts some of the pro-development

frameworks being forged by other eastern Kentucky residents. Toward the beginning of

this chapter, under Section "A. Reformulating Economies: It's Gotta Come From the

Community," I described two projects in which the "Appalachian" identity empowers

activists who are imagining grassroots development projects that essentialize their own

culture – the Eastern Kentucky Heritage Monument in Campton and the Kentucky School

of Craft in Hindman. The success of each of these ventures is hinged on bringing

outsiders inside, attracting people from the city to the rural mountains, and essentializing

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and selling Appalachian culture via art and crafts. On one hand, they want people to traverse the boundaries between the urban-rural binaries in order to migrate money into the region, but on the other hand, they must reinforce binaried identities to validate their projects as legitimate tourist attractions. Janine Musser explicitly stated her own essentialist assumptions, as if "Appalachia" is a blood-rite, when she said, "You know David [my husband] is Appalachian, and I'm Appalachian by marriage." The urban-rural framework espoused by Nick and Amelia allows for cultural identities, such as "Appalachian," to exist, but in more fluid forms that have transformative potential – their framework complicates the rural Appalachian identity[36].

The inside-outside identity of being Appalachian not only enables the tourism framework of economic development, but ironically it also thwarts many social change efforts in the mountains, including touristic ventures. During our interviews, *all* of my interviewees living deep in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky listed the inside-outside dichotomy as a significant barrier to their work. The following conversation between Amelia and Colleen in Letcher County is an apt example:

> AMELIA: There's really strict ideas about inside and outside and who is trying to do what and why. Not even from a coal perspective, it's even more intense than taking coal. But any kind of cultural development or community development or whatever, it's like, 'Who are you and why are you in my community doing this?' I think that's *really* hard to get over. In one way it makes perfect sense, people have been coming in from somewhere else for a century with ill intent, and then people coming in in response to that with good intent, but they're still coming in and they're still- there's been as much- it's just a hurdle. With some exceptions it's a lot very hard to generate new

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[36] It is important to note that Nick and Amelia are not against economic development projects that result from "community dialogue" (Szuberla, 2007) and the collaborative work of local residents. Nick pointed out that prisons are being pitched as an economic development solution all over the US. Such a universalized, non-place-specific project stands in direct contrast to the kind of efforts that Nick and Amelia support. One of my points here is not that Nick and Amelia thwart development projects like the School of Craft or the Heritage Monument, but that there are heterogeneous, contradictory conversations taking place in rural, coal-producing Kentucky communities. These discourses are not disempowering to each other.

perspectives from inside. You want new perspectives and you get it from somewhere else, then you have that hurdle of like, 'Why? Why are you here?' It's not insurmountable by any means, but it's definitely a barrier.

COLLEEN: Yeah, I would agree with that. That's definitely a challenge I've been faced with [not being from Kentucky]. It takes awhile to build trust with folks, and I think that once you've built it then people've got your back and stuff. […] Even folks, like [KFTC] members that have lived here for 20 years, they're still not *from* here. They say it takes 3 generations to be from here, so that's why there's such an important emphasis on leadership development and to figuring out ways for folks to stand *aside* people that are most directly affected and that are from the area. It ends up being a matter of- I've had conversations with some of our members that get into arguments with folks, their neighbors, who are willing to discount what's going on because there's some people involved [in a social justice project] who aren't from here. And people *really* talkin' trash about you, you know? It's kind of another thing that you gotta struggle with and get over. I think the best thing that I could do, at whatever point I do something else, if I've developed leaders that can step up and take on my role.

The boundaries of these inside-outside constraints are obscured by competition and the identity-place politics of particular counties. Amelia grew up in Wise County, Virginia, the bordering county to Letcher (the location of her grandmother's house), and she stated: "You know, I grew up, I could be in my grandmother's backyard in 45 minutes, but I'm not *from* here, I'm from the *next* county." Janine Musser shared an anecdote in which Wolfe County teachers had to be coaxed off the school bus when they arrived at a science day event and discovered there were schools from other counties there. Janine said that while multi-county participation is now more common for education and art events, a few years ago it was not; interacting with individuals from other counties was a lesson that education officials had to learn. She expressed how this sense of identity makes it difficult when trying to get communities to work together for their individual tourist projects, most of which are also intertwined with limitations in funding:

There's also a very strong sense of wanting their own community. Just this initiative of breaking through county lines is huge. And even though now we all get together and really work together, there's still this thought of, I want this project just for me. It's very hard to work in partnerships and to see outside of our own project. One of the reasons the [Heritage] Monument is so great is because it will make each of those projects that are so important in each community be more successful in the long term. But people involved in those projects, it's hard for them to look up from those projects and they see something like this as a competition rather than something that will enhance their project. So it's hard to think, and again it goes back to funding, it is *so* limited that people have to be so competitive with it that they don't want to see, they would rather have the big bucks to get their projects started and not think in terms of being able to survive years after the grant money is gone, which the Monument would help that to happen.

The inside-outside identity reaches beyond urban-rural binaries and becomes blurred along county lines to create rural-rural bifurcated constraints to spatial identity.

To subvert some of these limitations on how space is constructed and on the spaces that can be imagined, several of my interviewees are concerned with creating spaces of exposure and interaction, which often this results in idealizing both. Three of the people with whom I spoke identified schools as specific locations for this contact:

JOSH: [Berea] College is a really interesting thing, 80% of the students are from the Appalachia region, and they still have a large, maybe 7%, that are international students, and then over half the students have international experiences while they're at the college. So, you have this thing where a lot of people from Appalachia are getting to experience things new, and also a lot of people from outside of Appalachia are getting to experience people from Appalachia, so that's a really nice thing to have in the community.

TINA: Berea College being what it is, just the ability to be able to, in terms of a resource broader than just my own experience, when there is room in our society for people to go and get an education and experience something other than how they were raised, that opens up opportunities. I've experienced some very positive things along the way when I left home [in rural Ohio] and went to school, learned what good food is, got to go different places, and meet people who had different experiences and stuff like that. It was really an incredible time for me.

COLLEEN: People are getting exposed to more things, and the universities in the mountains, folks get four year degrees and there's increasingly more

programs that are accessible through that, through collaboration with Morehead [State University] and Eastern [Kentucky University] and Lindsey-Wilson College, and folks getting advanced degrees in social work and community development and all that good stuff. And I think it also enables folks to be in conversation where they wouldn't otherwise. It would make a place for people to generate new ideas and to hope and stuff like that.

When my interviewees discussed what they imagine to be revolutionary spaces, they introduced ideas that, again, thwart urban-rural binaries and, again, inscribe their own points of positionality. Usually, rural places are described as isolated and isolating, with individuals spread out into disparate areas. However, both of the interviews I conducted in Lexington illuminated that such space does exists in an urban environment. Kendra and Alexis identified the geography of the city as constraining to their family-oriented needs. As such, Kendra romanticizes rural living, in which family and friends are located close together, as a liberatory space:

> KENDRA: I think another thing is, with the isolation that we're talking about, is this sprawling city. And you have to have a car. Who wants to drive across town? You know, if we were *closer* it would be-
> ALEXIS: It takes me less time from where I live to drive to another city, sometimes, than it does to drive across Lexington.
> KENDRA: We had one car for over a year, but then when I went back on call [to perform homebirths, my husband] can't be at work with the car. And that's another thing, you can't be on call with the kid. You have to have somebody, when your husband's at work, what's the plan for the kid when you get called to go to a birth? You have to have, we're too isolated. You know, parents are living in other cities, and it used to be ma' and pa' were on the farm next to you, or whatever. But, you can't do that. You have to load up the car, get all your *stuff* together, transport your stuff.

Similarly, Patrick envisions a future in which Lexington residents do not live so far from each other. His efforts to get bicycling recognized as traffic (not only cars), strives for that spatial vision of social change:

> [If everyone rode a bike] it could really change the way the economy functions in Lexington as far as the city would be laid out. It would definitely clear up congestion problems in the streets. Everything in Lexington is spread

out. When I first moved to Lexington I lived in the suburbs and it was pretty bad riding bikes coming from out there when I first started riding bikes. It took me like 40 to 45 minutes to ride to LCC [Lexington Community College] to go to classes. It was pretty insane. But even downtown inside of New Circle [road], things are very far apart. So if a lot more people started riding bikes, things would become closer.

In contrast to Kendra's idealization of the rural, Colleen and Amelia, who live in rural Whitesburg, imagine revolutionary spaces with an urban character. However, like Kendra, Alexis, and Patrick, they also yearn for close spaces in which community members engage with each other more frequently.

> COLLEEN: One of the things I think is really great about Hazard is Bobby Davis Park. It's in the middle of the city, you know the booming city of Hazard, but there's park benches and a little museum and a little fountain, and you can just go there and write in your journal. Just having some community space, I think, is important. Spaces you can go to. And places you can go after 9 o'clock.
> AMELIA: Yeah, it's shared community spaces where you can gather in people's presence without being glued there to see them. I said bar jokingly, but it does really serve an extended function in the same way that a coffee shop would, a physical space where you can go and spend time outside of your home, outside of your defined spaces, you just visit with people, and you intersect with them or you don't intersect with them, but there's room for that kind of public sphere that we don't have as much.

All of the liberatory spaces I cite above are constructed around notions of family, friends, close-knit communities, and open spaces of engagement – all of which are built on the positive experiences my interviewees have of the real spaces they inhabit. While interviewing Amelia and Colleen in Whitesburg's local Courthouse Café, they interacted with almost every person in the establishment, much like their idealized vision of public space. Patrick imagines a community in which everything needed is within biking distance, and likewise he currently lives in a part of Lexington where he can bike to *almost* everything. My participants are affected by the landscapes around them; it shapes how they imagine friendly spaces, experience barriers to their social change efforts, and

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push forward toward their goals of transformed space. That these are often non-uniform and contradictory is not disempowering or paralyzing for my interviewees in any sense. Many of these idealizations of spaces for engagement ignore the negative complications that arise from more frequent social interaction – e.g. prejudices and social stratifications are able to play out in disabling and violent actions. However, I wish to emphasize here that my interviewees are forging important utopian paths in their imaginings. David Harvey (2000) points out that critics of capitalist social relations rarely propose utopian alternatives for fear of being accused of harboring oppressive or repressive ideas – my research shows that activists push past such bindings. Those who do attempt alternative imaginings, such as Gibson-Graham, "have engaged in a here-and-now political experiment – working on ourselves and in our backyards. This is not because we think that we have found the only way forward, but because we have become unable to wait for an effective politics to be convened in some future terrain" (2002, p. 53).

In the final chapter below, I detail ways in which my interviewees utilize concepts of scalar space to strategize and accomplish their social change work. I consider how these and other ideas from activists contribute to academic debates. I ponder the utility of this Thesis and its arguments, as well as some of the academic theories I utilize, to what folks are discussing, imagining, and practicing on-the-ground. Academic tools of analysis must be functional to activists enacting social change work, or else there is no reason to construct or expand them.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION: WHAT NEXT?

At the beginning of this Thesis I state that I began this project as a search for radical anti-development sentiments in Appalachia. Instead what I found was that my own concepts of what constitutes radical theory needed to change. My interviewees taught me that discourses can be mobilized in a variety of ways that are empowering, place-specific, and effective, even when they are considered disempowering and exploitative in other realms. I learned that one's positionality plays an extremely important role in shaping the ideas that seem possible, and that there are privileged spaces in which social change appears to be more easily achieved or imagined. Parts of the theories I criticize in chapter II (Colonial Model and Culture-of-Poverty theories) are even formulated by some of my participants to act as motivational tools. For example, I cite several interviewees in chapter IV who conceptualize Appalachia as a place that has been colonized by outside agents. In chapter II I say that this configuration victimizes Appalachian residents, and is thus a disempowering discourse. However, my interviewees feel moved to act *because* they have been labeled as victims; they imagine new possibilities for the future of their communities that directly contrast the exploitative practices employed by their colonizers. Now that my interviewees have taught me that radical and diverse discourses and practices are being formulated and reformulated (sometimes even during the course of our interview) on-the-ground in communities all over Kentucky, I must consider the role of my own work (and the work of academia in general) in effecting social change.

Researching this Thesis taught me that real life does not fit neatly into categories or theoretical constructs, but what this means for the academic world is that scholars cannot capture all the complexities and contradictions of practices and ideas that are constantly changing in time and space. However, capturing should not be the goal of theorists (or anyone) interested in social justice. The goal should be *multiplying* and advancing possibilities and imaginings, making them *powerful*, and making them *doable*. My work shows that this objective is already being taken forward by both academics and activists, through ideas and action, and the Thesis itself is a small contribution to this goal within academia. However, my research also demonstrates that what scholars see as vital for furthering social change does not always coincide with what activists find to be pertinent. This disconnect is good for allowing individuals in each realm to more thoroughly explore possibilities within their own discourses, but it stops being beneficial if academics and activists no longer say anything useful to each other.

In chapter III, I touch on theoretical strategies for fragmenting the concept of "economy" without giving the unfragmented "economy" so much power that it keeps the former marginalized. The works I mention are only some of the multiple, diverse conversations academics are having (and have had) on useful configurations of "economy." Scholars in these debates are concerned with logical inconsistency and tautological constructs, but also with identifying what ideas and discourses are empowering, mobile, and thus able to advance the aims of social justice. However, my interviewees seemed unhindered by logical inconsistencies and supposedly disempowering notions of "economy." They used the word at times as if it were a reified entity, at times to mean changing networks, and almost always as something intimately

integrated with history, culture, and natural and social relationships. While academics continue to discuss mobile languages, my interviewees prove that some language is already mobile and empowered. Ruccio and Amariglio (2003) describe this language as "everyday economics," which I highlight in chapter III, and thus I certainly cannot say that scholars are wholly ignoring non-academic uses of "economics." Nonetheless, sometimes scholars converse among each other too much to the detriment of outside influence. In this example, empowerment and mobility of language are the central concerns, and yet debates do not give much attention to activists (and others) who are already using "economics" in these ways.

A second example of an academic debate that misses pertinence for activists is the global-local discussion I mention in chapter III. Scholars discuss hierarchical language in which "local" action is seen as less powerful than "global" forces. Again, the works I cite only touch on an abundance of scholarly works debating "scale." In contrast to this abstract dispute, my interviewees utilize scale to formulate on-the-ground strategies. Below are quotes from interviewees who use scale to discuss how and where individuals can act. Even when they conceptualize larger, outside forces as being powerful, the work that these activists can enact in their own communities is not devalued or disempowered as a result.

> NICK: With the criminal justice issue, it's so huge and the grassroots groups have been in it for so long, so I don't even know if I spend a lot of time thinking about bigger changes. Think more about we're one small step probably in a series of steps that people are going to be doing for a long time. […] You can't just have people at the local community fight on their own, like the US Energy Policy, because it's pretty tough, and it's hard to fight that at the local community. But you can float up good models and stories to try to get the framing out, and people have done that pretty successfully.

Often my interviewees use a scaled language that privileges *local* work over larger social change efforts. In these examples, scale is again employed to work out strategies for action – how best to effect change.

> NATHAN: I think it does have to start locally. I mean, very rarely do you see the federal government make a change that's not already well underway at the state level. Seems like global warming thing now, you have businesses coming forward saying this would be good for business if we had more strict regulations on global warming, and they're proposing solutions. Finally the government is giving lip service to those issues. So I think starting locally is the most effective way to create change on a bigger scale, but also if you have more power to change things locally, at least your day-to-day local existence is going to be that much better, and there are those few who just do it. […] I think you really can make a difference on a *local* scale. The global economy, however big and however crazy it seems at times, you *always* have a chance to make a difference with where you spend your dollar. By acting that way together, which is what CFA is all about, getting people together, identifying their needs, develop a strategy to meet that need, and act on a slightly larger level, the state level, and transfer that into something that actually works.

Unlike academic conversations that I describe in chapter III, the uses of scale in these examples prove that sometimes the "local" holds more power than the "global," and in this sense hierarchical scale can provide empowering, mobile discourses. If scholars are concerned with identifying languages useful to social justice work, then perhaps their consultations with social justice organizers should be the focus of scale debates.

My point here is not to say that academics should not have conversations only with other academics, or that they should not explore constructs that only concern academics, or even that activism should always draw central focus from scholars. Instead I am expressing concern that academics do sometimes run theory in circles until it is no longer useful for advancing social justice. I do not want to argue that scholars and non-scholars do not speak to each other at all. In fact, there are several examples I provide in chapters II and III of academics concerned with social change who do focus on the

language and practices of community activists (e.g. Fisher, 1999; Halperin, 1990; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; H. M. Lewis et al., 1995 etc). Likewise, in Appendix B of this Thesis I provide a list of media that are particularly influential to my interviewees' current ways of thinking – the Appendix shows that activists do read academic works and are impacted by them. However, this Thesis demonstrates that activists contribute a great deal to multiplying possibilities in ideas and action; if scholars were to become too detached from that then they would no longer be constructing theories useful for social change. One of my interviewees spoke about the impact that dialogue can have for social change. Communities working toward common goals (such as activist and academic communities) can certainly enact what he is espousing.

> NICK: I think as an artist in my own approach to community work is believing that communities have the answers. When you have a vibrant dialogue going on, and a vibrant dialogue about *change*, it's not *just* a dialogue. Communities will float out the right solution or the right type of vision for how they want their community to be shaped.

There are several things I plan to do with my Thesis to communicate ideas and foster dialogue outside of academia. I want to share the theoretical reformulations I outline in this work with activists within their own realms. I want to translate some of these ideas into an accessible language, and then share it with non-academics. This includes putting something together in print – perhaps a handout, a booklet, or a small manuscript of some kind – and making it freely available to others. I also want to formulate a workshop and/or presentation on these ideas to give at social justice conferences and to organizations. An appropriate venue in the near future is an activist conference in West Virginia this Fall about what Appalachia can do without coal. I am

certainly not the first to have these concerns, but I want to be pro-active about putting my ideas and my empirical findings out into communities.

I hope that my attempts to carry this work outside of academia will result in more immediate exchanges of discourse and dialogue between the scholarly world and community members working on-the-ground for social justice. Through efforts such as these, perhaps academic and non-academic individuals will come to further understand what has been an extremely important lesson for me while writing this work – that revolutionary seeds of change are sown when critical and strange ideas confront scholars and non-scholars alike, when individuals question their own ways of thinking and struggle to envision imaginative and new directions, and when hope is mobilized to enact unique and experimental practices.
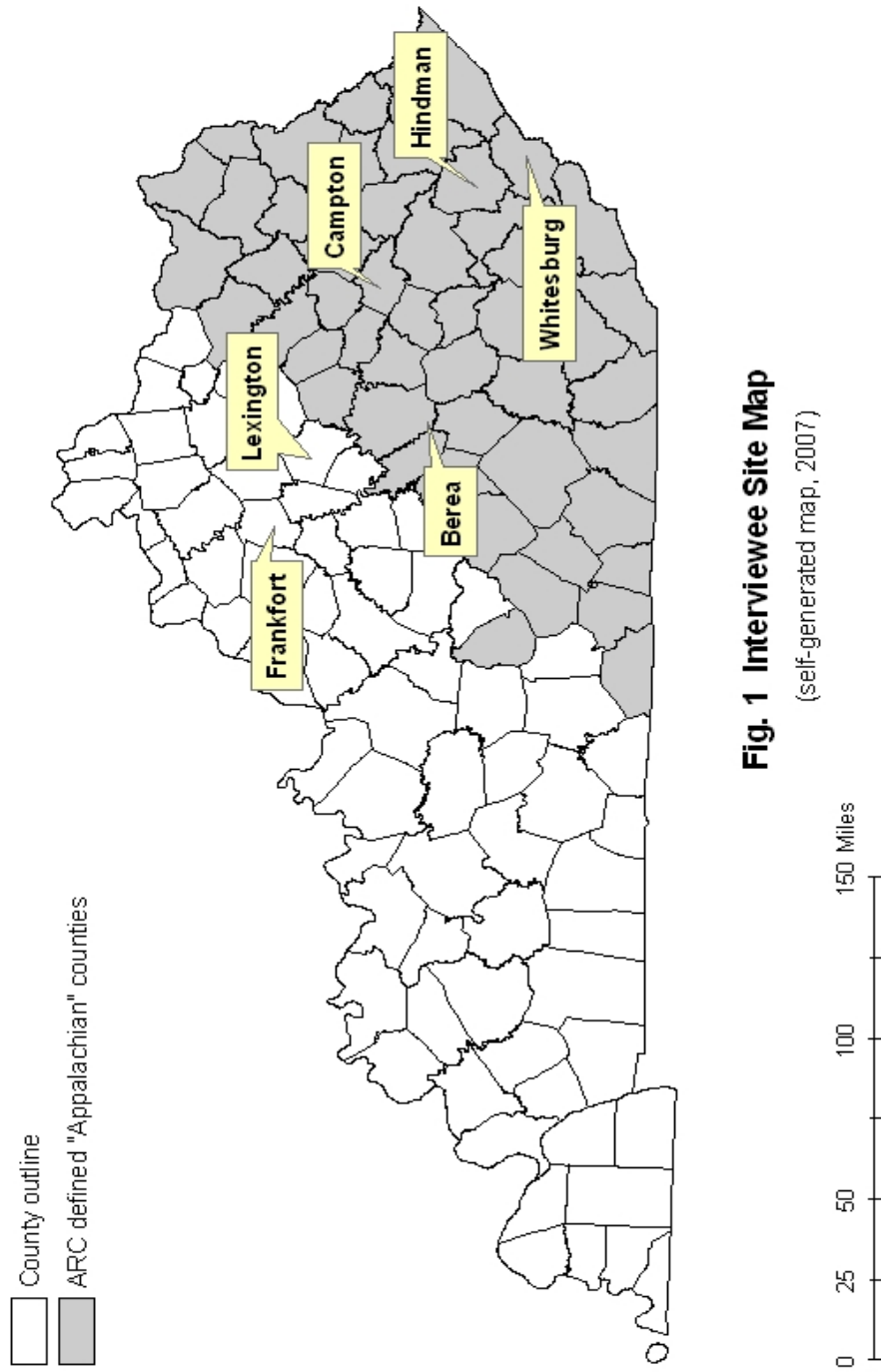
Fig. 1 Interviewee Site Map
(self-generated map, 2007)

County outline
ARC defined "Appalachian" counties

0   25   50   100   150 Miles

Appendix A: List and Description of Interviewees and Their Projects

Janine Musser: Appalachian Heritage Alliance
Campton, KY resident
www.AppalachianHeritageAlliance.org
Janine is employed as the Director of the Appalachian Heritage Alliance (AHA). The AHA grew out of the Wolfe County Arts Association. They organize a large number of arts and education activities in Wolfe County, including performances, retreats, educational field trips, and community classes. The names of some of their programs are Where Art Meets Ed, Rediscover Bicycle America, and ArtTernative. Janine's work duties include organizing these events, but also grant writing. Many of the grants they receive come from the Kentucky Arts Council.
(Interview date and location: 1/29/2007, her home in a remote part of Campton, KY)

David Musser: Eastern Kentucky Heritage Monument
Campton, KY resident
www.AppalachianHeritageAlliance.org
David is the inventor and unpaid project manager for the Eastern Kentucky Heritage Monument. David is trying to muster financial and community support to build the Monument in Wolfe County, visible from the Mountain Parkway. It consists of a stainless steel guitar, banjo, and fiddle, which would stand seventy-five feet tall, and also double as a giant wind harp – the largest in the world. The site pays homage to eastern Kentucky musicians, authors, and artists, and includes an amphitheatre, information and celebration center, and a monument trail. The purpose of the monument is to generate and circulate capital throughout eastern Kentucky.
(Interview date and location: 1/29/2007, his home in a remote part of Campton, KY)

Mike Mullins: Hindman Settlement School
Hindman, KY resident
www.hindmansettlement.org
Mike has lived in Hindman his whole life and has been (and still is) employed as Executive Director at Hindman Settlement School for thirty years. Most of the work he does for the school includes fundraising and grant-writing. The school has an adult education program and a dyslexia program to meet the educational needs of the community. They also have a Family Folk Week, several folk writing programs, and other culturally-oriented events. Mike volunteers his time with the Community Development Initiative that is implemented through the Kentucky Appalachian Commission in Hindman. With the state money they received they built the Kentucky School of Craft, the Knott County Opportunity Center, and the Kentucky Appalachian Artisan Center.
(Interview date and location: 1/29/2007, Hindman Settlement School)

Nick Szuberla: Holler to the Hood, Up the Ridge, Community Media Initiative, and Appalachia Media Institute (all at Appalshop)
Whitesburg, KY resident
www.appalshop.org
Nick co-hosts the radio program "Holler to the Hood," and co-directed the documentary film *Up the Ridge* – both Appalshop projects. Appalshop is a multi-disciplinary arts and education center in the heart of Appalachia producing original films, video, theater, music and spoken-word recordings, radio, photography, multimedia, and books. *Up the Ridge* records civil rights violations in two prison systems in nearby Virginia, and "Holler to the Hood" is a hip-hop and call-in radio show for prison families. Nick has been involved with Appalshop since 1998, and moved to Whitesburg so that he could participate in their Community Media Initiative and the Appalachia Media Institute – both of which integrate youth, education, and multi-media technologies together. Before coming to Appalshop he worked at the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, TN, where he made independent documentaries.
(Interview date and location: 2/16/2007, Appalshop in Whitesburg, KY)

Amelia Kirby: Holler to the Hood, Up the Ridge, at Appalshop
Whitesburg, KY resident
www.appalshop.org
Amelia has been involved with Appalshop since she was born, but she grew up in Wise County, VA, one county over. She co-hosts the radio program "Holler to the Hood," and co-directed the documentary film *Up the Ridge* – both Appalshop projects. She also did a photo project documenting traditional Appalachian musicians and an oral history project with musicians from the Whitesburg area.
(Interview date and location: 2/16/2007, The Courthouse Café in Whitesburg, KY)

Colleen Unroe: KFTC
Whitesburg, KY resident
www.kftc.org
Colleen is the Eastern Kentucky Organizer for Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (KFTC), and she has been employed with them since 2003. She described KFTC as follows: "a membership-run organization that's statewide. I work in Harlan, Perry, and Leslie counties. We work on a range of different issues, but a lot of the emphasis with the chapters I work on are mine issues with coal companies obeying the law, and enforcing agencies that aren't enforcing the law. I work with local communities that are having problems with coal mining destroying their property. We try to make the state agencies accountable, help people understand what the process is, what their rights are related to mining companies, and basically just trying to help people find a way to use their voice to make an impact. We help people learn about how to lobby and write letters to the editor and contact people in different agencies. The other big thing we've been doing is voter empowerment work, so getting people registered to vote and trying to make campaigns more about issues. We had a candidate forum and voter surveys."
(Interview date and location: 2/16/2007, The Courthouse Café in Whitesburg, KY)

Tina Johnson: MACED, KFTC, MJS, KY Heartwood
Berea, KY resident
www.maced.org
www.kftc.org
www.mountainjusticesummer.org
www.kyheartwood.org
Tina has lived in Berea off and on for more than ten years. She is the mother of three young children, she volunteers with Kentucky Heartwood, Kentuckians For The Commonwealth (KFTC), and Mountain Justice Summer (MJS), and she is paid to be the Program Assistant for Mountain Association for Community and Economic Development (MACED). She is also on the board of KY Heartwood. MACED employees provide financial investments and technical assistance to small locally-owned businesses and low-income communities, conduct research on policies that promote economic equality, and configure new programs that encourage forest preservation on privately-owned lands. Tina's job primarily performs this last function. MJS works to end mountain top removal mining in TN, WV, KY, and NC, KY Heartwood seeks to protect national forest lands, and a description of KFTC is under Colleen Unroe above.
(Interview date and location: 1/25/2007, a restaurant in Richmond, KY)

Josh Bills: ASPI
Berea, KY resident
www.a-spi.org
Josh is a former employee of Appalachia Science in the Public Interest (ASPI). He was the Technical Coordinator for more than ten years, now he is the unpaid Co-Director of their Kentucky Solar Partnership program, and he is a board member. He has been involved with the organization since 1996. ASPI was started in 1980, co-founded by Al Fritch, a Jesuit, who worked with Ralph Nadar with the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Josh described ASPI as follows: "One of the first success stories of ASPI was establishing strip-mining laws, federal laws against mining in the late '70s. Right now most of my work is done on a volunteer basis, and it's promoting renewable energies across Kentucky. We passed the net metering law, which allows people to backfeed their electric meter with solar electricity and various other incentives." ASPI also offers grants to help cut the cost of installing solar power to low-income homes. They conduct workshops on solar energy, other renewable energies, and even on growing and marketing ginseng. He is also the father of a young boy, who participated in our interview.
(Interview date and location: 1/25/2007, a restaurant in Richmond, KY)

Andri Kukas: ASPI
Berea, KY resident
www.a-spi.org
Andri is a former paid activist of ASPI, as the Nature Center Director, and current volunteer with the organization. She worked mostly in education when she was an employee, teaching environmental literacy to schools in Appalachia and at ASPI's Nature Center. ASPI promotes sustainable development and resource management. She is also the mother of a young boy, and volunteers with Merge Market in Berea.
(Interview date and location: 1/25/2007, a restaurant in Richmond, KY)

Nathan Brown: Community Farm Alliance
Frankfort, KY resident
www.communityfarmalliance.org
Nathan is the Eastern Kentucky Field Organizer for Community Farm Alliance (CFA). CFA is a 22-year-old statewide grassroots organization of persons committed to family-scale farming as the most efficient and sustainable form of producing the best quality food, while protecting the environment and strengthening rural community life. The organization does both legislative and community organizing. Nathan works mostly with members involved in CFA's Farm-to-School program in Bath County.
(Interview date and location: 2/2/2007, at Rick's White Lite Diner, Frankfort, KY)

Patrick Garnett: Alleycats, Critical Mass
Lexington, KY resident
Patrick has been a resident of Lexington for six years. He is an unpaid activist, as are all participants, in Alleycat bicycle races and Critical Mass bike rides in Lexington. He works to build the informal cycling subculture growing in the city, in which participants hope to make bike traffic more visible as a primary mode of transportation (rather than fossil-fuel-burning vehicles). He described Alleycats and Critical Mass as follows: "It's a loose network of friends and people that ride their bikes as a form of transportation instead of primarily exercise or recreation."
(Interview date and location: 1/22/2007, a private apartment in downtown Lexington)

Kendra Adkisson: Baby Moon Resource Center
Lexington, KY resident
www.baby-moon.org
Kendra is a doula and prenatal masseuse for Baby Moon Resource Center (a natural birthing clinic) and she is studying to be a legal midwife. She described midwifery and the philosophy of natural childbirth as follows: "Basically getting away from the male, technocratic model of childbirth, that it's a medical event, that the woman is sick, that interventions *need* to happen to make it a success. The midwifery model of care is that birth is a natural, normal event, and that low-risk women who have had good care and have taken care of themselves can pretty much do it by themselves. A midwife is just there to help them along, catch the baby, help with breastfeeding." Kendra also gave natural birth at home to her daughter almost two years ago.
(Interview date and location: 2/13/2007, at a bakery in Lexington, KY)

Alexis Cinnamond Pullen: Lexington La Leche League
Lexington, KY resident
Alexis is a member of Lexington's La Leche League. She described the groups as follows: "It's women serving women, for prenatal care, for breastfeeding care, lactation consultant, etc. It's an all-volunteer organization. Strictly women pay the fees and go through the leadership training and get appointed to lead the group." She also gave natural birth to her son two years ago.
(Interview date and location: 2/13/2007, at a bakery in Lexington, KY)

Appendix B: List of Media That Were Influential to My Interviewees

I asked my interviewees what books, magazines, music, film, and other media were most influential to their current thinking on social change. Most of them responded with names of people (sometimes their parents) or stories of certain experiences that impacted them. Many did not list any media at all, but only emphasized their personal experiences as the major force driving their work forward. This further reinforces what I say elsewhere in this Thesis – that my interviewees are action-oriented, more frequently influenced by action and personal struggle rather than books or theory. Here I list the media that my interviewees did provide.

MUSIC
Propagandi
Grand Fury
Act Up
The general Appalachian musical tradition of resistance
Kentuckians For The Commonwealth compilation CD
Protest songs sung in-action during rallies, marches, etc.

BOOKS & MAGAZINES
Participatory Economics by Mike Albert
Carbusters, a magazine out of Czech Republic
Spiritual Midwifery by Ina May Gaskin
Ina May's Guide to Childbirth by Ina May Gaskin
Gentle Birth Choices
HypnoBirthing
The Second Shift
Misconceptions
Power and Powerlessness by John Gaventa
It Comes From the People by Helen Lewis
Works by Jurgen Habermas
Works by Antonio Gramsci
Art is Activism

FILM
What the Bleep?
Harlan County USA
The Harvey Milk Story

OTHER PROJECTS
A series of writer's workshops with Gurney Norman
The Community Access Movement, in OH, which is a community media access to video project started in the 1960s, putting video cameras in kids' hands.
A group called Ra-Couga in New Finland, which is 10, 11, 12, and 13 year-old kids making media about their community.
The Highlander Research and Education Center, in TN

Appendix C: List of Additional Organizations and Projects

My interviewees mentioned several organizations, projects, spaces, and a variety of entities in which they are not personally involved (or are only marginally involved), but which they find to be important and influential for social change. Since I could not include every social justice project in Kentucky in this Thesis, I list the groups they referenced here in order to allude to the breadth of activities occurring across the state. Even this list is nowhere near exhaustive.

Wildcat Wheels community bikeshop, University of Kentucky campus, Lexington, KY
Berea College, Berea, KY
Heifer International, now working in eastern KY
Hazard Community College, Hazard, KY, and branched throughout eastern KY
Morehead State University, Morehead, KY, and branched throughout eastern KY
Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY, and branched throughout eastern KY
Lindsey-Wilson College, Columbia, KY, and branched throughout eastern KY
Tourist All-Terrain-Vehicle (ATV) trails in Harlan County, KY
The Courthouse Café, Whitesburg, KY
"The 2020 Project," a volunteer community group, planning for the future of Perry County, KY
Bobby Davis Park, Hazard, KY
Community College art projects centered on drugs, Harlan County, KY
Frontier Nursing, Wendover, KY
Amish and Mennonite communities, throughout KY
The new St. Joe East Birthing Center, Lexington, KY
A new federal Women Infants Children (WIC) program that promotes breastfeeding, national
Creation Gardens, Louisville, KY
The Natural Resource Conservation and Management program at the University of Kentucky
Merge-Market, Berea, KY
Climax, KY Mountain Spring Water
Kentucky Educational Television programs
Hazel Green Academy, Hazel Green, KY
Christian Appalachian Project, Lancaster, KY
Music in the Park every Thursday night in the summer, Campton, KY
Red River Gorge activities: Hoedown Island at Natural Bridge, Red River Outdoors (run by Amy and Matt Tackett), Miguel's Pizza, private preserve open to the public for rock climbing (run by Rick and Liz Webber)
People Approaching People (PAP), an anti-drug program, Lee County, KY
The Wolfe County women's club is running a project to paint quilts on barns, KY
UNITE, a Hal Rogers anti-drug project, including a youth center in Pikeville, KY
PRIDE, a Hal Rogers environmental project, run out of Somerset, KY
Southern and Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association (SEKTDA)
Community Scholars Program, "certifies" local activists, KY
Shaped By Water, a project funded by the Kentucky Arts Council

Pine Mountain Settlement School, KY
Drug addiction listening project in Harlan County, KY
KFTC's new High Road to Economic Development Initiative
Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, TN
The Mountain Eagle, Whitesburg, KY
Pine Mountain Trail, Whitesburg, KY
Center for Rural Strategies, Whitesburg, KY
Cowan Creek Mountain Music School, Whitesburg, KY
The Coalition for Jobs and the Environment, southwest VA
Community Development Corporations (CDC), which are in most rural communities in the US
Community Access Movement, OH
Antioch College, OH
Coal River Mountain Watch, WV
Appalachian Voices, NC
Mountain Watershed Association, PA
Kentucky Waterways Alliance
Department for Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, State of KY
KY Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet
Sierra Club, KY
The 700 Committee, Louisville, KY
Muhhamed Ali Institute, Louisville, KY
Bluegrass Energy and Green Living Expo, Lexington, KY
Farmer's Markets, all over KY

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Professional Positions

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2001-2002   Web Design, Legal Aid Network of Kentucky, Guide to Tenants' Rights,
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2000   Community Organizing Internship, Kentuckians For The Commonwealth,
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Scholastic and Professional Honors

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