[Opinion]
50 Years of Community Development Topics
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50 Years of Publishing in Community Development
EDITOR’s NOTE

After a search by the CDS Communications Committee, I was appointed the new CD Practice Editor. I’m deeply honored to be putting out this first issue, under my tenure, for the 50th anniversary of the organization!

I want to thank all those who have contributed to this issue to make it an opportunity for reflection and celebration. In this issue we have a guest editorial from past editors, highlighting themes from CD Practice and CDS generally. We also have authors who agreed to revisit one of these themes and undergo peer review. Finally, the issue wraps up with recommendations crowdsourced from our outstanding membership!

Moving forward, we’ll establish online mechanisms for submission of peer reviewed pieces, book reviews, and other types of publications. I will aim to have two issues a year out. The fall issue will be dedicated to special themes, as submissions allow. The spring issue will focus on highlighting the practical applications of those pieces submitted to the CD journal—translating research to practice!

I’m always open to suggestions, so please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have ideas for a special issue, additional publishing formats, or have general questions.

Regards,

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Topics in Community Development Over 50 Years

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Community development is such a broad field of study and practice that it is hard to define and describe its evolution over the past almost 50 years that the CDS journal of Community Development has been published. There can be little question, though, that topics addressed in the journal changed as issues facing communities changed and as did the interests of researchers and practitioners. An especially important aspect of Community Development as a publication is that it provides an outlet for interactions between academic researchers and practitioners with definite advantages to each group. In fact, this interaction is often mentioned in discussions at Community Development Society meetings as a major reason for continued participation.

Practitioners identify topics that need additional study and researchers apply scientific methods in identifying and evaluating potential strategies to address them. This collaboration contributes to effective practices and improvements in quality of life in communities. Interactions along these lines are what motivated launching the Journal of Community Development in 1970. It includes 50 volumes and, in the process expanded to the current five issues per year, spanning a broad range of topics.

The range of topics reflects issues that community development as a discipline needed to address. The early focus was on rural development issues with the major thrust in the early 1970s on rural development as a priority. The range of topics soon moved from economic development to much broader topics such as poverty, housing, health, and other social issues that community leaders in both rural and metro areas had to address. Especially important is the recognition that these issues are intertwined and require collaboration among practitioners, public leaders, and academics trained in many disciplines. Community Development continues to provide an outlet for these discussions making the editing process somewhat complex.

The journal remains broadly based in coverage to include contributions by disciplines that might not be included in outlets with a narrower and more focused coverage. Consequently, this broader and cross-disciplinary perspective sometimes made it more difficult for community development to earn recognition as an independent academic and professional field of study by both scholars and practitioners. The CDS still wrestles with this issue and is working to define topics and a field of study that should be covered in academic programs designed to train practitioners. Likewise, a debate continues whether a professional certification is appropriate and, if so, what topics should be included to maximize the value to practitioners.
Throughout these discussions, Community Development (CD) as a journal promoted the credibility of CD professionals and helped them select policies and development strategies based on tested theories and approaches used elsewhere. Because CD is a peer-refereed publishing outlet, it is respected by scholars and its articles are cited in many other journals facilitating the advancement of knowledge on community development issues. As an outlet for interdisciplinary research and discussions, CD created its niche and continues to be used by a variety group of both academics and practitioners. Practitioners identify relevant issues and concerns while scholars explore and document contributing factors and potential remedies. This teamwork provides direction to CD practices and boosts the credibility of community developers as they address a myriad and changing set of issues in their practices.

**Changing Community Development Issues**

Defining community development in a precise manner is difficult but a suitable place to start is with the Principles of Good Practice (POG) endorsed by the Community Development Society (CDS), under whose direction Community Development is published.

- Promote active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives.
- Engage community members in learning about and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other impacts associated with alternative courses of action.
- Incorporate the diverse interests and cultures of the community in the community development process; and disengage from support of any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged members of a community.
- Work actively to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community.
- Be open to using the full range of action strategies to work toward the long-term sustainability and well-being of the community.

The Principles encompass a broad range of research and practice topics in CD. For many reasons, this breadth of topics has enabled CD to be a platform for active discussions among CDS members--scholars as well as practitioners. The topics covered have changed with both community development issues as well as interests by scholars/practitioners in researching these topics.

During the past several years, the authors (past editors of CD) compiled a list of articles published with the aim of generating a collection of representative contributions that CD made to the literature over five decades. Key researchers were surveyed and presentations with discussions were held at CDS conferences along with download counts in recent years. These efforts produced a list of articles by decade and topic that provide an overall picture of how issues changed, as seen by journal authors and contributors. The following discussion is based on those findings. Time and space do not permit an intensive discussion of these times; rather, the topics are listed along with references to articles during specific times that illustrate the thinking.

**Rural Development.** The journal began in an era that focused on addressing rural concerns through regional solutions. For example, the Appalachian Rural Development Act (1965) recognized concerns in many low-income areas and funded agencies to address them. The U.S. Economic Development Administration, under the Public Works and Economic Development Act (1965), took a broader approach to rural issues in general and with financial assistance for regions to design

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1 In 2006, the Journal of Community Development was renamed Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society to reduce confusion by rating agencies with the Community Development Journal published in the U.K.
overall economic development strategies. These and other issues motivated early discussions by CDS founders as well as researchers and affected the types of topics published in the journal.

Thus, during the 1970s and 1980s, much research and interest by practitioners centered on issues facing rural areas including those resulting from the farm crises in that period (Pulver, 1989). Rural planning approaches with a more organized and consistent set of strategies were also researched in an attempt to manage some of the rural concerns addressed. These concerns brought research that was reported in CD on a variety of rural related planning issues (Blakely & Bradshaw, 1982).

Research on these topics were further stimulated by passage of the federal Rural Development Act (1972) that promoted efforts to find ways to help rural areas design a new future. Grant funds and technical assistance by federal agencies such as HUD provided opportunities, often with resources for local agencies in rural areas to expand planning and other efforts to address local issues and concerns. These strategies, sometimes based on research published in CD as federal financial support, enhanced the need for solid research and a theoretical base for planning efforts in both rural and metro areas.

The topics published in the Journal expanded as the CDS clientele and interests broadened into finding new ways to address both urban and rural concerns and as community development became more accepted as a discipline based on solid research with a theoretical base and documented practices (Shaffer, 1990). The latter 1970s and early 1980s brought articles that integrated research with local development programs, examined participatory evaluation as a tool to bring community members into finding solutions, and looked for new approaches to long-term solutions (Goudy & Tait, 1979).

Consistent through these discussions was a need to focus on finding consistent theoretical foundations that explain the inner workings of community development to continue enhancing its respect and acceptance as a discipline to study and pursue (Bhattacharyya, 2003). This basic direction for CD continues as is true of most scholarly outlets that try to link scholarship and practice.

Journal at 25 Years. A useful way to trace the changing topics in community development, especially in the early years of the journal, is to examine issues summarized 25 years ago by Blair and Hembd for the 25th anniversary volume. The editors at that time intended the volume as a way to “reflect on and gauge the progress made in community development.” The theme of the 25th volume—“What We Have Learned,” was a way to “reflect on the past and build for the future in community development…[providing] a forum to share important insights gained by people participating in community development the past quarter century.” While many submitted manuscripts focused on theory, most emphasized practice. This emphasis reflects the ongoing purpose of the Journal: “to disseminate information on theory, research and practice” of community development. Manuscript reviewers for the special edition included practitioners, researchers, and community development educators. The reviewers emphasized the reflective nature of the 25th anniversary. The articles selected by the reviewers and editors were grouped into three broad categories: the community as an entity; the changing practice of community development; and development of small or rural communities.

It is an enlightening exercise to compare the three general themes of 25 years ago to community development in the 21st century. Community development, for instance, increasingly has taken an urban and neighborhood focus. The community, as the building block of society, which is part of the CDS Mission Statement, was examined in the first set of articles in the special edition. This emphasis has not changed in the subsequent 25 years. Authors explored the nature and structure of community development as a collective and inclusive collaborative process of the community residents.
The second set of articles examined both the practice and the process of community development, focusing on the facilitative role of community development practitioners. It is safe to conclude that the role of the community developer has changed in the community development process with the growth in professionalism and knowledge of practices.

While the Principles of Good Practice maintain their relevance, community development has become more complex. Several authors in the 25th edition anticipated that controversy would increasingly impact the practice of community development, as is clearly the case in the current environment. Other articles discussed ways that the profession of community development could be improved. The last general topic in the special edition addressed rural and small community development, a continued focus of the profession in its diamond anniversary. As we know, that is not the case even in light of recent population declines and economic stagnation in many rural areas that, in some cases, is challenging their continued viability.

The 25th edition editors concluded from the scope of the articles that the theory and practice of community development had made significant strides from the birth of the Community Development Society in 1969 to 1995, but admittedly more progress was needed in several areas. While much has been learned about community development since 1995, the scope of the profession has expanded to addressing urban issues and challenges, and the quality of community development research has contributed to a more robust set of applied theories of community development but essentially the same conclusion can be reached: we need to keep working and learning about community development.

Community versus Economic Development. The early economic development literature devoted much attention to job creation and especially the use of financial incentives to lure manufacturing and other high-paying industries. These jobs, in turn, would have local multiplier effects that would bring local development. Of increasing importance was investing in workers (human capital) through education programs and workforce development to increase their capacity thus making an area more attractive to private investment.

However, it also became clear that effective development practices required a strong community development focus, namely how to build and strengthen broader community participation and contributions to finding remedies (Green, 2008). Equally clear was that society had changed in activities according to the discussions by Putnam in Bowling Alone in 1995. Residents now engaged in different types of activities and membership/participation in traditional organizations was declining. Key to local development was to find new ways to engage these groups in community decision-making practices and betterment programs. With technology changes, residents spent less time in traditional group activities but, nevertheless, participated in other endeavors with special interest. In some respects, this contributed to a centralized decision-making “top-down” environment.

Community development practitioners recognized that under-engaged populations such as minorities, females, and other groups were important contributors to local decision-making. Residents were shifting in how they interacted with groups so new ways to engage these residents in decisions about community issues and projects were discussed in more detail as an essential component of the community development process to enhance social well-being. During the 1980s, CD articles described ways to better engage females and other groups in these processes (Lackey, & Burke, 1984; Scott & Johnson 2005).

Small Business Emphasis. In addition, economic development thinking shifted from focusing mainly on attracting large manufacturing plants to communities through incentives to finding...
ways to help local investors launch new businesses. Interest grew in finding ways to stimulate these efforts by focusing on entrepreneurship, small business finance, existing business assistance, and related approaches (Lichtenstein, Lyons, & Kutzhanova, 2004). These initiatives, supported by federal agencies such as the Small Business Administration and the Economic Development Administration, were part of a national focus on state and local initiatives.

Local Leadership. The growing professionalism of community development recognized that effective local leaders are key to community sustainability and prosperity. CD contained an active discussion (1990s and later) of how to generate local leaders as well as the effects or outcomes. Issues such as the existence of a community lifecycle and can it be altered through aggressive external and local intervention through active leadership were discussed in CD.

Importance of the Capitals. Social capital grew in importance as an essential ingredient of community development theory and practice, deemed crucial to effective local development--both business and industrial development. The five capitals: financial, natural, produced, human, and social were recognized as elements that could be actively built and maintained in communities and, in fact, are essential for sustainability. Discussions of ways to engage broad participation by residents in a community continued as an important part of effective community development (Emery & Flora, 2006). Strategies to deal with these issues were developed and empirically tested under different scenarios. Community development relies especially on building and maintaining social capital and these discussions were an important part of discussions in CD during the 2000s.

Measuring Outcomes. Measuring the outcomes from community development practices has always been an issue but seemed to become more prevalent in discussions with both academics and practitioners as necessary to enhance the credibility of community development in the 2000s. The multi-dimensional nature of community issues complicates measuring outcomes but without solid information regarding effectiveness of strategies it is more difficult for practitioners to select and implement effective approaches. Thus, the CD published many articles documenting the effects of development strategies to learn in which circumstances and scenarios they are effective and how they have a sound theoretical basis (Brennan & Brown, 2008).

Successful and lasting community change has been difficult to measure as well as to document strategies that have been effective. This concern has been pursued by academics, practitioners and agencies such as foundations that for many years invested in local groups interested in bringing about community change. (Blanke & Walzer, 2013) The growth in Collective Impact and similar approaches that provide a framework to bring lasting change was an outcome of these discussions. The debate on measuring community change and factors that are important will continue as new approaches are formulated and implemented by community leaders in efforts to make desired and sustained community improvements. These discussions are at the heart of overall community development practice and are key to maintaining the credibility that community development practices has earned over the years.

Summary
Community Development has provided an outlet for researchers on many aspects of community development. While its growth from two issues per year to five issues increased its standing as research journal, it still faces challenges as CDS works to increase its stature among other journals based on number of citations and other factors. These increases will attract additional authors and increase the flow and quality of submissions to the journal.

At the same time, CD must meet the interests of both academics and practitioners as well as a
diversity of associated disciplines. This will continue to be a challenge but it addresses the core audience for a journal such as Community Development and is its market niche. The range of topics included in CD will widen in the future as new topics become important. This trend is likely to make managing CD more difficult.

*Community Development* is a growing field of interest as the complexity of the managing projects increases. Workforces adjusting to demographic changes including an aging population, housing market changes as well as shrinking retail markets due to internet competition, and changes in transportation demands are just a few of the issues faced by community developers in the future.

*Community Development* also must adjust to competition from electronic publishing outlets that can respond to interest in specific topics quickly and inexpensively. Many, if not most, major journals offer electronic access to their publications. A growing number of private outlets can offer a quicker turnaround and if they are accepted in university or business promotion and advancement schemes, they will represent competition for journals such as CD.

Nevertheless, community development is increasing in professionalism and relevance for public policy development. *Community Development* has a definite market niche in serving both academics and practitioners. Combined with the presence of an annual conference on community and economic development that attracts an international audience, the future looks bright for both *Community Development* and CDS as an organization that continues to be a ready source of information about up to date and effective policies and practices.

**References**


Building Collaborative Governance and Community Resilience under Socio-spatial Rural Disparities and Environmental Challenges

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Keywords: Community; collaborative governance; inequalities; resilience

Abstract: Recent literature on socio-ecological and community resilience from sociologists, geographers, and anthropologists (among others) highlights social inequalities and disparities with particular focus on rural/urban dichotomies. While academics, practitioners, and governments suggest building different types of collaborative efforts and governance as adaptive responses to increasing environmental changes created by human development and/or climate change, these initiatives sometimes ignore and/or omit social and spatial inequalities in specific rural settings.

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The authors have disclosed that they have no significant relationship, or financial interest in, any commercial companies pertaining to this article.

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Introduction

Socio-ecological and community resilience have recently gained the attention of multiple disciplines due to the worldwide increment of environmental challenges and disturbances created by both anthropogenic (i.e. human development) and natural phenomena (i.e. climate change) (Wilson, 2012; Brown, 2014; Cretney, 2014; Thompson, 2019a). The concept of community resilience has become universally popular and used, as well as its diverse and multiple interpretations and indicators (see Wilson, 2012; Bergamini et al., 2013; Berkes & Ross, 2013), by both practitioners and scholars working with communities. How communities are socially capable of responding to environmental challenges is one of the main aspects of resilience. The sociopolitical capacity of communities to organize and collectively discuss and mobilize resources for adaptation to environmental risks and problems is a critical area explored by the resilience literature. Collaboration and collective actions through spaces for decision-making has become a critical aspect to consider and explore, by recognizing and acknowledging existing inequalities,
disparities, and heterogeneity of communities and their residents. Building collaborative governance implies creating and strengthening inclusive spaces for discussion and participation in local matters, such as environmental challenges. The analysis of relations of power within collaborative governance in communities is critical, because, rural communities’ residents may feel marginalized and/or exploited by unequal or unfair relations with actors from outside such as the market and/or the State (see Scott, 1998; Ashwood, 2018a, 2018b; Kelly & Lobao 2018; Leap & Thompson, 2018; May, 2018; Wuthnow, 2018; Carolan, 2019; Thompson, 2019a).

This article aims to link recent bodies of literature from sociologists, anthropologists, and geographers (among others) highlighting that inequalities and disparities not only are important within communities but also under unequal spatial distribution of resources, especially in rural contexts. We recognize there are multiple aspects of community resilience that can be considered or measured (see Wilson, 2012; Bergamini et al., 2013; Berkes & Ross, 2013), but we aim to contribute to ongoing discussions and debates on community resilience by proposing strategies and practices that contemplate critical aspects of inequalities, power, and disparities within and outside communities, especially in rural settings. First, the article conceptualizes community resilience and highlights the importance and main characteristics of collaborative governance. Secondly, we analyze and stress salient aspects of inequalities, disparities, power, and heterogeneity on building collaborative governance for community resilience. After analyzing existing literature and critical aspects of these themes, we propose strategic steps that can be considered by practitioners and scholars working on building community resilience through collaborative governance, addressing local inequalities and the empowerment of disadvantaged groups as well as overcoming spatial inequalities and barriers to successfully mobilize resources for community mitigation and/or adaptation to environmental challenges.

**Resilience and collaborative governance**

Not all the challenges and disturbances communities experience are negative (Wilson, 2012). They may represent unstable situations which imply decisive changes that are necessary and inevitable (Lerch, 2017), but they may not necessarily represent negative consequences for communities (Wilson, 2012). Rather than considering the way communities return to an original state or ideal equilibrium, as some scholars proposed for social and ecological systems (see Holling, 1973; Wilson, 2012; Walker & Salt, 2017), nowadays, both practitioners and researchers are considering resilience as how social and ecological aspects of communities are reorganized or rearranged in response to challenges, disruptions, or changes (Adger, 2000; Wilson, 2012; Lerch, 2017; Thompson, 2019a). Community resilience is currently and generally understood as communities’ capability and/or ability to cope with challenges and disturbances and to sustain economic, social, and environmental functions, identities, and structures that comprise them, without reducing the wellbeing of local residents and/or institutions (Adger, 2000; Folke, 2006; Berkes & Ross, 2013; Wilson, 2012; Lerch, 2017; Walker & Salt, 2017; Leap & Thompson, 2018; Thompson, 2019a). Community resilience is the process by which communities seek specific outcomes under expected or experienced socio- ecological disturbances or changes, which can be either good or bad (Cretney, 2014; Walker & Salt, 2017). Community resilience can be preventive (i.e. by reducing vulnerability) or reactive (i.e. adapting after disturbances have been experiences) (Wilson, 2012).

The capability of communities to cope with and adapt to challenges or disturbances depends, in great part, on their governance characteristics (i.e. actors involved and the nature of decision-making processes at local level). Social studies on resilience have recently focused on the importance of sociopolitical aspects of communities (Wilson, 2012), giving special attention to governance characteristics on how communities adapt to environmental challenges created by climate change or development (see Adger, Lorenzi, & O’Brien, 2009; Thompson,
2019a, 2019b). During recent decades, different aspects of governance have been explored and considered by both practitioners and scholars to analyze community resilience or how communities respond to disturbances. Consequently, a myriad number of studies have explored the role of communities’ social capital, multi-level and network governance, collaborative governance, and the creation of assemblages to deal with challenges and disturbances, among other topics (see Adger, 2000; Adger et al., 2009; Forney, Rosin, & Campbell, 2018; Thompson, 2019a). Although the existing literature on community resilience and governance differ by disciplines, methods, and approaches, a salient commonality is the importance of collaboration at the community level to address unexpected changes and challenges. Collaborative governance has become an important aspect of community resilience. However, collaborative efforts cannot ignore its complex and dissimilar characteristics, drawn and influenced by relations of power within and outside communities, and the un-equal opportunities they create for local residents to participate. As Wilson (2012) and Thompson (2019a) point out, more work is needed on these aspects of community resilience and governance.

The inclusion of participatory and collaborative tools into the community adaptive process needs to recognize the diversity of community participants, power dynamics, and the intersectionality of different identities and characteristics (Healey, 2006; Leap, 2018). A collaborative adaptive planning process using local knowledge is likely to provide effective alternatives for communities and contribute to the community becoming more adaptive and resilient over time (Innes & Booher, 2010). In order to build consensus and shared ideas in a collaborative adaptive and planning process, the process should provide opportunities for all participants to express and integrate ideas into the decision-making process (Innes & Booher, 2010). Collaborative processes are likely to produce effective change empowering individual and collective learning (Innes & Booher, 2010), but unequal existing relations of power must be acknowledged by participants. Thus, as an attempt to explore and deconstruct aspects of power in collaborative governance to build community resilience, we propose the following guiding questions: Who do and do not participate in decision-making processes to build community resilience? How do specific actors from within and/or outside communities influence local decisions to mobilize locally available resources? How are community decisions made? These questions guide this article, acknowledging and critically analyzing the importance and exceptionality of specific rural settings and how unequal relations of power vary by different historic, geographic, socioeconomic, cultural, and political characteristics that define each community and its residents. The analysis of how relations of power influence community responses to disruptions or challenges, implies to carefully focus on intersecting inequalities (Leap, 2018), local injustices, and (non)participation of marginalized and unrepresented groups in local decision-making processes, as well as on rural communities’ views and relations with outside groups and institutions—under unequal territories and rural/urban landscapes (Lobao, 2004; Harvey, 2006; Kelly & Lobao, 2018).

**Unequal Capabilities and Spatial Divides**

Studies from multiple disciplines on socio-ecological and community resilience (see e.g. Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Cretney, 2014; Fabinyi, Evans, & Foale, 2014; Ingalls & Stedman, 2016; Leap, 2018; May, 2018; Thompson, 2016; Atallah, Bacigalupe, & Repetto, 2019; Thompson, 2019a) address the importance of social and spatial inequalities, power, and heterogeneities, stressing how multiple worldviews, values and opinions, politics, skillsets, knowledge/s, and resources can contribute to community resilience. This large body of literature highlights critical aspects of community resilience when some groups and/or individuals are not included in decision-making processes and/or local adaptive responses. Furthermore, the use of a critical approach to the
different opportunities that local individuals, groups, and/or institutions have (Atallah et al., 2019) in participating in collective governance, is critical for the success of community responses to environmental disturbances and challenges (Thompson, 2019a).

Local collaborative governance implies collective agency or the capacity of groups or individuals to collectively decide and mobilize locally available resources or community capitals (Flora & Flora, 2013; Thompson, 2019a, 2019b). Community empowerment for adaption to challenges and disruptions (Thompson, 2016) is an important aspect of collaborative governance at local level. A large body of literature on community development, rural development, and food justice and sovereignty stress the significance of inequalities and community empowerment to make changes at the local level, with special attention to the inclusion of historically marginalized groups (e.g. women, peasants, migrant farmers and farmworkers, black residents, etc.) (see Chambers 1983, 1994; Allen, 2007, 2010; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011; Mares & Alkon, 2011). Equal opportunities for local actors to participate in collaborative governance to address community matters implies the empowerment of individuals, groups, and/or institutions that have been historically marginalized in specific settings; otherwise, local responses to address disturbances and challenges may create and/or reproduce unequal relations of power or socioeconomic, racial, and gender inequalities (among others). Acknowledging the importance of intersectionality to explore inequalities in rural contexts, it is also important to identify struggles and challenges of marginalized rural residents who may be represented as members of dominant groups (Leap, 2018; Carolan, 2019).

Analyzing and discussing alternatives for rural development, Robert Chambers used the phrase “putting the last first” (Chambers, 1983). We draw on Chambers’ (1983, 1994) and other scholars’ ideas of empowering local marginalized groups in rural contexts, but critically acknowledging that rural communities (as unique socio-ecological systems) are immersed in unequal relations of power with outside actors (i.e. individuals, groups, governmental institutions) who influence local availability of resources and decisions to address challenges and disturbances (Thompson, 2016; May, 2018; Thompson, 2019a).

Literature from rural sociologists, geographers, and anthropologists (among others) address socio-spatial inequalities with particular focus on rural/urban dichotomies and how local perceptions among rural residents, access to resources, and local decisions’ capabilities about community matters are influenced by communities’ relationships with outside actors and/or uneven development promoted by the State and/or the market (see Scott, 1998; Ashwood, 2018a, 2018b; Kelly & Lobao, 2018; Leap & Thompson, 2018; May, 2018; Wuthnow, 2018; Carolan, 2019; Thompson, 2019a, 2019b). A good number of studies have shown that uneven development has had different consequences on places and populations (see Lobao, 2004; Harvey, 2006; Bell, 2016; Kelly & Lobao, 2018; Wuthnow, 2018) impacting communities’ capabilities to respond to environmental challenges created either by development or nature. Nowadays, rural communities in particular experience multiple challenges caused and/or exacerbated by their exploitation, lack of resources, fewer opportunities and people, and dependency on outside institutions from both the market and the State (see Thompson, 2016; Ashwood, 2018a, 2018b; Wuthnow, 2018; Peters, 2019; Thompson, 2019a). The current realities of many rural communities trapped in unequal geographic landscapes that often benefit the allocation of capitals and resources in metropolitan areas cannot be ignored by practitioners working on community resilience or development. Therefore, local and socio-spatial inequalities are equally important.

By reviewing theoretical concepts and proposing ideas and practices, this article aims to reconcile existing gaps between bodies of literature stressing community resilience, collaborative governance, and both internal and external inequalities and disparities, especially in rural contexts. Drawing on existing gaps and existing bodies of literature, this article aims to identify
and highlight strategies and practices that can be considered by different stakeholders dealing with environmental challenges in specific localities, with special attention to the involvement of marginalized groups in local collaborative governance to build community resilience.

**Overcoming Disparities and Unequal Capabilities by Building Collaborative Governance and Community Resilience**

Disturbances and challenges faced by communities can be either slow (e.g. environmental pollution) or sudden (e.g. natural disasters). In order for communities to respond, they need to be aware of their risks. Community acknowledgment or recognition of environmental challenges can be a consequence of collective memory or previous experiences with hazards (Messer, Shriver, & Adams, 2015), or because environmental challenges or disturbances are observed by local residents (Thompson, 2018). Local collective actions to build collaborative governance require individuals’ and institutions’ willingness to collaborate and discuss common threats and/or interests related to environmental challenges. Therefore, local awareness of environmental challenges and risks is key for communities to respond. As Masterson et al. (2014) point out, it is very important for communities to know their hazard exposure and vulnerability and to start organizing (as the first step) for mitigation of potential problems or recovery after disturbances have been experienced (e.g. after tornados, hurricanes, etc.). Masterson et al. (2014) state the first step could involve forming a core of team of people who would eventually address the environmental problems and would try to connect to other groups, institutions, and/or individuals. Making connections and informing about potential environmental risks and/or recovery and adaptation is another key aspect for building collaborative governance, which can provide new opportunities for social interaction and decision-making. The involvement of local leaders of “faith-based, civic, and voluntary institutions that are trusted in the community are important points of connection” (Masterson et al., 2014, pp. 64-65), especially local actors working with vulnerable or marginalized groups or local residents. As we emphasized in previous sections of the article, involvement and participation of vulnerable and historically marginalized residents and groups is essential for the success of community mitigation and adaptation strategies. Lerch (2017) emphasizes “the power to envision the future of the community and build its resilience resides with community members” (Lerch, 2017, p. 17). Inclusiveness in local decision-making processes is a central aspect for building community resilience. However, it is critical for people working on community resilience to acknowledge and deconstruct aspects of politics, power, and inequalities (Cretney, 2014; Leap, 2018; Attallah et al., 2019; Thompson, 2019a) that are entailed in all structures of collaborative governance. Knowing the community to build community resilience (Masterson et al., 2014) by recognizing inequalities, disparities, and heterogeneities is a fundamental aspect not only to strengthen local collaboration but also to develop adaptive solutions and strategies. Knowing the community implies acknowledging structural difficulties and barriers that vulnerable and disadvantaged community residents and groups may experience in participating in local discussions and solutions about environmental challenges, but explicitly, giving them the chance to become active participants and local actors of change. Although recognition and acknowledgment of unequal relations of power is crucial for community resilience, especially for the empowerment of marginalized groups or individuals, discussing differences and/or barriers should be carefully managed by participants, otherwise, this process may be seen as exhausting for most participants who devote their time and work in search of solutions, especially after severe disturbances have been experienced (e.g. natural disasters).

Local solutions for building community resilience generally imply discussions about shared or common resources and how to resolve disputes by acknowledging different interests
While we recognize the importance of addressing local inequalities and disparities, we also suggest that it is imperative for local residents, groups, and institutions to *find a common ground* in how to deal with environmental challenges and disturbances experienced by their communities. As Mayer (2019) highlights in addressing causes and possible responses to climate change, it is very important to avoid distance and separation between individuals. Instead, it is critical for people to *build connectedness and sense of collectiveness* that could promote and facilitate compassion, empathy, and solidarity (Leap & Thompson, 2018; Mayer, 2019) among community members to solve environmental challenges that—differently—affect local residents. The conditions for the collaborative process could involve what Innes and Booher (2010) describe as DIAD (diversity, interdependency, authentic dialogue) where different stakeholders have diverse but interdependent interests. Authentic dialogue occurs when stakeholders are engaged with each other on a common mission, having equal ability to speak and to be listened to. The results of the authentic dialogue are reciprocity, relationship, learning, and creativity among the stakeholders. The outcomes of the collaborative process are the adaptations of the systems, which may include shared identities, shared meanings, innovations, and future interactions beyond the collaboration process and the actors involved (Innes & Booher, 2010; Leap & Thompson, 2018).

Collaborative governance for building community resilience not only implies the construction of local alliances and coalitions but also *building and strengthening outside relationships* with key actors who can provide or transfer important resources (e.g. scientific information, technology, etc.) for communities (Thompson, 2016, 2019a). Internal and external relationships and ties of communities, also called bonding and bridging social capitals, respectively, are equally important (Flora & Flora, 2013). Communities’ outside relationships are critical for the access to resources used for mitigation or adaptation. Therefore, it is important to critically analyze political aspects and power on how outside actors influence communities’ access—or not—to outside resources that can be key for whether and how communities deal with environmental challenges and risks.

As addressed in previous sections, communities’ capabilities to build resilience or to adapt to environmental disturbances and challenges is influenced by their—unequal—access and dependency on external resources (Thompson, 2016), especially in rural areas. However, the dependency on outside actors and resources can be overcome by *recognizing local strengths or actions that worked well in the past, and mobilizing locally available resources* or community capitals (Thompson, 2019b) through collaborative governance and alliances. David Harvey (2008) stresses the idea of the right to access and transform the natural and built environment of communities as a collective right to overcome spatial injustices or disparities created by the market and/or the State. Reclaiming natural and built environments through mobilization of locally available resources would imply seeking spatial justice (Soja, 2010) and the redistribution and access to resources by communities (Harvey, 1973). Collaborative governance not only includes local actors but also outside actors who can provide resources communities need. However, it is very important for outsiders (i.e. practitioners or scholars) to consider that local people should decide about the allocation of their resources based on their local needs and/or desires. It is important for researchers, policy makers, and practitioners from outside communities to *learn, acknowledge, and value the unique characteristics of rural settings* (Chambers, 1983, 1994; Leap & Thompson, 2018) to—together—explore how communities can reorganize and sustain their efforts to mitigate negative consequences or adapt to environmental challenges over time.
Conclusions
This article recognizes the importance and critical role of inequalities, power, and disparities that may exist within communities and in relation with outside actors. We suggest key aspects and strategies to overcome communities’ barriers or limitations, by building local collaborative governance and alliances within and outside communities. The diagram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the role of these aspects and strategies on the construction of collaborative governance and community resilience. Based on the analysis of existing literature and the critical aspects highlighted by this article, we believe the following strategies and practices could be contemplated and/or considered by practitioners and scholars working on community resilience especially in rural contexts:

- Create local awareness of environmental risks and problems.
- Start organizing local actors.
- Make local connections.
- Involve and promote participation of vulnerable and historically marginalized residents and groups.
- Include diverse individuals, groups, and institutions in local decision-making processes.
- Know the community.
- Acknowledge structural difficulties and barriers that differently impact local residents.
- Find a common ground and/or interests for discussions and solutions for environmental challenges and risks.
- Build connectedness and sense of collectiveness.
- Build and strengthen outside relationships.
- Recognize local strengths or actions that worked well in the past and could be replicated.
- Identify and mobilize locally available resources or community capitals.
- Learn, acknowledge, and value unique characteristics of each community.

Although we recognize that there may be other approaches and ideas that contribute to community resilience and equal opportunities for community members to develop their own strategies and solutions, we believe these strategies and practices can strengthen the creation of collaborative governance capable of reducing inequalities and disparities that internally and externally affect communities, especially in rural contexts.
References


For the 50th Anniversary Issue, *CD Practice* would like to highlight stellar books and publications by our CDS members, both new and classic! Thanks to all those who contributed.

**Building Strong Communities: Guidelines on Empowering the Grassroots**

Publisher: Red Globe  
Author: Steve Skinner  
Recommender: Alan Twelvetrees

This book contains useful tools, down-to-earth frameworks and practical methods, a valuable resource for working with communities. Building Strong Communities looks at building skills, assets and local leadership, supporting community groups and networks, promoting equal opportunities and diversity, and introduces a new ‘Wheel of Participation’. The author, Steve Skinner, MA, CIPD, CQSW, is an experienced community worker with an extensive track record of published writing.

Packed with examples, this book is a practical resource with a range of approaches to help plan and implement effective community support. A key focus of the book is on ‘empowering the grass-roots’ – building people, groups, organizations and networks. It explores the meaning of ‘strong communities’, provides a useful new definition and a framework for working with communities.

I nominate this brilliant book because it contains a wealth of experience, ideas and examples, combining both theory and practice, while drawing on recent research and current literature. It gives a fresh and up to date comprehensive description of the art of building community strengths and empowerment, based in the current context. It will be an important new resource for both students and practitioners.

ISBN: 978-1352007855


Publisher: NCRCRD  
Author(s): Hustedde, Ronald J., Ron Shaffer, and Glen Pulver.  
Recommender: Judith Stallman, University of Missouri

An easy to understand how-to manual of some basic community economic analysis. People hear words about the economic base or the trade area, but don't know what they mean and this provides definitions and ways to investigate what it is for your community. I have used this to teach undergraduates, graduates and also in extension.

**Community Economics: Linking Theory and Practice, 2nd ed.**

Publisher: Blackwell Publishing. 2004.  
Ron Shaffer, Steve Deller and Dave Marcuiller  
Recommender: Judith Stallman, University of Missouri

Basic text on local economic development theory, the role of government and analysis tools. This book (and the 1st edition) are widely in teaching rural and regional development policy, both as the text for a course or parts of it. It is used in interdisciplinary courses because it is accessible.

ISBN: 0-8138-1637-8

**Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation**

Publisher: Broadway Books  
Author: Jonathan Kozol  
Recommender: Phyllicia Manley, Community Development Specialist, Global Communities

The author of Savage Inequalities, a New York Times best-seller, and Rachel and Her Children, winner of the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award, tells the stories of a handful of children who have-
-through the love and support of their families and dedicated community leaders--not yet lost their battle with the perils of life in America's most hopeless, helpless, and dangerous neighborhoods. His powerfully understated report takes us inside rat-infested homes that are freezing in winter, overcrowded schools, dysfunctional clinics, soup kitchens. Rejecting what he calls the punitive, blame-the-poor ideology that has swept the nation, Kozol points to systemic discrimination, hopelessness, limited economic opportunities and New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's cutbacks in social services as causes of this crisis. While his narrative offers no specific solutions, it forcefully drives home his conviction: a civilized nation cannot allow this situation to continue.

Kozol interviewed ministers, teachers, drug pushers, children who have not yet given up hope. In the array of the communities that we work and live in there are individuals that have not given up hope and are determined to generate change. Whether a rural town that has lost its gusto along with a bustling population or the inner city that has see programs and services flee its area due to crime and violence, we must hold on to the hope and change that always awaits in working and striving for change together.

ISBN: 978-0770435660

**Community and the Politics of Place**

Publisher: University of Oklahoma Press
Author: Daniel Kemmis
Recommender: Dave Campbell, UC Davis

Drawing on his experience as a state legislator and mayor, Dan Kemmis's beautifully written book concisely summarizes how the Madisonian system has bred an adversarial political culture in America, while a common attachment and care for the actual places we live together can foster a more collaborative and constructive politics. The book concisely connects the big picture to the smallest details of local political life, offering a hopefully realistic picture of democracy. It contains a host of real world examples of efforts to build collaboration, offering lessons to community development practitioners and everyday citizens.

No one I know has written a book about community politics that is as accessible, readable, theoretically rich, and practically oriented. I taught classes using his book for over 20 years, and students never failed to appreciate and benefit from Kemmis's wise and patient approach to making change happen.

ISBN: 978-0806124773

**Practicing Community Development**

Publisher: University of Missouri Extension
Authors: Donald W Littrell & Doris P Littrell
Recommender: Doris Littrell, University of Missouri

This book combines theory and practice in approachable language for community practitioners and for use as a beginning textbook. It is written for people working at the community level.

ISBN: 978-0933842304

**Agricultural Landscapes: Seeing Rural through Design**

Publisher: Routledge
Author: Dewey Thorbeck
Recommender: Dewey Thorbeck, FAIA, FAAR

Rural landscapes are part of everyone's heritage and rural areas around the world are often viewed as special places with cultural, historical, and natural significance for people. The book emphasizes the importance of these rural sites and their connections to urban area with particular emphasis on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) as identified by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization to document and explore personal experiences, lessons learned, and implications for the future. The authors sponsored research work is focused on bringing design and design thinking
as a problem-solving process to rural and urban land issues.

With increasing world population and critical global issues of food security, water resources, renewable energy and wellness - human, animal, and environmental it is essential that urban and rural issues be connected and the Community Design Organization can be very instrumental in nurturing connections between urban and rural communities.

ISBN: 978-1138308183

Experiential Education for Community Development

Publisher: Greenwood Press, Inc.
Edited by Paul S. Denise and Ian M. Harris
Recommender: Linda Sunde, CDS Past President

This book is the third in a series of volumes of curriculum essays on the concepts, issues, and strategies of community development education and training. The series was conceived in the mid-1970s by the Education Committee of the Community Development Society and was based initially on the findings of a 1973 survey by the late Dr. Harry Naylor, then a member of the faculty on the Department of Regional and Community Affairs at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The majority of essay authors included in this book were members of the Community Development Society when they wrote their submissions. The community development experiences offered in this book are quite diverse. They encompass theory, practice, and research; are international in scope; include urban and rural experiences; are written by practitioners, academics and researchers. Many of the essays describe likely pre-cursors to current service-learning programs in communities and on campuses.

ISBN-0-313-26405-8

An Introduction to Community Development (2nd Edition)

Publisher: Routledge
Edited by: Rhonda Phillips and Robert H. Pittman
Recommender: Ronald J. Hustedde, University of Kentucky Dept. of Community & Leadership Development; Rhonda Phillips, Purdue University

This edited (2015) multidisciplinary book was authored by 20 prominent community development practitioners and scholars. They have addressed theoretical and practical basics of road-tested community development for practitioners and students in the field. It makes strong connections between academic study and practice from both private and public sector contexts.

The book is an essential for any undergraduate or graduate community development class. It covers a wide range of community development related basics including theory, economic development, the role of the arts in CD, social capital, neighborhood planning and development, measuring progress and the global economy. University of Kentucky students have given the book excellent reviews because of its breadth and easy to understand writing.

ISBN: 978-0415703550

Rural Communities: Legacy + Change

Publisher: Routledge
Authors: Cornelia Flora, Jan Flora with Susan Fey
Recommender: Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, University of Nebraska Extension

The book discusses the rural landscape and and then look at it through the lens of the community capitals. At the end of the book it links and discusses the community capitals to the global economy, consumption in America, governments, and opportunities for community change.
For me it has been a critically important text in my work as an Extension Specialist over the years. It is foundational. The examples that are woven into the work really make the concepts pop.

ISBN: 978-0813349718

Rural Poverty in the United States

Publisher: Columbia University Press
Edited by: Ann Tickamyer, Jennifer Sherman, Jennifer Warlick
Recommender: Ann Tickamyer. Pennsylvania State University

America's rural areas have always held a disproportionate share of the nation's poorest populations. Rural Poverty in the United States examines why. What is it about the geography, demography, and history of rural communities that keeps them poor? In a comprehensive analysis that extends from the Civil War to the present, Rural Poverty in the United States looks at access to human and social capital; food security; healthcare and the environment; homelessness; gender roles and relations; racial inequalities; and immigration trends to isolate the underlying causes of persistent rural poverty.

Contributors to this volume incorporate approaches from multiple disciplines, including sociology, economics, demography, race and gender studies, public health, education, criminal justice, social welfare, and other social science fields. They take a hard look at current and past programs to alleviate rural poverty and use their failures to suggest alternatives that could improve the well-being of rural Americans for years to come. These essays work hard to define rural poverty's specific metrics and markers, a critical step for building better policy and practice. Considering gender, race, and immigration, the book appreciates the overlooked structural and institutional dimensions of ongoing rural poverty and its larger social consequences.

It provides a comprehensive overview of poverty and inequality in rural communities, their sources and consequences as well as policy and practices to address these issues.

ISBN: 978-0231544719

A Disability History of the United States

Publisher: Beacon Press
Author: Kim E. Nielsen
Recommender: Anita Montgomery, CDS member

Beginning with the foundations of community development, An Introduction to Community Development offers a comprehensive and practical approach to planning for communities. Road-tested in the authors’ own teaching, and through the training they provide for practicing planners, it enables students to begin making connections between academic study and practical know-how from both private and public sector contexts. An Introduction to Community Development shows how planners can utilize local economic interests and integrate finance and marketing considerations into their strategy. Most importantly, the book is strongly focused on outcomes, encouraging students to ask: what is best practice when it comes to planning for communities, and how do we accurately measure the results of planning practice?

This newly revised and updated edition includes: increased coverage of sustainability issues, discussion of localism and its relation to community development, quality of life, community well-being and public health considerations, and content on local food systems. Each chapter provides a range of reading materials for the student, supplemented with text boxes, a chapter outline, keywords, and reference lists, and new skills based exercises at the end of each chapter to help students turn their learning into action, making this the most user-friendly text for community development now available. It provides both foundations and applications, bringing together research and practice. The book includes many contributions from practitioners and scholars in community development, and provides a guide to successful implementation of
Participatory Development Practice provides a theoretical and applied base for rethinking development practice that is deeply influenced by a ‘community’ development tradition having its roots in participation and dialogue, yet is broader than that. The book makes the link from the intra-personal to the community and beyond, into the inter-organizational and international domains now required of twenty-first century development work.

Kelly and Westoby draw on diverse traditions of thought and practice, including the written works of author-activists such as Gandhi, Freire, Fanon, and the unwritten oral traditions of female workers in Asia, and First Peoples. The result is a true and tested methodology using frameworks of good ideas born from practice wisdom, that have come from research and reflection on 70 years of combined experience.

I use this book at the set text for my community development practice courses at university, and also recommend it to practitioners in the field when I do professional development training. It provides an actual framework for practice that is really helpful to both beginning and experienced practitioners. That framework covers implicate method (starting with positioning self), micro method (developing purposeful and constructive relationships), mezzo method (forming small participatory action groups), macro method (structuring participatory work within formal organizations) and meta method (working with both local to global and global to local issues). It is a brilliant book and I highly recommend it.

ISBN: 978-1853399992