RESIDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN
A RURAL, AMENITY RICH AREA

A Dissertation in
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by
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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to use an interactional approach to document residents’ attitudes toward ongoing tourism development in a rural area that has and is currently experienced amenity migration. The results of this study were expected to build on previous literature by providing an interpretive and interactional approach to understanding resident attitudes towards tourism development and impacts associated with community development and amenity migration. In terms of an interactional approach, this study built on previous literature by examining how social interactions and community agency influenced resident attitudes towards ongoing tourism development. Because this study took place in a rural community with rich natural amenities, the concept of amenity migration was explored and suggestions regarding methodology and segmentation of residents were made. Further, this research provided rationale for implementing qualitative methods when trying to understand resident attitudes.
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In loving memory of Maebe.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Tourism development has been proposed as a viable economic tool for small, rural communities impacted by the loss of industry (George, Mair, & Reid, 2009; Vanhove, 2012). Rural communities that embrace tourism development, however, often experience unexpected change, which can have economic, environmental, and social implications. Researchers who have examined this change have generally done so in regions with natural amenities that can support tourism development, and their focus has been on the impacts associated with or residents’ attitudes toward tourism, either prior to or after its development. Researchers have not to my knowledge studied impacts in the context of on-going tourism development.

Research on the impacts of on-going tourism development in rural communities with natural amenities is necessary as they are experiencing an influx of people from other rural communities as well as large, urban areas. This movement of people is referred to as amenity migration, which, like tourism development, impacts rural communities. Researchers who have studied impacts associated with amenity migration have often employed the interactional approach, which is derived from interactional theory (Wilkinson, 1991). The interactional approach to community development examines the social relationships and interactions that exist within a community, and how those interaction shape community and community development. Rather than examining demographics, length of residence, and involvement in the industry as predicting variables of resident attitudes, the interactional approach examines social interactions,
organizations, advocacy groups, etc. and how they shape community. This approach is used to understand ways in which a community and its residents can increase positive impacts such as well-being and decrease negative impacts such as conflict among residents (Bridger, Brennan, & Luloff, 2010).

Matarrita-Cascante, Brennan, and Luloff (2010) used an interactional approach to examine elements of community agency necessary for sustainable, community-based tourism development. I used the same approach, but focused on resident attitudes toward on-going tourism development in a community experiencing amenity migration.

The primary purpose of this study was to use an interactional approach to document residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development in a rural area that is experiencing amenity migration. The specific research questions were:

RQ1: What are residents’ positive and/or negative attitudes toward tourism development?

RQ2: Do residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development differ based on type (i.e., year round vs. seasonal) and length of residence?

**Literature Review**

Among other things, residents’ attitudes toward tourism development may differ based on context (i.e., rural vs. urban) and stage of tourism development. Thus, this section begins with a review of the literature on attitudes toward tourism development and continues with a discussion of rural and community-based tourism, which gives insight to the study context. The review closes with an examination of both community development and amenity migration, including potential impacts.
Attitudes

Attitudes, their strength and ambivalence, and the degree to which they predict behavior have long been studied by social psychologists. Early on, attitudes were defined as “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (Allport, 1935, p. 810). Ostrom (1969), however, recognized that attitudes are multidimensional and consist of affective (i.e., general feelings towards an object); behavioral (i.e., obvious actions and verbal statements about a behavior); and cognitive (i.e., perceptual response or a belief towards an object) components. Attitudes also vary in strength and ambivalence (Ajzen, 2001). Strong attitudes are more likely to be stable over time and resistant to persuasion. Attitude ambivalence reflects both positive and negative dispositions toward an attitude object.

Tourism researchers’ perspective on attitudes

Attitudes toward tourism development (i.e., an attitude object) have been studied in many different contexts. Recently, however, there has been a shift from understanding resident attitudes toward tourism development on a large scale to examining attitudes at the community level. Specifically, more research is being conducted to understand “the various elements and characteristics within those communities that predict resident attitudes about the presence of the tourism industry” (McGehee & Andereck, 2004, p. 131).

According to Getz (1994), attitudes toward tourism development can be defined as, “a state of mind of the individual toward a value” and as “an enduring predisposition
towards a particular aspect of one’s environment” (p. 247). Definitions like this as well as attitude-based theories such as the theory of planned behavior (TPB: Ajzen, 2001) have been used to inform studies of tourists’ and residents’ attitudes (Han, Hsu, & Sheu, 2010; Han & Kim, 2010). According to the TPB (Ajzen, 2001), attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape a person’s behavioral intentions and actual behaviors. “People act in accordance with their intentions and perceptions of control over the behavior, while intentions in turn are influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms and perceptions of behavior control” (Ajzen, 2001, p. 43).

Using his own definition of attitude, Getz (1994) studied the affective and cognitive components of residents’ attitudes towards tourism development in Scotland. He hypothesized that attitudes and behavioral responses were dynamic and would evolve along with perceptions of tourism. He found that residents were generally positive about tourism. Adopting a more holistic approach, McGehee and Andereck (2004) addressed the role of demographics in residents’ attitude towards tourism. They found economic (e.g., increased jobs, local government debt), sociocultural (e.g., promotion of traditional festivals and crafts, changes in crime rates), and environmental (e.g., protection of resources, depletion of natural resources for tourism development) factors influenced attitudes towards tourism development.

Other researchers identified links between attitudes toward tourism development and quality of life (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010); positive attitudes related to perceived financial benefits (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005); differences in perceptions of tourism development among various stakeholder groups (Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009); and more. Lepp (2007), for example, examined resident attitudes
towards tourism development in Uganda. He found that residents had positive attitudes towards tourism development because they believed it created community development and markets for agricultural products, improved the economy, and brought random good fortune. Similarly, Liu and Var (1986) addressed resident attitudes towards environmental, economic and cultural benefits associated with tourism. They found many residents agreed that tourism attributed to the economy and the culture, but environmental issues were often overlooked. While there are variances in findings related to resident attitudes toward tourism development, researchers have agreed that educating residents about tourism development and its potential benefits could increase support for development.

**Attitude measurement in tourism**

The tourism impact attitude scale (TIAS: Lankford & Howard, 1994) has been used to measure attitudes towards tourism development in a community context. Using their TIAS, Lankford and Howard found that residents justified tourism development’s negative social and cultural impacts by citing its economic benefits.

Other researchers have used the TIAS, or a modified version of the scale, to assess differences in attitudes toward tourism based on residents’ characteristics (c.f., Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Ap & Crompton, 1998; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Harrill & Potts, 2003; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Rollins, 1997; Vesey & Dimanche, 2001; Wang, Pfister, and Morais, 2006; Williams & Lawson, 2001). In general, their results suggested that residents had a more positive attitude towards tourism if they received economic benefits from tourism.
Researchers also measured attitudes toward tourism development in different contexts. For example, Ap and Crompton (1998), Andereck and Vogt (2000), McGehee and Andereck (2004) and Wang et al. (2006) studied residents’ attitudes towards tourism development in rural and urban settings. In general, and regardless of setting type, they found residents’ attitudes toward tourism development played a crucial role in determining resident support of tourism development. However, the results may be misleading for two reasons. First, these studies were conducted with residents after tourism development occurred. In my review of the literature, few researchers have examined residents’ perceptions of tourism development that is extending the product life cycle of a destination. Tucker County, the setting for this study, has experienced tourism development in the past (i.e., ski resort development in the 1970s and 1980s), but is now working towards continued tourism development to extend the life cycle of the area and prevent it from going into decline.

Second, researchers have identified several independent variables that affect attitudes towards tourism development, including: length of residence, economic dependency on tourism, distance of tourism center from the respondents’ home, resident involvement in tourism decision making, birthplace, level of knowledge, level of contact with tourists, demographic characteristics, perceived impacts on local outdoor recreation opportunities, and rate of community growth. Thus, researchers studying tourism attitudes must account for time of tourism development, context (i.e., rural vs. urban), as well as other independent variables (e.g., length of residence, involvement in the community). In this study I accounted for involvement in the community and length of
residence when attempting to better understand residents’ attitudes toward tourism development in a rural context, i.e. Tucker County, West Virginia.

Further, research on residents’ attitudes towards tourism development clearly exists, but it has generally been conducted using a positivist approach. The limited use of interpretivist (i.e., qualitative) methods has resulted in little understanding of why residents have certain attitudes towards tourism development. Further, using data collection methods such as surveys has not allowed respondents to account for variations in context, i.e. discuss how their answers “depend” on a variety of factors. Surveys employing quantitative methods often require respondents to indicate their level of agreement with an item listed on a Likert scale. This approach does not allow respondents to elaborate upon their positive or negative or neutral attitudes towards tourism development.

Few researchers have used qualitative approaches to uncover residents’ attitudes towards tourism development, and those who have primarily conducted their research in developing countries. Researchers have employed photo elicitation, individual and focus group interviews, and more to uncover residents’ attitudes towards tourism development at the community level. For example, Bricker and Kerstetter (2000) and Nyaupane, Lew, and Tatsugawa (2014) used photo elicitation to understand Fijian and Nepalese residents and/or tourists’ attitudes towards tourism development.

Lepp (2007) used semi-structured individual interviews to uncover Ugandan residents’ attitudes towards tourism. He found that their attitudes are a result of their perception of positive change such as an increased agricultural market, increased income, and random good fortune. Using the same data collection method, Ebrahami and Khalifa
(2014) documented non-participative residents’ attitudes towards community-based tourism development. They found that time and financial restrictions; religious and cultural sensitivities; and relationships with current residents influenced attitudes towards tourism development.

Researchers have also used a mixed method approach to address residents’ and stakeholders’ attitudes towards tourism development. Mbaiwa and Stronza (2011), for example, attempted to understand resident attitudes towards tourism development and conservation in Botswana using secondary data and ethnographic field data. They found that when residents understood the economic benefits of tourism development and had collective action in planning tourism, their attitudes shifted from negative to positive. Chen (2015) studied stakeholders’ attitudes using personal and focus group interviews, as well as a survey. Results revealed that stakeholders’ attitudes toward environmental and cultural preservation most strongly influenced sustainable practices in tourism.

Overall, resident attitudes towards tourism development have been studied in rural and urban areas as well as developing and developed nations, and researchers have used a variety of methods to document how resident involvement can change the outcome/limit growth of community-based tourism development. Knowledge gained from these studies, however, has been limited by researchers’ reliance on quantitative methods and the time frame in which they collect data (e.g., pre- and post-development). There is a need to expand this line of research by documenting residents’ attitudes towards tourism development in a community with on-going tourism development using qualitative approaches.
Rural/community-based tourism

Rural tourism development in the United States has been viewed as an appealing alternative to mass tourism (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). It has also been attributed to individuals’ psychological need for cultural attachment and nostalgia and more leisure time. According to George et al. (2009), people living in urban areas were losing their cultural identities and individuality. This led to “increased desires for ‘escapism’ and ‘search for meaning’ in one’s life; people sought experiences to satisfy these desires” (p. 7). Rural tourism theoretically allowed urban dwellers to reconnect with rural areas and create a sense of nostalgia. In addition, in the United States and Canada the amount of disposable income and leisure time has grown, which has increased visitation to rural areas (George et al., 2009). In response, economically depressed rural areas adopted tourism as a development tool in the hope that they could once again become economically viable places to live and work.

To be sustainable, rural community-based tourism requires the involvement of community residents in the planning and development of tourism products (Hall, 1991). Involving residents in the process likely increases their support for tourism development (Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990), but this response depends on a number of variables, including the role tourism played in the current economic status of a community. For example, Allen, Haefer, Long, and Perdue (1993), who examined residents’ attitudes toward rural tourism and recreation development in 10 rural Colorado communities, found resident attitudes toward tourism development were more positive in communities with high economic activity and high tourism development. Further, residents living in communities with low economic activity and low tourism development were also positive
toward tourism development. However, residents living in communities with high economic activity and low tourism development were found to be stable and therefore less likely to seek out tourism as a means for development. Allen et al. found residents living in communities with low economic activity and high tourism development were discouraged because tourism is currently not having a positive economic impact on their community.

Focusing on trends in tourism development, Long, Lane, Gartner, and Lime (2000) found consumers were moving away from vacationing in resort destinations and instead wanted to explore new opportunities, including visiting rural areas. Long et al. also recognized an increase in residents’ acceptance of tourism as a form of development in rural areas. Wilson et al. (2001) documented factors that helped rural communities successfully develop tourism and associated entrepreneurial opportunities. They found that a community approach to tourism development was crucial and that business owners and other stakeholders needed to work collaboratively for a tourism product to be successful.

While various researchers, including George et al. (2009), suggested there may be positive economic outcomes from tourism development in rural communities, researchers have long questioned the validity of this assertion. Thus, researchers have begun to use different theoretical constructs to guide their studies. One example is stakeholder theory, which has been used to guide much of the rural tourism development research in the United States. This theory suggests that members of the community in various leadership roles are “resident stakeholders.” Researchers have adopted stakeholder theory to guide their examination of stakeholder’s perceptions and attitudes towards tourism.
development (c.f., Allen et al., 1993; Dixon, 2016; George et al., 2009; Long et al., 2000; Wilson et al., 2001). Viable alternatives to using stakeholder theory as a guiding framework for studies of rural residents’ attitude toward tourism development are amenity migration theory and the interaction approach.

Community development, the interaction approach, and amenity migration

According to Wilkinson (1991), community development is a dynamic concept. There are ecological, organizational, situational and other forces that contribute to the development of a community.

Community development is always purposive… Community development…[,] as an expression of a particular purpose, has distinctive origins and is likely, therefore, to have distinctive effects – effects that cannot be understood apart from an understanding of the elemental bond of interaction among people who live together. (Wilkinson, 1991, p. 93)

Building on Wilkinson’s definition of community development, several costs and benefits associated with community development have been researched; however, community development is usually viewed as positive and purposive, particularly with respect to the relationships that develop between people and their capacity for sustained social action (Brennan, 2007). Therefore, studying the interactions between and the social actions of residents in a community has helped to understand community development, particularly if researchers use an interaction approach.

According to Bridger et al. (2010, p. 2), “[the interaction approach] focuses on local citizen interaction, mobilization, and residents working together as they address
place relevant matters.” It is an approach that has been widely used to understand community development, community agency, community field, and community action. Community agency refers to the “adaptive capacity” that gives community members the ability to “manage, utilize, and enhance those resources available to them in addressing local issues” (Bridger et al., 2010, p. 5). The community field is comprised of residents, businesses, organizations, and agencies that exist whereas “[c]ommunity action refers to the process of building social relationships in pursuit of common community interests and maintaining social life” (Bridger et al., 2010, p. 6).

Researchers have used the interaction approach to study communities and their development (Bridger et al., 2010; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010). Humphrey (1959) and Wilkinson (1970) introduced the interaction approach in an attempt to understand whether leaders in small towns have the ability to influence the local economy and demographic growth. They found that local participants (business owners; recreation, tourism, and forestry professionals; and other stakeholders) could influence local growth. Humphrey and Wilkinson found community action and actual growth were positively correlated. In this case, growth was measured through local taxes, business development, and development of local services.

Brennan (2007) used the interaction approach to assess community development in the west of Ireland. He found the depth of community engagement and participation, and the factors shaping these processes, included individual action, social interaction, social ties and networks, and community attachment. Brennan and Luloff (2007) then examined differences between Brennan’s findings in Ireland and additional findings in Pennsylvania. They found that when residents had positive attitudes towards other
community members, there was also an increase in community and greater awareness of the needs and social opportunities within their respective communities.

While rural sociologists have used the interaction approach to assess community development, few researchers have adopted the approach to understand tourism development. One exception is a study conducted in La Fortuna, Costa Rica by Matarrita-Cascante et al. (2010). They examined the “social interaction elements leading to sustainable practices in a tourism context” (p. 736). They built on the concepts of community agency and community field to study how interactions among stakeholders and community members led to the development of sustainable tourism in the region. By conducting key informant interviews and using participant observation, the researchers found that sustainable development could occur within small communities.

Regardless of the approach used to study tourism development in communities, researchers have generally accounted for length of residence, which more recently has been encapsulated in the concept of “amenity migration.” Many rural communities in the United States are in the process of “rural restructuring” (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). Part of their restructuring includes embracing an influx of new residents, which is a result of ex-urbanization (the movement of persons from an urban area to a rural area) or amenity migration (the movement of persons to an area with rich, natural amenities) (Cadieux & Hurley, 2011).

Amenity migration is “the purchasing of primary or second[ary] residences in rural areas valued for their aesthetic, recreational, and other consumption-orientated use values” (McCarthy, 2008, p. 130). It can result “…in significant changes in the ownership, use, and governance of rural lands, as well as in the composition and
socioeconomic dynamics of rural communities” (p. 303). While there is ample literature on amenity migration in international settings (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011), little is known about amenity migration to rural areas within the United States, particularly rural areas undergoing tourism development. Exceptions to this include research conducted in the American West (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008; Smith & Krannich, 2000) and the Outer Banks of North Carolina (Johnson & Beale, 2002). The following review of the amenity migration literature was limited to studies conducted in the United States.

According to Taylor (2011, p. 324), who reviewed research regarding exurbia and amenity-seeking residential movement to rural areas, “exurbia captures the phenomenon of very low-density, amenity-seeking, post-productivist residential settlement in rural areas. Exurbanites, the inhabitants of… ‘exceedingly low-density area[s],’ are city people who have deliberately chosen the rural landscape as a setting for their homes.” Taylor found that sociological, economic, and ecological factors typically motivate exurbanites to move to rural areas. And, their migration can potentially lead to further recreation and tourism development in the area, as well as economic, environmental and/or social impacts.

Negative and positive impacts from amenity migration generally occurred when the population increased rapidly and exponentially (Cadieu & Hurley, 2011; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Kruger, Mazza, & Stiefel, 2008; Moss, 2006; Smith & Krannich, 2000). These impacts, categorized as economic, environmental, or social (Abrams, Gosnell, Gill, & Klepeis, 2012; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011), are discussed in the remainder of this section.
**Economic impacts**

There are multiple costs and benefits associated with amenity migration to rural areas (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011). For example, the cost of land, property values, and the general cost of living could increase. With the increased cost of land comes increased taxation, which longer-term residents may not be able to afford (Kruger et al., 2008). Further, traditional practices and jobs (e.g., farming and/or industry) may no longer generate the revenue necessary to maintain livelihoods. Gosnell and Abrams cited cases where newer residents set up farms that were subsistence- rather than production-oriented and ended up using resources that displaced longer-term residents.

Economic benefits associated with amenity migration included more jobs, a better infrastructure, and the potential for a multiplier effect. Jobs, some of which may be non-traditional, were often created to meet the needs of newer residents. In addition, due to the increased tax base from newer residents as well as job creation, communities often had more financial resources to improve the infrastructure. Finally, and perhaps most notably, the potential for the multiplier effect existed. Amenity migration happened in areas with rich, natural resources and with the potential to develop recreation and tourism businesses. Visitors and residents bought products and services from these businesses. The owners of recreation and tourism businesses then invested the money they earned back into the community.

**Environmental impacts**

There are environmental benefits and costs associated with amenity migration to rural areas (Abrams et al., 2012). One benefit is the increased protection of natural
resources. Researchers found that newer residents showed as strong a sense of place attachment as longer-term residents (Smith & Krannich, 2000). This may be because newer residents were intentionally moving to amenity rich areas. Newer residents were also interested in protecting public lands and other natural amenities for recreation, which could include an enhanced number of recreation facilities, better signage, and an improved infrastructure in parks and protected areas. Gosnell and Abrams (2011) recognized the benefits associated with the renovation of communities where industry and natural resource extraction were once the main economic drivers. For example, removing or renovating dilapidated buildings once used for industrial purposes could result in cleaning and visually improving the surrounding natural resources.

Environmental costs to amenity migration included increased pressure on natural resources such as water, land use, and animal life in the area. Rapid growth in particular has also been shown to lead to competition for agricultural resources and issues associated with land use. For example, in the American West, fire management emerged as an important factor to consider while examining amenity migration (Charnley, McLain, & Donoghue, 2008). Often, amenity migration led to discussion of policy as well as surrounding natural resource development and/or protection. Charnley et al. (2008) concluded that community involvement in the protection of public lands was crucial, especially in the context of amenity migration. Further, increased population in rural areas led to an increased need for community amenities and resources, which placed pressure on an already challenged infrastructure.
Social impacts

The most often cited changes associated within amenity migration have been linked to the social structures within communities (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Jobes, 2000; McCarthy, 2008; Smith & Krannich, 2000). The costs associated with amenity migration often involved a culture clash between newer residents and longer-term residents, and permanent residents and second-home owners. Issues between newer residents and longer-term residents generally revolved around differences in worldviews, values, and morals. This was particularly true in areas with rapid in-migration, which at times introduced a change in the political climate. Issues between residents and second-home owners, however, were generally linked to second-home owners’ limited involvement in the community and awareness of their environment (Hao, Long, & Kleckley, 2010).

The benefits associated with amenity migration included population growth as well as an increase in business opportunities and competition, which could lead to an increase in the quality of products and experiences. There was also potential for an increase in social interaction, which Wilkinson (1991) argued offered an increase in community well being.

Amenity migration had the potential to create conflict regarding economic, environmental, and social change within a community. It was therefore important to understand this conflict and how to best mitigate it. I chose to use an interactional approach to document residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development in a rural area that has or is experiencing amenity migration.
Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to use an interactional approach to document residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development in a rural area that has and is currently experienced amenity migration. The results of this study were expected to build on previous literature by providing an interpretive and interactional approach to understanding resident attitudes towards tourism development and impacts associated with community development and amenity migration. In terms of an interactional approach, this study built on previous literature by examining how social interactions and community agency influenced resident attitudes towards on-going tourism development. Because this study took place in a rural community with rich natural amenities, the concept of amenity migration was explored and suggestions regarding methodology and segmentation of residents were made. Further, this research provided rationale for implementing qualitative methods when trying to understand resident attitudes.
Chapter 2

Research Methods

A qualitative approach (i.e., community and participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and collection of secondary data) was used to address the study purpose. This chapter includes a description of the study setting followed by a discussion of the data collection methods.

Study setting: Tucker County, West Virginia

Tucker County, West Virginia provided a unique context to study residents’ attitude toward tourism development because: 1) it was rural, 2) there was previous and on-going tourism development, and 3) community action was occurring in response to tourism development.

The West Virginia Division of Tourism is responsible for cultivating a viable “…travel and tourism industry through creation of jobs, stimulation of investment, expansion of current tourism businesses and promotion of a positive state image, thereby improving the way of life for West Virginians” (West Virginia Division of Tourism, 2015, p. 2). In 2010, West Virginia’s tourism industry generated $4.27 billion in direct spending, which supported 44,400 jobs (West Virginia Department of Commerce, 2015). This spending was not distributed equally throughout the state.

Located in the Potomac Highlands region of West Virginia, Tucker County is home to ski resorts, a state park, and a national forest. It is a rural area that has not yet been a primary beneficiary of the dollars and jobs generated by the state’s tourism
industry, in part because its visitation is seasonal and its infrastructure is lacking. Responsibility for promoting the County lies with the Tucker County Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCCVB). It promotes outdoor recreation opportunities year-round including trekking, hiking, skiing, and other winter sports. The TCCVB also promotes festivals and events that celebrate the local music scene, arts, and the natural resources abundant in the County.

Tucker County has five incorporated communities (Davis, Hambleton, Hendricks, Parsons—County seat, and Thomas) (Table 2.1) and over twenty unincorporated communities (e.g., Hannahsville, Red Creek, St. George).

Table 2.1 Tucker County incorporated community population breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>U.S. Census Bureau 2012 Population Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambleton</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendricks</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsons</td>
<td>1,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,141</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the United States Census Bureau (2017), from 2000 to 2015 there was a 4.8% decline in the number of persons living in the County (i.e., 7,321 to 6,966). This decline was evident primarily with persons under 18 years of age. Persons 65 and over increased by 5.4% over the 10 years. While there was a slight decline in population, the number of housing units increased by 15.6%, suggesting that there may be a growing second-home market in the County (Table 2.2).
Table 2.2 Population and housing data for Tucker County: 2000-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population estimates, 2015</td>
<td>6,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population estimates, 2000</td>
<td>7,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population, percent change 2000-2015</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years, 2015</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years, 2000</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons under 18 years, percent change 2000-2015</td>
<td>-3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 65 years and over, 2015</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 65 years and over, 2000</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons 65 year and over, percent change 2000-2015</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing units</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing units, 2015</td>
<td>5,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing units, 2000</td>
<td>4,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing units, percentage change 2000-2015</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to an economic impact study conducted for West Virginia by Dean Runyan Associates (2013), total direct travel spending in the Potomac Highlands region, which includes Tucker County, increased by $42 million between 2004 and 2012. This resulted in more local taxes—$1.4 million in 2004 to $3.8 million in 2012. Total direct travel spending was likely derived from tourists visiting Davis, Parsons, Thomas and Canaan Valley, whose aspects (e.g., campgrounds, trails) of its protected lands (e.g., Monongahela National Forest, Dolly Sods Wilderness Area, Blackwater Falls State Park, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, and others) are promoted by the TCCVB.

Because the primary focus of the TCCVB is on drawing tourists to Davis, Parsons, Thomas, and Canaan Valley, they were the communities from which the initial sample was drawn. Short descriptions of each of the four communities follow.
Davis: One of the major attractions in the County is Blackwater Falls State Park, which is accessible through Davis. The community is also home to a number of locally owned restaurants, shops and a craft brewery.

Parsons: Parsons is the county seat and the most populated community in the County. While there is not as much tourism development in this community, residents may have been involved indirectly through politics, etc., in tourism and may have experienced the effects of tourism as the rest of the County develops.

Thomas: Thomas is connected to Davis and many people referred to the two communities as one. The main street of Thomas (i.e., Highway 32) has a popular music venue, coffee shops, and is home to a budding artist community.

Canaan Valley: Partially located in Davis, Canaan Valley is known for its natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. Canaan Valley and the surrounding area is home to Canaan Valley Resort State Park, Timberline Four Seasons Resort, Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, parts of Dolly Sods Wilderness Area, and other protected lands. The two resorts are popular ski destinations offering winter and summer activities.

Within the past 15 years, these communities experienced changes in their population (younger families moving in) and in tourism development. In response to these changes, several community advocacy groups have emerged to help develop small
businesses, increase housing opportunities, promote local interests, and promote the overall health and wellbeing of community members (see Table 2.3 for a list of community organizations).
Table 2.3 Board-run advocacy groups in Tucker County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>About</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ArtSpring, est. 2011 (6 members)</td>
<td>ArtSpring promotes and cultivates the arts in public life and presents a Memorial Day weekend festival of the arts in the highlands of Tucker County, WV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of the Highlands Trail System, est. 2010 (14 members)</td>
<td>The Heart of the Highlands Trail System project is a non-profit 501(c)3 stakeholder organization. The Heart of the Highlands Trail System project will connect the non-motorized, multi-use trail systems of five land management agencies in Tucker County, West Virginia into a comprehensive, landscape oriented, environmentally sustainable, multi-use trail system that is accessible to the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Laurel Learning Cooperative (12 members)</td>
<td>Mountain Laurel is committed to: Providing an atmosphere where learning is engaging, challenging, and meaningful. Preparing students for a lifetime of civic engagement and close connection to their community. Equipping students with 21st century technological, communication, and critical thinking skills. Helping children become independent, creative scholars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Historic Thomas (7 members)</td>
<td>New Historic Thomas is a 501(c)3 non-profit community group dedicated to revitalizing the City of Thomas by preserving its history, cultural heritage, and resources that make the city unique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsons Revitalization Organization (PRO) ON TRAC, est. 2001</td>
<td>The mission of PRO ON TRAC is to achieve historic preservation and downtown revitalization by stimulating economic growth, enhancing Parsons’ core assets, and promoting Parsons as an appealing and vibrant place to live, work, and visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potomac Highlands Food &amp; Farm Initiative (PHFFI), est. 2013 (10 members)</td>
<td>PHFFI is a non-profit organization with the mission to increase access to quality food and farm products while assisting small farmers and producers in building their agricultural businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker Community Foundation, est. 1989 (35 members)</td>
<td>Tucker Community Foundation is a tax-exempt public charity that serves 8 counties in North Central WV and Garrett County, MD. Since the organization was formed in 1989, it has granted more than $6 million. In 2013 TCF launched the Potomac Highlands Food &amp; Farm Initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker County Cultural District Authority, est. 2013 (7 members)</td>
<td>Promotes the cultural, artistic, historical, educational, and recreational opportunities available in Tucker County, increasing tourism and economic opportunities in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tucker County Development Authority, est. 1980 (20 members)</td>
<td>“Committed to encouraging economic growth and opportunity in the area, to enhancing and maintaining economic development, and to preserving our values and heritage.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data collection

To address the purpose of this study, I conducted field research in Tucker County (Creswell, 2013). This approach allowed me to focus on residents’ and stakeholders’ perspectives on the development and change occurring in Tucker County. Prior to doing this, however, I acknowledged and controlled for my biases as a researcher.

Controlling for researcher bias

I became familiar with the area during three short visits to Thomas and Davis and the recreation lands surrounding them. During these visits the communities and their growth due to tourism development intrigued me. Without having any in-depth knowledge about the area or its history, I began asking questions and looking up historic data online. The results of this search, in combination with my visits to the communities and surrounding recreation lands, resulted in strong opinions regarding current and future development as well as its potential impacts. Because I had these opinions and potential biases I had to put them aside during this study. I accomplished this in a number of ways. First, I generated a questionnaire based on questions presented in interactional field theory and resident attitude literatures. Further, I vetted these questions with the director of the TCCVB and the chair of my dissertation committee (who had never been to Tucker County). Second, the interview guide was followed closely to eliminate bias during the interview process. Third, the chair of my dissertation committee listened to the results of the first two interviews to ensure that I was objective and did not show any bias throughout the process. She repeated the process with the remaining interviews. This type of triangulation (Creswell, 2013) allowed for some control of researcher bias.
Data collection procedures

Given the theoretical underpinnings of this study and my decision to adopt a qualitative approach to data collection, I chose to utilize: (1) participant observation and secondary data collection, (2) in-depth interviews with resident stakeholders, and (3) focus group and individual interviews with residents.

Participant observation and secondary data collection. Participant observation and secondary data collection were employed to obtain information about four communities in Tucker County (Davis, Parsons, Thomas, and Canaan Valley), including their local organizations and forms of development. According to Denzin (1989), participant observation can be used to help researchers better understand issues within the community. Thus, over the course of the interview process I observed daily activities and participated in casual conversations with residents in the four communities. In-line with Matarrita-Cascante’s (2010a) work, I also reviewed local news sources and other secondary data related to the four communities (e.g., census, statistical information). The secondary data were collected while I was in the community conducting key informant and focus group interviews. By observing and having informal discussions with residents, reading their local newspapers, and perusing other local information, I gained a better understanding of their general attitudes towards tourism development in the area as well as the geographic boundaries and social communities that existed within Tucker County. The results allowed me to: (a) inform the second phase of data collection (i.e., in-depth interviews) and (b) provide further context for the study and data analyses.
In-depth interviews with resident stakeholders. Brennan, Luloff, and Finley (2005) suggested that semi-structured interviews “[provide] information that would not have been evident from other research techniques that rely on surveys or secondary data” (p. 782). Such interviews proved particularly useful when conducted with key informants (Buta, Brennan, & Holland, 2012) who were knowledgeable about the assets in a community.

Further, gaining knowledge of key informant thoughts about their communities provided more useful data than secondary data alone. Key informants in this study were well known individuals residing in Tucker County who were generally acknowledged by other resident leaders as knowledgeable and active community members. They typically held formal and informal leadership positions on the city council and with advocacy groups, were business owners, etc. The director of the convention and visitors bureau suggested initial informants. Key informants in this study were referred to as “resident stakeholders.”

The semi-structured interviews opened with a description of the respondents’ residential community and their involvement with the community. Requesting a description of the residential community helped me to further understand the various communities within Tucker County. These questions, which were adapted from an instrument created by Brennan (2007), were followed by questions about amenity migration (Smith & Krannich, 2000); community agency (Brennan, 2007); and attitudes toward tourism development (Lankford & Howard, 1994). These questions were modified to be more manageable in a qualitative, open-ended format. For example, Brennan’s (2007) question, “In general, how would you describe your level of
involvement in community or local area activities?” was modified to, “In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in your group activities/community?” All of the original and modified questions can be found in Table 2.4. See Appendix A for the resident stakeholder interview guide. Justification each question follow.

“Do you take part in any kind of group activity, outside of work, with other people in your community? What kind of activities?” and “In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in your group activities/community?” The first two questions were asked to gain an understanding of respondent’s perceived level of involvement in the community. Beyond their involvement in government, elected roles, and advocacy groups, these questions brought to light respondent’s leisure activities and how they interact with others in the community who may or may not have been a part of the same advocacy groups or organizations.

“What is happening in terms of growth, development, and change in your community? Where specifically are growth, development and change patterns most evident?” The purpose of these questions was to gain an understanding of where the respondents believed the area was developing, and what type of development and changed was occurring. This type of development could be perceived as an impact associated with tourism development (either positively or negatively).

“Have you seen a change in the population in Tucker County? If yes, in what ways do you think the population is changing? When did these changes occur? What do you think is causing this change?” These questions addressed issues related to amenity migration and whether or not residents saw a change in the population makeup of Tucker County during the time in which they resided in the area.
“Do you think there is infrastructure development/ industry occurring in Tucker County? If yes, have the results been positive or negative? In what ways have these changes had positive consequences for residents in Tucker County? In what ways have the changes had negative consequences?” These questions sought to understand whether or not the economic system in Tucker County is shifting, and whether or not residents perceive that shift to be positive or negative. Previous research has cited economic change as an impact associated with amenity migration (Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Kruger et al., 2008) and tourism development (Liu & Var, 1986).

“What do you think about the new highway coming into the area? What do you believe the impact of that highway on development? Positive or negative?” After conducting the initial interview with the director of the TCCVB, this series of questions was suggested because the completion of Corridor H had the potential to bring in substantial change to the community. This highway could have brought an increase in tourism to Tucker County and is an important factor to consider when understanding potential impacts and associated attitudes.

“During this same time period, do you know of any actions taken by public officials, local groups, or citizens to attract business and industry, or to increase jobs and income for County residents?” The purpose of this question was to understand who residents thought were responsible for the change and development occurring in Tucker County. If, in fact, development is community-led, this may have led to positive attitudes towards tourism development (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997).

“How important are tourism and other recreation-based activities to the economy of Tucker County? How has tourism’s contribution to the local economy shifted over
time? How do you think it will shift in the coming years?” Similar to the questions regarding infrastructure development in Tucker County, these questions sought to understand the economic importance of tourism and recreation in the County and whether or not the level of economic importance has shifted over time.

“Who do you think has the ability to influence tourism decision-making in Tucker County? Which groups (local, state, regional, etc.) are supporting tourism development? How?” Lankford and Howard (1994) suggested that a resident’s ability to influence tourism decision-making is an important factor influencing resident support for tourism development.
Table 2.4 Key informant interview guide questions and adaptations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Question (Citation)</th>
<th>Modified Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you take part in any kind of group activity, outside of work, with other people in your community? (Brennan, 2007)</td>
<td>Do you take part in any kind of group activity, outside of work, with other people in your community? What kind of activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in community or local area activities? (Brennan, 2007)</td>
<td>In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in your group activities/community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is happening in terms of growth, development, and change in this community and nearby areas? (Matarrita-Cascante &amp; Luloff, 2008)</td>
<td>What is happening in terms of growth, development, and change in your community? Where specifically are growth, development and change patterns most evident?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the population changing, in terms of both size and composition? What factors do you think are the most important causes of these changes? How long have these patterns of change been going on in this community/area? In what ways have these change patterns shifted over time? (Matarrita-Cascante &amp; Luloff, 2008)</td>
<td>Have you seen a change in the population in Tucker County? Yes - In what ways do you think the population is changing? – When did these changes occur? What do you think is causing this change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is happening in terms of growth, development, and change in this community and nearby areas? [CVB suggested specific questions regarding infrastructure following the growth/development question]</td>
<td>Do you think there is infrastructure development/industry occurring in Tucker County? Yes - Have the results been positive or negative? In what ways have these changes had positive consequences for residents in Tucker County? In what ways have the changes had negative consequences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested question from the CVB</strong></td>
<td>What do you think about the new highway coming into the area? What do you believe the impact of that highway on development? Positive or negative?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.4 Key informant interview guide questions and adaptations, cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Original Question (Citation)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Modified Question</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During this same time period, do you know of any actions taken by public officials, local groups, or citizens in the area of local economic development? That is, actions involving things like efforts to attract business and industry, or to increase jobs and income for area residents? (Matarrita-Cascante &amp; Luloff, 2008)</td>
<td>During this same time period, do you know of any actions taken by public officials, local groups, or citizens to attract business and industry, or to increase jobs and income for County residents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important are tourism and other recreation-based activities to the economy of this community and nearby areas? (Matarrita-Cascante &amp; Luloff, 2008)</td>
<td>How important are tourism and other recreation-based activities to the economy of Tucker County? How has tourism’s contribution to the local economy shifted over time? How do you think it will shift in the coming years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What specific efforts have government agencies and organizations made to promote and develop tourism? [funding, policies, promotion, leadership, administration of local tourism…] How successful have they been? Why or why not? (Matarrita-Cascante &amp; Luloff, 2008)</td>
<td>During this same time period, do you know of any actions taken by public officials, local groups, or citizens to attract business and industry, or to increase jobs and income for County residents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to influence tourism decision making (Lankford &amp; Howard, 1994)</td>
<td>Who do you think has the ability to influence tourism decision-making in Tucker County? Which groups (local, state, regional, etc.) are supporting tourism development? How?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008) | Community: |
| Interview Date (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008) | Interview Date: |
| Time (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008) | Time: |
| Place (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008) | Place: |
| Title (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008) | Title in place of employment: |
| Length of time held this position (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008) | Length of time held this position: |
| Length of time living in this community (Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008) | Length of time living in this community: |
Once trust was established between the interviewer and the resident stakeholder, more information about development and reactions to that development (i.e., attitudes) were explored. Based on protocols used in studies that have addressed interactional field theory and community development (e.g., Brennan, Flint, & Luloff, 2008; Buta et al., 2012; Matarrita-Cascante & Luloff, 2008; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010a), I also examined concepts related to community agency (measured by the amount of involvement and interaction a person had within the community; see Wilkinson, 1991). Specifically, the focus was on: (a) community agency (i.e., “In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in your group activities/community?”); (b) development occurring in the community (i.e., “What is happening in terms of growth, development, and change in your community? Where specifically are growth, development and change patterns most evident?”); (c) main actors involved in the development (i.e., “During this same time period, do you know of any actions taken by public officials, local groups, or citizens to attract business and industry, or to increase jobs and income for County residents?”); and (d) tourism development and the impacts of that development on the community (i.e., “Who do you think has the ability to influence tourism decision-making in Tucker County? Which groups (local, state, regional, etc.) are supporting tourism development? How?”). An additional question regarding Corridor H (the new highway connecting Washington DC to Tucker County) was added after a suggestion from the TCCVB (i.e., “What do you think about the new highway coming into the area? What do you believe the impact of that highway on development? Positive or negative?”)
During interviews with resident stakeholders I learned that the Cultural District Authority had funded a researcher from West Virginia University to conduct a similar study in Tucker County. I followed up with the researcher regarding my research methods beginning in February 2015. In total I communicated six times with the researcher. Over the course of my communications with the researcher and resident stakeholders, I found that: (a) the researcher was using similar methods as those originally proposed for my study (i.e., key informant interviews and a county-wide resident survey); and (b) key stakeholders were concerned that residents would be over-surveyed and therefore response rates for both studies could be lower.

To appease resident stakeholders and ensure that the researcher from West Virginia University and I would be able to generate trustworthy results, I simultaneously met with the director of the TCCVB and the director of the Cultural District Authority to discuss the best way to move forward. During the meeting, it was decided that the best way to move forward was to conduct focus group discussions with residents to best understand their attitudes toward tourism development.

**Resident stakeholder sample.** To identify resident stakeholders, an initial interview with the director of the TCCVB was conducted. The director offered minor suggestions regarding improvement of the interview guide and, at the conclusion of that interview, names of and contact information for active community members (i.e., local business owners, members of advocacy groups, appointed officials). From there, I used snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961) with a convenient start of four resident stakeholders, all of whom were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. This process
continued until data saturation was obtained. According to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), data saturation may occur as early as six interviews.

The initial sample of resident stakeholders suggested by the TCCVB represented elected officials or government employees. As the interviews progressed it appeared that I should account for the geographic representation of resident stakeholders as well as their representation in terms of community involvement. To account for the geographic breakdown of Tucker County, the director of the TCCVB proposed doing so through the four communities: Thomas, Davis, Canaan Valley, and Parsons. However, early on in the interview process I learned: (a) Tucker County was primarily developed and marketed at the county level; (b) stakeholders referenced “off” and “on” mountain communities (Figure 2.1); and (c) the advocacy groups (refer to Table 2.2) tended to represent the County as a whole. In terms of stakeholders’ they referenced “off” and “on” mountain communities, Parsons was considered to be “off the mountain” and, despite being the County seat, less involved in tourism and other development occurring in the County. The three remaining communities (Canaan Valley, Thomas and Davis) were considered to be “on the mountain” and experiencing substantially more tourism. Given these findings, I decided to collect data at a county rather than a community (i.e., Davis vs. Parsons vs. Thomas vs. Canaan Valley) level. This decision affected my approach to data analysis, which ultimately focused solely on County residents’ attitude toward tourism development.
In addition to geographic differentiation, three main types of resident stakeholders emerged: 1) government employees, elected officials, and policy makers; 2) small business owners and entrepreneurs; and 3) members of advocacy groups. As Tucker County continued to grow and evolve, several small groups emerged to help develop or build within the County. Some advocacy groups included New Historic Thomas, an advocacy group working to revitalize downtown Thomas; Parsons Revitalization Organization ON TRAC, a group striving to re-develop downtown Parsons and create partnerships; and Tucker County Trails, a group of individuals working to develop and maintain trails in the County (see Table 2.3).

In response to these initial patterns, I modified my sampling approach to obtain equal representation from each of the four communities from government officials, small business owners, and members of advocacy groups. As interviews continued, however, it became more apparent that (a) Parsons was not a part of the tourism economy in Tucker County, and (b) resident stakeholders (i.e., government officials, business owners, etc.),
were rarely mutually exclusive. Thus, the effort to obtain equal representation from each geographic area and type of resident stakeholder was stopped.

**Focus group interviews with residents.** Prior to conducting the focus group interviews an interview guide was generated from the resident stakeholder interview guide and supplemented with additional questions based on responses from resident stakeholders. Focus groups tend to generate more discussion than a one-on-one interview and therefore the list of questions was shorter than the resident stakeholder guide (see Appendix B for the focus group introduction and Appendix C for the focus group interview guide).

To identify potential focus group participants I began by asking resident stakeholders who participated in the in-depth interviews to provide me with a list of short-term and long-term residents. I invited these residents to participate in a focus group interview. I also promoted the focus group interviews through emails, which were sent out to listservs managed by the TCCVB and three advocacy groups (New Historic Thomas, the Development Authority, and the Cultural District Authority) and social media sites managed by local businesses and general community groups. I also promoted the focus group interviews through visits to local businesses on the Friday night prior to the planned focus group discussions. My intent in visiting the local businesses was to talk about the study with residents, hand out promotional flyers, and continue with participant observation. Despite these efforts, only six individuals attended the four focus group discussions: no participants were present for group one, four participants were present for group two, and one participant was present for groups three and four.
Reasons for the failed focus group discussions are many. First, one of the residents interviewed after the focus group discussions mentioned it is difficult to find a good time to host a focus group discussion because working hours are so varied within the communities. Second, focus group participants suggested that many residents are uncomfortable being open and honest in front of other residents. As one participant in a focus group stated, “I wouldn’t say this if other people were here but….” Third, despite the fact that the focus group discussions were promoted for one week using online resources (listservs, social media, etc.), the in-person promotion worked best. Three of the six individuals who participated in the focus group interviews were recruited in person the Friday night prior to the weekend of focus group discussions. Thus, using online resources with residents of Tucker County was a poor recruitment strategy.

During the resident recruitment phase, three community residents offered to have individual discussions regarding tourism development in Tucker County. They were interviewed separately either in person or on the phone after the focus group discussions. Questions from the resident stakeholder interview guide and the focus group interview guide were asked and snowball sampling was used to identify other potential interviewees.

As data were collected, differences based on length of residence and on location of residence within the County became evident. Therefore, interviews with long/short-term residents of Davis, Thomas, and Canaan Valley continued until saturation was reached.
Data analysis

Secondary data were collected from local reports and publications. Economic indicators (i.e., population, age, housing costs); environmental indicators (i.e., information regarding public land); and social indicators (i.e., local events, historic information) were examined using census data. All of these data were used to supplement qualitative findings and gain insight to population changes in Tucker County.

After completing the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, the recorded interactions were transcribed and entered into NVIVO 11. The data analysis process associated with the key stakeholder interviews began with open coding of the transcripts of two interviews with key stakeholders from Thomas and two interviews with key stakeholders from Davis. All four had varying (but mostly high) levels of involvement in their respective communities. My dissertation chair and I read the four interviews and inductively conducted constant comparison analysis noting emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). We then discussed common themes that emerged and compared results as a form of triangulation, which creates consistency and reliability among qualitative analysis (Denzin, 1978). A total of 21 themes were identified and agreed upon; they served as the coding scheme in NVIVO 11 for the remaining interviews.

After the initial coding of the key stakeholder interviews, the data were analyzed using a theory-driven qualitative research approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A theory-driven approach allows for interpretation of the interview data based on themes consistent or contrasting with previous research. Because the data were collected using methods drawn from literature on amenity migration and interactional field theory, analysis was
conducted to understand whether elements of these theories were reflected in resident attitudes towards on-going tourism development. Specifically, themes were identified and then compared to ideas and constructs related to interactional field theory, amenity migration and resident attitude literatures.

**Study Sample**

A total of 19 residents were interviewed regarding their attitudes toward tourism development. Five reported being involved in the community at the official/advocacy level, five said they were involved with advocacy groups, five reported being business owners, and four were involved in some other capacity. Their residence was Canaan Valley (n = 5), Thomas (n = 4), Davis (n = 5), Parsons (n = 3), Jenningston (n = 1), Elkins (n = 1); however, when asked what community they mostly identify or work closest with, they cited Davis (n = 12), Thomas (n = 5), or Parsons (n = 2) (Table 2.5). While respondents have lived in the area from one year to their entire life, most (n =15) do not have family in the area. They indicated they are involved in a variety of community-based activities including directing or volunteering with advocacy groups, owning small businesses, working within the state park system, and being involved with various recreation groups. Eight females and eleven males participated in the study. A total of 15 individual interviews were conducted. Only four individuals participated in a focus group discussion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Residential Community</th>
<th>Community Involved in</th>
<th>Length of Residence</th>
<th>Family in the area?</th>
<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
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<td>Davis</td>
<td>7 Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Official/Advocacy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>Official/Advocacy</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Parsons</td>
<td>Parsons</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Official/Advocacy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>Canaan Valley</td>
<td>Thomas &amp; Davis</td>
<td>4 Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Official/Advocacy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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**Stakeholders in an Official Role and Involved in an Advocacy Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Residential Community</th>
<th>Community Involved in</th>
<th>Length of Residence</th>
<th>Family in the area?</th>
<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Canaan Valley</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>40 years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadie</td>
<td>Canaan Valley</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>5 Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Left - Came back</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
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**Stakeholders Involved in Advocacy Groups**

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<th>Residential Community</th>
<th>Community Involved in</th>
<th>Length of Residence</th>
<th>Family in the area?</th>
<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe</td>
<td>Parsons</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Parsons</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
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**Stakeholders who were Business Owners**

<table>
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<th>Pseudonym</th>
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<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristine</td>
<td>Elkins</td>
<td>Parsons</td>
<td>2 Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarrett</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>2 Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>Canaan Valley</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>15 Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monty</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>8 Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Residents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Residential Community</th>
<th>Community Involved in</th>
<th>Length of Residence</th>
<th>Family in the area?</th>
<th>Type of Involvement</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
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</table>
In terms of secondary data, census data and two research documents were obtained. The research documents included the *Tucker County Comprehensive Plan* (written by the Tucker County Planning Commission) and *The Small Business and Housing Needs Assessment* (written by the Woodlands Development Group).
Chapter 3

Results

This chapter begins with an introduction and then proceeds to a discussion of the results associated with the two research questions. Throughout the results, comments made by different types of residents (i.e., elected official/advocacy, advocacy, business owner, other) are highlighted (see Table 2.6).

Introduction

According to residents of Tucker County, there has been a shift in the population, development, and tourism economy. While the County has supported a tourism economy for several decades, today tourism development has occurred more quickly. The Tucker County Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCCVB) has created effective marketing campaigns, Corridor H is nearing completion, and advocacy groups have worked hard to increase tourism and the overall wellbeing of County residents. Due to changes already experienced as well as those occurring as a result of on-going tourism development, Tucker County was an interesting context for documenting residents’ attitude towards tourism development and how their social interactions have helped to shape community agency, community field, community action, and tourism development. Prior to doing this, however, residents’ definition of community needed to be established. The results related to Tucker County residents’ interpretation of community, seasonal residents’ interpretation of community, how leisure pursuits helped to define community, and motivations for staying in the area follow.
Residents’ interpretation of “community”

Drawing geographic boundaries within Tucker County is complicated. There are five incorporated and over twenty unincorporated communities in the County. These communities can be identified and separated geographically by their census designation, or, as Wilkinson (1991) suggested, by their social construction. According to Brennan (2007, p. 333), “community is more than a geographic location. It is a social and psychological entity that represents a place, its people, and the relationships between the two.” To this end, key informants and residents indicated that the communities comprising Tucker County are most commonly distinguished as “on the mountain” (i.e., Thomas, Davis, Canaan Valley, and surrounding areas) or “off the mountain” (i.e., Parsons and surrounding areas). They also noted that the communities are differentiated in terms of their political progression and their business and development focus.

On the mountain vs. off the mountain

Fourteen of the nineteen respondents in this study indicated they live on the mountain and five indicated that they live off the mountain in Parsons or some other small, unincorporated community. In terms of the communities on the mountain, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Canaan Valley was a lightly populated farming community with a lot of very large farms. Davis was a timber community, which was more male-centric and home to several saloons and brothels. Thomas was a coal town, comprised predominantly of immigrants from Europe and Africa. Parsons, representing an off the mountain community, was a manufacturing community on a river and, in terms of residents’ demographics, very homogenous.
Respondents recognized a distinct difference between the two socially constructed communities (i.e., on and off the mountain). Sarah, Sadie, and Nancy\textsuperscript{1} (all members of advocacy groups) indicated that the divide between the two communities reached back to a time when Tucker County’s economy was dependent on natural resource extraction and development. The importance of understanding the history of these communities on and off the mountain, and why there is divisiveness and sometimes contention between them, was reflected in Sarah’s comment:

If you go back to the 50s and 60s, Thomas and Davis and Parsons there were regularly fights and so it was a big deal when the high schools played each other and so that rivalry between towns is something that goes back generations. And it’s really important, I think, to understand where these communities are going is where the minds of the 60 and 70 year olds. Those differences are incredibly strong and that’s shared with their children and grandchildren.

In 1985, Parsons, which is off the mountain, experienced a large flood that resulted in millions of dollars in damages and the majority of the community being designated as a flood zone that can’t be re-built. In the 1990s, another flood enhanced the epic damage created in 1985. In this case, residents of Tucker County pulled together to help Parsons, despite tensions between the communities. Other respondents (Nick, Matthew, and Brian) echoed the sentiment that there is contention between the communities on and off the mountain but also recognized that in a crisis residents come together.

\textsuperscript{1} Pseudonyms have been used to ensure anonymity for all respondents. See Table 2.6.
Tensions between the communities on and off the mountain extended to tensions between residents off the mountain and tourists. This division could be detrimental to Parsons as the community attempts to rebuild. According to Sarah, communities on the mountain have always been more accepting and therefore will continue to reap the benefits of tourism dollars:

Thomas and Davis have always been historically more of outsider towns. The fact that they’re more accepting of outsiders today is not surprising… More accepting of outsiders and more accepting of tourists. That’s not to say they’re not unkind or unfriendly because it’s a wonderful, kind community, but theirs is a community that was never set up to bring in those kinds (sic) of people.

When discussing the differences between the communities on and off the mountain, Nancy called the issues between the communities “tribal”:

There’s also always historically been a divide between the people at the top of the mountain and the bottom of the mountain and Parsons is at the bottom of the mountain. So there’s always been that. It seems like people in the region are really tribal.

There was a clear lack of cooperation between these two communities but residents were resistant to refer to it as conflict:

I wouldn’t even describe the other tensions as conflict, just different personality. Just a difference of opinion and desires to see the status quo change or not change. I don’t think Davis can help but see the changes from people moving in. The more people move in that renovate those homes, the more it’s going to happen. What surprised me most weren’t the personalities in Davis and Thomas, but was the
conflict between up county and down county. That’s a schism there. Separation of personality in Thomas and Davis, but not separation of goals. (Sadie)

As Sadie noted, not only is there a separation in terms of personality between residents of the communities on and off the mountain, there is a difference in terms of their goals for future development.

Sadie, Sarah and Nancy talked generally about differences between the two communities while “other” residents like Kristine, Jarrett and Todd were more specific. Kristine, for example, who works in Parsons, mentioned the lack of housing and the limited number of things for young adults in Parsons to do. She noted that more recreational opportunities exist in Thomas and Davis. Jarrett and Todd, who were more familiar with the parks in the area, discussed how communities on the mountain depend on tourism and recreation, but made little mention of communities off the mountain.

The general versus specific approaches to discussing communities on and off the mountain showcased the many factors residents considered when thinking about their own communities. Members of advocacy groups and elected officials—those with acknowledged responsibility to the County—viewed the differences between the communities as a challenge or an obstacle to collaboration. Business owners and non-stakeholders viewed the differences between the communities more pragmatically—on the mountain as a community growing as a result of tourism development and off the mountain as a less economically viable small community.

Researchers using the interactional approach have argued that lack of cooperation and involvement in community efforts can stunt community development (Brennan, 2007; Bridger et al., 2010; Wilkinson, 1991). According to study respondents, this is happening
with Parsons and other communities off the mountain as they continue to separate themselves from the rest of Tucker County.

**Differences between communities “on the mountain.”** Within the past 15 years, Thomas, Davis, Canaan Valley and surrounding communities have experienced the impacts of major change and development. Understanding who lives in each of these distinct communities on the mountain, and how residents identified and defined the goals of each community allowed for a better understanding of not only how each community has and will develop, but how Tucker County as a whole may evolve in the future.

**Thomas.** A community of less than 600 residents (United States Census Bureau, 2012), Thomas is home to a budding artist community with an attractive Front Street running along the North Fork Blackwater River. According to respondents like Carol, an elected official, this community is home to many young residents:

> Thomas area is attracting a lot of Millennials. They’ve got a great group of creative, young, energetic artists and business entrepreneurs in Thomas. They’re elsewhere in the County, but there’s a large concentration in Thomas, which has been wonderful for the County. It’s a thriving arts community but there’s more than just art there.

Many of the County’s newer residents were initially attracted to the area by its scenic beauty, but eventually moved to the area because of the sense of community.

The community in Thomas, which also has newer residents, has adapted to (or showed more community agency for) development better than other communities on the mountain. Adaptability is considered important when looking at the long-term sustainability of an area. Thomas’s approach (in contrast to Davis’s approach) to adapting
to change has been to work together with a younger, more progressive city council:

It seems like Thomas is a little more progressive and active in several ways. Davis seems a little bit more rutted in what they’re doing. They’re just kind of like status quo is maintained. I think one of the differences is like – I think that their city council is made up of born and raised natives and Thomas’ city council is almost entirely newer transplants—within the past 15 years transplants. (James, a business owner)

The adaptive capacity in Thomas may be due to the fact that it is a smaller community than Davis, which is only three miles away. To date, Thomas has provided arts and entertainment, but only has two restaurants—a small coffee and sandwich shop, and a breakfast restaurant.

**Davis. While it is not the county seat, Davis is the municipal center for much of the political action on the mountain. The convention and visitors bureau and the chamber of commerce are located in Davis as are two breweries, a few restaurants, and outdoor recreation outfitters. Because the small businesses support one another there is a strong sense of community in Davis. Joe, a business owner, discussed how different businesses work together:

We’re not here without [the big resorts] but they’re not here without us. I mean if they were the only resort here and there was no other business here, people aren’t just going to come because that resort is here. It’s like they say – it takes a village. It takes more than one person to build a community. Here it takes everybody as one.
Wilkinson (1991) argued that a community’s ability to work together towards a common goal is one of the very things that defines a community.

Residents of other communities see Davis as a community comprised of more long-term residents who are resistant to change; however, respondents who have lived or worked in Davis had a different opinion. Because residents of Davis have not reacted to change in the same manner as residents of Thomas, they have had a difficult time seeing what the community is doing to move forward. Joe, who owns his own business, commented:

I don’t think Davis strives to be what Thomas is, nor does Thomas want to be anything like Davis. They complement each other instead of duplicating each other. If they were both the same I don’t think they’d have the same draw.

Based on discussions with residents and resident stakeholders, Davis has become more of a hub for the communities on the mountain. It is located between Thomas and Canaan Valley and many people consider Thomas and Davis to be one community. Many outsiders refer to the area as “Thomas-Davis” or “Davis-Thomas,” depending on the community with which they most identify. According to several respondents like Joe, Matthew, and Monty, the Davis community is focused on attracting more small businesses and fostering a supportive community of independently run service and other career businesses.

Canaan Valley. This area, which has not been officially geographically defined, encompasses most of the downhill and cross-country ski resorts in Tucker County, and is host to many second homes. In their study of second home-ownership and environmental action, Hao et al. (2010) identified contention between residents and second-home
owners based on second-home owners’ limited involvement in the community and awareness of their environment. Residents of Canaan Valley, however, did not present this same level of contention as many of them are involved in the communities on the mountain.

In summary, each of the communities on the mountain had different levels of social interaction between residents and businesses, and residents and tourists. According to Wilkinson (1991, p. 11), “Social interaction delineates a territory as the community locale; it provides the associations that comprise the local society; it gives structure and direction to process of collective action; and it is the source of community identity.” In the case of Tucker County, all respondents, whether an elected official or linked to advocacy groups, a business, or some other organization, recognized social interaction has impacted the way in which communities have been identified (i.e., Tucker County, on or off the mountain, Davis, Thomas, Canaan Valley, or elsewhere). The results also showcased how resident interactions occurred within different interest groups and how those interest groups interacted with one another.

Residents of Thomas were interested in developing small businesses, beautifying the front street, and providing affordable housing opportunities to those who live and work in the area. Their goal was to increase the overall well-being of the community while also creating an appealing tourism destination. Residents of Davis, on the other hand, who live in a less diverse community (in terms of age, length of residence, etc.), were more focused on the development and maintenance of businesses and tourism businesses in the area, including those that are seasonal. Some respondents (Donna, Jane, and Sadie) reported pushback from business owners in Davis when trying to create
tourism year-round. Canaan Valley was its own tourism-based community. Residents suggested they will continue to maintain its resources and welcome tourists as long as the current model works. Hence, given the cooperation that existed between communities in terms of tourism development and how to best move forward as a comprehensive, county-wide tourism destination, community in this study was deemed to be Tucker County as a whole. This definition of community was accepted for this study with the understanding that there were a number of smaller community identities that made up the County.

With the notion of community within Tucker County uncovered, the two research questions were addressed.

**Research question 1: What are residents’ positive and/or negative attitudes toward on-going tourism development?**

An interactional approach was used to document residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development in a rural area that has experienced amenity migration. Residents discussed their motivations for moving to, staying in, or returning to the area, which likely impacted the positive, negative and/or ambivalent attitudes they had towards tourism development. They also identified impacts shaping those attitudes.

**Motivations**

Tucker County is an active community with many opportunities for outdoor recreation and community-led events. Respondents cited several motivations for moving to, remaining in, or returning to the area. They mentioned cost of living, natural amenities,
sense of community, and potentially proximity to other cities (accessibility) as motivations for staying in or moving to Tucker County.

One of the major drivers for residents moving to the area was the relatively low cost of living. One local business owner, James, commented on how the low cost of living in Tucker County has allowed him to explore his artistic passions: “Really one of the main things was the low cost of living, which sort of allowed me to start playing with artistic possibilities.” This same local business owner commented on the availability of buildings and properties that are available at affordable prices: “The plethora of abandoned or semi-abandoned properties was also really appealing because there were so many that were available to help revitalize – this [current business] being one of them.”

Residents also suggested that the natural amenities and the recreation opportunities available because of those natural amenities were motivators for moving to, staying in, or returning to the area. They also expressed concern that the natural resources may be threatened by overpopulation or increased tourism. Donna, an elected official, commented: “I moved here because I liked the rural, quiet area – I like hiking and mountain biking and I don’t want to see that get overcrowded, so I have very mixed views on [tourism].” Brian, a business owner, recognized the natural amenities as a major draw to the area and why people continue to stay:

We have everything. We have hiking, biking, rafting, skiing, you name it, we have it and that’s what they want. They want to be outside and we have doctors who live here who could live anywhere, but hey, they’re mountain bikers or skiers or rafters. This is where they want to be.
Matthew, also a business owner, echoed this sentiment when he discussed his motivations for moving to the area: “I wanted to live in a rural area, and this area with the outdoor activities from skiing to boating, everything’s great.”

In addition to natural amenities, another often cited motivation for living in Tucker County was the sense of community and other social relationships. Brian, a business owner who already highlighted the role amenities played in his decision to live his entire life in the County, discussed how people leave the community but return later in life: “My cousin came back, he knows what its like to raise kids around family. You want your family to grow up around your family.” Others, however, discussed how they began visiting Tucker County for vacation and ended up buying a second home and retiring to that second home:

We started coming up for skiing, kept meeting the same people, and decided, ‘we should build a house up here;’ which is what we did in 2000. When we retired we spent a lot more time up here… this is the place we’ve become involved in.

(Sadie, advocacy group member)

When discussing the sense of community and its impact on her, the same respondent said that “deep thinkers” in the community “[have] kept us here and made us feel so passionate about this place.”

Beyond the general sense of community, residents reported they felt safe and appreciated what the County has to offer: “It felt like home. It felt really safe, the people were great and the food – there’s all this great local food and art and music and I said ‘wow. This is where I want to be’” (Joe).
Although proximity to other communities and increased access was important for some residents, neither seemed to be main motivators for people to move to or stay in Tucker County. However, with increased access to the area through Corridor H, tourism may increase, potentially attracting new residents or second homeowners:

[Potential visitors] want to come here to recreate. It’s easier to do that. It makes owning a second home more attractive to people and renting places on the weekend or weeks at a time. [Corridor H] has people thinking about this area as accessible, yet remote; different and a great place to go to. (Tom, business owner)

Overall, regardless of their affiliation (i.e., elected official, advocacy group, business owner, other), it became apparent after formal interviews and informal conversations with residents that many moved to the area primarily for the natural amenities or the outdoor recreation opportunities, but stayed in the area because of the community. Sadie said, “Originally, it was the natural beauty. The outdoor recreation possibilities and that’s what drew us. After we retired and we became more active in this community, I think what I love about this is the sense of community.” Residents who never moved out of the County said the same things.

**Positive Attitudes**

Residents’ positive attitudes were reflected in four primary themes: Economic Development, Recreation Opportunities, Social Interactions, and Social and Cultural Change.

**Economic Development.** Respondents in an advocacy role and those who were less involved in the community tended to express positive attitudes towards economic
development in the community. For example, Henry, an elected official said, “…for the businesses here, we live and die right now by tourism and things are getting stronger, which is good…” Because most of the land in the County is protected, economic development from tourism was favored over other extractive industries.

Jarrett, who is involved in another capacity, viewed the completion of Corridor H and other infrastructure as good for tourism development as well as residents:

Somebody laid it out to me and said they have an ordinance against franchises, but I don’t know that’s necessarily true or not. But I think it’s going to be a good thing, personally. Of course I’m in the tourism industry so the more and easier we can get our guests here and the more guests that come, I think is good for everybody involved.

Within Tucker County, the appearance of roads, parks and green spaces, main streets, and residential areas has improved. As Monty, another non-stakeholder, noted, “Davis is looking better because people are picking up. And I think Davis itself is beginning to show signs of looking better on Front Street. The memorial is a nice thing.”

Veterans in Tucker County worked together to create a Tucker County Veterans’ Memorial Fund to create a memorial on the main street. The memorial was completed in 2015 and sits in what was a vacant lot.

Further, residents engaged with advocacy groups were impressed with the infrastructure development and its general improvements in the county. Sarah recognized the development and renovations that have occurred in her community:

In the time since I moved here, we’ve gone from 20% occupation to about 100% on Front St. And now the River Front is open. We have grown to be very art-
centric; so, we have a music venue, a couple of bars, art galleries, antique stores and now we’re also moving into office spaces.

Improved infrastructure has been perceived positively, but so too has development, particularly amongst business owners. According to Joe, increased development is in keeping with the character of the community.

What I’m noticing now is that a lot of people are buying a place and fixing it up. It doesn’t matter how severe, badly the damage may be, we’re fixing this puppy up and it’s good because it looks nice. They’re period houses from so long ago. These types of observations suggested respondents are very proud of the development occurring in Tucker County.

**Recreation Opportunities.** Another factor that influenced positive attitudes towards tourism development was the increase in recreation opportunities. Members of advocacy groups perceived the change as a form of “energy” in the County that is driving development. Sarah suggested, “A lot of the energy you’re seeing is happening there, but you’re also seeing it since we got the Thomas City Trails built in the past three years which has opened up hiking, biking and skiing trails in Thomas that we hadn’t seen before.” These types of recreation opportunities have been driven by and embraced by locals, but have also increased tourism.

Jarrett, a resident who works closely with an organization that manages natural areas in Tucker County stated:

There’s a club there that’s always looking at enhancing mountain biking in the area, so of course a lot of that may be ego-centrically driven because they’re mountain bikers and they want a place to mountain bike, but in the same sense if
they’re helping develop the mountain biking community here then that’s just going to enhance tourism and recreation in the area.

Jarrett also highlighted efforts that have resulted in increased trail usage between the communities:

Well there’s other local groups, heart of the highlands—part of their mission is to develop a trail that links the public lands up here, you know, link Canaan Valley with [Blackwater Falls State Park], with the refuge, wildlife management areas, and make a loop trail that connects all of that.

**Social Interactions.** Social factors such as interaction between residents and tourists also contributed to positive attitudes towards tourism development in the County. According to Carol (elected official), positive interactions have been integral to maintaining the culture of the community as well as residents’ positive attitudes towards tourism. This positivity extended to collaboration between residents in Tucker County” “The nice thing about Tucker County, anybody can take the bull by the horns to say, ‘Hey, we need to have a meeting about this.’”

Carol went on to suggest, “it takes everybody” for the tourism product to be successful: “I think every single person who has a stake in the future of this County needs to have a seat at the table in order for it to be effective and have any organized, productive discussion where you have action items come out of it…. .” Hence, based on Carol’s and others’ comments, resident involvement in the collaborative planning process led to positive attitudes towards tourism development. However, transparency and access were key factors in residents maintaining their positive attitudes towards tourism development.
Members of advocacy groups also recognized the importance of social interactions between residents and tourists:

I mean everyone who comes in here who wants to come out and get involved should know that and feel invited and be involved when we do our street clean up and when we build our trails. Because it's the kind of thing that makes people want to be out here and if we don’t keep welcoming people out here who want to do that, then we get people who don’t appreciate it for what we want and they’ll come out here to be served instead of come out and be a part of things that are happening. (Sarah)

Overall, the social interactions between residents and between residents and tourists contributed to community agency, community field, and community action and development.

**Community agency.** Community agency is often referred to as a community’s adaptive capacity. In the case of Tucker County, Corridor H brought in significant change that will require communities to adapt. Residents predicted that the completion of the highway would lead to more tourism in the area.

There are multiple examples of community agency in Tucker County. First, the flood of 1985 brought the community together in a way that had not happened previously. According to Nick who is an elected official in Parsons, residents of Tucker County rallied around Parsons to clean up and help re-develop the area after the flood: “We’re a small city with a big heart. We may be a small city, but we come together in a time of need and we flood them with food, love and compassion.”
Respondents involved in other capacities agreed that residents look out for one another. They mentioned differences between the communities, but indicated that there are many cases where the community came together to support anything from the entire County to a single resident. In one case, a resident fell at work and was hospitalized. The community immediately rallied together to throw a party to raise funds for his hospital bills. In another case, “it happened with [Name] who had stage 4 cancer. He’s at UPMC and people are rallying around him. It happens when it’s needed. When someone needs help, everyone jumps in with their specialty” (Monty). While this type of agency is occurring at an individual level, it is also occurring at town and county levels.

The diversity of the population in Tucker County has also contributed to community agency. There is diversity in terms of residents’ professional and educational backgrounds. Sadie, who is a member of a local advocacy group, mentioned this diversity and its importance in moving Tucker County forward: “This may sound snobbish, but the intelligence around here is amazing. I met the first chair clarinetist in the army, and someone who played in the orchestra for three presidents. These are all deep thinkers.” From Sadie’s perspective, diversity is important, but community agency is focused on finding common ground.

When residents found common ground collective action was likely. This capacity is referred to as community agency and is essential in successful, sustainable community development (Luloff & Bridger, 2003). Further, communication among community residents, which is also necessary for community agency, flourished. This may be due to the fact that many key members of the community serve on a large number of boards.
However, differences between individual residents and organizational politics did get in the way.

While members of advocacy groups and elected officials boasted about the amount of collaboration in the community, not all residents agreed that the development has met everyone’s wants and needs. In discussing community involvement, Monty (other type of resident) referred to differences in opinion between new and long-term residents. His experience in other organizations informed his feeling that, “The older people want it to stay the same. But they have different ideas on how to treat that. Granolas want to restrict how businesses come in. Older people just say, ‘no, we don’t want them’.”

Carol, an elected official, differed on how to move forward but also recognized the need to work together: “…I don’t think there’s any one person, elected official or authority board that can do it by themselves: it takes everybody.” This idea was reiterated several times by key informants, but Monty (other type of resident) and Stephen (member of advocacy group) resisted the notion that community agency is as transparent and successful as some residents have claimed. When asked about who has the ability to influence tourism decision making, Monty said: “I think it’s not any one entity, but it’s a combination of a couple. County Commissioners, City council, and then TC information center, because they deal with these people all the time. They need to work together to plan.” Following up on whether they believe the process is collaborative, Monty said “eh, yes and no. It’s very political.”

**Community field.** Community field refers to the combined purpose of local organizations, businesses, and advocacy groups that exist within a community. According
to Wilkinson (1991, p. 33), “the community field cuts across organized groups and across other interaction fields in a local population. It abstracts and combines the locality relevant aspects of the special interest fields and integrates the other fields into a generalized whole.” The community field within Tucker County consisted of the common pursuits of official organizations, advocacy groups, small business and other local organizations.

According to Brennan (2007, p. 333), “The community field… connects the individual local groups, and serves to unite them in pursuing the general interests and needs of the wider community.” A combined purpose is evident when reviewing respondents’ involvement in community advocacy groups and organizations. At a meeting with members of the chamber of commerce, one person mentioned needing to attend another meeting with a second advocacy group. When others said they needed to attend the same meeting, Jane, an elected official, said, “same people, different shit.” On the surface this statement seemed pejorative, but members of the advocacy groups and promotional organizations in Tucker County have worked across the community field to better the community. This is most evident in Thomas and Davis:

So about 5 years ago [West Virginia Hub came to Thomas and they met with the group NHT and got it reorganized and refocused and what drives economic development is really a group of hero volunteers I call them. People who sit on a lot of different boards and volunteer with a lot of different organizations and so the result of that is that there’s a lot of vibrant groups that are doing a lot of cool things in the area that people are drawn to. (Nancy, member of an advocacy group)
Every respondent who mentioned being a part of an organization was a member of several different groups. The groups had different objectives but the same overall goal of increasing the overall well-being of Tucker County.

According to Brennan (2007, p. 333), “local adaptive capacity emerges where relationships between different and varying segments of a local society are established and maintained.” This aspect of community field was evident in residents’ efforts to work together to promote the County. For example, Nancy, in her capacity as a member of an advocacy group, was working with the artist community and with the resorts and other tourism businesses to create a comprehensive calendar of events that will be made available to the public and other tourism organizations:

I’ve put together a meeting with all the representatives of all the area resorts and with all the CVB and the development authority, and New Historic Thomas and the Cultural District Authority and I think a lot of people will be invited and Kent Spellman who is the director of the WV Hub is going to facilitate this meeting so that everybody can agree on one community calendar that can be promoted because the biggest complaint that we get from tourists and visitors is that it’s hard to figure out what’s going on.

While some organizations (e.g., Tucker Community Foundation, Tucker County Development Authority) work with all of the communities in Tucker County, a lot of the community field remains on the mountain. Parsons, for example, was often left out of organizational movements possibly due to the fact that there is little interaction with residents from the communities on the mountain. Nancy (advocacy group member) mentioned talking to the editor in Parsons about doing some freelance work: “I asked her
if people would be interested in articles about art, music and things happening in Thomas or anywhere and she said, ‘not really’.”

**Community action and development.** It is clear from discussions with residents that Tucker County has adapted to the increase in tourism development and its associated changes. Communities on the mountain seemed to be working at a different pace, however, depending on the level of agency that existed within. According to Brennan et al. (2008, p. 3),

Every community should be able to make informed choices about what it considers beneficial and what it considers detrimental or threatening. The ability of communities to act is vital to the success of developmental efforts. To achieve development goals, it is critical to identify and study local social interaction and culture, both of which provide a linkage and common sense of solidarity for people.

Thomas has worked towards creating ordinances that limit development while Davis has not. According to Nancy, a member of an advocacy group,

In Thomas there’s a few people who are really working to develop a comprehensive community plan so that legal ordinances can be put in place, for example, to restrict business licenses to independent businesses and local businesses rather than granting a business license to chain stores that might want to come in to at least Thomas.

In Davis, change has occurred in housing and the characteristics of the population, but leadership has remained the same. James, a business owner, indicated that long-term residents, especially those who have lived in Tucker County for multiple generations, do
not see tourism as an “industry” and are waiting for another industry like coal mining to be introduced to the area.

Brennan (2007, p. 332) stated that economic change is characterized by “the recruitment or establishment of industry and other economic structures, modernization, extra local control of industry, and other characteristics associated with the growth machine image of development.” One such industry is tourism, which has helped communities to develop, but may not be the only industry in an area. Sarah, who is involved in several development-related groups in the County, spoke to this issue: “If we’re not careful tourism will become the big economic generator. In rural tourism, if someone thinks tourism is the one magic answer – it’s a challenge because we’re in a place where we need to diversify the economy.” While some residents, regardless of level of involvement, felt that tourism is an industry that should be actively developed, others (again, regardless of level of involvement) were more cautious about how dependent the County should be on tourism.

Researchers have argued that community development involves a dynamic process that brings diverse people and fields together. This is absolutely evident in Tucker County as many of the newer residents (e.g., Kristine, Jarrett, James, Donna) have diverse backgrounds and/or are young and have come back to the area after receiving an education and/or working elsewhere:

These younger people who moved here in the past couple of years come from incredible professional backgrounds and serious professions that have just found this place the place that they want to come home. So they bring all of the skillsets and all of that knowledge and forward thinking to this area that’s not present in
other areas where those towns are dying out and young people are leaving and there’s no reason to come back. (Nancy, member of an advocacy group)

Regardless of type of involvement in the community, residents perceived of most development as positive and were cognizant of the various groups working towards further development.

**Social and Cultural Change.** There was substantial collaboration between communities, advocacy groups, and other organizations in the County. While such collaborative efforts were mentioned several times, when asked about who has been responsible for development in the community, Carol (elected official) said:

> I don’t think there’s any one entity that has the final say or that has to lead the process. I think it’s just making sure that you have reps from existing groups and making sure that there’s transparency so that if anybody feels like they have a stake at the table, they’re welcome in the conversation.

In closing, the different levels and types of involvement of respondents, social and cultural change in the County was generally perceived to be positive.

**Negative attitudes**

Residents tend to discuss the costs associated with tourism development if they perceive it will result in economic costs (Allen et al., 1993; Long et al., 1990; Smith & Krannich, 1998); cultural costs (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Smith & Krannich, 1998); and social costs (Allen et al., 1993; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Long et al., 1990; Smith & Krannich, 1998).

In this study elected officials and members of advocacy groups focused on how tourism negatively affected the County as a whole. They mentioned losing the feeling of
safety, which has traditionally been associated with small communities. For example, Henry said, “We like the small community feel and it’s almost like the 50s and 60s and it’s almost like Mayberry. Parents feel safe to let their children run around, which is unique these days.”

Business owners were concerned about tourism development in terms of how it may change the way in which people operate on a daily basis. Some small business owners, for example, indicated that they appreciate tourism because it keeps their businesses afloat; however, an increase in tourism also means working longer hours and serving the tourists. Tom mentioned he was not able to spend as much time on boards and working with advocacy groups since tourism to the area has increased. For Tom, the increase in tourism helped his business but decreased his hours of free time.

Business owners also questioned the number of tourists visiting. James indicated that he is “feeling a bit overrun by people who are visiting. It’s a fine balance to feel appreciated and to make a decent living by way of people visiting and not feel overly exploited” When asked to elaborate about “exploitation,” he said:

Exploited in terms of—it comes by way of a misunderstanding—there’s a certain city mindset that sometimes shows up and wants to just drink the delicious vein of authenticity of a small town. And we get that! I don’t know. My preference would be more of like a calm, assimilation rather than like an overrunning [of tourists].

Other negative attitudes (i.e., shifting economy and housing issues and social and cultural change) towards tourism development in Tucker County were mainly targeted at what could happen with the increase in tourism as opposed to what has already happened with tourism development.
Shifting economy and housing issues. Residents perceived that tourism is critical to advancing Tucker County’s economy and, as development continues, will become more important. While the recent in-migration (i.e., less than three percent population growth) may not have had a direct impact on Tucker County’s economy, it has indirectly increased the visibility of the County, bolstered the efforts of advocacy groups, encouraged tourism and other forms of development (e.g., renovation of historic buildings), and generated tax revenue for the County. It has also resulted in concerns about the rise in servant communities, funding, tourism as an industry, and housing.

Servant community. Residents were concerned that the County may become a “servant community.” Speaking anecdotally with residents during the data collection process, there was discussion of a need for “real jobs” in Tucker County rather than low-paying tourism jobs. Sarah, an advocacy group member, echoed this sentiment:

Everyone’s been able to live off of a minimum wage job, well that’s kind of tough. This weekend was crazy—restaurants are full—all these things are great, but does it mean we’re going to become a servant community, where the people who live here make minimum wage and serve the people who I used to be, who come out here to see how quaint it is here? Or, do we become what rural tourism can be really, where being part of a community is being a part of the adventure? Sarah suggested that the future of tourism development could go one of two ways: Tucker County becomes a destination where the economy is dependent on the tourism industry or Tucker County is developed in such a way that it becomes a community that is a residential area that is unique and pleasant to visit. The fear for Sarah, was that tourism jobs do not pay well and, if developed in such a way that tourism is the
prominent industry, Tucker County could become a community where jobs are low-paying and residents resent the tourism industry rather than welcome it.

Residents, regardless of involvement in the community, were interested in bringing in higher-paying jobs to Tucker County, rather than increasing historically low-paying hospitality jobs. The specific fear of becoming a ‘servant community’ was only voiced by business owners and members involved in advocacy or official roles.

**Funding.** Advocacy groups have secured grant funding to build or enhance recreation facilities, historic buildings, monuments, and schools. As Sarah noted, “New Historic Thomas [an advocacy group] works on supporting members of Thomas to apply for grants, renovations, picking up trash, beautification projects. The organization also received a $250k grant that helped Front Street.”

Business owners, however, were focused more on the financial costs associated with development. As the County has continued to grow and Corridor H nears completion, there has been more employment, funding for various initiatives, housing, and increased taxes. Increased taxes in particular have been a blessing as Tucker County, which had a five to six million-dollar budget, was reliant on the severance tax it received from extractive industries:

We’re trying to diversify a little bit more like we did in the past since we were focused on extractive industries and we’re moving towards tourism and recreation… We used to receive severance from the coal mining and now we’re losing around half a million dollars in revenue from that and, so, tourism becoming stronger is helping a bit, [but] it’s not as much as we’d like. (Tom)
Jarrett, who has been involved in other organizations, understood the County’s shift to tourism and, for the most part, was supportive of furthering its development: “The economy here has built itself around [tourism], if that makes sense. I just assume that’s the nature of things. It’s got to get more important – I mean with the new highway coming in it’s going to bring more out of town visitors, more than any industry.”

All four types of residents acknowledged the monetary costs associated with tourism development. Not surprisingly those in official and advocacy roles were most knowledgeable about and supportive of grant funding. Business owners were concerned about the amount of money coming in to the County from tourism development and whether it will be able to maintain (if not grow) the economy. And, other residents were simply “hopeful” that tourism development will make a difference to the economy.

Tourism as an industry. Many elected officials noted that public resources are now being supported by taxes generated from tourism (e.g., hotel occupancy tax): “Our ambulance authority is struggling for money so I worked with them on a state level to get motel/hotel tax to fund this effort” (Jane). This increase in taxes is especially important “if you factor in that… we don’t have the tax base to support emergency medical services to 7,000 residents, but we have up to a million visitors and a lot of second home owners” (Carol). Further, due to the amount of protected land within Tucker County, Jane recognized that they don't have many other options to generate additional taxes: “Protected land is a catch 22 because it’s one of the greatest assets but it’s also a downfall because we won’t be able to grow and collect that tax – can be hurtful.”

In a County where extractive and production industries have historically dominated, shifting to a service-based economy is unfamiliar and, to some, an
unacceptable alternative for high paying jobs. Anecdotally, some respondents discussed how Tucker County doesn’t need tourism jobs but rather real jobs that pay livable wages. Business owners like James recognized that some residents are wary of tourism:

I think a lot of people who grew up here are kind of waiting for the next industry as the economic driver and they don’t necessarily see tourism as the next industry and I think they’re sort of starting to realize that tourism can be quite a boom to the county – it’s acting as quite a boom. But you know, I still overhear that in certain places – what the next industry will be other than tourism.

All types of residents viewed tourism as an important industry to develop and promote in Tucker County, but some expressed concern with it becoming the primary industry in the County. The concern was predominantly linked to the industry’s low paying jobs.

**Housing.** In Tucker County there is limited land for continued development of new residential housing. Carol, an elected official who cited a housing study conducted by two local advocacy groups, stated, “They did a housing survey and it demonstrates the lack of housing in this County. We’re losing schoolteachers because they can’t find a place to live.” She indicated that this is both an economic and social issue: “As property values go up in the upper part of the County, it’s going to force our seasonal workers to find housing in other parts of the Count… They’re not only losing their homes, they’re losing their roots.”

The limited amount of housing has already led to an increase in housing prices. The number of second homeowners in the area has increased and they are renting their homes out to visitors, putting their homes on AirBnB, using it solely for their vacation, or
for both purposes. This has stressed residents who reside in Tucker County year-round.

Donna, who works closely with affordable housing in Tucker County, noted:

The biggest changing development I’m seeing, and the biggest worry I have, is that the amount of second homeowners and vacation homes is really starting to increase and we’re already seeing a rise in housing prices. And I’m afraid that locals and people who want to live here and really give time to the community are going to get priced out.

The fear of residents being priced out is also due to the type of employment available in Tucker County. According to a study conducted by the Tucker County Development Authority, in 2015 West Virginia experienced 2% job growth while Tucker County had 30% job growth. Some people were working traditional jobs (i.e., accounting, management) from home and/or telecommuting from Tucker County. But, as Donna indicated, other jobs are expected to come from “…small businesses that hire between 5 to 15 people. I think that’s really what’s going to drive this economy and the service industry, I guess. I don’t think we’ll be getting any big companies or plants.” This perspective has led residents like advocacy group members Nancy and Sarah to be skeptical about the type of jobs that may become available and to reinforce the need for “real jobs” that are not tourism-related.

Elected officials and members of advocacy groups were responsible for comments about housing. Other residents did not make many comments about housing issues within the community. This finding does not suggest they did not see housing as an issue for Tucker County, rather it suggests they may have other more immediate concerns.
Ambivalent/Uncertain attitudes

Residents elected into official roles, members of advocacy groups, and those less involved in the community all mentioned being ambivalent about tourism development. Because this study was conducted as tourism development is occurring, there was still a feeling of uncertainty about the changes that will take place within Tucker County. As an elected official and resident of the County Donna was admittedly “mixed” in her response to tourism development. She was unsure about the future of Tucker County, but like most residents interviewed, cautiously optimistic:

I think as a resident I’ve always had really mixed reactions even when we moved here and I first heard about it. I think it’s going to help Tucker County bring more tourists in and keep people coming back and I think we have a lot to offer and it’s helping the re-development of these buildings, it’s helping businesses get started, helping people get jobs already, I think.”

Business owners echoed Donna’s sentiment. James had a positive attitude towards tourism development, but was nervous about its future impact on the County:

And, again, it’s just that tricky sort of spooky possibility of getting kind of diluted or outnumbered by being loved to death that seems like a possibility right now. We’re not there but everyone is sort of starting to realize that like, ‘Wait! We have to be careful!’ we’re doing things like working on city ordinances and town ordinances, trying to prevent chain businesses and things like that. Controlled growth.

Other members of the community like Jarrett mentioned the character of Tucker County and why visitors and residents are so drawn to it:
I’d like to see it continue to develop and not lose its character and that’s potentially a fear of people, if I had to guess. That part of the reason it’s a cool place to visit is to kind of the cool, small town, the Purple Fiddle, the little quaint Thomas downtown. And that’s kind of one of the draws for people, so you hope you don’t use that with more people, but I think that’s the nature of any kind of tourism area.

When asked about the impacts of Corridor H, Henry, an elected official, mentioned Tucker County’s small community field and how tourism may compromise that: “The bad fear is that the community and the dynamics may change once more people come in, more crime comes in, more commercialized development comes.” Hints of optimism, however, came through with his thoughts of controlled growth: “And, from a town council area, we’re trying to control the growth as a way to say, when the growth comes in we have the mechanism to control it and maintain the uniqueness of the area right now.”

Monty (other resident), on the other hand, said:

Positive impacts could be business. Negative impacts could be big business. Everything is local community round here. Big business will come and lots of smaller businesses will fold because they can’t compete. If you want to go to Walmart, you have to drive 30 to 45 minutes to Elkins, Morefield, etc.

Another social impact residents worried might happen was a change in the community’s culture and character. Residents like Carol (elected official) recognized that increased development may have an impact on the County’s character: “It’s really important to us to maintain our character and trying to do that while still trying to
encourage economic development, there’s a fine line to walk.” Similarly Tom, a business owner, was apprehensive about how the completion of Corridor H will impact the community:

We like the small community feel and it’s almost like the 50s and 60s and it’s almost like Mayberry. Parents feel safe to let their children run around, which is unique these days. The bad fear is that the community and the dynamics may change once more people come in; more crime comes in, more commercialized development comes. And from a town council area, we’re trying to control the growth as a way to say: ‘when the growth comes in we have the mechanism to control it and maintain the uniqueness of the area right now.

Respondents involved in official roles primarily brought up these concerns.

Overall, regardless of their level of involvement in tourism, many residents held ambivalent attitudes or were uncertain about the future of tourism in Tucker County. A lot of that ambivalence seemed to be coming from the completion of Corridor H and how it would impact the number of tourists and the economy.

**Perceived impacts**

Some advocacy group members were excited about tourism development and cautiously optimistic about how it will occur and how it may affect residents. They questioned how tourism could develop in a way that protects residents’ values and avoids that which residents fear. Many, like Nancy, believe that the new highway is creating jobs and developing businesses, but may have a negative impact on the rural, quiet feel of the county, as well as outdoor recreation opportunities.
Ambivalence and uncertainty were pervasive, not only among the residents interviewed, but among other residents who, according to Todd (business owner), are not sure what to think of the development coming in to Tucker County. Todd indicated, “[The development is] positive or negative depending on who you talk to. Things are going to change and… more people are going to come in and they’re going to expect more.” He also highlighted how quickly the community has already moved forward and likely will continue to grow and change in the future.

Overall, Tucker County residents presented a mixed response to tourism development, regardless of level of involvement. Some saw tourism development as a way for the community to grow, but also as an industry that may negatively shift the economy. Other residents questioned how the community can make money from tourism development and whether residents will be able to earn an honest, livable wage.

**Housing prices.** Housing issues were related to negative attitudes towards tourism development but also contributed to ambivalence. Housing issues extended beyond the cost of housing to include the use of residential properties for tourism rentals and the effect of Corridor H. Some small business owners like James and Tom suggested if they were to move to Tucker County now, they wouldn’t be able to afford where they currently live. James stated, “They’re driving up real estate prices and rent and all of the sudden people are like, ‘maybe I should just move somewhere else and AirBNB my apartment that I currently have…,’ so it starts getting weird pretty fast.”

Compounding the problem, some residents who own homes in the area and could rent to locals have chosen instead to rent to tourists through AirBNB or other online
vacation rental by owner websites. This is a problem suggested Sarah who is involved with an advocacy group:

The AirBNB thing is kind of interesting… People are renting out their homes for the cost of rent for a single weekend—it wasn’t great because those who could afford to live there can’t because of AirBNB. It’s almost like they’re taking advantage of people’s kindness.

Further, if priority is given to more tourism-based properties, particularly in light of the fact that the vast majority of land in Tucker County is protected, the housing options for local residents could become more limited. As Kristine, who is involved with an other organization, mentioned, “There’s also not a whole lot of resources for places to live here… [the County got] new teachers in the area and they ended up leaving because they didn’t find a place that they wanted to live or felt OK living.”

Donna, an elected official, attributed limited housing options in Tucker County to Corridor H: “I do think it’s going to continue to drive up the amount of visitors, possibly the amount of population, and definitely the housing burden is going to increase, and that’s kind of what I’m always thinking about.” Carol, another elected official, agreed but suggested the impact of Corridor H goes beyond housing options to a potentially devastating impact on the local culture:

The Corridor is going to take out some homes, not a lot. It’s not like those property owners, some of whom have been there for generations, they can’t just move down the road. There is no other similar property available in TC.

Increases in housing prices in Tucker County affected most residents in the area, regardless of their level of involvement. Any differences between them were associated
with whether or not they were concerned for their own housing or others in the area. For example, members of advocacy groups advocated for maintaining affordable housing options, while business owners expressed concern about rent, etc. for their businesses.

**Quality of life.** Residents were unsure about their future quality of life in Tucker County. One of their main concerns was how tourism might impact the culture and character of the County. All residents were concerned about quality of life and wanted to make sure every voice was heard and that the eclectic mix of people within the County would not be compromised. As Sarah, an advocacy member mentioned, “I have neighbors who are former coal miners. These are good people and people come out here because I think we have a good community and we need to be careful about how we welcome tourism without ruining what people come out here to see.”

Overall, residents, regardless of level of involvement, were excited about tourism development but not if it compromises the character, housing costs, and safety and security of Tucker County. They shared mixed (i.e., positive and negative) attitudes towards tourism development. but also noted that they are waiting to see what happens and trying to control the way in which the community develops.

**RQ2:** *Do residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development differ based on type (year round vs. seasonal) and length of residence?*

Residents’ attitudes towards on-going tourism development did not differ based on seasonality but did with respect to length of residence.
**Seasonal residence**

Researchers have identified differences in attitudes, attachment, and level of involvement between primary and seasonal residents within communities (Matarrita-Cascante, et al., 2010; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2006; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2008). This did not appear to be the case in Tucker County. The community of second homeowners has wanted to contribute to Tucker County, but has been constrained due to limited information. Nancy, a member of an advocacy group, referenced second homeowners as an untapped market for volunteer hours and other community help:

I just think the second homeowners have a huge – they have so much professional expertise and probably funds that could really help out local organizations but these local organizations haven’t figured out a way to include them yet. So that’s something I’m working on, too.

Nancy continued by reflecting on a conversation she had with a second homeowner:

This other woman was like, ‘I really want to help this community and be a part of this community and I don’t know how to do that,’ and I just think the second homeowners have a huge, they have so much professional expertise and probably funds that could really help out local organizations, but these local organizations haven’t figured out a way to include them yet.

Business owners, Joe and Matthew, and Monty who has been involved in the community in other ways, agreed that second homeowners have been a positive force in the community. Second homeowners in Tucker County, they argued, consider themselves residents. Joe, who recognized that residents do rent their homes through companies such
as AirBNB, said this was not something “second homeowners, or tourists [do:] they don’t rent at all.” Matthew agreed: “They want to be a part of the community as much as everyone else.” Monty, who does not have business concerns, thought similarly and wondered “how many second homeowners don’t rent their places”?

**Length of residence**

Attitude toward tourism development differed primarily with respect to social and cultural impact. The recent influx of residents has created a positive social impact in that newer residents have not gotten caught up in tensions between communities that have historically been present. Instead, they have created a stronger sense of community within the County. As Sarah, an advocacy group member mentioned, “I would describe the County make up as siblings; we’re all really different, we all fight, but we all pull together at the same time.” In fact, many respondents saw the diversity of residents moving to the area as a good thing that will help the community move forward. For example, Nancy, another advocacy group member, said,

Because of these young people that aren’t trapped by these old relationships and resentments, they want to work towards something good. And also these younger people who moved here in the past couple of years come from incredible professional backgrounds and serious professions that have just found this place, the place that they want to come home. So they bring all of the skillsets and all of that knowledge and forward thinking to this area that’s not present in other areas where those towns are dying out and young people are leaving and there’s no reason to come back.
Newer residents have brought diverse backgrounds and skillsets to the area but their views on how to move forward do differ from longer-term residents. Monty, who has lived in the community over 20 years, suggested, “Granolas want [Tucker County] to stay the same. The older people want it to stay the same. But they have different ideas on how to treat that…”

Others indicated the recent influx of residents has diversified the community, yet there is minimal tension between long-term and newer residents. Several residents echoed this sentiment, including Tom, a business owner who said,

It’s an eclectic mix of people – some families who have been here for multiple generations and some who have been around for a generation or two. And then you have people like myself who come in… 7 years ago, others came in 10-15, but we are accepted as part of the town. We are affectionately known as granolas. It’s a hipster influx of people. There’s an artist community. Even the new blood that’s come in is not homogeneous. There’s the groups I described, retired population, others who came in and love it and are trying to make a life here and love it.

The increase in new residents has generally been welcomed, but the increase in tourism and traffic has created a shift in how long-term residents now participate in community events. For example, some small business owners no longer have time to participate in or volunteer for local events because they need to serve tourists at their place of business. Brian, for example, said he used to volunteer and plan for events but has not been able to recently: “For example, the 4th of July event and the Leaf Peeper
event are my two busiest Saturdays of the year. The problem is, those two Saturdays are so busy I can’t leave my business. I have to be here.”

Based upon narratives, there appear to be some differences in resident attitude based on length and type of residence. Attitudes toward tourism development differed with respect to the social or cultural impact on the community; newer residents wanted some change and development, where as longer-term residents wanted it to stay roughly the same. However, it could be argued that newer residents were less tribal and, in some way, bringing Tucker County together as they were not caught up in historically present tensions between communities.

**Summary**

The change that has occurred in Tucker County has included the development of Corridor H, a four-lane highway connecting the greater DC area to the community; renovations to historic buildings; small business development; an increase in recreation opportunities; and other community-led projects. Some of these changes were linked to residents multiple motivations for moving to, staying in, or returning to Tucker County. In addition, residents presented positive, negative and ambivalent/uncertain attitudes towards tourism development. Residents’ positive attitudes were generally related to the increase in economic development (i.e., infrastructure and jobs), increased recreation opportunities, and social interactions with both tourists and other residents and social and cultural changes. Negative attitudes were associated with change in routine, exploitation, type of job growth, and housing issues. Broadly, ambivalence was linked to the insecurity
associated with not knowing how current development will affect residents and their quality of life.
Chapter 4
Discussion, Limitations, and Implications for Future Research

Introduction

Beginning with the work of Perdue et al. (1990), researchers have studied residents’ attitude towards tourism development from several different perspectives, using a variety of approaches (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2010; Andereck et al., 2005; Byrd et al., 2007; Lepp, 2007). While there is ample research regarding residents’ attitude towards tourism development, few studies have engaged an interactional approach, especially in rural communities currently experiencing tourism development. In this study using an interactional approach proved beneficial because it allowed for an understanding of what resident attitudes are and why they have that attitude.

Rural communities with rich natural amenities have experienced an increase in population across the United States (McGranahan, 1999; Smith & Krannich, 2000). Within the United States, this trend in amenity migration has been most common in mountain regions (Moss, 2008) and Tucker County, West Virginia is no exception. Because previous research has not yet explained when potential social, economic, and environmental changes occur within a community, the primary purpose of this study was to document residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development in a rural area that is experiencing amenity migration. The current development and recent influx of residents to Tucker County was in-line with what previous researchers have deemed to be amenity migration (i.e., movement of people for a rich natural amenity) and residents have responded to the increase in residents as well as the impacts associated with amenity
migration. Focusing on resident attitudes towards development that is on-going was crucial because residents still have the ability to influence the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with this development.

A qualitative approach was used to more thoroughly understand rural residents’ attitudes towards on-going tourism development in Tucker County. Building on the early attitude research of Perdue et al. (1990) and Lankford and Howard (1994), in-depth interviews were used to gain greater insight to resident attitudes towards tourism development and the specific factors contributing to them. For example, results indicated many aspects of development (e.g., the new highway, increased tourism, increased housing prices) have had both positive and negative impacts on the community, which would have been difficult to ascertain using a traditional survey. Unexpected, given the results presented in the existing tourism literature, was the ambivalence felt by many residents. While cautiously optimistic about the future of Tucker County, being in the midst of tourism development and experiencing the changes that come with it, they were often ambivalent and, at times, somewhat apprehensive about the future. There is substantial ambivalence and uncertainty regarding the future of tourism development; however, elected officials and resident members of advocacy groups believed that they had the power to control tourism development in a way that may yield more positive impacts.

An interactional approach was used in this study to understand residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development in Tucker County. The primary research question was, “What are residents’ and resident stakeholders’ positive and/or negative attitudes toward on-going tourism development?” The secondary research question was, “Do
residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development differ based on type (i.e. year round vs. seasonal) and length of residence?”. Following is a discussion of the answers to these questions. Following the discussion are comments on the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Because literature related to interactional field theory, amenity migration, and resident attitudes towards tourism development informed the study, each construct was addressed in the discussion of the answers. As a reminder, the interactional approach to community development was adopted in this study because it focuses on interaction, mobilization and the ability for a community to come together to solve local, relevant issues (Bridger et al., 2010). In addition, because the local, relevant issue in this study was tourism development, previous efforts (e.g., Lankford & Howard, 1994) to study residents’ attitudes towards tourism development were referenced when documenting social impacts (Delamere, Wankel & Hinch, 2001), resource management (Spies et al., 1998), and rural development (Ayres & Potter, 1998; Lankford, 1994). Use of the interactional approach exposed changes occurring in community, community agency, community field, and community action and development as a result of tourism development. It also introduced a deeper understanding of factors within each community that impacted residents’ attitudes toward tourism development.
Research Question 1: What are residents’ positive and/or negative attitudes toward on-going tourism development?

**Positive attitudes**

In general, residents were positive about the on-going tourism development in Tucker County, particularly with respect to economic development, recreation opportunities, social interaction, and social and cultural change. In line with previous research, community agency, community action and development, and perceived control were all contributors to the overarching positive attitude towards tourism development (Bridger et al., 2009, 2010; Luloff & Bridger, 2003). Contrary to findings presented by Matarrita-Casacante et al. (2009) and Matarrita-Casacante and Luloff (2008), second homeowners were viewed as a resident population that could be more help than hindrance.

**Community field.** Community field is considered to be the total of residents, businesses, organizations, and agencies that exist within a community. There seemed to be a number of community fields within Tucker County and, in most cases, community development depended on the interests of and action taken by the community field. The existence of community field led to positive attitudes towards tourism development because, to some extent, residents felt as though they were somewhat in control of development; especially within their specific community field.

**Community agency.** Community agency has been defined as the “adaptive capacity” that allows community members to “manage, utilize, and enhance those resources available to them in addressing local issues” (Bridger et al., 2010, p. 5). In
Tucker County community agency was evident in residents’ ability to collaboratively plan for tourism, development, and disaster relief. For example, community agency in the past (i.e., relief after flooding in Parsons) created a sense of community and community agency aided in current planning and development efforts. Such a capacity for community agency was essential for successful, sustainable community development (Luloff & Bridger, 2003).

Community agency also positively impacted residents’ attitude towards tourism development. Because there was such an impressive amount of local initiative through advocacy groups and city planning, residents felt as though their voices could be heard when it came to the future of their community. Further, residents who understood the level of agency within Tucker County had confidence in the way it has grown, developed, and built the tourism product. Thus, community agency (and, perhaps residents’ understanding of community agency), was linked to residents’ attitude toward tourism development.

**Community action and development.** Community action and development has occurred in Tucker County. With an increase in residents, tourism development, including changes to the infrastructure and other resources, was observed. Community action, however, was not as obvious. Community action and development is a process in which social relationships are built in pursuit of common community goals (Bridger et al., 2010). In Tucker County community organizations such as New Historic Thomas, Woodlands Development Group, Tucker County Development Authority, and others were working towards building a sustainable community. Residents recognized the efforts of these organizations and in some cases discussed their level of involvement with
them. They also spoke about how people were working across communities towards common efforts such as mountain biking trails, community events calendars, and trail development. This type of community action, according to Bridger et al. (2009), has not only developed the individual interests of the persons involved, it has also created community development.

**Perceived control.** Because the control of the future of the community was perceived to be in the hands of residents and policy makers in Tucker County, residents’ attitudes towards tourism development was positive at best and cautiously optimistic at worst. Residents perceived they had some control over the development of Tucker County through community action (e.g., development of recreation opportunities, providing grant funding, offering business development opportunities, engaging in housing renovation projects), which generally resulted in positive attitudes.

Many researchers have suggested that controlled growth is possible and offered suggestions for sustainable development in areas experiencing amenity migration. For example, Matarrita-Casacante et al. (2009) suggested that increased participation could lead to increased social interaction, which is key for community development, Howe et al. (1997, p. 9) argued, “Change is inevitable, but it does not have to come at the expense of what citizens and communities value. We can either be victims of change or we can plan for it, shape it, and emerge stronger from it. The choice is ours.” In the case of Tucker County, residents seemed to be working towards taking control of the change.

**Contradictory evidence.** Despite the recent influx of residents to the area, many people in Tucker County were involved in its development and those who were not involved, particularly second homeowners, wanted to be involved. This finding
challenged results presented by Matarrita-Casacante et al. (2006) and Matarrita-Casacante and Luloff (2008) who suggested that interaction between the two groups was important for community development and action, but was not present in their study. For example, according to one respondent, second homeowners were more interested in potentially retiring to the area than making money by renting out their homes. They wanted to be involved in the community and were looking for opportunities to engage.

### Negative attitudes

Overall, residents had few negative attitudes towards ongoing development in Tucker County. Instead, many residents were ambivalent towards what could happen in the future as development continues. The negative attitudes that were presented were a result of a shifting economy and housing issues, lack of inclusiveness, and shifts in the social and cultural character of the community.

**Shifting economy and housing issues.** Residents saw tourism as both a way for the community to grow but also as something that may shift the economy in a negative way. Further, some residents did not see tourism as a way for the community to make money and/or to allow residents to earn an honest wage. In a sense, these results were more of attitudes towards economic dependency on tourism rather than seeing economic dependency as a predictor of resident attitude towards tourism development.

According to Nelson (2002), amenity migration can lead to housing issues, unemployment, and introduction of lower-paying jobs. Unfortunately, this was the case in Tucker County and, for some residents, led to negative attitudes towards development. For example, lack of housing was an issue. Families that have been in Tucker County for
multiple generations have been forced to move due to increased housing costs and infrastructure development. This loss of roots and culturally infused social fabric that makes up the community may, in time, negatively impact Tucker County.

**Lack of inclusiveness.** Several residents cited positive attitudes towards tourism development as a result of collaboration, community agency, and community action. One respondent, however, felt as though those efforts were political and not as inclusive as others made it seem. If this is true, lack of cooperation and collaboration between residents may stunt community development (Brennan, 2007; Bridger et al., 2010; Wilkinson, 1991).

Similarly, small business owners mentioned having worked previously with development and promotion of Tucker County. Because of increased business (which is, according to these business owners, due to an increase in tourism) they no longer have time to work on such initiatives; as was the case in Matarrita-Casacante et al.’s (2010a) study in La Fortuna, Costa Rica. According to Lankford and Howard (1994) they should not be neglected, despite their inability to be directly involved in development and promotion of the County. Their perspective as stakeholders was vital to the success of the development effort.

**Social and cultural change.** Tucker County’s unique history with extractive industries (i.e., coal, timber, and manufacturing) was highlighted in many parts of the community, including its new brewery “Stumptown Ales.” which reflected the timber community of Davis. This may represent a response to the potential negative effects tourism development may have on the local culture (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004) and lifestyle changes associated with living in a tourism destination (Gursoy & Rutherford,
2004). Some residents were weary of the potential negative effects of tourism on their local culture, but few discussed whether this had occurred. Those that did suggested that if tourism development continued it would be important to maintain the character and social fabric of the community.

Ambivalent/ Uncertain attitudes

Previous research has primarily focused on positive and negative attitudes towards tourism development. Tucker County residents, however, were ambivalent about or uncertain towards future tourism development and its potential impact on the community. This result was likely due to the fact that this study utilized in-depth interviews to uncover residents’ attitude towards tourism development and was conducted with residents who were experiencing tourism development.

Tucker County is considered home to many motivated residents – both new and long-term. As the County has continued to develop, collaboration and controlled growth has been crucial to maintaining its character, culture, and economic viability. Thus far, the impacts of in-migration have generally been positive. Yet, residents were weary of the potential impacts that might affect the County and the residents within it. Specifically, residents seemed ambivalent towards tourism in terms of the perceived impacts, housing prices, and quality of life.
Factors influencing positive, negative and ambivalent/uncertain attitudes

The concepts of community, leisure pursuits, and motivations potentially influenced residents’ positive, negative, and ambivalent/uncertain attitudes towards tourism development. So, too, did their perceptions of perceived impacts.

Community. The concept of community is difficult to define. Some researchers have adopted a geographical approach and defined communities at the city, county, region, state, or national levels. Others have used a sociological approach and defined community as an outcome of bonds to a geographic area, a common theme or action, even a mutual identity (Wilkinson, 1991). In this study, the sociological approach to defining community was used. Residents of Tucker County either identified with their incorporated or unincorporated communities or whether they were living “on the mountain” or “off the mountain.” According to residents, the communities differed in terms of their political progression and their business and development foci. Despite these differences, however, residents identified two communities in Tucker County—on the mountain and off the mountain—which ignored geographic boundaries and were linked primarily to residents’ professional and leisure interests.

Several residents brought up the “tribal like” differences between the communities and others suggested newer residents were helping to break down old barriers. While several authors have suggested that development creates tension between newer and longer-term residents (Brehm, Eisenhaur, & Krannich, 2004; Chipeniuk, 2004; Loeffler & Steinicke, 2007; Ooi, Mair, & Laing, 2016), in the case of Tucker County,
recent in-migration led to a stronger sense of community that has been dismantling historic tensions between communities.

**Leisure pursuits.** The results in this study suggested that residents’ leisure activities could also be a contributing factor to their attitudes towards tourism development. For example, a few residents involved in cross country skiing actively maintained trails in their free-time and in some instances worked towards preservation of cross country ski facilities (including public and privately owned parks). Further, residents appeared to be more favorable towards tourism development when their particular needs or leisure interests were met. Residents involved in the art scene, hiking, and mountain biking, for example, were interested in promoting and protecting their interests. And, those involved in the arts were helping to build the annual ArtSpring Festival and offering a variety of art programs for residents and tourists.

**Motivations.** Results suggested that newer residents moved to the community largely because of the rich natural amenities, but they were staying in the area because of the sense of community, social collaboration, and cost of living. While residents were aware of some of the impacts associated with amenity migration, concerns were raised regarding the potential for changes to and impacts on Tucker County and residents’ way of life.

Despite the social (which was primarily perceived positively), economic (i.e., increasing cost of living, low paying jobs), and environmental (i.e., changes in water treatment and other infrastructure) changes associated with amenity migration in Tucker County, residents were working collaboratively to maintain a sense of community, their quality of life, and the cost of living in the community through advocacy efforts and
collaborative planning. One example included New Historic Thomas, an advocacy group that was “dedicated to revitalizing the City of Thomas by preserving its history, cultural heritage, and resources that make the city unique” (New Historic Thomas, 2016).

**Perceived impacts.** Perceived impacts of tourism development have been associated with perceived economic benefits (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Long et al., 1990; Smith & Krannich, 1998); social benefits (Allen et al., 1993; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Long, et al., 1990); and cultural benefits (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). In the case of Tucker County, residents perceived tourism to potentially have economic, social, and cultural impacts. However, these impacts were perceived to be positive (e.g., potential for increased employment opportunities) and negative (e.g., less safety, changing the way of life).

Similarly, perceived negative impacts of tourism development, such as economic costs (Allen et al., 1993; Long et al., 1990; Smith & Krannich, 1998); cultural costs (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Smith & Krannich, 1998); and social costs (Allen et al., 1993; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Long et al., 1990; Smith & Krannich, 1998) could lead to negative attitudes towards tourism development. Again, while these perceived negative impacts affected resident attitudes towards tourism development in previous studies, residents of Tucker County were mostly concerned with what may happen with continued development when the new highway was completed (i.e., perceived future impacts) rather than the current status of tourism in the County.

**Housing prices.** Community field was clearly evident in Tucker County within and across all of the various organizations working towards increasing residents’ well-
being. According to Bridger et al. (2010), the community field tends to be comprised of residents, businesses, organizations, and the agencies that exist in a community. The community field within Tucker County was strong and those who were more involved in the field seemed cautiously optimistic about where Tucker County was going. For example, residents discussed how increased tourism was going to bring money into the community, but were hesitant about how it could increase housing prices. Others mentioned how an increase in tourism or population could lead to feeling less safe and potential exploitation of residents. Several researchers examining resident attitudes towards tourism development have concluded that residents respond more positively to tourism development when the perceived benefits (i.e., financial gain, improved infrastructure, etc.) outweigh the perceived costs (i.e., increased cost of living, decrease in safety) (Kang, Perdue & Long, 1999; Lankford & Howard 1994). Results of this study suggested that residents understood the potential costs and benefits associated with future development and were working with various organizations to ensure that the benefits outweighed the costs.

**Quality of life.** Residents who were more involved in the community field understood there were substantial costs associated with the benefits of community development and they might have to make some sacrifices to maintain their quality of life. Liu and Var (1986) who studied resident attitudes towards tourism development in Hawaii found that residents valued environmental protection over economic benefits of tourism but were not willing to lower their quality of life in order to achieve it. The same could potentially be said about residents of Tucker County. Over 60% of the land in Tucker County is protected and keeping it this way was important to residents. Their way
of life and tourism development depended on protecting and maintaining the quality of the protected land.

**Research Question 2: Do residents’ attitudes toward on-going tourism development differ based on type (i.e. year round vs. seasonal) and length of residence?**

Seasonal residence and length of residence had varying influence on residents’ attitude towards development.

**Seasonal residence**

The census data for Tucker County did not show a large increase in population; however, there was a change in the demographic make-up of the community. This change impacted resident attitudes toward development and involvement in the County. Previous studies cited length of residence (Berry et al., 1990; Brown et al., 1989; Graber, 1974; Lynch, 2006) or seasonal residency (Matarrita-Casacante et al., 2006; Matarrita-Casacante et al., 2010) as important determinants of attitudes toward development or involvement in one’s community. However, previous research also suggested that social interactions were arguably just as important as length of residence (Graber, 1974; Matarrita-Casacante et al., 2008).

In the case of Tucker County, the majority of respondents, regardless of how long they had lived in the County, were involved in community development as small business owners, members of community advocacy groups, volunteers on maintenance projects, etc. For example, one respondent had only lived in Tucker County for two years but was already involved in leading community workshops, implementing a project collaborating
with all tourism related entities in the county, and working with advocacy groups. Other respondents who were second-homeowners had already integrated in to the community or, if they had not, were trying to figure out how to get involved. Such social integration between short and long-term residents and between permanent and seasonal residents challenged findings from Graber (1974) and Matarrita-Casacante (2008).

**Length of residence**

Length of residence influenced resident attitudes towards certain components of tourism development but, in general, did not seem to be a strong predictor. Attitudes towards development differed with respect to social and cultural impacts. Residents who have been a part of the community for many years were more attached to the historic tensions of the area. Historically, tensions existed between communities on and off the mountain as well as within communities on the mountain. These tensions did not seem present within newer members of the community.

Previous research suggested that length of residence was a predictor of both attitude towards tourism development (Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990) and involvement in the community (Matarrita-Cascante, et al, 2006). In Tucker County, much of the involvement in community action and development was occurring because of newer residents to the County (i.e. newer residents are leading advocacy groups and other organizations); therefore, the variation in attitudes towards tourism development based on length of residence in this study contradict previous research. Those who have been residents for less amount of time are more supportive of and involved in the development in Tucker County.
Theoretical and Practical Implications

There were a number of theoretical and practical implications associated with the results of this study. First, this study built upon previous research in other gateway communities by looking at a case in the beginning stages of development. Second, there were implications in terms of how planning agencies and other organizations defined community and marketed their areas.

Theoretical implications

Interactional field theory

Understanding how the community was defined, the level of involvement of residents of that community, and how residents interacted with one another allowed for a deeper understanding of not only development, but residents’ attitudes towards that development. In this study context, community agency, field, and action allowed residents to perceive of the planning process as purposive and to work towards a sustainable product that promoted economic, social and environmental well-being in Tucker County. Unique to this study, however, was a focus on a community currently undergoing development.

According to Brennan (2007, p. 333), “community is more than a geographic location. It is a social and psychological entity that represents a place, its people, and the relationships between the two.” This proved to be true in Tucker County. However, before documenting how the community interacted and developed, it was necessary to address how residents defined community. The results re-enforced Wilkinson’s (1991)
and Brennan’s (2007) notion that community tends to be socially, psychologically and geographically defined.

The study results also reaffirmed notions of community agency, community field, and community action. According to Bridger et al. (2010), community agency was the “adaptive capacity” that gave community members the ability to “manage, utilize, and enhance those resources available to them in addressing local issues” (p. 5). Community agency was found to be very much a part of Tucker County. Residents have come together on a number of community issues including re-developing Parsons after the flood in 1985, raising funds for community members in need, and working towards local projects and development issues. Residents’ response to local issues re-enforced the existence and importance of community agency.

Community field is the total of residents, businesses, organizations, and agencies that exist within a community. In Tucker County the community field was not just one community field; instead, it was a combination of several community fields (i.e., on and off the mountain, incorporated and unincorporated) and the development of the County depended on the interests and values of those fields. Therefore, this study’s results reinforced previous researchers’ (Brennan, 2007; Matarrita-Casacante et al., 2010a; Matarrita-Casacante et al., 2010b; Wilkinson, 1991) argument for the importance of understanding what community fields exist and how they may influence development.

In terms of community action (i.e., “the process of building social relationships in pursuit of common community interests and maintaining social life,” Bridger et al., 2010, p. 6), residents and resident stakeholders of Tucker County were very active in their communities and were constantly working towards ensuring development that did not
hinder their current way of life. Several respondents mentioned feeling ambivalent about future development because they were unsure of how it might change the community economically and socially. They felt this way despite the fact that there were several community groups in place attempting to control growth. Similar to Graber’s (1974) findings, controlled growth may be possible for Tucker County given that residents and the community field were proactive in their policy making.

Implementing the interactional approach in this study to understand attitudes towards on-going tourism development allowed for a deeper understanding of the social interactions that existed within the community, how they were shaping the community, and the way in which interactions were influencing how residents felt towards on-going tourism development. Community is a dynamic process (Wilkinson, 1991) as is community development. Research has seldom been conducted in communities currently experiencing development. This study posited and reinforced the notion that dynamic communities tend to have dynamic community development and as such should be studied at all levels of that development.

**Amenity migration**

Amenity migration is the movement of people to a rural, amenity rich area. Given that 60% of the land in Tucker County was protected, it was clearly rich in amenities. However, not all of the issues cited in previous research applied to Tucker County. For example, much of the previous research on amenity migration has focused on individuals’ motivations for moving to amenity rich areas and then defined those new residents as “amenity migrants.” Missing from that line of research was an understanding of why
people stayed in an area. The results of this study suggested that while residents were initially attracted to the rich, natural amenities of Tucker County they ended up staying in the area because of the sense of community and the social interactions. Some of these respondents were initially second home-owners who ended up moving to the area permanently because of that sense of community.

Building on this finding was the notion that primary and seasonal residents differed greatly in their attitudes towards development. Matarrita-Casacante and Luloff (2008), for example, examined level of community participation between old-timers and newcomers as well as full-time and seasonal residents. They found differences and in some cases animosity between the groups, and suggested that communities wanting to continue to build in a sustainable manner should encourage more membership and community participation. This is not to suggest that differences don’t exist, instead it is about how the differences are controlled. In Tucker County primary and seasonal residents are active in their community. And, animosity between old-timers and newcomers and full-time and seasonal residents was minimal if not absent, suggesting that when looking at attitudes towards development amongst amenity migrants, researchers must be careful to focus on these two characteristics (i.e., older timers vs. newcomers, full-time vs. seasonal residents). It should be noted, however, that the results reaffirmed Matarrita-Casacante and Luloff’s (2008) conclusion that membership and community participation were imperative to sustainable tourism development.

**Resident attitudes**

Resident attitudes towards tourism development have been studied in a number of ways; however, few researchers have adopted a qualitative approach to understanding
attitudes towards tourism development. This study built on the efforts of Lepp (2007), Ebrahami and Khalifa (2014), and Mbaia and Stronza (2011) to address tourism development. Their use of qualitative methods to understand tourism development allowed for a deeper understanding of barriers to participation as well as how perceptions of tourism development shaped attitudes towards that development. Tucker County residents who once were more participative in community development were now somewhat restricted due to an increase in tourism traffic. Small business owners generally viewed an increase in tourism positively as it could create more demand and increase revenue. Even if they had positive attitudes, however, as tourism increased small business owners found that they no longer had time to commit to community development efforts. Thus, in the future, researchers should consider the impacts of increased tourism on the social structure of a community, especially with regard to small business owners.

Further, some residents are unsure about the development in Tucker County and therefore hold ambivalent attitudes towards development. While previous research focused on positive and negative attitudes towards tourism development (Allen et al., 1993; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Long et al., 1990; Smith & Krannich, 1998), there has been little focus on ambivalence towards tourism development. Because this study took place in a community currently developing tourism, residents were somewhat weary of future development and were not quick to establish positive or negative attitudes towards something that was still developing. This study contributed to the literature regarding resident attitudes towards tourism development by offering a third category—ambivalent attitudes towards development. This category was crucial as it presented potential issues
Residents felt they could face with future tourism development. This information could help community planners and resident stakeholders work towards controlled growth.

**Rural tourism**

Cutting across interactional field theory, amenity migration, and residents’ attitudes toward tourism development was residents’ desire to maintain a culture unique to their rural community, i.e., authenticity. Tourists’ search for authenticity (Chhabra, 2005; Hall, 2007; MacCannell, 1976; Wang, 2007) increased again in popularity due to an increase in urban populations and suburban sprawl. Urban residents “increased desires for ‘escapism’ and ‘search for meaning’ in one’s life; [they] seek experiences to satisfy these desires” (George et al., 2009, p. 7).

In Tucker County, residents feared that as tourists increasingly sought “authentic rural experiences,” their culture and social values could be compromised. Few researchers have addressed hosts’/residents’ perception of authenticity. According to Zhou et al. (2015, p. 29) this is problematic as local residents living in a tourist destination tend to be aware of tourists’ “judgment and focus on whether their own culture remains authentic when their distinctive traditional culture is being eroded by commodification [through tourism development].” Like residents’ attitude toward tourism development, their perception of authenticity evolved in response to changes in their environment (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006) and has been imprinted by their understanding of the past. Residents’ ambivalent attitude towards tourism development, which may be manifesting as concern about loss of culture/authenticity, should be expected suggested Zhou et al. (2015, p. 30) because “residents in tourist destination…” experience feelings of anxiety, falling, and being lost in an increasingly commercialized
and modern society, which is often brought about by tourism.” Hence, the results of this study suggested there was a connection between interactional field theory, amenity migration, residents’ attitude, and residents’ perception of local culture/authenticity, particularly in the context of tourism development. Ryan (2003) and Xie (2011) suggested this connection could be particularly strong among residents who experienced greater benefits from tourism development.

**Practical implications**

Continued growth in Tucker County, which was expected by all of the respondents, was vulnerable to issues that other gateway communities faced in the past such as loss of culture (Glorioso & Moss, 2006); loss of natural resources (Gude et al, 2006); issues with transportation structures (Gude, et. al, 2006); and sense of community (Matarrita-Casacante, 2008). In response, it was critical that residents engaged in proactive rather than reactive planning to help shape policies and control growth (Graber, 1974; Wilkinson, 1991). Continuing to shape the community through implementing community agency, action, and development could help shape policy and control growth based on what the community wants and values. A movement towards controlled growth was vital to the success (measured by meeting goals determined by the community) of Tucker County, especially as it continued to experience amenity migration.

Tucker County was currently experiencing amenity migration, which could be unexpected given Census statistics, which indicated a very small increase in population. Its impact on community structure has been positive and negative. “Amenity migrants” were developing infrastructure, ensuring equal housing opportunities, and working
towards controlled growth. Some long-term residents, however, were negative about second homeowners, increased traffic, and the potential for a decrease in safety. As the community continues to evolve, it will be imperative that officials monitor resident attitudes, wants, and needs.

In the United States, Convention and Visitors Bureaus often represent a county or region. As a result, little attention may be given to individual communities. In the case of Tucker County, much of the TCCVBs promotion surrounded community events (e.g., Pickin’ in Parsons, Leaf Peeper Festival, ArtSpring) and the natural, scenic beauty of the different parks. It was also focused on the County at large, despite the fact that much of the tourism development existed on the mountain. Thus far this has not been an issue for residents, despite their geographic and cultural separation, because they have similar visions in terms of how they want Tucker County to move forward as a destination. However, as tourism continues to develop, certain communities, particularly those on the mountain, could receive more attention from the TCCVB than others, which could become problematic. Hence, it will be imperative for the TCCVB to understand residents’ notion of community (i.e., on the mountain vs. off the mountain; incorporated and unincorporated communities).

In Tucker County residents feared that as tourists increasingly seek “authentic rural experiences,” their culture and social values may be compromised. Hall (1991) suggested that their fear could be mitigated through community involvement in planning and development of tourism. Residents, particularly those who have been elected to organization’s boards and/or are active in the efforts of advocacy groups, seemed to
already understand that their involvement and intentional planning could help to create a sustainable product that does not compromise cultural values (Perdue et al., 1990).

Previous research focused on positive and negative attitudes towards tourism development. Many residents in Tucker County, however, were ambivalent towards tourism development. They mentioned being weary about safety, traffic, increased housing prices, lack of available housing, and more. Tucker County officials should take this ambivalence into consideration as they plan for development. Further, as growth continues, these issues should be monitored to ensure well-being among residents.

**Limitations**

Despite the theoretical and practical advances made by this study, there are a number of limitations that should be identified. First, only 19 respondents were willing and able to discuss the development occurring in Tucker County. Two days of focus groups were attempted (a total of four focus groups), but only six respondents participated. To remedy this, more residents were interviewed after the focus group period concluded. This hindered the possibility of having a discussion with multiple residents regarding the future of their community. Such a discussion may have brought issues to the forefront that were not discussed during individual interviews. Further, several stakeholders discussed their perceptions of the mayors’ attitudes towards tourism development in their respective communities; however, no mayors were available to discuss their role in and attitude towards tourism development. Had the mayors been available for discussion, a potentially more comprehensive view could have been uncovered regarding the future development of the County. Further, certain developments,
which may arise in the future, may not be known to all residents and stakeholders and may have been offered during discussion with the mayors.

A mixed method approach was initially proposed for this study. Due to unforeseen circumstances, this study took a purely qualitative, interactive approach to understanding resident attitudes towards tourism development. While initially a concern, the qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth understanding about why residents held certain opinions regarding the development of Tucker County. In the future, conducting a household survey using information gained from the resident interviews would lead to greater validity of the findings.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Concepts related to resident attitudes towards tourism development, amenity migration, and interactional field theory were reviewed and applied in this study. Future research should expand upon the findings from this study by using different methods of data collection (i.e., mixed and qualitative methods), addressing different variables (i.e., length of residence), implementing longitudinal methods, and examining attitudes at the county and community levels.

**Qualitative methods**

While Lankford and Howard’s (1994) tourism impact attitude scale has been used and validated several times, it and other quantitative measures of resident attitudes have failed to uncover *why* residents have certain attitudes towards tourism development. Building on the work of Matarrita-Cascante, Brennan, and Luloff, (2010a), it would be
beneficial to replicate their studies to include a qualitative component. Using a qualitative approach to understanding perceived impacts of tourism development was crucial in this study for a few reasons.

First, interviewing residents during on-going tourism development allowed for an understanding of how residents’ perceptions were shaping the way the community might develop in the future. For example, several perceived impacts of tourism development as outlined by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) were identified. Economic, social, and cultural benefits and costs were identified; however, as in the case with variables impacting resident attitude towards tourism development, residents voiced their concerns and aspirations for the impacts of tourism development. When asked about certain issues several residents said “yes and no” or “there are pros and cons.” With standard quantitative surveys using Likert scales, respondents are forced to pick one answer and are rarely offered the opportunity to elaborate on that answer. For example, residents who suggest economic benefits such as increased job opportunities are a benefit of tourism development, would not be able to indicate that their attitude would change should the jobs not be comparable to those that have been lost through recession, company closures, etc.

Second, during the interview the researcher posed questions related to interviewees and their involvement in the community, tourism development in Tucker County, and how that development was affecting them on an individual level. She was also able to stray from the interview guide and collect additional data (e.g., history of protected lands, motivations of various advocacy groups, etc.) that was crucial to her understanding of tourism development in Tucker County as well as the geographic area.
When conducting a study like this in the future, it would be very beneficial to live in the community to gain trust, learn more about the members of the community, and get involved in the field. Conducting more of an ethnographic study would potentially bring more issues associated with tourism development to light.

Moving forward researchers should continue to use semi-structured and focus group interviews to better understand why respondents have certain attitudes towards development. Focus group interviews, however, will have to be managed closely as individuals in small communities may be reluctant to share their views knowing that they could easily be transmitted to other community members. Researchers should also delve more deeply into length of residence and the notion of authenticity, consider conducting longitudinal work, and account for level of abstraction.

**Length of residence**

Migrants are an important type of resident to understand, though using length of residence to categorize them into two groups proved to be problematic. Initially, based on the work of Graber (1974), length of residence was treated as a dichotomous variable (i.e., short-term residents are those who have lived in the area 15 years or less). After interviewing residents, however, it became clear that this categorization did not work. For example, a respondent who was 30 years old and had lived in the area for 9 years could have different life experiences and opinions than a resident who was 70 and had lived in the area for 15 years. In addition, in-migration often occurs in waves (as was the case in Tucker County) leading to different perspectives on which residents are newcomers.

In this study the researcher intended to get equal representation from long-term (i.e. longer than 15 years) and short-term residents. This approach did not work because
respondents who had left Tucker County and returned within the last 15 years were unable to characterize themselves accordingly. So, while the line was set and quasi-equal representation was attained, it was clear the length of residence in Tucker County was not as dichotomous as initially thought.

In the future, researchers should consider number of years lived in an area as well as whether individuals grew up in an area, left, and who left and came back. Until recently, rural communities throughout the United States were losing population (McGranahan & Beale, 2002). Residents who have moved away and are returning are a demographic that has received minimal attention in the literature. Given the findings in this study, it is clear that their attitudes toward development were just as compelling as the attitudes of short- and long-term residents.

In much of the mixed-methods research, length of residence has been treated as a continuous variable. This allows for regression and similar types of analyses. What this approach has failed to do, however, is account for return migration and the portion of a person’s life they’ve lived in the area. Thus, when collecting data regarding length of residence, a number of variables should be identified including whether (a) they are from the area, (b) their family has been in the area for multiple generations, (c) they left and came back, and (d) how many years they have lived in the area. These measures would allow for a comprehensive understanding of length of residence and to understand whether or not there actually are differences based on any of these measures.

**Authenticity**

In the future, particularly if tourism development leads to conflict between residents, perceptions of authenticity as it relates to local culture, should be addressed.
This would be especially important if personal benefits associated with tourism development begin to vary dramatically throughout a study area (Zhou et al., 2015). In this study residents’ perception of authenticity was impacted by knowledge of the area, attitudes associated with tourism development, and more; thus, future research should be conducted using in-depth interviews or some other qualitative tool.

**Longitudinal study**

There has been a recent shift in the composition of the population, type of development, and growth of the tourism economy in Tucker County. The TCCVB had created effective marketing campaigns, Corridor H had neared completion, and advocacy groups were working hard to increase tourism and the overall wellbeing of County residents. Further, as conditions continue to change, attitudes towards development could change as multiple residents aptly pointed out. Hence, it would be interesting to repeat this study to determine if there are significant, visible changes in the community.

Brown, Geertsen, and Krannich (1989) examined amenity migration and its effect on community satisfaction and other variables. They found levels of community satisfaction, attachment, and social integration deteriorated from before the growth to after the rapid change; however, once the population stabilized satisfaction did the same, especially with respect to economic benefits (i.e., public services, facilities) and costs (i.e., lack of jobs, fiscal problems). The same could happen in Tucker County if the development does not go as planned or control shifts to new entities. Future studies should account for who is making decisions, changes in population characteristics, level of involvement, etc. as well as issues residents mentioned feeling ambivalent towards (e.g., safety, economic changes, rising housing prices).
Level of abstraction

Another important finding applicable to many communities within the United States is the need to understand development and resident attitudes towards development both at the county and community levels. Convention and visitors bureaus often market and conduct research at the county, particularly in rural areas where funding is limited. However, as seen in Tucker County, communities often have their own story and approach towards development. It is therefore imperative that researchers document attitudes, goals, and agency at the community and county levels to ensure sustainable growth and development.

Brennan et al. (2008) suggested that a community’s ability to act is crucial to successful development. They posited that focusing on social interaction and culture provides “a linkage and common sense of solidarity for people” (p. 3). In the case of Tucker County, residents’ comments depended on their level of involvement within the community as well as their interactions with others involved in the development of the County. Even the definition of what the community is varied from person to person. Thus, in the future researchers should begin by documenting how residents define “community” using an interpretivist and interactional approach. Then they should document level of involvement within the community, what the community field and agency are within the community, and whether or not respondents are working towards controlled growth and development. To validate these findings and this method for understanding resident attitudes, future research should repeat this study’s use of the interactional approach to understanding resident attitude towards tourism development.
References


Appendix A: Key Informant Interview Guide

1. Can you please describe your community? (i.e. what areas do you consider to be a part of your community)

2. Do you take part in any kind of group activity, outside of work, with other people in your community? What kind of activities?

3. In general, how would you describe your level of involvement in your group activities/community?

4. What is happening in terms of growth, development, and change in your community? Where specifically are growth, development and change patterns most evident?

Now, I would like you to think about Tucker County in its entirety.

5. Have you seen a change in the population in Tucker County?
   - Yes - In what ways do you think the population is changing? – When did these changes occur? What do you think is causing this change?

6. Do you think there is infrastructure development/industry occurring in Tucker County?
   - Yes - Have the results been positive or negative? In what ways have these changes had positive consequences for residents in Tucker County? In what ways have the changes had negative consequences?

7. What do you think about the new highway coming into the area? What do you believe the impact of that highway on development? Positive or negative?

8. During this same time period, do you know of any actions taken by public officials, local groups, or citizens to attract business and industry, or to increase jobs and income for County residents?

9. How important are tourism and other recreation-based activities to the economy of Tucker County? How has tourism’s contribution to the local economy shifted over time? How do you think it will shift in the coming years?

10. Who do you think has the ability to influence tourism decision-making in Tucker County? Which groups (local, state, regional, etc.) are supporting tourism development? How?

11. Community:
12. Interview Date:

13. Time:

14. Place:

15. Title:

16. Length of time held in this position:

17. Length of time living in this community:
Appendix B: Focus Group Introduction

WELCOME
Thank you for agreeing to be part of the focus group. We appreciate your willingness to participate.

INTRODUCTIONS
Alison Murray - Moderator
Jordan Blair - assistant moderator

PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUPS
We are conducting the focus group as a part of my dissertation project and in an effort to help inform the CVB and other advocacy groups in Tucker County about resident attitudes towards tourism development. The reason we are having these focus groups is to find out your negative and positive feelings about the development that is occurring in Tucker County. We need your input and want you to share your honest and open thoughts with us.

GROUND RULES
1. WE WANT YOU TO DO THE TALKING.
   We would like everyone to participate. I may call on you if I haven't heard from you in a while.

2. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS
   Every person's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. We want to hear a wide range of opinions.

3. WHAT IS SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS HERE
   We want folks to feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up.

4. WE WILL BE TAPE RECORDING THE GROUP
   We want to capture everything you have to say. We don't identify anyone by name in our report. You will remain anonymous.
Appendix C: Focus Group Question Guide

(italicized = probes)

1. How long have you lived in Tucker County?

2. Why do you live in Tucker County?
   
   The majority of Tucker County is protected lands.
   
   What does this mean to you?
   
   To the county?

3. What motivated you to move to Tucker County? (Short term) OR Why do you still live in Tucker County? (long term)

4. Can you tell me a little bit about what you do in the community in terms of social groups or advocacy groups?
   
   How does it make you feel to be involved in the community?
   
   Do you feel supported in this community? How so?

5. Do you feel there has been any change since you moved here?
   
   Do you feel these changes have been positive or negative? Why?
   
   Who do you think is in charge of the development?
   
   Have you noticed an increase in tourism?

6. What effect do you think Corridor H will have on Tucker County?
   
   Quality of life? Economic changes? Social changes?
   
   Housing?
EDUCATION
2017 - Ph.D. Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management
Penn State University, University Park, PA
2012 – M.S. Sustainable Tourism
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC
Thesis Title: Factors influencing brand loyalty to craft breweries in North Carolina
2010 – B.S. Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
Concentration: Tourism and Commercial Recreation

ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
2016-Present – Instructor
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC
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2014-2016 – Instructor
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management,
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The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
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PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS
National Recreation and Park Association
Student Organization of Society and Natural Resources,
The International Ecotourism Society
Destination Marketing Association, North Carolina Young Professionals

SCHOLARSHIPS
2016 - Southeastern Recreation Research Symposium Graduate Student Scholarship
2016 - College of Health and Human Development Endowment Funds for Dissertation Research
2015 - Dr. Herberta Lundegren Graduate Student Scholarship for conference funding

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS