

Rural community culture: A critical analysis of two communities' perceptions of agricultural
focused community development through a directed facilitation approach

by

Russell E Plaschka

B.S., Kansas State University, 1990
M.S., University of Kansas, 2000
M.S., Pittsburg State University, 2008

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Rural development has historically been focused on the American farmer. With changes in demographics and shifting populations, the plight of the rural community has more recently been the focus of governmental programming. The focus of this study centers on the topic of rural community development as viewed through the lens of social constructionism using critical discourse analysis to answer the question: *How do Strategic Growth Initiative directed facilitations intersect with community members' ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members in achieving community-driven community development, from participant perspectives?* The purpose was to develop a deeper understanding of the perceptions rural communities have toward agriculture, the government's role in community development, and facilitation as a means to generate consensus on possible paths forward. Two rural communities were selected to participate in facilitated discussions centered on agriculture as a vehicle for community development. From the participants of the facilitated meetings, four individuals, two from each county, were selected to participate in interviews. The individuals represented geographic and demographic diversity in line with their respective counties. The analysis of the responses revealed that all participants agree that agriculture is the main economic driver and should be the foundation from which to build community and economic development. Further analysis revealed that the community members welcome community development resources from governmental agencies but felt more input from the local level is needed when determining the best use within their communities/regions. Additionally, the data illustrated participants valued the facilitated approach to gathering community members, soliciting ideas, and having difficult conversations around specific agricultural activities that would or could benefit their regions. The findings of this study shed light on the perceptions of rural communities and their

desire to grow or at least sustain their communities. The recommendations to community developers are to be purposeful in ensuring all community voices are valued and understood. Further, policy makers, those who develop community development programs, should be mindful that rural communities are not all structured and populated the same and that flexibility must be built into programs so that local community members can best utilize the resources.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Trisha Gott

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wife, Stephanie, who has “patiently” waited for nearly four years for me to cross this finish line. We are given a short amount of time on this rock, I choose you! Thank you for sticking with me, I love you.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Growing up in a rural area, this researcher witnessed the community slowly lose its economic base, as well as its cultural identity. The formative years in high school were during the farming crisis of the '80s, a time in which truly little support was given to those who had a desire to pursue agriculture as a career, let alone to use the agriculture industry to build community. In referencing Gee, it was these “D” discourses that guided this researcher here, to this study, in this time. Gee defines this “big D” discourse as the way people communicate with each other outside of the spoken word — our clothes, gestures, bodies, environments, the social display of beliefs, and values (Gee, 2014). Drawing on those times of witnessing missed opportunities for community development initiatives and failures of community-driven development efforts, it is the pragmatic part of this study to ensure rural communities might have a chance at sustaining or even growing. The “D” discourse of the researcher remains closely tied to his early roots and uses those Discourses in this role to lead a team that works to grow agriculture within rural communities across the state. As a graduate scholar, the researcher has focused on exploring and developing a deeper understanding of community development. This has led to the exploration of how the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s (KDA) Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) might play a role in the success of community development or at the very least, serve as a tool to add to the community discourse.

Motivated by the goal of empowering communities to help themselves, the assumption is that communities want to succeed in both economic and community development but at the same time feel that it is out of their control or is someone else’s responsibility. von Hoffman (2012) says the community development field had to emerge from the shadow of the top-down approach (as a tool for community development). As will be explained later in this chapter, historically

and up to recent times, community development, particularly in the rural area, has been a top-down approach where programs are developed and administered from the governmental agencies down to the local community. The rural communities are still struggling with similar issues as they were over one hundred years ago. This is exactly the reason and goal of this work, to put the work of Community Development (CD) back in the hands of communities and their members themselves using the resources they have available. Rural communities know themselves and their resources better than outside organizations. They need to be able to be the majority driver of CD within their own communities in order to survive, sustain, and grow.

This study centered on agriculture as the community's main resource and focused the research on that resource. The KDA's SGI tool is one possible intervention for communities to reclaim the CD process. Furthermore, this study seeks to understand more about SGI's impact on discourse within a community. The essence of the SGI tool is to match local Kansas communities and counties with potential growth opportunities. The SGI program was developed by the KDA to enable counties and communities to voluntarily identify the areas of food and agriculture in which they would like to grow. These growth areas are aligned with the state's existing strategic growth plans for nineteen unique food and agriculture sectors across Kansas. These growth plans are a guiding resource for strategic growth opportunities across the state. The SGI tool in concert with the SGI process could be a tool to engage the community in reflective discussion while looking and planning for future efforts. It would be of benefit to the reader to elaborate on the SGI program to share more about how that could happen.

The SGI is a government program, created with input from the professional community and local level economic developers. CD, in this case, is the goal that has extended the SGI process to communities. CD, on the other hand, is not a grassroots initiative from the

communities. Conversely, CD could be viewed as a role for only government to fulfill through programs and funding. It is this researcher's experience collaborating with rural communities that they do not wish for more governmental influence but would like more input as to what and how programs are administered. An exploration of how the dynamics of rural communities operate is needed, as communities are not the same today as they were when many of the CD programs were initiated. It is commonly understood that governmental change moves slowly, as does cultural change, but the two in regard to CD have not maintained an equal pace. Rural CD has a long history, but mainly from an agricultural perspective, as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was the first to focus on rural America. Programs such as the Rural Electrification Administration of 1935 and others that focused on infrastructure helped the farm families of rural America. As will be shown later in this chapter, these programs have evolved to include housing, childcare, business development, and education. However, due to this researcher's experiences with KDA and this study, the culture of rural Kansas relying on production agriculture to support the community has not evolved as rapidly.

Within this first chapter, a background of CD, more specifically rural CD, will be explained, and how the research questions intersect with the practical problems associated with rural CD. First, an exploration of the background of CD is in order, then frame the problem that the researcher seeks to shed light on through this study. Next, an outline of the purposes of this study, along with the research questions that guided this process, will be overviewed. This chapter will conclude with an introduction to the methodology and theoretical frameworks that underpinned this effort.

Background

Rural CD with a focus on agriculture has been a part of US policies since the early 1900s. Spurred by the Commission on Country Life and the Country Life Movement, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 and created the Cooperative Extension Service (Summers, 1986). Though the focus of programs such as the cooperative extension service was on production agriculture, the goal was to improve rural life. In 1909 President Theodore Roosevelt wrote of the Report of the Country Life Commission, the first nationwide study of rural living:

"The report shows the general condition of farming life in the open country, and points out its larger problems; it indicates ways in which the Government, National, and State, may show the people how to solve some of these problems. . . ." (Rasmussen, 1985, 2).

Roosevelt identified that it was the government's role to show rural populations how to live better. This report was a manifestation of the Roosevelt administration's mindset (and message to rural America) that the government knows best. This early history and discourse are important to this study as they offer insight into some of the current orientations communities may have to government-led intervention. Chapter Four will discuss data from this study that align with these sentiments. Specifically, the results of participant interviews include firsthand descriptions of the sentiment of rural communities feeling as they are all categorized as the same. With the mentality from government that one rural community, along with its problems, is identical to all others, entities then develop programs as a "one size fits all."

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries there was much discussion about the state of rural America. Summers (1986) surmised that at the turn of the century rural areas were viewed as an undeveloped region, and there was lively and productive sociological concern for those areas. However, during the next seventy-five years, few large scale programs would be

developed to help in the CD area, including social research. The basic argument was that social organizational changes wrought by macro processes had robbed rural communities of local autonomy in their decision making and had absorbed them into mass society (Summers, 1986). Thus, negating a need for research in rural development. Three-quarters of a century later, in 1984, Willard Phillips, Jr., Director of the Office of Rural Development Policy, the coordinating agency for rural development within the Department of Agriculture, said in testimony before a committee of the House of Representatives:

"The role of the Federal Government should be one of facilitating and enabling local development initiatives, not directing federally imposed development mandates."

(Rasmussen, 1985, 2)

This change in mindset, from a top-down approach to a self-help approach, that Phillips suggests, took more than eighty years to develop. Over the past century, from Roosevelt to Rasmussen to the work of Leahy and Lugar in the 1990s that established the Rural Development Administration, these programs, and approaches to CD as an intervention in agriculture, have developed a more localized lens. Nonetheless, though recent programs and initiatives may be more geared today to local initiatives than ever before, the "gate keepers" to the program and funding are nonexistent at the local levels and limited at the state levels. This model means that controls are not fully localized. Governmental officials still facilitate these programs "down" to the local communities.

Now, more than 110 years later, local communities are still struggling with the issue of the role of government in CD. Since the 1980s, only a handful of researchers have systematically examined the characteristics of rural CD policy (Blair, et al., 2008). With little specific focus on CD, it is difficult to develop programs that can or would be accepted and implemented by

communities. Lack of an overarching conceptual definition of this approach and clear understanding of what community development entails results in a scattered literature often targeted at specific groups (and omitting or overlooking others) (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2012). The aim is to specifically direct attention toward CD in rural areas, with the goal of informing communities, facilitators, and policymakers to better engage on the local level when developing rural CD programming.

A brief history of rural issues related to CD has been presented; next an introduction to the problems that rural communities are facing as they relate to CD is needed.

Statement of Problem

Building from the researcher's "D" discourses as an agriculturalist, government employee, and a facilitator, the problem to shed light on is impacting the rural communities that the researcher came from, lived, and worked in, and continues to serve today. Highlighting the central challenge facing CD and SGI facilitation in these communities is needed for an understanding of the need for this study.

According to the U.S. Census (2020), communities continue to see population declines in rural parts of Kansas, the focus of this study. There is an opportunity here to respond to this phenomenon of decline by understanding how rural communities are experiencing CD efforts on the local, state, and federal levels. Leveraging CD on the individual or regional county levels will be of utmost importance to sustain these communities through this decline. It is the researcher's assumption through his government work that local communities understand their issues more clearly, and through continued engagement, can find workable solutions, if given the proper resources. The combined population of rural counties in the western part of the state is projected to decrease by 19.9 percent by the year 2066 (Hunt & Panas, 2018). When it comes to population

swings, historically, Kansas has experienced similar shifts before. It is widely understood that the 1930s dust bowl forced many from the rural areas. During the 1980s farm crisis, many farms and businesses were closed. The number of farms dwindled, and the remaining farm population was aging because young people had departed for big city opportunities (Castle, 1995).

This trend continues today, marking one hundred plus years of rural flight. One outcome of this population shift is that there has been a decrease in the number of discreet farms but an increase in the complete size of discreet farms. With a decrease in the number of farms and an increase in farm size, the need for rural community businesses began to decrease. As these farms have grown larger, so has their buying power. Having economies of scale allows larger farms to buy directly from manufactures thus, bypassing the local supplier. The effect on local businesses is a simple economic principle of supply and demand that dictates if there are not enough buyers, in this case farmers/rancher to trade locally, the supply, or local businesses will be fewer in number. A classic domino effect thus ensues to slowly erode the economic base of the community or region. Without purposeful intervention, this will continue. While the SGI may not restore rural populations, CD facilitated through the SGI may be able to prepare communities better for economic and social realities of this continued shift in economies.

This decrease in community business has resulted in fewer opportunities for young people to stay in their rural communities and fewer opportunities for those who stay to find employment. Compassionate citizens should want to know about and, if possible, improve the welfare of the one-quarter of the population that lives outside the metropolitan areas (Castle, 1995). Though our rural areas are predominantly agricultural in nature, many businesses prefer the rural areas. Food and fiber processors, for example, buy farm products as inputs. Other businesses buy, sell, finance, and ensure farm property. Still, others sell and service equipment,

sell seeds to farms, or provide information and advice to farmers (Mills, 1995). The idyllic rural communities are still there behind the boarded-up windows, and they have opportunities to court economic partners for a redefined symbiotic relationship. What may be lacking is a discourse and an influx or culture of generating new ideas that the community members themselves may possess but have not unlocked. It is precisely this step that SGI can be part of catalyzing for communities.

To shift these realities (discourses, ideas, and ultimately outcomes) rural economic development efforts are needed that promote local government capacity building and attract business and industry to rural areas (Martin & Luloff, 1988). Martin and Luloff continue in those regional approaches, with circuit-riding professionals, cooperatives for production and marketing, and telecommunications technologies as some of the options that promote rural development and link the rural sector and economy with the larger urban sector and global economy. The need for rural CD has created space for agencies and people to call themselves community developers. This title may be understood within the economic development professional circle, but to scholars there are multiple meanings. Many who call themselves community developers can perhaps do so because the field is unfenced. If it became fenced, they would be obliged to go their separate ways or retrain (Bhattacharyya, 2004). It could be argued that CD is akin to community organizing for a cause or as Bhattacharyya (2004) says, a specialty in social work. This speaks to the social areas that can affect or drive CD programs, including poverty, housing, health care, education, childcare, and recreation to name a few. These social areas fall within the realm of CD as they impact the quality of life within all communities.

The idea of CD leads most to think of economic development or the practice and process of bringing businesses such as manufacturing or processing to a community to spur growth.

Many communities rely heavily upon a state or federal program to assist in this endeavor. Communities often do not have the resources to accomplish these (CD) tasks alone, therefore they look to the state for assistance (Clark, 1990). However, this does not mean that the communities want or need to be “programmed down to” from the government. Though they may not have a formal position dedicated to the job of CD, the community members have a voice and a desire to work for their community. If communities have a dedicated position, many times the county-level economic developers are not always trained to look at all resources, particularly agriculture in their effort to develop communities. With that said, there are ways in which programming can and is implemented to different communities.

Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2011) outline three CD typologies; imposed, directed, and self-help. The first two, imposed and directed, can be described as “top-down” programs, where the government has rolled out CD programs for the entire state or country without regard to personalities of individual communities. People at the community level, supported but not dominated by the government, can chart their own best path to progress (Rasmussen, 1985). However, sometimes, while the residents’ input is taken into consideration, it is not to the extent that it would create major changes in the program or activity. This reflects more tokenistic forms of participation (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan 2011). This “top-down” approach can be seen when program requirements include a fixed required number of public forums or hearings so that community members can provide input. But as Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan continue, community participation, in these cases, is nothing more than an attempt to convince beneficiaries of what is best for them.

Many times, economic or community developers are people from within the community that have a sincere desire to “save” their community. Though “home grown” developers may

have the absolute best intentions in mind, they may lack the necessary skills in CD, community engagement, and business recruitment. Furthermore, they may not have the intrapersonal skills to navigate complex relationships within the community structure. The role of community development must surely be to enhance agency, but this necessitates an understanding of power and how it mediates and controls (Shaw, 2006). These developers work to foster relationships with those who have the power to “funnel” projects/growth toward their community without the input from the general community membership. Without a focus on developing local agency, the cycle of government program, community need, and so on repeats. Wittingly or unwittingly, many governmental and private social service organizations, create chronic dependency in the “clients” (communities). They establish a relationship between givers and abject recipients, with the latter relying upon gaining the capability to break out of the relationship (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Bhattacharyya continues to elaborate, the developers are service providers, in community development parlance, and such projects are set for the clients, not with them. For communities to be self-reliant, something must be changed within to create sustainable self-driven CD. In this next section I will outline how the purpose of this study may be pertinent to catalyzing that change.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to shed light on how this cycle of government and community intervention and dependence connects to CD and the SGI. The goal of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of participants’ perceptions of a directed facilitation and specifically, perceptions of using agriculture as the catalyst for CD in rural Kansas communities. Two Kansas counties, Haskell, and Greeley, served as the sites. They have a combined population of 5,974 (U.S. Census, 2019) and are classified as rural by population as

defined by the USDA. A semi-structured interview process was designed with four county-level stakeholders, two from each county, to learn more of their experiences with CD. This study engaged directly with these participants in the SGI facilitation process as the researcher served as the facilitator for these community interventions. With participant involvement in the CD intervention as a requirement for this study, interviews were conducted with participants after SGI facilitated meetings took place within each county. The facilitated meetings took place in November 2021 with interviews following in November and December 2021. These facilitated meetings are a part of the KDA's agribusiness development director's duties to engage communities to determine specific agricultural sectors in which the county wishes to develop for the purpose of growing their economic base. They follow the top-down model with the exception of the facilitation format, which was the SGI format. Participants in these facilitations included representatives from education, business, industry, and key community leaders.

Following best practices in qualitative research and to gain insight from participants, open ended questions were used during 60-minute interviews with each participant. Information from interviews and recordings from the SGI facilitations provided the data which was analyzed for the themes related to the perceptions of a directed facilitation, and analysis of the themes related to communities' perceptions of agriculture and the government's role in CD. This process was guided by specific research questions.

Research Questions

The specific research questions that guided this study were:

Research Question: How do SGI-directed facilitations intersect with community members' ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members in achieving community-driven CD from participant perspectives?

Research Sub Question 1: How do the community members perceive agriculture as the focus of CD through SGI-directed facilitation?

Research Sub Question 2: How do the community members perceive the role of government in CD through SGI-directed facilitation?

These questions were designed to shed light on the participants' experiences in these processes. In the next section, a discussion of the focus on CD and the utilization of focused ethnography as they pertain to this study will be elaborated upon.

Nature of the Study

Just as humans are all individuals, the community itself has an identity all its own. An understanding of that must be clarified before any meaningful change can occur. The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the perceptions that rural community members have about agriculture, CD, and the role the government, on any level, plays in that development. The intent is to inform those in CD roles how they might influence the discourse around using agriculture as a means of CD. One tool that will be analyzed that could help those in CD is directed facilitation. Although group discussion has been found to increase understanding of a course of action, it sometimes does not increase acceptance nor lead to implementation (Pratkanis & Turner, 1996). The directed approach to facilitation allows the facilitator the flexibility, based on observing the participants, to intervene with information pertinent to the discussion at hand. Though in the moment change may not occur, the idea of something different might be introduced within their discourse.

As a qualitative research study, the researcher utilized focused ethnography (FE) as the method to observe and understand the workings of the communities. The term focused ethnography is used to describe a process in which small elements of one own's society become

the focal point for making sense of challenges, questions, and overall culture (Knoblauch, 2005). The focal point for this study is how a community talks, negotiates, and implements CD ideas within the two counties participating in this study. Focused ethnographies are short-ranged and not continual (Knoblauch, 2005), the researcher spends a brief period of time in these communities. The purpose here is to engage in the feel of embeddedness. FE does not allow the researcher time to become one with the community but he must be familiar enough with members of the community to not be seen as stranger. This allows the researcher to more closely observe and interact with the participants to understand how community members construct their reality. The concepts that an individual uses to construct things are determined or significantly influenced in some way by the community or society in which that individual lives (Mariyani-Squire, 1999).

The following Figure 1 is a guide for the reader to understand the layout of this research. Just as a spiral begins wide at the top and narrows at the bottom, it was the intent of this study to begin a broad look at the communities and work around the communities in an effort to funnel the data, analysis, findings, and finally recommendations into a tight concise grouping.

To begin this spiral into the community one must first look at the culture of the community. Specifically, the rural culture is looked at, as these communities vary from their urban counterparts in more ways than just their population and geographic representation. Understanding the communities' cultures allowed this researcher to begin to peel back the layers and start to hear the discourses that have been developed over the history of the community.

This leads to the next level of the spiral in that the discourses are a result of social constructionism. In its simplest form, social constructionism says that the way a community sees

and develops its own reality is a result of social interactions. In order to see and hear the discourses that were created through this social interaction a method of deeply focused observation is needed to study and collect the necessary data.

Figure 1.1. Spiral of Study



Focused ethnography is used because it focuses on small elements of one's own society (Knoblauch, 2005). In this case, the small element the research focuses on is how a community talks, negotiates, and implements CD ideas. Focused ethnography is a form of qualitative research. The data collection methods used in this study align with approaches to FE (Bhattacharya, 2017) and include a variety of data sources, in this case, interviews, facilitations, and observations.

Moving down the spiral, the data collection processes emerge. Specifically, the interviews and facilitation conducted within both communities allowed the researcher to become

a temporary part of the community. This researcher is not claiming to be of the community but instead temporarily embedded for the purposes of the community development meetings. Four interviews and two community facilitations provided over six hours of transcripts that painted a picture of the community and brought forth the perceptions of the community in regard to the research questions and what is driving or continuing to develop the discourses of the community's members.

Data was also informed by and examined with the perceptions of the community, which are an integral part of this research as it is through analysis of their discourse that the researcher can begin to understand how agriculture and the role government plays into their daily lives in relation to CD. Critical analysis of the transcription of interviews and the facilitations the perceptions noted begin to show deeper meanings behind the discourse.

Ultimately, as this data was distilled further in the spiral, themes emerged to shed light on the research questions. As will be described in greater detail in chapter four, five major themes were identified that amplified the perceptions of the community: sense of place, sense of urgency, sense of loss, sense of frustration, and sense of optimism. The purpose of assigning themes to the data is to give the data a "life," or in this study, purpose, in the form of recommendations.

As the spiral narrows down at the bottom it becomes focused on an area, just as the research has led to the recommendations. The focuses in this case included the intersections of agriculture and the government to spur community development. It was through each layer of the spiral serving to sift and narrow the focus of the study and the lens through which data was collected and ultimately analyzed that this study led to specific recommendations. The

recommendations, detailed in chapter five, are a call to action, or at the very least, strong suggestions for researchers to be engaged practitioners of the focus on community impact.

Two counties, part of a fifty-six-county region that belongs to the organization, Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (WKREDA), were selected to participate in the SGI facilitations. Stakeholders from these facilitations were then selected to participate in personal interviews. It is the facilitation experiences along with the participant interviews that provided the data for this study. An outline of the potential for the significance of this study is explained in the next section.

Significance of the Study

One of the obstacles for community developers is the issue of understanding and changing the culture of a community. To influence a community's culture, one must first understand the historical context around that culture. Culture in the classic anthropological sense is that which consists of what humans learn as members of societies, especially in regard to the expectations their fellow members have of them in the context of living and working together (Goodenough, 2003). Simply put, culture includes how members of a community interact day-to-day, conduct our business, and approach new ideas. In social setting, it is often used broadly to represent entire ways of life, including rules, values, and expected behavior (Brennan, 2020). Brennan (2020) continues to say that these rules are accepted ways of doing things and represent guidelines for how people should conduct themselves and how they should act toward others. In both communities, agriculture, historically and currently, is the number one industry. This would lead to the assertion that there is a specific "D" discourse around agriculture. This "D" discourse may include how community members view agriculture as a focus for CD and may develop and change over generations. However, it is the researcher's assumption that community members'

attitudes and actions surrounding agriculture as a CD tool have not changed dramatically over many years. Research question two was designed with the aim of understanding the current or modern perceptions of agriculture as an economic reality, as a cultural phenomenon, and as a way forward in maintaining or growing each respective community.

Culture has implications from the individual to the systems level. Culture shapes identities and fosters notions of community by defining how individuals and groups relate to one another, how meaning is created, and how power is defined (Graham, et al., 2016). To facilitate this change of culture, an understanding of what parts can be changed or what parts can be used to facilitate and sustain the change is needed.

Facilitating a discursive cultural change is at the crux of the KDA's SGI initiative. Through facilitated discussions about the sectors of agriculture that the community has or does not have and where the community sees opportunity, the KDA's objective is to change the narrative about how the community gains and shares knowledge about agriculture in relation to CD. Knowledge is spoken or shown to another, remembered, stored, and then regurgitated as a reality to someone else. It is known that knowledge undergoes construction and transformations (Raelin, 1997). In rural communities, this has played out over decades and the knowledge circle may be more tightly bound than in larger networks. As pointed out earlier, as populations decline there is little influx of new populations, thus one possible reality in rural communities is that this loss of population and failure to bring in new populations may also mean that few new ideas or discourses are being introduced. The theory used to support this is that culture, both spoken and through signs, is socially constructed. With this social construction in mind, understanding how community members perceive CD and its use for rural development becomes one aim of this research study.

The reason behind research question three is to develop an understanding of how local communities perceive the government's role in CD. Moreover, deepening understanding of how local communities and individual participants view the real purpose of CD programs and how they should be administered to their respective communities can provide those that make the "rules" invaluable insight. Specifically, legislators, state agencies, and those that administer programs at the local/regional level can develop a clearer picture of who needs to be involved in agricultural CD, what role participants and officials should play, and how to give the local community more agency in how programs are administered specific to their communities. As this study focused on two southwest Kansas counties the idea of regionalism also came about through discussions with local community stakeholders. Regionalism allows rural communities to pool their resources and reach the critical mass necessary to tackle a variety of regional issues and take advantage of new economic development opportunities without replacing or threatening existing government units (Lu, 2011). In understanding how a community perceives the role of CD in shaping their community, the researcher is also understanding the discourse of that community. The foundation of this study is the assumption that those perceptions and discourses are all constructs that were developed socially and built on each other over time.

Social constructionism is principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live (Gergen, 1985). It is a perspective that brings to the fore social processes simultaneously playful and serious, by which reality is both revealed and concealed, created, and destroyed by our activities (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). This exemplifies reality is an ongoing activity within any community. Reality is seen as constructed via ongoing interaction between

the self and the other (society, culture) in a physical and material world, and knowledge is based on meanings developed in social contexts (Demarrias & Lapan, 2004).

With this in mind, the goal of this research is to engage the developers, policy makers, and those who implement state and federal policy in dialogue around understanding how a community talks ideas (builds discourses) into reality. More importantly, the purpose is to understand that this influencing of discourse may take time and total community engagement. Community development has been, and continues to be, subject to competing rationalities, inhabiting a position at the intersection of a range of opposing ideas, traditions, visions, and interests (Shaw, 2006). Is it possible to align those opposing items to ensure positive CD through a directed facilitation?

The Researcher

For this portion of the chapter, I will briefly write in first person so as to clearly share my words, perspective, and voice as a scholar and practitioner.

As the researcher, rural communities have always interested me, and I have a deep appreciation for the continued struggle they face in sustaining themselves. I worked twenty-five years teaching agriculture at the high school level in rural communities, and the past seven years working as the agribusiness development (ABD) director for the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA). I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Education, a Master's degree in both Adult/Occupational Education, and Educational Leadership and I am pursuing doctoral research designed around rural and agricultural communities.

During my time in education and as ABD director I continued to pursue professional development to hone my skills. I have had training and classes in the necessary methods to conduct the research required for this study. Further skill development has been achieved

through education facilitation training, as well as specialized facilitation skills development through DELTA. Since 2015, I have been responsible for the KDA's SGI program of community facilitated discussion centered on agricultural growth focused on rural communities. This collectively points to a history with rural agriculture communities personally and professionally and an accompanying set of formal training and experience in facilitation.

In the introduction of this chapter, the community in which the researcher grew up was briefly described. My experiences in this community have stayed with me and inform my current professional role. I have had the opportunities to travel the state and engage with many rural communities that are experiencing similar situations as my home community. Seeing firsthand the issues that many rural communities are dealing with and hearing the frustrations voiced by community members was the main reason for choosing this topic to research. As a trained facilitator and educator, the secondary topic of facilitation came into focus from my observations of the various CD entities that I have seen and engaged with as they introduced programming to rural areas. I observed a lack of community engagement within the community meetings in which little feedback or input from the actual community as a whole or from individual members was used to inform the decision-making process.

Though I may be deeply committed and passionate about this research, my background is also a limitation that I must attend to. I am not from these communities that I work with professionally or as a researcher. Further, my experiences as an educated white male are arguably different from those of the many women and Hispanic populations that are part of the communities in this study. It is with this in mind that I engaged a critical lens in this work. Assurances were made that I was not interpreting their experiences through my own historical lens but through their geographic, cultural, and community lenses.

As the researcher, I also had to acknowledge that as a government employee and representative of the university, my titles alone carry power into the communities that I researched. Though I am from a rural background and have similar shared experiences, my now professional role is quite different from the participants in this study. Acknowledging I carry both my historical discourses and new discourses from the university and KDA was imperative in order to maintain a critical lens focused on the participants perceptions.

This research, for me, is a chance to bring together the research of CD, engagement, and facilitation with the actual practice of CD work within rural communities.

Summary

The goal of this chapter was to outline the problem, specifically, the decline of rural Kansas populations and the lack of lasting CD centered on agriculture. A discussion of the research questions, data collection, analysis, and the SGI facilitation outlined how the study was carried out. A social constructionist theory was briefly introduced as a way to explain how communities act toward CD and using social constructionism as a way to develop deeper understanding of a community's perception of directed facilitation.

Chapters

This dissertation is organized in a five-chapter format. Above is a summary to the work of chapter one. Chapter two will follow as the literature review. The goal of chapter two will be to lay out the justification of this study and explore the context of this work through a comprehensive literature review. The review will be inclusive of the history and impact of community development, community-led initiatives based on government programs, and facilitation as a tool. Localizing this work, an introduction to a closer look at the Kansas Department of Agriculture's SGI directed approach to facilitation is needed.

In chapter three the researcher will introduce the methodology of this study and provide an outline of the rationale for a qualitative research study. Furthermore, a justification will be provided for framing the focused ethnographic approach to this work using social constructionism as the lens in which to analyze the perceptions of participants post SGI facilitation.

Chapter four will provide an in-depth analysis of the data collected from the interview participants and the SGI-directed facilitations. Emphasis will be given to the themes generated during the analysis based on participants' perceptions of agriculture, government-directed CD, and the directed SGI facilitation.

Chapter five will be the discussion of findings from the data. In this discussion, the researcher will provide possible next steps in research, as well as recommendations for the use of this study in providing guidance to those implementing CD programs in rural areas. Acknowledging and discussing the limitations of the study and further possible research as it relates to facilitation and government interaction with rural communities will be explained. Emphasis is made within this chapter for the recommendations to use a more directed facilitation approach as a possible means of gaining stronger community involvement and movement on agriculturally based CD.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Researchers have studied the changing aspects of community development (CD), facilitation, and the challenges of community-led initiatives based around government programs that offer assistance. There are numerous articles on the above topics, most notably, Blair, et al. (2008), Lu (2011), and Bens (2012). However, little attention has been focused on understanding a directed approach to facilitation or directed facilitation in terms of how rural communities may engage this process and how this process may contribute to influencing perceptions around agriculture as a catalyst for CD. Due to the volumes of literature around CD and facilitation, it would be redundant to cover the entire history. Instead, this review is meant to shed light on directed facilitation as a means to enhance community-led initiatives. The following review will entail a summary of the topics and tools currently used in CD and how they relate to this study.

There are several keywords that are used in the review of the literature and they include: community, community development, rural, rural community development, economic development, agriculture, agriculture development, rural agriculture development, sustainable community development, sustainable rural development, facilitation, community facilitation, directed facilitation, biased facilitation, neutral facilitation, internal facilitator, external facilitator, and strategic planning. The main terms that are a focus within this study and deserve the attention of the reader are sustainable community/rural development, rurality, and community engaged.

Key Definitions

To frame this study further, a discussion of how the following terms are used within this study is needed: sustainable community/rural development, rurality/rural culture, and community engaged.

According to Roseland (2000), sustainability is maintaining an adequate per capita stock of environmental assets for use by future generations and avoiding irreversible damage to any single significant asset. Defined by Roseland, sustainability was directed toward a sustainable way to live by the remaining stocks of natural capital through a community development process. For the purpose of this study, this definition can be worked to also address how sustainability can be used in CD. By replacing environmental assets with community resources, communities can gain an understanding of how sustainability may be used as a concept in approaches to community development. In this case, a discussion of resources would include not only personal attributes and skills, but also the relationships among people developed and maintained through social, kinship, or associational networks (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002). Flora, et. al. (2016) calls this social capital, and Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2012) called it self-help. Social capital in the rural sense might include the norms among groups and developing a common view of a shared future. Self-help community development has the ability to provide residents with opportunities to develop capacities resulting in self-reliance and greater control over change in the community (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2012). Sustainable CD is, for this study, defined as ongoing community-led development with or without the assistance of outside individuals.

Rurality or rural are terms that mean many different things depending on where one looks or what one is needing. Cromartie and Bucholtz (2019) begin this discussion with the following explanation.

Methods of designating the urban periphery range from the use of municipal boundaries to definitions based on counties. Definitions based on municipal boundaries may classify as rural much of what would typically be considered suburban. Definitions that delineate the urban periphery based on counties may include extensive segments of a county that many would consider rural. (Cromartie & Bucholtz, 2019)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has narrowed their definition down to no less than nine definitions of rural, depending on which program or service a community is applying to serve their needs. For this study, the researcher used the Census Bureau's land-use definition of rural as areas outside urban areas of 2,500 or more people (Cromartie & Bucholtz, 2008). This definition best describes the subject communities studied in this research. Ratcliffe et al. (2016) points out that most rural definitions are based on the land use concept. In this study, the counties participating are agriculturally based, as are the majority of the counties that are members of the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (WKREDA). Though Haskell County's population is greater than 3,000, neither town within the county reaches the threshold of 2,500 people.

Rural and rurality are also understood as cultural identities. Harrington (2017) describes this rurality as connected to the concept of being self-sufficient. This self-sufficient attitude is given voice in chapter 4 by the interviewees. Rural people in the U.S. feel important ties to place and deeply value family and community (Ulrich-Schad & Duncan, 2018). These values are a basis for beginning to understand how the rural communities, in this study, perceive the world around them. For this study, the idea of rural culture is specifically a place that is not urban, or as the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) defines it, that what is not urban after defining individual urban areas, rural is what is left.

It is generally understood by social researchers that there are cultural differences between urban and rural communities. Some scholars and journalists argue there is a growing rural-urban divide that includes, not just economic differences but also 'cultural' differences, different values, and attitudes about what matters and where the U.S. is headed and should go (Ulrich-Schad & Duncan, 2018). It would be prudent at this point to define rural culture as it pertains to

this study. Culture, in the classic anthropological sense, is that which consists of what humans learn as members of societies, especially regarding the expectations their fellow members have of them in the context of living and working together (Goodenough, 2003). Simply put, culture includes the day-to-day interactions in our lives, conduct of our business, and our approach to innovative ideas. In social settings, it is often used broadly to represent entire ways of life including rules, values, and expected behavior (Brennan, 2020). Brennan (2020) continues to say that these rules manifest as accepted ways of doing things and represent guidelines for how people should conduct themselves and how they should act toward others. Culture has the power to shape peoples' identities and foster notions of community as culture impacts how individuals and groups define themselves and relate to one another. Culture in this case is central to how meaning is created and how power is defined (Graham, et al., 2016). Understanding culture as individual and collective is key to making sense of possible interventions that a community will adopt. If culture is a potential source of competitive advantage for firms, it may also be a source of advantage for geographic communities in their efforts to develop and market themselves as places (McKee, et. al., 1997). Though community and economic development programs do not take into consideration the culture of the community, the lack of understanding of the culture aids in communities not being able to take advantage of the assistance. Many counties are just too small to have the critical mass of facilities resources and people to support development (Lu, 2011).

Community engagement (CE) is the key piece of this study. To understand community engagement, let us first begin with making sense of the term engagement. The idea of engagement is twofold, 1) to engage or embed oneself in the community and work with them, 2) creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures connect. Community, for this

study, is the people and the relationships among the people in the rural counties chosen for this study. McKee et al., (1997) refers to a community as a network of social relations with mutuality and emotional bonds, not a particular place or structure. As Boyer (1996) says, the second definition of engagement means that ultimately, the scholarship of engagement requires the community move continuously and be engaged continuously in processes to enlarge the universe of human discourse. Practically this means the researcher was physically in the community interacting with the participants during the research process. In this study, that means that for the facilitation and during the focused ethnography prior to facilitation of the SGI, the researcher engaged with the community. With that in mind, this study adopts Grahm, et al. (2016) definition of community engagement. CE can be defined as the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people (Grahm, et al., 2016). This engagement of the community, in many cases, is done by facilitating a community discussion around the topic at hand.

Facilitated Community Development

This study is based on the following areas: 1) use of facilitation in community development planning, 2) concepts of community development and directed facilitation, and 3) the role of government entities in community development.

Though the idea of rural community development is nothing new, as has been pointed out in chapter one, how people see, talk, and write about CD is ever changing. CD is both a professional practice and a political practice, therefore it is important to emphasize that the distinction is a conceptual tool for analytical purposes rather than a dichotomy in which one must

choose sides (Shaw, 2007). This chapter focuses on both sides of this dichotomy in reviewing both governmental interventions, as well as local strategies for community-led initiatives.

Community Development

The current structure of community government or community development took shape with the introduction of the National Resources Committee in 1935. This committee advocated that regions/regional focuses are crucial elements in dealing with social and economic problems. The Tennessee Valley Authority launched in 1933 and the Appalachian Regional Commission created in 1965 are perhaps the two best-known examples of large-scale regional development programs from the early and mid-twentieth century (Max Lu, 2011). These two programs were designed to address the most critical issues in energy, environmental stewardship, and economic development in these regions. The programming represented a unique federal-state partnership that demonstrated a shared commitment to strengthening Appalachia's economy and helping the region's 13 states achieve economic parity with the rest of the nation. This was a documented community-engaged process of development that involved federal, state, and local action.

Over the next few decades various rural-focused programs were developed to help American farmers and eventually the non-farm rural populations. The 1940s saw the development of the Rural Electrification Administration bring electricity to farms and rural communities (Rasmussen, 1985). The forerunner of today's Rural Development arm of the USDA was started in 1954, because rural poverty persisted in the midst of agricultural abundance and national prosperity (Rasmussen, 1985). Both of these entities are in existence today in the form of rural electrical cooperatives and the USDA's Rural Development. During the 1960s, funding became an issue as Rasmussen (1985) points out. Neither the White House nor Congress would give strong support to rural development at this time, and the Secretary of

Agriculture cut back on some programs and reassigned responsibilities. During this time, the Extension Service expanded services to include community rural development as a result of the 1968 study “A People and a Spirit” (Rasmussen, 1985). As shown by the literature, Edward, 1939; Mays, 1968; Bell, 1942, many of the federal rural programs focused on the farming sector and little attention was given to the rural towns and non-farm individuals. Though attention was given to the rural sector during the latter part of the 1970s and 1980s, rural areas in general have been experiencing economic restructuring and decline for decades, and over that time the federal and state governments have done little to support those areas (Ulrich-Schad & Duncan, 2018). One major change was seen in policy that encouraged rural communities to define their problems and solve them through local efforts and local resources (Martin, & Luloff, 1987). With little help from the federal side, these efforts were left to the local communities that were ill-equipped to design and implement CD programs. This movement gives rise to the importance of local engagement.

In the 1980s, the regional planning idea lost steam as the role of development became the job of local governments. This was due to the social investment by companies and local organizations that could not see a national success unless it had a consistent funding source (von Hoffman, 2012). Congress responded to the increase in community development lending by establishing the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (von Hoffman, 2012). Many social investors earmarked a small percentage of their investment dollars to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) with missions focused on providing low-income housing and small business development financing in disadvantaged communities (Schueth, 2003). This added funding required a lead organization to partner with lending institutions such as local banks and credit unions. Community Development Corporations (CDC) were formed to

be the lead agencies to manage the local disbursement of funding for the local projects (Schueth, 2003).

The idea of strategic planning came into favor during the last moments of the twentieth century. Rural communities confronted an uncertain and chaotic future by turning to this business planning model as an avenue to strengthen their own regional and global positioning (Proctor, 2005). However, not all local governments can afford personnel to fill the role of an economic developer. In many communities, the Chamber of Commerce, or other organizations with interest in local business growth step in to take up the charge. Community Based Organizations (CBO) are increasingly recognized as important actors in the development of rural communities (Opare, 2007).

In some regions, CBO recruit and loan money for community development projects. CBO members are usually residents in the communities and are well connected, hence they have the advantage of being keenly aware of local needs and can respond effectively and a lot more rapidly than either government agencies or NGOs (Opare, 2007). This example can serve as evidence of an even stronger argument for local participation in community development as these organizations are closer to the local issues and must live with their decisions (financially and otherwise). An effective and feasible form of regional governance is “ad hoc regionalism.” Ad hoc regionalism constitutes voluntary, often grassroots initiatives by interested stakeholders who seek collaborative, incentive-based measures rather than regulatory solutions to regional challenges (Lu, 2011). In contrast, when agencies assume the task of community development it could be looked at as a government-driven initiative.

Part of community development is understanding what the strategic direction is for a community, which helps determine what a community is and where they want to go. The people

in this industry (community development) must apply the knowledge gained through past experiences to new and difficult circumstances (von Hoffman, 2012). As argued by Fernando and Cooley (2016), any CD efforts with new functions created by any new activity drive the types of structures and relationships needed for community development such as jobs and economic opportunity. Given this positioning, CD is a part of a larger system that has undergone tremendous change over the years and will continue to evolve. An increasing number of community developers who KDA interacts with, understand that focus groups, planning sessions, and organizational meetings, are important in moving a community or group toward a common objective. CD in order to promote agency aims at generating critical consciousness, addressing problems that the affected people “own” and define and take active measures to solve (Bhattacharyya, 2004).

Often though, the focus on the community is sometimes left out of the original decision-making process. In the rural context, this means the rural voice has often gone unheard in state governments where, despite the importance and size of the rural sector, urban interests have dominated the political landscape and along with the shrinking population, rural places have lost their political influence (Martin & Luloff, 1988; Lu, 2011). As it is now in Kansas, according to the 2010 census, five of the 105 counties represent half the population of the state. This means those five counties have half the representation in the Kansas House of Representatives advancing their interests. This leads to communities taking it upon themselves to act upon their own behalf for community development or participatory CD.

Participatory Community Development

Exploration of approaches to community development can provide possible intervention to raise rural issue to the level of government. Though Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2011)

report that the participatory CD of self-help deals more with the “soft” issues or interactional processes of CD, many are seeing communities dig into genuine issues relating to economic growth and attracting populations. Community (economic) development is first the responsibility of the community itself. The identification of opportunities and mobilization of resources to create structural change must come from within the community or the effort will eventually fail (Clark, 1990). The philosophy behind this approach is that people who live and work within a community have a better understanding of what is present and what is needed for sustaining or growing their community. Communities and organizations move toward what gives them life and energy, to the extent that memory and the construction of everyday reality offer hope and meaning, people tend to move in that direction (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Building on these orientations to community, it stands that no one is better at deciding what is best for a community than that community itself. This researcher finds it difficult to see successful, sustaining, and effective CD without a participatory element from community members that have a stake in the outcomes.

Many stakeholders remember the “heyday” of their community and long for that sense of success. This “heyday” memory is indicative of what Gee calls the big “D” discourse. The big “D” discourse is being able to engage in a particular sort of dance with words, deeds, values, feelings, other people, objects, tools, technologies, places, and times so as to get recognized as a distinctive sort of “who” doing a distinctive sort of “what” (within a community or culture) (Gee, 2014). New stakeholders have been indoctrinated with this big “D” discourse and understand where the community was but can also help the community look at the future through a new lens. As Gee described this big “D” discourse, newcomers and existing stakeholders may not even be aware they are operating within the discourse that has so well permeated the accepted way of

knowing, being, and doing in the community. It is embedded in the local culture and must be given attention by those doing the work of CD. Understanding that both big “D” and discourse shaped and continues to shape the history making in the moment.

The group’s history may be amalgamated with that of other similar groups, and it may contribute to a group myth (how they got out of there) which forms a part of the group’s self-image (they have learned how to deal with difficult situations) (Von Cranach, et al., 1986). This gives the group a sense of knowing and allows the community to come into the process of CD with knowledge of what has happened before and a sense of what could work. Within the self-help form of community development, the major view of the community is that of a place where people associate with each other while building meaningful relationships critical for the community’s subsistence (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan 2011). It is these individuals that can contribute to the larger body of knowledge by giving their perceptions to what and how CD is administered.

One reason for self-help form of government has been the argument that the modern state can no longer govern national spaces in an all-inclusive fashion (Shucksmith, 2009). The state or federal programs cannot be all things to all communities. The emphasis on integrated (self-help) development mirrors a general shift away from narrowly defined economic growth toward more comprehensive approaches to building sustainable rural communities (Bessant, 2005). However, with communities having more say in how programing and CD is done locally there are distinctive discourses and practices related to the different sectors, such as agriculture, that often retain power and influence, perhaps trapping governments (Shucksmith, 2009). In chapter three, the economic contribution of agriculture in the participating communities will be explained

further, but it is important here to state that agriculture is the driving economic force in most rural Kansas communities.

The “power” of the agricultural voices could overshadow those with ideas not congruent with traditional ideas. These traditional ideas are a perception of agriculture as it has been in the past and should be today. Attention should be given to this power by community leaders and outside facilitators including taking specific steps to navigate/mitigate that power. As Foucault (1972) describes the limits and forms of appropriation, he speaks of how discourse as a holder and producer of power should be looked at. He poses the question, “In what way is the relationship between the discourse and he who gives it, and he who receives it, institutionalized?” (Foucault, 1972, p234). From a facilitator’s standpoint, it is a reminder to be cognizant of who is in the room, who is speaking, and who or how the audience is receiving that information. Does the person speaking have power (information, experiences) that others do not or does the receiver have power (both informational and socially) to refute or to take action with this information?

It is this discourse that will be analyzed to determine the participants’ perceptions of the SGI and the directed facilitated approach to CD. Discourse to hegemony is that discourse is itself a sphere of cultural hegemony, and the hegemony of a class or group over the whole society or particular sections of it is in part a matter of its capacity to shape discursive practices and orders of discourse (Fairclough, 2013). Stated simply, discourse is always a part of constructing or destroying hegemonic groups within the community. At the same time, these discourses can provide a “way forward” if new discourses can be introduced that encourage and propel CD discourses in and around agriculture and other community areas. Finally, can that power of

discourse be mitigated by a more directed type of facilitation? If so, what is the approach the facilitator may use in directing that effort?

Facilitation

Facilitation is a broad topic with many definitions. Facilitation is an important mediator of success, also it is related to the concept of change agent, defined as an internal or external individual or team responsible for initiating a change program (Miranda & Bostrom, 1999; Lessard et al., 2016). In its simplest form, a facilitator can be described as someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them to achieve these objectives without taking a particular position in the discussion (Bens, 2012). For this study, the idea of facilitation is to create space for communities to have their voices heard and acknowledged for the purpose of exchanging ideas directed toward developing actions for CD. A facilitator's objective is satisfied when a facilitator can best use his/her competencies to perform the required role in the meeting (Azadegan & Kolfshoten, 2014). It can then be assumed that the act of facilitation would be leading a group in making decisions that lead to the completion of common goals where the entire decision-making power is in the hands of the group. A concept in which Foucault would be agreeable, as the knowledge of the community and the power of making the decision are completely owned by the group (Foucault, 1982).

With a greater state role, energy is diverted from local collective action and into subscription and resource seeking within the state's management regime (Lyon & Parkins, 2013). Keeping decisions and actions local provides the sense of responsibility and ownership with the local community that should have a greater chance of long-term success. With the majority of facilitation taking place within groups/organizations, this study accepts Wardale's (2013) definition in which he states, group facilitation is defined as the process whereby a person

from outside of an organization or immediate work group, and with no decision-making authority, is formally recognized by the group to assist it in problem solving or decision making.

The facilitator's main task is to help the group increase effectiveness by improving its process and structure (Schwarz, 2002). Using these explanations, it would appear that a skilled facilitator could enter any group situation and facilitate a discussion leading to group success. However, these do not consider the context of the setting. There is a general consensus about the benefits of facilitation to deliberative processes, and about it being both form and context dependent (Epstein & Leshed, 2016). Regardless of if the facilitator comes from the community/group itself or an outside person is used, both should have a clear understanding of the issues the group is trying to address, as well as a set of clearly defined goals to be achieved at the end of the process. While the facilitator may not need deep content knowledge of the topic being discussed, they do at least need to share a common language with the participant group (Wardale, 2013). This understanding of a common language is imperative to move participants through the facilitation process together.

Process of Facilitation

The first step in ensuring success in any facilitation is to make sure the meeting design is based on sufficient and adequate information (Bens, 2012). Prior to any facilitation, the facilitator must do the community research necessary to ensure a successful process. Many of the facilitation problems facilitators face stem from lack of agreement with the group about how to work together (Schwarz, 2002). This information must be from the stakeholder/s who invited the facilitator, regardless of if that individual is internal or external facilitator. This initial discussion should identify who should be involved, the specific questions to ask, the type of information to share, description of the issues, objectives of the facilitations, the facilitator's role, and the

ground rules to be used (Schwarz, 2002). This initial process ensures that the facilitator and the group have an environment to be successful. Any experienced facilitator will tell you there is nothing worse than basing the design (process) of a meeting (facilitation) on what one person has told you, only to find that no one else in the group agrees with that assessment (Bens, 2012).

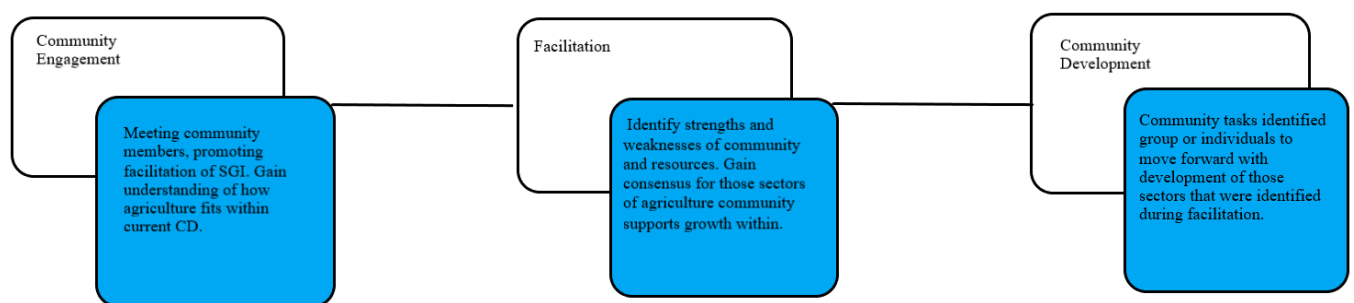
Bens (2012) reminds us that facilitators cannot make the mistake of thinking that being neutral on the content also means being neutral about the process. With part of the task of a facilitator to improve a group process, it is important that, as facilitators, we understand what that means. Process refers to how a group works together and includes how members talk to each other, how they identify and solve problems, how they make decisions, and how they handle conflict (Schwarz, 2002). Schuman (1996) simplifies this further; process is a concern with interpersonal interaction, group dynamics, communication, body language, and ensuring everybody in the group is involved.

Participants themselves play just as much of a role in the success. Having participants who are committed or willing to participate, have the right level of decision-making power or authority, do not dominate the group (or at least can be managed) and having a level of either openness or neutrality to the outcomes is vital (Wardale, 2013). No matter what group is represented or who makes up the group, the participants are individuals with their own personal and professional biases. A solid understanding of the personalities, backgrounds, and the power structure of the group can make the job of facilitating look like the “art” it is sometimes referred to. Facilitators may create space for those who have less power in a community and whose concerns have historically been disregarded or disrespected by giving equal time, legitimacy, and affirmation to their voices and priorities in a decision-making process (Mallory, et al., 2021).

In reference to the specifics of facilitation, the process can be summarized with guiding the agenda, clarifying and rephrasing, keeping the discussion on topic, reformulating issues, summarizing, testing for agreement, identifying decisions and implementation plans, pacing of the meeting, equalizing participation, identifying communication problems, soliciting feedback, aiding the group's emotional climate, and conflict management (Avery, et al., 1981 as cited by Niederman & Volkman, 1999, pg. 333). Facilitators should acknowledge their partial awareness, engage in reflective practice, give attention to their own development, acknowledge the complexity of facilitation role, and exercise care about the process and for the people in the process (Thomas, 2004).

Figure 1 illustrates the process of understanding the community, facilitating/garnering consensus, and implementing the outcomes of the facilitation. Some might argue there is more to this process. For the KDA's SGI, the outcome is simply to introduce a new discourse around agriculture as a vehicle for CD.

Figure 2.1. Facilitation as a part of the CD process



Some might also agree that the first two items, community engagement and facilitation, are relatively easy, and the implementation of the CD ideas is where many communities fall short. As a result of this, the focus within CD will be to shed light on the gaps and possible interventions available to those who work with communities. No matter the goal/outcome, it is

the role of the facilitator to understand the process to guide participants toward achievement of the outcomes.

Content/Outcomes

Though the most challenging part of facilitation may be ensuring the process is attended to effectively, the focus of the group being facilitated is the content or outcomes that brought them together. The content/outcomes refer to what a group is working on, which might be whether to enter a new market, how to provide high-quality service to customers, or what each group member's responsibilities should be (Schwarz, 2002).

Within the process of guiding participants, it is the sharing of individual knowledge and the discussion of its meaning relative to the group's final decision (outcome) that needs to be coordinated explicitly (Kolbe & Boos, 2009). Facilitation, when done properly, ensures that the discussion travels in a coherent direction toward the outcome. Generally, the information requirements are very high in most cases as initial information is typically unequally distributed (among participants) and a final decision is only possible via sharing and integrating information (Kolbe & Boos, 2009). Here again, not all participants share the same knowledge and the facilitator's role is to ensure an equitable process so that knowledge is shared with all participants so they may arrive at a shared outcome.

The knowledge or information held by participants can become an issue of distrust, positional power, or rivalries. Where participants are of disparate educational, social, or economic status; are at different hierarchical levels; or are in other types of control relationships, some group members might feel intimidated and not participate (Schuman, 1996). The art of facilitation, driven by the choice of the facilitator, would be the mitigating factor in the above-mentioned situations. If rivalries do surface, a facilitator can determine if they are relevant to the

task at hand. If not, the facilitator will refocus the group on its stated purpose or ask the group to understand them as part to the issues to be addressed (Schuman, 1996). This can also be affected by the relationship the facilitator has with the group.

An internal facilitator can know a lot about the organization's history, structure, dynamics, and people (Schwarz, 2002). In difficult situations, working with the breadth of issues and volumes of important information is demanding enough; it is too much to expect anyone to also manage the processes that come into play in a meeting (Schuman, 1996). In order to achieve the desired outcomes of the group, neutrality exists to ensure that the person facilitating is able to focus all his or her attention on providing structure and to encourage people to speak freely to the specific issues at hand (Bens, 2016).

The facilitator must understand the process and the importance of neutrality in achieving outcomes. What if the community or organizations need or demand a specific outcome to occur as a result of the facilitation? The goal of the SGI, as stated before, is to move a community toward a new way of thinking, speaking, and acting, specifically about agriculture as a tool in CD. To facilitate this type of result, a slightly different form of facilitation must be employed.

Directed Facilitation

Directed facilitation, as used in this process, is not totally biased but is used as more of a method of nudging the communities toward an outcome not originally considered. As facilitators, we are all partial to our points of views or perhaps to advocating for those points of view that facilitators consider either the most needed, unheard, or undervalued (Belden, 2019). At times, as an outsider from a state agency, the position of facilitator may carry the title of expert with it. Participants and learners see facilitators as the subject matter expert, and authoritative voice on whatever content or subject is being covered (Belden, 2019). According to

the ideas of participation, professional experts ought not to single-handedly define problems and solutions for citizens, as citizens are capable experts in their own everyday life (Westin & Joosse, 2022). Participants may rely on their own limited personal experiences and subjective perceptions—rather than on statistical data that illuminates larger trends over time—which might bias or limit proposed ideas in certain circumstances (Mallory, et al., 2021). As the facilitator and perceived “expert” there is a responsibility, both in facilitation and within the role of agribusiness development, to assist the community in thinking outside of their experiences. Participants may propose ideas that are not based on what is actually happening with community development within their community, or they may only consider the traditional forms of development they are familiar with (Mallory, et. al., 2021).

Facilitators, for example, can expose the deliberative process to takeover by vocal interest groups, while facilitators also run the danger of introducing bias or limiting the individual autonomy of participants (Epstein & Leshed, 2016). Again, the facilitator must carefully walk the line in guiding/directing the group and possibly influencing a group’s outcome. The role of the government should be one of facilitating and enabling local development initiatives, not directing federally imposed development mandates (Rasmussen, 1985). However, the role of facilitator within these communities is sometimes to push them outside of their “D” discourses. This push or nudge can be defined as a strategy for influencing individual or group behavior to the advantage of the individuals or group (Westin & Joosse, 2022). While most communities want growth, most project a fear of uncontrolled expansion and correspondingly resist any change to the quality of small-town life (Clark, 1990). They have relied on traditional community and economic development programs and business development practices that are congruent with their traditional thinking. While nudging was originally defined as a strategy for

influencing individual behavior to the advantage of these individuals, the strategy has recently been broadened and aims to advance the common good (Westin & Joosse, 2022). In the communities that participate in the SGI, this common good is focusing on agriculture as the CD tool. Many of the participants in previous facilitations have said “We have always done it this way,” “We tried that before and it didn’t work,” and “The people won’t support that kind of development.” Moving participants past this line of thinking is the purpose of directed facilitation.

Power in Directed Facilitation

The SGI is a facilitation focused on the content of using agriculture as the vehicle for CD. Content facilitation involves interventions that relate directly to the problem being discussed (Miranda & Bostrom, 1999). In practice, this refers to ensuring that the information being discussed is factual and being deliberate in facilitation of those facts in order to meet the group’s objectives. In certain organizational settings, facilitation can be regarded as an instrument of domination and can exercise a subtle kind of unilateral directive authority (Kirk & Broussine, 2000). There is power in the role of facilitator as they are often looked upon as the knowing one. The difficult question to ask is what part the facilitator may play accidentally or intentionally in the controlled violence and tyranny that can pervade organizational life in the Foucault perspective (Kirk & Broussine, 2000). In chapter three, the term critical discourse analysis will be explained but, it should be noted here that the issues of power in directed facilitation will undergo a critical analysis. The critical side of the analysis deals with the systems enveloping discourse, attempting to mark out and distinguish the principles of ordering, exclusion, and rarity in discourse (Foucault, 1970).

Though participants are not “prisoners” of their region, they can be held back by “the way things just are.” Power is exercised only over free subjects (Foucault, 1982). Foucault’s point here is that the individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized. Though Foucault is not referencing facilitation as has been described, the notion of power, whether political, knowledge, or social, plays a very real role in every facet of facilitation. Facilitators of change processes need to learn how to use their potential influence on institutions that determine power structures and relations (Taylor, 2008). The facilitator, to direct the group toward their outcomes, manipulates these powers for the purpose of providing the fields of possibilities that Foucault speaks of.

Slow Community Development

Many communities want results and may have a challenging time coming to grips that change does not and will not occur soon. Slow growth or slow acceptance of innovative ideas could lead to more community members’ acceptance as the continued discussion can lead to an influence of their daily discourses. Slow movement CD may be a new spin on a somewhat older idea, but the concept is similar. Slow food’s initial goal was to defend regional traditions, gastronomic pleasure, and a slow pace of life (Pickerel, 2014). It has meant that people slow down to enjoy local/regional foods as a “family” and consider the benefits of that enjoyment of being together breaking bread and discussing ideas. In a CD context, this means that communities could focus more on the businesses and local development projects that are currently there and ensure their long-term sustainability. In considering the slow movement, community members can contemplate one of the fundamental societal values that inform our current economic policy: how is time best used or spent (Pickerel, 2014). Pickerel (2014)

elaborates that, “In our current macroeconomic system, we are valued primarily as consumers.” In labor, production, and consumer functions, individuals and companies are rewarded for the consumption and production of quantity over quality. Instead of focusing entirely on financial incentives, as many communities do to attract larger businesses, communities should continue to make strategic investments in education, workforce and infrastructure that will complement their economic development efforts (Lester, et al., 2012). Communities may benefit from the slow food movement if they can make the discursive shift of quantity, larger industry development, to quality, fewer but longer lasting local businesses.

Gaps

The literature review shows that much has been written on the subject of CD, from the politics of CD (Shaw, 2007; Clark, 1990), regionalism as described by Lu (2011), asset-based CD (Mathie & Cunningham, 2002), and CD corporations as a vehicle for CD (Bessant, 2005). However, the literature fails to yield a clear look at how communities perceive themselves as the instrument for CD in a specific sector. Moreover, the literature lacks information on how communities understand their own roles as an entity (system) and also as a convener of community-members to lead or even simply engage in a CD process. Fernando and Cooley (2016) narrow their focus on understanding the nexus of CD and communities to the oil and gas sector but look at the reaction of each rather than the proactive processes that might have taken place to position each community to lead a development effort. Furthermore, little is found that describes how communities talk about or perceive the CD programming on the local level when the programs are developed with little local input.

In the literature review, facilitation is a subject that yielded a plethora of articles concerning process and protocols. Across the literature, authors generally agreed that much

attention should be placed on the process of the actual facilitation and outcomes that participants wish to achieve, while at the same time, the facilitator remaining neutral as to not bias the discussion (Azadegan, & Kolfschoten, 2014; Belden, 2019; Bens, 2012; Epstein, & Leshed 2016; Kirk, & Broussine, 2000; Lessard, et al., 2015; Mallory, et al., 2020; Miranda, & Bostrom, 1999; Schuman, 1996; Schwarz, 2002; Wardale, 2013). Though the importance on process and outcomes should not be diminished, one of the areas of this study is to look at the perceptions of participants to a more directed approach of facilitating a community toward a specific sector of their region for the purpose of CD.

Summary

In a search of the literature, there is little evidence of research specifically in and around how facilitation can affect the CD process. It was present in most articles that the process of identifying assets, barriers, and possible solutions was facilitated by both internal and external entities but little on if that facilitation had direct impacts on outcomes. The idea of a directed approach to facilitation was virtually non-existent in the search of literature. The bulk of the articles on facilitation focused on the pressure of remaining neutral. The closest reference to directed was “guiding” participants toward their own identified goals.

Key findings in the literature point toward the benefits of community engagement. With continued involvement from the community, key relationships are built and if maintained lead to discussions outside of the meeting space. Further benefits are that the decision-making process stays local thus maintaining control of what CD looks like for the respective communities.

CD has had a long history, although it has not always been labeled CD. The literature shows that many forms of CD has been implemented from local, regional, and federally mandated programs. Though only recently has the idea of locally initiated CD been developed.

Though many of the “local” programs are a result of governmental programs with locally engaged listening sessions to determine best use of established programs.

Our rural communities may not be able to support the quantity that many of their more urban counter parts can, but the quality of new development can pay huge dividends for all residents. The KDA’s SGI, as is in the name, is strategic, meaning that community input is necessary to sort through the various sectors of agriculture to which they can add value to or find those gaps that exist within their region.

Chapter 3 - Methodology of Study

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the three components that make up the methodology of this qualitative study. Focused ethnography and critical discourse analysis encompassed by social constructionism allows for a quick deep dive into a community's reality while thoroughly examining the discourse post Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI)-facilitation. The rationale for a focused ethnographic approach combined with social constructionism is the main focus of the chapter. The participating communities, individual participants, analysis method, and ethical concerns will also be addressed in the following pages.

Research Questions

The specific research questions that guided this study were:

Main Research Question: How do SGI-directed facilitations intersect with community members' ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members in achieving community-driven CD from participant perspectives?

Research Sub Question 1: How do community members perceive the role of agriculture as the focus for CD through SGI-directed facilitation?

Research Sub Question 2: How do the community members perceive the role of government in CD through SGI-directed facilitation?

Methodology Selected

Qualitative research aims to work within the context of human experiences and the ways in which meaning is made out of those experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017). The insistence of social constructionism upon the importance of the social meaning of accounts and other texts often leads logically to the use of qualitative methods (Burr, 2015). As this study focuses on the perceptions of the community and relies on interview transcripts, spoken language and how that

language is used and interpreted by the community, a qualitative approach is most appropriate. This study does not concern itself with specifics associated with number of times a word or phrase is used but more to the point of how it is used, in what context it is used, and ultimately how it has or could influence the “D” discourse of the community members.

Social Constructionism

Some authors agree there is no one description of social constructionism which could cover all accounts written thus far. What links them together is a kind of “family resemblance,” in the sense that members of the same family differ in the family characteristics that they possess (Burr, 2015). But just what this term (social constructionism) means, or should mean in research and whether it is of any value to the field is not at all clear (Hruby, 2001). Though the application may be somewhat unclear, most agree language or sharing of knowledge is a social process that provides a way forward. Descriptions and explanations of the world themselves constitute forms of social action (Gergen, 1985). It is through interaction that individuals are socially constructed, and thus a fundamental requirement of self-consciousness is the presence of another (Gerber, 1997). It was this researcher’s assumption that both the community’s perception of agriculture, as well as the role that government plays in community development (CD) was and continues to be socially constructed through shared experiences by members of the respective communities. A crucial step is of course the phase of “acting together,” where knowledge is embedded again in the culture of the community of practice and explicit knowledge is integrated as implicit knowledge in the community (Bouwen, 2001). The implied knowledge is an assumption that established community members know and understand the culture because of the time they have spent in the community. The explicit knowledge is gained

through observing, listening, and experiencing the culture of the community on the part of new members.

Social constructionism is presently unable to tell us to what extent that humans are able, either individually or collectively, to reconstruct themselves and their society (Burr, 2015). The relationship between individual and society operates in both directions: human beings continually construct the social world, which then becomes a reality to which they must respond (Burr, 2015). The problem is they cannot construct it as they please, as Berger & Luckmann (1966) made clear, as children we enter the world constructed by our parents. It is not until the social aspect away from our parents begins that children can start to rearrange our own reality, based on the interactions with others in a social manner. Therefore, it can be assumed a community of individuals may not create a reality unrecognizable by the past inhabitants. This is due to the basic fact that subjective reality must stand in a relationship with an objective reality that is socially defined (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In other words, the work is between what is already defined by social construction and what can or will be defined by future interactions.

Berger and Luckmann point out our everyday interactions reaffirm our reality. Without new stimuli or interactions with new actors with different/new ideas, a person and community stay in their reaffirmed reality. This is a critical difference between counties that have participated in SGI facilitations—few new ideas have entered the discourse in certain counties due to the limited inbound movement of people and ideas. Other counties may be operating on a different reality because of the non-native discourses imbedded with the economic development and other members of the economic development board. The validity of our knowledge of everyday life is taken for granted by oneself and by others until further notice, that is, until a problem arises that cannot be solved in terms of it (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). As with previous

facilitations conducted, the problems of CD cannot be solved unless new discourses enter the everyday reality of the communities. The new discourses must be shared among individuals through language, signs, and symbols to become embedded within the historical discourse for future members of their respective communities.

These new ideas, discourses, or as some researchers might say, truth claims, must be looked at with special scrutiny. There is a need to exercise caution when interpreting research findings, being careful to consider the cultural and historical context of our research and any political or ideological interests it may serve and thus how it may function to disadvantage or misrepresent certain people or groups (Burr, 2015). This exercise of caution must be considered from the side of the researcher as well. What are the “pre-loaded” personal assumptions, experiences, and interests of the researcher? The idea of using social constructionism as a reason for the way individuals or their community see and create their world must also take into consideration the motivation behind these “new ideas.” Context again comes into the picture. What is the history and motivation behind someone injecting new discourse? In the case of CD, is it for the good of all or a few who might share in the “profits” of a new direction? Analysis of data must consider this rationale for who this person or group is, why are they here, and what motivates them.

If an organism is to adapt successfully, its knowledge must adequately represent or reflect that environment (Gergen, 1985). Taking Gergen’s statement further, it could be said the organism will not evolve either, without new knowledge or stimuli from outside of the environment in which it lives. A parallel can be drawn working with rural communities. They are an organism that represents the combined knowledge and experiences of its individual members. Without outside stimuli, innovative ideas or members with differing ideas, the community

stagnates, and as U.S. Census data shows, an exodus of the population has and continues to occur as the individual members seek out survival or growth in another community. Previous facilitations in counties where they embraced new experiences could serve as an opposite case for this occurrence. Though their population has decreased, the rate of decline has also decreased. It could be argued this may be due to new stimuli, in the form of discourse, brought in by community members that had experiences from outside the community.

Focused Ethnography

To understand the meaning-making within the community, a focused ethnographic approach will be used to place the facilitator/researcher into the community's world, though for a very brief time. To understand the culture, norms, and values, observations, and interviews with members of the community that participated in the SGI process were conducted. Though as a Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) representative, the researcher has relationships with the communities, therefore it should be assumed that the researcher maintains some sense of distance and not presume he understands how the community operates until he has briefly embedded himself within the communities.

Culture is not to be called into question; it is not to be criticized, least of all by someone from another culture. Instead, one is to observe it as closely as possible, attempt to take the place of those within the culture and search out the insider's perspective.
(Crotty, 1998, p. 76)

Focused ethnography (FE) is a pragmatic form of ethnography for investigating a specific problem in a particular context via fieldwork at each research site (Kelly, 2022). More specifically, focused ethnography will be used as the methodology since the focus will be on the community's perceptions of agricultural CD via facilitated sessions. The term focused ethnography is used because it focuses on small elements of one's own society (Knoblauch,

2005). That one part is how a community talks, negotiates, and implements CD ideas. In using FE, the researcher spends a brief period of time in these communities, therefore the feel of embeddedness needs to be with the researcher to understand how community members construct their reality. The concepts that an individual uses to construct things are determined or significantly influenced in some way by the community or society in which that individual lives (Mariyani-Squire, 1999).

As Figure 2 illustrates, a focused ethnographic approach to understanding the community from a constructionist lens allows the researcher to interpret the discourse within the community.

Figure 3.1. Relationship of FE and CDA



The Focused Ethnography (FE) methodology assumes that the researcher has knowledge of the issues and insights into how the focus of the study, Haskell and Greeley Counties, operate. Ethnographic inquiry is predominantly a qualitative and interpretivist methodology through which researchers collect large amounts of deeply meaningful and contextualized thick data and participant quotes (Kelly, 2022). This abundance of knowledge is categorically different to the situation of a researcher who lacks knowledge of the culture he or she investigates or who even has difficulties understanding the basics of the language of the culture (Knoblauch, 2005). The main difference for this project between traditional and focused ethnography, according to

Knoblauch (2005), is that FE research is short-ranged and not continual, and at the same time relies heavily on notes, transcripts, coding, and sequential analysis. Focused ethnography is suited to research that spans single or multiple sites as it can be applied nimbly. This responsiveness makes the methodology particularly useful for applied research that requires findings to rapidly inform policy and practice (Kelly, 2022). In using FE, it is the goal of this research to quickly inform policy makers of the findings in hopes of benefiting the communities of the study, as well as the rest of the Kansas rural communities through changes in implementation practices regarding CD programs. The focus on a particular issue in these specific counties for a finite amount of time aligns with the protocols for FE.

Study Participants

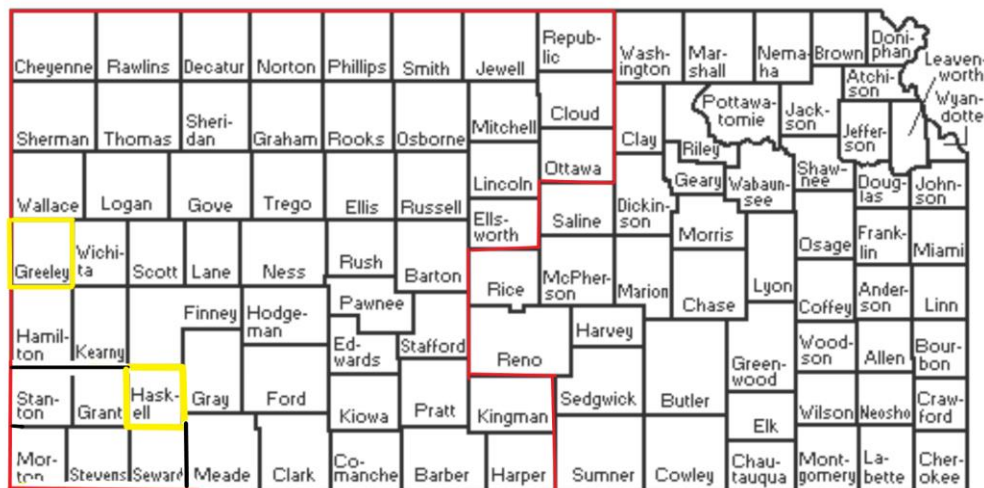
The areas of concentration for this study are two southwestern Kansas counties—Greeley and Haskell. They are a part of the fifty-six counties that comprise a group called the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (WKREDA), shown in Figure 3. These counties work together to provide regional economic/community development. WKREDA is comprised of county-level economic developers, chambers of commerce, city and county governments, small business development centers, public utilities, and community development foundations as voting members. Regional, state and federal agencies may join this work as associate members. It is this constellation of entities that make-up many of the actors at the table for this work, in addition to individual community members.

Greeley and Haskell counties were the subject of this study as both counties had requested an SGI facilitation via KDA's Agribusiness Development team. As Figure 3 shows, both counties are in extreme Southwest Kansas.

An overview of each county would be beneficial for the reader as an understanding of the overall make up and demographics of each county will provide context for the data collection and analysis of that data. Flora et al. (2016) suggests that giving a place a particular characteristic suggests how people and institutions act toward that place. For this paper, the description of each county provides the context for understanding the demographic and geographic differences and similarities of the chosen counties.

Greely County has a population, according to the 2019 U.S. Census data, of 1,232 people, making it the least populated county in Kansas, of which 78.6% are white not Hispanic or Latino descent with 19.6% being Hispanic or Latino descent. These two groups make up 97.3% of the county's population. The remaining 2.7% of the population is of African American, Native, or Asian descent.

Figure 3.2. WKREDA and SGI participating counties



Red outline indicates WKREDA member counties.

Yellow outline indicates SGI participant Counties.

The county has two incorporated towns, Tribune, which is the county seat, as well as the center of business for the county. Horace is the only other town and is a residential area that sits two miles to the west of Tribune. The county is a unified county with combined city and county

services overseen by a unified board of five commissioners. Agriculture is the main industry for the county with 474,883 acres of farmland and generates \$153 million in output while supporting 502 jobs or 43% of the county's entire workforce (KDA Economic Contribution Report, 2021). The town of Tribune has a population of 772 as of the 2019 U.S. Census. An inventory of businesses and amenities include six churches, two restaurants, a recently remodeled county hospital, one grocery store, one combination hardware store pharmacy, two banks, lumber yard, one auto parts store, three insurance agencies, two grain companies, two bed and breakfast lodging establishments, a county library, the county k-12 school, county offices, a golf course, and a community volunteer-run movie theatre. The closest retail department store is over an hour away in Lamar, CO.

Little research can be found pertaining to what is known of the culture of Greeley County. Their county website (2022) promotes that it is a western Kansas community looking to the future with technology and healthcare access while holding fast to the community spirit and family values that typify rural life. While rural life (as discussed in chapter two) can have different interpretations and explanations, in this case, reference is made to this rural life as deeply rooted in an agricultural setting, as noted in the above section. As will be explored in chapter four, the community understands and embraces the fact that the community's economy is based on the local farmers' success or failures. The community is forward thinking in respect to governance. As of January 1, 2009, the governments of Greeley County and the City of Tribune unified to form the Unified Government of Greeley County (Hopkins, personal interview, 11 November 2021). Furthermore, the community is a Public Square Community where community members take the initiative to be directly engaged in the policy and practices that shape Unified Greeley County (Greeley County website, 2022).

Haskell County has a population, according to the 2019 U.S. Census data, of 3,968. The county has two incorporated towns—Sublette serves as the county seat with a population of 1,413, and Satanta has a population 1,092. Haskell County's population consist of 31.4% Hispanic or Latino descent and 65.9% non-Hispanic or Latino descent. These two groups make up 95.2% of the population. The remaining 4.8% of the population is of African American, Native, Asian, or Pacific Islander descent. Agriculture is the largest industry with 363,751 acres of farmland that contributes \$706 million to the economy while employing 1,038 people. The two towns combined have ten churches, three banks, one farmer owned cooperative, two private grain companies, one hospital (located in Satanta) one long-term care facility, one pharmacy, one lumberyard, two agricultural equipment dealers, ten restaurants, one golf course, and each town has a k-12 school system. Haskell County sits between two larger towns. Using Sublette as the center point, it is 38 miles to Garden City and 35 miles to Liberal. Garden City and Liberal have sizable industries, which many residents of the county commute to.

The people of the region are of two distinct ethnicities. Much of the population is of European descent that settled the area during the late 1800s. The major-minority group consists of Hispanic populations that originally moved to the region for employment in the meatpacking industry. These migrants were drawn to the region by the prospect of employment in the (meat processing) plants or feed yards (Broadway, 1990).

Several papers have been published on the effects of drought and the rise of irrigation within Haskell County. Though these studies did focus specifically on the communities' perceptions of agriculture and community development, they did show a sense of loss in local control. The two most frequently mentioned issues were increasing taxation and the loss of local control to the state and federal governments (Bloomquist et al., 2002). As with the majority of

the western counties, agriculture is and has been the major economic driver and cultural connection for the members of the communities. The residents of Satanta, Sublette, and the area outside of the two towns still rely upon an agriculturally based economy (Williams & Bloomquist, 1996).

According to the survey conducted in the early 1990's by Williams and Bloomquist (1996) the community was satisfied with the opportunities to make friends and for residents to participate in community affairs. As the ABD team leader at KDA, the researcher has conducted over twenty community meetings in the western counties and can, anecdotally, confirm that these two communities share that sense of satisfaction. This satisfaction may be confined to their local participation only.

For the south-west region of Kansas, which includes Haskell County, the combination of complex social issues, court mandates, increasing regulations that carry no fiscal support, the relative decline of rural representation, the region's abundant natural resources and a relatively high degree of wealth relative to other rural areas has generated an atmosphere of suspicion toward the role or presence of federal and state governments. (Bloomquist, et al., 2002, p28)

Though the passage above is referencing just Haskell County, Greeley is part of the south-west region to which the authors refer to and share many of the same attributes as Haskell. Furthermore, both communities share a perceived notion of a growing division between eastern and western Kansas, a division drawn along rural and urban lines, as well as the tone of people's attitude about governmental activity as generally negative (Williams & Bloomquist, 1996). This example of the culture will be explored further in chapter five.

In a study by Wichita State University's Center for Economic Development and Business Research (2016), it was shown that a mass exodus from these counties would occur by 2064. The study shows that by 2064 Greeley County could see up to a 24% reduction in population, while Haskell County could see a decline of 60% within the same period. This prediction of a dramatic

decrease in population is an indication of a sense of urgency on the part of these counties to address CD issues within their communities using the SGI process.

The counties contacted KDA's ABD team requesting an SGI-facilitated session that would focus on each county but also focus the discussion on a regional approach to CD. The SGI was the instrument developed by the KDA to address community needs in developing local CD. The purpose was to help communities to identify the agriculture sectors to develop and to identify the community's resources such as infrastructure, utilities, real estate, and incentives for business development. The SGI was sent to the designated economic development directors within all 105 counties in Kansas. The term director in this case applied to a variety of roles, including volunteer individuals, committees, chamber of commerce director, or the city/county economic director. At the same time, the KDA's Agriculture Business Development (ABD) team offered to any community that requested an onsite facilitated discussion to select the agriculture sectors for their county or community.

Prior to conducting facilitated sessions, the researcher toured the area to get a feel of the physical assets that each has. This tour followed the framework outlined by Flora, et al. (2016) in assessing the seven Community Capitals. Examples of these include schools, healthcare, facilities for the elderly, main street businesses, available housing, and the agricultural landscape. This tour can provide an idea of the issues that might arise during the session and provide a lens in which to understand the community's culture. Furthermore, this tour allowed insight to who are the members of the community, as well as insight to who attends community functions. The use of FE during various community activities such as school events, and city and county governmental meetings give clues to who is currently in power at the various levels. Shared in Figure 2, attending to this research through the lens of critical analysis requires attention must be

given to those who are not in the room for facilitation and to how power plays out within facilitations. The SGI facilitations and interviews were conducted from a sampling of those populations. A very primitive search of the history of each county was also conducted; this provided a basis for understanding the “D” discourse for each county and the region.

Through a focused ethnographic understanding of the community’s culture and “D” discourse, a facilitation of the SGI to a true representation of the community, it will be possible to answer the research questions. In order to answer or provide deeper understanding of the participants’ voices, reliable data must be collected and analyzed. In the next section a detailed explanation of these processes are explored.

Data Collection and Analysis

As with any study, an explanation of how data is collected, how participants are selected, analysis of data, and the handling of that data after the study is necessary to provide assurances that research protocols are followed.

Participants for this study were recruited by the local economic developer in Greeley County and a volunteer community leader in Haskell County. The researcher provided both individuals with guidance on inviting members of the community with the understanding that the facilitation needed to be open to the public since the KDA, a state agency, was facilitating. Therefore, the number of participants was not under the control of the researcher, but it was suggested to keep the number under thirty. The Haskell County facilitation had thirty-five participants and the Greeley County had thirty. The interview participants were selected by the community meeting organizers with instructions to provide at least three from each facilitation that would be willing participants in the interviews. The researcher gave each meeting organizer the following suggestions on the areas of the community that needed to be represented in the

facilitation: education, health care, farming, ranching, ag businesses, non-ag businesses, banking, religious organizations, and simply those who live in the county and may or may not work within the county. Further instructions were given to include an equal mix of young, old, male, female, and to include all races or nationalities that are present in the community. Realities are constructed through social processes in which meanings are negotiated, consensus formed, and contestation is possible (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Ensuring a diverse representation of the community is also to ensure that the communities' big "D" discourses and language in use discourses were represented. Having that representation also means that realities for all are negotiated during the facilitation.

The researcher asked the respective county's ED or facilitation organizer to identify three individuals from each county to participate in follow-up interviews that were conducted three weeks after the community facilitation. Though six interviews were requested, four participants responded that they would be willing to participate in the follow-up interviews, two from each county agreed to participate. The issue of what constitutes an appropriate sample size in qualitative research is only really answerable within the context and scientific paradigm of the research being conducted (Boddy, 2016). Though the number of interviews for this study may seem small, the depth and quality of the data provided by the participants were adequate for this study. Individual cases can provide a new, deep, and nuanced understanding of previously unexplored phenomena (Boddy, 2016). To address the topic of saturation, careful analysis of the interviews was compared with the recordings and field notes taken during the facilitations to ensure congruency of thoughts and ideas expressed by both sets of participants. It is the opinion of this researcher that a similar study in a similar rural region would find results consistent to the data collected here. While qualitative methodologists are unlikely to agree on exact sample sizes

needed for qualitative studies, and this is not required for qualitative work, they generally agree that several factors can affect the number of interviews needed to achieve saturation (Marshall et al., 2013). While saturation is the goal of any researcher when gathering data, it has nevertheless been noted that individual case studies can provide reliable indications for the directions in which future research can go (Boddy, 2016). In part, this study looked at the phenomena of directed facilitation and the perceptions from participants. The interviews were conducted via phone or Zoom, recorded, and lasted 60 minutes on average. By not limiting participants to a set “stop time” for the interviews, it allowed a free flow of thoughts resulting in rich descriptions of their perceptions of the questions posed during the interviews.

For this project, informal, open-ended interviews and recorded transcripts/participant observation data was collected. By looking through the lens of a social constructionist during analysis of the data allowed the researcher to understand how and why participants speak and relate their perceptions and experiences. An informal, open-ended interview was the way to get at the authentic experience of participants by hearing their own words about this process. The researcher focused on using the key questions as probes to peel away a superficial understanding of one’s experiences to a deeper understanding of one’s experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017). This type of questioning is meant to allow the participant to “expose” how they construct their understanding of their experiences. In this study, a series of general questions was used as a guide for each interview. Those questions are represented in Table 1, below.

Table 3.1. Open Ended Questions to Participants

“What is your background/history with this community?”
“How do you define agriculture within your county/region?”
“Can you describe how agriculture is currently playing a role in community development within the county/region?”
“Can you tell me how, from your experiences, agriculture has changed in the county/region during the time you have lived/worked with the region?”

“Can you tell me about a time or in general how the county/region works together as a community for a community or economic development project?”
“Can you tell me how and when the county/region utilizes governmental resources for CD or economic development?”
“Can you share your overall thoughts about the process and outcomes from the SGI facilitated community meeting you attended?”

Each question was meant to elicit perceptions, experiences, and dialogue from participants and to understand their lived realities within the community. The purpose of using these open-ended questions was that it allowed the participant to “move freely” within the question, and it allowed the researcher to gather rich details, which is difficult to do with closed-ended questions that have fixed answers (Bhattacharya, 2017). This also allowed the researcher space to ask follow-up questions in order to gain deeper understanding of the participants’ experiences.

These rural communities of southwest Kansas have deep histories that are sometimes tied to a common ancestry thus having specific social traditions and ways of organizing. Social constructionism allows for a democratic plurality of perspectives on an issue, recognizing that because all perspectives are social constructions, each and every perspective has an equal right to be judged as possibly valid and true for the agents holding to their respective constructions (Mariyani-Squire, 1999). During the group discussion, the facilitator/researcher, was observing by using an active membership role. This is where the researcher takes on some of the roles of the group that s/he observes and participates in some activities and observes others from the sidelines as a peripheral member (Bhattacharya, 2017).

Procedures Followed

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Appendix D, was received prior to the county facilitations and interviews. The interviews were conducted and recorded post-

facilitation discussion over the phone or Zoom. The researcher also contacted the volunteer organizer in Haskell County and the ED in Greeley County for permission to email potential interview participants, as well as to procure contact information. Ideally, the intent was to use the ED in both counties, however, Haskell County did not have a dedicated person for that role. They utilize assistance from a neighboring county and an in-county volunteer that organizes community involvement. Local EDs know more intimately the community and have established trusted relationships with businesses, schools, health care, and residents of their respective communities. It was at the discretion of these two individuals to select the interview participants with the parameters that they must represent different sectors of the community. Suggestions of participants were given to both meeting organizers well in advance of the facilitated meetings in order to ensure a diverse mix of community members would be present.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom and phone, all of which were recorded; recordings were then transcribed via NVivo online transcription service. Each participant signed a consent form, Appendix B, prior to the interview. Although a complete sampling of the individual facilitation participants would provide a richer pool of data, the lead CD and volunteer will have a baseline of understanding of how the community views agriculture as a focus on CD. Facilitators are interested in the relationship between those who have power and those who are powerless because these socio-political dynamics are represented in the groups and individuals that are facilitated (Kirk & Broussine, 2000). Within this sense of power, this research is concerned with the power of the history or discourses within the community's current perceptions of agriculture. Agriculture has and remains the main industry within the region; understanding this type of historical power is key to facilitating the participants. This power relationship in agriculture and rural communities could be explained as a way to prevent reason

from going beyond the limits of what is given in experience (Foucault, 1982). In other words, are the participants willing to move toward a new discourse centered on building a new community? Are the participants willing to engage in economic development projects that involve agriculture in less traditional formats and ideas through a facilitated experience? In this way, agriculture represents a culture and an institution for the community. The industry holds power that the individual participants and associated entities that are a part of the economic development constellation all participate in, in one way, shape, or form. Keeping this in mind, it was imperative that the participants were not specifically chosen but given the opportunities to volunteer as interviewees, disregarding their status in the communities.

Pre-facilitation, a focused ethnographic study of the community capitals, allowed insight into who are the members of the community, as well as insight into who attends community functions. The use of FE during various community activities such as school events, city and county governmental meetings give clues to who is currently in power at the various levels. Attention must be given to those who are not in the room. The SGI facilitations and interviews will be conducted from a sampling of those populations.

The facilitated discussions were recorded for analysis and notes taken throughout the discussion. Though these discussions were a part of the researcher's employment with the KDA, and all notes, transcripts, and recordings are subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), an IRB was secured prior to facilitated sessions being conducted.

To know if the research questions have been answered an analysis of the data is necessary. Since all questions and assumptions are based on how the spoken word or the discourse of participants are perceived, CDA was selected as the most appropriate method for this study.

Critical Discourse Analysis

This study uses Fairclough (2013), Gee (2014), Rogers (2011), and Foucault (1971), to answer the questions of what discourse analysis is: What constitutes critical discourse analysis?; How is it an essential element of social constructionism?; and by putting it into practice in communities, how can change be facilitated? Discourse analysis (at a basic level) is the study of language at use in the world, not just to say things, but also to do things (Gee, 2014). It is not until researchers listen, watch, interpret, and analyze the discourses around them that informed assumptions about the best approach to “do things” can be made. In the case of CD, those “things” are creating programs or initiatives that serve the rural communities in a way they can be understood, supported, and utilized. Foucault (1971) reminds us that humans have not always paid heed to the discourse of men. From the depths of the Middle Ages, a man was mad if his speech could not be said to form part of the common discourse of men. Similarly, in modern times one might take the words spoken by a child as gibberish. However, those words from a child or a mad man are still discourses used within a community and are subject to analysis.

Gee (2014) gets to the root reason for this study, of why someone would use the approach of critical in discourse analysis.

Their goal is not just to describe how language works or even to offer deep explanations, though they do want to do this. They also want to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, institutional, social, or political issues, problems, and controversies in the world (Gee, 2014, p. 9).

For community-engaged scholars, the research itself is a tool that one uses to explain, rationalize, and plan to act on behalf of or with the community with which they are engaged.

Discourse analysis requires us to dig deeper into the words, signs, and symbols used to communicate to find the meaning, context, and “truth” within the discourse. Discourse is not simply an entity that can be defined independently; you can only arrive at an understanding of it

by analyzing sets of relations (Fairclough, 2013). As Fairclough brings in relations he also brings the social aspect of life itself. Discourse is an action— whether spoken, written, or viewed— taking place on both the giver and the receiver of the discourse. This interaction constitutes a social activity in which meaning is given and interpreted. It can be said what in particular discourse brings into the complex relations that constitute social life: meaning, and making meaning (Fairclough, 2013).

Some approaches to discourse analysis are not as closely tied to the grammatical details of language but concentrate on ideas, issues, and themes as they are expressed in speech and writing (Gee, 2014). The research taking place in these rural communities falls in line with Gee, “I am not as concerned with the words they use but more to how and why the ‘texts’ are used to generate, stagnate, or propel issues and ideas.” Foucault (1972) outlines analyzing discourses in their exterior dimensions. In doing this, he treats the past discourse as a monument or how it came to be in the now. Foucault seeks in the discourse not its laws of construction but its conditions of existence and refers the discourse to the practical field in which it is deployed.

This begins to explain what is meant when “critical” is added to discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is a methodology that enables a vigorous assessment of what is meant when language is used to describe and explain (Wilson, 2007). To begin to change a community’s discursive habits one must first understand how the discourse came to be— the monuments, how it is continued to be used within the community and the existence—and then it can be applied to the community for changing the status quo, e.g. the practical field. CDA is not analysis of discourse in itself as one might take it to be, but analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements, or moments, as well as analysis of the internal relations of discourse (Fairclough, 2013). The dialectical relation here is between the community

members themselves and the entity that controls CD programs and initiatives. Thus, through the use of CDA one can begin to understand how the discourse of those with the power compares or relates to the discourse of the people which the power affects.

A primary focus of CDA is on the effect of power relations and inequalities in producing social wrongs, and in particular, on discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities; on dialectical relations between discourse and power, and their effects on other relations within the social process and their elements (Fairclough, 2013). Critical approaches, however, go further and treat social practices, not just in terms of social relationships, but also in terms of their implications for things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power (Rogers, 2011). In other words, CDA analyzes how our rural communities talk about agriculture, CD, and the role government should play in CD within their communities. It is moreover a critical approach to discourse analysis in the sense that it sets out to make visible through analysis and to criticize connections between properties of texts and social processes and relations, which are generally not obvious to people who produce and interpret those texts (Fairclough, 2013).

The power that various authors speak of is found on the local level in conjunction with and separately from the government. Questions that should be overarching are: Is the historical discourse still driving social aspects of the community? Can these power relations be seen/heard on the local level? Can either the local or governmental discourse be changed so that commonalities appear? Critical discourse analysis argues that language-in-use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things (Rogers, 2011). The assumption here is that engaged researchers can encourage a community to think, act, and speak differently about

agriculture and CD, thus, can affect how that community's ideas are received and thought of as the normal discourse by those with the power to enact policies beneficial to CD in rural areas.

Data Analysis

Methodologists concur that coding schemes are customized to the specific contexts of a study; the data is unique, just as the researcher and their creative abilities to code them (Saldaña, 2016). There were several rounds of data analysis using the recordings from the facilitated discussion with community participants. The first rounds of analysis, Appendix D, utilized value coding to begin to understand the participants' perspectives and actions. Value coding is the application of codes to qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldview (Saldaña, 2016). Value coding applies to both interview transcripts and field notes. Using both sources, in fact, corroborates the coding and enhances the trustworthiness of the findings (Saldaña, 2009).

After categorizing the value codes a focused method of analyzing was implemented, which Saldaña (2016) points out that this method can focus the codes into categories, prioritize them to develop axis categories around which others revolve, and synthesize them to formulate a central or core category that becomes the foundation for explication. NVivo software was used to transcribe recordings. First cycle coding methods outlined by Saldaña (2009) were used and focused on attribute, structural, and descriptive coding. Within the first cycle value coding were much more effective due to the limited number of interview participants. Saldaña (2016) goes further, stating that a value is the importance attributed to ourselves, another person, thing, or idea. For this study, how participants describe their community, the value they put in CD, and their belief as to if they can collectively have an impact is crucial to understand for CD.

After coding of the data, themes were generated to identify what the unit of data was about or what it meant. As analysis of the data was being done, codes emerged, and data was organized according to those codes. Themes emerged as second and third readings of the transcripts and notes were done. The analytic goals are to winnow down the number of themes to explore in a report and to develop an overarching theme from the data corpus, or an integrative theme that weaves various themes together into a coherent narrative (Saldaña, 2009). During analysis of the data the hope is that the themes can, according to Ospina & Foldy (2010), bring together insights to identify specific practices that are associated with building connectedness, both within and across organizations.

It has been said that assigning codes or themes to the data is a way for a researcher to add their personal signature to the research. The researcher's own "D" discourse was ever present as observations, facilitations, and listening occurred. These Discourses cannot be completely ignored, but the researcher can be aware of it and note when it does surface. Since everyone most likely perceives the social world differently, each will therefore experience it differently, interpret it differently, document it differently, code it differently, analyze it differently, and write about it differently (Saldaña, 2016). How the researcher observed the participants, gathered field notes, and "translated" the transcriptions may not have been the same as if someone else had done the research. However, the researcher must provide enough detail that readers may come to their own conclusion about the scene (data analyzed) (Tracy, 2010). The goal for this research is to represent the observations and data rigorously and ethically for the communities as the reality, with context, at the time of collection. Saldaña (2016) emphasizes that the researcher must be rigorously ethical with the analysis by maintaining a sense of scholarly integrity and working hard toward the final outcomes.

Trustworthiness

Credible research or reports are those that readers feel trustworthy enough to act on and make decisions in line with (Tracy, 2010). In doing a qualitative study, the attention to credibility and trustworthiness must be addressed as the data is subjective to analysis of the researcher. In using three sources of data—interviews, facilitation recordings, and field notes—a triangulation of the data was secured. Triangulation in qualitative research assumes that if two or more sources of data are collected, similar results would be found within the same research subject (Tracy, 2010). Attention was also given to the rich description of the context surrounding the interview subjects, facilitation participants, and the two counties involved. Analysis of qualitative data requires that the researcher adhere to guidelines that allow for broad but thorough analysis. Leaning on Saldaña's (2016) methods, conducting several rounds of coding and theming the data ensured that if a similar study is done, the researcher would come to very similar conclusions.

In providing context and using focused ethnography, the reader will understand that the researcher was able to ascertain tacit knowledge of the communities. This tacit knowledge includes the culture's basic vocabulary, grammar, and the unarticulated contextual understanding that is found in members' nods, silences, humor, and off-the-cuff comments (Tracy, 2010).

Through triangulation, attention to detailed depictions, and analysis of the data, the reader should be confident in the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings and recommendations within this research.

Summary

Within this chapter, an introduction to the methodology used for this study was explored. From a social constructionism view, the researcher used focused ethnography to collect data with the assumption that all discourse and discursive practices were and continue to be socially

constructed. The researcher further detailed the respective counties so there was an understanding of who the participants are, where they are geographically, and the culture and diversity of the communities. Data collection using recorded facilitations and interviews were discussed as well as how critical discourse analysis will be utilized to draw conclusions in order to answer the research questions. An exploration of the findings of the data by providing supporting evidence from analysis of the facilitation and interviews will be detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 - Findings of Study

The purpose of chapter four is to present the findings of this qualitative, focused ethnographic study. Specifically, this research explored the perceptions of rural communities and the role the Kansas Department of Agriculture's (KDA) Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) plays in potentially shifting the discourse of the participants in community development facilitations. The intent of the research was to provide better understanding of 1) community members' views and attitudes of agriculture, 2) as a means of CD, and local, state, and federal programs relating to CD, and 3) their perceptions of a directed facilitation via the SGI. The participants in this study were community members selected by the local meeting organizer. The researcher requested that interview participants be as representative of the community's various demographics and career backgrounds as possible. This was a request to include participants from the sectors of education, health care, farming, ranching, agribusinesses, non-agribusinesses, banking, religious organizations, and simply those who live in the county and may or may not work within the county. The initial goal was to engage six participants and ultimately, four participants volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews. They included a farmer, an agriculture transportation business owner, a local economic developer, and a pharmacy/hardware business owner. Participants were engaged by the community organizer who asked for volunteers, and from those volunteers four participants were selected. All participants in this research project will remain anonymous.

Chapter three outlined the intended approach to data analysis. This included an approach to theme generation that would be conducted through a value coding system. Value is the importance that is attributed to ourselves, another person, thing, or idea (Saldaña, 2016). In addition, this qualitative study focused on the understanding and perceptions of rural

communities. Bhattacharya (2017) frames this as to simply understand and explore in an in-depth manner and not to generalize. The focus of this study was on two counties and four participants from those respective counties, specifically, their collective and personal perceptions of agriculture, community development (CD) programs, and the facilitation of the Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI). Though there may be assumptions drawn from this study that might be parallel with other rural areas, it cannot be assumed that people in other rural regions, within Kansas or elsewhere, would have the same perceptions due to geographic and cultural differences. Furthermore, while interviews were limited to four people in this study and the findings are not generalizable due to the qualitative nature of this study, the findings can inform how researchers think about future work in other rural communities. Lastly, the number of interview participants may be seen as a limitation of this study, this will be given more attention in chapter five.

The main research question in this study was: What are community members' perceptions of SGI-directed facilitations in community-driven CD as they intersect with elements of their culture including: existing ideas, traditions, visions, values, and perspectives? Sub questions in this study included:

1. How do community members perceive the role of agriculture as the focus for CD through SGI-directed facilitation?
2. How do the community members perceive the role of government in CD through SGI-directed facilitation?

As was stated in chapter three, in conducting participant interviews, an open-ended interview framework was used. This allowed the researcher to gather rich details of participants' experiences (Bhattacharya, 2017). Each interview began with open-ended questions as shown again in Table 1.

Table 4.1. Open Ended Questions to Participants

“What is your background/history with this community?”
“How do you define agriculture within your county/region?”
“Can you describe how agriculture is currently playing a role in community development within the county/region?”
“Can you tell me how, from your experiences, agriculture has changed in the county/region during the time you have lived/worked with the region?”
“Can you tell me about a time or in general how the county/region works together as a community for a community or economic development project?”
“Can you tell me how and when the county/region utilizes governmental resources for CD or economic development?”
“Can you share your overall thoughts about the process and outcomes from the SGI facilitated community meeting you attended?”

From these interviews, and following value coding through the data analysis process, Appendices E and F, a set of findings emerged from the data. Next the findings that emerged from the data analysis are presented here in four sections. Section one will consist of an overview of the interview participants and their general comments in relation to the introductory question of their history within the region. Section two will cover the research sub question 1: How do the community members perceive agriculture as the focus of CD through SGI-directed facilitation? Results and analysis within this section will include the open-ended questioning related to agriculture in the region. Section three will cover research sub question 2: How do community members perceive the role of government in CD through SGI-directed facilitation? Results and analysis here will include the open-ended questions relating to government programming in CD or economic development. Section four will analyze all data as related to the overarching research question: How do SGI-directed facilitations intersect with community members’ ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members in achieving community-driven CD, from participant perspectives? Those perspectives will be discussed as the themes that emerged during the coding process within each section as those themes relate to

the research questions. The fourth section will begin with an overview of the SGI-facilitated sessions as to orientate the reader as to the process of the facilitation and the participants who were in the room. Since this study leans heavily on the discourses and Discourses of the community and participants, a detailed look into the Discourses of the four individual interview participants is needed.

The Participants.

Four participants volunteered to be a part of the study beyond their participation in facilitations, specifically as interviewees. There were two participants from each county who also participated in the SGI facilitations, (two from Haskell County and two from Greeley County). An introduction to each participant is warranted that includes pieces of their life that shed light onto their connection to the community, their status within the community, their connection to agriculture, as well as their connection to CD within their respective communities.

First, Participant A owns a small but diversified business not directly related to agriculture, consisting of a hardware store and pharmacy. Participant A grew up in the area and moved to a larger town for a few years but returned each season to the region to help their family with farming, ultimately returning permanently, and has lived in the community for over 25 years. Participant B has spent several years doing CD work focusing on the local community and as an active member of the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance. Participant B grew up in the area and has, thus far, lived nowhere else beyond the county. Participant C owns a transportation company that focuses on the transport of agricultural products produced within the region. Participant C grew up in another state but married a local person and has now lived in the area for over five years. Lastly, Participant D is a fourth-generation farmer, living on and farming the same land that his great-grandfather settled generations earlier. Participant D has

only lived away from the area during their college years and married a local person. Each participant brought a unique “D” discursive perspective based on their personal and professional role in and connection to the community.

Understanding the participants within a study allows for a better understanding of their “D” discourses and in turn, allows for a deeper understanding of why they may have responded to the questions the way they did. This background information on each participant was important for the researcher to have, in developing a deep understanding of their approaches to this experience.

Each participant was asked at the beginning of the interview to briefly talk about their history in relation to the region. This question served to allow me, as the researcher, to gain a better understanding of their “D” discourses and allow the participant to get comfortable with the process and also with the interviewer. As an engaged scholar and as a Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) employee, the researcher is not vested as a community member nor a part of the western Kansas region or community. Building rapport, in this case, is also building trust with participants in order to allow the participant to feel at ease with the interviewer and at ease with being honest in their responses to the questions.

During analysis of the responses from the first question, it became clear that all participants’ responses carried a strong theme of sense of place. Participants understood where they were and more importantly, why they chose to live and stay within their respective communities. Two of the participants, A and D, had long established family ties to their communities and communicated a very prideful sense of that. Participant D stated:

“I grew up on the county line and my wife and I raised our five boys on our farm that my great-grandparents homesteaded in 1902, so yeah you could say we are vested in this community.”

Participant A stated:

“We bought the business in ’89 and moved back. We had been coming back to help with the relative’s farm on and off and once we moved back it really didn’t feel like we had left at all.”

That sense of place seemed to stem from the fact that almost everyone in the communities has a tie to agriculture. Participant A stated:

“I think everybody knows that most of the people out here are involved in ag, you know, if they aren’t directly involved, they’re either married to someone that is or their close friends are.”

Participant D stated:

“Agriculture is very robust here for sure and I am quite proud of how we’ve been able to continue to produce with limited resources.”

Even those who are not native to the area had a strong connection to the region and established roots quickly. Participant C stated:

“We moved out there June of 2016 so this year this coming June will be six years I guess been there long enough to get a pretty good feel of the area. Yep, my my wife grew up there that’s the connection.”

The participant elaborated on the transition in moving to western Kansas. The sentiment that was added was not a new thought, as many of the conversations overheard in the SGI meeting contained similar feelings.

“I don’t know, in my opinion you don’t move to western Kansas just on a whim, you gotta kind of have a reason.”

All of the participants alluded to a feeling similar to the above statement. The sense of place became more evident when they elaborated on their feelings after settling back to the community. Participant C:

“Yeah, so I’ve been here for a little over six years, but it didn’t take me long to figure out it’s quiet and it’s peaceful out here and I have no regret.”

This sense of place was described as agriculturally centered, welcoming, resilient, and peaceful. This was affirmed formally during the participants' responses to the initial questioning in the interviews and informally during side conversations that facilitation participants engaged in while conducting the facilitations. Participants communicated almost a sense of wonder that they can/could make a life in such a remote place. Participant B emphasized this point, "I don't know, I still struggle to figure out how they get it done, year after year." They, in this case, was a reference to the rural community this participant is a part of. Without fail, every participant who was interviewed had a sentiment similar to a statement made during facilitation, "We all have that realization that rural Kansas still matters." Participants understood that their rural place is important to the people of western Kansas and the economies of the region and state.

The above descriptions provided a cursory summary of the data from this study. The next three sections will discuss the themes that emerged from the data in more detail. Three major themes emerged, 1) a sense of urgency, 2) a sense of loss, and 3) a sense of frustration. These themes emerged alongside two other major themes in the data; the participants' sense of place, that were discussed in the participant section, and their sense of optimism. The participants' sense of optimism will be outlined in a later section, this theme emerged primarily from data collected through discussions of the SGI-facilitated sessions.

Sub Question 1: How do the community members perceive agriculture as the focus of CD through SG- directed facilitation?

In each interview, as well as in each SGI-facilitation, participants recognized the importance of agriculture within their regions. When asked during the interviews about their and the community's perception of agriculture, several themes emerged. The first and most prevalent was a sense of urgency. Both interview and facilitation participants conveyed an understanding

that if their rural region were to grow, or at the very least maintain, that agriculture was the means to that success. Participant D emphasized their statement: “I mean I think anybody that’s still out here understands if the farmer goes so goes everything else.” Participant A continued that thought by adding: “They (the community) know that their livelihood depends on the farmer making it or not making it.” They underscored the disadvantage they feel rural communities have in Kansas by comparison to rural communities in eastern Colorado, participant B stated: “When I look at eastern Colorado and the number of resources that are not available on the front range or anything outside the front range, eastern Colorado is basically dead to the rest of Colorado” (emphasis added). Outside of the recorded interview this participant had described the transformation that Colorado has gone through over the past few decades. The participant communicated that with over 70% of their population living along the I-25 corridor, few resources or programs benefit the rural communities outside of those urban boundaries. With little difference between the two areas, western Kansas and the Colorado rural front range, geographically or economically, there is an urgency to do something. The language the participant used to describe the death of one state region as compared to another highlights what the participants see is at stake—the death (or livelihood) of their town and their community. This is emphasized by a participant from the SGI facilitation: “We are desperate to find something to keep people here.”

All four participants expressed a sense of urgency to sustain and grow their communities. Statements from the data that contributed to this finding generally emerged as statements directed toward attracting populations, developing local resources (financial and physical), and attracting effective programming. Participants in their discourse tied that sense of urgency to bring these things to the community with the community survival, economic/community

development, and the economic importance of agriculture to their region. The comments that conveyed a sense of urgency also contained some sense of loss. This sense of loss also emerged in relationship to the same things the community identified as needs in the discussion of urgency. This included a sense of loss in terms of local population loss, the loss of businesses and resultantly, economic opportunities, and the loss of opportunities generally. The following excerpts provide context to unpack the discourses that conveyed that sense of loss.

A sense of loss was heard within all of the responses to this study's questions. In the sense of urgency, participants discussed that the community needed new people or at least to retain the young people raised in the region. Though a dramatic loss of population was not the issue with participants, a change in demographics was.

Participant D stated:

“We can grow anything out here, if there is a market, and we do a great job of growing crops. We do an even better job of growing our kids and shipping them out after they graduate high school. We are lucky if they come back for Christmas or Thanksgiving.”

Participants of the interviews and the SGI facilitations expressed their concern of how easy it is to drive to a larger town for shopping and entertainment. In one facilitation a participant shared: “If we can't get something started, the only housing we will need is assisted living and nursing homes for the elderly.” They were referencing the high numbers of an aging population and the need for housing specific to that group. This points directly to another concern expressed by the community and noted above—the loss of or sense of urgency to attract resources to the region. The significance of that statement, in this case, was that housing is needed to serve and retain the aging population and it is also needed for attracting young people to the region. The community faces a do, or quite literally, die scenario for population growth and it is tied up with the need for programming and resources.

As was stated earlier, the communities are proud of the progress that agriculture has made, but that progress has also come with a price. Participant A explains:

“My parents and that generation, this was their town. They worked for good streets and businesses. They built churches and started businesses; we don’t see that now. We basically have two Saturdays every week since the school went to four-day weeks. If they have young kids, they are participating in year-round private sports traveling every weekend. That used to be the time they committed to 4-H, Boy Scouts, and churches.”

Participant D expands on this thought:

“The economy has changed; I think ag is way more prosperous than it was back then and maybe that contributes to the loss. I had a friend tell me prosperity is killing us., I asked how. He said everybody that can leave is leaving.”

The general feeling from participants was that they understood why community members were traveling outside of the region but lamented that fewer and fewer were stepping up to be community leaders. As participant D said: “You can’t be a community leader and be gone every other weekend, it’s disruptive.”

The sense of loss was represented in regard to people, current attitudes, and prosperity. These representations were related to community responsibility, community resources, and community achievement. From the statements made by participants, the loss of community responsibility was a strong issue that tied to the economic loss. As community members have the means to travel outside of the community, they are also spending their dollars elsewhere. Furthermore, that time away from the community has led to a loss of community involvement in community groups or services. The sense of loss led participants to describe their frustration with not so much individuals, but the situation that has been created.

A sense of frustration was heard from participants through interviews and facilitations. The frustration was directed at groups or situations that have been inadvertently created. Since these communities are tied closely with agriculture, that frustration has grown out of the

disconnect that the general public has with agriculture and the attitude shift in their own communities. Participant B explains:

“I don’t feel like there’s a broad understanding of what agriculture looks like out here or how vast it truly is. There doesn’t seem to be an understanding of the fact that we can’t just change what we are growing tomorrow.”

The comment here, stemmed from a meeting that Participant B attended in eastern Kansas. The frustration heard was due to a lack of real understanding of the differences in geography and agricultural practices when looking at eastern and western Kansas. All participants relayed a small sense of entitlement, in that many community members feel they deserve more than what the community can offer. Participant C commented: “We are all spoiled, and we like it that way.” The participant was referring to the idea that they have access to amenities in larger communities that are relatively close due to better vehicles and a modern infrastructure. This sentiment builds off the situation that their progress has created ease of transportation and many families have the means to be more mobile. One facilitation participant relayed that when residents have experienced the quality of life that larger nearby communities have, they expect their own small rural community to have those amenities as well. Participant D elaborates:

“I wanted to live on the family farm and to raise my boys here. I am fortunate enough to have married a woman that is allowing me to do just that. On the other hand, I have friends who got married after college and wanted to live on their family farm, but the wife or spouse said I’m not living in the sticks or the boonies, I want to live in a town that has some size. I want to live on a paved street where I have neighbors that the kids can play with while we are grilling on the weekend, and I want more or better access to entertainment.”

The frustration was clear in many of the voices during the facilitations as well. Many pondered how to strike a balance of maintaining the small town feel along with opportunities and amenities that would retain and attract young people back to their area. The perceptions of the participants view toward agriculture was an overall positive one, in regard to understanding the

importance and economic value to the community. From the researcher's point of view, the issue remains that in order for the community to "think outside the box," a continued conversation needs to happen in order to embed a new discourse around agriculture and CD. Participants in both SGI facilitation and interviews were receptive to looking at different sectors that may have had success in the past but lacked a worldview of what might be effective based on evidence from other rural communities similar to theirs.

A sense of urgency, loss, and frustration emerged from the data associated with question one that asked about the perceptions participants have about agriculture. The data showed that participants centered their thoughts around community, people, and agriculture. The progress that has happened in agriculture has affected the community and people in a way that has the community re-thinking what a successful community looks like. Next, a look at the data presented for Research Question Sub question 2 as it relates to the communities' perceptions of the government's role in CD.

Sub Question 2: How do the community members perceive the role of government in CD through SGI-directed facilitation?

Participants were asked about the community's perception of the government's role in CD. This included local, state, and federal government involvement. Three of the four interview participants had, at some point, been involved with some form of community development either through direct participation in economic development or volunteer organization boards. One participant had worked within the scope of CD for several years. The final participant had not served on any boards or committees but was familiar with a few of the programs available.

The first theme, sense of urgency, was more appropriate in the first question, though most of the participants expressed a similar sentiment as participant D: "You can't wait until you're on

the verge of closing the doors before you decide to work together” (emphasis added). This statement was directed mostly at the local level and the people of the communities. Other participants explained that when businesses or even schools experienced challenging times, because of the agrarian mentality, many would not ask for help until it was too late. Participant C explains the agrarian mentality this way: “You feel like you’re out there on your own so you kind of have to figure it out yourself, or it feels that way”.

A sense of urgency for this question, focuses on acting quickly as a community when a sector of the community struggling. As was related, they cannot wait until people ask for help as it may be too late to lend that helping hand. This sense of urgency led into frustration, focused on policy makers, programs, and how they feel they are viewed as a region.

As sense of frustration was heard more within this question than any other. Participants shared their frustration with all levels of government, as well as the local community members. In both interviews and SGI facilitations, much of the frustration was directed at government programs that did not meet the needs of most rural regions. Participant D stated:

“I thought we should be grateful to get what we get, but that’s the thing they (government) need to realize when they make the rules, not everyone lives in or close to a city or urban area.”

Similarly, Participant C expressed that “well for one thing they sure need to realize we’re out here and not in Topeka.” During the interviews, there was almost a sense of abandonment, but the frustration could be heard through that. Participant C remarked, “I think we’re so far out there that we will get overlooked as far as government funding,” and from a facilitation participant, “We are a long way from Topeka.” It was a feeling that the communities knew they had almost been forgotten but they did not mind that, as they had been through hard times before and would come through it again. The participants all stated there are programs available for

their regions, but too often they were not eligible, or the program missed the mark of serving the region's needs or they are "lumped" in with a one-size-fits all mentality. These near misses result in losing out on funding for CD programs designed to help start businesses or provide adequate housing for new and existing residents.

Observations of small group discussion during the SGI facilitations yielded many comments from participants that the parameters of the program may work for a county next to them but would not work for their own county. One SGI facilitation participant was heard saying, "we can't attract a big company that may hire 50 people, let alone one that may hire 500. We need programs that help a business that may hire two or three people." For these rural communities, that size of business is one that can make an impact. Other participants stated that generally there are a lot of programs available, but they do not qualify due to a lower capital investment or will not employ enough people. Participant D stated:

"In order to pursue an opportunity (that qualifies for state assistance) we would have to create at least five jobs. We have businesses that employ maybe two, but those jobs are supporting families and are paying 50k plus, creating space for an additional three jobs and matching the pay would bankrupt some of these guys."

The above statement reflects a willingness to do what is necessary but that due to limitations within the qualifications of a CD program they are unable to tap into that resource. The data suggests that the frustration has grown out of lack of programming that does not meet the needs of the local communities.

Participant B stated:

"The sweeping regulations (programs) that all the government or departments make for some of those are just catastrophic for us. For instance, back during COVID we were already socially distanced as there is nothing out here and all of us are essential. Then they tell us we are the same as Kansas City or Wichita!"

The statement by Participant B draws a parallel with program regulations and COVID. As COVID regulations were blanket regulations for the entire state, many of the CD programs are given parameters that all communities must meet in order to benefit, such as median income levels, minimum number of jobs created, or minimum population size impacted. This statement emphasizes that not all communities are the same and that fact should be considered when developing policy.

All the participants spoke of feeling overlooked when it came to some of the programs. The economic output of the counties rivaled that of their urban counterparts to which many participants expressed a sentiment of not worthy of programming based on the lack of population or representation. Participant B stated:

“I think that money is sort of thrown at things and then politics takes hold and things that are intended to help rural Kansas end up not helping us. It’s just been politically manipulated to be meaningless. I appreciate their effort, but there are very few things that apply to us.”

The sense of frustration in the above comment combines the participant’s feelings toward politics getting in the way of doing what is needed for communities and the policies within the programs that do not allow many rural communities to benefit. It was stated in chapter three that many of the counties do not have the benefit of a full or even a part-time economic developer. This point also causes a level of frustration due to the responsibility that is placed on those residents who do volunteer to lead CD projects. In using volunteers, the participants felt they miss opportunities that other counties are able to take advantage of simply because they have a county employee designated to fulfill the economic developer’s role. As Participant D explains:

“You know what they say, if you want something done give your task to a busy person and they will get it done. Somehow everybody is getting busy, I used to only serve on the church board. Now I serve on that, the rec-center board, the Rotary, Farm Bureau, and the farmers’ cooperative boards too. We still have all the activities we used to but fewer

people that are willing to serve, I think there gets to be some physical and emotional tiredness that makes you less of a go getter!”

This statement emphasizes that rural communities rely on volunteers to ensure organizations and community groups have enough representation to continue to exist. It also shows that those who volunteer for one thing will typically get asked to do more. The sense of frustration is that not enough people in the community step-up to help and that many get “burned out” and the result is programs and initiatives end up as ideas only. Though government programs were the focus of the question, Participant A felt that other organizations meant to represent rural communities also miss the mark:

“Here’s a good example, this has been a long time ago, but my grandfather believed in the coop system and the Farm Bureau. Well in my lifetime here as a business owner, both of those organizations have passed out discount cards for Walmart. Yeah, that’s helpful but how many members do they have in urban areas (emphasis added). They even have a mail order pharmacy business to this day! How do they say they represent the rural communities yet pass out discount cards, so they spend their money outside of our local businesses (emphasis added)?”

As Participant A points out, well-meaning initiatives from rural-representing organizations also may miss the mark by trying to serve all communities instead of creating programs to work alongside existing businesses that are present in the rural community. This provides further evidence of how the frustration in programming manifests in poorly executed local initiatives.

Participants expressed they felt like they were only complaining. They reiterated that though they do have some opportunities through programs to better their communities, they are frustrated with the bureaucracy of the CD and economic development systems. Participant C sums this thought up: “I felt like we should just take our funds and go get what we need; we need a mechanic, a welder, or some other business. Let’s just go ahead and figure out what they would need and get it for them ourselves.” This participant speaks to what Lu (2011) talked about when

addressing regional efforts in CD, that local communities have a better understanding of what needs to be done and how to address it, as the community members are closer to the issues.

The sense of frustration, through the voices of the participants, is directed at the programs and policies that are handed down from the government. Along with that, there is frustration with the local community members that fail to “show up” when others are ready to step down from years of service to the many organizational needs. The sense of frustration can also begin to frame a sense of loss with the lack of community members willing to step up, reminding many participants of the older generations that built the community.

A sense of loss was related by participants in terms of a loss of community mindedness (being socially concerned about the community) and a loss of keeping the population tied to the community. This sense of loss also related to the economic or community development within the community. Participants spoke of past generations who built the town up and grew businesses on the continued growth of agriculture. With fewer farms and fewer people who are busy living their lives separate from the community, the loss is felt across the region. Participant A stated:

“When I was a kid, we were building churches one after another, we paved the road from the county line to town, built a new courthouse, and the hospital. The only thing we have built lately is an addition to the hospital.”

The loss came across as not just a loss of people willing to invest in the community, but a loss of a way of life or the community mindedness of residents. Participants in both interviews and SGI facilitations spoke of their youth and growing up in a tight-knit community. Both sets of participants spoke of their children and how they enjoyed growing up in the region, but most move on for better jobs or for the spouse. An example is provided by Participant D:

“I know there were four families, I think it was, moved back here during COVID from California and the East Coast. They came back when all the COVID crap reared its head,

and they were coming back to rural America where they were safe from the outbreak and people weren't going to be "breathing" all over them. I thought this is great, you came back home! But what did we have for them after the pandemic let up? Nothing, it's been two years now and three of the families have gone back to where they were living before."

The level of loss in participant D's response was the result of a missed opportunity for the community. When communities are given an opportunity to have new or former residents move in, they struggle to provide them the level of amenities and conveniences they had in their previous community or to offer an interesting enough alternative to those amenities to retain them as residents.

The sense of loss was represented in this section by the loss of community mindedness and missed opportunities to enrich the community. This results in community members being at a loss of how to react in time to mitigate the issues. Though the sense of loss was directed at community members, the participants also had a great deal of optimism toward the community as well. Next, a discussion of optimism as it relates to the question at hand.

A sense of optimism was prevalent from the data in regard to sub question two. Though participants of the facilitation and interviews felt frustrated, at a loss, and had a real sense of urgency that change needs to happen, they were very optimistic about how their respective communities could respond and how they still come together to help each other in times of need. "We had a gentleman pass away during COVID. The whole community came out to help, farmers got together and harvested the crop, and the community members cooked and provided snacks for everyone" (Participant C). The quintessential rural picture was repeated by several participants in reference to situations such as the one above.

In looking specifically at the CD side in reference to the government's role, all of the interviewees expressed a reluctance to look past the local level first. Participant A stated:

“People are pretty optimistic about ,you know, the basic things that we need, and they are willing to tax themselves to do it.” Though the business owners and the farmers share the largest tax burden, participants stated that typically they are the first to mention they could do it locally and not be tied to “loads of paperwork to get a dollar” (SGI participant). Participant C said the following: “Yeah, we look to the community first. I don’t know if I could give you an example, but we are more locally focused, more of a let’s figure it out ourselves.” Many commented on the fact they are an agricultural community and that the mentality of we can do it ourselves permeates through the community.

Though there were fewer explicit examples in data, the theme of optimism was strong in the comments and in how the participants discussed their community. The sense of optimism was directed toward the community as a whole and members’ ability to come together for a need within the community. Attention must be given to the SGI facilitation. In the next section the discussion centers on the format and the participants responses to the final question.

Research Question: How do SGI-directed facilitations intersect with community members’ ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members in achieving community-driven CD, from participant perspectives?

As a reminder, the overarching goal of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of participants’ perceptions of the SGI-directed facilitations in CD as they intersect with elements of their culture including existing ideas, traditions, visions, values, and perspectives. Within this section, the SGI facilitations and summarization of the data from the final question that was asked to the interview participants will be described.

SGI Facilitation Protocols

Two counties were the focus of the facilitations, Greeley, and Haskell, both of which have been described in chapter three. Each facilitation followed the protocol outlined below:

- I. Introductions
 - a. Participants state their name
 - b. Occupation
 - c. Time lived in the community
- II. Overview of Region
 - a. History of county
 - b. Agricultural contribution data for county
- III. Asset Inventory
 - a. Participants are broken into three groups and stationed at separate tear sheets that are placed around room on the wall.
 - b. Groups capture the assets of the community, why they live, work, and stay in the community.
 - c. Gallery walk: participants move to each tear sheet to compare responses.

Missing assets are added to the sheets.
- IV. Agriculture Sector Discussion
 - a. Table Talk: each table works through the SGI packet to determine what sectors do not make sense for the county.
 - b. Open Share: each group shares their sectors and a rationale for their decision.
- V. Agriculture Sector Selection

- a. Table Talk: each table works through the SGI packet to determine which sectors should be focused on as a possible CD or economic driver.
- b. Open Share, each group shares their selections and rationale for their decision.

VI. Open Discussion

- a. Facilitator guides participants through a discussion to build a top five list of those sectors that the community should focus on.
- b. Final Questions/Comments

As has been discussed, the researcher served in two roles—researcher and facilitator on behalf of the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s (KDA) Agribusiness Development (ABD) team. Hence, ensuring accuracy was paramount by having a fellow ABD team member capture in the moment notes in both meetings. After completing standard introductions and the overview of the respective county’s history and economic data, the activities associated with exploring the communities was initiated.

The first activity was the inventory of community assets. Both communities listed similar items as community assets, which included: family friendly, history, business-friendly climate, safe, good schools, cost of living, and agriculture production. Some unique responses came out that were not included in the asset list in both counties. One county mentioned they are immigrant friendly and centrally located. When asked to elaborate, participants mentioned they had a volunteer group that would help to welcome immigrant families and help to educate the community on new cultures that immigrants have. The other county highlighted their long-term care programs and the clean air in the region. In their explanation, it was stated they had just built new long-term care facilities and they were proud they keep their retired/elderly community members in the community with those amenities. As has been mentioned before, prior to the

facilitation, the researcher conducted a “grand tour” of the county to take an inventory of the assets. This allowed questioning as to why certain things, such as parks, golf courses, walking trails, or swimming pools were not mentioned. Participants responded to this with similar responses of “we didn’t remember, or we take that for granted as, don’t all communities have those?”. The assumption was that most communities do take for granted their amenities as they do not see them as an attraction that would compare to larger communities in the region. This was confirmed when Participant A remarked “We don’t do a good job of promoting ourselves, we don’t want to brag on ourselves.” That humble attitude was prevalent throughout the facilitations and may shed light on some of the challenges the community faces.

The primary rationale for enhanced stakeholder participation in community planning and governance is based on the democratic maxim that those affected by a decision should participate directly in the decision-making process (Roseland, 2000). Local communities are the best at understanding their own issues and therefore it could be assumed they would also have the best understanding of how to use program funding at the local level. A facilitation participant stated: “We have some great things here in our community, but we can’t get people here to experience them.” Participant D said the following: “We don’t do a good job of promoting ourselves because we view it as bragging or being too prideful instead.” Both of these comments came during the discussion of the assets within the regions and reflect a common thread of community members taking for granted what their communities do have to offer and to the humility that was referred to earlier. They have focused on what they lack instead of concentrating on what is still there that might attract people and CD.

In the next two activities the focus was on which sectors of agriculture either did or did not make sense for the community. In both counties there was a common thread of “we will take

it all.” More simply put, they were willing to try any and all of the sectors of agricultural growth. The directed approach was, in essence, to push back on the participants to be more selective. At one point during a discussion on manufacturing, an older man was adamant that the community could not support the sector. During the table talk, the researcher observed a younger woman discussing that manufacturing could be a business with one employee. She was encouraged to voice that sentiment during the open discussion. The woman was very apprehensive as the older man was an established part of the community and had owned a large business prior to retirement. In order to mitigate the power of that man, the young woman was encouraged by the facilitator to speak up and then reaffirmed her position to the group, thus giving her voice more credence. This was done by giving examples of what other communities or businesses had done in relation to manufacturing on a smaller scale. This prompted a local teacher to remark, “We have students in ag classes who take welding. What are we telling them if they want to start a local business, that they have to hire “x” number of employees?”, again supporting the young woman’s comments. In a typical facilitation this lending of credence to a participant’s statement by a facilitator would be seen as biasing. However, in this case, this was a specific strategy employed by the facilitator to address and to shift power dynamics in the room that connected to culture, time in the community, age, and gender.

During the facilitation, the final activity is winnowing down the sectors to a “top 10” list. Though no set amount is indicated, they were instructed to keep the list short enough to allow the community to focus and not feel the issue was too large to address. The low hanging fruit of utilizing and adding value to the agricultural commodities produced in the regions were at the top of the list. Several participants noted that the group had discussed new and different ideas and they should have some of those up there to begin research on. As each facilitation ended,

most of the participants stayed and visited with each other and me. The conversations were more direct and had energy behind the voices. Though these comments were not spoken directly to the facilitator, they were overheard by him. The comments overheard were phrases such as: “we need to move on this momentum,” “we can’t let this stop tonight,” and “who else do we need to talk with,” which were captured within the researcher’s field notes. With any community meeting there are the end-of-the-evening conversations. These are important conversations to hear. They reflect a “strike while the iron is hot” mentality that many rural communities lack due to the issues that were addressed earlier of no one willing to volunteer or the community has no one in a CD position. These comments added to the optimism and urgency themes that will be elaborated on in the next section

The purpose of this section was to give context around the SGI facilitation and the process used in facilitating the meeting. Next, a summary of the interview responses to the final question are presented.

SGI Facilitation Results

Within this section the two themes that emerged from the interviews that directly related to the SGI facilitation itself will be explored. A sense of optimism and a sense of urgency were the themes that emerged from the data collected through interviews and facilitation.

A sense of optimism was the main theme that came from the data concerning the SGI facilitation itself. There was a consensus among interviewees that this meeting was unlike most they had attended before. The participants remarked that other meetings were a presentation or simple question and answer sessions that really did not lead or challenge them to look at agriculture or CD in a different context. Participant A stated:

“I didn’t think you were telling us, you were, to me, sort of giving information and not really coming across like this is what you ought to do as with so many other meetings I have attended.”

This comment suggests that previous meetings they had attended were more of a direct presentation of programming. Other participants expressed they felt freer to share ideas that in other settings might not have been taken seriously. Participant C stated:

“It (discussion) was wide open, I liked how it went completely. Like the brainstorming of ideas of what our community has to offer and how we can promote those, and you know, you throw those things out but also the ones that are possible for us are out there too.”

Having the opportunity to speak freely among peers among your own community, was reflected in this statement. Giving participants the space and voice to present ideas and take away ideas is important. This process also begins to disrupt norms of power and role within the community.

Participant B stated:

“The overall facilitation encouraged those present to look at our community, as well as its strengths and opportunities in a fresh and forward-moving light. It encouraged us to look at the qualities our place boasts and to focus on best fits, not to bemoan what our community may lack.”

Many participants had not thought about the various assets their community offered. Being able to hear about those assets they may have forgotten from others in the community can be a powerful tool in sparking innovative ideas.

Though the list of invited facilitation participants was left up to the community organizer, with guidance from the facilitator, the interviewees commented on the diversity of those who attended. Specific comments centered on gender and age, “there was a lot of younger people and women there too which was good, and I think the conversations we had will encourage some younger people to get involved” (Participant C). This is a powerful insight to hear from participants as it also speaks to the power of more established community members, which could

be mitigated just by having a diverse audience. Though there were young people and females present, there was a lack of the Hispanic population of the community. As was stated in chapter three, both counties have a high Hispanic population, mostly employed in the agriculture sectors.

A facilitation participant stated the following:

“We can’t get the Hispanic people to participate, they are afraid of being seen almost. Some are illegal but even if they aren’t some of their family members that are here are illegal.”

Though this was said with a sense of frustration more than once by several participants, during the facilitation, they also noted that they didn’t really care if immigrant populations had migrated legally or not, they wanted them to be more involved in the decision making of the communities. This indicates another shift in concerns of power, in this case the population holds more power than the legal status or country of origin of the community member. Highlighting this, as well as limitations of the study, will be addressed more in chapter five, the study population.

Continuing with the sense of optimism, interviewees commented on how the facilitation also engaged people. Participant B stated:

“I would say the conversation invited those attending to re-engage in the conversation around economic and community development and what that looks like for us today.”

During the facilitation, this comment was brought up by some that remembered related topics discussed in previous meetings, which had been forgotten. Keeping ideas in front of community members ensure they are at least keeping the topic alive. Participant D stated:

“We need another meeting in December another in January and one more in February. We have to keep it in front of people to change the conversations.”

Again, continuing the conversations are important for these participants. Energy is a scarce resource, as was pointed out in discussing the lack of volunteers in the community. Having

follow-up meetings are necessary to continue to narrow down ideas and develop plans to move forward on selected projects. Participant C stated:

“I learned a lot from the guy next to me. We’ve had some conversations on how the meeting went and different things. I really need to pick his brain a little more and just have those conversations about change.”

These participants see and talk to one another in their small community almost daily. However, finding time to have meaningful conversations about the future of their communities is more difficult. This comment speaks to being purposeful and direct in those type of conversations—something an organized facilitation can provide. Examples of refocusing conversations and members wishing to engage in dialogue with others to focus the conversation on the community and how they, as a community, can participate began to surface. Interviewees mentioned they have been involved in other meetings but those seemed to focus on the past and what the community did not have that could support growth. Interviewees understood that influencing a mindset or in this case, the discourse around agriculture, is not a quick task. Most of the facilitation participants were eager to have another meeting and to push each other to begin the work of moving any of the suggestions forward. That optimism was also seen directed toward the type of meeting they wish to have, open and rich conversation that include a diverse audience representative of the cultures and backgrounds of the community. Thus, a sense of urgency comes into the conversation again in the form of encouragement from and to community members to continue to be engaged.

A sense of urgency was found in a follow up to the final question; participants were asked about perceptions of the SGI facilitation overall. A sense of urgency could be heard in each of their responses as it related to not letting the momentum die. “If we just let it sit without someone pushing a little bit, I can see it maybe not go anywhere” (Participant A). Participant C

follows this thought as well, “I think there’s potential if we could get some driving force behind it.” Ensuring the momentum does not die is one of the most important and difficult parts of CD. As participants have previously alluded to, it is hard to find people to lead a project and stick with it. Participant D stated:

“I talked to one individual after, who said you know this is a fact, ‘this is the kick start to get us going’, and you know that is great to hear from your community members.”

Though this statement contains both optimism and urgency it is a powerful statement that adds to the momentum needed in rural communities. That sense of urgency related also to people and the need to ensure someone is moving the issues forward. As was discussed earlier, many participants serve many organizations within their communities and are stretched to manage family, jobs, and volunteering. This urgency of ensuring there are people to lead was expressed by Participant D:

“I overheard two people talking outside in the parking lot. They said, yep that was great it felt really good and that’s what needs to happen but I’m not going to lead it. I was like, you know they were not old, but they were right! They were like we need a 30 something to be doing this not a 65-year-old, I thought about my own parents they are 75 and 73, you know they are retired and living in Colorado, they have earned the right to enjoy life not to be tasked with saving a community.”

In reflecting on that statement, it could be that the directed form of facilitation is a way to direct the conversation around the “who” engages in CD. It is one thing to talk about change, it is another to ensure that someone is leading it as well.

As the data shows, the initial shift in community conversations may not last unless community members continue engaging with each other, as well as those organizations that initiate the conversations, governmental or community led.

The data analyzed here came from two sources, four participant interviews, and two community SGI-directed facilitations. The data collected was analyzed and categorized into five

major themes: sense of place, sense of urgency, sense of frustration, sense of loss and sense of optimism. These themes were related to the research questions that guided this study and emerged from analysis of participant statements and facilitation comments captured through observations and field notes.

Conclusion

Within this chapter, a critical look was done on the analyzed data collected from two SGI facilitations and four personal interviews of participants. The SGI protocol was provided along with an overview of the SGI facilitations in Haskell and Greeley counties. Overarching themes emerged from the interviews that have given deeper understanding to the participating community's perceptions of agriculture, governmental programs designed to encourage CD, and the perceptions of the SGI facilitation. Within this chapter, the unpacking of major themes of sense of place, urgency, frustration, loss, and optimism that emerged were amplified through the rich examples of participant statements. This unpacking of themes generated provides a clearer lens in which to view how community members think and feel after a facilitation focused on agriculturally based CD. The limitations and implications of the findings will be discussed further in chapter five.

Chapter 5 - Implications, Recommendations, Conclusions

During the twentieth century, the world continued to urbanize, becoming metropolitan and the rural population became a smaller fraction of the whole (Dandekar & Hibbard, 2016; Ulrich-Schad, & Duncan, 2018). The 2020 U.S. Census continues to show an outmigration from rural areas of our country and, specifically, from the counties highlighted in this study. While economic changes in rural communities have been occurring for decades, the Great Recession that started in late 2007 hit rural communities hard, and they have still not fully recovered (Ulrich-Schad, & Duncan, 2018). The rural communities that were in this study are all that is left in their respective counties. They remain to provide the social and economic benefits necessary to support the agriculture producers and related industries that continue to drive the economy for the region and state. Developing a deeper understanding of the perceptions that rural populations have toward agriculturally based community development (CD) and toward programs aimed at assisting communities, is not only an important endeavor but a matter of survival for the rural community at large. The participants' responses, in both interviews and facilitations, expressed a deep appreciation for agriculture within their regions and recognized it as their main strength to build upon. The analysis also showed that even when not specifically talking about agriculture, the participants referred to the culture and spirit of the community to be an agricultural mindset when referring to completing CD projects. Participant C articulated this clearly, stating, "I think that may just be an agriculture type thing, that mentality of we could do it on our own." It is this mentality that offers insight into perceptions of CD that are explored in this research.

As a Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) employee and researcher, the rural communities (in Kansas and beyond) are at a dangerous crossroads. One road is leading out of the communities, toward opportunities in more urban areas. The other road appears to be a dead-

end sign reflecting the lack of innovative ideas and initiatives that could fit within rural communities and encourage members of the community to stay local. While many rural residents are accustomed to patching together different jobs in different seasons, the undermining of the core production-sector industries has left rural communities without ballast (Ulrich-Schad, & Duncan, 2018). This feeling of loss and being undermined was apparent in the interviews conducted by the researcher for this study. Further, these sentiments of loss add to the frustration heard throughout the interviews and facilitations. In chapter two, a discussion was brought forth concerning the lack of research on the impacts of facilitation on community participants. While little research is available that looks at the effects of facilitation, or specifically, a more directed approach, it is the purpose of this study to add to the body of knowledge in facilitated CD. Specific goals outlined in the research questions were to provide a deeper understanding of perceptions of the government's role in CD and agriculture as the focus of CD from the participant's perspectives. This leaves questions as to what facilitation methods most honor community-driven approaches while advancing clear CD goals that serve and center rural communities around their most prevalent industry, agriculture.

In chapter four, the analysis of data for this qualitative research study was shared. The SGI facilitation was unpacked and the protocol presented for review. The goal of chapter five is to find meaning in the study completed and present recommendations. A sense of what communities think and value in relation to the research questions was established. But what are the limitation and recommendations for the future work of researchers, those who work in CD, facilitators, agriculture, and the rural communities?

To begin, a review of the research questions is in order along with making a connection to the data collected and analyzed to gain a better understanding of how the data analysis sheds

light on the research questions. From there, a look at the themes generated and the linking of those themes with the corresponding research question is needed. To close the chapter, an exploration of the limitations and recommendations will be done from this researcher's point of view, based on the findings of this study. In the next section, an unpacking of the implications of those findings for the field will be done.

Implications

According to the Oxford online dictionary (2022), the definition of implication is: the conclusion that can be drawn from something although it is not explicitly stated. With this in mind, there is a need to closely look at the themes generated from the data analysis and outlined in chapter four. Through that analysis, implications from the data are presented. The purpose of this research was to provide a better understanding of community members' views and attitudes of agriculture as a means of CD and to explore perceptions through local, state, and federal programs relating to CD. Specifically, the focus was on their perceptions of a directed facilitation via the Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) in the state of Kansas. This study includes the responses of four participants and data from two facilitations held in two target communities over one month. Additionally, data for this study was thoroughly analyzed using qualitative coding processes including three rounds of coding based on Saldaña (2009, 2016) value coding and NVivo transcription software. These steps were taken to ensure that the participant responses, in addition to the facilitation processes, were deeply understood by the researcher. It was that data gathering and analysis process that was outlined in chapter four and leads to the implications discussed here.

The implications discussed below have stemmed from analysis through a social constructionism lens, in that each participant comes to the facilitation or interview with their own

“D” discourse but may possess common discourses. Though the participants may come from slightly diverse backgrounds, within the implications it is shown that their discourses, how they talk, act, and interact with each other, are similar.

People should have an equal opportunity to decide what will become of them as people and the future they share together (Deetz, 2008). In order to fully realize this opportunity, communities need better processes for discovering, understanding, and managing the tensions and paradoxes inherent within systemic, value-laden problems (Carcasson & Sprain, 2016). CD in rural Kansas is one such value-laden problem. It is understood by those involved in CD that facilitation has long been a tool to help groups find consensus to address these kinds of value-laden issues within discreet communities. However, the idea of using a more direct, semi-biased method of facilitation is a relatively new concept. Along with this generally unknown and unstudied approach to facilitation, there is also a lack of human resources, especially in rural communities, to lead such processes. Simply put, the demands put on local community or economic developers and volunteers in rural communities is overwhelming. Thus, The purpose of this study is to recognize the lack of information on SGI CD and the decline in human resources in these areas and to shed light on community members’ perceptions of agriculture, government programming, and directed facilitation.

This first section will summarize the themes generated from the interviews that were detailed in the previous chapter. Next, the themes that emerged in data analysis are explored for how they may deepen understanding of community members’ perceptions of SGI facilitation. Specifically, they are explored through the lens of the three research questions: (Sub Q1) How do the community members perceive agriculture as the focus of CD through SGI-directed facilitation? (Sub Q2) How do the community members perceive the role of government in CD

through SGI-directed facilitation? (Main Research Question) How do SGI-directed facilitations intersect with community members' ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members in achieving community-driven CD from participant perspectives? Through these themes as related to the research questions, one can begin to see the start of a way forward for the coming recommendations.

Qualitative research requires that the researcher be the instrument of research. As was acknowledged earlier, the researcher's discourses must be taken into consideration while analyzing the data. Bhattacharya (2017) reminds us that you identify themes out of your own analytical thinking. During analysis of this data, the research questions allowed the researcher to maintain clarity on how sense-making of the data was happening. Additionally, through the process of literature review, the researcher had the opportunity to attend specifically to the notions of power and culture. This process allowed expansion of the researcher's own thinking on what power is, how it shows up, and that, in this study, not so much power over but more of power to do. This power refers to the productive or generative potential of power and the power to make a difference, to create something new, or to achieve goals (Stuart, 2019). In terms of the culture, the process expanded this researcher's thinking of how culture is shaped by places and people, in that it can be influenced. An example of this was provided by participant C as they explained their experience of how an out-of-state person can be absorbed into and adapt to a new culture.

During the analysis of the data, five main themes were identified through a three-tiered process of data analysis. Each round included three rounds of data review utilizing value coding, which allowed the researcher to sharpen findings to the following five themes:

1. Sense of place: Participants identified a sense of place as a core orientation and connection for their participation. Participants spoke of their county and their personal history/connection to it. A participant from the facilitations commented, “That cemetery outside of town has my father in it, I will be buried there, and I want my children to be buried there as well. That sentiment conveyed a very honest representation of the importance of the community sustaining and growing so future generations have a place that they also call home. They conveyed a deep understanding of the region, the importance of the communities within, and the people who they live and work with. Participant A’s statement “I never felt like I left the community,” expressed a deep connection to the land and the people of the communities. The comments from those who had moved to the region recently, Participant C, “Didn’t take very long for me to figure out it’s quiet and peaceful out here, I have no regrets,” illustrated a quick path in planting their roots in the community. The comments above give that sense of place a geographic and social connection to their respective regions.
2. Sense of urgency: A sense of urgency was very evident. Participant A commented, “If we just let it (the conversation) sit without someone pushing a bit I can see it maybe going to the wayside.” This speaks to the participants’ understanding that in order to at least sustain their communities they need to do something soon and not let the subject die. During the facilitations, the participants expressed they have seen the withering of communities in other regions and in neighboring states and that time is of the essence. One facilitation participant said, “We remember what happened to Lamar (Colorado) when the packing plant chose Garden City, they went downhill

- fast.” They have experienced the downhill progression in their community and region and know that time is of the essence.
3. Sense of loss: The loss of people, culture, and economy was expressed by participants during the interviews. Participant D said, “With school going to four-day weeks, we basically have two Saturdays every week and those families that can afford it or have better vehicles leave town for sports or long weekends.” Those who had lived their lives in the community compared today to the days when people showed up to help and contribute their time and energy for the betterment of all. They felt a loss of people, young people who leave for education and do not return. This is expressed by Participant D’s comment, “We do a good job of raising young people out here, but we do a great job of shipping them out after they graduate high school.” An economic loss from businesses that have closed due to the lack of community support was also mentioned, as Participant A reflected, “It’s kind of sad looking back, but you know we’ve lost a lot of restaurants, motel, service stations, and clothing stores.” The potential for continued loss, if conditions remain the same, is very real for these participants.
 4. Sense of frustration: A sense of frustration was seen in over forty-eight separate statements throughout the interviews. That sense of frustration seemed directed at what participants saw as “the modern way of life” and toward community members who felt entitled or felt that it is not their job to ensure the success of the community. Participant D’s comment illustrates the above, “I serve on the church board, rec center board, Rotary, and oh yeah by the way Farm Bureau needs another volunteer and while you’re at it the COOP needs to fill the vacancy on the board.” Participants

- expressed that they need people to get involved again. The sense of frustration was further articulated and directed toward programs that are meant to help rural areas that miss the mark for their regions and result in missed opportunities. Participant B, “I think that money is just thrown at things and then politics takes hold and sometimes things that are intended to help rural Kansas end up not helping us, it’s just been politically manipulated to be meaningless.” Many of the participants spoke of programs that are labeled as job creators. Participant D illustrated his frustration with a sarcastic tone, “Oh look if you can create five jobs (you qualify for the program) now that’s hard to wrap my head around because I don’t know how to create an opportunity that creates two jobs, how am I supposed to create five that earn 60,000 each.” Participants want to build their communities and do not expect a handout for free but are frustrated with programs that cannot truly help kickstart their initiatives.
5. Sense of optimism: Finally, a sense of optimism gave hope to the findings toward a possible path forward. Participant B illustrated the spirit of the community, “We look at the community first. Yeah, I think they’re I think more locally focused, more of let’s figure it out ourselves.” The participants all spoke of a spirit or responsibility in their community, in wanting to succeed in growing — or at least maintaining — a community that can support the local economy and provide those amenities that people feel they need. Participant C stated, “I talked to one individual who said ‘you know this is the kick start to get us going’ and you know that is great to hear.” They want to continue conversations and they feel energized each time they come together for the greater good of the community. The sense of optimism was heard from participants around the subject of keeping young people involved. Participant D said,

“There were young people there too which was good, and I think the conversation we had, we were hopeful that they would be involved.”

The above themes were again identified from participant interviews and facilitation data after a thorough data analysis process. It is now, through these five lenses, that a discussion occurs that will address the specific findings and implications for the field as they relate and provide clarity to the research questions.

Research Sub Question 1 Findings. How do the community members perceive agriculture as the focus of CD through SGI-directed facilitation? The assumption going into the interview was they would have a slight negative view of agriculture as a focus for CD. During Agribusiness Development (ABD) visits as a part of this researcher’s role at KDA, the discussion often centers on the future of their respective businesses or of opportunities within the region that are not in the area of agriculture. The focus is many times on sectors of technology and manufacturing in which the region would need to repurpose land and resources that are already producing abundant agricultural products. This researcher’s assumptions were wrong, as will be shown. They are more than willing to keep agriculture at the forefront of conversations as a way forward in CD.

The participants in this study defined themselves in a rural lens with agriculture being at the forefront of their minds. Participant B stated, “For our county it (agriculture) just makes sense, I don’t think you will find anybody who thinks otherwise.” Participant A takes this further, “I think it’s pretty obvious that it’s an ag community.” This lens was clear to this researcher as participants used the term rural and agriculture to refer to their situation. A facilitation participant illustrated this by saying, “We are about as rural as you can get, we are the least-populated county in the state.” The significance of this is that participants felt that

agriculture is the mechanism they wish to use to grow their communities. Though during the SGI facilitations there were disagreements on which agriculture sectors would be appropriate, they all were in agreement that using agriculture is the way forward. “It’s our largest industry out here, we just need to capture more of the value before the raw product leaves” (Facilitation Participant). They had an understanding that the progressiveness could be defined by the success of agriculture. Furthermore, participants understood that agriculture success was an opportunity to mitigate community decline. Participant D expressed this sentiment, “During COVID we had four families move back from California to ‘escape’ the virus and lockdowns. Now three have moved back to California. We had nothing to keep them here.”

These themes give credibility to the participants’ understanding that the success of agriculture was the reason their communities are shrinking. It further shows the participants want to capitalize on that success by having new ways of thinking about agriculture.

Research Sub Question 2 Findings. How do the community members perceive the role of government in CD through SGI-directed facilitation? This researcher had strong assumptions, based on work-based conversation with communities and businesses, that there would be a negative reaction to this question. The purpose of this question was not to confirm or deny this assumption, but rather to develop a deeper understanding of perceptions and why those perceptions are felt. Participants were focused on the government’s role in CD from the standpoint that the programs do not fit all communities, as illustrated by Participant B, “I think when they make the rules (for CD programs) they need to realize that not everybody lives in the urban areas.” Because of the multiple stakeholders involved, their goals, and the forms (processes) in which they appropriate, use and manage local resources, community development produces many different outcomes (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2012).

The data gathered from the participants suggests a finding that more local input and control of how state and federal programs are administered should be left at the local level. Participant A related that, “I felt like we should just take the funds and if we need a mechanic or welder (in the community) go buy what we know we need.” The data also shows that the local participants are more connected to area’s resources and can “make things happen” more quickly if given the resources they currently lack, as Participant C asserted, “Look at the community first, I think we are more locally focused, Let’s figure it out ourselves”. The importance of more local control is that it is understood by community developers that no one knows the community better than the people who live within it. These participants understand their communities, how they are perceived from outside, and know they must act in order to sustain their communities. Participant B related, “I don’t feel like there’s a broad understanding of what agriculture looks like here (from a policy maker point of view)”.

Within the themes of sense of loss and sense of frustration there is an idea of being overlooked or taken for granted. Participant C stated, “I think we’re so far out here that we get overlooked as far as government funding.” The rural voice has often gone unheard in state governments where, despite the importance and size of the rural sector, urban interests have dominated the political landscape (Martin & Luloff, 1988). Participant A explains, “COVID is a great example, we already are socially distanced, I mean there’s nothing out here and then they tell us that we’re the same as Kansas City or Wichita.” The participants want their voices to be recognized as a resource when planning CD programs for rural areas.

Main Research Question. How do SGI-directed facilitations intersect with community members’ ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members in achieving community-driven CD, from participant perspectives? The purpose of this question was to gain

an understanding of participants' perceptions of a more directed approach and purposeful approach to facilitation. More simply put, can facilitation maintain a group's ideas, traditions, visions, and values while "directing" them toward a specific goal that may not be clearly stated?

Facilitators are trained to intervene as necessary to spark interaction, ensure engagement with tensions, and support the learning process (Carcasson & Sprain, 2016). As was discussed in chapter four, at times it is necessary to push participants to express innovative ideas and mediate the power in the room by assisting in that push back. Again, the example presented in chapter four of the young woman who supported the idea of agriculture manufacturing but was apprehensive about pushing back on a negative comment made by an established older gentleman due to his status and power in the community. As a KDA employee, this topic needed to be heard and pursued. As a facilitator, according to the literature, the facilitator's duty was simply to observe and report. In this case the researcher/facilitator visited with the young woman during a small group discussion, encouraging her to bring her points up to the entire room. This is the directed part of the directed facilitation. In this example the researcher/facilitator directed an intervention with a participant to increase their participation and added to how the discussion took shape. The data from participants showed the directed part was not an obvious hinderance on their decision making. Participant B stated, "It encouraged us to look at the qualities our place boasts and to focus on the best fits, not to bemoan what our community may lack."

The participants, when asked about their perceptions of the facilitation, expressed a refreshed feeling from the facilitation. Participant C expressed, "It was wide open. I mean I liked how it went completely, just the brainstorming of ideas of what our community has to offer and how we can promote those." They emphasized that other meetings they have attended were more informational, more like someone explaining a new program, or telling them this is what you

need to do. The importance here is that no participant expressed a feeling of being coerced, but that it felt as if they were nudged toward progress and a sharing of innovative ideas of which they had not thought. Participant A illustrated this by stating, “I would say the conversation invited those attending to re-engage in the conversation around CD and what that looks like for us.” Furthermore, participants relayed that new ways of thinking about agriculture and CD came together, but that more discussion with more people would be needed to solidify those ideas in order to see them through.

Since the knowledge base and skill set of the organization is bounded by the network, more members might be recruited to increase these assets (Haugh, 2007). In relation to who should be involved in these community discussions, participants emphasized that younger people, the Hispanic and immigrant populations, and those newer to the area must be involved. A facilitation participant explained, “We can’t get the Hispanic population to participate, they are afraid of being found (we need them here).” This also brings in the “power over” issue. The marginalized population may feel a sense of fear of repercussions from the government’s immigration policies. The participants recognize the importance of the immigrant population in fulfilling agricultural roles within the region and understand the ramifications of not having their voices heard as a part of the community’s future. This supports the statement that Gergen (1985) makes: if an organism is to adapt successfully, it is claimed, its knowledge must adequately represent or reflect that environment. Participants felt they had a good geographical representation but lacked those voices that either feel they do not have time to participate or do not show up out of apprehension.

In reflecting on the participants’ statements about conversations had during and after the meeting, that adaptation, albeit slight, was happening in both the language-in-use and the “D”

discourses (Gee, 2014). Participant C in reflecting on his experience, “I learned a lot from the guy next to me. We’ve had some conversations, but I need to pick his brain a little more.” Social construction of ideas, thoughts and discourses is exactly that, social. Without the social interactions within the facilitations and continued community discussions after the formal facilitated processes, the discourses or Discourses are likely to remain similar to what this study has found. Participant D sums this idea up nicely, “Probably need another meeting in December, one in January, and again in maybe March to keep it in front of people to change the conversations.”

The data provided by the participants in facilitations and interviews while looking through the lenses of the themes generated has given me, the researcher, and the reader a deeper understanding of the perceptions illustrated by participants. The theory of social constructionism was given attention and tied to the research questions through the idea that participants’ discourses have merit in moving conversations within a social group. Providing an explanation of the limitations of this study and this researcher’s recommendations based on the findings of this study is in order at this time.

Limitations

Researchers taking a qualitative approach are particularly careful not to undermine the validity of observations by isolating them from the environment that gives them meaning (Sutton, 1993). The environment referred to by Sutton, from this researcher’s view, includes the region studied, communities within, and the members of those communities. One of the limitations to this study was the people who were not there, the voices not heard from during the facilitations and interviews. As was described in chapter three, the communities of Haskell and Greeley counties both contained a sizable Hispanic population. The participants who were at

both the facilitations and interviews represent the majority culture of the population. This study cannot assume the same results if a true representation of the community was present. Future researchers must be diligent in attempting to have a complete representation of the communities studied. Working more closely with meeting organizers to include those participants should help mitigate this limitation.

A justification for the sample size was addressed in chapter three. It should be noted that a larger number of interviews conducted would provide additional depth to the data set. While initially this study sought to conduct three interviews within each community (six total) only four participants emerged for the study. The four interviews conducted yielded data that was similar to the discussion observed during both SGI facilitations. Future research with a larger number of interviewees would be a benefit to confirm data congruency.

Qualitative, interpretive, and naturalistic researchers practice forms of modeling that depend on verbally articulated concepts (Sutton, 1993). In other words, the researcher interprets what they hear or observed based on the environment they observe it in. Though all attempts are made to adhere to a rigorous research protocol, the “D” discourse of the researcher plays a role in data collection and analysis. This researcher’s history and involvement in rural communities could have been seen as too empathetic toward participants, however this history also provided insight and access to communities and those participants who an outsider may have not been able to access.

Values for quality, like all social knowledge, are ever changing and situated within local contexts and current conversations (Tracy, 2010). Using this line of thinking, it would be beneficial to look at a more longitudinal ethnographic study of these two communities in order to “hear” the discursive nuances over time. A follow-up study may be one that is conducted over

the course of 10 years or more to explore the social, community, and economic innovations and developments over time and with intentional directed facilitation in community development efforts. In the next section a discussion is brought to address the recommendations that are aimed to provide practical approaches for community developers, policy makers, the agriculture industry, and facilitators.

Recommendations for Practical Approaches

The participants in this study relayed a keen sense of place to begin the interviews. They were proud of their rural and agricultural way of life and expressed a deep desire to solve their issues locally. The opportunities and challenges they (rural communities) face often reflect the presence or absence of people with a specific skill (Greenlee, 2019). As the interviews showed, many people wear many hats within their community. In order to assist these communities, government programs are often touted as a way to lend a hand to rural communities, but as participants stated, many of the programs miss the mark. Each community has its own unique set of circumstances, and each should have a voice in determining the best use of programming on a local level. Within this section a deeper look is taken at the next steps for those who work in CD, policy makers, agriculture, researchers, and facilitators.

Community Development

Community developers are the community's first contact with CD and should be the community's loudest voice in advocacy. Those who work in CD must engage with their community on a regular basis in order to maintain an awareness of the needs of businesses and community members. Engagement must also be purposeful, ensuring that progress is happening, and community members are not brought together to repeat past conversations. Though regular community meetings, facilitated or informal, are useful sources of information, the community

members may be “tapped” out of time, just as the CD workers are very often a department of one person and as the data in this study reflected. As participant D stated, “if you want something done give it to a busy person.” This sentiment is not lost on this researcher as community developers struggle to find volunteers for their projects.

As community developers are the voice for the community in regional and state development groups, they need to ensure they are reaching out and involving those voices that were missing from the facilitations. The U.S. Census shows that the Hispanic population accounts for 12.2% of the entire population of Kansas with a higher percentage in western Kansas counties. Marginalized people are sometimes marginalized exactly because they are unable to access social capital (Roseland, 2000). As was shared in the data and facilitations, the Hispanic populations do not show up due to apprehension. Ensuring that these marginalized voices are heard is a community responsibility and cannot rest solely on the back of the volunteer or employee charged with CD. Community developers, or those tasked with CD, can build off of the SGI facilitation by ensuring follow-up meetings with community members. Having scheduled and timely meetings will continue to reinforce the discourse introduced. It should also be the goal to task others within the community to step-up and share the task of moving innovative ideas forward. It should be the responsibility of county/city officials to ensure that someone in the community is tasked with the job of CD. Many of the rural communities lack a designated CD person. This is also another area that governmental programs can “hit” the mark by providing funding programs that can provide a person or organization funding to begin or continue past efforts.

There is room for engaging with the entire community on a timely basis to ensure that the needs of the community are continually being looked after, as well as flushing out innovative ideas on what initiatives the community should be focusing their resources toward.

Policy Making

In looking at policy makers, those who design and implement CD programming on the state or federal level, there is much to be taken from this study. Though geographic and demographic information label much of our state as rural, there are programs that these communities cannot take advantage of. As participant B noted, “We don’t qualify because of the high-income level of our older population.” Participants of the SGI facilitation mentioned that “you don’t get much more rural than us, we are the lowest populated county in the state.” Policy makers need to see, from the analysis, that they may not be reaching the desired populations and that a one-size-fits-all programming is no longer providing the benefit needed in many of these communities. Designing of programs that allow more local control from implementation would be of great benefit. Through the use of SGI facilitations and follow-up meetings, the community can develop an understanding of the local need from a grassroots level. If more local control is not feasible, then a regional effort from policy makers should be made as the neighboring counties are barely indistinguishable from each other in terms of demographics and the economic contributions from agriculture. Allowing more flexibility in how CD programs are administered on the local level may result in a greater return on investment by the governing bodies.

Federal and State government agencies have funding programs for rural communities, though they have strict parameters as to how funding is dispersed and utilized, those parameters are adjustable with help from policy makers. Rural communities and organizations such as the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance must continue to pressure policy makers

to create parameters that can be flexible enough to serve the most rural, as well as their slightly more populated rural communities.

Agriculture Industry

Agriculture has been the backbone of the economy of the rural counties since their formation in the last part of the 19th century. In the future, agriculture will continue to be that economic driver for years to come due to the landscape and resources available to these rural areas. How communities think, feel, and act about agriculture as the base of CD is the motivation behind the SGI facilitations. The analysis of the data did show that all participants understand and see the impact of agriculture on their local communities, however, what was missing was the growth mindset of the community in moving forward. The issue, in short, is not a lack of understanding, it is instead, a lack of new discourse to explore possibilities. They understand there is a smaller number of farmers and ranchers producing the raw products and they have seen the dwindling of the value-added processing that once was a part of many rural communities. To flush out new ideas, one meeting every five years or so is not enough to generate and continue conversations. As participant D states, “We have to keep (the topic) in front of people to change the conversations.” Agriculture employers in these rural areas, both farmers and agribusinesses, continually struggle to attract talent to remote areas. As participants mentioned, there are few amenities for young or current residents for that matter. Those employers must have a voice and at times they are in leadership positions within the communities, therefore in a position to steer the conversations in a direction that can benefit all sectors and populations of the community. The agriculture industry has always been on the forefront of innovation. Therefore, the industry within rural communities must be one part of the effort to bring forward innovative ideas that can move a community forward.

As one SGI facilitation participant added, “we (agriculture) may be able to survive out here without the community, but the community cannot survive without us.” With that line of thinking, the power element of agriculture is felt in many communities. Agriculture is the largest economic driver in all western Kansas counties, therefore not only does the industry need to step up to the task of CD, they must also be open to new ideas and methods of utilizing the sector for CD. What has worked for the past 100 years will not continue to sustain our rural communities for the next 100.

To meet our current and ever-shifting problems there is continually a need for new and better ways to attend to, talk about, and respond in the world (Deetz, 2008). As has been mentioned, many of these rural communities do come together occasionally to address issues within their communities. However, without outside help, such as engaged scholars, it is sometimes difficult to truly flush out deeply rooted Discourses and at the same time ensure a productive meeting that brings out the voices needed to address the issue or take advantage of an opportunity. As Carcasson and Sprain (2016) state, one of the most common problems within discourse on public issues is that issues — even complex issues like wicked problems — are simplified and framed narrowly. Agriculture as a basis for CD may not be a wicked problem, but it is a large elephant that takes time to digest the many facets that touch rural communities. Past studies of rural Kansas have focused extensively on the farmers and agriculture production of the region (Edward, 1939; Mays, 1968; Bell, 1942). Little modern research is found that focuses on community member’s perceptions of agriculture. This researcher maintains that it is the construction of discourses around agriculture, not the technical work, that requires attention for these communities to develop. Future research may also address the east vs west topic that the participants alluded to — this is the nuance within ruralities. Though Kansas is a very rural state,

in terms of the number of counties classified as rural by the USDA, there are subtle differences that need to be identified and researched. Just as Kansas is a diverse state in its geography and climate, there are distinct differences between rural east, rural central, and rural west. This study, along with future research, can begin to fill that gap in literature.

Facilitators

Facilitation has played a central role in this study. The SGI facilitation, as a reminder, was developed by the KDA in order to facilitate a community's willingness to explore the sectors of agriculture as a focus for CD. Though the process used in the SGI facilitation follows accepted processes and procedures of standard facilitations, the slight push to focus and select specific agriculture sectors could be construed as biasing participants toward an unintended outcome. This directed form of facilitation is an area that requires attention from researchers and facilitators. The goal of the facilitation, from a community developers' standpoint, is to flush out ideas that are generalized toward common goals of the community. However, the SGI facilitation is presented by an agency whose goal is to support and grow the agriculture industry across Kansas. Participants felt they were not being pushed in a certain direction. Participant A explains, "I didn't think you were telling me what to do more like this could be an answer." A closer look at directed facilitation is needed to gain a deeper understanding of participant perceptions of bias. Engaged scholars, with facilitation training, can help these communities ensure all voices are heard and that the process of facilitation is followed while providing the analysis of those voices in order to bring back to the community and to the academic community, a deeper understanding of the issues. Rural communities, as the ones in this study, have "beaten the dead horse" enough, they understand their liabilities and what they do not have, they are needing a push. Participant A emphasizes this, "There's potential if we could get some driving

force behind it.” Designing or tweaking facilitation procedures that do not conform to traditional facilitation is needed to help these communities move toward a sense of certainty.

The participants’ responses were straightforward and so are the recommendations from this study. Ensuring all sectors, cultures, and demographics are represented in community discussions rest on the shoulders of those who do the local CD work. Relying on a core group to garner support and participation in community discussions can lessen the workload on rural community developers. Those who create and implement CD programs should search for ways to ensure that programs can be flexible when administered on a local level with local input on how the resources are utilized. Though rural communities are similar, there are still subtle differences that only community members may recognize and are in the best position to address. As agriculture is the largest economic driver in these rural areas, those sectors present need to be involved in the community discussions. The agricultural leaders, whether they are producers or indirect businesses, understand the industry and the importance of adding value to their raw products prior to leaving the rural areas. They are the job creators. In addition, engaged scholars need to look to the entire rural community, develop an appreciation of rural life, and contribute to the community. Engaged scholars can help fill the gap in rural differences, east vs west as an example, which in turn can inform policy makers to tailor programs that fit a region. Finally, facilitators need to look a directed facilitation as a way to help rural communities “off the fence” and take steps toward implementation of ideas generated. The responses were clear in the message of wanting more and needing more of these types of meetings. Both engaged scholars and facilitators must be able to serve these communities as a resource for future meetings.

Ultimately the goal is to ensure communities have the processes to conduct their own assessment, facilitation, and direct resources as needed to grow their communities. The following steps provide a possible solution to implement the above recommendations.

1. Designate a person or small group to organize community meetings. If possible, work with county and city officials to secure funding of a position to lead community and economic development, if one does not currently exist. Having a point person to maintain group communications is imperative to ensure continued discussions.
2. Conduct SGI facilitations conducted by KDA and partnering agencies/organizations. Ensure that a true representation of the community is present at each of the facilitations. Conduct at least three facilitations during times of the year so all community members may participate.
3. Prioritize results of community discussions during a fourth meeting of community members. Develop a list of developments that community members are willing to support with their physical, social, financial, and political capitals. Only those ideas that will be fully supported should be on the list of priorities.
4. Engage with local, state, and federal policy makers to share results of facilitations and provide the list of priorities for community/regional specific programming including community/regional needs. This work must be from the local level up as support for priorities must be shown at each level.

5. Work with policy makers to develop programming that can be flexible enough to work with the community's priorities. If programming exists that will fill the needs, apply for those programs.
6. Implement community development projects, utilizing the initial planning group and those community members who have pledged their support.
7. Evaluate and report back to policy makers at each level to ensure understanding of the impact the project/s are having or had on the community/region.

Future work may include refining and expanding on these steps for future facilitation processes. This is not an end, but a starting point to build toward more meaningful engaged processes in rural agricultural settings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop a rich understanding of two rural community's perceptions of agriculture, CD, and directed facilitation as they intersect with elements of their culture. The idea of CD is by no means a new topic; rural community development was implemented more than one hundred years ago. The rationale behind this study is that the same issues that were present then are resurfacing today as a result of the advances in agriculture production and the mass exodus of populations from rural counties. Many of the programs implemented by policy makers are a "top-down" approach instead of a "self-help" as described by Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2011). The findings and implications brought forward have provided a deeper understanding to answer the research questions posed by this researcher.

Using Fairclough's (2013) definition of critical discourse analysis (CDA), an analysis was made of the dialectical relations between the community's discourse and the focus of the

research questions, agriculture, CD, and directed facilitation. Through this analysis, it was concluded that the participants possessed a deep sense of place. The participants understood the importance of agriculture to the region and expressed a deep appreciation of the history and contributions to the community from that industry. “I don’t know, I still struggle to figure out how they get it done” (every year) (Participant C). That sense of place and pride led into frustration that CD programs do not consider individualism among the rural counties. The idea that they felt left out or overlooked should be concerning to those who design and implement CD policies. Participants also shared a deep sense of loss for a perceived way of life that the past generations modeled. The loss of community responsibility, engagement, and the economy was communicated. The sense of urgency resonated throughout the interviews, “I think everyone knows if the farmer goes (away) so does the community” (Participant D). Community members expressed that time is of the essence and they cannot wait for someone else to fix their issues. As this researcher has often experienced through his travels working with KDA, there is a real sense of optimism among western Kansas residents. The participants in this study affirmed that sense, “people are pretty optimistic about the basic things that we need and they’re willing to tax themselves to do it” (Participant A), or Participant C, “we are more locally focused, let’s figure it out ourselves.” The participants expressed that agriculture is the tool they know best how to work with for CD, if they are given the flexibility to administer programs on the local level. Furthermore, they shared a willingness to come together and be facilitated in order to bring all the voices together so that all community members are thinking, feeling, and acting as one community.

This study is not without its limitations. The four interviewees were originally supposed to be six, though the four who did participate gave very candid and rich responses to the

questions. The facilitations, though well represented in geographic, gender, and age, did not include a major culture that has been established over the past decades. The lack of Hispanic voices may have introduced bias in the results toward a more traditional view and outlook of the region. The choice for a focused ethnographic study was a matter of time; the researcher did not have the luxury of spending several months inside the communities. Thus, if a true ethnographic longitudinal study were conducted, the results might be different and would ensure that cultures not represented would be given more voice.

The significance of this study is the focus on the voices of the rural community members who comprise a cross representation of two rural communities. This study may expand the discourse around narratives of economic development and agriculture in Kansas, specifically, which can impact more broadly on how these issues are understood in other areas. Where most of the past studies have focused specifically on the farmer (Edward, 1939; Mays, 1968; Bell, 1942) or on more overarching topics such as climate (Harrington, 2001), this focuses on agriculture as the base of CD. It gives credence to those who participated that their rural voices are heard and more importantly, understood. Specifically, this study should help fill the gaps in the literature on rural CD, how it is facilitated and what opportunities there are for other interventions in these processes. This study will inform practitioners on a more directed form of facilitation.

It is the recommendation of this researcher that 1) rural communities must come together and facilitate conversations that involve a true representation of the community, 2) agriculture, as the main industry, should be at the center of considerations as a way forward, and 3) policies on the state and federal levels be developed with rural voices in mind in order to create flexible and impactful programs. Bourgeois (2015) and her thoughts on the importance of future rural studies

are very applicable to close with, “Without this knowledge, unwanted futures are likely to unfold, to which our only options will be at best to adapt and, if not possible, to surrender.” Our rural communities must be recognized for what they are, the backbone of our economy and the basis of our Kansas culture.

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Appendix A - Participant Consent Form

Thank you for participating in the Kansas Department of Agriculture's (KDA) Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) and possible individual interviews. The information shared during the facilitated discussion will help us better understand how communities view rural economic development through community development.

Information collected during this facilitated discussion and/or individual interviews will help us better understand how communities talk about economic development related to agriculture within their community. This information will further allow us to critically analyze the effectiveness of the SGI process with the purpose of improving the protocols for future facilitated discussions, we offer this information and opportunity to provide or withhold your consent to participate.

Terms of participation: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts from the study.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT NAME:

PARTICIPANT
SIGNATURE:

WITNESS TO SIGNATURE:
(PROJECT STAFF)

DATE:

DATE:

For additional information, contact Trisha Gott via email at tcgott@ksu.edu or via phone at (785) 532-6085.

Appendix B - Facilitation Protocol

Strategic Growth Initiative/Grow in Kansas

Kansas Department of Agriculture

Facilitated Discussion Protocol

PROTOCOL

The facilitator will follow a standard protocol for each session that includes:

- Welcome and opening remarks
- Informed consent form review
- Establish guidelines
- Questions and answers period
- Wrap-Up

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS (5 Minutes)

Welcome, and thank you all for being here today to share with us your thoughts and opinions regarding your community's future regarding agricultural growth.

I am_ , and I will facilitate our discussion group this evening. We are going to focus our discussion today on your community's assets, community's needs, what sectors of agriculture does and does not make sense, etc. My task is to keep our conversation going, and to keep us on time.

I also want to introduce_ who is here as note taker. She/he will be taking notes to help ensure we don't miss any details, and may, at times, be asked to summarize the group's comments to ensure we are effectively capturing your comments.

CONSENT FORM REVIEW

[Hand each person an informed consent form] Remind group members that they received the consent form in the email inviting them to participate in the focus group. Ask them to take a moment to review. Solicit questions and comments and address any concerns. *[Collect consent forms; provide a blank copy for their records if requested.]*

GENERAL GUIDELINES – Have guidelines posted on flip charts (5 Minutes)

- We want an atmosphere of respect for everyone's opinions, and where everyone has a chance to speak. Let's talk one at a time and speak loud and clear.
- We would like to spend no more than 90 minutes in this focus group meeting. We have a series of pre-formed questions, but also will leave time for your suggestions. This may cause me to occasionally interrupt you to keep the discussion focused and on track.
- We ask you to please be as honest with us as you can when answering questions.
- There are no right or wrong responses to the questions; we just want your thoughts and opinions.
- If you have a question about the process at any time, please do not hesitate to stop and ask questions.
- Please silence or turn off all electronic devices. We sincerely appreciate your attention to this discussion group.
- This discussion will be recorded with a digital audio recording device to ensure we capture all of your thoughts and suggestions. We will not link your identity to any of your comments.
- Lastly, you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to and you can stop your participation at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Discussion Questions (Audio Record)

Warm-Up (15 Minutes)

Let's quickly go around the circle and share a few facts so that you all can understand the make-up of our group:

- a. How long have you lived in this community/region?
- a. What is your vocation? (business owner, ag producer, student, school representative, citizen)
- a. If not a lifelong resident, why did you choose this community?

Facilitator at this time will display two slides that highlight the county's history highlighting formation, population at its highest and current demographics including-educational attainment,

age distribution, poverty rate, employable workforce, ag commodities produced, acres of farm and pasture.

- a. What stands out as you look at your county by the numbers?

I. (15 Minutes)

1. Why do you choose to live, work, do business, farm, or ranch in this community/region?
(Gallery Walk, use flip charts posted on the wall to answer these questions)

- a. What are the assets in the community that make the above-mentioned activities possible?

Facilitator will ask for additions, pause, and then ask for comments or thoughts on the list.

Encourage them to think about all areas of the county/region and again ask if this list represents ALL assets in the county/region.

I. SGI packet, NIMBY, Got to Have it (20 Minutes)

1. *Hand out SGI packet-* The purpose of this packet is to help economic developers, site selectors, ag business developers and regional program managers to determine what communities in the state are willing to grow within the sectors selected.
 - a. Look through the packet, what questions do you have at this point?
1. Turn to page 5&6, these are the 19 sectors of agriculture in the state of Kansas along with their subsectors listed below each.
 - a. Discuss with your neighbor which sectors DO NOT make sense for your county/region, be prepared to share with the larger group. (5 minutes)
 - a. Who would be willing to share what their group came up with? *Capture answers on flip chart.*
 - a. What comments or thoughts do you have on the thoughts shared? Can we come to a consensus that this list is a complete list?
1. In looking at the remaining choices on pages 5&6, can we assume that this county/region would or could grow in these areas? *Solicit responses from the group.*
 - a. You have at your tables a tear sheet, on the sheet please come up with a top ten list of those sectors your group feels are the most readily feasible and needed in this county/region.

Have each table share and explain their top ten.

- b. What comments or thoughts do have on what you see on the wall?

III – Wrap Up (15 Minutes)

There is no easy solution to economic growth in rural communities, we cannot guarantee that any new business will come here, however you are guaranteed that these sectors will be shared with those that recruit businesses to come to Kansas or relocate within the state. You may also find that this discussion alone may spark ideas from within the community for entrepreneurs to come forward.

We have come to the end of this program, I appreciate your participation and welcome questions, note cards are on your table if you want to write out any comments or questions for me to view after we leave tonight. Feel free to add any comments or thoughts on anything we discussed today.

Appendix C - IRB



View xForm - IRB Application for Approval

IRB Application for Approval

Data Entry

- Submitted 08/07/2021 3:41 PM ET by Russell Plaschka

Administrative Information

Instructions

The KSU IRB is required by law to ensure that all research involving human subjects is adequately reviewed for specific information and is approved prior to inception of any proposed activity. Consequently, it is important that you answer all questions accurately. If you need help or have questions about how to complete this application, please call the Research Compliance Office at 532-3224, or e-mail us at comply@ksu.edu.

Form Creator

Russell Plaschka

Email: rplaschka@k-state.edu

Title of Project/Course

Changing Rural Community Culture: Critical Analysis of Directed Facilitation in Community-Led Initiative in Rural Kansas

Principal Investigator

Principal investigator must be a K-State faculty member. If the PI's name does not appear, they will need to log into the system once to become a contact.

Trisha Gott

Email: tcgott@k-state.edu

Degree/Title

Associate Professor/Assistant Director

Department

Leadership Studies

Campus/Cell Phone Number

785-341-7491

Select/Provide College

College of Arts & Sciences

Responsible Graduate Student (Person to contact for questions/problems with the form)

Russell Plaschka

Email: rplaschka@k-state.edu

Contact Phone

620-228-1340

Project Classification

Dissertation

Short form criteria

(By clicking None of the Above, you will proceed to the full application. If you are doing data analysis plus another form of data collection, do not select "existing data analysis only".)

None of the Above

Does this project involve any collaborators not part of the faculty/staff at KSU? (projects with non-KSU collaborators may require additional coordination and approvals):

No

Funding Source

N/A

Please provide a copy of the sponsor's grant application or contract as submitted to the funding agency, if applicable.

No answer provided.

Based upon criteria found in 45 CFR 46 – and the overview of projects that may qualify for exemption explained at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/checklists/decisioncharts.html>, I believe that my project using human subjects should be determined by the IRB to be exempt from IRB review:

Yes

Requested Exempt Category

2 Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

Study Information

Non-Technical Synopsis

(Please provide a brief narrative description of proposal. This should typically be less than 75 words and be easily understood by nonscientists):

Community meetings will be conducted by the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Ag Business Development team. It is the purpose of this study to determine if the procedure and protocols used for the Strategic Growth Initiative's facilitated community discussion are effective tools in creating a change in discourse within rural communities in determining the direction of their economic development efforts.

Background

(concise narrative review of the literature and basis for the study):

Community development (CD), specifically the rural communities and the growth of agriculture within them, will be the focus of this research. Little has been written regarding agricultural CD though there is much available on the topics of rural populations and CD in general. The remarkable success of U.S. agriculture in the second half of the twentieth century resulted in ever-expanding farms but ever-fewer farmworkers. Many parts of rural America have lost population since the early twentieth century (Lu, 2011). As agriculturalists near retirement, if no family members wish to join the operation, neighboring producers will acquire the land, thus the law of attrition is demonstrated. With fewer producers, there is a drop in population and in turn a drop in the number of consumers for the community businesses. The eroding tax base makes it increasingly difficult to provide essential services such as education and health care (Lu, 2011). With an interest and need in community development there came a need for organized conversations and facilitated discussion about the direction of CD. The goal of a group or team facilitation is to create and sustain an environment in which the group can accomplish its task and learn about itself in the process (Niederman & Volkema, 1999). The history of community government or community development took shape with the introduction of the National Resources Committee in 1935, which advocated regions as crucial elements in dealing with social and economic problems. The Tennessee Valley Authority launched in 1933, and the Appalachian Regional Commission, created in 1965, are perhaps the two best-known examples of large-scale regional development programs from the early and mid-twentieth century (Lu, 2011). In the 1980s regional planning lost steam and the role of development became the job of local governments. The idea of strategic planning came into favor during the last moments of the twentieth century; as rural communities confronted an uncertain and chaotic future, they turned to the business-planning model as an avenue to strengthen their regional and global positioning (Proctor, 2005). However, not all local governments can afford to staff an economic developer. Therefore, in many communities, the Chamber of Commerce or other organizations with interest take up the charge. Community-Based Organizations (CBO) are increasingly recognized as important actors in the development of rural communities (Opore, 2007). In some areas, community foundations plan, recruit, and loan money for community development projects. CBO members are usually residents in the communities and are well connected, hence they have the advantage of being keenly aware of local needs and can respond effectively and more rapidly than either government agencies or NGOs (Opore, 2007). This is an even stronger argument for local participation as they are closer to the issues and must live with their decisions. An effective and feasible form of regional governance is ad hoc regionalism. It constitutes voluntary, often grassroots initiatives by interested stakeholders who seek collaborative, incentive-based measures rather than regulatory solutions to regional challenges (Lu, 2011). In contrast, when agencies take

up the task of community development it is often viewed as a government-driven initiative. If this process is seen as a governmental task, then the politics of the government in power can create the bias in participants. Part of community development is understanding what the strategic plan is for a community, which helps determine what a community is and where it wants to go. The people in this industry must apply the knowledge gained through past experiences to new and difficult circumstances (von Hoffman, 2012). Hudson (2004) further states that currently, the language of community and community development is also heavily used in government discourse as a key policy initiative across the board and as a primary focus for the delivery of government community services at both a state and local level. Community development has undergone tremendous change over the years and will continue to evolve. Whether it is community engagement, focus groups, planning sessions, or simply an organizational meeting there has been much written on the effectiveness or failures of each in moving a community or group toward a common objective. With a member of the research team being an employee of a state agency implementing the Strategic Growth Initiative, we seek to assess the effectiveness of the facilitated discussions around CD to move a community toward plans of action.

Works Cited:

Lu, Max. (2011). Ad hoc regionalism in rural development.▼*Geographical Review*, 101, 334-352.▼<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41303638>. doi: 10.1111/j.1931-0846.2011.00100.x.

Niederman, F., Volkema, J. R., (1999). The effects of facilitator characteristics on meeting preparation, set up, and implementation, *Small Group Research*, 30(3), 330-360.

Opare. S. (2007). Strengthening community-based organizations for the challenges of rural development. *Community Development Journal*, 42(2), 251-264.▼

Proctor, D. (2005). *Civic communication: The rhetoric of community building*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

von Hoffman, A. (2012). The past, present, and future of community development in the United States. https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/w12-6_von_hoffman.pdf

Project/Study Description

(Please provide a concise narrative description of the proposed activity in terms that will allow the IRB or other interested parties to clearly understand what it is that you propose to do that involves human subjects. This description must be in enough detail so that IRB members can make an informed decision about the proposal).

As a part of his position with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, KSU doctoral student and research-team member Russell Plaschka is charged with facilitating community meetings on the topic of agriculture growth. Also, as part of his position, he regularly interviews community members and decision-makers within communities on the topics of rural development, governmental program effectiveness, and future growth. We propose studying these meetings and interviews as cases of facilitated community-development conversations. Data gathered from the meetings will include the content of meeting discussions as recorded by 1) one participant at each meeting who serves as note-taker; 2) flipcharts created by participants during the meetings, and 3) audio recordings of the meetings. Russell's reflective observations of the meetings, as recorded in his field notes, will serve as an additional source of information for the study. These data will be analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis and similar methods of qualitative content analysis, looking for patterns of language use, decision-making strategies, and communication style. Ultimately, we seek to make recommendations on how to change meeting structure, process, or facilitation to promote more creative, inclusive, and egalitarian decision-making in developing plans for agricultural community growth.

Objective

(Briefly state the objective of the research – what you hope to learn from the study).

To evaluate the effectiveness of the facilitated SGI discussion in moving communities forward in developing plans for agricultural growth and evaluating the language used by communities when discussing agriculture sectors to determine understanding, denial, or acceptance of specific agricultural sectors.

Design and Procedures

List all sites where this research will be conducted:

Stanton County Kansas, Johnson City, KS
Haskell County Kansas, Sublette, KS

List all Variables to be Studied:

Language use, decision-making process, communication styles

Data Collection Methods

Data gathered from the meetings will include the content of meeting discussions as recorded by 1) one participant at each meeting who serve as note-takers; 2) flip-charts created by participants during the meetings, and 3) audio recordings of the meetings and three follow-up interviews from each location. These means of capturing data are a regular part KDA facilitation.

Supporting Documents for Data Collection

(surveys, instruments, etc.)

Interview Questions Interview questions

List any factors that might lead to a subject dropping out or withdrawing from a study.

(These might include, but are not limited to emotional or physical stress, pain, inconvenience, etc.)

Because public meetings are our research site, subjects are not enrolling in a study per se.

Will Biological Samples be Collected/Taken?

No

Debriefing procedures for participants:

Summaries of research findings will be sent to KDA officials overseeing the SGI program, as well as community conveners who requested SGI facilitation. As a part of the KDA continual outreach with communities, the results of the research will be presented at follow-up meetings with each location.

Research Subjects

Provide the source of Subject Population used in the research activity:

Participants include anyone attending these community meetings.

Number of Subjects

(provide the number of subjects to be used and a brief rationale for your sample size)

For facilitated conversations, 15-25 has been the typical attendance at past SGI discussions. However, there is no limit to the number who might attend; subject to Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), these conversations may be attended by anyone.

Inclusion Criteria

(List any unique qualifiers desirable for research subject participation)

Any member of the community with an interest in agriculture and/or community development.

Exclusion Criteria

(list any unique disqualifiers for research subject participation)

None; no one can be excluded due to KOMA and all materials are subject to Kansas Open Records Requests.

How will subjects be identified?

(Members of a professional organization, Screening tools, etc..)

Community organizers identify potential meeting attendees. Neither KDA nor this research team plays any role in this process.

How will subjects be recruited?

(advertisement, associates, etc.)

Local organizers will notify potential attendees via the communities' normal media, such as newspaper announcements, emails, etc.

How will subjects be enrolled in the study?

Because public meetings are our research site, subjects are not enrolling in a study per se.

Describe any follow-up recruitment procedures:

(reminder emails, mailings, etc.)

Local organizer notifies potential attendees via the communities' normal notification system.

Risk-Protection-Benefits**Risk-Protection-Benefit:**

The answers for the three questions below are central to human subjects research. You must demonstrate a reasonable balance between anticipated risks to research participants, protection strategies, and anticipated benefits to participants or others.

Risk for Subjects (check all that apply)

(If this is records based research, indicate the risk for subjects during the original study.)

N/A

In your opinion, does the research involve more than minimal risk to subjects?

("Minimal risk" means that "the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")

No

Minimizing Risk:

(Describe specific measures used to minimize or protect subjects from anticipated risks.)

While the research sites are public meetings, we will use pseudonyms in research reports, eliminating any possible risk to the participants created by the research via the dissemination of their comments beyond the meeting.

Provide Study Benefits:

(Describe any reasonably expected benefits for research participants, a class of participants, or to society as a whole.)

Because participants are not enrolling in a study, they likely will not benefit directly. However, KDA officials and community conveners may benefit through our recommendations for improving and broadening participation. Indirectly, all Kansans will benefit from the strengthened community-development process, meant to improve regions and the state economically.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the formal treatment of information that an individual has disclosed to you in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure. Consequently, it is your responsibility to protect information that you gather from human research subjects in a way that is consistent with your agreement with the volunteer and with their expectations.

Explain the type of data that will be collected:

(electronic, hard copy, video, specimens, etc.)

Data gathered from the meetings will include the content of meeting discussions as recorded by 1) one participant at each meeting who serve as note-takers, using pen and paper; 2) flip-charts created by participants during the meetings, and 3) digital audio recordings of the meetings.

Explain where, and how, the data will be stored:

All data will be stored on the KDA's secured State of Kansas server. Hard copies of written material will be stored in Russell's office at the Kansas Department of Agriculture, 1320 Research Park Dr. Manhattan, KS. This is a secure office with access by employees only.

Explain the time frame of the data storage, to include how data will be destroyed:

Subject to KORA, the records of the meeting can never be destroyed.

Explain who will have access to the data, and privacy/security provisions:

(password protection, encryption, etc.)

All KDA servers are encrypted and password protected; only employees of KDA will have access to the materials unless an Open Records Request is made by a member of the public.

Informed Consent

Informed Consent

Informed consent is a critical component of human subjects research - it is your responsibility to make sure that any potential subject knows exactly what the project that you are planning is about, and what their potential role is.

(There may be projects where some forms of "deception" of the subject is necessary for the execution of the study, but it must be carefully justified to and approved by the IRB). A schematic for determining when a waiver or alteration of informed consent may be considered by the IRB is found at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/checklists/decisioncharts.html#c10>)

Even if your proposed activity does qualify for a waiver of informed consent, you must still provide potential participants with basic information that informs them of their rights as subjects, i.e. explanation that the project is research and the purpose of the research, length of study, study procedures, debriefing issues to include anticipated benefits, study and administrative contact information, confidentiality strategy, and the fact that participation is entirely voluntary and can be terminated at any time without penalty, etc. Even if your potential subjects are completely anonymous, you are obliged to provide them (and the IRB) with basic information about your project. See informed consent example on the URCO website. It is a federal requirement to maintain informed consent forms for 3 years after the study completion.

Are you using a written informed consent form?

No

In accordance with guidance in 45 CFR 46, I am requesting a waiver or alteration of informed consent elements (see section VIII above).

Yes

Provide a basis and/or justification for your request.

Per Chart 10 on the linked HHS website we believe the requirement should be waived per 45 CFR 46.116(d). Project will not be conducted by nor subject to approval by a state or local official, it will involve no greater than minimal risk, it isn't practical to seek informed consent at a public meeting, waiving this will not adversely affect the participant rights or welfare, and study results will be provided to appropriate participants--namely, local meeting conveners.

Are you using the Consent Form template provided by the URCO?

No

Does your Informed Consent document have all the minimum required elements of informed consent found in the Consent Form Template? (Please explain)

Public meetings.

Are your research subjects anonymous?

(If they are anonymous, you will not have access to any information that will allow you to determine the identity of the research subjects in your study, or to link research data to a specific individual in any way. Anonymity is a powerful protection for potential research subjects. (An anonymous subject is one whose identity is unknown even to the researcher, and the data or information collected cannot be linked in any way to a specific person.))

No

Please explain why subjects will be identifiable.

All research is done in conjunction with Russell's regular job duties and is subject to Open Records Requests.

Are subjects debriefed about the purposes, consequences, and benefits of the research?

(Debriefing refers to a mechanism for informing the research subjects of the results or conclusions, after the data is collected and analyzed, and the study is over.)

No

Please provide an explanation for not Debriefing the participants/subjects.

Summaries of research findings will be sent to KDA officials overseeing the SGI program, as well as community conveners who requested SGI facilitation.

Describe the Informed Consent Process:

Who is Obtaining the Consent?

(i.e. Principle Investigator, Graduate Student, etc.)

N/A public meetings

When and where will consent be obtained?

N/A Public meetings

If assent (for minors) is required, please describe who will obtain the assent?

(Assent means a child's affirmative agreement to participate in research)

N/A All participants will be adults.

If assent (for minors) is required, when and where will assent be obtained?

N/A

How will consent be obtained from non-English speaking participants?

(a translated written form, orally, identify the name and qualifications of the individual providing the translation)

N/A public meetings

Informed Consent Checklist

Informed Consent Checklist

	Select the correct response:
Does the title appear at the top of the consent/assent form?	N/A
Is the consent/assent form written toward the subject?	N/A
Is there a statement that explains that the study is research?	N/A
Is there a statement that explains the purpose of the research?	N/A
Are the procedures to be followed explained clearly and adequately?	N/A
Does the consent document describe risks or discomforts to subjects as a result of participating in the research?	N/A
Is the consent/assent form written in the native language of the potential subject?	N/A
Are participants compensated?	N/A
If the subjects' identity is known to the PI, does the form detail how confidentiality of records will be maintained?	N/A
Is contact information for both the PI and the URCO/IRB office included?	N/A
Does the consent document indicate to the participant that they can withdraw at any time from the project without penalty or loss of benefit?	N/A
Are there probable circumstances which would require the PI to terminate a subject's participation regardless of their consent?	N/A
A statement that identifiers might be removed from the identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens and that, after such removal, the information or biospecimens could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional informed consent?	N/A
A statement that the subject's information or biospecimens collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research	N/A

studies.

A statement that biospecimens (even after identifiers are removed) may (or may not) be used for commercial profit and whether subjects will or will not share in the profit.	N/A
--	-----

A statement that clinically relevant research results will or will not be provided to subjects.	N/A
---	-----

A statement indicating whether or not the research project will or will not include whole genome sequencing.	N/A
--	-----

Is the consent document written in lay language (Recommended 8th grade level)?	N/A
--	-----

Project Information

Project Information:

(If you answer "yes" to any of the questions below, you should explain them in the appropriate section on a previous page)

Will deception of Subjects be used in the research?

No

Will shock or other forms of punishment be used in the research?

No

Will sexually explicit materials or sexual experience be used or collected as part of the research?

No

Will information about sexual orientation be part of the research?

No

Will information about sexual abuse be part of the research?

No

Will there be handling of money or other valuable commodities as part of this research?

This does not include incentives for participation.

No

Will there be extraction or use of blood, other bodily fluids, or tissues in this research?

(if "yes", you must comply with facility and handling protections detailed in the 5th Edition of the Biosafety in Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL))

No

Will questions about any kind of illegal or illicit activity be a part of the research?

No

Will questions about protected health information as defined by HIPAA be part of the research?

No

Will there be purposeful creation of anxiety as part of the research?

No

Will any procedure that might be viewed as invasion of privacy be used in the research?

No

Will physical exercise or stress be part of the research?

No

Will there be administration of substances (food, drugs, etc.) to subjects as part of the research?

No

Will any procedure that might place subjects at risk be part of the research?

No

Will there be any use of Radioactive materials and/or use of Radioactive producing machines as part of the research?

No

Will any form of potential abuse; (i.e., psychological, physical, sexual) be used in the research?

No

Is there potential for the data from this project to be published in a journal, presented at a conference, etc?

No

Will data be collected using surveys, questionnaires, or interviews?

Yes

Attach the Data Collection Instrument

Interview Questions Interview questions

Is this a Clinical Trial?

(one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions, which may include placebo or other control, to evaluate the effects of the interventions on biomedical or behavioral health-related outcomes.)

No

Subject Information

Subject Information:

The below questions refer to intentional targeting of these groups as a study population, not an incidental chance that a member of one of the below populations may take part in your study.

If you answer yes to any of the questions below, you should explain in the appropriate section on a previous page of the application).

Will individuals under 18 years of age be part of the research?

(these subjects require parental or guardian consent)

No

Will individuals over 65 years of age be part of the research?

No

Will minorities be the target population used in the research?

No

Will physically or mentally disabled individuals be part of the research?

No

Will economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals be part of the research?

No

Will any individual be unable to provide their own legal informed consent?

No

Will pregnant females be the target population?

No

Will the target population be victims?

No

Are subjects in institutions?

(e.g., prisons, nursing homes, halfway houses)

No

Are subjects likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence?

No

Is this international research?

No

Are research subjects in this activity students recruited from university classes or volunteer pools?

No

Is audio from the subjects recorded?

Yes

How do you plan to protect the recorded information and mitigate any additional risks?

The audio files will be stored on an encrypted, password protected State of Kansas server.

However, because the recording is subject to KORA, the researchers cannot guarantee that the recordings will not be heard by others.

Are research subjects' images being recorded (video taped, digitally recorded, photographed)?

No

FDA Activities and Conflict of Interest

FDA Activities:

Answer the following questions about potential FDA regulated activities

Is this a Clinical Trial?

No

Are you using an FDA approved drug/device/diagnostic test?

No

Does this activity involve the use of FDA-Regulated products?

(biological products, color additives, food additives, human drugs, etc.)

No

Have you submitted an FDA form 3454 or 3455 (conflict of interest)?

No

Conflict of Interest

Concerns have been growing that financial interests in research may threaten the safety and rights of human research subjects. Financial interests are not in themselves prohibited and may well be appropriate and legitimate. Not all financial interests cause Conflict of Interest (COI) or harm to human subjects. However, to the extent that financial interests may affect the welfare of human subjects in research, IRBs, institutions, and investigators must consider what actions regarding financial interests may be necessary to protect human subjects. Please answer the following questions:

Do you or the institution have any proprietary interest in a potential product of this research, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, or licensing agreements?

No

Do you have an equity interest in the research sponsor?

(publicly held or a non-publicly held company)

No

Do you receive significant payments of other sorts, (eg., grants, equipment, retainers for consultation and/or honoraria) from the sponsor of this research?

No

Do you receive payment per participant or incentive payments?

No

Project Collaborators

KSU Collaborator

List anyone affiliated with KSU who is collecting or analyzing data: (list all collaborators on the project, including co-principal investigators, undergraduate and graduate students). If the individual's name does not appear, they will need to log into the system once to become a contact.

Name	Role	Department	Campus Phone
Russell Plaschka	Graduate	Leadership	620-228-
Email: rplaschka@k-state.edu	Student	Studies	1340

Additional Attachments

Additional Attachments:

Please attach any supporting document not requested at earlier points within the application. Examples; letters of support, recruitment emails or fliers, charts/diagrams, photos of devices to be used.

No answer provided.

Online Training**Online Training**

The IRB has mandatory training requirements prior to protocol approval. Training is now offered through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program. Instructions for registration and access to training are on the URCO website <http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply/>.

Use the check boxes below to select the training courses that apply to this application. If you have any questions about training, contact URCO at comply@ksu.edu, or (785) 532-3224.

Mandatory Training

Required for all Principal Investigators, research staff and students

Responsible Conduct of Research

IRB core modules (IRB Researchers and personnel on IRB protocols)

Required (Provost-mandated) for all full-time K-State employees

Export Compliance

Required procedure-specific training (check all that apply to this protocol):

All new personnel or personnel with expired training are required to register for CITI and take the new training requirements. If you previously completed online IRB modules, your training status will remain current until it expires. URCO will verify training from the previous system as well as the new system prior to approval of any protocol.

N/A

INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCE

Please click next and submit, in order to send to PI for signature.

Appendix D - First Round Coding

General Information, how long they have been in community:

Participant 1-business owner

well both my wife and I grew up here and we went off to college and got married and I went to pharmacy school and Kelly went to she was a business Ed teacher degree and we moved to Garden City I briefly lived here right after I got out of college and did relief work in pharmacy and and move we moved to Garden City like in 81 you know year after I graduated from school and I had to startle to store there from six or seven years and then I bought the store here in 89 and that whole time I was farming nights and weekends attribute my brother and I had a real small farm OK at the time so we were coming back my my parents lived here in Kelly's parents lived here so we were yeah I mean we've I never felt like I left the community right **Sense of belonging/home**

Participant 2-Self employed

uh we moved out there June of 2016 so this year this coming June will be six years I guess oh good so you've been there for you been there long enough to get a pretty good feel of the area yeah Yep Yep that my wife is my wife grew up there that's that's the connection

I don't know in my opinion you don't move to western Kansas just on the whim you gotta kinda have a reason that is that is true that is true well yeah

well apparently it was a good reason you got a good family and settled in pretty well

yeah yeah it's I grew up in Missouri was there for 37 years and my hometown and of course I left for college and whatnot

but I when we when I finally gave in to move **I thought this is this is not a good idea D discourse, stereotype**

but he didn't take very long for me to figure out it's quiet and it's peaceful out there and I have no regret

Participant 3 local government employee

Yes. **State line is interesting**, though, really sometimes.

How so?

Now, it's very clear in politics now it is extremely from where I sit right now. The different focus is that **the states put on what's important, what they value, how they act, how they behave night and day different. Have and have not**

One of the things too, that's very evident is the fact that Kansas has one hundred and five counties in Colorado has sixty four. **So similar yet seperate**
Right.

I grew up in a county the size of Rhode Island. And so. Just the disbursement of resources, there is so much different like.

There are a lot of us with ties to Colorado who are now living in Kansas, **common histories** and I think a lot of it has to do with.

It would be interesting to visit with some of the others and see what they see.

Yeah, but just the stability that Kansas has and kind of that **realization that rural Kansas still matters. Hopeful**

Because so much of it is rural is a difference that I don't I don't see that still in Colorado.

There's no doubt. But when I look, when I look at eastern Colorado and the amount of resources that are not Available on the front range or anything outside the front range.

Eastern Colorado is basically dead, to Colorado. Survival, don't want to be forgotten, don't want that to happen here

1. How do you define agriculture within your county/region?

Participant 1: They're not oblivious but lives to it but it's like people don't understand or don't want to recognize that they're in and out community

you know it's a small community that's isolated alone,

I think people do things that indicate to me that they they're not they're not they don't know where their home is and and in that it's like participation in in that activities that you like school and church and where they shop with

you know what they're doing on the weekends those things are changing you know those those patterns

so I think everybody knows where most of the people involved in you know out here are involved in Ag are married to somebody that is or you know have friends that are **commonalities of connection to ag**

I think it's pretty obvious and it's it's an ag community

but I think you know the **behavior doesn't match that all the time in my opinion resistant to tradition**

can you say a little more about that behavior part of as well

I had a really good friend he's gone out of the lived here and he this was a long time ago back in the 80s and he said you know Chris we got you know your parents and that generation this was their town they worked for good streets and for businesses to you know and common banks and they built churches and **reminiscing of days gone**

he said the people now are just guess OK that makes sense yeah you know that's kind I you know I didn't believe him at the time that was right when we had moved back here grew up here but when we moved back but it's kind of that's kind of grown I think a little bit that sort of existence **survival mode**

sorry you say it's kind of grown that existence do you feel like that the general population or the majority don't feel that same way today as they did say 20 30 years ago

I don't know what's percentages Russell but it's sure a greater percentage by far in the oh that people raising kids right now you know the thirty 30 40 year old twenty thirty 40 year olds right and but it's are you finding that everywhere yes and no

Participant 2:

it's **definitely unique emphasis added, laughed when he said it**

I mean just right off the bat with the lack of moisture in that country what really startled me I guess I just didn't realize that coming from Missouri where you get all basically all the rain you want you go out there and and **stark contrast to other side of the state**

just the idea of leaving the ground late for a you're not getting any production off of it for a year those guys that are still doing the one year and one year out deal it's it's a lot different

and I just didn't realize it I sometimes look at it and don't understand how they how they make it **that resilient you know how they keep after it every year and you know resiliency**

if it doesn't rain out there you're talking 10 bushel wheat how can how can you make a living on ten bushel wheat,

coming from Missouri where you know you 200 bushel corn

so to me that's that's the biggest challenge out there is it's probably the moisture and and I don't know I I still struggle to figure out how they get it done and **Pride/sense of awe in their resiliency**

you you hit the right word there you would have to be resilient

yeah yeah then on the cattle side of it when I was in Missouri we had herds of cows and you know we fed the heck out of him and

with that said he grasped you know you just you gotta feed him

well I go out there and I my brother-in-law's got a pretty good herd of cows he's weaning 600 pound calves and hardly giving him anything you know they're running on Milo stalks in the winter and they're running on grass in the summer you know **mindset differences**

I get them all men or maybe some lick tubs when the stalks is short in the the winter time but that's that's another thing they don't have a lot of rain

but the little bit that they give them that that buffalograss or whatever you know their grass and all down there it really it can really produce **make the most of their situations**

if them guys will manage it resistance to progress

you know I've seen a few producers out there man you go by their place and they have nubbed it down to dust and

I'm like you can tell the guys that understand range management and these ones that maybe don't or don't have a lot of schooling in it or experience **hope**

Participant 3: Answer is combined in Q2

1. Can you describe how agriculture is currently playing a role in community development within the county/region?

Participant 1:

well I think if anything it's become a bigger percentage of where people make a living I think there's few **growth**

you know we it's kind of **sad looking back but you know we've lost a lot of restaurants and motel service stations and clothing stores disheartening**

you know where other people might have worked with and now we had a pretty much every family had made me working in some sector does not directly AG but their wife or husband does right so that's **limited options**

that's changed a lot

yeah we had when you get time with business community and right really vibrant Rotary Club and you know most has different restaurants have you know killed those kind of things when I moved back and and
you know you're right they were all kind of run by people in my parents generation **changing of the guard**

yeah but I think you know the **economy changed**
I think yeah ag is way more prosperous than it was back then maybe maybe that contributes how **what makes you say that**

well I joke about it I still farm man that kind of pickups we drove around in the field if you are work compared to what these guys I still haven't crappy old 25 year old pickups yeah it's **just how they live they travel more their vehicles are nicer their homes priorities have changed** are nicer than

when I was growing up farmers were I like to think you know we were the families were more middle class for the most part right in the farm families **disparity within ag sector**

now it's consolidated more bigger farms and

I just think I think guy that used to run the grain elevator he sold out to schooler he's really good at it indent five years older than I am but he told me a long time ago we were trying to save the theater and and that was kind of the but we were working on it

he just said that you know Chris **prosperity is killing us** yeah

I looked at him and asked like how could that be he said no he said **everybody that can is leaving town grass is greener elsewhere**
another thing that kind of happened is we went to a four day school and I **really that's been horrible for our community emphasis added**

I don't know what it's done for the kids so much but

so we basically **have two Saturdays every week and those families that are wealthier now have better vehicles leave town and loyalty to hometown**

if they have young kids they're participating in year round private sports right traveling you know maybe and those kind of things so the town you know and that was the time people spent in 4H and Boy Scouts and church and all that so they're usually yeah **lifestyle differences**

I think he's right I think they have the **wherewithal to travel and they do emphasis added**

Participant 2:

yeah like really county area um I don't know I guess I don't know that I've been there long enough to really see a big change

but when I first got there a lot of like I said earlier a lot of guys were still summer fallowing and you know they they grow wheat one year and then they lay out for the next year

I guess as I've as I've dug into it a little deeper I got to know some of those people a little better they're they're switching it up to the the every third year deal you know

they're growing corn and then they Milo and

then we you know that leaving it lay out a year so that they can I guess it lays out through the summer so they could plant their wheat in the fall that one year but feels like a lot more of our going that way

I see a lot more no till which to me out there no till I would think that would be the only way to go with the lack of moisture **change because of necessity**

yeah and and the guys the few guys I've got to know and just from from the other side of the fence looking seems like year in and year out the notill guys will raise the bushels

I don't know I have no idea on cost flies you know if if they're with with all the spray and stuff they're doing if if the extra bushels is justified but it seems like every year they bring in a crop

I don't know that something's working 'cause they you know they seem like they're the I don't wanna say the better producers

but they're the ones that sure look like they're they've got to figure it out or they're everybody going a little better go as it may be out there **lead by example**

Participant 3:

07:51 I would say for Greeley County, it makes perfect sense. I mean, you won't find anybody who thinks otherwise. **Common interests**
I mean, if you were to look at how our economy is driven, it's **agriculture and health care, period.**
Those are our two strengths. (emphansis added) do what we know
And it's not that we don't have great local businesses. We do, but they're mostly retail. **Limited opportunities**
They're not really the ones that are contributing to anything outside of the economy. **Limited opportunities**
So if we're going to export something, it's going to be an Ag product.
If we're going to bring people in, it's usually going to be for health care.
So in our community, I would say the support of agriculture is. **Pretty robust.**
It's interesting, as I get to. Play in some of the other worlds that I play in, how different that sometimes looks.
I don't know if you attended a few years back, there was a harvesting opportunity conference in Lawrence.
A., Lawrence, I know. *(Laughed about Lawrence and ag)*
B. **I don't feel like there's a broad understanding of what agriculture looks like.** Here. Right. And how vast it truly is. **Limited exposure to new ideas**

We went to the day before we went to this you-pick farm. Neet experience
(*indifferent tone*) Great.

You know, there are I think they were having a breakfast that weekend where
600 people were coming out to the farm to have breakfast. Well.

We don't have 600 people that have Saturday morning available to have
breakfast, A **despare?**

and B, we're not going to grow orchards because we don't have enough
water and the the topic of conversation at that became really well.

We would really like. Western Kansas to grow something that's
edible. **Limited understanding**

Well, wheat is edible, it does make some products, but it was really a
jalapeno kick at that point in time.

There didn't seem to be any understanding that it's not just change what
you're growing like,

the systems are not in place to allow someone to be successful in that
particular realm.

And that's **not to say you can't innovate and you can't create.** **hope**

But I don't know. I don't know that the people who aren't intricately,
intricately involved in AG in some way shape or form have an understanding
of how it works.(*emphasis added*) **divided**

10:24 I don't think people who are not intimate, OK, that's the word I want it
intimately involved in agriculture have an understanding of how it works.

10:30 **Do you feel like the people that are involved in agriculture in this area?**
Understand. Maybe what some of the opportunities are outside of the area
that could be brought in,

10:43 some, I wouldn't say all, I think some are probably **too nose to the grindstone.**
Just this is what I'm going to get to do this year to the next year **Survival mode**
We do have some people who have chosen to be involved a little more widely
on the statewide level and different things, and I think they probably have. As
to what that is. **Slow to change**

11:00 **That makes sense. Yeah. Have there been. along those perceptions, because**
that's two of the things that I'm focusing on perceptions of agriculture and
perceptions of The role of government and community development. so you
know, I'm thinking. Not just your role and not just your perception and views,
but the feel that you have for the community of the county.

1. Can you tell me how, from your experiences, how agriculture has changed in the
county/region during the time you have lived/worked within the area?

Participant 1:

that's an interesting perspective and you think on that you know you mentioned 4H and the church
groups and and like that do you see a what do you see in terms of community participation in those
what trends have you noticed over the years

well I mean in our church the Methodist Church we have kids who come to church **when they're not**
gone for the weekend **loss of community participation**

you know young families we have way more kids being dropped off and picked up

and their parents aren't stayed for church or Sunday school and

our attendance is probably at least half of what it was 20 years ago and

it's **harder to get things done** and because of that we do less projects the charms of **sense of loss**

Boy Scout it's over and it used to be strong when I was a kid we probably had 35 or 40 Boy Scouts and then when my children I had all girls they probably had 25 scouts there are no scouts now

now all 4H is gone from 4 clubs to two and not a lot of kids however

we still have kids I mean the **population of our school is relatively stable the last 20 years** probably **hope**

and you know you mentioned earlier you know and I and I see it too you know if they can afford it then their kids are somewhat athletic they're gone all the time with traveling teams and doing all sorts of things or like you said traveling **Overall lack of sense of community home building? Individual needs**

so is that I mean it makes sense that that attributes to the lack of participation in those activities that used to take out that time during the weekends would you agree to that or I think that's true and

I think it kind of think about it the parents that **needed to keep things going** **emphasis added** you know to **show up and be leaders** you have to do that you have to be that leader all the time and **you can't do that and be gone every other weekend or you know right it is disruptive** **community responsibility**

Participant 2:

or yeah I think so it's I think I really think tribune is it **really grounded in agriculture**

I think **that even the businesses in town that maybe aren't agriculture** on the agriculture side of it let's say the drug store or even the grocery store talking to those

I've got to know like the guys that owned the grocery store I've got to know him pretty well and he knows a year that they're not gonna raise a lot of wheat those business owners in town no it's **gonna be a tough year for them too** **symbiotic relationship**

because the farmer doesn't have the cash you know he's not gonna spend it like when he if he's got a 50 bushel crop out there in the field

they know that they're I guess their **their livelihood depends on the farmer making it or not making it** in a year that he had the really good crop it's better for the entire community **Mutual dependency**

it seems like not everyone I mean the way the world has changed you know you could buy so many groceries and so much stuff online **community responsibility**

but it seems like that little town has everything you need and there's there's still people that go out you know they travel to do their grocery shopping and whatnot **community responsibility**

but from where I came from in Missouri there's more people in tribune that shop locally and understand if they keep their money in town that it helps everybody and and

and that's something I've noticed about about here right

you kind of feel you know that's pretty much communitywide I think so yeah I would I would say good 80% I mean

I can probably count handful of people that I know I mean things are a little higher price you know

it's gonna cost you a little bit more to grocery store and at the hardware store

but it's awfully **convenient to go to town and grab a gallon of milk versus going to Garden City 70 miles**

yeah you know and and most of the people understand that and wanna keep you know **they want to support the local business keep them around community responsibility**

1. Can you tell me about a time that the county/region worked together as a community for a community or economic development project?

Participant 1:

we had several but I've been really happy that that was a really cool because so many different people donated money time yeah

it was just the everyday people it was an organization I **willing to give back**

I think an example is the theater or something and that's still operating so that was a really good success and

they they were able to purchase it and keep it going and buy the equipment they needed and now that word we've had a couple like

I think the most recent thing is is the hospital expansion you know for some reason that just went very well and people really supported it it's \$13 million bond which is huge and that pretty much went everybody agreed to it and been supportive so that you know it's been pretty positive and **basic needs**

you know we've had a couple school remodels **basic needs**

that people you know I think people are **pretty optimistic about you know the basic things that we need** and they're willing to tax themselves to do it and **community responsibility**

but nothing like when I was a kid **when I was a kid** we were building churches one after another and we paved the tribune to city tribune pave their roads they went to pavement and

build a new courthouse built a new hospital and **changes in thinking/culture**

you know that I don't you think that's really tied into the economy to that

there's a highways got better and and farmers had more money and we continue to consolidate farm size you know the population dropped **freedom or ability to move/travel, progress can kill**

Participant 2:

whole the the hog the hog farm coming in was really before my time out there

so I I I don't have a lot of knowledge just from what people have talked about but I don't first-hand knowledge I really don't know how that all went

I know there was some you know there's **probably as many against it As for it but I don't** know that I can really answer that I don't I can't think of anything recently since we've been there that that's really went on **NIMBY**

I mean it's a **tight knit community**

we've had a couple of tragic you know farmers have passed away the last couple years and or well just this last year actually before fall harvest is part of the **community gets together but to get behind something common good**

it's not I don't think really what you're asking

but the community got together both of it were the the gentleman that ran the farm they both had passed away and you know **everybody got together** and went out and harvested the crop for his wife and daughter **sense of community**

and then the other one had a son but so yeah I mean that **small town help help anybody out that needs to self-reliance, resiliency**

definitely there but the economic guys I I don't think I've been there long enough to see any any big deals that I've come up

1. Can you tell me how and when the county/region utilizes governmental resources for community or economic development?

Participant 1:

that's a good question I think we think about our local and I think I agree Christy **she's done great job** I sometimes

I think that money is sort of thrown at things and then **politics takes hold** and sometimes things that are intended to help rural Kansas end up not helping us **feeling of being used**

so rural Kansas in my experience there fits situations like that like as an example that have anything to do with case state or what you do

but Kansas came up with a loan forgiveness for physicians who are willing to go to places like tribune

it initially there were 21 counties that qualified based on population well so that kind of thing it actually tribute bounced in and out of a Greeley county

but now it's almost every county in Kansas but too get that to use that same fund
no it's **it's just been politically manipulated to be meaningless** frustration/futility

and I don't know that don't tell Christy but I don't know any programs from the state or federal level
that I really remember benefited **futility, despare?**

you know there was a time when you could get loans home loans and things like add attribute through
the government it was nice and for people

I was on the economic board **so was my wife at different** times and **commitment to community**

I was I felt like we should just take our funds and go if we needed a mechanic or welder or something
like just go buy the equipment.

you know just go say what does it take what kind of building do you need will give you a zero percent
loan yes **Self reliant/resiliency**

**spend the money that way basically take that money that you would have gotten from the state and just
we'll we'll raise it keep it local and do our own thing what we need to do is it**

yeah 'cause some so many times the **programs miss the boat or something** I don't know **self reliant,
take care of ourselves**

I'm trying to think of something that was really successful

**that's really where I'm you know the main thing that I wanted to get out of this is one what the role is
perception of the role of the government so and that's kind of a follow-up question what do you feel like
what do you feel like the role of government outside of local the role of state and federal what do you
feel like it should be for community economic development for rule communities**

well for one thing they sure need to realize we're here and we're not Topeka not being heard

We're not doing you know the coast and that these sweeping regulations that all government all the
departments make for some of those are just **catastrophic for us yeah** one size does not fit

we're all back just recently in the COVID deal we already socially distance I mean **there's nothing out
here and then they tell us that we're the same as as Kansas City and Wichita** type of discrimination/
Misrepresented

and close businesses and you know when what was the word they used if you were if you were
necessary oh essential essential yeah well you know **everybody is essential in Greeley county we only
have one of everybody** needs to be understood/ misrepresented

and that was that was and continues to be disturbing you know the government offices from week to
week you can either go in or you can't do the farming right out of business but

I just think that they were what are we now are we less than 2% of the population yeah so production agriculture yes **so it's hard**

I I'm you know I thought we should be grateful we get the attention we give

but that's one thing I think they just need when they make rules they **need to realize that not everybody lives in the city urban areas** **desperation/frustration misrepresented**

but I don't know I've always been curious about how much revenue do we generate out here for the state and where does it go you know are we are we even or are we are we being taken care of by Kansas I don't know do you have any kind of data on that **we are important but not populated**

yeah and that was that economic impact study or the economic impact data sheet that I handed out it had I believe it had a percent of the states GDP and I can't remember exactly what it was but part of that goes to oh I wish I could remember his name he came up and talked to me after the meeting and he said he said you know the one thing that bought and it may have been you I think it might have been basically talking about there's a lot of industry agriculture industry and in Greeley county but the dollars don't stay there it could have been that's your truth yeah they go they go South to the to the company that owns the facilities yeah

yeah that's a I don't know if we should have just had school decided to discontinue with civics and our high school that's how it been disbanded I guess and

to teach people the difference **between the local bank and it's been a branch bank yeah** **local first**

stopping at the dollar store compared to stopping the shopping in a little clear grocery store right now **local first**

but the impact that has on the community those things the I think case they could do better job

here's a good example this has been a long time ago I know what they could take about that so I grew up in my granddad was a farmer my parents were office people and teachers and I farmed with my brother and I farmed with my granddad that's how we kind of got started and my granddad believed in the coop and Farm Bureau well in my lifetime here as a pharmacist and a business owner

both of those organizations have **passed out discount cards for Walmart pharmacy**

yeah helpful how many farm Bureau customers do they really have in urban towns in Kansas **MAJOR emphasis added, frustration, dismay**

they have a mail order pharmacy business to this day Farm Bureau does huh and I talked to her local people they just got angry with me yeah **frustration with competing systems that both have similar objectives**

I just said what do you ask them what they were doing you know **what how can you possibly be the spokesperson for rural America and do this you know and** **MAJOR emphasis added**

to them you know it just seemed like well **whatever is good for me is good for everybody** and what's wrong with you those kind of decisions you know bug you **one size fits all, generalizing**

yeah out of **self destructive behavior**

Participant 2:

I don't know I don't know that I'm appropriate with it or not

I guess this might sound a little harsh but I guess I sometimes feel like we're way out **there at the edge isolation/desperation** and

you know I guess I kind of feel like we may **get overlooked if we're** not keeping our name in the hat or **easily dismissed**

you know really not not I **guess I just I keep keep the thing stirred up** but we got it **squeaky wheel** we gotta let it let the rest of the state **know that we're out there because**

I think we're so **far out there** that we **we will get overlooked far as government funding undervalued/not important**

I'm I'm probably not involved enough with any of it to maybe see it first hand

yeah that makes sense do you trying to think how to word this on that part of it do you think that you know does it feel like when people need something that they automatically look toward the state or federal government or do they look to the community first

I think they looked at **the community first** I don't know that I could give you an example but yeah I I think they're I think they're **more locally focused more let's figure it out ourselves** before we go ask for help and **resiliency**

I and I don't know I think that **may just be an agriculture type** thing that mentality of you know we could do it on our own we're probably **self sustaining**

I mean we're probably 80% agriculture out there and those I guess the way **I was brought up seems to be a lot different than a lot of my friends that grew up in the in the city or in town D discourse ag community**

you know just just have a different way right here in this community you know you're always out there on your own and yeah you kinda gotta figure it out for yourself yeah yeah **self reliant, resiliency**

Participant 3:

I think here it is widely accepted, at least our office will be funded.

And if we can make a case for why this makes sense, it's pretty widely supported.

The county originally so our secondary, which is J 7 dairy.

The county purchased the land and drilled the wells for that dairy,

because it was very clear that they would recoup that in taxes in pretty short order.

So **if the case can be made**, sure let's go ahead. **Willing to grow**

I would not say that this is a county that likes harebrained schemes overly well, and I can I can go with that. **Real growth for all**

And I would also say that we have **some hesitancy around local investment projects**,

and the only reason I say that is **because of the dairy**.

The **dairy that failed and people kind of the once bitten, twice shy** look. **Experiences**

Now that's not to say that there are people who don't invest very readily in projects, but I don't know that community wide scale what that looks like.

And that's also not to say that there aren't dollars that could be available because.

We may not have the tax base of a lot of places, but we do have wealthy people in the community.

Speaker 2 **There's a lot of old money?**

Speaker 1 yes, and a lot of it and a lot of it kind of flies under the radar.

But I don't know.

We're very big proponents of the Roz program because we can see and track if we can see that something will show results.

We're pretty open to that

because it's pretty evident that we have. I think we're eighth in the state in degrees per capita.

And a lot of that tracks right back to when we started the program, that number started climbing.

Well, it's you know, Paddy Clarke once told me, like, keep data, track things, know where you are. And it was it's been really good advice all along the way.

So outside of the local government, what do you feel like the view is and even your own the view of state and federal role and community development. Very candid

. I know what I'm trying to think, how to answer that because.

Well, I appreciate so much the efforts that are made,

there are very few things that apply to us. Despair/frustration

You know, we are beyond rural. Isolated/forgotten

This is frontier care territory, and it's very frustrating. Emphasis added,

There are times that I disagree with our Legislature wholeheartedly,

but at least at some point there are some checks and balances and

an opportunity for organizations like the Kansas Department of Agriculture to get up and say, **Do you understand what the ramifications are of this particular amendment?** *Misunderstood/ forgotten*

Colorado doesn't have a whole lot of that.

I we're a unified government. We're very clearly a unified government because we know where the least populated and **if Kansas decided they wanted to have less counties**. Guess who gets to go first? *Flight or fight, survival mode*

So what we did when we extended, when we unified was we extended our cities home rule to our counties borders. And basically, that allows us to tell the state that if you're going to consolidate counties, it has to be uniform. **So we can't be that target pilot project**. It was a **protectionist move**. *Survival from government*

One of the conversations I had actually got to spend some time with Jerry Moran the last time he was out, and one of the conversations I had with him was.

It's really hard to explain to people why we're not USDA rural development eligible.

A lot of the time they say, well, there are grant dollars for this.

They're not for us. *(Emphasis added)*

Our **income levels are too high**. **They're not for us.** *Frustration but satisfaction*

And that's there are a lot of moments that I have.

We have other advantages because we have high income levels, and so most of the time,

I don't get upset or I'm not, I'm not overly frustrated with that particular emotion.

But we had recently there were some American Rescue Plan dollars that came out for rural communities to help build health care facilities.

And we're looking at we're going to need to do something with our health department right now.

And our nurse had gotten so excited she's like, **This is perfect, we fit under all these** *(emphasis added)*.

There's no way we qualified. I will call. I will verify this with the USDA Rural Development Director Kansas, and say,

Look, we don't qualify for this money.

And usually we could say, Well, you might be able to get 15 percent grant, right?

This one, **we're not we can't even look at it like and the guys from Wallace**

County, he said, **how is that possible?** I said, I, I know how we are in relation to USDA rural development.

We are not eligible for those funds. And he said, You're right, you're not, period, **but who's more rural than we are?** *Emphasis added*

And you know, Wallace County was in the same boat,

but again, maybe there needs to **be a frontier carve out, change the system**

or maybe I don't know what that looks like,

but so many **times things just don't work.** (*Frustration, despair*)

I think here it is widely accepted, at least our office will be funded.

And if we can make a case for why this makes sense, it's pretty widely supported.

The county originally so our secondary, which is J 7 dairy. The county purchased the land and drilled the wells for that dairy,

because it was very clear that they would recoup that in taxes in pretty short order.

So if the case can be made, sure let's go ahead.

I would not say that this is a county that likes harebrained schemes overly well, and I can I can go with that.

And I would also say that we have some hesitancy around local investment projects, and the only reason I say that is because of the dairy.

The dairy that failed and people kind of the once bitten, twice shy look.

Now that's not to say that there are people who don't invest very readily in projects, but I don't know that community wide scale what that looks like.

And that's also not to say that there aren't dollars that could be available because.

We may not have the tax base of a lot of places, but we do have wealthy people in the community.

Speaker 2 There's a lot of old money?

Speaker 1 yes, and a lot of it and a lot of it kind of flies under the radar.

But I don't know. We're very big proponents of the Roz program because we can see and track if we can see that something will show results. We're pretty open to that

because it's pretty evident that we have. I think we're eighth in the state in degrees per capita.

And a lot of that tracks right back to when we started the program, that number started climbing.

Well, it's you know, Paddy Clarke once told me, like, keep data, track things, know where you are. And it was it's been really good advice all along the way.

So outside of the local government, what do you feel like the view is and even your own the view of state and federal role and community development. Very candid

. I know what I'm trying to think, how to answer that because.

Well, I appreciate so much the efforts that are made, there are very few things that apply to us.

You know, we are beyond rural.

This is frontier care territory, and it's very frustrating. One of the conversations I had actually got to spend some time with Jerry Moran the last time he was out, and one of the conversations I

had with him was. It's really hard to explain to people why we're not USDA rural development eligible.

A lot of the time they say, well, there are grant dollars for this.

They're not for us. (Emphasis added)

Our income levels are too high. They're not for us.

And that's there are a lot of moments that I have.

We have other advantages because we have high income levels, and so most of the time, I don't get upset or I'm not, I'm not overly frustrated with that particular emotion.

But we had recently there were some American Rescue Plan dollars that came out for rural communities to help build health care facilities.

And we're looking at we're going to need to do something with our health department right now.

And our nurse had gotten so excited she's like, This is perfect, we fit under all these (emphasis added).

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This one, we're not we can't even look at it like and the guys from Wallace County, he said, how is that possible? I said, I, I know how we are in relation to USDA rural development.

We are not eligible for those funds. And he said, You're right, you're not, period, but who's more rural than we are?

And you know, Wallace County was in the same boat,

but again, maybe there needs to be a frontier carve out, or maybe I don't know what that looks like,

but so many times things just don't work. (Frustration, despare)

they have the frontier catagory

in health care generally,

but rarely any of the other Programs.

But it also makes me wonder on that particular one, I think it had to be a population of under 5000

So I'm wondering who gets to apply for these dollars? (frustration)

Who's left? (Emphasis added)

Extremely, extremely poverty,

SPEAKER 1: yes, extremely poor places that don't have the capacity. To manage what they get right,

and I'm not saying we always have a tremendous amount of capacity, **but we usually don't pursue things we can't find a way to get done. Proactively cautious**

And **we're very deliberate too**. I don't chase dollars.

That's kind of always been. The community's stance is that if this makes sense for a project that we're working on, well, then by all means will pursue it.

But I'm we're never going to just chase something for the sake of the money. **commitment to community**

It's got to be a worthwhile project that fits our needs **commitment to community**

well, and generally it has to be something the community has set forth as a need.

Maybe this is something we want to go after.

And I think that's why we've seen some success, because they've been projects for the most part that have **been backed by the community and said they've been elevated**.

And so it's really easy to get support from a wider community when they said, that's what we want. Yeah.

From day one on this job, I had a board member saying we just need base hits. Rural community needs

Don't go for home runs. We need base hits.

And so I think that that mindset has enabled me to think of smaller things as wins too.

I think there is a an awareness and awareness that. We don't have the capacity for huge projects and. Self aware of situation

We don't have the ability to build the housing, we don't have the infrastructure to handle some of those things.

And so, you know, growth of a few jobs at a time works really well for us.

And more than anything, I think people like to see, and I don't know that they're actually not aware of it,

but they like to see taxpayers grow because our tax base is stressed.

We believe in the kind of art and culture we want this and we want that.(Emphasis Added)

And which I love.

There are. We have so many, so many assets, I mean, the fact that we have a bowling alley, still it's pretty, pretty cool, right? Somewhat sarcastically positive

But we also have a community theater and we also have a year-round rec program.

And we have a senior center and we have a walking trail and.

We've tried very deliberately to make this a place that people are proud to call home, proud resiliency

but that also stresses a tax base. despair

And so I think that's more where people see even more than the job creation as they'd like not to have to pay quite as high taxes as they do currently. Frustration, wants to do more for residents but have to provide basic services

If you more people, you

don't have to pay yes for that a little bit.

But I did notice some new houses, the new apartments over on the south side of town.

We have this is people don't believe me when I say this, but it's Patty Clarke. Keep your numbers. Keep your data.

From 2000 to 2010, we didn't have any homes built.

Now chances are they were probably five. But the census says none. Emphasis of frustration

Right, OK. When you don't require building permits in the county, the census has no way to track us.

I can acknowledge that, but we had thirty one units of housing built between to 2010 and 2020.

No kidding. Yeah. Wow. Yeah. I noticed nice houses that were built

there are there are some nice places and there are a lot of them are owner homeowner invested and we're going to live here. Resiliency

And that's really the mentality is if you're going to build a house, you're probably planning to be here just because,

again, you can't sell it for what you put in it to begin with. despair

You know that's a rural problem. It's not just a tribune problem. It's a real Kansas problem.

Emphasis added

But we also have had. I think nine of those units were rentals, and they're probably been.

Another 10 or so that have been houses that were taken from abandoned to back into use.

So there really there really has been a pretty deliberate effort on housing and it's been private

Self reliance

with the exception of that unit that you just mentioned those that complex. We did have some MIH (modern income housing) money in it, some moderate income housing,

1. Can you share your overall thoughts about the outcomes from the SGI facilitated community meeting?

Participant 1:

on the surface level I didn't think you were telling you were to me you were sort of giving some information and gathering some information and not really coming to crosses **this is what you ought to do with so many meetings are** and I don't know that's a good question

have you have you had a chance to visit with anybody else after that meeting that was there at the meeting only

you know it hasn't really come up or specifically talked to them about that meeting but I had with the eco devo and what was kind of the

you know when you're in conversation what was kind of the overall feeling of it of maybe perceptions of the people that were there and maybe steps forward or if there was you know what was the general feeling from the movie all the people that came in

as you I don't know if you noticed but there was **younger people there too which was good** and I think the conversation we had we **were hopeful that they** used some younger people would get involved and **Hopeful**

you know get more information and **get more involved in the community and economic development**

let's see I see it for follow up that I wanna circle back to you know you just mentioned that it would cover that young people do you do you see the young professionals you know like the ones that were in that meeting that night do you see them have you noticed that there wanting to be involved or hesitant to be involved or is it you know kind of what's your view of the some of the younger professional people that are just like at that meeting do you see more of them coming to activities or not well you know

when we're talking about participation at things are kids are involved in locally and kind of being critical

not everybody is in that boat and

I think a lot of young couples and young professionals are they know they're trying to figure out how they can be more active and

the fact is **they're torn between you know committing to doing local things and working on local things and then having the lifestyle that they have** **commitment, life balancing**

that's kind of what I run into no and I think everything would do like that's helpful in getting people to commit to doing locally

well that kind of wraps up the questions that I had is there any any questions or or comments that you thought about that you you make sure you that you want me to hear

maybe you already said that not a bit when you're done you reach the point where you're going to put this all down well we have an opportunity to see what you found out oh yeah oh yeah and i and it's you know it's still pretty(friends that live in) Lawrence, Kansas City area payment lived in garden and it's always been

for even within my family my cousins parents lived here and someone that grew up here they have this weird idea about **how you it's a living in tribune is easy and slow pace and you know how they they love to have that simple life but they have no idea how hard it is to state afloat out it's tough you know you're under we're still fighting the weather** Resiliency
yellow mention mother nature and their struggles you know and and I think you're right I think further you go east more civilized yet and then they will they lost some of that ideas

Participant 2:

I liked it felt like there was a lot of good discussion!
just seemed like it if we could get it a abig development of some kind it seemed like everyone would get behind it
there's a lot II I thought there's a **lot of good ideas thrown out there** and every
I think **everybody wants the same end result**
you know bring something that would generate **generate some economy you know some jobs and some revenue and some tax dollars** and
I don't know how but think with the eco devo moving to the newspaper side of things I think she'll still do a lot there for the community development as well
but you know I think we need to get someone **that wants to has the same ideas** congruency
that she has been building on for so many years yeah you know
if we just let it **sit without someone pushing a little bit I can see it maybe not going to the wayside** urgency

but maybe not happening as quickly as it could
I think **there's potential if we could get some driving force** behind it hopeful

have you been have you been in some of the other meetings that the eco devo has done or other you know community organizations have done before
no that's probably that's **probably the first one I've really been involved with**

so in terms of in terms of the way the meeting was set up did it did it feel like you were being forced into a certain direction or was it pretty wide open
well I think it was **wide open yeah I didn't I I mean I I like how it went completely just the the brainstorming ideas of what what our community has to offer and how can we promote those and** refreshing

you know what there was a few things we didn't you know
we just there's there's probably no way we're gonna have a a cotton here you know we can't we can't raise cotton in our in our area
so you know you **throw those things out but the ones the ones that are possible for us** you know
I think strategic, open mindedness
think it **was wide open and just** whatever whatever the people there could you know put together come up with

have you have you had a chance to talk to anybody after that there did you talk to anybody after the meeting about some of the things that we talked about

I learned that not a lot of the guy was sitting beside
I haul a lot of cattle for him and and during the summer you know harvest stuff and do a lot of business with it

so we've had some conversations just you know how the meeting went and different things I guess really did nail **down I probably need to pick his brain a little more** curiosity

he's been there for 50 or 60 years well he's probably been there for 50 years and uh he's **pretty business orientated and I think he would he would push something** connecting
if he thought it would work

you know he he'd **go out on a limb to try to push something** along if he thought it was doable hopeful

so yeah I mean I guess I we've had just conversations about the meetings that I've I probably ought to push him a little bit or pick his brain

do you feel like that that the conversation or do you feel like the topics or the way you're talking about moving forward changed any at all because of the meeting or was it just there and kind of resurfaced
yeah I don't I don't know I I haven't I guess I probably haven't talked to those people about it to see if anybody else is turning around some of those ideas or or if it just kind of sits there
yeah I haven't I **haven't visited with enough probably to** I haven't I haven't heard a lot of talk
I guess from the people I've said I know were there right but you know
I also I live outside of town and I'm out I'm out over the road truck driver so I'm on the road

Participant 3

The meeting's structure and the overall facilitation encouraged those present to look at our community as well as its strengths and opportunities in a **fresh and forward-moving light.** futuristic

Too many conversations **dwelt on what we lack** – emphasis added, frustrated

your meeting design and facilitation encouraged us to look at the **qualities our place boasts and to focus on best fits, not to bemoan what our community may lack.** Positive outlook

More specifically: Do you feel like the manner in which it was conducted allowed for a more diverse discussion during and after?

In many ways, I would say the conversation invited those attending to re-engage in the conversation **around economic and community development and what that looks like for Greeley County.** visioning

(We've long had a tradition of community conversations which encourage the community to gather to plan, scheme, dream, set priorities, and discuss matters of importance but hadn't hosted one in a few years.)

I've heard additional discussions and energy around solar projects,

am hearing peeps of information regarding bioenergy development, and

have had additional conversations with individuals who attended that night on a more general interest **in becoming more involved in development activities, overall.** Engaged participation

We're having continued conversations about the retail and service businesses needed to support the local ag economy. I'm also hearing some new interest in long for-sale feedlots, but I don't believe it's related to the meeting.

In Greeley County, we live, eat, and breathe ag. It's central to our economy, so I'm not sure that we every didn't think about ag as a development tool...but I do know that the meeting helped generate some new interest and additional ideas around agriculture as a way to grow the local economy and the tax base.

Overall general comments outside of the questions:

Participant 2;

you know just talking to you I may I may get ahold of and I don't know that be the guy I sat next to, might be one you wanna talk to as well he's he's got a lot of good ideas right I I might

yeah I'm gonna follow back up with some other folks yeah continuation, hopeful

I think people he definitely talked to you he's like he likes that community and he likes to promote it and he likes to keep his dollars in in town to as much as he can so

Appendix E - Second Round Coding

1st round codes:

General Questions about their history in community

Sense of belonging/home
owner)

Survival/not forgotten

Pride

Quote:

I never felt like I left the community (Business

but he didn't take very long for me to figure out it's quiet and it's peaceful out there and I have no regret (Farmer/trucking)
stability that Kansas has and kind of that **realization that rural Kansas still matters.** (eco devo)

I grew up on The gray county line and my wife and I raised her five boys on our my grandparents homestead the great grand father homestead in 1902 so been here even ask county since 1902 (Life long resident farmer) when I look at eastern Colorado and the amount of resources that are not Available on the front range or anything outside the front range. **Eastern Colorado is basically dead, to Colorado (eco devo)**

We have so many, so many assets, I mean, **the fact that we have a bowling alley**, still it's pretty, pretty cool, right (eco devo)
we do a fantastic job out here of raising very good quality productive individual citizens (Life long resident farmer)

I was a last high school graduating class with Copeland high school before Copeland Montezuma became South grey junior high Sr high school (4th gen farmer) **was said with a bit of pride not dispair**

so we've seen our nice little boom in SWK through the years because of the packing plants, livestock industry, and grain production that feeds that sector (4th gen farmer)

Q1 How do you define Agriculture within your county/region

Resiliency/survival

I just didn't realize it I sometimes look at it and don't understand how they how they make it **that resilient you know how they keep after it every year and you know** (farmer/trucking)

being more efficient with the water and making sure that if we put a drop out there on the ground that it stayed there not evaporating into

the atmosphere out here in this wonderful semi arid desert that we live in without irrigation (4th gen farmer)

Pride

I don't know I I still struggle to figure out how they get it done (farmer/trucking)

I would say the support of agriculture is. **Pretty robust. (eco devo)**

agriculture is very **robust** here for sure and I'm quite proud of how we've been able to continue to produce with a dwindling asset (4th gen farmer)

but we we could literally grow any crops only pick a crop and I bet we can grow it out here if there's a market for it

Resistant to change community

I think it's pretty obvious and it's it's an ag

but I think you know the **behavior doesn't match that all the time in my opinion** (business owner)

common beliefs

I think everybody knows where most of the people involved in you know out here are involved in Ag are married to somebody that is or you know have friends that are involved in ag (business owner)

I would say for Greeley County, it makes perfect sense. I mean, you won't find anybody who thinks otherwise. (eco devo)

it's **agriculture and health care, period. Those are our two strengths (eco devo)**

Misunderstood

I don't feel like there's a broad understanding of what agriculture looks like. Here. Right. And how vast it truly is (eco devo)

There didn't seem to be any understanding that it's not just change what you're growing

there are some folks that **do you recognize the value of rural America** (4th gen farmer)

Despair

aquifer irrigation production in terms of gallons permitted pumped or acre feet pumped per season goes down in my opinion every year at least they ability does for sure but yet our our yields continue to go up though that's got a lot to do with genetics from the seed companies which is great but we also are learning more with the crops (4TH gen farmer)

we got you know your parents and that generation this was their town they worked for good streets and for businesses to you know and common banks and they built churches we don't see that today

area really doesn't have much available to buy – has kept community and school from growing in size, missing out on opportunities (participant from Haskell)

1. Q2 Can you describe how agriculture is currently playing a role in community development within the county/region?

Despair

we it's kind of **sad looking back but you know we've lost a lot of restaurants and motel service stations and clothing stores** (business owner)

now we pretty much have every family working in some sector directly AG or their wife or husband does (business owner)

the **economy changed**

I think yeah ag is way more prosperous than it was back then maybe maybe that contributes

I had a friend tell me prosperity is killing us yeah I looked at him and asked like how could that be he said no he said **everybody that can is leaving town**

Dollar spent sending soybeans to Wichita just so they can come back here and be fed to our cattle (Haskell Participant)

We can't grow ag manufacturing we have no labor pool (Haskell)

Loyalty

we basically **have two Saturdays every week and those families that are wealthier now have**

better vehicles leave town (in talking about the school going to a 4 day week)

if they have young kids they're participating in year round private sports right traveling you know maybe and those kind of things so the town you know and that was the time people spent in 4H and Boy Scouts and church and all

Common Beliefs

I would say for Greeley County, it makes perfect sense. I mean, you won't find anybody who thinks otherwise. (eco devo)

I mean I think most anybody that's still out here understands if the farmer goes so goes by the wayside therefore so goes everything else (4th gen farmer)

Misunderstood

But I don't know. I don't know that the people who aren't intricately, intricately involved in AG in some way shape or form have an understanding of how it works. (eco devo, speaking about a group from eastern Kansas that wanted their county to change ag practices)

I think a lot of I think a lot of them do realize that, I don't know if they realize how **truly a important it is** (4th gen farmer) but you know the way we travel so easily in today's age communication works so quick and easy with the Internet and cell phones and it's in my mind it's it's allowed people the ability to not think about how important the AG industry is because we don't have to look at it (4th gen farmer)

Survival

I think some are probably **too nose to the grindstone**. Just this is what I'm going to get to do this year to the next year (in response to the follow up of local understanding of ag and the impact)

we are desperate to find something”(Haskell)

Desperate/slow adoption

I see a lot more no till which to me out there no till I would think that would be the only way to go with the lack of moisture (farmer/trucking)

We can't get the Hispanic people to participate they are afraid of being found, most are illegal even if they are not, some of their family that is here is illegal. (Haskell Participant)

Q3. Can you tell me how, from your experiences, how agriculture has changed in the county/region during the time you have lived/worked within the area?

Survival

they know that they're I guess their **their livelihood depends on the farmer making it or not making it (speaking about local businesses)**

Frustration/despair

you know to **show up and be leaders** you have to do that you have to be that leader all the time and **you can't do that and be gone every other weekend or you know right it is disruptive (business owner, lamenting on the prosperity of ag has allowed families to be mobile and not be as involved with the community)**

but it seems like that little town has everything you need and there's there's still people that go out you know they travel to do their grocery shopping (farmer trucking)

lot of young couples and young professionals are they know they're trying to figure out how they can be more active

fact is **they're torn between you know committing to doing local things and working on local things and then having the lifestyle that they have**

but it's awfully **convenient to go to town and grab a gallon of milk versus going to Garden City 70 miles**

that makes it harder while the agricultural community and even these smaller smaller communities it's hard because you know again we we travel faster and easier and we don't think much of 20 miles or 30 miles so that's that's that's not that big of a deal today as compared to 30 40 years ago we do an **even better job of shipping them** (young people) out after they graduate high school city of them or lucky if they returned for Christmas and Thanksgiving (4th gen farmer)

Sense of Frustration
way right and

we all we're all spoiled and we like it that

you know I want to live on the family farm and I want to raise my boys here and I'm fortunate enough to have married a wonderful woman that is allowing me to live that dream with her raising her boys out here

on the other hand I have friends who got married up you know in college after college and wanted to live on the family farm

but the wife was not raised on a farm and says I'm not living in the sticks or the boonies

I wanna live in town whether it's Garden City or in Copeland

ya'll I wanna live on a paved St I wanna live where I have neighbors that the kids can play with while they're Grilling up or I want more better closer access to entertainment (all from 4th gen farmer)

Q4. Can you tell me about a time that the county/region worked together as a community for a community or economic development project?

Sense of Responsibility

people are **pretty optimistic about you know the basic things that we need** and they're willing to tax themselves to do it (business owner)

Frustration

I don't want to have to farm 10 to 20 thousand 1,000 acres how awesome is **that because really what we want to do is just provide for our families yeah**
we'd love to pass something on (Has to be something other than production ag to do it though)

nothing like when I was a kid **when I was a kid** we were building churches one after another and we paved the tribune to city tribune pave their roads they went to pavement and build a new courthouse built a new hospital (business owner)

gentleman that ran the farm they both had passed away and you know **everybody got together** and went out and harvested the crop for his wife and daughter

that is exactly the problem, our two towns have continued to be segregated, we need to come together and share resources, like school administrations or city government services (Haskell Participant)

because without agriculture and the fossil fuel industry whether it's natural gas or coal or oil the dollar has to be created it has to be generated from he can't say nothing but you have to go create it you create it with with crops and livestock and in fossil fuels (or something new) (4th gen farmer)

what do you do be able to make real money out here in agriculture so that we don't have to farm 10,000 acres that they that to make a living so so I could get 100 grand right

I know there were three 4 families I guess I think it was

move their family back to Haskell county prop well like with word came from California two were on the East Coast software November where the fourth came from because they were gonna be in quote Los Angeles when all of this Covid crap reared its head and they were going to get back to rural America where they were safe from the drugs of people that were going to be breathing this ever so deadly terrifying COVID virus on and

you know that was I I **thought it was great that came back home yeah but (what did we have here to keep them here)** (4th gen farmer)
you know how it's been watching two years
now **three of the four are gone we went back**

Q5, Can you tell me how and when the county/region utilizes governmental resources for community or economic development?

Frustration/Despair/Futility

I think that money is sort of thrown at things
and then **politics takes hold** and sometimes
things that are intended to help rural Kansas
end up not helping us
every county in Kansas but too get that to use
that same fund
no it's **it's just been politically manipulated to be meaningless** (loan forgiveness, ROZ)
instead of I wanna grow in this economy so I'm
going to take part of your slice of the pie yeah
we we gotta make the the pie bigger so that
everybody slice gets bigger without taking from
somebody else
and that that's hard for some people to
understand
because all they **take for me to succeed is I have to make you fail but I'll pick up your pieces** (4th gen farmer) EMPHASIS added
I don't know any programs from the state or
federal level that I really remember benefited
programs miss the boat or something but we either overlook the opportunity for ourselves because we just oh look what if we pursue this opportunity it has to create 5 new jobs right
now that's hard to wrap my head around because I don't know how how to create an opportunity that creates two jobs how am I going to do it to create spite because those five jobs they need to make 60 thousand a year (4th gen farmer)

I just think that they were what are we now are
we less than 2% of the population yeah so
production agriculture yes **so it's hard**

it it takes dedicated **person or people to even pursue an opportunity yeah that's that's their job is to go pursue it develop** (4th gen farmer)

I thought we should be grateful we get the attention we give
but that's one thing I think they just need when they make rules they **need to realize that not everybody lives in the city urban areas** but trying to attract do to come in it's it's hard to it's not hard to have the idea of building if they will come in the Field of Dreams but if you don't have it **how do you even draw the attention** thereof, but it makes harder to find funds to build and create something for someone to come to right (4th gen farmer)
you know what they say if you want something done give your task to a busy person is then get it done
somehow everybody is getting busy busy are you know used to I only served on the church board (4th gen farmer)
well I serve on the church board and the rec center board and and you know Rotary wants me to join their their group but Oh yeah by the way Farm Bureau needs another volunteer on the board and other Co-op needs somebody to fill that vacancy 'cause that member board member retired or died or moved away is it

there's we still have all the activities that we that we've always had and fewer people to spread the responsibilities across so (4th gen farmer)

I think there gets to be some yes physical and emotional tiredness that makes you less of a go getter (4th gen farmer) Bowling Alone
our current County employees they are still busy doing their first job that they were hired to do you know whether it's a deputy or a Street sweeper or a County Road maintainer or the county treasurer you know (4th gen farmer)
part of my **point is though they truly don't have six hours a day five days a week available maybe today they could have squeezed six hours into a project but they're not going to be able to do that on a consistent basis right if we drop if we drop what we're doing we're not doing the services we were meant to do in the first place right**

we don't do good job promoting ourselves because we view it as bragging or being prideful instead (4th gen farmer)

NOTE: Local systems that are to represent rural can at times mimic the frustration of the examples of state programs missing the mark)

here's a good example this has been a long time ago I know what they could take about that so I grew up in my granddad was a farmer my parents were office people and teachers and I farmed with my brother and I farmed with my granddad that's how we kind of got started and my granddad believed in the coop and Farm Bureau well in my lifetime here as a pharmacist and a business owner

both of those organizations have **passed out discount cards for Walmart pharmacy**

yeah helpful how many farm Bureau customers do they really have in urban towns in Kansas MAJOR emphasis added,

they have a mail order pharmacy business to this day Farm Bureau does huh and I talked to her local people they just got angry with me
yeah

I appreciate so much the efforts that are made,

there are very few things that apply to us (eco devo)

you know it's it's hard to have the critical mass to support a really nice water park in a community of 1000 people (4th gen farmer)

Self-Reliant/Resiliency

I was I felt like we should just take our funds and go if we needed a mechanic or welder or something like just go buy the equipment.

you know just go say what does it take what kind of building do you need will give you a zero percent loan

Overlooked/misunderstood

well for one thing they sure need to realize we're here and we're not Topeka

sweeping regulations that all government all the departments make for some of those are just **catastrophic for us yeah**

back just recently in the COVID deal we already socially distance I mean **there's nothing out here and then they tell us that we're the same as as Kansas City and Wichita**

I kind of feel like we may **get overlooked** if we're not keeping our name in the hat (farmer/trucking)

I think we're so **far out there** that we **we will get overlooked far as government funding** (farmer/trucking)

NOTE: following up with question on do local people look to the state/fed or local first for assistance.

looked at **the community first** I don't know that I could give you an example

but yeah I I think they're I think they're **more locally focused more let's figure it out ourselves**

know I think that **may just be an agriculture type** thing that mentality of you know we could do it on our own we're probably you're always out there on your own and yeah you kinda gotta figure it out for yourself (farmer/trucking)

Q6. Can you share your overall thoughts about the outcomes from the SGI facilitated community meeting?

Urgency

if we just let it **sit without someone pushing a little bit I can see it maybe not going to the wayside**

I talked to one individual that you know this is fact that already this is the kick start to get us going and you'll now is great to hear (4th gen farmer)

Frustration

then I I heard I overheard two people talking outside in the parking lot Yep that was great it felt really good that's what needs to happen **but I'm not gonna lead it I'm you know they they were not old but they were right**

they were you know a 30 year old needs to be doing this not a 62 year old and you know I think about my own parents that are 75 and 73 you know they're retired now but the living in Colorado (4th gen farmer)

Hopeful

you can't wait till you're on the verge of closing doors before you decide to work together (4th gen farmer)
I thought there's a **lot of good ideas thrown out there** and every I think **everybody wants the same end result**

I think **there's potential if we could get some driving force** behind it

it was **wide open yeah I didn't I I mean I I like how it went completely just the the brainstorming ideas of what what our community has to offer and how can we promote those and**

you know you **throw those things out but the ones the ones that are possible for us you** know (farmer/trucking)

the overall facilitation encouraged those present to look at our community as well as its strengths and opportunities in a **fresh and forward-moving light (eco devo)**

encouraged us to look at the **qualities our place boasts and to focus on best fits, not to bemoan what our community may lack (eco devo)**

I didn't think you were telling you were to me you were sort of giving some information and gathering some information and not really coming to crosses **this is what you ought to do with so many meetings are (business owner)**

but there was **younger people there too which was good** and
I think the conversation we had we **were hopeful that they** used some younger people would get involved

Futuristic

I would say the conversation invited those attending to re-engage in the conversation **around economic and community development and what that looks like for us**

I really liked it and appreciated it and you know the the timing was was right (4th gen farmer) probably needed another meeting add in December and another one in January another one in February and one more in March, have to keep it in front of people to change the conversations (4th gen farmer)

General I learned a lot of from the guy was I sitting beside we had good geographical representation from the county

we've had some conversations just you know how the meeting went and different things I guess really did nail **down I probably need to pick his brain a little more**

I guess I we've had just conversations about the meetings that I've I probably ought to push him

Appendix F - Third Round Coding

Round 2, Overarching Themes in relation to the RQ and Sub RQ

General Comments at beginning of interview

Sense of Place:

We have so many, so many assets, I mean, **the fact that we have a bowling alley**, still it's pretty, pretty cool, right (eco devo)

we do a fantastic job out here of raising very good quality productive individual citizens (Life long resident farmer)

I never felt like I left the community (Business owner)

but he didn't take very long for me to figure out it's quiet and it's peaceful out there and I have no regret (Farmer/trucking)

stability that Kansas has and kind of that **realization that rural Kansas still matters.** (eco devo)

I grew up on The gray county line and my wife and I raised her five boys on our my grandparents homestead the great grand father homestead in 1902 so been here even ask county since 1902 (Life long resident farmer)

I don't know I I still struggle to figure out how they get it done (farmer/trucking)

I would say the support of agriculture is. **Pretty robust. (eco devo)**

agriculture is very **robust** here for sure and I'm quite proud of how we've been able to continue to produce with a dwindling asset (4th gen farmer)

but we we could literally grow any crops only pick a crop and I bet we can grow it out here if there's a market for it

I think everybody knows where most of the people involved in you know out here are involved in Ag are married to somebody that is or you know have friends that are involved in ag (business owner)

I would say for Greeley County, it makes perfect sense. I mean, you won't find anybody who thinks otherwise. (eco devo)

Research Sub Question 1: What are the community members perceptions of agriculture as the focus sector for CD as a result of the SGI directed facilitation?

Sense of Urgency:

when I look at eastern Colorado and the amount of resources that are not Available on the front range or anything outside the front range. **Eastern Colorado is basically dead, to Colorado (eco devo)**

I was a last high school graduating class with Copeland high school before Copeland Montezuma became South grey junior high Sr high school (4th gen farmer) was said with a bit of pride not dispair

so we've seen our nice little boom in SWK through the years because of the packing plants, livestock industry, and grain production that feeds that sector (4th gen farmer)

I just didn't realize it I sometimes look at it and don't understand how they how they make it **that resilient you know how they keep after it every year and you know** (farmer/trucking)

being more efficient with the water and making sure that if we put a drop out there on the ground that it stayed there not evaporating into the atmosphere out here in this wonderful semi arid desert that we live in without irrigation (4th gen farmer)

I think it's pretty obvious and it's it's an ag community

but I think you know the **behavior doesn't match that all the time in my opinion** (business owner)

it's **agriculture and health care, period. Those are our two strengths (eco devo)**

I mean I think most anybody that's still out here understands if the farmer goes so goes by the wayside therefore so goes everything else (4th gen farmer)

but you know the way we travel so easily in today's age communication works so quick and easy with the Internet and cell phones and it it's in my mind

it's it's allowed people the ability to not think about how important the AG industry

is because we don't have to look at it (4th gen farmer)

I think some are probably **too nose to the grindstone**. Just this is what I'm going to get to do this year to the next year (in response to the follow up of local understanding of ag and the impact)

we are desperate to find something”(Haskell)

I see a lot more no till which to me out there no till I would think that would be the only way to go with the lack of moisture (farmer/trucking)

We can't get the Hispanic people to participate they are afraid of being found, most are illegal even if they are not, some of their family that is here is illegal. (Haskell Participant)

they know that they're I guess their **their livelihood depends on the farmer making it or not making it (speaking about local businesses)**

but it seems like that little town has everything you need and

there's there's still people that go out you know they travel to do their grocery shopping (farmer trucking)

but it's awfully **convenient to go to town and grab a gallon of milk versus going to Garden City 70 miles**

that makes it harder while the agricultural community and

even these smaller smaller communities it's hard because you know again we we travel faster and easier and we don't think much of 20 miles or 30 miles so that's that's that's not that big of a deal today as compared to 30 40 years ago

we do an **even better job of shipping them** (young people) out after they graduate high school city of them or lucky if they returned for Christmas and Thanksgiving (4th gen farmer)

Sense of Loss

we got you know your parents and that generation this was their town they worked for good streets and for businesses to you know and common banks and they built churches we don't see that today

area really doesn't have much available to buy – has kept community and school from growing in size, missing out on opportunities (participant from Haskell)

we it's kind of **sad looking back but you know we've lost a lot of restaurants and motel service stations and clothing stores** (business owner)

now we pretty much have every family working in some sector directly AG or their wife or husband does (business owner)

the **economy changed**

I think yeah ag is way more prosperous than it was back then maybe maybe that contributes **I had a friend tell me prosperity is killing us** yeah I looked at him and asked like how could that be he said no he said **everybody that can is leaving town**

Dollar spent sending soybeans to Wichita just so they can come back here and be fed to our cattle (Haskell Participant)

We can't grow ag manufacturing we have no labor pool (Haskell)

we basically **have two Saturdays every week and those families that are wealthier now have better vehicles leave town (in talking about the school going to a 4 day week)**

if they have young kids they're participating in year round private sports right traveling you know maybe and those kind of things so the town you know and that was the time people spent in 4H and Boy Scouts and church and all

you know to **show up and be leaders** you have to do that you have to be that leader all the time and **you can't do that and be gone every other weekend or you know right it is**

disruptive (business owner, lamenting on the prosperity of ag has allowed families to be mobile and not be as involved with the community)

Sense of Frustration

we all we're all spoiled and we like it that way right and
you know I want to live on the family farm and I want to raise my boys here and I'm fortunate enough to have married a wonderful woman that is allowing me to live that dream with her raising her boys out here
on the other hand I have friends who got married up you know in college after college and wanted to live on the family farm
but the wife was not raised on a farm and says I'm not living in the sticks or the boonies
I wanna live in town whether it's Garden City or in Copeland
ya'll I wanna live on a paved St I wanna live where I have neighbors that the kids can play with while they're Grilling up or I want more better closer access to entertainment (all from 4th gen farmer)

I don't feel like there's a broad understanding of what agriculture looks like. Here. Right. And how vast it truly is (eco devo)
There didn't seem to be any understanding that it's not just change what you're growing

there are some folks that **do you recognize the value of rural America** (4th gen farmer)

aquifer irrigation production in terms of gallons permitted pumped or acre feet pumped per season goes down in my opinion every year at least they ability does for sure but yet our our yields continue to go up though that's got a lot to do with genetics from the seed companies

which is great but we also are learning more with the crops (4th gen farmer)

Research Sub Question 2: What are the community members perceptions of the government's role in CD as a result of the SGI directed facilitation?

Sense of Urgency

you can't wait till you're on the verge of closing doors before you decide to work together (4th gen farmer) *Almost angry when stated this*

Sense of Frustration

I think that money is sort of thrown at things and then **politics takes hold** and sometimes things that are intended to help rural Kansas end up not helping us every county in Kansas but too get that to use that same fund no it's **it's just been politically manipulated to be meaningless** (loan forgiveness, ROZ) instead of I wanna grow in this economy so I'm going to take part of your slice of the pie yeah we we gotta make the the pie bigger so that everybody slice gets bigger without taking from somebody else and that that's hard for some people to understand because all they **take for me to succeed is I have to make you fail but I'll pick up your pieces** (4th gen farmer) EMPHASIS added I don't know any programs from the state or federal level that I really remember benefited **programs miss the boat or something but we either overlook the opportunity for ourselves because we just oh look what if we pursue this opportunity it has to create 5 new jobs right** now that's hard to wrap my head around because I don't know how how to create an opportunity that creates two jobs how am I going to do it to create spite because those five jobs they need to make 60 thousand a year (4th gen farmer)

I just think that they were what are we now are we less than 2% of the population yeah so production agriculture yes **so it's hard**

it it takes dedicated **person or people to even pursue an opportunity yeah that's that's their job is to go pursue it develop** (4th gen farmer)

I thought we should be grateful we get the attention we give
but that's one thing I think they just need when they make rules they **need to realize that not everybody lives in the city urban areas**
but trying to attract do to come in it's it's hard to it's not hard to have the idea of building if they will come in the Field of Dreams but if you don't have it **how do you even draw the attention** thereof, but it makes
harder to find funds to build and create something for someone to come to right (4th gen farmer)
you know what they say if you want something done give your task to a busy person is then get it done
somehow everybody is getting busy busy are you know used to I only served on the church board (4th gen farmer)
well I serve on the church board and the rec center board and and you know Rotary wants me to join their their group but Oh yeah by the way Farm Bureau needs another volunteer on the board and other Co-op needs somebody to fill that vacancy 'cause that member board member retired or died or moved away is it

there's we still have all the activities that we that we've always had and fewer people to spread the responsibilities across so (4th gen farmer)

I think there gets to be some yes physical and emotional tiredness that makes you less of a go getter (4th gen farmer)

Bowling Alone
our current County employees they are still busy doing their first job that they were hired to do you know whether it's a deputy or a Street sweeper or a County Road maintainer or the county treasurer you know (4th gen farmer)

part of my point is though they truly don't have six hours a day five days a week available maybe today they could have squeezed six hours into a project but they're not going to be able to do that on a consistent basis right if we drop if we drop what we're doing we're not doing the services we were meant to do in the first place right
we don't do good job promoting ourselves because we view it as bragging or being prideful instead (4th gen farmer)

NOTE: Local systems that are to represent rural can at times mimic the frustration of the examples of state programs missing the mark) here's a good example this has been a long time ago I know what they could take about that so I grew up in my granddad was a farmer my parents were office people and teachers and I farmed with my brother and I farmed with my granddad that's how we kind of got started and my granddad believed in the coop and Farm Bureau well in my lifetime here as a pharmacist and a business owner

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I think we're so **far out there** that we **we will get overlooked far as government funding** (farmer/trucking)

I don't want to have to farm 10 to 20 thousand 1,000 acres how awesome is **that because really what we want to do is just provide for our families yeah**

we'd love to pass something on (Has to be something other than production ag to do it though)

that is exactly the problem, our two towns have continued to be segregated, we need to come together and share resources, like school administrations or city government services (Haskell Participant)

I was I felt like we should just take our funds and go if we needed a mechanic or welder or something like just go buy the equipment.

you know just go say what does it take what kind of building do you need will give you a zero percent loan

Sense of Loss

nothing like when I was a kid **when I was a kid we were building churches one after another and we paved the tribune to city tribune pave their roads they went to pavement and build a new courthouse built a new hospital (business owner)**

because without agriculture and the fossil fuel industry whether it's natural gas or coal or oil the dollar has to be created it has to be generated from he can't say nothing but you have to go create it you create it with with crops and livestock and in fossil fuels (or something new) (4th gen farmer)
what do you do be able to make real money out here in agriculture so that we don't have to

farm 10,000 acres that they that to make a living so so I could get 100 grand right I know there were three 4 families I guess I think it was move their family back to Haskell county prop well like with word came from California two were on the East Coast software November where the fourth came from because they were gonna be in quote Los Angeles when all of this Covid crap reared its head and they were going to get back to rural America where they were safe from the drugs of people that were going to be breathing this ever so deadly terrifying COVID virus on and you know that was I I **thought it was great that came back home yeah but (what did we have here to keep them here)** (4th gen farmer) you know how it's been watching two years now **three of the four are gone we went back**

Sense of Optimism

gentleman that ran the farm they both had passed away and you know **everybody got together** and went out and harvested the crop for his wife and daughter

people are **pretty optimistic about you know the basic things that we need** and they're willing to tax themselves to do it (business owner)

NOTE: following up with question on do local people look to the state/fed or local first for assistance.

looked at **the community first** I don't know that I could give you an example

but yeah I I think they're I think they're **more locally focused more let's figure it out ourselves**

know I think that **may just be an agriculture type** thing that mentality of you know we could do it on our own we're probably you're always out there on your own and yeah you kinda gotta figure it out for yourself (farmer/trucking)

Research Question: What is the impact of the SGI directed facilitation in aligning opposing ideas, traditions, visions, and values among community members to achieve sustainable community driven CD?

Sense of Optimism

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I talked to one individual that you know this is fact that already this is the kick start to get us going and you'll now is great to hear (4th gen farmer)

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it was **wide open yeah I didn't I I mean I I like how it went completely just the the brainstorming ideas of what what our community has to offer and how can we promote those and**

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but there was **younger people there too which was good** and
I think the conversation we had we **were hopeful that they** used some younger people would get involved

Sense of Frustration

I would say the conversation invited those attending to re-engage in the conversation **around economic and community development and what that looks like for us**

I really liked it and appreciated it and you know the the timing was was right (4th gen farmer) probably needed another meeting add in December and another one in January another one in February and one more in March, have to keep it in front of people to change the conversations (4th gen farmer)
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they were you know a 30 year old needs to be doing this not a 62 year old and you know I think about my own parents that are 75 and 73 you know they're retired now but the living in Colorado (4th gen farmer)