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The Influences on and Impact of Economic and Community Development Policies in a Micropolitan City

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Abstract

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Anna M. Kautzman

JD, University of Denver, 1985

MEd, Jones International University, 2010

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

As the U.S. economy changed from industry to information, small cities suffered a decline in quality of life and an increase in poverty. The existing research has focused on demographics and descriptive attributes of micropolitan cities, but not on efforts to overcome these challenges. The purpose of this study was to explore and understand how a micropolitan city used economic and community development policies to rebuild its economy and improve quality of life. Using Holland's conceptualization of complex adaptive systems, research questions focused on triggers for policy creation and its use to create social change by improving the local economy and reducing the effects of poverty. Data for this qualitative case study were collected through open-ended questions in semi structured interviews with policymakers (elected officials), policy implementers (city employees), and policy influencers (community leaders). Interviews were supplemented with document review and photographic observation. The data were analyzed using descriptive coding, categorical aggregation, and direct interpretation to identify overarching themes of acceptance, resilience, building on strengths, and the interwoven nature of policy. The findings indicate that economic and community development policies can lead to positive changes such as the rehabilitation of blighted areas, growth of new and existing businesses, and influence state policy, illustrating the attributes of complex adaptive systems. The positive social change implications of this study include recommendations to city administrators to develop economic and community development policy based on their unique circumstances, to build partnerships, promote community change, and build a positive mindset to benefit their city and citizens.

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Dedication

To my family, who has encouraged me for years; especially my sister Donna.

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With much thankfulness, God has granted me the opportunity and ability to achieve much and to complete this research. Many heart-felt thanks go to Dr. Linda Day for her patience, wisdom, and encouragement. She truly is amazing. I am also grateful to Dr. Christopher Jones for his good humor and support. His perspective has been valuable throughout the process. I am also thankful for Dr. Aman Khan's great wisdom, invaluable teaching and his willingness to stay with me through unexpected turns.

I don't have adequate words to thank all the participants connected to Danville who made the study possible and who spent so much time bringing life to the topic of policy making.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Economic and Community Development

In this study I focused on the interactions and influences on economic and community development policies in a small, nonmetropolitan U.S. city. The aim was to develop a better understanding of how these types of policies interact and are managed to support common, and sometimes differing, goals. Local policymaking in these areas is generally intended to combat the effects of poverty, create a sustainable local economy, and improve the community's quality of life.

Economic and community development are the policies and actions taken by the local government, often partnering with nonprofit organizations, to improve the overall quality of life within the community while reducing the undesirable effects of sustained unemployment and poverty, such as blight, crime, and health challenges. Such policies frequently take the form of efforts to reduce poverty, increase employment, increase educational attainment, and improve access to healthcare and social services. I did not intend for this study to be a model to remove poverty or to create economic growth, but to understand the interaction of factors and policies in the effort to transform the local economic base and to improve the community's quality of life.

Economic growth is a term used by economists to refer to an increase in an economy's gross domestic product (GDP) or an increase in the output per person for an area (Noell, Smith, & Webb, 2013, p.3). But *economic development* is a broader term that encompasses a broad based, sustainable improvement (of which economic growth is one element) in the community's standard of living as measured by individual quality of life

(Greenwood & Holt, 2010, p.3). Community development is a systematic and sustained action within a community to use policies and strategies to identify and address local needs, assets, and investments (infrastructure, public facilties, community centers, housing, public services), and other concerns that affect the quality of life of individuals within the community (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014). The combination of successful economic and community development policies should lead to an improved quality of life. In this study I examined the influences and policies used to transform the local economic base and to address the overall well-being of a community combating poverty and its effects.

Studying policies, influences, interactions, and effects appears more manageable on a smaller scale. Yet, the subject community should be large and diverse enough to enable a variety of policies and programs in order to examine those interactions and relationships. A micropolitan city (an urban center, integrated with the surrounding area, having a population between 10,000 and 50,000 people) that is located in a largely rural area and nonadjacent to a metropolitan community is ideal for this study. The city studied has experienced the positive and negative aspects of both urban and rural life. The community selected has attributes of a metropolitan area, including economic and social diversity, access to education with a community college and a private university offering both undergraduate and graduate level programs, and cultural amenities, such as museums, shopping areas, and restaurants. It also has attributes of a rural area, including lack of significant transportation infrastructure, home-grown leadership rather than professional politicians, limited access to surrounding communities, and an

agricultural/industrial based economy (Federal Highway Administration, 2013). Similarly, it has experienced challenges of both rural and metropolitan areas: limited employment opportunities within a small community, population leaving for more attractive opportunities in metropolitan areas, housing blight, drug use, and the related increase in criminal activities.

A better understanding of policy and influence interactions, both successful and unsuccessful, may help practitioners and scholars in policymaking. The social change results could be far-reaching as communities gain greater understanding of policy interactions and as individuals benefit from improved quality of life.

In this chapter, I describe the research problem and state the research questions. I also present the purpose of the study, the theoretical framework used to guide the research, and a discussion of the nature of the study. Finally, the chapter includes a definition of terms.

Background of the Study

Much of human history was marked by dire poverty with only royalty and privileged classes escaping until economic growth spurred by the industrial revolution created prosperity and the rise of the middle class (Noell et al., 2013, p. 2). Today, poverty refers to the condition where a household's total income is less than the amount needed to pay for basic needs (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2014). In 2014, about 15% of the U.S. population is lived in poverty, about 8.5 million in rural areas (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2014). Since poverty rates were first tracked in the 1960s, U.S. rural areas have had greater rates of poverty than urban metropolitan areas, with the

difference averaging between 2 and 3% (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2014).

However, the difference has been more marked in the Southern and Appalachian regions

of the country, with southern metropolitan areas experiencing poverty at a rate of 15.2%

in 2012 while nonmetropolitan areas are at 22.1% (U.S. Department of Agriculture,

2014). According to the United States Census Bureau, poverty has been relatively

common within the United States during recent years, with nearly 32% of the population

experiencing poverty for 2 months or longer during the 3 years from 2009 to 2011, which

is after the Great Recession (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014).

Officially dated as lasting from December 2007 through June 2009, the Great

Recession has been identified as the most severe economic decline since the Great

Depression of the 1930s (Danziger, 2013). During the 18-month Great Recession, jobs

declined by 6% and family incomes by 8% (Danziger, 2013). However, the recession did

not just happen; it was preceded by declining housing values, declining stock prices, and

increasing foreclosure rates. Reports on the economy 6 years after the start of the Great

Recession indicated why economic and community development are so important to the

recovery of local communities. As of January 2014, the United States needed an

additional 7.9 million jobs to return to prerecession levels (Shierholz, 2014). A

significant portion of the apparent improvement in the unemployment rate from fall 2009

(10%) to January 2014 (7%) is arguably due to workers who drop out of the labor force

or potential workers who never enter it (Shierholz, 2014). If these employment

nonseekers are counted, the unemployment rate would have been 10.3% (Shierholz,

2014).

Policy Approaches

Economic and community development are the two approaches that local communities can use to try to overcome these daunting circumstances. The two efforts are intertwined, although they have different focuses. Economic development is often focused on creating or attracting new businesses to the area to increase the number of jobs (economic growth). Ideally these jobs improve the local employment rate and local families benefit. But, the growth also may result in traffic congestion, increased demand for public services such as fire protection, police, public utilities, and road maintenance, and pollution (Greenwood & Holt, 2010, p. 4). Community development seeks to: lower crime rates; improve the quality of neighborhoods; and, provide recreational, cultural, educational, and health care services, as well as access to natural resources to residents. These goals may be inconsistent with economic growth that can lead to overcrowding and increased crime (Greenwood & Holt, 2010, p. 13). As development attracts new residents to an area, social and economic inequalities can arise between those who are benefiting from the development and those who are not (Greenwood & Holt, 2010, p. 77). This phenomenon, called *negative trickle down*, creates an environment that is conducive to crime committed by those who do not benefit. "Rural economic growth and development and rural crime patterns are two sides to the same coin" (Deller & Deller, 2010, p. 267). So simply creating employment opportunities in an area does not necessarily lead to an improved quality of life for the community.

Prior research on micropolitan areas is limited since this specific category of community was only recently defined (Lang & Dhavale, 2004). These communities

existed but were not readily identifiable, and statistical data were not recorded in a

manner that could be correlated since some were included within larger metropolitan area

statistics and others were included within rural areas identified as nonmetropolitan (Lang

& Dhavale, 2004). Researchers have looked at rural economic development focusing

primarily on the measurement of success of various types of projects ― prisons (Hooks,

Mosher, Genter, Rotolo, & Lobao, 2010), tourism (Gartner, 2004) and development as a

retirement locale (Das, 2007). Other researchers have examined the use of specific

strategies, such as the development of a professional network of small business owners in

a rural area (Miller, Besser, & Vigna, 2011) or the use of a community market as an

economic development tool to foster local merchant networking and to increase local

commerce (Morales, 2009). Policy-based research has taken the approach of evaluating

specific initiatives and their effectiveness: workforce development (Harper-Anderson,

2008) and enterprise zones (Wainwright, 2012).

In this study, however, I looked at a different aspect of development: how internal

and external influences affect policy development and how the various economic and

community development policies interact. The time period I studied was that following

the Great Recession, June 2009 through June 2015, as a time period when communities

and the country were focused on economic growth and rebuilding. I conducted the

research in a setting where data are relatively severable from surrounding economies and

communities. The outcomes, thus, are largely attributable to policies made and actions

taken within the subject community. Yet, the community is not isolated from outside

influences altogether and it often competes for new businesses with larger cities within a several-hour drive.

City of Danville, Virginia, Micropolitan Area

The City of Danville is located in southern Virginia in the mid-Applachian area. Historically, the city has depended on two industries for its livelihood: tobacco and textile manufacturing. It is rich in history, having served as the last capital of the Confederacy durng the Civil War. The area offers a variety of attractions for residents, including a moderate climate, opportuntities for water sports on the river, hiking and climbing in the nearby mountains, and weekends at the beach just a few hours' drive away. During much of the 20th century, the city thrived. It grew economically and boasted its own *millionaires' row* of mansions along a main street. Spanning both sides of the Dan River, Danville was growing yet maintained a community feel in many of its neighborhoods. Its population reached a high of 53,000 residents within the city in 1990 before its main industries began to decline (BiggestUSCities.com, 2014). By 2010, the population had declined by almost 20% to about 43,000 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a). The population has remained at about that level since. Danville is the core city in the micropolitan area that includes the surrounding county, with an additional population of nearly 20,000 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014b).

The area has a long history of industrial and agricultural employment, with a downtown area that included textile mills and tobacco warehouses. With the decline of those industries, the city experienced an economic decline accompanied by a declining population, decreased tax base, abandoned buildings, and an increase in drug use and

crime. Located along a river, near the state border, the city has large industrial properties

sitting empty. Some buildings have been damaged and subsequently demolished while a

few others have been renovated to create office space for new and expanding business

ventures (Star News, 2013) or lofts and apartments (Tupponce, 2012). Part of the

community development efforts have created a riverwalk, an outdoor amplitheather, and

a science center (City of Danville, Office of Economic Development, 2014). These

efforts have improved conditions in the city but much more remains to be done. This

micropolitan area offers an opportunity to study policy interactions, influences, and to

gain insight as to how they connect and conflict.

Problem Statement

The research problem addressed in this study was to explore how economic and

community development policies are affected by internal and external factors and how

they interact with each other to help transform a community's economic base and

improve the quality of life within that community. Poverty is a problem nationwide, and

it is worse in the Applachian Region and rural areas than in metropolitan urban areas

(Economic Research Service, 2014; Jacobsen, Lee, & Pollard, 2013). Poverty increases

when the national and local economy are in distress or decline (Economic Research

Service, 2014). But decreasing poverty and improving life for residents of those areas is

largely determined by local government (Greenwood & Holt, 2010). Following the Great

Recession, employment lagged and recovery was slow, leaving workers and potential

workers without jobs (Economic Research Service, 2014; Shierholz, 2014). During the

economic turmoil of the early 21st century, neighborhoods suffered physical deterioration

evidenced by abandoned buildings, trash accumulation, and streets and sidewalks in disrepair (Allen, 2013), problems which now need to be addressed as part of community development actions.

The challenges are well known. There is an extensive body of research on economic development and a somewhat lesser, but still significant set of research, on community development. Yet, no studies have focused on the interaction of these policies as a function of the natural influences within and surrounding a community. Since the Great Recession has left many communities to address these issues, the understanding gained from this research is needed. This study contributes original research on economic and community development policymaking and influences; it provides community leaders with research-based insights and understanding that can inform their policy and implementation decisions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore and understand the interaction of local economic and community development policies, as affected by internal and external influences. In particular, the study examined their interaction in the context of efforts to improve the local economic base and engage in community development with a focus on quality of life for residents of a rural micropolitan city in the United States. The aim was to explore how these compatible, yet competing, goals are managed by a set of policymakers over time and to see the progress of a micropolitan area overcome challenges, learn lessons, and create opportunities to improve the local economy and the lives of its residents.

Economic and community development together focus on building economic growth through the creation of jobs and to increase the wealth of an area and its residents while also improving the quality of life within that community through the creation and preservation of cultural, recreational, environmental, educational, health, and neighborhood resources. This case study provides insight into the interactions, challenges, and successes.

Research Questions

The focus of this study was to explore and understand the interaction among community and economic development policies and the factors that influence them. The research questions for the study are:

1. How can a small, nonmetropolitan city use policy to address its local economic and quality of life challenges?

2. How do the economic development and community development policies and strategies interact to create positive social changes?

3. What factors raise the awareness of public officials of the need or desire to engage in economic development and community development?

4. To what extent has the interaction of policies and their implementation been effective in reducing poverty and its effects, and why or why not?

Theoretical Framework

Complexity theory has been used in biological science to address the interaction between an evolving organism and its changing environment. It posits that life develops in a nonlinear fashion and is influenced by internal and external factors so that while

periods of stability can be achieved, they cannot be maintained unless the organism continues to change with its environment (Ozer & Seker, 2013). When applied to public administration, complexity theory often takes the form of complex adaptive systems theory (known as CAS). CAS and complexity theory enable researchers to examine the interactions of policy, implementation, process, and changing environments. Economic and community development and the role of complexity theory and CAS in public policy development are discussed further in Chapter 2.

Ozer and Seker (2013) said that public policy is a complex system with nonlinear elements that are in a coevolutionary relationship with the other elements. This makes public policymaking a good fit for a complexity theory approach to study. Byrne (2003) noted that a key attribute of complex systems is that they stay what they are even as they experience change. An industrial city can change to a postindustrial city, but the system is still that of a city with policy, structure, and social realms. Complexity theory enables exploration of alternatives for future change that are not likely with other approaches to urban planning (Byrne, 2003). Teisman and Klijn (2008) favored a complexity theory approach to public policymaking because it enables a focus on the dynamics of a story through time, place, seeing it evolve in unexpected ways, and recognizing that phenomena develop as a result of internal features (employment, education) as well as external forces (economic conditions, federal policy).

Nature of the Study

For this study, a qualitative research method and single case study approach was used to explore the interaction of policies and influences on economic and community

development in one small city's efforts to transform its economic base and reduce the

effects of poverty. According to Flyvbjerg (2011), case studies provide a close look at

real-life situations and the details that enable understanding human behavior at a depth

not found at the rule and theory levels of research. The benefits offered by a case study

approach also include gaining an understanding of context and process while linking

causes and outcomes (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Data collection in a qualitative case study in

public administration and policy research most often uses a combination of methods

including interview, observation, and analysis of internal and external documents

(McNabb, 2008, p. 294). Interviewing allows a researcher access to things that cannot be

observed, such as thoughts or feelings; it enables a researcher to enter and view events

and information from another's perspective (Patton, 2012, pp. 340-341). Observation

enables the exploration of the subject as an outsider while recording events, behaviors,

and impressions that can be used with interviews to paint a fuller picture of the case and

to provide context for the interviews (McNabb, 2008, pp. 294-295). Document collection

is a tool that provides information about things that cannot be observed and may reveal

things that participants have forgotten or prefer not to reveal (Patton, 2012, pp. 293-295).

Use of multiple methods of data collection enables triangulation of the data for a more

accurate picture of events (McNabb, 2008).

Definition of Terms

Community development: the process and the product of people working

collectively to address common concerns and achieve common goals (Greg, 1998); often

used in the context of reducing poverty, providing affordable housing and services to

moderate and low-income families in distressed or underserved areas (The Community

Reinvestment Act, 2005)

Counterurbanization: the migration of population out of urban areas down the

urban hierarchy to suburban, micropolitan, or rural areas (Vias, 2011).

Economic development: a broad based, sustainable improvement (of which

economic growth is one element) in the community standard of living as measured by

individual quality of life (Greenwood & Holt, 2010, p. 3).

Governance: horizontal, collaborative, and participative decision-making

practices by groups of people and organizations linked by place and interest (Lu, 2013).

Micropolitan: an area with at least one urban center with a population of at least

10,000 but less than 50,000 plus surrounding area with social and economic integration

evidenced by commuting ties (Office of Management and Budget [OMB], 2003).

Quality of life: the aspects of a community used to assess the relative standards of

living such as health, education, culture, recreation, cleanliness, and safety (Greenwood

& Holt, 2010, p. 33).

Regionalism: a grassroots effort across political or jurisdictional boundaries

within an area to overcome challenges posed by small populations and limited fiscal

resources to enable economic development, and often to address a particular issue such as

water access and quality, transportation, or recreation (Lu, 2011).

Urbanization: the migration of population up the urban hierarchy from rural areas

into micropolitan or metropolitan areas (Vias, 2011).

Assumptions

There were several assumptions underlying the study. The first assumption is that the city has characteristics and approaches in its leader's policy-making efforts related to economic and community development. The second assumption is that city leaders desire to improve the city's economic circumstances and improve the quality of life for its citizens. The third assumption is that participants were honest and have relevant knowledge regarding the research topic. The fourth assumption is that the documents collected are accurate and relevant to the inquiry. These assumptions are necessary because proving them true would require additional studies, and the assumptions are important to the results of research.

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of the study was on economic and community development policy in an isolated micropolitan city located in a largely rural area near the Appalachian region. Use of a qualitative exploration within a single case study research design means the sample size will be small and based in one geographic region. The analysis explores the policy interactions in a specific setting that has some unique features, but it may also provide insights that apply to isolated micropolitan cities that are located in highly rural areas. It is expected that the findings of the study will not translate well to larger urban areas with more developed infrastructures or to purely rural areas without a central urban core because the differences in internal conditions and desired outcomes will likely differ significantly.

By using complexity theory as the framework for the study, it is expected that much of the analysis will be applicable to other local governments since it explores the interaction of both internal and external influences. While the factors for any given locale may vary, the theoretical framework should translate well.

Limitations

I am familiar with the City of Danville. This close knowledge of the subject city could produce bias based on preconceived notions about the city's challenges and opportunities. By being aware of my own bias and being careful to ask open ended questions and listening carefully, I was able to separate the views of the city policymakers from my own. The findings and results of a single case study cannot be generalized broadly, but they may be used to provide context specific understanding of how the factors interact to create policy and how economic and community development policies interact within a small city.

Significance

This case study has the potential to illustrate how economic and community development policies interact within small cities. Policymakers are expected to benefit from the research, as will economic development professionals and community improvement agencies. The social change goal for the research is to provide a deep understanding of how these types of policies interact with each other and with significant internal and external factors so that policymakers and other community leaders can make good policy decisions.

Summary

Chapter 1 has presented the background and framework for a qualitative case study on community and economic development policy creation and interaction in a micropolitan city. The purpose is to gain understanding of how these policies interact and are affected by internal and external factors using complexity theory as a framework for the study. Current literature on micropolitan America has been limited and largely focused on demographics or measurement of specific attributes. While there is extensive literature available on economic development strategies and community development activities, there is almost no research on the interaction of these policies and how they interact in a specific city. Chapter 2 expands the information on the literature review to further inform the problem, and efforts to understand approaches to economic and community development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Dr. Christina Gabriel, president of a partnership among five universities, led a call to discuss regional economic development in which she emphasized the need to focus on regional strengths (U. S. Department of Commerce, 2012). In her message of hope, Gabriel promoted the idea that even regions that have lost industries, people, and other resources can turn around their economies. She made specific mention of the importance of culture, perspectives, and innovation from the bottom up as being keys to successful partnerships and economic development. She highlighted the role that universities can play in supporting these positive relationships. In this study I sought to expand on Gabriel's idea that communities have unqiue attributes that represent resources, and that changing the path of a community or region involves many perspectives. Understanding policy interactions within and outside the community can lead to increased effectiveness in economic and community development. Its purpose is to explore and understand how the interaction of local policies, along with internal and external influences, can change a micropolitan community and its economic base.

Community and economic development are intricately tied together; as the local economy improves, the resulting revenues are reinvested into the community in the form of law enforcement, parks and recreation, improved housing, better transportation, and more sustainable structures and employment. Likewise, if the local economy declines, unemployment rises, property values decline, lower revenues are generated, and infrastructure and the quality of services suffer (Greenwood & Holt, 2010). Economic

growth is one aspect of economic development that can either contribute in a positive way to the local economy or it can subtract from economic and community development with increased sprawl, pollution, rising utility and service costs, and increased crime, creating a drain on public services (Greenwood & Holt, 2010).

The local economy is affected by factors within the community, within the region, the state, nation, and by global influences. To be effective, policymakers need to understand these factors and how they influence the local economy, as well as how policies interact to create succesful economic and community development programs. The research problem this study addresses is the gap in the existing literature regarding how economic and community development policies interact in small, rural cities to combat poverty and improve the quality of life. I investigated the problem of how a small community balances the sometimes inconsistent goals of both economic and community development in its efforts to reduce the effects of local poverty. Economic development seeks to create new jobs and raise revenues while community development addresses the quality of life by improving social and recreational opportunties, improving the environment, and increasing safety, health, and education levels. Often economic growth can impact the community aspect of a city by increasing traffic, crime, and greater demand for services than the exististing infrasture can supply. The purpose of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of how the internal and external factors and policies interact to create positve growth and improve life in a micropolitan city located in a largely rural area.

In order to understand the dynamic interaction of policies, the factors influencing those policies, and how a community with limited resources and infrastructure can manage those interactions to create positive changes, this literature review explores local economic and community development policies and strategies, regional development alliances, and complexity theory. This literature review includes: (a) a discussion of the strategy used to conduct the literature search, (b) the purpose of the literature review, (c) the review itself, and (d) a summary of conclusions. The literature review lays a scholarly foundation for this case study to demonstrate and understand the interplay of influences and policy in micropolitan economic and community development efforts to combat poverty.

The Purpose of this Literature Review

A literature review provides the foundation for the research: what is known and not known — a summary of previous research (Eisenhart & Jurow, 2011). It also helps focus the study on a gap in the literature and provides insights into the directions and trends in the field being studied (Patton, 2012, p. 226). This literature review sets the context for this study and helps show why the study is important and timely (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 62).

With qualitative research, there is a concern that conducting a literature review prior to doing the research can create a bias and influence the researcher's thinking so that the review is better done either simultaneously with or following the field work (Patton, 2012). However, in this study, the literature review was used to inform and focus the study by providing a foundation for the study of economic and community

development, an overview of research on micropolitan areas, and key policies and approaches for combating poverty in nonmetropolitan areas.

Search Strategy

The information and scholarly works within this literature review were collected through multiple comprehensive searches of several databases, through the Walden University Library and the Averett University Blount Library. Databases searched were: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Political Science Complete: A Sage Full Text Collection, Lexis-Nexis Academic, ProQuest Central, ERIC, World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, and the National Bureau of Economic Research. Keywords used in the database searches included: economic development, community development, micropolitan and rural development, economic policy, poverty, complexity theory, and economic growth – both individually and in conjunction with other keywords. These searches led to several subject matter experts who were then used by name in author searches to locate additional research by Greenwood and Holt (2010), Lu (2011), Vias (2011), Lang and Dhavale (2004) and others. These same keyword terms and authors were used in searches for books held in the Averett University library, available through interlibrary loan, and on Amazon.com. Web searches also were conducted on government agency websites.

The results of these searches were 30 articles included in this review as well as many articles that I read and did not include as not directly relevant to this study or which represented material adequately covered by other, more recent articles. The journal articles, books, websites, reports, and other published documents I consulted and

included for a total of 40 resources that I used to prepare this literature review. While many of the sources used are from recent literature (within five years), some are dated prior to that time period and are included because they are relevant and inform the topics in ways that more recent literature does not.

Complexity Theory

Complexity theory originated in science to address the interaction of an evolving organism with its environment, to explain the development of changes in an organism in response to influences in the external environment and to needs within itself (Haynes, 2008). The theory acknowledges periods of stability, but holds that an organism must continue to change with its environment in order to thrive or even just to survive. When looking at community and economic development, the use of complexity theory enables the examination of a community system as a whole through interactions of policy, implementation, and changes within and external to the community (Haynes, 2008). As described by Haynes (2008), complexity theory recognizes that individuals are subservient to society but also have the power to contribute or influence the future and structure of that society (p. 402). Applying complexity theory to a policy system is a holistic approach that has a focus "as much on evaluating an evolving policy process as it is on the ends of current outputs and outcomes of policy" (Haynes, 2008, p. 403).

Because economic and community development are so intertwined with each other and are affected by and influence other policy-driven factors such as housing, education, and healthcare, the complexity methodology provides an adequate lens for viewing a case study. Haynes (2008) conducted a policy case study to determine (a) if it

was possible to identify stability and instability phases in a policy process, (b) if that identification was aided by the use of time series data, and (c) how this method of studying policy process compares with other theoretical models. Through his examination of social care policy for older people in England over time, Haynes was able to validate that complexity theory did enable a more thorough understanding of policy process over time than other methodologies. He highlighted three key concepts from complexity theory as applied to policy and change over time:

- Complex systems are not easily regulated by simple devices. They have complex evolving mechanisms related to interaction and feedback within the system, which may "evolve around dominant logics and values that are constantly being reinterpreted and redefined" (Haynes, 2008, p. 404).

- Complex policy systems view historical and present data through emerging events as "part of the feedback and interactive process within the system" (Haynes, 2008, p. 405).

- Complex systems go through periods of instability and stability. Instability can increase the magnitude of a seemingly small change, and change can happen within a system without creating instability (Haynes, 2008).

Complex Adaptive Systems

Holland (2014) identified two forms of complexity theory: that of physical systems and that of more social or interactive systems (complex adaptive systems or CAS). In the social science realm, CAS is based on the actions of an agent and a network of agents. According to Holland, each agent has three core behaviors: performance

capabilities, evaluation of capabilities, and generating new capabilities. Agents are sensitive and respond to their internal conditions (changes in population for a community), external conditions (economic conditions, for example) and other agents (such as neighboring communities). CAS also recognizes that not all agents are the same; some are specialists while others are generalists, although there is a trend toward specialization as seen in the production line approach to manufacturing (Holland, 2014, p. 44).

While applying CAS to a social organization, attention should be given to describing the framework, hierarchies, and populations. The role of time as it relates to functions and dynamics is also a key consideration according to Holland. In short, Holland suggested that complexity theory as applied to a social organization means considering all the levels of agents, their interactions (network) and their diversity. The system can be described as it works over time and the changes (emergence) that happen in repsonse to change within itself and its environment. Given the nature of economic and community development within a city, CAS, as described by Holland, seems an appropriate mechanism for understanding policymaking and implementation.

Emergence is the phenomenon, in complexity theory, where aspects of a system or entity combine to produce a new attribute that is more than the sum of the aspects (Holland, 2014). It is the creation of new properties, such as new markets or rules. In his use of complexity theory to study urban regeneration in Ireland, Rhodes (2008) applied a complex adaptive systems framework to explore the concepts of emergence and fitness landscape. The fitness landscape as defined by Rhodes was comprised of the decisions

that can be made, rules governing those decisions, and the outcomes associated with the decisions (p. 363). After examining six cases, Rhodes concluded that not only was the complexity framework a viable lens for viewing public policy, but that it also accommodated the different events and decisions made within each separate case as well as enabling identification of emergent behavior patterns with predictable effects (Rhodes, 2008). By viewing the interactions of decision makers and the resultant outcomes through a complexity lens, patterns emerged even though each case had different circumstances and players. Such a tool enables policymakers to understand the overall interactions and relationship to outcomes.

Understanding Micropolitan America

For 50 years, policymakers and scholars relied on the definitions developed by the federal OMB for a central city and metropolitan statistical area system (MSA) of classifying U.S. counties as metropolitan or rural (Frey, Wilson, Berube, & Singer, 2004). The metropolitan concept was based on the idea of a central city with more than 50,000 people as the center of social and economic activity in the area (Frey et al., 2004). Over time, the decentralization of the population and employment created smaller cities that had significant influence but were not recognized under this statistical measuring scheme (Frey et al., 2004).

In 2003 a revised system that created a new type of classification was implemented: the core-based statistical area system (CBSA; OMB, 2003). A new category of micropolitan area was established to address smaller cities, many located in nonmetropolitan counties that had previously been included in a larger metropolitan area

or that fell into unclassified rural space (OMB, 2003). When first defined, 560

micropolitan areas were identified within the US, excluding Puerto Rico; by 2013 when

the list of statistical areas was updated, there were 536 micropolitan areas within the

United States (OMB, 2013). Micropolitan areas are an important opportunity for

research; they represent 10% of the nation's population, about 25% of American

counties, and nearly 20% of U.S. land territory (Vias, 2011). Identified micropolitan

areas are spread throughout the country and generally display population growth rates

that are lower than metropolitan areas but still greater than rural areas (Vias, 2011).

There is a great range of variation among the communities that have been

identified as micropolitan in terms of geography, amenities, and other characteristics.

Vias identified three types of micropolitan areas that differ in "economic, demographic

and social structure, geographic site and situation, migration processes, and prospects for

growth and change over time" (p. 119):

1. A micropolitan area that is located in a relatively isolated location that
   offers desirable scenic and recreational amenities such as sking, hiking,
   fishing, and camping.

2. A micropolitan area that is near or adjacent to a metropolitan area and may
   even be included within the metropolitan combined statistical area.

3. A micropolitan area that lacks the beneficial aspects of either amenities or
   metropolitan resources and that may be in a rural or isolated area (Vias,
   2011, p. 119).

Lang and Dhavale (2004) developed another approach to stratifying micropolitan areas, by using various attributes, including population and proximity to a metropolitan area, to identify several categories or types. The categories themselves show the diversity of micropolitan areas: Minimetros (highest populations) and Smallvilles (lowest populations); Boomtowns (population growth) and Dwindlevilles (population loss); Nearburgs (close to a metropolitan area) and Lonesometowns (the most remote from a metropolitan area); and Middleburgs (the most average areas). The study looked at the geographic occurrence of each category of micropolitan area and noted while Middleburgs are useful as being an average, they cannot be considered typical since the diversity of micropolitan areas is so great (Lang & Dhavale, 2004).

Existing Research about Micropolitan America

Because micropolitan areas, as a defined statistical area is a relatively new creation, there is only a relatively small body of research focused on it. Much of that research is related to population characteristics and comparison of micropolitan areas to metropolitan areas, with little focus on policy. When it comes to micropolitan cities, there is a significantly large gap in the research in many areas, including policymaking for economic and community development.

Vias (2011) examined population changes from 2000 to 2009 and found that micropolitan areas were positioned to benefit from two opposite migration trends: counter-urbanization and urbanization. In some areas of the country, micropolitan cities have benefited from the immigration of both legal and undocumented aliens. He recommended that more research be done to examine the demographic differences

between micropolitan and metropolitan areas. Following up on that idea, Oliver and

Thomas (2014) examined land cover changes in micropolitan cities, recognizing these

areas as "important transitionary regions that may provide insights into the economic,

demographic, and social forces driving urbanization" (p. 84). That study concluded that

land conversion for development in micropolitan areas is different from both

metropolitan and rural areas, but that as a micropolitan area grows, it becomes more

metropolitan-like in its development.

Another study examined racial and socioeconomic differences, as measured by

home ownership rates, in micropolitan and metropolitan cities. They found that there was

less segregation in southern micropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas and suggested

that it was a result of increased rates of homeownership rather than of any other social

factors (Wahl & Gunkel, 2007). This study is representative of research on micropolitan

America in that the primary research interest is the comparison of micropolitan areas to

either metropolitan or rural areas, rather than being studied as the sole, independent focus

of interest.

Economic Development in Micropolitan Areas

Because the focus of this present study is a micropolitan area that is surrounded

by rural territory, rather than one that is adjacent to a metropolitan area, the literature on

economic development in rural and, to a more limited extent, urban areas of the United

States is relevant. In the decade since their definition, little research has been performed

on micropolitan economic development. Local economic development has been defined

by the World Bank as the building of economic capacity "of a local area to improve its

economic future and the quality of life for all" (The World Bank Group, 2011). Local

economic development can involve one or multiple local governments, private business,

and community nonprofit organizations working together to improve the local economy

and to create sustainable, inclusive growth (The World Bank Group, 2011). Economic

development can include a wide range of activities or strategies:

- Maintaining an investment climate that is functional for local business

- Supporting small and medium sized enterprises

- Encouraging the formation of new enterprises

- Attracting external investment (nationally and internationally)

- Investing in physical (hard) infrastructure (transportation, utilities)

- Investing in soft infrastructure (education and workforce development, institutional support systems and regulatory issues)

- Supporting the growth of particular clusters of businesses

- Targeting specific areas for regeneration or growth

- Supporting informal and newly emerging businesses

- Targeting certain disadvantaged groups (The World Bank Group, 2011)

To engage in economic development activities, any community, regardless of

size, must consider sources of funding to support the proposed project, whether it is

building infrastructure, developing a business or tourism locale, or supporting the growth

of local entrepreneurial ventures. Further, fiscal sustainability of the project over time

must be considered in that tax revenues combined with use or impact fees must be

sufficient to sustain the improvement and development (Greenwood & Holt, 2010, pp.

117-124). One source of initial funding for economic development projects has been

federal grants. Jeremy Hall (2010) studied the correlation between rural areas and need to

the distribution of federal grants across the state of Kentucky, which includes poverty-

ridden rural areas as well as more affluent metropolitan areas. Hall's quantiative study,

using a cross-sectional time series analysis, indicated that funding was greater for rural

area projects measured on a per capita basis than for urban areas, but it had a negative

correlation with need (Hall, 2010). This finding may mean that areas with improving

economies receive more grant funding than areas with high poverty and little economic

growth, making economic development more difficult in the places that need it the most.

    With the recent prolonged national economic downturn known as the Great

Recession, many areas, metropolitan, micropolitan, and rural, have found themselves

suffering serious economic distress (job layoffs, business closings, declines in

entrepreneurship, declines in tax bases as a result of outmigration and poverty). While

communities struggle with these effects, they are also experiencing an increase in

demand for social and public services (Eberts, 2010). The consequence of these

problems is an underutilization of assets: abandoned buildings, deteriorating

infrastructure, mismatch with human skills and knowledge, declining community values

and leadership, and a lessening financial base to sustain or grow the local economy

(Eberts, 2010). Eberts (2010) identified four measures of success: (a) per capita income,

(b) employment, (c) gross metropolitan product (GMP), and (d) productivity. Eberts used

a factor analysis approach to identify measuring factors that would reflect these four

measures. Although the factors are assuming a metropolitan or urban location, most of them translate well to a micropolitan setting. These identified factors are:

- Skilled workforce and research and development (R&D) – contributing to an improved per capita income and productivity. Measured by the percentage of the population with bachelor-level or graduate education, percentage in professional occupations, R&D per employee, and population dependency on social services (negative impact). Improved education levels and increased R&D support regional competitiveness.

- Technology commercialization – contributing to an improved per capita income, GMP, and productivity. Measured by venture capital investment per employee, patents per employee, and the cost of living index. Product innovation increases investment and produces economic growth.

- Racial inclusion and income equality – contributing to all four measures. Measured by percentage of the Black population, isolation index for the Black population, income inequality, free lunch rate in schools greater than 70%, and violent crime rate. Economic growth is impeded when large segments of the local population are isolated or experience poverty.

- Business dynamics – contributing to employment and GMP. Measured as the number of single location businesses that opened to the number that closed. Entrepreneurism is associated with employment growth.

- Urban assimilation – contributing to employment, GMP, and productivity. Measured by the percentage of the Hispanic and Asian populations, share

of minority business employment, rate of immigrant population, and productivity of information sector. Diversification is associated with employment growth and productivity.

- Individual entrepreneurship – contributing to employment and GMP. Measured by the percentage of self-employed and businesses with fewer than 20 workers. Growth of small businesses is related to growth in employment and output.

- Locational amenities – contributing to per capita income. Measured by transportation, arts, recreation, and health care indexes. Locational amenities are related to growth in per capita income.

- Urban/metro structure – contributing to employment and GMP. Measured by the percentage of the population in the MSA and the property crime rate. The connection between a central city and its surrounding area impacts employment and the GMP.

- Legacy of place – negatively impacting employment, GMP, and productivity. Measured by business churning, climate, age of housing, dissimilarity index for black population, poverty ratio, number of government housing units per capita, and the amount of manufacturing employment. These factors slow or inhibit economic growth. (Eberts, 2010).

Eberts' factors are intended to enable governments to develop a framework for their economic development activities that is relevant to their unique circumstances, to

align resources based on a prioritization of factors, and to track progress. Eberts' factors

are considered as internal factors in this present study and will be considered for

relational interaction with policies intended to support community and economic

development.

Development Strategies

Historically, the two main strategies for development in rural areas have been

tourism and prisons. Tourism has been shown to be successful in towns such as Black

Mountain, NC, Branson, MO, and Etowah, TN (Lambe, 2008). This approach is popular

in rural areas with special cultural, historic, ethnic, or geographic features because it is

easier and less expensive than other strategies, such as industrial or commercial

complexes (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001, Gartner, 2004). In a study

to determine what factors were necessary for success, Wilson et al. (2001) examined

communities that had been successful and others that had been unsuccessful. Using two

types of focus groups (community leaders and businessmen), they identified 10 factors

related to success:

1. A complete tourism package.

2. Good community leadership.

3. Support and participation of local government.

4. Sufficient funds for tourism development.

5. Strategic planning.

6. Coordination and cooperation between businesspersons and local leadership.

7. Coordination and cooperation between rural tourism entrepreneurs.

8. Information and technical assistance for tourism development and promotion.

9. Good convention and visitors' bureaus.

10. Widespread community support for tourism. (Wilson et al., 2001, p. 134)

Included within these factors are elements of community development that are not purely economic in nature (do not directly contribute to production of goods or income): transportation infrastucture, clean and well-maintained community appearance, development of community and business organizations, and community support to develop a local tourism industry (Wilson et al., 2001). That the buy-in of the local community to the development project was an essential factor for success is consistent with the finding of research investigating successful regional governance (Lu, 2013).

Although rural tourism can be successful when marketed on a domestic level, some scholars have expressed that to be truly successful, there must be an international focus to the marketing (Gartner, 2004), which is also a trait associated with high growth firms (Mason & Brown, 2013). Gartner (2004) identified several reasons why rural tourism may be a successful strategy for economic development: (a) interest in tradition, heritage, and rural life, (b) multiple holiday opportunities enable short rural trips, (c) increased awareness of health and exercise associated with outdoor recreation, (d) increased interest in performance gear such as bikes and climbing equipment, (e) desire for solitude and peace, and (f) an aging, but active, population. Rural touism has the potential to tap into international tourism and to create growth to transition micropolitan or rural area into a metropolitan one. For example, Orlando was largely surrounded by undeveloped rural areas until Disney built its tourist destination there. Las Vegas was a

micropolitan city in the middle of the desert, but skillful marketing has led to visitors from around the world. Branson, Missouri, has grown from a truly rural small town to a micropolitan city (that is still growing), with its global attraction for those who enjoy music and performing arts (Gartner, 2004).

An alternate, but related, approach to rural tourism is that of becoming a retirement destination. For many years, Florida and Arizona represented popular retirement destinations based on their natural amenities (primarily climate), but within the past decade, retirees have been choosing other locations, causing states and communities to evaluate development of retirement communities and attractions (Das & Rainey, 2007). Das and Rainey (2007) noted that prior research established that affluent retirees moving into an area had beneficial outcomes for the community, including growth in healthcare, housing, entertainment, and banking sectors. Using an input-output model adjusted for several factors, such as trade area capture and pull factor, researchers ran simulations of the economic impact on two rural counties in Arkansas becoming retirement locales predicting significant increases in tax revenues and spending in retail and service sectors (Das & Rainey, 2007). Employment overall was projected to increase only slightly but was still in the positive direction (Das & Rainey, 2007). Thus, developing a micropolitan city that has some degree of natural amentities (weather or attractions) as a desirable retirement destination may be a viable economic and community development strategy if the community can sustain a balanced population of retirees and working-age community members (Das & Rainey, 2007).

Another popular approach to rural economic development in the 1980s and 1990s was the building of prisons, which were thought to be recession-proof sources of increased employment and thus improved economic and community circumstances (Hooks et al. 2010). In the updated study of the economic effects of prison building, Hooks et al. (2010) focused on the employment at prisons on a county level, particularly new prisons, between 1976 and 2004. Findings were contrary to the popular belief. In metropolitan areas, prisons appeared to have no impact on employment levels. But in rural areas, if there was a low level of college-degreed, or higher educated, people, a prison may have actually impeded or harmed employment, since these public sector jobs require education beyond high school and are filled with workers from outside the community (Hooks et al., 2010). In addition, it is noted that many positions are filled as seniority or promotion positions for officials employed elsewhere in the state system, again importing the labor from outside the host community (Hooks et al., 2010). Furthermore, prisons are not viewed generally as an attraction for new businesses and may deter new residents from moving into the area. When businesses do open in support of a prison, they often employ only low-wage workers and may have a further negative impact on the local economy by driving out locally owned businesses that cannot afford to compete with large chain stores or fast-food restaurants (Hooks et al., 2010). Before prisons are validated as economic development opportunities, more research is needed into the specific long-term effects on rural and micropolitan communities.

Encouraging and growing new businesses

Inherent in the nature of economic development is the growth in the number of jobs available, which can happen in two ways: increased success in fostering entrepreneurship and expansion of businesses within the community or attraction of outside businesses to locate within the community. Encouraging job growth is not solely the role of local policymakers, but is often the subject of state-level policymaking as well. Taylor (2012) conducted a review of governors' economic development proposals from all 50 states over a 12 year period to study the variation in the economic development policies they promoted. Approaching the study, Taylor tested three hypotheses: (a) expecting that there would be more economic development proposals made when economic conditions are poor, (b) states with high-cost business climates would have more locational policies than states with low-cost climates, and (c) states with scarce entrepreneurial resources would have more entrepreneurial development polcies. He found that his first hypothesis failed; rather, governors proposed more locational policies when wages were lagging and not in response to overall poor economic conditions. The second hypothesis held true that more locational policies were proposed when a state had high-cost climates; and, the third hypothesis was true only when low levels of high-tech employment were seen (Taylor, 2012). Taylor concluded that gubernatorial economic development policymaking was only partially an attept to solve economic problems but also partially an attempt to attract a larger share of business during times of economic expansion. If Taylor's findings are true, then local and regional governments must bear

greater responsbility for economic turnarounds through fostering entrepreneurship and not merely rely on the state-level government to attract and develop new businesses.

As far back as the 1980s, there was an awareness that some start-up firms develop at a significant rate of growth while others grow so slowly as to make little economic impact or will even fail. But financial support was available to most start-ups as it was not possible to know which ones would succeed and which ones would not (Freel, 1998). After conducting a study of six cases, Freel concluded that "while blanket financial support of start-ups is inappropriate the notion of 'picking winners' pre-start is untenable" (Freel, 1998, p. 19).

Following on Freel's work, Mason and Brown (2013) examined how public policy can be used to support the portion of small businesses that have greater growth potential (high-growth firms called HGFs) rather than pumping resources into start-up firms that will fail and generate little employment or economic improvement. Acknowledging that external conditions, such as macroeconomic circumstances, regulation of products, taxes, and immigration affect HGFs, they focused on what mico-level policies could support HGFs on a local or regional basis (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 213). Their survey of current policy shows support for research and development, often through research universities, and accesses to funding (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 214). They contend that the assumption that technology and HGFs correlate is erroneous and that HGFs exist in all sectors.

In fact, new technology innovations are the most challenging to finance because of the lack of a proven market, and therefore less likely to experience high growth

(Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 214). In essence, it is more profitable to improve current products than to create entirely new ones. Second, consistent with this idea is that HGFs are not necessarily new businesses but may be older firms engaging in innovation, often pre-incubating new organizations until they are ready to spin off into a separate business (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 216). Their third finding is that manufacturing is often considered more valuable than a service industry for economic development, even though knowledge, technology, and customer service have been promoted as key factors for business growth (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 217). A key finding of Mason and Brown's study was that support of HGFs on a local or regional level needs to address identification of HGFs from other entrepreneurial undertakings and improve financing opportunities. The study also suggested coordinating the timing of support with critical junctures in a firm's growth. Perhaps use of an economic development account manager to work with a firm over time in a relationship, rather than isolated grants or interventions would achieve better outcomes (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 218). To aid communities in identifying and developing HGFs, the study identifies several charateristics of HGFs and attempt to link them to specific policy initiatives. The first characteristic is a "strong market orientation and customer engagement" that can be developed through funding joint product development with customers (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 218). The second is an "emphasis on sales and marketing" to be supported with development of marketing and sales skills and promotional programs for specific companies and the local economy (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 218). The third characteristic is a focus on internationalization supported through training programs and connecting young firms with international

networks and advisors outside of the regional community (Mason & Brown, 2013, p.

218). The fourth characteristic of HGFs is strong leadership to be supported through use

of experienced entrepreneurs to provide peer review and training, and the development of

a strong board of directors to provide strategic guidance (Mason & Brown, 2013, p. 219).

A final conclusion of the study was that although serial entrepreneurs are not necessarily

correlated with HGFs, they are more likely to succeed if they have a track record of prior

entrepreneurial success and therefore are worthy of policymaker support (Mason &

Brown, 2013, p. 220).

There are a number of ways in which a community can foster developing

business: providing economic incentives (as discussed above); providing a venue in

which new businesses can launch; and, providing support systems to small business

owners. One traditional venue for launching new businesses has been that of a public

market. These markets, whether rural or urban, can serve as business incubators,

providing social, political, and economic benefits to a community (Morales, 2009). In a

qualitative study conducted over three years, Morales (2009) observed and interacted

with vendors in Chicago's Maxwell Street Market to gain an understanding of who starts

a business in a market, how, and why. The finding was that the market was an attractive

venue because the barriers to entry were low with little overhead or start-up costs. The

result is that entrepreneurs can experiment with their business ideas and test market

products with relatively low investment costs. Many of the vendors in the market were

seeking to improve their economic situation after being released from the formal

employment market or to supplement earnings from other employment. Morales (2009)

suggested that cities can support new business ventures though a public market setting and put into place policies and programs that help graduate experienced merchants into more institutionalized venues as their business grows.

Another way of supporting entrepreneurial businesses is to encourage and support a network among the business owners. Miller et al. (2011) engaged in a study with small busness owners of women's apparel stores in small rural communities in the Midwest. Framing the study with social capital theory and strategic network theory, the study investigated the formation of a network, the flow of resources within the network, and the bonds and opportunities resulting from the network (Miller et al., 2011). The findings indicated that network members developed ties, supported each other's businesses, used other network members as resources, referred business among the network members, and provided social support to each other (Miller et al., 2011). While it cannot be said that providing an avenue for small business networking guarantees business success and positive economic development, these two studies do indicate that there is a connection between providing a supported networking environment and short-term business growth. Whether through a community market or a merchant's network, supporting new entrepreneurs working together appears to a viable strategy for economic and community development.

Workforce development

An educated workforce and a business community engaged in research and development has been identified as a positive factor in economic and community deverlopment (Eberts, 2010). Regarding the state of research in rural and micropolitan

communities, Strasburger (2009) discussed that land-grant colleges were created so that working class people could acess higher education and so that the research needs of agriculture and industry could be met (p. 137). Yet, there is a disconnect between that founding intent and the current state of research within the US. "At present, micropolitan and rural areas are not viewed as potentially viable research locations by many academic faculties and institutions" (Strasburger, 2009, p. 133). There are identified barriers on both sides (community and university) that prevent or inhibit research activitity from reaching micropolitan America. Among the community barriers are lack of experienced grantwriters, lack of access to university partners, lack of matching funds for research projects, and difficulties in compiling local statistics to support a research grant. On the university side, regimented protocols and timelines that favor larger metropolitan areas, lesser appreciation among the university team for rural and micropolitan researchers, under-representation of rural and micropolitan communities on university and advisory boards, and policies that foreclose the comittment to research in remote micropolitan or rural areas were identified barriers (Strasburger, 2009, p. 134). However, recognizing the success of the Mayo Clinic in a largely rural area, Strasburger also presents lists of recommended steps that universities, communities, and legislatures can take to enhance education and research opportunities in non-metropolitan areas. These steps for communities provide factors and policies that were considered in this research study.

The linkage between workforce development and economic development seems to be widely accepted among policymakers and scholars. Legislation was passed during the 1990s encouraging the connection of workforce development programs to local

business communities. Those efforts have been reinforced by federal initiatives, such as the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative (Harper-Anderson, 2008). One positive outcome of the recent economic recession is that economic developers and workforce development teams have begun to find ways to work together. Sector-based initiatives have become more common as workforce developers try to align their programs with demands created by the economy or by local economic development activity (Harper-Anderson, 2008). Harper-Anderson conducted a national quantitative survey of workforce development administrators to explore the connectivity between economic and workforce development, to evaluate if sector-based strategies are effective, and to determine the outcome of increased connectivity. The number of respondents reporting significant connection or even integration between workforce development and economic development was at least 50%, with only 10% describing their functions as separate, even though 97% reported their goals as being the same or related to the economic development goals (Harper-Anderson, 2008). More than 90% of the respondents indicated they use sectors or clusters as part of their work, and many have formalized them with written plans, boards, and specialized funding. Connectivity between workforce and economic development did correlate with the use of sector or cluster-based approaches, with most respondents indicating positive outcomes (Harper-Anderson, 2008). This study did not focus on a particular segment of population stratification, so it cannot be broken down into metropolitan, micropolitan, or rural; however, it does indicate that formal alignment of workforce development activities with

economic development activities, combined with a sector-based approach, may generate positive outcomes for the local community.

Role of amenities

Local amenities have been repeatedly correlated with economic success on a community level (Eberts, 2010; Lambe, 2008; Wilson et al., 2001). The debate regarding the degree to which amenities influence economic development is an ongoing one, exploring the attraction of urban amentities (shopping, entertainment, cultural venues), natural amenities (climate, landscape), and rural recreation and lifestyle amenities (neighborhood communities, less traffic and noise, greater access to outdoor recreation). It has become linked to the question of whether people follow jobs, or if jobs follow people (Ferguson, Kamar, Olfert, & Partridge, 2007). In their study of population changes in Canadian communities, Feguson et al. (2007) found that economic factors were most important for rural growth and that urban growth was more strongly linked to amenities. They acknowledged that Canada lacks the climate variation (warmer) that has been linked to rural amenity migration in the United States. However, although focused on Canada, this study reinforces the relationship of economic factors with amenites in people's choices of where to live. And while not identified and set apart in Ferguson et al.'s research, rural-located micropolitan communities are poised somewhere between the urban/rural extremes and potenially could offer both types of amenities if they can overcome the need for improved economic conditions.

Housing

One of the factors that can be significant in local economic development is that of

affordable housing availability. Five years after the micropolitan designation was created,

the first study was done looking at the affordability of housing in the micropolitan areas

within the contiguous 48 states and linking it to potential economic development

considerations (Lang & Danielsen, 2008). The researchers analyzed characteristics of

micropolitan areas and found that those nearest metropolitan areas tended to be larger and

experience greater growth, while those which were more remote were smaller and grew

more slowly, if at all. In analyzing housing affordability, their research used the

Micropolitan Affordability Index (MAI), which is the percentage of households in a

micropolitan area that can afford to purchase a median price home in that community.

They found that in several ways housing in micropolitan settings was comparable to

housing in metropolitan settings: age, average number of bedrooms, and average number

of total rooms (Lang & Danielsen, 2008, p. 191). They noted differences in that

micropolitan areas had higher percentages of detached single-family homes,

manufactured homes and nonowner-occupied homes (Lang & Danielsen, 2008, p. 191).

Rather than attempting to analyze each micropolitan area in detail, the study

focused on the least and the most affordable micropolitan areas (Lang & Danielsen,

2008). There was a correlation between the least affordable areas and remoteness, as well

as an association with scenic or recreational amenities. These areas included Jackson,

Wyoming, Silverthorne, Colorado, and Key West, Florida. This author notes that these

areas are reflected in Vias' first type of micropolitan area—one that is remote with scenic

or recreational amenities (Vias, 2011). The most affordable micropolitan areas were found to be clustered in two states, Texas and Kansas (Lang & Danielsen, 2008). These micropolitan areas were in largely rural areas and were experiencing population declines (Lang & Danielsen, 2008). Not surprisingly, Lang and Danielsen's analysis of median home values mirrored these findings. The highest median home values were in areas with low affordability and scenic/recreational amenities, while the lowest median home values were in areas of high affordability with either declining populations or populations increasing as a result of immigration (Lang & Danielson, 2008, p. 195).

Considering these findings, some policymakers may need to use affordable housing as an attribute to attract economic development, while others may need to address the addition of affordable housing to their communities to support continued growth; housing opportunity is tied to regional development (Lang & Danielsen, 2008). Looking at housing with regard to rural community vitality (economic strength and social well-being), a study was done of 134 communities in nine states. It further reinforced the connection between availability of affordable, appropriate (non-aged) housing and economic development (Cook et al., 2009). The study was conducted as a mixed-methods design and correlated community vitality to housing planning, finance, and inventory, as well as to community leadership and population changes. The findings indicated that entrepreneurial leadership that addresses housing as part of economic development contributes to community vitality and that solutions to rural housing challenges require collective efforts, including planning activities and external funding. The researchers concluded that availability of affordable, appropriate housing is a necessary part of

community and economic development plans if the community is to attract new

businesses (Cook et al., 2009). Although the availability of affordable housing is a

significant factor in encouraging local economic growth, it is not the most important one.

     A later study of micropolitan area growth found that industry composition was the

most important variation in micropolitan population growth, although correlations were

noted for housing supply, climate as measured by average January temperature, and state

and local policy (Davidsson & Richman, 2012). Among policy variables, county

spending on education and highway infrastructure had a positive correlation with growth.

State income taxes had a negative effect on growth (Davidsson & Richman, 2012).

Finally, the distance of a micropolitan area to the nearest metropolitan area indicated that

remoteness tended to reduce growth (Davidsson & Richman, 2012). Davidsson and

Richman's (2012) analysis of a broader range of variables seems to confirm Lang and

Danielsen's contention that housing supply and affordability should play a significant

role in a community's economic development policy.

Regional Governance and Partnerships

     Many of the challenges faced by small communities require more resources than a

single community can provide and thus are appropriate for a regional partnership or

governance approach (Lu & Jacobs, 2013, p. 82). Rural and micropolitan areas that seek

to build infrastructure, such as roads or transportation systems, are faced with the reality

of the high costs. When the costs of building, operating, and maintaining infrastructure

are spread over a smaller tax base, it is more expensive on a per capita basis than it would

be in a metropolitan area, where there is a higher population density. Many of these types

of infrastructure projects are candidates for a regional governance approach, as was shown in a study of the cost efficiency of building roads in rural areas (Chicoine, Deller & Walzer 2001). Chicoine et al. (2001) studied the costs of building and maintaining rural roads across several Midwestern states at the township level using an empirical model that suggested the joining together of the smaller government units to form a regional approach to infrastructure building was more cost effective. Considering the Resource Conservation and Development Program as a successful program of regional governance, Lu and Jacobs (2013) performed an archival study on the program, particularly focusing on Kansas, to identify aspects of the program that enabled success. Their findings highlighted that each council was comprised of a wide variety of organizations, governmental and private non-profit, that worked together to identify projects and priorities, address funding, and represent the unique nature and interests of the specific region. The authors concluded that the council system was an effective way to combine state and community interests to achieve economic and community development goals (Lu & Jacobs, 2013, pp. 96-97).

In an earlier study, Lu (2011) explored the use of ad hoc regionalism in rural areas to both deal with challenges and to implement economic development strategies. As examples, the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (WKREDA) and the San Juan Forum (SJF) were compared and contrasted. The WKREDA was formed with 46 counties bonded by the need to fight economic decline in their region. Over 5 years it succeeded in developing a governance system that focused on equal representation of interests, improved employment, and expansion of the dairy industry in

the region (Lu, 2011). The SJF, led by a partnership between a four-year college and a

community college, was formed to enable information sharing and to increase efficiency

of resource development in the Four Corners area of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona,

and Utah. However, the forum did not develop broad-based representation, but rather it

depended on the vision and efforts of one person to hold it together (Lu, 2011). The

lessons learned from these studies indicate that regionalism can produce positive

outcomes but requires committed participation by policymakers, reasonably equal

distribution of power and benefits, and achievement of desired outcomes in order to be

effective over time (Lu, 2011).

International Influences on Local Economic Development

We live in a global society, so whether a community is part of a metropolitan

area, a micropolitan community, or a rural area, international concerns and changes can

affect economic conditions directly or indirectly. In 2011, *Forbes* reported that the US

Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis released data that showed, in this

century, millions of American jobs are moving overseas and that major corporations

shrank their U.S. workforces by 2.9 million workers, while adding 2.4 million workers in

non-U.S. locations (Adams, 2011). In 2012 the *Wall Street Journal* noted that a number

of companies were reincorporating outside of the United States, with one reason cited as

lower taxes (McKinnon & Thurm, 2012). In an effort to analyze the effects of

international trade on the US labor market, Autor et al. (2013) undertook an empirical

analysis of trade shocks on regional employment and economic adjustments within the

United States. During 1991 to 2007. Goods imported from China increased by 1,156%,

while exports lagged far behind. The researchers correlated the increase in Chinese imports with negative effects in manufacturing employment, a drop in average household earnings, and an increase in government payments for disability, retirement, medical payments, unemployment insurance, and income assistance (Autor et al., 2013). So not surprisingly, unidirectional internationalization tends to hurt local communities. To support economic and community development within U.S. cities, policymaking should include attracting foreign investment and provide incentives to keep employment within U.S. communties.

Summary and Conclusions

The existing literature on economic and community development shows a lack of information on policy issues relating to micropolitan America. Much of the research that has been done has examined the success of specific strategies or at certain factors that correlate with economic development. The research performed to date on micropolitan areas does provide limited insight as to why some areas experience growth and why others do not, but it does not relate those findings to specific policy development or address the interaction between economic and community development. In this present study, I examined the interaction of the factors and policies idenfied, as well as the influence of the sometimes conflicting goals of community and economic devlopment. The findings should enable development scholars and practitioners to better understand the influences and how to balance the competing interests.

Chapter 3 presents a description of the methodology used in exploring the policy interactions and influences on economic and community development in a micropolitan

setting. The chapter also includes information regarding the city selected for study, the

research design, and the data used in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore and gain an understanding of the interaction of economic and community development policies and how they are affected by internal and external factors. The aim of the study was to determine how the sometimes-conflicting interests of the policy goals are balanced and influenced by circumstances and events. For this study, economic development policy relates to policy decisions and actions taken to improve the local economy and employment while community development policy relates to those policy decisions and actions taken to improve the quality of life within the community with improved environment, health, education, and recreation. Within the study, I explored what factors influenced decisions, what outcomes were desired, how implementation affected future decisions, and how policymakers put the pieces together while balancing the key interests of economics and quality of life.

The understanding of policy interactions with influencing factors was achieved by answering the following research questions:

1. How can a small, nonmetropolitan city use policy to address its local economic and quality of life challenges?

2. How do the economic development and community development policies and strategies interact to create positive social changes?

3. What factors raise the awareness of public officials of the need or desire to engage in economic development and community development?

4. To what extent has the interaction of policies and their implementation been effective in reducing poverty and its effects, and why or why not?

This chapter reviews the research questions and presents a discussion of qualitative research methods, particularly the case study approach. It provides information on the role of the researcher, data collection, and method of data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations.

Design of the Study

This section describes the research design used for the study, including research method and approach, sample population, proposed data collection methods, ethical considerations, and role of the researcher.

Qualitative Research Method

Quantitative research is appropriate when testing theories by measuring variables and using statistical analysis to interpret results (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative approach is appropriate when the research is exploratory in nature (Creswell, 2014). It is conducted by putting the observer in the world to study organizations, people, and events in their natural setting and transforming that world into interviews, photographs, and other representations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). One important aspect of qualitative research is that the researcher is an instrument in the study. As such, the researcher must focus on the meanings the participants attach to the issues and data. Because the nature of this inquiry is how types of policies relate to each other and the environment in which they are made, it cannot be studied in a laboratory setting or without immersion into the environment in which the events have occurred and are occurring.

The research questions for this study are not focused on a set of variables or testing an existing theory; rather, they explore relationships, interactions, and the viewpoints and understandings of policies and policymakers. A qualitative approach will enable the depth needed to answer the research questions while providing the richness of detail to build the context in which policy decisions and events occurred. Based on the nature of the inquiry, a qualitative approach is the more appropriate research methodology.

Case Study Qualitative Approach

A case study is an intensive research approach in which the description and explanation of developments within one case is developed in full, rich detail (Swanborn, 2010). Because the case study approach can be applied to so many disciplines and studies, a definition of a case study is both lengthy and complex. One definition provides that it is the study of a social phenomenon that is conducted in the setting, during a set period of time, where the researcher focuses on the description and explanation of processes with an open mind and using multiple data sources to gain understanding (Swanborn, 2010). Yin (2014) provided a two-part definition. First, "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth, within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). Second, it copes with situations having many variables, relies on multiple sources of data, and uses theoretical propositions to guide the collection and analysis of data (Yin, 2014, p. 17).

For this research, the case is defined as one micropolitan city that is not part of a larger metropolitan area and which has both experienced economic and quality of life challenges and has taken steps to address them. The time period studied is that following the Great Recession, June 2009 through June 2015, when communities have been focused on economic growth and rebuilding. Interviews were conducted, documents reviewed, and observations of actions and settings were made to develop the rich description and develop the deep understanding that constitutes a case study.

Justification of the Case Study Approach

While there are more than 20 research designs within the qualitative approach, only the 5 identified by Creswell as being most common in the social sciences were considered for this study: narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Creswell, 2014). Choice of design should consider several aspects of the research, such as what is being studied (Creswell, 2014), the purpose, audience, and other factors, such as funding and researcher interests (Patton, 2012). Narrative or phenomenology is well suited to studying individuals, while ethnology is more compatible with the study of cultural aspects of groups (Creswell, 2014). Because this study is focused on processes, activities, and events, a case study, or grounded theory design, could be considered appropriate (Creswell, 2014).

The grounded theory research design "is a method of social scientific theory construction" (Charmaz, 2011, p. 360). Although the data collected and used in a grounded theory design can be much like that used in a case study, the key difference is in the overall goal as reflected by the research questions. Grounded theory is more

appropriate for studies that seek to build a theory from the data gathered rather than understanding a specific instance of interactions.

A case study has four key features:

- the study of an individual unit

- that has depth through its rich, detailed information

- that evolves over time, and

- it considers the environment or context (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

It is the preferred method when the research is exploring the "how" or "why" of something. The researcher does not control events, and the focus of the study is contemporary rather than entirely historical (Yin, 2014).

Sampling for the Study

In selecting the case for the research, several decisions needed to be made. The research focuses on a micropolitan city that is not part of a larger metropolitan area and which constitutes a relatively small population. The 2013 list of principal cities of micropolitan statistical areas shows a total of 564 cities, many of those adjacent to or part of a larger metropolitan area (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Sampling in qualitative case study research is generally performed using a purposeful or informed-oriented selection process so as to be sure the sample used will inform the study (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

Choosing a case from the subject population can be done using one of several approaches that should align with the research questions of the study. Extreme case selection seeks out unusual cases which are valuable to understand the extremes of

existing theories or to develop new theories. Maximum variation cases are those that

when taken together are similar in several ways but very different in one key dimension

and can be used to study that difference or the effect of the difference. A critical case is

one that is chosen because it has strategic importance to the topic of the research. Finally,

a paradigmatic case is one that exhibits the characteristics of the societies or cases in

question, often called a typical case (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Based on the research questions

for this study, a paradigmatic, or typical, case is the most appropriate for the research

since the purpose is not to explore extremes or unique qualities. Trying to identify a

critical case requires enough experience with the topic being researched to know how to

define it (Flyvbjerg, 2011), which is not a quality of this researcher. Rather, this study's

research questions are best answered by a typical case chosen based on identified criteria.

In choosing a case, Yin (2014) stated that the researcher needs "sufficient access

to the data for your potential case" and given more than just one potential case, the

researcher should choose a case or cases "that will most likely illuminate your research

questions" (p. 28). His advice differs from Swanborn (2010), who suggested using all

available cases under many circumstances and using pragmatic considerations only as an

additional criteria; however, many of his recommendations focus on the independent and

dependent variable so that his approach may be more useful in a quantitative case study.

I purposefully chose the city of Danville, Virginia, (which is located less than 30

miles outside the official Applachian Region) as the case for this research. It meets the

objective criteria of a relatively isolated (at least 30 miles from the nearest metropolitan

area), is a micropolitan area city that had experienced a "boom" period followed by

economic decline, significant issues with poverty and unemployment, and has active

economic and community development programs. Danville is located in a rural area with

mulitple urban areas relatively distant in most directions. It is 45 miles from Greensboro,

NC; 56 miles from Durham, NC; 144 miles from Richmond, VA; 73 miles from

Roanoke, VA; and 65 miles from Charlottesville, VA. See Figure 1 for the location of

Danville, VA, relative to the nearest metropolitan areas.
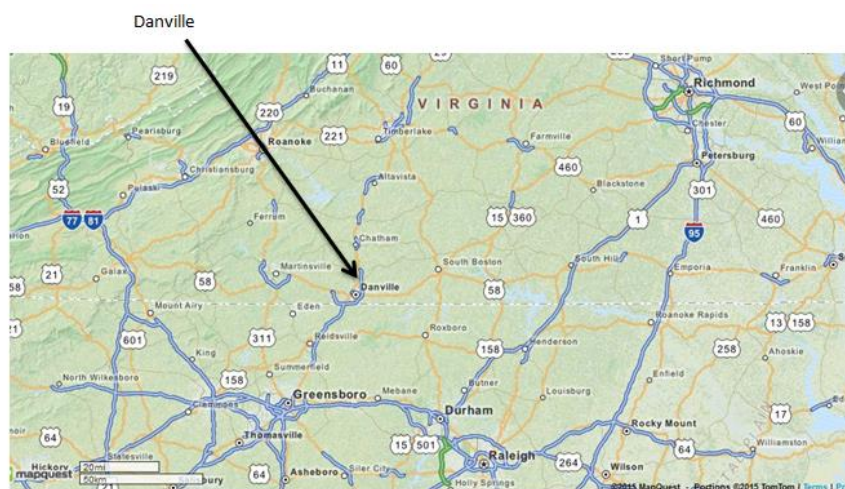
Figure 1. Danville, Virginia, area map.

The city's population is approximately 43,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a) with

about 27.4% of households below poverty level as compared to the state's overall rate of

11.3% of households in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014a). Unemployment in

Danville was 8.3% in August 2014 when the state unemployment rate was 5.5% (U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). It is also a location that I can access and be able to

succeed in accessing key officials and records.

I then used purposive sampling to select participants who could provide information and insights into the city's policymaking and who can identify other potential participants. The participants interviewed were elected city officials, key city employees, and community leaders. Participants were chosen based on their experience and knowledge of events during the time period of the study. One factor to be considered when interviewing is maximum structural variation of perspectives— to interview participants who hold various perspectives relative to the topic (Patton, 2012). The elected officials were selected because they are the policymakers, and their perspectives related directly to policy initiatives, choices, and strategies to address problems and achieve goals. The city employees were part of the study because they were largely responsible for implememtation of policy and could provide information on how policies were enacted and and whether or not they were well received. Finally, the community leaders were identified as policy influencers, individuals who represented private organziations within the community who have interests in the economic future of the city. These participants provided a nongovernmental view of policymaking and outcomes. The three categories of participants were able to provide diverse, relevant perspectives to build a well-rounded understanding of the case.

I created a list of potential participants for the study within city government based on public information available on the city's website. In addition, key individuals within the community, identified through various news articles, were included in the potential participant pool as well. From this pool, participants were recruited for interviews. Participants who engaged with me, either in interviews or in exchanges in which they

declined to be interviewd, were asked for names of other potential participants who would know information relevant to the study.

Once the pool of potential participants had been identified, I attempted to contact each individual for whom contact information was publicly accessible or for whom such contact information was provided by other members of the participant pool. Because of the small size of the case being studied, the pool was relatively small; by requesting interviews of all members of the pool, I was attempting to assure that a sufficient number of participants with various perspectives who were active during all or part of the time period studied would be included in the study. By asking participants during interviews and declination conversations for names of others who had relevant information, I was able to interview others and maximize data collection and confirm or disconfirm information provided. Collecting data that includes a number of perspectives and sources is one way in which qualitative data can be collaborated and validated (Yin, 2014).

Sample Size

With purposeful sampling, the sample size is determined by information, with validity, meaningfulness, and insights being determined by the information richness of the research rather than the size of the sample (Patton, 2012, pp. 245-246). Saturation is reached when additional data no longer reveals new information or insights (Creswell, 2014). Although saturation is an important aspect of qualitative research, there is little guidance as to estimating the sample size needed to reach saturation. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) conducted interviews with 60 participants to determine at what point data saturation was reached. They found that data saturation with high frequency codes was

reached as early as 6 participants and clearly within 12 interviews. I anticipated a sample size of 8 to 10 participants, but to assure full information and complete representation of each of the perspectives, 11 interviews were conducted. At that point, data saturation was reached with approximately equal representation among the three perspective types. Table 1 and Figure 3 show the number of participants broken down by category. Of the 11 participants, 4 were policymakers, 4 were primarily policy implementers, and 3 were policy influencers. In addition, data samples included a large number of documents and photographs.

Access to participants

Gaining access and building trust and rapport with participants was an essential step in the data collection process. I discussed the importance of the study and the opportunity participation provided for the participants to discuss their perspectives. Trust was built through personal communication, including telephone calls, email exchanges, and conversations. I presented as a learner interested in economic and community development. I explained the purpose of the study and why the participants were invited to participate. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and asked not to reveal any information that they were uncomfortable sharing or that could jeopardize projects if the study results were released before the project was complete, all of which helped build the needed trust and rapport. Written consent was obtained before the interviews were conducted.

Role of the Researcher

I was born and raised in a small city surrounded by farmland in Pennsylvania. As a child of two factory workers, I was always aware of challenges relating to poverty and efforts to build a better quality of life within the community. Having lived in many communities in several states, over time, I became aware of the differences in the quality of life in different communities and the impacts that economic development activities could have. My interest in economics and community development grew out of those life experiences. My academic experience reflects that interest in creating social change in communities as well. With an undergraduate degree in biological science, I quickly realized that alone was not sufficient education to make a significant change for the better. I obtained a law degree and worked in financial services and government regulation for many years. Acknowledging that education was the key that enabled change to people's lives and circumstances, I retired from law, obtained a master's degree in education and began working in higher education administration as a way to help others change their lives and communities.

Having lived in major metropolitan areas, rural areas, and several micropolitan cities, I have seen the differences in the goals, policies, and outcomes based on the policies made and implemented. Some communities appeared to be successful at economic development, but at the cost of quality of life, while others seemed to offer a great quality of life, but with little to no economic growth or activity. It became a goal to gain an understanding of how communities manage these differing priorities in policymaking and accommodate the ever-changing business and economic climates. My

current position in education administration does not directly interact with the topics or issues being studied.

Although several members of the leadership team at the university where I am employed are also local political leaders (city council), no bias or conflict of interest relating to their professional relationship was evident. These individuals are not people with whom I work regularly and my role as a student conducting research, rather than an employee of the institution or working colleague, was presented and steadfastly adhered to during the research process.

I personally conducted all the research: data collection, data analysis, and writing of findings. I recruited participants, obtained consents, conducted interviews, and collected documents and photographs. Telephone calls and emails were used to contact participants. Each interview was conducted, audio recorded, and transcribed by me. There were no additional team members used for data collection or analysis in this study.

My professional experience in the legal field, as well as business experience collecting and analyzing data, helped build my skill in interviewing. I had also worked as an investigator for a federal agency investigating financial institution failures, interviewing and reviewing documents to build professional liability cases against those responsible. These experiences and education prepared me and honed the skills needed to identify valuable participants and to conduct informational interviews. With years of professional experience as an attorney, investigator, and business leader, I have developed the necessary skills and an awareness of the need to collect data with an open mind while following ethical practices and protocols.

One of the concerns in qualitative research that may affect data interpretation and analysis is the predisposition or biases of the researcher (Patton, 2012). During the course of this study, I took several precautions to address subjectivity or bias. First, I maintained a high degree of awareness of the need to be objective and of the possibility of bias. I reported data that appeared discrepant and used data triangulation to minimize bias. Interview transcripts were subjected to member checking to assure accuracy and to enhance the credibility of the study. The combination of these precautions should have minimized or eliminated any researcher subjectivity or bias.

Data Collection

As part of this study, I obtained approval from the University Institutional Review Board on December 10, 2015, to conduct the study under approval number 12-10-15-0266730. I collected data from December 2016 through August 2016. Data analysis began immediately upon data collection and continued until this report was complete.

Data collection for this study was performed using three methods in overlapping phases, each informing the others: document review, interviews, and observation of place. Yin (2014) advised case study researchers to be prepared before they begin the data collection process by developing five attributes: asking good questions and being a good listener; staying adaptive to identify new opportunities; having a firm grasp of the issues being studied; avoiding biases by including contrary evidence; and, conducting the research in an ethical manner. By being organized, recording data, and engaging in constant comparison, I was able to follow the evidence to additional data to inform the study.

Yin (2014) identified four key principles of data collection that help establish construct validity and reliability of the data and study; these principles were used in conducting this research. First, whenever possible, multiple sources of evidence (data) were gathered by using several data collection methods to help avoid examining only one perspective or attribute and to assure accuracy (data triangulation). Second, a case study database or computer files were created and maintained separately from my own writings and documents. The database (within Atlas.ti) contains documents, photos, transcripts, researcher notes, and other data collected, indexed, and sorted in a method that makes them easily retrievable. Third, a chain of evidence was maintained that links statements in the case study report to the sources in the database, and to the protocol and research questions. By linking the specific data to conclusions and back to research questions, it enables another person to follow the analytical flow from data to conclusion. Finally, electronic sources of data were handled with particular care and caution because the source of the information had to be validated as reliable and because electronic sites can change over time. Specific URLs and screen prints have been printed and scanned, or downloaded and saved, creating permanent electronic records, to document what data was present and used in the study.

Documents

Documents "constitute a particularly rich source of information about many organizations and programs" (Patton, 2012, p. 293). Relevant documents can include a wide range of types, such as minutes of meetings, reports, administrative documents, news clippings, and correspondence (Yin, 2014). While documents are not always

accurate, and often represent only the viewpoint of the author, they are useful in several ways: identifying key individuals to interview, providing background information, and providing corroborating or augmenting evidence (Patton, 2012; Yin, 2014). In this study, document review was part of the preparation for interviews; document review helped identify potential interview candidates and, most importantly served as additional evidence to validate and augment information gathered from other sources.

Specific documents used during the study included both primary and seconary documents relating to the policymaking, economic development, and community development activities in Danville. Available data was important because much of the period of time being studied was in the past. A review of documents created at the time of decisions and events may be the best source of factual information since human memories may have faded over time and reflect biases of the participants. Available data documents for this research included news articles relating to economic and community development matters in the Danville, Virginia, micropolitan area; minutes and reports from city council meetings; and consultant reports prepared for the city. The documents were downloaded elecronically or hard-copy scanned and loaded into Atlas.ti for coding and analysis for policy interactions and influences.

Interviews

Interviews have been described as being one of the most important sources of data in case studies (Yin, 2014). Often conducted as guided conversations rather than a more rigid question and answer session, the researcher has two main concerns during the interview: follow the line of inquiry outlined in the research protocol and to do so by

asking questions in an unbiased way to discover relevant information (Yin, 2014). Whether using a standardized question format or a more informal conversational format, the key to a successful interview is the interviewer's ability to ask open-ended questions, patiently allow the participant to respond, to ask appropriate un-biased probing questions, and to listen and learn throughout the interview (Patton, 2012).

Interviews can be conducted individually in-person, telephonically, or in focus groups. For this study, I utilized individual indepth, in-person interviews to solicit detailed information and clarify ambiguities. Research on micropolitan policymaking is a new area of study, so gathering honest, accurate data under circumstances in which participants are comfortable discussing choices, actions, and insights with anonymity was important. Conducting interviews in-person enabled me to more easily build rapport with the participants and assess body language, which could not be achieved in telephonic interviews. The disadvantage I noted to conducting individual interviews was the investment of time and the challenge of getting time on people's schedules; but, the disadvantages were outweighed by the ability to get detailed information and separate perspectives of key individuals. Each participant was informed of the purpose of this study, informed regarding the confidential nature of the interview, and informed of the protection provided to assure that confidentiality is maintained. All participants were then asked for their explicit consent before the interview was started (Rudestam & Newton, 2007).

It was expected that I would conduct between 8 and 10 individual interviews with community leaders and government representatives, but a total of 11 such participants

were ultimately interviewed. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions in a conversational approach based on an interview guide to assure key topics were covered. I developed an interview protocol for use with all participants (the Interview Protocol is included as Appendix B). During some interviews with policy influencers, some questions were adapted to fit their role. The use of open-ended questions allowed me to customize the questions based on the participants' responses and their roles in the community. Interviews were recorded with an electronic recorder. The recorder used enabled direct uploading of the interviews to a computer for safekeeping and later retrieval. All participants agreed to the recording. In addition, I took notes to document understanding and for use in case of equipment failure. Each recording was transcribed using Dragon speech-to-text software, produced by Nuance, that accompanied the recorder. The transcript was edited and proofread against the recording and then member-checked with the participant to assure accuracy and completeness. To the extent possible, interviews were conducted in the participant's place of business. Three participants did not have suitable workplaces so those interviews were conducted in other locations (a restaurant, a borrowed office, and a library).

The candidates I initially approached for participant interviews included members of city council, the mayor, the director of economic development for the City of Danville, leaders in community development organizations, and representatives of organizations active in economic development. Using a snowball sampling technique, I asked initial contacts to help identify other potential participants who had knowledge to contribute to the research.

The interviews provided first-hand information and understanding of prior policymaking and influences, as well as current concerns, influences, and policymaking practices. By setting aside bias and using neutral language during the interview process, I focused on understanding how situations are viewed, how policy decisions are made, and how interactions and competing interests balanced by the participants. Information about actions and events were corroborated through other data, but gaining insights into the participants' opinions, attitudes, and meanings are available only through a successful interview (Yin, 2014).

An interview guide, as approved for use in this research (Appendix B), was used to conduct the interviews. Each interview was conducted with a clean, separate guide on which observations, ideas, notes, and reflections of the interviewer were noted. The interview guide was organized to address each research question and to allow for the differing roles of the participants in the policymaking and implementation process.

Direct Observation

Because case studies are conducted in the natural setting and include contemporary events, direct observation by the researcher is an essential source of data for the study (Yin, 2014). Observation for this study included observation of city council meetings and public areas of the city, particularly those that are illustrative of the concerns and events discovered through document review and interviews. For example, certain areas of the city are targeted for revitalization (such as the downtown River District); I traveled to those areas to observe and to compare buildings that have or are undergoing work to buildings that have not yet been worked on (or photographs of the

buildings and area prior to renovation). My observations were documented through

photographs made concurrently with the observation. Specific care was taken to avoid the

potential bias that comes with the role of a participant-observer and to remain objective

without endorsing a particular viewpoint (Yin, 2014). Although observation requires the

researcher to be in the community and walking through parts of the community,

interaction with city residents was not part of my research since the study is focused on

policymaking, rather than community perception.
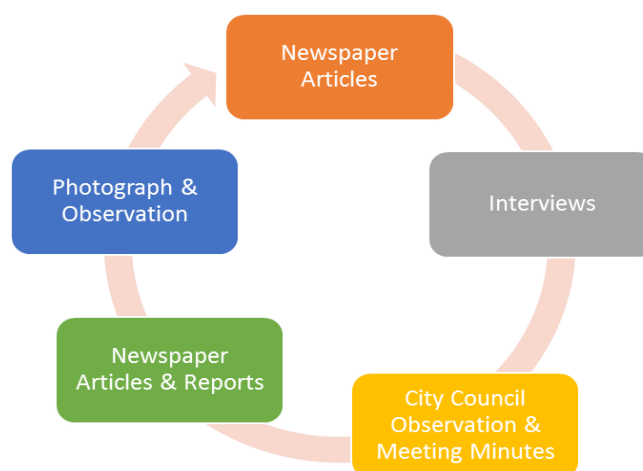
Figure 2. Cycle of data collection.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data collected involved multiple steps: reading and examining,

categorizing, coding for themes, and searching for patterns, insights, and connections

(Patton, 2012; Yin, 2014). There are several challenges with the analysis of qualitative

data, including the lack of set guidelines or formulas, combined with the massive amount

of data associated with qualitative studies. As data was collected, the detail of the data

(source, date) was recorded in the data collection database. Computer software, Atlas.ti, was used in the analysis portion of the study. Documents, transcripts, and photographs were analyzed through the use of the software to enable me to engage in constant comparison analysis and refine coding structures as the research progressed. Yin (2014) and Swanborn (2010) suggested several activities to help with the analysis step, including comparing data from interviews, placing data into categories, creating data displays (flowcharts or graphics), looking at the frequency of events or ideas, and constructing a timeline.

Because of the large volume of data collected, it was scanned and uploaded or directly downloaded from websites to a secure computer and organized into folders based on the type of data. Interviews were coded by participant numbers to maintain confidentiality. Next, I read all the collected material at least two times through: interview transcripts, city council meeting minutes, newspaper articles, and notes. During the second and subsequent readings, I assigned codes. The codes were words or short phrases reflecting topics, issues, or concepts. This process, known as open coding, was a relatively exhaustive effort to identify the nature of the information and enable further organization into categories (Silverman & Patterson, 2015). Using constant comparison, codes were combined and organized until meanings, connections, and relationships were clear. Additional coding was performed using a set of predeveloped codes based on the research questions and the theoretical framework of complexity theory. These reviews and the finalization of codes took many weeks to achieve because of the volume of data and the number of research questions in the study. Use of this

approach enabled me to develop ideas and insights through the iterative process and organize them into categories to provide understanding of the relationship between economic and community development policies and the influences on the policymaking process.

When selecting what themes or categories to be used in analysis, it is appropriate to consider the research questions and sub-questions and to assure that the coded data used is relevant and embodies information the message from the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). I identified descriptions and facts within the case that address the research questions and classified them into categories or themes. Data was organized into categories and interpreted to form conclusions that contribute to the understanding of policy interactions and influences and lessons evident from the data concerning policymaking in small cities.

The next step in the process was for me to diagram the relationships that were identified by the data analysis process. Diagrams are useful in aiding a researcher to develop a narrative describing the results of the research (Silverman & Patterson, 2015). Some difficulty was experienced in this step, which necessitated that I return to the categories and coding to review the data again and to clarify understandings and relationships. The diagrams were used to solidify my understanding and help guide the writing of results. Diagrams can illustrate results, or relationships between in support of the written narrative to aid comprehension. Such diagrams and table presentations show the relationship of codes to themes and categories, summarize findings, and illustrate conclusions.

Use of multiple sources and types of data enabled the use of triangulation and examination of discrepant data to establish credibility. In addition, member checking and the diversity of participants to include a variety of perspectives, combined with the use of rich, thick description provides a basis for dependability and transferability.

Structure of the Narrative Report

Denzin and Lincoln (2013) explained analytic realism as being based on the idea that there is a real world in which people interact and create meaning. Although theories approach some understanding, they cannot reach complete comprehension because other theoretical perspectives are possible. Using realism to prepare the narrative means the researcher provided detailed descriptions and quotes from participants and documents. Words, visuals, and diagrams were used in the narrative so as to generate reader interest and demonstrate significance.

While there may not be a standard format for writing a case study, it needs to provide a granulated and textured narrative (Silverman & Patterson, 2015). My report balances background information with analysis, interpretation, and discussion. Rather than using a prescribed formula or ratio, I relied on the objectives of the research to guide the writing to provide a deeper understanding of the policy interactions, policy influences, and factors.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity is an extremely important standard in conducting research that needs to be considered at every step in the process. To assure this integrity in the study, I took steps to assure information was provided to participants concerning the purpose of

the study; how the information would be used; and the confidentiality of participants

protected. Participants were not offered, promised, or given any rewards or incentives for

their participation, and appropriate steps were taken to assure they were not placed at risk

for providing their assistance. Meetings were scheduled at times and locations identified

by the participants as locations where they were comfortable discussing the research

topics. Such locations included a library, a restaurant, official offices, and a borrowed

office. Identities are confidential, with each participant identified only by a number. Each

participant explicitly consented to the interview after disclosure of the purpose and nature

of the research; had any participants objected, the interview would have been cancelled

(Creswell, 2014). Participants were informed that they could stop the interview and back

out of the study at any point in time. None did.

Only documents that were publicly available or provided with permission to use

were included in the study. While observing locations discussed in the interviews or

referenced in the documents, I recorded the details via photographs. Care was taken to

avoid the inclusion of persons in the photographs. In situations where it was not possible

to photograph a location without including people, I elected to not take photographs or to

return to the location at a different time.

Summary

This chapter has presented information on the research methodology and

approach for the study. The research was conducted as a qualitative case study based on

the research questions, which seek to understand policy interactions and influences within

the context of a specific small city situated in a largely rural area. The chapter also

identified the rationale for the selection of the case city to be studied by narrowing the identified micropolitan areas (564) down to one particular area that meets predetermined criteria and is accessible for data collection purposes. Finally, the chapter discussed the data collection and analysis process used. I conducted the study using document analysis, interviews, and direct observation as methods of data collection, resulting in a case study that is rich in detail and well supported by a variety of evidence. Participants interviewed were purposefully selected based on their involvement in policymaking within the city during all or part of the time period being studied. Eleven semistructured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions. Data were coded and analyzed using coding that was later organized into families (themes or categories) that relate to the research questions. Findings were validated through the use of multiple sources of data, rich description, and member checking. The methodology used resulted in information that provided in-depth insight and understanding of economic and community development policy in a small city. Chapter 4 presents data analysis and findings from data organized in response to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Results

*"*I want to see where every person in this city has the ability to live their American dream. And that's where the catch becomes what is the American dream for me isn't the American dream for someone else.*"* Participant 619230.

Introduction

Chapter 4 includes the findings from this study. The purpose of the study was to provide a deeper understanding of the interactions among economic and community development policies and the factors that influence them within the setting of a small U.S. city seeking to grow its economic base and improve the quality of life for its residents by reducing poverty and its effects. There are four questions that have guided this study:

1. How can a small, nonmetropolitan city use policy to address its local economic and quality of life challenges?

2. How do the economic development and community development policies and strategies interact to create positive social changes?

3. What factors raise the awareness of public officials of the need or desire to engage in economic development and community development?

4. To what extent has the interaction of policies and their implementation been effective in reducing poverty and its effects, and why or why not?

This chapter gives a brief presentation of how data were collected, and the process used to interpret the data and gain understanding. I included a short history of the city highlighting key events that affected economic and community development

policymaking. Next, I present the findings, organized by dominant themes, and discussed in context of the research question.

Setting of the Study

The case study approach was the most suitable method to use to obtain the in-depth context and perspective on the research topic. The research findings presented here consist of analysis of three types of data: interviews, documents, and photographs. In early 2016, I recruited participants who are active in influencing, making, and implementing policy in Danville, Virginia. I recruited participants from only this location since the unit of analysis was the Danville micropolitan area. Purposeful sampling was used to assure that participants interviewed would have direct knowledge of activities, events, and decisions impacting policies during the time period being studied.

No trauma or personal, professional, or psychological changes were experienced by the participants during the time of the study that would have affected interpretation of study results. Several of the city council members had terms of office that were ending. One of them chose not to run for re-election, and those who did were successful in their re-election bids. It is not apparent that the election campaign had direct influence on the research since data from other sources was used to evaluate and validate data provided.

Demographics

The participants in the study represented policymakers, city employees who implement policies, and nongovernmental policy influencers, in order to obtain a well-rounded perspective of the case. Interviews were conducted with 11 participants. The sample size was initially expected to be 10, but an opportunity arose to more evenly

balance the representation of policy influencers, so the sample size was expanded (see

Figure 3). The names of the participants were not used in the data, but rather participants

were assigned an identifier number. Policymakers interviewed were members of city

council; policy implementers were current or former city employees; and policy

influencers were leaders of major organizations within the micropolitan area representing

education, business, and charitable funding. All participants were active in the

community for much or all the time period studied.

Table 1

Participant Types

Primary Participant Type	Number	Role
Policymaker	4	Elected Official
Policy Influencer	3	Community Leader
Policy Implementer	4	Government Employee
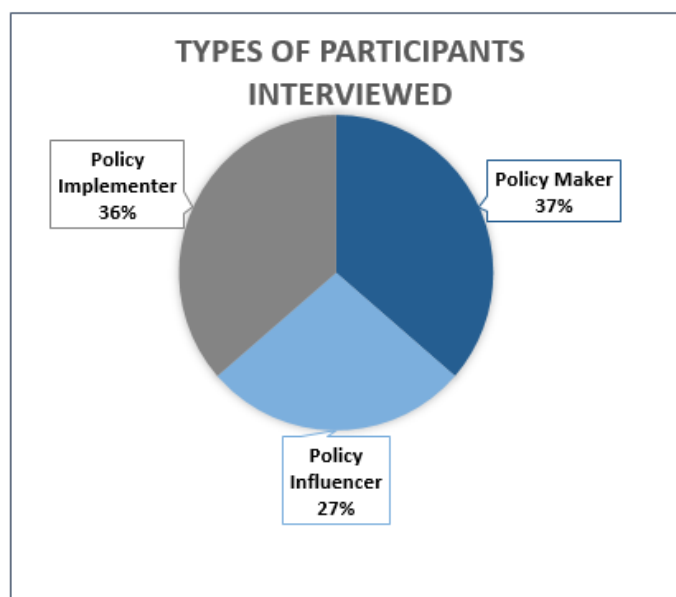
Figure 3. Visual presentation of study participants.

Data Collection

I identified members of city council and some key positions within city government, using a purposeful sampling technique. Each member of the list of potential participants held a position within the community that would indicate involvement in policymaking or policy setting. I also used the snowballing strategy of asking participants for names of other persons who have knowledge relevant to the study. Potential participants who declined interviews were also asked for names of additional people. This snowballing strategy was effective in that three of the participants interviewed were identified in this manner.

Contact information for potential participants was gathered from public websites for the city and other organizations that provided an email address and, in some cases, a contact telephone number. The identified potential participants were initially contacted by email, as included in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. Only one response was received, so I sent the email a second time, followed by phone calls to those potential participants who had publicly listed business telephone numbers. While many still chose not to respond, others engaged in conversation with me about the nature and purpose of the study; only one of them declined participation, but instead provided a referral to another participant. That referral did lead me to an interview an individual not originally identified. Several of the participants offered names of other potential participants who would be knowledgeable. Many of those had already been included in the pool of potential participants and had been contacted; however, several new names were offered. One participant not only provided several suggestions, but also contacted

one of them and provided contact information for me, which did result in another participant interview.

Generally, participants were interested in knowing who I was and why studying policymaking and policy interactions in this small city would matter. Nearly all expressed an interest in hearing the results of the study after it is completed. Willingness to share results was an important aspect of interaction with participants, as it seemed to support trust building between the participant and researcher. One participant reached such a strong level of trust that the participant suggested I consider running for a position on city council in the future. All participants were cooperative in sharing their thoughts, insights, and experiences.

While conducting interviews, I observed participants' demeanors. Policymakers and policy implementers tended to be rather matter-of-fact about their responses. Community leaders were more passionate and emotional during their interviews, with one moved to tears while discussing community needs and policies to address them. No participants expressed fear or anxiety about the research topic or participating in the study.

Interviews were semi-structured using open-ended questions to allow participants to respond with the information they chose as responsive and to say as much as they were willing to contribute. Questions were prepared in advance, as an interview guide was used. Questions were adapted slightly if a participant seemed to experience confusion or an inability to answer the question as it was asked. At times, I asked prompting questions to follow up or encourage participants to expand or explain some aspect of their initial

response. In a couple of interviews, the participants were so enthusiastic about the topic that asking one question led to a discourse that also answered subsequent questions. All interviews were recorded with an electronic recorder that provided speech-to-text capabilities, thus streamlining transcription. I also took notes during interviews. Participants were provided with an opportunity to review and correct transcripts; other than a few transcription errors, no changes were made.

Documents collected and used as data for the study were minutes of city council meetings, documents available through the websites of the city and other organizations represented in the study, statistical information from the Danville Regional Foundation, County Health Rankings prepared by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, and articles from the *Danville Register and Bee* (newspaper) relating to the type of events described by the participants. Certain areas and aspects of the city were presented by participants as examples of policy at work or policy outcomes. I visited some of these locations and documented observations via photographs. These photographs were carefully taken so as to not include any persons who were in the area.

Data Analysis

All documents, transcripts, and photographs were uploaded to Atlas.ti 7, a software program designed to aid in the qualitative analysis of textual, graphical, audio, and video data. Data coding was performed initially with open coding. I had developed a series of preset codes based on the theoretical framework and topics of the study; however, once data were collected, I determined that open coding was a more productive first-step. Use of open coding enabled descriptive codes and coding based on issues and

ideas present in the data. I spent much time working to assure that data was coded

thoroughly and that codes were useful to further the research analysis. Interviews were

then coded a second time using the preset codes to enable data to be directly related to the

research questions and theoretical framework. Categorical aggregation of codes into

related groups (families) and families into themes enabled specific instances and

impressions to be examined together to form meanings. Direct interpretation enabled me

to identify meanings from statements, reports, and observations. Frequency of codes was

useful to show how often an issue or idea appeared, particularly in interviews.

Table 2

Aggregation of Quotations to Codes to Themes

Theme	Major Code Families	Codes
Acceptance	Transportation infrastructure inadequate	7
	Blight is a major challenge	26
	Triggers to motivate new policies	3
	Use consultants to provide expertise	6
Resilience	Bring people together as a community	6
	Learning from experience	36
	City in transition, balance decline with growth	41
Building on Strengths	Citizen input into policy	8
	Industrial Parks	5
	Riverwalk is an asset	7
	Encourage Entrepreneurs	3
	Preserve historic aspects	12
	Recognizing and using the positive attributes	39
ED and CD are Interwoven	Policy can also divide the community	6
	Change children's lives now to change the future	3
	CD and Ed interact and are closely related	8
Keeping Focus	Workforce development is part of ED activities	17
	Creating new mindset in the community	16
	Using ED and CD to create social change	9
Continual Assessment	Measuring the impacts	24
	Success stories but not enough impact	1
Partnerships: More than Just a City	Funding makes the difference	5
	Use a regional approach to increase attractiveness	10
External Influence	Federal/State action as influence/effect	14
	Change state law and develop a land bank	5
	Globalization is a factor and a challenge	3
	Look outward for examples and inspiration	7
Achievement	Danville receives recognition and awards	14
	Community development has some success	8
	River District success	41

The collected data yielded many quotations relevant to the research questions.

Multiple reviews using a constant comparison approach enabled me to group the

quotations into codes and those codes refined into more inclusive codes, known as

families. The resulting families led to the identification of nine significant themes

relevant to economic and community development policymaking. An analysis was
performed to determine the frequency of the themes in the participant interviews and
overall data to help indicate areas of potential discrepancy and consistency. The relative
frequency of a theme does not reflect its importance, merely a difference in focus
between responding to questions versus recording information over an extended period.

Table 3

Frequency of Themes in Participant Interviews

Theme – Ordered by Frequency in Interviews	Frequency in Interviews	Frequency in All Data	Rank Based on All Data
Continual assessment	152	294	2
Resilience	112	393	1
Keeping focus	82	260	4
Acceptance	77	151	6
ED and CD are interwoven	72	101	8
Partnerships: More than a city	50	137	7
Achievement	35	169	5
Building on strengths	27	262	3
External influence	26	68	9

One correlation shows the prevalence of the themes of continual assessment,
resilience, and keeping focus across all types of data. The importance of external
influence, building on strengths, and recognition of achievement merit their inclusion,
even though they may not be overtly discussed as often as other themes.

While no information was found that contradicted data gathered from interviews,
some data is discrepant in that it provides additional information, not included in the

interviews, illustrating the extent of errors and repercussions of some policy decisions. This discrepant information is included in the discussions of the relevant themes and is used to present a more fully informed picture.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Member checking, the practice of having participants review interview transcripts to ensure completeness and accuracy, was used along with use of published data to ensure that credibility was maintained. By using the same interview protocol for all participants, consistency was maintained throughout the study. By allowing participants to respond to questions without influence, I avoided any researcher bias. The use of additional documents and photographic observation to substantiate, expand, or put context around the participants' information enabled me to avoid bias in analysis and to triangulate and assure validity of the research. The conclusions may not be transferrable to other cities since the nature of a case study is an in-depth examination of one case, and is not intended to be directly transferrable to other cases.

Key Attributes of the City of Danville

Because this study was an in-depth examination of one city, the results of the research must be viewed in the context of that city, its history, and circumstances. During data collection and analysis, it became apparent that the geography of certain neighborhoods and institutions as well as events in the history of the city were important in understanding why and how policies were made, and in at least one instance, why the policy led to the consequences it had.

The City of Danville is bisected by the Dan River with the downtown and warehouse district on one side, along with the regional medical center, community college, and private four-year university. On the other side of the river are shopping areas, including the local mall and large strip malls, known as the Coleman Marketplace. Industrial plants are present in the area and represent the major source of employment; the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company currently is the largest employer in the city (Office of Economic Development, 2015). See Figure 4.

The River District, as it is now named, was once the tobacco warehouse district in downtown Danville. With rail lines running among the warehouses, this area adjacent to downtown's Main Street was home to several large tobacco processing warehouses. Once the tobacco industry declined, these buildings were left empty and without purpose. The other major industry that had supported Danville for decades was the textile industry, with Dan River's several mills located throughout the city, including along the river, downtown, and near the tobacco district (National Park Service, n.d.). The physical effect of these two industries disappearing from the city was that many large buildings were left unoccupied and unmaintained. Not surprisingly, vandalism, decay, and fire affected the properties. The socio-economic effect was that thousands of people lost their jobs with no real alternative employment sources.
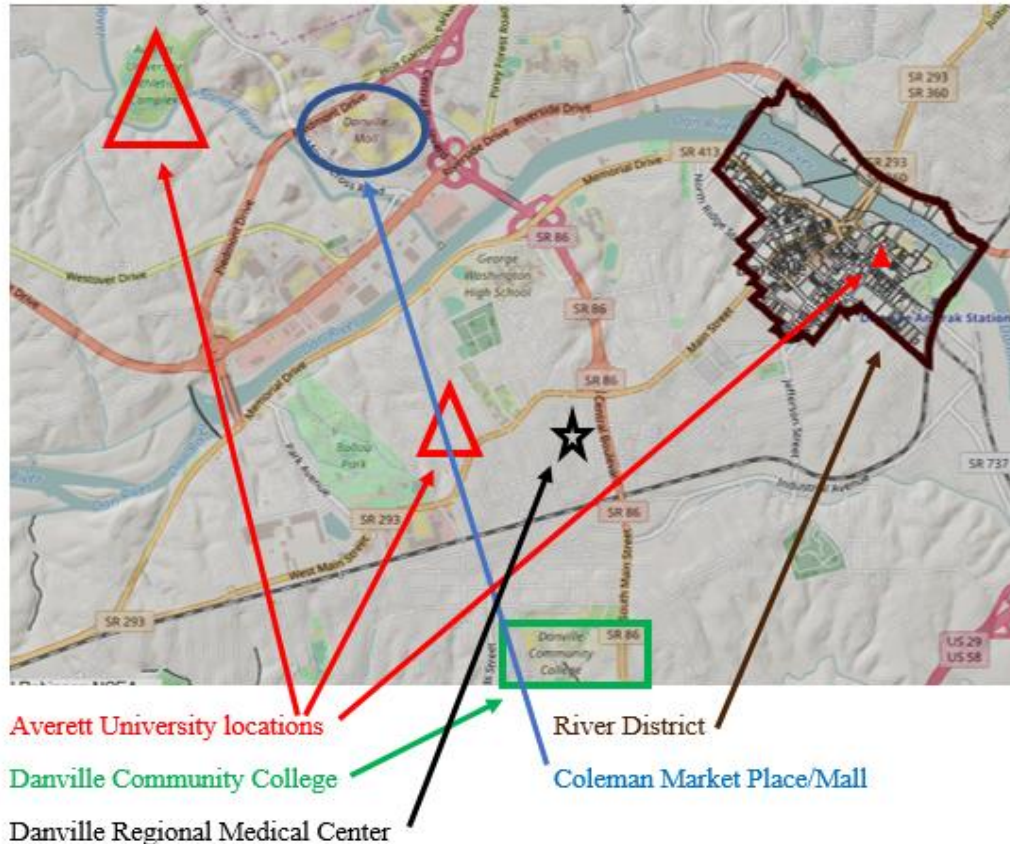
Figure 4. Danville: Geography of key locations.

Many families chose to leave the area in pursuit of employment elsewhere, leaving their residences vacant and falling into disrepair as well. Of those who remained, unemployment was common, and the available employment was often low-paying (minimum wage retail or food service, for example) or required credentials beyond the abilities of the citizens (such as physicians or education professionals; U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Consequently, more residences fell into disrepair and more businesses failed because the local economy could not support them. Even the city's "Millionaire's Row" along West Main street between downtown and Averett University's main campus fell into disrepair as the executives who once ran thriving corporations left them behind

for the next position in a new town. The city's population declined, poverty increased,

and empty and decaying buildings were left throughout the city.

Table 4

Important Events in the History of Danville, Virginia

1746	William Wynne establishes a ferry at Wynne's Falls
1793	Virginia General Assembly establishes a tobacco inspection station at Wynne's Falls and renames it Danville
1830	Danville receives its town charter
1836	Had a population of 1,000 with 2 tobacco warehouses and 2 tobacco factories
1873	Dibrell Brothers Tobacco is formed in Danville; it later grew to be the second-largest tobacco company in the world.
1890	Danville becomes an independent city
1856	R&D (Richmond and Danville) railroad completed
19th Century	Tobacco industry continued to grow and Danville became known as 'World's Best Tobacco Market"
Civil War	Danville became a major supply depot for the Confederate Army
April 4-10, 1865	Danville became the last capital of the Confederacy after the fall of Richmond. The Sutherlin mansion served as the temporary home of Jefferson Davis. This mansion is now home to the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History.
July 1882	Riverside Cotton Mills is founded; it later became known as Dan River, Inc., the largest textile mill in the world
1994	Dibrell merges with Monk-Austin to form the Dimon tobacco company.
2005	Sale of the Danville Regional Medical Center provides $200 million to fund the Danville Regional Foundation to improve life in Danville, Pittsylvania County, and Caswell County (NC)
2006	Dan River, Inc. closed because of overseas competition
2010	City Council visits Greenville, SC, and gains a vision to revitalize Danville

Note. Compiled from information published by the National Park Service: Virginia Main Street Communities, City of Danville, the Caswell Messenger, *Danville Register and Bee*, and the Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History.

Results

The research questions for this study represent a continuum of influences on and effects of policymaking. Presenting results based on research questions proved to be challenging because of the overlapping nature of the questions and themes. The first research question was used to discover how community leaders viewed the role of policy and how it could be used to further economic development and community development goals. The second research question was to explore the interaction of economic and community development in creating positive social change. The remaining questions sought to identify factors influencing policymaking, and finally, the extent of success of addressing the underlying challenges. Therefore, results are organized by theme with discussion addressing the relevant research questions.

Acceptance

One of the major themes identified is the city's acceptance of the changes in its circumstances. As is often said in the context of addiction, the first step is accepting or admitting there is a problem (CRC Health, n.d.). Participant 611136 described Danville as a true mill town where people felt their opinions did not matter; instead, "it's what the people at the mill decide." The data indicate the policymakers realized that the tobacco industry was in a permanent decline and that textile jobs had moved away and were not coming back. They accepted the new reality of the city. As one participant (P619224) stated, "We had tobacco processing plants closing right and left here and moving off shore, and our downtown was decaying." Another participant (P611122) presented the

idea that the city had a choice to either move forward aggressively or to let the business market determine whether the city is successful or if it fails.

To move forward, the city accepted that its circumstances had changed from being a mill town and tobacco-trading hub to be a city with more people than jobs, more houses than families, and that without action, it would only decline further. The theme of acceptance relates most directly to research question 3 in that acceptance of the changed circumstances was a key trigger for policymaking.

Blight. After the decline in population and businesses closing, the city was left with a large inventory of unoccupied and untended buildings, particularly in locations where the textile and tobacco businesses and their employees used to live. In 2010, Danville conducted a study of its housing stock and found that "about 2,000 of its roughly 16,000 houses were dilapidated, boarded up or abandoned" (Thibodeau, 2014b). It is not just housing that was affected though. In the past, Danville's downtown was thriving with several large businesses located there, along with shopping and restaurants to support them. When shopping centers became the new norm, downtown saw some loss, but when the tobacco companies pulled out and the "white mill" (so called because it is a large white building located on the river downtown that housed a large portion of Dan River Textiles' mill operations) closed, conditions in downtown and along Main Street worsened (P619224).

> Downtown, nobody was coming anymore so you started seeing things closing down, close down, close down. It got into decay mode. People that owned the buildings didn't live here, didn't care about them, they were just trying to make a

buck. And that's what finally got us to the point where we had to do something.

(P619224)

Participant 617138 described blight in terms of a ride down the street. "Houses that have been poorly maintained…you see the shutters falling off, one hanging upside down, the paint peeling, and maybe two of the porch columns are gone" (P617138). Without jobs, residents cannot afford to repair or maintain their houses, so poor neighborhoods continue to decline. A policy influencer (619230) stated that blight is a deterrent to economic growth and vitality so policies to eradicate that blight are needed. Several participants noted that the empty, blighted houses attracted crime.

> You have people coming in who just moved in to the neighborhood; they may stay 2 to 3 months. They may set up drug distribution areas and then they'll move. They'll go from house to house. They won't leave the community, they just go down the street and rent another house. (P617138)

See Figure 5 for photographs of several blighted buildings in Danville.

Blight is relevant to all four research questions, particularly to research question 3 addressing triggers to policymaking. Once city leaders accepted the decaying conditions and their effects on the city, they became enabled to address those conditions.

Figure 5. Blighted buildings. Photographs by A. Kautzman, 2016.

Transportation infrastructure. Looking at a map of Danville, Figure 1, provides a visual reference for the city's awkward, or indirect, highway connections that were referenced by several participants. They noted that there are highways to and from Danville, but they are not major interstates. Connections to large interstate highways (such as I-64 or I-95) from Danville require travel on roads that are, at times, two lanes. Danville is not a port and only has a local airport. Its tobacco and textile industries were supported by railroad lines, which although are still active, have suffered significant decline. Participant 611136 discussed an opportunity for establishment of a distribution center in the region. Danville-Pittsylvania County was a finalist but lost to a location in North Carolina because it "is on the interstate and we're not."

Highway 29 comes through Danville and is a four-lane divided highway going south; it has also been designated "future Interstate 785" for years. About an hour away is Greensboro, North Carolina, which hosts interchanges with three major interstates (I-40,

I-85, and I-73). The beltway around Greensboro is scheduled to connect to Highway 29 at a point that is not interstate grade, leaving a 5.1 mile-gap before vehicles reach interstate-grade road up to Danville. The ability to upgrade that 5-mile stretch rests with the state of North Carolina; but North Carolina's decision impacts Danville's ability to attract industry dependent on surface transport. Participant 611136 indicated that having spoken with officials, they are not motivated to make that upgrade, which would position Danville to compete more directly with North Carolina communities for economic development opportunities.

The City of Danville accepted that its transportation infrastructure is inadequate compared to other communities in the larger region by limited highway access, limited airport access, and no maritime port. Directly relevant to research question 3, recognizing and accepting the limitation, enables policymakers to explore alternatives and solutions.

Use consultants to provide expertise. Some participants discussed, and documents supported, that city policymakers and policy implementers have expertise and extensive experience in working with economic development in this region. They also have hired consultants to provide in-depth expertise in certain areas. "We've got to study best, next practices and bring in experts. We're experts, but we need to have that influence from outside." (P612941).

One example cited by Participant 619224 was commissioning a housing study of the city in which consultants looked at every house in the city to report on the health of the neighborhood, even on a house-by-house level. The study identified some previously recognized issues (oversupply of degraded housing stock) and additional issues, such as

"dead zones" around key areas, such as near the university and hospital that could be used more wisely and productively (City Council 12.16.2014). Another example is the use of a retail consultant to evaluate what is already present and to identify additional opportunities (City Council 2.5.2015).

Accepting that there is value in objective, unbiased evaluations is part of the process the city has used and has been identified as a factor in raising awareness of the need for policymaking (research question 3).

Policy trigger. One policymaker (P619230) explained that when industry declined, Danville was left with a larger population of poor and fewer people of affluence.

> What you've seen with the demographics in Danville is a lot of our middle and upper-class have left because when jobs went away they moved where jobs were. We no longer had corporate headquarters here .... A lot of those people left all at once. The people in poverty became greater and the people in affluence got smaller. (P619230)

Participants described these conditions and considered them as direct triggers for policymaking (P617123, P617138, P618139). Danville City Council minutes reflect discussion around the city's priorities in 2012, which included "stimulate new private sector jobs and investment; eradicate property blight and stem Danville's population decline by retaining and attracting more middle and upper income residents." The city has been described as having an economic divide; a small upper class with a large lower class with very few in between. A 2014 newspaper article summarizing the report of a

consultant reported that the city's population needs to be more diversified and "the middle class needs to be grown in Danville" (Morrison, 2014b). City council minutes from December 2014 state that Danville needs to attract employed working-class and middle-class professionals and that housing is part of its economic development challenge.

Many of the participants interviewed cited crime as another trigger for policy; several linked crime problems in the city to the blighted buildings and high poverty in the city. "With regard to dilapidated property, we found that there's a lot of crime. A lot of people conducting bad deals in that property" (P618139). The shooting of a popular doctor walking home after work put violent crime in the news and stirred community action as well as policy action. One participant, a policy influencer, noted that recognition of a crisis leads to people think about what needs to be done.

> Every Friday night we have a walk somewhere in the city that has been the hospital stepping up. It started programs and some workshops. A lot of people don't seem to think there's an issue until there's a sense of crisis or urgency and then people start to look at what do we need to do in our communities. (P619230)

Acceptance of the new reality motivated the city to create new economic development policies and its citizens to engage in efforts to bring about social change in the community. Acceptance enabled policymakers to move the city forward by recognizing the need for change and focusing the efforts.

Resilience

According to the American Psychological Association (n.d.), resilience is the ability to adapt and bounce back from adversity, trauma, and other sources of stress. In this study, all the participants discussed actions and policies that demonstrate the resilience of the City of Danville and its leaders.

Participant 611122, a policy implementer, discussed two opposite philosophies: Do not do anything and let the free market determine if a community is successful versus do everything you can to make your city competitive. "For a community, like Danville, we're somewhat isolated, we have to be aggressive if we want to see any success" (P611122). In Danville, city leaders chose resilience by seeking strategies, making policies, and implementing changes intended to not only stop the city's decline, but to reverse it and improve the city's fortunes.

City in transition. After its main industries died, and the population declined, the city found itself with a declining student population in its schools, spread across more school buildings than the budget could support. City Council minutes from 2012 through 2014 show discussions of closing elementary schools and combining the magnet high school back into the general high school. Ultimately, students were consolidated, the magnet school was kept separate, and two empty school buildings were turned over to the city by 2014. These buildings were declared as surplus property and put up for sale (City Council meeting May 2015). Council meeting minutes reveal that along with schools, other city operations such as library branches, fire stations, and the armory were reviewed

for restructure or combination. Participant 611122 summarized the city's approach as adapting over time, seeking better or new ways to manage.

A policy implementer, Participant 611122, noted that because the city had established resources to assist its citizens, it is easier to live in poverty in Danville than in other places. There is easy access to social services, affordable housing readily available, and shopping and medical care within walking distance or a short bus ride from almost anywhere within the city. These factors make Danville an attractive location for people in poverty, worsening the challenge the city already faces. Participant 618139, a policymaker, discussed the factors evidencing the city's decline and the effects of a city with aging infrastructure. At the same time as the city was addressing the need to replace water lines and gas lines, it also was looking to improve other aspects before they started to decline. Specifically, the participant mentioned finding the "right" presidents for the private university and the local community college, as well as the development of the River District. So as economic hardships accumulate, and employable citizens migrate away and people struggling to get by are attracted in, the city leaders chose to mitigate some issues while making focused efforts on the central business district (now known as the River District) and its rehabilitation to create growth. Participant 168139 compared the central business district to a home's living room. If your living room is a mess and in disrepair, no one will want to come in and stay; but if your living room is clean and attractive and in good repair, people will choose to spend time there.

With the city experiencing a prolonged economic decline that led to the population decline and increase of poverty and crime, and the city's policy response, it appears that Danville is a city in transition.

Learning from experience. Two policy implementers (P67123, P610435) discussed that sometimes policymaking means recovering from your own earlier policy mistakes. Not every effort to improve circumstances works. In 2013, the city formed Danville United (City Council meeting October 2013), a new organization intended to "create a community of all races in Danville" (P612941). The vision was that members of the community would come together in a true grass-roots movement to unite the city's residents to foster tolerant, friendly, and welcoming attitudes towards people of differing races, religions, and economic status (Thibodeau, 2014a). After a couple years of meetings, the organization disbanded, and according to one policy influencer, may have left minorities in Danville feeling disillusioned with the community and seeing the experience as an example of community leaders not living up to their promises to support the black community (P612941).

Another area in which Danville has learned from its past mistakes is in the use of incentives for new businesses moving to or opening in the city. Among the resources available for economic development identified by several participants has been funding from several state and local foundations (primarily the Virginia Tobacco Commission and Danville Regional Foundation).

Early in the economic development efforts, the city entered into arrangements for grants to businesses interested in opening or moving to Danville. These arrangements

often included acting as guarantor to repay the foundations if the businesses did not meet investment and employment goals and failed to repay (P617123, P610435). Unfortunately, the city chose to do its own due diligence on companies without expert assistance; the result has been that a number of those firms never reached investment or employment targets (P617123, P611136). Rather than give up or cut back on economic development incentives, Danville's leaders made several decisions. First, the relationships with the funding organizations are extremely important, so the city has been making the repayments for at least six unsuccessful ventures (identified through newspaper articles and city council minutes). Second, the decision was made to sue some of the offending companies and principals to try to recover the lost funding (Morrison, 2014a). Third, an international law firm was retained and is now used to "vet" each new company before the city extends an incentive package or aids in securing funds from foundations or the state (P617123). Finally, but not least, as noted by nearly all participants, Danville continues to aggressively pursue economic growth and development and continues to offer incentives for current businesses to expand and others to choose the Danville area as their new location.

Bringing people together. To build a sense of community and bring the city residents together, Danville holds several annual events. All of which provide positive experiences for people enduring the changes in the city, both positive and negative. P611122, a policy implementer, noted that many of these events sell out every year, such as ShrimpFest and BrewFest. Each year there is the Festival in the Park and a series of summer concerts at the Carrington Pavilion.

The theme of resilience crosses three research questions. The city is in transition from a declining city with many challenges to becoming a city that moves forward, rebuilding and revitalizing, starting with its living room. The resilience demonstrated through its policies addresses the first research question. The resilience shown by Danville in its efforts to transform itself and learn from its own mistakes in earlier policy decisions and actions is relevant to research question 3. Sometimes the trigger for policymaking is the need to correct policy. Finally, the resilience shown by continuing to bring people together as a community for positive events and experiences relates to the second research question of creating positive social change.

Building on Strengths

Every participant during their interviews noted the relationships of using the strong assets of the Danville area to create stronger communities and economic development. Assets frequently identified by participants included funding incentives and tax credits, the Dan River, historic interests, citizen involvement, access to education and workforce training, and recreation opportunities. The theme of building on strengths touches on all four research questions.

Citizen involvement. Policymaker P611021 noted that he gets to speak to people at events and through social media so that he hears a lot of ideas and what the priorities are in ways that are less intimidating than standing in front of city council in a meeting, although many do that as well. Policy influencer P619230 mentioned that the size of the community enables people to have conversations with policymakers, to raise concerns, and to propose changes in informal ways. This participant also discussed how after the

shooting of a popular physician during a hold-up attempt, the community now comes together every Friday night for a community walk to protest crime and reclaim the neighborhoods. Participant 617123 provided an example of citizen involvement that directly makes a positive difference is a group of residents who worked to build a mountain bike trail. The city allowed access to the property, but invested no funds or resources; the volunteer group created it.

Citizen access to policymakers and input into policy were identified repeatedly during participant interviews as a positive aspect of Danville. They also expressed a desire to have more residents involved, including sitting on boards and commissions.

Riverwalk. One of the most popular city assets, identified by several participants, is the Dan River. The Riverwalk was built in segments, and enables residents to enjoy the river and nature as they walk, jog, or ride their bikes (P615137). Much of the work to create it was done through the city public works and park and recreation departments. Surveys and feedback from the residents and many visitors are that it is a valuable quality of life asset to the city and to the River District (P611122, P617123, P618139). Increasing the value of the trail as a city asset is the fact that many aspects of Danville's rebirth can be seen while walking it: the new internationally recognized YMCA, the revitalized River District buildings, the events facilities at the City Market and Carrington Pavilion.

Figure 6. Riverwalk entrances from the river district. Photographs by A. Kautzman, 2016.

Industrial parks. Through partnerships, Danville has designated and developed four industrial parks in and near the city that house major entities, such as IKEA and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (P617123). The industrial parks enable the city to offer ground-up opportunity locations, or shell buildings, that can be custom finished to accommodate the business, as was done with Nestle (P611122). Because there are several locations/parks with varying options for building, the city has flexibility to accommodate the needs of businesses interested in expanding or locating in the area.

Entrepreneur-friendly. New business can be brought into a community from elsewhere or it can be developed within the community. Making a community entrepreneur friendly has the potential to improve its economic conditions.

This approach led the City of Danville to partner with the surrounding county to create the Dan River Business Development Center – a business incubator to help new

business owners start and learn to operate their businesses (P618139). The Danville

Regional Foundation has supported several other initiatives that aid by providing funding

for start-ups, resources in terms of skill development, access to expertise, and locating a

property to house the new business (P611136). Another participant noted that by

developing entrepreneurs within the community, the people and the money stays in the

community rather than searching for opportunities elsewhere (P619224). An example

was given of a key leader in a relatively new company that is seeing some success

choosing to mentor a young high school student with a business idea. As such, the city is

starting to see entrepreneurs mentoring new entrepreneurs (P619230).

Preserving history. As the last capital of the Confederacy, Danville and its

residents have a strong sense of history and pride that extends to the industries that

provided for the city for so many years. Preserving that history as part of its economic

development activities also reminds the citizens of their community roots.

The central business district and the tobacco warehouse district are registered as

historic districts (P617123). As part of the neighborhood revitalization process, the city is

paying attention to the old homes that have deteriorated, determining which can be saved

and which cannot. "You have to pick what you can do and what you can't do" (P619224).

When North Carolina ended its historic tax credit program, the construction

companies that specialized in historic preservation work became available to invest in

projects in Danville, such as converting tobacco warehouses to modern lofts while

preserving the building and cobblestone streets. With those projects showing success,

local investors are following that lead by purchasing and rehabilitating historic properties

(P611136). In honor of the city's heritage, the local historical society, History United, along with a group of interested citizens rescued and restored the "HOME" portion of the old Dan River Fabrics sign (P611021). The sign used to be on the white mill downtown that greeted people with "Home of Dan River Fabrics." Each letter was located and repaired so that the HOME sign could be installed on a wall along Main Street as part of the holiday light show in 2016.

  ***Using positive attributes*.** One way the city builds on its strength is by recognizing and using its positive attributes to attract new residents and present a positive quality of life to companies. One policymaker discussed that that some people choose to live in Danville because of its lack of traffic congestion, opportunities to engage in social activities, and overall enjoyable quality of life (P618139). One employer noted that the weather in Danville is an advantage because there are almost no severe weather closures (Thibodeau, 2013). A beautiful river runs through the middle of the city, that with the addition of a few cutouts, becomes a great place to canoe and kayak. (P619224). The city has a strong information infrastructure: a fiber network, transmission redundancy, and it is the location of the serial number three Cray XMT2 supercomputer. Participants noted other attributes contributing to the desirability of the city, both as a place to live and as a place to locate a business. These attributes include: easy access to higher education, with both a four-year univrsity and community college, many parks throughout the city, a baseball "farm team" – the Danville Braves, several museums, a science center, and a myriad of activites and events.

The theme of building on strengths applies to all four research questions. In many ways it addresses the question of how the city can use policy to address its challenges (research question 1). The riverwalk has been cited as a direct contribtion to the quality of life in the community while the support of entrepreneurs supports economic development. The focus on preserving history has contributed to both economic and community development. Positive social change (the focus of the second research question) is achieved, in part, through making use of the community's positive attributes. Citizen involvement helps trigger policymaking by bringing issues and concerns to the attention of policymakers. Finally, a measure of success can be seen in the industrial parks the city has developed.

Economic and Community Development Policies are Interwoven

Closely related. One policy influencer stated that community development and economic development must work "hand-in-hand," since one seeks to improve life in the city and the other wants to present the city in its best light. The successful interplay of these policies and their success not only improves the city, but it also makes Danville an attractive and viable place for outside investors (P610435). Another policy influencer noted that community development supports long-term economic success. As an example, having a strong advocacy program through a merchant's association will help strengthen the revived River District. They brought the "Main Street" program back and were successful in having Danville certified by the state as a Main Street City, which makes additional funding available (P611136). Another noted that the two sets of policies are so interwoven that it is not possible to separate them (P619230). The common ground

is socioeconomic status: economic development seeks to raise it by increasing

employment and rebuilding the middle class. The community responds to magnify the

positive effect. When the city works with residents to repair their homes and to increase

home ownership, they noted those residents began talking to others about fixing up and

"picking up" their properties, as well as reporting suspicious and criminal activities; this

policy created additional positive outcomes with improvements in home quality, safety,

and neighborhood stabilization (P617138).

The theme of the interwoven nature of economic and community development

policies enlightens the first two of the research questions. The data collected relates to the

use of policy to address quality of life and to creating positive social change through the

interaction of these policies.

Change children's lives. Several participants discussed that the hope for the

economic future depends on the children who are in elementary school or younger now.

The idea is that by changing children's lives now, it will have a positive change on the

city in the future. One participant discussed Smart Beginnings, a program that focuses on

preschoolers and instills the idea that they can be great and become anything they want to

be. It sets the ideal (P615137). If children grow up with the expectation of staying in

school and going to college and building professional careers, they will positively

influence the economic future of the city. This sub-theme directly illustrates the use of

policy to create positive social change within the community (research question 2).

Policy can divide the city. A mistake in policy can have unintended negative

outcomes; one example was described by Participant 612941. After much public

discussion and review, the city council voted to have all flags other than the US, state, and city flags removed from all public property. As the last capital of the southern confederacy, a large confederate flag had flown in front of the Sutherlin Mansion—now a museum—for many years. The resolution meant that the flag had to be removed. "No one ever dreamed it was going to cause people to come along and start putting up the confederate flag everywhere" (P612941). There were those who thought the flag belonged at the museum, some who felt it should be gone, and now those who are exercising their rights to put the flags on their property in protest. Visitors and prospective businesses will see them and question what our community values are. The policy related to presenting the city in a certain light to attract business became the incentive for a community campaign and citizen action.

Policy created in support of economic development and an awareness of the different meanings attached to the symbol of the flag affected the community in unexpected ways.

Keeping Focus

Several participants noted the importance of keeping focused on the goals and working towards change. "Probably social change is the most difficult part of growth. You get into a cycle and it's difficult to break." (P615137)

The intersection of economic and community development creates social change. Development is a continuous activity, which always has room for further improvement, was the perspective presented by one participant (P618139). Economic development attracts people to the city, bringing in jobs and increasing the tax base.

Community development builds stronger neighborhoods, forces improvements in education and healthcare, and influences how people feel about themselves and where they live. According to Participant 611136, building educational pipelines through community development efforts will enable people to reach prosperity and will connect those pipelines to economic development in the region.

Examples of programs that create these feeder pipelines include Smart Beginnings, which works with preschool children to prepare them for long-term success (P612941) and the Gentlemen by Choice Club at the public high school. The club is founded on the idea that young men can project a positive image of themselves and their peers; it provides opportunities, such as service, mentoring, leadership development, and networking and career development. The club members engage in public speaking and mentor middle school students (Staff, 2014). Another is the Engaged Employers initiative led by Averett University that encourages employers to provide paid time off so employees can engage in volunteer work to benefit the community. When people (students and employees) are engaged in serving the community, they become a part of it and stay to make it better (P612941).

The use of policies that affect both community and economic development to create positive social change within the city directly relate to research question 2.

Workforce development. To change the local economics and address poverty, the nature of the available workforce must change. Participants 619224 and 611136 described the situation as beyond just needing jobs, but the city residents need living-

wage jobs that include healthcare and retirement benefits. To do that, the city must have both the amenities for a quality of life but also a workforce to fill the jobs.

> You have to get an industry that fits our community; it wouldn't do our citizens a lot of good if we brought in an industry or business and we couldn't provide any workers for them. So, we've got to select those businesses we feel we can supply their workforce, or develop their workforce. (P615137)

It used to be that manufacturing jobs required no education, just a strong back; however, with technology, it is now the knowledge and ability to use and fix the technology that matters. So, the outlook needs to shift to understanding the role of education. Participant 617123 believes the DRF has helped the community greatly by providing access to funding for programs such as the RN to BSN program through Averett University and the advanced manufacturing programs at the community college and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research. However, the people need to understand they hold the responsibility for taking advantage of the opportunities to get "trained up" (P611122).

Creating a new mindset in the community. One challenge that Danville must overcome is the mentality of a mill town. Participant P611136 describes it as people waiting for another big company to come in and give them jobs and run the city the way it used to be. Too many residents do not believe in education because they are waiting for a job like they used to have. Another participant expressed that citizens must get involved in creating social change. If representatives of a potential new business interact with residents and those residents are talking about how terrible it is to live here, Danville is

not going to get that business and its jobs. There is an old saying: You are what people think you are. Danville needs to turn negative criticism into a positive attitude (P615137).

Participants described several approaches taken by the city to create a more positive outlook for the city. One was the demise of the Downtowner. The Downtowner was an old hotel on Main Street that had undergone several attempts at revitalization without success. It had become a symbol of failure, sitting right in the middle of downtown on Main Street. The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) bought the property and tore it down (P611136). Another approach was to redevelop targeted neighborhoods; Participant 617138 described the transition. The city would provide resources for qualifying homeowners to have their houses repaired and the yards cleaned and mowed. That resident would then talk to neighbors about fixing their homes, cutting the grass, getting the junk out of the yard, and so on. Pride returned to the neighborhood. The city also provides opportunities for people to purchase homes, on affordable terms – they make small loan payments and keep the home in good repair for a few years; the loan is then forgiven, and they own the home. Participant 610435 described it as a game-changer for the families because they develop pride and believe that life can get better; the children have a renewed interest in learning.

The use of policy to change the way citizens think about the city, education and future opportunity, and even their neighborhood is a way of creating positive change within the community (Research Question 2).

Continual Assessment

Development is a process. Measuring progress to assure the city is staying on track for improvement is part of that process. The theme of assessment (and measuring impact) provide insight to research question 4 regarding the effectiveness of the city's policymaking efforts.

Measuring the impact. Economic development is highly stressful because people have big expectations and are always looking for another big announcement (P611122). The city will keep trying to solve its poverty problems. The indicators of success are job creation numbers, increased tax base, sales tax, and meals tax (P611122). Crime is another metric to watch; people commit crimes when they have no hope to escape poverty. Getting high school completion rates up and teenage pregnancy rates down are also goals for the community (P612941). Another participant (P619230) discussed measuring impact based on achievement of the "American Dream." But people's idea of what that dream is varies, so measuring the achievement is difficult. Is it measured by employment or income? Or is it measured by whether a family has adequate food and healthcare access? Participant 611021 considers employment levels, median income, population growth, as well as business and tax revenues as key measures of impact along with "mood radar" —how do people feel about being here. "There is more of a sense of optimism now than there was in years past" (P611021).

Success stories but not enough impact. There have been some successes, and some families are taking advantage of the services to help their children; there is still more to do. The city has too much poverty and too little of a middle class (P611122).

Looking at statistics, Danville has improved its unemployment rate, seen hotel revenues rise, and people are choosing to return to downtown to live in the River District. Now the challenge is to make a real impact to take the success from the River District and expand it city-wide. The precision machining program has a 100% job placement rate, so that program needs to be made accessible to more people by taking it to the city's high school (P611021). Danville has been successful in getting several large companies to locate in the city and county, but now there needs to be targeted effort put into identifying what their needs are so that the city can support them, keep them, and help them grow. Not all manufacturing jobs have the advanced technology; some employers need entry level, machine operators (P619230).

Partnerships: More Than a City

Partnerships between local government and private sector entities or other governments have been a way to maximize strength and increase investment. Some other identified benefits include reduced development risk, improved efficiency and implementation timelines, and improved service to the community (Conrad, 2012). Partnerships do not always go as planned and require flexibility, perseverence, and an understanding of stakeholders and their perspectives in order to succeed (Stachelski, 2017). The partnership approach to economic and community development, as well as funding for projects and policies, provides information relevant to research qestions 2 and 3: creating social change and triggering policymaking.

One of the most important partnerships the City of Danville has is with the surrounding Pittsylvania County. According to Participant 618139, that alliance was a

challenge to form since in the mid-1980s the city annexed 17 square miles of land and

10,000 people from the county, which created tension between the city and county.

Nevertheless, the need for an improved economy enabled the two governments to work

together to create the Regional Industrial Facility Authority (RIFA), which owns several

industrial parks. This partnership works well enough that it has been noted as an example

of model cooperation (P618139 & P611122).

A second important partner with Danville is the Danville Regional Foundation

(DRF), which worked closely with the city to create the River District (P610435). In

2010, the DRF organized a trip to Greenville, South Carolina, for members of the city

council and key city employees; their experiences in Greenville inspired the vision for

Danville's River District (P619224, P611136, & P618139). The DRF works with the city

to provide funding for economic development projects and incentives (P611136). Averett

University and the DRF were early partners with the city in converting a tobacco

warehouse in the River District into offices and classrooms to house the university's

school of nursing and the adult education division. Other partnerships with community

groups, companies, and the Chamber of Commerce have resulted in a bike repair station

on the Riverwalk (Kiwanis Club), a dancing waters fountain on the downtown plaza

(Japan Tobacco International) (City Council minutes April 2012), and other benefits to

the community.

Regional approach. Working with surrounding governments to create a regional

approach to attracting new business development and addressing challenges is a

necessity. The city is surrounded by Pittsylvania County in Virginia and Caswell County

in the state of North Carolina to the south, so working with several other local governments and two state governments is essential. Many people in Danville work in North Carolina or in the county and vice versa. The governments in the area have to cooperate with each other if they are going to be able to compete with metropolitan areas for jobs and funding (P611021). If a business locates in Caswell County, it benefits Danville residents who get jobs there, so a regional approach makes more sense than going it alone (P615137). A study investigating whether regional economic development partnerships in metropolitan areas are effective in improving certain indicators of economic health. The study linked adoption of a REDP with increased personal income per capita and increased firm creation (Chen, Feiock, & Hsieh, 2015). Whether or not these correlations are found in micropolitan areas remains to be seen.

Engaging in partnerships to further economic and community development goals relates to research question 2 and the creation of positive social change. Participants provided several convincing examples.

Funding makes the difference. Funding emerged as a significant factor in policymaking. One Danville policy implementer (617123) described the sale of the Danville regional hospital, which enabled the establishment of the Danville Regional Foundation, as the most significant event affecting economic development and quality of life in the area. Participants 617123 and 611122 also identified another source of funding as the Virginia Tobacco Commission, which was established by legislation and managed by its Governor-appointed board. These two foundations have provided a great deal of funding, which enabled the city's economic and community development activities. One

of the largest was the internationally recognized new YMCA built overlooking the Dan

River. Policy without funding does not make a difference (P617123). But as the city's

efforts began to take root in the River District, private investors began follow. Participant

619224 noted that small entrepreneurs are responsible for bringing restaurants, coffee

shops, a yoga studio, and an orthopedic treatment center to the city's downtown River

District. "It's gone from a government and nonprofit-primed pump to being driven by

investment dollars" (P611136).

> Without the assets, all the policies in the world don't get you where you need to
>
> go. But which comes first? I think the assets drive the policy…If I have enough
>
> financial strength I can afford a few mistakes in policy, but if I don't have any
>
> financial strength, the best policies in the world won't get me there. (P617123)

The presence of funding sources to support economic development efforts in the

region encourages and supports the city's policymaking efforts. In essence, the access to

funding that enables the city to put policy into practice is relevant as a trigger to

policymaking under research question 3.

External Influence

Complexity theory recognizes that an organism or entity responds and adapts to

external influences from its environment and that it also exerts influence back on the

environment that can, in turn, influence outward change (Holland, 2014). Data supporting

this theme provides information and examples to answer research questions 2 and 3.

Looking outward for inspiration. One way that external influences affected

Danville's policies was through its intentional outward exploration, seeking examples of

successful policies, strategies, or inspiration. One policymaker noted that seeing other communities that have successful outcomes encourages Danville leaders to ask if that strategy could work here (P611021). As a participant in the Virginia Municipal League, city leaders saw what another locality had achieved and adapted it to fit the Danville culture and needs. The designation of a tourism zone was a result of seeing its success elsewhere (P611021).

The most impactful example of purposeful external influence is the city's River District. Several participants (618139, 617123, 619224, and 611136) described a trip the city council took to visit Greensville, South Carolina, another city that had experienced devastating changes when the textiles and tobacco industries left. That metropolitan city remade its downtown into a pedestrian-friendly area with schools, housing, entertainment, and businesses. Keeping that model in mind, Danville was inspired to envision a new downtown now known as the River District.

These examples provide support for the influence of external models as a policy trigger for small cities (Research Question 3).

National and state actions, events, and circumstances. One participant noted that a change in state government in about 2012, correlated to an emphasis on economic development and education in communities (a shift away from an earlier focus on only the larger metropolitan areas). Now there is a better awareness of community development (P610435). There were other positive policy influences from the state as well. The state legislature might pass a law that makes certain conditions more favorable or provide some funding that the city might be able to access. So, the legislature "could

influence some of what you do" (P619224). For example, the state has passed a bill that makes it legal to produce industrial hemp, which can be produced wherever tobacco can be grown. So, for the Danville area, the state created an opportunity for Danville and its partners in economic development to attract new business (P611021).

Less positive influences noted included changes to funding formulas (P619230) and unfunded mandates set by the state with the costs of meeting them left to localities (P617138). Events elsewhere in the country can create policy impacts in the city as well. "The protests and things at political rallies, that affects Danville. The mass killing in San Bernardino, that affects Danville." Events like those cause the city to evaluate how well protected the city workers are, and to make security changes to minimize the risk of such events happening in Danville (P615137).

Finally, the overall economy was cited as an influence in policymaking and economic development. One policymaker (P615137) correlated a bad economy with little interest from businesses in locating here or expanding. Nearly all participants identified the overall economic decline and recession as incentives to develop economic and community development policies and initiatives.

Economic and community development policy in Danville is directly influenced by decisions made at the state and federal level, whether it is in response to the creation of new opportunities or to address the challenge of added burdens. The influence of actions by the state and federal governments often trigger policymaking on a local level. These issues are directly relevant to research question 3.

Danville changes state law. Danville has influenced state law in order to move forward with some of its development initiatives; Participant 611021 provided an example. The city has an oversupply of housing that is falling into decay. While the city can condemn the buildings, and tear them down, there has been no legal mechanism in place for the city to seize ownership of the land and turn it back into a productive property. The city looked to the external environment to find a solution and consequently proposed a land bank based on the success of that approach in Michigan. For Danville to proceed, however, state law needed to be changed. By working with the state representative, a land-bank bill was passed and localities in Virginia can now create land banks to acquire and remarket decaying properties (P611021). Another instance relates to the city's work toward attracting industries by developing several industrial parks. State law created a circular bind since it required a company to commit to the property before it could be permitted for the development of improvements, but tenants were unwilling to commit to properties that were not permitted (P615137). Again, the City of Danville pursued influencing lawmakers at the state and federal level to change requirements (P615137).

Globalization. Participants saw both positive and negative impacts from globalization. One policy influencer made the point that whether people believe it is good or bad, it must be recognized and dealt with as a matter of policy that Danville is part of a global competitive economy (P61136).

> This region competes in a global economy. Our competition is not South Boston, it is South Korea; it is not Martinsville, it is Malaysia. If we are to continue to

compete successfully, we have to build a policy and practice framework that cuts across borders, that builds new competitive advantage, that builds a much more diversified economy, and I think we are making solid progress on all of that. (P611136)

This global connection is evidenced by the presence of businesses in Danville that represent ten foreign countries (P618139). That global diversity requires policy support to create a city welcoming to international investment. "It's also cultural diversity, cultural enrichment, acceptance, learning from others" (P618139). A "China strategy" is a key part of the city's economic development efforts, as has been evidenced by outreach visits to China by city officials, the hiring of a consultant, and development of marketing materials in Chinese (City Council minutes February 2015).

While policymakers and influencers may see benefits for the city from globalization, others realize that the citizens of Danville see it as negative factor in the city. Many residents view the decline of Dan River (textiles) as being caused by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (P619230). This perspective of the globalization is demonstrated by participant 617123 who attributed the consistently high level of poverty and stagnant median income per capita to "globalization, which cost two major industries; Danville lost two Fortune 500 businesses – totally, they're gone."

Achievement

The real issue is whether the economic and community development efforts have been successful in addressing the effects of poverty in Danville. "Danville is withstanding a lot of challenges better than a lot of cities our size" (P618139).

The River District. "The downtown wasn't like this three years ago. The apartments, condominiums, and businesses wasn't like this three years ago" (P618139). Nearly every participant discussed the rebirth of downtown as the River District as a major achievement. On Bridge Street, where there used to be empty warehouses, there are now offices, apartments, condominium lofts, and an activity area with the Science Center, Community Market, and Carrington Pavilion (concert venue), all along a restored cobblestone street. Participant 611122 and others provided a financial overview of the River District project. The city invested $30 million mostly into enhanced streetscape, purchasing, and preparing properties for sale. Private investment in the River District has been about $100-$110 million. Participant 611136 stated that the housing projects in The River District have come online at about 85% leased and consistently remain full. The population in The River District five years ago was about 200, and now it is more than 2,000 (P619224). Those residents use the Riverwalk to access the new YMCA to work-out and then can walk to a number of restaurants within a few blocks of home for a nice dinner (P619224).

Figure 7. Bridge Street, The River District, Danville, Virginia. Photographs taken by A. Kautzman, 2016. Top left is the former Dan River R&D building undergoing rehabilitation into an orthopedic medical center. Top right is a former tobacco warehouse now occupied by the Danville Regional Foundation and Averett University's School of Nursing. Center photos show warehouses converted to lofts and the restored cobblestone street. Bottom left is the Danville Science Center. Bottom right is the Community Market, which also serves as an event venue.

Some success, making progress. Participant 618139 explained that the economic

condition had been severe, so it takes a while to recover; however, many policies and

programs are paying off. The city is more attractive with blighted properties being

removed. Streetscape efforts are changing the face of downtown, and people are starting

to move in instead of out of Danville. Participant 611122 noted that Danville is an

affordable place to live with nice amenities and a good quality of life; there are

educational opportunities available beyond high school, both vocational and academic, and services and medical care are easily accessible. Those are attributes of success. The city has good policies in place, is working to attract living-wage jobs, and has the education and training programs to develop the workforce to fill them. Given time, it should come together successfully (P619224). The Smart Beginnings program has taken the number of children who were not prepared for kindergarten from 31% to 14% -- "that's success" (P611136).

On the other hand, Participant 611136 indicated that there was only limited success. Yes, the city has developed great recreation opportunities and has wonderful educational opportunities, but poverty and its related problems are still present. There are good policies and programs in place, but the city should not rely solely on policymakers to make the change; rather, more citizens need to take responsibility for making Danville a better place.

Most participants painted achievement to-date as a work in progress. There are other goals related to employment, reduction of households in poverty, and an increase in arts and culture discussed by participants that still lie in the future.

Recognition and awards. During the time period studied, Danville received a number of awards and recognitions acknowledging the quality of its efforts and some of the outcomes. In 2012, Danville was recognized for the Best Economic Development Plan for Cities with a population of 40,000 to 100,000 because of for The River District's success (City Council Meeting August 2012). The Virginia Municipal League gave Danville the 2014 Achievement Award for The River District improvements. It won The

Digital Cities Award, a national competition, in 2011 (City Council Meeting March 2011). The Virginia legislature designated 15 miles of the Dan River through the city as part of the State's Scenic River Act (City Council Meeting October 2014). Several participants also discussed that the magnet high school has been named a Blue-Ribbon School several years running.

While there is no direct, demonstrable link between a specific policy and a statistical outcome, looking at some key indicators over time and alongside those for the state provides context for the policymaking and actions of the city's leaders. Periodically the DRF gathers statistics and publishes a regional report card that provides information on the education, health, and socioeconomic indicators of Danville, several other cities, and the state of Virginia. Table 5 includes information on selected measures related to education, health, and socioeconomic status. Even though in most areas Danville lags behind the state as a whole, it does show signs of stabilization. Improvement can be noted in measures related to education, although it remains to be seen if it can be sustained.

Data from the US Census Bureau provides a historical overview of population changes over time for Danville. From 1960 through the 1980s, the population was relatively stable. The 1990 census showed a peak population of 53,056, with a marked decline subsequently reflecting the attrition attributed to the city's loss of tobacco and textile industries. The 2020 census will provide some indication if the changes in the city will have stopped or reversed the loss of residents. Table 6 presents the reported population for each census.

Table 5

Selected Statistics for Danville and Virginia.

	City of Danville			Virginia		
Indicator	2010	2014	2017	2010	2014	2017
Education						
PALS Pass Rate (K)	75% (2009)	82.8% (2013)	81% (2016)	86.1% (2009)	87.5% (2013)	86.2% (2016)
HS Drop Out	11.5% (2010)	8.9% (2012)	2.3% (2016)	2.1% (2010)	1.9% (2012)	5.3% (2016)
Associates Degree	4.8% (2000)	9.1% (2012)	9.4% (2015)	5.6% (2000)	6.9% (2012)	7.5% (2016)
Bachelors or Higher	13.9% (2000)	16.5% (2012)	17.2% (2016)	29.6% (2000)	34.7% (2012)	37.0% (2016)
Health						
Adult Obesity	28% (2010)	33.0% (2014)	35.0% (2016)	25% (2010)	28% (2014)	27% (2016)
Adult Smoking	27% (2010)	24% (2014)	22.0% (2016)	20% (2010)	18% (2014)	20.0% (2016)
Socioeconomic						
Median Household Income	$33,880 (2007)	$31,609 (2012)	33,600 (2015)	$68,467 (2007)	$66,061 (2012)	$65,015 (2015)
Percent at Poverty Level	24% (2007)	26% (2012)	23.6% (2016)	9.9% (2009)	11.1% (2012)	11.2% (2016)
Percent of Children in Poverty	37% (2010)	41% (2014)	37.0% (2016)	13% (2013)	16.0% (2014)	16.0% (2016)
Homeowner Rate	55.6% (2007)	54.2% (2012)	54.0% (2015)	69.5% (2007)	67.8% (2012)	66.2% (2015)

Source: Compiled from Danville Regional Foundation, 2010, 2014, & 2016 Regional Report Cards.

Table 6

City of Danville Population

Census Year	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	35,066	46,577	46,391	45,642	53,056	48,411	43,055

Source: Compiled from U.S. Census Bureau statistics.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Relation of the Themes to the Research Questions</h3>

Summary of Findings for Question 1

The Danville case study provided several examples of ways in which policymaking was used to address quality of life challenges. Resilience is the trait that allows an entity to experience trauma and to recover from it. Danville is a city in transition struggling to offset the effects of declines in industry, employment, population, and housing quality. The use of policy in a flexible manner, adapting over time, has enabled the city to balance slowing the decline into poverty (fighting blight) with improving and developing new assets, such as the revived downtown River District.

One of the themes developed indicated that participants linked using policy that builds on the city's strengths with building the quality of the community and supporting economic development. Using city resources and personnel to create the Riverwalk trail to takes advantage of the river flowing through the city. Identifying and partnering with other local entities enables the city to encourage and support local entrepreneurs. Another attribute of the community that participants considered important was the efforts to preserve the local history, from the magnificent mansions of Millionaires Row to the tobacco warehouses downtown. Keeping the city's history alive helps maintain the sense of community that the residents value.

Economic development and community development are so closely interwoven that a policy directed at one challenge can influence and support policies in another. As illustrated with examples provided by participants, policy also can be used to create

social change within the community, prepare the workforce for future economic

development, and build a sense of community.

Summary of Findings for Question 2

The case illustrates that resilience, building on strengths, and partnering with

other localities and organizations can be effective in creating social change in a small

city. Realizing that the community has a mindset that hinders the efforts to improve the

economic and community conditions, the city implemented policies to shift that mindset

from defeat and pessimism to one of hope and raised expectations for the future. Policy

was a tool used to create opportunities for home ownership, to create expanded education

and vocation opportunities, and to transform a neighborhood from empty buildings to

high-demand lofts, business offices, and restaurants and entertainment venues. The case

also provided evidence that a small micropolitan city can create social change not only

within its own borders, but can also exert influence back out to the larger environment

influencing change at the state level and, indirectly, to other communities. This small city

worked with the state legislature to create new law at the state level, permitting localities

to develop land banks to cope with nonproductive properties and to change permitting

regulations to enable effective development of industrial parks.

Summary of Findings for Question 3

Complexity theory presents the concept that an entity is influenced by factors in

its external environment as well as factors within itself. This study on a geographically

isolated micropolitan city identified a wide variety of factors, both internal and external,

that triggered active policymaking. Acceptance of the changed circumstances that beset

the city following the economic decline triggered policymaking as corrective action to address the undesirable effects. Internally, blight, increasing poverty, and a declining population served as factors to trigger city leaders to explore options and make policy to address those challenges

The attribute of resilience enabled the city to respond to an earlier faulty policy and process through amended and new policy to address vetting of potential businesses. One of the identified strengths is the access to policymakers to make them aware of the need for policy. The level of citizen involvement supports the sharing of ideas and influences the development of policy to move the community forward.

The use of partnerships and access to funding for community and economic development initiatives also created awareness within city leadership of the need for policy development and opened new directions for policy. Partnerships enabled the development of multiple industrial parks to attract employers and to provide the funding to make the location of those businesses in the region possible. Funding also provided opportunities to explore options and models for the redevelopment of the downtown city core. Looking outward to the external environment enabled Danville to consider several models of redevelopment and create a vision for itself based on another city's success. Looking further afield, globalization has been a factor in triggering policymaking, both as a negative factor in "taking" jobs away and as a positive factor as a source of new investment back into the city.

Summary of Findings for Question 4

Using policy to address challenges and to take advantage of opportunities is only purposeful if there are outcomes to be achieved. Measuring the effectiveness of the policy measures is a natural evaluation step. One aspect of measuring impact discussed by participants is continual assessment of the progress being made. The study indicates that while large steps are desirable, it's also important to make small steps forward: to support local entrepreneurs as well as seeking to attract large employers. The goals are to raise the numbers of living wage jobs, increase tax revenue, lower crime rates, and raise education levels as ways to contribute to an improved community.

In Danville, there are indicators of success evidenced by awards and recognition of achievements by peer groups, successful partnerships, and a revitalized downtown that attracts private investment, residents, and new businesses. The success of the River District is evidence that this small city can preserve its history while achieving. Success is not complete, as nearly all participants noted that there remains significant work to be done with little improvement in poverty levels.

The findings of this case study are consistent with research findings by Laura Reese (2014) on what types of economic development strategies and policies were most effective in building the economic health of cities in Michigan. That study looked at all cities within the state, not just metropolitan areas. The factors found to be positively related to economic health for a city were investments in the downtown and spending on local public services. Tax incentives were limited in effectiveness and worked best when linked to the achievement of specific targets.

Summary

Chapter 4 is a discussion of findings from the case-study research into how a micropolitan city's community and economic development policies interact to create social change. The chapter opened with a brief description of how the research was conducted and continued to discuss the analysis from coding through development of themes and how they related and enlightened the research questions. The next chapter provides an interpretation of the findings, social change implications, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to provide an understanding of influences on and interactions between economic and community development policies. To achieve this purpose, the study examined how policymakers, policy influencers, and policy implementers in a micropolitan city developed and used policy. These four questions guided the research:

1. How can a small, non-metropolitan city use policy to address its local economic and quality of life challenges?

2. How do the economic development and community development policies and strategies interact to create positive social changes?

3. What factors raise the awareness of public officials of the need or desire to engage in economic development and community development?

4. To what extent has the interaction of policies and their implementation been effective in reducing poverty and its effects, and why or why not?

A qualitative case study approach was the most appropriate method for the research based on the purpose of the study and the type of data required to address the research questions. A case study method requires the use of multiple sources of data to discover a comprehensive understanding of how this micropolitan city makes policy, implements policy, and uses economic and community development policy to create positive social change in the city (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A quantitative survey would not have enabled an understanding of the policy interactions and implications that the

analysis of the detailed data in a qualitative study provides. Three sets of data were used: interviews; publicly available documents; and photographic observations. Participants were 11 individuals in active leadership roles as policymakers (elected officials), policy implementers (city employees), and policy influencers (representatives of non-city government entities). The participants were selected for their involvement in economic and community development in the city and represented a range of perspectives on those policies. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour and allowed the participants to discuss their experiences and understanding of the policies, influences, interactions, and outcomes. Documents used included city council meeting minutes, special reports, documents published on webpages, and newspaper articles. Photographs were taken of locations discussed in interviews and in areas near those locations. Analysis was done through descriptive coding, categorical aggregation using constant comparison, and direct interpretation. Validation of findings was achieved through member checking, use of multiple sources of data, use of detail-rich description, and peer review through the committee process.

This chapter will discuss the findings of the study, its implications for social change, and recommendations for future research. The study used the theoretical framework of complexity theory and was not designed to test or develop any particular theory. The study's findings will contribute to the knowledge base on the use of community and economic development policy in micropolitan cities. Flyvberg (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) described this type of knowledge as *phronesis,* which is "action-oriented knowledge of a local social ecosystem" (p. 53). The best solution for one

city is not a compilation of solutions from several others, but rather the solution is dependent on the specific circumstances of that one locality. But looking at those other cities may help the one city to develop policy that fits its circumstances.

Interpretation of the Findings

Findings in Context of the Literature

The analysis of the data collected during the study provides insight into the influences and interaction of economic and community development policies in a small, isolated American city. The research addresses influences on the creation of policy, the uses of policy to address challenges and to create social change, and whether the policies have been successful. Many themes that crossed multiple research questions were developed during analysis. The findings of the study are that economic and community development policies are so interwoven that a policy directed at solutions in one area often has impacts in the other area. Triggers for policy are found both within and external to the community itself and include factors from correcting earlier mistakes, to conditions relating to poverty, as well as global, federal, and state influences. Participants repeatedly emphasized the challenges that follow an economic decline and the importance of finding and creating solutions to them. Resilience, strength, social change, and the key role that partnerships and assessment play are common themes. The study indicates that economic development and community development policies can lead to positive social changes in the city, such as the rehabilitation of blighted sections of town, improved opportunities to attract new businesses, the ability to support expansion of existing businesses, and development of entrepreneurs.

Acceptance

A number of consequences described in the literature as resulting from a declining economy (Eberts, 2010) were identified by participants in the present study as problems to be addressed by economic and community development policy. Specifically, these include: abandoned buildings, deteriorating infrastructure, misalignment between the workforce available and the needed skills and knowledge, and a declining financial base and population. These items were present in the data in the context of leadership's acceptance of changing circumstances. As one participant noted, the city could accept its fate and do nothing more, or it could accept that circumstances had changed, and action would be needed to improve the circumstances.

The new conditions within the city at the start of the research period, noted by every participant, included blighted buildings, both residential and commercial, consistent with factors noted in the literature. The transportation infrastructure was less than ideal, also consistent with factors noted in the literature review as impacting local economic and community development. Individual participants provided specific examples of how these conditions related to policymaking efforts and strategies.

Resilience

The theme of resilience emerged from participant interviews referring to the determination to survive the poverty and economic conditions afflicting the city and the leadership's ability to learn from past mistakes. Although resilience was not discussed in the literature, two of the factors identified by Eberts (2010) are racial inclusion with income equality, and legacy of place. As described in the literature, these factors relate to

poverty as an inequity among population segments within the city, as well as the circumstances present in the "place" that policymakers need to address as a starting point. These factors are very similar to the attributes of the theme of resilience.

Building on strengths

As noted in the literature review, little research has been published on micropolitan cities since that category was defined in 2003. As a result, the literature on economic development addresses metropolitan areas, or to a more limited extent, rural areas. These studies include developing a skilled workforce, attracting investment to produce economic growth, supporting entrepreneurs, building on the strengths of the community, including local amenities, and negative factors of poverty ratios, aged housing, and reliance on manufacturing.

The literature, particularly with regard to tourism as an economic development strategy, discusses the importance of building on strengths and the existing amenities of the community (Gartner, 2004, Lambe, 2008, Lu, 2013, and Wilson et al., 2001). Every participant in this research discussed the strong assets of Danville. These strengths, or assets, ranged from an active citizen base that provides ideas and feedback for policymakers to amenities, both man-made and natural. The Riverwalk system takes advantage of the scenic river flowing through the city; while the development of industrial parks takes advantage of the availability of raw land for development and city-owned utilities. The literature notes that economic success on a local level is correlated with both natural amenities, such as climate and landscape, and lifestyle amenities, such as shopping, entertainment and cultural activities (Ferguson et al., 2007). In documents

reviewed, one employer noted the climate of Danville as being an attractive feature, since there were very few weather disruptions to work. The city developed a shopping area known as the Coleman Marketplace to serve not only the residents of Danville, but that attracts people from surrounding communities. Other relevant amenities discussed by the participants or observed include the presence of a Cray Supercomputer and a vibrant event venue in the revived River District. The theme of building on strengths touches on all the research questions, which further serves to highlight its importance in this study.

Support of entrepreneurs to develop and grow business was another strength noted by several of the participants in this study. The presence of a business incubator, access to funding support, and opportunities to open businesses in the developing River District were provided as examples of how the community exhibits this attribute. The literature review also noted the role entrepreneurs play in economic growth and the challenges associated with determining which businesses are likely to succeed and which are not. The city's focus on developing a workforce trained in advanced manufacturing techniques is consistent with Mason and Brown's (2013) findings that manufacturing is often more valuable for economic development than are service businesses. Danville's support and varied use of the Community Market is also consistent with Morales' (2009) studies of community markets serving as small business incubators providing an affordable opportunity for entrepreneurs to test their business ideas and to network with each other.

Economic and Community Development are Interwoven

My review of literature suggested that this relationship is one that is consistent even when not specifically addressed. The literature review noted that Ferguson et al. (2007) found that urban growth was strongly linked to amenities, which relate to the quality of life within the community. Participants often discussed the role that housing plays in both economic and community development. Affordable housing is needed to attract new businesses and residents; but a surplus of low-quality affordable housing can be a problem for the community as it deteriorates over time. One study focused on micropolitan cities considered the affordability of housing and its relationship to economic development considerations (Lang & Danielsen, 2008). The present research is consistent with their findings in terms of housing availability and the challenges with rates of non-owner-occupied housing. Also consistent is that the most affordable micropolitan areas were in more rural settings, rather than attached to metropolitan areas and high affordability is associated with population decline. Participants attributed the high affordability of Danville's housing to the exodus of residents after economic conditions declined. Danville's programs to increase homeownership in target communities is a strategy consistent with both community and economic development, as some communities need to use affordable housing to attract economic development (Cook et al., 2009 and Lang & Danielsen, 2008). Other areas that this study identified as being related to both community and economic development are the quality of education and opportunity available to children, and the effects of errors in policymaking.

Focus on social change

Participants in the current study repeatedly connected both community and economic development to the creation of social change within the community. Building better educational pipelines connects to both and creates social change within the community, its people, and their attitudes. Workforce development is recognized in the literature as a positive factor in both economic and community development (Eberts, 2010). Workforce development is also a key factor in creating social change by preparing people to take advantage of current and future opportunities. Participants noted the advanced manufacturing programs and the new degree options offered by the local four-year university as examples. One of the challenges to workforce development noted in the literature by Strasburger (2009) is access to research and research funding. In the case of Danville, however, participants noted among its assets a regional foundation that funds community development activities and research and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, as well as a local university and community college. All of these support research and workforce development as well as help overcome the difficulties noted in Stasburger's research. Harper-Anderson (2008) explored the connectivity of workforce development and economic development found significant connection, and even integration, in many communities. Participants have indicated that Danville's policies are supportive of this approach as economic development and education pipelines have not only common goals but work together to try to attract new employers to the area.

Partnerships are key

Participants in this research cited several partnerships with other governmental entities, private sector entities, and funding organizations as key factors in achieving the city's success so far. The literature has identified a number of benefits associated with partnerships, such as reduced development risks, increased efficiency, and improved services (Conrad, 2012). Lu and Jacobs (2013) suggested that regional partnerships are appropriate for challenges that require greater resources than a single community can provide. Chicoine et al. (2001) looked at a project to build roads in a rural area and found that joining small government units together to form a regional partnership was a more cost-effective approach. The findings in Danville are consistent with these studies. Danville's partnership with its neighboring county has enabled access to a number of industrial parks that draw upon resources from both entities: land, utilities, and expertise. Another partnership often cited was with the Danville Regional Foundation (DRF), which helped develop the vision and access to funding for the revitalized downtown, the River District. A partnership with the hometown university, Averett University, and the DRF led to the conversion of a tobacco warehouse into offices for DRF and the university's adult education program and School of Nursing. It was one of the first projects in the River District. Other business, both for profit and nonprofit, have contributed in partnership to provide a fountain plaza downtown and the construction of an internationally recognized YMCA.

Not all partnerships are successful or even formed. Participants discussed the need for a regional partnership approach to address the completion of Highway 29 to interstate

grade, but that it has not been successful because Danville is viewed as a competitor, rather than a resource, to the North Carolina communities. Early in its economic development program, the city partnered with a businessman from China, not only to support opening his business in the city, but to connect and recruit other Chinese companies to the area. Ultimately both aspects failed according to documents reviewed. This experience is consistent with a study by Lu (2011) in which a partnership that depended on the actions of one person or that did not have an internal governance system was not successful.

Globalization

Within the literature review section, several articles were cited that discussed the trend of American jobs moving overseas and companies re-incorporating outside of the US (Adams, 2011; McKinnon & Thurm, 2012). Autor et al. (2013) related an increase in goods imported from China to negative manufacturing employment, decline in household earnings, and a greater reliance on government assistance programs in the US. The experiences cited by the participants in the current study are consistent with the literature. Dan River Textiles was acquired, and its US operations subsequently closed, by a Chinese company. While a few participants acknowledged that globalization had the potential to bring positive impacts to the community, most represented that the citizens of Danville felt globalization was responsible for a significant part of the city's economic decline.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilized complexity theory as its theoretical framework. In its simplest form, complexity theory posits that an entity must adapt to changes in both its internal and external environment in order to survive. In addition, as a consequence of its adaptations, it may exert influence on its environment triggering new changes that will affect others. This case study of economic and community development policymaking within the City of Danville appears to be consistent with complexity theory. The findings indicate that participants identified a number of internal (increased poverty and blight, for example) and external factors (globalization, declines in core industries, national recession, and external models for change) that affected the city. Its policymaking efforts represent the city's adaptation to the changes in its environment, its efforts to remake itself in order to survive, and ultimately its hopes to thrive. Finally, some of the city's policies effected changes on its internal environment by creating positive social change within the community in terms of education and workforce development, increasing homeownership, and decreased blight. It also impacted its external environment as it initiated and supported changes at a state level that resulted in permitting Virginia communities to form land banks to repurpose abandoned property; legalizing the growth of industrial hemp as a crop has been permitted as well. Finally, the awards and recognition that the city has received are indications that it may be becoming a model for redevelopment for other small communities. Complexity theory appears to be a viable and valuable framework for examining and understanding locality policymaking.

Limitations of the Study

The goal of this research was to understand the interactions among and on local economic and community development policies in a micropolitan city, Danville, Virginia. Specifically, the focus was on policies intended to improve the local economic base and improve the quality of life for residents; goals that often compete for limited resources, but which are closely related. The use of interviews as a data collection tool has the inherent limitation of what people are willing to discuss. Thus, the information provided may be incomplete or biased. Although the use of additional data sources provides some level of validation for the information, there is no guarantee that those sources are without bias or complete either. Therefore, the findings of the study are limited by the nature of the data used.

Second, this case study represents the insights and experiences of one micropolitan city. There are approximately 550 other micropolitan cities within the United States (Office of Information and Regulator Affairs, 2015), each with unique features, leadership, and values. Therefore, the findings of this study are not necessarily reflective of what might be found if the same study was performed in another city. The findings also may not be generalized to apply to larger cities (metropolitan) or smaller towns.

Recommendations

Since the U.S. Census Bureau introduced the concept of micropolitan areas in 2003, the number of such areas within the US has changed, fluctuating from 560 to 536 and back to 551. The changing numbers indicate that some areas may be growing and/or

that some are shrinking below the threshold. A study of the micropolitan areas over time

to identify characteristics of those that are succeeding in growth, those that are stable, and

those that may be declining may be useful in identifying some key areas for

policymaking. A multi-case study could be performed comparing several similarly

situated cities, which also may provide insight.

While many themes that developed during the data analysis correlated to some

aspects of existing literature, there were several themes that did not directly link to

existing research. These themes provide areas for additional research as well. The theme

of continual assessment relates to how the community measures its progress towards

goals and adjusts its policy efforts accordingly. However, there were many different

approaches and ideas presented by the participants; some statistical measurements related

to income and employment, while others were more qualitative, such as achieving

individual dreams. Additional research should be done to determine if there is a

correlation between these very different approaches. Creating a new mindset is another

theme of interest. In this study, participants noted that many residents had a negative or

defeatist mindset that needed to be changed in order to support economic and community

development. However, changing the mindset of one individual can be a daunting task, so

research into how communities have achieved a successful attitude change would be a

valuable resource for struggling communities.

One of the findings related to Danville's influence on changing state law so that it

could better effect some of its policies. More research is needed to address how

micropolitan America can influence the actions and lawmaking of larger government.

Localities are generally viewed as not having significant influence on state and national government; small cities certainly are viewed as having even less impact than metropolitan areas. Yes, this study would indicate that it is possible. More research into other instances of micropolitan influences and what factors enabled that success would be a useful tool for both practitioners and political science scholars.

Finally, but not least, more studies of specific micropolitan communities and their policy challenges and successes would be useful. Perhaps a model of policymaking and policy interactions unique to small communities could be developed.

Implications for Social Change

This research demonstrated some success and some missteps in economic and community development policymaking. It also demonstrated the close relationship between the two policies and provided an example of supporting both rather than competing for funding. However, most of the participants were more able and appeared more comfortable addressing economic development. Not all participants saw the two types of policies as interwoven; a few seemed to think of them in terms of an if-then relationship. If there is success at economic development, then the community will have more financial resources and thus will have a better quality of life. There is a need for a better mechanism to bring citizens and policymakers together in addressing community concerns.

The findings also provide some useful insights into the nature of local government partnerships with a variety of partners. Many of these partnerships were for short-term specific projects, such as streetscaping and providing a fountain for the community to

enjoy. The City of Danville should continue to engage with other localities and private organizations to make strides forward. Finding benefits for other partners and finding the right partners should enable more achievement. Specifically, the city needs to find a reason and a way to engage Greensboro and North Carolina in a partnership to complete the Highway 29 connection to provide true interstate access for the city. To do this, they need to identify what they can bring to the table to create this joint effort.

Danville has demonstrated its ability to learn from past mistakes by implementing a new vetting process for funding benefits for new business to locate to the area. Yet, at the same time, it demonstrated its inability to accurately assess effects or outcomes of some policies. While certainly subsequent events around the country, and just a couple hours away in Charlottesville, VA, have confirmed that city council's concern that a display of the Confederate flag on city property may send a negative message; it also failed to anticipate that citizens of the last Confederate Capital – Danville became the Confederate Capital in 1865 following the fall of Richmond – may also view it as part of their history and heritage. The policy enacted was to remove all flags, which included a display in the River District of flags of the home countries of foreign companies that had opened businesses in Danville (Thibodeau, 2015). Ironically, a policy to avoid negative responses to one flag viewed as an enemy of diversity has resulted in lessening the diversity apparent for many others. Decisions are not always yes or no and rarely should be all or nothing. The city should give greater consideration to finding solutions that are more accommodating to a variety of groups and opinions.

Policy influencers, policymakers, and policy implementers who may want to use Danville as a model for redeveloping their economic base and community should not assume that it can be used in any city. The study does demonstrate complexity theory as a viable lens for viewing the factors influencing policymaking and policy interactions. Applying this theoretical lens to a city's circumstances, can provide greater understanding for policymakers. As Danville learned from adapting the revitalization model from Greenville, SC, the inspiration for Danville's River District, it needed to be individualized based on the political, socioeconomic, and cultural dynamics of the community. Danville discovered the need for a new law at the state level, so that anticipation step should be included earlier in the process of planning policy. The need to change, or grow, some community attitudes should also be considered as part of the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics of the community as early in the process as possible. Just as Danville recognized the need to create a new mindset within the community, shifting it from thinking about failures and waiting for a rescue, to one of recognizing the positive attributes and looking forward to the future, other communities may need to strengthen the mindset of their citizens as well.

Conclusion

This study was based on a of couple basic assumptions. First, that micropolitan cities are different from metropolitan and rural areas even as they have some aspects in common. Secondly that poverty and its effects is a problem that can be addressed and managed to some extent through policymaking on a local level. The findings confirmed some of these underlying assumptions while showing them to be overly simplistic. It

became clear that while the city engages in policymaking to try to transform the city into a new economic future, it was divided on the problem of poverty. Poverty as a fact of life is something that many accept. Working to minimize poverty or contain it is a different approach than correcting it. Addressing the results of poverty on the community takes much longer than creating the problems. The loss of one or two major employers from a community can create high unemployment, lower median incomes, and lead to an exodus of middle and upper-middle class citizens. Within a few years, those impacts result in abandoned buildings, lower tax revenues, greater demand on public services, and increases in crime. Repairing those consequences and rebuilding the city takes longer than the decline into poverty. A community has many working parts that are affected whenever there is a change in one area. Policymakers cannot always accurately anticipate all those effects, but by knowing the community, by bringing that community to consensus and giving it a vision, and by selecting the right partners, one small city can change its course.

There are still questions to be answered and other policy areas that influence the outcomes for this small city. The city leaders must decide on exactly what is best for that city and then to evaluate the policy pathways to achieve the outcome given the political, socioeconomic, and cultural context. History may be valued by some, but disdained by others. The need to constantly consider and assess the policy choices means the job is never really done. But in the end, policy should reflect and serve the overall interest of the citizens. In Danville, that means creating immediate change to create hope while addressing the underlying challenges of poverty through education, economic

development initiatives, and workforce development. As one participant described, you can take the view that you should accept your fate and that some cities, maybe yours, will fall, or you can accept your circumstances and then start working on changing them for the better. This case study demonstrates that policy can be a powerful tool in reversing the fortunes of a city that has experienced severe challenges and pervasive poverty. By drawing on strengths and partnering with carefully chosen public, private, and nonprofit groups, a small city and its residents can be effective in addressing the causes and consequences of poverty and can create a new, stronger future.

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Appendix A: Interview protocol

The following questions will be used in the interviews. The main questions are numbered, and the follow-up questions or probes are listed under each question. Each respondent will be asked to verify their professional role (City Council Member, Director of a community organization, etc.) and their primary (and secondary if applicable) role as it relates to policy (recommend, make, implement, or evaluate).

As you respond to these questions, please include information on both effective and ineffective policies and efforts that have been used in Danville with regard to economic or community development. For purposes of this research, economic development refers to a broad based, sustainable improvement in the community standard of living as measured by the individual quality of life. Community development refers to the process and the product of people working collectively to address common concerns and achieve common goals. I use the term, "policymaking" to refer to the making of decisions or laws as actions intended to address local problems and challenges and/or improve the quality of life for its citizens.

1. How can Danville, as a small, non-metropolitan city, use policy to address its local economic and quality of life challenges?
    a. What is your role in economic and community development or policy making?
    b. What policies have you seen used to address economic development? Community development? Both together?
    c. What issues, challenges, or other situations were being addressed with those policies?
    d. What considerations and factors played into the policymaking?
2. How do the economic development and community development policies and strategies interact to create positive social change?
    a. What are some of the outcomes you have seen from these policies?
    b. Please tell me about a time when use of economic or community development policies, used separately or together, resulted in the intended positive social change in Danville, an improvement in life or a lessening of a problem.
    c. Please describe an unintended positive social change resulting from economic or community development policies in Danville.
3. What factors raise the awareness of public officials of the need or desire to engage in economic development and community development?
    a. How does the local government determine when additional economic or community development policies are needed?

     b. What types of changes or influences in the external environment are likely or common triggers for policy making?

     c. What influences or situations within the community trigger policy making intended to affect economic or community development?

4. To what extent has the interaction of policies and their implementation been effective in reducing poverty and its effects in Danville, and why?

     a. How do you measure the impact?

     b. Please describe an example of how these policies have changed or affected the issues they were addressing?

     c. Why do you think the outcome was what it was?

5. What other information would you like to add to what has been asked?

As needed, appropriate probes and follow up questions may be used to help the respondents understand what is being asked. These probes may include the following questions.

1. To clarify what has been said:

     a. Can you explain what you mean when you say, "…."?

     b. So what it sounds like you are saying is,…, is that correct?

2. To elicit more detail:

     a. Please tell me more about that.

     b. Can you give me an example?

     c. What would that look like?

     d. How do you do that?

     e. How did people respond to that?

3. To clarify reasoning and rationale:

     a. Why was that important?

     b. What was the motivation for that decision/action?

     c. How did you feel about that?

     d. Why was that decision/action significant?

4. To prompt discussion of differing viewpoints:

     a. What might make you decide/act differently?

     b. How has your approach changed over time?

     c. I read/heard about an approach that used…, what do you think of that idea/approach?

5. What factors influence your thinking about this point?