Nonprofit Organizational Sustainability in Bounded Contexts: A Case Study on an Appalachian Arts Organization

Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree Master of the Arts in Arts Policy and Administration in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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Abstract

What follows is an exploration into the realities of organizational management and sustainability for Appalachian arts organizations and non-profits. Using a single selective sociological descriptive case study of an Appalachian arts organization, I gathered data pertaining to the processes of fundraising and community engagement. Along with this data gathering comes a post-industrial retrospective of Appalachia history and a self-reflection of my identity and voice as an Appalachia to establish a bounded Appalachian context. Literature concerning community engagement, fundraising and organizational theory was considered to further develop my lens. All of this was executed in the hopes of discovering an organizational model that would best equip Appalachian and other disenfranchised and disadvantaged arts and culture organizations and institutions to become and/or remain successful and impactful parts of their communities.
Dedication

To Appalachia, my home

My success would not be possible without all of you who have poured into me in Raceland, Lexington and Columbus – my family, my mentors and my friends – and my faith which pushes me to serve a purpose far beyond myself.

To all of you, thank you and God bless!
Acknowledgement

I want to acknowledge the many teachers who have challenged me in creativity, discipline and innovation – Dr. Jefferson Johnson, Dr. Rachel Shane, Tom Stephens, Frank Fletcher, Cynthia Lawrence, Dr. Everett McCorvey, Dr. David Landsbergen and countless others. To my advisor, Dr. Sonia BasSheva Manjon, whose guidance I would be utterly lost without. To the staff at OSU and UK whose diligent efforts in supporting me through my studies do not go overlooked. To my Raceland, Lexington and Columbus families who have believed in me and supported me through innumerable ways. To my family who has sacrificed time, money and distance so that I may pursue that which they have prepared me for. To my girlfriend Malory – patient, kind, intuitive and resourceful. Thank you to all of you for lending an ear, an office, a coffee break, a pint of beer or a glass of bourbon and helping me find my passion and supporting my work.
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Major Field: Arts Policy and Administration
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“Our population never has been so diverse and the contours of our cultural landscape are shifting accordingly...(But) the vast majority of cultural groups, especially those serving lower-income neighborhoods, remain small and financially challenged” (Sidford, 2011, p. 12). There is a real danger these groups “...stand upon gradually melting icebergs drifting further and further from solid ground...” and this drifting is due in part to “...a lack of direct, meaningful connections...” between these groups and the communities they reside in (Borwick, 2012). This is nowhere more true than in Appalachia, that geographical and cultural experience nestled in the hills and valleys of the Appalachian Mountains in the Eastern United States. This is land rich in culture with once an abundance of natural resources, but also a land of egregious exploitation and catastrophic socioeconomic disparity. And this disparity has landed upon the doorstep and pushed through the threshold of many a rural cultural institution. As of 2011, over 75% of all cultural groups, including non-profit arts organizations in Appalachia, had budgets of less than $250,000, a “...testament to the disparity of resources available to support different communities’ artistic aspirations” (Sidford, 2011, p. 13).

This unique situation necessitates even more unique strategies to overcome it.
Typically, organizations follow a pattern of compartmentalization; programming puts on shows, fundraising raises money, etc,

with some intermingling occurring. Clearly, resource allocation is a great need for communities and arts organizations operating on the fringe, and some organizational structuring operates without consideration of this unique and challenging reality. But why not combine those departments often associated with this process - fundraising, and, more recently, community engagement? If indeed “…individual giving has been, and will continue to be, the backbone of cultural philanthropy…” and “…individual support is generally expended at home” (McCarthy, 1984, p. 16), then this paper argues more specific strategies to galvanize donor bases in rural communities are crucial to organizational longevity. In light of this, I intend to formulate a model from the question of how can current ‘best practices’ of nonprofit development, as well as current methods and theories of community engagement, be combined to reconfigure how arts organizations in Appalachia can engage and grow with their communities and become more sustainable and impactful.

But what is a successful and impactful arts organization? Success and impact are such fluid terms, fluctuating from person to person, group to group, society to society. In this sense, a successful and impactful organization in Appalachia is first and foremost a community advocate. It is keenly aware of the issues the community it resides in faces and provides a source of positivity, hope and direction for its constituents. This
organization is locally funded, relying significantly more on the generosity and loyalty of its immediate communities rather than absentee support. This organization engages its communities, involving members in an open and transparent business structure which promotes democratic processes. This organization cares to know and be known by its communities and never waivers in its pursuit of understanding the people surrounding it. Lastly, this organization is financially healthy by industry standards and does not become a burden to its community.

Through a social descriptive case study of an arts organization currently practicing in the Appalachian region, the goal of this research is to provide data and contribute to a growing body of literature promoting such organizations or organizational shifts in the same. By analyzing efforts of fundraising and community engagement, and reflecting on how these efforts can become more collaborative, based on the bounded contexts of organizational theories behind the existence, purpose and function of nonprofit organizations, this research hopes to produce a model for connecting with and galvanizing more local community support and spark cultural and economic revival in these long neglected Appalachian communities. Furthermore, it is to be a benefit to any and all arts organizations across the United States as they adapt to the growing tide of diversity sweeping this vast nation forever intertwined in the greatest social experiment in Western history.
**Background**

For the reader to better appreciate the intent behind this research, it is essential to discuss several problematic matters of Appalachia’s cultural, economic and political history, namely absentee ownership, industrialization and disinvestment through the introduction of coal mining and the railroad, and social and cultural stereotyping. These issues construct the backdrop of the Appalachian scenery encountered today and so often throughout history and continue to trouble communities and organizations alike. There is no avoiding the destitution, disinvestment and deprivation often encountered in this region.

It is also vital to explore who I am as a researcher, practitioner and, most importantly, native son of Appalachia so that the reader may better appreciate my position in relation to this issue. This research is deeply personal to me, both for the connection to my hometown which encourages and troubles me and for how I have suffered at the hands of these systemic issues presented to Appalachia, though it be but a fraction of what others have and still endure. Furthermore, as an artist, administrator and researcher of arts policy and entrepreneurship, I have drawn connections between my skill sets and interests and the needs of mine and other Appalachian and rural communities. It is the revelation of these issues, the personal connection I have to Appalachia and my affinity towards the arts which motivates me to conduct this research.
and inspire change.

Appalachia: A Brief History

As mentioned earlier, Appalachia is both a geographical place and a constructed concept. Geographically, it is the Appalachian Mountains and the rolling hills and tributaries it most immediately affects, from up north in upstate New York down south to the tops of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. But it is the constructed concept which dominates how it is portrayed and perceived by the outside world. Any by constructed, I mean a perception of a place which has been carefully crafted for the benefit of those doing the crafting. Appalachia “…is a region without a formal history…a socially constructed conceptual place” (Lewis, 1998, p. 1). In the 19th Century, though Appalachia had been increasingly populated by several different veins of European immigrants seeking the American Dream and freedom from various forms of religious and cultural oppression since before the 18th Century, an emerging middle class throughout the coastal colonies of Virginia, the Carolinas and others found themselves with very little knowledge of this vast and harsh mountainous frontier so drastically different from their sprawling plantations and scenic coastal towns. But thanks to the efforts of such color writers as John Fox Jr. and William Goodell Frost, “…the myth of Appalachian otherness...” was perpetuated to “…facilitate absentee corporate control of
the region’s natural resources by marginalizing indigenous residents...” in order “...to entertain an emergent urban middle class” (Lewis, 1998, p. 1).

Most of the history reported upon in this paper will be focused around the American Civil War and Reconstruction Era onwards, the rise of Modernism in the Western World, and lead into Post-industrial Appalachia. Thanks to the studies of Ronald L. Lewis and his book *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920*, along with the studies of Richard B. Drake and Mary Beth Pudup, Dwight B. Billings and Altina L. Walter, and the gruff memoir of John O’Brien *At Home in the Heart of Appalachia*, we are given an overview of how economic capital and the forces of Industrialization captivated and plundered the once vast forests of the Central Appalachian backcounties and decimated a people mostly unknown to the culturally established of a still young nation. Lewis’s text “...examines the transformation of Appalachia from a rural agricultural society dependent on the virgin forest, to a twentieth-century society denuded of the forest and fully enmeshed in capitalism and the markets” (Lewis, 1998, p. 3). A paradigm was being established, one which centralized the desires of the wealthy capitalist while shunting the very livelihoods of the Appalachian people to the periphery of existence.

**Social Prejudices**

Before addressing the effects of capital and industrialization, it is necessary to
reference certain intangible forces which have impacted the Appalachian landscape. One such force is the power of social prejudices and stereotyping commonly associated with this region. For the sake of not propagating current stereotypes simply by acknowledging their existence, I will focus on less direct accounts given by the social researchers referenced in this text. This is no easy task and I must be careful. As John O’Brien states, “You spend your life rejecting stereotypes, then sit down to write and confront them once again…” possibly leading “…someone outside of the Appalachian Mountains…(to) having all of their…stereotypes confirmed.” (O’Brien, 2001, pp. 71-72)

Beginning with the Civil War and Reconstruction Era, there were growing Unionist and Northern upper middle class interest in aspects of their successfully defended America not directly associated with their experience (Drake, 2001, p. 119). The Confederacy, defeated and approaching destitution, wanted nothing to do with the poor backwaters they had so easily convinced to carry their bastard flag into battle. Therefore, the newly victorious Union took an interest in this new politically and economically vulnerable territory of the United States. For the Union to grow after the devastation of the American Civil War, they needed voters and they needed workers. This interest sparked the intentional and unintentional strategies for “othering” the people living in and around the Appalachian Mountains, giving birth to the social construct seen and experienced today. Initially, association with this series of stereotypes created a social nightmare for anyone so unfortunate. These stereotypes play out in attire, family
situations, education, occupation, language and ultimately one’s positionality in relation to the power structure.

In 1950, Cratis D. Williams recognized “...quite different yet occasionally overlapping types...” of Appalachians (Drake, 2001, p. 119):

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1. Commercial, town-oriented Elite</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Branchwater Mountaineers</td>
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Table 1: Williams’ Three Appalachian Stereotypes

I float between the three distinctions because of how they so easily overlap in Appalachian communities. While the former two groups certainly feel the negative effects of association with the prejudice due to their proximity, most Appalachian stereotypes were formed around these Branchwater Mountaineers. These stereotypes, which include such monikers as “hillbilly” and “backwoods” have been solidified in Western Culture and find new ways to proliferate themselves every day.

But for the Union to begin understanding the nature of this wild frontier, they needed voices on the inside. Researchers today have now classified the three groups of writers who are behind the construction of these negative perceptions, both intentionally and unintentionally;
Missionaries pitched the Appalachian to their congregations and associations as “...a worthy person…Pro-Unionism and...” Republican but also one of “...crucial deficiencies, such as grinding poverty, a feud temper, ignorance, and a lack of practical Christianity.” “...American missionaries – members of the American Missionary Association…inundated Appalachia to ‘uplift’ the mountain people” (O'Brien, 2001, p. 63). This reference to practical Christianity harkens back to the Protestant beginnings of this faith in the United States and the belief that the rise and fall of socioeconomic position is synonymous with the rise and fall of favor from the Judeo-Christian God, a far cry from the reality of the Gospel. The missionaries’ work, along with the early efforts of Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, laid the groundwork for the stereotype “...of a technology of the log cabin and the long rifle, where the jackals of civilization were destroying the Arcadian rural simplicity” (Drake, 2001, p. 122).

Pressing onward to the Local Color Writers and their efforts, we see a collective
effort set forth “...to tell the story of the various groups (minorities) that then made up the United States” (Drake, 2001, p. 123). They set out to tell stories of the unknown lands of the still growing and recovering United States for the leisurely consumption of the emerging upper class, distancing them from the horrors of war but also othering the existence of outsiders and normalizing the existence of the reader. One foremost writer, Miss Mary Murfree, who sometimes vacationed in the Tennessee Cumberlands, produced writings that were admiring of the scenery “...while emphasizing an unusual, violent and uncouth people.” (Drake, 2001, p. 124) John Fox Jr., a “...Bluegrass Kentuckian, Harvard educated...” in addition to writing novels which reached the “...summit of literary success...” also lectured throughout the modernizing United States regarding mountaineers and “...their feuds, violent ways, and their fierce ‘simple meanness’” (Drake, 2001, p. 125).

The last group of influential writers were business promoters who produced literature which “...was very depreciating of those who either lived atop the mineral resources these promoters wished to exploit or those who would provide the labor base for the new Southern industry they were championing” (Drake, 2001, p. 126). The mineral resources were what would propel the victorious Union and its industrial machines further while the demoralized and still mostly agricultural South needed a new and cheap labor force, the lives of millions of slaves finally wrestled from their greedy grasp. Throughout these writings, the actual people of Appalachia were rarely if ever
referred, and even then only in reference to their ability to provide labor, purely an exploitation of the work ethic wrought from the necessities of survival in a sometimes unforgiving landscape, while the region’s natural resources and the supposed benefits of their exploitation were heavily lauded. To this vein of literature, the mountaineer was someone who “...could be lifted into civilization and made into productive citizens through industrial employment” (Drake, 2001, p. 126). While this demeaning literature was filling shops and homes throughout the coastal regions,

“Thousands of ruthless, thoroughly dishonest agents swarmed into the mountains. Appalachian families were cheated, threatened, bullied, and swindled out of ancestral land...” and left to a land of “…brutal beatings, murder, drug addiction, alcoholism, disease, malnutrition, medieval living conditions, insanely unsafe working conditions, and environmental rape...” (O'Brien, 2001, pp. 62-63).

Throwing in the literature from the other two sources, missionaries and Local Color Writers, the outsider was given a “grossly inaccurate” picture based on “stereotypes and self-serving characteristics” (Drake, 2001, p. 126). But to anyone who grew up in Appalachia or who has spent extensive time residing there, one cannot deny that the seemingly magical gifts of capitalism have yet to arrive, perhaps even having passed us completely by. O’Brien claims, “In the Appalachian Mountains, the golden age of laissez-faire capitalism was one of America’s great nightmares (O’Brien, 2001, p. 63). This inaccuracy continues today and Appalachians remain one of the most under-advocated people groups in the United States. The writings of the Civil War and Reconstruction Era “...firmly established the stereotypes of the violent, ignorant,
malnourished, moonshining, and feuding mountaineer that has proven so durable...” over the years (Drake, 2001, p. 127)

The Railroad

Industrialization and the global transition towards the modern society we in the Western World encounter today had a variety of effects on Appalachia. While we have already discussed the establishment and devastation of stereotypes, it was the introduction of mass capital and steel production that led the way for the implementation of railroad tracks lain across the ever expanding United States, and the beginning of consistent economic disinvestment from Appalachia. This rapidly expanding railroad industry set its greedy capitalist eye on the vast and ancient forests of Appalachia and revolutionized what had been up to the late 19th century a meager local timber market into a massive resource devouring machine hell bent on uprooting the entire region.

To assuage the swelling demand of the industrial age, timber needed to be moved at a much higher capacity and much quicker rate than had been previously provided. The localized practices long known to the Yeoman of the mountains never stood a chance. Shipping a few logs down the river each day, enough in that time to keep a man and his family fed, was no match for the desires of a nation eager to burst forward into the bustling 20th Century. To better summarize this time of transition along the rivers and streams in Appalachia, I’d like to turn to Old Crow Medicine Show and the song James
River Blues

James River blues
I just heard the awful news
I could steer around the rocks
But they're bustin' down the docks
James River blues
That train came on through
And the work's gotten slow
Now where's a boat man to go
I think I'll float on down
To Richmond town
They don't need us anymore
Haulin' freight from shore to shore
That big iron hauls much more
Than we ever could before
I've seen good men going wrong
I've seen bad ones get it right
As that river rolls along
I'll be steppin' out tonight
On the cool flow
Floatin' down, down below
The bridge to the waters edge
From the ridge to the ledge
From the hills to the sea
I'll become a memory

With the introduction of the railroad, the practice of using local barges to transfer timber along the rivers to the many sawmills became obsolete, and competition, along with the “...American ideology of unrestrained expansion, a federal policy of cheap land, and notions linking civilization with open country...” brought an unprecedented pace to the mass removal of trees from the hillsides (Lewis, 1998, p. 5). And in a region much unknown to the rest of the nation, very little advocacy for the rights of its inhabitants existed and “...county officials and local newspaper editors – who often became coal or timber executives – looked the other way” (O'Brien, 2001, p. 63). Throughout this transition, very little if any ownership of the capital clunking in and out of the region, uprooting livelihoods wherever it trod, was placed in the hands of those who had lived there for so long, those whose lives were being reduced to no more than a disposable
resource, an economic externality. Locals either went to work with the railroad companies, constantly moving where the rails took them, or they sold their farms, packed up and moved to any of small towns popping up across the region, towns whose dependency was founded, and still resides, in the continued success of industrialization. As the trees left the hills in droves and locals flooded into the new towns, so too did a defining facet of Appalachia, its Agrarianism, replaced now by painfully futile attempts of assimilation to the modernizing 20th Century.

**Coal Mining**

Moving on from the roots of stereotyping and the devastation of a way of life, we turn our attention now to the black dust found deep inside the Appalachian Mountains. While the forests of West Virginia and Virginia were being decimated by lumber companies “...relying on superior knowledge of the law...” and “...favorable legislation...” to out maneuver private landowners (Lewis, 1998), coal was having similar success with the Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia Appalachian Mountains and Ohio River Valley foothills. Since its inception into the market place in the early 19th Century, “...coal mining in Appalachia has had as profound an impact on the region's inhabitants as it has had on the region's forest and water resources” (Buckley, 2004). This profound impact remains today as coal companies lobby intensely for their own interests at the expense of Appalachia, evidenced by the consistent political rhetoric demonizing the efforts of the
United States Environmental Protection Agency and its labors to minimize the effects of pollution created by coal mining and mountaintop removal.

From western New York through the rolling hills of the Virginias down south to the tops of Georgia and Mississippi, coal production grew from 100,000 tons annually in 1800 to 20,000,000 tons in 1860, to over 110,000,000 tons by 1885 and topped out at over 240,000,000 tons by the turn of the twentieth century (Buckley, 2004). But while the coal industry loaded ton after ton into empty rail cars and sent them on their raucous way up to the industrializing North, where absentee owners and their unsuspecting neighbors enjoyed the benefits, the miner villages, built up around the thousands of coal mines throughout the mountains, found themselves with nowhere to go, voiceless against this modern tide.

In order to meet the market’s labor demands, strained by the rugged and oft times inaccessible Appalachian terrain, coal companies began to feed off the influx of immigrants from Europe and Black migrants from the South and established their infamous company towns. My Papa, a worker at a brick mill in Hitchens in Carter County, KY and a WWII veteran, worked and lived in the company town with my Mama, Aunt and Dad. But his was a more modern and much more bearable experience. As my dad mentioned, Papa had the opportunity to buy a house on his own land but chose to stay in a company owned building instead. Others throughout Appalachian history have not been as lucky. With the introduction of the company town came the company store...
and company scrip, along with nearly unmanageable living conditions. In a time before
labor unions, and little to no advocacy across the young political parties, in order to
guarantee a consistently present and disempowered labor force, one that could not vacate
or gain access to any improving capital, companies would pay their workers not in US
dollars, but company scrip that could only be used on or at company owned property.

Given the remote location of many towns, the company store was often the only
commercial retail establishment to which the mining population had regular
access. In some cases, coal companies prohibited the establishment of other
stores; …penalized miners for making purchases in neighboring towns. Customer
loyalty was achieved through the issuance of company scrip. Paying wages at
least partially in scrip ensured that a portion of a worker’s paycheck would be
funneled back to the company. (Buckley, 2004)

The isolation, disempowerment, disenfranchisement and forced segregation, and social
inequity spurred on by the power of the coal companies has had lasting effects on the
region. Appalachians learned to depend upon these coal towns and the stores they were
held captive to and this dependency remains with it to this day.

**Absentee Ownership**

Appalachia has a long and troubled history concerning capital and absentee
ownership. When I drive along the roads in the Tri-State area, most of the businesses I
see are corporate, very few appear to be locally owned and operated. The introduction of
Industrialization to the region through the railroad and coal mining and the impacts on the
region there of all fall under the umbrella of this Capitalistic practice. As industrialization
continued to boom up to the 1930s, “...75 percent of West Virginia’s landmass and between 85 and 95 percent of the state’s natural resources ‘legally’ belonged to outside interests” (O'Brien, 2001, p. 63). These numbers are not so dramatic in other states nestled in Appalachia when held against each’s entirety, but do become more alarming when considering only the portions of those states identified as Appalachian.

With little land left for their own endeavors and having to owe someone wherever one turned, Appalachia’s ability to control its own wealth creation and investment continues to dwindle. Professional jobs, those with the needed benefits to function in our society, either do not exist or are terribly sparse. As capital and ownerships continues to flow out so, too, do the children led to believe in their potential to be successful and grasp the American Dream. Brain drain, the issue of a rural community’s most talented and promising high school graduates leaving for urban areas in seek of further education and opportunity, a trap I knowingly fell into, continues to plague this land. Localized entrepreneurship has sprung up here in there over the years, most notably being the distilling of moonshine, but these have either been made illegal and punishable by law or commoditized by outside forces.

**Appalachia Today**

The powers of social prejudice, industrialization, coal mining and absentee land ownership, all forces of the Western Modern Age, worked profound and lasting effects
on the region of Central Appalachia, the focus area of this research. Until I left for college, I never noticed the dire economic disparity my hometown of Raceland faces. If you don’t work for the school, the churches, or the not even a handful of small businesses, you either don’t work or you work in another town. In 2006, The Raceland Car Shop, one of the largest car shops in the nation, which for over 80 years provided heavy duty repairs for rail cars, was transferred from one corporate conglomerate to another and eventually shut down in 2010 due to a lack of marketability, laying off 120 local workers (Yohe, 2010). Then in 2015, news rolled in that long-time employer AK Steel would shut down the Ashland blast furnace and leave Appalachia behind, due to what they claimed are unfair trading and tariffs in the steel industry. The ripple effect of such a devastating layoff has been felt across the region; Cisco in Boyd County lost over 11,000 contracts, workers in the coal and trucking industries have seen reduced hours, businesses along the Boyd/Greenup County line are seeing fewer and fewer customers, families are restructuring for the sake of resource and cost sharing, and social safety net services have experienced a strain due to the increase in unemployment benefits distribution. Finally, CSX, one of the oldest and most secure mass employers in the region, laid off another 101 railyard workers, and coal companies, under pressure to acquiesce to new Environmental Protection Agency emissions standards, have decided to cut their losses and demolish their factories, essentially ringing the death bell for old industry and the region so dependent upon it.
And I wish a lack of employing local businesses was the only issue still found in Appalachia. But it’s not. Not only does this issue of unemployment continue to devastate the broader Tri-State area of Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia, other travesties of poverty continue to work their dark magic. The singer/songwriters of Old Crow Medicine Show explained it perfectly in their song *Methamphetamine* from their album *Tennessee Pusher:*

**Methamphetamine**

Times they ain't like nothing they used to be
From Rocky mountain to Northeast Tennessee
Where the river flows with a dusty cold disease
And the babies whine 'cause they can't find nothing to eat

But mama she ain't hungry no more
She's waiting for a knock on the trailer door

It's gonna rock you like a hurricane
It's gonna rock you till you lose sleep
It's gonna rock you till you're out of a job
It's gonna rock you till you're out on the street

It's gonna rock you till you're down on your knees
It's gonna have you begging pretty please
It's gonna rock you like a hurricane

*Methamphetamine*

Don't need no Ph.D for a hundred dollar card
Just find a crooked cop and that doctor disregard
'Cause when it's either the mine or the Kentucky National Guard
I'd rather sell him a line than to be dying in the coal yard

Now papa he ain't hungry no more
He's waiting for a knock on the trailer door

It's gonna rock you like a hurricane
It's gonna rock you till you lose sleep
It's gonna rock you till you're out of a job
It's gonna rock you till you're out on the street

It's gonna rock you till you're down on your knees
It's gonna have you begging pretty please
It's gonna rock you like a hurricane

*Methamphetamine*
Well, it's a war out there and it's fought
by poor white men
From the plateau to the falls of the
Cumberland
You better watch your back 'cause you
just can't trust a friend
And the method man is going to get you
in the end

So listen to the whispering wind
It sounds like a big storm rolling in

It's gonna rock you like a hurricane

This song speaks to the ravaging power of drug addiction; Meth, OxyContin, Cocaine,
and lately heroin – that has swept into this region and violently attacked children,
teenagers, adults and the elderly without discrimination and without forgiveness.
Alcohol has also played its part in destabilizing families and communities, much the
same it does in any situation where it is abused. Tragic story after tragic story of drug
addiction, exploding meth labs, and violent murders, like the one of the preacher from
Westwood found dismembered in a basement, continuously roll down the river and along
the highways, further prejudicing the American perception of Appalachia and
disempowering everyone who calls it home. When looking back to the past and around at
the present, envisioning a prosperous future for this long beleaguered land becomes all
the more difficult.

And the last aspect of the region worth considering is its tendency to fall into in-
fighting. This is most present in the ballot box. Time after time after time, Appalachians have taken to election day dead set on continuing to approve its own demise. Whether it be through voting in local and state lawmakers with pockets flush with coal money, falling for propaganda targeted towards federal agencies like HUD and the EPA, balking at the efforts of public health programs like the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, needle exchange or Planned Parenthood and birth control, the trend of sadomasochism persists.

The 2016 Presidential election in the United States brought this in-fighting into sharp focus as rural communities descended on the voting booths in droves dead set on electing a candidate boasting of promises to “drain the swamp” and be their voice in Washington. I won’t mention the candidates name in this paper as I don’t want their brand on yet another American product. Knowing what I know now about Appalachia’s political history, I was more than skeptical of this bombastic candidate. And not to my surprise, decision after decision by this Administration has or will continue to threaten the health and well-being of Appalachian communities. Not everyone in Appalachia voted for this candidate. To say otherwise would only serve to further the monolithic misrepresentation of these communities given by the media to the American public. There is no denying Appalachia needs assistance at so many levels but the stubbornness of its people displayed through a commitment to a Puritan culture remains yet another hurdle between destitution and prosperity.
As I have already mentioned a handful of times, I was born and raised in Appalachia. More specifically, in Raceland, KY, along the river, deep in the heart of the Ohio River Valley. I grew up attending Sunday School at Raceland Christian Church, played soccer and baseball across the railroad tracks in Worthington, polished my golf game on the unforgiving and narrow slopes of the Oaks Golf Course, and attended all my years of secondary and primary education in the Raceland-Worthington School District. But most importantly, I received my initiation into the arts through the many educational performances my school took us to at the Paramount Arts Center in Ashland, KY.

We would regularly join others in the district to see the next wonder in arts education and cut our teeth on audience etiquette. I can’t specifically recall the many performances I saw in the Paramount. Regardless, these performances left a lasting impression upon me. In junior high and through high school, I discovered my talent and passion for music, which led me to join the school choir. I grabbed a few solos here and there, received some formal training in the big city of Lexington, KY, and did my breakthrough performance as a singer and actor on the Paramount stage in the role of Gaston from Disney’s Beauty and the Beast. Then, I earned entrance and a scholarship into the University of Kentucky School of Music for Vocal Performance. While I didn’t finish my music degree, I completed a degree in Arts Administration, performed in four
opera productions, traveled the nation with the UK Men’s Chorus, and eventually found myself in the Arts Policy and Administration Master’s Program at The Ohio State University.

The Researcher

It is here I discovered a new reality for myself. Since I started studying at The Ohio State University, I’ve explored many avenues of policy, issues and research in the arts world. My understanding of administration and policy, or for that matter, research in general, was limited by my worldview, a worldview which placed the term “research” on some lofty intellectual pedestal I could only admire from afar. This worldview is, as I have come to find out, founded in the theories and histories of Appalachian studies and how I align with the Appalachian experience. Growing up in Appalachia, I was never truly aware of the many issues I laid out for you in the section of this paper discussing Appalachian History. As I grappled with the process of graduate school, struggling with a sense of belonging and attempting to mold myself to my more acclimated colleagues, I continued to feel displaced, lost in a world I never dreamed of stepping into in the first place. Some will tell you this is commonplace for anyone stepping onto the battlefield of academic research, but I couldn’t deny something unique about my situation.

It wasn’t until graduate school that I even learned I am Appalachian. This realization spurred me to explore what it means to be Appalachian, what it is that defines
this cultural and geographical landscape, and what challenges I and others from and still in my community face. It also contributed to developing a new consciousness within me. My heart broke to learn about the centuries of exploitation, stereotyping, manipulation and disempowerment which have plagued and still plague the existence of so many from the rivers, valleys and hills of this wild countryside. Needless to say, this realization, along with the realization of the many opportunities and privileges I have been afforded thus far in life, brought with it much guilt, anxiety, confusion and shame. To give further significance to the dire situation in Appalachia, it was only through my mother returning to finish a Bachelor’s Degree at Morehead State University in Social Work in Morehead, KY where she took a class on Appalachian History, that I became familiar with the history explained earlier in this thesis. Had she not kept the books she purchased for the course, thus increasing my access to information tremendously, I might still have never come across this stream of knowledge so critical to understanding my existence in this world. This further proves my privilege as an educated Appalachian but does more to provide another side effect of the tragedy that is the lack of support for educating Appalachians on their own history. The more I discovered about Appalachia, the more I longed for home, a place I supposedly belonged to, and the more distant I felt from it. As I analyzed how I had unknowingly worked to assimilate into a class not originally mine, unconsciously shunning an experience I was never aware was the source of such embarrassment anytime I left home, the stronger the urge to redeem myself and my
betrayed community became.

My work in graduate school became an endeavor to link all my course material, readings, assignments and research interests into alleviating the issues I had once run away from. I’ve since become familiar with the specific history which accompanies and defines the framework that is the Appalachian experience. My questions turned from “what can I research?” to “how can my research benefit those back home?” I’ve reflected upon my experience of growing up in Appalachia and what this background means for me and my career in the arts. This is the driving force behind this research today. All of these issues significant to Appalachian History, my experience as a runaway Kentuckian, and my struggle to belong in a world not meant for me have led me to this point. For it is these issues which disadvantaged me in my worldview and disadvantage so many others less fortunate than I.

The Practitioner

The next piece to this puzzle lies outside the realm of academia. As a practitioner, I have interned with a variety of arts organizations and non-profits – each providing me with different experiences and insights. I developed my management and leadership skills as a Front of House manager at the Singletary Center for the Arts and discovered just how tedious certain responsibilities of a development department at a museum can be. I have engaged with an arts community in Columbus, OH - one in the
midst of a maelstrom of internal and external conflict - to study trans-disciplinary and
diverse approaches for organizational sustainability and have worked hours on end to
produce an inaugural opera festival in the European city of Prague. Most recently, I
experienced the inner-workings of a finely-tuned, summer opera festival steeped in
tradition and more than beneficial connections in Cincinnati, Ohio. Through all of these
experiences, I have developed a healthy respect and appreciation for the practicing arts
administrator.

But it has also left me with more than a few questions. It is one of these questions
which drives my research today. In a country whose diversity is skyrocketing and whose
institutionalized oppression is being consistently brought into question, it has become
undeniably apparent to me that certain arts organizations are at a crossroads. It was
impossible not to notice the disparity between the community which dominates the day-
to-day demographics of downtown Cincinnati and the community which attended the
main and non-main stage events of the company I interned for this past summer. It
occurred to me it was possible that this organization was not engaging with the
community it walked by on the street every day, a community whose positionality
relative to the power structure is not too different from my own in Appalachia.

This organization had a community relations department and it had a development
department; one engages with the community living downtown and the other, the one
most often attending the events. But could these departments be infused and turned into a
collaboration machine of intentional and expansive community engagement? A machine which constantly feeds off the efforts and success of both of its parts? It is easy to say, “Of course” to this question, but far more difficult to explain how. There was no denying the empty seats in the Aronoff Center in downtown Cincinnati this past summer. And while some might blame a venue change or the parking situation in downtown, I see an entire community, most within walking distance of the theatre, with no interest and no reason to fill those empty seats, but with every potential to do so. So now the question becomes less of an “if” and more of a “how” and that is where we find my research: How can the principles of community engagement and the best practices of non-profit development be combined in order to create more sustainable and diverse arts organizations and audiences?

**The Practitioner Researcher from Appalachia**

But, we’re not quite done yet. In all of this theorizing about the potential of collaboration in urban environment, I cannot toss aside my passion for change and redemption in Appalachia. It is this inquiry – initiated by my background, passion, and artistic experiences, and driven by recent events in the tri-state area of Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia - which inspires me now. While I have many fond memories of growing up in Kentucky and enjoy returning for the holidays or an occasional weekend getaway, there are things about my hometown I never realized. There is a reality which
haunts me, haunts me every time I cross that grand river headed back to Columbus, knowing there are so many left behind to issues I no longer face.

A lesson can be learned from being taught the dying tradition of holding a door open for someone behind you. Whether you have opened a door yourself or a door has been opened for you, it goes a long way to put forth the effort to keep that door open for the next person. There has been great hurt in Appalachia, and doors have been closed to its people for years. But where there is great hurt, there can be even greater healing. It is this hurt which has inspired me to conduct a case study regarding a current community engagement project at a classical arts organization compared to a rural Appalachian arts organization. I intend to formulate a theory on how the current ‘best practices’ of nonprofit development, as well as current methods and theories of community engagement, can be combined to reconfigure how arts organizations in Appalachia can engage and grow with their community.

**Need Statement**

The history of oppression of the Appalachian region and its people coupled with the economic and social tragedies of the recent years lays out a need for change. These circumstances create a unique situation which calls for new strategies in how arts organizations engage with and solicit communities. With the lack of internal wealth in certain rural communities, non-profit arts organizations cannot rely on the small yet
significant pool of wealthy donors often afforded large urban organizations. The unique social and economic dynamics of communities in Appalachia require a more democratic approach, one that engages a larger variety of community members and seeks to create sustainability through a higher volume of mid to low level donors.

There is also a moral need to create arts organizations which will not function as agents of oppression in Appalachia, but will serve to celebrate and promote the uniqueness and significance of Appalachian culture instead. This researcher unashamedly takes a stance of enmity towards absentee investment and influence in the ongoings of a community based on the history of malingerer involvement in Appalachia, as detailed earlier in this thesis. To counteract this status quo, a facet of the mission of such an organization is to educate the community on its uniqueness, significance and history and to provide avenues for self-advocacy. It would be antithetical for an arts organization to promote community support and oppose further absentee ownership and then be financially supported by a few wealthy absentee patrons.

There is also a need for turning consumers of community engagement into multi-faceted consumers of programming and development, further ingraining them in the process, structure and culture of the company. As the organization pursues its mission of creating a broad swath of donor support rooted in the community, members of the community will have to be nourished into what this researcher calls multi-level consumers, able to participate, or consume, in more than one area of the organization.
Otherwise, the organizations cannot hope to remain both ethically and financially viable.

Appalachia and its people have long since attempted assimilation into the more modernized and wealthier America, but at their own expense. The challenges of landscape and Appalachia’s tarnished history present a disadvantage for its communities. Arts organizations who attempt the same assimilation, assuming the practices of large arts organizations in urban areas relying on a considerably different audience are easily transferable without significant adaptation, will certainly suffer similar devastating outcomes. There is a need to develop more adaptive systems of funding, engagement and management which can assimilate to the community dynamics in Appalachia, rather than impose a system on the community which ultimately cannot be supported.

Finally, while this research limits its scope towards applicability in the Appalachian Region, the need for such organizational shift as is proposed herein is not so thusly limited. One need only to look at the recent inauguration of the National History Museum of African American History at the Smithsonian Institute to take notice of a demographic swing in American society. This inauguration marks a crucial shift in American culture – the recognized ascendency of the African American experience as crucial to the American experience as a whole. When considering the cultural importance of the Smithsonian to American society, one can no longer deny the status of the many timeless contributions African Americans have made to this great nation as anything but monumental. This shift leads me to believe any institution which has so
rooted itself into one specific demographic or one traditional, routine audience and also lacks the ability to properly engage with a multitude of communities, in any sense of the word, will struggle for relevancy in an increasingly diverse landscape. Therefore, there is a need for research and knowledge which will support the organizational alterations of said institutions so as to increase their continued viability. It is the hope of this researcher that the data collected will contribute to that pool of knowledge.

All of these needs accumulate into the necessity to formulate a theory on how the current ‘best practices’ of nonprofit development, as well as current methods and theories of community engagement, can be combined to reconfigure how arts organizations in Appalachia can engage and grow with their community while becoming more sustainable and impactful.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Before we begin answering the core question of this thesis, we must first explore the question’s components. What exactly are “best practices” of non-profit fundraising and what are the current methods and theories of community engagement? Answering these questions should be simple enough. But beyond answering these questions, we must also explain how the current literature does or does not consider the Appalachian context established in the background chapter. Answering these questions will add filters to my lens.

Beyond identifying these practices of fundraising, we must also question the assumptions and logics behind them. Fundraising in the non-profit business sector, specifically the performing arts, has been an accepted reality for quite some time. Most of us know how the story goes; Development departments identify stakeholders, profile potential donors, nurture current ones, make the big ask and hope for the share of an estate when a benefactor passes away. However, as generations come and go and the balance of power and influence shift ever so slightly, the assumptions surrounding a long accepted reality can change. Pull these assumptions out of a disinterested context and into one with its own realities, and the waters become even murkier.

In the case of most Appalachian communities, what can a fundraiser do when a
community is so devastatingly drained of the usual disposable income often afforded wealthier communities which is often necessary to support a more traditional approach? As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, debilitating issues generations old combined with new threats continue to diminish the possibility of ever developing thriving neighborhoods in Appalachia, leaving the area limited on a variety of resources. To counteract these perpetual issues, academics and practitioners have coined such terms as community engagement, community development and community participation, all in an effort to rally communities and their culture and economies around a centralizing idea of agency and ingenuity and free them from the tethers of outside investment. But have they gone so far as to combine the ideas of community engagement with the practices of fundraising, considering this as another best option to galvanize such communities?

This literature review seeks to acknowledge the long-standing principles and best practices of non-profit professional fundraising and theories of human and organizational behavior which inform them and analyze the availability of organizational structure and models one can pull from. I will begin with the definitive text *Principles of Professional Fundraising: Useful Foundations for Successful Practice* by Joseph R. Mixer and move forward through more recent books, articles and journals on fundraising and the ideas that support it. This review will also consider the theories and practice of community engagement and the organizational structure and values (i.e. personnel, transparency, management systems, etc.) necessary to promote such an environment in non-profits,
reviewing literature from such researchers as Ellen Rosewall and Doug Borwick. Finally, with the garnered information, this review will analyze the gaps in data and the plausibility for the integration of community engagement theory and principles with the best practices of non-profit professional fundraising and the most suitable organizational structure all guided by a supportive organizational theory. I intend to formulate a model from the question of how can current ‘best practices’ of nonprofit development, as well as current methods and theories of community engagement, be combined to reconfigure how arts organizations in Appalachia can engage and grow with their community and become more sustainable and impactful.

**Community Engagement**

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, we must define what community engagement is and how it is achieved, especially in relation to the arts. From there, we can further theorize on how these practices can be more finely tuned to an Appalachian context. The US Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines community engagement as the “...process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people...” and goes on to distinguish the goals of such practices to be “...build trust, enlist new resources and allies, create better communication, and improve overall health outcomes as successful projects evolve into lasting collaborations”
(McCloskey, et al., 2011). Truly, these are lofty and admirable goals. This purpose sounds enticing enough, and were I not looking for a more arts-based approach and focus, would more than suffice. One benefit is their recognition of communities as both a concrete (i.e. geographic) and abstract concept (i.e. special interest), highlighting the need for organizations to consider “community” in all its forms. While this purpose and these goals are certainly to be desired in any activity related to community engagement, I wanted literature far specific to the arts. This is where I came across Ellen Rosewall’s *Arts Management: United Arts and Audiences in the 21st Century* and Doug Borwick’s *Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of Arts in the United States*, both incredibly relevant texts on the topic of community engagement.
Arts Management: United Arts and Audiences in the 21st Century

Ellen Rosewall’s Arts Management: United Arts and Audiences in the 21st Century begins by describing the difference between community outreach, a now out-of-fashion approach, and the new trend of community engagement. Rosewall remarks outreach “...implies that a magnanimous organization is reaching out to those less fortunate, and the community partner does not have much to bring to the table” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 242). Her definition and theory behind community outreach is laid quite bare and supports my theory of moving beyond this outdated practice due to its top-down approach. Borwick also supports an aversion to this top down approach, remarking on the need for the focus to be “...on the community and then on the organization’s role in it” (Borwick, 2012, p. 12). Their approach to community engagement is denser and significantly more varied.

Rosewall calls this process a “...broad field...”, one that incorporates “...several similar, but distinct activities...” but has the core idea of “...breaking down the misconception that arts and culture are simply entertainment vehicles...” for the enjoyment of “...those who are specifically interested in them” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 243). While this is not a primary goal of my research, ameliorating this misconception regarding arts and culture, it is personally encouraging to know this process has yielded such results. Purposes of community arts engagement include addressing “...specific community social or civic needs, linking grassroots efforts with efforts of “social and
political activism”, partnering with various organizations throughout the community, assisting an organization “...achieve its mission and serve the community...”, creating a valuable space for “...diverse groups of people...” to come together, integrating the arts into communities, and eradicating the misconception of the need for exclusivity in the arts (Rosewall, 2014, p. 243). This gives me credible reasoning for executing community engagement in an organization for the benefit of a community and several outcomes to seek when exploring and learning about an organization’s work. When observing an organization attempting to work in this field, I can ask if they are accomplishing any of the outcomes Rosewall lists and, if yes, which ones and how, and, if no, why not. However, it does not yet give me a solid process or strategy to work from.

Rosewall goes further in her discussion of community engagement to identify its social and civic benefits, focusing on revitalization, promoting community identity, enhancing quality of life and place, and the art’s role in healing and trauma – more outcomes for me to keep an eye out for in my coming observations. She references the work of MASS MoCA and a film by Nancy Kelly that “...chronicles the transformation of her hometown from a case study in industrial decay to a growing and vital community...” because of art (Rosewall, 2014, p. 248). I’ve witnessed this documentary and can attest to the impact the museum is having on North Adams, Massachusetts and acknowledge the socioeconomic similarities between this community and ones in Appalachia. She mentions the need for “...authentic expressions of its citizens...” in
communities, a need for discovering a sense of place, that idea which “...makes each community unique and authentic” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 249). She address quality of life, “...the well-being of individuals and society...” and the need for communities to improve quality of place, citing Tom Burrup who states “...what makes a community work...is its culture and its governance – the shared understandings and expectations that people have of themselves, each other, and their collective endeavors...” and even goes on to discuss how the arts can play a role in healing community trauma through documenting events, expressions of mourning and memorializing the dead, among other things (Rosewall, 2014, pp. 249-250). In response to Burrup, considering how an organization positions itself in a community’s culture and governance and what level of understanding it has of their understandings and expectations will be another interesting phenomenon to observe, perhaps hinting at the depth of familiarity with the community that organization has. Still, we’re only landing on the reasons for and benefits of community engagement and further integrating arts into communities and societies. But the practitioner, hampered by resources and any other number of external stressors, needs more information on how to do community engagement, as does this research.

While Rosewall may not delve into the semantics of initiating community engagement projects, she does provide a meticulous series of metrics for measuring the outcome of any such endeavor. She mentions the Americans for the Arts report by Mara Walker and Johanna Misey Boyer *Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Community: How the*
Arts can be Integrated. These characteristics, listed below, can serve both as features for practitioners to be wary of when evaluating their community and as outcomes to be achieved when planning, implementing and evaluating community engagement projects (Rosewall, 2014, p. 256). In that sense, her text serves to fulfill one, if not two, aspects of the process of community engagement and provides this research with potential metrics to be used when analyzing data.

<table>
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<th>Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Community</th>
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<tr>
<td>● The arts bring together diverse people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Elected officials understand the importance of supporting the arts and do so.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The arts are valued as a critical component of learning for all</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Participation in culture creates individual and community meaning.</td>
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<td>● Business/corporate citizens recognize that the arts are important to a healthy business environment, and support the arts in diverse ways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The arts are infused into the natural and built environments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The arts are integral to civic dialogue and community building.</td>
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<td>● The arts are valued as an industry because of their contribution to the economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The contributions of individual artists are valued and supported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The arts flourish with new and diverse leadership informed by those who paved the way for them.</td>
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Table 3: Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Community, 2001
Each of these characteristics assist in forming the backbone of measuring the success of community engagement projects. These outcomes – creates individual and community meaning, valued as an industry, recognize that the arts are important, etc. – are crucial realizations needed in Appalachian communities and the arts organizations that serve them. These characteristics urge arts organizations to be conscientious of their impact on a community. Observing how and to what extent the organization I observe contributes to or diminishes from the overall health of the community it practices in will be assisted by these ten characteristics and will be a key topic of discussion in my interviews. Unfortunately, we are still without a concrete process towards contributing to improving these ten characteristics for an organization to follow, presenting still a pragmatic and practical dilemma.
Building Communities, Not Audiences

In her book, Rosewall makes mention of Doug Borwick’s Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of Arts in the United States, remarking on his proposition of the need for acknowledging the reality that “…different kinds of art require different, but equally valid responses…reflective art is considered culturally significant…while visceral art is normally produced in the commercial sector...” but organizations will miss out on fully executing a partnership, be it with an individual or a community, government, non-profit or private corporation, if they bring in an elitist attitude (Rosewall, 2014, p. 244).

Borwick claims the “…reputation of not-for-profit arts institutions is elitist, insular, out-of-touch, and irrelevant…” and that “…nothing short of a radical transformation of the way arts institutions relate to their communities will suffice to convince the person on the street that established arts organizations matter in their lives” (Borwick, 2012, p. 40). He says the fundamental issue needing to be addressed in the 21st Century is “…that the organization should be an active participant in the life of the community…”, claiming their viability depends on it (Borwick, 2012, p. 40). Resolving this issue is larger than any one organization and ideally “…organizations would come together…” and discuss the many options for resolution, resolving then to address them (Borwick, 2012, p. 41).

Moving beyond Borwick’s reasoning behind this shift, a shift similar to the one I have identified, he breaks down the process of community engagement into two
categories: arts-based programming with the subcategories of economic development, education, and community building and the idea of “The Arts as Community Citizen”, an idea spearheaded by the Ford Foundation’s Shifting Sands Initiative. This initiative rests in assumptions similar to ones I made in the introduction, specifically regarding increasing diversity in America. The namesake follows up a statement that, “...(t)he sands are shifting rapidly in America’s fast changing neighborhoods...” and sites specific factors increasing tensions between these groups. Where the idea of “...The Arts as Community Citizen...” results from is the idea that “…museums, community-based arts/cultural organizations, and others can help to break down these hurdles by using the languages of art and culture to broker common identify and facilitate shared vision.” The goal of the initiative is to build “…a common vision, create tolerance and respect, and strengthen economic outcomes in rapidly changing neighborhoods.” (Partners for Livable Communities).

While I take issue with the urban focus of this initiative in regards to my research focus, it does go further than either Borwick or Rosewall is setting forth a strategy to accomplishing its goals. In a chart titled Partners’ Approach to Culture Builds Community, they explore arts and culture impact, the benefits its engagement brings and lay a framework for involvement. Involvement includes a visioning committee, a strategic team of experts and participants (i.e. arts organizations, entrepreneurs, government officials). From here they lay out a three-step process and provide a sample
outline for strategic planning.

In further exploring this initiative, the urban focus becomes nothing but white noise next to the colonizing approach of partnership building. This initiative is a top-down, outside-in approach where very little of the change inspired will come from those living in the affected community. Change rests solely on the expertise of Partners for Livable Communities and they come into the community just as quickly as they leave it. They assume a “community”, specifically a disinvested community, will be able to mobilize itself well enough and quickly enough to provide a reasoned and efficient base from which Partners will be able to apply their expertise and wisdom. There are good strategies and logics applied here, but I am searching for a much more organic engagement.

In discussing economic development, Borwick cites Tom Burrop and Stephanie Moore and their research on “...how arts and cultural organizations can boost economic vitality...” along with the eight strategies for Economic and Social Capital Development, listed below:
### Economic and Social Capital Development Strategies

| 1. Create jobs                  | 5. Attract Investment       |
| 2. Create and Enhance Identity  | 6. Diversify Economy        |

*Table 4: Economic and Social Capital Development Strategies*

Arts and economic growth have always been at opposition in this nation, with the former playing servant to the latter. No such better example in our modern times exists than that of the discourse between Science, Technology, Education and Math (STEM) initiatives and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) initiatives. We need look no further than Plato’s ideal society and his less than kind regard for the arts to understand the roots of this discourse. Therefore, it is encouraging to have evidence of the economic benefits of arts integration. Our argument must be a holistic one, that these efforts of community engagement through the arts will not just be self-serving but wholly beneficial to the communities in which it is practiced.

**Principles for Effective Engagement:** Borwick’s chapter titled *Principles for Effective Engagement* provides key information for my research. He remarks that the most important principle in this process of community engagement for arts organizations developing a “…compelling vision of community involvement…” is “…arts
organizations believing that they should have one...” in the first place (Borwick, 2012, p. 92). This vision should “...be rooted in a belief that the arts should be a partner in everything that is important to a community…” and “…every arts organization should consider how it can contribute to the economy and social health of the region in which it exists” (Borwick, 2012, p. 92). He says “…community engagement should be a new lens through which all of an organization’s activities are viewed, not as something extra...” and goes on to discuss how it should be mainstreamed into the mission, vision and values of an organization (Borwick, 2012, p. 93). He also remarks that the opportunity cost should be considered and programs “…should be eliminated in order to pursue those alternatives” (Borwick, 2012, p. 94).

Revisioning all the work of an arts organization as a subset of service to the whole community permits adaptive re-use of existing infrastructure. Development functions of visibility (marketing) and resources (fundraising and sales) become modes of taking the interests of the community seriously. Advocacy efforts flow from providing the community with direct examples of how the work of the arts id directly benefitting them. (Borwick, 2012, p. 94)

In all, Borwick identifies ten principles of community engagement, listed below:
We’ve already touched upon the first three principles in the previous paragraph. He goes further to discuss programming and collaboration. Of programming, he calls it the “...cornerstone of community engagement...”, stating that, “...Arts organizations that take the concerns and interests of the community seriously and that present culturally, aesthetically, and topically meaningful reflective work of the highest quality will, over time, be embraced by that community” (Borwick, 2012, p. 93). Organizations looking to become more involved in community engagement need to consider how critical community engagement is and also critically approach the concept of “reflective art” Borwick mentioned earlier. His last remarks on programming deal with increasing and diversifying representation of the community on the organization’s staff and, if they have one, board. In this process, advocacy which “...yields a more culturally accommodating organization...” should be the goal, along with the organization and its leadership maintaining an understanding of this diversification process in how it does or does not
achieve the desired results (Borwick, 2012, p. 94). Of collaboration, he deems it a necessary process which must begin internally in order to foster a desire and attitude towards developing inter-organizational partnerships throughout the community.

Borwick’s statement on the sixth principle, readiness, is similar to his remarks on the organization’s mission, vision and values, mentioned earlier. It is his thoughts on Evaluating Resources, the seventh principle, which intrigues me the most. He opens by addressing the response that occurs when most arts organizations are challenged to change, “that arts organizations are stretched beyond their limits as it is and the addition of any other focus…is out of the question” (Borwick, 2012, p. 95). But he says there are benefits to be gained by “…re-imagining the nature of the relationship between the arts organization and the community”, including new funding opportunities, more avenues for marketing, and the opportunity to re-evaluate the effectiveness, both cost and impact wise, of current programming. The idea of new funding opportunities is incredibly encouraging to me and my research, but it is hard to imagine how these resources will manifest in an already scarce environment. He goes further to discuss steps which can be taken to better allocate resources, including assessing the relationship-building assets, considering and evaluating current relationships between the organization and the community and determining what gifts are present in the individuals involved in this process, and galvanizing leadership, particularly board members, to act as ambassadors in engaging in inter-organizational relationships (Borwick, 2012, p. 96).
Jumping over the eighth and ninth principles, we look now towards Process and Product, principle number 10. Borwick states that, more often than not, the point is made that process is equally, or close to equally, as important as the product when endeavoring in community engagement work. He mentions the legacy of valuing product over process in the arts and how it has led to a disconnect between “...the not-for-profit arts industry and substantive community engagement” (Borwick, 2012, p. 97). The benefits of valuing process equally with product are healthier communities, healthier individuals, and, as a by-product of increasing community inclusivity in creating arts experiences, exceptional artistic results with the goal being “...to value process and elevate it to active consideration in the established arts world” (Borwick, 2012, p. 98). This is not a process of devaluing or negating the importance of outcomes, but instead redefining the values that determine whether an outcome is positive or not.

This is breakthrough information for me as it sets up specific activities within an organization to identify and analyze and gives me topics for the questions I will use in the interview section. His ideas on resource allocation, how he hides the fundraising portion of an organization under the guise of “relationship-building assets” shows me the importance of fundraising and gives me direction on how fundraising can be utilized in this process.
Preparation and Project Development

In this chapter of Borwick’s text, he identifies the lack of a “...tradition of arts organizations developing on-going reciprocal relationships with non-arts entities...” and that this paradigm will present yet another challenge in the relationship building process of creating community engaged partnerships with businesses and community members. “...Engagement...is built on the development of relationships” (Borwick, 2012, p. 100) and may come to fruition in a variety of forms. Unfortunately, a lack of practice combined with a perception, and to some a reality, that “...established arts industry...has been a province for the elite” (Borwick, 2012, p. 100) have positioned these institutions as “...wary strangers...” in a community, quick to retreat behind their walls of expertise, authenticity and artist product. Further adding to this “wary strangers” predicament most art organizations will find themselves in is “...an arts infrastructure in which decisions are largely made by and for those with the money to support that structure...” which has created a barrier between arts organizations and the broad populace (Borwick, 2012, p. 100).

From here Borwick begins mapping out and discussing key parts of the community engagement process, including the more specific task of developing a project to support this shift. In preparing for this process, he highlights the importance of readiness, familiarity and trust building. Readiness is considered both in the mindset of the participants and the availability of necessary resources, reminding managers and
organizers to be considerate of where each participant is in regards to preparing and facilitating such an endeavor. He also cautions organizations not “...to conflate marketing with community engagement”, something all too common in the for-profit market, and to not assume “...that the organization already knows all that is necessary to know about a community’s needs and interests” (Borwick, 2012, p. 101). Adding to the necessary considerations needed before moving forward in community engagement, he provides us with qualities necessary in organizations and community organizers, shown below in Table 6 (Borwick, 2012, p. 102)
## Qualities of Partners in Community-Focused Arts Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artists/Arts Organizations</th>
<th>Community Organizers/Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• They view their product as something that has its role to serve the people, not the other way around.</td>
<td>• They are committed to service and community betterment, not to themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They emphasize grassroots arts activity that is based directly upon the experiences of the people who attend their performance.</td>
<td>• They know that the wisdom of the community comes from the bottom up, not from the top down.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• They are seen, individually and collectively, as approachable members of their community.</td>
<td>• They see themselves as peers and partners in the community with which they are working.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• They have genuine respect for the large majority of their audience who are uninitiated in the traditions and language of the arts.</td>
<td>• They have genuine respect for artists who will meet them as partners in community improvement work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They understand the potential that the arts have for improving the lives of the members of the community.</td>
<td>• They understand the potential that the arts have for improving the lives of the members of their community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They have the humility to know that they do not know that is the best for the communities with which they work.</td>
<td>• They have the humility to know that they do not know how the arts might best accomplish the goals they have for their community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Qualities of Partners in Community-Focused Arts Projects

From here “...each participant must discover what they do not know about their intended partner and about that partner’s world...” (Borwick, 2012) in order to overcome assumptions and move forward to the trust building stage, whereupon partners must meet, talk and work, overcoming “...baggage...” and learning “...about the backgrounds and history of the organizations and individuals who will be participating” (Borwick, 2012). Based on this literature regarding preparation and project development, instilling some
plan in my methodology for analyzing how this occurred or is occurring in the organization I am analyzing for my case study would be a productive way of gathering data to further develop a more specific process within the bounded context of the Appalachian Experience. However, there is danger in this idea, as it could lead future organizers to rush the familiarization stage if they assume too much and attempt too general policy transfer based on those assumptions. Borwick’s text solidifies the need for nurturing the familiarization step within the process of community engagement, establishing it as a value to consider when determining the positivity of an outcome. The final thing worth mentioning on community engagement in this literature review is Borwick’s *The Arts’ Four Noble Truths* and *The Eightfold Path of Community Engagement*, found below in Table 7 and Table 8:
The Arts’ Four Noble Truths

1. Life in the arts as we know it today is suffering
2. The origin of that suffering is insufficient attachment to community
3. The cessation of suffering is attainable by engagement with the community.
4. Freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Eightfold Path of Community Engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 7: The Arts’ Four Noble Truths</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Life in the arts as we know it today is suffering</td>
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<td>2. The origin of that suffering is insufficient attachment to community</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The cessation of suffering is attainable by engagement with the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Eightfold Path of Community Engagement.</td>
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The Eightfold Path of Community Engagement

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Table 8: The Eightfold Path of Community Engagement</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Belief</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fidelity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Knowledge</td>
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</table>
Community Engagement Training

In the third part of Borwick’s definitive text on Community Engagement, he addresses the need for arts organizations, community organizers and educational institutions to receive and then produce training on community engagement and the theories and processes that support it. He addresses this need and addresses certain educational institutions and advocacy organizations, such as the Eastman School of Music and their Institute for Music Leadership and the Association of Arts Administration Educators, along with Bill Cleveland and his work with the CAT Institute in St. Louis (Borwick, 2012, p. 320). But, in the end, he brings to light the lack of “…a universal curriculum for community arts preparation...” and presents a curriculum “…focusing on those coming to the training from the arts world…” (Borwick, 2012, p. 320). The interest in mentioning this section of his research in regards to my own is found in the apparent need for an arts organization practicing such efforts in Appalachia to understand and produce a curriculum for training artist, community organizers, politicians and any other form of community leader on community engagement. A successful organization, as described in the introduction of this proposal, will, as based on Borwick’s suggestions, need to participate in this kind of training.

He divides this chapter into three key sections; Strategic Issue for Arts Institutions, Introduction to Community Arts, and Essential Skills and Knowledge for Community Arts Practitioners. From here, most of the subheadings he highlights serve as
brief summaries of issues, ideas and concepts he addressed earlier, including making the case for engagement, understanding the obstacles and challenges associated with the process, and mainstreaoming the process in the fundamentals of the organization, stating

A thorough curriculum would include a discussion of how organizational systems...can be re-tooled through substantive interaction with the community. It would also present methods for evaluating the opportunity cost of existing work as one step in the potential reallocation of resources. (Borwick, 2012, p. 321)

His brief mentioning of the need to know and understand the history of community engagement in as many contexts as possible is a simple suggestion to not “...re-invent either the wheel or the hula hoop” (Borwick, 2012, p. 321). I plan to investigate the history of the organization I am studying and adding this perspective, meaning where the specific organization sits in the progression of community engagement efforts, will be of interest. From here, Borwick’s discussion on community engagement curriculum becomes much more extensive, dividing his section of skills and knowledge into three categories: Community focused, Selected Arts-Specific Content, and the Design and Implementation of Community Arts Programming.

In discussing community focused skills and knowledge, he mentions the concepts of cultural humility and understanding privilege, along with other principles of the curriculum which focus on community organizers and practitioners surrendering their preconceived notions of a community and its people and being open to the process of breaking down barriers and essentially letting the community commandeer the project.
Without going into too much detail on already fleshed out principles, Borwick uses this section to drive home his emphasis on those seeking to engage in community engagement to be keenly aware of the need to know and/or become familiar with any and every aspect of a community. Community organizers are going to have to become an integral part of the community they are working in, known by other organizers, business owners, politicians, public officials, religious leaders and organizers, artists, community elders, etc.

In his next section, *Selected Arts-Specific Content*, he mentions the need for “…entrepreneurship in community art works – structural, financial, social…”, declaring it as something “…helpful as community arts projects are designed” (Borwick, 2012, p. 324). Again, Borwick lays out for us just how encompassing one’s knowledge need be in order to effectively execute community engagement projects, including knowledge of public art processes, economic impact and familiarity with local educational institutions. He also mentions cultural mapping, of which he declares that “…skills in this area are important for those seeking to enter into partnership with populations new to and underserved by the arts” (Borwick, 2012, p. 325). Identifying the level of knowledge relative to these aspects of community engagement in the staff I interact with at the organization under review and analyzing to what extent this knowledge impacts the process will be crucial in furthering the development of a model applicable to other organizations hoping to delve into these kinds of projects.
Between Rosewall and Borwick, we are giving an incredibly clear picture of what community engagement is, what forces are driving it, why communities today are in great need of it, how it has been realized and the methods and principles for applying it in a community. We’ve discussed organizational mindsets, relationship building, and breadth of outcomes one can expect from a proper development and implementation of a community engagement project. But what Borwick only touches on and Rosewall ignores are the financials to be considered behind any project development and implementation, new partnership or complete organizational shift. Borwick attempts to ease any trepidation an organization has by insisting this to be a necessary direction for arts organizations today, but he does not provide concrete ideas for designing financial management systems supportive of this new paradigm. In response to Borwick’s call for potential partners to determine their level of readiness, I turn now to the long-standing tradition of fundraising in nonprofit organizations and seek to delineate principles of this process which compliment or would be key to the process of community engagement and ensuring organizational sustainability through the entire process.

**Fundraising**

While we could discuss the roots of philanthropy in America, a phenomenon synonymous with the rise of Modernism, that merely gives us a story of the passing of money through generations. I need to know why people give, how they give, and how an
organization can galvanize current donors to give more and prospective donors to give for the first time. Furthermore, I need principles to guide the development of my interview protocol.

I decided to take an historical approach to his portion of the literature review, but historical in the sense of reviewing the progression of principles and practice within the field. To start, I noticed Mixer’s *Principles of Professional Fundraising* referenced often in more recent articles. Written in 1993 and considered perhaps outdated, Mixer establishes fundraising as a process of “…asking for funds to support needed services…” with a goal of creating “…relationships between prospects and charitable organizations…” (Mixer, 1993). Although his vision of possible relationships could be considered limited, he still provides a very basic and transmittable definition. He goes on in his introduction to discuss the social exchange model, that which “…illustrates how positive attitudes and satisfactions are created in both solicitors and donors in various methods of fundraising…” and acknowledges needing to understand “…the motivations and influences that cause individuals to give, and…the reasons why people do not give” (Mixer, 1993). These abstract ideas of social behavior in communities are certainly worth investigating in Appalachia. A successful organization will need to understand these behaviors and how they express themselves on a local level in order to execute the model this research intends to promote.

Joseph goes on to acknowledge that the chief challenge of any fundraiser is
“...finding sufficient numbers of persons who can be motivated and influenced to give, who are capable of giving requisite dollars, and who can be interested in the purposes and needs to be served” (Mixer, 1993). Without a doubt, all three of these challenges manifest themselves in Appalachian communities. He mentions the need for fundraising to “...be freed from such pejorative labels as ‘begging’ and ‘manipulating’”. It is true that fundraising, especially for arts non-profits, is not “...elevated to the same status and value society gives to economic exchange and similar social activities...” (Mixer, 1993) as he suggests, bringing us once again to the discourse of Plato’s ideal society. This lends further support for the need to engage with communities on a deeper and more mutual level, to better understand its many nuances and build the trust Rosewall discusses.

Mixer references a 1992 Gallup Organization Poll in which eleven motives for giving were measured and then ranked. The list included in order of most relevant:
### Gallup Poll: 11 Motives for Giving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Those with more should help those with less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personal satisfaction from giving and volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Their behavior met their religious beliefs or commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Giving back to society some benefits derived from it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Being asked to contribute or volunteer by a personal friend or business associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ensuring the contribution of activities or institutions that they or their families benefit from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Serving as an example to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fulfilling a business or community obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Creating a remembrance of oneself or one’s family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Obtaining tax considerations or deductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Being encouraged by an employer</td>
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</table>

A more recent post from Network for Good sites the following 14 reasons in their Non-profit Marketing Blog (Ragland, 2015):
The Secret to Getting People to Give: 14 Reasons Why People Donate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Someone I know asked me to give, and I wanted to help them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I felt emotionally moved by someone’s story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I want to feel I’m not powerless in the face of need and can help (this is especially true during disasters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I want to feel I’m changing someone’s life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I feel a sense of closeness to a community or group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I want to memorialize someone (who is struggling or died of a disease, for example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I was raised to give to charity—it’s tradition in my family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I want to be “hip,” and supporting this charity (i.e., wearing a yellow wrist band) is in style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>It makes me feel connected to other people and builds my social network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I want to have a good image for myself/my company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I want to leave a legacy that perpetuates me, my ideals, or my cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I feel fortunate and want to give something back to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I give for religious reasons—my faith teaches me to help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I want to be seen as a leader/role model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Table 10: 14 Reasons Why People Donate*

The leading motives for volunteering included, in no particular order:
Motives for Volunteering

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Importance of helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Feeling compassion toward people in need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Doing something for a cause that was personally important to the volunteer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He goes on to cite other studies which reference the importance of religious affiliation to volunteering, cite correlation between volunteering and increased giving, acknowledge that households with less disposable income tend to give less while households claiming tax deductions “...outgive by almost four to one those who do not itemize deductions...” and “...people who pledge specific amounts or a percentage of income give larger sums than whose giving is less systematic” (Mixer, 1993). These motives and correlations provide principles by which a fundraiser can strategize within a fundraising plan and are a good starting point for developing the metrics to be used in my case study.

Unfortunately, as Mixer points out, this research came at a time when “...the specific application of these findings to fundraising...” was just emerging with “...philanthropy and fundraising having only recently become acceptable academic pursuits” (Mixer, 1993). But as we can see from the 2015 report, certain logics and desires behind giving have maintained since that 1992 Gallup poll, thus solidifying them as core forces behind this activity.

This actually brings us back to Rosewall and the tenth chapter of her already
referred to. In this chapter, titled *Fundraising Basics*, she describes fundraising as “...an art, a science, and an essential part of the activities of the arts organization...as much a part of the organization as planning programs or marketing...” in which “...everyone has a crucial role to play” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 151). She addresses the same ideas of “begging” and “manipulation” Mixer addressed in 1993, using “...memories of going from door to door as a child with a cardboard box full of candy bars...”, something I am very familiar with, as a visual (Rosewall, 2014, p. 152). Rosewall goes on to further solidify the process of fundraising in the key functions of an organization, differentiating it from “...selling candy or promoting a teen dance...” and acknowledging it as “...not a desperate measure” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 152). Much the same as Mixer did in 1993, Rosewall gives authority to the importance of fundraising in arts non-profits, an importance not ignored by this researcher. Clearly, this is a function of arts non-profits worth further research and investigation.

Where Mixer presents reasons why people do or do not give, Rosewall provides Ten Principles of Fundraising, taken from the *Tools for Results* toolkit produced by the Texas Commission on the Arts (Rosewall, 2014, p. 155).
Teßn Principles of Fundraising (Taken from *Tools for Results* – Texas Commission on the Arts)

| 1. Never ask a stranger for money. | 6. Raise money from the inside out. |
| 2. Cultivate before asking. | 7. Raise money from the top down. |
| 3. Think of the needs of the donor. | 8. Make the case larger than the organization. |
| 4. Ask for support for what you need. | 9. Develop a strategy you can accomplish. |
| 5. Personalize your solicitation. | 10. Treasure your volunteer leadership. |

*Table 12: Ten Principles of Fundraising*

Most of these principles support the need for engaging more fully with the community; eliminating strangers, expanding your cause beyond the organization, and considering the needs of the donor. Where I would question this toolkit is its directive to raise money “...from the top down.” This positions the organization as lord and the community as beggar. Rosewall also explores ideas of why people give, citing that “…the bulk of support for any organization comes from local sources...” and that “…organizations do better by cultivating local sources than by applying for national foundations (Rosewall, 2014, p. 154).

The further away from the organization the funding source is, the less likely it is that the source will understand your organization, be aware of the good work you do in your community or know your track record...the more likely it is that you will be competing with hundreds of applications from all over the country.
This literature points towards the need for grassroots efforts in fundraising, focusing energies on getting the most out of your immediate community over distant and absentee funders. But Rosewall does not make the connection between the ideas of community engagement she promotes later in her text and these principles of fundraising here, leaving a gap in the research and a potential for innovation. She also does not consider what an organization can do if local money is not present and they are then forced to compete with “…hundreds of applications from all over the country.”

Along with these ten principles, Ellen discusses the mentality fundraisers should have regarding the benefits of this “...important and necessary part of the activities of a not-for-profit business” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 156). She states organizations should learn the standards for their art form, community and unique circumstances, crafting budgets that balance the odd types of incomes and should also acknowledge fundraising is more about relationships than it is money, breaking the status quo of transactional existence between entities (Rosewall, 2014, p. 156). Bray supports this idea of relationship building, stating “…a fundraiser’s ability to relate positively to his or her fellow human beings is crucial to that person’s long-term success…and (fundraisers) should enjoy the idea of interacting with people outside the organization, be they donors, foundation funders, board members, or others” (Ilona Bray, 2010). Both authors, and Mixer, concede to the idea that “…more people give to people they know and trust than to
abstract ideas” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 165). Still, none of the authors go as far as to make the connection between this relationship building necessity in fundraising and the ability of community engagement to galvanize communities.

There is also the need for preparation and planning in the realm of fundraising. Rosewall states “...the process starts with… the creation of long-range and strategic plans...” hinging on the importance of having a mission and vision statement. She then goes on to cite the importance of creating “…specific financial and other goals…”, having “...in place a list of policies and procedures for every step of the process, creating a case statement, determining who does what fundraising when and even reaching out to consultants for feasibility studies (Rosewall, 2014, p. 156). These are all aspects to critique and analyze in the organization in my study to ensure their presence, study their implementation and outcomes, and later theorize how the principles of community engagement can be integrated. The information regarding who should be involved in the fundraising process assists in identifying key stakeholders, such as development directors, board members, grant writers and other members of the fundraising department, who will be potential interview prospects in the case study research.

This literature has been helpful is assisting me in creating interview questions for my methodology and metrics for the data analysis section, while also pointing towards gaps of data this research intends to fill. Mixer’s Reasons Why People do or do not Give taken from the 1992 Gallup Poll combined with the Ten Principles of Fundraising
provided by Rosewall and the Texas Commission of the Arts provide a framework of ideas I can target when engaging with each organization and studying their functioning, helping me better develop my interview protocol and building a metric to measure, compare, and analyze the data gathered.

Fundraising is an ingrained and necessary function of an arts non-profit organization and most of the literature points to the importance of using relationship building processes to familiarize prospective donors with the organization, focusing energies on galvanizing your immediate community over distant foundations and government grants. Fundraising is a key part of creating more sustainable and impactful art organizations. However, there is an apparent need for providing models which allow organizations to do so at a grassroots level. Yet, none of the literature I have perused regarding fundraising mentions using community engagement to accomplish this. Vice versa, none of the literature provided on community engagement acknowledges the potential for integrating this idea with the process of fundraising, an integration this researcher suggests will improve the ability of organizations to better understand and relate to their community.

Organizational Theory

My engagement in reviewing the literature on organizational theory as it relates to nonprofits in the United States is less an exploration for validation for my research based
on research gaps but more an attempt to gain an understanding of what organizational theory is and what roles and distinctions are given to nonprofits today. Through this literature I hope to gain key points of organizational theory and acquire insight as to specific parts of an organization which should be analyzed. I am also exploring any interplay between certain organizational theories and the concepts of community engagement and fundraising in order to identify any past research which would support organizations molding the mindset towards community engagement presented by Doug Borwick earlier in this review. Finally, I will comment on and critique any theories I think would best support the final development of my model for how the best practices of fundraising and community engagement can be combined to create more sustainable and impactful organizations in Appalachia.

First and foremost, it is necessary to understand that the ...“majority of available theories of nonprofit organizations are economic in nature...”, meaning they involved, in some way or another, questions of utility, resource maximization and consumer and producer behavior (Anheier, 2005). They deal with the question of why is one product or service provided one way in this scenario and another way in this scenario and what are the factors which influence that relationship between consumer and producer. More specifically, in regards to nonprofits, they ask why certain services tend to exist either solely or more in the nonprofit market as opposed to the for-profit market – what values, beliefs, ideologies cause a society to demand services through one avenue or another or
value some products one way and some products another. Exploring and understanding these theories is critical to studying what makes a nonprofit organization successful within the bounded context it functions in.

To narrow the focus down some to the bounded context of the American economy, the question becomes why do certain services exist in the free market and certain services do not. Based on Titmus’s treatise *Gift Relation*, Anheier posits six aspects key to explaining why market failure leads to the distinguishing of services between markets (Anheier, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Failures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Information asymmetry</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Externalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Transaction Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Limitation of market</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Limitation of voluntary system</td>
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*Table 13: Market Failures*
The specific market failure faced by nonprofit organizations, one incredibly specific to arts organizations in Appalachia, is the concept of Voluntary Failure, which “…refers to situations in which nonprofits cannot adequately provide a service or address a social problem at the scale necessary for its alleviation” (Anheier, 2005). This argues that all nonprofit organizations suffer under the constant strain of lacking the resources, especially financial, needed to fulfill their mission over a long period of time. I do not argue that this attrition cannot be found in any nonprofit organization – if this were so, development departments would not have such a prominent role in organizational structure – but I do argue that the degree to which an organization is challenged by this paradigm is dependent on the political and social context it exists in. From that argument, I propose more localized and specific approaches to how organizations address this paradigm, approaches based in research sensitive to how the political and social context within which an organization exists affects that organization. To be fair, generalization will still occur but efforts can and should be made to lower the level of generalization closer to more specific phenomena as they occur.

To assist in gaining a better understanding of the organizational theory as it relates to nonprofits, I decided to explore the history of the formation of nonprofits within the United States civil society before exploring the theories themselves. The progression of association in American history is rooted in the notion “…that the nonprofit sector is embedded in the broader political and social development of a country or region. Its
development is shaped by political cultures and forms of government…cultural and religious factors, and…aspects of class structure” (Anheier, 2005). To understand how the nonprofit sector came to existence in the cultural and political schematic of American civil society, I turned to Helmut Anheier’s *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy*. To explore literature on the development and present situation of organizational theories surrounding nonprofits, it is necessary to review the progression of this sector in American society in how it reflects the cultural beliefs instilled from the nation’s founding.

The founding of the United States of America presented a unique opportunity for the reexpression of associationalism in Western society. In this new Western world, the reign of how the arts had been supported by society was put on trial. Some called for prioritizing the arts as a way of providing a “...powerful legitimacy for the new country...” while others viewed the arts as “...representative of the wealthy, decadent societies they had come to America to avoid [and] feared that government control...would inhibit individual creativity and innovation...” and perhaps lead to censorship (Rosewall, 2014). According to Anheier, where issues of “...dominant state religion and hierarchical institutional structures...few alternative power stratumss...” an overlap of politics and cultural elitism, homogeneity of culture, centralized government, and a lack of innovation had stifled the development of associations within previous establishments of civil society, opportunities to counter these issues had arisen (Anheier,
The newly founded American civil society of the eighteenth century presented religious diversity, “...alternative spheres of influence...”, lack of dependency between wealth and power, cultural heterogeneity, decentralized government, higher interpersonal trust and social innovation (Anheier, 2005). This, along with the “...five basic ideological factors of classical liberalism...” – those being liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism and laissez-faire policies – “...are central for the development of the modern nonprofit sector in the twentieth century...” (Anheier, 2005).

Further, the United States and its government and voluntary associations “...did not have to deal with pre-existing, inert social formations and barriers to mobility...”, this said in reference to established Western societies (Germany, France, England, etc.) (Anheier, 2005). Along with this idea of Associationalism is the concept of Communitarianism, the “...social philosophy that views community as a voluntary grouping of individuals who come together to identify common goals and agree to rules governing the communal order” (Anheier, 2005). Combining these two concepts led to the idea that “...a self-confident civil society works with, neither for nor against, government...” and this brought “...the rise of philanthropic foundations, privately endowed universities, and think-tanks as independent centers of wealth, knowledge, and power” (Anheier, 2005)

This history of association in American society, though volatile at times, has been “...characterized by a social infrastructure of dense networks of face-to-face relationships...
that cross-cut existing social cleavages such as race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and gender that will underpin strong and responsive democratic government” (Anheier, 2005). The normalization of the values of reciprocity, citizenship and trust persist in these networks and are an essential source of innovation, linking them to the “...survival of community...” and “...to economic prosperity...” (Anheier, 2005). A strong, democratic society depends upon a strong and community-centric nonprofit sector.

Anheier normalizes and centralizes the existence of and support for a strong nonprofit sector as something instilled in the value system of American society and essential to support the growth of communities. This supports the notion of investigating ways of supporting nonprofit sector associationalism in communities that is sensitive to the unique social and political climates existing there.

While the history of the development of the value system behind the American nonprofit sector may be perceived as linear, the current environment for the nonprofit sector is anything but. Several issues lie in the wake of understanding today’s nonprofit sector and how to understand the function of the multitude of organizations which comprise it. One such issue is found in the lack of homogeneity in the terms used for the nonprofit sector. As Solomon and Anheier argue, “...Coming to terms with the diversity and richness of organizations…is the first challenge encountered in trying to gain a better understanding of this set of institutions” (Anheier, 2005). Anheier presents seven terms which “...depict one aspect of the social reality of the sector...”, listed below:
### Seven Aspects of the Nonprofit/Social Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Organizations or Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nongovernment Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Organizations/Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economie Social (Social Economy)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Each of these sectors present a different purpose on some fundamental level, but it is defining them where Anheier goes further in this research. Drawing comparisons between legal and functional definitions or structural-operational definitions, the idea is to find “...definitions that facilitate communication, generate insights, and lead to better understanding” (Anheier, 2005). In the United States, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Internal Revenue Code 501 differentiate between two types of nonprofit organizations, 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4). This differentiation, a part of an allowance by the US Congress permitting “...some businesses that provide services for the common good to remain exempt from paying federal income tax, came on the heels of the income tax system, established in 1913” (Rosewall, 2014). The difference in these two distinctions
lies in the former being able to receive tax-deductible contributions from society while the latter does not qualify. The latter is also known in American society as “…social welfare organizations...” and “…include many civic leagues and advocacy organizations that support particular social and political causes” (Anheier, 2005). There are other distinctions within this specific tax code, but we will not focus on those in this research.

Rules also exist in this field regarding the political electoral process, stating 501(c)(3) organizations are prohibited from either promoting any specific candidate for office or making substantial contributions to third-party lobbying activities, with the caveat that expenditures on lobbying activities cannot go beyond twenty percent of annual expenses and must relate to the organization’s mission. 501(c)(4) organizations enjoy the luxury of having no such restrictions in this process (Anheier, 2005). These distinctions between contributed incomes and the ability to participate in lobbying activities is crucial and worth noting in how I formulate my own theory. Due to the nature of the Appalachian experience and the bounded context it exists in, it could be necessary, or should at least be considered how an organization can become involved in the process of advocating and lobbying for the community it exists in and issues and policies on a local, state and national level which might adversely impact it.

From here Anheier goes into the various methods of defining nonprofit organizations across the globe, but his section on the structural-operational definition and how it deals with the basic structure and operation intrigues me the most. In this concept
“...an organization is defined as a nonprofit entity if it shows the following five characteristics (Anheier, 2005):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Characteristics of Nonprofit Organizations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Organized</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-governing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Non-profit distributing</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Voluntary</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 15: Five Characteristics of Nonprofit Organizations

In this definition, an organization must have some form of institutional reality and “...meaningful organizational boundaries...”, must be separate from the government, “...organizations must be in a position to control their own activities to a significant extent...”, profit must be realized and distributed in a mission-oriented manner, and volunteerism must be present, active, and “...non-compulsory” (Anheier, 2005). The United Nations Handbook of Nonprofit Institutions provides a more reduced version of this definition and what organizations must practice in order to be considered nonprofit (Anheier, 2005):
United Nations Handbook of Nonprofit Institutions Definitions and Boundaries

| 1. Self-governing organizations  |
| 2. Non-for-profit and non-profit-distributing  |
| 3. Institutionally separate from government  |
| 4. Non-compulsory  |

*Table 16: Nonprofit Institutions Definitions and Boundaries (UN)*

But in all these definitions, Anheier remarks that we must consistently ask ourselves “...does the definition facilitate communication, generate insights, and lead to better understanding” (Anheier, 2005). Certainly, it is vastly important how an organization defines itself as this definition will impact all facets of how it operates, especially in regards to community engagement and fundraising. Based on this literature, it will be interesting to explore how the organization I am studying in the case study defines itself and what the outcomes of this definition are. Classification, a closely related but slightly different task from definition, is also important in considering how to represent a non-profit and its work. As Anheier states, classification spells out the dimensions where they differ, while definitions specify “...what entities or phenomena have in common” (Anheier, 2005).

Moving on from the challenges behind definitions and classifications, this review begins to build momentum when Anheier introduces what is meant by civil society. With a history rooted in the Enlightenment age, Civil Society lost its standing during the
ideological battles between authoritarianism and liberalism, but gained momentum in late twentieth century Eastern European and Latin American communities in an effort to find “...an alternative public sphere outside that of a dominant autocratic state” (Anheier, 2005). The idea was to create space independent of government or state influence where citizens could engage openly and impactfully with each other and then from that outgrowth a society “where citizens could come together to pursue their interests and values” (Anheier, 2005). Out of this movement have spawned many different definitions and classifications but Anheier boils it down to “...modern civil society is the sum of institutions, organizations, and individuals located between the family, the state, and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests” (Anheier, 2005) This presents yet another area of exploration for this proposed research, namely how does the organization I am studying fit into this idea of civil society, especially within the bounded context of the Appalachian experience.

**Theoretical Approaches:** Before exploring the variety of organizational theory approaches to establishing and managing nonprofit organizations, specifically arts organizations, it is important to also briefly note the role of the manager. Managers, the more modern term for those tasked with maintaining, administering and applying an organization’s mission must understand and anticipate the needs of the organization and then strategize and direct the resources necessary to accomplishing organizational goals
as efficiently as possible. Managers, according to Rosewall, are responsible for planning, organizing, leading and controlling an organization, ensuring their smooth operation (Rosewall, 2014). I will keep this principle behind management in mind as I explore the theoretical approaches to nonprofit organizational management and policy and perhaps bring Rosewall’s authoritative take on this role into question in relation to the goal of my research.

With the history and some of the contemporary challenges and principles of organizational theory broached, we come now to what Anheier calls “The Major Theories”: 
Organizational Theories of Nonprofit Organizations

1. Public Goods Theories
2. Trust-related Theories
3. Entrepreneurship Theories
4. The Stakeholder Theory
5. The Interdependence Theory

Table 17: Organizational Theories of Nonprofit Organizations

Each of these theories, economic in nature, attempt to provide a path for nonprofit organizations to function with the six key aspects of the nonprofit market failure identified earlier – information asymmetry, trust, externalities, transaction costs, limitations of the market, and limitations of voluntary system. The first theories, Public Goods, Trust related and the Stakeholder theory, are founded in studying the demand-side of the equation, while the Entrepreneurship theory focuses on a supply-side perspective (Anheier, 2005).

**Public Goods Theory:** The Public Goods Theory, perhaps the most extensively expounded upon theory in Anheier’s text, is based upon Burton Weisbroad’s idea that “...public good problems are resolved by the collective action of the individuals affected [and] provides an economic rationale for the formation of nonprofit organizations to provide public goods” (Anheier, 2005). Two key concepts must be understood in this
theory; demand heterogeneity and the median voter. Demand heterogeneity deals with the similarity or dissimilarity of demand across a population group and the median voter holds to the idea that demand can be most easily determined by the “…statistically average person and the demands she would make on governmental spending policy” (Anheier, 2005). Based on the idea of market failure, supported by the concepts of demand heterogeneity and the median voter, nonprofits are thrust into a gap-filler role, providing “…public goods not offered by the public sector” (Anheier, 2005).

Anheier and other researchers notice a consequence of the public good gap-filler role; heterogeneous societies facilitate more nonprofit organizations than do homogenous ones because the demand for these kinds of public goods grows and becomes more varied. I would then argue that with the increase in demand for more diverse public goods, a good already existing within a market failure, and subsequent increase and diversification of the supply without government intervention necessitates more diverse approaches to organizing how the supply meets the demand. Meaning the way one public good is supplied to one population demand might not sufficiently supply another public good to another population demand. Additionally, Weisbrod’s theory hangs on the presence of sufficient donor support, what would be tax dollars in state-funded countries, but does not go on to specify what should be considered when the phenomenon of voluntary failure occurs and populations, or communities, do not have the funds necessary for an organization’s supply to meet their demand. Furthermore, his theory
does not consider the phenomenon of when demand for a public good dissipates because it has been systematically diluted from a community by market forces and an organization, driven by stakeholders, steps in to then invigorate that now latent demand, as is occurring in rural and suppressed urban communities throughout the United States and is the case in the organization I will be studying.

A further expansion of Weisbrod’s theory actually ignores the market failure of information asymmetry. He proposes a “...collectiveness index…” for measuring the degree of “publicness” in the demand of a public good’ (Anheier, 2005). Simply put, the more privately donated money an organization receives, the higher its measure on the index. He calls this act donors essentially voting for “...their preferences for public goods not demanded by the median voter”. This assumes there is no information asymmetry, that donors are fully aware of the breadth of public goods they can be funding and make their decisions off that information. It also does not take into account the socioeconomic situation a specific donor or group of donors might find themselves in and whether or not they have the disposable income necessary to support a public good, causing organizations to look elsewhere for funding and placing them lower on the index. This does not necessarily mean donors do not have a demand for a public good but instead suggests they are not capable of parting with the funds to do so.
Trust-Related Theories

The second theory Anheier presents considers the role trustworthiness, information asymmetry, and non-distribution constraint plays in how nonprofit organizations are founded and function. According to Anheier “...the nonprofit form emerges when it is more efficient to monitor financial behavior…than it is to assess the true quality of output” (Anheier, 2005). This theory begins at the “...information problems inherent in the goods or services provided and the trust dilemmas associated with them...” and takes the view that for-profit businesses, due to their drive to produce profits, would take advantage of information asymmetries to the harm of the consumer (Anheier, 2005). This is where the non-distribution constraint, a tenant of nonprofit organizations, comes into play as this creates a sense of trustworthiness between the organization and the consumer because the consumer believes the organization will and does spend money appropriately and does not drive up costs with only profit in mind.

The unfortunate side to this constraint is the supposed sacrifice in product quality and efficiency experienced in the nonprofit field because of “...limited access to capital markets…and lower incentives for managers to impose strict cost minimization” (Anheier, 2005). Ultimately, where Weisbrod did not fully consider information asymmetry, this theory assumes there exists “...asymmetric information between supply and demand that could be exploited to the disadvantage of the customer or recipient...” (Anheier, 2005) and that the nonprofit model, with its non-distribution constraint, is the
best business model for mitigating this disconnect.

Taking this information asymmetry in mind, this theory gives validation to the progression of for-profit industry in Appalachia and how the communities have often found themselves to be disadvantaged and swindled. With such a legacy as this, current or new nonprofit organizations might face more of an uphill battle to gain trustworthiness in the community than this theory leads on. This plays very well into the realm of community engagement, a key process of which is trust building, as a method for ameliorating this tarnished legacy and presenting a more conscientious and trustworthy business model for the community to engage with.

Entrepreneurship Theory

This theory, based mostly on research by Austrian-American economist Joseph Schumpeter but also relying on the work of Estelle James, Susan Rose-Ackerman, and Dennis Young, comes to us “...from a supply-side perspective...” and is rooted in the idea of the Entrepreneur, “...defined as an individual with a specific attitude toward change, whose function is to ‘carry out new combinations’ (Anheier, 2005). These Entrepreneurs, and the organizations they found or exist within, “...are part of the ‘creative destruction’ that drives the capitalist system...” (Anheier, 2005) introducing new ideas through innovative thinking while displacing old, obsolete ones.

Further within this theory is the subcategory of social entrepreneurship where
creating social value is the desired outcome, as opposed to creating monetary or economic value, and is characterized by an opportunistic and persistent mindset, a socially oriented mission, continuous innovation, courage in the face of resource limitations, and a “...heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created” (Anheier, 2005). The Entrepreneurship theory takes issue with the Trust Related and Public Goods Theory regarding the concepts of non-distribution restraint and demand heterogeneity. They argue that a nonprofit organization’s desired outcome(s) may have nothing at all to do with any economic or monetary considerations, but something immaterial, something value based in some ideological form.

The goal of resource maximization becomes service delivery, as opposed to monetary gain. To fully separate this theory from economics is foolish, as some nonprofits might seek economic development and the benefits thereof from improving such conditions as that value-based outcome. Another feature of the Entrepreneurship theory is “product bundling” where a “preferred output” is coupled with a “auxiliary co-product”, something used (i.e. program, project) to accomplish that output (Anheier, 2005). The challenge of this theory rests in the difficulty of differentiating between entrepreneurship, that process of innovation in business, and nonprofit management, that process of strategically utilizing resources to reach a maximal balance between inputs and outputs. Anheier and Weisbrod argue that the differentiation comes down to a behavior theory of organizational management and that “...entrepreneurs create and react to
demand heterogeneity…”, thus defining innovation as either creating new demand for a product in a populace or rethinking and innovating upon old processes of delivering an already established demand.

This idea of innovation is a key concept behind this research as I am attempting to develop a model which fulfills both sides of the innovation process. As I mentioned earlier in regard to the Public Goods Theory, we are presented a unique situation in Appalachia in which demand for a product, those products being culturally relevant artistic programming, has been systematically delineated by market forces. This demand delineation combined with the socioeconomic climate of Appalachian communities approached through the lens of the Entrepreneurship Theory supports my assumption for the need for both aspects of the innovation process; demand needs to be reinvigorated and how the demand is supplied needs to be reconsidered. Where this research goes further is to examine a current arts nonprofit organization engaging in the innovative process and using the data gathered from studying that organization along with the principles of nonprofit fundraising to provide a theoretical process to engaging in entrepreneurship within the bounded context of Appalachia.

The Stakeholder Theory

This theory, similar to the Trust Related Theory, deals mostly in information asymmetry and the argument that a “…conflict of interest between seller and buyer…”
exists in trade, namely that buyers want high quality at a cheap price and sellers want low quality at high price (Anheier, 2005). Stakeholders work to “...maximize control over output in the face of informational asymmetries...” and the concept of non-distribution constraint supports the assumption that nonprofit organizations are the best option to achieve this optimization (Anheier, 2005). Due to the stark similarities between this theory and the Trust-Related Theory, much of what has been said in regards to how that theory applies to the Appalachian context can be said to equally apply here.

**Interdependence Theory**

To this point, the theories discussed have assumed government and nonprofit organizations exist and function within two separate vacuums and are, if anything, in conflict in deciding how provisions are made. The Interdependence theory counters that argument and suggests a certain level of cohesion between the two entities. This is most clearly shown in the “...scope and extent of government support for nonprofits in terms of direct monetary support, indirect support, and variations in support...” in the US and it other nations (Anheier, 2005). This theory assumes that, were it not for nonprofit organizations, government would carry out the processes necessary to meet populace demand, whereas the previous theories suggest nonprofits exist to fulfill market failures created by government (Anheier, 2005). This theory also rejects the market failure notion and relies on the voluntary action theory of which there are several issues, namely
philanthropic insufficiency, particularism, paternalism, and amateurism. These are further explained in the table below, taken from the text by Helmut Anheier:

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<tr>
<th>Voluntary Failure Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropic Insufficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropic Particularism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropic Paternalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropic Amateurism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 18: Voluntary Failure Theory*

The argument here is that government, due to its ability to tax a larger populace, its professional nature, higher level of accountability, and its access to more resources, can, through collaboration, eliminate the failures created by voluntary action. Unfortunately, what this theory does not consider is what an organization must do if the climate of the current government will not support the demand they are trying to meet. If collaboration is not a possibility, based on the voluntary failure theory, a nonprofit organization becomes insufficient and a populace is left underserved. It also does not take into
consideration the possibility for information asymmetry to exist between nonprofit organizations and their needs and the government they are working with. If proper representation for that organization and its constituents does not exist and needs are not properly communicated to government agencies, the possibility of government efficiently meeting those needs is delineated, thus creating a failure in the collaboration necessary for the Interdependence Theory.

**Summary of Literature Review**

Within this literature review I have critiqued literature on the concepts of community engagement, fundraising for nonprofits and nonprofit organizational theory. Rosewall, Borwick, Anheier, Mixer and others each present solid structures to their respective topics, with some inefficiencies in relation to my thesis topic. Each section of the review has provided me with key principles, definitions and theories through which I can develop my argument for a more innovative approach of managing arts organizations in Appalachia. The fact that the majority of this literature does not present an Appalachian bounded context, and I did not find any other literature in these areas that does this, supports the need for more specific research, data and knowledge about how these fields represent Appalachia. Each concept presented a broad outline of how each is to be achieved but many assumptions regarding the environment in which the processes are applied were made and no consideration was taken for how to manage specific
socioeconomic environments. To be fair, it was the goal of this literature review to provide as bare-boned a review as possible of these three topics and the literature I gathered provided the opportunity to do this. But it also presents the reality that more specific and localized research is needed in these three fields to support the more optimal application of each by an nonprofit arts organization operating in Appalachia when considering the unique socioeconomic environment this bounded context presents.
Chapter 3

Methodology

I intend to conduct a single Sociological descriptive case study of a small, rural professional arts organization currently practicing community engagement and fundraising in the Appalachian region of Southeast Kentucky. As stated previously, the goal of my research is to formulate a model on how best to combine the practices and principles of non-profit fundraising and community engagement in order to promote more sustainable and impactful arts organizations in the Appalachian region. This research project is qualitative in nature, meaning it “begins with…the use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Cresswell). Cresswell says we use qualitative inquiry when we desire to “develop theories when partial or inadequate theories exist for certain populations and samples or existing theories do not adequately capture the complexity of the problem we are examining” and to explore individuals’ stories “unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature” (Cresswell). Qualitative research permits us to “explore individuals or organizations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs and supports the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena” (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and is often “motivated by respect for the unique and creative
ways that individuals understand the world” (Packer, 2011).

In an effort to better understand how the complex issues and ideas of organizational theory, community engagement, fundraising and the Appalachian experience interact, I will investigate the organization and its efforts in the area of community engagement and fundraising. I want to explore issues of success and failure within these processes and the challenges this organization faces. I will also observe the relationship between community engagement and fundraising in this organization. I will analyze the organizational theory of the institution and consider what role this framework plays in the grand scheme of the issues listed. Finally, I will investigate and observe key stakeholders in the processes of community engagement and fundraising and collect data from individuals participating in the observed program.

**Rural Arts Case Studies**

I needed to identify and analyze the variety of methodologies used in studying rural arts organizations so as to either discover a methodology well-suited to my pursuits or to congregate the most suitable aspects from a variety of methods to formulate my own new investigative process. To better understand the variety of case studies conducted in rural communities across the United States, I turned to the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation and their *Vibrant Rural Communities Case Study Series.*
The NADO Research Foundation’s Vibrant Rural Communities case studies series highlights how rural regions and small towns across the country are growing local and regional economies and creating stronger communities. This series shows how small towns can leverage a wide range of tools and approaches to build on their assets, protect their resources, and make strategic investments that offer long-term benefits for residents and local businesses. (Schwartz B., Vibrant Rural Communities Case Study Series, 2012)

An initial benefit of these case studies comes in the form of an observation by Research Fellow Brett Schwartz that “as each community has its own geography, history, natural resources, climate, and demographics…the unique nature of each town should not serve as a barrier for sharing success stories and best practices” (Schwartz B., Vibrant Rural Communities Case Study Series, 2012). I am constantly interested in the process of policy transfer, the process by which policymakers take and adapt policies from one area to then be used in their own, and it encourages me to find data supporting the possibility of such a practice between rural communities, despite their variety of particulars. To better the development of my own methodology, I investigated several of these case studies hoping to identify the “wide range of tools and approaches” mentioned in the series overview (Schwartz B., Vibrant Rural Communities Case Study Series, 2012).

**Vibrant Rural Communities Case Study Series**

The first case study I investigated was *On the Right Track: Guthrie, Kentucky to*
Showcase its Transportation History, a project in which the small 1,400-person town of Guthrie, KY “broke ground on a planned transportation Museum and Welcome Center” (Schwartz B., On the Right Track: Guthrie, Kentucky to Showcase its Transportation History, 2012). The case study provides a brief overview of the history of Guthrie and the significance of its role in the proliferation of the American railroad through the Appalachian region. Schwartz identifies the project as “Downtown redevelopment, historic preservation, museum development, tourism industry” and also identifies key partners from universities to NPOs to government officials (Schwartz B., On the Right Track: Guthrie, Kentucky to Showcase its Transportation History, 2012). From here, the author gives a macro level observation and timeline of how the city turned an abandoned block of buildings into the museum, highlighting the role of various community partners throughout.

The next case study I investigated was Facades, Festivals, and Footpaths: Greenville, Kentucky’s Downtown Redevelopment, a report on how the 4,300-person town of Greenville had turned their “deteriorated sidewalks and vacant storefronts with dilapidated facades” into an “economic and entertainment focal point in Muhlenberg County” (Schwartz r., 2012). The story begins with the initiative set forth by several key local government officials to galvanize the community, seek out partnerships with development organizations and then grants from several government agencies and grant funds. The next step of revitalization came in the form of partnerships with tourism
commissions and agencies and finally culminated into the community unequivocally supporting a restaurant and hotel tax and initiating the idea for a 12-acre nature preserve. One community leader was quoted saying “It really came down to strong leadership that sought community buy-in and support which has made a huge difference” (Schwartz r. , 2012).

In investigating these two case studies within the Vibrant Rural Communities series, I can begin to identify that “wide range of tools and resources” (Schwartz B. , Vibrant Rural Communities Case Study Series, 2012). Each city relied upon concerned citizens, proactive and responsive government officials, partnerships between NPO’s and government granting agencies and the identification and galvanization of culturally significant features of the community. The results documented in this series are immeasurably encouraging to someone like me whose roots are dug deep into a deteriorating small town much like Guthrie and Greenville. These case studies highlight the importance of observing if and how the rural arts organization I am investigating is forming partnerships across different community stakeholders and observing the dynamics of the relationship(s) thereof. Unfortunately, these case studies only give me key stakeholders to be on the lookout for but does not go terribly far in helping me to formulate a methodology to investigate the plausibility of a relationship between community engagement and fundraising.
AIR in G (Arts Council England)

To formulate a methodology, I needed more in-depth case study examples. The case studies in the Vibrant Rural Communities Case Studies Series were too broad and rested mostly on after-the-fact observation and reporting. I looked into Arts Council England and their touring program AIR in G (Arts in Rural Gloucestershire). They identify that “many rural communities face particular challenges…that mean people have very limited access to professional work…” and promote that “…Touring is fundamental to opening up these opportunities” (Arts Council England, 2016). The case study goes on to laud the efforts of the now 15-year program, which works by using voluntary promoters who offer practical advice and financial viability in order to bring in professional performing companies and artists to perform in their village or community (Arts Council England, 2016). Where I ultimately take issue with the approach of AIR in G in regards to my research and desired outcomes in relation to Appalachian communities is the idea of bringing in talent instead of cultivating and promoting talent from within. However, there is one glimmer of hope and that can be found in the Young Promoters Scheme in which “young people aged between 8 and 18 from youth theatre, educational settings and community arts groups…programmer and promote theatre, dance, music, circus and film into rural venues in their communities” (Arts Council England, 2016). Again, though, this is another case study reporting on an already implemented community engagement project. What I am looking for is an example of a
case study that critiques a community engagement project of an organization, not one that just reports on and provides an overview of an ongoing endeavor.

**Building Communities, Not Audiences**

Though I have already mentioned his work in my literature review, Doug Borwick’s collection of community engagement based case studies has proven useful in furthering my methodology. Each of the case study reports in his text follow a similar template which can include Setting, Organizational Description, Mission or Statement of Purpose, Goals and Strategies, Assets Employed, Direct, Indirect, and Potential Outcomes and a Summary Section. Each case study is also an iteration of the eight strategies for economic and social capital development I referenced in the Literature review (see table). Since I am interested in how my theory can facilitate all of these outcomes, it is difficult to narrow down my focus to any one example. However, I think it most relevant to review the study which iterates the third strategy – Build Capacity/Social Capital.

The outcome of this strategy is to “develop civic pride and responsibility through good ‘place-making’ and community-centered arts practices” and is iterated through the Colquitt Miller Arts Council in Colquitt, Georgia. Engaging people through collective experiences is an appropriate task for the creative sector and building social capital, networks of trust and reciprocity and the benefits created by these partnerships, is crucial
in creating cross-sector partnerships (Borwick, Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of the Arts in the United States, 2012). A possible outcome of this process is a growth in understanding between community members regarding “how important everyone’s story is in their community’s unique identity, giving all residents a sense of ownership of and pride in the community as well as more civic responsibility” (Borwick, Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of the Arts in the United States, 2012).

Much like we’ve seen across Appalachia, Colquitt was a town suffering under the ramifications failed industry. The case study focuses on a play based on community story telling called Swamp Gravy and explores how the Colquitt Miller Arts Council worked to promote it and other grassroots efforts, including markets, mural projects, learning centers and museums. This project “connected local citizens from diverse economic, social and ethnic backgrounds in theater-making and continues to teach acceptance and understanding” (Borwick, Building Communities, Not Audiences: The Future of the Arts in the United States, 2012). Focusing on the goals and strategies of the project, it began by the community collecting oral histories, turning those stories into a play and, eventually, the community becoming more involved and taking over the creative process. The assets employed and outcomes of the project are detailed in the table below:
## Assets Employed

- Oral histories of Colquitt, GA and Miller County Residents
- The Entrepreneurial spirit of community leaders and creative professionals
- Renovated abandoned warehouse space in Colquitt
- History of storytelling in the area

## Direct Outcomes

- Strengthened partnerships between businesses and the creative sector
- Generated revenue through diverse methods, including a larger tourism industry
- Engaged all residents in writing, acting, and producing a theatrical performance
- Educated residents and others about the history of Colquitt, GA as seen through residents' eyes
- Has sold over 120,000 tickets and generated more than $4 million for Miller Co.
- The Miller Arts Council has reinvested over $1 million into downtown revitalization efforts

*Table 19: Assets and Outcomes*

Based on these case studies, there is clear evidence that projects achieving similar outcomes to what I desire from my model. I’ve been given metrics to be aware of, especially how community engagement is capable of galvanizing local businesses, something I had not considered. However, what none of them take into consideration or, at least, showcase is the role fundraising plays in these projects. Furthermore, a clear methodology for how
the case study was researched is not found. Because of this, I will set forth in designing my own methodology based off the tenants of qualitative study, case study design and my own judgment on what I deem the most efficient way to gather date relevant to my research question.

**Case Study Design**

The framework of the case study will be a *Sociological Descriptive Instrumental Study*. Sociological case studies are those that “focus on society, social institutions, and social relationships, examining the structure, development, interaction and collective behavior of organized groups of individuals (Algozzine, Hancock, 2006). A case study “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system…in which the investigator explores a bounded system…over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information…and reports a case description and case-based themes” (Cresswell). More specifically, an instrumental case study is one where “the research focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects one bounded case to illustrate” (Cresswell) said issue. The issue is the relationship between fundraising and community engagement in an arts organization within the bounded context of the Appalachian experience. All of the facets described by Algozzine and Hancock within the organization and the community will be evaluated during this research based on the concepts of non-profit fundraising and community
engagement, thus lending it a sociological case study approach. Moving to the second part of the study design, a descriptive design attempts to “present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context”, the phenomenon being the potential relationship between non-profit fundraising and community engagement and the context being both the individual institution analyzed and the Appalachian framework established earlier in this thesis (Algozzine, Hancock, 2006). The framework of a sociological descriptive case study is conceptualized through the application of a case study.

**Interview Protocol:** The research to support my formulation of an interview protocol comes from several sources. An interview protocol, sometimes referred to as an interview guide, “is a schematic presentation of questions or topics” which will explore the research the interviewer is proposing (Jamshed, 2014). One source is Carter McNamara’s *General Guidelines for Conducting Research Interviews*. Interviews are a useful method for acquiring the story behind a participant’s experience(s) (McNamara, 1999) as they facilitate the “access to a person’s subjectivity, to the personal meaning of some event of phenomenon” (Packer, 2011). The goal of qualitative research interview, the method utilized in this study, is to contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The rationale behind using interviews as a method of data collection hinges on Cresswell’s observation that qualitative inquiry allows the
researcher to engage with participants in a way that unencumbers themselves and the participants from expectations of outcomes based in what has been explored in prior literature and Kvale’s reasoning that “The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view” (Packer, 2011). Rather than reviewing literature then deducing that because whatever amount of similar factors are present in any specific bounded context I can assume a past causal relationship supported by literature to be present, the interview allows the researcher to learn from the people most relevant to the issue, thus presenting more specific data within a particular bounded context.

I will be using a series of standardized, open-ended interviews, also known as a semi-structured interview, described as an interview in which the same, open-ended questions are asked to each interviewee, with some variance (McNamara, 1999), (Jamshed, 2014). There is a need for variance in my interview protocols and why I mention using a series of them. I will be dealing with multiple samples and those samples will need to be asked different questions because I am looking for different data. For instance, I will be asking some questions to key personnel identified with the process of community engagement that I won’t be asking to key personnel identified with the process of fundraising and vice versa in order to obtain more specific data related to the individual topics. My questions will deal with five of the six kinds of questions identified by Patton and provided in McNamara’s text: behaviors, opinions/values, feelings,
knowledge and background/demographics – and are guided in theory by the principles of community engagement and fundraising identified in my literature review (McNamara, 1999).

**Developing Rapport in the Interview Process**

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree mention past research which supports the need for considering how an interviewer will develop a rapport with the interviewee. Rapport can be described as simply as familiarity and can find its importance in one part of the inherent nature of the qualitative interview process. Packer and Kvale’s observations that qualitative interviews are “not an interaction between equals”, what Kvale calls and “asymmetry of power”, and Oakley’s observation that “the preoccupation with rapport…and neutrality serves to obscure the hierarchical and exploitative character of the interviewer-interviewee relationship, both support and call into question this process of the interview but ultimately credit as necessary (Packer, 2011).

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree cite other research which proposes and explains the four stages of building rapport in the interview process – apprehension, exploration, cooperation and participation – and provide directions on how to navigate each phase successfully. Based on their article, it is crucial to handle the apprehension phase carefully and strategically. In considering my own interview process, I will handle the apprehension phase by following their directive to begin with a “broad and open-ended
question” while also collecting some background/demographic information (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The goal is to ease the interviewee into this vulnerable space in which we will be openly discussing them and the work they are involved with. By engaging in an effort to become more familiar with my interviewee, actively listening to their responses and taking the opportunity to commiserate should the opportunity present itself, I will be able to successfully navigate the apprehension phase and move forward into the exploration, co-operation and participation phases.

Another step I will take to ease this apprehension phase is to access the interviewee in their space, a space that is comfortable, familiar and will present a safer environment. In planning this space, considerations for confidentiality will be made alongside feedback from the interviewee as to which space or spaces they would prefer. Feedback will be garnered through preliminary communication with the interviewee(s) and asking them what space(s) they would prefer to be interviewed in. Through the careful application of these steps leading up to and in the apprehension phase, my ultimate goal is to reach the participation phase as quickly as possible, as it is here that the “interviewee takes on the role of guiding and teaching the interviewer” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).
Rationale for Case Study

Non-Probability Sampling

Participants in the research study will include the organization itself and key staff members at the organization I am studying. The process for identifying interviewees is based on purposeful sampling, “an iterative process…that seeks to maximize the depth and richness of the data to address the research question” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Purposeful sampling, or non-probability sampling, is a technique where “samples are selected based on the subjective judgement of the researcher, rather than random selection” (aerd Dissertation). Using the freedom instilled in this selection process, I am able to review the theory behind community engagement, fundraising and organizational theory explored in my literature review and draw connections between these theories and the staff of the organization and their roles and responsibilities and use my informed but subjective judgement to determine who I should approach for an interview based on who I believe will provide the most critical data to my research.

The rationale behind choosing to conduct a single case study over multiple case studies is rested in the concept of bounding. Appalachia presents itself as an unique microcosm of human existence and experiences and expresses a variety of unique challenges to community members, practitioners and researchers. One specific issue, as documented in the historical background earlier in this thesis, is the process of assimilation towards the cultural dominate, in various aspects, and a detraction from the
development of more specific and sensitive processes of existence, both for arts organization and for the communities within. This approach is founded in a constructivist perspective in which “truth is relative and that it is dependent on one’s perspective” (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In order to better develop more specific and sensitive practices, it is necessary to then explore a current arts organization practicing within the bounded context of Appalachian, rather than observing outside organizations whose practice is bounded by a different context. Gathering outside data, date founded in a context and experience different from that found in Appalachia would only further promote the homogenization of practice which disadvantages arts organizations in Appalachia. By practice, I mean the organizational theories, concepts and policies which dictate and guide how an organization functions and interprets information. The goal of using a bounded context of the Appalachian experience is to present data which supports a theory of how arts organizations practicing in this context can better respond to the issues facing their existence and the existence of the communities surrounding them.

The purpose for identifying key staff members is to gain adequate information and internal perspective on the development, implementation and evaluation of the organization and its project. I will also observe and analyze any specific skill sets/characteristics of the project organizers which may or may not contribute to a successful project. Using the research identified in my literature review and my preliminary organization review, I will be able to identify these key personnel in the
organization. In this scenario, my **sample** is the staff of the organization and my **participant population** are the key personnel identified for further analysis through the one-on-one interviews.

**Case Study Process**

There are four key steps to collecting my data through the process of a single *sociological descriptive instrumental case study*: **preliminary organization review** and **interview of key personnel**. Once I have collected my data, I will use the process of *holistic analysis* in which I analyze the entirety of the case. The preliminary organization review will consist of familiarizing myself with the organization and the community it serves. I will study the history of the organization and observe how it has progressed in relation to the surrounding community and will familiarize myself with the more recent work of the organization. I will also study the history and current situation of the surrounding community, identifying similarities and differences between this community and the community I am from and very familiar with in Northeast Kentucky in order to better analyze my resulting data. I will accomplish this step by exploring any means of media relating to the organization and the community (i.e. news articles, research, websites).
Participant Identification

As mentioned previously, participant identification will be realized through the in-depth organizational overview I detailed in the previous paragraph. Using this overview, combined with non-probability sampling, I will be able to identify key personnel in the organization whose knowledge and insight will be of the most benefit to my research. They should be able to provide a narrative of their experience working within the contexts of community engagement and fundraising or through the context of participating in the identified key project. This narrative will be realized and reported on through the interview process.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

I will gain access to my population by contacting those individuals at the organization I am studying and expressing my interest in engaging with them further. Once access is granted, I will then begin the process of familiarizing myself with that individual, scheduling an interview and arranging a space the interviewee will feel most comfortable in. If anyone consents to the interview, for which I will have a consent form, I will explain the nature of the interview and my research project to them.

Interviews of Key Personnel

Once I feel comfortable enough in my understanding of the organization, the next stage
of the research will be to engage key personnel at the institution directly. **Key personnel** are those on the staff identified as having particular importance or influence on the processes of fundraising and community engagement. The interview will be a two-fold process including both observance of the efforts of key personnel in real time and holding individual sessions of pre-determined standardized, open-ended questions. It is important to engage directly with the project implementers and influencers due to the unique insight into the process they will provide and for the opportunity to discover their impact on the project.

**Interview Protocol for Key Personnel**

The actual protocol - the introduction, question and answer and conclusion statement – for this interview can be found in the Appendix for those of you interested in the specific question I asked and how I structured my interview. The themes I attempt to broach through my interview related to community engagement are concerned with these personnel’s perspective on and experience with the mission, vision and values or the organization, the concepts of programming and collaboration, and the importance of process in community engagement to the interviewee along with a few lead-in questions to ease the subject into the interview. The interview is broken down into five sections, each beginning with a broad question to introduce the interviewee to the topic and secondary exploratory questions to coax the interviewee into giving more detailed
information.
Chapter 4

Data Analysis

What comes next details how I gathered the data for my research, how I will organize my data and in what ways I will represent it, and what themes I draw from engaging with the data. As mentioned several times throughout this thesis, my question regards the process of formulating a model for how the best practices of non-profit fundraising, combined with the most recent theory and practice of community engagement can be used to reorganize Appalachian arts organizations and engage them with their communities in more sustainable and impactful ways. My data analysis is guided by the processes of iterative sampling and triangulation, which I will go into further detail on later.

Rationale Restated

The goal of my analysis is to come to terms on a model for combining community engagement and fundraising to best support more sustainable and impactful arts organizations in Appalachia. The lenses will be that of two different bounded contexts; Appalachian experience and organizational theory. Using the portion of my research paper focused on Appalachian History and the Appalachian Experience, I will critique the data presented me on how best it fits within this bounded context. As stated earlier, we discovered the Appalachian experience presents certain socioeconomic and
sociopolitical realities, thus establishing a bounded context. This context is a set of bounded assumptions based on discovered realities which occur within a certain real or abstract setting. This creates a phenomenon, a seemingly unexplainable event or occurrence. In terms of this context, the assumptions are of a political and socioeconomic nature. Those assumptions are informed by the historical narrative I provided in the background chapter, both of myself and of the geographical region of Appalachia. When in this research I attempt to analyze data from an Appalachian context, I am considering what the data mean from an Appalachian perspective. This perspective is deemed critical, but there is no desire in this research to assume this to be the only possible representation of the perspective. It can manifest itself in other manners. The application of this perspective creates meaning of the data specific to the Appalachian context. It makes data understandable for those whose existence is impacted by the assumptions of the context. I am also placing limitations on how the data can be interpreted by holding all assumptions, realities, and perspectives present outside of the established context as constant. In this instance, we are not concerned with what these data mean for someone or some organization operating outside of the context. That is not to say it is inapplicable to them or that they cannot learn from the analysis and conclusions, only that their perspective, how they would interpret the data, is not a priority. This accomplishes removing the objective and disinterested voice from the equation and introduces a specific voice rooted in experience that will no longer be
considered strictly anecdotal.

But the question to answer here is what is the Appalachian context? This is a difficult question to answer without pandering to already established assumptions made in other contexts. These assumptions have manifested themselves in negative ways, as I explained in the section discussing media misrepresentation and the creation of Appalachian stereotypes. Ironically, the manifestation of those stereotypes serves as one part of the whole context. A reality we can establish without furthering any more pandering is that Appalachia has been misrepresented in the media and this had led to damaging assumptions of who Appalachians are and how valuable they are to the grand American scheme. To counter this misrepresentation, we establish a context which analyzes data through questions of representation, to borrow from the multiculturalist theory of art criticism. Therefore, a portion of our context considers how this data affects Appalachia’s ability to represent itself in all ways concrete and abstract.

Moving forward, we must consider another reality of Appalachia. This is a reality of economic matters. Based on discoveries made in the background chapter, we learned of the egregious disinvestment of the Appalachian economy and land and how this has positioned the region to be economically subservient to outside interests. This ultimately limits Appalachia’s ability to be self-determining but there are other lessons to be gathered here. Because of this reality, we must now consider how assumptions from other contexts measure against this context. For instance, how well do the generally
accepted non-profit business practices measure against this specific context? Do they or are they capable of handling the variables our region introduces? One such variable is the need for the region to be economically self-determining and another could be the lack of organized wealth in communities. Therefore, we consider how the data will contribute to or delineate from this process of self-determination or better aid organizations in managing the lack of organized wealth. Synonymous with the economic reality is the political reality of the region. Just as there’s been misrepresentation in the media there has been misrepresentation, of lack of representation altogether, for the region on any political scale. We must also consider how the data will contribute to or delineate from the region’s ability to be politically self-determining.

We further argued this bounded context necessitates itself for consideration by arts organizations operating within its parameters, therefore nullifying the disinterested universal approach of non-profit practices and establishing the need for more specific and considered strategies for organizations to utilize. Our exploration of the literature pertaining to my topics further supports diving more deeply into what it means to operate an arts organization in this context. As with the call for more specific strategies, there is also a need for more specific literature, thus developing a new lens through which to interpret the data collected.

Using the portion of my research paper, specifically the literature review, focused on organizational theory for non-profit organizations, I will critique that same data on
how best it fits in the theory most complimentary to the Appalachian Experience. From here, I will cross-reference my analysis between the bounded contexts of the Appalachian Experience and organizational theory to discover the optimal combination of the two, labeling themes and highlighting patterns.

**Gathering my Data**

As explained in the methodology section of this thesis, my data gathering process involved an organizational overview, a series of interviews, and a panel in which topics relative to my research were discussed by academics and practitioners. The organizational overview was conducted to both further familiarize myself with the organization and to inform my decision on which staff member(s) to interview. This helps develop an insular context by which I can interpret the data gathered from my interviews. Whereas I am interpreting all the data through the bounded context of the Appalachian Experience, the organizational overview provides me an opportunity to cross-reference information gathered from the interviews. The process for identifying interviewees is based on purposeful sampling, “an iterative process…that seeks to maximize the depth and richness of the data to address the research question” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Purposeful sampling, or non-probability sampling, is a technique where “samples are selected based on the subjective judgement of the researcher, rather than random selection” (aerd Dissertation). The rationale behind using
interviews as a method of data collection hinges on Cresswell’s observation that qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to engage with participants in a way that unencumbers themselves and the participants from expectations of outcomes based in what has been explored in prior literature and Kvale’s reasoning that “The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view” (Packer, 2011). Furthermore, as with the organizational overview, the interviews also act as a cross-referencing tool.

The panel involving academics and practitioners was an opportunity to put the material produced in the background and literature review to use through lines of questioning. The panel consisted of four panelists, myself as the moderator, and an audience. The panelists were divided between those identified with the occupation of an academic and those identified with the occupation of an arts manager and/or community organizer. In truth, each panelist is experienced in both occupational field. Once I had devised my occupational scheme, I then pursued panelists who either work in the fields of arts management and community organizing in Appalachia or whose research is concerned with the similar themes as mine in Appalachia. The panel was born out of the need to build consciousness in Appalachia and to push the discussion I am having in this thesis into a broader arena. Bringing practitioners and researchers together was a way to bridge this occupational gap and spark conversation and partnership between the two fields. This method was inspired by another colleague of mine utilizing a similar
approach to his inquiry into graphic arts and comics and social justice.

**Process**

My data analysis progresses in four stages. Beginning with the data gathered from my organizational overview, I identified structural and programmatic highlights. These are conditions of and/or decisions by the organization I believe are of specific interest to my research based on how my lens informs my interpretation of them. They have something to do with either supporting or complicating my question, which I will explain before moving on to my next set of data.

Moving on to my data gathered from the interviews, the analytical process will be more complicated. It will involve both linear and circular analysis. The linear analysis involves me identifying repetitive and/or important themes in each interview and then placing those themes into three charts. The first chart will contain all identified themes, the second chart will pertain to themes as they relate to community engagement, and the third chart will pertain to themes as they relate to fundraising. Regarding the first chart, it will require several iterations. The first iteration will serve as a data dump for all possible themes, key words or topics. The secondary iterations will be more condensed, narrowing these numerous themes, words and topics into a fewer and more broad themes.

The circular analysis involves relating the literature and data highlighted in my proposal to each interview in a cumulative and iterative process. This is known as
iterative sampling, a process by which “researchers move back and forth between selecting cases for data collection and engaging in a preliminary analysis of the cases sampled.” (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). Each time an interview transcript is read and responded to, it adds to what will need to be read and responded to for the next interview, engaging me in a process which considers how all the data relates. “The idea is that what emerges from data analysis will shape subsequent sampling decisions…” and no data is considered isolated from other data (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008). If at any time my thoughts on an interview are challenged by the introduction of new data, I will consider how it is challenged and adjust my analysis accordingly. This will create a cumulative analysis of the interviews and lead to my next section. I will continue this process of iterative sampling until my data analysis reaches a point of saturation, described as the point “…when no new information or new themes are emerging from data analysis.” (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008).

To visualize the leading emergent themes in my iterative sampling analysis, I will use a frequency table. This table will list all emergent themes gathered from the interviews in the rows on one side of the chart. On the other side, each time a theme iterates itself, a “mark” will be placed in the chart. The themes with the most “marks” will be considered “leading themes” and considered the most necessary to grapple with in my continued analysis. It will serve to visually cross-reference the interviews and display the most common ideas shared by the interviewee.
The third portion of the analysis combines both the organizational overview and the interview analysis. At this point, I will have dealt with a tremendous amount of data and produced an equally tremendous amount of analytical text. To combine this data into one final argument, I will use a chart which highlights the principles of community engagement and fundraising I identified earlier in my proposal. This chart is informed by literature review and the research of Ellen Rosewall and Doug Borwick. This chart is designed to highlight and organize which principles the organization exemplifies and how it does so. The “how” statements will be brief when inputted into the chart, therefore more extensive explanation through text will be required. The goal of using this chart is to initiate more critical thinking regarding how this organization models my question and where my thesis question slips into the realm of disillusionment. Essentially, how it is or is not proved correct. The fourth stage of my data analysis will lead me into my conclusion chapter of the thesis.

The Interviews

For this portion of the research, I traveled to Whitesburg, Kentucky and spent a weekend interviewing several staff members from the identified organization and learning all I could about the town and the area. The interviews both affirmed and complicated my inquiry and were an enriching experience. The roles I identified for interviewing are the Program Manager for the organization’s theater company, the
Creative Placemaking Project Manager and the Institutional Development Director. The intent behind interviewing her program manager to gain a sense of how the organization determines its programming and links its programming to its mission. My desire was to gather perspective on how the organizational structure relates to the ideas of community engagement and fundraising. The intent behind interviewing the Creative Placemaking Project Manager was to gain an in-depth and experience-based perspective on the organization and how it participates in community engagement. The intent behind interviewing the Institutional Development Director was to gain an in-depth and experienced-based perspective on how the organization thinks about and engages in fundraising and discover whether or to what degree fundraising considers the role of community engagement.

Data Analysis Representation and Discussion

Organizational Overview

Organization is a multi-media cultural institution. This is the most basic understanding and expression of its work. It produces media projects based in cultural expressions through radio, theatre, archiving, music and research. Organization consists of five subsidiaries and several others extensions of programming. The subsidiaries are a radio, a theater troupe, two media programs, and an archive. These subsidiaries and their various programs intersect to form the programming side of Organization and drive its
The mission of Organization is,

“…to enlist the power of education, media, theater, music, and other arts to document, disseminate, and revitalize the lasting traditions and contemporary creativity of Appalachia, to tell stories the commercial cultural industries don’t tell, challenge stereotypes with Appalachian voices and visions, to support communities efforts to achieve justice and equity and solve their own problems in their own ways, to celebrate cultural diversity as a positive social value, and to participate in regional, national, and global dialogue toward these ends.”

In short, the mission of Organization is democracy for its communities and others.

Through the mission, we see values of ownership, arts integration, self-determination, cultural preservation, and agency. Organization began as a program under President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty in the late 1960s in which community youth would be taught the skills of film production with the hope those skills would translate into gainful employment elsewhere. However, once the government program had concluded its work, several of the youth decided to remain in Whitesburg, Kentucky and begin Organization as an institutionalized non-profit organization.

Organization has both an Executive and Artistic Director, at least one staff member dedicated to each programmatic area, and a Board of Directors. Much of funding for Organization comes from public and private donations, specifically private foundations like the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, but some funding comes from local sources such as the Appalachian Community Foundation and through programming. Organization’s space, located in downtown Whitesburg, includes a small theater, a radio station, community meeting space and an archive.
Programmatic Highlights

_Subsidiary 1:_ This program, whose name has been redacted to protect its prospects, is one of the oldest and longest running subsidiaries of _Organization_. It began as a traveling theater troupe with the goal of telling local stories through engaging and iterative theater productions in order to preserve and disseminate Appalachian stories and culture locally and nationally. The mission of _Subsidiary 1_ reflects the mission of _Organization_ and grew out of a response to a loss of storytelling traditions as a result of some national television programming at the time.

An example of the work of _Subsidiary 1_, which I will highlight again later, is its one of its most recent collaborations _A Thousand Kites_. Born out of collaboration with _Subsidiary 2_, a radio station I will go into more detail on soon, this program featured stories developed from interactions with prisoners and prison guards. Appalachia has witnessed a boom in prison development, both private and government run, and this has presented a unique situation for _Organization_ and the communities in which these prisons are built. This play, developed out of a program started by _Subsidiary 2_, tells the stories of prisoners and their families and prison guards and their families as one complete story without diminishing the experiences of either party. It is an intersectional and iterative project in which the impacts of our nation’s current criminal justice system on both prisoners and those interacting with prisoners daily is investigated and reported through
artistic expression.

**Subsidiary 2:** This program is a locally operated radio station broadcasting out of Organization’s building featuring over 50 volunteer DJs arising from various backgrounds, musical preferences, and ideologies. The mission of the radio station is “…to be a 24-hour voice of mountain people’s music, culture, and social issues, to provide broadcast space for creative expression and community involvement in making radio, and to be an active participant in discussion of public policy that will benefit coalfield communities and the Appalachian region as a whole.”

The radio has been operating since 1985 and is unique in its lack of programmatic limitations. While it caters mostly to a Central Appalachian crowd – old time string music, bluegrass, and country - its producers realize a diversity in musical and cultural preferences exist within the region. In response to this diversity, its programming is not limited to the Appalachian cultural archetypes. A tremendous and successful example of this programming, one which I highlighted in describing Organization’s theater, is *Hip Hop from the Hilltop* and *Calls from Home* which features Hip Hop music and recordings of phone calls from families of prisoners incarcerated in the booming prison system in Appalachia.

Another unique feature of the radio is its policy portions focusing on how policy developments at local, state and national levels affect the lives of its listeners in Central Appalachian and online. Through programs like *Mountain News and World Report*, which seeks to interpret world events through an Appalachian perspective similar to the post-industrialist one I detailed earlier, to *Fractured Appalachia* which focuses on policies pertaining to oil and natural gas extraction in Appalachia, to the *Coal Report*, a conglomeration of local and global reporting on the business of coal and its effects on Appalachia, *Subsidiary 2* provides a critical Appalachian
perspective on world events and builds agency for those living in Central Appalachian communities. This addresses my directive that a successful and impactful organization will be keenly aware of the issues the community it resides in faces and provide a source of positivity, hope and direction for its constituents. Other portions of Organization’s programming will be discussed at length moving forward but will not be mentioned here to reduce redundancy in my analysis.
### Thematic Identification Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject 1</th>
<th>Subject 2</th>
<th>Subject 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Academia</td>
<td>● Access</td>
<td>● Administrating v.</td>
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<td>Organizing</td>
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<td>● Asset building</td>
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<td>● Associational work</td>
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<td>● Challenging tangibility</td>
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<td>● Co-production</td>
<td>● Community narrative awareness</td>
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<td>● Complicating narratives</td>
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<td>● Connection to the work</td>
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<td>● Coordination</td>
<td>● Community Action</td>
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*Table 20: Thematic Identification Chart*
Table 20 Continued

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<td>• Engagement                                                            • Disassociation                                                          • Decentralization</td>
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<td>• Generational                                                          • Engagement                                                              • Equity</td>
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<td>• Heritage                                                              • First voice                                                              • Flexibility</td>
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<td>• Language                                                              • Integrating                                                               • <strong>Continued</strong></td>
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<td>• Intentionality</td>
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Table 20 Continued

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<th>Intersectionality</th>
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<td>Iterative programming</td>
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<td>Mission-driven</td>
<td>Justice</td>
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<td>Meaningful work</td>
<td>programming</td>
<td>Lateral relationships</td>
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<td>Mission-driven values</td>
<td>Legacy</td>
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<td>Negotiation</td>
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<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td>oppositional</td>
<td>Oppositional</td>
<td>Mission-driven</td>
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<td>Organizational</td>
<td>programming (MDP)</td>
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<td>learning</td>
<td>Mutual-interest</td>
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<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Model</td>
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<td>Organizing</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Representation</td>
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<td>Potential</td>
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<td>Ownership</td>
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<td>Prioritization</td>
<td>Prioritization</td>
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<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Process</td>
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<td>Self-Interest</td>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>Relationship building</td>
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<td>Self-affirmation</td>
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<td>Value</td>
<td>Self-interest</td>
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<td>Voice</td>
<td>Situational Awareness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategizing</td>
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<td>Sustainability</td>
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<td>Transparency</td>
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Table 20 contains a list of identified themes for each interview. The goal of this first chart is to compile as many themes from the interviews as possible. But this is obviously not the last iteration of this process necessary to fully code my data. As I mentioned in the introduction of the Data Analysis chapter, once this first chart had been created, I would move into the charts dealing specifically with community engagement and fundraising themes found in the interviews, respectively. Before we move into that step of the iterative sampling, we need to trim this chart, centralizing it around a smaller number of themes. You might also notice this chart follows a logic closer to that of identifying key words than identifying key themes. Once I have narrowed my themes, I will provide examples of how these themes manifest themselves in the interview dataset.

**Iterative Sampling – Thematic Narrowing**

The following chart is an extension of the first chart. In the first chart, I read through each interview and identified as many themes, key terms and topics as possible without repeating anything explicitly. While it served its purpose of a data dumping
ground, per se, it itself requires further analysis. This brings us to the next chart, our second iteration of thematic identification I am calling *Thematic Narrowing*. This is in tandem with the iterative sampling process and will eventually lead me into data saturation.
Thematic Narrowing

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Intersectionality</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Situational Awareness</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Self-Determination</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Dissimilation</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mutualism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Table 20: Thematic Narrowing*

**Democracy**

I narrowed the themes identified in the interviews to the following seven: *Democracy, Legitimacy, Intersectionality, Situational Awareness, Self-Determination, Dissimilation, and Mutualism*. I recognize Democracy is an incredibly broad theme and perhaps an oversimplification. But, when each interviewee speaks about voice, agency, ownership, intersectionality and cultural equity, any one of these could themselves be a theme, but they are all crucial parts in a much grander scheme. At this point that scheme is democracy, or democracy in its truest since.

**Legitimacy**

Each interviewee concerned themselves with what about them and their work
gives them the ability to continue curating local voices in an affirming and productive manner. Each cited the legitimacy the organization has procured through decades of honest engagement with the community. Despite its oppositional nature, evidenced by its media critical on coal and prison industry, Organization has made clear it and its work will remain strong and true and will not yield to undue influence or outsider coercion.

Per Subject 2, “we have centered the first voice narrative in our art and media creation…” As volatile and sensitive as their programming tends to be, how it challenges so many status quos so often, any affront to their legitimacy in the communities with which they work will severely tarnish their ability to continue traversing these difficult terrains. How they have garnered this legitimacy is what is crucial to this research. Per Subject 2, Through authentic programming, vulnerability with the community, unyielding representation in national conversations, and stringent financial management, Organization has proved their “…ability to pull off whatever it is we say we’re going to pull off…” and assured there are no doubts in the communities “…that they’re going to be able to reach us to that we’re not going to manage the money well. That is a great benefit to whatever partnership we start out with, just the fact that we are taken seriously.” As Organization continues to challenge status quos through authenticity and innovation, the legitimacy that its brand carries both locally and nationally will remain crucial to its efforts.
Intersectionality

One step to realizing democracy is the process of intersectionality. Intersectionality is “the theory of how different types of discrimination interact” (Adewunmi, 2014) and is typically applied to the inner struggles of realizing how class, gender and race are realized within the feminist movement, but it does not need to be constrained so. Intersectionality, in the case of Organization, can apply to how issues of poverty are examined within or alongside issues of race. As Subject 1 explains, in making the move to joining Organization based off an essay by Organization’s Artistic Director, they found “a vision for cultural equity that (they) had never heard before that included poor white people in a way that didn’t minimize the struggle of other minorities.” This feeds into the theme of self-determination, but we will get to that later.

Per Subject 1, Organization engages in advocating for the voice of the communities it works in - communities, as explained in my background chapter, that come from a history of oppression and misrepresentation - without discrediting the travesties other communities (i.e. communities of color) suffer, making their work intersectional and eventually uplifting to both communities.

“But here I've found cultural workers who readily say Black Lives Matter and we have no problem saying that because it's not a zero-sum game. We realize that by lifting our inner-city cohorts and communities of color, we advance our entire community and we're not going to move forward, and there's no way, literally no way, to dismantle white supremacy without treating the people and lifting up the people who have been living under similar oppression as inner city and communities of color as they do here” – Subject 1
Subject 1 goes further in our interview to quote the Artistic Director, “Don't think of us exclusively as a white, rural advocacy group, we're not, we're about connecting those conversations, working in communities whose economic realities reflect our own and making that connection.”

An example of this intersectionality in action would be their work addressing the for-profit and government prison partnership booming in Appalachia I mentioned in the Organizational Overview. Their work with the prisons began with Subsidiary 2, a community-run radio housed in Organization’s building. Subsidiary 2 began a radio program called Calls from Home where prison inmates, who come from all over the United States and often from low income urban neighborhoods, can communicate with their families back home through letters read over the radio. This eventually lead Subsidiary 1, a traveling theater company, to become involved in producing a play called A Thousand Kites. As Subject 1 explained, the kite represents a communicative device “…between prisoners and their families…” based “…on stories from storycircles we conducted between inmates, inmates’ families, prison guards and prison guards’ families so that a multiplicity of views were represented.” Another example would be a collaboration between Subsidiary 1 and a Puerto Rican theater company in New York City. This culminated in a production titled Betsy which was performed Off Broadway in 2015.
What this highlights is how \textit{Organization} works to make their programming intersectional in as many ways as possible. \textit{Organization} works to “braid our four programmatic areas, or make them intersectional” and seek to keeping these “…areas as actively intertwined as possible.” \textbf{Subject 1} goes so far as to say this intersectionality is part of their fundraising persona, enabling them to make “…more compelling arguments.” I will go into that later. Through this method of programming, they not only normalize these prisoners as a part of the community but provide a progressive platform in which seemingly opposing views and experiences are considered equally for the benefit of all involved. No one experience is diminished for the sake of another. Per \textbf{Subject 1}, “One of the first things they told me when I came to \textit{Subsidiary 1} was "don't think of us exclusively as a white, rural advocacy group, we're not, we're about connecting those conversation, working in communities whose economic realities reflect our own and making that connection."

\textbf{Voice, Agency, Ownership}

Voice, agency and ownership have everything to do with a community’s self-determination. Without these concepts, Democracy will flounder. This considers a community’s ability to represent itself politically and economically, ensuring its needs are communicated to the proper channels and with the proper support. When referencing the background of this thesis, we find voice, agency and ownership have been diminished
in Appalachian communities through various forces. Even in our most recent Presidential Election, realities were imposed upon Appalachia by biased national media outlets which only serve to further divide our nation.

In the introduction, I stated that a successful organization would need to produce positives outcomes for a community in regards to these three concepts. The very existence of Organization is rooted in this. Per Panelist 2, Organization came about “…as an economic development program funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity and the American Film Institute. It was a job-training program – teach young people how to make films and make media and to use this technology. It started as a government program, but the young people that started it took it over several years later.” This is a clear display of a community, in this case young adults living in Whitesburg, KY, taking ownership and developing agency and voice through that taking. Panelist 2 also mentioned Organization’s legacy in documentary filmmaking, theater and music and how this has “allowed people living where we live to express ourselves in our own voice instead of being spoken for.” The co-production between the radio and theatre portion of Organization is just one of many examples of this phenomenon. Panelist 3 highlighted another example of this phenomenon, a bluegrass festival that three local volunteer fire departments fund and organize:
“…I can talk with a bunch of volunteer firefighters…and they say, “Look, what we really care about is the Bluegrass Festival. We put it on every year.” But they haven’t put it on since they 80s because government money and the coal severance tax money stopped and they weren’t able to do it anymore. It did not take much. It took a few self-afacing communist Jew jokes and a few conversations after that to get us to a table where we can say, “we can do this again.” Organization granted them the money to do it, a grand total of $2500.00. That’s all it took for three volunteer fire departments to come together and make a first annual festival that grossed over $10,000.

This speaks to Organization’s theory of change, where “…the people who are directly impacted by this problem have to be the ones who are instrumental in taking the lead and solving the problem.” This theory of change is also informed by Ella Baker and her tremendous work during and after the Civil Rights Movement. Baker coined the saying “find the people who are already leading within their communities and support their work, don’t come in with an outside agenda.”

**Situational Awareness:** In the process of theorizing the mandates of this model, I described a successful organization would be aware of its community. Now, based on the data, this community awareness appears to be part of a larger, more encompassing awareness. When I asked Subject 1 how they became involved with Organization, they spoke candidly about a past administrative experience in the Northeast. What Subject 1 learned from working with the organization there is “…You can’t live and work in a community and not understand…how your organization is interacting with the entire
town.” This realization on their part is in response to what they believed was an elitist and exclusive approach to engaging with the community. I would stop here and state the theme to be community awareness, clearly evidenced by the quote above, but other revelations complicated my conclusion.

While the organization clearly values Democratic values in the community, they also acknowledge the reality of funding. “...we have to get our funding,” Subject 1 remarked when asked about handling stereotypes in dealing with outside funders. They showcase an understanding of the importance of fundraising despite the past of absentee influence in Appalachia. But there is not a complete disregard of the Appalachian context within these fundraising narratives. They consider how they can approach funders “...without perpetuating this constant negative stereotype” and seek to “...complicate the conversation on who Appalachian people are and who Appalachian organizations are.” This demonstrates a consciousness beyond zero-sum thinking, an awareness of both the importance of community representation and the need for grant money.

And this awareness spreads. Subject 1 was candid about how they consider recent political events and their potential impact on the community. They consider the political environment and factor it into their work. In reference to the 2016 election cycle, Subject 1 remarks, “Considering how to make an argument for rural that isn’t completely a decent or an apologia for rural is really difficult right now,” and that “...staying...up to date on the national conversation about inequality in funding...and how rural people and
organizations are perceived has been really important.” This political awareness covers not just the national conversations but regional and local developments as well, as evidenced by Subject 1’s reference to the West Virginia state government’s efforts to defund the state public broadcasting, what Subject 1 calls “…maybe the only reputable major new source in the state.” As a media producing organization, Organization needs to be aware of other media outlets producing similarly charged products and how the destabilization of one could negatively impact themselves or the communities they support.

“One thing that I really appreciate about fundraising at Organization, and it is something I noticed very quickly coming in, is it is understood as an extension of relationship building. Not everybody at Organization speaks organizing language and they may not talk about it as power and stuff, but the idea is never that we are, the foundations, or the funders are gods. It’s all about how do we build relationships and figure out what’s in your self-interest and how it connects to our self-interest and how it can work from and develop ideas we can work on together” Subject 3

Self-Determination

Self-determination theory is the idea that when given the proper resources, individuals or a group of individuals will act in their best interests. It is the process that assists the person in designing and exercising control over their own life (selfdetermination.com, 2017). This set of principles challenges the long-standing American poverty myth that those in poverty are their strictly of their own shortcomings and moral fallacies and should not receive any help to recover from such a position.
The initial concept of Organization was founded on the principles of self-determination, devising to give area students the skills to advance themselves and their careers. When the students decided to remain in Appalachia and assume the management and application of the program, the principle of self-determination remained and began to be applied to other situations in the region. Today Organization works to bring the benefits of self-determination and power to the people of the region through their many programs, including the youth media program and media institute. This self-determination also manifests in the workplace, as each interviewee describes a unilateral anti-authoritarian management structure in which they can pursue projects and goals beneficial to them and the people they work with.

Subject 3 discussed how they were able to redefine their position upon contracting with Organization into a methodology that better fit their ideology and would better suit the desired outcomes of the project. Subject 1, as I mentioned when discussing intersectionality, was disconnected and disinterested in their previous work but found work at Organization they could invest all of themselves in and would help them better understand themselves. Organization’s work benefits the community in not only developing life and workforce skills but by providing a space and methodology for developing their own voices and understanding the many environments around them.

The Letcher County Culture Hub, a project spearheaded by Organization but in partnership with a large variety of organizations, is aiding the community and its business
owners and advocates in the practice of self-efficacy in policy decisions at various levels, giving them the tools and power to fight to determine their own way forward.

The last step of self-determination is to allow the person to come to their own conclusions and goals and not to control the process from start to finish. Subject 1 speaks to the challenges of this, especially with them being an academic, and how Organization strives to not be controlling in determining what are successful and/or beneficial outcomes. All of the programming at Organization is borne out of dialogue between interested individuals and is designed to encourage further dialogue by those participating in the programming. Per Subject 2,

“That’s what were interested in and one of my main things I like to think of a lot with (Organization) is after you see a play, or after you see a film or after you listen to a radio piece, you should be left with more questions then you came with. That’s our goal. Our goal is not to tell people through our pieces how to think, it’s to ask more questions.”

Were Organization to produce their programming without providing a space for its participants to consider, process, and engage in dialogue on it, they would not be supporting the mandates of self-determination and instead acting as an authoritative institution.

**Dissimulation**

Dissimulation is the process by which a person or group of people separate themselves from the established culture of power and challenge its assumptions. One
way this dissimilation can be encouraged is by disseminating information that challenges norms and/or assumptions about an idea or, in this case, a group of people. The pressures of assimilation, or the process by which a group of people are coerced into assuming the identity deemed fit by those with the power to do so, have long acted against the best interests of Appalachia. Whether through the diluting of our culture through mass-production and consumption or the stereotyping and degrading of certain aspects of the Appalachian culture, assimilation has fought a long battle to keep this region in line, and it wins far more than it loses.

All three interviewees showcase an awareness of this assimilation and each puts forth efforts to challenge and circumvent it. They spoke about the importance of disseminating locally developed narratives – first voice narrative – and media that challenges the notions perpetuated by national media since after the Civil War. **Subject 1** considers this in their work with every project, asking, “how do we continue rooted in the local and lift it upward and outward…we don’t want it to just perpetually cycle through and through, living and dying here,” They go on to mention serving the community as the heart of their work, “but it can’t end there…we want to continue to keep lifting it up.” **Subject 2** discussed how they manage these negative narratives when seeking funding from larger foundations such as the Mellon or agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts. Though they understand the importance of funding, they do not allow themselves to be beholden to that power, “…we don’t really do what
other people tell us to do and we have a really long history of if a fundraising proposal...is X and it doesn’t fit well...we tell them why what they are doing doesn’t really make the most sense...” and aren’t afraid to turn down grants.

Dissimilation is also present in the media Organization produces and presents. Through the storytelling process and the work of Subsidiary 1, Organization produces performances and media that promotes local and authentic voices and sometimes challenges the assumptions made by national media. But promoting local and authentic voice is the desired outcome – it challenging an assumption is merely a bonus. Subsidiary 2, the radio station operated by Organization, also challenges the forces of assimilation by providing informed and interested dialogue on policy developments that affect the communities around Organization and providing a perspective not often promoted in national media discourse. This includes The Coal Report and The Mountain News and Report programs.

Mutualism

This last theme is one I am still grasping with. It sounds simple enough. It’s the idea of two organisms working in equal benefit of each other. Where it becomes challenging to grasp is when it is coupled with the idea of self-interest, a notion often disdained by our society. This came to light when Subject 3 dismissed both community outreach and community engagement as neither promoting mutual relationships, “…what
it implies is, ‘We, the NPO, are here and you the community are over there. We are apart from you and our relationship is either as a supplicant, to humbly serve you from below, or as a God, to administer you from above.’ Subject 3 explained neither approach allows both parties to take their self-interest seriously, allowing one to possibly act in a way that is detrimental to the progress of the other. ‘We…are neither above or below the community, we are part of the community to the extent we have any legitimacy to do any of this work.’

Subject 2 and Subject 1 also mentioned the concept of self-interest in the since that they will not move forward on a project that does not have investment from the community and will not benefit everyone’s interests involved. Per Subject 2, this requires both compromise and hard lines. While we’ve already discussed how Organization rejects assimilation and undue influence in the larger fundraising world, Subject 2 discussed the importance of understanding in developing and executing partnerships, making clear distinctions between responsibilities and financial expectations, but being willing to revisit and renegotiate should issues arise and a responsibility not be met. Yet the principle of self-interest and mutualism remains and they refuse to move forward on projects that lack the ability for this principle to be realized.

This theme also promotes the other themes. By encouraging individuals and organizations to not only consider their self-interests but to also value them, they are
more likely to advocate for their needs in a confident manner. This promotes self-
determination in the community. It also creates a space where people can consider and
develop their voice and take ownership over their organizations and lives. This
challenges the powers of assimilation, which often coerces individuals to value the
interests of the powerful over their own or to assume those interests are the optimal
interests for them. Lastly, it encourages dialogue that is crucial to developing democracy
and mapping such issues as intersectionality.

Fundraising Related Data

Importance of Fundraising at Organization

Rosewall describes fundraising as “…an art, a science, and an essential part of the
activities of the arts organization…” in which “…everyone has a crucial role to play”
(Rosewall, 2014, p. 151). As demonstrated in all three interviews, Organization
understands this cruciality. Organization further institutionalized fundraising by hiring
Subject 2 as the Institutional Development Director in 2013 and will continue to
diversify this portion of the organization by hiring a Director of Advancement in 2017.

Subject 1 spoke candidly of learning how braiding or making intersectional the four
programmatic areas supports developing more inclusive and powerful fundraising
narratives, “…keeping those four programmatic areas as actively intertwined as possible
and then working that into our funding areas…makes for a more compelling argument.

We’re always making the argument…the urgency is always rash.” Subject 3 acknowledges the success of fundraising at Organization, “…it is understood as an extension of relationship building…we will spend a good amount of time and money on building those relationships including trips to meet heads of foundations.” Clearly, fundraising is an important and respected function of Organization, but what is the guiding force behind it?

Before we discuss its guiding principle(s), we must comment on how the reality of fundraising at Organization challenges claims made in the literature review. Rosewall states, “…the bulk of support for any organization comes from local sources,” and that “organizations do better by cultivating local sources than by applying for national foundations” (Rosewall, 2014, p.154). This is simply not the reality for Organization. Subject 3 has already given us evidence to the amount of resources spent pursuing national funders and Subject 2 has “focused on private foundations and public money” including the Mellon Foundation and both the National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities. Subject 1 speaks on putting forth the “…most positive vision of our organization and the culture that it’s part of…” to national funders in places like New York City. Organization has a history of receiving large grants, upwards of $500,000, from national foundations and federal granting agencies, including the Arts Place grant of $450,000 that paved the way for Subject 3 to join Organization in 2016. This reality is
no doubt in response to the economic reality of the community and region Organization is in and the limited wealth that presents them. Add the fact they are often seen as oppositional by local, state and federal government officials because of their media dealing with the realities of coal mining and other corporate industries – industries which disproportionately possess the region’s wealth – and it’s easy to see why they look beyond Appalachia for money.

**Principles behind Fundraising**

In reading Subject 1’s remarks about intersectional programmatic areas, you might surmise programming is subservient to fundraising – that the end goal of programming is to develop better fundraising narratives. This is not the case. Subject 3 places fundraising in a different light, and Subject 1 does so as well, by describing it as a part of a larger whole – that larger whole being relationship building. What I observed is a concern with the potential outcomes of fundraising efforts beyond just securing resources. Organization is concerned with the mandates of grants and whether fulfilling those mandates will force them to compromise another relationship, as Subject 3 states, “I see a request for proposals…begin to think about how I can build…the program in their (granter) self-interest…either I’m selling out the rest of my community or I’m selling out the people where I live.” While they are aware of the need for fundraising, as Subject 2 states, “We are not against turning down grants…we have to set our
parameters."

“The hardest rub of my work is trying to be really clear about what our mission and values are and sometimes getting in arguments with funders about their mission and values not being the best vision for our country and for whatever outcomes they are trying to get, whether it’s around democracy or helping poor people.”

This compliments Rosewall’s statement,

“The further away from the organization the funding source is, the less likely it is that the source will understand your organization, be aware of the good work you do in your community or know your track record…the more likely it is that you will be competing with hundreds of applications from all over the country.”

(Rosewall, 2014, p. 154)

Organization is aware of this, aware of how reaching beyond Appalachia has the potential to jeopardize their and/or a community’s interests in favor of the interests of the granting institutions. Subject 1 was candid in approaching this predicament,

“I think it’s a mistake to polish…to a point where language is watered down past any kind of vitality or impact. Just the stripping down and numbing away of language in stories and identities in that corporate funding environment that you find especially in private philanthropy is to be avoided. Avoiding that false gloss is a big part of maintaining that Appalachian identity.”

There is a value system fundraising at Organization is subservient to. Fundraising is treated as something crucial, but not the end goal.
### Organization and Community Engagement Principles

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<td>Opportunity Cost</td>
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*Table 21: Organization and Community Engagement Principles*

This section will critique how Organization fits into Borwick’s *Principles of Effective Engagement* by identifying and analyzing specific examples. The chart above lists each principle and features a mark identifying whether Organization reflects that principle. An X in the “Yes” column means Organization does reflect that principle and the “How” column lists the example of that principle which will be explained in more detail.
detail in this section. Data used to support this analysis comes from the organizational overview, interviews, and the panel discussion.

What is Community?

But before we measure Organization against Borwick’s principles, we must answer the above question. Engaging with my data has forced me to reconsider how I posited the term “community” earlier in this thesis. While the definition of community engagement given by the CDC considered community as something both tangible and abstract, I neglected to carry this observation into my line of questioning. In my interview with Subject 3, they challenged by understanding of “community” and which community I meant when I asked my questions regarding community organizing. I had been limiting my concept of community to the geographical community of Whitesburg, Kentucky. I assumed it possible for Organization to manifest one encompassing representation of that community and that this is the community they should be organizing in.

But Subject 3 provided a terrific example of how the term “community” should be considered. They expressed it as both a geographical and abstract idea, supporting the definition given by the CDC in my literature review.
“And that’s where we get in trouble with these abstractions...this is a real analytical issue that leads people down bad paths. Can I drive a half hour out of Whitesburg to the poor, high unemployment, high addiction community of Hempville, knock on a door and say, “Hey, I want to organize you?” Maybe, maybe not, but there would be some issues with that because immediately they would recognize that I am not a part of their community in the way they understand it. That’s legitimate. What I can do and what I have done is build a relationship with the leaders of the community center which draws people there for all sorts of events from bluegrass nights to dinners to holiday parties and is run by people who’ve been in that community for generations. They are people who are respected and loved by that community. I build a relationship with those leaders so that I certainly can call someone on the phone anytime and ask them to knock on that person’s door. The point is, again, it’s not that I don’t like the word community, I just want to be precise about it. There’s a community around the city, a geographic community, in which Hempville Community Center is one of the anchor institutions of that community, among others. I am not a part of that community.”

Understanding both the abstract and concrete realizations of community is crucial when addressing our next topic. This observation by Subject 3 suggests an organization must constantly consider and reconsider how it manifests in different communities.

Values, Vision and Mission

We will begin by dissecting Organization’s mission and identifying and analyzing an example of its realization.
(Organization) is a non-profit multi-disciplinary arts and education center located in Whitesburg Kentucky, in the heart of Appalachia, producing original films, video, theater, music, and spoken-word recordings, radio, photography and multimedia products. (Organization’s) goals are to enlist the power of education, media, theater, music, and other arts to document, disseminate, and revitalize the lasting traditions and contemporary creativity of Appalachia, to tell stories the commercial cultural industries don’t tell, challenge stereotypes with Appalachian voices and visions, to support communities efforts to achieve justice and equity and solve their own problems in their own ways, to celebrate cultural diversity as a positive social value, and to participate in regional, national, and global dialogue toward these ends.

Of this principle, Borwick states an organization’s vision should “…be rooted in a belief that the arts should be a partner in everything that is important to a community…” and “…every arts organization should consider how it can contribute to the economy and social health of the region in which it exists” (Borwick, 2012, p. 92). Clearly, Organization has a compelling mission with a vision of integrating the arts into every facet of their programming in an effort “…to support communities’ efforts to achieve justice and equity and solve their own problems in their own ways…”. Everything about their mission stands in opposition to the forces of disinvestment that have ravaged Appalachia for centuries – forces I explained are part of the Appalachian context.

An example of this realization is the Letcher County Culture Hub, which I will detail later.

“The Letcher County Culture Hub is a growing collaboration among community centers, artist and artisan organizations, business associations, volunteer fire departments, elected officials, government and educational organizations, and local for- and nonprofit corporations, convened and facilitated by community organizers at (Organization)” (Appalshop, 2017)
Through the culture hub, *Organization* makes clear their support of total arts integration as a pathway towards building the capacity for communities’ efforts to “…solve their own problems in their own ways.” While *Organization* acts as a facilitator, they reject any notion of ultimate leadership and instead focus on building mutual relationships with all their partners. This Culture Hub has been effective in building community advocacy through representation on civic and social issue boards (Letcher County Broadband Board) and preserving and supporting cultural traditions by encouraging organizational ownership and sustainability (Carcassonne Community Center Square Dance).

For a community to advocate for its needs in powerful and impactful ways, they must organize outside the boundaries of the traditional political system. I don’t mean the political system in terms of Republican or Democrat but instead the system by which power turns into policy. Appalachian communities do not have support within this traditional system. As evidenced by the history supporting the Appalachian context, this traditional system is often opposed to or unaware of the needs of these communities. This Culture Hub provides a model of organizing a base of community voices and advocates in a new fashion, one that challenges the notions of the traditional political system and demands to be heard.
Mainstreaming

Borwick describes community engagement as a “…new lens through which all of an organization’s activities are viewed. (Borwick, 2012, p. 93). He suggests community engagement as a new value system, a set of principles guiding every decision an organization makes. Though his text dates to 2012, Organization has an almost 50-year history of mainstreaming community engagement in its decision-making. This began when the youth involved with the government program initiated in the late 1960s decided to commandeer the Appalachian Film Institute and use the skills it taught to continue producing local media, instead of heading for LA or NYC. Borwick’s statement is more relevant to an organization looking to adopt this new value system than one which realized this need from its inception.

Opportunity Cost

For Borwick, this is another suggested principle for an organization looking to adopt this new value system. Since Organization has realized this value system for some time now, we must take a different approach. We can now bring fundraising into the equation. I mentioned earlier how Organization is in a state of transition with their fundraising efforts. Previously, they had focused their efforts on national funders – government and private philanthropy. As a result of a lack of favorable organization of wealth in the region – that being available resources that also support the efforts of
Organization – they have been forced to look elsewhere. But a shift in the organization of wealth in the region along with a distrust for and disinterest in rural communities from these national funders has flipped the equation. Organization is now looking more closely at local money with which they can engage and pull from. One example of this new organizing of wealth was mentioned by Subject 2 and is called the Foundation for Appalachia Kentucky.

“…over the last decade is there’s a community foundation that got set up called the Foundation for Appalachia Kentucky. It’s based in Perry County. They both have a large fund for a variety of counties and they help counties in particular set up their own funds.”

Subject 2 expressed excitement about this prospect but is still cautious in considering local money. This is where the opportunity cost comes into play. As Subject 2 states,

“…what Organization has always had to decide is; we only have so much staff time, where’s the best place to place our bet? There’s just no way we’re going to get the amount of money we can get there (private foundations) than if we have one person totally focused on New York City private foundations in fundraising, just daylight and dark…we’ve got so many people and on so much staff time.”

Organization works tirelessly to fulfill their mission in every endeavor but they are not naïve to the fact they need outside money to support their partnerships and their partners. But with the changing landscape mentioned a paragraph earlier has come a push for an organizational shift. Organization is institutionalizing an additional direction with funding through the creation of two new positions: Community Development Manager and Director of Advancement. The Director of Advancement position is of
particular interest to me. *Organization* realizes they have not done a good job engaging their local donor base. The goal of this new position will be just that. This position will produce outcomes that “…more holistically have donors engaged in both the mission of the work and financially contributing.” This position is given further emphasis with its close proximity with the Executive Director, including

“…doing a lot of prep for (Executive Director), a lot of work with (Executive Director) to make sure (they) has all the materials (they) needs to be prepared for a meeting as well as coming up with actual physical materials that donors want to see…” and facilitating people “…know as many staff members here as possible and to match people with who they are most interested in, the work they are most interested in.”

**Programming**

Programming is a core process through which community engagement is achieved and *Organization* is overflowing with relevant and impactful programs. One in particular, and one I’ve already mentioned as a realization of intersectionality, is the storytelling facilitated by *Subsidiary 1*. This storytelling is an iterative process through which community members express their lives in groups and develop understanding and compassion for each other’s’ experiences. Logistically, it involves putting a group of people in a circle and one by one telling a story without any interjection from another storycircle member. This programming intrinsically contributes to community engagement by fostering compassion and understanding. But *Organization* goes a step further by transitioning stories from the circle into theater productions for *Subsidiary 1*. 
These productions are typically based around a common theme, often a community issue otherwise unaddressed.

**Subject 1** provided me with two terrific examples. I have already discussed *A Thousand Kites*, a dialogue between prisoner and prison guard. Another example is *What if There was a Fire*. This is a multi-generational play born out of a storycircle in which local queer and trans students, along with other students in the community, voiced their concern with the 2016 presidential election, gun control and the culture of gun ownership in the community. This also came alongside a spurt of devastating wildfires throughout Appalachia in the late fall of 2016 that engulfed Whitesburg in thick smoke. The students produced a 30-minute play addressing these questions and fears, which then lead to another storycircle where other community members continued the conversation and added their unique experiences.

These are terrific examples of programming that is born out of the interests of a community and addresses real issues a community is struggling with. So often, media is dominated by the voices of the few. Right along with Organization’s effort to focus on the first voice narratives, challenge stereotypes and help a community solve their own problems, the programming of Organization serves as another uplifting and positive force for both Organization and the communities and organizations it partners with.
Collaboration

Collaboration at *Organization* is encouraged both in intra-organizational and inter-organizational contexts. Internally, **Subject 1** speaks to braiding the four programmatic areas of *Subsidiary 1* to create a more complete fundraising narrative and highlights programs that have formed out of collaborative efforts with other subsidiaries of *Organization* and **Subject 2** speaks about the holistic approach to *Organization’s* fundraising and how everyone on staff is somehow involved in furthering that process. Externally, collaboration is showcased by nearly every program of *Organization*, but none more clearly than the Letcher County Culture Hub. Collaborative in nature, this project involves almost the entire county at a grassroots level in coordinating power and developing mutual advocacy. Another example of external collaboration is a developing partnership in Appalachian Food Ways between several non-profit organizations and *Subsidiary 4*. This involves a collaborative grant proposal to the National Endowment of the Humanities and will work to discover, understand and preserve the food culture of the region for generations to come. *Organization* clearly does not see itself as an entity apart from the community but one that must seek to involve various communities in as many ways and fashions as possible.

Self-Reflection/Readiness

Again, Borwick positions this principle as one to consider for an organization
transitioning towards community engagement, but it does not have to be limited so. This self-reflection can occur within the context of a single project or when an organization assesses its work in this field thus far. An example of Organization exemplifying self-reflection, and intersectionality by default, is its work in the Performing Our Future Institute. This is an economically driven program sponsored by Imagining America and Organization received grants to put it to use in Letcher County. The goal of the institute is to

“…demonstrate how the assets of local culture enacted through theater can enable communities to imagine, construct, and own their civic and economic future. Our claim is that culture and artistic expression are fundamental to the development of a democratic culture because of the way they shape individual and collective identities; bound or expand imagination; and influence micro- and macro-economic incentives and behavior.” (Roadside Theatre, 2016).

Per Subject 1, the conversation was “…very programmed and there had not been a lot of room left in the conversation to gauge people’s emotional states.” Subject 1 brings this to light in response to “…a large representation of people of color at the institute that summer.” Despite the very economic nature of the conversation, they needed space to “…take a measure of the group conscience at the moment and talk about what was happening in the world outside with the pressure of the election cycle and the police violence.” The group decided to halt the conversation, assess the readiness of everyone in the room and reflect on recent developments across the nation. Per Subject
1, not everyone responded in favor of the change in conversation, “…there were…people in the room who felt, I would say, threatened when the conversation took a turn to be overtly about race.”

**Evaluating Resources**

*Organization* displays an awareness of the need and a willingness to evaluate how best to position and utilize their resources to further its mission. The staff is aware of the limitations of its own resources and thus pursues collaborative efforts in order to best maximize its impact in the region. An example of this is the implementation and institutionalization of two new positions related to fundraising, specifically the Director of Advancement. As mentioned earlier, **Subject 2** realizes they cannot manage local, regional and national fundraising efforts alone but *Organization* also realizes they need to foster and galvanize their local donor base. By realizing the limitations of its current resources and opting to institutionalize local donor base fostering by dividing and conquering, *Organization* displays an ability to honestly assess itself.

**Rocking the Boat**

This is yet another principle of community engagement that *Organization* does not shy away from. In order to develop the local voices of Appalachia, you have to challenge the narratives that have been imposed on the region. Some of these narratives
were reviewed in my background chapter. To develop agency and ownership, you must challenge the established hierarchy of power, including political systems (i.e. government) and conglomerations of wealth and power (i.e. coal industry, prison system). Through the media produced at *Organization*, they have positioned themselves as oppositional to these contexts in favor of developing and representing the interests of the communities they associate with.

“We have had a lot of films over the years that, film and radio pieces and theater pieces and youth media productions, were critical of the coal industry and what was going on. We have a lot of pieces about the environmental effects, we have a lot of pieces about the organizing that is happening, the social reality of what was going on, the economic reality.”

But the most prominent way *Organization* is oppositional is not through these media productions but through the iterative process these productions instigate. As **Subject 3** remarked, “…asking questions isn’t necessarily a cultural piece that is promoted here.” Yet all their media seeks to bring the communities to a point of dialogue, of acknowledging and questioning the status quo and discussing how they as an organized community of individuals can challenge and overcome it. While *Organization* has staked its claim as being oppositional to certain establishments in the region, the greatest good they produce is upsetting certain cultural norms in order to bring Appalachia to a new level of awareness and activity.
Mutuality

While I have highlighted and will continue to highlight instances of mutuality in how Organization operates, another example would be its community advisory boards. Each programmatic area of Organization has an advisory board consisting of interested and knowledgeable members of the community who provide feedback and make suggestions in the direction of these areas. Organization welcomes this mutuality and often responds in kind to their suggestions. One instance is the inception of a for-profit tech company in which Organization has part ownership. Through one of its subsidiaries, Organization trains local youth in media technology but was not interested or did not feel accountable towards producing job opportunities for the participants. In a community meeting, several members expressed frustration in this, considering it Organization’s job not only to train their children but also provide more practical means towards employment. In response to this interest, and seeing an opportunity to further the mission of Organization, Organization assisted a group of former program participants to develop a for-profit technology and media company that provided jobs and technology support for local and regional businesses. If Organization did not operate in a way where community interests are gathered and respected, such an endeavor, one that benefits both the community and Organization, would likely have not occurred.
Process over Product: Letcher County Culture Hub as Community Engagement Component

Organization gives witness to all the mandates of community engagement given by Rosewall detailed in the literature review.

“The Letcher County Culture Hub is a growing collaboration among community centers, artist and artisan organizations, business associations, volunteer fire departments, elected officials, government and educational organizations, and local for- and nonprofit corporations, convened and facilitated by community organizers at Organization” (Appalshop, 2017)

“…Purposes of community arts engagement include addressing “…specific community social or civic needs, linking grassroots efforts with efforts of “…social and political activism…”, partnering with various organizations throughout the community, assisting an organization “…achieve its mission and serve the community…”, creating a valuable space for “…diverse groups of people…” to come together, integrating the arts into communities, and eradicating the misconception of the need for exclusivity in the arts (Rosewall, 2014 p. 243)

While there are many examples to choose from, the culture hub project mentioned by Subject 3 is the best. The Culture Hub includes Organization, schools and public sector organizations, tech sector, artist and artisan organizations, volunteer fire departments, community centers, national research centers, local businesses and health and agriculture businesses. This is a clear display of arts integration and exclusivity eradication.
Furthermore, it provides advocacy for a “specific community social or civic need” through their representation on the County Broadband Board. The board consists of six seats and is tasked with bringing high-speed internet to Letcher County, one of the highest priorities of policy people “…so that there’s opportunities for entrepreneurship and telecommuting.” Because of the Hub’s organizing of power, they were able to fill half of the seats on the board.

“The Culture Hub was strong enough and had relationships that we’re good enough that when this broadband board was formed, we were able, out of the six seats on the board, two of them are Culture Hub Partners and a third works for an organization that we’re in regular communication with.”

This representation enables them to bring the interests of the Culture Hub Partners to the table and has turned out to be incredibly important. The Board is pursuing community centers as broadband hubs for this initiative. As Subject 3 explained, this “…will bring resources into community centers and also increase their ability to reach people.” This is one example of how the Culture Hub achieves the some of the mandates of Rosewall’s mission for community engagement.

The work of the Culture Hub is inspired by Subject 3’s desire to ‘…find those organizations that are involved in bringing their individual communities together, identifying the assets that they have, latent cultural assets that they have and turning them into community wealth in all sorts of different ways.” One such example is Subject 3’s work with the Carcassone Community Center and Hemphill Community Center.
Carcassone is “…a community center hosting the state's oldest-running square dance, a weekly quilting group, crafts fairs, and community gatherings.” (Appalshop, 2016).

When Subject 3 came to Organization, word got around that the Center would close its doors and Subject 3 was tasked with preventing this. How Subject 3 worked with the Center serves not only as an example of base building but also inspiring organizational ownership and sustainability. Organization rejected the notion of simply handing the Center a lump sum of grant money to reenergize its programming and instead spent ample time…

“…building relationships with leaders in the community to figure out how they can…grow their capacity to lead…and figure out how (Organization) can indeed give them a certain amount of money as investment…to make this work for (Center) and have a cushion under (Center) that if (Center) take(s) a risk and it fails, you’re (Center) not going to be broke.”

The goal of this relationship was to inspire the Center to remain independent and self-determining and to value the process by which an outcome is achieved over the outcome itself. While reinstituting the Square Dance was a priority for Organization, about which they were candid and hinged their donation on, Organization wanted “…this to be community led…” and did not require any reporting by the Center. Through this, the relationship becomes less a transactional relationship and more a relationship built on trust in which each partner is able to determine their own path and is aware of the other’s
desired outcomes. While the Square Dance (product) was important, the process by which the Square Dance would be reinstituted through establishing a mutual relationship was the priority. Through prioritizing process, *Organization* encouraged base building and organizational ownership and sustainability in the Center. This outcome is supported by Borwick and his 10th Principle of Effective Community Engagement:

> “The benefits of valuing process equally with product are healthier communities, healthier individuals, and, as a by-product of increasing community inclusivity in creating arts experiences, exceptional artistic results with the goal being “to value process and elevate it to active consideration in the established arts world” (Borwick, 2012, p. 98).

The goal of the Culture Hub is to build a power base of grassroots and community based organizations capable of wielding influence and acting in its self-interest. Subject 3 spoke about self-interest at length and Subject 1 and Subject 3 mentioned the concept as well. The concept arose when discussing the deficiencies of community engagement and community outreach. When I began this research, I positioned community outreach as something outdated and problematic and community engagement as the future of interactions between organizations and communities. My positioning of the two is supported by Rosewall who remarks that outreach “implies that a magnanimous organization is reaching out to those less fortunate, and the community partner does not have much to bring to the table” (Rosewall, 2014, p. 242) While neither Subject 1 or Subject 2 challenged this distinction, Subject 3 rejected both and argued for the use of
community organizing as a guide to these interactions. “I would say it a little differently...I would talk about producers versus consumers.” **Subject 3** rejects both, stating one is reaching down to the community (community outreach) and one is serving or being a supplicant to the community (community engagement).

“...what it implies, even when it’s not said or not understood, but what it implies is “We, the Non-Profit Organization are here and you the community are over there. We are apart from you and our relationship is either as a supplicant, to humbly serve you from below, or as a God, to administer you from above.” I think they are both counterproductive. If you are below, then you are not taking your own self-interest seriously and if you are above, you’re not taking the other person’s or the other group’s self-interests seriously.”

To understand his rejection, we must discuss self-interest. This concept was present in all three interviews, centralizing it in my data analysis and in the work of *Organization*. **Subject 3** was even more explicit in this idea by adding the concept of mutualism. Achieving mutualism through the expression, acknowledgement and realization of each partner’s self-interest is the underlying goal of the Culture Hub. “The goal of our work is to find out where our self-interests overlap and then work in the overlap and build as strong a base as you can.”
Chapter 5

Conclusion

Recent developments in Greenup County have thrown my research in sharp focus. A new aluminum manufacturing plant will be built along the Ohio River in South Shore, KY, bringing with it a $1.3 billion investment and over 550 full-time positions. Even more recent developments state the company will be building its headquarters in downtown Ashland, Kentucky, perhaps a positive step in how industrialization typically treats our region. But knowing the historical narrative about Appalachia, it is difficult not to be skeptical.

The tri-state area has been mired in the throes of desperation for some time now, especially after CSX significantly downsized its railyard in response to a decline in coal production and AK Steel closed its plant in Russell partly due to rising steel production costs in the United States. Neither company is headquartered in the region. We need jobs and need them as soon as possible. When you consider the cause of this job loss – absentee ownership – I cannot be anything but skeptical when that very method is used to recover our region. It appears to be nothing more than using the very knife that cut you in the first place as a bandage. Add in the implementation of Right to Work legislation in the state which will continue to decrease labor unions and worker representation and the development appears more damaging than promising. The CEO of the incoming company even cited the Right to Work legislation as a key reason why his company
settled on Greenup County over 20 other potential locations. This and other regulation rollbacks by the Republican majority in the state places Appalachia Kentucky in a perilous position.

But this is also a great opportunity to put the ideas of self-interest and organizing to work. This region needs representation and organized power at grassroots level so as to contest the inherent power of large industrial corporations. Such legislation at Citizens United has already placed communities at a disadvantage in how corporate interests are valued and handled. Projects like the Letcher County Culture Hub provide a framework for organized community power and effective advocacy in developments such as this. In discussing this with folks back home, I discovered an attitude of dissenting to the corporation’s interests in lieu of their own. The mood is the outcome of new jobs is more important than how those jobs come about or are protected and promoted in the future. We are ready to sell the farm.

The reporting on the new industry left many questions unanswered. How will the corporation invest that promised money? How will the workers’ rights and safety be preserved and promoted? Will the corporation yield to environmental regulations designed to protect our river and overall environment? How much of the profits of this venture will our communities see through infrastructure and standard of living improvements? I could list more and I was disappointed when reading the reports that no one appeared to be asking these questions. The only interest is the jobs. The concepts of
agency, ownership and self-interest are nowhere to be found. I mention this development because it clearly speaks to a need for work similar to what Organization is accomplishing in Whitesburg, KY and surrounding communities. It is a need and an opportunity. An opportunity to rewrite our region’s post-industrial history in a way that benefits our communities and not only encourages us to consider our self-interests but inspires us to pursue them confidently.

**Answering the Question: Community Engagement as Principle, Fundraising as Process**

The glaring theme from the interviews is a culture of community engagement and democratic process which buttresses all organizational decision making. This establishes Community Engagement as a principle. There are instances in the interviews where explicit language comes forth supporting this position and instances where it expresses itself abstractly and we have covered most of these in my analysis. Organization seeks and values community voices, evidenced by the community advisory boards associated with each programmatic area, and works to understand how its power is manifested in various contexts. But we cannot disregard the importance of fundraising, though it never manifests itself as a principle. Fundraising is regarded more as a necessary means to an end, made evident both by its institutionalization into the fabric of the organization and how Organization constantly weighs the cost of pursuing a grant against maintaining
authentic community representation. This relationship is most apparent in the interview with Subject 2, the Institutional Development Director. Each interviewee spoke often and in-depth about the importance and need of fundraising, highlighting how involved the process is at Organization, “…I don’t think there is a single person here that isn’t somewhat involved in fundraising because we are hustling for our organizational budget every year.”

I asked a good question but did not consider how I could have answered it sooner. In considering how these two practices can be combined, I needed to cease viewing both as a process and consider one, community engagement, as a value system that directs the other, fundraising, a process by which the value system is supported. If we consider community engagement as a set of values, those values being rooted in democracy and self-determination, then we can direct the process of fundraising to insure its results are informed by these values. As Subject 2 states, “Fundraising is a part of how you make that happen,” highlighting its institutional necessity but not placing it as a priority above the value system. This takes resolve on the part of fundraisers to ensure this value system is always realized above any financial gain from the process. Subject 1 supports this positioning of fundraising, stating “You have to remain true to your own culture and remember who you are representing when you go to speak to those funders and bring an authentic vision of your own culture into the room.” Both Doug Borwick and Subject 3 highlight the need for an organizational culture shift for community engagement values to
be realized in all organizational processes. “…Community engagement should be a new lens through which all of an organization’s activities are viewed, not as something extra” (Borwick, 2012, p.93). Organization has established this since its inception and appears to be on an upward and outward trajectory in how its media is received and disseminated, challenging the long-standing national narrative about Appalachia.

**Lessons from Organization**

The most important lesson I learned from interacting with and studying *Organization* was to remove the stigma surrounding self-interest and have the confidence to act within the realms of the concept. As I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, understanding and acting upon self-interest is a need in my Appalachian community. The dialogue this process begins is crucial and leads a community to better understand its situation and its needs.

I learned the importance of knowing, valuing and understanding my power and its importance to organizing power within a community. This brings in the theme of situational awareness, knowing how your power is manifested in a given context. This requires subsets of awareness, including personal, cultural and political. Organizations cannot act as if policy developments do not affect their ability to produce authentic and empowering programming. *Organization* and its staff stay well aware of national funding conversations and disseminates local voice and knowledge regarding political
events through its various programmatic outlets.

I learned this is difficult work and requires a culture of individuals willing and invested in its success. As each interviewee mentioned, there are those in the community and in the government who would see their work and their organization done away with. They either do not understand what Organization does, do not consider its work to be valuable, or consider it to be detrimental to their own privilege or interests. The interviewees also mentioned the difficulty of representing and defending their work on a national scale, citing both an incredibly competitive grant market and granters whose values contradict those of Organization. There is no doubt this work will leave a trail of enemies. Such a model as answers my question requires resiliency, dissimilation, and the ability to seek out, listen to, and value other voices in the communities you engage with.

Making the Shift

The question then becomes how is this value system realized within an institution previously opposed to, disinterested in, or, at the very least, unaware of it? How can organizations make this culture shift? If the shift does not occur, cohesion is incredibly unlikely as competing value systems will complicate the organization’s existence. One common theme is the theme of self-determination in the workplace. Everyone I interviewed displayed an understanding and personal appreciation of the principles of community engagement and the importance of that value system for their work and the
organization, though Subject 3 did explain the process in other terms. As much as organizations would prefer to remain inorganic and objective entities, they are ultimately a reflection of their organic parts, those being the many individuals they are comprised of. Those individuals, whether consciously or not, impress their value system onto the value system of the organization. For an organization to execute a cultural shift, they must have individuals within willing to lead that shift and embed the new value system as a part of their own. This requires a holistic shift in leadership.

**Changing the Guard:** This shift in leadership may require a change in staffing for an organization. Everyone I interviewed at Organization is invested and accountable to the principles of community engagement and bringing power to Appalachia, and the mood seems to permeate the entire organization. While their practices and methods vary, they adhere to these principles. They are well-versed in their theories and assumptions of the principles and bring along the necessary attitude of resiliency and oppositionalism. For an organization to make this shift, they will need staff who not only know these principles but are anxious to put them into practice and will lead the organization forward in development and implementation. If there are staff opposed to the idea of more community investment and voice in the organization or producing media and other products that better reflect the interests of the community as discovered through dialogue, this will cause a compromise in the development of mutual relationships in which self-
interests are discussed and realized.

This must be an entire organizational shift, not simply the implementation of a single position which lacks support. An organization cannot expect one employee to be successful in this work while everything else about the organization is counterproductive to their efforts. As I’ve mentioned already, this is an adoption and institutionalization of a set of values, not a tag along to satiate the negative portions of an organization’s image. Both Subject 3 and Borwick would support my claim, stating this shift requires a complete effort or will result in wasted time and resources. If there is staff who is oppositional to these efforts, to adopting this set of values that will allow an organization to exist mutually with its communities, then their future with the organization should be reconsidered.

**Stop Pandering**

This also requires an organization not familiar with or comfortable with involving themselves further in their various communities to start doing so. This requires leadership with the knowledge of how to organize the power around them who do not fear or disrespect the interests and values of others. It also requires an organization to have mutual dialogue with its communities. They must ask who their communities are. If an organization has traditionally seen themselves as the gifters of culture, benevolent Gods of beauty and understanding, making such a shift will require humility, forgiveness
and a willingness to see themselves no longer as greater than the communities around them.

This will present new challenges for the organization. The reality of their distance from various communities could come as a shock and any lack of leadership in these situations will further deconstruct any legitimacy the organization has with that community. But as Subject 3 remarked, they cannot go knocking on doors in communities where they are unknown. An organization looking to make such a shift and to cease pandering to various communities must put Ella Baker’s theory or organizing to use to find and build relationships with community leaders who can then welcome that organization in.

Stop Assimilating

The last paragraph considered an organization whose power rests closer to the wealth and elitism of our nation, most notably urban European arts-based institutions descending from a lineage of wealth and unearned legitimacy. For an organization whose position is far and away from that reality but constantly strives to imitate it, to assimilate, they must come to terms with their own position. In considering the opportunity cost of such a shift, assimilation will ultimately cost an organization more than dissimilating and moving towards relationship building with its communities. As we can see from Organization, dissimilation is the chosen and proven method of developing voice, agency
and ownership – a.k.a. power – for the communities they associate with. Whether is it through their media critical of the Coal Industry and the prison boom or their haggling with foundations and agencies to accept grant guidelines that best represent the interests of the communities they associate with, does not shy away from oppositionalism. Other organizations must follow suit and ask themselves how well their work measures up to the work of Organization and Doug Borwick’s principles.

If there are areas of their programming that do not authentically represent the interests of the communities they associate with and are accountable to, then their programming should be revisited and revised. If the organization is unaware of those interests and has been producing programming that only represents the narrative of elitist power, then they will need to take these principles of democratically discovering the interests of their communities or the programming will continue to contradict the principles of community engagement.

Some practical shifts an organization can make are community advisory boards for each programmatic area and adopting some method of programming that encourages dialogue for program participants. This will require space, both physical, in the budget, and in project timelines, for participants to come together and engage in this dialogue. This will cause not only a disruption in the standard operating procedures but for these documents to be rewritten in a way that not includes but emphasizes the importance of the need for dialogue.
Beyond Marketing

The last realization organizations must have to be successful in this work is that this is not merely an extension of marketing schemes. A transactional approach will not suffice in this instance as worth is determined solely by someone’s ability to give your organization value. I can see where the self-interest argument alone contradicts my stance above, but the self-interest cannot be discovered without building a relationship of trust. Marketing depreciates trust as it is built on a falsehood of supposed benefit, that purchasing a product will propel the purchaser into a new state of euphoria or social status.

Implications for Future Research

In my interview with Subject 2, certain pending developments of the organization present opportunities for future research in relation to this paper. The institutionalization of a Director of Advancement to focus on local individual giving as a key part of the fundraising directive is an opportunity for a future research to observe the success and impact of such and determine its viability for other organizations. Questions of institutionalization, staff cohesion and mission adhesion, and impact on revenue diversity are viable options if one were to investigate further. The Letcher County Culture Hub
also presents a unique opportunity for future research. A researcher could analyze how such a project impacts the mission of Organization over a period and begin hypothesizing on how a reproducible model could be developed in various scenarios.

From a political standpoint, researchers could explore how Organization has weathered almost 50 years of shifting policy and ideology and seek out the principles and strengths behind such resiliency. I would want to see how Organization responds to the current administration’s policies and theorize on how other organizations can weather similar situations and better advocate through their organized community in a way that circumvents and challenges such policies. A goal of this research is resiliency and sustainability and giving organizations the principles and tools to weather politically oppositional climates is key to these outcomes.

If I were to continue this research, I would look further into the culture hub – how it was conceived, its theories and assumptions, how it is realized – and observe its progress to determine what, if any, are the outcomes and how those outcomes work for or against the different parties involved. I would begin mapping the project to visualize its impact to bolster to argument for similar endeavors in socio-politically and socioeconomically similar regions of the nation. I would also observe how well Organization adheres to its principle of self-interest, what the outcomes of that adherence are, and theorize on how other organizations can confidently engage in the process in their own communities.
The interviewees also mentioned a changing of the guard at *Organization*. The founding generation is slowly stepping aside and a younger and even more progressive generation is assuming leadership in mandated and discretionary roles. I am interested in how the culture of *Organization* will shift and what impact this has on its ability to remain sustainable and impactful in the communities it interacts with. Will the work change? How will it change? Will they continue a trajectory of regional and national dissemination of locally produced media? This has the potential to give other organizations insight and principles to navigate a similar shift should they come across one.

I would have also liked to interview both more staff at *Organization* and some of the community and business leaders and program participants they interact with. This would provide me an even fuller picture of *Organization*’s work, covering how it is received and understood by a wider range of individuals. To go even further, I would have compared the work of *Organization* to an urban arts organization, either large or small, to observe the nuances of approach between these sociogeographic communities. This is work all arts organizations can engage in and diversifying the contexts in which data is collected and interpreted increases the ability for policy transfer across demographics.

I mentioned a need for leadership in making the cultural shift in an organization that is required to institutionalize this value system. The question becomes where and
how is this leadership developed and what institutions of the day can contribute. One could take this research in the direction of either developing a community engagement and organizing leadership program and/or degree path at an educational institution or altering a current program to reflect the importance of this value system. Whatever method for development, this leadership must be conceptualized and fostered at some point to prepare the next generation. Several community arts degree programs have been implemented in the last few decades but perhaps the next study should be taking the theories from that program and applying them to a larger swath of degree paths.


http://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm


Appendix A: Interview Consent Form & Protocol

The Ohio State University Consent to Participate in Research

Interview and Audio Recording of Interview

Study Title: Using Fundraising and Community Engagement to Create More Sustainable Arts Organizations

Researcher: Dr. Sonia BasSheva Manjon

Sponsor: The Ohio State University

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.

Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose:

The purpose is to find what are best practices of non-profit fundraising and community engagement that create more sustainable and impactful arts organizations in Appalachia.

Procedures/Tasks:

The procedure is a 60 - 75-minute interview on the topics of community engagement and fundraising.

Duration: 60 – 75 minutes

You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study,
there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University or with Appalshop. Refusal to participate will not affect your relationship with Appalshop, nor with The Ohio State University.

**Risks and Benefits:** There are no risks, harms, and/or discomforts or benefits to the participant expected from this research other than those encountered in everyday life.

**Recording:** In order for there to be any audio/video recording of the interview or any other aspect of this research, you must provide your consent for there to be so. Your refusal to consent to being audio recorded during the interview will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University or with Appalshop.

**Confidentiality:**

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;
- The sponsor, if any, or agency (including the Food and Drug Administration for FDA-regulated research) supporting the study.

**Incentives:** There are no incentives provided to participate in this research. Your participation or refusal to participate is strictly voluntary.

**Participant Rights:**

You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal
legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

Contacts and Questions:
For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, or you feel you have been harmed as a result of study participation, you may contact Dr. Manjon at manjonvanewyk.1@osu.edu or Charles W. Calhoun at Calhoun.188@osu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

Signing the consent form:

Consent to Participate in Study

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

Printed name of subject ___________________________ Signature of subject ___________________________

AM/P
M

Date and time

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Consent to be Audio Recorded:

This section confirms either my consent or refusal to be audio recorded during the interview. Should I refuse to be audio recorded, I am clearly aware that I maintain all my legal rights and in no way jeopardize my relationship with either Appalshop or The Ohio State University. I also maintain the right to withdraw my consent to be recorded at any time during the interview and to request the recording, in part or in whole, not be allowed for research use and be disposed up properly.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol for Key Personnel: Community Engagement Focus

Hi insert name, welcome and thanks for taking the time to meet with me today. I am very
interested in the work your organization is doing and excited to learn more about it from you. To give you some context, I am from Northeast Kentucky in Greenup County, studied arts administration in my undergrad, have been a musician for over a decade and have relished these last few years connecting to my Appalachian heritage. From what I’ve observed so far in becoming more familiar with your organization and its work, I feel encouraged. As you might already know, this interview is part of the research I am doing to fulfill the requirements for my MA in Arts Policy and Administration at The Ohio State University. This research is exploring the relationship between fundraising and community engagement in hopes of formulating a more sustainable and impactful model for Appalachian Arts organizations. We’ll start with basic questions, for instance what role you have with the organization, where you’re from, how long you’ve been with the organization, etc., just to get us both settled in and comfortable then move into some more in-depth and complex questions. The more complex questions with deal with the ideas of community engagement, fundraising and organizational theory. I’m very much interested in what you have to say about the work y’all are doing.

All of your responses are confidential and will remain confidential. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may also withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission we will begin the interview.
Read Only if Participant has Consented to be Audio Recorded: I will be making an audio recording of this interview. As you aware based on your consent given in the consent form "Interview and Audio Recording of Interview", you may withdraw your consent to be audio recorded at anytime during the interview. At times, I may glance at the recording device to insure it is still recording and I apologize for any distraction that may cause.

Lead-in Questions:

Q: Tell me about yourself. For starters, what is your title with the organization?

A:

Q: What does this title entail? What are your responsibilities, daily tasks, necessary outputs?

A:

Q: How long have you been with your organization?

A:

Q: Are you from the area?

A:

Q: What brought you to being involved in this organization and the work it is doing?

A:

Community Engagement

Values, Vision, Mission:

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Q1: I want to talk to you about the mission, vision and values of your organization. What are they and how do you think they are accomplished?
A:

Q2: How do you envision these aspects of the organization in relationship to the community or communities you operate in? What impact is your organization having in making better the lives of members of the community?
A:

**Programming:**

Q3: Let’s talk programming some. We both know the crucial role programming plays in fulfilling the mission of an arts organization. It’s important the programming reflects this attitude of community engagement. Do you feel the programming you produce finds its purpose in the attitude of community engagement and, if yes, how so?
A:

Q4: Could you give me some examples?
A:

Q5: How does your programming present culturally, aesthetically and topically meaningful works regarding the community/communities you operate in?
A:

**Collaboration:**

Q6: Let’s talk how the staff works together to accomplish these goals. How is
collaboration encouraged in the organization and what are some examples of beneficial collaborations in the past or examples occurring now?

A:

Q7: Now that we’ve discussed intra-organizational collaborations, let’s talk about some external collaborations. Can you identify for me a particular current or past collaboration your organization is(was) involved with, especially one in which you were involved in forming, and discuss the process that brought about that collaboration and your experience in forming it?

A:

Q8: How did you identify the possible relationship and what was the initial encounter like?

A:

Q9: What was it like getting to know the other partners in the collaboration?

A:

Q10: How has this collaboration developed over the length of the relationship?

A:

Process:

Q11: I wanted to get specific in a few areas regarding the work your organization is doing, but let’s turn the conversation to a broader topic now. In some of the literature I read leading up to this case study, I noticed an importance given to valuing the process
involved in achieving community engagement. Talk to me about the process your organization uses. What is the attitude regarding process?

A:

Follow-up:

Q12: Before we conclude this interview, is there anything else you would like to share or anything you’d like to go over we didn’t cover earlier?

A:

Post Interview Remarks:

Thank you very much again for taking the time to meet with me and answer my questions. It has been a pleasure talking and sharing with you. As I mentioned earlier, this is strictly for research purposes and all of your answers will remain confidential. If you should like to follow up with me on anything regarding this interview, please feel free to contact me via email at c.calhoun201@gmail.com and I’ll be happy to either meet with you again or communicate over the phone.

If at any time to wish to withdraw your consent to be audio recorded, you may do so.
Appendix B: Subject Interviews

Interview with Subject 1

Subject 1: And I promise to be very candid about disclosing, when I simply don't know or I haven't enough experience in a given area if you ask about it. I have a very different perspective then some of my colleagues here do, working outside the building and working outside the state. Mine is going to be a bit of bird's eye.

Charlie: Sure

Subject 1: Perfect

Charlie: We'll start with some very basic introductory questions. We got most of it out of the way during that phone call and so far on the tour. Then once we get through those we'll get into some more targeted questions that deal with Community Engagement, Fundraising and the organizational theory behind the idea of Organization and Subsidiary 1.

Subject 1: I hope it won't bother you if I walk around or move a little bit while I'm talking, sometimes it helps me to think and clarify.

Charlie: Not at all!

Charlie: Tell me about yourself. For starters, what is your title with the organization?
Subject 1: I'm the Program Director for Subsidiary 1, which is the theatre wing of Organization.

Charlie: So, what does that entail, being the program director?

Subject 1: Being the Program Director, I look for ways to braid our four programmatic areas, or make them intersectional. Those program areas are teaching in communities and universities, advocacy, new play creation, and community cultural development. So, if we've got something that hits one programmatic area, like advocacy for native cultures and people in the area, we look for ways to educate about those things or make a play about them. So, keeping those four programmatic areas as actively intertwined as possible and then working that into our funding areas.

Charlie: Cool! So this funding narrative, which is one of the things I am looking at in my research, what is your thinking behind linking the intertwining of your four programmatic areas to that funding?

Subject 1: Well, it makes for a more compelling argument. We're always making the argument and that is just a non-profit thing that I've come to gather in my year here. Unlike many of my colleagues at Organization who've been doing this their entire adult lives, making that argument for not just rural advocacy but for Organization as a national knowledge creation center and grassroots training center, I've just gotten the crash course in this last year about Non-profit fundraising and about how to make a
compelling argument for rural. Now, it happens that that year that I've had coincides with the 2016 election cycle. So considering how to make an argument for rural that isn't completely a descent or an apologia for rural is really difficult right now but it's been part of my training. Staying, I guess, up to date on the national conversation about inequality in funding because we now know rural is funded so much less than urban centers and staying plugged in to the conversation about how rural people and organizations are perceived has been really important. It is as important as any of the four parts of our program in the funding argument that I am learning to make now. It's a strategy we have to consider for every single argument we make to these national foundations, whether its public money or private philanthropic money, we're always asking in Roadside, and this is something I've learned from my artistic director and our managing director and long-term playwright, that strategy. What is it these foundations and these agencies now just want to hear about who we are the work we are doing and why this money is essential to economic and community development. The urgency is always rash because it's so high but especially right now. I think keeping the funding narrative as urgent as possible.

But in terms of just the four Programmatic Areas, which is what you asked about. For instance, we were recently funded $500,000 from the Mellon Foundation and that as simple as just making a timeline that made clear how our programmatic areas intersect and what they are building together, what is the complete package that those programmatic areas united are forming and the answer is community cultural
development that eventually has an economic impact on the community. This economic argument is inseperable from the arts and cultural argument. People perceive arts and culture as merely attractive and maybe not necessary to economic development, that's a huge stake in our argument, arguing for the capacity of this thing that we do. I think that is organization wide in all the arguments that we make and have made since 1969.

Charlie: Or perhaps the arts as a luxury item which definitely goes back to the puritan roots, some of the thinking behind the founding of the United States as an institutionalized country. We certainly struggle with that in almost all areas of the arts.

Charlie: So what brought you to being involved with Organization and Subsidiary 1?

Subject 1: It was circuitous. I was a graduate student at University of Massachusetts Amherst getting my MFA in dramaturgy and graduating in 2015. I was on track to become a mainstream commercial theatre worker, that was my background. I grew up in North Central West Virginia, where West Virginia University is. I saw it referred to in an article recently as Metrolachia. I like that. I didn't grow up in an extremely rural area and I was one of those Generation X people who had a strong idea that I needed to get out of Appalachia if I wanted to earn a living and stay connected to art. So, I pursued that commercial training and was miserable. I hated what I was doing. I was in an internship in Hartford, Connecticut and it was a cold experience that I found to be very disconnected from the community we were serving and, in fact, the community we were serving in the
theatre wasn't reflective of the community in Hartford at all. You can't live and work in a community and not understand, on some level, how your org is interacting with the entire town. If the people in the audience are only the wealthiest, whitest, oldest and most educated then there is something out of balance there.

It happens that in Western Massachusetts there is an incredible history of great, land-based, rural art-making, since it is a rural area. It just happens to have a lot more money compared to Whitesburg. I would go up to Ashfield, Massachusetts and Theater, which actually cultivates and works the land that they rent from the city in exchange for performance and rehearsal space and they have a working farm with livestock, gardens, fields and a farm that they train in. They perform on the entire grounds. I thought that was very compelling and I loved to work with the kids there.

And up in Vermont, there's Theatre that's very land-based puppetry and pageants, movement-based work. It's the most wacko, liberal work. They do screenmaking and put out these $1 artist manifestos. But it's fantastic and it works. They've been there for about a half century.

When my cohort was headed in Boston or New York constantly to see what's going on in the mainstream theatre scene, I was going to these rural theaters. My third year (grad school), I read a textbook called An Ideal Theatre by Todd London that sounding vision was great American theater institutions and how the producers and the creators of these
theaters got the idea, the capital and wherewithal to realize their visions for the
theatre. There was a chapter on Organization and Subsidiary 1 and I thought, "oh, my
God! This is it, this is what I've been missing!". There was an essay by Artistic Director
and there was a vision for cultural equity that I had never heard before that included poor
white people in a way that didn't minimize the struggle of other minorities. That was
something that's missing from the diversity model in higher education in the
Northeast. That's not what we were taught and was never a part of the conversation at
all. As a matter of fact, poor whites, the topic was verboten. We were working in all
these communities of color, which I found very rewarding, but I couldn't help but wonder
where that left less racially-diverse areas like Appalachia and my home that were
struggling so badly. What is our way forward within that framework? I didn't see one
and there was no one there to answer those questions. I felt like I found some of those
answers in this essay from Organization’s artistic director.

I began learning about Organization. In my last years of school, I read more and more
and started reaching out. I interviewed for two jobs here. One of them was for a vista
position. I started talking to the executive director. He kept saying "no, no this isn't the
position for you. Keep trying". Finally, through my guild LMDA, I found a grant to do a
residency in a theatre in an American theatre. I took that grant proposal and I made a
workplan for Subsidiary 1. I contacted the Artistic Director and I said "Here's what I'd
like to do for your theatre. From looking at your website and your archival materials, you
could use someone to do this, this and this and here's what I am qualified to do. Here's a grant. Let's do this proposal together to fund me to come and do some work for Subsidiary 1." We collaborated on that small grant together, got it and I came down. I started doing contract work and then in 8 weeks I was offered a position. It was just the right time and I was the person they needed on staff for the transition that they were doing and it happened to click. There aren't many people who want to come here and do this work and live in Central Appalachia. You have a skilled adult who comes with a clear vision about what they like to do. That speaks very much to Subsidiary 1 and to Organization’s history of agency and self-determination in the workplace.

Charlie: You mention the diversity conversation. I've toyed with the idea of "how do I talk about poor white people in a high education institution without pissing people off?" I couldn't think of something and, lo and behold, did that bite us in the butt.

Subject 1: The diversity model in higher education is a nightmare. You have people with a genuine impulse for equity run up against a stumbling block when it comes to Appalachia. We're an inscrutable culture to outsiders, we seem impenetrable and they don't know how to view the problem of staying here for 150 years. They perceive us a monolith and they don't know how to begin to make sense of what they are finding here. This is some of the draw of Hillbilly Elegy. It resonates to this national undercurrent of "why don't they just fix their problems, God. Stop blaming everyone else and pull yourself up by the bootstraps." It's a bootstraps narrative that happened to work
for JD Vance.

Charlie: I see that in much of historical research on post-civil war Appalachia. There are the 3 literary lines; missionary, color writer and the business promoter. Now when I see something that is a new sensational text about Appalachia, knowing that history, I have a skepticism of it as opposed to something that is historical text out of university press. I found a lot of those books from University of North Carolina and University of Kentucky press very helpful in understanding Appalachia. From someone who grew up here, moved away, understands Appalachia now, it’s hard for me to see how do I get back here, do some good work here, but also sustain myself, let alone bring someone else with me.

Subject 1: But yes, we were talking about the diversity model for higher education, which, in my experience, if I had to articulate it over the past year, I would say that we have a lot of workers who are now at a place where they are willing to able and have the vision and the experience to make race and gender intersectional, but they're not ready to put class into the mix. Most of the progressives I know are at a complete loss on how to move forward. It has stratified our difference. The majority of people I find are doubling-down on their inherent biases.

I can speak to my last year's experience here. What I found when I left the enclave of progressives in the Northeast was a total mirror community here. They are just the same
as Massachusetts, there is an equal amount of knowledge about the other culture. It is really intense cultural isolationism and is at the root of the problem. But here I've found cultural workers who readily say Black Lives Matter and we have no problem saying that because it's not a zero-sum game. We realize that by lifting our inner-city cohorts and communities of color, we advance our entire community and we're not going to move forward, and there's no way, literally no way, to dismantle white supremacy without treating the people and lifting up the people who have been living under similar oppression as inner city and communities of color as they do here. Our genuine interest lie in working and living here and it has helped me to realize that in a way I couldn't before. If you start accepting that, even in places where racism is deeply engrained, and Appalachia is one of those regions and it’s a pervasive problem, and as a West Virginian, I want to talk about that and this is giving me a language and a context in a community where we can talk about things like that and move forward.

**Charlie:** That actually, I like where this takes us. How does *Organization* address, or, does *Organization* address those issues with the community here and, if so, how?

Through programming, through community engagement?

**Subject 1:** So, the question is a question of how is activism intersectional with our media creation?

**Charlie:** In my idea for my thesis here, I say one way I would define an organization
working in this area is successful is that it is an advocate and educator of the community it's in and that it helps them to see through divisive tactics, propaganda and learn to grow its own voice. One thing Appalachia struggles with, from what I experienced growing up, we struggle with speaking for ourselves. I was wondering if Organization does anything in that intersection of organization, community and advocacy for the community.

Subject 1: Yes, can I give you a history of Organization and about how they were conceived. The general Framework is something I can give and I think other staffers are going to be able to give you many more specific stories about how that works. Especially one staff member with their culture hub in Letcher County. They are someone who is out there pounding the ground, in the community, in these meeting halls and the local partners meetings, they work on the ground with their people. Me, I'm more of an administrator and I don't do as much of the community engagement directly. But I can say that there's never been conceptually any kind of urban/rural divide in the work we do, we've always perceived ourselves as a cohort of communities of color.

We began as a process of Lyndon B. Johnson's war on poverty in the 60's. The name comes from Appalachian Film Workshop. A bunch of govt. people came here with film equipment and taught local young people to use it with the idea that they would leave and go seek gainful employment in the TV and film industries. Like good Appalachian people, they were contrarian and said "no, I think we're gonna stick around here. Tell our own stories in our own way." So, even after the funding the ran out, the equipment stayed
and the teaching became iterative and it became an educational program that was self-containing. They decided on making *Organization* so the film making continued and, of the original group of communities that were selected for the WOP filmmaking project, *Organization* was the only rural area selected. It was all urban cohorts. We were always connected to that group of city filmmakers and artists and many of our cultural conversation over the last 50 years. One of the first things they told me when I came to *Subsidiary 1* was "don't think of us exclusively as a white, rural advocacy group, we're not, we're about connecting those conversation, working in communities whose economic realities reflect our own and making that connection."

In terms of the speaking for ourselves, that's such a huge part of our theory of change. These ideas that 1) the people who are directly impacted by this problem have to be the ones who are instrumental in taking the lead and solving the problem. We're not the only org to have that in our mission but we were one of the earliest advocacy groups to realize and articulate that it is a goal. Here we have a radically disenfranchised group who doesn't have agency, voice, ownership or belonging in their own communities and our stories are constantly being told by other people and the images that are reflected of us back to ourselves is a mainstream media and the storytelling is almost entirely negative, often inaccurate and way to broad. If you look at specials back in the 60s, like Christmas in Appalachia, that's a good sample of a horrific reflection of who we are and our values. So many of *Organizations* films deal with media images of us and how we are
perceived.

(Charlie talks about the Dateline NBC special on a high school running back in Johnson County, KY)

**Subject 1:** That's it, that's at the heart of it. We know we are Appalachian people and that's all we ever see of ourselves. And the trick is to not fall into this trap. If you making a funding proposal, how do you predict us and our needs? This is what we have to do, having to advocate without perpetuating this constant negative idealization. The Appalachian Culture, these people and how we live here. First of all, this media portrays us a monolith. We all know that's not true, because my culture growing up was totally different in North Central West Virginia than we are here in the coal fields of Central Appalachia. That's the first thing you learn, we are not the same. Appalachia is huge. First of all, most people can't distinguish between Appalachian states on a map. America doesn't even know all we are. But they know we are poor and that's what the media wants to constantly hit on and it's really come back to bit us in the butt with this election.

This idea of first voice, reporting advocacy, control of our organizations, our local cultural and eco development. This idea that we are the ones we've been waiting for, to steal a title. We're the ones who need to be in control in our future in this post-coal transition that we find so that there can be a just ecocultural transition to whatever our
next sustaining industry, source of income, revenue, however you want to frame it. Informational Technology’s very much at the heart of our work. It all begins with the voice that Appalshop has always seeking to lift up. On every platform, to the local, to the regional, to the national, to the international, as technology increases, we're collapsing those boundaries. And Subsidiary 2, our community radio station that broadcasts out of the building, has a very huge listen area, I've forgotten the terms, but now with streaming, that audience reach is as far as we are able to spread it. Those boundaries are collapsing back.

Charlie: I love what y'all do with Hip Hop Hour (Calls From Home).

Subject 1: I love that, too and the calls from home. It is gorgeous how that grew up organically in the community’s in response to our for-profit prison system. Which is, again, one of our connections to urban communities is you have these prisoners bused in from regions all throughout the east separated from their families, disappeared from the community and this horrible proliferating for-profit and government prisons system that we have here in Appalachia. So, keeping those people connected to communities through our projects like Subsidiary 2’s Call's From Home. That sparked a collaboration with Subsidiary 1. It became a play called "Thousand Kites". A Kite being a communicate between prisoners and their families that was based on stories from storycircles we conducted between inmates, inmates' families, prison guards and prison guards' families so that a multiplicity of views were represented. We tied that into the work that Calls
From Home is doing in the community. So, it's using our different media creations, performance and presentation areas in Organization to lift up that Appalachia voice and we count these prisoners, these prisons as members of our community whose voices need to be lifted up and heard.

Charlie: You mentioned funding models and are seeking funding. How do you avoid negatively perpetuating stereotypes of us here in Appalachia when you're going outside the border?

Subject 1: Yes, as we have to get our funding. The people who have been doing this for years, among whom I am not one, I'm just starting, I'm a writer, so I contribute to these proposals and narratives but I'm not the person in the room with the funders. But I'm starting to be part of that conversation. Here are my ideas that are an important part of our funding strategy. You want to put out our best and most positive vision of your organization and the culture that it's part of forward to funders who are from New York City and are grounded in that aesthetic and that ethos. You want to put forth the best possible version of your organization. You have to remain true to your own culture and remember who you are representing when you go to speak to those funders and bring an authentic vision of your own culture into that room. I think it's a mistake to assimilate too much to the non-profit industrial concept, that urges corporatization, you know, polish, political correctness to a point where language is watered down past any kind of vitality or impact. Just the stripping down and the numbing down of language in stories
and identities in that corporate funding environment that you find especially in private philanthropy is to be avoided. We can't live in that world and still maintain our own identity. That's something I think about all the time. "Who are you? Who are my colleagues when they're in that room with those funders?" From what I've learned of them from this past year, I'd say they are probably exactly the people that I know when I go to work. I think the quality of the work that is done here is such that we can go in there and speak truly, directly and to the point about the problems that we experience here in the region without having to put a false glass on it. Avoiding that false gloss is a big part of maintaining that Appalachian identity. We're stubborn people, we've refused to assimilate in some pretty fundamental ways for a really, really long time. That doesn't mean we are oblivious to what's going on in the world outside, including funders. But people here have made a choice to value their own ways of doing things, their own ways of telling stories, their own voices and that translates into the funding conversation.

The thing is, those funders, they're people, too. The program officers, despite the slick appearance they put on and the appearance of neutrality, they aren't coming into the room neutral. They are coming into the room with preconceptions into our region and who we are. So constantly complicating that idea of who we are is the huge thing. It's not just with funders, I would say it is on the national presenting level, too. When we do things present at conferences, we're looking for ways to complicate the conversation on who Appalachian people are and who Appalachian Organizations are, what we advocate
for. So when it comes to the conversation about racism that is at the forefront of everyone's mind right now, we're constantly seeking to complicate that. My own personal feeling is that white supremacy is so pervasive and so omnipresent in every part of what we do and experience in America, that we need to reexamine this question of what is a racist and what do they look like. There's this idea that a racist is a white, rural person who's ignorant and bad, they're just bad and an anti-racist is a good, progressive, educated, well-spoke, reasonable upward to middle-class, really mobile person. My personal feeling and one I am not shy with in these funding conversations is that good people everywhere are horrible racist and still do good things for their communities and if we stop this kind of qualitative conversation this unprovable about "who is racist" and "who isn't racist" and start saying "what are we doing that's racist and how can we change it?" and examining racism as a spectrum of behaviors that are not terminal or fixed but are changeable and can be addressed, then we can bridge a lot of these boundaries, including in our funding argument, and stop looking at racism as terminal state that people are or aren't based on their region or their color and start looking at racism as changeable behavior patterns. That's how I see us representing ourselves as Appalachian people in the future, that's what I'd like to see.

Ya know, Appalachian people like me, who don't have an accent, to speak of, or maybe only have one when we get passionate about something, when we're in a certain mood. In conversations with people who have very deep accents and have been told they
need to lose that accent to come across well to funders or in teaching, which I know is a pervasive thing.

**Charlie:** It is very hard to stay in my accent when I'm in Columbus.

**Subject 1:** In Academia especially, its always, there's so much baggage people carry with that Appalachian dialect. There was a good article that came out about abandoning the Appalachian dialect in a doctoral program, someone published recently. This is my identity but it reads as stupid to people, what do I do about that? The answer, keep it.

**Charlie:** You talked about staying authentic and true to what Appalachia is, not sugar coating it's issues but also working to complicate the conversation.

**Subject 1:** Right, and not apologizing or being on the defensive. It helps to have lived a bunch of different places.

**Charlie:** Yes, this is something I struggle with in my writing. How do I talk about the systemic historical issues and what are the challenges today without perpetuating stereotypes and someone coming across reading my thesis and having their stereotypes confirmed about Appalachia but instead seeing my writing as advocacy for and seeing my writing as enlightening to someone who's not from here but also the people who are from here? There's a lack of awareness, especially in Greenup County, perhaps because it is a wealthier county in Appalachia. I think a lot of folks didn't grow knowing this about myself and some of us don't even know we live in Appalachia, we're not taught it in
school and I continue to see, at the ballot box, perpetuating our own demise. That's something I'm struggling with.

**Subject 1:** Yeah, I think we all are right now and especially for anyone who's in the any kind of advocacy position. I'm finding myself making two opposite, parallel arguments depending on the group I am with. Here, I say, "we need to talk about these long-standing issues that maybe historically pushed aside too quickly or we refuse to acknowledge." Just recognizing there is not a uniformity of opinion here about anything that is going on right now or has been going on. I know that all my coworkers and people here do not agree with all my opinions about the election. I think I am more on the progressive end of spectrum. I am an outsider here in many ways with no, not that it's anyone's fault, but I don't come from here. And I don't have the right to speak as though my opinion as an Appalachian person represents the experiences of people who live here. So there's that level of humility, we don't have an Appalachian opinion moving forward. But this reflexive pushing away of these long-standing issues, the very good-natured and loyal urge to defend our friends and neighbors from the accusations of racism or a really deeper or more complex understanding of what it means to go into that voting booth and cast a ballot for Trump. What is the impact on other marginalized communities that people maybe either don't know or don't want to consider so deeply? What kind of deal did voters make, did Appalachian people make? Even allowing that not everyone in Appalachia voted for Trump, which is incredibly true and never talked
about. Or that people did it for very different reasons. There is a baseline bargain made for every person that did vote for Trump and I think the country recognizes that but that we don't always acknowledge here. The bargain that was made, whatever the intention, there's a real impact on people outside this region that we talk to, that we say, "Ok, we'll take that deal." That's an argument that I'm advancing here. How do we move forward from that? It's not a very popular opinion here.

And then on the other side, it's like, we need to, ya know, my progressive, urban cohort that I have, especially in the arts and culture world, who are often the least humane, don't want to talk about classism at all, don't see it as a problem, don't indict themselves at all in the election results, they don't take any responsibility for what happened, and they are bold as brass about advancing the neo-liberal diversity model and just reflexively dehumanizing anyone in the Appalachian region about which they know nothing about. They see what they see in the mainstream media and dismiss us wholesale. So how do you get around that without qualitatively disagreeing with their points about what this is doing to our immigration policy. You can be completely critical and terrified of what's happening in the federal govt right now, and the state level and still recognize that people here have a totally legitimate battery of complaints that need to be advanced. To be from here, but not entirely of here, to have lived in other places and know other people is to constantly be making that dual argument and this evident in our funding, it's evident in the scholarship we are producing now, when we're walking about Appalachia. The being
consumed, being vetted by people who don't necessarily know what we’re talking. It's really, it's a very dynamic time to be an Appalachian person from Appalachia.

**Charlie:** We're probably more in the media than we've been since the 60s.

**Subject 1:** Yes, indeed! And it ain't good but there is also some good first-voice writing coming out of it and reportage and there are some sympathetic ears out there. But they're aren't the ones who need to be advancing, it's us. I wrote a piece recently called *Why's it Take some Time to Get Some Time?* about there's been this spate of interest from papers like the *New York Times* about what's going on in Appalachia. And we're glad for the national coverage but that needs to be our voice in the *New York Times* and increasingly, it is. Other media sources are recognizing there's a trustworthiness and an authenticity to first-voice reportage and storytelling that's going to continue to take primacy as questions of the trustworthiness of our media sources and our news sources get more and more dire and situation more scary. I can see radio stations, local regional national radio stations like *Subsidiary 2* becoming more and more viable and appreciated, it we don't shut them down. We see that at work everywhere in West Virginia. Joe Manchin, WV Governor, put forth a bill to completely defund West Virginia Public Broadcasting, maybe the only reputable major news source in the state, reporting as accurately and as passionately as possible on what that state government is doing. Appalachians, we're in a crisis mode now and we've got this two-party system where the currently winning side thinks they own us and stopped communicating with us in a valuable way decades ago and the other
party has written us off at a loss.

Charlie: Yep, I've had those conversations with some of my progressive friends and none of them have gone well.

Subject 1: There's a big variety of political opinions about that here, too. Ask people here what they think about the two-party system and, like good Appalachians, they'll give you an earful, and rightly so.

Charlie: I'm realizing some of these questions are a bit more into what Organization does...

Subject 1: for some of those operational questions I can speak best of Subsidiary 1, but others will be able to give you that Organization perspective.

Charlie: Let's start at what's the anchor of an Non-Profit Organization. How you do envision the mission, vision, values for Organization? What do they mean to you as an individual and when you are representing Organization and representing and Whitesburg and Norton?

Subject 1: When we say “representing the community we serve,” the way I do that in my position is lifting up the work of those of us working on the front lines. I learned pretty early on that that was going to be my role. Since I'm not out in the community all the time, which is a very important organizational value that we have here. This is not a community that we serve, we are the community, we live among these people, they are
out neighbors. There is very little division and that gives the work of Organization a trustworthiness. So, recognizing that is really important. I thought that I would be out there when I came here then I realized that wasn't going to be my job, I had to reassess. I had to say, "Ok, I can still help, this is my role organizationally. We all can't be the one who are out there." Now when I do a theater workshop as a teacher, I am working with the young people here in Whitesburg and in the surrounding counties. For the most part, I'm in the office.

It's been a way to return to my identity as an Appalachian person. Growing up in West Virginia, being a 6th generation Appalachian family. My Dad's family, the Brooks, our people come from Upshore County, West Virginia, we have a homestead there that has long since burned to the ground, we still have property in French Creek. I was gone for almost my entire adult life, I left, became a part of the Rural Diaspora. Learning something about the Central Appalachian culture, which is very different from the Appalachian culture I grew up in, learning about our recent history, learning about Appalachia as it's portrayed and advocated for in high education now with the proliferation of these great Appalachian studies programs and school likes East Tennessee University and Appalachian State University. To me, it's been a way to find an Appalachian framework that makes sense. For me, I had to be an Appalachian person in communities who didn't understand Appalachia to learn something about that. Coming down here and doing this work is a way for me to reconcile my identity through this
work. I never found a comfortable way to do it before. On an arts level, it's a way for me as a theatre maker to contribute to something larger than myself, it's a positive cultural force that I didn't feel I was doing as a commercial theater worker. I didn't feel that I was serving something I strongly believed in. As much as I loved the work aesthetically, loved my colleagues and all the students, the people who taught me, and a lot of commercial plays, it wasn't a world where I felt I was contributing in a way that was meaningful to me. Working in community-based and grassroots arts is a way to do that. The theater making part that we do at Subsidiary 1 is just one of the many cogs in the bigger wheel that is Organization. That's what it means personally.

The other parts of our mission, I touched on. First voice, lifting up the first voice of the Appalachian person. All the media we create, the way that we present nationally when we perform, lifting the voices of dances and songs that are created here regionally, that's huge part of what we do and what I advocate for. The agency, the voice and ownership, the belonging are part of the big national argument that we trying to make when we present and when we make funding narratives, too. It's through the work, it's not just through having the arguments on Facebook, which I do and so do many others. So much of what we do we say "just let it come through the work." It's in the films, it's in the presentations that we do regionally and nationally, it’s in the story circles that we do, it's in the partner meetings we have out in the community with local business people and government and teachers.
Charlie: Would you be able to give me some more recent examples of the mission playing out here in Whitesburg or in Norton, Virginia?

Subject 1: In regards to Norton, we don't do much work there, it's just where our office is. The majority of our work is done in Whitesburg. Subsidiary 1 collaborated with the Regional Media Institute, which is the youth film making training program here in the Organization building and across the street at the Boone Building. We do youth training workshops because one of Subsidiary 1's current programmatic struggles is to rebuild our performance ensemble. We don't have a core performance ensemble at the moment. Our original group of performers grew up, came of age, and the dispersed. When the National Endowment of the Arts was reshuffled in the late 90s and Organization and its projects lost a ton of funding and staffing, that was when our core performance group was essentially lost. A lot of what we do now is cultural exchanges with resident companies that do have performers but we do still teach and we're looking to rebuild our own ensemble with local youth. One of the projects we're working on and just completed was the Fall Youth Training Workshop where some of the students who have come up through RMI and knew Organization and knew our way of working, our method of questioning, who had never done theater came to do a fall theater lab which is Subsidiary 1's way of working the story to performers. You start with the story circle and if you are interested I can explain a little more of this specific methodology, the way we use the storycircle the way stories are generated are used to create a play. In this case, we
created a 30 minute short play called "What if There was a Fire?". It was a multi-generational, we had a doctoral student at Berea working with the local high school and college students. It emerged in these story circles that there were some common themes on everyone's mind. First of all, it happened right before the 2016 election so everyone was really, really concerned. We were reeling from the impact of the results afterwards. There were a series of wildfires afterwards that were literally on pine mountain. There were whole swaths of the community here that either had to evacuate or were facing evacuation and Whitesburg was just filled with smoke, so the air was unbelievable and we had to cancel and reschedule.

We talk about an in-your-face physical pressure for this play creation process we were doing. There was concerns with governance and leadership on the local level and the way it impacted things like gun ownership and our relationship to guns. We have young students who are queer, who are trans, who are surrounded by guns and families who use guns and raise up guns as a part of our cultural shorthand but walk around afraid of being the victim of gun violence at the same time. So how do you acknowledge your own heritage and the place is advocating for the second amendment and high level of gun ownership here and hunting culture and the fact that you are very likely to face some form of violence directed at you. They created a play that intertwined these questions, these threads that they had about all of these cultural pressures that were going on at the time through the story circles that we conducted. They created a 30-minute play that had
a story within a story about a young girl who appeals to a bunch of local people who hold power, like the mayor, who ends up being an incredibly corrupt and funny character, ya know, what are they going to do if the fire overtakes their town and how will she save her horses on her farm. The little story within a story was bookended by monologues that some of the students had generated about some of the questions about these issues, too. The whole community came out and like most of Subsidiary 1’s playmaking, it was iterative. They don't just leave, they watch the play and then that starts another story circle or group discussion about the themes they saw and the questions they had and how it impacted them which prompted more stories.

That's a way that we use the experiences of local people and their day-to-day experience of what it means to be Appalachian and we use it to make the art that we then lift up, like the doctoral student who is presenting this upcoming week at a conference on the University Kentucky’s campus about the experience there. It's about keeping everything that we do firmly rooted in the local and specific and lifting it up to the regional and it's about sharing on a wider level and lifting the regional voice up to the national. How do we continue rooted in the local and lift it upward and outward so that we're disseminating this knowledge making and development that we do here? We don't want it to just perpetually cycle through and through, living and dying here. Serving our community is at the heart of what we do and lifting up the voices of the people who live here. But it can't end there, just from a funding and advocacy perspective. We want to continue to
keep lifting it up.

**Charlie:** Yes, how do you produce culture locally and then disseminate regionally, state and nationally. And sure from that one of the challenges, just reading a little bit about *Subsidiary I*’s history, how do you ensure the authenticity of your product no matter where is goes?

**Subject 1:** *Subsidiary I*, back in the day, we were a beast, we were a touring company par excellence. We toured 43 states and several foreign countries, mostly in Europe. (Artistic Director) estimates, back in the day, he was on the road at least three out of every five days. That's part of the reason we were never based in this building, because roadside was always on the road. A lot of that work was inter-cultural and inter-community, and we did these residences and we almost always found a way to make things work. The hardest venues were always the elite ones where they just couldn’t get a hold on what we were doing. There’s a video of *Subsidiary I*, I think back in the early 90s performing at the Kentucky Governor’s Mansion and it is just so out of place. This grassroots community based theatre that relies on audience participation and call and response and you all these beautifully groomed old white people out in the audience and it’s so not what *Subsidiary I* is about. There’s never an authenticity problem whenever *Subsidiary I* presents because it’s all about us and no one else. It’s *Subsidiary I*, it’s the people who come from here who can speak with absolute authority about the Central Appalachian experience. Working with these ensembles from all different sectors and
fields and places in their community speaking with absolute authority about their experiences. That’s what gets produced, these first voice stories. So putting the first voices in the community in conversation with each other is how Subsidiary 1 has maintained its authenticity and not become some, ya know, polished, professional theater, which is always the danger when you get a certain amount of funding for touring. Our last show that we produced Betsy in 2015 performed Off Broadway. It was a collaboration of Theatre Company, a Puerto Rican theatre company in the Bronx. I just visited them in New York and met them for the first time. We’re about to mount a concert version of Betsy here in the next month and it’s the same thing for them, the exact same problem. They’re looking for ways to maintain their authentic Puerto Rican identity and you find those people in almost every community.

Charles: I had questions about process versus product, but we’ve definitely talked on that already. The end goal of this research is to provide literature towards developing a model for organizations like Organization to exist in other Appalachian communities, to exist in Latina/o communities, to exist in rural and inner city Black communities…

Subject 1: A reproducible model, yes. That’s a big part of our theory here.

Charles: Yes. I’ve recently become more aware of the prevalence of rural Black communities. I was not as aware as I’ve become. Actually, University of Kentucky Basketball has helped with that with Malik Monk from the backwoods of Arkansas.
**Subject 1**: And I just want to put in, when we talk about rural communities of color, they are often dealing with multiple layers of visibility. They are all dealing with the same shit that people of color in America have to deal with, and then on top of everything – they’re rural. So, they here all these conversations about how only poor white people voted for Trump, or only white people supported Trump, but a lot of the people of color I know here in Central Appalachia voted for Trump. I wouldn’t want to assume anything about their reasons. The people I’ve spoken to directly happen to be Pentecostal and, for them, abortion was the deal breaker. They couldn’t support a candidate who supported abortion. Now, that didn’t make Trump a hugely attractive candidate to them necessarily. We don’t know what they were ambivalent about, but it just complicating the conversation with facts like that. Don’t assume.

**Charles**: And in hearing that, I think about having to go back to Columbus and saying, “Y’all, it is just not that simple.”

But in developing this model, of course there is gathering data on good examples. But also, there’s – and if you don’t want to share anything about this…it doesn’t sound there has been…and you if you don’t want to share you don’t have to – but has there been an instance, a project, that, either the community has sparked to put forth or Organization put forth or one of your partners, floundered or backfired? If you have an example and wouldn’t mind sharing what that was like and what you learned from it.
Subject 1: Yeah, we’re talking about the failures, the times you have to reassess. I’m trying to think off the top of my head if you do know one of those stories. I can think of anecdotes others staff members have told me, but that’s all I know, I wasn’t there for the actual stories as they unfolded. I know they have those stories. But I don’t, off the top of my head, because I’m working just enough above the ground and I’ve only been here for about a year. I haven’t been privy to that just yet.

Now, I can talk about an instance at the Performing Our Future Institute this last summer here at Organization. The institute is out very much economics driven national program that we got grants for these last couple of years. We had to radically reassess in the middle of this institute the programming of the institute. We had a large representation of people of color at the institute that summer and we were driving a very hard economic conversation with dense economic language and methodologies we were passing down. It was very programmed and there had not been a lot of room left in the conversation to gauge people’s emotional states, the way they were responding on a visceral level or a spiritual level to being dropped in the middle of a predominantly white rural community like this. We had to stop – they stopped us, they disrupted us, and I mean that in a positive sense. They disrupted the proceedings with a request to stop and check in and a take a measure of the group conscience at the moment and talk about what was happening in the world outside with the pressure of the election cycle and the police violence and very many recent deaths – it was just particularly bad this last summer
before the election swallowed up every other concern in the front of the American consciousness. It was a terrible, terrible year in police brutality and it was very much in the minds of a lot of people there and we just had to stop what we were doing and change the programming for an as democratic a conversation as we could make it. Not everyone appreciated that. There were definitely some white people in the room who felt, I would say, threatened when the conversation took turn to be overtly about race. There were some long-time Whitesburg residents who work with us who didn’t know how to respond in a way that was both respectful of their own experiences with the people here and respectful of the guests in the room. We were very sensible – these people were our participants, coworkers and colleagues and there was definitely a tension in the room and not everybody was equally willing to participate in that conversation. I thought it was great, I thought it was fantastic that people drew a line in the sand and said, “look, no, we have to stop what we are doing.” And look, it turned out to be a huge part of the conversation about the whole election cycle. You got people in town saying, “Why are progressives like Bernie Sanders unwilling to talk about making restitution to the black community? Why can’t they make their platform more overtly about race, why can’t they confront it?” You have the leftist only wanting to talk about economics are leaving a huge part of the social conversation out and it’s not hard to understand why the Democratic Party crashed and burned. And that’s a tension we feel here and we’ve felt in our programming and we don’t all agree about to the extent to which we foreground the
racial conversation, even though there is so much support in Organization for Black Lives Matter, not everyone agrees with that movement in particular and to the way that we maintain our private and public activism at the same time as we run this advocacy shop – there is a question of who we reach out to. Not everyone in this community is pro-Organization, quite the contrary. A lot of people here call of apple heads – we’re the tree hugging hippies, a bunch of do nothings, the people who don’t have real jobs, who work 100 ft. off the ground and don’t care about people who are actually going through things. Other staff members can tell you these conversations are constantly in the mix of what we do.

**Charles**: Have you experienced those conversations yourself?

**Subject 1**: I’m too far removed. Working over the line in Virginia and not having been here that long, it’s not in my face. It’s in other staff members’ faces. (Creative Placemaking Project Manager) is very good at crossing those bridges. He’ll sit down with Trump people, absolutely. As a community organizer, he knows how to have those kinds of conversations. (Institutional Development Director), as well. But I know a lot of people here (at Organization) come out of training programs like the Regional Center in Tennessee, which is great southern justice organization – so it is often a hanging question where that intersection between activism and whole community advocacy intersects. We don’t always come on to a solution that pleases everyone.
Charles: I can certainly sympathize with understand that that would have happened in that talk. I felt that way when I was working with a large arts organization in Cincinnati, Ohio. Cincinnati had their own dealings with police brutality, it was all over Ohio. Now, we were premiering an opera about the lavender scare in Washington, DC during the 1950s and we had conservations about Orlando, which occurred during opening week. But you also mentioned, you were working at an organization whose patrons didn’t look like an entire cross-section of the community and I felt that same odd sense in Cincinnati this summer. More often than not, the people I walked by on the street, that we all walked by on the street downtown during the day, who lived in the most immediate areas surrounding the city, were not at our events. They were very much below their goals by the end of the season. They wanted to blame it on being in a new venue and difficulty parking, but I couldn’t help notice the discord between communities and the barriers the organization had created.

Subject 1: Whereas with Organization and Subsidiary 1, it’s something we have to – as a Dramaturgue, we’re always thinking about the three phases; pre-production, production and rehearsal and then audience engagement is a huge part what I was trained to do. It’s curatorial, you’re dealing with not just with the programming itself but the programming’s intersection with the community and how they perceive it, how they feel about, what they want, how it serves their needs. I am always interested in that.

Look what just happened in St. Louis with that art gallery – did you follow that story?
Charles: No.

Subject 1: I forget the name of the artist that they exhibited, but it is someone who is widely accused of appropriating the black cultural experience in America, repackaging it in a Pop way – basically co-opting the black experience as a white artist. They hosted this disastrous Salon at the Art Gallery and the community did show up and asked, “why the hell are you exhibiting this?” but they hadn’t really involved the community or gauged the community’s feelings about it at all. The curator who was leading the conversation shut it down, didn’t handle it well and it completely blew up and made the national news about how not to carry the conversation about arts and whether the programming in your institution is serving the people who actually inhabit the area. You know, it’s all these conversations about art washing and it’s something we are starting to think about here at Organization, especially as we get more and more – people in Organization historically, the majority have not been trained in the academy (higher education) and that balance is shifting. There are more and more young people coming in here now who come out of higher education with undergraduate and master’s degrees. As that balance shifts, how do you still responsibly interact with and represent people in the area where education is a huge problem? Where you can’t rely on your state governments, local governments to provide quality of education or to advocate for your students and do what’s right.

Charles: In the work of Subsidiary 1 and in Organization in general, a question I am having in regards to this model – are there certain artistic mediums that you find work
better for your process than others, as far as maintaining this authentic, culturally relevant produced work?

**Subject 1:** Well, there is no one. It depends on what is most suitable for the subject matter or the person who is making it. No one form of media here at *Organization* is inherently more interesting or useful than another, I think, certainly not on their own, as they would be in conversation with each other. We have found, despite our very, very disparate ways of working, of investigating the art and the way that it works within a community – we have found through working in the community, the producers, the archivers – I want to mention the archiving work we do here – and then performers, which is what *Subsidiary 1* does. As different as our ways of working and ways of encountering the work are, they all work and they support each other. I’ll include radio in that, too.

They serve different purposes and they all have their inherent pitfalls. When you are making a documentary film, you have a lot of artistic choices to make, narrative choices to make in the way that you edit the film, the way you choose to portray people.

**Charles:** What are some of the challenges you run into with the storycircles?

**Subject 1:** Over years and years of trial and error, I can tell you that the methodology has become so specific and we tend to do it the same way again and again in a way that tends to diffuse problems. The biggest problem, I would say, based on the several storycircles
I’ve participated in as a roadside person so far is that people from certain backgrounds and fields of training have a hard time of just following the simple instructions and keep it about a story. People in academia who are highly professionalized have a really hard time just telling a story. We tend to veer towards the opinions, the frameworks, the beliefs, the facts. We tend to get theoretical and abstract rather than just telling a story, which is the point of the storycircle. That is never a problem when we do a community storycircle here. People who don’t come from a highly professionalized background get it and they are just able to tell a story. But in academia, we go from here to here in no time whatsoever and everything becomes abstract, it’s really weird.

It’s designed, just because things always used to go haywire. There is no crosstalk. You don’t comment on someone else’s story or even ask a question until everyone is done and there is a time for an exchange afterwards if you want to say something. The most, I think that you could say the circle when it is acutally going on is, “Your story made me think of this.” When you hear the prompt, you’re not supposed to immediately sit there and think of your own story, it’s one of the hardest parts, trying not to be planning your own story while you are listening to others – just trying to focus on what they are saying and your responses to it and their story affects you so that you can begin to work on an empathetic level. I’ve seen this principle at work and I can say with 100% certainty it does work.

You get two people from radically different points of view, say a coal operator and an
environmentalist, and you put them in a storycircle and you ask them to tell a story about the time they were worried about a member of their family. If they are able to do that, then they are going to be able to connect on a level they wouldn’t otherwise. It’s not a universal problem solver, but it is a basis for seeing each other as human beings, which is what is missing in so many of our interactions now. It actually does make communication on a whole different plane possible.

**Charles:** One more question about medium and the different mediums y’all work with. How often is it either *Organization* or *Subsidiary 1* establishing medium and how often is the community or partner doing so?

**Subject 1:** Are you thinking on a local level or more the national level?

**Charles:** The local level.

**Subject 1:** Again, other staff members are probably going to able to give you more details, but if we’re not, again, It’s back to that reproducible model – if we’re not, and I don’t even like to use the word empowering because people have their own power, they’ve been doing this for a longtime. A lot of the people we work with are already community leaders so that takes us to Ella Baker’s theory of organizing which is, “find the people who are already leading within their communities and support their work, don’t come in with an outside agenda.” That is certainly where so many people have gone wrong in Appalachia. Don’t come in trying to impose an outside agenda on your own
assumptions and aesthetic conditions and try to force everyone to conform to them. I know that when we do community partnerships, it’s about honestly listening to, investigating and lifting up their way of solving their own problems and working with their communities – lifting that up however we can, in whatever capacity we are able to. If there is some service or facilitation that we can provide, then we’ll do that. A lot of the times, it’s about facilitating communications between partners. I know a lot of that is trying to make sure these people stay in touch with each other in ways that they might not otherwise, creating systems whereby they can do that. But our feeling, and this is like a guiding star – it’s hard, you know, when you are investigating different projects. But if you can’t pull us away and have it be maintained to a certain level, these projects that we are a part of, like the culture hub – if the culture hub is not self-sustaining, then what is the point? If we are what is keeping it going. We don’t want to make ourselves obsolete, but at the same time, isn’t about getting people in the region and in the city, all these people, to the point where they don’t depend on us to make these projects work? It’s that balance. It’s hard to strike a balance, I think.

**Charles:** It’s hard to be in partnership with the community if they are dependent upon you in unsustainable ways.

**Subject 1:** I think mutualism, true mutualism, in the biological sense is the answer. Mutually beneficial to both parties, keeping that reciprocity so that it’s not just one sided, understand that at every case, we are leaning as well and that sounds condescending, but
it’s really true. We are informed by people who are experts on their region when we work with Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, for instance, which is an outstanding Appalachian organization based around here, we’re learning something about community organizing as well and how it affects their communities. It has to be reciprocal…or it’s bullshit.

Charles: Has there ever been a moment where when you are trying to uplift processes already there in the communities where you sit there and go, “Well, this is counterintuitive to solving the problem that the community is trying to solve?”

Subject 1: Thinking, “Oh, you’re wrong and we could do it better?” I haven’t personally, I’d ask other staff members. But I could just speak as a resident where you, you know, about six times a day, you go to places that’ve not got much infrastructure to speak of, like a municipal office, and you see them filing their documents like it is 1984. “Do you people own a computer, why is it taking 45 minutes for you to write my water bill out?” I don’t understand what is happening here – I could do it better. But that’s the pitfall, that thing, you end up, if you are an outsider, thinking 25 times a day, “Oh, this could be done so much better, I could fix this.” Or “I know a better way coming from the outside.” Boy, you got to watch that. First of all, you’re not always right. There could be a real value to the way they choose to do things. There could be a reason to why half of the things haven’t changed in all this time. You have to bench some of those assumptions, some of those impulses. I constantly have to check it as a smartass outsider.
But, at the same time, you are here for a reason. You have possible solutions and new systems you could propose, but it’s about advancing them respectfully. It’s always kind of on the agenda, just trying things out, seeing whether they stick or not. That’s as much as I am qualified to say. A lot of us are steeped in the Northeastern culture. We know how the people here in Whitesburg perceive us and what the conversation is between those two cultures. We understand a lot of the reservations and we are similarly conflicted a lot of the times as people who have one foot in academia and constantly shifting back and forth. I didn’t apologize for being West Virginian when I was in graduate school, so why would I apologize for my education when I am here? That’s the way I look at it. I’m not sorry and I’m not sorry for the skillset my education gave me. It’s absolutely necessary to the work I do now, absolutely made me better at my job, for multiple reasons. Getting to know that culture. It’s a culture, too, in and of itself. It’s not just place-based, it’s not just neighborhood and the community and the colleges. When you are in academia, you are part of a larger system that transcends the campus. We need to be critical of that and I make no bones about it in saying it is absolutely an elite culture.
Charles: I’ll give you a quick review of this research. The core question is, “How can fundraising and community engagement be combined to establish more sustainable and impactful arts organizations in Appalachia?” My theory is there is an opportunity for this to happen, especially in communities where social capital and financial capital are not as prevalent as in wealthier communities where Arts organizations have a wider swath to pull from. That is what has brought me to this question and what’s brought me to Appalachia. It’s partly my roots – I’m originally from Greenup, Kentucky, really Raceland in Greenup County. Getting familiar with my heritage, something I wasn’t familiar with when I was living there, has brought me to this point.

The way this interview will pan out is we’ll do some introductory, lead-in questions – just so I can get to know you better – then step into more direct and complicated questions. So, tell me a little about yourself, your title and what responsibilities, tasks and outputs come along with that.

Subject 2: Yes, my name is Subject 2 and I work here at Appalshop as our Institutional Development Director and I grew up here in Whitesburg and also in Pikeville, KY. We lived there for six years, about 45 minutes east of here, and went there because the high school was better. I actually played soccer in Greenup, County. Both of my parents are filmmakers here at Organization. For instance, as a youngster, I would get off the school
bus here. I’ve been around this organization my entire life, don’t have any context of this town without Organization, whereas people who founded this organization had a much different understanding of what Whitesburg and Eastern Kentucky were before an organization like Organization came.

In my job duties, I should say that first, I started at Organization in 2010 after I graduated from college. I went to college up in Massachusetts at a school called Hampshire College and when I graduated, I came to work here for our youth media program called Regional Media Institute, or RMI, and was the program coordinator there for a few years and then ended up in this position which was created to help coordinate the fundraising efforts within the organization. There is different divisions at Organization – our theatre, Subsidiary 1, Subsidiary 2, Subsidiary 3, RMI, our Subsidiary 4 and a few others – and, so, all of those projects of Organization are doing a good amount of fundraising themselves and my job was to A) coordinate the fundraising efforts so there wouldn’t be as much competing for one source but also to B) really begin a better institutional approach to what the work entirely was within the organization so that we could submit larger, more competitive applications for the whole of Organization, not just a part of it (i.e. radio station or the theatre program). That’s what I was tasked to do.

There was a lot of talk at the beginning of my job that, you know, we have three main sources of outside funding at Organization, those being individual donors, private
foundations and government agencies and public money, whether it be state or federal. All three of them, these outside sources, are very different audiences, very different things they care about. There was no way that I, individually, or my role, individually, could fundraise in all three of those venues well. We were very clear from the beginning of my job, which started in about 2013, that we should focus in on which areas I was most equipped to tackle and I felt like Organization would be most competitive in. In my job over the last three and a half years or so, I have focused on private foundations and public money, I do very little with individual, but we are in the process of hiring an individual donor person and we can talk about that more. But, again, just to say, my job is coordinating fundraising between staff and at Organization and conceptualizing and leading the staff through processes that we can formulate institution-wide proposals to ask for a larger amount of money, both visioning and strategic planning, getting people in rooms to talk about long-term hopes and outcomes we are hoping for as well as often creating institutional partnerships we need with other non-profits or with our local government, or higher education, you name it, in order to carry out whatever it is we are trying to do. I’ve got both an internally focused job in terms of facilitation, in terms of writing grants and reports, but then I have a pretty external job representing the organization to other organizations and institutions.

Charles: You have a lot on your plate. There are so many ways I could take this from here. What got you involved with fundraising?

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Subject 2: To tell you the truth, the main way I got involved with fundraising is when I was in college, I was really homesick and had been involved in some youth leadership work here at Organization through RMI as well as interning at an organization in Tennessee called the Regional Center and interning at an organization in West Virginia called the Regional Educational Cooperation and had worked with young people and realized myself, and others realized, how much young people across the Central Appalachian region didn’t know each other and weren’t communicating with each other. So, we ended up creating this regional youth network called the STAY project. That regional network still exists today and has a coordinator. In the beginning, when we started it, we had to figure out money to get people together, so we started fundraising. It was a thing that myself and my friends, some of my partners in crime, people that I loved the way they were working, I loved what they wanted to see happen in Central Appalachia, we were getting together, we were brainstorming, and we needed money to put people up in houses and feed them and get together for the weekend. It was thinking about how do we get $3000, $5000 to do an event and then grew into, “how do we get the amount of money we need to actually have a staff coordinator for this job?” because we can’t just volunteer all of our time. Around that time, I started working at Organization and I don’t think there is a single person here that isn’t somewhat involved in fundraising because we are hustling for our organizational budget every year. The more, you know, again, I was kind of coordinating programs for Subsidiary 3 and part of coordinating a
program is figuring out how it is going to happen money-wise. I then got involved in fundraising stuff more and then realized I was pretty good at it and that it’s a really big need and I was highly encouraged here (at Organization) to apply for the position. It was never my dream to fundraise and I don’t know, if you had told me growing up that I would work here, I would’ve rolled my eyes at you. I never wanted to work at Organization mostly because I thought what everyone did here was make media or make art and that’s not what I wanted to do. When I realized there was a way to help this place, both Eastern Kentucky and this place Organization that literally raised me, I continued to move forward. I think, specifically what happened when I was working here and began my roll as the Institutional Development Director, is there was a real big push around transitioning the organization away from the founding generation to a new generation of leaders and felt like I had a lot of history here, I knew a lot about the organization that I could play a role in helping make that transition happen. Fundraising is a part of how you make that happen.

Charles: The position that you mentioned, would you mind telling me a little bit more about that?

Subject 2: Yeah! We are trying to actually grow our development office, which is what we are going to call it when we have more than just me, not that I am the only person raising money at Organization, everyone is involved. But to have a fuller development office that can be a little more robust. We’re actually planning to hire two positions: One
is a Community Development Manager and then one is the Director of Advancement. We created both because we wanted to focus more on our individual donor base and have not done a great job of working with our individual donors over the last decade but also because we are approaching our 50th anniversary as an organization. We went back and forth a lot about what that person’s title would be. Most non-profits don’t have Directors of Advancements, it’s really a higher education term, yet we decided to title the position that way because A) we wanted to be clear that this was not someone, like a development associate, just assisting me, it was not an individual donor specialist, it was someone really understanding that part of advancing the organization, was getting our current individual donor base more engaged and more holistically having donors engaged in both the mission of the work and financially contributing.

We are in the interview process of that right now and hope to have someone hired in the next month for that position. Then there is our 50th anniversary and the main year we are celebrating that in is 2020. So, here we are, about three years out from there, a little less, and that person’s main focus will again be current donor base, trying to secure new donors and encouraging the facilitating and coordinating of the rest of Organization staff fundraising around private foundations and public agencies. This position will be helping facilitate and coordinating the whole organization to work with individuals. For instance, our Executive Director will be highly involved with working with individual donors and whoever we hire for this position will be doing a lot of prep with him, a lot of work with
him to make sure he has all the materials he needs to be prepared for a meeting as well as coming up with actual physical materials that donors want to see, potentially a video, potentially fundraising parties. All the planning for those kinds of events and, again, we don’t believe all that happens with just one person, we believe the best way to fundraise at Organization is for people to know as many staff members here as possible and to match people with who they are most interested in, the work they are most interested in. Again, the Director of Advancement will be coordinating all of that. They won’t be the main lead for the anniversary, but clearly playing a really big role when it comes to the individual donor part.

Charles: Awesome! The other thing you mentioned in answering the first question was partnerships. I’ve read from my literature on the importance of partnerships, not just having them but even how they are formed. When in the process of partnerships, what is Appalshop’s strategy with those?

Subject 2: It really often matters what particular types of partnerships we’re looking for, right? But, I think, over the years we’ve had a really robust array of partnerships and I think that one of the things that is very beneficial and often a thorn in our side is the legacy of the organization. We’re in our fifth decade as an organization, we’re not going anywhere, no one is unclear about whether or not we’re going to follow through on the work that we say we’re going to do. We have over a $1.5 million budget; we have had over a $1 million budget for over a decade. For a non-profit in this area, in the coalfields,
especially an arts non-profit, we’re at a very large scale and I don’t think there’s anyone who doubts our ability to pull off whatever it is we say we’re going to pull off or that they’re going to be able to reach us or that we’re not going to manage the money well. That is a great benefit to whatever partnership we start out with, just the fact that we are taken seriously. Clearly, I don’t think that it is true for the first 15 or 20 years of an organization. As I was mentioning with the STAE project that started from nothing and did not have a big legacy, the ability to secure funds or to find people who want to partner with you is a lot more difficult when you are brand new and you don’t have a long track record.

However, *Organization* also has a very clear style of working and our staff has a particular organizational culture, a pretty particular politic for the region. We’re very liberal, etc…we’re known for that. It’s very clear the way we have centered the first voice narrative in our art and media creation that is rare for our region and that not everyone is excited to hear people’s actual stories. There has also been a lot of difficulty in partnerships here when folks don’t necessarily agree with the work we are putting out. For instance, in particular, over my three and half years in my position, the hardest partnerships have been with state and local government. In general, they dislike us and don’t trust us. There are a lot of people who have been in those government positions for a long time, even at the federal level, people who are representatives and senators to our
state that have been in those offices for the majority of the time *Organization* has existed and have been very publicly outspoken about their dislike of us and that if we are involved in something, they aren’t going to report it. There are some funds in our state government that a lot of npo’s and a lot of similar art non-profits in Eastern Kentucky have been able to access that we probably haven’t gotten money from in 20 years. I think we have to always be aware of who we are and who we are talking to and never act like somebody we’re not and yet, I think, what has changed in our partnerships here in the last five years has been the fact that the coalfields are really having to partner in different ways than they used to because the coal industry is not a dominate force anymore. Clearly still exists, there’s no doubt we are still mining coal, we still have, you know, 3800 miners in East Kentucky and yet, in the last eight years, we’ve lost over 8000 miners. It’s a major economic shift for the region we work in, it’s huge economically, historically and socially what’s happening here right now. It opens doors to us in terms of people’s willingness to look in new directions, people’s willingness to try anything – people are a little desparate to, you know, “What can you do? Can you bring us $5000? If you can bring us $5000 then, yes, we’ll partner.” Whereas, before people were a little bit more guarded about who they wanted to be associated with, now it’s come full circle with the need to embrace broader holistic communities than just the individual ones.

*Charles:* What were, if you don’t mind being a bit candid, what were some of the reasons
given by those who were oppositional in the state and local government?

**Subject 2:** That we’re against the coal industry. That we’re a bunch of hippies not from around here that are trying to radicalize people, we’re trying to displace workers, that we’re trying to…I don’t know, it’s, um, that we don’t respect people’s work, we don’t respect their livelihoods. We have had a lot of films over the years that, film and radio pieces and theater pieces and youth media productions, were critical of the coal industry and what was going on. We have a lot of pieces about the environmental effects, we have a lot of pieces about the organizing that is happening, the social reality of what was going on, the economic reality. And we have a lot of pieces that talk about health impacts and the dangers that were happening. And yet we also have films about prisons and we have films about chicken factories that were happening in East Tennessee and chemical companies in West Virginia. I don’t think our work has been siloed only on the coal industry. *Organization* actually has a wide array of films. For instance, there is a film we made called fast food women looking at what it is like to be a minimum wage fast food worker who is often a single mother and how do you make ends meet. We have not zeroed in on one industry, and yet the reality is that for this region over the past 50 plus years, the coal industry has been a major economic force. I mean, really, for over 100 years and with a lot of hard political divides in that particular industry. We are also working a lot of, I think, hard rubs right now that have to do with prison growth in this region. That has been something we’ve also been pretty outspoken about, not as an
organization, but in telling the realities of what having prisons does. There is a federal prison coming to this county and so, there’s also been some pretty hard rubs locally because of the work we continue to do here.

I think everybody in this area is trying to figure out how to make ends meet and trying to, specifically at this time, trying to figure out how to provide jobs to people and trying to figure out what our assets are, what we can build from and what’s worth fighting for, what’s worth resisting on, what’s worth staking claim in. It’s a difficult time and I don’t think Organization feels like we have the answer. We don’t know the answer and yet, I think we try out hardest to make sure as many voices are a part of that conversation as possible and that people’s realities of what they’ve experienced here over the last how many years they’ve been alive are brought to the table when making decisions about the economy or health or social impact. That’s what we were interested in and one of my main things I like to think of a lot with Organization work is that after you see a play, or after you see a film or after you listen to a radio piece, you should be left with more questions then you came in with. That’s our goal. Our goal is not to tell people through our pieces how to think, it’s to ask more questions. Asking questions isn’t necessarily a cultural piece that is promoted here.

Charles: I’ve experienced that. What, and thank you for being candid there, has the
reorganization of the board at the State Arts Council had any kind of impact on y’all?

**Subject 2:** We haven’t had any impact because we just recently submitted our new proposal for the State Arts Partnership Grant which is given annually and we will know more in June, how much it affects and yet, I should be clear that we did lose two different board members, one that was older and was getting ready to rotate off and a younger artist from the area that both left the council and yet we gained someone who wasn’t on the Arts Council at all from Whitesburg onto the Arts Council. We do still have some representation and I would be really shocked if the arts council makes major changes to the current Arts Partnership Grant, which is our main leg of support. The biggest thing that has affected us over the years has been the dramatic diminishment of their budget over the years. *Organization* used to get over $80,000 from the State Arts Council annually and now we get about $30,000. That has nothing to do with the State Arts Council and everything to do with the state governor’s and the budget office and feeling like the best way to save money in our problematic state budget crisis is by hacking at this tiny arts council.

**Charles:** With your fundraising, is the community ever involved in that?

**Subject 2:** Yeah, in different ways. We do have a pretty clear stance here at *Organization* that *Organization* is the organization submitting the grant or proposal. We’re the one’s responsible, our board here is responsible, our staff is responsible. We don’t want to get in, specifically around private foundations with public money, too open
a process considering the real ramifications Non-Profit Organization’s have to deal with in terms of reporting requirements. The main parts of our organizations: Subsidiary 2, Subsidiary 1, Subsidiary 3, Subsidiary 4, most of them have community advisory boards outside of our board of directors of the organization. They receive a lot of input from their community advisory board. Obviously, for instance, Subsidiary 2 has over 50 community DJs who are in and out of this building every week doing radio shows. They give a lot of input from their DJs about the direction of the station and what needs to be happening. Subsidiary 3 also gets a lot of input from the young people and alumni about what needs to be going on. In general, I think, we are right here, we’re not going anywhere and we get plenty of people in and out of this building. I get my groceries at the same grocery store as a lot of people. We get our gas at the same gas station as a lot of people. One of the positive things about being in small community is, for instance, even the criticism I am talking about – people can find ya and they can tell ya, there’s no issue to that, there’s nowhere we can go hide. Obviously, sometimes we staff people not from here that are here for a short period of time and maybe they don’t get as much interaction with everyone. But most of us who’ve been here a long time, who’ve grown up in the region get a lot of community input basically everywhere we go. We also have designed particular projects to have a large amount of community input. For instance, our archive right now is working on a grant proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities and it’s about creating humanities communities in places that maybe don’t
have as much humanities programming and we’re going to be partnering with five
different local Non-Profit Organizations to more fully examine the kind of humanity, the
history that is in local Appalachian food ways. For instance, all of those Non-Profit
Organizations partners are way more involved in food ways work than we are at
Organization right, that’s not our focus. And yet, documenting what’s going on around
food ways is a part of our work. Those five local Non-Profit Organizations are in three
different counties, they each have been involved in the proposal process, they know what
it’s about, they’ve given input for it, each of them are actually having to fundraise a little
bit for the match of grant and they also will receive a little funds from the grant. There’s
a lot of grant proposals that do like that with the public foundations where we have some
really hard community partners. I think that the main way we do community engagement
is through other Non-Profit Organizations and other institutions. At Organization, we
really believe that to build power in places and to lead work, you have to have organized
groups that represent broader people and that folks can give input to. We’re not
necessarily coming up with the 50 person community group, we’re partnering with a
community center that already has a base of 200 people. And, of course, at Organization,
we have a base of hundreds of people. I think that’s kind of how we see fundraising
partnerships and less on an individual community engagement level. But again, once the
fundraising happens and there’s public programming, lots of individual engagement,
right?
Then again, I can think as an individual donor growth, there’s going to be a lot more potential for a lot more individual community engagement as aspect. That has not been a focus as of late and I’m really interested, personally, to see how that moves. We talked about, for instance, in the little bit of individual donor work I did, we had one donor suggest to us that we just do more to create jobs for the young people who were training in our media program and so, literally, a year and a half ago, due to this opportunity that came about, we helped incubate and form a for-profit tech company. That business is now off the ground and going for 18 months. We wouldn’t have probably done that as much as we did if that individual had not said, “from my perspective, y’all are training all these people but where are they supposed to go work?” Clearly, we knew that and yet we didn’t necessarily feel like it was Organization’s job to create those jobs. But to here from an individual that they did see that as our role encourages us to take some opportunities and move forward in that. We are now a part-owner in a for-profit company. That would have never happened. I think there’s a lot more excitement, in my opinion, of what can happen as more individual donors, in their unique perspective as people who don’t work here, as people who are in the community, as people who have known us for a long time are really dedicated to what we’re doing and want to see Organization succeed. I think that they are going to offer a whole new level of what’s topical and what we can begin fundraising around once they are more fully engaged.
Charles: Cool. Has there been a moment where community input, maybe, backfired?

Subject 2: I can’t think of a moment where community input has backfired. I think, again, a couple things: The kind of hard rubs we can have with people -there have been times where *Organization* our building… the first voice is a really public space, it was designed that way. For instance, there was a time we opened our building up to community meetings up that we were not doing but people wanted to use out theater. We were happy to do that. That community did not go well and people had felt like they hadn’t been a part of the planning leading up to the meeting and their thoughts hadn’t been…part of the plans that were being presented at the meeting. By the end of the meeting, there were hurt feelings and then there were a lot of opinions that *Organization* had been the problem even though it actually wasn’t our meeting and we had nothing to do with what was happening. Yet it was in our space and again, people already have a lot of opinions about us. Again, that’s not something I would say is our fault and yet I do think I have been clear over my time here about some of the questions we need to ask and some of the things we need to be clear on when we aren’t leading a meeting and it is in our space. I also think that how clear we are about how *Organization* incorporated, *Organization* 501c3 is applying for a grant, *Organization* is responsible for the reporting, *Organization* is involved in the financial commitment, ect…that I also can’t think of a time that we have totally screwed up a community partnership and yet I think there’s a reason we’re really clear about those things and I think it’s probably because in the past,
that wasn’t as clear with some people and there were some mishaps way in the early
days. But in my time here, I don’t know of any problems we’ve had with partners. I do
think Organization as well as a box of organizations here in Eastern Kentucky have really
high hopes for what we can pull off with money and it is very clear to me often by the
end of a project period or by the end of grant period that we all may be a little
disappointed by what actually had happened. Not we didn’t do the grant well or not that
we didn’t pull off what we said we would but I think all of us at the beginning of
anything we do in our lives, I think most of us have a lot bigger vision, bigger than our
stomachs, per se. Managing expectations is hard and that’s both internally and
externally, right? When people see that we got a $450,000 grant, they’re like, “Oh my
God, Organization got almost half a million dollars…why aren’t you doing duh, duh,
duh, duh, duh?” That’s a lot of money for people around here, right? And yet, for us, it’s
not even half of our organizational budget.

Charles: Right, y’all could spend that in a month.

Subject 2: Right, little bit more than a month, but still, I think we have a lot of
responsibility as an organization with the fact we are in a community like we are, like
when you’re talking about the access to money people have, etc…Organization has a
unique fundraising strategy that has mostly relied on funding sources outside of this
region and not local people. We’re not dependent on our local resources to fund
Organization ever. It’s not that it’s not a part of the mix but it’s not been part of our mix.
It has been mostly federal and large foundations like in New York City, in big cities that have funded Organization. We’re in a unique scenario where that’s what we’ve done and that’s the market we’ve played in and we’ve played in it well. The reality is that a lot of people around here don’t know how to play in those bigger markets, even though the coal industry actually does play in those markets locally. The economic reality with not doing that. We do have to be really clear with people locally and our partners and the people we work with and our family members about how we raise the money we do, how hard it is, who we are competing with. We’re not just competing with an arts organization in Perry County, that we’re actually competing with the Kennedy Center and that we’re in a different field. People need to understand that. And we have to be very clear about what does it take to run an organization of this size in a place like this for five decades and not be like, “Yeah, we’re doing great over here.” We have been lucky and, yes, again to have an organization of this size in a community like this for five decades is something we should all pat ourselves on the back on. There are plenty of Non-Profits Organizations who serve this region who have their organizational budgets met before their fiscal year even begins and we are nowhere close to that. We are hustling every year to meet our budgets and to pay our employees. We have to pay people every two weeks just like everyone else. We ain’t got a bunch of money just sitting somewhere. We’re not just hording it. We do have to be really clear with people, not just with our partners, but people internally and externally about what it takes to do this. It’s very familiar to when
people look at small businesses and they’re like, “man, you’re rolling in the dough with that…you’ve got 10 employees, blah, blah, blah…” and when it’s all said and done, they just making ends meet. We don’t have some pot of money just laying around and do whatever we want with it. Every cent we raise, for the most part, except for some individual donor money, is already earmarked for a specific project. Just because we get $450,000 doesn’t mean there’s some money to come get. That $450,000 is already dedicated to some specific leg of work over an 18 or 24-month period, that’s very clear.

**Charles:** So, would you say y’all are pretty candid with…

**Subject 2:** I feel like we are. I don’t know if everybody would agree with that. I feel like we’re really candid and yet how much do people really want to know about your ins and outs, benchmark outcomes, financial realities. Even though I’ve said some of that stuff to people, I think, most of that stuff goes right over people’s heads or in one ear and out the other. Everybody wants there to be somebody they can go peck on their door and get a couple thousand dollars when things aren’t working out. We get that just as much as everyone else does and we don’t have that unfortunately.

**Charles:** Do you seen potential for more local money coming into Appalshop through not just programs and foundations, but through fundraising?

**Subject 2:** Yeah, one think that has happened over the last decade is there’s a community foundation that got set up called the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky. It’s based in Perry County. They both have a large fund for a variety of counties and they help
counties in particular set up their own funds. Letcher County has not been able to pull it together to do that yet. They are working in eight different counties and they have this larger fund they can give out to a broader range of counties. That community foundation will grow and I do know they really like the arts and really see it as a positive thing. 15 years from now, we may be able to get a significant, you know, $50,000 from them. But right now, they’ve really just been trying to build their community foundation. They don’t have a huge endowment. It’s been a hard job to get the infrastructure set up, to get the Internal Revenue Service tax stuff set up and to get the individual donors to buy in. At the end of 2016 during our annual appeal period was the first time we got a couple of people who actually gave through the foundation. I’m thrilled that that infrastructure is in place. That was not something that was in place. And for the coal fields, for Central Appalachia, there are very few community foundations, which is something that exists nationally. It’s really sad that there is not the infrastructure set up to capture the local money that was getting taken. One of the main hopes with Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky has been to try to get some of that before it completely goes away.

I do think there’s potential to raise more local funds. Most of that potential, right now, lies in healthcare. Healthcare is our largest industry in the region. When I think of who the most wealthy individuals are who live around here now, it’s either people who made their money in the coal industry and are no longer doing that – most of those people have
decided to live elsewhere – there’s not tons of those people but there’s some of them.

Then I think of doctors or lawyers, but mostly doctors who have been able to have really
good paying jobs for this area. There’s some potential, but again, what Organization has
always had to decide is; we only have so much staff time, where’s the best place to place
your bet. We get the most money from private foundations then we do having someone
solely focused on East Kentucky. There’s just no way we’re going get the amount of
money we can get there than if we have one person totally focused on New York City
private foundations in fundraising, just daylight and dark. WE gotta diversify, diversify,
diversify and hit everything as much as we can, but clearly we’ve got so many people and
only so much time in the day. We do have to some analysis of where are we actually
going to get the bang for out buck. What’s unfortunate about that is that it takes you out
of some people around here who, even though they can’t give that much, care a lot about
the organization and the work it’s doing.

It’s not that we don’t ever raise money from local people. For instance, our radio station
has two fund drives every year, out spring and fall fund drives, and almost all of those
donations are under $100. We raised $60,000 total in a year from that. That’s a huge
amount of tiny donations and we’re really accountable to those listeners and really
appreciate their support. Just to be frank, the time we spend on the fund drive, if we
spend it somewhere else, we’d get way more money. We think it’s important that our
listeners are involved in a radio station.

**Charles:** It’s a double-edged sword, huh? Y’all understand the necessity to look outside the border for funding. How do y’all avoid the pitfall of undue influence?

**Subject 2:** I would say part of the culture and the legacy of *Organization* is also we don’t really do what other people tell us to do and we have a really long history of if a fundraising proposal guideline is X and it doesn’t really fit well what we are doing, we tell them why what they are doing doesn’t really make the most sense and why they should actually fundraise a different way instead. Sometimes that work and sometimes that doesn’t.

*Organization* has a reputation of sometimes being, I don’t want to say rogue, because we’re not making grant agreements and not meeting them – it’s just that when we see certain guidelines, we don’t necessarily see that as an etched in stone reality and we tend to do a lot of conversation with program officers about the particular unique circumstances that we find in this community and how there is a difference in how communities need to use their funding and try to make grant agreements that we can both agree with on. We are not against turning down grants and saying, “We’re not going to do that. I know you want us to do that but that’s not what we are going to do.” It doesn’t
happen all of the time because we try to negotiate. I don’t think *Organization* has ever agreed to something it doesn’t want to do. We have to have set parameters. I’m not writing grants for things people don’t think we should do. I think that’s something different from development offices in some bigger Non-Profit Organizations – that someone is writing the grants and there’s someone else being told what to do with what money came in – and that’s not how we work. We’re not formulating grant proposals that don’t have people on staff saying, “Yes, that’s something I’d be interested in.”

**Charles**: That was going to be my next question: If you go after certain kinds of grants and if there are certain kinds you don’t. So y’all aren’t afraid to haggle and walk away from a deal that doesn’t work for you. That brings me to my next question: How do the vision, values and mission of Appalshop play out for you and for your role.

**Subject 2**: I love *Organization*’s mission, I think it is really broad and yet, really specific. One of the jots of working in a place that uses arts and culture is that there’s really nothing we can’t work on. We can work on any issue, in any sector and in any way and contribute. Not everyone feels like we may be the best person to fund. For instance, there’s still a lot of arguments among economic development people about whether or not arts are a significant part of the work or not, yet we have gotten a lot of economic development money over the years. We currently have an economic development grant
from the federal Economic Development Association. The Office of Economic Opportunity started *Organization* for the war on poverty. We have been able to make the case over the years in a lot of different ways. Even though our mission is very clear about the role of culture, it’s also really about achieving justice for people, telling stories the mainstream media isn’t telling. That opens up everything to us, right? We do work around health, we do work around economic development, we do work around food and agriculture, do work around young people, around youth leadership, around civics – it’s just, everywhere. I’ve never felt like anything we’re doing is off mission or out of our values. We’ve often fought with foundations about the importance of storytelling in whatever thing they are trying to get done. Right now, we also have a proposal pending for a group that gives funds to work around reproductive rights and we’re partnering with an organization that does specifically work around reproductive rights. Our role within that would be to make advocacy happens. We have a unique role in that and I don’t think many reproductive rights funders are arts organizations. We’re doing a lot of work of trying to put our work into context to people and really get them to understand how powerful arts and culture can be for whatever goals they are trying to move.

In terms of the work, I think the hardest thing for me around our mission and how it plays out fundraising wise is that not everywhere we are asking for money from believes in our values. As I mentioned, not everybody actually wants first voice stories. A lot of people
want to hear a narrative they’ve already heard and been told to them and doesn’t debunk
that. People get really upset when something refutes their idea of what is right or wrong
or what people are experiencing or who, for instance, people in this region are. They
don’t always like to hear the real deal about who people are here, what they believe and
how they think. It is hard for them to wrap their head around the idea that this is different
than what they actually think it is like. With Arts and Cultures funders, we have a really
strong value and a part of our mission statement that’s about cultural diversity and the
importance of cultural diversity, that we should not be in the same culture. It’s an
American strength, an American value to have different cultures that have their own
defined ideas of who they are and are very robust. I don’t think all Arts and Culture
funders believe that. They want everyone to have a very particular culture and they want
to promote a very eur0-ethnocentric culture. They don’t even like, even though this
region – not that it’s all white but it’s very predominantly white – they don’t even like
that the white people here have a different culture than the white people in Boston. The
hardest run in my work is trying to be really clear about what our mission and values are
and sometimes getting in arguments with funders about their mission and values not
being the best vision for our country and for whatever outcome they are trying to get,
whether it’s around democracy or helping poor people. Their approach to it is not going
to get them where they want to go. But it doesn’t always work.
**Charles**: Probably not.

**Subject 2**: We have made many a funder an enemy as well.

**Charles**: Do you have a specific process or model that you follow when a partnership is getting established from a fundraising perspective?

**Subject 2**: Not when it’s getting established. A couple things – for the most part, not when it’s getting established. For the most part, if we have a fundraising proposal going in that has specific partners, we often need letters of support from them. Something on our letter head and something on their letter head that explains who they are, why they want to work on this project, etc…But we normally don’t formalize the partnership until whether we know the money is going to happen. There is no reason to get to a hard MOU phase if the money doesn’t happen. It’s once we here that we got that grant that we sit down and write a formal MOU.

**Charles**: What’s an MOU?

Subject 2: Memorandum of understanding. It is sometimes considered a legally binding document. Normally, it’s not legal, it’s a kind of, “My name is Subject 2 at Organization. Here are the things Organization is agreeing to provide to X partner. You are so and so at X partner group. Here are the things you are expected to provide to Organization.” We sign it and it’s a way for everyone to be very, very clear about what is expected on both sides. And if something doesn’t happen, it’s a document to say, “Hey, you said this was going to happen.” And ask either why didn’t it or what’s going on or is there some other
way to can assist? We do that on almost every clear partnership we have. Some partnership are a lot looser. There’s not a particular sum of money or hard ask and so we don’t have MOUs for those types of things. But if there is money leaving our doors going to another organization or something they expect from us for vice versa, we expect from them to get something done, we almost always have some formal written agreement.

Charles: What does Organization do in the instance that the MOU is not honored?

Subject 2: Luckily, we have not had many of those instances. What we have done in the past is that sometimes, for instance, an organization loses a staff person or someone gets really sick, they lose a big chunk of money they thought they were going to have, sometimes circumstances change and we have to go back to a funder let them know something has changed. We make a new plan, considering X, Y, and Z is not going to happen, on what’s going to happen instead. Sometimes, it means a new partner, or adding a new partner and removing one, or that Organization is going to take on more responsibility than was expected to do. Sometimes it means that we’re just not able to fulfill a certain part of the grant agreement. As long as they are okay with it, things are good. Sometimes they say, “Ok, we understand you can’t do that. Can you do this instead?” It’s very rare that those types of things happen but when they do, we try our hardest to figure it out with the group and within ourselves on what can get covered. But if things cannot happen at all, we have to go back to funder and be clear with them about
what has changed.
**Interview with Subject 3**

**Charles:** How I’d like to start is to begin with basic questions – who you are, what you do here…

**Subject 3:** Not a basic question

**Charles:** Well, we’ve gotten some of the small talk out of the way beforehand. So, let’s just get into it. What do you do here at *Organization*?

S3: Cool, feel free to shut me up if I talk to long. My job title, which I did not choose, it was given to me, is Creative Placemaking Project Manager. As I understand it, what happened was that folks that were there (at *Organization*) had applied for some money for “creative placemaking” for a couple of years. At first, they got the Our Town grant and then this new Arts Place grant for $450,000 in which they basically engage in some county wide projects to develop the capacity of citizens in Letcher County to build businesses and rebuild cultural institutions and change the consciousness of Letcher County from despair, hopelessness and dependency to possibility, hope and action. Or in the words we usually use; agency, voice and ownership – about which I’ll talk about more later. I think It was the (Managing Director) from *Subsidiary 1*, who you might have met when you were with (Program Manager), who said, “We need to hire someone for this. We don’t have the staff capacity to actually fill this out with the staff that we got.”
They put out a call. I was working in rural South New Jersey at the time and I got a text in August 2015 from someone at Imagine America who had worked with Subsidiary 1 for a long time that, “(Artistic Director) and I put your name in for this job at Subsidiary 1. Are you interested?” I wasn’t but I applied and when I applied, what I said was, and I’ll say it more bluntly here than I did in my letter, “I am not a grant manager, I’m an organizer. IF you hire me for this job, I will turn it into an organizing project.”

It’s a fundamental difference in approach to work. This is the third Non-Profit Organization that I have worked closely with – 2 as an employee and one as a consultant. I worked in smaller way for others but three in a big way. My experience before I came here, I kind of recognized that the approach of program administration and the approach of organizing, with the approach of program administration – and I’ll oversimplify it here – the job of program administration is; you get the grant, you hire the staff and you do the project and then you do the project again.

The organizing approach is different. You begin with a base. The point is you want to organize people, you want to organize money, organize ideas – you want to build a base. And I get more into what the bases look like in my doctoral research. Building off the work of a whole lot of other people, of course. You start with a certain amount and you figure out in what ways can you grow it. Goal is always to build the power so that you can act in more and more ways with more and more resources and more and more strength and more and more potential. In the organizing approach, the project is the end.
goal. The mural you paint or the square dance you start or the film you make, it’s all part of an iterative practice that takes you toward building and ever bigger power. It’s different approach. Program administration tends to be top down and staff driven.

Organizing is relational. You are building power with, not power over. You’re bringing people in from outside your organization. Notice, I did not say in the community, we’ll talk about that later. You’re bringing people outside of your organization not as clients or as consumers – they are co-participants, no greater than and no less than us. The goal of our work is to find out where our self-interests overlap and then work in the overlap and build as strong a base as you can.

The occasion of starting a bluegrass festival, for instance, is an occasion of “Ok, we want to do this” in so far as that will allow us to build more power and bring more people and organizations to it and that will help us to raise more money and allow us to consolidate the world views that we are constructing towards and bring more people into that world view. It’s a radically different approach in the literal since, from the root, it’s just a different approach. It’s a lot of the same work that you do, it’s just for different reasons and with a different understanding. I really, in most cases – and it’s never just black and white – I tend to shy away from the program admin approach and drift towards the organizing approach, which is not something people in Non-Profit Organizations know about and some actively reject to the extent that they know about it. Where I worked before Organization, people really rejected it and gave me no room to do it. I’d rather
have a one-to-one relationship with someone, to sit down and have lunch with the Director of the County Chamber of Commerce and the response was, “Why do you want lunch with her? We don’t have anything to offer her?” The only understanding of relationships is transactional in terms of a direct, you’re either going to be a client or a supplier. The idea that we are going to build base outside of our payroll and figure out how we can build together, how can our mission over here and your mission over here be uplifted by us working together in some way. That’s not even on the radar screen.

As it so happens, I went and had the lunch anyway and turned out she had this super fantastic deal for us to get a billboard for two years for virtually no money. We wouldn’t have known that. I’m pretty convinced that at least more often or not, the organizing approach is the one you want to take, certainly if you’re going after things like social justice or things like that. That’s what I’ve invested in, that’s how I was able to do it. 47 people applied to the job, they picked me. I started last year just before Thanksgiving. A year and two and a half months and they hired me on a two-year understanding. Whether or not I am here beyond November is an open question and we we’re talking about and trying to figure that out. We can go into that to the extent that it is useful.

I can go on about what it is I do every day or do you want to ask a follow up?

Charles: I still want to know the practical side of what you do every day but you mentioned “outside the organization” and then “in the community”, you made a distinction there. So, if we could explore both those things; your practical day-to-day and
the distinction you made.

**Subject 3:** I’ll do them in reverse order. I don’t know, maybe because I used to be an academic or what, but I have a bee in my bonnet about words and terminology sometimes, even though I know that sometimes fussing over words and terminology is not helpful. But I really have come to find the formulation “Community Engagement” or “Community Outreach” not helpful. The reason for it is because I think what it implies even when it’s not said or not understood, but what it implies is “We, the Non-Profit Organization, are here and you the community are over there. We are apart from you and our relationship is either as a supplicant, to humbly serve you from below, or as a God, to administer you from above.” It’s more often both of those things, a sort of dialectical ping pong, you’re never sure of which. I think they are both counterproductive. If you are below, then you are not taking your own self-interest seriously and if you are above, you’re not taking the other person’s or the other group’s self-interests seriously. In neither case can you meet face to face and actually live out democratic values, which is we are citizens and we want to build our world together. That’s the best one sentence of democracy I can offer. Clients and supplicants and all that, this is not about public works, this is not about democratic work, this is about social work. Is social work important? Sure, is it important that people get welfare checks? Absolutely, but I don’t want to be a welfare person. It’s great, it’s important work but it’s not what we’re after. We are after a democratic relationship and what that means is that we, and I say this a lot
about the work we do at Organization but I think it’s true of any arts organization that wants to do work moving toward democracy and equity and justice and all this stuff, are neither above nor below the community, we are part of the community to the extent that we have any legitimacy to do this work, we are a part of the community. All this thing about the institution over here and the community out there – universities do this all the time, right? The university is here and the community is out there – it’s an awful euphemism.

Danna Harroway talks about the God trick, who gets to speak in the abstract about everything presuming you are disinterested, right? Generally, the people who get to that are educated, urban, white, often, but not always male, and everybody else speaks, when they speak, the assumption is they are just speaking from a point of view, they are biased. I’ll give you a concrete example of that: A large foundation was meeting with us recently that’s considering making big investments in a certain number of Non-Profit Organizations in the arts world they consider to be national leaders. They expressed to us they are not seriously considering Organization for this because they see us as a regional leader. I was not at this meeting. If I were, I might have said, “then explain please why people from all around the country and beyond, but let’s stay with the country right now, come to Organization to learn about what we’re doing in order to do it there – Professor being one example of many, you being an example of many. There is a long history of this. I do believe if we were doing the same work we are doing now, but we were in New
York or San Francisco or whatever, we would be considered. But because we are here, that disqualifies us. Because we are in the community, we’re too in the community, we’re not enough at the commanding heights looking above and playing God. We explicitly reject that distinction. Yes, we’re in the community and yes we can do theory and abstraction and policy and all that as well as anybody else. Any of the people you’ve talked to, put them up against anybody at any foundation or national organization, we do OK. Having said that, we don’t want to be in the commanding heights of New York or San Francisco. If we were there, we would be in the community there, too because that’s the kind of work we do, that’s the point of it. That’s a long answer to a short question but I think it’s an important one.

So, obvious questions is: “Where does that leave you Subject 1? You’re a Communist Jew from the Northeast. Are you in the community here?” Well, funny that you would ask that. I’ll actually introduce myself as a Communist Jew from the Northeast. I’ll tell you a funny story. First of all, I’m a lead for who I am. I open my mouth and clearly I’m not from around here. I call myself a Communist Jew from the Northeast and it’s a lot of fun, especially when working with people that are – I’ve got a good suspicion they did not vote as I did in the last election or in various others and the result is that we laugh and sometimes we tell some jokes and I always love a good self-deprecating Jew joke. I’m not trying to pretend to be anything I’m not but it’s amazing how when I take myself seriously and take you seriously how quickly you’re going to take me seriously and
yourself seriously. About nine months after I started, (Executive Director) said to me, “You need to stop starting your sentences with ‘I’m not from here but…’. You’re from here now, you’re here.” I thought that was such an important lesson to learn and I can’t take that out. That that was saying was (Executive Director) saying, “You’re here, you’re a part of this community. You can’t not be. Deal with your own legitimacy that way.” I really appreciated it. Which gives a different perspective to the differences that we have, both among ourselves and among other people in the community. I think it is remarkable and wonderful how the Smith family has been here for so long. Being so oppositional to what so many people believe and yet they are still beloved members of the community. That’s a beautiful thing and it can happen and if it can happen here, it can happen a lot of places. If you put yourself as a supplicant, just to serve the community, then you’re taking yourself seriously. Do I agree with all the more agitational activist tactics? No I don’t, but the fact is, I think it’s a beautiful thing that they have their freedom to do it and I have my freedom to disagree. That’s my piece on community engagement and I’m happy to talk more about it.

Day to day, my work is a lot of meetings and a lot of emails and some writing on the side. You read my piece, so you know a little bit about the culture hub and work with different institutions. That’s growing and continues to grow. We added two new partners last month which is a little fast. We need to take a little time to shore those up.

Charles: Tell me a little about your partnerships, your thinking and approach for
partnerships. I’ve noticed that’s key in the ideas of community engagement I came
across, Doug Borwick and Ellen Rosewall. They both talked about the importance of
process over product.

Subject 3: I would say it a little differently, although I get and I appreciate where this is
going. I would talk about producers versus consumers. An audience, primarily, is a
group of consumers primarily. I’m on stage, I’m singing, I’m producing the music and
they are consuming the music. In shape note singing, such as the one we started at
Organization a little less than a year ago, everyone is a producer, everyone is coming
together and singing together. Some people are learning, some people sing well, some
don’t sing well and some people are listening and humming in the back. But spatially,
everyone is sitting in a square together. Nobody is set apart as a consumer and people are
encouraged to take part to the extent that they are interested and able. I would say that
partners are co-producers. They are people who are doing the work with us and
alongside us. As I was saying before, working in mutual self-interest. I don’t think it’s a
problem if you have audiences. People come to a Bluegress Express LIVE concert or to
anything else. If you want to come see a show, come see a show. But embedded in the
Organization aesthetic across different media, and certainly including the organizing that
I’m involved with, is an open door and an invitation to become a producer that should
make explicit and easy to do so and should encourage people to do so. You go to
Subsidiary 1 play, there is always talk back with the audience. And I don’t mean a post-
show discussion, I mean during the show. It is direct address, story-based theatre and the audience is encouraged to respond. You go to our storycircles afterwards that are considered Act II or Act III of the show, so they are part of the event, it’s not a tack on at the end. Subsidiary 2 has staff people that are on the radio with a backbone as volunteer DJ’s and it’s always, I love the fact that there’s just people coming and going at all times, including people who have very differing political ideologies. Prisons, former prisoners have been on the air. You probably heard about the prison show and the fact that James Cooper came back to DJ a show himself, that is the coolest thing after being in prison. Filmmaking, as you know, RMI that (Executive Director) young, a lot of young people in the area learn how to do this and even if you can’t dedicate a whole summer to it, come to a workshop at the Boone Center. We’ve got all the stuff, use it. (Artistic Director) talks about it all the time of putting the means of cultural production in the hands of the people. That’s what Organization is setup to do, by, for and of the people themselves. To me, the producer versus the consumer is a more useful way to think about that product versus process because – I appreciate it in so far as, again, we’re talking about management versus organizing. The idea that in the management model, the product and the end goal and you’re done with those people and all that stuff and you start over again. In that way, it’s a process that makes products over time. I don’t think that’s wrong but I think the more fundamental distinction is, “are you ‘engaging’ the ‘community’ as co-producers or as consumers?”
In my work, I work primarily on an institutional level. What that means is, I’m looking for other institutions or organization in Letcher County, because that’s where the Arts Place grant was and now the Arts Place grant is over as of a couple weeks ago and so we’re talking about how we want to continue that and start building up. I find those organizations that are involved in bringing in their individual communities together, identifying the assets that they have, latent cultural assets that they have and turning them into community wealth in all sorts of different ways. From the festival to a catering company, the idea is build relationship with and among. That’s the other thing. With Organization having individual relationships with each of these and fostering relationships among them and see that we can all build together. We are intentionally starting with organizations that are grassroots and community-based. We didn’t start with the Letcher County Fiscal Court and our big anchor institutions which is where I think a lot of collective impact goes wrong. You’re organizing a cohort of organizations that do not have democratic culture, they have a top-down, assertive administrative culture at best and an authoritarian culture at worst, which is not to say we don’t work with those big organizations, but we work with them as equals. We’re building a power base so we can influence the big organizations. Eventually, down the road, might we all became so powerful that we act together in concert, who knows? The beauty of this work is we don’t have to know until we get there and that’s the most important – (Artistic Director) uses the word iterative all the time – it’s important because, not to say we don’t
plan, there’s a level of planning in this democratic work but 1) it’s always tentative and you have to react to whatever happens and then 2) it’s gotta be broad based. If the only planning going on is in the Organization building and the partners just get the plan at the end, then you’re back to a consumer model.

And of course, I’m drawing absolute distinctions where the reality is messy. With these grants, the original idea came with Organization, albeit with a lot of involvement of certain parties. Right now, if I got shot in the head, I’m not sure if the culture hub would continue. Having said that, we are working actively to change that, to realize the democratic financial model. In terms of our aspirations or goal, what you are going to get towards is more than an absolute distinction. We’re not Maoists, you know, “Well, whatever the people decide, we’re just going to run it and blindly follow.” That’s not taking us seriously, no mutual self-interest.

For instance, one our original partners named in the Arts Place grant was a Community Center (Ask Ben for name) it’s the only Carcison Center in America. Do you know what I’m talking about?

**Charles:** No.

**Subject 3:** Way up in the mountains, about 45 minutes from here, where Letcher, Knot and Perry County meet is a remote community that has the distinction of running the oldest continuous community-led square dance in the history of Kentucky. It’s been going for maybe 60 years. But they were going to stop. They had published this article
in Mountain Eagle saying it’s not working. In part of what I was charged with when I came here was reviving Carcison Square Dance. We could have given them a whole bunch of money and said, “Here, run square dances for a while, but that’s bullshit because when the money runs out…”

**Charles:** They’ll be right back to where they started.

**Subject 3:** Exactly, that’s is truly square dance as end, not as means. That’s a lot of how grant funded projects work. So, what I did was I spent months, and it was not an easy process, building relationships with leaders in the community to figure out how they can 1) grow their own local capacity to lead because they really did not have a lot of leaders, a lot of people burned out, a lot of people alienated, there was a lot of internal stuff going on, and 2) figure how can we indeed give them a certain amount of money as investment to figure out what you need to do to make this work for yourselves and have cushion under you that if you take a risk and it fails, you’re not going to be broke. We go through a whole process, and I can tell you more about it if you want to know, but the reason I am bringing it up now is that in the process of working out this agreement over several months in which a bunch of community leaders came to meetings, I said, “We really want to give you this money and we want this to be community led. We won’t ask for reports on it but we’ll stay in touch, it’s your money. Having said that, it is in our interest and we want the square dance to be continued. Whatever plans you want to make, you have lots of other ideas on how you want to spend the money, totally cool. But the plans
have to include the square dance.” Obviously, more power to you if don’t want to but we’re not going to write you this check. Just being open, open about that, that we care about what you are interested in and we hope you care about what we’re interested in and we can work together. It’s this above and below thing, and nobody is looking for that, at least nobody who’s worth working together, who takes his, her, their own power seriously. Obviously, some people are just looking for as much money as they can get ahold of and we’ve encountered that and there’s at least one organization who is no longer a part of the culture hub because it turned out that’s what was going on. As it happened, when they left the culture hub, their president left them because she was really, really interested in this work and was getting fed up with people at her own organization that didn’t do it and is not starting a new organization.

It’s building a culture where different things are possible then necessarily thought and this is the grand vision of the work, moving from a culture – and you’ll notice the economic and cultural questions are circularly tied and that’s not by accident – moving from a culture where we are fundamentally consumer and dependents and the only thing we can do is wait for Donald Trump or Mitch McConnell or whoever else to bestow us with a revived coal industry or a prison or a car plant, whatever the savior of the moment is going to be and until then, we’re hopeless to we can look around and work with each other and figure out we can actually build stuff ourselves. Does that mean that we’re going to create enough jobs to replace the coal industry? I don’t see, leastways not
anytime soon. But what I do see here are at least two things 1) We’re able to build communities together with a big meaning, all of our culture hub partners, including the Organization staff, community people want to live their own lives and they can have meaningful work that will allow them to live sufficiently. There are more people who can survive as visual artists, musicians and filmmakers, food producers, growers, photographers, all sorts of ways than we’re true certainly before Organization got started and I think even more recently since the culture hub got started. Graphic designers, web design, there’s just more opportunities for meaningful work that allows for a decent life, that allows for efficiency and doesn’t always look like jobs, in terms of a full-time job and that has been a hard thing, both locally and in terms of funders, because they want to know how many jobs we’re going to make, and it sounds like we’re bullshitting when we say, “Actually, let’s put it a different way.” But I don’t think it’s bs’ing, it’s a shift in the world, culturally and economically, away from an industrial model and towards a more entrepreneurial one, which has, I don’t say I like that even, it’s literally that’s what is happening and those are the material conditions of our existence and it’s how we respond to them. 

Charles: The other side of my research is how does fundraising and community engagement organizing power structures, how do they, or can they work together towards a common end that is, as you say, has the interest of both parties in mind?

Subject 3: Who are they two parties?
Charles: Self-interest of you as *Organization* as an institution and self-interest of Whitesburg.

Subject 3: Hold on, are we talking about the city of Whitesburg or are we talking about the individual businesses of Whitesburg, are we talking about Letcher County?

Charles: Just, the people here.

Subject 3: And that’s where we get in trouble with these abstractions. And let me say more about that because I’m not trying to censor your language or anything, but this is a real analytical issue that leads people down bad paths. Can I drive a half hour out of Whitesburg to the poor, high unemployment, high addiction community of Hempville, knock on a door and say, “Hey, I want to organize you?” Maybe, maybe not, but there would be some issues with that because immediately they would recognize that I am not a part of their community in the way they understand it. That’s legitimate. What I can do and what I have done is build a relationship with the leaders of the community center which draws people there for all sorts of events from bluegrass nights to dinners to holiday parties and is run by people who’ve been in that community for generations, they are people who are respected and loved by that community, I build a relationship with those leaders so that I certainly can someone on the phone anytime ask them to knock on that person’s door. The point is, again, it’s not that I don’t like the word community, I just want to be precise about it. There’s a community around the city, a geographic community, in which Hempville Community Center is one of the anchor institutions of
that community, among others. I am not a part of that community. It’s interesting, sometimes I’ve gotten the outsider thing not from being from Connecticut but from being from Whitesburg as opposed to being from other parts of the county, which is funny because I don’t even live in Whitesburg but because I work at Organization, it’s the Paris versus the province thing, which reproduces itself culturally on every level, including Whitesburg versus Letcher County.

**Charles:** Ashland versus Raceland where I’m from.

**Subject 3:** Exactly, so you get it. Sorry, I feel like I am lecturing you and I didn’t mean to lecture at you.

**Charles:** No, it’s fine. This is something I am very careful in developing my understanding of it because one thing I’ve grasped on initially is the potential to 1) is the historic trend of organizational imposition and oppression on whatever definition of community you have and the model I have in mind is definitely something the organization I have mind should not do. As John O’Brien mentions in his book *At Home in the Heart of Appalachia*, he talks about the Woodlands Institute that had that “God to people” attitude. The people in the town called them the “come heres”. They were educated and from the Northeast and didn’t understand why the people didn’t like them.

**Subject 3:** Right, why didn’t the uneducated hicks like us. Maybe because you called them uneducated hicks.

**Charles:** I really am approaching Organization and approaching you three because I see
a 50 year institutional history of doing and learning this process.

**Subject 3:** I think *Organization* tries and has a lot to learn and they don’t always succeed but there is space for it. Having said that, I don’t know how many random people in the street you’ve stopped around Whitesburg and around Letcher County, there’s a lot of prejudice against *Organization*, it’s sometimes overstated, there’s a lot of people who’ve got a lot of feelings about *Organization*. Definitely, I don’t think *Organization* can, in any simple way, can claim to be for the community. The community voice is strengthened by what is done, stuff that has happened previously in *Organization’s* history but has not happened recently, I think there is a little bit more intent about it now than there has been in a while and I don’t think people are talking about us differently, not everybody.

But what are the communities I could legitimately say I am a part of here? I am a part of the *Organization* community and I think the newness has more or less worn off by now. I’d say I am part of the Whitesburg community and I’m up here a lot, a lot of people know me. I am part of the Calin (Look up name) community, it’s where I live and I’ve got good relationships with people there, including the community center, which is also a partner of ours, and I’m a member of the Letcher County Community. I’m not a member of the Hempville community and I don’t pretend to be. But what I am is in relationship with the people in the Hempville community. They can do their organizing even though I can’t directly, therefore I am doing because we’re doing it together. This is a question – I
was up in Minneapolis last week talking to a lot people about this work and questions come up about this. An old friend of mine, very out spoken professor, young black women in her mid to late 30s, writer and community college professor, she looked at me and said, “Well, I don’t know if a black person could do this work in a place like Letcher County.”

First of all, that’s a really good question. Obviously, you met (Executive Director), they do exist here and they do a lot of work and talk to a lot of different people. I’m not sure if that’s true. But let’s assume for the moment that this professor would not feel comfortable doing that kind of work here. That’s cool because she can do other things and organize in different ways in other communities that I can’t, that’s Ok. We’re working together out of mutual self-interest. We can each deliver our constituencies and build more power together. It doesn’t have to mean either or. Different people in an organization do different things. The division of labor created efficiency. That’s a plus, as far as I’m concerned.

All that is to say, the question you asked about the mutual benefit, I would want to challenge this idea that there is Organization and “the community” around it. There’s two useful framings of it. 1) There’s talking about the community of a bigger entity of which Organization is one part or you talk about smaller communities within Letcher County and then you’re talking about more than two. That’s the way I would want to analyze it. But the question you’re asking is finally a good one, it’s about mutual self-
interest and how we can do it, and you asked a specific question about fundraising. I’ll go there first. One thing that I really appreciate about fundraising at Organization, and it something I noticed very quickly coming in, is it is understood as an extension of relationship building. Not everybody at Organization speaks organizing language and they may not talk about it as power and stuff, but the idea is never that we are, the foundations, or the funders are gods. It’s all about how do we build relationships and figure out what’s in your self-interest and how it connects to our self-interest and how it can work from and develop ideas we can work on together. We will spend a good amount of time and money building those relationships including trips to meet with heads of foundations. Stuff that not a lot, I would imagine, “regional organizations” do and that’s the way you build something. Without that, the only way you work is you’re working in somebody else’s self-interest. I see a request for proposals from a foundation and then begin to think about how I can build or tweak the program in their self-interest but in doing that, I’m selling out the people where I live. Either I’m selling out the rest of my community or I’m selling out the other communities we’re working with.

Organization, as far as I understand it, has always had healthy relationship with any amount of dialectal tension: You, foundation, have your interest, we, Organization, have our interest and we’re going to figure out how we can do a project that serves our interests and your interest enough that you’re also going to contribute to it. Because then it is a relationship among equals as co-producers. It’s not you’re producing the stuff and
we’re consuming it, we’re producing a product and disseminating it to the plebs. What that means is it’s a non-linear model, it’s a relationship model. It’s not about writing as many grants as we can, it’s about cultivating relationships with program officers and foundation directors and folk in govt. and folks in policy or wherever else. The way we do fundraising comes directly out of this work.

For the culture hub work, in particular, what I am interested in, and not me alone, I’d say many of us at Organization are interested in, is breaking out of the arts foundation funding world. What we are doing right now is looking to build ongoing relationships in mutual self-interest with regional and national organizations that see what we are doing as a model. We’ll apply for grants, but that’s not our grand goal. What we want to do is figure out with each member how they supporting us it also going to support them. Whether that be working with our regional Community Development Financial Institution, non-profit bank, to develop a training curriculum with the culture hub as a model for other counties in the promise zone to work or make their dollars go further.

We’ve started to show that is something we can do and they are interested in that. Whether it is presenting to a national policy organization, a rural analog for their urban democracy projects in the culture hub and, frankly, after the election they admitted to that they realized they need to care about Rural America in a way they didn’t before. It’s a shame it took that but it’s meeting people where they are at. It’s that kind of work that we will, and it’s not that we don’t apply to grants based on Requests For Proposals, of
course we do. But the idea is that application is one instance in an ongoing relationship. I can’t think of time where we’ve applied to a grant without knowing the humans behind that grant, one way or another. I think that’s really important, it’s really of a piece. And culture hub partners are now starting to get involved in that fundraising effort.

I’ll tell you one example of that, is at 6 PM tonight, I go across the street to the courthouse to attend a meeting of a newly formed county broadband board. It’s one of the big, I’d say, probably the biggest priorities of politicians and establishment policy people in the area is bringing high-speed internet to wider swaths of the population so that there’s opportunities for entrepreneurship and telecommuting. The culture hub was strong enough and had relationships that we’re good enough that when this broadband board was formed, that we were able, out of 6 seats on the board, two of them are culture hub partners and a third works for an organization that we’re in regular communication with. We have half of the seats on the board. We’re able to say, “Alright, we are representing this independent power base of community centers, volunteer fire departments and arts organizations, small businesses, etc…and we are accountable to them and we are going to bring those priorities to the table.” One thing that is in the works is community centers as Broadband Hubs which will bring resources into community centers and also increase their ability to reach people because people are already accustomed to being in these places, they are places where folks feel safe and trusted and all that – it’s where the self-interests overlap.
So the broadband board is now considering applying for grants from the USDA and Arts Place America and Organization will be a partner on the application. We’ll help them out, write a letter of support and hopefully be written into the grant for some money, but we won’t be the primary applicant of it. As I was saying before, if the culture hub is about the same kind of coproduction that our theater, films, radio or whatever are about on an institutional level, same for the funding. When we started this, it was Organization raised the money and we distributed it out and that is now changing in a really good and healthy way. When I’m working out these deals with the community development financial institution, I’ve got three or four culture hub partners at the table right there with me. It’s an active collective production, it’s not Organization on behalf of the “community.”

Charles: One concern is organizational sustainability, how to do this work and not have the organization fold underneath them?

Subject 3: I don’t get the question.

Charles: This organizing of power, understanding your different communities and how you are situated in those in abstract ways, what I’ve seen is a desire to do this type of work but a concern about organizational sustainability. Are we still going to be an organization with jobs in a year?

Subject 3: Sure. It’s a huge issue and it’s an ongoing question. MY smart-ass answer is, “You’re sure as hell more likely to be around in a year if the people around you give a
damn about you than if they don’t.” Unless you are firmly committed to this fortress model and you are just this monolith and you’re connected to a lot of other non-geographic communities of elites, which some places are. If you have any pretense about being community-based or anything else…What I will tell you is, 10 years ago, if *Organization* folded, there would be a lot fewer people sad about it and want to step in and make change than there are now. This is the thing about self-interest. Everybody is too busy to do everything other than what is in their self-interest. Now, how is the self-interest understood. There are people you don’t want to talk to and you tell them you are too busy and the people you really care for, you’ll make time for them, even though you are busy. The question is, it’s important for an organization that understands itself as grassroots, it would be better for the community, so to speak, to give a damn about it, to have a self-interest in it. That’s my smart-ass answer.

But you are also asking a totally legitimate question which is, given that it is a lot easier to fundraise to paint a mural than to build a broad-based power organization, how do you do that. We do have a project of painting murals, that’s a common thing and I’m not downing that but I would call it Band-Aid community engagement. What we are doing is a lot more complicated and I’d like to go into to the extent that it matters to your work. Other staffers were initially skeptical of the work I am doing and the reason for it was it wasn’t obvious this thing we were making, relationships are intangible. It requires a longer time horizon to say, “We’re in it for the long haul.” *Organization* has been around
for 50 years and you don’t do that by a hermetic staff-driven approach. You do that by a basic level of give a damn about the people and the institutions around you then they will also give a damn about you. There is a legitimate question about culture shift that often needs to happen within institutional culture to make that happen. Like I said, at the place I worked before, I was unable to do that, I was not able to activate a culture shift. For a lot of organizations, it’s a matter of recognizing that within your institution as well as outside, even at *Organization*. There was always interest in it and history of it and a curiosity about it and tolerance for it, I would say there are more people on the *Organization* staff that understand it’s value now than did a year ago. Part of that is, I got lucky. I came into an organization with a history of it and an openness towards it. They also have a decentralized and entrepreneurial culture where not every move I make will be scrutinized by a manager. Lastly, there was a grant with money put aside for partnerships. It’s for basic community partners and we have $10,000.00 for each of them. I quickly, when I came in, I asked if the rest of the money I could do whatever I wanted with and they said yes. I’ve built it into smaller contributions to get a lot more partners involved with a different kind of understanding that’s about starting mutual relationships based on self-interest and not about just starting programming there. That was my way in and I was able to start this work and start having results. And nothing breeds like success. Once stuff starts happening then you get more attention and more people around working on it and more funders interested in it and then more people are
going to jump on. But it is a legitimate and serious challenge and I would love to see more writing, training and thought devoted to, “How can you shift an institutional culture from a top-down program-based approach to a bottom-up or co-creative, on the same level mutual-interest model?” And that’s Organization, that’s how it’s always been, you know, “Hey, I want to do this thing can you find funding for it? Cool, yeah do it!” That’s how Organization started doing films and added theatre and added radio, just different projects. There are projects that started and ended at Organization. There was a magazine at one point that no longer exists for a variety of reasons, basically because the self-interest wasn’t there – the self-interest among the staff and the self-interest among the members and it didn’t happen anymore. That’s ok for that to be, you’re not doing these programs for their own sake, you’re committed to following the interests of the community, both the community within your walls and the communities outside the walls.

Charles: In introduction to my paper, I talk about how America has reached its highest point of diversity in its history and power in those groups, and the internet has possibly made this more available, but appears power in those groups is growing and its spreading in ways that certain arts organizations are not anticipating. I see them resting on an old power. I experienced this in an organization I worked with where I had older board members asking me as a young person, what are we going to do when all the old money dies and we don’t get their money. I see there will be a lot of organizations that are going
to hit the point or continue hitting the point where what they are doing is not working.

Power has built around us in ways we don’t see and we’re not a part of it.

**Subject 3**: I would challenge that analysis a little bit and I don’t think it is all wrong, there is definitely a lot of anxiety. You go to an opera performance or something like that and it’s a lot of old people. Having said that, I also feel like that was true two generations ago. Part of it is true and another thing is true that diverse groups of people have less power than they had in a long time. You only need to look at the distribution of wealth in America which is more and more the 1% owns everything and everyone else is just fighting for scraps, that’s getting worse, not better.

Do you know the Holly Sidford report? She used to work for the Ford Foundation and it’s something that is talked about a lot in the grassroots organizing community and the non-profit world. It was first written in 2011 and there’s a revision that’s about to released. I forget the numbers, but it would be a good thing to look at for what you are talking about. What the report essentially says is that there is massive and drastic inequality in the art funding world where you have small numbers of large established, white dominated arts organizations getting lots of the funding and not a lot going to everybody else, including organizations led by people of color and rural organizations and the rest. Since she published that report in 2011, equity has been the talk of the town in the arts funder world. Long story short, she’s coming out with this report five years later that says all this talk about cultural equity have gotten worse, not better. I want to complicate the
Hamilton vision of America where badass fierce urban people of color are taking over the world because last I looked, Donald Trump and Steve Bannon are taking over the world. Obviously, you’re not wrong that the discourse is changing and there are more media outlets and voices in ways that are easier to find by more people but fundamentally I do not believe the internet has liberated us.

Charles: I actually quote her report, It’s the first sentence of my paper about the disparity of funding. Now, since January 20th or November 7th, I have not considered a lot of what I have written over the last year and half with this new administration. I am considering, half of me wants to trash the whole project because that threw a wrench in the whole thing…

Subjet 3: I want to argue it didn’t, though. Donald Trump, look at the governors, look at the state legislatures. Bevin and 33 of his buddies across the country, it’s just cuts, cuts, cuts, cuts. An oversimplified and not unuseful statement by a 68er was that after 1968, the Republicans took over the state legislatures and the democrats took over the English departments. That is true, that since the 70s, we’ve had this ever-liberalizing discursive politics and every reactionary republican and economic politics. I don’t want to say the world is going to hell in a hand basket because that’s easy, too, and oversimplified.