



*Routledge Studies in Entrepreneurship and Small Business*

# **EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES AND ECOSYSTEMS**

**CASE STUDY INSIGHTS**

Edited by

Morgan R. Clevenger and Michael W-P Fortunato



Clevenger and Fortunato's latest book adds depth, context, and nuance to their 2017 volume with depth from new research into the key constructs of their model and context from the seven case studies from states and provinces in North America. It is a must-read for thinkers and doers interested in developing entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities.

**Jerome Katz, PhD**

Robert H. Brockhaus Chair of Entrepreneurship  
Richard A. Chaifetz School of Business, Saint Louis University  
*St. Louis, Missouri, USA*

Bravo to Clevenger and Fortunato for writing this book. I am old enough to remember when everyone said 'entrepreneurship' but no one knew what it really was. How many times did I hear *business model* used by smart people who all used it with different definitions and constructs? I would suggest *entrepreneurial ecosystems* is the new jargon in entrepreneurship. This book addresses the often overlooked level of *entrepreneurial communities*. The work slays the dragon through research, thoughtful exploration, and excellent case study illustrations with great precision and innovative insight.

**Jay Kryslar, MPA**

Entrepreneurship Instructor  
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)  
*Canada*

Clevenger and Fortunato provide exceptional clarity and insight useful toward understanding the complex nature of entrepreneurial communities, ecosystems, and empowerment. The skillful incorporation of complementary case studies only intensifies the effort while by providing a pragmatic perspective to anyone interested in engaging the true diversity of today's evolving entrepreneurial landscape.

**Mark T. Schenkel, PhD**

Professor  
Belmont University  
*Nashville, Tennessee, USA*  
*Past President and Justin G. Longenecker Fellow, USASBE*



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# Empowering Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems

*Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems: Case Study Insights* aims to provide applied examples that embody the theories, principles, and processes that contribute to empowering everyday entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems.

Relying on a diversity of narratives from a wide range of entrepreneurial communities, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and organizations, this book presents a collection of case studies that take the reader inside the minds of leaders who are working to empower entrepreneurs and build entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities—sometimes from scratch. The book features research and stories from entrepreneurs, development agencies, entrepreneurial support and assistance organizations (i.e., feeders and supports), governments, and involved citizens and local leaders in their quest to make their communities more entrepreneuring. The book presents an analytic frame through which the case studies are cross-analyzed, providing “meta-guidelines” for pursuing a broad range of strategies for supporting local and regional entrepreneurial action.

This research book is equally useful as an undergraduate or graduate text on the sociology of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship as it is a field guide for ecosystem builders, policy makers, nonprofits, and entrepreneurship and social researchers worldwide.

**Morgan R. Clevenger, EdD, MBA**, is Associate Professor of Management at Hiram College, Ohio, USA, as well as Professor of Management and Post-doctoral Fellow in Corporate Social Responsibility and Global Business Ethics with Monarch Business School, Zug, Switzerland.

**Michael W-P Fortunato, PhD**, is an internationally published scholar, researcher, author, entrepreneur, community developer, educator, public speaker, and innovator, and CFO and Founding Partner of Texas-based community consulting group Creative Insight Community Development (CICD).

**Routledge Studies in Entrepreneurship  
and Small Business**

Edited by Robert Blackburn  
*University of Liverpool, UK*

**How Small to Medium Enterprises Thrive and Survive in  
Turbulent Times**

From Deconstructing to Synthesizing Organizational Resilience  
Capabilities  
*Yiu Hia Chu and Kosmas Smyrniotis*

**Managing People in Small and Medium Enterprises in Turbulent  
Contexts**

*Alexandros Psychogios and Rea Prouska*

**Business Transfers, Family Firms and Entrepreneurship**

*Edited by Bérangère Deschamps, Audrey Missonier, Catherine Thévenard-Puthod,  
Paulette Robic and Dominique Barbelivien*

**The Persistence of Entrepreneurship Myths  
Reclaiming Enterprise**

*Simon Bridge*

**Corporate Volunteering, Responsibility and Employee  
Entrepreneurship**

*Aldona Glińska-Noweś and Beata Glinka*

**Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems**

Theories in Culture, Empowerment, and Leadership  
*Edited by Morgan R. Clevenger and Michael W-P Fortunato*

**Empowering Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems**

Case Study Insights  
*Edited by Morgan R. Clevenger and Michael W-P Fortunato*

**Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Crisis**

SME Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic  
*Edited by Joanna Duda and Rafał Kusa*

For more information about this series, please visit: [www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Entrepreneurship-and-Small-Business/book-series/SE0463](http://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Entrepreneurship-and-Small-Business/book-series/SE0463)

# **Empowering Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems**

Case Study Insights

**Edited by  
Morgan R. Clevenger  
and Michael W-P Fortunato**

First published 2022  
by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2022 selection and editorial matter, Morgan R. Clevenger and Michael W-P Fortunato;  
individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Morgan R. Clevenger and Michael W-P Fortunato to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-032-26317-5 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-26319-9 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-28768-1 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003287681

Typeset in Bembo  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

As an entrepreneurship major and minor advisor, I always made a student spell “entrepreneur” in our first meeting. I joked that if they could not spell the word, they should not major or minor in it! However, as a professor, I have been amazed by the number of students with passion for self-sufficiency, drive for success, cleverness, creativity, innovativeness, and entrepreneurial spirit. This book is dedicated to many of my former students:

CJ Alevras	Josh Gundle	Vanessa Musto
Haider Alhashmalsaid	Connor Harding	Russell Newell
Abdulaziz Alhumoud	Britton Heim	Jordan Nochimson
Ibrahim Alhumoud	Josh Helwig	Steve Oprendak
Abdullah Altaleb	Richard Hoggarth	Cord Pennell
Taylor Baker	Jeff Horwith	Jeff Piccolo
Jessica Batchler	Zijie Huang	Edward Powell
Michael Boures	Hayden Jacobs	Tory Price
Tyler Briskie	Dan Kelly	Joe Pugliese
TJ Carton	Quinn Kelly	Samantha Reinhardt
Cory Cesare	Sultan Kalifa	Nicole Santorelli
Jarrold Cooper	Katie Lawlor	Kyle Schopf
Alanna Denauski	Michelle Lehman	Taillon Staudenmeir
Ryan Dupre	Dominic Manzione	Christian Sweigert
Suzanne Ekstrom	Sam Mass	Bowen Wang
Morgan Evans	Colleen McCabe	Haoxiang Wang
Troy Everetts	James McCormack	Brittany Welsh
Olivia Falkhoury	Tighe McCormack	Keegan White
Alexis Featherman	Emelie Meinhart	Vinne Werner
Joe Feibus	John Morio	Nicholas Wesley
Alex George	Victoria Morrison	Tyler Wombough
David Graff	David Morse	Yuchan Xie

Good luck with your many ventures and adventures!

~ Dr. Clevenger aka “Clev”

My dedication goes out to anyone out there—especially those working in the least expected places—who provide vital material, networking, financial, and (perhaps most importantly) emotional support to entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial thinkers alike. And, to those entrepreneurs who work and act as a true community to accomplish great things, together. This is often not a work of aggressive profit-seeking, trendsetting, or legacy generating. My thanks go to those people who consistently and tirelessly support new ideas, meeting critical needs, and the betterment of life irrespective of a venture’s fitness for the cover of *Fast Company* or *Inc.* It is for the *everyday* entrepreneur and their *everyday* support system. It is for the people who elevate ideas over personal wealth and fame, and who seek to serve others even more intensely than they



seek success in business, although how can one achieve the latter without the former? Some of them will be gazelles, sure. A great many will fail. And more still will brush themselves off and try again. But all will share an experience so rare and important in this world: to bring an idea that serves the public good into self-sustenance. And for those of you who just need a little extra prodding to take the plunge as either an entrepreneurial leader or feeder, I hope this book gives you the gentle nudge into the fray that you seek. I would like to further thank my mentors who guided me, and who taught me the importance of putting the emphasis on *community* in community-based venturing, including Ted Alter, Diane McLaughlin, and Bunny Willits at Penn State University, my business partner Bruce Balfour (a savvy entrepreneur and scholar in his own right), and of course, my grandfather Bill Lawrence who gave me my own kick into the world of independent venturing. And to all my friends and family who tolerate my long absences and late-arriving correspondence while writing, which is much of the time these days. Your patience means the world to me, and hopefully the book did not turn out too badly.

~ Michael

# Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	xi
THEODORE R. ALTER	
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xiv
<i>List of Figures</i>	xx
<i>List of Tables</i>	xxi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxii
<i>Preface</i>	xxiv
1 An Introduction to Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Entrepreneurial Communities to Empower Entrepreneurs	1
MICHAEL W-P FORTUNATO AND MORGAN R. CLEVINGER	
2 Prologue to the Case Studies	29
MORGAN R. CLEVINGER, MICHAEL W-P FORTUNATO, AND MONTRESSA L. WASHINGTON	
3 A Case Study Exploring Entrepreneurial Communities in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA)	39
MORGAN R. CLEVINGER, MICHAEL W-P FORTUNATO, AND KENNETH G. OKREPKIE WITH BILL LEWIS	
4 Raising Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Three Nebraska Case Studies	112
JASON L. WEIGLE AND DON MACKE WITH BILL LEWIS	
5 A Small-Town Music Movement as an Economic Driver and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development Strategy in Indiana	132
MICHAEL W-P FORTUNATO WITH BILL LEWIS	

x *Contents*

6	The Culture and Individual Nexus of an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: The Impact of Culture on What Necessity-Driven Entrepreneurs Believe Is Possible as Illustrated in a Case Study From Nova Scotia, Canada	176
	BRUCE DYE WITH BILL LEWIS	
7	Called to a Community Venture: Entrepreneurial Mindset and Empowerment Through Networking as Illustrated in a Case Study in Abilene, Texas	211
	MIKE MIKEWORTH WITH MORGAN R. CLEVINGER AND BILL LEWIS	
8	A Framework for Decolonizing Community Economic Development and Entrepreneurship in Native Nations in Minnesota	224
	RANI A. BHATTACHARYYA WITH BILL LEWIS AND MORGAN R. CLEVINGER	
9	Little Town, Layered Ecosystem: A Case Study of Chattanooga, Tennessee	259
	YASUYUKI MOTOYAMA, EMILY FETSCH, CHRIS JACKSON, AND JASON WIENS WITH BILL LEWIS	
10	A Meta-Analysis and Conclusions: Relevance of Developing Entrepreneurial Communities to Empower Entrepreneurs	285
	MICHAEL W-P FORTUNATO AND MORGAN R. CLEVINGER	
	<i>Index</i>	317

# Foreword

It may seem that entrepreneurs are hard-driving, independent, autonomous operators fostering the development and commercialization of new technologies, creating new business models to increase competitive market advantage, or inventing new products targeting unique market niches. This overarching “heroic” story is an important one, and it captures much of what it means to be an entrepreneur and to be entrepreneurial. It is a true story that shapes our individual and collective understanding of entrepreneurs, business development, business success, entrepreneurship, our local, regional, and national economies as well as public policy.

It is only one story, however. Every entrepreneur in each business in markets in any locale has her or his own story, and each one of these stories is important for understanding what it takes and means to be an entrepreneur. But there is another critical story about entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneuring. This book is the story about the importance of entrepreneurs to each other as sources of ideas, inspiration, and support. It is also the story about their embeddedness in communities and extra-local economies—their interdependence with other entities within the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, locally as well as regionally and nationally. These cases are the stories of entrepreneurial ecosystems and/or communities, and these stories are true, as well. This book provides an overarching accounts of entrepreneurial embeddedness and interdependence. The essence of the ecosystem story is that communities need entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs need communities. This entrepreneurial ecosystem story has received increasing attention during the past couple of decades, but it is not the dominant story or narrative about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

*Empowering Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems: Case Study Insights*, by Clevenger and Fortunato, follows on the two of their recently published books by Fortunato and Clevenger (2017) titled *Toward Entrepreneurial Community Development: Leaping Cultural and Leadership Boundaries*, and Clevenger and Fortunato’s (2022) *Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems: Theories in Culture, Empowerment, and Leadership*; both focus on theories, principles, and processes of entrepreneurial communities. Each of these books, and most certainly the three taken together, focuses on theories, principles,

and processes of entrepreneurial communities; are well-grounded in up-to-date research and long-time practical experience; and robustly build out the important entrepreneurial ecosystem story. These books fill important gaps to aid in our understanding of theory, policy, and practice, thus making meaningful, substantive contributions to the perspectives on entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, entrepreneuring, and entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities. These books significantly enrich and elevate the entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurial community stories.

For this book, Clevenger and Fortunato have identified and organized a set of conceptually rich, practice-oriented, thought-provoking case studies that bridge theory and practice and challenge conventional thinking about entrepreneurship and entrepreneur development. These case studies are replete with varied experiences and new ideas, and they elucidate the importance and power of entrepreneurial communities, along with the challenges in nurturing and navigating entrepreneurial ecosystems. In addition, the authors detail a very useful meta-analytic framework for analyzing each case and facilitating cross-case comparison. This framework, in effect, facilitates thinking and planning entrepreneur strategy and tactics. There is much in this book to explore and learn for academics, practitioners, and policy makers, alike.

Each of the seven case studies provides practical perspective and deep insight regarding the critically important issues at the nexus of community, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and the power and empowerment of entrepreneurs. They include depictions of a mature, stagnating yet ambitious entrepreneurial community and multiple entrepreneurial ecosystems in the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem of Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA); a regional growth-oriented ecosystem in rural Nebraska; an early-stage music-based ecosystem in a small southern Indiana community; a necessity-driven ecosystem in urban Nova Scotia; a faith-based, learning-oriented grassroots ecosystem in north Texas; development of a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem among Indigenous peoples in remote Northwest Minnesota; and a philanthropy-supported layered innovation district ecosystem in Tennessee. Together, these cases enrich our understanding of the importance of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and entrepreneurial communities.

In reviewing these cases, I am personally intrigued with the discussions of the role of societal and cultural phenomena, especially relationships and networks, in shaping entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial opportunities; the role and agency entrepreneurs themselves have in shaping these phenomena; the ubiquity and implications of conflict, power play, and powerlessness inherent in the interdependent dynamic nature of entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems; the critical importance of education in nurturing an understanding of entrepreneurship and sustaining a cadre of entrepreneurs in communities and our society overtime; and emergence of entrepreneurial communities, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and ecosystem logic.

I have known Morgan for 5 years and have worked closely with Michael for more than 15 years. Both Morgan and Michael are accomplished scholars with broad and deep professional experience analyzing business and economic development, business economics and finance, organizational behavior, community development, and socioeconomic change in rural, peri-urban, and urban space. They both are also experienced, practicing entrepreneurs themselves. Michael and Morgan bring vast practical experience to the vetting of the ideas and propositions detailed in these books. We have much to learn from these scholar-practitioners.

A word about stories and this book: I have noted the “heroic entrepreneur” story and also the “embedded, interdependent” entrepreneur story. Stories are important. They reflect our understanding of the world around us and shape that understanding and our current and future behaviors. They are frames through which we interpret the socioeconomic, cultural, and technological phenomena we experience and what we see as important and possible. The “heroic entrepreneur” story has been and is dominant in our thinking about entrepreneurial activity and its contributions to our local and extra-local economies. The “embedded, interdependent entrepreneur” story, the entrepreneurial ecosystem story, has been and is growing in prominence in research and practice during the past couple of decades. These two stories are not opposing stories; indeed, they are complementary stories. Communities need entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs need communities. *Empowering Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems: Case Study Insights* by Clevenger and Fortunato robustly enriches and elevates the embeddedness of entrepreneurs and their stories, helping to fill, along with their companion volumes, a significant gap in our shared understanding of how to cultivate a more empowered and empowering entrepreneurial world.

Theodore R. Alter, PhD

Professor of Agricultural, Environmental, and Regional Economics  
Co-director of the Center for Economic and Community Development  
Former Co-editor of the *Entrepreneurial Research Journal*  
The Pennsylvania State University

## Reference

Fortunato, M. W-P., & Clevenger, M. R. (Eds.). (2017). *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries*. Routledge.

# Contributors

**Theodore R. Alter, PhD**, is a professor of agricultural, environmental, and regional economics and co-director of the Center for Economic and Community Development in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education at Penn State University. He served as co-editor of the *Entrepreneurship Research Journal (ERJ)* and as adjunct research fellow in the Australian Center for Agriculture and Law at the University of New England in Australia. Alter served from 2012 to 2017 as one of the lead researchers for the institutional analysis and community-led action initiative of the Invasive Animal Cooperative Research Centre in Australia. The Victorian Rabbit Action Network, one of the projects stemming from this initiative, received the 2019 United Nations Public Service Award in recognition for its contributions to strengthening working relationships and shared responsibility among citizens and communities, industry, and government. Alter's research, teaching, and community engagement work focuses on community and rural development, resource and environmental economics, community engagement in natural resource management, community and entrepreneurship, behavioral and public sector economics, the practice of public scholarship and civic engagement in higher education, and the political economy of democracy. In recent years, he has advanced his work to include the study of public and collective choice, democracy and innovation, and how paradigms of public discourse have shaped complex societal issues from technology and communications development to entrepreneurship and public-private partnerships. A central component of his work focuses on issues of democracy, emphasizing the roles played by societal organizations such as governments, private sector businesses, non-governmental organizations, and colleges and universities. He is driven by concern with how and for whom democracy works and does not work.

**Rani A. Bhattacharyya, MS**, is a Northwest community economics extension educator at the University of Minnesota Extension. Bhattacharyya has been serving Minnesota's Northwest 11 counties, the Red Lake Nation and White Earth Nation with applied economic research programming for

the past 9 years. The focus of her work has been on understanding the potential markets for entrepreneurs in the food, tourism, and retail sectors as well as the potential economic impacts of these businesses on the regional economy. Prior to serving with the University of Minnesota Extension, she served with the U.S. Peace Corps in the municipality of Ivailovgrad as an environmental education educator and ecotourism development advisor. She holds a master of science in recreation, parks, and tourism administration from Western Illinois University and also served as an AmeriCorps Fellow with Rural Partners Illinois. Born in Minnesota, Bhattacharyya is a passionate advocate for lifting up and celebrating the state and regions' cultural and natural assets.

**Morgan R. Clevenger, EdD, MBA**, is an associate professor of management at Hiram College, Ohio, as well as a professor of management and a post-doctoral fellow in Corporate Social Responsibility and Global Business Ethics with Monarch Business School, Zug, Switzerland. Clevenger is previously a visiting professor in the Department of Management, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship in the Grove College of Business at Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania, and is erstwhile tenured associate professor of entrepreneurship at Wilkes University, Pennsylvania. Clevenger attained a bachelor of science degree in news editorial journalism from the Reed College of Media (formerly named the Perley Isaac Reed School of Journalism) and an MBA from the John Chambers College of Business and Economics, both at West Virginia University. Clevenger completed a doctorate in educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Clevenger researches, writes, and presents widely on issues of corporate citizenship, philanthropy, higher education, nonprofit management, ethics, entrepreneurship, corporate social responsibility, family business, entrepreneurial ecosystems, entrepreneurial communities, and culture of entrepreneurship. He is an author/editor of several books and journal articles. Clevenger is editor of the *Monarch Management Review* (MMR) and also serves as an associate editor of the *Entrepreneurship Research Journal* (ERJ).

**Bruce Dye, PhD**, has been working as an entrepreneurship development consultant since 2001. His passion is advising and teaching entrepreneurs—especially those who are necessity-driven. He has worked with more than 225 entrepreneurs in Canada and the Philippines, including Canadian immigrant entrepreneurs from more than 18 countries. He provides services such as advising, consulting, business planning, training, and small business financial management including accounting and tax consulting. He has also provided consulting and training services to Canadian and Philippine non-government organizations that aim to help clients secure or create livelihoods. Dye's academic pursuits have led him to study in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, earning a degree in International Development Studies from Dalhousie University, an MBA from St. Mary's University, a master's degree in community and economic



development from Penn State University, and a doctorate in social science from University of Leicester. He has also earned a micro-finance professional certification from the United Nations Development Program and financial industry certifications in accounting and business taxation. Dye is an active researcher and writer. He has published peer-reviewed articles in the *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship and Community Development*. He has published peer-reviewed book chapters in *Entrepreneurship, Community, and Community Development* and the *Research Handbook on Entrepreneurship in Developing Economies*. He has presented research at academic conferences in Canada and the United Kingdom. In July 2021, he co-convoked an international panel on economic justice at the European Association of Development Research and Training Institute's conference in The Hague, Netherlands. To date, he has visited 48 countries and still has a long list of regions he wants to explore.

**Emily Fetsch, MA**, is the director of fiscal policy at Kansas Action for Children where she works to center policy decisions relevant to economic, racial, and social justice. Such focus includes budget and tax policy, as well as economic family support programs. Previously, she was a researcher at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Public Religion Research Institute and served as the associate director at the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. She earned a bachelor of arts with double majors in justice and peace studies and political science, as well as a minor in theology, from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota and earned a master of arts in political science from the University of Kansas.

**Michael W-P Fortunato, PhD**, is an internationally published scholar, researcher, author, entrepreneur, community developer, educator, public speaker, and innovator, and CFO and founding partner of Texas-based community consulting group Creative Insight Community Development (CICD). Fortunato received a PhD degree in rural sociology and a master of science in community economic development from Penn State University's College of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education in 2011. He also holds a dual bachelor's degree in finance/international business and international studies, also from Penn State University. He is a subject area expert in the fields of community and economic development, community-based entrepreneurship, rural and small urban development strategy, social science research, and community/regional leadership. From 2013 to 2017, he moved to Texas to become assistant professor of sociology, engaged scholar, and director of the Center for Rural Studies at Sam Houston State University. Since 2005, Fortunato's research and practice have focused on developing better strategies to revitalize rural communities and economies and declining cities and towns through more effective collaborative action, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.

He has conducted research and outreach—and been a featured trainer/expert—in dozens of rural communities and small towns; and at major conferences, on radio shows, guest blogs, and educational/training seminars on three continents. He has co-authored two books on entrepreneurial community development (with Routledge). Fortunato also serves as an associate editor of the *Entrepreneurship Research Journal* (ERJ).

**Chris Jackson, MA**, is a research analyst at the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council. He provides expertise on economic, demographic, business data and research to complement economic development efforts to help new businesses grow in Overland Park, attract and retain existing businesses, and foster a healthy and prosperous community of businesses. His areas of focus for the Chamber and Economic Development Council include the local labor market, the entrepreneurship community in the region, and emerging economic development strategies. Previously, he worked as a consultant with the Enterprise Center in Johnson County and as a research assistant at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Jackson earned a bachelor of arts degree, majoring in economics, and a master of arts economics degree both from the University of Missouri–Columbia.

**William “Bill” V. Lewis Jr., PhD, MBA, CFP, CPM, and ChFC**, has been an investment advisor and portfolio manager for more than three decades. He also serves as a commissioner of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. His undergraduate degree and MBA are from Wilkes University, and he holds an MSFS from The American College of Financial Services, and he earned an MPA and doctorate from Lehigh University.

**Don Macke, PhD**, leads e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (formerly the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship), a new initiative with NetWork Kansas to build sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems across North America. Macke has over 40 years of community economic development and policy experience. He was most recently the co-founder and co-director of the national Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. Through this work, Macke helps communities and regions throughout North America grow entrepreneur-focused economic development strategies and ecosystems. Macke calls Nebraska home and he is a proud resident of America’s Great Plains Region.

**Michael “Mike” Mikeworth, MBA**, is a founder of Venture Call LLC, has been in the “people-development business” throughout his careers that have spanned the private, governmental, and non-profit work sectors. His foundational belief is that each person has a unique blend of gifts and aptitudes that directs his/her motivation to work. Successful organizational and personnel development has been built on this premise while working as owner of Synergos Consulting, working with organizations that needed skills assessment of employees and infrastructure

remodeling; workforce director responsible for delivering government-funded workforce programs/services to the employers and job seekers; founder/executive director of faith-based nonprofit 501(c)3 in 1996, Just People, Inc., that has assisted hundreds of people in finding jobs; associate pastor of start-up North First Community Church (currently named, Grace Point Church in Abilene); and region sales manager for Frito-Lay responsible for \$20 million budget and 80 employees. Mikeworth earned a bachelor of arts degree in education from Western Illinois University.

**Yasuyuki “Yas” Motoyama, PhD**, is an assistant professor at the City and Regional Planning of the Knowlton School at The Ohio State University. He conducts research about regional economic development and urban vibrancy through innovation and entrepreneurship. He is the author of two books and 25 journal articles in economic development, geography, regional science, and business journals. Motoyama was a post-doctoral fellow with the Center for Nanotechnology in Society at the University of California, Santa Barbara, a research director at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and an assistant professor of geography and business at University of Kansas. Motoyama earned a bachelor of arts with triple majors in history, international relations, and political science from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He earned a master of public administration from Cornell University, and a PhD in city and regional planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Kenneth G. Okrepkie, MHR**, serves as the regional manager for Ben Franklin Technology Partners, where he oversees investments in a portfolio of more than 40 companies in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Each year this group of companies will generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue creating good family sustaining jobs in the region and for every \$1 Ben Franklin invested in its companies, they return \$3.90 in tax revenue back to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Prior to Ben Franklin in 2004, he joined the Great Valley Technology Alliance, now TecBridge, as a vice-president. He is credited with creating the Lackawanna and Luzerne County Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ) Program that generates more than \$2 million each year for technology companies in the region, now totaling \$26.4 million since the inception of the program. A graduate of the University of Scranton, Okrepkie holds an undergraduate degree in marketing and a master’s degree in human resources. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at the University of Scranton Kania School of Management teaching in the Entrepreneurship program, where he has been selected into the Sigma Nu Tau Entrepreneurship Honor Society, while also being recognized as the 2017 Pennsylvania Technology Acceleration Leader of the Year by Accelerate PA. In 2018, he received the CANDO Chairman’s Award. Okrepkie provided the Johnson College 2017 Commencement Speech and received the 2013 TecBridge Bill McNally Mentor of the Year Award. He was a Wilkes University Allan P. Kirby

Center Mentor of the Year recipient in 2016 and NEPA Business Journal “Top 20 Under 40 Business Professional” in 2008.

**Montressa L. Washington, PhD**, is the director of Shenandoah University’s Institute for Entrepreneurship and is an assistant professor of management in the Shenandoah University School of Business. Washington worked in management consulting for 17 years, specializing in change management, technology adoption, and business transformation before transitioning into academia. She teaches courses in entrepreneurship and design thinking. She holds a Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) SCP certification and teaches courses in human resources at the University as well as for SHRM. She enjoys mentoring and coaching students about career choices as well as nominating high-performing students to the Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society, of which she is a member. Washington’s education credentials include a doctorate in management from Case Western Reserve University, an MBA in international business and marketing from Johns Hopkins University, and a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Maryland College Park. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Zonta International, and Leaderships Maryland and Howard County.

**Jason L. Weigle, PhD**, is a business support analyst at Wheat Belt Public Power District and former an associate extension educator at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension. Weigle’s work, teaching, and research over the last 20 years have focused around the interactions of community and environment. He brings a wide variety of work experience ranging from inspecting and permitting landfills for the state of Alaska to work in the unconventional oil and gas development in the United States and Canada to starting and running his own woodworking business. Both his master’s in community and economic development and doctoral research in rural sociology—both from Penn State University—focused on community and the challenges facing rural areas due to competing interests in natural resource development and use. Weigle’s work in extension focused around community capacity development and asset building, with particular emphasis on entrepreneurial ecosystem development.

**Jason Wiens** is a policy director in entrepreneurship for the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, where he leads the Foundation’s strategy to reduce barriers to entrepreneurship by improving public policy. He oversees a national grant portfolio of advocacy projects that educate policy makers about how government can support entrepreneurship and directs the Kauffman-led Start Us Up coalition. Previously, he spent 10 years on Capitol Hill, where he led bipartisan efforts on entrepreneurship, immigration, and economic mobility in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. He earned a bachelor of arts in political science with a minor in sociology from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois.

# Figures

1.1	Example of an entrepreneurial ecosystem	5
1.2	Example of an entrepreneurial community	6
1.3	A Concept of community illustrates major elements often found in a community	20
3.1	Map of Pennsylvania highlighting NEPA	62
3.2	County representation of responses in NEPA	64
3.3	Educational attainment of entrepreneurs and leaders in NEPA	66
3.4	Importance of entrepreneurs to community in NEPA	75
3.5	Support entrepreneurship as a lifestyle in NEPA	76
3.6	Treatment within the communities of NEPA	76
3.7	From NEPA Survey Question A17	77
3.8	Word Cloud of Key Concepts from Survey Open-Ended Responses in NEPA	80
3.9	Political control in NEPA	83
3.10	Buy local emphasis in NEPA	88
3.11	Regional Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in NEPA	103
3.12	Entrepreneurial Communities in NEPA	104
4.1	Map of Nebraska	115
4.2	Superior Ecosystem	126
4.3	Hastings Ecosystem	127
4.4	Ord Ecosystem	128
5.1	Map of Indiana	133
5.2	Logo of M3	143
5.3	Logo of IMC	144
5.4	Music Industry Entrepreneurial Social Group in Madison, Indiana	168
5.5	Indiana Music Industry Entrepreneurial Community	169
6.1	Entrepreneur Social Group	178
6.2	Map of Nova Scotia, Canada	180
7.1	Map of Texas	213
7.2	Faith Community Entrepreneurial Social Group in Abilene, Texas	222
8.1	Map of Minnesota	225
8.2	Decolonization of Community Economic Development	235
9.1	Map of Tennessee with Hamilton County Noted	261
9.2	Innovation District of Chattanooga, Tennessee	266

# Tables

1.1	Levels of Analysis in Entrepreneurship	2
3.1	Demographics of NEPA Survey Respondents	64
3.2	NEPA Entrepreneur Business Demographics	64
3.3	Top Sectors Responding to the NEPA Survey	65
3.4	Location of Entrepreneurs' Businesses in NEPA	65
3.5	Educational Attainment of Entrepreneurs and Leaders in NEPA	69
3.6	NEPA Survey: What variables led to you owning your own business?	72
3.7	NEPA Survey: Where did the money come from to fund your business?	72
3.8	Income of NEPA Entrepreneurs	73
3.9	NEPA Survey: What are your technical resources?	79
3.10	Higher Education and Entrepreneurship in NEPA	94
3.11	Educational Attainment for NEPA Population Aged 25–64	98
3.12	Gaps and Progress in Entrepreneurship from 1999 to 2019 in NEPA	100
6.1	Individual Participant Characteristics Biographic and Demographic Information	195
8.1	Business Entrepreneurial Performance Scales in Relation to Community Spheres of Civic Action	234
8.2	Distribution Channel Assessment	243
10.1	Meta-Analysis Comparison of the Case Studies	294

# Acknowledgments

While our names appear on the cover of this book, we personify our life's journeys. These journeys capsule much love, support, discussion, life experience, formal education, experiential and co-curricular education, trial-and-error, and "carpe diem" attitudes with execution. It is through family, friends, colleagues near and far, lifetime support actors, teachers and professors, and organizational leaders who have invested in our success and thought processes.

First, we certainly appreciate the diversity of our contributing authors who bring a breadth of personal, academic, practical, and experiential backgrounds. We are very thankful for Ted Alter, Rani A. Bhattacharyya, Bruce Dye, Emily Fetsch, Chris Jackson, Ronald Leach, Don Macke, Mike Mikeworth, Yasuyuki Motoyama, Kenneth G. Okrepkie, Montressa L. Washington, Jason L. Weigle, and Jason Wiens. A special thank you is due to Bill Lewis for writing introductory histories for each of the case studies. We are also thankful for reviewers and copy editors who always challenge and improve writing through thorough content verification, proofing, and revisions. Additionally, many librarians have been valuable resources, including Bethlehem Area Public Library (PA), Luzerne County (PA) Public Library, and Pierce Streetsboro Library (Portage County District Library, OH) staffers, and reference librarians at Hiram College, Missouri State University, Penn State University, Shippensburg University, University of Missouri-Columbia, and Wilkes University. Special thanks is also extended for permission by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation for inclusion of the case study on Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Special thanks to Dr. Ellen E. Newell, associate professor of psychology at Wilkes University, for helping co-develop the research instruments used in the Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) survey and interviews, respectively, which catapulted the creation of this work. That research was made possible through funding from the Wilkes University Faculty Development Committee seed research grant, summer Mentor Grant, and the Provost's Research and Scholarship Grant. Gratitude is extended to the staff at the Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development at Wilkes University for operating the online survey. Additionally, we are thankful

for encouragement and support from former colleagues Dr. Jeff Alves, Dr. Jennifer Edmonds, and Dr. Anne Heineman Batory, faculty emerita. A million thanks for helping with data analysis is extended to Dr. Fern K. Willits, faculty emerita, at Penn State University. Special appreciation is afforded to Dr. Chris Hampel, proprietor of *Family Prescription Counter* in Duryea, Pennsylvania, for sponsoring the key stakeholder meeting and reports for *First Look: Entrepreneurial Communities Research Results* on April 5, 2019, by Clevenger, Fortunato, and Willits (2019).

A million thanks are extended to Wilkes University students who helped with literature collection, survey mailings, field interviews, data entry, and auditing (listed alphabetically): Abdullah Altaieb, Taylor Baker, Tommy Bowen, Jakob Chiasson, Regan E. Clevenger, Dianna Conner, Alanna Denauski, Troy Everetts, Alexis Featherman, Morgan Galluzo, David Graff, Britton Heim, Derek Jolley, Kim Keller, Allison Kristofco, Michelle Lehman, Ethan Lonstein, Kate Mahoney, Colleen McCabe, Emelie Meinhart, Mike Murphy, Samantha Reinhardt, Nicole Rizzolini, Zach Walser, and Conner Wylie.

An extreme “kudos” and thank you to the tireless efforts of highly motivated, intelligent, and dedicated research assistants at Wilkes University: Britton Heim, David Graff, Michelle Lehman, Kim Keller, Taylor Baker, and Derek Jolley. We are also appreciative of graphic design work by Chad Bonk at Storyteller Photography and copyediting by Melissa Kougher.

Morgan R. Clevenger, Hiram College, Ohio, USA,  
and Monarch Business School, Switzerland

Michael W-P Fortunato,  
Creative Insight Community Development (CICD)  
and The Pennsylvania State University, USA

## Reference

Clevenger, M. R., Fortunato, M. W-P., & Willits, F. K. (2019). *First look: Entrepreneurial communities research*. NEPA Stakeholders.



# Preface

As of this writing, modern global society is left with few good answers about how to best move forward post-2020 economic crisis—while simultaneously inheriting a deeply adapted social order that continues to change the way social life and business are structured. As is often true with all social change, entrepreneurs have been among the first to embrace and advance that adaptation, often filling critical needs and finding new ways to make life a little bit better in a time of crisis.

An important adaptation from a macroeconomic perspective has been the accelerated migration of the workforce from dense urban centers to the suburbs, exurbs, the regional hinterland, and rural areas. In a few cases like New York, San Francisco, San Jose, and Boston, workers (especially tech workers) and entrepreneurs have left these regions altogether to escape high rents and overhead, finding new opportunities to lend their talents to smaller growth centers like Austin, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Sacramento, Dallas, and other smaller metros that were already growing before the pandemic began (Cherry, 2021; Kolko et al., 2021; Scigliano, 2021; Patino, 2020). For many other cities, the migration was mostly intra-regional, began before 2020, and was accelerated because of the need for space beyond the dense living quarters of the central city (Scigliano, 2021; Patino, 2020). To anyone who follows the entrepreneurial ecosystem literature, this is *big news*. It means that talent is fleeing some of the most important and well-established entrepreneurial regional or city ecosystems to join or build emergent entrepreneurial ecosystems in other entrepreneurial communities elsewhere. This is a highly disruptive pattern happening within some of the ecosystem literature's "favorite" ecosystems, as entrepreneurial leaders and feeders spread out, relocate, go virtual, or relocate entirely. Dense networks of social relations have been unsettled and reorganized at a rapid pace, as have the roles of many of the players within those ecosystems—think of physical event planners and traditional conveners as just one example. This phenomenon means that entrepreneurial talent has sought out smaller and smaller environments for their operations, eschewing economies of scale to an extent while seeking a better balance between access to customers, suppliers, and talent; affordable cost of doing business; higher quality of life; and a greater

lifestyle orientation overall. In short, entrepreneurs are increasingly investing in smaller places that were once off the entrepreneurial ecosystem map, and so far, many are succeeding beyond the traditional centers of global entrepreneurial capital (Goetz & Han, 2020; Kniggendorf, 2019).

In *Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems: Theories in Culture, Empowerment, and Leadership* (Clevenger & Fortunato, 2022), we reviewed ecosystem concepts, brought the reader up to speed on the latest research in entrepreneurial ecosystem and community dynamics, and raised the issue that ecosystems—as in nature—can occur or be catalyzed in nearly any environment as long as they are well suited to local social, economic, and environmental contexts. Thus, these entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities can thrive in places that are quite off the radar to much of the literature, including small towns and rural areas, although they certainly look and feel quite different. The crescendo of smaller-scale ecosystems may in turn be supported by changing behaviors around technology, although more research must be done to fully understand how technologies like virtual meetings and cloud-based team management systems have impacted the entrepreneurial environment (Corvello et al., 2021; Ritter & Pedersen, 2020). In the current macro-socioeconomic context, the emergence of entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems in smaller places is likely to grow in importance, holding promise for reinvestment in areas that have been marked by economic and population decline for decades (see Cromartie, 2017). And instead of being a breeding ground for high-growth, high-tech firms (although not impossible), perhaps an emerging goal of smaller entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities is a healthy mix of small- to medium-size firms serving regional needs: creating lifestyle and tourism opportunities, encouraging “do-it-yourself” innovation through a combination of incubators, co-working environments, and art and maker spaces, and finding niche export specialties grounded in local tastes, history, talent, and opportunity. We also explored the idea of entrepreneurial *empowerment*, or the ability of individuals and groups (particularly disadvantaged and oppressed social groups) to transcend barriers and successfully enter the entrepreneurial economy. Perhaps the ideal ecosystem of the future is less concentrated and rarified than the Silicon Valleys of the world and more of an “everyday ecosystem” featuring greater overall participation in the entrepreneurship economy (i.e., more entrepreneurs per capita), with a greater focus on meeting local needs, exploring local opportunities, and creating global niches from one’s living room, garage, or incubator. It is less of a high-growth economy and more of a high-specialty, lifestyle-oriented, easily adaptable economy that blends a great life in the places entrepreneurs care about with barrier-spanning technologies that provide global access to customers, suppliers, and services.

This book features a collection of case studies from just such “everyday” entrepreneurial economies. Some are larger and more layered than

others, while some are inchoate and grounded mainly in peer-to-peer mentorship. We believe that all contain lessons for how to start building an entrepreneurial ecosystem or community *now*, in the place you care about, using the very best resources available to you. Each chapter is organized in a way that draws the eye to the key lessons of each case, the cultural and historical context, the methods used to analyze the case, and how entrepreneurs became empowered in each case. We hope that you enjoy this highly practice-oriented look into seven diverse, interesting, and instructive everyday entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities.

Morgan R. Clevenger  
Associate Professor of Management  
The Scarborough School of Business & Communication  
Hiram College, OH, USA  
and

Professor of Management and Post-Doctoral Fellow in Corporate  
Social Responsibility (CSR) and Global Business Ethics  
Monarch Business School, Zug, Switzerland

Michael W-P Fortunato  
Founding Partner, Creative Insight Community Development (CICD)  
New River, AZ; Madison, IN; State College, PA; and Santa Rosa, CA  
and  
Instructor of Community and Economic Development (CEDEV)  
Research Specialist at the Institutional and  
Behavioral Economics Working Group (IBEWG)  
The Pennsylvania State University, University Park,  
Pennsylvania (USA)

## References

- Cherry, A. (2021, January 19). Austin was the most popular destination for Redfin. Com users looking to move to a different metro in the fourth quarter: A record 30% of Redfin.Com users looked to move to a different metro area. *PR Newswire*. [www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/austin-was-most-popular-destination-redfin-com/docview/2478753353/se-2?accountid=13158](http://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/austin-was-most-popular-destination-redfin-com/docview/2478753353/se-2?accountid=13158)
- Clevenger, M. R., & Fortunato, M. W-P. (2022). *Entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems: Theories in culture, empowerment, and leadership*. Routledge.
- Cromartie, J. (2017). *Rural areas show overall population decline and shifting regional patterns of population change* (No. 1490–2017–3197).
- Corvello, V., De Carolis, M., Verteramo, S., & Steiber, A. (2021). The digital transformation of entrepreneurial work. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEBR-01-2021-0067>
- Goetz, S. J., & Han, Y. (2020). Latent innovation in local economies. *Research Policy*, 49(2), 103909.
- Kniggendorf, A. (2019). Making a small town home. *The Kaufmann Foundation*. [www.kauffman.org/currents/making-a-small-town-home/](http://www.kauffman.org/currents/making-a-small-town-home/)

- Kolko, J., Badger, E., & Bui, Q. (2021, April 19). *How the pandemic did, and didn't, change where Americans move*. [www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/how-pandemic-did-didn-t-change-where-americans/docview/2517171355/se-2?accountid=13158](http://www.proquest.com/blogs-podcasts-websites/how-pandemic-did-didn-t-change-where-americans/docview/2517171355/se-2?accountid=13158)
- Patino, M. (2020, September 16). What we actually know about how Americans are moving during Covid." *Bloomberg CityLab*. [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-16/the-truth-about-american-migration-during-covid](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-16/the-truth-about-american-migration-during-covid))
- Ritter, T., & Pedersen, C. L. (2020). Analyzing the impact of the coronavirus crisis on business models. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 88, 214–224.
- Scigliano, E. (2021). Covid means remote workers can live anywhere. So where's "anywhere"? *Politico*.



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

# 1 An Introduction to Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Entrepreneurial Communities to Empower Entrepreneurs

*Michael W-P Fortunato and Morgan R. Clevenger*

## Introduction

This book is about *entrepreneurship development*, or the cultivation of both entrepreneurial action and a supportive environment that foster and reinforce one another in a particular organization, place, territory, or industry. We derive this term primarily from two fields of research: *entrepreneurship* and *community development*, so the term *entrepreneurship development* can be thought of as a sort of hybrid between the two. We will get into the details of how these two ideas combine shortly, but to put it as simply as possible, entrepreneurship development is simply the deliberate, strategic cultivation of *that which supports entrepreneurship*—anytime, anywhere, for anyone. It is a broad area of action on purpose, as it speaks to the idea that anyone, anywhere, at any point in their community’s or organization’s story can do something, *anything*, to support entrepreneurship. Whether you are a researcher, development practitioner or economic developer, an entrepreneur (at any stage), a civic leader, a business leader, or some combination of these, it is our goal that by reading these pages, you will learn more about the ways that anyone, from any part of an entrepreneurial community or ecosystem, can take immediate action to stimulate and support entrepreneurship. You too can become an *entrepreneurship developer* or *entrepreneurship development researcher* from just about any position you hold in your community or organization.

A kaleidoscope is described as “a mixture of different things” or “a changing pattern or scene” (Merriam-Webster, 2021c) as noted in our first book, “The concept of an entrepreneurial community [or entrepreneurial ecosystem] is dynamic and ever changing—a kaleidoscope of individuals, firms, communities, and all their related complexities” (Clevenger, 2017, p. 37). The rest of this book digs deeper into the actors, organizations, feeders and support enablers, processes, community supports, and governments reflected in this kaleidoscope to promote entrepreneuring as well as entrepreneurship at multiple levels of analysis as illustrated in Table 1.1. But where does this constant, stochastic change come from? From where do we derive the “kaleidoscope” analogy in a seemingly linear idea-plan-assemble-support-launch process? As we move from the individual toward the collective, new dynamics impact upon the business launch

*Table 1.1* Levels of Analysis in Entrepreneurship

<i>Level</i>	<i>Level of Analysis</i>	<i>Functional Characteristics</i>
Macro-level 4	Worldwide level: global macro-sociological, global sociocultural, global society, global culture dynamics, global political economies; global entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities; global institution level	United Nations initiatives, human regulation context, global industrial relations, global business environments, global labor market dynamics, structures of resources and constraints, globalization, omnipreneurship
Macro-level 3	Environmental level: macro-sociological, national sociocultural, national society, national culture, political economy; national regulatory determinants; national entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities; national institution level	Social regulation context, industrial relations, national legislation, macro national business environments, national labor market dynamics, prevailing discourses of legitimacy, structures of resources and constraints, participation nationally toward globalization
Macro-level 2	Environmental level: macro-sociological; regional or state sociocultural; regional or state society; regional or state culture; supra-regional; political economy; regional or state regulatory determinants; regional and state entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities; regional or statewide clusters; inter-industry collaboration; institution level	Social regulation context, state legislations, macro-regional and state business environments, regional and state labor market dynamics, prevailing discourses of legitimacy, structures of resources and constraints via intra-state and inter-state concerns
Macro-level 1	Community level: sociological, sociocultural, sector or industry, market, community as organization, intra-industries, sector and industry entrepreneurial ecosystems; community clusters; localized regulatory determinants; entrepreneurial communities	Objective structures pertaining to the community organization and sector, industry rules and procedures, industry or sectoral patterns of legitimacy and competition, entrepreneurial networks (which may include associational, professional, and organizational linkages), informal codes of conduct, community and organizational history and culture, informal rules of legitimacy; feeders and supports for entrepreneurial communities
Meso-level 2	Population level: business ecosystems; entrepreneurial ecosystem(s)	Collective organizations serving a business or entrepreneurial ecosystem such as financial or network resources; strategies used to gain capital to legitimize their presence in the field

*(Continued)*

Table 1.1 (Continued)

<i>Level</i>	<i>Level of Analysis</i>	<i>Functional Characteristics</i>
Meso-level 1	Organization level: Enterprise or firm level; entrepreneurial ecosystem	Individual organizations (not collective) such as educational, financial, cultural, and network resources; strategies used to gain capital to legitimize their presence in the field
Micro-level	Individual level: entrepreneurs and small business owners	“Great person” school; psychological entrepreneurial attributes, biographies, and motivations; individual skills; hero’s tale focus; management function; leadership function; intrapreneurship; entrepreneur health and well-being

Expanded from Clevenger (2017, Table 2.1, pp. 24–25) and amalgamated from ideas from Aldrich and Fiol (1994), Aldrich and Wiedenmayer (1993), Bourdieu (1977, 1984a, 1984b, 1987, 1990, 1998), Carroll (1987), Cunningham and Lischeron (1991), Forson et al. (2014), Fortunato and Clevenger (2017a), Sedkaoui (2019), Thornton (1999), Uy et al. (2017), and Wiklund et al. (2019).

process that are well beyond the “sum of individual action.” We begin to see the emergence of *societal* and *cultural phenomena* that structure and order human action and interaction beyond the realm of individual utility maximization (Schmid, 2008; Hoffman, 1981)—the kind of “stuff” sociologists and anthropologists like to study and write about. What once seemed like a distant field of study examining the lived experience of people, often culturally distant people scattered across the globe, now seems to have new insights to contribute to our *own* entrepreneurial cultures in modern society.

### ***Levels of Analysis in the Ecology of Entrepreneurship***

Typologies help to organize levels of analysis for research. Understanding actors, their spaces, and their networks provides illumination and dialogue around specific opportunities for feeders and supports, policy, and metrics. Scholars divide entrepreneurs and their businesses; networks and alliances; clusters and districts; entrepreneurial ecosystems; entrepreneurial communities; and multiple regional, state, and national networks into various *levels of analysis* (Clevenger, 2017; Goldstein, 2003; Tappi, 2003). From our first book, we have slightly expanded on the levels of analysis to better describe the sociological dimensions and clarity in exploring entrepreneurial communities and entrepreneurial ecosystems (see Table 3.2). We have divided meso into two levels and added macro-level 4. Additionally, important expansion of relevant level phrases and some functional characteristics are included. The goal is trying to organize and better understand the complexity in the myriad of layers (cf. Courgeau, 2003; Lazega & Snijders, 2016). Note that *unit of analysis* is different from levels. Units may encompass the perspective view; the unit could be an



individual, an individual business, a town or city, a university, a consortium of higher education institutions, an incubator, or various entrepreneurial ecosystems (e.g., local, regional, state, or national), an entrepreneurial community (e.g., locally, regionally, in a state, or nationally), or collectives of any of those (Goldstein, 2003; Miller & Ács, 2017; Tappi, 2003).

### ***Entrepreneurial Community and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem***

A large part of our ambition here is to unpack the relationship between the *societal* and the *individual* in supporting entrepreneurial action by understanding those forces within an entrepreneurial community or ecosystem that transcend individual-level transactions, capacities, and capabilities. If you wonder, as we often do, why entrepreneurs in some communities seem to have a “tailwind” behind them, or why more entrepreneurs simply exist in some places while so few exist in others, you are asking the kinds of questions that keep us engaged in this work, doing cultural- and leadership-level research, and writing books like the one you are holding now! We hope to make the point again and again that an ingredient list is not enough. It is possible to have all the ingredients of a viable ecosystem, especially innovative entrepreneurs, and to never *actually* develop a mutually reinforcing cultural system of entrepreneurial support (see Breznitz & Taylor, 2014, for an example).

Developing any community, or ecosystem, requires a knowledge of *community development* as it relates specifically to the realm of communities of entrepreneurs and their supporters. Once distant from the field of entrepreneurship research, such insights are becoming requisite information for the generative establishment of any ecosystem. And this kind of community development knowledge is not immune from the same kinds of social tensions and dynamics found elsewhere in communities. Cultural norms matter, as do the prevalence of certain personalities and personality types, leadership styles, culturally situated ideas about progress and a vision of the future, conflict (sometimes petty), collaboration (sometimes tenuous), intentional or unintentional lack of inclusivity, dominant and protective behaviors, acting out, thinking out loud, generational differences, the bravery to voice counter-cultural ideas, activism, collective intentions, the list goes on nearly infinitely. When we speak of communities and ecosystems, we cannot avoid the language of real-world, everyday human dynamics, of “drama,” of great ambitions, and competing but equally feasible outcomes. We cannot shy away from discussions about *conflict*, not just risk and Knightian uncertainty as the literature would suggest (see Knight, 1921) but real human, interpersonal difference as a *catalyst* for innovation rather than an inhibitor (Johansson, 2004). We cannot avoid talking about our community of entrepreneurs as a very human collection of very ambitious and productive social deviants driven to break down existing systems through their capability to see a better path forward. (cf. Thomas & Autio, 2020; Thomas & Ritala, 2022.)

## ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

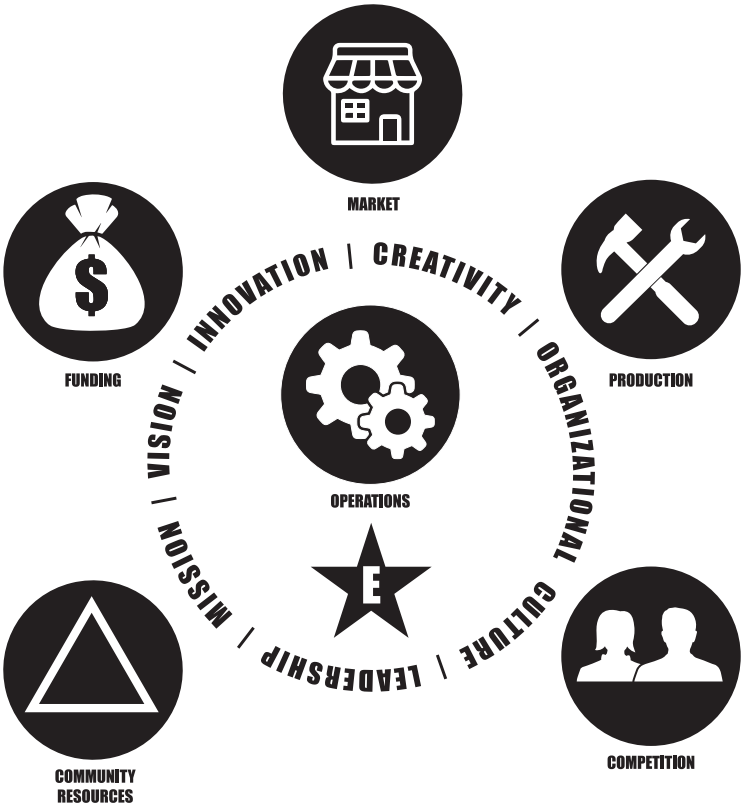


Figure 1.1 Example of an entrepreneurial ecosystem provides a visual representation of a lean, entrepreneurial ecosystem. Note that a money bag represents a high percentage of personal investment.

It should be evident from this book's title that we will be focusing on entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems, which have received increased attention and very rapid conceptual development in the entrepreneurship literature over the past few years. These are the "process-oriented" side of entrepreneurship development, focusing more on the dynamic interrelationships among people than on the static conditions that give rise to higher rates of entrepreneurship.

Looking at Figure 1.1, it is important to note the placement of an entrepreneur and their relative ascendancy and power in the overall model compared to Figure 1.2 with a broader range of actors. Furthermore, the structure and density of networks across both systems are very different, along with the

## ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY

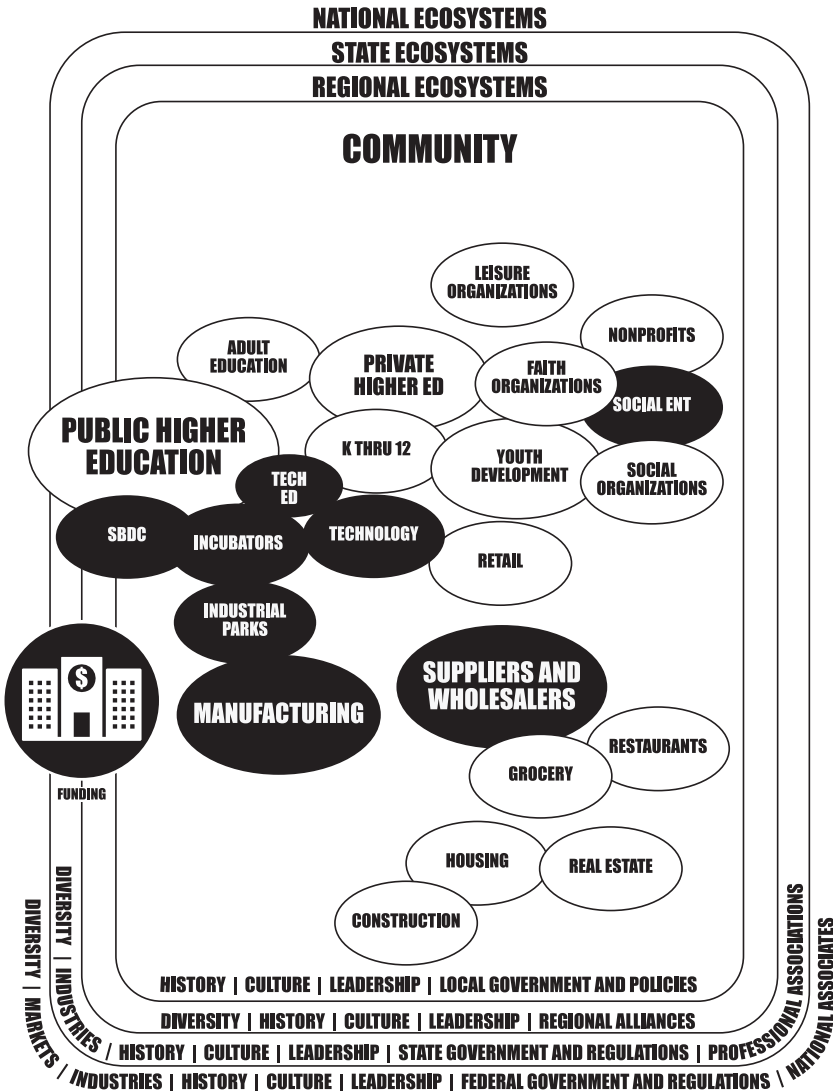


Figure 1.2 Example of an entrepreneurial community provides a visual representation of the wide range of ‘feeders’ and ‘supports’ across a community contributing to the work of entrepreneurs within an entrepreneurial community. White lettered items on black backgrounds represent the entrepreneurial community as predominant players who support entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial ecosystem. This illustration is not comprehensive yet provides examples and ideas.

emphasis of those networks. In *entrepreneurial communities*, such networks seek system stability, continuity, and egalitarian democracy.

We will often use the term “entrepreneurial community and ecosystem development,” and we will occasionally use the terms “community” and “ecosystem” interchangeably, but we want to make the point that these are *not quite the same*. (See Key Terms later.)

## Overview

The case studies we feature in this book display the efforts of intelligent people from ordinary backgrounds, most typically business owners, government officials, nonprofit leaders, ordinary citizens, artists, and other free thinkers—most without the benefit of a PhD (let alone one in entrepreneurship). If they can do it, anyone can, and most on-the-ground ecosystem builders would tell you the same. Data from our 3-year study in Pennsylvania also confirm and expand on these ideas in Chapter 3. Likewise, case studies in Chapter 4 on Nebraska, Chapter 5 on Indiana, and Chapter 9 on Tennessee have entrepreneurial community discussion—as well as entrepreneurial ecosystems. Does this mean that a vibrant town of 12,500, one-fourth that size (and the approximate size of Madison, Indiana, which will be featured later in the book in Chapter 5) should simply “throw in the towel” when it comes to ecosystem development? Examples of entrepreneurial ecosystems are presented in case studies in Chapter 6 in Nova Scotia, Canada, and Chapter 7 in Abilene, Texas. Chapter 8 provides a complex topic of decolonization with a framework to help Native Nations in Minnesota.

Chapter 2 gives a brief overview of the importance and diversity of the research to be presented. Chapters 3 through 9 provide illumination into entrepreneurial ecosystems and some embeddedness in various entrepreneurial communities. As noted by Neergaard and Ulhøi (2007b), a variety of methodological research tools are warranted in entrepreneurship research. Further, Bygrave (2007) noted that quantitative isolation focuses on the “study of central tendency,” which is useful in demand field analyses but does not support Schumpeterian outliers (p. 22). Thus, a wide variety of qualitative research methods better explore the essence of experiences involving entrepreneurs, local communities, leaders, and networks (Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007a). This “practice-oriented endeavour” must be viewed through the lens of entrepreneurs’ actions and experiences (Berglund, 2007, p. 75).

Chapter 3 provides some findings from an eight-county case study. It highlights a robust 3-year study exploring behaviors, self-reflection, and community embeddedness through entrepreneurs and local leaders. The study highlights progress being made in utilization of education and community networks. The anecdotal and demographic findings also highlight gaps and dysfunctional areas that create opportunity for refinement, partnering, and creation of new support resources.

In Chapter 4, three different entrepreneurial community initiatives in rural Nebraska are explored. Each case study reflects a different stage in the entrepreneurial community process, from initiatives just starting up to advanced and highly functioning programs. Characteristics of each community and program, highlighting the similarities and differences that make each one unique, are discussed. Concluding lessons learned create areas for more discovery to occur.

Chapter 5 is about an incipient arts- and music-based, small-town ecosystem in Madison. This study examines the emergence of the Madison Music Movement (M3) in Madison, Indiana, having a population of approximately 12,500. It is rare to see a community of this size attempting to become an established “music city” in the style of larger cities like Nashville and Austin. However, this small community recognizes how emphasizing the arts and quality of life also energize the tech and digital media sectors (among others) in Austin, and the finance, insurance, and health-care sectors in Nashville (among others). Along with growth in those sectors, economic diversity followed, creating important opportunities for entrepreneurs. In the same fashion, Madison’s emerging music ecosystem has a distinctively small-town flavor that emphasizes interpersonal relationships, cooperation, and cultivating an outstanding quality of life with the clear expectation of creating entrepreneur opportunities—both within and beyond music.

Chapter 6 tells the story of a group of 18 entrepreneurs functioning within the entrepreneurial ecology of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. It focuses on the point-in-time when they entered entrepreneurship. This point-in-time is the focus of the study because, at that time, these entrepreneurs were experiencing difficult personal circumstances, including extended periods of unemployment and underemployment. While none were destitute, when compared to those around them who were fully employed, they were experiencing comparative disadvantages. The disadvantages included having little or no earned income and having to deal with the cultural pressures associated with not being able to secure full-time work. The study specifically focuses on the cultural impacts on their entrepreneur aspirations, attitudes, and behaviors and, ultimately, on their turning to entrepreneurship to relieve their difficult circumstances. It does so by framing the study within the individual and culture nexus of the entrepreneurial ecology in which the participants function.

Chapter 7 is about a faith-based, learning-oriented, grassroots ecosystem in north Texas. Entrepreneurs epitomize *sovereign individuals* necessary for building the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. In the current American generation that is tilting toward massive collectivism and group identity structures, the *entrepreneur* stands as a bulwark of individual thought and pursuit of a specific purpose. This chapter could possibly be considered by academics as somewhat autoethnographic in nature, but for many it is a narrative based on a participant-observer who was content to instigate a gathering of

like-minded “wanna-be” entrepreneurs which (surprisingly) has continued to meet weekly for more than 4 years (at the time of this writing). Rather than trying to generate a movement among the local “movers and shakers” of a small city, the focus was upon folks who self-identified as interested in examining the feasibility of starting/expanding their own enterprise.

Chapter 8 explores Northwest Minnesota, which is home to a set of diverse but remote communities. Two of the largest and most isolated are the American Indian communities of the Red Lake Nation and White Earth Nation, whose ancestors and citizens have suffered marginalization and neglect by both the State of Minnesota and the U.S. Government since 1851. Yet the people have survived with their creative spirit, determination, and relationship to their homelands. In addition to these nations, there are numerous rural communities in the region that are proud of their immigrant origins. These residents have channeled their need to survive into a very innovative and self-sufficient cultures, while also struggling with an aging and declining population. The challenge in uniting this dynamic region is how to sustain and support the economic self-sufficiency and collective identity of all residents. One potential partner in addressing this issue can be University of Minnesota Extension. Ever since the origins of the Land Grant University concept (with the Smith-Lever Act), the Extension has been charged with providing research and education on problems of local, regional, state, or national concern. The University Extension delivers public education and outreach, specifically in the areas of Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family Development and Community, and Economic Development. To better understand the opportunity that UMN Extension and its community development partners inhabit to uplift the indigenous economies of these two Native Nations and strengthen the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, it is paramount to explore thematic terms and concepts not addressed currently by Extension programs. These topics relate to considerations that should be taken into account when planning to develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem that serves both American Indian communities and their neighbors.

Chapter 9 examines Gig—the high-speed, one-gigabit fiber internet service—which is identified as the backbone of the infrastructure as well as its environment for entrepreneurship deeply rooted with multiple layers of supporting organizations with decades of efforts in community and economic development in the area. More specifically, three layers of intertwined supporting organizations are identified: (1) two philanthropic foundations, (2) four direct entrepreneurship support organizations, and (3) four organizations in the public sector, including the mayor’s office. The analysis of these major support organizations not only makes a good list of “ingredients” but also provides implications for the “recipe” in the context of the ecosystem of entrepreneurship through the complex web of relationships between each layer and each organization. The objective of this chapter is to analyze those “recipe” roles that mayors could possibly play in the context of promoting

entrepreneurship ecosystem. In particular, the mayoral roles are in three parts: (1) major players who are involved in and supporting entrepreneurship, map them out, and cultivate relationships by periodically meeting them; (2) being a cheerleader of entrepreneurship by formally establishing the mayor's task force or by informally attending entrepreneurship-related events and talking about successful entrepreneurs regionally; and (3) convening and brokering entrepreneurship supporters, including non-profit organizations, local anchor companies, and the local university.

Chapter 10 provides thoughts to summarize and investigate important commonalities and differences across nine case studies. The analytic framework for building entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems is applied to understand how each of the case studies catalyzed action around entrepreneur empowerment. Key lessons are presented, along with a call to action and potential additional research.

Dana and Dana (2005) recommend less-commonly used qualitative approaches and case studies for understanding the entrepreneur *in their cultural context*. Case studies, particularly those that involve qualitative and mixed methods, can be enormously powerful for understanding the nature of *processes* behind social phenomena like entrepreneurship as they occur in their social context or surrounding environment (Feagin et al., 1991). According to Yin (2017), case studies should be used when:

The research question involves *how* and *why*, and not just *what* or *how much*.

When the researcher has very little control over the events being studied.

When the researcher wishes to understand contemporary phenomena in a real-life context.

Yin (2017) further states that case studies are particularly appropriate for situations when the boundary between the phenomenon being studied and its context is not clear, which is particularly true in the case of entrepreneurial ecosystems, where ecosystem-oriented behavior may be difficult to discern at the early stages from other economic or community-oriented behavior. What helps us to make that distinction is a more thorough, grounded, clear understanding from the perspectives of ecosystem builders and participants about *how* the ecosystem matters in their life and business. This is echoed by Dana and Dana (2005), who note that qualitative research enables researchers to get beyond the cultural limitations of the questionnaire, which may not be culturally appropriate, or which may be asking the wrong questions—or the right questions in an unclear or misleading way based on local culture and history. Feagin et al. (1991) stress four major advantages to case study research when studying complex social phenomena (like entrepreneurship):

- 1) It permits the grounding of observations and concepts about social action and social structures in natural settings studied at close hand.

- 2) It provides information from a number of sources and over a period of time, thus permitting a more holistic study of complex social networks and of complexes of social action and social meanings.
- 3) It can furnish the dimensions of time and history to the study of social life, thereby enabling the investigator to examine continuity and change in lifeworld patterns.
- 4) It encourages and facilitates, in practice, theoretical innovation and generalization.

(pp. 6–7)

Feagin et al. (1991) and Yin (2017) promote that there is analytic power in even one well-constructed and well-executed case study, as even one set of observations can provide a diverse wealth of knowledge about how the parts of a system fit together and interact. For that reason, we hope that each case study found in this book is individually useful.

However, there is even more power in the analysis of *multiple case studies* (Yin, 2017). While falling short of providing the same benchmarks of external generalizability found in quantitative research, multiple case studies enable the use of discriminant, thematic cross-case analysis techniques (see Audet & D’Amboise, 2001; Perry, 1998) and pattern matching (Marquart, 1990) to identify areas of theoretical convergence (those phenomena that exist across multiple cases) and divergence (those phenomena that are idiosyncratic to each case). From this, we hope to identify recurring themes from across the case studies that can be instructive in terms of ways to support the generation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem or community in a variety of environments.

### ***Selection of Cases***

For this book, we invited case studies from a variety of entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities, quite on purpose. By inviting variety in the stories we tell here, we are drawing from a wide range of experiences with entrepreneurial community and ecosystem building. This diversity is favorable, not only because it illustrates the immense range of backgrounds of the community and ecosystem builders, local advantages, types of businesses and institutions involved, but also because it demonstrates entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities at various stages of their development, including their struggles and stagnation. We aim to avoid the selection bias of only presenting successful cases, and, instead, privilege and prioritize a very “real world” examination of what it *means* to be an entrepreneurial ecosystem and/or an entrepreneurial community builder. Sometimes, that process means dealing with major challenges, finding one’s self in a declining economic region, struggling to retain community members, or the total uncertainty of whether or not the proposed ecosystem will have the intended economic effects. There could



be differences in opinion about what the ecosystem *should* be. Should it be focused on economic growth and technology, against Isenberg's (2010) well-known admonition against trying to become the next Silicon Valley; or should it be focused on lifestyle, or food and agriculture, or the arts, or tourism, or some other local advantage? These are important considerations, but our question remains stalwart in the face of such variation: What can we learn *across* the diverse experiences of entrepreneurial community and ecosystem builders and what commonalities will we find in their experience that is instructive to others?

### ***Limitations of the Approach***

The use of case-study approaches, particularly cross-case analysis completed by different authors and researchers, brings up routine questions about the external generalizability of the cross-case analysis. This constraint is a major concern when directly comparing phenomena to one another, particularly in measurement. In this case, however, we are very interested in examining a natural diversity of experiences found on the ground. While not intended to be fully generalizable (as is a common complaint with case studies; see Yin, 2017, or Stake, 1995, for the realistic limitations of case studies), our interest is in seeing whether or not key patterns emerge from our analytic framework in different cultural circumstances, across different types of ecosystems, and at different stages of ecosystem development. Furthermore, a concern may be raised about the vastly different background of the authors providing case studies, who are often connected in some way to the case study sites themselves. There is an important trade-off to be made here methodologically, as we are trading the potential for some *investigator bias* for the ability to get access to these ecosystems, some of which are quite young and incipient, from the inside.

We will make every effort to flag circumstances that we believe may be sensitive to investigator bias. However, we also encouraged our case study authors to be open and honest about their experiences. For them, we expect that writing the case was an opportunity to talk openly about both the benefits and challenges of building community and constructing an ecosystem from the ground up. Our only clear guidance to our readers is that building an entrepreneurial ecosystem or entrepreneurial community (a) may be more difficult and/or time consuming than the literature suggests, (b) may not always be successful immediately, and (c) relies on human interpersonal relationships, which are never uniform across time and space. With this in mind, we believe great insights can be drawn from the cases presented here.

In the case studies presented later in this book, we will look across the following dimensions for evidence that these different strategies are being employed—or not—and whether the effects have been beneficial, neutral, or deleterious. These meta-frameworks will be applied across cases in search of recurring patterns illustrative to the entrepreneurial community and ecosystem builder.

Thus, *force field analysis* is a useful model for understanding the genesis and dynamic of entrepreneurial ecosystems, by presenting a framework for cross-case analysis of the case studies presented in this book. It is an appropriate model because (a) the trajectory and focus of entrepreneurial ecosystems are stochastic and change over time, (b) the trajectory and focus of the ecosystem are the resultant effects of dynamic facilitating, constraining, and blocking field conditions over time, (c) the social units comprising the ecosystem comprise a *social field* (see Wilkinson, 1991) or a web of networks and relationships with a common identity and mutually understood purpose, and (d) much like Sarasvathy's (2009) *effectuation* concept, force fields enable the analysis of social interaction via *bricolage*, or incremental, opportunistic change based on who and what is present in the system at any given time. As a result, we will look across cases to examine which social, institutional, and cultural features (a) encourage the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem or community, (b) constrain the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem or community, or (c) serve as a barrier to the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem or community. We will attempt to isolate key points when the momentum of the ecosystem (or the resultant force) changed, what led to that change, and what the consequences of the change were for the ecosystem or community.

Instead of seeking quantitative rigor and the mathematization of forces as Lewin attempted to do in his later career (Burnes & Cooke, 2013), we seek to utilize force fields primarily as a tool for qualitative exploration, identification, conceptualization, and as Lewin states: "a method of analyzing causal relations and of building scientific constructs" (1943, p. 246). In this sense, we take a qualitative approach toward sense-making, identifying common and divergent patterns across cases (see George & Bennett, 2005, for the role of cross-case analysis and a "building block" approach to theory construction). Heeding an admonition from King et al. (1994), this review is possible because cases were not selected on the dependent variable—we did not select only successful entrepreneurial ecosystems, or entrepreneurial ecosystems of a particular type or that produced a particular outcome. Rather, we deliberately selected five very diverse examples of ecosystems with the aim of identifying common and divergent factors that affect entrepreneurial community and ecosystem development. Our aim in using this approach is to identify potential, broadly usable strategies for ecosystem and community builders to use in a wide variety of cases to create facilitating (or driving) conditions simultaneously reducing the constraining conditions and removing blocking conditions. Constraining and blocking conditions may prohibit the cultivation of strategic ecosystem relationships, which stand in the way of important pivots and maneuvers the ecosystem can use to grow and adapt and that suppress entrepreneuring more broadly.

We presented several frameworks that will be utilized in our cross-case analysis of emergent entrepreneurial ecosystems in a diversity of environments later in the book.

## Conclusion

We aim to challenge the idea that size is an important prerequisite for the cultivation of an entrepreneurial community or ecosystem. Social relations do not necessarily need to be large to be successful. There are many challenges to rural entrepreneurship as well as living and working in a rural area; and urban and suburban areas all face their own unique challenges—some rust belt from neglect. Miles and Morrison (2020), Dabson (2001), Dana (1995), and Wortman (1990) describe some of the challenges of competing in a global marketplace from remote areas, although these areas are by no means free of entrepreneurship, nor have they ever been (Fortunato, 2014; Henderson, 2002). While the idea that ecosystems require a very large number and diversity of participants and reaching a “tipping point” beyond which the ecosystem will turn over on its own and generate its own momentum. Isenberg (2011) suggests one “runaway success” business for every 50,000–150,000 population (p. 9), this is far out of reach for smaller communities and regions that simply do not have the population count to follow Isenberg’s recommendations. Does this mean that entrepreneurship development is out of reach for smaller places? According to Miles and Morrison (2020), certainly not: it just takes a different logic—an *effectual* logic. While typically applied to the idea of launching individual businesses, Sarasvathy’s (2009) notion of *effectuation* involves “bricolage” or building opportunities from those skills, assets, talents, networks, and ideas that happen to be lying around. There is no reason this logic cannot be expanded to the community or ecosystem level, where communities develop entrepreneurial initiatives, grassroots gatherings, local meetups, idea exchanges, and a culture of entrepreneurial support with whatever advantages they have readily available to them. We will see some examples of this effectual approach in action later in the book.

We intend our work to be a true blend between perspectives in both entrepreneurship and community and economic development, reflecting our own research and practice experience in the hopes that other applied practitioners, leaders, and entrepreneurs can benefit from insights at this nexus of thinking. Fortunato’s community-based practice revolves around helping smaller communities, often in very rural areas, to catalyze new economic and social activity through creative venturing. This focus could take the form of a business plan or a feasibility study for a creative, “catalytic” venture that could spawn additional entrepreneurial activity, such as a food hub, maker space, innovative entrepreneurship conference, or arts initiative. It could be the delivery of an action-based launchpad intended to get a diverse range of citizens and public officials to begin thinking like entrepreneurs, to engage in small experiments through an entrepreneurship process to create solutions to persistent problems, and to provide new ideas and services locally where they are most needed. Or, it could involve educational curriculum that hybridizes a traditional leadership curriculum with a very

healthy dose of entrepreneurship practice insights, especially related to risk, uncertainty, adaptability/pivoting, and lean approaches to community-based action (see Ries, 2011). In about 0% of these cases, the community has the recommended size, sophistication, and full range of inputs commonly cited to be the prerequisites of ecosystem success. Similarly, Clevenger's research and practice evidences actual data—both quantitative and qualitative—from entrepreneurs and local leaders regarding these important processes. Examples of both high- and low-entrepreneurship as well as entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities are explored in the case studies.

As such, we also see a true blending of perspectives from both the *entrepreneurial communities* approach and the *ecosystems approach*. In smaller communities, declining places or areas where entrepreneurs may be struggling, a greater concerted effort by supporting institutions may be able to help entrepreneurs to generate additional momentum that catalyzes better entrepreneur engagement. In the spirit of Feld (2012), “feeders” may make excellent “leaders” in the incipient stages of ecosystem development, serving as strategic conveners, network “information brokers” who can bridge structural holes (i.e., gaps in a social network that would yield huge informational gains to the entire network if filled), and who may also have the credibility to be taken seriously (Burt, 2004; Obstfeld, 2005). Local institutions with high credibility and high network potential—as in a lot of good contacts that are helpful in supporting entrepreneurship—may be important in playing a stronger leadership role up front, from government to nonprofits to interest groups to higher education. For this reason, we support that the *entrepreneurial communities* “it takes a village” approach may yet be relevant in the early stages of ecosystem development, even if the term “ecosystem” seems to have eclipsed “entrepreneurial communities” almost entirely.

Once momentum has been generated, it is at *that* point that the admonitions of Feld (2012) and Isenberg (2010) become highly relevant: make sure that entrepreneurs are in charge, and that entrepreneurial (not institutional) incentives are at the center of the initiative. From this point, we hypothesize that institutions may be best advised to take a step back into a “feeder” role, enabling entrepreneurs to set their own collective course freely, with institutions continuing their role as boosters, investors, advisers, conveners, networkers, brokers, suppliers, helpers, and resource allocators. While our focus is on the dynamic processes of entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems in this book, we continue to include the *facilitating conditions* and *national and regional policy approaches*, as a lack of infrastructure, institutional capacity, restrictive policy, or a stifling culture can truly clip the wings of not only entrepreneurs but also the ability of local institutions to catalyze and support entrepreneurship development. If institutions are to act as strategic conveners and resource allocators, there must be relevant people to convene and resources to allocate, for example. The most sophisticated commercial jet in the world cannot fly without jet fuel (resources), without a suitable runway (infrastructure), nor is flying directly through a hurricane

recommended (stifling conditions), even if the aircraft is full of technology that allows it to adapt reasonably well to changing conditions.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Certainly any discussion of community rapidly makes us think about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Entrepreneurship has had a wide array of individuals, yet there is always room for more. One classic work that collates personal, product, marketing, and fortune is Fucini and Fucini's (1985) *Entrepreneurs: The Men and Women Behind Famous Brand Names and How They Made It*. Personality is explored through five lenses: teen whizzes, inveterate tinkerers, super salesmen, partners, and perfectionists. Product prowess includes purveyors of quality, better mousetrap builders, personal problem solvers, budget stretchers, and trendsetters. Marketing gurus include sales strategists, promotional geniuses, packaging innovators, image makers, and local favorites. Finally, fortune makers: the talented and the lucky. The book also includes 150 cameo stories. Another interesting book looks at the support actors in the shadow of entrepreneurs in Sobel's (1974) *The Entrepreneurs: Explorations within the American Business Tradition*. The individuals noted in the book get far less credit or name recognition than their partner counterparts: Francis Cabot Lowell, Cyrus Hall McCormick, John Wanamaker, James J. Hill, James Buchanan Duke, Theodore H. Vail, Marcus Loew, Donald Douglas, and Royal Little. Of special interest is Taylor's (1988) *Exceptional Entrepreneurial Women: Strategies for Success* that features chapters on female entrepreneurs: Lois Wyse, Lillian Vernon Katz, Faith Popcorn, Geraldine Stutz, Debra Lee Charatan, Josie Natori, Diane Von Furstenberg, Muriel Siebert, Mary Kasy Ash, Maryles Casto, Lane Nemeth, Pamela Scurry, Rose Totino, Dorothy Brunson, and Estée Lauder.

The chapters in this book represent a diversity of insights from the field of entrepreneurship—with a special focus on the rapidly evolving literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems—and the fields of community development and the institutional and behavioral sciences, which give us a special understanding of how communities and ecosystems emerge, grow, and function. The first half of this book is dedicated to making sense of emerging areas of the current research, including useful frameworks and ideas for understanding ecosystem development. The second half is a presentation of case studies of a variety of entrepreneurial ecosystems at various stages of development, with the intention of understanding (1) who is involved and (2) what they are doing at key points in their development. In keeping with a recommendation of ours from our last book on encouraging diversity, we selected several case studies that represent ecosystems that are *atypical* to the literature but *typical* to everyday communities. These include

- (a) A mature but building regional entrepreneurial ecosystem in North-eastern Pennsylvania made up of multiple entrepreneurial communities
- (b) A statewide (regional), growth-oriented ecosystem network in rural Nebraska
- (c) An incipient music-based, small-town entrepreneurial community in southern Indiana
- (d) A necessity-driven entrepreneurial community in urban Nova Scotia
- (e) A faith-based, learning-oriented, grassroots entrepreneurial community in north Texas
- (f) White Earth Nation and Red Lake Nation regional ecosystems in Northern Minnesota
- (g) An innovation district ecosystem in Chattanooga, Tennessee

These case studies diverge from the focus on the major entrepreneurial ecosystems or entrepreneurial communities that receive most of the attention in the literature, and that is exactly the point. We were inspired by case studies that we feel remain in the minority of the literature, as they stress less-studied attributes of entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurial community genesis or study that genesis in unexpected places. For example, Miller and Acs (2017) provide an excellent example of university-led ecosystem development from Chicago; Motoyama and Knowlton (2016) examine collaborations across an emergent ecosystem in St. Louis, a post-decline city showing signs of entrepreneurial rebirth; earlier work by Saxenian (1999), which effectively described immigrant communities and ecosystems before the term was popularized in the literature; and, of course, final examples include Miles and Morrison (2020) and Roundy (2017) for their explicit focus on small towns and rural areas, and what meaningful actions toward entrepreneurship development can be taken there.

By the end, we think you will find that *anyone* can take steps to support entrepreneurship development, at any stage in their community's journey, using a combination of community and ecosystem logic to catalyze social action around our favorite societal process: entrepreneurship. We are excited to see the literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems fettered out into levels of analysis in entrepreneurship to delineate entrepreneurial communities as well as beginning to unfold in diversity, which includes a diversity of participants, cultures, and entrepreneur ambitions. At the end of this Preface, we have included various lists of influential, emergent studies examining entrepreneurial diversity across racial, gender, cultural, religious, national, and ethnic difference—and more. We fundamentally hope that such literature will continue to help to remove systemic barriers to joining a club that should be accessible to anyone, from anywhere, with any racial or religious background, sexual orientation, or identity or age: a club for entrepreneurs. Ensuring fair and symmetric access to this club accomplishes something quite simple: it opens the door to more people doing their best to make the world a better place.

**Key Terms and Definitions**

*entrepreneur*—“Simply put, an entrepreneur is someone who takes on the risk and responsibility to own and operate a business to potentially reap a reward” (Clevenger, 2017, p. 26). (See also Shane, 2008.)

*entrepreneurial/ism*—means “having to do with the creation and development of economic ventures” (Merriam-Webster, 2021b, para 1). Likewise, Google Dictionary’s definition is “characterized by taking of financial risks in the hope of profit; enterprising” (Google Dictionary, 2021b). As noted by Matthews (2018), a key focus is *value creation*. It appears the word *entrepreneurial* has become a definitional morass. Because the word is an adjective, it needs to modify individuals or groups—people—who have the capacity for creating value and profit. It is not to be confused with creativity or approaches. Thus, common use over the years by various individuals has distorted its true focus and meaning. Perhaps both popularity of the term and multi-use have its roots from Kozeracki (1998) saying: “The switch to a more entrepreneurial way of operating—of being innovative, responsive to the market, and of finding new ways to make money—began in the business world and is spreading to the non-profit sector, including academe” (p. 3). Taken together, the ideas resound “value creation” and “economic focus”; however, danger in the use of the term comes from only focusing on “innovation” implying “creativity” alone, as that is not the intent.

*entrepreneuring*—the action, implementation, or “doing” by entrepreneurs and execution of an idea (e.g., product, service, or process) and harnessing for production (see Johannisson, 2011).

*entrepreneurial community*—“entail the for-profit sector: start-ups (true entrepreneurs), serialpreneurs, small business owners, family businesses, [micro enterprises], small and medium enterprises (SME), [omnipreneurs,] and corporations. Entrepreneurial communities also include a wide range of other individual and organizational actors” (Clevenger, 2017, p. 34). When using the term “community,” we are referring to the collection of people—not a geographic constraint or geography. *Community* is defined as:

1. a unified body of individuals: such as
  - a. the people with common interests living in a particular area
  - b. a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society
  - c. a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society
  - d. a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, or political interests
  - e. a group linked by a common policy
  - f. an interacting population of various kinds of individuals
  - g. state, commonwealth

2. a social state or condition
  - a. joint ownership or participation
  - b. common character or likeness
  - c. social activity

3. society at large

(Merriam-Webster, 2021a, para 1)

Definitions by Google Dictionary (2021a) are:

1. a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common
  - a. a group of people living together in one place, especially one practicing common ownership
  - b. a particular area or place considered together with its inhabitants
  - c. a body of nations or state unified by common interests
  - d. the people of a district or country considered collectively, especially in the context of social values and responsibilities; society
  - e. denoting a worker or resource designed to serve the people of a particular area
2. a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals
  - a. a similarity or identity
  - b. joint ownership or liability
3. ecology
  - a. a group of interdependent organisms of different species growing or living together in a specified habitat

A community can be imagined as somewhere with various interest groups (see Figure 1.3).

Communities are also a level of human interaction defined by locally oriented collective actions (Wilkinson, 1991). It should be noted here that what differentiates an *entrepreneurial community* from an *entrepreneurial ecosystem* is that communities are broader social categories that encompass multiple ecosystems. It provides the cultural basis/context through which ecosystems are likely to emerge—or fail to emerge. In short, a community that is antithetical to entrepreneurial ideas (i.e., a “company town” like the ones presented in Fortunato, 2017a, 2017b, in our first book) is unlikely to spawn any kind of viable entrepreneurial ecosystem because it lacks the cultural context to value entrepreneurial action (leaders) and support (feeders). This context likely precedes and disrupts the emergence of entrepreneurial networks, presenting



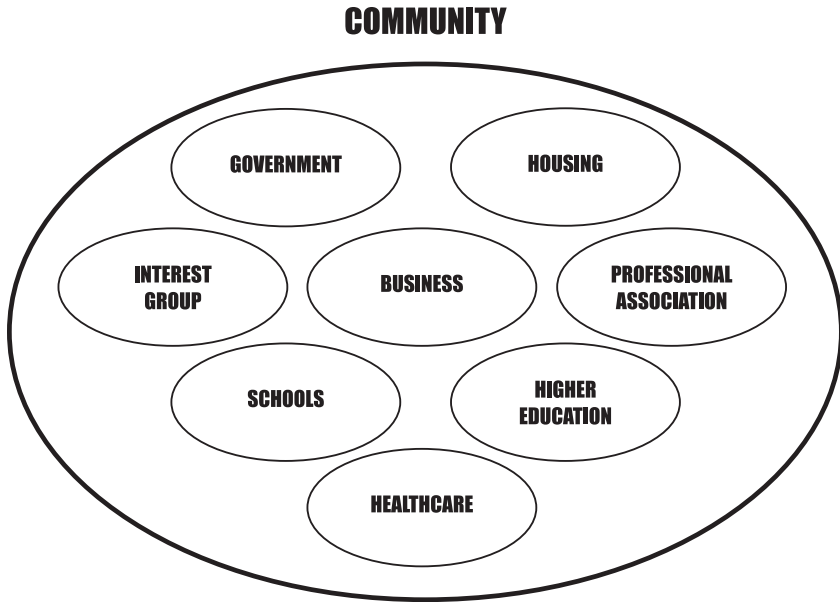


Figure 1.3 A Concept of community illustrates major elements often found in a community.

ongoing, persistent challenges to entrepreneurial action and especially collaboration. This concern stands in comparison to highly *entrepreneurial communities*, which have a cultural orientation toward valuing and supporting entrepreneurship and entrepreneuring. Such cultural values are often evident in the presence of an entrepreneurial social infrastructure (ESI) that creates a cultural basis for the emergence of entrepreneurial value and support across the community (Flora & Flora, 1993; other studies examining the cultural basis of entrepreneurial action at the local level include Breazeale et al., 2015; Dana, 1995; Hustedde, 2007; Julien, 2008). An illustration could be as simple as a community whose residents and businesses buy local, compared to one whose residents and businesses shop regularly on Amazon.com—placing price and convenience ahead of local support, customization, and potentially personal access to an entrepreneur. Or, it could be more pervasive, as in communities where entrepreneuring is simply not a valued career pathway.

The broader community members of groups, organizations, and individuals and the resources they offer would include a wide range of direct and indirect feeders and supports, including but not limited to (1) *education and training* via formal educational programming from K-12 through to higher education (including entrepreneurship courses, minors, majors, master's degrees, and PhDs) or informal educational programming (e.g., for youth: Junior Achievement, Kauffman Mini-Society, 4-H, Boy Scouts; for collegiate: clubs, CEO, enactus, NACCE; for adults: entrepreneur networks, chambers of commerce,

professional associations, SBDCs); (2) informal or formal *mentoring and training* programs; (3) *governmental resources* (e.g., local leaders, SBDCs, SCORE volunteers, economic development resources, general community infrastructure, local culture, local politics); *funding streams* (e.g., venture capitalists, angel investors, banks, foundations, corporate partners, public grants); (4) *support networks* and facilities such as incubators, shared work spaces, co-working spaces, accelerators; and (5) *support resources* (e.g., strategy, marketing, website and online technologies, accounting and finance, human resources, supply chain, logistics). “Communities are often viewed as ‘ideal state,’ by contrast, that exists quite happily in perpetuity and does *not* focus on system change and evolution (central to ecosystems)” (Clevenger, 2017, p. 36). Yet “an entrepreneurial community is dynamic and ever changing—a kaleidoscope of individuals, firms, communities, and all their related complexities” (Clevenger, 2017, p. 37).

*entrepreneurial ecosystem*—“are dynamic, generative, and inhere in the relationship between actors and their environment. Like communities, ecosystems carry with them ‘system ethics,’ but like entrepreneurship, they also connote a degree of destruction and turnover to benefit the entire system” (Clevenger, 2017, p. 36). An entrepreneurial ecosystem is tight and efficient to *only* include individuals and organizations necessary for that entrepreneur, business, or specific area or industry actors. An entrepreneur’s network and alliances are included. Thus, each entrepreneur has their own entrepreneurial ecosystem.

*entrepreneurology*—the study of entrepreneurs and the epistemology of entrepreneurship. The concept would apply to academic programming in support of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, economics, business, and economic development (cf. Fillon, 1998).

*entrepreneurship*—the process of the approach in organizing and using resources for the purpose of entrepreneuring.

*intrapreneur*—an individual’s creative and unique approach to anything . . . life, a goal, a business. It is the mindset to be creative or unique. [For entrepreneurial action within a corporate or institutional environment, see *corporate entrepreneurship*.]

*intrapreneurship*—the process of an individual using a creative or unique approach to anything . . . life, a goal, a business. It is the mindset to be creative or unique. [For the process of entrepreneurial action within a corporate or institutional environment, see *corporate entrepreneurship*.]

*omnipreneur*—an individual’s or an organization’s presence in multiple locations in multiple countries, which is often associated with global entrepreneurship.

*omnipreneurship*—the process of an individual’s or an organization’s active big picture passion and execution of business ideas and productivity in multiple locations probably in multiple countries, which is often associated with global entrepreneurship.

*serialpreneur*—one who creates or is involved in business venture, after business venture, after business venture (Fortunato & Clevenger, 2017a; Clevenger, 2017).

*serialpreneurship*—the process of creating business venture, after business venture, after business venture.

*corporate entrepreneurship*—while some label this “intrapreneurship,” it is really the innovative internal process for a business or corporation for value creation and economic motive; however, the risk is absorbed by the company—not the individual employee(s) involved.

*disentrepreneurship*—

is when a community creates, either systematically or by accident, an environment unsuitable for the establishment or sustainability of existing entrepreneurial activities. It may do this through public policy initiatives that penalize or prohibit entrepreneurial activities, by promoting cultural values and norms that discourage entrepreneurship, or by failing to create the required legal, institutional, and structural environment necessary for entrepreneurship to become established.

(Honig & Dana, 2008, p. 11)

### **Authors' Note**

This book is intended for the United States; however, articles and examples have been used from available materials including items from around the globe. The focus for the current book is primarily on United States because of the framings of legal and accounting parameters that bound within one country.

Because we are focusing on entrepreneurial communities, we do not devote undue attention to specific concepts of creativity and innovation, leadership or management, social entrepreneurship, or funding. All of these concepts are important and are likely intertwined in organizations and entrepreneurs for their decisions and actions.

### **References**

- Aldrich, H. E., & Fiol, C. M. (1994). Fools rush in? The institutional context of industry creation. *Academy of Management Review*, 19(4), 645–670.
- Aldrich, H. E., & Wiedenmayer, G. (1993). From traits to rates: An ecological perspective on organizational foundings. In J. A. Katz & R. H. Brockhaus (Eds.), *Advances in entrepreneurship, firm emergence, and growth* (Vol. 1) (pp. 145–195). JAI Press.
- Audet, J., & D'Amboise, G. (2001). The multi-site study: An innovative research methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, 6(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2001.2001>
- Berglund, H. (2007). Researching entrepreneurship as lived experience. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 75–96). Edward Elgar.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984a). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (Ed.). (1984b). *Questions de sociologie*. Edition de Minuit.
- Bourdieu, P. (1987). What makes a social class? On the theoretical and practical existence of groups. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 31, 1–18.

- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Polity Press.
- Breazeale, N., Fortunato, M. W-P, Allen IV, J. E., Hustedde, R. J., & Pushkarskaya, H. (2015). Constructing a multi-dimensional measure of local entrepreneurial culture. *Community Development*, 46(5), 516–540.
- Breznitz, D., & Taylor, M. (2014). The communal roots of entrepreneurial—technological growth—social fragmentation and stagnation: Reflection on Atlanta’s technology cluster. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 26(3–4), 375–396.
- Burnes, B., & Cooke, B. (2013). Kurt Lewin’s field theory: A review and re-evaluation. *International Journal of Management Review*, 15, 408–425.
- Burt, R. S. (2004). Structural holes and good ideas. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(2), 349–399.
- Bygrave, W. D. (2007). The entrepreneurship paradigm (I) revisited. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 17–48). Edward Elgar.
- Carroll, G. R. (1987). *Publish and perish: The organizational ecology of newspaper industries*. JAI Press.
- Clevenger, M. R. (2017). Perceptions of entrepreneurs and community: From historical roots to a contemporary kaleidoscope. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 10–50). Routledge.
- Courgeau, D. (Ed.). (2003). *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis* (Collection Methodos). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Cunningham, J. B., & Lischeron, J. (1991). Defining entrepreneurship. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 29(1), 45–61.
- Dabson, B. (2001). Supporting rural entrepreneurship. In *Exploring policy options for a new rural America* (pp. 35–48). Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Center for the Study of Rural America (CSRA).
- Dana, L. P. (1995). Entrepreneurship in a remote sub-Arctic community. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 20(1), 57–72.
- Dana, L. P., & Dana, T. E. (2005). Expanding the scope of methodologies used in entrepreneurship research. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 2(1), 79–88.
- Feagin, J. R., Orum, A. M., & Sjoberg, G. (Eds.). (1991). *A case study for the case study*. The University of North Carolina Press.
- Feld, B. (2012). *Startup communities: Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem in your city*. Wiley.
- Fillon, L. J. (1998). From entrepreneurship to entrepenology. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 6(1), 1–23.
- Flora, C. B., & Flora, J. L. (1993). Entrepreneurial social infrastructure: A necessary ingredient. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 529, 48–58.
- Forson, C., Ozbilgin, M., Ozturk, M. B., & Tatli, A. (2014). Multi-level approaches to entrepreneurship and small business research—transcending dichotomies with Bourdieu. In E. Chell & M. Karatas-Özkan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on small business and entrepreneurship* (pp. 54–69). Edward Elgar.
- Fortunato, M. W-P. (December 2014). Rural entrepreneurship matters, but why? *Texas Town & City*, 1–12. [www.tml.org/p/Dec%2014%20Small%20Cities%20Corner.pdf](http://www.tml.org/p/Dec%2014%20Small%20Cities%20Corner.pdf)
- Fortunato, M. W-P. (2017a.). Models of entrepreneurial community and ecosystem development. In M. W-P. Fortunato and M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 51–103). Routledge.

- Fortunato, M. W-P. (2017b.). High- and low-entrepreneurial communities: A multiple case study. In M. W-P. Fortunato and M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 177–235). Routledge.
- Fortunato, M. W-P., & Clevenger, M. R. (2017a). An introduction to entrepreneurial community development. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 1–9). Routledge.
- Fortunato, M. W-P., & Clevenger, M. R. (2017b). *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries*. Routledge.
- Fucini, J. J., & Fucini, S. (1985). *Entrepreneurs: The men and women behind famous brand names and how they made it*. G. K. Hall & Co.
- George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press.
- Goldstein, H. (2003). Multilevel modelling of educational data. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis* (pp. 25–42). Springer.
- Google Dictionary. (2021a). *Community*. Google Dictionary. [www.google.com/search?q=google+dictionary&oq=google+dictionary&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i433j0i131i433j0l6.2672j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#dobs=community](http://www.google.com/search?q=google+dictionary&oq=google+dictionary&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i433j0i131i433j0l6.2672j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#dobs=community)
- Google Dictionary. (2021b). *Entrepreneurial*. Google Dictionary. [www.google.com/search?q=google+dictionary&oq=google+dictionary&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i433j0i131i433j0l6.2672j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#dobs=entrepreneurial](http://www.google.com/search?q=google+dictionary&oq=google+dictionary&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i433j0i131i433j0l6.2672j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#dobs=entrepreneurial)
- Henderson, J. (2002). Building the rural economy with high-growth entrepreneurs. *Economic Review-Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City*, 87(3), 45–75.
- Hoffman, M. L. (1981). Is altruism part of human nature? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40(1), 121.
- Honig, B., & Dana, L. P. (2008). Communities of disentrepreneurship. *Journal of Entreprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 2(1), 5–20.
- Hustedde, R. (2007). What's culture got to do with it? Strategies for strengthening an entrepreneurial culture. In N. Walzer (Ed.), *Entrepreneurship and local economic development* (pp. 39–58). Lexington Books.
- Isenberg, D. J. (2010). How to start an entrepreneurial revolution. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(6), 40–50.
- Isenberg, D. (2011). The entrepreneurship ecosystem strategy as a new paradigm for economy policy: Principles for cultivating entrepreneurship. In *Babson entrepreneurship ecosystem project*. Babson College.
- Johannisson, B. (2011). Towards a practice theory of entrepreneuring. *Small Business Economics*, 36, 135–150.
- Johansson, F. (2004). *The medici effect*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Julien, P. A. (2008). *A theory of local entrepreneurship in the knowledge economy*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry*. Princeton University Press.
- Knight, F. H. (1921). *Risk, uncertainty and profit*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Kozeracki, C. (1998). Institutional entrepreneurship in higher education. *Digest*, 98(5), 3–4.
- Lazega, E., & Snijders, T. A. B. (Eds.). (2016). *Multilevel network analysis for the social sciences*. Methodos Series 12, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-24520-1\_215
- Lewin, K. (1943). Defining the 'field at a given time.' *Psychological Review*, 50(3), 292–310.
- Marquart, J. M. (1990). A pattern-matching approach to link program theory and evaluation data. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1990(47), 93–107.

- Merriam-Webster. (2021a). *Community*. Merriam-Webster Dictionary. [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community)
- Merriam-Webster. (2021b). *Entrepreneurial*. Merriam-Webster Dictionary. [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entrepreneurial](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/entrepreneurial)
- Merriam-Webster. (2021c). *Kaleidoscope*. [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kaleidoscope](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kaleidoscope)
- Miles, M. P., & Morrison, M. (2020). An effectual leadership perspective for developing rural entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Small Business Economics*, 54(4), 933–949.
- Miller, D. J., & Ács, Z. J. (2017). The campus as entrepreneurial ecosystem: The University of Chicago. *Small Business Economics*, 49, 75–95.
- Motoyama, Y., & Knowlton, K. (2016). Examining the connections withing the startup ecosystem: A case study of St. Louis. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 7(1), 1–31.
- Neergaard, H., & Ulhøi, J. P. (Eds.). (2007a). *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar.
- Neergaard, H., & Ulhøi, J. P. (2007b). Introduction: Methodological variety in entrepreneurship research. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 1–16). Edward Elgar.
- Obstfeld, D. (2005). Social networks, the tertius iungens orientation, and involvement in innovation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(1), 100–130.
- Perry, C. (1998). Process of a case study methodology for postgraduate research in marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 32(9/10), 785–802. Doi:10.1108/03090569810232237
- Ries, E. (2011). *The lean startup*. Currency.
- Roundy, P. T. (2017). “Small town” entrepreneurial ecosystems: Implications for developed and emerging economies. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 9(3), 238–262.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2009). *Effectuation: Elements of entrepreneurial expertise*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Saxenian, A. (1999). *Silicon Valley's new emigrant entrepreneurs*. Public Policy Institute of California.
- Schmid, A. A. (2008). *Conflict and cooperation: institutional and behavioral economics*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sedkaoui, S. (2019). An empirical analysis of the Algerian entrepreneurship ecosystem; Entrepreneurship ecosystem in Algeria. In S. R. Nair & J. M. Saiz-Alvarez (Eds.), *Ethics, entrepreneurship, and governance in higher education* (pp. 467–497). IGI Global.
- Shane, S. A. (2008). *The illusions of entrepreneurship: The costly myths that entrepreneurs, investors, and policy makers live by*. Yale University Press.
- Sobel, R. (1974). *The entrepreneurs: Explorations within the American business tradition*. Weybright and Talley.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Tappi, D. (2003). On the unit of analysis in the Study of networks. In D. Fornah & T. Brenne (Eds.) *Cooperation, networks, and institutions in regional innovation systems* (pp. 149–170). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Taylor, R. R. (1988). *Exceptional entrepreneurial women: Strategies for success*. Quorum Books.
- Thomas, L. D. W., & Autio, E. (2020). Innovation ecosystems in management: An organizing typology. In R. J. Aldag (Ed.), *Oxford research encyclopedia of business and management*. Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190224851.013.203>
- Thomas, L. D. W., & Ritala, P. (2022). Ecosystem legitimacy emergence: A collective action view. *Journal of Management*, 48(3), 515–541.
- Thornton, P. H. (1999). The sociology of entrepreneurship. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25, 19–46.

- Uy, M. A., Sun, S., & Foo, M. D. (2017). Affect spin, entrepreneurs' well-being, and venture goal progress: The moderating role of goal orientation. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 32(4), 443–460.
- Wiklund, J., Nikolaev, B., Shir, N., Foo, M. D., & Bradley, S. (2019). Entrepreneurship and well-being: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(4), 579–588.
- Wilkinson, K. P. (1991). *The community in rural America*. Social Ecology Press.
- Wortman Jr., M. S. (1990). Rural entrepreneurship research: An integration into the entrepreneurship field. *Agribusiness*, 6(4), 329–344.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage.

### ***Additional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Reading***

- Ali, M. (2007). Diversity pays financially. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 137–148). Information Age Publishing.
- Ball, C. A. (2019). *The queering of corporate America: How big business went from LGBTQ adversary to ally*. Beacon Press.
- Cotter, D. A., Hermsen, J. M., & Vanneman, R. (2004). *Gender inequality at work*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Gelwicks, A. (2020). *The queer advantage: Conversations with LGBTQ+ leaders on the power of identity*. Hachette Go.
- Gladwell, M. (2011). *Outliers: The story of success*. Bay Back Books.
- Johnson, S. K. (2020). *Inclusify: The power of uniqueness and belonging to build innovative teams*. Harper Business.
- Kushell, J. (1999). *The young entrepreneur's edge: Using your ambition, independence, and youth to launch a successful business*. Random House, Inc.
- Orser, Jr., C. E. (2007). *The archaeology of race and racialization in historic America*. University Press of Florida.
- Schoeniger, G. G., & Taulbert, C. L. (2010). *Who owns the ice house? Eight life lessons from an unlikely entrepreneur*. Eli Press.
- Shane, S. (2008). Why is black entrepreneurship so rare? In S. Shane (Ed.), *The illusions of entrepreneurship: The costly myths that entrepreneurs, investors, and policy makers live by* (pp. 135–145). Yale University Press.
- Valdez, Z. (2011). *The new entrepreneurs: How race, class, and gender shape American enterprise*. Stanford University Press.
- Zhang, T. (2008). *Elderly entrepreneurship in an aging US economy: It's never too late*. World Scientific.

### ***Additional Reading About Women Entrepreneurs***

- Achakpa, P.M. (2007). Women entrepreneurs and development in Nigeria. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 69–76). Information Age Publishing.
- Adesanya, O. (2007). Cultivating entrepreneurship among women in the 21st Century. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 25–40). Information Age Publishing.
- Amorós, J. E., & Stjepović, O. P. (2007). Women entrepreneurship context in Latin America: An exploratory study in Chile. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 109–128). Information Age Publishing.

- Blau, F. D., Brummund, P., & Liu, A. Y. H. (2013). Trends in occupational segregation by gender 1970–2009: Adjusting for the impact of changes in the occupational coding system. *Demography*, 50, 471–492.
- Brush, C. G. (2006). Women entrepreneurs: A research overview. In M. Casson, B. Yeung, A. Basu, & N. Wadson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of entrepreneurship* (pp. 611–628). Oxford University Press.
- Colligan, V., & Schoenfeldt, B. (2007). *Ladies who launch™: Embracing entrepreneurship & creativity as a lifestyle*. St. Martin's Press.
- Fletcher, P. (2018). *Disrupters: Success strategies for women who break the mold*. Entrepreneur Press.
- Gray, K. R., & Gray, D. H. (2007). Women entrepreneurs in Morocco: Vanguard of change in the Muslim world. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 55–68). Information Age Publishing.
- Kirkwood, J. (2009). Is a lack of self-confidence hindering women entrepreneurs? *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 1(2), 118–133.
- Marković, M. R. (2007a). The change of women's roles through the centuries: Confrontation of tradition with new challenges. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 3–12). Information Age Publishing.
- Marković, M. R. (2007b). *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization*. Information Age Publishing.
- Marković, M. R. (2007c). Women entrepreneurs and managers in Serbia. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 77–86). Information Age Publishing.
- Marković, M. R. (2007d). Women leaders: Case study of Serbia. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 87–94). Information Age Publishing.
- McAtavey, J. M. (2002). *Women entrepreneurs: Factors that contribute to women launching their own business and factors that satisfy women entrepreneurs*. Student Theses, Dissertations, Portfolios, and Projects. Lynn University. <https://spiral.lynn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1128&context=etds>
- Oppedisano, J. M. (1985). *Historical encyclopedia of American women entrepreneurs: 1776 to the present*. Greenwood Press.
- Orser, B., & Elliott, C. (2015). *Female capital: Unlocking the power of women entrepreneurs*. Stanford Business Books.
- Rezaei, S., Li, J., Ashourizadeh, S., Ramadani, V., & Gërguri-Rashiti, S. (Eds.). (2021). *The Emerald handbook of women and entrepreneurship in developing economies*. Emerald Publishing.
- Shane, S. (2008). Why don't women start more companies? In S. Shane (Ed.), *The illusions of entrepreneurship: The costly myths that entrepreneurs, investors, and policy makers live by* (pp. 125–134). Yale University Press.
- Smith, C. A. (2005). *Market women. Black women entrepreneurs: Past, present, and future*. Praeger.
- Terjesen, S., Hatcher, C., Wysocki, T., & Pham, J. (2007c). Leading women entrepreneurs of Thailand. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 95–108). Information Age Publishing.
- Valencia, M. (2007). Past female entrepreneurship with the stress on the future in new economy globalization. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 13–24). Information Age Publishing.



**Additional Reading About Entrepreneurship and Diversity in Various Cultures, Religions, and Nations**

- Basu, A. (2006). Ethnic minority entrepreneurship. In M. Casson, B. Yeung, A. Basu, & N. Wadson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of entrepreneurship* (pp. 580–600). Oxford University Press.
- Dana, L.-P. (2007). *Asian models of entrepreneurship from the Indian Union and the Kingdom of Nepal to the Japanese Archipelago: Context, policy, and practice*. World Scientific.
- Gray, K. R., & Gray, D. H. (2007). Women entrepreneurs in Morocco: Vanguard of change in the Muslim world . In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 55–68). Information Age Publishing.
- Terjesen, S., & Ratten, V. (2007). La Vita Imprenditoriale: Female and male entrepreneurs in Italy. In M. R. Marković (Ed.), *The perspective of women's entrepreneurship in the age of globalization* (pp. 41–54). Information Age Publishing.

**Other Recommended Reading**

- Butler, J. S. (2005). *Entrepreneurship and self-help among black Americans: A reconsideration of race and economics*. State University of New York Press.
- Charles, M., & Grusky, D. B. (2004). *Occupational ghettos: The worldwide segregation of women and men*. Stanford University Press.
- Fairlie, R. W., & Woodruff, C. M. (2008). Mexican immigrants and the entrepreneurship gap? In D. Furchtgott-Roth (Ed.), *Overcoming barriers to entrepreneurship in the United States* (pp. 97–122). Lexington Books.
- Frasier, A. (2016). *Don't dumb down your greatness: A young entrepreneur's guide to thinking & being great*. Anthony Frasier.
- Habbershon, T. G., Minniti, M., Rice, M. P., Spinelli, Jr. S., & Zacharakis, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Entrepreneurship: The engine of growth*. Praeger.
- Hamilton, D. (2011). *Beyond Tallulah: How Sam Wyly became America's boldest big-time entrepreneur*. Melcher Media Inc.
- Herman, R. T., & Smith, R. L. (2009). *Immigrant, Inc.: Why immigrant entrepreneurs are driving the new economy (and how they will save the American worker)*. Wiley.
- Koellinger, P., Minniti, M., & Schade, C. (2011). Gender differences in entrepreneurial propensity. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 75(2), 213–234.
- Kundu, S. C., & Rani, S. (2007). Human resources' self-esteem across gender and categories: A study. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 107(9), 1366–1390.
- Lee, D. (2010). *Black business secrets: 500 tips, strategies, and resources for the African American entrepreneur*. Hay House.
- Piperopoulos, P. (2012). Ethnic female business owners: More female or more ethnic entrepreneurs. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 19(2), 192–208.
- Schoonhoven, C. B., & Romanelli, E. (Eds.). (2002). *The entrepreneurship dynamic: Origins of entrepreneurship and the evolution of industries*. Stanford Business Books.
- Schramm, C. J. (2006). *The entrepreneurial imperative: How America's economic miracle will reshape the world (and change your life)*. Harper Business.
- Walker, J. E. K. (2009). *The history of black business in America: Capitalism, race, entrepreneurship. (Volume 1 to 1865)*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Weems, Jr., R., & Chambers, J. (Eds.). (2017). *Building the black metropolis: African American entrepreneurship in Chicago*. University of Illinois Press.

## 2 Prologue to the Case Studies

*Morgan R. Clevenger, Michael W-P Fortunato,  
and Montressa L. Washington*

We have contended that the contexts of entrepreneurship and community are complex and dynamic (Clevenger, 2017, p. 36). Audretsch et al. (2021) have indicated that “entrepreneurship is a multi-level phenomenon” (p. 2). Further, as noted by Landström (2005), “the entrepreneurial process is complex, and entrepreneurship involves many different kinds of people.” Likewise, entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities are also multifaceted—very intricate and knotty—and involve many individuals, organizations, networks, and systems. Neergaard and Ulhøi (2007), Davidsson (2008), and Rauch et al. (2014) have suggested qualitative research as the best approach for entrepreneurs and their work as *lived experiences* to illuminate these complex entrepreneur roles, networks of feeders and supports, and ecological systems of the multiplicity of entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities. All *levels of analysis* are important but create intertwined dynamics that are often difficult to dissect. Quantitative means may also be used—Likert scales and surveys, for example—that help to better understand audience representations, impressions, self-reflection, or comparisons.

In Chapters 3 through 9, we explore an eclectic group of case studies to celebrate, illuminate, and explore—from simple to complicated—diverse entrepreneurs and ecologies. Yin (2009) said “case studies arise out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena,” and the case study methodology aids researchers to “retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life” (p. 2). As scholars, we are presenting this bricolage of available case study work from typical, everyday entrepreneurial ecosystems or entrepreneurial communities (and some regional entrepreneurial ecosystems) that often escape the focus of the mainstream literature. An excellent journal article discussing in-depth case studies, scientific value, and justification of usefulness is Gerring’s (2004) *What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?* “Case studies rely on the same sort of covariational evidence utilized in non-case study research [and] is correctly understood as a particular way of defining cases, not a way of analyzing [or] modeling causal relations” (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). The goal of the case studies provides emerging examples of entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities as they exist in a variety of in situ circumstances or places, or those with special foci,

or those at incipient stages of development. As the topic of entrepreneurial ecosystems continues to grow, we believe it is important to appreciate and view varying ecosystem sizes at varying stages of development, as well as a more comprehensive understanding of the sociological considerations of community—thus entrepreneurial communities and their myriad layers. [Note that the *levels of analysis* and *units of analysis* are discussed in *Entrepreneurial Communities and Ecosystems: Theories in Culture, Empowerment, and Leadership*, 2022, Clevenger and Miao, *Chapter 3 An Ecology of Entrepreneurship: A Review of Concepts, Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, and Entrepreneurial Communities from the Literature*.]

The following case studies come from a range of geographies with a breadth of histories and utilizing various lenses of research methods and viewpoints. Classic case-studies scholars (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2014; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) are starting points for the approaches presented in this book. We have gathered relevant, conceptual, and empirical cases illustrated in seven chapters from multiple contributing authors from North America, including the United States and Canada. Viewed collectively, the contributions push forward the diversity of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship as well as the scholarly debate as evidence from the field. The works link entrepreneurship as a field of practice back to entrepreneurship as a field of scholarly inquiry (Clevenger, 2017; Davidsson, 2008; Lichtenstein & Lyons, 2010).

Each case provides an overview to help with cross-case analysis. Each overview includes a topical highlight, time span, snapshot of methodology and data sources, delineation of kind entrepreneurial ecosystem, entrepreneur social group, entrepreneurial community, and/or regional entrepreneurial ecosystem aspects or culture—including power and empowerment—and leadership, a thought of “why” each case is important to contribute to the conversation and a brief history including a map to help anchor the environment. Using Grix’s (2002) framework, the studies consider the ontology, epistemology, methodology, research methods, and data sources. The studies include a range of approaches in methodologies including grounded theory, autoethnography/narrative, content analysis, critical incident, observation, and document and audio-visual analysis. Data collection methods include surveys, interviews, informal polls, reflection, and site visits.

Additionally, each case presents one or more visuals to attempt at illustrating various components of an entrepreneurial ecosystem or entrepreneurial community—or both. It is important to note that “entrepreneurship is a matter of everyday activities rather than actions of elitist groups of entrepreneurs” (Steyaert & Katz, 2004, p. 180). As admonished by Ulhøi and Neergaard (2007):

Entrepreneurship research cannot be approached at arm’s length. Indeed, most entrepreneurs would agree that it is necessary to have been in an entrepreneur’s shoes to know what it takes. Entrepreneurship

researchers should therefore be willing, at least occasionally, to get their hands dirty. It is in and through a close interaction with the field that we become familiar with and gain new insights into entrepreneurial phenomena.

(p. 478)

The benefit of these cases can contribute to local and regional dialogue and the development of ecosystems in any environment of any size, starting from anywhere. We as authors and researchers are keenly aware that the kinds of robust, multifaceted, high-growth ecosystems detailed by scholars like Isenberg (2010) are unlikely to arise in very small and remote areas. Rather, we promote that culture is alive in any situated society of any size, and that this social context is very likely to have an impact on entrepreneurial dynamics locally. It may be hard to start a gazelle (i.e., a high-tech company; see Henrekson & Johansson, 2010) or a unicorn (i.e., a disruptive and high-wealth-generating company; see Sussan & Ács, 2017) in Reeder, South Dakota (population 162 in 2010), but that does not necessarily mean it has to be difficult to launch a business that is profitable, innovative, and that contributes meaningfully to localized economy. Lichtenstein and Lyons (2010) implied that entrepreneurship, in a collective sense, requires investment and cultivation over time. We hope that this brief collection of eclectic case studies illustrate that entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities can take many forms beyond the classic focus on high-growth venture creation hubs, and that each contributes meaningfully to their local economy, society, and to the quality of life and well-being of residents—whether locally or regionally situated.

In developing new ideas and theories, often new methodologies are required (Ketchen et al., 2008). Entrepreneurs, entrepreneuring, and entrepreneurship are complex, nonlinear phenomena that do not fit into linear assumptions, thus traditional methods may not work or be appropriate in the exploration of the context of entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities (Berger & Kuckertz, 2016). Perhaps Steyaert and Katz (2004) propose the most important questions for future research: “what spaces/discourses/stakeholders have we privileged in the study of entrepreneurship and what other spaces/discourses/stakeholders could we consider?” (p. 179). As noted, the cases presented include a wide variety of research methodologies.

Because of space limitations and permissions, these specific seven case studies were included. Here are a few excellent other relevant case studies to which we will draw your attention:

- Motoyama and Knowlton (2016) provided a deep dive into a larger city ecosystem in St. Louis in their Kauffman Foundation Report and subsequent journal article, *Examining the Connections within the Startup Ecosystem:*

*A Case Study of St. Louis.* Rather than taking a more holistic approach to ecosystems, these researchers used social network analysis to open up the layers of social interaction to understand how interaction within and across entrepreneurial support networks influences interaction within and across entrepreneurs themselves. What they found was consistent with most ecosystem philosophy one finds in the literature: entrepreneurial support networks work better when they provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to interact, collaborate, and engage in peer-to-peer learning. The researchers then provided policy guidance with helpful suggestions on how to encourage such interactions, including restructuring existing incubators to foster greater interaction and collaboration among tenants and ensuring that organizations hire people with on-the-ground entrepreneurial experience that is relevant to their end users.

- Graham (2014) highlighted higher education ecosystems to be considered “well-regarded practice” in exploring 200 universities on all continents. Three universities “consistently cited as the world leader” include MIT, Stanford University, and the University of Cambridge (Graham, 2014, p. i).

The most highly-regarded universities operating in more challenging conditions included Technion, Aalto University, University of Michigan, Kaist, and the University of Auckland. The challenging environments in which the universities operated were typically characterized as cultures that did not support entrepreneurship and innovation, geographic isolation, and/or a lack of venture capital.

(Graham, 2014, pp. i–ii)

Case studies presented by Graham (2014) take a deeper look into Aalto University, Imperial College, Tusur University, University of Auckland.

- Another case study example is of a university-led ecosystem by Miller and Ács (2017) in *The Campus as Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: The University of Chicago*. These authors provided a detailed history of the genesis of the University of Chicago ecosystem over time—a process that was largely driven by student demand for ecosystem services and supports. The case study details how a university can take leadership in ecosystem development by embracing an “open, bottom-up” approach that encouraged students to pursue ventures in their chosen field of study, and “by offering experiential learning and extensive engagement with the off-campus world, regardless of their field of study or chosen industry” (Miller & Ács, 2017, p. 94). This organic path to supporting high-growth ventures diverges sharply from approaches taken by university such as Stanford or MIT, whose ecosystems tend to be focused around engineering and technology (as the University of Chicago has no engineering school). The success of this ecosystem is credited to the replication of “frontier conditions” on the U.S. campus that emerged following the closing of

the actual U.S. American frontiers. Miller and Ács used Turner's frontier framework from 1984 as an explanation of the university's success: promoting attributes of "liberty, diversity, and readily available assets, as well as the agents, institutions, and processes that allow them to begin the firm-formation process" (Miller & Ács, 2017, p. 81).

Gerring (2004) promoted that a case study is "an intensive study of a single unit [a relatively bounded phenomenon] with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units" (p. 341). However, Malecki (2018) admonished that "research should be longitudinal" noting that "case-study snapshots, even if interview-based, to prove for a retrospective look at an ecosystem . . . are inevitably partial (in unknown ways) compared with a true longitudinal study" (p. 12). Both viewpoints are valuable and aid in quality manifestation of case study work, with all of us agreeing longitudinal research may add depth. Thus, additional interesting case studies include various components contributing to entrepreneurial ecosystems or entrepreneurial communities, such as:

- Harper-Anderson (2018) comparison of three U.S. Regional ecosystems in Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Richmond;
- Etzkowitz et al. (2019) with a longitudinal case study at Stanford University;
- Wakkee et al. (2019) with a longitudinal case study in India; and
- Meng et al.'s (2019) case study of automotive dynamics control group and Tsinghua University in China.

Other non-case-study research of interest includes *phenomenological interviews* by Jain et al. (2009) on role identification of university scientists involved in commercialization activity; *literature reviews* by Yusof and Jain's (2010) on university-level entrepreneurship, Bronstein and Reihlen (2014) on entrepreneurial university archetypes, and Centobelli et al. (2017) on entrepreneurial universities emphasizing start-ups; *survey studies* by Sánchez-Barrioluengo and Benneworth's (2019) on individual university knowledge exchange in the United Kingdom, Riviezzo et al.'s (2019) on entrepreneur departments in Europe, and van Geenhuizen and Soetanto's (2012) on university spin-offs in the Netherlands and Norway; and *mixed-methods research* in Fuster et al.'s (2019) on network relations in Spain.

We have selected the case studies in the following seven chapters as illustrative of less-traditional entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial ecosystems, entrepreneur social groups, and entrepreneurial communities that can arise out of a variety of locations, contexts, situations, diverse representation, socioeconomic status, or interpersonal networks. After the case studies, a brief chapter introduces a new concept of omnipreneurship. The concluding chapter then provides a meta-analysis of important themes for ecosystem builders and entrepreneurial community supporters. These case studies illustrate the

many paths that can be taken to inspire, launch, build, or support an ecosystem in any nearby environment.

## References

- Audretsch, D., Mason, C., Miles, M. P., & O'Connor, A. (2021). Time and the dynamics of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development: An International Journal*, 33(1–2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2020.1734257>
- Berger, E. S. C., & Kuckertz, A. (2016). The challenge of dealing with complexity in entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology research: An introduction. In E. S. C. Berger & A. Kuckertz (Eds.), *Complexity in entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology research: Applications of emergent and neglected methods* (pp. 1–9). Springer.
- Bronstein, J., & Reihlen, M. (2014). Entrepreneurial university archetypes: A meta-analysis of case study literature. *Industry and Higher Education*, 28(4), 245–262.
- Bygrave, W. D. (2007). The entrepreneurship paradigm (I) revisited. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 17–48). Edward Elgar.
- Centobelli, P., Cerchione, R., & Esposito, E. (2017). Knowledge management in startups: Systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Sustainability*, 9(3), 361.
- Clevenger, M. R. (2017). Perceptions of entrepreneurs and community: From historical roots to a contemporary kaleidoscope. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 10–40). Routledge.
- Clevenger, M. R., & Miao, C. (2022). Chapter 3 An ecology of entrepreneurship: A review of concepts, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and entrepreneurial communities from the literature. In M. R. Clevenger & M. W-P. Fortunato (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems: Theories in culture, empowerment, and leadership* (pp. in press). Routledge.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2007). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Pearson.
- Davidsson, P. (2008). *The entrepreneurship research challenge*. Edward Elgar.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Etzkowitz, H., Germain-Alamartine, E., Keel, J., Kumar, C., Smith, K. N., & Albat, E. (2019). Entrepreneurial university dynamics: Structured ambivalence, relative deprivation, and institution-formation in the Stanford innovation system. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 141, 159–171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2018.10.019>
- Fuster, E., Padilla-Meléndez, A., Lockett, N., & del-Águila-Obra, A. R. (2019). The emerging role of university spinoff companies in developing regional entrepreneurial

- university ecosystems: The case of Andalusia. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 141, 219–231.
- Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for? *American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 341–354.
- Graham, R. (2014). *Creating university-based entrepreneurial ecosystems: Evidence from emerging world leaders*. MIT.
- Grix, J. (2002). Introducing students to the generic terminology of social research. *Politics*, 22(3), 175–186.
- Harper-Anderson, E. (2018). Intersections of partnership and leading in entrepreneurial ecosystems: Comparing three U.S. regions. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 32(2), 119–134.
- Henrekson, M., & Johansson, D. (2010). Gazelles as job creators: A survey and interpretation of the evidence. *Small Business Economics*, 35, 227–244.
- Isenberg, D. J. (2010). How to start an entrepreneurial revolution. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(6), 40–50.
- Jain, S., George, G., & Maltarich, M. (2009). Academics or entrepreneurs? Investigating role identity modification of university scientists involved in commercialization activity. *Research Policy*, 38, 922–935.
- Ketchen, D. J., Jr., Boyd, B. K., & Bergh, D. D. (2008). Research methodology in strategic management: Past accomplishments and future challenges. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(4), 643–658.
- Landström, H. (2005). *Pioneers in entrepreneurship and small business research*. Springer.
- Lichtenstein, G. A., & Lyons, T. S. (2010). *Investing in entrepreneurs: A strategic approach for strengthening your regional and community economy*. Praeger.
- Malecki, E. J. (2018). Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Geography Compass*, 1–21.
- Meng, D., Li, X., & Rong, K. (2019). Industry-to-university knowledge transfer in ecosystem-based academic entrepreneurship: Case study of automotive dynamics and control group in Tsinghua University. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 141, 249–262.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, D. J., & Ács, Z. J. (2017). The campus as entrepreneurial ecosystem: The University of Chicago. *Small Business Economics*, 49, 75–95.
- Motoyama, Y., & Knowlton, K. (2016). Examining the connections withing the startup ecosystem: A case study of St. Louis. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 7(1), 1–31.
- Neergaard, H., & Ulhøi, J. P. (2007). Introduction: Methodological variety in entrepreneurship research. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 1–16). Edward Elgar.
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Rauch, A., van Doorn, R., & Hulsink, W. (2014). A qualitative approach to evidence-based entrepreneurship: Theoretical considerations and an example involving business clusters. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 38(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12093>
- Sánchez-Barrioluengo, M., & Benneworth, P. (2019). Is the entrepreneurial university also regionally engaged? Analyzing the influence of university's structural configuration on third mission performance. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 141, 206–218.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.



- Steyaert, C., & Katz, J. (2004). Reclaiming the space of entrepreneurship in society: Geographical, discursive, and social dimensions. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 16, 179–196.
- Sussan, F., & Ács, Z. J. (2017). The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Small Business Economics*, 49, 55–73. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-017-9867-5>
- Ullhøi, J. P., & Neergaard, H. (2007). Post-script: Unresolved challenges In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 477–479). Edward Elgar.
- van Geenhuizen, M., & Soetanto, D. P. (2012). Benefitting from learning networks in “open innovation”: Spin-off firms in contrasting city regions. *European Planning Studies*, 21(5), 666–682. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.733504>
- Wakkee, I., van der Sijde, P., Vaupell, C., & Ghuman, K. (2019). The university’s role in sustainable development: Activating entrepreneurial scholars as agents of change. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 141, 195–205.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Yusof, M., & Jain, K. K. (2010). Categories of university-level entrepreneurship: A literature survey. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 6, 81–96.

### ***Additional Reading***

- Achtenhagen, L., & Welter, F. (2007). Media discourse in entrepreneurship research. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 193–215). Edward Elgar.
- Ahl, H. (2007). A Foucauldian framework for discourse analysis. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 216–252). Edward Elgar.
- Alvedalen, J., & Boschma, R. (2017). A critical review of entrepreneurial ecosystems research: Towards a future research agenda. *European Planning Studies*, 25(6), 887–903.
- Barbosa, S. D. (2015). Revisiting entrepreneurship research from a decision making perspective. In A. Fayolle (Ed.), *Handbook of research on entrepreneurship: What we know and what we need to know* (pp. 389–426). Edward Elgar.
- Berglund, H. (2007). Researching entrepreneurship as lived experience. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 75–96). Edward Elgar.
- Blundel, R. (2007). Critical realism: A suitable vehicle for entrepreneurship research? In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 49–74). Edward Elgar.
- Bøllingtoft, A. (2007). A critical realist approach to quality in observation studies. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 406–433). Edward Elgar.
- Brundin, E. (2007). Catching it as it happens. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 279–307). Edward Elgar.
- Brush, C. (2007). Avoiding a strike-out in the first innings. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 460–476). Edward Elgar.
- Bygrave, W. D. (2007). The entrepreneurship paradigm (I) revisited. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ullhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 17–48). Edward Elgar.

- Carsrud, A. L., Olm, K. W., & Eddy, G. G. (1986). Entrepreneurship research in quest of a paradigm. In D. L. Sexton & R. W. Smilor (Eds.), *The art and science of entrepreneurship* (pp. 367–387). Ballinger Publishing Co.
- Cavallo, A., Ghezzi, A., & Balocco, R. (2019). Entrepreneurial ecosystem research: Present debates and future directions. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 15(4), 1291–1321.
- Dana, L. P., & Dana, T. E. (2005). Expanding the scope of methodologies used in entrepreneurship research. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 2(1), 79–88.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532–550.
- Flick, U. (2014). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*. SAGE Publications.
- Franck, R. (2003). Causal analysis, systems analysis, and multilevel analysis: Philosophy and epistemology. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis* (pp. 175–198). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Goldstein, H. (2003). Multilevel modelling of educational data. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis* (pp. 25–42). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Gomm, R., Hammersley, M., & Foster, P. (Eds.). (2000). *Case study method*. Sage.
- Grant, P., & Perren, L. (2002). Small business and entrepreneurial research. Meta-theories, paradigms, and prejudices. *International Small Business Journal*, 20, 185–211.
- Hindle, K. (2004). Choosing qualitative methods for entrepreneurial cognition research: A canonical development approach. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 28(6), 575–607.
- Johnson, L. R. (2017). *Community-based qualitative research: Approaches for education and the social sciences*. Sage.
- Johnstone, B. A. (2007). Ethnographic methods in entrepreneurship research. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 97–121). Edward Elgar.
- Lazega, E., & Snijders, T. A. B. (Eds.). (2016). *Multilevel network analysis for the social sciences: Theory, methods, and applications*. Springer.
- Leitch, C. (2007). An action research approach to entrepreneurship. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 144–168). Edward Elgar.
- Mäkelä, M. M., & Turcan, R. V. (2007). Building grounded theory in entrepreneurship research. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 122–143). Edward Elgar.
- McKenzie, B. (2007). Techniques for collecting verbal histories. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 308–330). Edward Elgar.
- Neergaard, H. (2007). Sampling in entrepreneurial settings. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 253–278). Edward Elgar.
- Neergaard, H., & Leitch, C. M. (2015). *Handbook of qualitative research techniques and analysis in entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar.
- Parvez, S. (2017). Community-based entrepreneurship: Evidences from a retail case study. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, 6(14), 1–16.

- Paulin, W. L., Coffey, R. E., & Spaulding, M. E. (1982). Entrepreneurship research: Methods and directions. In D. L. Sexton & K. H. Vesper (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of entrepreneurship* (pp. 352–373). Prentice-Hall.
- Perren, L., & Ram, M. (2004). Case-study method in small business and entrepreneurial research: Mapping boundaries and perspectives. *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*, 22(1), 83–101.
- Petticrew, M., & Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Piihl, J., Klyver, K., & Damgaard, T. (2007). The scientification of fiction. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 359–382). Edward Elgar.
- Rauch, A., & Frese, M. (2007). Let's put the person back into entrepreneurship research: A meta-analysis on the relationship between business owners' personality traits, business creation, and success. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 16(4), 353–385.
- Riviezzo, A., Santos, S. C., Liñán, F., Napolita, M. R., & Fusco, F. (2019). European universities seeking entrepreneurial paths: The moderating effect of contextual variables on the entrepreneurial orientation-performance relationship. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 141, 232–248.
- Smith, R., & Anderson, A. R. (2007a). Daring to be different: A dialogue on the problems of getting qualitative research published. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 434–459). Edward Elgar.
- Smith, R., & Anderson, A. R. (2007b). Recognizing meaning: Semiotics in entrepreneurship research. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 169–192). Edward Elgar.
- Spigel, B. (2019). Envisioning a new research agenda for entrepreneurial ecosystems: Top-down and bottom-up approaches. In J. A. Katz, & A. C. Corbett's (Eds.), *Reflections and extensions on key papers of the first twenty-five years of advances* (pp. 127–147). Emerald.
- Tranmer, M., Steel, D., & Fieldhouse, E. (2003). Exploring small area population structure with census data. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis* (pp. 121–156). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Trettin, L., & Welter, F. (2011). Challenges for spatially oriented entrepreneurship research. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 23(7–8), 575–602.
- Tsujimoto, M., Kajikawa, Y., Tomita, J., & Matsumoto, Y. (2018). A review of the ecosystem concept—Towards coherent ecosystem design. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change*, 136, 49–58.
- Wakkee, I., Englis, P. D., & During, W. (2007). Using emails as a source of qualitative data. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 331–358). Edward Elgar.
- Walliser, B. (2003). Organizational levels and time scales in economics. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis* (pp. 157–174). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Welter, F., Baker, T., & Wirsching, K. (2019). Three waves and counting: The rising tide of contextualization in entrepreneurship research. *Small Business Economics*, 52, 319–330.
- Wigren, C. (2007). Assessing the quality of qualitative research in entrepreneurship. In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 383–405). Edward Elgar.

### 3 A Case Study Exploring Entrepreneurial Communities in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA)

*Morgan R. Clevenger, Michael W-P Fortunato, and Kenneth G. Okrepkie with Bill Lewis*

#### **Overview**

This case study research was inter-disciplinary with faculty expertise in entrepreneurship and business, sociology, and psychology. The purpose of this mixed-method, grounded theory case-study research was to explore factors contributing to entrepreneurial community environments. Key research questions:

- In what ways do communities interact with entrepreneurs?
- How do communities support or hinder the entrepreneurial spirit through cultural beliefs, leadership practices, and institutional structures?
- What are strengths and barriers for entrepreneurs' success in their local community?
- What do entrepreneurs contribute to the local community?
- Beyond sheer economics, in what ways do entrepreneurs enrich human well-being in their communities?

Findings highlight descriptive statistics and grounded theory themes relating to the first three of the questions. This chapter *does not* include findings from the psychological perspective and individual entrepreneur unit of analysis. Inferential statistics are also not covered here but in other related journal articles stemming from the case study.

#### **Background of the Case Study and Setting**

The following sections explore why the project materialized, explanation of the time period, a basic explanation of methodology (although a deeper discussion appears later in the chapter), cultural and leadership aspects of NEPA, and histories of the eight counties in the study. There is a great deal of historical influences regarding the development of NEPA that will be explained.

#### ***The Why***

This case study was inspired as attention increased in the national dialogue around the concept of the entrepreneurial ecosystem level of analysis.

Fortunato and Clevenger (2014) noted that the *entrepreneurial community* level seemed to be absent in discussions and entrepreneurship research and so presented a roundtable dialogue at the 2014 USASBE Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. David Vorley, an acquisitions editor with Routledge thought the topic was of interest and agreed that it identified a major gap in the discussion of entrepreneurship and related research. Thus, an initial, theoretical book was written to begin the dialogue, *Toward Entrepreneurial Community Development: Leaping Cultural and Leadership Boundaries* (Fortunato & Clevenger, 2017). In tandem with writing that book, this case study was created to find evidence to illustrate key concerns surrounding the influence of culture, local leadership, and politics on the environments in which entrepreneurs function *within* and *beyond* the traditional key supports touted by economic development gurus who tend to focus only on a skilled and trained workforce, capital accessibility, and infrastructure. While those are important, less measurable and often embedded concepts (i.e., culture, local leadership, and politics) are overlooked or understudied. (For more discussion about levels of analysis in entrepreneurship, see Clevenger & Miao, 2022.)

### ***Time Span***

The literature review and instrumentation (i.e., a survey and the interview questions for the study) took place in 2013 and 2014. The formal research of collecting data through surveys and face-to-face interviews occurred in 2015 through 2018. Data analyses occurred in 2018 through 2020.

### ***Methodology and Types of Data***

A mixed-method, grounded theory case study was utilized to explore key issues relating to entrepreneurial communities (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Neergaard, 2014; Silverman, 1993; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The research included a mixed-methods approach that implemented a survey and optional face-to-face interviews conducted after completion of a survey. The survey was mixed-mode as it combined online availability as well as mailed printed surveys using the Dillman et al. (2014) mixed-method, mixed-mode technique. The mixed-methods approach is utilized to provide illumination of experiences as well as frank opinions for the complex and multi-faceted concerns of entrepreneurs and leaders. Studying entrepreneurs is best done inductively by first identifying areas with different entrepreneurship characteristics and then exploring the local culture and leadership structure *in situ* (Bygrave, 2007; Davidsson, 2008; Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007a). Productivity of entrepreneurs is then used as personal self-reflection for success through isolation of key views of specific skills supporting the process. Ultimately, entrepreneurial ecosystems are aggregated to view entrepreneurial communities, and multiple entrepreneurial communities are aggregated to characterize NEPA's regional entrepreneurial ecosystem.

This case study explores social, political (i.e., governmental), cultural, and leadership factors that may contribute to higher or lower levels of entrepre-  
neuring that are often difficult to quantify, and do not fall into many  
predictive models. Such data require researchers to think beyond an input-  
output focus about what supports entrepreneurs, which aim toward models  
that include complex and often unpredictable local and regional action,  
bounded by culture, and stimulated or inhibited by local leadership, politics,  
and coalitions. Could culture and leadership be factors influencing varia-  
tions in entrepreneurial action? (See also Breazeale & Hustedde, 2017.)

### ***Cultural Aspects***

As discussed in the county histories, NEPA has a varied patchwork of his-  
torical, political, economic, social, cultural, and diversity influences as well  
as being an anthracite coal region (Shackel, 2017). The area also yielded  
famous U.S. American icons such as Yuengling Brewery, *Camptown Races*  
by Stephen Foster, the Nicholson Bridge, Mr. Peanut and the Planters Pea-  
nut Company, Paper Magic Group and Pennsylvania Paper and Supply (aka  
pencils) serving as the setting of the sitcom *The Office*, the Pittston Tomato  
Festival, and the birthplace of President Joe Biden. The research data from  
a demographic perspective are representational of the overall area, although  
NEPA's demographics are a bit less diverse than the overall state of Pennsyl-  
vania. NEPA is a coexistence of cultures from Indigenous Native American  
tribes including Delaware (and Munsee), Iroquois League or Confederacy  
(i.e., Haudenosaunee or *Ho-De-No-Sau-Nee*), Nanticoke, Shamokin, Shaw-  
nee, Shawnese, and Susquehannock (Hodge, 1907) to predominantly White  
European settlers from England, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithu-  
ania, Poland, Russia, Ruthenia, Slovenia, and Wales in the 19th Century  
(Blatz, 2002; Palladino, 2006; Shackel, 2017). "Their ancestors were part  
of the last major migration to the USA before federal laws severely limited  
immigration in the early 1920s. The region developed for several genera-  
tions without any new major influx of outsiders until about 2000" (Shackel,  
2017, p. 1). (See also Orlandini, 2001; Lottick, 1992; Morgan, 1995.)

### ***Power and Empowerment***

Northeast Pennsylvania is a mixed region that has a cultural history in heavy  
industry and extraction. The culture of these industries is vastly different from  
the culture of entrepreneurship, which is flexible, adaptive, and opportunity-  
oriented. As such, many larger institutions in the region have generated  
norms and mores around more structured, long-term family-anchored  
status, and staid industries like coal and heavy manufacturing which do not  
necessarily serve the needs of (particularly innovative) small businesses. As a  
result, the story of the region's entrepreneurial empowerment has in many  
cases been the ability of entrepreneurs to transcend cultural attitudes that are

ambivalent to small business—or worse—outright opposed to small business development in favor of industrial recruitment. Thus, Northeast Pennsylvania represents somewhat of a mixed bag of new and old institutions with different orientations toward entrepreneurship. In terms of empowerment, this case study illustrates the importance of new institutions that are specifically focused on small business development, through incubation, information sharing, networking, and finance—often linked to an educational institution or nonprofit. It also shares some of the cultural attitudes of local small businesses in their experience in the region, including hurdles to entrepre-  
neuring. As this case study demonstrates, culture can itself be an empowering or inhibiting factor in supporting entrepreneurial action.

### *Negative Voice*

At the start of the study, it was noted about the disparaging public perceptions that gained national attention “regarding the region’s general health and well-being indicate[d] that this area is the unhappiest place in the USA, a product of the region’s declining employment and outlook, as well as its poor general health, among other factors” (Shackel, 2017, p. 5). Official surveys (Gibbons, 2014), articles (Frohlich et al., 2015; Guydish, 2015; Halpin, 2014; Scinto, 2017), and audio-visual accounts (Johnson, 2016; May, 2014) provided negative reflection of the area. Additionally, a major scandal in the area included the *Kids for Cash* saga (Ecenbarger, 2014; May, 2014). Between news media and social media, much negative publicity skewed viewpoints and impressions of NEPA. In tandem, however, local leaders, entrepreneurs, business owners, corporate management, several nonprofit organizations, chambers of commerce, and higher education leaders all rallied to promote a positive image and rejuvenation of the area.

Some examples of negative voice emerging from the study:

I believe this area continues to be corrupt and “who” you know get more than experience, education, etc. in regards to local politics, deals, opportunities. I am risk-oriented and believe the reason for my success.

—Luzerne County

NEPA (Luzerne County) for PA has the highest level of corruption; and as one repercussion, the highest insurance rates; cheating judges, lawyers, cops, etc.

—Luzerne County

Not too many businesses survive in this area. Businesses are closing or leaving this area on a regular basis. The community has gone downhill in the past years. I don’t see much chance for it ever coming back.

—Luzerne County

Trouble starting a business due to lack of funds.

—Luzerne County Serialpreneur

Being from the right family (status) and having the right connections are most important in the U.S. today! Especially in business.

—Luzerne County

However, these sentiments were one-off accounts and not prolific in the findings. Potentially interacting with closed and discontinued business entrepreneurs could have illuminated restraining conditions, problems faced by failed entrepreneurs, or provided additional negative voice. Overarching sentiments from the study and open-ended responses on the survey as well as interviews provide some introductory thoughts on the project and the state-of-affairs relating to entrepreneurship in the area:

We are in a very rough time for many small businesses.

The area is tough.

Not sure what is the next step?

—Luzerne County native and entrepreneur

I get the impression that the survey results will bring to light the only way NEPA will progress is for the citizen members to be creative, involved, and committed to improving the attitude of the NEPA population.

—Luzerne County leader

Entrepreneurship is a strong concept.

—Schuylkill County entrepreneur and leader

### ***Leadership Aspects***

For NEPA, there are multiple layers of types of leaders (see Clevenger & Munro, 2022). The first are long-term families with well-known family names—often fourth generation. Namesakes from politicians and those cities named for such people provide additional leadership influences; many of these are noted in the NEPA county histories section. Many view the “heyday” of NEPA as 100 years ago with key historical impacts in the area of milestone influences by the decline of anthracite coal after World War II and Hurricane Agnes in 1972 causing a renowned, devastating flood in the area. Leaders from key employers in the area, nonprofit leaders, government officials, and entrepreneurs all combine as leaders for the area forging a revival of business and economics throughout the Wyoming Valley and have been building momentum the past 2 decades.



***A Condensed History of the Eight Counties Researched in NEPA***

“NEPA is located in the northernmost reaches of the Appalachian region” (Shackel, 2017, p. 2). Northeastern Pennsylvania is anchored with two key cities that are county seats that are labeled by population through the U.S. Census as metropolitan statistical area classification as *Urban Area III*s: Scranton in Lackawanna County and Wilkes-Barre in Luzerne County (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2012). Historically, Wilkes-Barre has strong ties and roots more closely associated with Connecticut with business relationships with Baltimore and Philadelphia. Scranton’s influences and legacy connections originated from Wilkes-Barre with business relationships with New York.

“While anthracite coal was discovered in this area in the late 18th Century, large scale extraction of this carbon fossil fuel did not begin until the mid-19th Century” (Shackel, 2017, pp. 2–3). NEPA served as a major hub during the Industrial Revolution with excellent transportation infrastructure, manufacturing plants, natural coal resources, and waterways (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999). This era with extraction, shipping, and navigable transportation (on land and water) enabled U.S. industries to become an international leader in manufacturing (Palladino, 2006). An ample supply of workers kept wages relatively low (Roller, 2015). Over time, this reliance on a single industry—coal—had a devastating impact on the region’s economy once it deteriorated and once deindustrialization set in (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982). “While the post-WWII USA was called the affluent society, NEPA never experienced this prosperity” (Shackel, 2017, p. 4).

After the Post World War II era—as the anthracite coal industry declined—there was a “second wave of industrial development based on the apparel industry” (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. vii). Women found jobs in this garment industry—often becoming the main financial household provider (Dublin, 1998; Dublin & Licht, 2005). However, with international competition, production of garments and other textiles was also fading in the area and across much of the United States. Business owners also fled areas emphasizing organized labor (Shackel, 2017). “Commercial businesses could not survive, and Main Streets throughout the region were slowly abandoned. As a result, the long-term deindustrialization in NEPA created major demographic shifts. There was a significant outmigration as households sought opportunities in other regions” (Shackel, 2017, p. 4).

In the late part of the 20th century, with the advent and growth of technology, a new, third wave of economic development arrived making NEPA a hub for “call centers, warehousing, and distribution,” along with manufacturing and from “advanced technology (semiconductors, electronics, instruments, plastics, and glass) to mature technology (printing and publishing, metalworking, and paper)” (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. vii). The area was anticipating a new century with a new economy focused on “knowledge, technology globalization, and talent” (Battelle Memorial

Institute, 1999, p. viii). The tech wave quickly shifted to the fourth wave of economic development in the spheres of information and knowledge.

Also, at the turn of the 21st Century, the region continued “to face economic problems” (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. 2). In 1999, median household income in NEPA was noted at \$30,300 compared to \$34,400 for Pennsylvania and \$34,100 nationally (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. 4). During this study, in 2014: average median household income for the eight counties was \$47,081 compared to \$53,115 for Pennsylvania and \$53,482 nationally (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2014) and in 2018: median household income was \$52,217 compared to \$59,445 for Pennsylvania and \$60,293 nationally (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2018). In 1999, the region’s population was less than 2% non-White; in 2014, nearly 7% non-White; in 2018, 7.5% non-White.

This area was more heavily populated 100 years ago. The eight-county region in this study provides a balanced mix of rural, urban, and suburban areas. The following are brief historical synopses of the participant counties (discussed in historical chronologically)—stemming from Northumberland County: Luzerne (1786), Susquehanna (1810), Bradford (1812), Wyoming (1842), and Lackawanna (1878); derived from parts of Northampton County: Wayne (1798); derived from parts of Berks and Northampton Counties: Schuylkill (1811); and derived from Lycoming County: Sullivan (1847).

### *Luzerne County*

A favored spot for Native American agriculture and farming, what is now Luzerne County saw its first settlers in 1762 when Connecticut settlers began to visit the area with hopes to establish permanent settlements in the area (PHMC, 2019b). The rich soil of the area was a strong attraction as settlers from Connecticut farms began to experience a declining crop yield and the Connecticut settlers believed that this area was a part of their home state under the terms of the land grant received from King Charles II in 1662. Shortly after the Connecticut people came to the area, the Penn Proprietors began to send Pennsylvanians to settle into the area; they also believed the territory belonged to Pennsylvania under the terms of the land grant given to William Penn in 1681.

Almost immediately, disputes began to arise between the Connecticut and Pennsylvania settlers, which Pennsylvania’s leaders sought to end by sending armed groups to the area (PHMC, 2019b). From 1769 until the beginning of the American Revolution, the land disputes erupted into significant conflict known as the Yankee-Pennamite Wars. Wilkes-Barré was settled in 1769 (City of Wilkes-Barré, Pennsylvania, 2021) and was later dubbed *The Diamond City* because of the coal found in the region. While the conflict quieted during the Revolution, it would start again as the War for Independence began to wane. Finally, in 1782, the American government, operating under the Articles of Confederation, issued the Decree of

Trenton confirming that Northeastern Pennsylvania was within the boundaries of Pennsylvania, while also confirming that existing Connecticut land titles would be valid. Part of the agreement was to found a new county, so in 1786, Luzerne County was established, taking part of the land of Northumberland County. The new County covered a large part of Northeastern Pennsylvania, including areas that would later be broken away to form Bradford, Lackawanna, Susquehanna, and Wyoming Counties (PHMC, 2019b).

This area was also a key region of conflict during the American Revolution. On July 3, 1778, a large group of Loyalist, British Rangers, and Native American fighters invaded the area's Wyoming Valley and more than 360 local settlers were killed in the ensuing battle (Luzerne County Courthouse, 2021). This skirmish was part of a larger British strategy to raise terror in the rural areas of the North, keeping colonial troops engaged as the British tried to control the South. In September 1778, the colonial Hartley Expedition left Wyoming Valley and destroyed Native American villages along the Susquehanna River. In 1779, General John Sullivan led a major expedition designed to chase the Native American tribes out of the entire Susquehanna River region and organized his army in Wilkes-Barré. In June of 1780, Indians and loyalists raided settlers in what is now southern Luzerne County in the Sugarloaf Massacre.

While the area was first settled to take advantage of the excellent soil and access to the Susquehanna River and remembered as being heavily agriculturally oriented into the early 20th Century, the discovery of anthracite coal in the 1700s was to forever change the County. The late 1800s were a boom time for the five-and-dime retail trade in Luzerne County with retailers such as Kirby, Woolworth, and Kresge opening some of their earliest stores in the County. In 1808, Jesse Fell, in Wilkes-Barré, found a way to burn coal in an open grate, making the fuel a sought-after source for heating, cooking, and industrial use (Luzerne County Courthouse, 2021). The Susquehanna River was first used to transport coal but stretches of the river in the area made navigation quite difficult. In the 1830s, a canal system that was tied into navigable parts of the Susquehanna became the favored way to get coal to other markets. By the mid-1800s, railroads were quickly expanding across the County to provide for movement of coal to major east coast cities.

While anthracite coal mining and rail transportation became the dominant industries in the County, other large manufacturers also developed. The Vulcan Iron Works of Wilkes-Barré became a major manufacturer of railroad locomotives and the Hazard Wire Rope Company made iron and steel wires for uses in mining, bridges, ships, elevators, railroads, and telegraph applications. Silk throwing and other garment mills and clothing factories established a major presence in the area, creating employment for women, children, and eventually former miners as the demand for anthracite coal began to fade.

By the 1930s, coal production was quickly falling as oil and gasoline became more popular as fuels. There was a brief resurgence in mining during World

War II but by the 1950s, coal was dying. The Knox Mine Disaster in 1959 flooded most of the deep mine operations in Wyoming Valley and strip mining became a small survivor of the massive coal extraction from the earlier anthracite industry.

As the latter half of the 20th Century evolved, the County's economy rapidly changed. New employment opportunities in the area came from warehousing and logistics, higher education, government, healthcare, and light manufacturing (Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, 2021).

### *Susquehanna County*

Like the other parts of NEPA, Susquehanna County was first settled by Connecticut colonists, who claimed the area under their original land grant; but the region was also claimed by Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania claim was secured by the Trenton Decree (PHMC, 2019f). As an active area for Native Americans, the land of the County was purchased in 1786 at Fort Stanwix by the Pennsylvania government from the native tribes.

The Pennsylvania legislature created Susquehanna County in 1810, carving the land away from what had been Luzerne County. It was not until 1812 that the County government was officially organized and officials elected to run the new county (PHMC, 2019f). The early economy of the County existed on maple sugar and then later lumbering. Woodworking factories were plentiful in the 19th Century and coal deposits were found and extracted in part of the County. Agriculture remained a mainstay of economic life in the area, especially dairy farming. The Erie Railroad came through the County before 1850, as it sought an easy and direct route to Binghamton, New York (Blackman, 1873, p. 84).

Susquehanna County was an important part of another more human transportation system, that being the Underground Railroad, which helped escaping slaves from the southern United States to move to freedom in the northern states. Montrose, the County seat, was a main station on this route to human freedom (Switala, 2008, p. 160). Jonathan Jasper Wright grew up in Montrose before the Civil War and in 1865 became the first Black person admitted to practice law in Pennsylvania, and whose picture hangs in the Luzerne County Courthouse (Woody, 1933). In 1870, after having moved south to help newly freed slaves, he was elected as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of South Carolina. Founded more than 200 years ago, Susquehanna County is also home to the Denise Farm, one of, if not the oldest known Black-owned, continuous farms in the country.

The lumber industry flourished here in the 19th Century, as did the leather tanning industry. Natural flagstone quarrying was and remained a major industry in the area (PHMC, 2019f). In the mid-1900s, the Bendix Corporation came to the area and established a large flight system manufacturing plant. The existence of the Marcellus Shale deposits in the area has made the County into a significant natural gas producer, adding to the area's prosperity.

*Bradford County*

Bradford County, Pennsylvania was created on February 21, 1810 by separating parts of Luzerne County as well as part of Lycoming County (PHMC, 2019a). The area was originally named Ontario County, but it was renamed in 1812 and given the name of Bradford in tribute to William Bradford, who had served as the chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court as well as the second Attorney General of the United States under President George Washington.

Native American villages existed in the area as early as the beginning of the 17th Century (Bradsby, 1891, p. 27). Settlers began to make visits to this area by the 1730s, with Moravian religious missionaries taking a particular interest in the location (Bradsby, 1891, p. 63). During the Pontiac War (1763–1766), Moravians moved Native American converts to Bethlehem from the area to protect them from the frequent raids that were occurring in the region. After the conclusion of the conflict, Moravian settlers accompanied the converted natives back to the Wyalusing area of Bradford County and established what was intended to be a permanent Moravian community for the natives, calling it “Friedenhutten,” or huts of peace (Bradsby, 1891, p. 44). In 1772, the village was abandoned, fearing new incursions of raids, and the community was moved to Ohio.

The first Connecticut settlers, part of the Susquehanna Company that claimed northern Pennsylvania as a part of Connecticut, had begun to arrive there in 1774 (Bradsby, 1891, p. 58).

The Revolutionary War brought tense moments to the area, as the Connecticut settlers overwhelmingly sided with the American cause, making the communities vulnerable to attacks by those Native Americans who were in sympathy with the British. Much of the area was abandoned by settlers who feared ongoing attacks (Bradsby, 1891, p. 88). In response to the many raids that happened in the area, combined with the larger Battle of Wyoming, which occurred in the Wyoming Valley, George Washington ordered General John Sullivan to form an army and proceed up the Susquehanna River with the primary objective of moving Native Americans out of their villages, homes, and farms, brutally moving them completely out of the upper Susquehanna region by force and a “burned earth” strategy. The success of his mission moved the tribes out of the area and by the end of the American Revolution, settlers had once again returned to the area.

By the 1790s, very different immigrants began to find their way to what would become Bradford County. Land speculators had gained access to large tracts of land in the region and they, in turn, worked at attracting French immigrants who were fleeing from the terror of the French Revolution (PHMC, 2019a). The area the French refugees developed became known as French Azilum and the legend that the area was being prepared for the arrival of Queen Marie Antoinette began to evolve.

As the 1800s moved on, a branch of the Pennsylvania Canal came through the County, benefitting the growth of the agriculture and lumber-based economy (PHMC, 2019a). Towns in Bradford County, with its proximity to New York State, became part of the Underground Railroad movement. Bradford County became the home of 19th Century politician David Wilmot, who proposed the Wilmot Proviso in Congress in 1846—a measure that would have banned the expansion of slavery into new states. The controversy from his proposal helped to hasten the Civil War. Wilmot was a founder of the Republican Party and his close friendship with Abraham Lincoln made him a key advisor during Lincoln’s rise to the Presidency.

Bradford County also served for a time as the home of famed 19th Century composer Stephen Foster (PHMC, 2019a). His famed song “Camptown Races” probably was named for an area horse racing track and town.

The 20th and 21st centuries saw further diversification of the local economy, as manufacturing, meat packing, and the Marcellus Shale gas industry joined agriculture as key parts of the area’s economic structure.

### *Wyoming County*

Wyoming County, Pennsylvania, has a long history of Native American habitation, but most of it is undocumented, except through archaeological relics. The area was mostly used for agricultural purposes, probably for centuries, as the Susquehanna River added significantly to the richness of the soil (Munsell, 1880, p. 496). The area was first settled in the 1750s in the modern era as Connecticut residents began to relocate to this area since they perceived it to be part of the land grant given to Connecticut by King Charles II in 1662, which established the original western boundary of Connecticut at the Pacific Ocean (Connecticuthistory.org, 2019). That charter provision was to be the basis of ongoing disputes between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, ultimately leading to the Yankee–Pennamite Wars.

The original Penn Family design of Pennsylvania made this land part of Northumberland County. The population of what would become Wyoming County grew as a result of the 1778 Battle of Wyoming—a battle that took place between settlers and the opposing Native Americans and Tories near what is now Exeter, in Luzerne County with a monument located in Forty Fort. Fleeing settlers headed toward the Wyoming County area to escape the violence that had taken place in the Wyoming Valley. In 1786, Connecticut withdrew its claim to the area after the Trenton Decree, and so the area became part of the newly established Luzerne County. In 1842, by act of the Pennsylvania legislature, the area was separated, and the new Wyoming County was organized (PHMC, 2019h).

Farming has been a major economic force in the County. The rich forests of the area made the lumbering industry another significant part of the economy and the availability of hemlock bark made the County a leading leather tanning area around 1900. Served by the North Branch Canal and

then by the early introduction of railroads in the area, shipping products from the area became quite easy. Major railroads like the Lehigh Valley and the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Hudson served the area. In 1912, the DL&W railroad began building the Nicholson Bridge (Tunkhannock Viaduct), which for decades was the largest concrete bridge ever built (The Houdini Museum, 2017). Manufacturing also added to the economic activity in the County, first through farm equipment production and then, in the 1960s, Procter and Gamble built an absorbent paper manufacturing plant in the County to take advantage of the local timber supply.

By the beginning of the 21st Century, the County's physical location, atop part of the Marcellus Shale natural gas deposits, began to have a huge economic impact on the County. Formerly struggling agricultural lands became sought-after drilling locations, with landowners reaping the benefits of gas leasing rights.

### *Lackawanna County*

The area now known as Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania has a long history of human habitation, first occupied by Native American tribes and later by settlers from Connecticut who claimed the area as part of their home state (Munsell, 1880). Yet it is Pennsylvania's youngest county established on August 13, 1878, and having been separated from Luzerne County. As the City of Scranton's population began to significantly exceed that of the then county seat of Wilkes-Barré's population, a rivalry had developed between the citizens of what is now Lackawanna County and Luzerne County, and demand for a new county became politically strong.

In the late 1700s, Connecticut settlers moved into this area, finding rich iron ore deposits. By the 1800s, blast furnaces and iron forges began to develop in the area. Another valuable resource was soon found in the area, anthracite coal. The introduction of a gravity railroad to nearby Honesdale, Wayne County, as well as the development of a canal system provided for the transportation needed for area coal to be delivered to the greater New York City area. The Delaware and Hudson Canal Company was the nation's first million-dollar, private business (Munsell, 1880).

In 1842, William Henry and his son-in-law, Seldon Scranton, together with brother George Scranton, constructed the Lackawanna Furnace, producing nails for construction. But lacking transportation to various markets, the efforts were becoming unsuccessful. In 1847, they turned to the production of "T" rails, and they contracted with the Erie Railroad to produce its iron rails. Borrowing money from New York-based investors, in 1853, the Scranton family incorporated the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company, while also building two railroad lines from Scranton. These railroads would become the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad. In 1848, the local post office was named "Scranton," establishing a new name for the area once known as Slocum Hollow, providing the name of the emerging City of Scranton. While

coal mining dominated the local economy, in the 1870s, silk mills began to develop in the area, beginning a long era of silk, lace, and other manufacturing. Scranton was the site of the first electric streetcar system in the nation in 1880, gaining the nickname of *The Electric City*. Diverse ethnic immigrants flooded into the area for the many employment opportunities, while frequent mine labor disputes and strikes began to take place, with the 1902 anthracite strike becoming a central part of U.S. labor history.

Year 1902 also witnessed the departure from the area of the Lackawanna Iron Company. By the 1930s, as oil, gasoline, and electricity gained in popularity in the United States, demand for anthracite coal began to rapidly decline. By the 1950s, the coal industry was facing its demise.

The latter half of the 20th Century saw considerable diversification in Lackawanna County's economy, as higher education, logistics, light manufacturing, and healthcare began to play key roles in revitalizing the area.

### *Wayne County*

In northern Pennsylvania, Wayne County was claimed by Connecticut settlers until 1786, when the Pennsylvania claim was secured. For centuries before, the area had been a favored hunting ground by Native American tribes (Goodrich, 1880, p. 12). The County itself was created on March 21, 1798, from an area taken from the existing Northampton County and was named after Revolutionary War General Anthony Wayne (Goodrich, 1880, p. 32).

Like so much of NEPA, the area was thick with trees; so, the lumber industry grew quickly, and with the Delaware River forming the County's eastern border, logs were easily moved southward via the river (PHMC, 2019g). While coal was not initially part of Wayne County's economy, the installation of a gravity railroad helped to move coal from Carbondale, Pennsylvania to Wayne County's Honesdale, where the coal was then placed on boats on the canal system that went through the town. The trackage used by the gravity railroad had been previously used in 1829 for the very first locomotive in North America, the "Stourbridge Lion" (PHMC, 2019g). An additional gravity railroad also served the County, moving coal from Pittston, Pennsylvania in Luzerne County to the Wayne County community of Hawley in the second half of the 19th Century. Glass-maker Christian Dorflinger opened his glass factory in the County in 1865, producing fine glass and crystal goods until 1921. The discovery of anthracite coal deposits in the area led to mining activity in the latter part of the 19th Century, which continued up until after World War II.

At the beginning of the 19th Century, Wayne County became the birthplace of two very prominent political leaders during the Civil War—David Wilmot and George Washington Woodward. As a U.S. Congressman, Wilmot proposed the famed Wilmot Proviso, a measure that would have barred slavery from being expanded into the western United States. Wilmot was born in Wayne County in 1814. He would later serve as a Pennsylvania



judge and later as a U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania and was a close ally of Abraham Lincoln.

In contrast, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice George Washington Woodward was also born in the Wayne County in 1809. Woodward, who was also the 1863 Democratic candidate for governor and a nominated, yet defeated, U.S. Supreme Court nominee (in 1845 by President Polk) was a strong advocate for maintaining slavery in the South as well as a vocal critic of Abraham Lincoln. In May of 1859, abolitionist Horace Greeley met with Republican political leaders in Honesdale to help organize a push for Abraham Lincoln's nomination to the Presidency, this being one of the earliest meetings held to propel the Lincoln Presidential nomination.

Farming has been a central part of Wayne County's economy, and ice harvesting was a booming business before the widespread introduction of electric refrigeration. As the 20th Century began, the County became the home of many summer camps for children and boarding homes to handle the tourists to the region. The latter part of that century saw additional tourism and the growth of a new vacation home industry, with construction becoming a major part of the local economy.

### *Schuylkill County*

Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania was created in 1811 from parts of Berks and Northampton Counties (PHMC, 2019c). In 1818, the County's land area was expanded when parts of Columbia and Luzerne Counties were added.

The Penn Family acquired the land where the County now sits through a treaty with the Native American Six Nations (or Iroquois) as well as the Delaware, Shamokin, and Shawnee tribes in 1749. Though a popular agricultural area for the American Indians, it was probably not heavily inhabited by natives in its early history (Schalck & Henning, 1907, p. 17). By the 1750s, German immigrants were settling in the area, along with Moravian missionaries who settled in the County's southeast area. Anthracite coal was found near present day Pottsville in 1790, beginning the era of the County as a source of energy that would last for almost two centuries. In 1812, Colonel George Shoemaker proved that anthracite coal could be used to fire a rolling mill. In the early 1820s, coal shipments began to leave the area via the Schuylkill Canal. In 1842, the Reading Railroad moved into the area, providing an additional way to move coal to major markets. The canal system method of coal transportation would continue until 1881.

The development of the anthracite mining industry created enormous early land speculation in the area, also beginning in the 1820s. Initially, most coal mining was conducted by small operators. As the 1800s moved on, major railroad companies began to acquire large numbers of the small mine operators. As mining rapidly expanded, large numbers of immigrants were drawn to the area because of the employment opportunities available in coal mining.

Numerous small railroad lines were established in the area to serve the needs of transporting coal, whether the function of the railroad was to move the coal within the County or to other larger rail lines. At one time, more than a 1,000 miles of railroad track existed in Schuylkill County and the area was home to what was then the largest railyard and roundhouse in the world, located in Mill Creek.

Agriculture has long been a major economic force in Schuylkill County, beginning from the time when settlers first came to the area. While early farming focused on providing the livestock, crops, and timber, much of which was needed locally to feed the County's growing population, as mining declined, County agriculture shifted to nurseries, greenhouses, Christmas trees, and orchards. Roughly one-fifth of the County's land is used for agriculture (PHMC, 2019c).

As coal mining declined in the 1940s and 1950s, the County's population also significantly declined (National Historical GIS, 2021). Knitting manufacturers of the textile industry moved into the County, and they found a large available labor pool from displaced mine workers and their families. This industry became a major employer up until the last decade of the 20th Century, when mills began to move to southern United States or to foreign countries with cheaper wage rates.

Unique industries started in Schuylkill County have brought fame to the area. In 1948, the first cable television system began in Mahanoy City. The brewery industry thrived here during the mining years, and Schuylkill County can still claim to be the home of America's oldest operating brewery, the Yuengling Brewery.

### *Sullivan County*

Sullivan County was created from a part of Lycoming County in 1847 and was named after Charles C. Sullivan, who was a leader in the Pennsylvania Senate at the time of the County's formation (PHMC, 2019e). Some historians, however, point to the likelihood that one of the motivations for naming the County was that it also took its name after General John Sullivan, whose famous military expedition during the Revolution had become a part of NEPA history.

The land of Sullivan County was purchased in 1768 by the Pennsylvania government as a part of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix—an agreement negotiated by British Indian agent Sir William Johnson and representatives of the Iroquois (PHMC, 2019e). The Penn Family first made this area a part of Northumberland County, but it became part of Lycoming County in 1795 when that county was first established.

The earliest settlement probably occurred around 1786 with the establishment of a farm and gristmill (Ingham, 1899, p. 7). This settlement was the beginning of an agricultural and lumber-based economy for the area. From 1792 until early in 1814, state land laws allowed property in this area

to be purchased for 6.67¢ per acre, with a limit up to a maximum of 400 acres (Ingham, 1899, p. 9). Land speculators soon learned how to evade the laws by using straw men to acquire multiple 400-acre tracts. Among those who sought to speculate in the area lands was Joseph Priestly, Jr., son of the famed theologian and discoverer of oxygen.

Early in the 1800s, former Englishman George Lewis bought land near a lake in the County (first known as Lewis Lake, but now called Eagles Mere Lake) (Ingham, 1899, p. 20). Here he established a glass-making factory in the area. With little reliable transportation to the Philadelphia market for his glass products, his business thrived only during the time when the height of the War of 1812 prevented the importation of cheap glass from England. When the war ended, the importation from England resumed, and Lewis was forced to close his glassworks.

The beauty of the Eagles Mere area, however, had not been lost on those who had visited it. By the Victorian Era, the town of Eagles Mere had become a bustling summer retreat for wealthy Philadelphians, with grand hotels, its own rail line, and numerous vacation summer cottages. However, the 1929 Depression, followed by World War II, saw the rapid decline in the seasonal interest in the area.

By the late 1800s, lumbering and leather tanneries combined with farming to make up Sullivan County's economic activity. Small coal mining efforts added to the economy, but the extraction of coal also quickly declined after the end of World War II (Gamble, 1967, p. 5).

The population of Sullivan County reached its peak in 1900 when more than 12,000 people lived in the County—many involved in lumbering and farming. By 2010, just a little more than half of that number still reside in the County.

### **Summary**

NEPA has Indigenous Native American heritage, with western expansion of the descendants of Pilgrims and Puritans, heavy immigration from Europe and eventually Central and South America (including Latin influences), and northern Black migration starting before the Civil War and continuing after the war (Blatz, 2002; Chavez, 2008; Palladino, 2006; Shackel, 2017). As with the 20th Century in-migration, the 21st Century migration to the region—particularly Hazleton—gained national attention (see Englund, 2007; Longazel, 2016; Tarone, 2004). According to recent census data, the area is growing in diversity.

### **Regional, Entrepreneurial Community, and Local Support Organizations**

In 1999, Battelle Memorial Institute created the report, *Great Valley—Pennsylvania's I-81 Technology Corridor: Growing a 21st Century Knowledge Economy in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties*. The project was commissioned by the Greater

Scranton Chamber of Commerce and Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry. However, note that this research study was not prepared or conducted with knowledge of the report. While this chapter is not a retrospective, there is opportunity for looking at the status and recommendations in the “Battelle Report” and see what progress has been made in 20 years.

In 1999, regional strengths identified in the Battelle Report included:

- Education and training
- Quality, productivity, and stability of workforce
- Business climate
- Geographic location
- Cost of living
- Strong economic development organizations
- Diversified economy
- Advanced telecommunication services

(Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. ix)

Regional weaknesses were noted as:

- Lack of a research and development base
- Insufficient graduate higher education
- Weak entrepreneurial culture
- Inadequate supply of technically skilled workers
- Lack of local venture capital
- Lack of vibrant downtowns
- Lack of amenities that appeal to young professionals
- Parochialism and lack of regional identity
- Local government fragmentation
- Image
- Aging population
- Inadequate employment opportunities
- Inability to retain college graduates in the region

(Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. ix)

In consideration of all of the factors from the 1999 Battelle Report interviews, goals for the area became:

- Leveraging the region’s higher education institutions to position the region to build a technology base;
- Capitalizing on scenic and recreational amenities to market the region as an attractive location for technology companies;
- Building on existing call center operations to develop higher wage, higher value added jobs;
- Capturing expansion of information technology and new media companies from the New York metropolitan area;

- Accessing talents and interest of successful entrepreneurs and CEOs in the region as mentors and investors; and
- Capitalizing on past investments in industrial and technology parks.  
(Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. x)

### ***Support Organizations in NEPA***

Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations (i.e., CANDO, WEDCO, SEDCO), Local Development District (NEPA Alliance), Ben Franklin Technology Partners, Penn’s Northeast, DiscoverNEPA, tecBRIDGE, and Lauchboxes (Hazleton, Wilkes-Barre, and Scranton) are all significant resources in the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. For example, WEDCO and CANDO each own incubators, discussed later with Table 3.12 Gaps and Progress. NEPA Alliance offers programs that teach entrepreneurs how to apply for government contract through their Procurement and Technical Assistance Center as well as promote international trade by making connections to the 29 Pennsylvania trade representatives who are disbursed across the globe. The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania (BFTP/NEP) is a major emphasis in the region (and even broader in Pennsylvania). (See Clevenger et al., 2022b, for more elaboration on BFTP) The goals of “form angel investor and mentoring network, create Great Valley Innovation Fund, [and] celebrate entrepreneurial success” have more than materialized, also discussed later with Table 3.12. Three resources are further discussed here including chambers of commerce, tecBRIDGE, and Invent Penn State’s LaunchBox program.

### *Chambers of Commerce*

Chambers of commerce are business networks with a mix of interests in business, entrepreneurship, education and training, employment, and related resources. Representation in these organizations varies from area to area and may include a variety of volunteer, appointed, and elected representation. A “Chamber of Commerce, [is] a nonprofit organization of business people and corporations established to promote economic development and collectively represent their concerns to government on public policy” (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2021, para 2). Chambers often operate at multiple levels of government (e.g., local community, state/province, provincial, national). NEPA includes the following chambers:

- Carbondale Chamber of Commerce, Carbondale
- Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce, Hazleton
- Greater Pittston Chamber of Commerce, Pittston
- Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Scranton
- Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce, Wilkes-Barre
- Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce, Tunkhannock

*tecBRIDGE*

In 1998, leaders from the Scranton and Wilkes-Barre Chambers of Commerce who commissioned the Battelle Institute to research and prepare a strategic evaluation of NEPA desired to form a taskforce (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999; tecBRIDGE, 2021a). In 1999, the Great Valley Technology Alliance (GVTA) was formed to organize and facilitate programs, which promote NEPA to become a recognized leader in technology-based economic development, with particular focus on the emerging new media and information technology space. Further, in 2004, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Technology Institute (NPTI) was created to provide a coordinated effort to seek support for and to facilitate organized intellectual property development in conjunction with the region's higher education institutions. "Following a change in leadership in 2012, a new Board was empaneled and agreed to merge GVTA and NPTI to carry on their good work—the merged entity was rebranded **tecBRIDGE**" (tecBRIDGE, 2021a, para 10).

From the Battelle project, research and interview findings, recommendations, and a formal plan of action were summarized in the Battelle Report: *Great Valley—Pennsylvania's I-81 Technology Corridor Growing a 21st Century Knowledge Economy in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties*. Six key strategies were proposed to achieve the Report vision:

- (1) Information Technology Growth. Seek to develop a core competence and specialization in the area of information technology—including new media and E-commerce. Information technology has been chosen as a focus for the Great Valley region because the region already has a sizeable base of activity in the related areas of information storage, retrieval, and communications, and information processing centers.
- (2) Technology Infrastructure Investment. Establish a technology incubator and a regional multi-tenant facility, sometimes called an accelerator, to house growing technology companies. The region would also benefit from additional transportation services especially improved air services, an important consideration for technology companies seeking a location.
- (3) Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Create a world-class environment for technological innovators and entrepreneurs. This can be accomplished by providing a comprehensive range of services to support entrepreneurs and new company start-ups and encouraging greater entrepreneurship on the part of the region's students and citizens.
- (4) Knowledge Worker Retention and Attraction. Focuses on people/talent—these are the most important assets to technology-driven firms. A skilled workforce will build a strong technology driven economy. Access to courses, certificates, and degrees that enable employees to stay abreast of changes and advance their careers are extremely important.

College graduates should be encouraged to stay and pursue career opportunities within the region and the region should offer sufficient opportunities to attract talent from surrounding regions, the nation, and the world.

- (5) Enhancement of Quality of Life. The region needs the kinds of amenities demanded by younger knowledge workers, such as loft-like or studio apartment rental housing, coffee shops, outdoor cafes, gallery spaces, health clubs, and restaurants.
- (6) Industry Assistance. To better leverage the capabilities of the region's manufacturing base, and build strength in its service industries including health, logistics, GIS, and other areas, it is important to foster linkages among existing industries and ensure that companies are aware of and have access to the latest technologies. The region should establish a Manufacturing Technology Network to provide a forum in which the region's industries address common needs and share information on successful innovative practices.

(tecBRIDGE, 2021a, paras 1–7)

tecBRIDGE offers a wide range of programming. A significant contribution includes annual bootcamps, business pitch and plan competitions, and tecBRIDGE RADIO (tecBRIDGE, 2021b).

#### *Invent Penn State and LaunchBox Programming*

A statewide initiative by Pennsylvania and the State Government was funding Invent Penn State and LaunchBox programming on all Penn State campuses. These hubs provide a range of resources for students (e.g., mentor networking, funding access, maker spaces) and for community entrepreneurs (e.g., networking, business education, and encouraging support).

NEPA is home to three in Hazleton, Scranton, and Wilkes-Barre (Invent Penn State, 2021).

## **Methodology**

Utilizing a mixed-methods, mixed-mode technique, a 3-year study was conducted in eight counties in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The counties included Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming. Mixed methods included a quantitative research tool (i.e., a survey) and qualitative included open-ended responses on the survey and optional semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. Mixed methods provide demographic information, comparison of entrepreneurs to local leader viewpoints, attention to high- or low-variance, statistical significance, and essence of experiences illuminated through self-reflection and opinion.

### **Qualitative**

Neergaard & Ulhøi (2007b) and Bygrave (2007) indicated that qualitative research suits the essence and experience of entrepreneurship better as lived experiences and sociological views of entrepreneurs. A case-study approach bounded the topic of entrepreneurial communities based on geography of NEPA. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative research as:

Multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactual, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives.

(p. 2)

Thus, a qualitative approach provided an opportunity to view a historical backdrop, a sociological perspective, and entrepreneur and leader reflection for partial framing of the study (Burkard et al., 2012; Stake, 2005).

Grounded theory allows for approaching the topic with knowledge of vocabulary and context, yet allowing themes, findings, and potential theories or models to emerge after analyzing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this instance, it was anticipated to discuss business and entrepreneur topics as well as issues of economics, diversity, local culture, government, and history.

Qualitative research instruments included: (a) open-ended questions on the survey in the question, “*Is there anything else you would like to share that was not covered in the survey questions?*” and (b) face-to-face interviews with post-interview debriefing used to capture interviewer impressions of interviewees immediately after each interview.

### **Quantitative**

Bygrave (2007) noted that quantitative, statistical analyses focus on “central tendencies” that could easily miss behaviors of outliers—the entrepreneurs. Quantitative data are helpful to identify audience demographics, and in the survey, illuminate attitudes of self-reflection, community acceptance and engagement as an entrepreneur or local leader, opinion on support organizations and leaders, and views about entrepreneurs in the community. The survey instrument included Likert scales and demographic questions. [Authors' Note: Many statistically significant findings emerged from this effort but are not covered in this chapter. Only descriptive statistics are discussed here.]



### ***Human Subjects Protection***

This research was conducted through Wilkes University with exempt status and full protection for human subjects' research by the principal investigator, co-investigators, and all research assistants and students through the Wilkes University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Survey participants acknowledged informed consent and those interviewed were also provided informed consent and agreed to being audio-recorded. All businesses were de-identified, and all data were aggregated for reporting. Examples discussed will be identified as entrepreneur or local leader (or both) and attributed by county.

### **Data Collection**

This research utilized the Dillman et al.'s (2014) mixed-methods, mixed-mode approach of two primary data sources for this grounded theory study, including a survey and then semi-structured, face-to-face interviews to illuminate the lived experience of entrepreneurs and local leaders (Berglund, 2007; Burkard et al., 2012; Carsrud et al., 1986; Neergaard & Ulhøi, 2007b). Participant selection of entrepreneurs and local leaders are explained here and basic demographics of the participant pool introduced for analysis.

### ***Participant County Recruitment***

Walliser (2003) said:

In economic theory, two main **organizational levels** are abstractly defined by specific entities (and the outputs they produce):

- at individual level, several basic agents take on some actions in a rational way, under the influence of the states taken by a physical environment called "nature" and of the signals taken by a social environment symbolized by "institutions of several kinds";
- at collective level, agents' actions, nature's states and institutions' signals interfere to give rise to global phenomena of several types: distributional (distribution of agents' actions), relational (network between basic agents), and emergental (original collective entities).

Agents are individuals like consumers or already social groups like firms; institutions (assumed to co-ordinate the agents) are physical like markets or conceptual like money.

(p. 158)

These considerations are important when looking at level of analysis and unit of analysis. The analyses considered here include (1) aggregated regional entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northeastern Pennsylvania (macro-level 2), (2)

the multiple entrepreneurial communities (i.e., meso-level 2 and macro-level 1), and (3) the individual entrepreneurs and each one's entrepreneurial ecosystem (i.e., micro-level and meso-level 1). Thus, a consideration of a multi-level of analysis is involved to help answer questions of emphasis (Franck, 2003). The purpose of the study was to explore factors contributing to entrepreneurial community environments (i.e., county, township/borough, city, and aggregate NEPA areas). [Note that Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania is the only incorporated *town* in the entire state and is the county seat of Columbia County, not in this case study (The Town of Bloomsburg, 2021).]

This case study is focused on aggregation of information to view the NEPA *regional entrepreneurial ecosystem* made up of the multiple *entrepreneurial communities* based around local cities and boroughs, such as Pittston, Scranton, or Wilkes-Barre. Additionally—while not the main focus in this chapter—individual entrepreneurs and their individual entrepreneurial ecosystems were independently used for their viewpoint on the survey, and subsequent interviews for those who participated. Again, the aggregate picture is aimed at but may be reflected through individuals. Findings and discussion highlight impressions and reflection by NEPA entrepreneurs and local leaders.

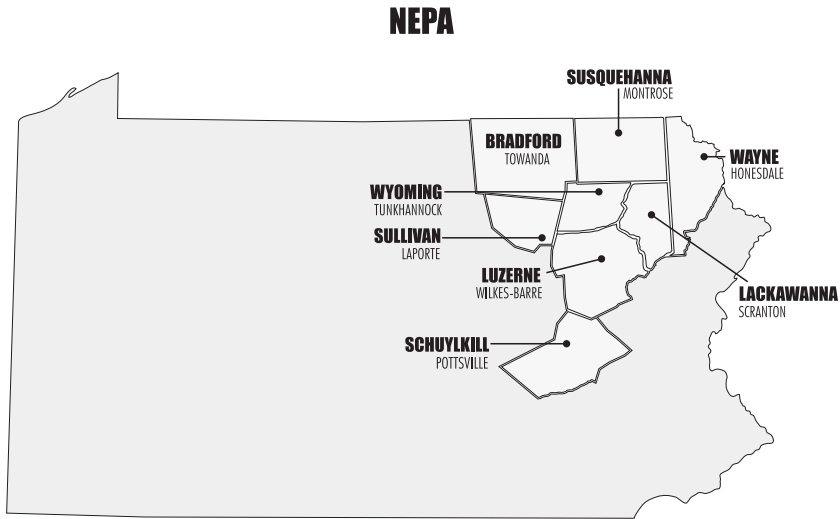
Walliser (2003) noted that

economics has gradually detached itself from the other social sciences and rapidly gained autonomy. Its field has been defined by the quantitative relationships between the individuals in a society rising from the production, exchange, and consumption of goods and services. [A key consideration is] to define the aggregation levels at which economic objection will operate . . . we are not dealing with levels located in a geographic space, as in other social sciences, but with subtler levels whose analysis came to be seen as essential in the course of the development of economics.

(p. 157)

However, in entrepreneuring, social currency, networks, and access to resources are important. The other key considerations for socioeconomic snapshots for research include time span and objective methods to describe, explain, and analyze the phenomenon. Thus, mixed methods are used for this case study. Therefore, the epistemology relies heavily on the viewpoints of entrepreneurs and local leaders through interviews.

The 2012 Census information was the most recent available at the creation of the study, so was used for analysis and selection of the eight counties used for participant selection (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2012). Census data can help “to determine the structure of the population studied, at a given moment” (Tranmer et al., 2003, p. 121). Census data can be used “to study not only regional or national populations but also local populations” (Tranmer et al., 2003, p. 121). Given time and budget constraints, evaluation of several state and federal zoning schema labeled as



*Figure 3.1* Map of Pennsylvania highlighting NEPA

“Northeastern Pennsylvania” was reviewed and narrowed the participant county selection to include the anchor county seats of Lackawanna County (aka Scranton) and Luzerne County (aka Wilkes-Barré) as urban (or more heavily populated and labeled metropolitan statistical area level IIIs) and adjacent counties most proximate with a balance of counties not claimed by other urban populations. The eight counties in the study included Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming (see Figure 3.1).

### ***Entrepreneur and Leadership Participant Selection***

Initial intents were to study entrepreneurs, local leaders, and failed or discontinued businesses. As the study emerged, the failed or discontinued businesses did not materialize. While the *Northeast Pennsylvania Business Journal* was a ready source of data for closed or discontinued businesses, trying to contact them was difficult. While the State of Pennsylvania business registry had contact information available, it was not always accurate. When reaching out to failed, closed, or discontinued businesses, many were reticent to share their plight for emotional, financial, embarrassment, or detrimental reasons. In many cases, widows of entrepreneurs expressed how “business stole him from the family” or “work competed too much for his time.” Thus, this participant audience did not emerge. Efforts, therefore, were spent on gathering surveys and interviews from entrepreneurs and local leaders.

Entrepreneurs were identified through paid services by Marketing Systems Group in Horsham, Pennsylvania. Just over 19,000 businesses were found to

be eligible. Minimum eligibility criteria for participation included self-identifying as an entrepreneur, having two or more full-time employees involved, having \$10,000 or more in capital investment, and inclusive of non-national brands unless headquartered in the region. Grant funding permitted purchasing 15,000 randomized business contact records with a weighted sampling to reflect each of the eight counties' business population; and just over 13,000 contact records ended up being distilled with good addresses, thus viable contactable businesses for an eligible data pool. A preponderance of businesses were found in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties.

There was no "local leaders" database in the region to acquire or managed for NEPA. An effort was made to craft a "local leader" list from elected, appointed, and administrative organizations in the area. A snowball sample (see Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Frank, 1979; TenHouten, 1992) was created by asking those individual leaders to identify and name ten others. A list of 400 leaders both formal and informal was crafted among the eight counties. Ultimately, such a small, non-random, strategic selection allowed for a purposeful leader participant pool that provided a deeper understanding, information-rich discovery, and meaningful findings (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Stake, 2005; Wolcott, 1994). Leaders affirmed they were either a formal or informal leader.

### ***Survey***

The survey was based on prior work by Fortunato and Alter (2011) and is explanatory in nature (see Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The survey included three sections: (a) community experience consisting of 29 questions with 17 being Likert scales, (b) personal experience with 43 Likert questions, and (c) demographics with 16 questions. Survey data were collected in waves over a 3-year period. A sample size of 400 respondents was established to target a 95% confidence level of survey response, thus a minimum of 8,000 businesses would need to be contacted (Dillman et al., 2014; Neergaard, 2007) and just over 13,000 were contacted. Participants were mailed a postcard pointing them to an online survey using SurveyMonkey; non-respondents received a printed copy of the survey 5–7 weeks later.

Returned surveys yielded  $N = 590$  responses (10% online and 90% returned in U.S. mail), and a total of  $n = 424$  entrepreneur participants and  $n = 41$  for local leader participants after distilling the survey responses.

The following information in Tables 3.1 through 3.9 provides demographics of survey respondents including gender, ethnicity, business size, sector, location, educational attainment, and income of responding entrepreneurs.

Figure 3.2 denotes representation of participation in the survey by entrepreneurs (gray bars) and local leaders (black bars) representing each of the counties.

Table 3.1 Demographics of NEPA Survey Respondents

<i>Entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Local Leaders</i>	<i>Regional Average of the Eight Counties ( U.S. Census , 2014 ) (Not Necessarily Business Only )</i>
78% Male 22% Female	75% Male 25% Female	50.325% Male 49.675% Female
98% White 1% Hispanic/Latinx 0.5% Native American 0% Black 0% Asian 0.5% Other	100% White 0% Hispanic/Latinx 0% Native American 0% Black 0% Asian 0% Other	93.44% White 3.3% Hispanic/Latinx 0.018% Native American 2.34% Black 0.75% Asian 0% Other

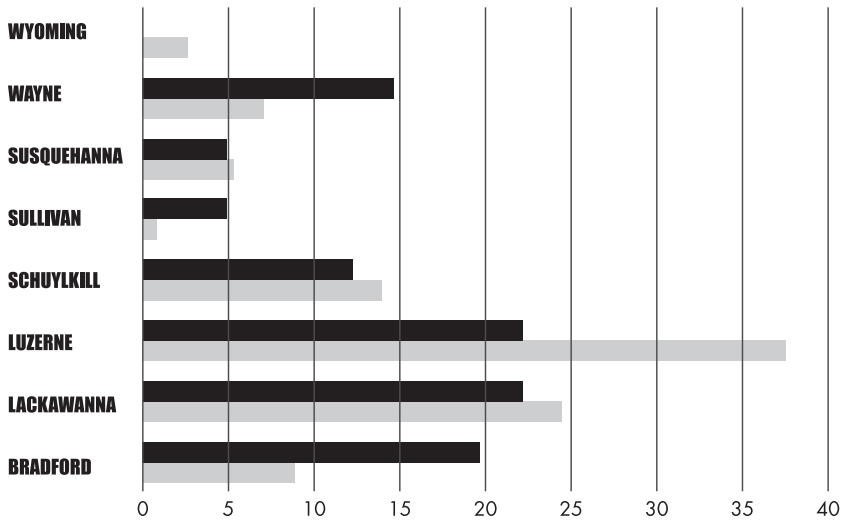


Figure 3.2 County representation of responses in NEPA (dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs)

Table 3.2 NEPA Entrepreneur Business Demographics

80.8% Small Businesses
17.5% Medium Businesses
1.7% Large Businesses

Table 3.3 Top Sectors Responding to the NEPA Survey (Identified by NAICS Sectors)

---

13.4%	Agglomeration or Conglomeration of Businesses
11.9%	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
10.5%	Retail Trade
8.8%	Other Services
8.4%	Construction
6.4%	Finance and Insurance
6.0%	Transportation, Automotive, and Warehousing
5.7%	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting
5.2%	Accommodation and Food Services
5.2%	Real Estate and Rental/Leasing
4.8%	Healthcare and Social Assistance
3.4%	Manufacturing
2.2%	Wholesale Trade
2.2%	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
1.4%	Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Gas Extraction
1.4%	Information
1.4%	Educational Services
0.7%	Utilities
0.5%	Management of Companies/Enterprises
0.5%	Administrative and Support and Waste Management
0.2%	Public Administration

---

Table 3.4 Location of Entrepreneurs' Businesses in NEPA

---

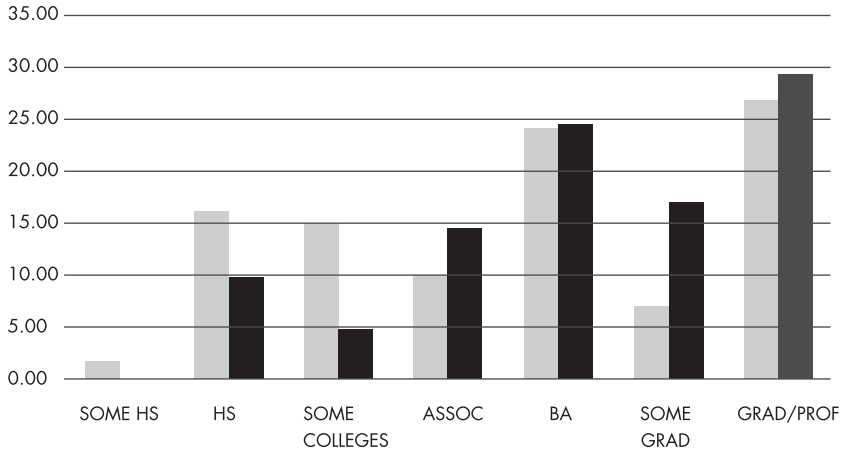
46%	Small Town Area
25%	Rural
15%	Suburban
14%	Urban

---

Figure 3.3 denotes educational attainment from the survey by entrepreneurs (gray bars) and local leaders (black bars) as a percent representation against that participant pool, thus controlled to compare apple-to-apple.

### ***Semi-structured, Face-to-Face Interviews***

Individuals taking the survey could self-elect to have a face-to-face interview. Interviews took between 30 and 90 minutes and included a minimum of two interviewers: one to facilitate and one to take notes or provoke follow-on questioning. Interview protocols were followed, including informed consent affirmation and audio-recording face-to-face interviews with permission on a digital recorder and an iPhone app, *VoiceRecorder*<sup>HD</sup>. Two devices were used to safeguard capturing all interviews. After completing each interview, they were transcribed verbatim as quickly as possible and proofed by a second person. Upon completion of an interview, a debriefing form was completed by the interviewers.



*Figure 3.3* Educational attainment of entrepreneurs and leaders in NEPA (dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs)

## Data Analysis

“Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 175). Yin (2013) indicated five types of data analysis for case studies: pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-unit analysis. This case study allowed for patterns to emerge identifying behavior related to entrepreneur perceptions and self-reported behaviors and explanation building. Data analysis included review of survey statistics and interviews. Patterns, themes, and overarching ideas were developed based on salience and centrality in statistical analysis, which were used for cross-grouping analysis between entrepreneurs and local leaders (Creswell, 2008; Stake, 2005).

## Surveys

Survey data were entered into SPSS for tabulations and a wide range of statistical analyses. Survey data entry was audited by at least two additional people. Incomplete surveys were eliminated as well as any not indicating the participant was an entrepreneur and/or a local leader. Open-ended questions were compiled to be analyzed using Dedoose mixed-method software for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software and SPSS for quantitative analyses. For this chapter, only descriptive statistics are highlighted.

## Interviews

To categorize the data, the research team utilized an open-coding system to determine the major themes (Creswell, 2014; Emerson, 1995; Merriam,

2009; Stake, 2005). To begin the coding process, the researchers reviewed individual interviews and identified key words or phrases that emerged from the interview transcripts. Five people independently coded the transcripts. Next key words or phrases were clustered according to their meaning to develop patterns, themes, and commonalities as well as distinct differences in the sub-units. Hence, the research team used a series of *open coding*, *axial coding*, and *selective coding* to collate ideas and themes to yield findings (Mäkelä & Turcan, 2007). Open coding included identifying and labeling key terms or ideas and labeling them, which created divergent categories. Axial coding included categorizing similar ideas, topics, or sub-categories together for convergence of content (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Thompson et al., 2012; Yin, 2013). Finally, selective coding aided in seeing an emergence of coherent themes and eliminated poorly developed categories. Through this iterative process, saturation of ideas emerged.

Themes were organized and emerged as a lens for grounded theory ideas. The researcher collected any significant content and statements and then compared them to the conceptual framework looking for supports or strengths and hindrances or barriers. Using inductive data analysis, the researcher built patterns and themes by organizing the data into clusters. Next an interpretation was made of what was understood to be significant and central to the research questions by examining the patterns of statements (Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1994). The researchers provided a textual description of the emerging themes to discover how each entrepreneur and local leader perceived and experienced the phenomena of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial community (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1994). This process led to the findings of primary themes central to the relationship of entrepreneurs and local leaders, including government action, regional support organizations, and local support organizations (e.g., chambers of commerce, banks, higher education). This process was completed manually as well as using *Dedoose* (2013) online software for Macintosh and used as “a qualitative computer program to facilitate the process of storing, analyzing, and sorting the data” (Creswell, 2008, p. 247).

### ***Data Visualization***

Data visualization allows for easy explanation of aggregated data from both quantitative and qualitative data. Multiple representations of data such as narrative from interviews, tables and figures representing survey data, and word clouds are complementary and work together to highlight findings and themes. Tables, for instance, only provide part of a story. Likewise, “word clouds have certain limitations, and we need to be well aware of them” (McNaught & Lam, 2010, p. 641). Word clouds denote “frequency” not “context” of words from the data (McNaught & Lam, 2010, p. 641).

Narrative provides the rich description found in data analysis that developed into findings and themes (Patton, 2002). Key descriptive



information is provided in tables for readers to understand perceptions and experiences of both entrepreneur and local leader participants. “Tables allow complex data to be expressed in a tidy format” (Nicol & Pexman, 2010, p. 4). Additionally, “a good table presents findings in a manner that makes it easy to read and easy to identify trends” (Nicol & Pexman, 2010, p. 6).

*Word clouds* help create a visualization to represent text data, which emerged from interview transcripts (Dickinson, 2010; McNaught & Lam, 2010; Ramlo, 2011; Viégas & Wattenberg, 2008). The software *TagCrowd* was used to create the word cloud for illustrating some findings. “A word cloud is a special visualization of text in which the more frequently used words are effectively highlighted by occupying more prominence in the representation” (McNaught & Lam, 2010, p. 630). Word clouds illustrate “word frequency in a text” (Viégas & Wattenberg, 2008, p. 51). LeCompte & Schensul (1999) indicated that frequency is one method of pattern development for themes to emerge. Ramlo (2011) explained,

In a typical text analysis, words of interest are placed in a rectangular form. The font size and color [i.e., value] of the words that are placed into the word cloud to represent frequency and usefulness, respectively. . . . The more prominent (larger the size) the word is in the word cloud, the more frequently it appeared in the text provided.

(p. 103)

Word clouds help “viewers to have an overview of the main topics and the main themes” from texts (McNaught & Lam, 2010, p. 630). Additionally, word clouds serve as “a validation tool to further confirm findings and interpretations of findings. A word cloud thus provide an additional support for other analytic tools” (McNaught & Lam, 2010, p. 631).

## **Findings**

Findings include some narrative and a variety of data visualization to organize and explain salient content, limited statistical representations, descriptive statistics, and examples relating to themes found in data analysis (Patton, 2002). Stake (2005) defined this process as a development of key issues. Many themes emerged during this process. This chapter highlights some demographics and statistical representation as well as providing quotes, stories, and a word cloud. However, the empirical statistically significant results do not appear here but in various journal articles.

Findings shared in this chapter mainly address research questions of:

- In what ways do communities interact with entrepreneurs?
- How do communities support or hinder the entrepreneurial spirit through cultural beliefs, leadership practices, and institutional structures?

- What are strengths and barriers for entrepreneurs’ success in their local community?

Emerging from the research through combining all data sources of surveys, open-ended write-in responses on the surveys, and interviews collated into four key findings: (1) *NEPA entrepreneurs* and who they are; (2) *entrepreneurial community resources* through entrepreneurial culture, support organizations, support networks and their importance to the community, and local leaders; of acceptance, mixed feelings on support networks and their importance, resources, and local leaders; (3) *governments* with issues of taxation, regulation, and policy; and (4) *business operations* including business planning, employees, competition, e-Commerce, and customers.

***Finding (1) NEPA Entrepreneurs: Who are they?***

The following display information and graphics (in Tables and Figures) help to create a descriptive picture of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs’ motivation, and supports to go into business and entrepreneuring. Some graphics contrast opinions of entrepreneurs compared to local leaders on a variety of topics. It was found that entrepreneurs have a high level of education behind their ventures.

Tables 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8 highlight key attributes of entrepreneurs and responses to demographic and resource questions.

*Education Matters: And Can Help to Close the Gender Wage Gap*

Positive comments about education from the surveys or interviews included:

Education is important.

—Bradford County

In order for us to grow and develop and change and move with everything that is going on in the area or the country, we have to continue to educate ourselves. That’s the number one thing is education. Never stop learning . . . never stop learning.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

*Table 3.5 Educational Attainment of Entrepreneurs and Leaders in NEPA*

Some High School	1.9%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	16.2%
Some College	13.8%
Associates Degree	9.9%
Bachelor’s Degree	24.2%
Some Graduate School	7.0%
Graduate/Professional Degree or Higher	26.9%

A large part of mainstream media is constantly messaging that people can't move from point A to point B, which then becomes self-fulfilling prophecy. A person with no resources except a high school diploma can join the military, do one stint stay in reserves, get guaranteed jobs, start in something [as an entrepreneur with educational and career experience], and will have four retirement income streams when they are done working.

—Lackawanna County

We go to boot camps and trainings because again, it comes down to education . . . I need to be out trying different things, moving different things, and see what works and what doesn't.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

The best thing about failure is learning from the mistake that caused the failure and then retaining that to move on to your next adventure.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

You're not always going to succeed in everything you do. You're going to have failures in your own business right away, but you have to understand—that's part of the education of learning to run a good business.

—Luzerne County interviewee

You are never smart enough—learning never ends.

—Luzerne County

I think it starts in high school. The high schools have to develop a career education curriculum where they're not just focusing on kids going out and getting jobs—where kids are going out and starting their own businesses, doing something different. . . . Do something to start your own business, make your own job.

—Wayne County interviewee

I think the community has been a great help, especially the local colleges—you know, Wilkes and King's and Marywood and the University of Scranton, Lackawanna, all of them. All these programs they have for encouraging business development, all these business incubators; they have all of those have done it. I think that's the most important part—in this area, anyway. The local colleges are doing because we don't have the economic or industrial base here that New York or New Jersey have, so to stimulate entrepreneurship, we need colleges to take the lead.

—Wayne County interviewee

And on the flip side about education, which speaks somewhat to the mentality about the “culture of acceptance” of entrepreneuring as a lifestyle:

College never taught me anything about operating a business! Not banking, keeping books. They taught me about getting a job for a company! One has to be aggressive, curious, self-taught, eagerly talks to people in your line of work. One has to read trends articles—looking to the future!

—Lackawanna County

None of my education has helped me become an entrepreneur in any shape, form, unfortunately. What it did was teach me how to think, and then elaborate on that as I got older into an adult.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

Our public schools need to focus more resources on training for trades. A large segment of our student population don't go to college and don't want to. They leave high school without the skills required to be productive.

—Lackawanna County

Please tell the students to go work for some large corporation. Small business is dying.

—Luzerne County

There is a need to stimulate the youth in this community to enter the realm of “being self-oriented and independent,” especially where formal education is so costly. Develop the incentives to become a “self-starter” and slowly build a business with hard work and long horns. Too many young people lack confidence and motivation to succeed on their own!

—Luzerne County

Biggest challenge is keeping our young, educated, and talented people locally. Losing too much talent to Philly, NYC, Pittsburgh, etc.

—Luzerne County

There are not enough training programs available to individuals who need to learn a valuable skill/trade or to be re-trained after an industry closes. A job training partnership between schools, government, and business [needs to be] available to all.

—Luzerne County

Stigma to receive college degrees is more important than seeking out employment opportunities that bring joy or peace to your life.

—Wayne County

By putting my family first I have raised and educated three remarkable adults who will make the world a better place.

—Wayne County

Business is about hands-on experience. You need dirty hands and worn out boots. Education will get you so far, but common sense goes a long way. Willingness to accept failure or not being afraid to fail is important, too. It's not how many times you get knocked down; it's how many time you get back up that matter.

—Wyoming County

### *Entrepreneur Outlook, Tenacity, and Success*

Entrepreneurs recognize the need for self-empowerment and taking action.

I think that [awareness and local market development] is something that the business owner has to develop and work on, and I do not know if they get that from the community. But, you know, the community does have some aspects in developing.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

I think opportunity is a lot of your own doing. I mean, opportunities sometimes present themselves, but you have to know “what” to do with it once it presents itself.

—Luzerne County interviewee

*Table 3.6* NEPA Survey: What variables led to you owning your own business?

Personal Experience	66.3%
Family Influence	47.4%
Location	28.8%
Other Variables	20.0%
Economic Development	9.0%
Community Influence	8.0%
SBDC	1.7%

[Note: Entrepreneurs could pick all categories that applied.]

*Table 3.7* NEPA Survey: Where did the money come from to fund your business?

Savings	72.9%
Loan	56.1%
Family	27.7%
Credit Card	14.6%
Special Grant	2.1%

[Note: Entrepreneurs could pick all categories that applied.]

Table 3.8 Income of NEPA Entrepreneurs

\$15,000–\$24,999	2.9%
\$25,000–\$34,999	3.5%
\$35,000–\$49,999	6.1%
\$50,000–\$74,999	21.9%
\$75,000–\$99,000	14.5%
\$100,000+	50.1%

### *Entrepreneurs Make Good Money*

This case study yielded findings that 84.3% of women and 85.1% of men earn \$50,000 or more.

### *Entrepreneur Reflections About Success*

*Comments about success:*

Desire. Decisions that contribute to successful business. And hard work.  
—Lackawanna County

Success requires constant effort toward excellence and self-reliance, a strong work ethic that drives you to work harder than anyone else doing what you do, a commitment to continually learning everything there is to know about your profession, and non-stop networking, and a personal resolution to never depend on or worry about those things which are not within your control.

—Lackawanna County

People have to be more self-reliant. You cannot depend on the government, etc. to be a success—and nothing is over until you give up!

—Lackawanna County

Hard work and discipline are first and foremost. Skill levels must be maintained. Motivation is extremely important. Fear or failure is good motivation.

—Luzerne County

I knew from the moment I started college that I would go into the restaurant business for myself, and that was catapulted by the fact that I got sick of working for a corporate company. A company with . . . you know . . . nationwide company with upper management that was clueless about the realities of what goes on in the lower levels.

—Luzerne County interviewee

To start a business you must be good at what you do, love what you do, and be willing to jump off a cliff—devote yourself wholeheartedly to what you do. You need a good and decent CPA, banker, and attorney. You need to be a leader in your community (school board, town council, service club, coaching, etc.)—not for the sake of your business but for your own sake—to be a complete person.

—Luzerne County

The people who are the “best off” are not necessarily those with the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. As a long-time entrepreneur, the independence and freedom to make of myself and my position in life what I want it to be, is what drives many entrepreneurs.

—Luzerne County

Positive attitude.

—Luzerne County

Most important: entrepreneurs need to work extremely hard and stick to goals to be successful.

—Luzerne County

If you do not like what you do then change what you do.

—Schuylkill County

I came from a poor family and am a woman in a man’s world. I have worked for every penny I have ever earned and will continue to do so. If I have made it this far, so can others. Nothing in life is free, and my hard work and effort has paid off; I am grateful for that.

—Schuylkill County

Hard work, determination, and attention to detail are significant attributes to a successful business. A good business plan is a great help and customer satisfaction also a key item. Most of all . . . a quality product is what puts you on the road to success.

—Susquehanna County

Plan your work; work your plan.

—Susquehanna County

*About giving back and contributing to the community:*

We’ve done giveaways in the past where we’ve solicited other companies to go with us to give something away—everybody has been very willing to do that. We have great events around the holidays here . . . the community comes out; you can get involved in a lot of ways.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

**Finding (2) Entrepreneurial Community Resources, Support Organizations, Support Networks and Their Importance in a Community, and Local Leaders: Mixed Feelings**

Reflection on being accepted in a community is reflected in Figures 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6. (Note: dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs.) Figure 3.4 summarizes the importance or value of entrepreneurs to a community from survey questions A1. *Community members recognize the importance of local business in stimulating local economic development*, and A2. *Local small business owners receive recognition for their contributions to making the community a better place*. (Note: dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs.) Figure 3.5 highlights entrepreneuring being accepted as a vocation and life choice from survey questions A3a. *Citizens in the community support entrepreneurship as a lifestyle option*, A3b. *Local leaders support entrepreneurship as a lifestyle option*, and A3c. *State and federal politicians support entrepreneurship as a lifestyle option*. (Note: dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs.) Figure 3.6 illustrates how entrepreneurs are viewed as being treated and having resources met as surveyed in questions A8. *I feel that the community treats local businesses fairly*, and A13. *I feel that local businesses get resources they are entitled to have*. (Note: dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs.)

*Acceptance in the Community*

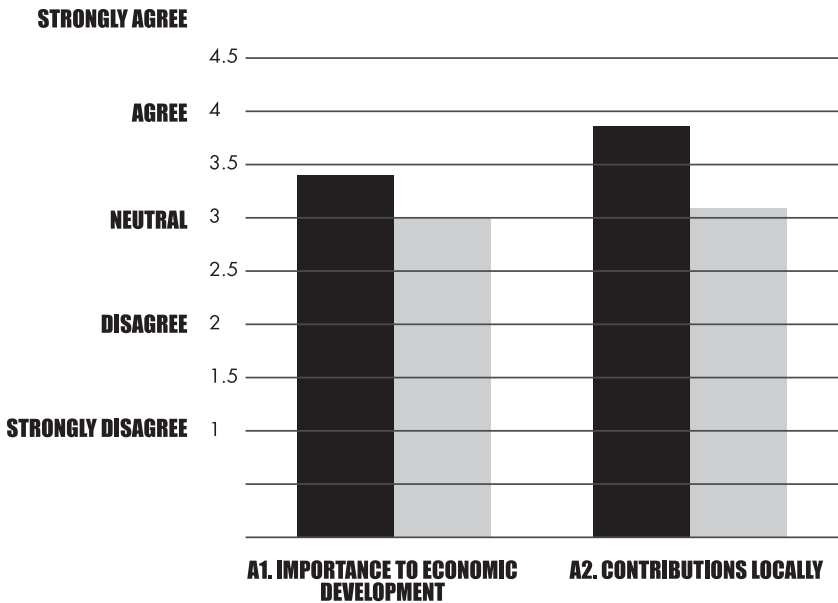


Figure 3.4 Importance of entrepreneurs to community in NEPA (dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs)



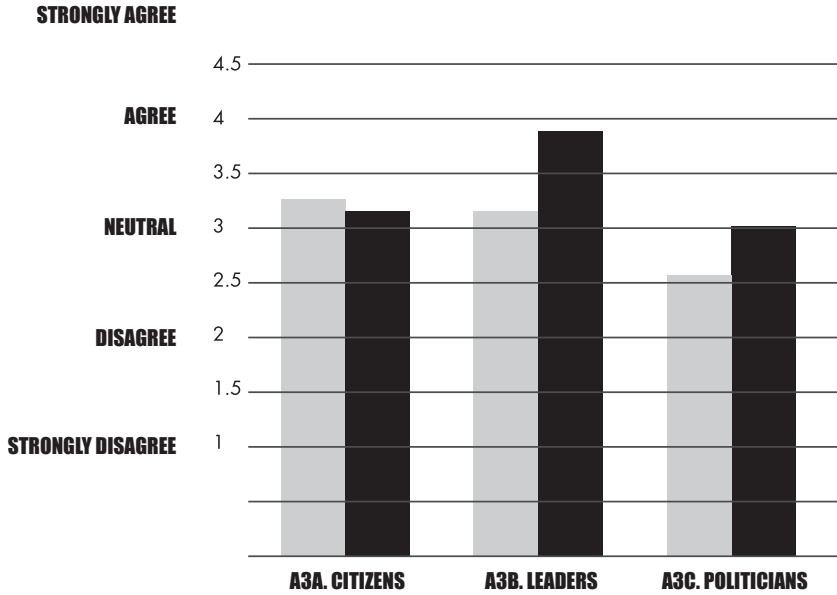


Figure 3.5 Support entrepreneuring as a lifestyle in NEPA (dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs)

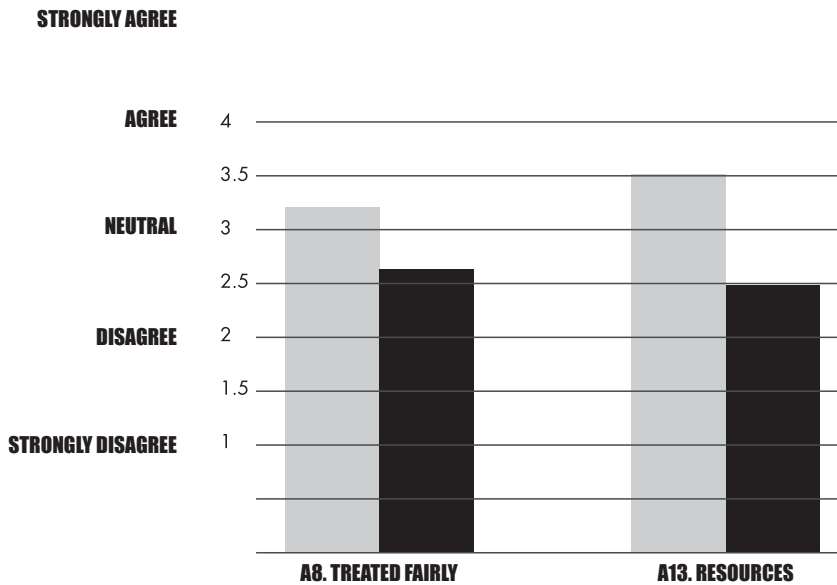


Figure 3.6 Treatment within the communities of NEPA (dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs)

One interviewee said:

I think being an entrepreneur is a very rewarding lifestyle, and when you finish your work . . . see the product of your labor . . . and how nice it turns out. They've called it in this country for 200 years: the products of the work ethic. . . . We don't do things to make money only, we do a thing to make money and make things look really good. There's a lot of self-respect. My grandfather was an immigrant with a 2nd grade education and started this business.

—Wayne County interviewee

Figure 3.7 dramatically illustrates response to survey question A17. *The community leaders and supporting agencies have been successful in getting the needs of its business members met.* Neither group's average was 3.0 (neutral) or higher with leaders being a little more satisfied than entrepreneurs. (Note: dark text leaders, light text entrepreneurs.)

Here are a mix of viewpoints:

There are many in this community who envy the success of others. I have experienced far greater success and acceptance in the other communities in which I have participated (e.g., in Texas and South Carolina especially).

—Lackawanna County

The “community” interacts with only a select few entrepreneurs. Most are relatively anonymous.

—Lackawanna County

It's a very community-oriented area. There's a lot of families here. It's very tight knit. I feel like the other companies even on Main Street are our neighbors and are supportive.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

**LOCAL LEADERS 2.9634**  
**ENTREPRENEURS 2.6393**

Figure 3.7 From NEPA Survey Question A17 (dark text leaders, light text entrepreneurs)

A17 *The community leaders and supporting agencies have been successful in getting the needs of its business members met.*

### **Comments about support networks and support organizations:**

I don't think there is a real good support structure in the area for entrepreneurs. You've got the universities . . . the chambers . . . the incubation building supporting . . . there is a small group of people who will help entrepreneurs and guide them, but if you wanted to go

into business . . . there's not. If you ask 10 people, how do I? or Who can help me? I don't know if you'd find anyone able to tell you who the right people are. They'd probably send you to the SBDC, but not people who will help.

—Luzerne County interviewee

Through the years both the SBA and local banking have told me my business was not viable. Over the years we have totally funded our businesses ourselves. We've survived really good times and bad. Now through the latest banking and real estate mortgage scandal our business is almost gone.

—Luzerne County

The largest thing anyone can do for small business today is get the FDIC off the backs of local or regional banks so they can loan money for working capital or operation to small businesses. Even the SBA can't help unless banks are able to make loans and they can't due to the FDIC and its current rules on loan reserves!

—Luzerne County

I don't know what to think of the community. The newer generation is different.

—Schuylkill County

It takes time to build a business. Many businesses do not give it time, and younger people neglect to socialize other businesspeople. Not everything should be done via social media.

—Schuylkill County

I believe there are serious issues with small business development and support in Schuylkill County. Our towns reflect that with the empty buildings. There is a huge resistance to any "business" or new ideas. If it isn't free and for the children or a non-profit, it is not supported. Laws and regulations don't help either making it financially non-viable to renovate a building for a business.

—Schuylkill County

Located in a coal region town that now has half the population that it had 30 years ago and probably 40% of that is on some kind of public assistance—a smaller Wilkes-Barre. 65 years ago, this was a vibrant city with two movie theaters, train service, and a wonderful downtown shopping district. Today we have none of the above.

—Schuylkill County

My community is unaware of the value in local employment and local volunteering.

—Sullivan County

The key to entrepreneurship is communication with your community members. We partner with other local businesses for more impactful results. We raise money for local charities. We are involved in our community and take an active role by serving on boards and participating on committees. It takes “a village” to grow a business!

—Wayne County

**Comments about resources:**

Entrepreneurs need:

More access to finance

More local government support

More grant money for local advertisement and promotion of “all” small local businesses that support the local tax base

And more encouragement to start-up!

—Lackawanna County

SBDC has helped me. After seeing them speak at the local chamber. Will utilize them more. Also interested in SCORE. Will look into it.

—Luzerne County

Too many lawyers.

—Luzerne County.

Utilities cost ten times more than when business was good.

—Luzerne County

Small businesses need more affordable resources and funding to be able to build their businesses. Business loans/debt should not affect personal credit scores as long as payments are being made in a timely manner.

—Schuylkill County

*Table 3.9* NEPA Survey: What are your technical resources?

Accountant	62.9%
Another Entrepreneur	26.0%
Bank Coaching	7.2%
Help from SBDC	5.9%
Professor	4.8%
Help from SCORE	1.2%

[Note: Entrepreneurs could pick all categories that applied.]

My most limiting resource is terrible unreliable internet [and] cell phone service.

—Sullivan County

Federal regulations impact on banking system—disaster for small business!

—Susquehanna County

Ability to attain working capital is ridiculous. Exhausting.

—Susquehanna County



Figure 3.8 Word Cloud of Key Concepts from Survey Open-Ended Responses in NEPA

Figure 3.8 provides a good summary of key ideas in a word cloud that were expressed in the open-ended section of the NEPA survey. Businesses and entrepreneurs are key components in a community. Further, words illustrate the most important concepts corroborated by survey respondents.

**Comments about local leaders:**

Most political leaders have no idea what is involved with business, but are sure they do!

—Lackawanna County

Many leaders are motivated by partisan politics.

—Lackawanna County

I am in an area where “the good old boys” thrive. A look at downtown Wilkes-Barre will help you understand. A visitors center at The Station? Our attractions are Mohegan Sun and the Arena.

—Luzerne County

Undue influence by political-type people.

—Luzerne County

The worst people and business leaders are the ones who constantly complain and sell our community short.

—Luzerne County

I believe the low pay and other downsides of public service prevent many very capable and enthusiastic managerial people from participating in community management. The result in our area is poor management quality, and thus results. In our communities, entrepreneurs are presented with organizations rarely capable of providing the right assistance.

—Luzerne County

The state and federal government does not care about the middle class or small business anymore. That is not to say that some state and federal representatives and senators don't, but as a whole, no!

—Luzerne County

The only thing or time local government has been at my place of business is to ask for a donation. ☹

—Luzerne County

I think that's what's the matter of what the definition of small business is because I've come to learn that “small business” to local leaders is not me. I've come to learn that “small business” to them is someone who employees like 10–15–20 people or more; they really don't care about mom-and-pop-shops, individual sole proprietors. If you're not adding to the economy with employees, they don't really care about you.

—Luzerne County interviewee

The business community and the amount of money a person has/makes very much influences what power they have with the “leaders” of the community political and business. Some people can work very hard and just about make it. Sad but true.

—Luzerne County

Our government agencies are a big problem, and getting worse. Government agencies hinder business. There is a low standard for the productivity of state employees and agencies. Very inefficient. Huge pensions, huge benefits, sub-standard work ethic of state agencies can't be financed from private industry and hard-working individuals. Compensation packages (not so much the hourly pay but the benefits) for state employees can't be sustained. DEP, PennDOT, public schools, state police, need to be run like private industry. They are out of control. Makes me want to leave the state.

—Susquehanna County

People should be good role models.

—Schuylkill County

Need new life in government leadership. No more politics as usual!

—Wayne County

Our community is populated in large part by retired individuals and low income/section 8. It's "leaders" lean toward keeping higher paying enterprise out of the area.

—Wayne County

### ***Finding (3) Governments: Issues of Taxation, Regulations, and Policy***

The most talked about topic in both interviews and write-in responses was about government at multiple levels. Individuals analyzed, complained about, and berated taxes of all kinds as well as made accusations of nepotism, incompetence, and creation of red-tap. Other concerns were regulations and imbalance in resource allocations. Figure 3.9 considers survey questions A22. *People like me are generally well qualified to participate in the political activity and decision making in our community*, A23. *There are plenty of ways for businesses like mine to have a say in what our government does*, and A24. *Most public officials wouldn't listen to me no matter what I did*, regarding political control as contrasted by entrepreneurs and local leaders. (Note: dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs.)

#### **The following are general comments:**

The government is the biggest problem!!!

—Luzerne County

We have no say in pricing wholesale.

—Bradford County

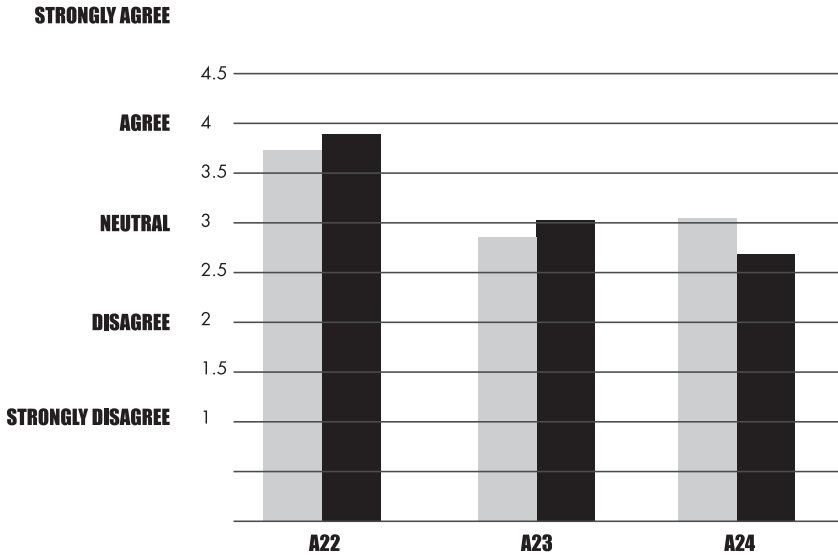


Figure 3.9 Political control in NEPA (dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs)

I feel our state and federal officials do not support small business.  
 —Lackawanna County

Inflated big governmental agency control (i.e., EPA, FDA, IRS) is strangling the average citizen to conduct business at this point in America.  
 —Lackawanna County

I view government generally as an impediment to business. The companies that benefit from government programs are the people that are strongly linked to government in the first place (cronyism). For everyone else, government views business as safe boxes of money to crack open and take what they are able.  
 —Wayne County

**Comments about taxation:**

To help small business grow we need . . . less taxes.  
 —Bradford County

Local governments do not realize the importance of small businesses. They pay lip service to it but when it comes to tax ramifications and other considerations, many townships do not really take care of the small guy.  
 —Lackawanna County



Small businesses are taxed to death.

—Lackawanna County

Government state, federal, local are no help at all in help to hire people. We may need to hire people, but cannot afford it, not at all! Cost (compensation etc.) costs combined are way too high for “Mom & Pop” organizations!

—Lackawanna County

I believe business would thrive if in a city like Scranton or Wilkes-Barre if local government would ease the tax burdens of local businesses. Dickson City and Taylor are the tax-friendliest around Scranton, and it shows.

—Lackawanna County

Payroll taxes are a huge impact on small businesses. It greatly effects employee wages and company growth negatively.

—Lackawanna County

Tax structure needs to reward entrepreneurs per employee. If I were saving more I would increase staff.

—Luzerne County

Government constrains too much which brings extra financial burden on business.

—Luzerne County

Our government and tax system does not come close to giving average, honest, non-ethnic people equal opportunity.

—Schuylkill County

Property and income tax are the largest burden on my small business.

—Susquehanna County

Government doesn't work. Big business doesn't pay their share. Government is making it hard for small businesses to succeed. PennDOT is not accountable to anyone. Took 4.5 years to complete road job—literally has killed my 110-year-old business. Lost ¼-million dollars.

—Susquehanna County

Regulations along with more and more taxes are driving businesses out. State workers and school teacher unions keep pushing for them and keep raising taxes to meet their demands. I have no unions pulling for me in a private business. If the economy is down like it is now, people don't have the little extra to spend so my sales drop but the taxes are still there. But the unions and politicians don't care how much they

tax businesses and people. They only seem to care that they got what they demanded no matter how much they are hurting people with all of these taxes. It is a sin to tax the elderly out of their fully paid homes because they have to make a choice between heat in the winter or paying their taxes.

—Wyoming County

One optimistic opinion about taxes:

I've always said this about my taxes—whether my home taxes or my business taxes: if you can see your tax dollars working for you, it is much more palatable to pay them then.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

**Comments about regulations:**

To help small business grow we need small government (less regulations).

—Bradford County

I think government makes it hard for small business to exist. Regulations, rules, paperwork, taxes, liabilities, legal.

—Bradford County

Current government regulation has choked small business.

—Schuylkill County

I feel that state and federal regulations are crippling.

—Susquehanna County

Too many rules and regulations to stay in business!

—Susquehanna County

**Comments about policy:**

Regulations and horrible federal policies crippled businesses for the last 8 years (e.g., 2008–2016).

—Lackawanna County

I feel foreign entrepreneurs and business owners get more help and benefits than American entrepreneurs.

—Lackawanna County

The state failed. The Dodd Frank Bill stopped the banks from extending my credit line.

—Luzerne County

Federal and state governments have a significant ability to impact entrepreneurs. Uncertainty and unpredictability surrounding state and federal budgets, and tax rates/tax treatments have impeded investment. . . . If federal and state governments developed policies and programs which actually considered and assisted small businesses, our economy would be stronger, and the working class more financially stable. In the last 10–15 years, government has been part of the problem, not part of the solution.  
—Wayne County

I feel as though I have a silent partner in business—one that never contributes to the business but always takes a paycheck. Government! The regulations have become about unbearable for me and for my customers.  
—Wayne County

#### ***Finding (4) Business Operations***

A variety of business operations topics emerged including discussion on business plans, employees, dealing with competition, e-Commerce, and customers. A band of questions dealt with “buy local” perspectives.

#### *Business Planning Is Less Than Formal in Most Businesses*

A total of 95% of respondents indicated not having a formal business plan and either “reflecting on the prior year(s) to forecast the current and next year” or “flying-by-the-seat-of-our-pants” modality. Most indicated a business plan would be valued but had not taken priority. Those 5% who have a business plan indicate it communicates to their investor(s), family (where applicable), employees, and management on what is intended, forecasted, and captured annually. This minority indicated a business is vital to operations and growth goals.

#### **Comments about employees:**

The single largest value I my company is our people. Proper focus on them builds a secure foundation for ongoing support and success.  
—Bradford County

We need more jobs that pay enough for people to afford professional services performed to improve their well-being. People who make good money, spend money. Bottom line is jobs.  
—Lackawanna County

We support local community by bringing jobs . . . skilled and unskilled labor.  
—Lackawanna County interview

Financial planning, awareness, and responsibility are the most important factors in maintaining and achieving a successful business. This includes having the proper respect for paying a living wage as well as the rights and privileges of one's employees.

—Luzerne County

Employers struggle to hire skilled or unskilled workers.

—Luzerne County

Nobody has money: lack of good paying jobs!

—Luzerne County

**Comments about dealing with competition:**

Big box stores like Home Depot, Walmart, Cabela's make it very hard for entrepreneurs like myself to stay in business. We sell our products for the same price as our competition but we give our customers much greater value by offering service for our products after the sale.

—Lackawanna County

Even if there's three businesses that are selling the same thing on the same street . . . the competition is a good thing, and I think that generally businesses that are local want to support each other . . . and help promote business, you know. Everyone has something to offer, so you know if you're in the same business you know you might do something a little bit differently than the next guy. I think there's mostly cooperation between businesses.

—Lackawanna County interview

Something changed when the big boxes went in. Now we find ourselves traveling out of the area to work. The work is still good, but the locals refuse to support local business.

—Schuylkill County

Large box stores are changing traditional retailing.

—Susquehanna County

Small businesses need to be diversified. Large department stores offer a variety of items, free parking, one stop shopping, and usually sell cheap. Small businesses need to get together and sell better quality items, each offering a different item.

—Wayne County

**Comments about eCommerce and entrepreneurship:**

There is a fundamental change of retail's brick-and-mortar viability. Small (and large) city governments are decades behind (i.e., clueless) in understanding paradigm shifts. The average customer tends to know the price of everything and the value of nothing. This is not good or bad; it is what it is. This is a difficult paradigm shift!

—Bradford County

There is an impact of internet commerce (i.e., Amazon or retail/ wholesale business) and the propensity to purchase online. A BIG MISS! As it impacts the viability of local business. Does anyone read the stats? K-Mart, Radio Shack, JCPenney's all have one foot in the grave. The early bird gets the worm is a great story . . . only if you're the bird! If you lost your job due to Amazon—you've become the worm!

—Bradford County

The general public does not understand the potential impact increased online purchasing will have on small brick and mortar stores. Breaking into online sales has been a challenge for our business.

—Schuylkill County

The internet is changing traditional retailing.

—Susquehanna County

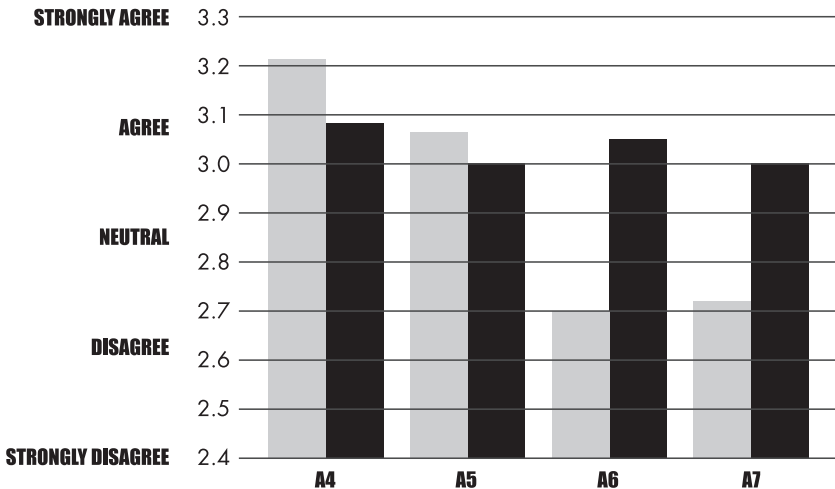


Figure 3.10 Buy local emphasis in NEPA (dark bar leaders, light bar entrepreneurs)

**Comments about customers:**

The average consumers are what keeps my business running!!! J  
—Luzerne County

The secret to success is to treat the customers we serve with compassion, honesty, and like one of my own family members. “Listening” is a major part of what helps me connect.  
—Schuylkill County

Part of consideration for customers is doing local business. Figure 3.10 summarizes sentiments from survey questions A4. *Citizens in my community buy locally/support local business whenever possible*, A5. *Citizens in my community understand the importance of buying/supporting local business*, A6. *My community has an established “buy local” campaign*, and A7. *Entrepreneurs who start businesses are not concerned about tarnishing their reputation in the local community if they fail*, relating to support of local businesses.

**Examples of buy local:**

I own my own building, so small business pays a lot in real estate taxes to the local community, the local school district . . . that, you know, stores that are not in the community don’t contribute to that. So you’re paying, and I think that’s important that a small business in a local town is part of the tax base of that community, you know? Like the stores in the malls or whatever big box stores aren’t really contributing anything to the local tax base.  
—Lackawanna County interview

[With technology and good customer service] there is a big push from places for folks to “buy local,” and I always tell my customers they have the opportunity to buy through another business or on the Internet or through the 800 number—but why would you want to do that when you have a local [person] who is just a phone call away from you? When you are calling an 800 number, you are going to get a different person [every time]. To whatever money is spent in my local [business] here, [I] turn around and give a large portion of that to the community and the different ways I’m involved in the community.  
—Lackawanna County interview

I have three questions: (1) Do you think the local large businesses and institutions consider local firms as vendors/service providers? (2) Why do regional institutions (like Wilkes) receive small business financial support on a consistent basis and do business with “outsiders?” (3) Why don’t institutions seek out the real entrepreneurs in the community and learn what they do on a national scale?  
—Luzerne County

We need support to manufacturing companies with longevity.  
—Luzerne County

### ***Reflexive Notes***

While conducting this research, field notes and jottings were tracked in accordance with Howell's (1972) suggestions, making observations about the research process, impressions made by interviewees, and other observations not mentioned by participants. The following were directly salient and relevant to entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial communities, and reflections from the research team:

1. While conducting this research, it was a strong economic time period in recovery from the great recession of 2007–2009.
2. It is good that there were mixed emotions involved, and some negative voices emerged. This dichotomous voice creates awareness of differing viewpoints and added credibility to reality. More negative voice would likely be yielded from the “closed and discontinued business” audience, which did not materialize.
3. There was a consideration that having the study branded with Wilkes University caused people without a negative relationship with the university to respond. There was no correlation of respondents as particularly having a relationship with this specific university based on a wide participation of non-alumni or other affiliations.
4. The phenomenon of NEPA entrepreneurship lacks diversity in age, gender, and racial categories. The average age respondent was 57 years.

### ***Limitations***

Based on the response data, 80.8% of entrepreneurs reflected having small entrepreneurial firms as the most highly represented audience, thus the data reflect start-up and entrepreneur depth at the small business size. On the flip side then, the data are limited in representing medium-sized (17.5%) and large-sized (1.7%) entrepreneur businesses.

Because the minimum eligibility required two or more full-time employees, micro-based businesses were excluded. Micro-based businesses are often home-based with less than a full-time employee. Note that 60% of home-based businesses are typically women-owned, so a major sub-audience was not included. The minimum requirements were aimed at established, more committed, or permanent businesses and entrepreneurs as a delineation for this case study.

Leader response was  $n = 41$ . While some impressions are able to be gleaned, a much larger sample would be needed to draw more generalizable or statistically significant results.

The demographics of NEPA are reflected in the respondent demographics, which are not diverse. Thus, opinions highly represent

White entrepreneurs (98%) and White leaders (100%), a major limitation for non-Whites. Non-White entrepreneur representation: 1% Hispanic/Latinx, 0.5% Native American, and 0.5% Other.

While women represented 22% of entrepreneur respondents and 25% of local entrepreneur respondents—which are reflective of the overall business statistics in the area, the state, and nationally—a higher *n* for either participant respondents would be desired for greater depth representation to draw more generalizable or statistically significant results.

While conscientious participant recruitment efforts were made, these types of surveys often reflect potential *confirmation bias* in that only “happy” or “successful” entrepreneurs tend to respond. Because of the negative voices that did emerge, the research team believes there is good balance; however, there could be limitations because of self-selection to participate. Part of this challenge also stemmed from not being able to contact and collect impressions from failed entrepreneurs and closed or discontinued businesses, which would likely have exhibited much richer data on inhibitions of entrepreneurship and entrepreneuring or systemic problems in the environments.

Because of budget and time constraints, the particular eight counties in the research were studied. Other agencies or researchers might have also included additional counties such as Pike, Monroe, Carbon, Lycoming, Columbia, Montour, and/or Northumberland. Still others would also include Northampton and Lehigh. In a quick Google search of maps of the State of Pennsylvania, different agencies, geologists, economists, historians, or governments have a myriad of groups. Inclusion of additional counties could shift, change, or negate findings in the study.

Analyzing and reporting data takes time. The data in the research as well as analyses were all completed prior to the pandemic, thus reflects a period in time during the second decade of the 21st Century (i.e., 2010–2019) and retrospective analysis from the Battelle Report (i.e., 1999–2019). The pandemic caused mass unemployment, episodic business closures, and funding priorities in health and educational technologies not focused on entrepreneurs or business development. The third decade (2020–2029) would likely reflect differently.

## **Discussion**

Discussion is collated to follow the four key findings: (1) *NEPA entrepreneurs* and who they are; (2) *entrepreneurial community resources* through entrepreneurship culture, support organizations, support networks and their importance to the community, and local leaders of acceptance, mixed feelings on support networks and their importance, resources, and local leaders; (3) *governments* with issues of taxation, regulation, and policy; and (4) *business operations* including business planning, employees, competition, e-Commerce, and customers.



A major concern in 1999 noted by the Battelle Report: “A common theme emerging from the project team’s interviews is that the region, similarly to Pennsylvania as a whole, does not have a strong entrepreneurial culture” (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. 22). However, the 2020 Michigan Entrepreneurship Score Card (Toft et al., 2020, p. 54) ranks Pennsylvania as the 12th best state for entrepreneurial climate. This sentiment is the “culture of acceptability.” Entrepreneurial communities also need the key ingredient of *entrepreneurship culture*. Birch et al. (1994) indicated a climate test for entrepreneurship:

- When the mayor of an area meets with business leaders, are there as many leaders of mid-size companies as bankers and corporate executives?
- Are entrepreneurs invited to the best events or clubs in the area (e.g., athletics, arts, social)?
- Does the local newspaper and regional business journal follow entrepreneurial start-ups and discuss people of all ages in light of being entrepreneurs?
- Are there companies recruiting a majority—or all—of their talent locally?
- Is there venture capital available and known?
- Do the higher educational institutions have faculty and students participating and publicizing entrepreneuring activities, business plans, start-ups, etc.?
- Are entrepreneurs board members of local banks or other financial institutions?
- Is there affordable infrastructure and space available for incubators, start-ups, support helps?
- Can you name ten entrepreneurs or new businesses?

These indicators give a litmus test of the entrepreneurial culture and climate. Not on the list but important to culture are the policies and incentives to support entrepreneurs and businesses.

The Battelle Report touted many incubators, technology centers, mentoring opportunities, and entrepreneur networks. These were grassroots in the 1990s; they have certainly flourished. One key help has likely been the Internet and access to information, websites, blogs; information about local, regional, state, and national support agencies; easy access to data including competition; and instantaneous communications with scholars, practitioners, other entrepreneurs—around the world; and funding agencies, venture capitalists and their networks, and grant or other fiscal access.

One of the greatest successes in the region is the revitalization of downtowns like Scranton (see *Scranton: The Electric City*, <https://scrantonpa.gov/>) and Wilkes-Barre (see *Diamond City: Partners in Progress*, <http://wbdc.org/>). Both communities continue to see private investment in downtown

residential living that is breathing new life and enticing restaurateurs and recreational outlets to serve an expanding demographic—key attractions needed for creative and technology-savvy entrepreneurs (Florida, 2002, 2012). These areas also attract entrepreneurs and their desire to locate start-ups, expansion, and even larger operations in the areas.

There is a polemic viewpoint on the area. Insiders often have a self-deprecating perception of NEPA—maybe a bit of the “grass is greener on the other side of the fence” viewpoint. When “coal was king,” this region had significant wealth and then the region fell on hard times, so bitterness has carried forth for two to three generations. However, people who come to the area from outside the local communities are amazed by the opportunity. With amenities like the AAA teams for the Yankees and Penguins, world class waterparks, world class mountain biking terrain with more than 200 trails close by, ski resorts, two casinos, a long list of breweries, and revitalization of downtowns—the perception of the region and its communities are changing.

Threats noted in the Battelle Report included:

- Low-cost operations moving off-shore
- Underemployment causing increase in outmigration of young workers
- Lack of new economy anchors making the region vulnerable to high unemployment
- Continued fragmentation of local government resulting in blighted neighborhoods and concentrations of low-income populations
- Continued educated workforce to attract and retain technology companies (or lose them)

(Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. x)

### ***NEPA Entrepreneurs***

Nationally, an estimated 57% of undergraduate and 59% of master’s degrees are attained in the United States by women (Warner et al., 2018). Trends have changed with the number of women in the workforce during and since World War II (Baig, 2017). Lehman (2018) noted:

Gender equality and the wage gap is a popular topic of discussion for progressive, developed societies. Throughout the last century, women have made momentous progress in the fight for equality in the United States of America. Women have advanced in civilization through education, employment, and breaking stereotypical gender roles.

(p. 3)

This case study yielded findings that 84.3% of women and 85.1% of men earn \$50,000 or more; thus with a formal education and self-employment, equality of wages and job satisfaction were reported. Lehman (2018) noted:

Table 3.10 Higher Education and Entrepreneurship in NEPA

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Entrepreneurship Programming</i>				
	<i>Classes</i>	<i>Certificate</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Major/ Degree</i>	<i>Masters/ Doctoral</i>
Clarks Summit University	•			• <sup>1</sup>	
Johnson College					
Keystone College	•	•			
King's College	•	•	•	• <sup>2</sup>	
Lackawanna College					
Luzerne County Community College					
Marywood University	•				
Misericordia University	•				
Penn State Hazleton	•	•	•		
Penn State Scranton	•	•	•		
Penn State	•	•	•		
Worthington-Scranton					
Penn State Wilkes-Barre	•	•	•		
University of Scranton	•	•	•	•	
Wilkes University	•	•	•	• <sup>3</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Entrepreneurship<sup>2</sup> Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a Concentration in Entrepreneurship<sup>3</sup> Wilkes University eliminated the major in entrepreneurship and degree in 2019

Gender equality and the wage gap is a popular topic of discussion for progressive, developed societies. Throughout the last century, women have made momentous progress in the fight for equality in the United States of America. Women have advanced in civilization through education, employment, and breaking stereotypical gender roles.

(p. 3)

This case study illustrates that having formal education and being an entrepreneur create equal footing for men and women to earn an equal amount of money and reflect as successful.

Statistically, people who come from a family entrepreneurship background often have more of the endorsement of a “culture of acceptability” to entrepreneuring because others in the family have. Additionally, family entrepreneurs often have resources to support offspring or grandchildren in executing on their idea or passion. Additionally, a majority of entrepreneurs start with their own tenacity and drive (i.e., personal experience). Community, economic development, and SBDCs ranked very low on inspiration for enticing people to consider a path as an entrepreneur.

A majority of funding for new entrepreneurs comes from their own savings. Once companies seek additional support from venture capitalists, angel investors, banks, or an IPO, accountability that comes into question is “what skin do you have in the business?”

### ***Entrepreneurial Community Resources***

As illustrated from the technical resources question, the number one place where entrepreneurs turn for advice is their accountant. Mentoring or support from another entrepreneur occurred more than a quarter of the time; thus in addition to family, having a role model is a potentially important component.

There seems to be a decline in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship degree offerings in higher education institutions in the area (see Table 3.10). For example, at the baccalaureate level, Wilkes University eliminated its entrepreneurship major in fall 2019 (Wilkes University, 2019) while maintaining a minor, and Misericordia University now offers no credentials but some classes in entrepreneurship (C. Speicher, personal communication, August 9, 2021). Entrepreneurship minors range from two to three classes at Penn State to only six at King’s College, University of Scranton, and Wilkes University. University of Scranton has the most robust entrepreneurship degree (AACSB accredited), followed by Clarks Summit University and King’s College (also AACSB accredited), which allow earning a bachelor of science degree in business administration with a concentration in entrepreneurship (see Table 3.10). [Note: within driving distance within greater NEPA, there are additional entrepreneurship educational opportunities at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania’s Zeigler College of Business (AACSB) and an Entrepreneurial Leadership Center, and East Stroudsburg University, which also has an Entrepreneurial Leadership Center and The East Stroudsburg University Innovation Center.]

While the U.S. Government and State governments—with delivery through regional and localized programming—have a range of programs available, SBDCs and SCORE were not popularly named. In reviewing the high level of education of the respondents in the study discussed in the next section, the researchers have deduced that highly educated people rely on their own education, professional advice, and own network as opposed to turning to publicly available resources. While at first glance it looks as though as SBDCs are unimportant, the research team would contend that such offerings need to increase budget for advertising and promotion of available resources.

### ***Local Leaders***

Entrepreneurial social groups help people in entrepreneuring and business maintenance (Lou, 1997; Newell, 2017; Renzulli et al., 2000; Ruef, 2010). Broader goals of developing leadership, building consensus, and considering

community assets (Battelle Memorial, 1999) were made a priority for leaders to work together. Interviewees indicated generally good communication but need for more marketing efforts about opportunities. From this case study's data set, Heim et al. (2017) found that entrepreneurs interact the same or more than the average community member; however, it was noted that entrepreneurs "was nearly an even split between formal and informal venues" (p. 18) with rare leveraging from local leaders. Heim et al. (2017) noted:

Many of the business owners interacting with community leaders seemed to speak of more informal interactions where they just reach out and speak to representatives or business support organizations. Such as this business owner who stated that, "we have reached out to state senator [uhm] and they've been very accommodating with giving us the [uhm] connect information to work more, more with government contracts." They made this seem like a relatively informal interaction where they just reached out to a leader to get information to help their business. Another spoke of meetings with politicians that seemed somewhat formal to a degree, but not at any kind of a formal business organization meeting or social organization meeting. They said, "My business is politics, so I am meeting with politicians. They're either my client, and afterwards I want to make sure there are allies that support their platform, there are usually rewards. Sounds corrupt but it's not." This business owner was using politicians to help their particular business succeed, most likely due to the fact that politicians "hold the keys" to much information and resources that businesses would like to have access to. Others spoke of more formal meetings with Small Business Development Centers. One stated, "I mean they were, they were pretty good. And they were pretty, for what I needed them for and how long I utilized their service they were really, they were, they were good." Many others mentioned some sort of interaction with a social or business organization but were rather vague in what the interaction was. However, that is evidence that there was some level of interaction between business owners and community leaders. There was also a bit of evidence in that meeting with these community leaders helped the business owners' success. Just stating that an SBDC was helpful, or that a politician helped a business owner navigate some sort of political landscape in efforts to do a government job shows that interaction with community leaders can be related to business success in some instances.

Banyai (2009) noted that community leaders connect "people and empowers them to pursue their individual and collective goals" (p. 246). Thus, many entrepreneurs expressed the helpfulness of local leaders in their entrepreneuring aims.

## **Government**

When entrepreneurs are asked about paying taxes, it is expected that they will have unfavorable opinions about those who are responsible for the tax legislation that takes money directly out of their pockets. In reflecting on these sentiments, it is important to explain some potentially rational background at the time for such specific angst among entrepreneurs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania while these responses were recorded.

First, as it relates to taxes, entrepreneurs in many cases are building their companies on thin financial margins. Each dollar spent needs to drive value. Payments to employees provide a return in the form of tasks accomplished that drive revenue to the organization. Money invested in marketing provides leads to the sales team which results in a monetary return. It is much harder to correlate tax expenditure to revenue generation. A significant amount of time could be spent on debating the value of stated services and what they bring to the greater good. For instance, taxes dollars support infrastructure, such as the roads and bridges that allow for goods to be distributed. But in many cases, it is very possible the entrepreneurs do not see an investment of their tax dollars as a direct impact on their bottom line.

Second, in 2005, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Legislature passed a late-night Legislative package that provided a pay raise for the state's elected officials. The citizens of Pennsylvania did not take it well, and in the end, it cost many State House and Senate officials their positions during the next few election cycles. This activity was followed by a series of budget fights in Harrisburg (the State Capital), which led to delayed budgets. The Pennsylvania budget should be approved annually by June 30, and in 2015, it was delayed until December. During this 10-year period, the Legislature was also forced to consider a statewide pension reform program that played out in the public impacting all state employees including the public educators. It may have been a bit unfair to hold this group of legislators accountable for the decisions that were made decades earlier by others. In any case, a bad decision to enact a pay raise, a series of extended budget fights, and a need to address pension reform frustrated entrepreneurs and the Commonwealth's citizens eroding the confidence at that time in the Pennsylvania Legislature.

Finally, the legislative officials in Northeastern Pennsylvania tend to make themselves and their staff members available to the community. It is possible that entrepreneurs have an unfair expectation that since they pay taxes their elected officials should provide grant dollars or access to customers, ultimately driving revenue to their ventures. Instead during this time period, the legislature supported investments in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Today, it is a system that makes the entire region stronger but may not be felt by each individual entrepreneur equally. In the end, it is better for legislators to invest resources in the ecosystem, instead of picking

winners and loser. As a final thought, one of the authors previously surveyed individuals in this community for a different project and did not encounter the same level of uneasiness.

### ***Business Operations***

Several business operations concerns emerged in the dialogue with entrepreneurs. Main topics included business planning, dealing with employees, dealing with competition including e-Commerce, and interfacing with customers. Some of the findings express competition in terms of trying to get local customers to “buy local” and support entrepreneurial small businesses. Here, discussion is focused on business planning and employees. Local entrepreneurs seem to like healthy competition with other local entrepreneurs but are often concerned about large, national chains eroding entrepreneurs, small business, downtowns, and local and regional businesses.

### *Business Planning*

An interesting finding was that most entrepreneurs believe planning is important, but only 5% of entrepreneurs indicated they have created, maintain, and use business plans. Several indicated they need to create these plans for various goals: short- and long-term planning, succession planning, growth and expansion, and valuation of a business to attract investors. Many entrepreneurs indicated they were “lucky” to have ambition, passion, and drive to make sure they market and keep income going. Nearly all entrepreneurs indicated they need to plan better and desire to create and maintain business plans.

### *Employees*

While consultants noted there was “an ample supply of highly education workers” (Battelle Memorial Institute, 1999, p. ix), there became encouragement for technology infrastructure, more technically skilled workers, and

*Table 3.11* Educational Attainment for NEPA Population Aged 25–64

<i>County</i>	<i>Less Than High School</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>More Than High School</i>	<i>Some College</i>	<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	<i>Advanced Degree</i>
Bradford	10%	45%	45%	17%	12%	6%
Lackawanna	9%	36%	56%	17%	18%	11%
Luzerne	8%	39%	53%	20%	15%	8%
Schuylkill	11%	47%	43%	16%	10%	6%
Sullivan	10%	45%	45%	17%	12%	6%
Susquehanna	9%	40%	52%	22%	13%	7%
Wayne	9%	40%	52%	22%	13%	7%
Wyoming	9%	36%	56%	17%	18%	11%

creation of vibrant downtowns. A major goal of the State of Pennsylvania is creating greater access to higher education as a tool for upward mobility (Price et al., 2018). Many researchers and scholars have noted that higher education leads to higher earnings. Specifically, advanced education aids entrepreneurs and also higher ways (Graff, 2016). Table 3.11 summarizes the educational attainment of the counties at the beginning of this case study. Most entrepreneurs expressed contentment with the available workforce. Additionally, entrepreneurs mentioned time and again how important retaining employees is to keep a stable or growing business.

As discussed, four key findings emerged including (1) learning who *NEPA entrepreneurs* are; (2) an understanding of *entrepreneurial community resources* through entrepreneurship culture, support organizations, support networks and their importance to the community, and local leaders; of acceptance, mixed feelings on support networks and their importance, resources, and local leaders; (3) discontentment with *government controls* with issues of taxation, regulation, and policy; and (4) key themes from entrepreneur *business operations* including business planning, employees, competition, e-Commerce, and customers. In summary, a lot has happened in 20 years that is reflective in nature for NEPA as summarized in Table 3.12 against regional goals established and a benchmark toward progress.

High- and low-entrepreneurship (Fortunato, 2017) emerged in the data with definite polaristic behaviors. Some low-entrepreneurship environments included chamber of commerce members or politicians who were making decisions regarding entrepreneurs and business in general who had no knowledge, training, education, or experience in business. Such power without functional knowledge is classic—and detrimental—to entrepreneurs. On the flip side, high-entrepreneurship entrepreneurial communities reflected healthy industry and competition behaviors as well as open dialogue and supportive reflection from both entrepreneurs and local leaders. A positive outlook and optimistic viewpoint were evidenced in high-entrepreneurship communities.

## Implications

While about half of the goals established in 1999 seem to have been accomplished, there is still room for growth and refinement. Potentially, the scores discussed in Figure 3.11 summarizes the status where things are: they could be better. Neither group in aggregate was 3.0 or higher with leaders being a little more satisfied than entrepreneurs. Thus, there is room for improvement.

While many programs have been established, there needs to be much greater adoption and involvement, which would come from a multi-platform image and information campaign. In addition, robust metrics and a resource directory could be beneficial for accountability and positive synergy. An



Table 3.12 Gaps and Progress in Entrepreneurship from 1999 to 2019 in NEPA

1999 (Battelle Report, p. 40)	2019 (Environmental Scan Post-Case Study)
No single point of contact for entrepreneur support services	tecBRIDGE Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) located in Wilkes-Barre and Scranton NEPA Alliance Three Invent Penn State LaunchBox locations Economic Development Organizations (WEDCO, SEDCO, CANDO) Chambers of Commerce Ben Franklin Technology Partners NEP are still entry points for entrepreneurs Economic development leaders meet regularly to coordinate and share leads There are numerous examples of entrepreneurs established in NEPA who make themselves available and circulate throughout the communities and region to network people to find appropriate resources
Lack of networking opportunities for entrepreneurs and CEOs of small, start-up technology-based companies	Several localized leadership programs Incubator's Networking Programs 20th Annual Business Plan Competition 17th Annual Entrepreneurship Institute Innovation Conference (and attracts statewide participation, not just local) Young Professional Networking Programs Launched Internship Programs Many local colleges and universities offer entrepreneurship courses and some academic credentials
Lack of locally available seed and venture capital	Significant investment from Ben Franklin Technology Partners NEP Pennsylvania Angel Network Local Angel Investors active in deal flow NEPA Alliance Angel Fund \$24.6 million in Keystone Innovation Tax Credits awarded to date and growing Companies attracting NYC, Silicon Valley, and Philadelphia venture capitalists
Lack of facilities for small start-up companies	Seven Business Incubators Created in NEPA: 1. The Scranton Enterprise Center 2. TecBridge 3. The Carbondale Technology Transfer Center 4. The Stourbridge 5. Innovation Center in Wilkes-Barre 6. The Allan P. Kirby Center for Free Enterprise and Entrepreneurship 7. CAN BE Innovation Center Three LaunchBox Programs in NEPA by Penn State University and the Governor's Office

(Continued)

Table 3.12 (Continued)

1999 (Battelle Report, p. 40)	2019 (Environmental Scan Post-Case Study)
Absence of local entrepreneurial role models	<p>Many entrepreneur role models, mentors, purposeful interaction and event participation in the community and offered by academic institutions</p> <p>Series of entrepreneurial tech-success stories, which have created thousands of jobs molding entrepreneurs who can transfer their knowledge to the next generation</p> <p>Examples include PepperJam, Noble Biomaterials, Solid Cactus, TGM Health, GiveGab, NetDriven, Signallamp Health, American Paper Bag, Mt. Everetts Frozen Creation, and ChannelApe</p>

example of attempting to promote entrepreneurs is seen through the Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce's Wilkes-Barre Connect and NEPA Works (Greater Wyoming Valley, 2021) and NEPA Entrepreneurs private Facebook group. Other Chambers of Commerce in this NEPA eight counties include Carbondale, Hazleton, Pittston, Scranton, and Tunkhannock.

More feeder organizations from primary, secondary, and higher education would be good. At the K-12 level, utilization of 4-H entrepreneur curriculum, Junior Achievement, etc. programming would provide a "culture of acceptability" for youths of all ages and a more open mentality, including positive support from families. There is an inverse relationship between theory and hands-on focus of entrepreneurship (Clevenger et al., 2022a). While local higher education is scaling back on formal entrepreneurship education, perhaps entrepreneur spaces (e.g., incubators, co-working spaces, formal and informal networking) can sustain entrepreneur involvement.

While initiatives like the Ben Franklin Technology Partners and tecBRIDGE support technology and innovation, that is potentially only 5% of the market needs. Thus, non-technology entrepreneurs also need resources, mentoring, and support organizations.

## Conclusion

The following sentiments seem to summarize the qualitative data analyses:

The world is made up of three types of people: (1) people that make it happen! (2) people that watch it happen! (3) people that don't even know what happened.

—Susquehanna County

I feel like in this area, everyone is very willing to help everyone else. Ya know, I can reach out to our customers, our commercial customers,

to other local businesses. Some small, some of them not so small. And once you make that connection, you always have that person to call upon.

—Lackawanna County interviewee

I think people need to realize that we've got a great area. A lot of people have this perception that, yah know, this area is backward. It drives me crazy when people say, "there's nothing to do around here." . . . I'm running my own business now. . . . There's no reason people can't start a business and grow it [even] out of this area. There is no reason. I mean, you have access. . . . If you need to get into a big city . . . you've got access . . . I think we have to help people have a vision.

—Luzerne County interviewee

"Engaging local communities and trying to develop a shared heritage" has to take into consideration the people involved (including language and culture), policies, local networks and amenities, and sensitivity (Shackel, 2017). NEPA created momentum the past 20 years since the Battelle Report. Fostering growth of entrepreneurial communities and resident entrepreneurial ecosystems for each entrepreneur to contribute to revitalization and collaboration is not easy. The process can be done when there is a shared vision, a strong strategic plan, and people who are willing to roll up their sleeves and put the community ahead of their own organization's interests (see Figures 3.11 and 3.12). Although governments can be perceived by entrepreneurs as an impediment for progress, the governments have played a role in the region's success. Much of the seed capital to fund initiatives was provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, and most, if not all, of the incubators received funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce Small Business Administration. Many times entrepreneurs would prefer dollars be sent directly to their individual businesses. In this case, the dollars funded the infrastructure that provides access to capital, mentors, and solutions providers (see Figures 3.11 and 3.12). In 20 years, the region has built an infrastructure to provide assistance to entrepreneurs so their businesses may reach their fullest potential.

This region did an excellent job of diversifying its economy, creating and filling its business parks, and overcoming a number of scandals the last 2 decades. Today, the region is promoted by Penn's Northeast, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and is privately funded by DiscoverNEPA. Although there is certainly still room for growth, the region is positioned as a strategic location to distribute product to more than 50% of the U.S. population within a 600-mile radius. Additionally, as the pandemic has pushed some transition to remote workforce, people can live in Northeastern Pennsylvania enjoying the amenities of medium-sized urban and suburban communities within close proximity and within 2 hours be able to travel to the world's largest urban centers in Philadelphia or New York City.

## REGIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

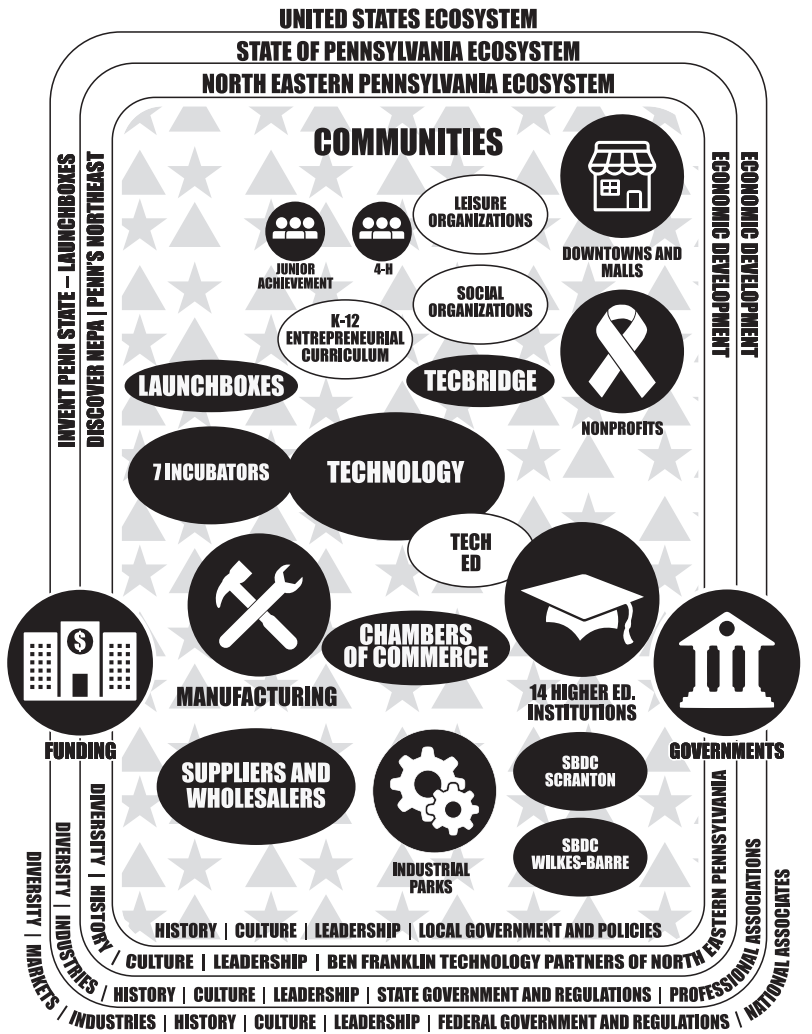
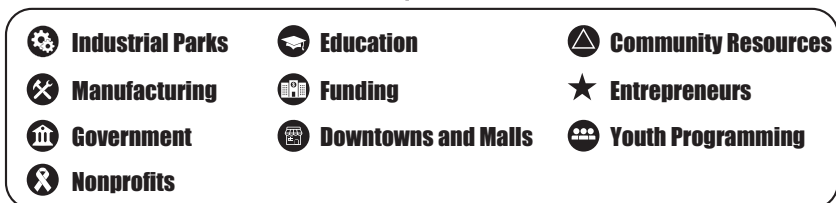


Figure 3.11 Regional Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in NEPA

### KEY | NEPA



## ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES IN NEPA

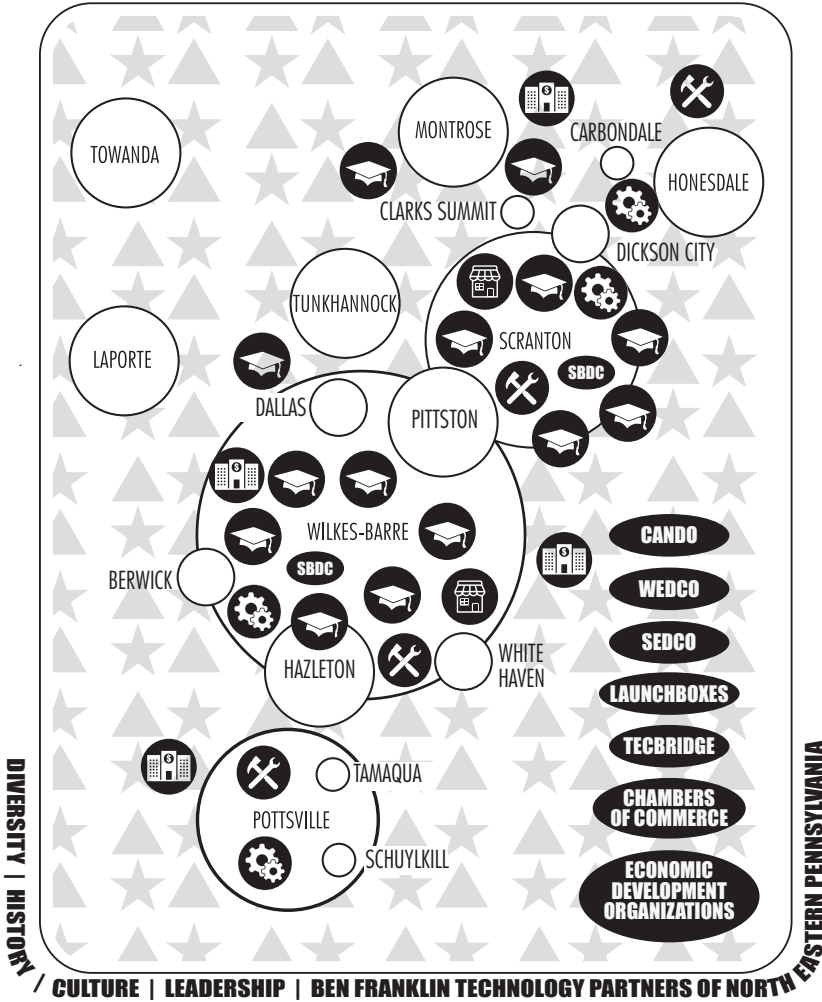


Figure 3.12 Entrepreneurial Communities in NEPA

As for entrepreneurs, investment was made in physical infrastructure, creation of support organizations and programs, and engagement of the region's 14 colleges and universities to leverage the assets embedded in the entrepreneurial communities and localities. Furthermore, the economic development organizations bought into the "rising tide floats all boats" theory, and now their leaders communicate with one another at an unprecedented level

while also facilitating a long list of state and federal programs that include the Keystone Innovation Zones, Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA), and Opportunity Zones.

### **Funding Acknowledgments**

This NEPA research project was made possible through generous grant support of the Wilkes University Faculty Development Committee seed research grant, summer Mentor Grants, and the Provost's Research and Scholarship Grant. Family Prescription Counter in Duryea, Pennsylvania sponsored the key stakeholder meeting and reports for *First Look: Entrepreneurial Communities Research Results* on April 5, 2019, by Clevenger et al. (2019).

### **Special Thanks**

Deep appreciation is extended to Dr. Ellen E. Newell, associate professor of psychology at Wilkes University, for helping Dr. Clevenger and Dr. Fortunato to co-develop the research instruments used in the NEPA survey and interviews, respectively, which catapulted the creation of this work. Accolades and sincere thanks to the tireless efforts of highly motivated, intelligent, and dedicated research assistants at Wilkes University are presented to Britton Heim, David Graff, Michelle Lehman, Kim Keller, Taylor Baker, and Derek Jolley. Also, a word of thanks is afforded to the staff at The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development at Wilkes University for operating the online survey. Other kudos are expressed in the Acknowledgments section of this book.

### **References**

- Baig, M. (2017). *Women in the workforce: What changes have been made?* www.huffpost.com/entry/women-in-the-workforce-wh\_b\_4462455
- Banyai, C. (2009). Community leadership: Development and evolution of leadership in Himeshima. *Rural Society*, 19(3), 241–261.
- Battelle Memorial Institute. (1999). *Great Valley—Pennsylvania's I-81 technology corridor: Growing a 21st Century knowledge economy in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties*. Prepared for Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce and Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry. Technology Partnership Practice. Battelle Memorial Institute. Cleveland, Ohio. <https://tecbridgepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Battelle-Memorial-Institute-Report.pdf>
- Berglun, H. (2007). Researching entrepreneurship as a lived experience. In H. Neergaard and J. P. Ulhøi's (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 75–93). Edward Elgar.
- Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball sampling: Problems and techniques of chain referral sampling. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology*, 10, 141–163.
- Birch, D., Haggerty, A., & Parsons, W. (1994). *Entrepreneurial hot spots: The best places in America to start and grow a company*. Cognetics.

- Blackman, E. C. (1873). *History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania from a period preceding its settlement to recent times, including the annuals and geography of each township with maps and numerous illustrations*. (p. 84). Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger.
- Blatz, P. K. (2002). Reflections on Lattimer: A complex and significant event. *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, 69(1), 42–51. Special Issue: The Lattimer Massacre (1897).
- Bluestone, B., & Harrison, B. (1982). *The deindustrialization of America: Plant closings, community abandonment, and the dismantling of basic industry*. Basic Books.
- Bradsby, H. C. (1891). *The history of Bradford County, Pennsylvania with biographical selections*. S. B. Nelson & Co.
- Breazeale, N. D., & Hustedde, R. J. (2017). Understanding the impact of culture on entrepreneurship. In M. W-P Fortunato and M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 104–125). Routledge.
- Burkard, A. W., Knox, S., & Hill, C. E. (2012). Data collection. In C. E. Hill's (Ed.), *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena* (pp. 83–101). American Psychological Association.
- Bygrave, W. D. (2007). The entrepreneurship paradigm (I) revisited. H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 17–48). Edward Elgar.
- Carsrud, A. L., Olm, K. W., & Eddy, G. G. (1986). Entrepreneurship research in quest of a paradigm. In D. L. Sexton & R. W. Smilor (Eds.), *The art and science of entrepreneurship* (pp. 367–387). Ballinger Publishing Company.
- Chavez, L. R. (2008). *The Latino threat: Constructing immigrants, citizens, and the nation*. Stanford University Press.
- City of Wilkes-Barré Pennsylvania. (2021). *History of Wilkes-Barré*. [www.wilkes-barre-city/about-wilkes-barre-pa/pages/history-wilkes-barre](http://www.wilkes-barre-city/about-wilkes-barre-pa/pages/history-wilkes-barre)
- Clevenger, M. R., Crews, M. I., Cochran, S. L., U., L., Leach, R. G., Perlman, J. Isele, E., Krueger, N. F., Knight, M., & Udomsak, D. P. (2022a). Entrepreneurship of formal and informal education, co-curricular and extra-curricular programming, vocational and technical entrepreneuring, and learning from failure to support and empower entrepreneurs. In M. R. Clevenger & M. W-P Fortunato (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems: Theories in culture, empowerment, and leadership* (in press). Routledge.
- Clevenger, M. R., Fortunato, W-P, Okrepkie, K., & Eppler, L. (2022b). Beyond bureaucracies and bourgeoisie of regional, state, and national economic development: Framework conditions, policy, and the interplay of support organizations. In M. R. Clevenger & M. W-P Fortunato (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems: Theories in culture, empowerment, and leadership* (pp. in press). Routledge.
- Clevenger, M. R., Fortunato, M. W-P, & Willits, F. K. (2019, April 5). *First look: Entrepreneurial communities research results*. Local key stakeholder presentation. Wilkes-Barre, PA.
- Clevenger, M. R., & Miao, C. (2022). An ecology of entrepreneurship: A review of concepts, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and entrepreneurial communities from the literature. In M. R. Clevenger & M. W-P Fortunato (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems: Theories in culture, empowerment, and leadership* (pp. in press). Routledge.
- Clevenger, M. R., & Munro, G. (2022). Avoiding anomie: Diffusion of support resources for the empowerment of entrepreneurs. In M. R. Clevenger & M. W-P Fortunato (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems: Theories in culture, empowerment, and leadership* (in press). Routledge.

- Connecticuthistory.org. (2019). *The charter of 1662*. <http://connecticuthistory.org/the-charter-of-1662/>
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, & mixed methods approaches*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Davidsson, P. (2008). *The entrepreneurship research challenge*. Edward Elgar
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Dickinson, W. B. (2010). Visual displays for mixed methods findings. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie's (Eds.), *SAGE handbook of mixed methods in social & behavior research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 469–504). Sage.
- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. A., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (4th ed.). Wiley.
- Dublin, T. (1998). *When the mines closed: Stories of struggles and hard times*. Cornell University Press.
- Dublin, T., & Licht, W. (2005). *The face of decline: The Pennsylvania anthracite region in the twentieth century*. Cornell University Press.
- Ecenbarger, W. (2014). *Kids for Cash: Two judges, thousands of children, and a \$2.8 million kickback scheme*. The New Press.
- Emerson, R. M. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (Chicago guides to writing, editing, and publishing). University of Chicago Press.
- Englund, J. (2007). Notes: Small town defenders or constitutional foes: Does the Hazleton, PA anti-illegal-immigration ordinance encroach on federal power? *Boston University Law Review*, 87(4), 883–909.
- Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. Basic Books.
- Florida, R. (2012). *The rise of the creative class, revisited*. Basic Books.
- Fortunato, M. W-P. (2017). High- and low-entrepreneurial communities: A multiple case study. In M. W-P. Fortunato and M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 177–235). Routledge.
- Fortunato, M., & Alter, T. R. (2011). The individual-institutional-opportunity Nexus: An integrated framework for analyzing entrepreneurship development. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 1(1), Article 6.
- Fortunato, M. W-P, & Clevenger, M. R. (2014, January 9–13). *Entrepreneurial communities*. United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship® (USASBE) Annual Conference, Fort Worth, TX.
- Fortunato, M. W-P, & Clevenger, M. R. (2017). *Entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries*. Routledge.
- Franck, R. (2003). Causal analysis, systems analysis, and multilevel analysis: Philosophy and epistemology. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis: Approaches from different social sciences* (pp. 175–198). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Frank, O. (1979). Estimation of population totals by use of snowball samples. In P. W. Holland & S. Leinhardt (Eds.), *Perspectives on social network research* (pp. 319–347). Academic Press.
- Frohlich, T. C., Lieberman, M., & Kent, A. (2015, April 7). *The happiest (and most miserable) cities in America*. <https://247wallst.com/special-report/2015/04/07/the-happiest-and-most-miserable-cities-in-america/4/>
- Gamble, H. B. (1967). *The economic structure of Sullivan County, Pennsylvania*. Penn State University, College of Agriculture, Agricultural Experiment Station.



- Gibbons, B. (2014, July 25). Study: Scranton, Wilkes-Barre No. 1 in unhappiness. *The Times-Tribune*. [www.thetimes-tribune.com/news/business/study-scranton-wilkes-barre-no-1-in-unhappiness-1.1724490](http://www.thetimes-tribune.com/news/business/study-scranton-wilkes-barre-no-1-in-unhappiness-1.1724490)
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine de Gruyter.
- Goodrich, P. C. (1880). *History of Wayne county* (p. 32). Haines & Beardsley.
- Graff, D. (2016). *Entrepreneurial communities: How much does education matter?* Presentation at the 2016 Mason Entrepreneurship Research Conference (MERC), Fairfax, VA.
- Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce. (2021). *What is Wilkes-Barre connect?* Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce. [www.wyomingvalleychamber.org/wilkes-barre-connect/learn-about-us/](http://www.wyomingvalleychamber.org/wilkes-barre-connect/learn-about-us/)
- Guydish, M. (2015, May 6). Study ranks NEPA region as 3rd worst in nation for small business employees. *Time Leader*. <https://timesleader.com/business/17819/study-ranks-nepa-region-as-3rd-worst-in-nation-for-small-business-employees>
- Halpin, J. (2014, April 7). Region's residents among most miserable. *The Times Leader*. [www.citizensvoice.com/news/region-s-residents-among-most-miserable-1.1663700](http://www.citizensvoice.com/news/region-s-residents-among-most-miserable-1.1663700)
- Heim, B. S., Clevenger, M. R., & Fortunato, M. W-P. (2017). *Interacting to succeed: Business community interactions and their relationship to business success* (Unpublished senior capstone research paper). Wilkes University.
- Hodge, F. W. (1907). *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*. Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin # 30. Government Printing Office.
- Howell, J. T. (1972). *Hard living on clay street: Portraits of blue collar families*. Waveland Press, Inc.
- Ingham, T. (1899). *History of Sullivan county, Pennsylvania*. Lewis Publishing Company.
- Invent Penn State. (2021). *Innovation hubs across the commonwealth*. Penn State University. <https://invent.psu.edu/>
- Johnson, N. (2016, September 7). *The 10 worst cities in Pennsylvania explained*. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAcmqiQvoEA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAcmqiQvoEA)
- LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). *Analyzing & interpreting ethnographic data*. AltaMira Press.
- Lehman, M. (2018). *Making progress to gender and income equality* (Unpublished research report). Wilkes University.
- Longazel, J. (2016). *Undocumented fears: Immigration and the politics of divide and conquer in Hazleton, Pennsylvania*. Temple University Press.
- Lottick, S. T. (1992). *Bridging change: A Wyoming Valley sketchbook*. Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.
- Lou, J.-D. (1997). The significance of networks in the initiation of small businesses in Taiwan. *Sociological Forum*, 12, 297–317.
- Luzerne County Courthouse. (2021). *History of Luzerne county*. [www.luzernecounty.org/422/History-of-Luzerne-County](http://www.luzernecounty.org/422/History-of-Luzerne-County)
- Mäkelä, M. M., & Turcan, R. V. (2007). Building grounded theory in entrepreneurship research. H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 122–143). Edward Elgar.
- May, R. (2014, February 7). *Kids for cash official trailer*. SenArt Films. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHWcgYDvjng](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHWcgYDvjng)
- McNaught, C., & Lam, P. (2010). Using wordle as a supplementary research tool. *The Qualitative Review*, 15(3), 630–643.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Morgan, L. H. (1995). *League of the Ho-De-No-Sau-Nee or Iroquois*. World Publications.

- Munsell, W. W. (1880). *History of Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming Counties, PA.: With illustrations and biographical sketches of some of their prominent men and pioneers*. Forgotten Books.
- National Historical GIS. (2021). *Schulykill county*. <https://data2.nhgis.org/main>
- Neergaard, H. (2007). Sampling in entrepreneurial setting. H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 253–278). Edward Elgar.
- Neergaard, H. (2014). The landscape of qualitative methods in entrepreneurship: A European perspective. In A. Fayolle's (Ed.), *Handbook of research on entrepreneurship: What we know and what we need to know* (pp. 86–105). Edward Elgar.
- Neergaard, H., & Ulhøi, J. P. (2007a). *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar.
- Neergaard, H., & Ulhøi, J. P. (2007b). Introduction: Methodological variety in entrepreneurship research. H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 1–16). Edward Elgar.
- Newell, E. E. (2017). Entrepreneurial community success: Psychological characteristics, experiences, and identity. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 254–281). Routledge.
- Nicol, A. A. M., & Pexman, P. M. (2010). *Presenting your findings: A practical guide for creating tables* (6th ed.). American Psychological Association.
- Orlandini, J. (2001). *The ancient native Americans of the Wyoming Valley: 10,000 years of prehistory*. John Orlandini.
- Palladino, G. (2006). *Another civil war: Labor, capital, and the state in the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania, 1840–1868*. Fordham University Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry. (2021). *Luzerne county profile*. Center for Workforce Information Analysis. [www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Luzerne%20County.pdf](http://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Documents/County%20Profiles/Luzerne%20County.pdf)
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. (PHMC). (2019a). *Bradford county*. [www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx)
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. (PHMC). (2019b). *Luzerne county*. [www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx)
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. (PHMC). (2019c). *Schulykill county*. [www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx)
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. (PHMC). (2019e). *Sullivan county*. [www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx)
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. (PHMC). (2019f). *Susquehanna county*. [www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx)
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. (PHMC). (2019g). *Wayne county*. [www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx)
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC). (2019h). *Wyoming county*. [www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx)
- Price, M., Herzenberg, S., & Polson, D. (2018). *The Pennsylvania promise: Making college affordable and securing Pennsylvania's economic future*. Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED589967.pdf>
- Ramlo, S. (2011). Using word clouds to present Q methodology data and findings. *Human Subjectivity*, 9(2), 99–111.
- Renzulli, L. A., Aldrich, H. E., & Moody, J. (2000). Family matters: Gender, networks, and entrepreneurial outcomes? *Social Forces*, 79, 523–546.

- Roller, M. (2015). *Migration, modernity, and memory: The archeology of twentieth century in a northeast Pennsylvania coal company town, 1897–2014* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Maryland.
- Ruef, M. (2010). *The entrepreneurial group: Social identities, relations, and collective action*. The Kauffman Foundation Series on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Princeton University Press.
- Schalck, A. W., & Henning, D. C. (1907). *History of Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania; in two volumes: Including a genealogical and biographical record of many families and persons in the county*. State Historical Association.
- Scinto, S. (2017, August 6). *Unhappy valley—what residents love and hate about life in NEPA*. Wilkes-Barre, PA: The Citizens Voice. [www.citizensvoice.com/news/unhappy-valley-what-residents-love-and-hate-about-life-in-nepa-1.2226927](http://www.citizensvoice.com/news/unhappy-valley-what-residents-love-and-hate-about-life-in-nepa-1.2226927)
- Shackel, P. A. (2017). Immigration heritage in the anthracite coal region of Northeastern Pennsylvania. *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* (pp. 1–13). Routledge.
- Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction*. Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 443–466). Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Switala, W. J. (2008). *The underground railroad in Pennsylvania* (p. 160). Stackpole Books.
- Tarone, L. A. (2004). *We were here once: Successes, mistakes, & calamities in Hazleton area history*. Citizen Publishing Company.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *Applied social research methods series, Vol. 45. Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage.
- tecBRIDGE. (2021a). *tecBRIDGE history*. tecBRIDGE. <https://tecbridgegepa.org/tecbridge-history/>
- tecBRIDGE. (2021b). *tecBRIDGE RADIO*. tecBRIDGE. <https://tecbridgegepa.org/tecbridge-radio/>
- TenHouten, W. D. (1992). Generalization and statistical inference from snowball samples. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology*, 37, 25–40.
- The Canadian Encyclopedia. (2021). *Chamber of commerce*. [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chamber-of-commerce](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chamber-of-commerce)
- The Houdini Museum. (2017). *The Nicholson Bridge*. Pocono.org <http://pocono.org/nicholson.html#>
- The Town of Bloomsburg. (2021). *The only town in PA*. Bloomsburg Area School District. <https://pa01000125.schoolwires.net/Page/167>
- Thompson, B. J., Vivino, B. L., & Hill, C. E. (2012). Coding the data: Domains and core ideas. In C. E. Hill's (Ed.), *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena* (pp. 103–116). American Psychological Association.
- Toft, G., Jeserich, N., & McCabe, L. (2020). *Michigan entrepreneurship score card* (Sixteenth annual edition). Small Business Association of Michigan. VP Demand Creation Services. [www.sbam.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/SBAMScorecard2020\\_Digital-2.pdf](http://www.sbam.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/SBAMScorecard2020_Digital-2.pdf)
- Tranmer, M., Steel, D., & Fieldhouse, E. (2003). Exploring small area population structure with census data. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis: Approaches from different social sciences* (pp. 121–156). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2012). *Statistical abstract of the United States: 2012*. [www2.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/tables/12s0358.xls](http://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/tables/12s0358.xls)

- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2014). *American community survey*. [www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2014/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2014/)
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2018). *American community survey*. [www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2018/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2018/)
- Viégas, F. B., & Wattenberg, M. (2008, July–August). Tag clouds and the case for vernacular visualization. *Interactions*, 49–52.
- Walliser, B. (2003). Organizational levels and time scales in economics. In D. Courgeau (Ed.), *Methodology and epistemology of multilevel analysis: Approaches from different social sciences* (pp. 157–173). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Warner, J., Ellmann, N., & Boesch, D. (2018). *Fact sheet: The women's leadership gap*. Center for American Progress. [www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2018/11/20/461273/womens-leadership-gap-2/](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2018/11/20/461273/womens-leadership-gap-2/)
- Wilkes University. (2019, November 19). *Entrepreneurship (ENT) major elimination proposal*. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership. Wilkes University. [www.wilkes.edu/about-wilkes/university-committees/university-curriculum-committee/meeting-minutes/2019/curriculum-committee-meeting-11-19-2019.pdf](http://www.wilkes.edu/about-wilkes/university-committees/university-curriculum-committee/meeting-minutes/2019/curriculum-committee-meeting-11-19-2019.pdf)
- Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Sage.
- Woody, R. H. (1933). Jonathan Jasper Wright, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of South Carolina, 1870–77. *The Journal of Negro History*, 18(2), 114–131.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage.

# 4 Raising Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

## Three Nebraska Case Studies

*Jason L. Weigle and Don Macke with Bill Lewis*

### **Overview**

Rural areas and smaller communities have always been home to an ecology of entrepreneurs and small businesses, beginning with the original farming traditions of its first settlers (Richards & Bulkey, 2007). Additionally, rural areas often have higher entrepreneurship rates than micropolitan areas—defined as traditionally smaller, company-oriented towns—that were home to a primary industry focused on wage employment (Henderson, 2002). Entrepreneurship is thus a critical economic lifeline in smaller communities that have reduced capacity for attracting larger corporations and branch plants and is a means to satisfy local demand organically with local entrepreneur talent. However, rural entrepreneurship differs in some ways from urban entrepreneurship, from its cultural setting to the types of industries that thrive in rural places (see Fortunato, 2014; Markley et al., 2005). Therefore, different logics are necessary when building a rural entrepreneurial ecosystem (Miles & Morrison, 2018) that are often grounded in closer-knit relationships and purposive interaction (Pushkarskaya et al., 2021; Wilkinson, 1991) that necessitate starting with pre-existing local advantages over addressing needs in a more mainstream market (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Miles & Morrison, 2018). These case studies examine the emergence of small, rural ecosystems and their unique development styles and cultural/industrial contexts in three stages: infant (Superior), teenager (Hastings), and adult (Ord).

### ***Time Span***

3 Years

### ***Methodology and Types of Data***

A case-study approach is utilized (Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lancy, 1993). Specifically, observational and narrative qualitative data are compiled and analyzed using a combination of grounded theory and

phenomenology drawn from community participants' lived experiences with support and resources from a multitude of providers is reflected here (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Creswell, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

### ***Entrepreneurial Communities***

Three communities are explored: Superior, Hastings, and Ord. Superior is a small town located in the southcentral portion of the state in the 'infant' stages of entrepreneurial community development. Hastings is located approximately 40 miles to the north-northwest and has rolled out several programs to help develop its entrepreneurial ecosystem. Thus, Hastings is the 'teenager' in this entrepreneurial community discussion. Finally, Ord is a community which has been utilizing entrepreneurial ecosystem concepts and programming for close to 20 years, developing a sophisticated and successful entrepreneurial community program, and is thus the 'mature adult' in the discussion.

### ***Cultural Aspects***

The case studies explore the industrial history of the communities studied, demonstrating ways that this history has shaped the current cultural context. The case studies point to a collaborative culture in rural Nebraska, where people work across organizational boundaries to launch new initiatives.

### ***Power and Empowerment***

This series of three brief case studies underscores the transformative capacity of entrepreneurship ecosystem building in changing local narratives from consumers to producers of their economic destiny. Many Nebraska communities have encountered chronic economic and population decline over the past several decades due to macroeconomic shifts in manufacturing and especially in agriculture. The consolidation of agriculture into fewer and larger producers working on very thin margins has reduced the need for small town trade and logistic centers for the centralization of agricultural products, as well as the provision of entertainment and lifestyle amenities. As more and more young rural residents leave the farm for higher-paying jobs in the cities, many Nebraska communities have faced the choice of complete economic reinvention or disappearing completely.

These case studies examine small towns who chose to reinvent themselves entrepreneurially, and who find themselves at three different stages of that reinvention. The case studies show how local institutions can pair up with one another to create a local context that provides education, mentorship, ongoing entrepreneurial guidance, and perhaps most especially, investment. These stories show how even historically small and rural institutions can

partner effectively to remove barriers to entrepreneurial self-empowerment, and how connections to educational institutions can create a pipeline of young entrepreneurs who are both interested in venturing and highly committed to place. Notable in this case study is the role of U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension—known historically for empowering farmers by providing cutting edge knowledge and research created at land grant institutions as a public service, and now pivoting to innovative programs in entrepreneurship that empower entrepreneurs by catalyzing local partnerships.

### ***Leadership Aspects***

A combination of community resources are leveraged with support and direction from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, the Community Vitality Initiative (CVI) from UNL Extension, the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Center for Rural Affairs Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP), Nebraska Business Development Center (based out of the University of Nebraska-Omaha), and the community asset-based work of the Nebraska Community Foundation.

### ***The Why***

In these relatively remote, rural communities, entrepreneurship is a necessity for economic development and growth.

### ***A Brief History***

Nebraska was admitted as a state on March 1, 1867, but the history of the state dates back significantly longer than the beginning of its statehood (History.com Editors, 2020). Native populations lived in what is now Nebraska as early as 8000 BCE (Britannica, 2021). In the late 1600s, both Spain and France developed trade connections with the various native tribes in the area. In 1720, a Spanish military expedition was attacked and destroyed in Nebraska, ending the era of Spanish exploration in the region (Hanson, 1993, pp. 2–21).

France placed this area into its Louisiana Territory, but in 1762, they ceded the region back to Spain. The land was then returned to French control until its sale as part of the 1804 Louisiana Purchase by the United States. The 1848 California Gold Rush brought settlement to the area and, in 1854, Congress created the Kansas-Nebraska territories (Young, 2020, p. 8). Much of the growth of Nebraska's population occurred in the 1870s and 1880s as the state became renowned for farming and cattle grazing (Homan & Radford, 2004, p. 408).

Nebraska is located in the heart of the United States with a long agricultural history. It is the ninth least densely populated state in the United

States at 26 residents per-square-mile in the 2012 Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2012), with most of that population being concentrated in the Eastern part of the state in the cities of Omaha and Lincoln. The communities presented here create an axis from North (Ord) to South (Superior) in the central part of the state—still well west of the most populated corridor; the closest town to a major city is Hastings, which is still 104 miles or approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes via road from Lincoln, according to Google Maps (2021). Thus, these communities are distinctively rural in character and a description of each can be found in the following sections. (See Figure 4.1.)

### *Superior, Nebraska*

Superior, Nebraska, was mapped out in 1875 and the land was sold based on what area residents perceived to be the quality of the land that was available for farming (Destination Small Town, 2021). By the late 1880s, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad added a branch line to the town, helping to bring new residents and business to the community. The town hosts an annual Victorian Festival that emphasizes the well-maintained Victorian architecture found among many of the older homes of the city (Superior, 2021). Superior is located in Nuckolls County.

### *Hastings, Nebraska*

Hastings, Nebraska, was founded in 1872 at the place where the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad and the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroads intersected (Nebraska State Historical Society, 1977, p. 539). Hastings is in Adams County. The town took its name from Colonel D. T. Hastings,

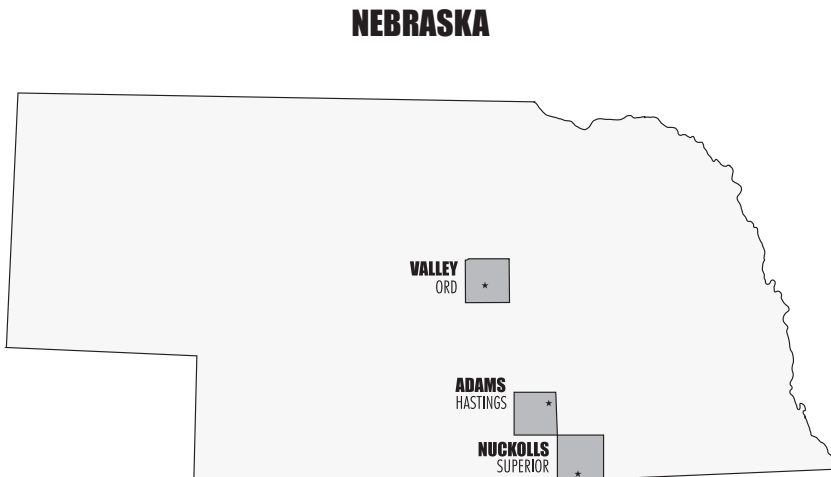


Figure 4.1 Map of Nebraska



who helped to bring the St. Joseph Railroad through the area. Some of the growth in the area came from the railroads, who advertised in Europe to help attract settlers to the newly established State of Nebraska. Railroads brought enormous activity to the local economy, but the agricultural depression and droughts of the 1890s helped to temporarily hurt the local economy. Still, the area became known for its Victorian style homes and had four brickyards to supply fireproof building materials. The 20th Century brought greater prosperity again to Hastings. The state's largest cigar factory located in the town and, in 1942, the Naval Ammunition depot came to Hastings, helping to build the community (Spilnek, 2009). The depot's closure in 1950 caused a setback in a town that continues on agricultural-dominated local business.

### *Ord, Nebraska*

Following the admission to the Union of Nebraska in 1867, the town of Ord was mapped out in 1874. The town was named for Civil War General Edward Ord (Burr et al., 1921, p. 140). The town grew slowly, reaching a population of 181 by 1880 (Department of Commerce, 1880). While largely surviving on an agriculturally based economy, in recent years, the town has placed an emphasis on attracting entrepreneurs to the community. The town has strived to retain its small town atmosphere. Ord is located in Valley County.

## **Case Studies**

Launching entrepreneurial communities is a lot like rearing kids. Each one is different, with their own identity, quirks, personalities, needs, and desires. Parents soon learn—often by trial and error—what combinations of factors help to make a child successful and which ones lead to the classic ‘grocery store meltdown’. Much like parenting, the entrepreneurial ecosystem developer has to sort through all of these factors to find the right combination that allows a successful entrepreneurial community to emerge.

Also like rearing children, there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to entrepreneurial community and ecosystem building. Entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurial community building takes many different forms, depending on the practitioner’s metatheoretical starting point. (See Fortunato and Clevenger (2017) for a comprehensive summary and discussion of different approaches to entrepreneurial community development.) These forms also depend on the practitioner and/or agency as well as the situational factors faced in a particular community. It is this combination of factors and assets within a community that dictates what is needed in terms of connecting pieces together or developing new ones. When working with a community, regardless of its size, shape, and location, an entrepreneurial community practitioner must develop a working knowledge of these

community assets and develop relationships to ensure that the pieces come together in a sustainable, beneficial way.

## **Background**

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship (now e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems hosted by NetWork Kansas, 2021) was created by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Rural Policy Research Institute about 25 years ago to create a national resource for communities and regions pursuing entrepreneur-led development. The ‘e2 framework’ has been curated by a national network of rural entrepreneurial ecosystem builders from Klamath, Oregon to Georgia and all points in between. The Energizing Entrepreneurs development framework and process provides communities and regions with paths forward in building entrepreneurial ecosystems, stronger and more diverse economies, and greater community prosperity.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Community Vitality Initiative (CVI) launched an entrepreneurial community program in 2018 modeled after the e2 framework (CVI, 2021). This emergent program is engaging communities across the state in conversations around how they can utilize their ecosystem assets to support existing entrepreneurs and to develop new ones.

CVI’s entrepreneurial community program joins the work already being done within the state by e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems as well as other programs such as the business building Center for Rural Affairs Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP), Nebraska Business Development Center (based out of the University of Nebraska-Omaha), and the community asset-based work of the Nebraska Community Foundation.

Where CVI differs from many of these existing programs is its location within a broad-based portfolio of Extension programming. CVI’s approach to community vitality is that healthy, vibrant communities must not only foster entrepreneurship and businesses but they also have to work on other aspects of what attracts and keeps people in a particular community—housing, day care, goods, services, education, infrastructure, etc.—in order to be successful and sustainable.

Connecting these pieces together into a cohesive whole is the fundamental task of the CVI educator when working with communities.

The following case studies highlight three communities where entrepreneurial community activity is occurring. Following our parenting metaphor, these three communities represent three distinct stages in entrepreneurial community development:

- Superior: a small town located in the southcentral portion of the state, just off the Kansas border, is in the ‘infant’ stages of entrepreneurial community development.

- Hastings: located approximately 40 miles to the north-northwest lies the city of Hastings. Over the last 5 years, Hastings has rolled out several programs to help develop its entrepreneurial ecosystem. CVI has used e2 framework concepts to help refine and identify gaps. Hastings is the ‘teenager’ in our entrepreneurial community discussion.
- Ord: Rounding out the case studies is Ord, a community which has been utilizing entrepreneurial ecosystem concepts and programming for close to 20 years, developing a sophisticated and successful entrepreneurial community program.

### ***Superior***

Superior is located in Nuckolls County, around 130 miles southwest of Lincoln. Superior was founded in the 1870s as an agricultural community (Destination Small Town, 2021). Growth in the town accelerated when the Atchinson, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad laid a line to Superior. The city served as a commercial hub for the southcentral part of the state, providing needed services to the surrounding communities in Nebraska and Kansas.

Superior is known as the ‘Victorian Capital of Nebraska’ and still maintains its Victorian charm. A large number of Victorian era houses and buildings lining its streets. Every year the city celebrates perhaps its most famous former resident, Lady Evelyn Brodstone Vestey, who from her humble beginnings in Superior worked her way into an executive position with Vestey Cold Storage Company before marrying William Vestey, Lord of the British Realm. Her legacy included donations for the construction of the hospital and many improvements across the city (Superior, 2021).

At its peak in the 1950s, Superior had over 3,200 residents. Since then, Superior has experienced steady population decline. Losses of a soft drink bottling facility, concrete plant, cheese plant, and several other core businesses exacerbated outmigration, with the 2010 Census indicating a population of 1,957 residents.

### *The Emergence of an Ecosystem*

Superior’s historical economic development strategy was on recruiting large employers to replace those it lost or those that were not as successful as hoped for in order to ensure that the City’s industrial park achieved full utilization. This lack of success, coupled with the loss of population, had a domino effect on the town, affecting its tax base, creating dilapidation of its housing and infrastructure, and a slow but steady loss of additional small businesses, and a general feeling of helplessness and disenfranchisement. (For a discussion of ‘company town’ effects, see Fortunato & McLaughlin, 2012; Gaventa, 1982; Luloff & Bridger, 2003.)

To stem the loss of population and businesses in the area, a coalition of concerned citizens formed the Superior 3000 Foundation. The main goal

of the Foundation is to support initiatives that will counter population and business loss—with the goal of growing the population of the community back up to 3,000 residents.

Coupled with the emergence of the foundation was a shift in leadership across key institutions in Superior. The new leaders, mostly recruited from outside the area, brought with them a different perspective on development and what can/cannot be done. Instead of focusing on the losses the city has incurred, these leaders instead focus on what is and what can be—utilizing the assets of the area to better Superior.

Beginning in about 2018, the City has engaged in a number of community betterment projects. The downtown's sidewalks and lighting were replaced. And a façade program fixed and updated the face of the city's businesses and storefronts. Volunteers within the city upgraded and fixed Superior's movie theater as well as the City's auditorium. Other improvements, such as the opening of the 213 Business Center, a business incubator and office space, and the 4th Street Square, a micro-park in downtown, have helped fill gaps in the communities social and economic infrastructure as well as provided needed places for the community to gather. The Superior Chamber of Commerce played an active role, driving a wide variety of marketing and identity campaigns around these upgrades, as well as delivering key messaging campaigns such as 'Rural is Cool' and 'Together we are Better'.

Changes within Superior's *esprit de corps* driven by the community's exterior upgrades and the Chamber of Commerce's media campaigns necessitated a shift in perspective on business and economic development. Those involved with recent changes in the community realized that growing their own businesses and entrepreneurs was going to be critical to long-term sustainability and recruiting new people to the city.

### *Starts . . . and Stops*

It is within these changes that the Cooperative Extension began working with both the Chamber and SDC in early 2018. It was apparent that the changes in leadership accompanied by early successes with several community-focused projects were creating a new mindset, one focused on assets and possibilities. The main issue the community faced was *too many* conversations about economic and community development, or at least too many conversations without an anchor point, which tended to spread resident's attentions in many directions.

With a variety of activities and changes happening in the community, it was important to create relationships with community leaders and key entrepreneurs to help focus the great enthusiasm of the community. Over the course of 2018 and early 2019, Extension and SDC worked directly with community leaders and residents in supporting Superior 3000, SDC, and Chamber initiatives. This engagement led to a foundation across the

community where residents started thinking about ways to work together more cohesively to address local business and entrepreneur needs—the major lynchpin to pulling together many of the great ideas of and enthusiasm in the community.

SDC's board voted to become CVI's pilot entrepreneurial community in late 2018. The shift to an ecosystem development approach required SDC to revisit its strategic plan. While preparing for the strategic planning session, a number of questions arose which required legal interpretation of state policy. These questions ultimately required several changes to the structure of the corporation and its relationship to the city.

These changes lead to several starts and stops in the entrepreneurial communities program. Fortunately, key stakeholders in Superior understand the necessity of entrepreneurship education, business retention, succession planning, and education and have continued to implement entrepreneurial communities concepts, and fundamental community education, within the community. Thus, while the entrepreneurial communities program has not officially kicked off yet, many of the concepts discussed—and linkages made—in the preliminary educational engagements have continued to be implemented.

When it restarts, a key aspect of the entrepreneurial communities work will revolve around focusing the many assets of the community toward the task of accomplishing entrepreneur-focused ecosystem development. The many ideas the community has developed will require entrepreneurs to bring them to fruition. This work will involve organizing the community's leadership toward entrepreneur-friendly programming, targeting resource agencies toward specific needs, and filling gaps in service provision.

### ***Hastings***

Hastings is located in southcentral Nebraska and is the seat of Adams County, about 105 miles west of Lincoln. The population of Hastings was 24,907 in the 2010 Census. The city was founded in the early 1870s as a junction town between two rail lines. Because of its reliance on the rails and agriculture, the city and its surrounding area have gone through multiple boom and bust cycles with subsequent increases and decreases in population.

The last major boom the city experienced occurred during World War II, when the Navel Ammunition Depot was constructed east of Hastings. The construction of the depot and the resulting workforce it employed caused population to jump almost 54% in 1 year. The boom in population led to a housing shortage, resulting in rapid growth of Hastings's neighborhoods and shifts in its housing stock. When the depot closed in the 1950s, Hastings saw a contraction of population which would take 20 years to recover from.

Hastings has a long history of entrepreneurship. Hastings is best known as the home of Edwin Perkins, the creator of Kool-Aid ([Nebraskastudies.org](http://Nebraskastudies.org),

2021; Smith, 2012). The building where the drink mix was created can still be found downtown and Kool-Aid Days is celebrated every August.

### *Turnaround*

Over the years, the building stock in the downtown has decayed as businesses and population moved into strip malls in the outer periphery of the city. By the late 2000s, only a handful of businesses resided in the downtown corridor.

In the early 2010s, a core group of community leaders started to develop a game plan for redeveloping the city's downtown corridor. Part of this meant acquiring and/or renovating the buildings downtown through Hastings' Community Redevelopment Authority-Business Improvement District. Other entrepreneurs also took up the initiative, slowly reestablishing the downtown core as a destination for work and play. Over the past 6 years, the downtown has become home to a national organic soap producer, several breweries, several coffee shops, and a variety of boutique and businesses. It is a place where people want to go—not have to.

The turnaround has not solely focused on redevelopment in the downtown core. Several new, large-scale economic developments have also occurred in the town's periphery. These developments have provided both spec buildings for purchase and open land for development. The city has landed several large employers as well as fostered a number of locally grown ones as well.

### *Talent Attraction and Development*

During this turnaround, the executive director and board of the Hastings Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) realized the need to foster talent within the city as well as recruit new talent to the area. HEDC hired a 'Director of Talent Solutions' to lead these efforts. Much of Hastings' talent attraction has focused on supporting and showcasing existing businesses, supporting the development of new entrepreneurs, and making connections and supporting entrepreneurial activities among the community and Hastings' two academic institutions, Hastings College and Central Community College's Hastings Campus.

HEDC has been instrumental in creating a number of events within the community to foster entrepreneurship and community awareness of new and emerging businesses. The community hosts a business pitch competition where both college students and community members pitch new business ideas in a shark tank format for both cash prizes and coaching/support for winners.

They have worked with the Business Improvement District to provide funding and technical assistance to businesses, making connections between the needs of businesses within the means available within the community.

HEDC has recently undertaken housing development as part of its business support and development functions. A constant concern they have heard and received from business owners is the lack of workforce in the area. Many would like to expand, but they simply do not have the workforce numbers to be able to do this.

As HEDC and others investigated their workforce needs, they realized a major barrier for the community was the lack of housing stock for workers. Many employees within the city would drive anywhere from 20 to 40 miles—if not more—to work in Hastings. Many did this out of necessity; there simply was not adequate housing stock to keep the workforce in.

HEDC has chosen an entrepreneurial approach to this dilemma, helping to subsidize and construct several housing developments and apartment/condo complexes with housing that most contractors would not build due to a lack of profit on the endeavor. By stepping into this niche, Hastings is providing a much-needed service to the community. Coupled with their talent attraction and business development activities, they have laid the groundwork for the future.

### *Making Good ‘Great’*

Amidst all the successes and initiatives, something was still missing. Despite all the successes, it was still common to hear people speak negatively about the city and the downtown. Key aspects of the city’s tourism and economic development infrastructure were disconnected, cooperating in some respect and not in others. Like Superior, Hastings had a lot of good ideas and resources available, but in many respects lacked a focused plan to apply all these together.

The lead author began working with HEDC in 2018 as part of a fledgling initiative called ‘*Build Hastings*’. *Build Hastings* started as a program to help provide entrepreneurship education to high school students. During the ensuing discussions of the steering committee for the program, it was realized that there were a lot of activities happening in Hastings—they just needed a bit of focus and support to get them moving forward. *Build Hastings* slowly transformed from a youth talent development program to an entrepreneurial ecosystem development program. The steering committee—consisting of local government and non-profit agencies, schools, and entrepreneurs—separated the program into three components:

- Youth-focused entrepreneurship programming and pipeline development
- Entrepreneurship programming for existing and emerging entrepreneurs and businesses

- Programming to support the civic aspects of the city—tackling soft skills, town/gown relationships, leadership development—which, in turn, affect entrepreneurial ecosystem development.

The three components, when combined, create a pipeline of entrepreneurial talent and support from ‘cradle to grave’, regardless of when someone might step into becoming an entrepreneur.

More importantly, *Build Hastings* provides an opportunity to focus resources. Through applying entrepreneurial ecosystem design concepts, we identified potential avenues to apply existing resources with intent, such as tapping into existing legal, financial, or marketing services to support businesses and emerging entrepreneurs. Working groups for each of the three areas are developing plans to fill identified gaps in the existing business, entrepreneurial, and civic support structure through either bringing in existing programs from outside the area or developing concepts for new ones. Lastly, the program enhances existing efforts to develop young entrepreneurs through utilizing existing programming such as 4-H and Junior Achievement to foster future entrepreneurs. (More about these youth programs is in Chapter 5, Clevenger et al., 2021.)

Coupled with the existing redevelopment and housing programs in the city, Hastings is truly emerging as a small city focused on growing its own entrepreneurs, businesses, and talent, giving them the support, housing, and amenities, the modern workforce needs to be successful.

### **Ord**

Like other communities in the Great Plains, Ord (population 2,100 today) and Valley County have experienced the transition from settlement in the late 1880s to farm automation and population erosion beginning in the 1920s and peaking during the farm crisis of the 1980s. Valley County peaked in population in 1920 with more than 9,000 residents and lost more than 50% of its residents with a current population of just more than 4,000. The 1980s agricultural crisis was an economic depression in this community resulting in massive farm and ranch consolidation, main street destruction, and accelerated net out-migration. Unlike other farm downturns, Ord and this region did not come back in the 1990s resulting in political and social stress and fear of perpetual decline. A culture of hopelessness was rooting.

In the late 1990s, Ord reached out to resources like Nebraska Extension, other communities (e.g., Aurora, Central City), and the Nebraska Public Power District for help. They undertook assessments and completed community visioning. They worked through two major challenges gaining progressive control of local government and schools saving their nearly failed hospital. In 2000, a group of leaders created an inter-local governmental agreement including local groups, area communities, the city, and



county establishing the Valley County Economic Development Board. A year late in 2001, Ord hired its first full-time economic developer and passed a one cent local options sales tax with 100% dedication to providing gap financing for local business development. Over time the Valley County Investment Club, a community foundation, tax increment financing, and other development tools were created. From 2002 to 2004, Ord committed to entrepreneur-led development and hired their first dedicated business coach. Ord pursued other development strategies including the development of an ethanol plant and value-chain cluster of up-stream and down-stream development (e.g., trucking, trucking services, distiller grains, cubing) and tourism development (e.g., particularly tied to the Calamus Reservoir and River).

Ord has developed a basic but high-performing entrepreneurial ecosystem that has sustained at a robust level for nearly 20 years. More than 100 development deals and projects have been undertaken. A number of these deals are an investment in quality-of-life placemaking projects including a new hospital, parks, fire barn, schools, and the like. More than 60 business transitions and startups have been successfully completed increasing the size and diversity of this community's business sector and economy. This region has become proactive and opportunity focused. Every building, entrepreneur, and asset is a focus for potential development creating a pipeline of future development projects. The Valley Country region, as illustrated by the name of its leadership academy—Syncoption—is creating a strong entrepreneurial culture and reputation.

But Ord is more than a good news story (Macke et al., 2019). There is growing documentation that this entrepreneur-focused approach to development is transforming this community and region. Key indicators of transformative change include:

- 56% increase (2000–2016) in household adjusted personal income.
- 131% increased (2000–2018) in local property tax valuation (i.e., commercial and industrial).
- 48% increase (2000–2018) in sale tax receipts.
- 54% increase (2000–2010) in 30- to 34-year-olds.
- 25% increase in school enrollment with a 36% increase in average class size.
- Best in class among similar communities in the Great Plains.

For most rural communities, asset-based and entrepreneur-led development represents the strongest pathway to greater community prosperity and resilience. Ord and Valley County represent a compelling case study of what is possible and what other communities should be doing to ensure their future. As is always the case, the central theme driving this community's progress is leadership.

## **Discussion**

Despite being small, rural towns, each of our case-study locations offers practitioners some insight as to different considerations one must take in order to develop a successful entrepreneurial community development program. Despite the hardships each faced, each has engaged in an entrepreneurial process of their own to develop entrepreneurial ecosystems within an entrepreneurial community.

In Superior (see Figure 4.2), community residents were fully engaged in dialogue about various aspects of entrepreneurship and community development and had tackled a number of key improvements to its infrastructure. Their shortcoming was not ideas but a solid approach to reaching those goals. Through building relationships with and across stakeholders and integrating ecosystem development concepts into the work already underway, Superior has been able to focus its efforts and shift toward developing its own entrepreneurs, rather than recruit them in from outside.

Hastings (see Figure 4.3), like Superior, is awash with good ideas. Through the foresight of its leadership, a number of key programs and players had been put in place on its ecosystem development trajectory, already making Hastings very successful. In Hastings case, focus was not as important as refinement—finding a better way of doing things or utilizing resources to make programs more successful or to address key community shortcomings in order to make the entrepreneurial ecosystem more effective.

From a practice perspective, the road has been full of pitfalls. Entering into Superior's ecosystem development process, we had no idea that several problems would emerge which would derail formal programming. The community stepped up and has continued interest in applying entrepreneurship education in a variety of different formats, maintaining the concept of development if not being able to roll out a formal program.

In Hastings, the challenge was finding the right place to inserting the e2 framework concepts among the great programming already in existence. Finding the right insertion point required time, patience, and relationship building to enter into the discussion. In Ord, the feelings of helplessness created by the loss of population and farming created a formidable barrier to launching the e2 framework there.

Ord (see Figure 4.4) faced many of the same issue as Superior and Hastings. Economic busts, massive outmigration, and loss of farms and businesses could have led to the death of the community. Instead, the community took the initiative and began a slow, but steady, process of rebuilding its ecosystem. This entrepreneurial spirit, coupled with the support of outside programs and the e2 framework, helped community develop its ecosystem into a thriving, right-sized program.

A consistent theme throughout our case studies is that entrepreneurial ecosystem development is highly dependent on other aspects of community development. If a community has not addressed key quality of

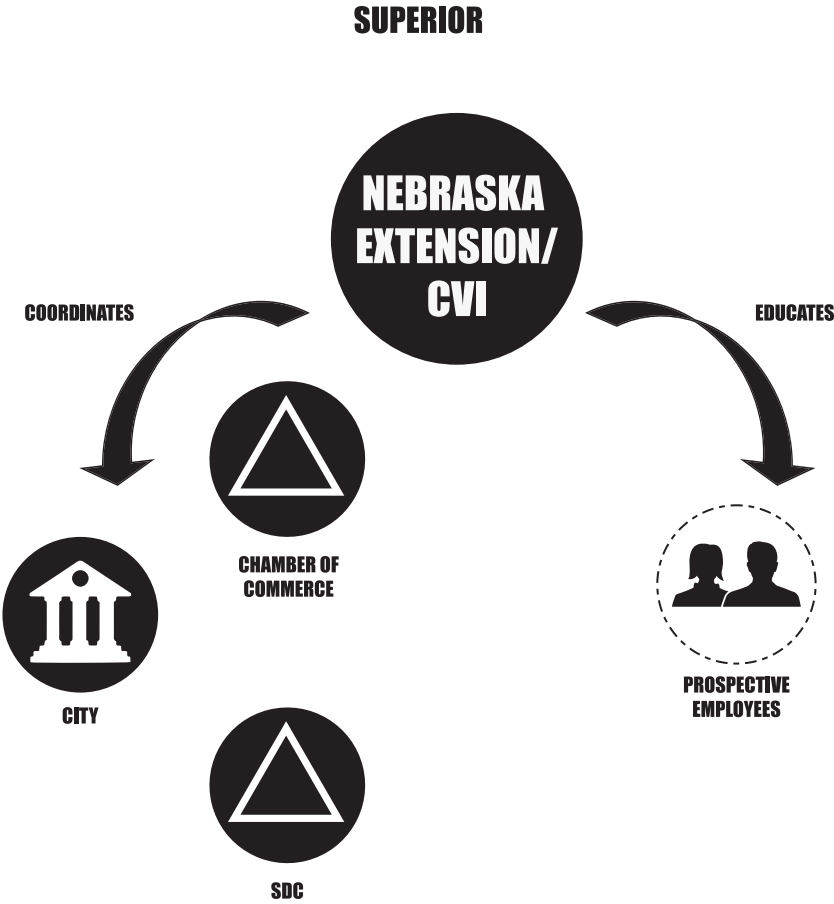


Figure 4.2 Superior Ecosystem

**KEY | NEBRASKA**

<b>People</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Community Resources</b>
<b>Government</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Entrepreneurs</b>
<b>Nonprofits</b>	<b>Mentor</b>	<b>Youth Programming</b>

### HASTINGS

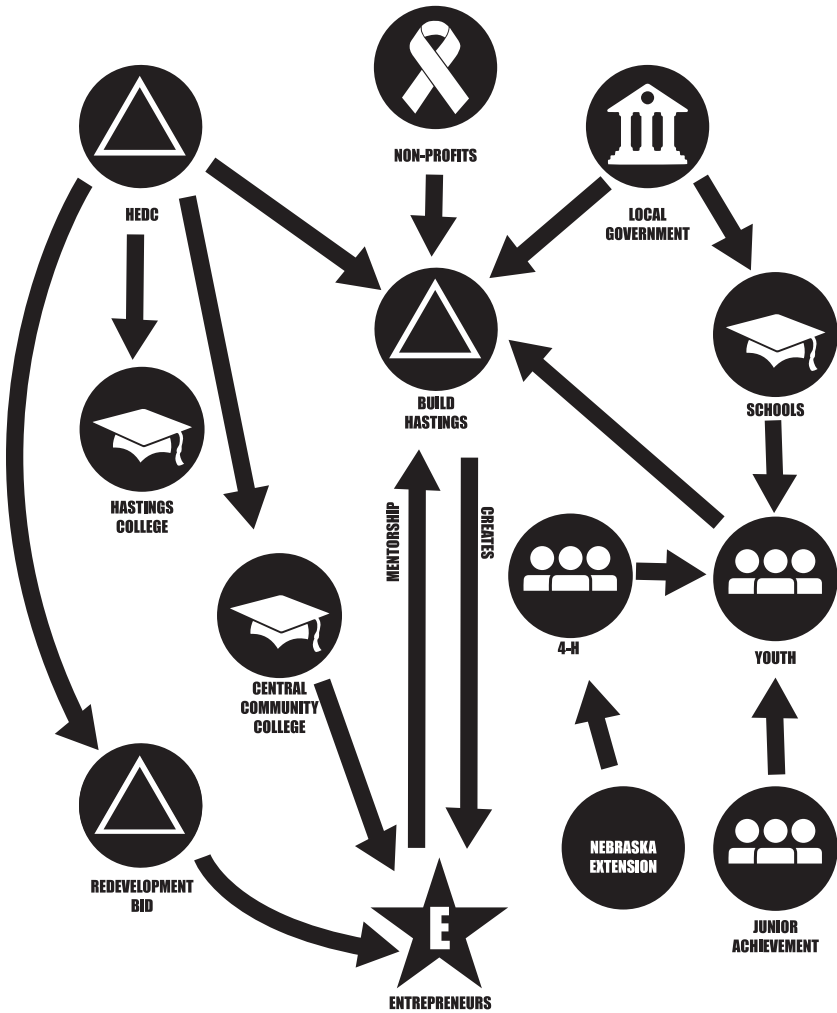


Figure 4.3 Hastings Ecosystem

life and placemaking—such as housing, daycare, or basic medical services—entrepreneurial ecosystem development may have little effect as entrepreneurs will either (1) have no place to set up shop or (2) not want to live there anyway.

Entrepreneurial ecosystem development is as much about addressing and developing these aspects of community prosperity as it is about supporting

# ORD

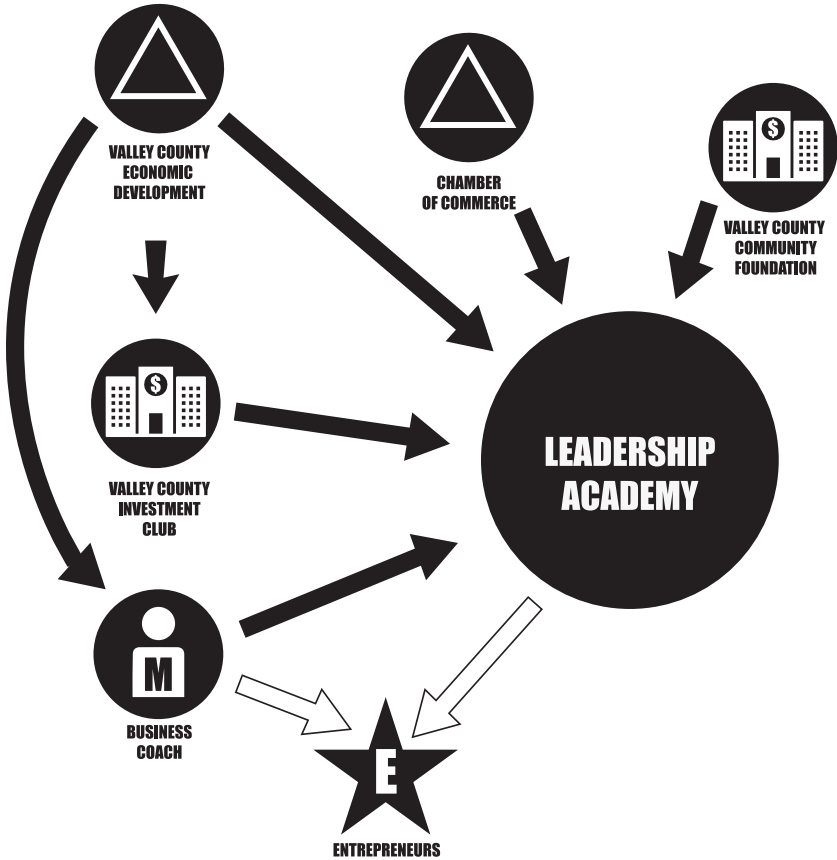


Figure 4.4 Ord Ecosystem

entrepreneurs and businesses. Each of our communities had undertaken significant redevelopment activities as part of this, tackling facades, sidewalks, and housing as well as building and social infrastructure. Communities were already thinking differently about themselves—CVI and the e2 framework simply helped them help themselves.

## Conclusion

The application of entrepreneurial community developments in three communities in rural Nebraska each demonstrated different approaches

needed to understand and adapt to local conditions. As each community had its own history and needs, if we had tried a ‘one size fits all’ approach to entrepreneurial ecosystem development, or even a narrower entrepreneur/business development focused approach, we would have missed many opportunities to help connect different aspects of the ecosystem together.

Entrepreneurial ecosystem development is really entrepreneurial community development. From our experience, entrepreneurial ecosystem developers must not only be attuned to the needs of the entrepreneurs and businesses in a particular community but also the layers in entrepreneurial community assets, and the demographic, cultural, and quality-of-life aspects that make a community work. Each of these facets may be in a different stage of development and require different approaches and techniques to pull the pieces together. If we, as practitioners, can navigate through these different developmental phases, we can help communities find sustainable, successful, and robust entrepreneurial ecosystems.

## References

- Britannica. (2021). *Nebraska*. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. [www.britannica.com/place/Nebraska-state/History](http://www.britannica.com/place/Nebraska-state/History)
- Burr, G. L., Buck, O. O., & Stough, D. P. (1921). *History of Hamilton and Clay counties, Nebraska volume 1*. S. J. Clarke Publishing.
- Clevenger, M. R., Crews, M. I., Cochran, S. L., Underdahl, L., Leach, R. G., Heuss, R., Perlman, J., Isele, E., Knight, M., & Udomsak, D. P. (2022). Entrepreneurology of formal and informal education, co-curricular and extra-curricular programming, vocational and technical entrepreneuring, and learning from failure to support and empower entrepreneurs. In M. R. Clevenger & M. W-P Fortunato (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial communities, ecosystems, and empowerment: Emerging research in cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. \_\_\_\_). Routledge.
- Community Vitality Initiative (CVI). (2021). *Building Nebraska's future: Community vitality initiative*. <https://communityvitality.unl.edu/>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2007). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Pearson.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Department of Commerce. (1880). *Fourteenth census of the United States*. State Compendium: Nebraska. [www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/06229686v26-31.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/06229686v26-31.pdf)
- Destination Small Town. (2021). *About Superior, NE*. [www.destinationstalltown.com/towns/superior-ne#about\\_town](http://www.destinationstalltown.com/towns/superior-ne#about_town)
- Fortunato, M. W-P. (2014). Supporting rural entrepreneurship: A review of conceptual developments from research to practice. *Community Development*, 45(4), 387–408.
- Fortunato, M. W-P, & Clevenger, M. R. (Eds.). (2017). *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries*. Routledge.
- Fortunato, M. W-P, & McLaughlin, D. K. (2012). Interaction and purpose in highly entrepreneurial communities. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 2(1), 1–34.

- Gaventa, J. (1982). *Power and powerlessness: Quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian valley*. University of Illinois Press.
- Google Maps. (2021). *Lincoln, Nebraska to Hastings, Nebraska*. <https://goo.gl/maps/WZ8KbUQ7iif3UakN8>
- Hanson, J. A. (1993, Spring). Spain on the plains. Nebraska State Historical Society. *Nebraska History*, 74, 2021. [www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1993Spain.pdf](http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1993Spain.pdf)
- Henderson, J. (2002). Building the rural economy with high-growth entrepreneurs. *Economic Review-Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City*, 87(3), 45–75.
- History.com Editors. (2020). *Nebraska*. History. History.com A&E Television Networks, LLC. [www.history.com/topics/us-states/nebraska](http://www.history.com/topics/us-states/nebraska)
- Homan, M., & Radford, D. A. (2004). “Nebraska” *redbook: American state, county, and town sources* (3rd ed., p. 408). Ancestry.
- Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out* (pp. 2–10). Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research. Neighborhood Innovations Network.
- Lancy, D. F. (1993). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to the major traditions*. Longman Publishing Group.
- Luloff, A., & Bridger, J. (2003). Community agency and local development. In D. Brown & L. Swenson (Eds.), *Challenges for rural America in the twenty-first century* (pp. 203–213). Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Macke, D., Wall, M., Stowell, R., & Iaquina, I. (2019). *Ord case study* [Work in progress].
- Markley, D., Macke, D., & Luther, V. B. (2005). *Energizing entrepreneurs: Charting a course for rural communities*. Heartland Center for Leadership Development.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Miles, M. P., & Morrison, M. (2018). An effectual leadership perspective for developing rural entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Small Business Economics*, 54(4), 933–949.
- Nebraska State Historical Society. (1977). Nebraska History. *Nebraska History Magazine*, 58(3).
- Nebraskastudies.org. (2021). *Edwin Perkins: Kool-Aid inventor*. Nebraskastudies.org <http://netwagtaildev.unl.edu/nebstudies/en/1925-1949/edwin-perkins-kool-aid-inventor/>
- NetWork Kansas. (2021). *About. Network Kansas*. [www.networkkans.com/about](http://www.networkkans.com/about)
- Pushkarskaya, H., Fortunato, M. W-P, Breazeale, N., & Just, D. R. (2021). Enhancing measures of ESE to incorporate aspects of place: Personal reputation and place-based social legitimacy. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 36(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2020.106004>
- Richards, S. T., & Bulkey, S. (2007). *Agricultural entrepreneurs: The first and the forgotten?* Research Paper #07–01. The Hudson Institute.
- Smith, A. (2012). *Drinking history: Fifteen turning points in the making of American beverages*. Columbia University Press.
- Spilnek, E. (2009). *Hastings, Nebraska: Then and now*. Arcadia Publishing.
- Superior, Nebraska. (2021). *Chamber of commerce*. Superior, Nebraska. <https://cityofsuperior.org/happening-here/chamber-of-commerce/>
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2012). *Statistical abstract of the United States: 2012*. [www2.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/tables/12s0358.xls](http://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/tables/12s0358.xls)
- Wilkinson, K. P. (1991). *The community in rural America*. Social Ecology Press.
- Young, M. (2020). *1850–1874 railroads & settlement*. Nebraskastudies.org [file:///Users/morganclvenger1/Downloads/Lesson7\\_RailroadsSettlement\\_2020\\_UxZRXDq.pdf](http://file:///Users/morganclvenger1/Downloads/Lesson7_RailroadsSettlement_2020_UxZRXDq.pdf)

***Additional Reading***

Lafuente, E., Vaillant, Y., & Rialp, J. (2007). Regional differences in the influence of role models: Comparing the entrepreneurial process of rural Catalonia. *Regional Studies*, 41(6), 779–795.



# 5 A Small-Town Music Movement as an Economic Driver and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development Strategy in Indiana

*Michael W-P Fortunato with Bill Lewis*

## Overview

### *A Brief History of Madison, Indiana*

Madison, Indiana, is a small town by the standards of most modern U.S. Americans. At roughly 12,900 population, the city is a “city” in name only—but is the epitome of an idyllic, postcard-like, historical small town on the Ohio River to most people who pass through. Located in Southeast Indiana on the Kentucky border (see Figure 5.1), Madison occupies an important vantage on the Ohio river that made it historically important as a river trade town, located roughly equidistant between two other important trade ports: Cincinnati, Ohio, and Louisville, Kentucky. The city was founded in 1809 and local building lots began to be sold in 1811 (John M. Gresham Company, 1889, p. 193). Madison’s strategic location across the Ohio River from Kentucky made it an important spot for early river commerce and as the beginning point in Indiana for the Old Michigan Road. The proximity to Kentucky, a slave state before the Civil War, made the town a key part of the Underground Railroad, a system that helped to free fugitive slaves (Hudson, 2011, pp. 117–118).

The Madison and Indianapolis Railroad was the first railroad in Indiana, and it began operations in 1836. The line would eventually merge into the Pennsylvania Railroad after years of corporate ownership swapping, giving nationwide access to the community. Trade and local society boomed in Madison in the riverboat days until the decline of both riverboat transit and the railroad, which was not competitive with other main-line railroads connecting Louisville and Cincinnati (John M. Gresham Company, 1889). The economy thus “froze in time” because of its secondary location along the railroad lines and the decline of its primary mode of trade on the river. This situation was not the case in either Louisville or Cincinnati, enabling both of these cities to advance to become major industrial rail centers and continue their economic growth throughout the peak of the Industrial Revolution, while Madison mostly dwindled and then declined, leaving in place



Figure 5.1 Map of Indiana

the largest single National Historic Landmark District in the United States (National Park Service, 2021).

Even today, stepping onto Madison’s main street—called “Main Street” in the grand U.S. tradition—one finds themselves immersed in a built environment that has changed little since the middle 1800s. Unlike other towns, most with a collection of well-preserved, historic properties, Madison’s collection goes on from one end of downtown right to the other with very few modern structures whatsoever. Buildings are in a variety of conditions, from many tastefully refurbished Federal-style brick townhomes to a few increasingly rare, utterly dilapidated properties with 170-year-old sagging masonry that makes one wonder if they should cross the street in case of an imminent building collapse. The community has an impressive visual arts scene, complete with well-attended galleries, public murals and sculptures, and popular art festivals. The town is considered to be a gem for Indiana tourism that is gaining notoriety and a must-see for history and art buffs from the region.

### ***Introduction, Cultural Aspects, and Background***

Sitting at a Madison restaurant, it was easy to become involved in discussion with a few locals, where showing off one’s beaming appreciation and pride for the town is a regular feature of conversation—especially with outsiders. “What are the three things that make Madison really unique?” said one of the locals. “Historic architecture, art, and music, of course!” said another. “Naw,”

a third person chimed in, “it’s drinking, swearing, and giving!” Being from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where the Ohio River begins, this kind of exchange resonated with the familiar culture growing up where a pithy retort is essential to greasing the wheels of any conversation. Having spent a bit of time getting to know Madison as an outsider, these attributes are easily seen and were true: historic architecture, public art displays, and several fine art galleries are everywhere in town, while drinking and swearing—occurring in healthy moderation are standards. Music and giving, however: these appear to be the two attributes that locals appeared most excited to discuss during the interviews presented in this case study. Despite its impressive historical preservationist ethic, community members still think of the community as being a “music town” that aspires to become a “music city,” or a music ecosystem that is dense, deep, and well-known enough to be mentioned in the same breath as major music cities like Nashville, Tennessee (less than 4 hours away over the road), Chicago, Illinois (about the same distance), and Austin, Texas. Locals are not crazy; they know there is an obvious difference in size and scope between Nashville and Madison, but most people interviewed see Madison as being much like Nashville or Austin in the earlier days of their development as music cities. However, unlike these larger cities, Madison appears committed to diversifying its strategy by emphasizing a small town, grassroots, “everybody pitch in” approach to building that entrepreneurial community with more of a broad vision than a formal plan.

The connection between music and entrepreneurship in Madison is explicit to most locals. Home to few large companies from outside the area, Madison comprises mainly small, homegrown enterprises in a diversity of industries—from music to manufacturing, healthcare, and education. Most of Madison’s music history has likewise been built on the backs of small operators, including independent music venues, studios, festivals, and of course, musicians themselves. The future vision for the community is one that involves more music, venues, musicians, and supporting companies—as well as tourism activities hotels, restaurants, outdoor recreation, and creative retail—all boosted by a growing music industry. In a town the size of Madison, nearly all of this vision will require the work of entrepreneurs and small enterprises who see an opportunity and feel supported enough by the local community (both individually and through the market) to take a chance on a very small town instead of a larger music city.

To study Madison’s emerging ecosystem represents a unique opportunity: there are few studies that present a description of ecosystem dynamics at the very earliest stages of development *as they are happening*, largely because they are often difficult to identify in advance. Many studies, including Miller and Ács’s (2017) study of the University of Chicago and Stam’s (2014) national case study on the Netherlands, are highly robust but occur in hindsight. While not claiming that this retrospection creates any harmful hindsight bias, it does present the selection bias of only focusing on those ecosystems that have survived into maturity, or where there is something to talk about. A

similar critique of only examining successful businesses was shared by Davidson (2009), where researching only currently functioning entrepreneurs is like interviewing only winners in a game—absent any alternative perspectives, the key lessons will be to invest big and take as many risks as possible!

In Madison, the formal organization, and the deliberate focus of M3 to cultivate a culture and economy dedicated to music, entrepreneurship, and economic development more broadly allow outsiders to recognize that, at the very least, this group intends to cultivate an ecosystem locally.<sup>1</sup> While M3s planning behavior indicates that it will evolve into an ecosystem in perpetuity, there are risks associated with studying such a young ecosystem. First, it is possible that M3 could fail—by becoming insolvent, or through internal conflict, or through attrition, or a lack of interest. This miscarriage is not an uncommon outcome for young community organizations and initiatives, much in the same way that business failures are not uncommon among entrepreneurs. Second, another risk is that M3 could one day pivot away from entrepreneurship altogether, focusing primarily on supporting music, or using music to support larger-scale economic development efforts with established businesses, or casting out non-music entrepreneurs from its sphere of influence. Just like studying a very young business, there is no guarantee that a young ecosystem will grow to maturity in its current form, if at all.

However, if M3 *does* succeed, an explicit goal of this case study is to examine the genesis of this young ecosystem in the moment, evading hindsight bias to the greatest extent possible, and representing the current attitudes of the builders of a novel and emergent ecosystem. Such ideas can provide helpful information about how ecosystems begin intentionally, and how the pieces of the entrepreneurial community around the ecosystem come together to produce momentum and enthusiasm behind a common cause.

### *Power and Empowerment*

This case study examines the concept of mutual empowerment through free association across a diversity of actors from various sectors to create synergistic relationships that enhance information and resource exchange. The community specifically focuses on the empowerment of a historically low-income, low-margin group of self-employed individuals—professional musicians and their businesses—and how to enhance their profitability and success by creating a supportive local ethic and recognizing the link between live music and high local quality of life. This group is capable of connecting musicians with those entities who can best help them to succeed—and who can simultaneously benefit from their connection to the live music scene.

### *Time Span*

Summer 2020 with an update from Summer 2021.

### ***Leadership Aspects***

Leadership in this emerging music ecosystem are typically leaders from other areas of the local society, both arts-related and non-arts-related. This network includes everything from local government leaders to nonprofit leaders, entrepreneurs and small businesses, self-employed musicians, big business leaders, music fans, and business-minded individuals with interest in local music.

### ***The Why***

As a community asset, music has been existing throughout the area so if finally formalizing to become Indiana's *Music City* through a combination of business development, artist development, investment, branding, and collective action. This case study provided important data for the inhabitants as a self-reflection and organizing tool to aid in strategy, mindful action, coordination, and positive momentum.

### **Methodology and Types of Data**

The study employs a simple qualitative case-study design to examine the genesis and planned behaviors of the Madison Music Movement (M3) as an inchoate, early-stage music- and arts-based entrepreneurial ecosystem. Among qualitative methods, a case-study approach is most appropriate because of the unique, bounded nature of the case under study. It is unlikely that many other communities will have a similar set of people, intellectual capital, size and layout, local physical assets, and musical and entrepreneurial talent in the same configuration, or with the same tastes, preferences, and ambitions, as in Madison. Every community, even small ones like Madison, is likely to diverge in terms of what Schmid (2008) would call *structure* (i.e., institutions, people, and assets) and *situation* (i.e., the cultural and historical context)—which in turn affect *performance* (i.e., outcomes of human action given the structure and situation). However, this study relies on what Orum et al. (1991) call the “power of a single case,” in which any community—regardless of their structure or situation—can discover interesting similarities or derive inspiration and ideas from the experience and performance of another. Naturally, this raises the normal caveat about *generalizability* from any qualitative, limited-sample study. The goal of this study is not to describe inchoate ecosystems in any general sense, as they are likely to be extremely diverse and often difficult to identify *ex ante*. Instead, its purpose is to elucidate the ideas, ambitions, beliefs, organization, and planned behavior of one unique ecosystem, focusing on the ways that the lessons of Madison could be applied to other smaller communities who seek to cultivate an ecosystem based on an existing social, cultural, or human capital base.

Because of the small study sample and targeted nature of the subject under study, this study utilized a simplified, qualitative case-study design inspired by procedures found in Yin (2009) and Maxwell (2012). The study relies on qualitative data due to the highly exploratory nature of the research question (Dana & Dana, 2005; Creswell & Poth, 2016). The case study involved:

- (a) A content review of organizing documents, including M3's original concept presentation deck, the M3 website, and other publicly available information on M3 and the Madison music economy more broadly.
- (b) A two-part qualitative data collection sequence involving individual and group face-to-face interviews and a facilitated, strategic visioning exercise in which qualitative data were collected.
- (c) A simple, thematic-coding procedure to isolate and examine key convergent themes, and to underscore any divergent themes that arose during the course of the research.
- (d) Data cleaning and simplification.
- (e) A member check of the thematically sorted data narrative.
- (f) An analysis and interpretation of key themes.

The following paragraphs describe the methodology utilized in this study in greater detail for replicability and evaluation in similar research situations.

### ***Content Review***

Materials were made available to the researcher and to the general public regarding M3's genesis and development, including an initial "pitch deck" for catalyzing M3 as a formal movement. This pitch deck was presented to a group of community stakeholders interested in supporting and expanding the music scene locally.

### ***Sample Selection***

A core group of participants were present at meetings about M3 since the initial meeting to debut plans for the organization in February 2020 in Madison. This group was not a formal steering committee but rather a "proto-board" consisting of people who were involved in music in some way, or initially interested in joining the initiative as a supporter. Prior to the creation of a formal board of directors, this group would consistently meet to discuss future directions for the music movement. The initial strategic visioning exercise was called the "why" exercise. Participants in this exercise were asked to meet for a face-to-face interview, either individually or in groups as they felt comfortable, in the 2 weeks following the commencement of the "why" exercise. The final sample included a mix of 11 M3 affiliates and one local professor, at the recommendation of the group, who

had recently written a lengthy article about Madison's budding music scene. The final sample had nine men and three women, all over age 40, which is not surprising as many are local leaders and have substantial experience. The group (participants will be referred to as "M3 affiliates") represented a mix of large and small business leadership, government, medicine and veterinary, nonprofit and arts organizations, and one musician with a business background. There were two participants in the "why exercise" who were not included in the interviews: one because of non-response, and another with scheduling difficulties as a result of the pandemic.

### ***Data Collection***

Data collection occurred in two phases: face-to-face interviews and a structured, facilitated group exercise aimed at determining a cohesive vision as to "why" the group exists, intended to drive action toward collective action.

#### *The "Why" Exercise*

To help create a strategic vision for the organization, Sinek's (2009) book *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action* was used. During the period of the case-study research, the M3 affiliates were inspired by this book. The affiliates wanted to understand *why* M3 was the right idea for Madison's future development, which (according to Sinek) taps into the real motivations of each organizing member of M3 (the initial Board of Directors) to support the movement. This exercise was conducted via email, where each affiliate member was asked the simple question, "Why do you want Madison to become a music city?" where participants were asked to write their answer and email the response. These "Why statements" were then compiled and thematically coded according to the following data analysis procedure.

#### *Face-to-Face Interviews*

Interviews were conducted either one-on-one or in one-group setting with four individuals, based on the preference of participants. Interview data were collected by hand to avoid the use of a recording device and any biases this may induce. Participants were asked to rephrase unclear answers or answers that were too rapid, or to clarify wording, when necessary, to maximize the potential for the use of direct quotes. Interviews relied on a simplified, open-ended protocol intended to permit the participants to speak freely on this exploratory subject. The protocol asked the following questions:

- (a) How did this ecosystem come into existence?
- (b) Who is involved in the ecosystem's development, and what roles do they play?

- (c) What are the first elements of the ecosystem to emerge?
- (d) How will the ecosystem expand and in what ways?
- (e) What is the role of musicians, venues, and festival organizers in stimulating entrepreneurial activity?
- (f) What are the goals, ambitions, and expectations of the ecosystem?

### ***Data Analysis***

Data were analyzed using thematic-coding and data-reduction techniques (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) to remove extraneous comments and to group convergent ideas into themes. This process was continued until all ideas from interview transcripts were categorized into key themes. Truly extraneous ideas (those that did not contribute to the theoretical scope of the study) were removed. Ideas for which there was broad consensus were noted, and when ideas diverged, both points of view are presented. The results section follows the key emergent themes from the research, presented in a logical order. The results utilize a narrative structure (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Howell, 1972) to present the data in an easily readable format. Reflexive notes are similarly coded into themes and presented in a narrative style.

### ***Human Subjects Protections***

This research was not conducted through a university, and therefore was not subject to traditional IRB requirements for human subjects research. However, having worked extensively in university research environments, the researcher employed the same research protections afforded to participants under a formal IRB application, including (a) explanation of the project, (b) use of the data, (c) storage of the data, (d) participant anonymity unless consent is given to utilize identifying information, (e) explanation of potential risks, (f) informed consent, and (g) a member checking step. Participants were asked to continue with the interview only if they agreed to the use of their data in the manner explained, and participants who did not wish for their identity to be shared will remain unidentified. As a general rule, participant names are withheld in the data presented here unless it is (a) a comment *about* another person, in which case the subject of the comment (not the commenter) is identified and (b) such commentary is important to making sense of the comment being made.

### ***Bias and Researchers' Role***

As a community and economic development researcher and practitioner, the researcher was first introduced to Madison by a client and colleague who has lived in Madison for more than a decade. This colleague had been mentioning the creative community in Madison since 2014, and he encouraged a visit—something not accomplished until 2018, when guest speaking



on arts-based entrepreneurship development to the Madison Area Arts Alliance (MAAA). The immediate impression was with the strong progress in the community in terms of supporting the arts and music as a collective and with their enthusiasm and optimism for their community. Sensing that this was a community that was already modeling many of the strategies utilized in community and economic development practice, I returned to the community several times in 2019 and early 2020, giving an expanded version of my original talk to an audience of nearly 200 community members in February 2020. Due to the relevance of my own work to the community's efforts to build a music ecosystem, I was invited to sit in on the original M3 organization meetings as an outside observer/consultant. I was still playing this role as of the summer of 2020, when data were collected.

During this time, I made many friends in the Madison music scene and even became involved in playing music locally (my other profession outside of scholarly and consulting work). Sensing continued synergy between my own values and the values of the community, I eventually stated my intentions to relocate myself and my business to Madison from my previous locations in East Texas and Northern California. I formally joined the board of M3 in late summer 2020, after the data collection and facilitated exercise in this case study, but prior to data analysis. As a result, I consider myself to be a *participant observer* (see Howell, 1972) in the research due to my close personal proximity to the community and the M3 organization. [See Spradley's (2016) book and Musante and DeWalt's (2010) book for extensive field guides on participant observation, advantages, common biases, and mitigation strategies.]

The methodology presented is broadly consistent with Howell's (1972) phases of participant observation, which include:

- (1) *Establishing rapport*. This was done progressively since my first encounter in Madison in 2018.
- (2) *In the field (do as the locals do)*. As a musician, community builder, and
- (3) *Recording observations and data*. This was done through the explicit process outlined here, but also includes reflexive notes and observations on the process available in the analysis following the results section.
- (4) *Analyzing data*. This can be accomplished through both thematic and narrative analysis. The former is emphasized more than the latter in this study, although it is a goal to communicate these ideas through a narrative format that is logical and cohesive.

(Howell, 1972, pp. 392–403)

To reduce the bias of participant observation, (a) I am transparently acknowledging my own role in the community before, during, and after the research, (b) I openly welcome and acknowledge the need for more research on small, inchoate ecosystems for additional conceptual validity, (c) I include a member checking step to identify inaccuracies and misrepresentations, and perhaps most importantly, (d) I remain committed as a participant

observer to a balanced reading and analysis of the data, as good strategies are unlikely to arise by turning a blind eye to weaknesses and problems within the community.

## Results

This section presents the thematically coded results of the research, beginning with a content review of M3's organizing documents, followed by the "why" exercise, and ending with data from individual and group interviews with M3 affiliates.

### *Content Review of Organizing Documents*

On February 12, 2020, Todd Boone—a local businessperson, Madison native, and self-proclaimed music fan—invited several key stakeholders from across Madison's arts, government, and nonprofit organizations to attend his presentation on making Madison the next "music city," in the fashion of Nashville or Austin but smaller. Boone made appeals to a vision where Madison could build on the legacy of its original venues, creating an environment where spectators could walk the streets of Madison any night of the week and find high-quality, live music by a variety of local and regionally and nationally touring players. In the very first slide, Boone made it clear that, while Madisonians already love live music, this presentation was about "creating the ecosystem" for music that "drives economic value," generates "music-related business," and facilitates "city brand building" (personal communication, T. Boone, February 12, 2020). Boone recognized the many active musicians, venues, and studios in the community, but proposed bringing these sometimes siloed and socially disconnected entities together behind a business- and quality-of-life-oriented movement: The *Madison Music Movement (M3)*. The movement would be a joint effort by anyone locally that saw themselves as capable of supporting live music, from investment to policy. The presentation briefly reviewed the substantial economic benefits received by communities who had successfully catalyzed a local music industry through a combination of policy, investment, and artist and business development including Nashville, Austin, Asheville (NC); and on the smaller side, Muscle Shoals (AL) and Taos (NM).

The original M3 presentation deck outlined five "pillars" that, to the best of Boone's knowledge and research, were key drivers of a music city's development: a city-wide blanket license from a performance rights organization (PRO) like ASCAP or BMI,<sup>2</sup> a health alliance for Madison musicians, a state-of-the-art recording studio, low-cost transient (artist) housing, and a delivery system (i.e., more local venues and festivals). The presentation did not mention the word "entrepreneurship" specifically, although the cultivation of new artists and artist businesses, and the creation of new venues, festivals, and artist housing were all communicated as the work of primarily

new and existing independent businesses in Madison, although the goal of eventually attracting larger-scale investment in the community from outside entities was also explicit.

Due to his catalytic role in bringing key stakeholders together, Todd Boone is credited to be M3's founder, in concert with the original group of stakeholders, who continued to meet monthly to work on M3's structure, goals, and activities. The first public manifestation of the group's efforts was a limited-capacity (due to COVID restrictions) public unveiling and fundraiser on June 6, 2020, at the Red Bicycle Hall that included volunteer performances from several of Madison's most well-known musicians. This unveiling was quickly followed by a new "Live Lunch" series (originally "Music in the Streets" until it was moved from alleyways in town to downtown Lytle Park), which brought local and regional musicians to downtown Madison for a free, public, outdoor lunchtime concert every Friday, spring-through-fall, and debuted on June 19, 2020. The concerts continued through part of the summer, as it enabled local patrons to enjoy music in an outdoor, socially distanced setting. The group also coordinated branding for the organization, including the two logos seen in Figures 5.2 and 5.3.

The initial stakeholder group chose the term "Indiana's Music City" as a way of declaring its future trajectory to outsiders. While the group was split over the decision to adopt this slogan (due to its high ambition and competition to become a top music ecosystem from larger and better-funded competitors like Indianapolis), M3 eventually adopted the slogan, sometimes qualifying it as part of a journey to "Elevate Madison as 'Indiana's Music City'" (Madison Music Movement, 2021). M3 adopted the new branding prior to the public unveiling concert, selling merchandise to support the organization financially. M3 eventually formalized a board of directors and refined its goals and mission from the original five pillars into the following comprehensive statement:

**As Indiana's Music City will become:**

- A preferred destination, where people will want to visit and explore and see what all the excitement is about.
- A desired community, where people will want to move and make it their home, so they can enjoy our unique quality of life every day.
- An easy sell, where existing business and industry can attract and retain the top talent they need to grow.
- And an even stronger destination for new business and expanded commerce.

**The Three Pillars to becoming Indiana's Music City:**

- Spread the word to the world—coordinate the messaging and promotion of Madison's musical brand.



Figure 5.2 Logo of M3

- Fill the streets with music—facilitate the success of the existing music venues and pave the way for even more places to see and enjoy live music in Madison.
- Make it a musician’s town—strengthen the original music culture and build support infrastructure that will attract musical talent who want to live and create and perform here.

**How does M3 help make this a reality?**

- Help coordinate all local entities that create advertising or communications about Madison, to ensure that it is focused on the Indiana’s Music City brand message. Local government, the tourism office, the chamber of commerce, the festival committees, anybody and everybody who promotes Madison to the outside world.
- Advise venues regarding challenges like BMI/ASCAP licensing fees, liquor licenses, or other hurdles that might keep live music from flourishing.



*Figure 5.3* Logo of IMC

- Facilitate the infrastructure musical artists' want and need to create and thrive. These might include:
  - A musician's hostel or other short-term housing options
  - A creative collaboration space for musicians to hang out
  - A professional sound recording studio
  - Health insurance strategies (discounts, group plans, etc.)

**Madison Music Movement is:**

- A collection of subject-matter experts, community leaders, and civic-minded boosters who want to apply their expertise and energies to help transform Madison into Indiana's Music City.
- An organized and strategic way to unleash all the economic and cultural benefits that will flow from achieving this powerful brand position.
- A central rallying point for like-minded organizations and individuals to contribute their talents and resources to help make this vision a reality ([madisonmusic.org](http://madisonmusic.org)).

### ***“Why” Exercise***

The following statement represents the thematically coded compilation of reasons *why* M3 affiliates want to make Madison a music city, compiled among responses by study participants. This statement was accepted and approved by the new board of directors in July 2020.

### **Eight Reasons Why We Want to Make Madison a Music City**

#### ***Music Inspires Us***

Music soothes the soul and inspires the heart. Music lifts the spirit, it is positive, and it feeds the spirit and vibe of our community. Music and other cultural enrichment activities help citizens of a community feel a sense of place and a sense of ownership and engagement. Music will only exist in Madison if we cultivate it with intent and purpose. If we do not act to inspire others, then who will?

#### ***Music Creates Community***

Music can draw people together and as such helps create community, and this is especially true for live music. Madison is the kind of place where “community” already exists, and you can see examples of it everywhere. Investing time, creative energy, and dollars into building a better music scene will help create a more vibrant and flourishing music community, which in turn will add more shine and brilliance to the place we call home (and for people that would like to make Madison their home). The arts are a true representation and celebration of our community and its character.

#### ***Music Gives a Voice to the Voiceless***

Music is the one thing that has inspired generations to tell their stories and about their hardships and successes. It creates a historical reference that virtually everyone can relate to. Music brings a voice to the voiceless. It is the universal language that unites us all.

#### ***Music Has Long Been Part of Our Own Story***

Music has been a feature of Madison for a long time, so supporting a music scene more deliberately is just asking to be done. There is a natural excitement and movement happening already, and the vibrancy of Madison has been steadily growing, almost as if it is feeding itself. Madison is already halfway there, boasting more musical talent, more music festivals, and more live music venues than cities five or even ten times our size. We are on the

map among music fans and regional musicians and ready to grow that story into the future.

### ***Music Is a Positive Alternative for the Next Generation(s)***

The Madison Music Movement is very much about young people. Young folks in our community need a vehicle to express themselves now more than ever before. We can work together to create a music community for young folks that do not feel like they belong anywhere else. And, the biggest weapons we have to combat drug addiction and depression are music and community.

### ***Music Is Good Business***

What better focus for economic growth of an artistic community than the arts, one in which we are exceptionally rich. It is both a recognition of an opportunity and a responsibility to nurture it in order to elevate our quality of life in Madison, which in turn will drive investment and yield a superior return on that investment. Music is a natural strategy based on existing assets for attracting a competitive workforce, helping existing Madison businesses and industry to enhance their ability to attract and retain the top talent they need to grow. Music makes Madison an even stronger destination for new business and expanded commerce.

### ***Music Makes Madison More Desirable***

We love our town, and we think others will too. Music can help Madison to become a preferred tourism destination, where people will want to visit and explore and see what all the excitement is about. It also helps to make Madison a desired community to live in, where people will want to move and make Madison their home, so they can enjoy our unique quality of life every day and become part of Madison's unique story.

### ***Music Here Wants to Go Full Spectrum***

Madison is simply the coolest town in the country and we want others to enjoy it as much as we do. But Madison had one missing link to catapult it into a league of its own—and that was finishing the story on music. There have been lots of great stories and creative musicians and innovators who got us this far—but we needed to go beyond being known as a festival town and finish the story. The Madison Music Movement provides the bricks on the yellow brick road that lead to the Emerald City, and for us, that is to become THE Music City, featuring a complete ecosystem of venues, festivals, studios, practice spaces, live- and work-spaces for musicians, legal and

licensing support, networking, and professional development opportunities for musicians and fans (see Figure 5.4). This case study includes focus of a music entrepreneur social group (Newell, 2017). It does, however, also support the Madison, Indiana entrepreneurial community as well as each nascent entrepreneur's entrepreneurial ecosystem being developed.

**In short:**

We want to build a better music scene because music inspires, creates, and enhances a sense of community that has already been growing here for a long time. It lifts up people's voices in a way anyone can understand and provides a positive and uplifting context for personal and economic development, and for creating a truly unique community that others will want to join—whether it be as visitors, friends, or new residents. Our music story is just getting started and waiting to bloom into its fullest potential. All it takes is a little action, intention, and cooperation across our community to make it happen. And besides, it's just plain fun.

***Face-to-Face Interviews***

This section details the results of the face-to-face interviews that occurred over the course of about two weeks in late Spring 2020, detailing the genesis and development of M3 as an inchoate music ecosystem. The results here begin with historical features supporting Madison's ecosystem and move on to the future goals and ambitions of the ecosystem, its leadership, strategy, and organization.

***Building on Local Cultural and Historical Assets***

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) suggest beginning with existing assets to develop any community: a technique known as asset-based community development or ABCD. This first section details some of the cultural and historical assets that set the context for Madison's continued development into a music community.

***Physical Infrastructure and Urbanism***

To begin, let us focus on Madison's unique setting and cultural and industrial history on the Ohio River as a potential asset in ecosystem building. A local journalist had the following to say about M3's mission:

This is a quality of life play that through luck (architecture left here), we're left with this "gem . . ." it's stunning! Madison was preserved [following economic collapse]. Some guy showed up in the 1960s and told the town elders they had a treasure. Their response: "Sorry we



didn't build modern buildings!" The key features of town are friendliness, density of downtown, music, urban tightness, and walkability. Madison couldn't spread out [over time], and shows like *Friends & Seinfeld* had an outsized cultural impact on guiding tastes for urban living. This is idealistic urbanism, and Madison has had that for a real long time.

Madison's subtle, walkable urbanism was noted by others as an advantage during interviews, often noting the importance of the density of existing local clubs and venues. "You could go to the Electric Lady, then Shipley's, then other places. It's like Austin . . . one strip made it happen," said one participant. "And everything is walkable," noted another.

Madison is a unique town in that we are an "island." We are close to Indy, Cincinnati, Louisville, but still far enough away [that we do not compete with them] We have always been an artist enclave (mostly visual arts), and the downtown core is unique,

said a local promoter. The unique combination of Madison's natural and built environments has been a draw for some of Madison's biggest music boosters. "[Two current affiliates of M3] were passing through. They woke up in the Hilltop Inn and saw the valley . . . and wanted to move here."

### *Musical Cultural Heritage*

Madison's focus on music is not new. In fact, it is the recent culmination of a decades-old culture of music enthusiasm that was sometimes manifest, sometimes latent. But the "movement" began long before M3 was formalized as an organization. M3 can thus be seen as accelerating a culture that was already alive and ambient in the community. A local journalist traced Madison's music history back to one of the first professional musicians of note in the 20th Century.

"Patient Zero" for musicianship was Charlie Humphrey, a guitarist. "He taught everybody to play guitar!" a local sound engineer once told me. Most local musicians over 50 learned from Charlie. By luck, this culture of music got built here. Guys like Jimmy Davis [a prominent local musician] grew up seeing guitars everywhere. There was a culture of musical excellence . . . music everywhere in the 70's until there was a drunk driving crackdown in the mid-1980's. That original culture is aging but it's still here.

A local professor noted the historical diversity of the local music scene, dating back even before the past century.

It's a border place . . . not really Blues here, but there is African-American influence here in music. In [nearby] Settler's Grove, there's a fiddling competition there. Our geography and being a border place help make this scene what it is, this culture of musical excellence.

Even local doctors participate in the music scene, especially those who pursue music as a serious avocation. "A few people wanted to make music together, so we started the 'Doctors' Band' for 35 years . . . like the Rolling Stones, we keep going!" said one local doctor who is also an active participant in M3. Diversity in participation in both the music scene and the broader M3 movement has persisted throughout the community's recent history.

### *The Original Venues and Festivals*

M3 is a new organization, but the music community had a long history of latent activity and potential energy going back decades, waiting to be organized into a more cohesive movement. Like any ecosystem, music entrepreneurship in Madison grew venue by venue over time. A government official stated,

M3 really started 50 years ago, there was a large concentration of bars. The landscape started to change: it started with the Electric Lady, then Joey G's, then Red Bike [the colloquial name for Red Bicycle Hall, a non-profit cooperative concert venue] . . . they started bringing in top talent. Then Ribberfest [a blues and barbecue festival] appeared, then River Roots/Folk Festival—these introduced artists and visitors to Madison.

"The music movement really started about 20 years ago with Joey G's [a former club where the Off Broadway Taproom is now]. Their tagline: 'Where Music Matters.' Before that, there was just 'background' music in town," said a festival promoter and venue co-owner. "Joey G" Gales is often credited with jump-starting venue development in the city and dedicated most of his entrepreneurial life to supporting music. "He would have live music every single night," said two other participants. "And Joey opened a record store where House of Jane is today," said the promoter. An M3 leader said of Joey

He was the tip of the spear. I don't want to play that down . . . these you see people on the street and say, "hey, that guy can play!" [because of him]. Joey never wavered. He was flying down that [entrepreneurial] hill and could wipe out anytime.

Soon, festivals followed. According to the same local promoter,

John Walburn [a local musician] and Steve Thomas [a musician and wine entrepreneur] started Ribberfest, then Ohio River Valley Folk Festival (now RiverRoots). They started small: dancing in the dirt, a grassroots effort, 99% volunteer . . . that's special. Regatta [an established boat racing festival] kicked this [momentum] off even though it's not music—but it all comes from the volunteer spirit. That's the best of Madison.

A local doctor and musician participated in the founding of the local festivals.

There was the *American Music Festival* (AMF) in Louisville. I always went to Blues night, but Brown-Foreman pulled their sponsorship and the festival died. We have 10 times the riverfront of Louisville, and with AMF gone, we thought: let's start a blues festival in Madison, maybe get some grants since blues is an American music style. Our efforts stalled because we couldn't find a good meeting time. Someone wanted to bring in a barbecue festival, so we ended up collaborating, and I was basically the chairman.

That is how Ribberfest Blues and Barbecue Festival began. Based on the success of that festival, "It was Jeff's idea to start a folk festival. Our friend John [Walburn] became band chairman and eventually became head of the festival. RiverRoots was born . . . folk music and craft beer."

Momentum from festivals led to—more festivals, which spun off related music businesses. Another festival promoter stated,

My cousin in Indy wanted to promote the Madison Regatta with music. It was a success, so we created RoosterTail music festival [concurrently with the Regatta]. I get my feet wet as a promoter for these festivals. Drew Eades asked for help getting music in the Red Bike. We formed an LLC for booking bands. I had some connections with the band Days of the New, but I started out by dabbling.

The Red Bicycle Hall, or "Red Bike," was notable in Madison's music scene for bringing in big name talent from beyond Madison. A nonprofit cooperative, the Red Bike is a partnership between six key stakeholders in the local music community, including promoters, journalists, and other professionals across the town. A few owners also play instruments and perform locally. A local journalist and partner in the Red Bike stated,

Red Bicycle Hall was the first major step [to growing the scene]: it was Kevin Watkins' [a local veterinarian and promoter] vision. It has elevated the quality of life in Madison. Before the Red Bike, you could see cover bands in bars. Now there's live and original music. [Kevin] is the kind of kid that would hang up a sheet and put on a show for the

neighbors only now he's all grown up. Todd [Boone] originally wanted to bring together existing venues behind the Red Bike [as M3's strategy] to help the music scene turn the corner.

Another promoter and co-owner of the Red Bike said,

M3 is really recent. I was promoting shows on my own. I wanted to bring quality music to Madison, which is where Red Bicycle Hall started . . . bring original, natural touring acts to Madison, which was unheard of and started slowly, and then charge admission. Steve Thomas [local wine entrepreneur] has always brought original music to his winery too. Then, live music started to pop up everywhere. People started spending more money, and the light bulb went off. A lot of cover bands were there to fill the gaps. It was hit or miss at Red Bike, but we were a cooperative, so if we had a shitty show, we could handle it together. If you can push through the tough times, you can hang in there in the long term.

Red Bike's collaborative model has been replicated in local festivals as well. "It used to be individuals trying to bring musicians to town. MadHop is collaborative too: unlike other festivals, all the vendors are local and the money stays here. People just loved it and the community supports it."

Other M3 stakeholders echoed the importance of the Red Bike in raising the profile of local, original music. "The first year I came here was 2001, and there were always bubbles of activity under the surface. Now over the past 5–7 years it's bursting," said one M3 affiliate. "Red Bike Hall was responsible for this," said another.

The progress detailed earlier has been persistent, despite economic ups and downs. As a local businessperson stated,

There have been some significant music festivals by people who love music in a way that is beyond what I do. Madison has always had different venues: the Taproom was Joey G's before for 20 years or so, with live music every night regardless of the economic environment—[they were] totally committed. I have spent many nights there—just awesome! I got to know a lot of local musicians this way.

Even in their earlier days, music venues were described as a meeting place for the entire community, not just musicians.

### *Music Journalism Heritage*

Music is a promotion-driven industry, and the same goes for music scenes. In Madison, music journalism is emerging as a way to support the local ecosystem. One local journalist recounts,

Maggie Hillary was the editor of the local paper. She was an Indiana University journalism school grad, and ended up the editor of the Austin [Texas] Statesman from 1978–1990. She blew up the entertainment section, to “make Austin a music town,” and then chronicled the transformation. She moved back to Madison, when her brother-in-law lost his editor at the local paper, so she was a major leaguer in a small town. She said, “this town is two or three venues away from being a music town, almost to the point where we could get someone from Indy to walk down Main Street and they would have a blast.”

The local journalist has taken up the torch. “That’s why I’ve been writing a column to really harp it like Maggie did for Austin.”

### *Existing Social and Cultural Infrastructure*

Madison’s progress is built on existing social networks, with a supportive culture, and this is seen as ascendent to other forms of business support. The Executive Director of a local arts organization explained the “people first” approach in Madison:

What has always existed here is being acknowledged and brought to the surface. The infrastructure has been here for a very long time: Pioneering river spirit, the most beautiful spot between Pittsburgh and the South. The music came from that. M3 was something that was already here. Our [recent efforts] go further, by making it a “thing.” We can do Muscle Shoals here, it’s all about the people. Madison has the natural environment, state park, and the built environment. But we are just now realizing the power of the people in a town of 12,900. That’s the easiest way to build a community—through its existing assets—not Disneyland, just musicians, artists, culinary.

A local professor similarly noted the power of more formal organizations to attract doers. “People here join music organizations instead of Rotary. Most of the action happens outside the government.” Lately, government has taken a stronger role, as the current mayor of Madison has participated in M3 as an ex officio member and supporter. The professor stated, “Prior mayors weren’t obstructionist [about music], but they weren’t helping either.” Grassroots arts organizations have largely played this role since, and accepting change—stereotypically rare in a small town—has been part of the culture to some extent in Madison. “People say, ‘oh, folks don’t want things to change,’ but I don’t have any data to support that.”

### *Grassroots Leadership, Diverse Backgrounds*

One final pre-existing asset in Madison is its leadership from various parts of the community, which have tapped into Madison’s music scene organically

whether they play, sing, or simply attend shows. A local journalist credited M3's founder and a variety of supporting actors with the organization's genesis:

M3, and music, is the ends to the means. Not even half the people involved are music people—it's government people, businesspeople. It's a civic prosperity play, not just a music play. You can tell this from the board. It will have all sorts of economic benefits. And Todd [Boone] is driven by love of the town. He's of an age and has enough influence that he can make a difference. This is the old "chamber of commerce" model. He's energetic, focused, do it first and figure it out later. Don't wait for the structure to be there.

A local business owner recounted Todd Boone's actions prior to launching M3:

Todd has a great Christmas gathering. He started telling us about this idea he had—it's not about creating another music festival, but for the community and for economic development. That's when it clicked for me . . . it hit all my buttons. And then guys with big ideas started making things happen.

"Todd Boone thought it would be a good idea to get everyone together and point energy in the right direction, make sure we have a collaborative, cooperative group," said a local festival promoter.

While Todd Boone is broadly credited with founding and catalyzing M3, it was not solely his pet project. Boone quickly worked to attract other key stakeholders from across the community, interested in connecting for a variety of reasons. "My role was pure enjoyment!" said one venue owner. "My role is a hybrid between musician and a business-minded individual, which connected me to the business community. A lot of musicians don't have that," said another member. A local doctor and M3 affiliate stated, "We needed to get an official group together to attract these folks in. Todd [Boone] was the one to catalyze the effort." Boone himself stated,

I was the last one in but in a different way. I have taken up new work since I was young. I want people to have fun and I have respect for people who work hard. I'm an all boats rising guy. . . . I want Madison to win. It's all about the diversity of who's on the team. It's not just business people, it's not just musicians, it's not just government. It's the diversity of experiences that's driving this thing.

Speaking to the interactive nature of Madison's music scene, one festival promoter said, "We are more of a grassroots ecosystem. I've always supported the music scene here."

### ***Focus on Quality of Life***

Instead of addressing business issues directly, M3 is aimed at improving local quality of life, which is in turn expected to drive economic action. According to a local journalist,

There has always been a local focus on quality of life development . . . the idea was that factories would follow, and they did. M3 is based on the idea that businesses here thrive *because* of quality of life. Todd [Boone] is using this to contribute to a quality of life push, that's what's going on. Trees are being cared for downtown, while other towns neglect this.

A local businessperson agrees:

It's a total quality of life play. [The M3 board] supports it by helping to bring people together, bring expertise, leverage networks to help the overall mission, navigate and bring industry to the table to support the efforts, learn about the music business. And I think it will be fun! I can bring my kids of various ages out. Even after a pandemic, people can do their work from a place like this, enjoy their life. Even local protests were peaceful . . . that appeals to people.

A government official also concurred: "My daughter can have a well-paying career that is location independent. We can use this to attract younger talent of quality. That's our identity!"

The quality of life strategy, in turn, drives human interaction, which drives evolution and eventually growth. As a local government official puts it,

My predecessors put emphasis on quality of life . . . we are a rural community. [Our culture] brings people together, we are approachable. It facilitates an environment where people interact constantly. It also allows the system to evolve, things always get better. We focus on what will make our quality of life better. That attracts population growth, which attracts talent, which attracts business, which attracts job creators. Our tourist base is 300,000 people per year. So we have switched [from industrial recruitment] to quality of life and quality of place. I want to be able to say, "here's where we are, here's where we've been," and I want to attract capital. Quality of life is an economic development strategy here.

There is agreement that quality of life is a central motivation driving local growth and development. "Pound for pound, Indy is bigger but not better," says one M3 affiliate. "People here are looking for quality of life, finding a business that adds to that is a great investment," said another, while a third said of M3 specifically, "It's all driven by quality of life." The government's explicit strategy is equally recognized: "The city promotes a better life experience for people here."

### ***Acting Like a Family***

Several affiliates and supporters of M3 described doing business in much the same way that families interact. A local artist and venue owner said,

My story started at Joey G's, he always had interesting music. [Current M3 affiliates] were always there. I used to follow my ex-husband's band. I was part of a [visual] artist collective called Gadfly. Then I got discovered. I *love* Madison. I love my town, it's like a big family. I used to walk my dog, and my mother worked at City Hall. I would knock on the window. One day, she had a note for me on the window, and I thought, "I love this town."

Speaking about a fellow M3 member, Jane Vonderheide, who runs the microvenue House of Jane, one M3 leader said, "Jane seems to know everyone. She cares about all of them, and connects the dots well." The family atmosphere is sometimes surprising to people from the city.

A different M3 affiliate commented,

I bring guys to town from the outside for work. They love it . . . the river, golf, hotels, food. My dad pulled up one day and talked to me in front of my colleagues, then takes off. "That was my dad," I said. The guys were surprised. We take that for granted.

While many ecosystems are business-forward, and many other music cities are fast-growing, locals place a high value on preserving the family-like interactions and quality of life in Madison. One M3 affiliate commented, "We just need to be Madison, not anybody else. Our tendency is to look to other communities who have done interesting things . . . we are not trying to be the next Nashville or Asheville." "We're trying to be the first Madison," said another. An M3 affiliate commented, "[In Madison's original venues], the music was too loud and you couldn't talk. I like the Austin model where you can see live music but still talk business." Another stated,

We want people to be *part* of the community. The best ideas don't come from government . . . it comes from great people, and we support it. There are artistic, energetic, creative, intellectual people here, I'm proud to be part of it.

### ***Starting by Sailing With the Wind***

As a fledgling music ecosystem, M3 has forced somewhat of a local choice about *what* to support locally. "Music is the fastest horse right now," said a local musician. "Economic development was all about industrial recruitment, down on tourism. Music and tourism is the most logical industry we've got! Some lady told me we've got more going on



than NYC . . . an exaggeration, but still!” remarked a local artist and venue owner. “There is an artist on every corner.” “And there is a core of people that support downtown,” said another M3 affiliate. While M3’s goal is not to operate at the expense of other local cultural assets, there is a recognition that music tourism, and excitement about music entrepreneurship, is the logical local strength to focus on at the current time.

A local nonprofit arts leader commented,

M3 is in its infancy, an idea. It was sprung on us a couple of months ago. It has people like Jimmy Davis being a seasoned musician, who grew up here, but has succeeded in the big city, a veteran. Todd Boone is a businessman. And Tawana, who has a journalism background and is our tourism director, they are all involved. What M3 does is produce opportunity . . . via people in the know.

“The strategy is to stay just a little behind the curve,” said a local promoter.

It’s not “build and amphitheater and they will come.” It’s a long-term strategy . . . we’re building so the next generation can pick it up. Nashville and Austin had that culture for generations, and we’re just getting started. Maybe we’ll be there in 50 years. It’s exciting just to be part of it! Capture your successes along the way because once you get to the tipping point, then it’s easy!

With the development of any ecosystem, there is always the possibility of competition. What about businesses that feel left out of the music momentum? “I don’t think competition between small business and music has been that strong,” says a local professor.

[There hasn’t been] much effort in terms of getting vendors out to shows and supporting local restaurants. Until MadHop, there wasn’t much of a boost to local business. [MadHop] is big in terms of connecting to local businesses—it actually happens on venues on Main Street. Regatta is not too helpful [to small business], while at Folk Fest, people wander up to Main Street more often.

### *Learning As You Go*

Like an entrepreneurial business, part of building a small-town ecosystem involves learning as you go. This is true within the music industry and also at the level of managing group strategy and public investment. About the music industry, one promoter said,

This is all changing: we’re still moving from covers to originals, and we are still mid-revolution. It’s an educational process, and it’s going to take a

long time to learn what keeps people coming back. What subsidizes this is out-of-towners coming in for festivals until we get the mix right. I can get 100 people from Cincinnati in a snap, and we still can't do that locally. If we have musicians, and followers here, then we don't have that problem.

At the level of local strategy, one M3 leader remarked,

We invest \$10M in industrial recruitment. What if we redirected it? If a local company wants to create 50 jobs, they can apply with the city and will almost always get it. If you sink \$300K in a property, you get a bigger property tax bill. Imagine if you spent \$100K to have live music three days a week. The mayor is into this idea!

Embracing changes in local strategy over time has been challenging but important to pivoting toward a new model of local development.

A 2,000 person plant *changed* us . . . Madison is actually more like 10,000 people. We all love Madison like it is. If it's perfect, let it go. But if it could be a little better, we can do that.

Many of the people who have supported the change over time are those that commonly do so: "It's often the same groups supporting the same things," said the leader.

### *The Challenges and Benefits of Small Community Life*

Economic life in a small town is not always easy, presenting unique challenges due to social proximity that do not exist in larger cities. An M3 affiliate explains,

It's like Mad Paddle [Madison's largest local brewery], a disadvantage is it's like crabs in a barrel. When you get up, others try to claw you back. We are not respecting [Mad Paddle's founder's] investment. In the past . . . I wouldn't call it tribes, but we had pockets of initiatives. We have to say, "we're all in this together" and assure others I'm not cooking in your kitchen.

Quoting M3 founder Todd Boone, a local musician said,

When a dog is barking, that's what you hear. Turn up the music and you can't hear it. One local business gets the fire marshal called on him all the time. People call [the business owner's significant other] horrible names online. People try to claw [the business owner] back. They're barking, we try to turn [the business owner's] music up.

Chronic negativity by those outside the initiative has been a persistent barrier to development in Madison. A local artist stated, "There is definitely a

negative undercurrent, but I choose to ignore it.” “You hear it less in a larger city,” said another M3 affiliate.

However, concurrent with small town negativity is a wellspring of community support that is helpful in moving the initiative forward. One M3 affiliate explains, “From a personal level, I have done a lot of benefits to get a child a headstone, or help a woman to afford a house. I can make 10 phone calls and get 10 musicians willing to help.” “It’s very much tied to cohesion,” says another. “I can’t believe how much this town gives,” states a local artist, before being interrupted by another affiliate: “Make all checks payable to the Madison Music Movement!” “Because it’s a small community it’s easy to make things happen, like John Walburn did with RiverRoots,” explains a local professor. “The scene is smaller so it’s easier to say, ‘let’s do this!’ Like Richard Florida says: he says rural places have high barriers to participation, but I haven’t found that here.”

One barrier to participation that does exist is high inequality. Madison is a mixed-income community, and it is further separated geographically between people who live in the Downtown neighborhood, where most venues are located; and people who live on top of the large bluff, or “Hilltop,” that isolates Madison into a suburban upper and dense, walkable lower half separated by steep roadways and no public transportation. “There are multiple Madisons,” says a local professor. “‘Downtown’ versus ‘Hilltop,’ and therefore a split between people. There’s also a split between people that make things happen and those that don’t.” An M3 affiliate notes the strong class divide across the community, saying, “You’re still going to have the high-end engineers, and the meth heads. High inequality. In Louisville, you can isolate yourself among your own people. Here it’s diverse, everyone is together.” While diversity can drive innovation, high inequality and geographic dispersion were noted as important barriers to M3s development.

### ***Becoming The Place to Play***

The secret to attracting musicians and music-related businesses rests on developing a reputation for excellence in music. A local journalist said,

Madison is catching on as a place that musicians across the region like to play. Local promoters are very generous toward musicians, and often lose money, but it’s their passion. Nashville is very jaded by comparison. We take care of musicians.

A local promoter had similar ideas:

The music movement could end up creating a destination spot for musicians, like Nashville did in the past. The current moment in East Nashville is similar to ours. You can be *supported* and *found* as an artist,

and find an audience. Madison has a name . . . you know that what you are going to get here is going to be good. I want to see the music scene here take off . . . we've been doing things here without a true "hub." [M3] helps to build a common goal.

A local professor stated,

Madison is the best per-capita music scene out there. There are so many musicians. Kim Nyberg [The Executive Director of MAAA] hit it on the head—it's one of the things you take for granted if you live here. Everybody has a story [about how they got here].

A local musician agreed that Madison is a sensible location strategically for music touring:

It's one hour to Louisville, one hour to Cincy, 1.5 to Indy, 3.5 to Nashville . . . it's a great place for a musician to tour. I can't tell you how many Madison musicians I see on music boards [concerts] regionally. People say, "What's happening in Madison? So many talented people!"

Growth in the local music scene has led to higher-caliber musicians showing up to play to bigger audiences and venues willing to take chances on these bands. This culture of excellence and of higher expectations seems to be growing. "We have world-class musicians who have come in big time over the past 10 years," said one M3 affiliate. Another business leader stated,

It could blossom so much more, to the point where we could use it to recruit out of top schools. When you look at where to live, you think, "what are schools like? What is shopping like?" Not as many people ask, "What's the night life like?"

A good night life appears to be a point of pride. "Indiana is just starting to have 'Hoosier Pride' just like Texas has Texas pride. There's a lot of state pride that is starting to build." But some feel that pride must be kept in check, at least for now. Speaking to M3's goal of making Madison "Indiana's Music City," a local arts leader stated, "Proclaiming yourself 'Indiana's Music City' bothers me, unless you can back it up," but the leader also concedes that, despite having other strong cultural and artistic assets locally, "music is winning the horse race right now, it's not far from who we are and what we are about . . . it's our *natural resource!*" A local journalist commented, "Maybe we will be jaded someday if too many people want to play here. It's a good problem to have!"

### ***Attracting Energy Through Exposure***

Madison's music scene currently attracts new energy and talent through a "try it and you will love it" strategy. As a local musician explains,

One of the key focal points [in Madison] is that music has helped to bring people to the community. People come in, there's live music, maybe loosen up, they have a good time, etc. I used to work in a hotel, and I saw so many folks coming in to see music. It brings in outside revenue not related to music. It's always "I love Madison," and "When can I come back?" If we can get them in once, we've got "em."

A local doctor told a similar story: "People that come in for festivals—musicians too—leave wanting a real estate guide, asking where the nearest airport is."

Getting more musicians to give Madison a try was a major motivator behind M3's founding. According to founder Todd Boone,

I wanted to help Jimmy [Davis] get to Nashville. Instead, he said he could hand out flyers, and he said he can get folks to move here. So the mantra became, "Keep Jimmy here," instead of sending people away—build the infrastructure *here*. I started building. The whole thing catalyzed behind economic development and connecting to places like Mad Paddle [the local brewery]. We've got to get more people here—get people to "buy Apples" before they're even ready to sell. We need more out-of-towners, to be ready to grow from 12,000 to 20,000 population.

"But there's an element of Madison that's good just like it is," responded one M3 affiliate.

I understand the need but, let it happen organically. Don't force it . . . that's what happened to RiverRoots [a recently-failed local festival] . . . there was no balance. Tourists have to want to come here on their own.

"We could bring in a 3,000 person riverboat," joked another affiliate. A third said, "What could happen is that we have turnaround of tourists, coming here as a cultural destination." Another said, "In the past two years, we have seen so many new people in Madison . . . more than ever! But we want to attract people who 'get it.'" The "it" in question is Madison's unique culture, which several participants privilege over economic growth, and which connects to their understanding of how to build quality of life locally.

### ***360-Degree Economic Development***

From its founding, M3 is explicitly about economic development. Entrepreneurs, musicians, and small businesses all play an important part, but efforts at improving the local economy are highly comprehensive and go well beyond the entrepreneurial- and small-business ecosystem specifically. A nonprofit leader commented, "We are shoring up: in housing, education, recording, performance, and other activities. Having a *structure* [i.e., M3]

makes ‘music city’ real, a sound initiative that can attract others. If we’re going to do this, then let’s do it right.”

A local promoter echoed the same sentiments, pointing at the importance of the volunteer spirit:

It’s all about people who *volunteer* their time that makes this work until you build the base. That’s why we need to focus on affordable housing, venues, recording studios. There is a new hotel coming in soon, new assisted living community, younger kids are always looking for something to do, and the middle demographic that likes to spend money. Our local outdoor concerts are packed with locals, people here have that hunger.

And while local demand is clearly strong, there is some disagreement over where the target market may come from.

“Music is an economic driver for Madison *over* industry . . . all industry here is local,” said a local businessperson.

Small manufacturing, that is . . . we aren’t going to reinvent the railroad. We have \$100K jobs here aimed at supporting local industry. We could redirect that into a better investment locally. You get a much quicker return: hotels and restaurants would be full, so there’s always a need for new venues, but I’m also a big believer in the expanded ecosystem that includes industry. We need \$50–80K jobs. A local business can’t get the \$100K engineers to live here, or sales people. We should target [recruitment of] local people who travel.

According to a local musician, there is room for Madison to grow, and for that demographic to occupy: “The town was designed for over 50,000. I feel pretty good about downtown. It just takes some money for people to figure out how to inhabit the upper floors.”

“There is a cross-sectional [tourist] appeal here, with music being a unifying element,” said a local promoter, showing some divergence in opinion over Madison’s future. Will economic growth be driven primarily by local demand? By recruiting a traveling workforce? Through high-paying wage earners? Or by tourist dollars?

Regardless, most M3 affiliates are certain that music will be the driver. A local businessperson stated,

[M3] will catalyze other development. I think it will help attract talent. A VP of engineering for a major company connected with a popular local musician, and they have gone to Nashville together, working on a music podcast, attracted studio time. My goal as a member of a major economic development group is that this helps Madison get on the map. We need highway access to airports, to be a gateway, helping that

continue to blossom. But even in a time of government budget shortfalls, [government] should double down on local initiatives like [M3].

### ***Supporting New Ventures***

M3 affiliates have a clear idea of what constitutes “development” in their mind. One business leader says, “We’re looking at more restaurants, more things to do, and that builds the opportunity for other jobs in town.” Another says, “I want to see seven or eight new venues, and have them make it. Our main street businesses are barely making it. They’re doing it because they love Madison,” to which another M3 affiliate added, “It’s a community of hobby businesses, and that’s what we need to change: toward those who are committed to doing business here.” “I like the idea of [a local businessperson] blending tech with music,” said a local musician. A local government official said, “The strategy is this: Attract investment for job creators. We don’t have to be in a big city to do commerce anymore.” A promoter brought the focus back to M3, saying, “[M3] will really relate well to tourism [ventures], restaurants, and to seeing music all around town.” The majority of business activity aimed at building quality of life when discussing M3’s strategy was within the domain of small, local business, even if larger-scale job creation is an eventual goal.

### ***Enthusiasm***

Madison takes pride in having enthusiasm for the community, and for music, and that was clearly demonstrated in interviews. “It is so much fun talking about Madison!” said one participant. Another said:

Now that my kids are grown, I’ve become a “yes” person . . . people say “you should be part of the Arts Alliance,” and other groups. I do it because I love Madison. I’m more excited about music than art. Everyone loves music,

A third noted that with each win, the enthusiasm for the community keeps growing. “Madison has really unique advantages. It’s an amazing place! We want to take a smart strategy: we like quiet wins that put us on a path to big wins that build over time.” While this may seem like a simplistic idea, M3 participants are open about their enthusiasm for what they are doing, which sustains their efforts.

### ***Knowing the Niche***

M3 affiliates recognize that it is impossible to make everyone happy and appealing to the general public would be a destructive strategy. “Our town doesn’t fit everyone. Things we think are cool could be terrible to some,” said

one affiliate. “Why would we want those people here?” remarked another. “If everyone liked it here, we’d have 400,000 people. We’ve got Columbus [Indiana, nearby], and we have it all over Columbus!” said another. “Do we want to be diverse and inclusive, or specific and exclusive?” asked the first affiliate. The second responded, “For me, the vision is exactly what it looked like during Mad Hop [i.e., people out on Main Street and at local venues], every single month.” Madison may not be for everyone, but M3 is working hard to attract new energy with similar, small-town, community-oriented values.

## Analysis

There are several important lessons to be learned from the experience of Madison as an emerging, music-based entrepreneurial ecosystem that are noteworthy. The following key nine themes were pertinent to the creation of a new, thematic, entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- (1) *Madison’s story is intentional across the collective.* While the origins of M3 can be traced back for decades within the community, it is a recent, collectively driven action that has given the group a sense of collective purpose and momentum.
- (2) *Quality of life, not profit, is the central driver.* M3 affiliates believe strongly that it is high quality of life that drives a better economy, not a better economy that drives high quality of life. If quality of life is improved, there is a clear sense that other economic energy will follow.
- (3) *An entrepreneurial community formed before an ecosystem formed.* While several M3 affiliates are small business owners and self-employed musicians, many represent larger companies, nonprofits, governments, and organizations. Departing from suggestions by Isenberg (2010) and Feld (2012), who suggest that it is entrepreneurs that lead ecosystems from the beginning, Madison’s development is closer to the entrepreneurial social infrastructure (ESI) described by Flora and Flora (1993), or entrepreneurial communities described by Macke et al. (2014), which underscore a stronger antecedent role for non-entrepreneurial actors. It is community-oriented organizations that create the social, network, and cultural context for entrepreneurial action by cultivating a culture of support and intentional action around entrepreneurship. It should be noted that the authors listed here work primarily in rural areas and small towns similar to Madison, which suggests that broad-based community support may be a more important antecedent to entrepreneurial action in rural areas than in urban areas, where ecosystems are more often created by entrepreneurs themselves or entrepreneur-university partnerships (see Miller & Ács, 2017; Feld, 2012).
- (4) *Individual venturing with cultural relevance had a ripple effect.* It was often one venue, like Joey G’s, or one festival, like Ribberfest, that



catalyzed a wave of energy based on latent demand for music in Madison. Such findings show the ongoing importance of individual agency, effort, and risk-taking even in a collectivist, community environment.

- (5) *Entrepreneurship only part of the story.* Most of the developments that M3 wants to see—more musicians, more venues, more festivals, more studios, more production and marketing firms—are highly likely to be entrepreneurial ventures, and this is broadly recognized. However, the group also recognizes that economic development is more holistic, and that improved quality of life is equally important to larger, incumbent firms and potential new branch plants who wish to use the community's cultural resources as a recruiting tool. M3's strategies may involve larger economic actors eventually, but it cannot happen without continued and sustained local entrepreneurial action—particularly among musicians, who are nearly always self-employed and growing a personal brand. M3 does not refer to itself as an entrepreneurial ecosystem, but the majority of its activities—supporting more musicians, more venues, more festivals, and more music supports like studios, production and management companies, and music-related retail—will take the form of new ventures. M3 is about the music—and entrepreneurship is essential to the recipe but largely inferred.
- (6) *Leaders have very diverse backgrounds.* M3 leaders include business leaders from large organizations, government leaders, nonprofit directors in the arts and culture, journalists, small businesspeople, tourism organization leaders, venue owners, festival, and concert promoters and, of course, musicians. This diversity of participants provides M3 with expertise in a wide range of areas related to organizational development, on both sides of the stage, and also access to a more diverse set of social networks for building support, raising funds, and connecting needs with providers. It also enhances innovation, boosts the organization's situational awareness (including awareness of opportunities), and broadens social cohesion beyond a tight-knit group.
- (7) *Small-town interpersonal communication is an advantage.* Participants in the research frequently mentioned the ability to meet up with people for a conversation, to see people you know on the street, and to interact informally as an important part of Madison's local culture. Madison's dense layout and well-attended venues maximize opportunities for interpersonal interaction to discuss M3 and related business, while simultaneously enjoying local quality of life.
- (8) *Cultural assets are antecedent and combinatory.* M3's development is a clear example of asset-based community development (ABCD) championed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). In the case of Madison, the asset being utilized most readily is a culture of music performance and local support for music, but this builds on other existing assets that pair naturally with music and that attract visitors to the town.

Madison is known as a major destination for seeing a large number of mid-1800s historic structures in one place, and thanks to the presence of the Madison Area Arts Alliance (MAAA) as well as other local organizations, public art displays, art festivals, and art galleries are plentiful. Music is a natural pairing with these other attractions, often occurring in art spaces and historic places around town or appearing side-by-side with other art forms at festivals, adding to the broader artistic ambience of the community. But music has also benefitted from these cultural assets having already achieved some level of maturity locally, bringing in lovers of art and history who have adjacent interests in music.

- (9) *The movement is powered by volunteerism and giving.* The efforts of volunteers have been essential to launching M3, which participants tied to a broader spirit of giving across the community.

### ***Reflexive Notes***

While conducting this research, field notes and jottings were tracked in accordance with Howells's (1972) suggestions, making observations about the research process, my own participation, and other observations not mentioned by participants. The following were directly salient and relevant to M3 and the genesis of Madison's music ecosystem:

- (1) While there are several successful small businesspeople involved in M3, it remains surprising to me to see how few musicians are involved in M3's leadership, and whether or not this will pose problems for the organization later on. Feld (2012) discusses how important it is to have entrepreneurs leading ecosystems as a matter of credibility. The same could be said for musicians, who are likely to find credibility with other musicians.
- (2) The M3 organization indeed lacks age, gender, and racial diversity, at least at these early stages. Some of this lack of diversity can be expected, as Midwestern communities typically have lower concentrations of racial minorities than larger cities. However, Madison also has a strong, vibrant Hispanic community that currently has no representation within the organization, and whose musical heritage and shared leadership could enrich the Madison ecosystem in the long term. This does not appear to be through any deliberate exclusion of minorities, but rather simply that this young organization has not yet built social bridges to this important community within Madison. A similar issue exists for young people from nearby Hanover College—this potential pool of younger musicians and leaders has not been brought in deliberately, despite having both instrumental and choral programs and an entrepreneurship course within their business program (Hanover College, 2021). Ivy Tech Community College's Madison campus does not

have entrepreneurship or music programs, but the leadership potential among the student population, and a strategy for tapping in, has been under-studied by the M3 organization. As Johansson states in his 2004 book, *The Medici Effect*, innovation typically occurs at the intersection of diverse ideas, people, and backgrounds, and this remains an opportunity for M3's (and the ecosystem's more broadly) future development.

- (3) There are countless studies that could be listed here touting economic growth, job creation, wealth creation, and innovation as key outcomes of ecosystem development (and thus key motivational drivers of the same). In Madison, however, one gets the sense that participants in M3 would be doing this work anyway, even if there were no direct economic benefit to them. The ability to enjoy music and socializing in close proximity to their own homes is a strong motivator to act. One also gets the sense that the town comprises people who are simply music and art fans, and who grew up in a culture of music and art appreciation. Thus, Madison's ecosystem may be more in concert with literatures on lifestyle and tourism entrepreneurship, and although the motivations here may be different from those in a high-growth-oriented environment, it is still a motivation, albeit a secondary one.
- (4) As a historically manufacturing- and logistics-oriented community, it is interesting to note that M3's activities are largely aimed at new venturing, but many of their goals are aimed at eventually attracting industry and a skilled workforce. Similar cultural features can be found in legacy manufacturing communities (see my previous work in Fortunato, 2017), where communities tend to value and privilege industrial development over entrepreneurship development, or see entrepreneurship development's role as supporting larger industry. This is surprising in Madison, as the community has a healthy and vibrant small business sector, relatively few industrial firms, and many of those industrial firms are locally founded (which, in that 2017 study, were consistent with high-entrepreneurship communities). It is nonetheless surprising that entrepreneurship is not a *more* explicit focus of M3 and the broader ecosystem, even though many of M3's goals directly imply entrepreneurship development.

### ***Study Limitations***

The limitations of the study have been discussed throughout but warrant an additional mention here. Like all single case studies, this study seeks *analytic* generalizability over *statistical* generalizability, or a deeper understanding of the dimensions of an underlying concept over the likelihood that the concept is manifest in a wide range of situations. This relates back to Orum et al.'s (1991) power of a single case—the ability to learn more about the detailed workings of a social concept, rather than its commonality. Further research will be required to understand the scope of applicability of lessons

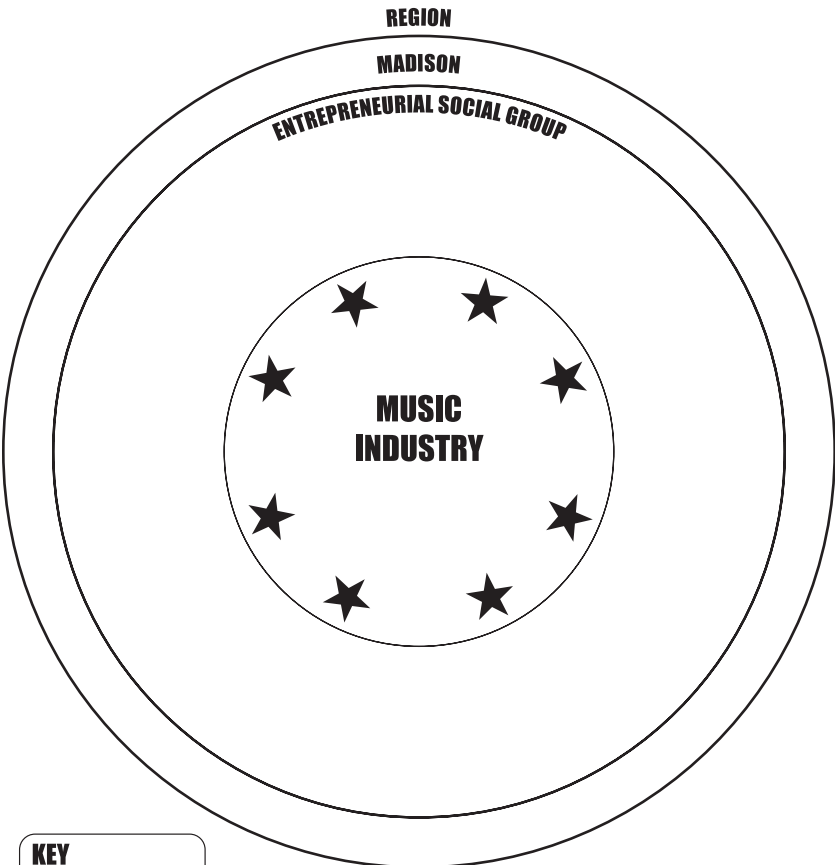
from Madison's unique case in other communities seeking to create an arts-related entrepreneurial ecosystem, or a general entrepreneurial ecosystem more broadly.

Second, the researcher as a participant observer raises some important issues about participant observer biases that derive from being too close to the research topic. I have addressed these in a previous section, but steps have been taken to validate the information presented here, and caution should be used in applying the findings here too strictly. Speaking personally as a researcher, I would rather fully understand the benefits, challenges, and shortcomings of any social phenomenon in favor of a simplistic-but-incomplete rendition that ignores important caveats that could be instructional for others. Despite this admonition, the case study is intended to be instructive and inspirational to researchers and practitioners in examining other inchoate and/or small ecosystems rather than a strictly applied schematic of such ecosystems more generally.

Finally, participants in the research identified other potential participants after the face-to-face interviews had already commenced, including several other musicians who were not part of the "why" exercise, but who had interesting perspectives to share. Because of the pandemic in Madison shortly after data collection, it became difficult to schedule interviews with these individuals who no doubt had important things to say—and no doubt there are others in the community who were not directly identified could have contributed important ideas as well. In the interest of safety and methodological consistency, a decision was made to stick to the original method of interviewing the core group involved in the "why" exercise instead of expanding the research to include chain referral sampling and more of a grounded theory approach to saturation (see Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, to learn about "snowball" sampling and Strauss & Corbin, 1997, for those interested in grounded theory studies). It is regrettable that these perspectives could not be included, but as in any research, trade-offs must often be made involving study feasibility, timing, methodological consistency, and scope of data.

The following figures illustrate the structure of the emerging M3 ecosystem. Figure 5.5 illustrates the interrelationships. To begin with, the "ecosystem" is more of an entrepreneurial social group (illustrated in Figure 5.4) whose networks are deepening to the point where material, mutual support is likely to form, which occurs in the broader environment. In this figure, it can be seen that most of the action occurs at the local level, while regional, state, and national-level supports are available—these supports largely fall into the contextual environment at this stage in the ecosystem's development until the group begins to reach out to these resources and support organizations in the entrepreneurial community. Community members are portrayed as falling into one or more of the three categories (denoted as "bands" demarcated by the dashed-lines): music, music-related, and non-music-related. All three categories play an important role in Madison's

# INDIANA



**KEY**

★ Music Entrepreneur

Figure 5.4 Music Industry Entrepreneurial Social Group in Madison, Indiana

## KEY | INDIANA

Local Industry	Art Nonprofits	Community Resources
Hospitality and Hotels	Bars   Restaurants	★ Entrepreneurs
Government	Main Street Business	

# Madison Music Ecosystem

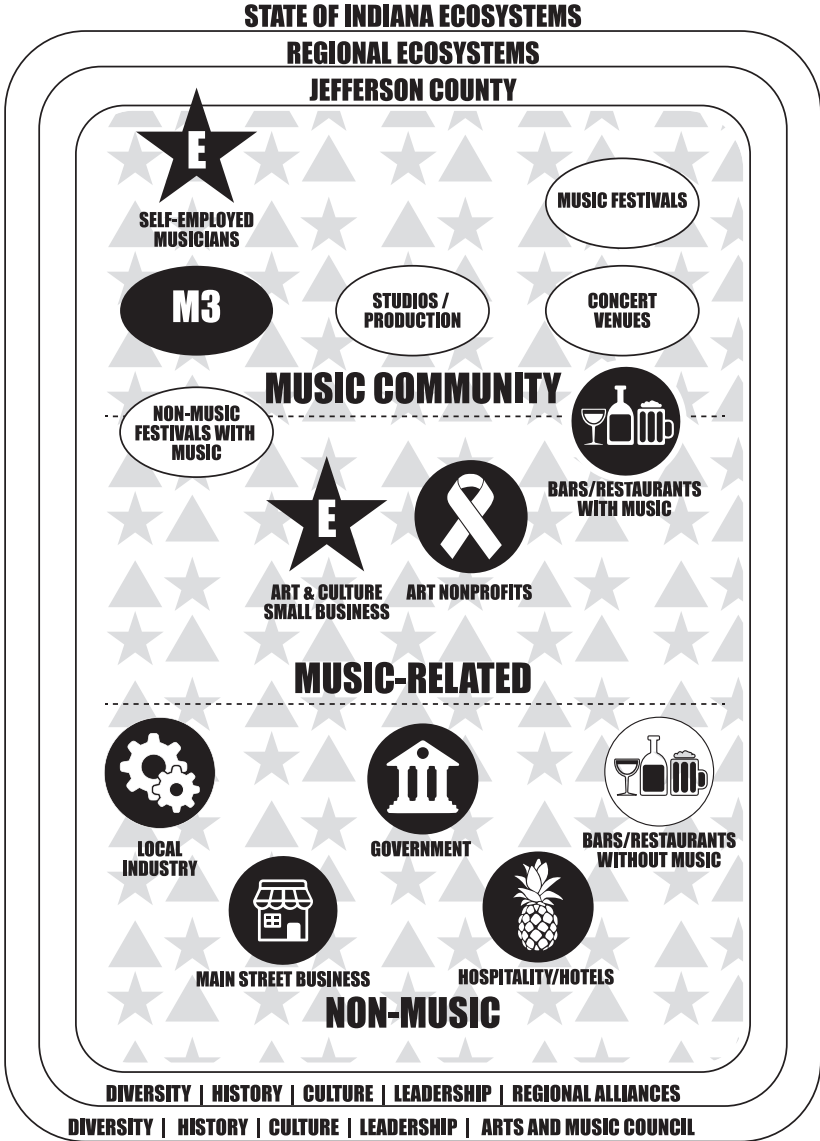


Figure 5.5 Indiana Music Industry Entrepreneurial Community

ecosystem. Finally, Figure 5.5 is that same entrepreneurial community with the gray stars and triangles in the background that represent the myriad of entrepreneurs (represented by stars) and other support organizations (represented by the triangles).

### ***Progress Since Data Collection***

Since data collection, there have been several changes to Madison's music ecosystem—many showing promising signs for the efficacy of M3 and some presenting new challenges. The pandemic affected local music and musicians across the world as venues were forced to close their doors to prevent the spread of the virus. As a rural community, the pandemic did not become a serious problem until late Summer 2020 when community spread became evident, and again in November 2020, when the community spread was at its highest point. During warmer months when the surrounding county was not declared a “red zone” by the Indiana state government, small-scale concerts were still common in outdoor settings. Over the winter and following the peak of the disease, many venues had to close their doors to live music, while others remained open for attendance “at your own risk” to the extent the law would permit. As of this writing, local venues are again hosting live music now that community counts have subsided and vaccinations have increased.

The pandemic has also stalled new venue and business creation around music in the short term, but there is reason to expect this will be temporary. As of this writing, several new music-related businesses have emerged or are emerging, some in direct response to M3's deliberate efforts in supporting and championing new music businesses. Madison's largest brewery, Mad Paddle, expanded its music offerings from patio concerts to a full music venue with a state-of-the-art sound system. Barber shop and microvenue, The House of Jane, kept music—and the venue—alive during the pandemic by live-streaming shows from Jane's intimate concert space. A new ice cream shop was opened by two musicians from another region in Indiana, who came to Madison to open their businesses in a town with a great music scene where they could also participate as musicians. Next door, a new studio/rehearsal space has opened and is welcoming its first clients. The Central Hotel bar, long considered a “rough spot” or a “great dive” depending on your perspective, is under new ownership that includes an M3 board member. The bar is now hosting live music for the first time in decades, while the adjacent Drake Bar, long vacant, is currently being renovated as a live music venue. The Rivertown Grill appeared where a flagging lunch café used to stand, and now offers a full menu and live music performances. One of Madison's two fine dining restaurants closed just prior to the pandemic shutdown for unrelated reasons but is currently in the pre-launch phase for a new restaurant that, unlike its predecessor, will also host live music performances. In all, there is little doubt that local entrepreneurs are tapping into

live music as a development strategy and supporting their business model with the tourism revenue that live music creates.

Finally, the RiverRoots festival shuttered following the pandemic, as festivals across the world have suffered during the shutdown. However, other festivals hosting live music are still moving forward for 2021, including Ribberfest, MadHop, and Soup, Stew, Chili, and Brew. M3 has continued to host “Live Lunch” on Fridays with a wide variety of local musicians in socially distanced, outdoor surrounds and are currently experimenting with bringing live music to the Hilltop neighborhood to keep the entirety of Madison plugged into live music. For the first time in 2021, M3 had a live music stage featuring local and regional acts at Madison’s at the Madison Regatta and accompanying RoosterTail Music Fest. And importantly, a major renovation of a historic, local cotton mill was completed, leading to the opening of an 85-room Fairfield Inn by Marriott. While this project preserves yet another piece of Madison’s architectural history, it also expands tourist capacity in the downtown by providing a substantial number of rooms within walking distance of music venues and local festival sites.

## **Conclusions and Future Research**

It will be interesting to see how Madison’s entrepreneurial journey ends up, and where it goes next. Historically, small and rural economies have exhibited a mix of both resilience and stability over time (Scott, 2013), while many are especially vulnerable to macroeconomic and socioeconomic shocks and “black swan” events (Taleb, 2007; Eakin, 2005; Leichenko & O’Brien, 2002). It is entirely possible that internal diversity will greatly assist Madison in providing adaptability and stability in the long term as it attempts to create an ideal environment for music entrepreneurship. But, like any entrepreneurial venture, the question remains: Will the musicians, studios, production companies, and customers continue to show up? M3 affiliates remain enthusiastic that they will, and that Madison’s reputation as a small-town music alternative will spread as a result of deliberate action.

Perhaps the most important lesson that can be taken from Madison’s efforts to create a music ecosystem is that deliberate action toward local development can be done anywhere, even in smaller communities, and these efforts can have an outsized impact on both the local economy and local quality of life. It is also important to note that small-town ecosystems may have a distinctively different flavor than larger, more urban ecosystems, and this is largely due to the unique set of assets available to smaller communities generally speaking: a slower pace of life, high lifestyle amenities, affordability, and a reservoir for regional culture. Madison’s focus on music was authentic, not artificial. It did not arise out of any desire to take advantage of current trends in economic development or looking to see what other towns and cities were doing (with the exception of cities like Nashville, with a similar history in music) and attempting to replicate their model arbitrarily. Instead,



M3 followed an *asset-based community development* approach (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) to identify a strength that made it unique among a host of other strengths. Despite Madison's historic architecture and long-standing arts scene, local enthusiasm for music showed considerable promise for bringing *networks* of diverse individuals together under a broad, easily understood, common purpose that had real relevance to local people's passions.

It is easy to think of "assets" as being physical. Even within the arts, physical art displays provide an ongoing testament to the spirit of a community that anyone can see. Sonic art, like music, is temporary and evanescent. However, it possesses the immense potential to bring people together behind a common purpose and common ideas, and to form common bonds between humans. To the hard-edged social scientist, this may sound like a feel-good explanation for local development. But it is also an explanation that lays the groundwork for building trust, effective communication, and self-organizing alignment behind a common purpose—the basis of social capital (Coleman, 1988) and the foundational seedbed of effective network development (Burt, 2000; Granovetter, 1973). This sense of commonality can be channeled into productive conversations that strategically support entrepreneurship over time (see the literature on Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure, ESI; Flora & Flora, 1993). In this case, it was a broader community effort seeking to jump-start a musician-led ecosystem. In others, it may be a small group of motivated entrepreneurs with a collective vision based on culturally unique advantages that are relevant to the market who generate their own ecosystem within the broader (likely supportive) community context. In either case, as this case study suggests, collective action across a diverse set of stakeholders is helpful for generating the initial momentum, enthusiasm, and excitement needed to attract artists and supporting enterprises (entrepreneurs) and listeners (customers) to the group.

In the tradition of Roundy (2017) and Miles and Morrison (2020), there is much more research to be done on the genesis, emergence, and sustainability of small town and rural entrepreneurial ecosystems. This literature diverges markedly from earlier works by Isenberg (2011, 2010), who stress the importance of a large population in supporting runaway successes, particularly in high-tech, innovative businesses. By these standards, communities like Madison could never hope to compete, let alone the thousands of communities across the United States that are smaller than Madison. If the fundamental ecosystem goal of launching gazelle businesses is relaxed, and if community relations and entrepreneurial social infrastructure can be viewed as potentially important sources of economic momentum and entrepreneurial support (and a social signal to launch an enterprise, as Isenberg suggested as the role of the gazelle or runaway success business), then it is certainly possible to generate a functional entrepreneurial ecosystem that serves many of the same functions as a larger urban ecosystem—albeit one that is tailored to the scale and culture of a smaller environment. Future research should examine how social supports may serve as a proxy for market-based, economic supports in incubating new ecosystems, and how successful these

efforts are at sustaining and generating small-town ventures that enhance and improve local life to an appropriate scale in the long term.

## Notes

1. A literature on entrepreneurial intentions has already been established, with the stated intention of becoming an entrepreneur being a potential ex ante predictor of actual venture creation (see the theory of planned behavior literature, beginning with Ajzen, 1991), moderated by several social and institutional factors (Bandura, 1986) including gender (Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2010), education (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018), and cognitive and institutional factors (see Farashah, 2015)—plus a host of national and regional cultural factors. It would be interesting to see if such theories hold true for planned ecosystems!
2. The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and Broadcast Music, Inc. (now just BMI) are the two major nonprofit organizations dedicated to the collection and disbursement of composers' and artists' royalties for licensed, published music: an important income stream for many musicians. When musicians play other artists' music, or "cover songs," it is typically the music venue who becomes liable to pay royalties. A blanket license issued by ASCAP or BMI, while rare, ensures that venues can host cover bands while paying a flat royalty fee that simplifies royalty payments and ensures compliance and fair artist compensation.

## References

- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211.
- Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 4(3), 359–373.
- Barba-Sánchez, V., & Atienza-Sahuquillo, C. (2018). Entrepreneurial intention among engineering students: The role of entrepreneurship education. *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 24(1), 53–61.
- Burt, R. S. (2000). The network structure of social capital. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 22, 345–423.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95–S120.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.
- Dana, L. P., & Dana, T. E. (2005). Expanding the scope of methodologies used in entrepreneurship research. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 2(1), 79–88.
- Davidsson, P. (2009). *The entrepreneurship research challenge*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Díaz-García, M. C., & Jiménez-Moreno, J. (2010). Entrepreneurial intention: The role of gender. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 6(3), 261–283.
- Eakin, H. (2005). Institutional change, climate risk, and rural vulnerability: Cases from Central Mexico. *World Development*, 33(11), 1923–1938.
- Farashah, A. D. (2015). The effects of demographic, cognitive and institutional factors on development of entrepreneurial intention: Toward a socio-cognitive model of entrepreneurial career. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 13(4), 452–476.

- Feld, B. (2012). *Startup communities: Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem in your city*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Flora, C. B., & Flora, J. L. (1993). Entrepreneurial social infrastructure: A necessary ingredient. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 529(1), 48–58.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360–1380.
- Hanover College. (2021). *Business*. <https://www.hanover.edu/academics/programs/business/>
- Howell, J. T. (1972). *Hard living on clay street: Portraits of blue collar families*. Waveland Press, Inc.
- Hudson, J. B. (2011). *Fugitive slaves and the underground railroad in the Kentucky borderland*. McFarland & Company.
- Isenberg, D. J. (2010). How to start an entrepreneurial revolution. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(6), 40–50.
- Isenberg, D. (2011). The entrepreneurship ecosystem strategy as a new paradigm for economic policy: Principles for cultivating entrepreneurship. *Presentation at the Institute of International and European Affairs*, 1(781), 1–13.
- John M. Gresham Company. (1889). *Biographic and historical souvenir for the counties of Clark, Crawford, Harrison, Floyd, Jefferson, Jennings, Scott, and Washington, Indiana*. Franklin Classics.
- Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out* (pp. 2–10). Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Neighborhood Innovations Network.
- Leichenko, R. M., & O'Brien, K. L. (2002). The dynamics of rural vulnerability to global change: the case of southern Africa. *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change*, 7(1), 1–18.
- Macke, D. W., Markley, D. M., & Fulwider, J. M. (2014). *Energizing entrepreneurial communities: A pathway to prosperity*. Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.
- Madison Music Movement. (M3). (2021). *New movement looks to make Madison Indiana's Music City*. <https://www.madisonmusic.org/>
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Sage Publications.
- Miles, M. P., & Morrison, M. (2020). An effectual leadership perspective for developing rural entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Small Business Economics*, 54(4), 933–949.
- Miller, D. J., & Ács, Z. J. (2017). The campus as entrepreneurial ecosystem: The University of Chicago. *Small Business Economics*, 49(1), 75–95.
- Musante, K., & DeWalt, B. R. (2010). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Rowman Altamira.
- National Park Service. (2021). *Madison historic district*. National Park Service. U.S. Department of the Interior. [www.nps.gov/nr/travel/madison/madison\\_historic\\_district.html](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/madison/madison_historic_district.html)
- Newell, E. E. (2017). Entrepreneurial community success: Psychological characteristics, experiences, and identity. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 254–281). Routledge.
- Orum, A. M., Feagin, J. R., & Sjoberg, G. (1991). "Introduction." In J. R. Feagin, A. M. Orum, & G. Sjoberg (eds.), *A case for the case study*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Roundy, P. T. (2017). "Small town" entrepreneurial ecosystems: Implications for developed and emerging economies. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*, 9(3), 238–262.
- Schmid, A. A. (2008). *Conflict and cooperation: Institutional and behavioral economics*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Scott, M. (2013). Resilience: A conceptual lens for rural studies? *Geography Compass*, 7(9), 597–610.
- Sinek, S. (2009). *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. Penguin.
- Spradley, J. P. (2016). *Participant observation*. Waveland Press.
- Stam, E. (2014). *The Dutch entrepreneurial ecosystem*. Available at SSRN #2473475.
- Taleb, N. N. (2007). *The black swan: The impact of the highly improbable* (Vol. 2). Random House.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). Sage.

## 6 The Culture and Individual Nexus of an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The Impact of Culture  
on What Necessity-Driven  
Entrepreneurs Believe Is Possible  
as Illustrated in a Case Study  
From Nova Scotia, Canada

*Bruce Dye with Bill Lewis*

### **Overview**

This study explores and illuminates the journeys of 18 entrepreneurs who were thrust into becoming entrepreneurs with thought and determination yielded from life circumstances of becoming unemployed or being underemployed and choosing a next career. Thus, nascent entrepreneurship is explored.

### ***Time Span***

This research occurred during the academic years of 2016–2017 and 2017–2018, roughly from October 2016 to April 2018.

### ***Methodology and Types of Data***

A multiple case study method was used because it facilitated the analysis of the social construction of necessity-driven entrepreneurs and the issues they face through a flexible and probing process of interpretation (Creswell, 2013). Case study methodology is explored and the phenomenon of underemployed and unemployed individuals who became entrepreneurs through necessity (Creswell, 2013). Careful consideration of the research system, including the ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods, and sources are discussed and important (Grix, 2002). The study is underpinned by an ontological position of constructivism and the complementing epistemological position is influenced by interpretivism (Bryman, 2001). Various sampling methods were used including purposeful and theoretical. The early participants were chosen using purposeful sampling, based on having

“the characteristics . . . necessary to answer questions about a certain matter” (Koerber, 2008, p. 495). In this case, entrepreneurs were chosen based on a predetermined criterion, including qualification as an entrepreneur and one who entered entrepreneurship through necessity-driven circumstances. As themes emerged from the data, they were validated by employing tenets of theoretical sampling (Clarke & Braun, 2017). That is, subsequent participants were sought while keeping in mind that the goal was to test the themes that were emerging from the data.

### ***Entrepreneurial Community, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, and Entrepreneurial Social Group***

Multiple layers of entrepreneurial ecosystems for each entrepreneur as well as the greater Central Region of Nova Scotia areas as entrepreneurial communities provide the context for this case study. The collective unemployed or underemployed individuals who became entrepreneurs created an entrepreneurial social group (Newell, 2017). (See Figure 6.1.)

### ***Cultural Aspects***

Culture is a part of the sum of conditions for entrepreneurship (Busenitz et al., 2003). In this case, culture and the individual entrepreneuring overlap. Thus, culture influences individuals’ views of their possible achievements through entrepreneuring, both positive and negative. It is therefore necessary to theoretically inform and underpin the study with extant theory of culture and possible future selves, contextualized within the theories of the entrepreneurial ecology.

### ***Power and Empowerment***

Another sociologically important group of people featured in this book are those who are disadvantaged not because of discrimination or identity, but because they find themselves in dire economic straits in either the long or short term. Unemployment and under-employment play into the complex class dynamics of modern societies. In some cases, these situations, and poverty more broadly, become endemic across social groups leading to multi-generational poverty that is difficult to escape, especially in the world’s less-populated areas (Farrigan, 2020; Peredo, 2015; Baernholdt et al., 2012). In other cases, unemployment and under-employment are transitory and part of broader economic cycles. This topic is an important one for entrepreneurs, who themselves face a higher-than-average risk of business closure, which can leave entrepreneurs in tenuous situations. Inversely, the loss of a job can be a catapult into self-employment, offering an opportunity to pursue a long-desired dream. There are stark differences

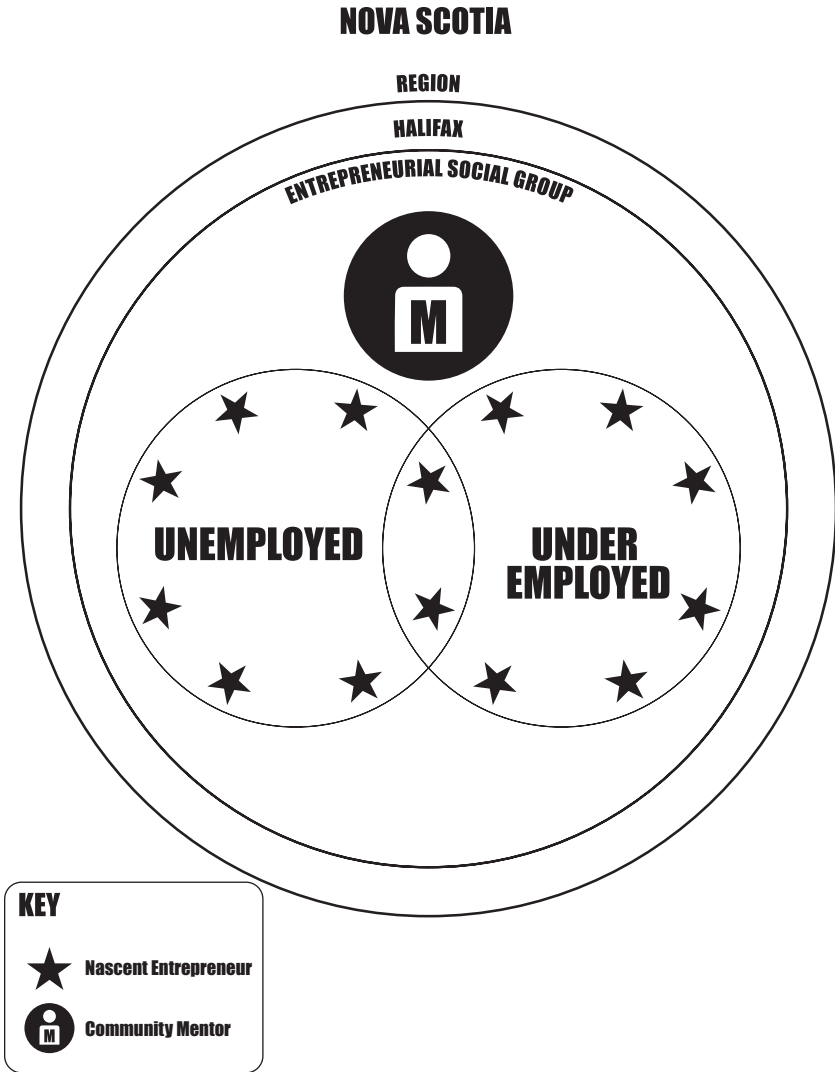


Figure 6.1 Entrepreneur Social Group

between opportunity- and necessity-driven entrepreneurs such as those that find themselves suddenly unemployed (Block & Wagner, 2010; Lingelbach et al., 2005), but the role culture plays through this transition is a subject that has received less focus in the literature than the launches more broadly and generally.

This case study is one that focuses on self-empowerment and self-determination from a position of social and financial disadvantage. As the

case explains, one of the most disempowering barriers to self-employment is not a lack of financial resources but rather culturally alienating attitudes toward entrepreneurship more generally, being seen as the “little person,” and the loss of status and prestige that often accompanies the loss of a steady job. Conversely, entrepreneurship can also fill non-financial needs just as readily by providing a sense of self-determination, confidence, and belief in one’s self and one’s own abilities. These cultural push/pull factors often find themselves on the periphery of the conversation of what empowers and disempowers entrepreneurs, and may provide insights into some of the cultural supports and barriers that shape the decision to become self-employed and its social and psychological effects.

### ***Leadership Aspects***

Entrepreneur self-leadership is a major focus. Those who are unemployed have to take ownership and responsibility for their future. Such self-empowerment includes grit, self-efficacy, and consideration of one’s own abilities and mindset (see Bandura, 1997; Chen et al., 1998; Duckworth et al., 2007; McGee et al., 2009; Newell, 2017; Zhao et al., 2005).

### ***The Why***

The plurality and intersection of theoretical underpinnings will contribute to a better understanding of the complexities that surround necessity-driven entrepreneurs such as those who become unemployed regardless of circumstance as well as those people who recognize they are underemployed and desire greater self-expression, entrepreneur passion, and long-term rewards (both monetary and non-monetary).

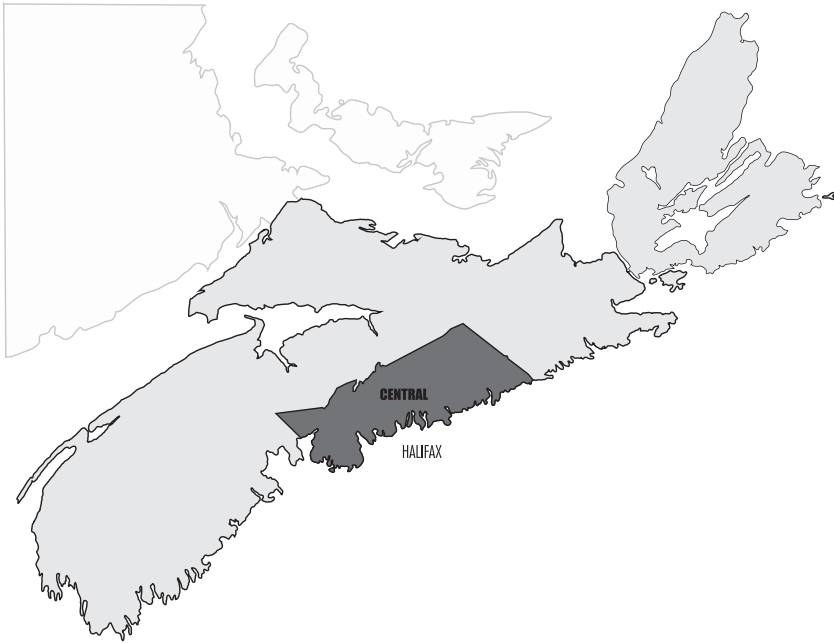
### ***A Brief History***

Nova Scotia is one of the oldest inhabited areas in North America (see Figure 6.2). For thousands of years, the native Mi’kmaq people, who lived in a large mountainous area of both Canada and New England, moved around during the various seasons pursuing both fishing and hunting (Brasser, 1978). The Mi’kmaq inhabited the area as European fishermen and began to try to exploit the area for its rich and abundant fishing.

Around 1605, the French began the first permanent settlement in what would become Canada, which at the time was known as *Acadia*. During its time as a French colony, it was conquered and controlled by the British for 13 years then was also conquered by the Dutch, who named their colony New Holland (Griffiths, 2004). From 1629 to 1632, Scottish forces occupied the area, but after repeated battles, the colony was returned to France through a treaty in 1632 (Nicholls, 2010). Then from 1640 to 1645,



## NOVA SCOTIA HALIFAX



*Figure 6.2* Map of Nova Scotia, Canada

an ongoing civil war took place, led by competing French governors who sought control over the region.

With the onset of the Seven Years War in 1754, Nova Scotia again became the target of the fight between Great Britain and France. Much of the war in the region was actually carried out by colonial forces from New France and New England. As the British began to take control of the area, they began to deport the majority of the Acadian residents to both Britain and France. As the British took full control over Nova Scotia, appeals were made to the residents of New England to relocate into what had become a sparsely populated area.

Deeply concerned about the political divisions and authoritarianism that was driving many of the American colonies to rebel, the political powers in Nova Scotia tried to stay moderate in their approach to governing (Brebner, 1937). The political elite were more trade oriented than in other parts of North America, seeking to retain their profitable British trading ties. Nova Scotia was the site of several battles during the American Revolution, and American shipping privateers did a great deal to disrupt Nova Scotia's trade

by frequent raids on port cities. These actions caused great dislike of the American Revolutionary cause and forced the British to maintain a significant naval presence in the area.

The British defeat in the American colonies led to a significant migration of Loyalists to Nova Scotia, as well as to other provinces. More than 3,000 Blacks came to Nova Scotia during this time immediately after the Revolution—some formerly enslaved who gained their freedom by taking advantage of a British offer to free slaves who escaped their masters. Some also arrived as slaves with their fleeing Loyalist masters, but they would quickly find Nova Scotia as a welcoming place, as the provincial legislature voted several times to reject the legalization of slavery.

As the War of 1812 raged, Nova Scotia became a significant naval location for the British Navy in its war efforts. U.S. Blacks were again encouraged to join the British side and gain their freedom—leading more formerly enslaved people to come to the province.

In 1867, the Dominion of Canada was created, and Nova Scotia became a part of the new confederation. The province benefitted significantly from the American Civil War, as Canada remained neutral and trade was greatly enhanced. Post-Civil War United States would seek to punish Canada for refusing to take sides and high tariffs were imposed, impacting the Nova Scotia economy, which was also impacted by the rising naval switch from wooden to steel ships. Yet Nova Scotia's diverse economy would quickly recover, as farming, lumber, banking, brewing, and manufacturing made the province a strong part of Canada's economic strength. Coal and steel would also bolster the region's economy. The fact that Halifax's port was the closest to Europe of all the North American ports gave the province a significant shipping advantage. Throughout both world wars, Nova Scotia was an important shipping location for war supplies as well as medical transport for injured soldiers.

While modern-day Nova Scotia's economy is weaker than its neighboring Canadian provinces, its role as an exporter of seafood, lumber, food products, and Christmas trees—as well as a manufacturing and tourism businesses help to sustain this very old part of North America.

The first chamber in North America was founded in Halifax in 1750. Today, there are 500 local chambers of commerce or boards of trade in about 600 communities across Canada, with about 170 000 individual and corporate memberships. The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, with about 10 000 members, is the largest in Canada.

(The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2021, para 3)

## **The Case Study**

When participants entered entrepreneuring, they were “necessity-driven entrepreneurs” because they entered entrepreneurship while unemployed,

underemployed, or living in poverty (Brünjes & Diez, 2013; Baptista et al., 2014). Entrepreneurship development efforts to encourage and support this type of entrepreneur are constrained because knowledge about them is limited and as a result, the literature tends to dismiss, marginalize, expect less from, and is relatively silent on how to support necessity-driven entrepreneurs (Hecharria & Reynolds, 2009; Block & Wagner, 2010; Chrysostome, 2010).

More specifically, there are two problems related to necessity-driven entrepreneurs which this study is exploring. First, a comprehensive theory of necessity-driven entrepreneurs does not exist (Lingelbach et al., 2005; Block & Wagner, 2010). There is no agreement in the literature as to exactly who are necessity-driven entrepreneurs, why they do what they do, or how their social disadvantage impacts their entrepreneurial activity. This ambiguity is problematic because it is sometimes beneficial or necessary to categorize entrepreneurs for purposes of targeting development or research efforts. The lack of understanding of necessity-driven entrepreneurs has created negative consequences when categorization has been attempted. Such consequences include forced, dichotomous categorization in the literature of entrepreneurs as either opportunity *or* necessity entrepreneurs and the application of multiple, varied, and inconsistent definitions of necessity entrepreneurs (Block & Sander, 2009; Block & Wagner, 2010; Chrysostome, 2010; GEM, 2017; Hinz & Gans, 1999; Serviere, 2010; Williams, 2009).

To avoid that problem in this study, an accepted, specific, non-subjective, and measurable definition of necessity-driven entrepreneurs is used. Participants had to be unemployed for more than 3 months or underemployed (working in a field for which they did not train, earning less than the job they trained for, and/or working fewer than 30 hours per week but wanting to work more), or living below the poverty cut-off, prior to starting their business. This clear definition is supported by extant literature (Baptista et al., 2014; Brünjes et al., 2013; Hinz & Gans, 1999).

The second problem to which this study is responding is there is not an understanding of the impact of entering entrepreneurship from this culturally defined position of disadvantage (e.g., unemployment, underemployment, poverty). That is, there is a gap in the understanding of how culture influences necessity-driven entrepreneurs' aspirations and behavior. At best, this lack of understanding results in the literature being silent on how to effectively encourage and support necessity-driven entrepreneurs. At worst, this lack of understanding leads to the "othering" and exclusion of necessity-driven entrepreneurs from mainstream entrepreneurship research in favor of more "normal," opportunity-driven entrepreneurs (Chrysostome, 2010).

In response to these problems, this study aims to make contributions to solving them in three ways. First, the study is responding to the opportunity to contribute to the understanding of necessity-driven entrepreneurs. Second, this study is responding to an opportunity to better understand the impacts of entering entrepreneurship from a position of social disadvantage (e.g., unemployment, under-employment, poverty). Third, the study is responding to the

opportunity to improve the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development efforts in encouraging and supporting necessity-driven entrepreneurs.

### ***Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada***

The geographic focus of the study is the Halifax Regional Municipality (Halifax). The city is the capital of the Province of Nova Scotia, located on the eastern coast of Canada. Because of its relative size (population 431,700) (Statistics Canada, 2018) and relative economic power, Halifax serves as the unofficial capital of the group of provinces known as Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island). The only other metropolitan areas within a day's drive of Halifax are Moncton (population 152,200), St. John (population 128,500), Fredericton (population 105,688), and Charlottetown (population 69,325) (Statistics Canada, 2018). The economy of the Atlantic region has been traditionally tied to industries such as fishing, forestry, and manufacturing. It is therefore sensitive to external economic shocks such as fluctuations in international seafood prices, reduced demand for paper, and trends in global manufacturing.

Studying Nova Scotia's entrepreneurial ecology is timely and important because the province is facing immediate demographic problems that will benefit from creating and maintaining encouraging and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems. First, Nova Scotia is experiencing a trend of rural migration to the capital city of Halifax (One Nova Scotia Commission, 2014). This can have devastating economic and social impacts on rural communities. Entrepreneurial activity in rural communities, the jobs created, and the economic spin-offs could encourage people to stay in their communities and thereby slow rural out-migration. Second, Nova Scotia has been experiencing a negative overall population growth over the past decade (One Nova Scotia Commission, 2014). This trend is often spurred by people looking to larger cities in central and western Canada for better employment opportunities. Entrepreneurial activity in Halifax that creates good jobs for Nova Scotians might relieve this pressure. Further, an encouraging entrepreneurial ecology may attract entrepreneurs from other parts of Canada or immigrant entrepreneurs to choose Nova Scotia as the home for their venture. The One Nova Scotia Commission (2014) recognizes the contributions that increased levels of entrepreneurship can make to solving these problems. However, the report is relatively silent on how to create a more encouraging and supportive ecology for entrepreneurs.

### ***Theoretically Informing the Study: The Nexus of Culture and the Individual Within an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem***

To understand participants' entrepreneurial journeys, it is necessary to contextualize them within Halifax's entrepreneurial ecology. The entrepreneurial ecology (of which culture is a part) is the sum of conditions for

entrepreneurship (Busenitz et al., 2003). The aims of the study will be achieved by probing the nexus of Halifax's entrepreneurial ecology where culture and the individual entrepreneur overlap. More specifically, it will probe how culture influences individuals' views of what might be possible for them to achieve through entrepreneurship, both positive and negative. It is therefore necessary to theoretically inform and underpin the study with extant theory of culture and possible future selves, contextualized within the theories of the entrepreneurial ecology. The plurality and intersection of theoretical underpinnings will contribute to a better understanding of the complexities that surround necessity-driven entrepreneurs. These theories will be discussed in the literature review section.

### *The Research System*

A discussion of the study's research methodology and methods will be presented in the methods section; however, it is necessary to introduce them here to create context for the upcoming presentation of the guiding research questions.

To achieve the aims of this study, it was necessary to design a research system that connected the research aims to the research questions and, ultimately, to the right sources and the social phenomenon of which they are a part. Careful consideration of the research system, including the ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods, and sources was important (Grix, 2002). The study is underpinned by an ontological position of constructivism and the complementing epistemological position is influenced by interpretivism (Bryman, 2001). This author believes that what it means to be a necessity-driven entrepreneur does not exist independently of social actors and to learn about necessity-driven entrepreneurs, one needs to engage in a process of interpreting social phenomenon. To effectively support the study's exploratory nature and the author's constructivist and interpretivist ontological and epistemological positions, a qualitative research methodology was necessary. A multiple case study method was used because it facilitated the analysis of the social construction of necessity-driven entrepreneurs and the issues they face through a flexible and probing process of interpretation (Creswell, 2013). Finally, it was necessary to carefully identify sources that had experienced events that resulted in them having the lived experiences necessary to shed light on the research problems.

### *Research Questions*

Within the context of the research problems, research aim, and underpinning research system, the following general and specific research questions were designed.

### **General Research Question**

- What is the relationship between necessity entrepreneurs' culture and their self-constructed view of their possible future achievements from entrepreneurial activity?

### **Specific Research Questions**

- What need(s) are necessity-driven entrepreneurs trying to fill by entering entrepreneurship? What is the relationship between culture and these needs?
- What are necessity-driven entrepreneurs' meanings of entrepreneurial success (dreams)/failure (fear)? What is the relationship between culture and these meanings?
- How did necessity-driven entrepreneurs understand their families'/friends'/community's perception of them being an entrepreneur? How did this understanding impact necessity-driven entrepreneurs' self-constructed view of their possible future achievements from entrepreneurial activity?
- Does a necessity-driven entrepreneur's culture push them toward entrepreneurship or pull them away from it? How does this pressure impact necessity-driven entrepreneurs' self-constructed view of their possible future achievements from entrepreneurial activity?
- How does entering entrepreneurship from a culturally defined position of disadvantage (unemployed, underemployed, poor) impact necessity-driven entrepreneurs' self-constructed view of their possible future achievements from entrepreneurial activity?

Consistent with the research aim, the general research question probed the space in the entrepreneurial ecology where culture and individuals overlap. Specifically, it probed the impact of culture on entrepreneurs' view of what might be possible through entrepreneuring, both negative and positive. The specific research questions supported the general research question by probing participants' needs, dreams, fears, and how culture impacts these. The open-ended, flexible, and fluid nature of the questions is intertwined with the aforementioned underpinning constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology.

### ***The Literature***

This study is nested within the literature pertaining to what are entrepreneurs, what entrepreneurs do, and why entrepreneurs do what they do. It is contextualized by the entrepreneurial ecology literature that considers the context in which entrepreneurs function, the theoretical literature pertaining to

the possible future self, and literature pertaining to the influence of social structure and individual agency on entrepreneurial aspirations, attitudes, and behaviors.

### *Who is an Entrepreneur, and What Do They Do?*

Entrepreneurs create and control an enterprise for the purpose of achieving some financial or non-financial gain. They invest resources in their venture and risk losing those resources (time, money, or other tangible or intangible resources) in anticipation of achieving some gain (Clevenger, 2017). Innovation is an integral part of what entrepreneurs do (Kao, 2006). The creation of the enterprise, the offerings, the way they are offered, or the circumstances in which they are offered is not more of the same but is underpinned by innovation and newness (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Adding the innovation criteria to what entrepreneurs do shifts the focus from solely on the individual to a broader focus on the individual being part of a larger creative, transformational, and disruptive process of entrepreneurship (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Schumpeter, 2011).

Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) synthesize the entrepreneurship literature by creating the various schools of thought pertaining to who are entrepreneurs. They identify that entrepreneurs are leaders, born with great leadership qualities (the great person school of entrepreneurship), entrepreneurs are those having unique psychological characteristics such as high need for achievement, propensity to accept risk, and an internal locus of control (the psychological characteristics school of entrepreneurship), entrepreneurs are natural managers who were able to achieve their goals through others (the leadership school of entrepreneurship), and entrepreneurs are individuals who undertake an event with great initiative (the classic school of entrepreneurship) (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991). While these categorizations represent a useful synthesis of the literature, it runs the risk of oversimplifying the characteristics entrepreneurs and too neatly categorizing them as those having certain characteristics and propensities. In reality, it is a complex and fluid cocktail of characteristics and abilities that entrepreneurs need to be able to draw upon in order to survive.

### *Why Entrepreneurs Do What They Do—Necessity-Driven and Opportunity-driven*

The literature distinguishes between the two extremes of why entrepreneurs do what they do by dichotomously categorizing them, based on their underlying drivers, as either opportunity-driven entrepreneurs or necessity-driven entrepreneurs (Block & Wagner, 2010; Chrysostome, 2010; Hinz & Gans, 1999; Williams, 2009). Opportunity-driven entrepreneurs engage in entrepreneuring by choice, to take advantage of a perceived

opportunity, while necessity-driven entrepreneurs do so because other income-generating options are not available or are unsatisfactory (Williams, 2009). There are problems related to these categorizations as discussed in the introduction to this chapter (i.e., lack of a solid understanding of necessity-driven entrepreneurs and the resulting inaccurate and inconsistent treatment of necessity-driven entrepreneurs in the literature). As detailed in the first section of this chapter, this study is in response to those problems.

### *The Possible Future Self as Motivation and Demotivation*

The focus of this study is how culture impacts what entrepreneurs view as possible to achieve through entrepreneurship. An individual's possible future selves are based on perceived self-knowledge of their future potential, both positive and negative (Dunkel & Kerpelma, 2006; Farmer et al., 2009; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Notions of possible selves can range on a spectrum from dreams of what an individual might become to fears of what they are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Markus and Nurius (1986) contended that "an individual's repertoire of possible selves can be viewed as the cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats" (p. 954). An individual's possible selves "derive from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future—they are different and separable from the current or now selves, yet they are intimately connected to them" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). The theory of possible self is an extension of the theories of self-concept and identity (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Self-concept is a system of cognitive theories or schemas about one's self that provides structure to an individual's experiences (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Dunkel & Kerpelma, 2006) and identity refers to the characteristics that determine who a person is. Extending these theories, it is the future thinking component of possible selves that distinguishes it from self-concept and identity.

Visions of one's possible selves influence an individual's motivation and behavior (Hamman et al., 2010) through "a systematic and pervasive influence on how information about the self is processed" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955). That is, possible future selves are filters through which current and past life experiences are sifted and they provide a context of possibilities for life events by influencing the degree of importance ascribed to life events (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Dunkel & Kerpelma, 2006). Markus and Nurius (1986) argue that "self-knowledge of what is possible for them to achieve is motivation as it is particularized and individualized; it serves to frame behavior, and to guide its course" (p. 955). Individuals will act in ways that are consistent with achieving desired possible future selves and avoiding their negative possible future selves (Cross & Markus, 1991).



*The Entrepreneurial Ecology—Where Entrepreneurs Do What They Do*

Entrepreneurs do not function in isolation but within an entrepreneurial ecosystem (i.e., ecological and socioeconomic-political context). The entrepreneurial ecosystem—within an entrepreneurial community—is the sum of the conditions in which entrepreneurs function and is concerned with the structure created for entrepreneurial activity and how it contributes to or deters from the volume and success of entrepreneurial ventures (Spigel, 2015; Griffiths et al., 2009).

There are numerous attempts in the literature to formalize the entrepreneurial ecology concept within a framework. Mack and Mayer (2016) proposed the use of an entrepreneurial community framework including six components: culture, formal institutions, infrastructure and amenities, information technology, melting pot, and demand. Spigel (2015) proposed the use of a framework including three attributes with subthemes within each attribute: *cultural attributes* (supportive culture, histories of entrepreneurship), *social attributes* (worker talent, investment capital, networks, mentors, and role models), and *material attributes* (policy and governance, universities, support services, physical infrastructure, open markets) (Spigel, 2015). Busenitz et al. (2003) combined ideas from Amit et al. (1990), Shane and Venkataraman (2000), and Venkataraman (1997), proposed a framework for understanding this ecology that includes three components: institutions, opportunities, and individuals (Busenitz et al., 2003; Fortunato, 2011). Where the three fields overlap, the conditions for entrepreneurship are created.

A modified version of Busenitz et al.'s (2003) model is used in this study for two reasons. First, although Mack and Mayer (2016) and Spigel (2015) acknowledge that all the components of the ecosystem interact, Busenitz et al. (2003) and Fortunato (2011) place greater and necessary emphasis on the interaction between components and, more specifically, the compounding and negating aspects of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the necessary change in one component in response to any change in the multiple entrepreneurial ecosystems within the community. Second, Busenitz et al. (2003) assert there are main components of an entrepreneurial ecosystem within an entrepreneurial community but they remain relatively silent, and thereby flexible, on the specific influences within each component. This more flexible and fluid approach by Busenitz et al. (2003) allows for unique application of the model within various diverse contexts.

The individual component encompasses the characteristics, motivations, and activities of individual entrepreneurs within the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Busenitz et al., 2003). These are the considerations discussed both in the introduction of this chapter and earlier in this literature review, including who are entrepreneurs, what do entrepreneurs do, and why do entrepreneurs do what they do?

The institutions component of the entrepreneurial ecosystem encompasses the impact of *formal* institutions or *formal* structural mechanisms on entrepreneurial activity (Busenitz et al., 2003). This includes structures such as government regulations, banking systems, non-government institutions, legal institutions, and other institutions (Busenitz et al., 2003; Williams & Vorley, 2015). These institutions influence the decisions entrepreneurs make and influence their perception of the existence of opportunities (Ács et al., 2008). If entrepreneurs want to function within an ecosystem, they, and the organizations they create, must adapt to the rules and regulations put forth by institutions in both the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the entrepreneurial community (Ács et al., 2008).

The third component of the entrepreneurial ecosystem is culture and this, along with the individual component, is the focus of this study. In the context of entrepreneurship, culture is the *social* influence on entrepreneurship that supports and/or deters the identification, creation, and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities (Breazeale & Hustedde, 2017; Busenitz et al., 2003). Culture is a group's way of life, way of thinking, feeling, and behaving created by the organizing of thoughts and behaviors into meaningful schemes and systems (Breazeale & Hustedde, 2017; Friedman, 1994; Geertz, 1993; Hays, 1994; Jeanquart-Barone & Peluchette, 1999). Culture is a group's systems of relations (Friedman, 1994) and shared organization of ideas, morals, and standards (Breazeale & Hustedde, 2017; LeVine, 1984). Culture is not static but is fluid and changes over time and space. Each entrepreneur's organization has a culture, each entrepreneurial ecosystem has a culture, and each entrepreneurial community has a culture. Chui (2014) emphasizes this point by suggesting that "any attempt to encompass the meaning of culture in words is 'like trying to seize the air in the hand, when one finds that it is everywhere except within one's grasp'" (p. 3).

The micro-level of culture is the collective thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals such as surrounding family, friends, and community members (Friedman, 1994; Geertz, 1993; Jeanquart-Barone et al., 1999). The macro-level of culture is the wider cultural environment such as national culture that is influenced by meso-levels of regional, ethnic, linguistic, and religious subcultures and countercultures (Jenks, 2004; McSweeney, 2002). Culture perpetuates itself as individuals learn about their culture from those around them (Geertz, 1993) and "through everyday social interaction" (Williams et al., 2015, p. 841). Culture is communicated to individuals through a process of cultural transmission (Litina et al., 2016; Taylor & Thoht, 2011). Cultural transmission is the process through which a group's attitudes, beliefs, norms, accepted behaviors, and values are communicated to and taught to others within the group (Taylor & Thoht, 2011). This transmission takes place as individuals perceive and interpret signals that are transmitted from culture. The signals are overt, subtle, or

even unstated—they are the words, actions, attitudes, and behaviors of the group (Geertz, 1993).

### *The Intersection of Structure and Agency*

Since this study is concerned with individual behavior as it is influenced by surrounding social structure, and behavior, it is necessary to situate the study within the broader sociological discussion about the influence of both agency and structure on individual thinking and behavior.

Agency-initiated actions are self-determined by the individual while structure-initiated actions are prompted by the individual's surrounding social structure (Archer, 1995). Culture influences individual behavior by transmitting norms (Litina et al., 2016; Taylor & Thoth, 2011) and encouraging maintenance of those norms by influencing individual agency (Billett, 2006).

Social structure is “patterns of action that define collectives” (Berger, 1991, p. 5) and “resilient patterns that order life” (Hays, 1994, p. 57). Culture, itself, is not social structure but culture is part of social structure (Hays, 1994). That is, culture is a part of the patterns that order life. Hays (1994) noted that “social structure consists of two central, interconnected elements: systems of social relations and systems of meaning” (p. 65). The system of meanings to which Hays is referring is culture and it is part of social structure, the other parts being formal institutions and other structural elements.

Structure-initiated actions are ones in which individuals are prompted to act, or to act in a certain way, because of influence from the social structure (Archer, 1995). Alternatively, agency-initiated actions are actions self-determined by the individual, without influence from the surrounding social structure (Archer, 1995). However, caution is needed with this dichotomous conceptualization of how structure *or* agency influence individual behavior. That is, caution is needed because the dichotomy oversimplifies the complex, simultaneous, dualistic influence of both structure *and* agency that is undeniably present within most individual action (Archer, 1995).

This section has embedded the study within extant literature, the place from where the study emerged and the place to which the study aims to make a contribution. In the next section, the study's methodology and methods will be discussed.

### ***Methodology and Methods***

As discussed in the Introduction section of this chapter, to achieve the aims of this study, it was necessary to design a research system that connected the research aims to the research questions and, ultimately, to the right sources and the social phenomenon of which they are a part. Careful consideration of the research system including the ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods, and sources was important and is presented subsequently.

### *Ontology and Epistemology*

The study is underpinned by the author's ontological positionality of constructivism. The constructivism ontology supports this study because what it means to be a necessity-driven entrepreneur does not exist independently of social actors (Bryman, 2001). There is no such thing as a necessity-driven entrepreneur except when an individual engaging in business activity (entrepreneurship) is considered within the social context, considering their social disadvantage and when compared to other entrepreneurs who do or do not have the same social disadvantage. The author's accompanying and complementing epistemological position is rooted in interpretivist assertion that creating social knowledge is a process of interpreting social interaction and social phenomenon (Bryman, 2001). Such an epistemology facilitates this type of study because the issues surrounding necessity-driven entrepreneurs are not "out there to be counted and measured" and do not exist but through the interpretation of social actors. Building knowledge about these issues must be done through a process of interpreting the social interactions and social phenomenon of necessity-driven entrepreneurs and other related social actors.

### *Methodology: Qualitative Research*

To effectively address the open-ended research questions and the probing, reflexive, constructivist, and interpretivist ontological and epistemological positions, a qualitative research methodology was necessary. It was necessary because the research problems under investigation needed to be explored, not counted and measured through a quantitative methodology (Creswell, 2013). It was also necessary because the nature of this kind of social research requires a process of interpretation that was only possible through a qualitative process (Creswell, 2013).

### *Methods: Case Studies, Sampling, Interviews, Analysis*

The study's methods and sources were linked with the underpinning ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Grix, 2002). As such, a multiple case study method was used because it facilitated the analysis of the interpretation and social construction of necessity-driven entrepreneurs and the issues they face through a flexible and probing process of interpretation. The case study method was best because case study research usually involves a study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting (Yin, 2009). That is, what this study aims to understand: the real-life issues, challenges, and problems facing necessity-driven entrepreneurs within the setting of their entrepreneurial ecology.

Various sampling methods were used including purposeful and theoretical. The early participants were chosen using purposeful sampling. For the

purposeful sampling, informants were identified based on having “the characteristics . . . necessary to answer questions about a certain matter” (Koerber, 2008, p. 495). In this case, entrepreneurs were chosen on the basis of a predetermined criterion, including qualification of them as an entrepreneur and one who entered entrepreneurship in necessity-driven circumstances. As themes emerged from the data, they were validated by employing tenets of theoretical sampling (Clarke & Braun, 2017). That is, subsequent participants were sought while keeping in mind that the goal was to test the themes that were emerging from the data.

For the purpose of this research, and in light of the literature reviewed, an entrepreneur was considered to be an individual who undertakes something innovative or new for the purpose of personal, economic, or social gain. To be considered a necessity-driven entrepreneur, participants had to have entered entrepreneurship from a position of unemployment (for 3 months or more) or under-employment (working in a field for which they did not train or earning less than the job they trained for or working less than 30 hours per week but wanting to work more) or be living below the national poverty level either before becoming an entrepreneur or currently (Baptista et al., 2014; Brünjes et al., 2013; Serviere, 2010). However, it turned out that all participants were either unemployed or underemployed and none were living below the poverty line.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. The interview guide influenced by the McCracken (1988) long interview format was designed to facilitate the gathering of information from participants that would help to address the research questions. The guide was pre-tested to obtain feedback on wording and interpretation of questions. The questions were open-ended, and participants were encouraged to speak freely about their entrepreneur journey. The interviews lasted an average of 60 minutes and were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed on an ongoing basis as they took place.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the empirical method because of the complex social nature of the study’s research questions. These interviews facilitated the gathering of complex information about the relatively understudied phenomena of the impact of culture on possible entrepreneur selves, afforded me flexibility in terms of asking probing questions and responding to non-verbal cues and informant characteristics, and provided the richness of data required (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By combining the use of a theoretically informed research protocol (interview guide) with the flexibility of a semi-structured interview, the research process becomes guided by theory, open to the lived experiences of participants (Galletta & Cross, 2013). It allowed the gathering and creation of participant narratives in a relational context (Galletta & Cross, 2013).

Thematic analysis of the data was conducted. Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning [‘themes’] within qualitative data” (Clarke et al., 2017, p. 297). Thematic

analysis was used to identify patterns within and across cases (Clarke et al., 2017). What was learned from the analysis was used to influence future interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 2011). The data analysis was also informed by Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparison method; similarities, differences, and themes were identified within and between cases. This data analysis method allowed analysis within a single interview, comparing between interviews, pairing of interviews, and then comparing pairs of interview data (Glaser et al., 1967). The participant recruitment was stopped after 18 interviews, when theoretical saturation was reached (Glaser et al., 2011).

The research system described was used to achieve the study's aim of contributing to the understanding of necessity-driven entrepreneurs within the context of the individual and culture nexus of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### ***Findings and Discussion***

In this section, the analysis, discussion, and synthesis of the data obtained during participant interviews will be presented and applied to addressing the study's general research inquiry into the impact of culture on possible future entrepreneur selves.

#### *The Participants Within Their Social Context*

While it is not possible here to display the biography of each participant, highlighting a sample of three participants' biographies will contribute to creating context for the study's findings.

- *Steve was in his 30s when he entered entrepreneurship in 2016. When Steve immigrated to Canada, he did not have any post-secondary education but he earned his university degree when he immigrated to Canada. When he graduated from university, he followed the logical path into professional employment within the field in which he earned his degree. After several years in that professional field, he realized that working in an office environment was not how he wanted to spend his life. He bravely exited his job and began a quest to find work that was more personally satisfying for him. After more than a year of looking for a new job unsuccessfully, he came to the realization that the solution to his social disadvantage of unemployment was to create his own livelihood through entrepreneurship. He took the plunge, using all his and his spouse's savings and credit, and some loans from close family members, and he launched his business.*
- *Phil's employer made him redundant in 2005 and thus he found himself unemployed in his mid-40s. He had only a high school education but had been earning a significantly high income in his previous sales job. It became difficult for him to find a new job where he could earn a salary comparable to the one he was earning in his previous job where he was well established with*

a strong client base. He identified that entrepreneurship would give him the opportunity to regain his previous income level. Through his social network, he heard of a small start-up business that he thought might be willing to take on an additional partner. Phil approached that other entrepreneur and they agreed that he would buy 50% of the start-up for a relatively small amount. Phil used his personal savings and other assets to acquire 50% of the start-up.

- In 2014 Chad was in his early 40s and unemployed. Despite having extensive work experience in his technical field, he lacked the formal academic qualifications that most employers were requiring. His solution was to start his own business where he could use his technical skills and where there was less of a requirement for formal academic qualifications. Chad took advantage of a government program that financially supported him while he planned and launched his business. With that support, he was able to launch his new venture.

The common theme across these three biographies is representative of the theme across all 18 participants' biographies. They all had the common experience of being unemployed or underemployed for an extended period and all eventually relieved their unemployment or under-employment through entrepreneuring. While these three biographies provide a sample of the details of the participants, Table 6.1 offers biographic and demographic information about each of the study's 18 participants.

The participants were 83% male (15 of 18) and 17% female (3 of 18). Ten of 18 (55%) participants had achieved some form of post-secondary education. They were 78% Canadian-born (14 of 18) and 22% immigrants to Canada (4 of 18). Thirteen of 18 (72%) participants were unemployed for more than 3 months before entering entrepreneurship. Of those 13, 7 were unemployed for 3–5.9 months, 3 for 6–11.9 months, and 3 for longer than 12 months. The remaining five (28%) participants were not unemployed prior to entering entrepreneurship but they were underemployed. One of these five was working part-time jobs; three were doing sporadic, unpredictable, and temporary contract work; and one was working at a commission job and was earning very little.

Participants had an average of 14 years' work experience but only 12 participants had work experience within the industry in which they launched their business. Those industries were personal services (13 participants) and technology design and/or light manufacturing (5 participants). Although the participants were active in similar industries, their actual businesses varied widely. Their businesses included restaurants, technology design and light manufacturing, professional coaching, training, construction, and various other personal and business services.

Interviewing these necessity-driven entrepreneurs yielded rich stories about their journeys to entrepreneurship. The following is a presentation of five themes that emerged from their stories.

Table 6.1 Individual Participant Characteristics Biographic and Demographic Information

<i>Name (Pseudonym)</i>	<i>Age When Enter</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Immigrant</i>	<i>Unemployed/ Underemployed</i>	<i>Post-Secondary</i>	<i>Year Launch</i>	<i>Operating</i>
Steve	30–40	Male	Yes	Unemployed	Yes	2016	Yes
Wes	40–50	Male	No	Unemployed	Yes	2012	Yes
Jack	40–50	Male	No	Unemployed	No	2008	Yes
Phil	40–50	Male	No	Unemployed	No	2005	Yes
George	50–60	Male	No	Unemployed	Yes	2004	Yes
Dan	40–50	Male	No	Unemployed	Yes	2004	Yes
Jennifer	40–50	Female	No	Unemployed	Yes	2015	Yes
Robert	30–40	Male	No	Underemployed	No	2003	Yes
Chad	40–50	Male	No	Unemployed	No	2014	Yes
John	40–50	Male	No	Unemployed	No	2017	Yes
Alan	40–50	Male	No	Underemployed	Yes	2011	Yes
Janice	20–30	Female	No	Underemployed	Yes	2015	No
Samuel	40–50	Male	Yes	Unemployed	No	2012	No
Ali	30–40	Male	Yes	Underemployed	No	2011	Yes
Terry	20–30	Male	No	Underemployed	No	1990	Yes
Mitchel	20–30	Male	Yes	Unemployed	Yes	2012	No
Bob	40–50	Male	No	Unemployed	No	2009	Yes
Karen	20–30	Female	No	Unemployed	Yes	1995	No



*Theme 1—The Needs Participants Were Trying to Fulfill Through Entrepreneurship Were Non-financial and the Impact of Culture on Them Fulfilling Their Needs Were Positive, Negative, and Neutral*

Only 3 of 18 participants cited financial gain or making money as the dominant need they were trying to fulfill by entering entrepreneurship. Despite the fact that all participants were in a disadvantaged position within their cultural context by being unemployed or underemployed prior to entering entrepreneurship, none were independently wealthy, and they all had the need to earn an income; 15 of 18 participants reported that earning an income was not the dominant need they were trying to fulfill by entering entrepreneurship.

Despite his financial need, Steve reported that making money was “not at the top of the list of needs he was trying to fulfill by becoming an entrepreneur.” Jennifer echoed this by saying:

there is no money in (type of business), because I have a spouse who supports me, I don't have to worry about that right now, I will have nothing on my taxes this year, (if I can make) 40k and we would be really happy providing a service that makes me feel valuable . . . my sense of value has had to shift since I left my 100k per year job . . . realizing what matters to me—how do I want to live the next 10, 20, 30 years—to have enough money but to be happy.

These 15 of 18 participants cited multiple non-financial needs that they were trying to fulfill through entrepreneurship, such as the ability to control how they allocated their work and personal time (6 of 18), the freedom to autonomously make management decisions pertaining to their work (9 of 18), and the need for work-related self-satisfaction (7 of 18).

Seven of 18 participants perceived support from their culture pertaining to them meeting their needs through entrepreneurship. For example, the dominant need Dan was hoping to fulfill through entrepreneurship was self-satisfaction and he perceived his culture was supportive of him meeting these needs. He “generally felt a sense of encouragement and [he] felt encouraged by many people that [he] could succeed as an entrepreneur.” John also felt supported by his culture. He reported that his culture was “very supportive of [him] meeting [his] needs—people had good hopes for [him] and no one saying [he] should not do this.”

However, not all participants felt supported by their culture. Five of 18 participants perceived that their culture was not supportive of them meeting their needs through entrepreneurship. This was illustrated by the story told by Jennifer. She reported she entered entrepreneurship to fulfill a need for greater work satisfaction and she specifically stated that financial gain was not a dominant need she was trying to fulfill. She felt unsupported and misunderstood by her culture because “people did not understand why I was

becoming an entrepreneur” (par.) and “people thought I was doing it just for money when in fact money was not a motivator for me.”

Finally, 6 of 18 participants perceived and interpreted culture having a mixed (supportive and not supportive) impact on them achieving their needs. Steve was trying to fulfill the need for time freedom, decision freedom, and specifically not financial gain. He reported that he interpreted a mixed response from his culture about his ability to meet those needs through entrepreneurship. He stated, “my wife and my wife’s family believed I can achieve those needs but some friends did not think so. My friends told me how risky (type of business) are and how many of them fail.”

These findings pertaining to the needs participants were trying to meet through entrepreneurship and the impact of their culture on their meeting those needs contribute to the literature by suggesting there should be a broadening of how performance and success of necessity-driven entrepreneurs are defined and measured. That is, it cannot be assumed that financial gain is necessarily the dominant need that all necessity-driven entrepreneurs are trying to fulfill through entrepreneurship even though they enter entrepreneurship from the disadvantaged social position of unemployment or under-employment and therefore have a need to generate an income. For example, extant literature tells us that necessity-driven entrepreneurs perform poorly when compared to opportunity-driven entrepreneurs (Servon & Bates, 1998; Block et al., 2010). However, the most common measure used to judge entrepreneurial performance is profit alone (Brush et al., 2008). These two are inconsistent. These findings suggest that if we want to understand necessity-driven entrepreneurs and the performance of their ventures, we cannot assume that profit is the primary aim of all entrepreneurs, not even those who are necessity-driven.

*Theme 2—Participants’ Entrepreneurial Dreams and Fears Were Distinctly Social. A Contributing Factor May Have Been the Sarcastic, Belittling, Insulting, and/or Derogatory Signals to Which They Were Subjected*

Twelve of 18 (67%) participants defined their entrepreneurial dreams within the social context of having others view them favorably as a result of their entrepreneurial activity. For example, participants Jack and Alan defined their entrepreneurial dreams in relation to being viewed favorably by their family, as a result of their entrepreneurial activity. Jack also defined his entrepreneurial dreams in relation to how his wife might view him. His entrepreneurial dreams were to “prove to my wife I could make my own way as an entrepreneur without having to be employed by the government as I was previously.”

For 14 of 18 (78%) participants, their fears related to entrepreneurship were also defined in relation to how they expected they would be viewed by others in the event of failing as an entrepreneur. To describe this, participants used powerfully descriptive and fear-provoking words such as *blame*, *branded*, *disappointed*, *afraid*, *embarrassment*, *black mark*, *rejection*, *not good enough*, *loser*,

and *hurt*. The use of these words is an illustration of the fear associated with participants' anticipation of how they would be viewed negatively by others in the event they were not successful as an entrepreneur. Specifically, Steve expressed, "I was afraid that people would *blame* me if the business fails." He also said that "some of the people say, you're *crazy*." Jennifer described her fear that "it won't work . . . that breaks down to people won't want what I create . . . financial and personal *rejection* . . . feel like *idiot*."

This is powerful language and it communicates the high emotional cost and shame anticipated in the event of entrepreneurial failure. This is important because the goal is to encourage individuals to become entrepreneurs but the anticipation of shame potentially resulting from their entrepreneurial activity could drive individuals away from behavior that potentially exposes them to experiencing shame (Barbalet, 2001). Also, it is unknown how many other aspiring entrepreneurs have turned away from entrepreneurship due to their attempt to avoid this potential shame.

These findings pertaining to entrepreneurial fears contradict the literature that emphasizes individual agency alone as the driving force of entrepreneurship, at the expense of the impact of social structure (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991; Yarzebinski, 1992; Zafirovski, 1999; Zapalska & Zapalska, 1999). The findings also contradict the psychological characteristics literature that argues the primary role of individual characteristics and individual agency in entrepreneurial activity, at the expense of considering the influence of the surrounding structure (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991; Eisenhauer, 1995; Yarzebinski, 1992; Zafirovski, 1999; Zapalska & Zapalska, 1999). These findings are consistent with entrepreneurial ecology literature that recognizes the role of culture and institutions in addition to individual-level factors as drivers of entrepreneuring activity (Busenitz et al., 2003; Spigel, 2015). They are consistent with the entrepreneurial ecosystem literature that accurately places individual entrepreneuring activity within the context of the surrounding entrepreneurial community socioeconomic-political structure (Busenitz et al., 2003; Spigel, 2015).

### *Theme 3—Participants Perceived a Mix of Positive, Negative, and Neutral Signals From Their Culture Pertaining to Them Entering Entrepreneurship*

The majority of participants (11 of 18) reported simultaneously perceiving both positive and negative signals from their culture pertaining to them entering entrepreneurship. Specifically, 18 of 18 participants perceived what they interpreted to be positive signals, 7 of 18 *only* positive signals, and 0 of 18 *only* negative.

Positive signals from the micro-level of culture are exemplified by Steve who reported that he perceived positive signals from his spouse, stating,

she has actually wanted me to open the business, my wife, she knew I wanted to do something, start my own business, she was very happy

finally that I am going to . . . and then she was very happy, her family was very happy I am going to start my own business, so they were very big support.

He reported that his wife's attitudes, beliefs, and feelings were positive and encouraging of him entering entrepreneurship.

However, not all signals from culture were positive. Eleven of 18 participants perceived negative signals. That is, they perceived and interpreted the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors of the family, friends, and community members around them (Friedman, 1994; Geertz, 1993; Jeanquart-Barone & Peluchette, 1999) to be negative, or discouraging, regarding their entering entrepreneurship. The perception and interpretation of such negative signals are exemplified by Steve not telling his family he had opened a business due to the signals he previously interpreted to be negative. Despite his operating the business for several months, he had not told his family in an effort to minimize the negative feedback he anticipated he would receive from them for doing so.

The most complex scenario faced by participants in relation to transmissions from their culture was for the 11 of 18 participants who reported they simultaneously received what they interpreted as positive and negative signals from their culture. For example, Jennifer reported that her "[spouse] thought it was great and said [spouse] would support me and my sister told me 'we have your back.'" However, she had to simultaneously process the negative signals from her parents who "thought [she was] *nuts*, they thought I should stay (at my previous job) for the pension . . . they thought I was *crazy*." They asked "what are you thinking?" These 11 participants who perceived what they interpreted to be a mix of positive and negative signals from their culture were subsequently faced with the task of processing this mix of signals while forming their own interpretation of the pros and cons of launching a business. This would be difficult as some signals would reinforce their entrepreneurial aspirations and some would undermine them.

*Theme 4—Participants' Dreams, Fears, and Possible Future Entrepreneur Selves Were Sensitive to Signals From Culture. Fears Were More Sensitive Than Dreams, and They May Have Contributed to Risk-Adverse Behavior*

All 18 participants perceived what they interpreted to be positive signals from the micro-level of their culture, yet only 4 of 18 reported that the positive signals fueled their dreams. Alan reported that his family's positive views on entrepreneurship allowed him to dream about entering entrepreneurship; he reported "I come from an entrepreneurial family, it was just accepted that it is possible." Ali stated that positive feedback:

helped me a lot . . . they were happy for me because they know I can create something and handle it, because all my life I am working I have

different experiences from managing [type of business] . . . I have different skills so it wasn't difficult for me, I wasn't scared and the people around me, they trust, I can handle that thing.

Participants reported more often that negative signals from their culture contributed to their fears related to entering entrepreneurship. Of the 11 of 18 participants who perceived negative signals from the micro-level of their culture, 10 of those 11 reported that the negative signals increased their entrepreneurial fears. That is, 91% of participants who perceived negative signals reported that those negative signals increased their entrepreneurial fears.

There were indications in the data suggesting that the negative signals from culture may have impacted participants' future entrepreneurial selves and resulting behavior. That is, there were indications that negative signals from culture may have contributed to participants being financially conservative and risk-averse with their investment in their entrepreneurial venture. This theme emerged when it was discovered that 11 of 18 participants had immediate access to more capital than they invested or were willing to invest in their business. Of these 11 participants, eight (88%) had previously reported that negative signals from their culture increased their entrepreneurial fears. Further, the most interesting part of this finding is that 8 of these 11 participants who were not fully invested were the same eight participants who previously reported that positive signals did not increase their entrepreneurial dreams and that negative signals did increase their entrepreneurial fears. A larger initial investment in the business could have fueled the growth of the business, facilitated entrance into larger, more lucrative markets, and leveraged the entrepreneurs' efforts, potentially resulting in greater profitability. Despite these possibilities, 11 of 18 participants were not fully invested in their venture and had immediate access to more capital than they were willing to employ to launch their business. These data show a pattern that participants who felt the impact of negative signals increasing their fears and positive signals not contributing to their dreams, may have been more conservative and risk-averse in their investment in their entrepreneurial venture.

These findings suggest that participants' possible future entrepreneur selves and entrepreneurial behavior were impacted by both structure and agency. Consistent with Archer's (1995) morphogenetic perspective, the data reveal that it is the interplay between the individuals' possible future selves and culture as a component of the social structure that ultimately influences entrepreneurs' behavior. That is, participants' entrepreneurial activities were individual activities embedded within, and influenced by, the surrounding social structure. Markus and Nurius (1986) refer to this nature of the possible future self as a combination of the "inventive and constructive nature of the self but they also reflect the extent to which the self is socially determined and constrained" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Participants were forging their own path into entrepreneurship to

relieve their social disadvantage of unemployment or under-employment but, despite their pioneering tendencies, they were both aware of and influenced by the impact of the micro- and macro-levels of their culture on their dreams, fears, possible entrepreneur selves, and resulting entrepreneurial behavior.

These findings contribute to the literature by providing insight into the understanding of the space in the entrepreneurial ecology between culture and individual entrepreneurial behavior. Extant literature tells us that there is a relationship between culture and the volume and quality of entrepreneurial activity (Busenitz et al., 2003; Spigel, 2015) but is vague on the constitution of that relationship. This study contributes to the understanding of this space between culture and individual entrepreneurial behavior by exhibiting how signals from culture were filtered through the dreams, fears, and possible future entrepreneur selves of participants and resulted in culturally influenced individual entrepreneurial behavior.

*Theme 5—Entering Entrepreneurship From a Disadvantaged Social Position Did Not Play a Big Part in Story of Participants’ Entrepreneurial Journey, as They Describe It*

The social disadvantage experienced by necessity-driven entrepreneurs (unemployment, under-employment) can prompt them to act to realize their possible future entrepreneur selves as a means of relieving the social disadvantage. As the study was concerned with not only entrepreneurs but also necessity-driven entrepreneurs, the research questions probed how participants’ culturally defined disadvantage impacted their entrepreneurial dreams, fears, possible future entrepreneur selves, and resulting entrepreneurial behavior.

Being unemployed or underemployed in Nova Scotia is more than not having something to fill your time and not having a full income. Being unemployed or underemployed is counter to the normal social structure of working every day and supporting yourself with a full-time income. It places the unemployed or underemployed individual in a position of social disadvantage. That is, if one is unemployed or underemployed, s/he might be different than or “less than” the norm of being fully employed. This message of non-conformity may have been communicated to participants through transmissions from their culture (Litina et al., 2016; Taylor & Thoth, 2011). Participants may have been consciously or unconsciously influenced by their culture to find a way to conform to this normal social structure (Archer, 1995) by relieving this social disadvantage by entering entrepreneurship. The moment an unemployed or underemployed individual decides to start a business, they change from being “unemployed or underemployed” to being “an entrepreneur involved in a start-up.” Their social status immediately changes from “less than” to garnering admiration for “being an entrepreneur.”

As it was a requirement for participation in this study, all participants were experiencing the social disadvantage of unemployment (13 of 18) or underemployment (5 of 18) prior to launching their business. Despite this, the fact that participants were entering entrepreneurship from a disadvantaged social position did not emerge as a significant part of participants' stories of entering entrepreneurship. Despite being given many opportunities to stress how their unemployment or underemployment influenced their entrepreneurial aspirations, motivations, and behavior, they tended not to. This silence is interpreted as a finding in itself. That is, participants did not understand their social disadvantage to be a big part of the story about their journey into entrepreneurship. It appears that participants may not have *consciously* seen the disadvantage as a dominant driving force for them entering entrepreneurship. Whether, participants *subconsciously* saw entrepreneurship as a way to relieve their social disadvantage has not been determined. That is, were they attracted to entrepreneurship at the time they were unemployed or underemployed because, subconsciously, they knew that entering entrepreneurship would relieve their social disadvantage?

This study's general research question probed the impact of culture on participants' possible future entrepreneur selves—at the place in the entrepreneurial ecology where culture and the individual overlap. Through analyzing the data, synthesizing the findings derived from the specific research questions, and through a general process of interpretation, it was possible to construct new social knowledge pertaining to if and how culture impacted participants' possible future entrepreneur selves. That is, culture did have an impact on participants' possible future entrepreneur selves and subsequent entrepreneurial behavior. Culture was invasive in the processes of participants' formation and maintenance of their possible future entrepreneur selves by directly impacting the needs they were trying to meet through entrepreneurship, their perceived ability to meet those needs through entrepreneurship, their entrepreneurial dreams and fears, their ability to realize those dreams and fears, and the role of culture in prompting them to act on trying to realize their possible future entrepreneur selves.

## Conclusions

By sharing their entrepreneurial experiences, the necessity-driven entrepreneurs who participated in this study facilitated the exploration of the nexus of the entrepreneurial ecology where culture and the individual overlap. The study was inspired by the lack of a comprehensive theory of necessity-driven entrepreneurs in the literature (Block & Wagner, 2010; Lingelbach et al., 2005) and by the lack of understanding of the impact of entering entrepreneurship from this culturally defined position of disadvantage (unemployment, underemployment, poverty). This exploration was done with the aims of contributing to the understanding of necessity-driven entrepreneurs, bettering our understanding of the impacts of entering entrepreneurship from a

position of social disadvantage (e.g., unemployment, underemployment, or poverty), and improving the effectiveness of entrepreneurship development efforts in encouraging and supporting necessity-driven entrepreneurs.

### ***Understanding of Necessity-Driven Entrepreneurs***

The themes emerging from the study contribute to the understanding of necessity-driven entrepreneurs. They tell the story of the improvement of individuals' circumstances due to their turning to entrepreneurship. Despite all participants having to find a source of livelihood, the primary needs participants reported they were trying to fulfill through entrepreneurship were not financial needs but more likely time-freedom, decision-freedom, and self-satisfaction related to their work. Participants felt a complex mix of positive, negative, and neutral signals from their culture pertaining to their entrance into entrepreneurship. Their entrepreneurial dreams and fears were likely to be social and rooted in how they would be looked upon as a result of their entrepreneurial success or failure. There was also the suggestion in the interview data that participants' fears were particularly sensitive to the signals they received from their culture and may have contributed to some participants' levels of risk aversion. Finally, entering entrepreneurship from a disadvantaged social position did not play a big part in the story of participants' entrepreneurial journeys, as they describe it.

The common thread running through these themes is the idea that entrepreneuring is not an individual-centric activity but a social activity that is embedded within its socioeconomic-political context of the surrounding entrepreneurial community. The "great person," individual-centric image of entrepreneurship that depicts an individual undertaking an extraordinary and innovative activity does not do justice to what is happening. The entrepreneur is a complex social being with needs, dreams, and fears that are so tightly intertwined with the socioeconomic-political context of their entrepreneurial ecology that it is not possible to consider one without the other.

### ***Policy and Practice—Improving the Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Development Efforts***

The final aim of this study was to contribute to the effectiveness of encouraging and supporting necessity-driven entrepreneurs. The themes that emerged offer contributions to entrepreneurship development policy and practice in two ways.

First, they contribute to the understanding that entrepreneurship development policy and practice need to align with the true motivations of necessity-driven entrepreneurs. If entrepreneurship development policy and practice are to be successful at promoting and supporting entrepreneurship, they need to have a solid understanding of what motivates



individuals to enter and remain in entrepreneurship. In order to do so, we need to first make the effort necessary to understand the motives and goals of entrepreneurs. As discussed in the literature review, profit performance is the most popular dependent variable used in the literature when considering entrepreneurial success (Brush et al., 2008). However, the findings of this study tell us that it is presumptuous and likely inaccurate for practitioners to assume all entrepreneurs have the same, primarily profit-driven goals as the main reason they entered entrepreneurship. More specifically, the literature tends to assume that for necessity-driven entrepreneurs, financial gain is necessarily the primary reason for entering entrepreneurship because it is a matter of economic or physical survival (Hinz & Gans, 1999; Williams, 2009). This presumptuously and inaccurately implies that the non-financial motives for entering entrepreneurship, such as need for achievement or creating a certain favorable lifestyle are reserved for opportunity-driven entrepreneurs (Haugh & Talwar, 2016; Zellweger et al., 2011). If entrepreneurship development policy and practice is rooted in an underlying assumption that financial gain is the primary motivation of necessity-driven entrepreneurs, the opportunity to align development efforts with the actual goals of necessity-driven entrepreneurs may be missed.

The second contribution this study offers to entrepreneurship development policy and practice is the knowledge that there are perceived risks, other than financial risk, that create fear in aspiring entrepreneurs and may prevent them from acting. These non-financial risks were primarily related to the way they might be viewed by others if their business did not survive. Participants were sensitive to what family, friends, and their broader community thought about them becoming entrepreneurs. Participants tended to define their dreams and fears about entering entrepreneurship within the context of how positively or negatively they would be viewed by others in the event of their venture succeeding or failing. These findings suggest that the negative reactions from those around them about them entering entrepreneurship led participants to see entering entrepreneurship as socially risky.

Managing entrepreneur risk is a skill that can be taught. There are effective methods to proactively anticipate, identify, mitigate, and recover from risk. While it is outside the scope of this study to discuss entrepreneurial risk management strategy, it can be said that entrepreneurship development policy makers and practitioners should be cognizant of the dominant role that perceptions of risk play in individuals' decisions to act on their entrepreneurial aspirations. The influence that social context has on the elevation of potential entrepreneurs' perception of risk should be of particular interest to entrepreneurship development policy makers and practitioners. Entrepreneurship development policy and practice must actively promote and provide services related to the methods of managing risk within the context of cultural surroundings.

### ***Limitations***

There are two intertwined limitations of this research. The first is that participants of the study were visible to the researcher and were recruited to participate because they were currently functioning as entrepreneurs. However, it is suspected that there were other populations of individuals who were not visible and, therefore, participants were not recruited from those populations. The other populations include individuals who aspire to enter entrepreneurship but who have not acted on their aspirations, individuals who did act on their entrepreneurial aspirations but whose businesses did not survive, and even individuals who have no entrepreneurial aspirations. These other populations may or may not have entrepreneurial needs, dreams, fears, and possible future selves. It would be beneficial for future research to probe these other populations, thereby looking at entrepreneurship from yet another angle. This limitation does not undermine the study's findings because learning from the entrepreneurs who did act and did survive contributes to our understanding of what it takes to act on entrepreneurial aspirations and to survive in entrepreneurship.

The second limitation is the small proportion of female participants in the study. Three of 18 participants in the study were female. This is a small percentage, but it is not completely inconsistent with the fact that only 35.6% of women in Canada are self-employed (Mousseau & Hawa, 2017). Despite looking for differences in the data derived from female and male participants, no differences were observed. Regardless, future research should probe the female population to address questions such as “Do fewer women aspire to entrepreneurship and, if so, why?” and “Do women aspire to entrepreneurship but do not act on those aspirations and, if so, why?” This space is where these two limitations are intertwined. Again, it would be difficult to conduct such research on females since, again, it is the ones who did not act as entrepreneurs that would likely yield the most information.

### ***Future Research***

There are several other ways this study's findings could both benefit and be benefited by future research. First, the study introduced the “possible future entrepreneur self” as a complex mix of entrepreneurial dreams and fears, intertwined with culture, and likely as an influence on whether or not an individual will act on their entrepreneurial aspirations. This opens a new line of research in entrepreneurship that focuses on the role of entrepreneurial dreams and fears and their impact on entrepreneurial aspirations and entrepreneurial action. It compliments, but is different from, the literature on entrepreneurial motivation because it considers the emotional aspects of individuals' dreams of what could possibly be achieved through entrepreneurship and fears of the possible negative outcomes of entrepreneurial activity. Further research can shed more light on the phenomenon of the

possible future entrepreneur selves including, but not limited to, how they are formed and how they can be influenced.

Second, this has been a study of how culture impacts entrepreneurial activity. However, consistent with Archer's (1995) morphogenetic approach, entrepreneurship and culture, like agency and structure, likely have a bi-directional relationship. That is, not only does culture impact entrepreneurship but also it is likely that entrepreneurship impacts culture. Both entrepreneurship development practice and research would benefit from a better understanding of how entrepreneurship impacts culture, especially in a positive way.

Finally, while this study did contribute to the understanding of necessity-driven entrepreneurs, there is still more knowledge to gain. Necessity-driven entrepreneurship is a complex mix of individual activity intertwined with the surrounding socioeconomic-political context of an entrepreneurial ecology. Because of this complexity, it is therefore challenging to study. Instead of dismissing and marginalizing necessity-driven entrepreneurs, likely because of the complexity of their circumstances, why don't we take up the challenge to continue to study and build knowledge about necessity-driven entrepreneurs?

## References

- Ács, Z., Desai, S., & Hessels, J. (2008). Entrepreneurship, economic development and Institutions. *Small Business Economics*, 31(3), 219–234.
- Amit, R., Glosten, L., & Muller, E. (1990). Does venture capital foster the most promising entrepreneurial firms? *California Management Review*, 32(3), 102–111.
- Archer, M. (1995). *Realist social theory: The morphogenetic approach*. University of Cambridge Press.
- Baernholdt, M., Yan, G., Hinton, I., Rose, K., & Mattos, M. (2012). Quality of life in rural and urban adults 65 years and older: Findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. *The Journal of Rural Health*, 28(4), 339–347.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman & Co.
- Baptista, R., Murat, K., & Mendoncs, J. (2014). The impact of human capital on the early success of necessity versus opportunity-based entrepreneurs. *Small Business Economics*, 42(4), 831–847.
- Barbalet, J. (2001). *Emotion, social theory, and social structure: A macrosociological approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Berger, B. (1991). Structure and choice in the sociology of culture. *Theory and Society*, 20(1), 1–19.
- Billett, S. (2006). Relational interdependence between social and individual agency in work and working life. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 13(1), 53–69.
- Block, J., & Sander, P. (2009). Necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs and their duration in self-employment: Evidence from German micro data. *Journal of Industry, Competition and Trade*, 9(2), 117–137.
- Block, J., & Wagner, M. (2010). Necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs in Germany: Characteristics and earnings differentials. *Small Business Review*, 62, 154–174.

- Brasser, T. J. (1978). Early Indian–European contact. In B. G. Trigger (Ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians* (Vol. 15) (pp. 78–88). Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Breazeale, N. D., & Hustedde, R. J. (2017). Understanding the impact of culture in entrepreneurship. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 104–125). Routledge.
- Brebner, J. B. (1937). *The neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A marginal colony during the revolutionary years*. Russell & Russell.
- Brünjes, J., & Diez, J. (2013). Recession push and prosperity pull: Entrepreneurship in a rural developing context. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 25(3–4), 251–271.
- Brush, C., Manolova, T., & Edelman, L. (2008). Separated by a common language? Entrepreneurship research across the Atlantic. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 32(2), 249–266.
- Bryman, A. (2001). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Busenitz, L., West, G., Shepherd, D., Nelson, T., Chandler, G., & Zacharakis, A. (2003). Entrepreneurship research in emergence: Past trends and future directions. *Journal of Management*, 29(3), 285–308.
- Chen, C. C., Greene, P. G., & Crick, A. (1998). Does entrepreneurial self-efficacy distinguish entrepreneurs from managers? *Journal of Business Venturing*, 13(4), 295–316.
- Chrysostome, E. (2010). The success factors of necessity immigrant entrepreneurs: The search for a theory. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 52(2), 137–152.
- Chui, C. (2014). What culture could be? *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 45(1), 3–4.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 297–298.
- Clevenger, M. R. (2017). Perceptions of entrepreneurs and community: From historical roots to a contemporary kaleidoscope. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 10–50). Routledge.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Sage.
- Cross, S., & Markus, H. (1991). Possible selves across the life span. *Human Development*, 34(4), 230–255.
- Cunningham, J., & Lischeron, J. (1991). Defining entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship*, 29(1), 45–61.
- Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 1087–1101.
- Dunkel, C., & Kerpelma, J. (2006). *Possible selves: Theory and application*. Nova Science Publishers.
- Eisenhauer, J. (1995). The entrepreneurial decision: economic theory and empirical evidence. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 19(4), 1–3.
- Farmer, S, Yao, X., & Kung-Mcintyre, K. (2009). The behavioral impact of entrepreneur identity aspiration and prior entrepreneurial experience. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 35(2), 245–273.
- Farrigan, T. (2020). Extreme poverty counties found solely in rural areas in 2018. *Amber Waves: The Economics of Food, Farming, Natural Resources, and Rural America*. [www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2020/may/extreme-poverty-counties-found-solely-in-rural-areas-in-2018/](https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2020/may/extreme-poverty-counties-found-solely-in-rural-areas-in-2018/)

- Fortunato, M. (2011). *The individual-institutional-opportunity nexus: Examining interaction, purpose, and opportunity in rural entrepreneurship development* (Dissertation). State College, PA: The Pennsylvania State University.
- Friedman, J. (1994). *The emergence of the culture concept in anthropology, cultural identity, and global process*. Sage.
- Galletta, A., & Cross, W. (2013). *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond*. New York University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1993). *The interpretation of culture*. Basic Books.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies of qualitative research*. Wiedenfeld and Nicholson.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2011). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Transaction Publishers.
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. (GEM). (2017). *The world's foremost study on entrepreneurship*. Global Entrepreneurship Research Association. [www.gemconsortium.org/](http://www.gemconsortium.org/)
- Griffiths, M., Gundry, L., Kuckul, J., & Fernandez, A. (2009). Innovation ecology as a precursor to entrepreneurial growth. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 16(3), 375–390.
- Griffiths, N. E. S. (2004). *From migrant to Acadian: A North American border people, 1604–1755*. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Grix, J. (2002). Introducing students to the generic terminology of social research. *Politics*, 22(3), 175–186.
- Hamman, D., Gosselin, K., Romano, J., & Bunuan, R. (2010). Using possible-selves theory to understand the identity development of new teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(7), 1349–1361.
- Haugh, H., & Talwar, A. (2016). Linking social entrepreneurship and social change: The mediating role of empowerment. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 133(4), 643–658.
- Hays, S. (1994). Structure and agency and the sticky problem of culture. *Sociological Theory*, 12(1), 57–72.
- Hechavarria, D., & Reynolds, P. (2009). Cultural norms and business start-ups: The impact of national values on opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs. *International Entrepreneurship Management Journal*, 5(4), 417–437.
- Hinz, T., & Gans, M. (1999). Starting a business after unemployment: Characteristics and chances of success. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 11(4), 317–333.
- Jeanquart-Barone, S., & Peluchette, J. (1999). Examining the impact of the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance on staffing decisions: A look at US and German firms. *Cross Cultural Management*, 6(3), 3–12.
- Jenks, C. (2004). *Subculture: The fragmentation of the social*. Sage.
- Kao, R. (2006). Defining entrepreneurship: past, present and? *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 2(1), 69–70.
- Koerber, A. (2008). Qualitative sampling methods. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 22(4), 454.
- LeVine, R. (1984). Properties of culture: An ethnographic view. In R. A. Shweder & R. A. LeVine (Eds.), *Culture theory: Essays on mind, self, and emotion* (pp. 67–87). Cambridge University Press.
- Lingelbach, D., de la Viña, L., & Asel, P. (2005). *What's distinctive about growth-oriented entrepreneurship in developing countries?* UTSA College of Business Center for Global Entrepreneurship Working Paper No. 1.
- Litina, A., Moriconi, S., & Zanaj, S. (2016). The cultural transmission of environmental values: A comparative approach. *World Development*, 84, 131–148.

- Mack, E., & Mayer, H. (2016). The evolutionary dynamics of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Urban Studies*, 53(10), 2118–2133.
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, 41(9), 954–969.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Sage.
- McGee, J. E., Peterson, M., Mueller, S. L., & Sequeira, J. M. (2009). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy: Refining the measure. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33(4), 965–988.
- McSweeney, B. (2002). Hofstede's model of national culture differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith—a failure of analysis. *Human Relations*, 55(1), 89–118.
- Mousseau, J., & Hawa, Z. (2017). *Facts and figures on Canadian women entrepreneurs*. The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service. [www.owit-ottawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Facts-and-figures-on-women-entrepreneurs.pdf](http://www.owit-ottawa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Facts-and-figures-on-women-entrepreneurs.pdf)
- Newell, E. E. (2017). Entrepreneurial community success: Psychological characteristics, experiences, and identity. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 254–281). Routledge.
- Nicholls, A. (2010). *A fleeting empire: Early Stuart Britain and the merchant adventurers to Canada*. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- One Nova Scotia Commission. (2014). *Now or never: An urgent call to action for Nova Scotians*. One Nova Scotia: Shaping Our New Economy Together. [oneNS.ca www.onens.ca/sites/default/files/editor-uploads/now-or-never.pdf](http://oneNS.ca/www.onens.ca/sites/default/files/editor-uploads/now-or-never.pdf)
- Peredo, A. M. (2015). Poverty, reciprocity, and community-based entrepreneurship. In T. Baker & F. Welter (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to entrepreneurship* (pp. 263–280). Routledge.
- Schumpeter, J. (2011). *The theory of economic development*. Transaction Publishers.
- Serviere, L. (2010). Forced to entrepreneurship: modeling the factors behind necessity entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship*, 22(1), 37–53.
- Servon, L., & Bates, T. (1998). Microenterprise as an exit route from poverty: Recommendations for programs and policy makers. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 20(4), 419–441.
- Shane, S., & Venkataraman, S. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 217–226.
- Spigel, B. (2015). The relational organization of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 41(1), 49–72.
- Statistics Canada. (2018). *Population 15 and over by highest degree, certificate or diploma by province and territory 2006 Census*. Statistics Canada. [www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/educ41a-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/educ41a-eng.htm)
- Taylor, M. J., & Thoth, C. A. (2011). Cultural transmission. In S. Goldstein & J. A. Naglieri (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of child behavior and development* (pp. 448–451). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9\\_755](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9_755)
- The Canadian Encyclopedia. (2021). *Chamber of commerce*. [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chamber-of-commerce](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chamber-of-commerce)
- Venkataraman, S. (1997). The distinctive domain of entrepreneurship research: An editor's Perspective. In J. Katz & R. Brockhaus (Eds.), *Advances in entrepreneurship, firm emergence, and growth* (pp. 119–138). JAI Press.
- Williams, C. (2009). The motives of off-the-books entrepreneurs: Necessity or opportunity driven? *The International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 5(2), 203–217.
- Williams, N., & Vorley, T. (2015). Institutional asymmetry: How formal and informal institutions affect entrepreneurship in Bulgaria. *International Small Business Journal*, 33(8), 840–861.

- Yarzebinski, J. (1992). Understanding and encouraging entrepreneurs. *Economic Development Review*, 10(1), 32–36.
- Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage.
- Zafirovski, M. (1999). Probing into the social lawyers of entrepreneurs: outliers of the sociology of entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 11(4), 351–371.
- Zapalska, A., & Zapalska, L. (1999). Small business ventures in post-communist Hungary. *Journal of East-West Business*, 5(4), 5–21.
- Zellweger, T., Nason, R., & Nordqvist, M. (2011). Why do family firms strive for nonfinancial goals? An organizational identity perspective. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 37(2), 229–248.
- Zhao, H., Seibert, S. E., & Hills, G. E. (2005). The mediating role of self-efficacy in the development of entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1265.

### ***Additional Reading***

- Blakie, N. (2000). *Designing social research*. Polity.
- Dubini, P. (1988). The influence of motivations and environment on business start-ups: Some hints for public policy. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 4, 11–26.
- Mason, C., & Brown, R. (2014). *Entrepreneurial ecosystems and growth oriented entrepreneurship*. OECD. [www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/entrepreneurial-ecosystems.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/entrepreneurial-ecosystems.pdf)
- Morris, M. (2001). Entrepreneurship is economic development is entrepreneurship. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 6(3), 1.

# 7 Called to a Community Venture

## Entrepreneurial Mindset and Empowerment Through Networking as Illustrated in a Case Study in Abilene, Texas

*Mike Mikeworth with Morgan R. Clevenger and Bill Lewis*

### **Overview**

This case study embodies nascent entrepreneurs, self-leadership, and their network of support in a faith-based entrepreneurship (Busenitz & Lichtenstein, 2019). (Faith-based entrepreneurship is a growing area, there is a Top 10 Advisory Groups for Faith Driven Entrepreneurs; see Faith Driven Entrepreneur, 2021.)

### ***Time Span***

This reflective narrative captures nascent entrepreneurs over about a 4-year period from 2017 to 2021 with monthly luncheons and discussions.

### ***Methodology and Types of Data***

This chapter utilizes a combination of narrative ethnographic inquiry and analytic autoethnography to summarize and reflect on the process of congregating and organizing monthly networking luncheons for nascent entrepreneurs in a range of disciplines, fields, and industries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Riessman, C. K. 2008). The author uses reflexive narrative authority (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Pin-negar & Daynes, 2007) as well as personal accounts (Anderson, 2006; Lancy, 1993).

### ***Entrepreneurial Social Group***

This case study focuses on a single encouragement group or entrepreneur social group (Newell, 2017). It does, however, also support the greater Abilene, Texas, entrepreneurial community as well as each nascent entrepreneur's entrepreneurial ecosystem being developed. (See Figures 7.1 and 7.2.)



### ***Cultural Aspects***

The author reflects on the area as a “small city.” But the cultural focus of the entrepreneurial social group is that of a faith-based community. The kindred cultural component is faith and spiritual beliefs. As written by King Solomon, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Biblica, 2011, para 1). In the faith community, such practices include authenticity and congruence in both spiritual dimension and all aspects of life, which includes business and entrepreneuring.

### ***Power and Empowerment***

This case study is one that focuses on self-empowerment and self-determination with a combination of the power of mentorship and peer-to-peer groups in empowering entrepreneurs through personal encouragement, inclusivity, learning together, and information sharing. As a faith-based group, this emergent community seeks those who have been called to an entrepreneurial life through their faith and encourages risk-taking and opportunity-seeking by creating a supportive community of mutual care. The community will support anyone from small business veterans who often give back by giving talks and mentoring younger entrepreneurs, to new entrepreneurs who are seeking role models and a community connection. The group can connect new entrepreneurs with information and resources through networking that might otherwise be “off the map” to those new to the local entrepreneurial community.

### ***Leadership Aspects***

A combination of self-leadership and support from Venture Call, LLC via founder Mike Mikeworth.

His foundational belief is that each person has a unique blend of gifts and aptitudes which directs his/her motivation to work. A driving motivation for establishing these businesses is to provide business models that adhere to proven ideals such as honesty, consistency, fairness, quality service and attention to customer needs.

(Venture Call, 2021, p. 1)

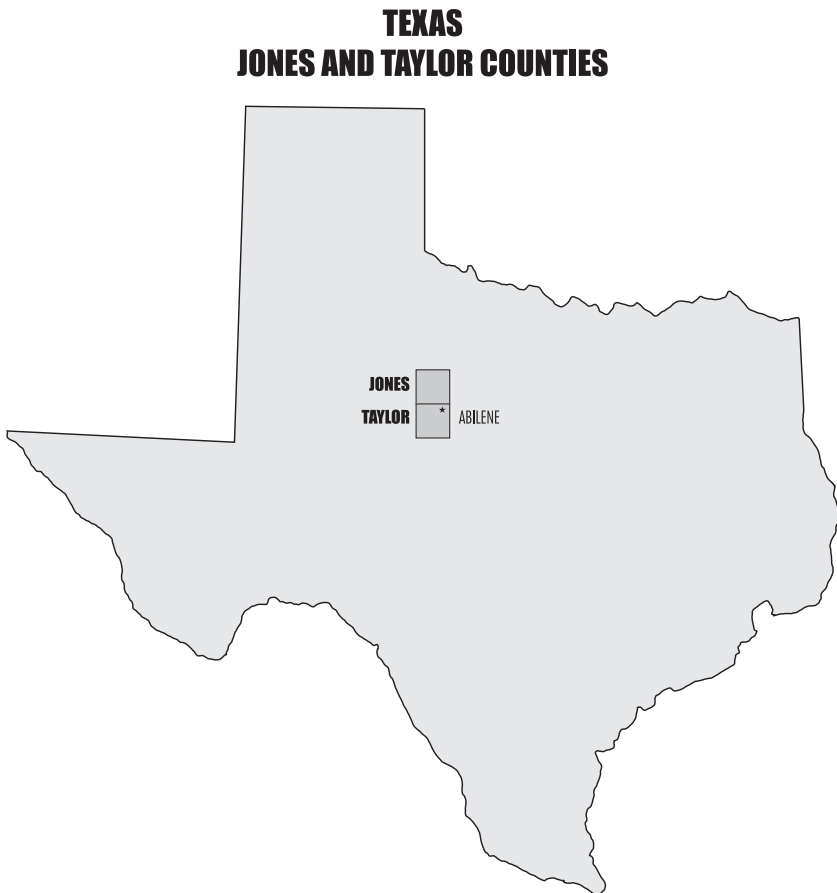
### ***The Why***

People of faith often desire an approach to life based on principles. Key principles include networking with others of the same framework. Entrepreneurs by nature take ownership of their future (Lichtenstein, 1998, 2000, 2016; McClelland, 1961; Neal et al., 1999; Neck & Manz, 2012). Readiness

and encouragement are key to supporting self-lead entrepreneurs. Key motivators for performance-oriented achievers are Mike's role as an influencer and impactor toward change in helping entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders (Venture Call, 2021).

### ***A Brief History***

Abilene, Texas, was established in 1881, when the Texas and Pacific Railroad began to use a cattle shipping stop on their rail line at the location (Gannett, 1905). The city was named in honor of Abilene, Kansas. The community was laid out in lots, and because of railroad access, there was great demand for the building lots. The town was incorporated in 1881 and local residents quickly organized an effort to bring the county seat to Abilene.



*Figure 7.1* Map of Texas

Aside from a cattle-ranching economy, Abilene early on became a center for higher education in Texas. In 1891, Simmons College was established in the town (Heiberg, 2010). Within a few decades, the early predecessors of both Abilene Christian University and McMurry University were founded.

The establishment of Camp Barkeley, a U.S. Army base, in the community right before World War II, would bring more than 1.9 million men who passed through the town. When the army base closed after the end of the war, part of its land was used for the new Dyess Air Force base, which opened in the early 1950s, and it continues to be a leading area employer. The agriculture and livestock businesses continue to be an important part of the area's economy.

### **The Case Study: A Faith-Based Entrepreneurial Social Group**

Entrepreneurs epitomize *sovereign individuals* necessary for building the local entrepreneurial ecosystems. In the current American generation that is tilting toward massive collectivism and group identity structures, the *entrepreneur* stands as a bulwark of individual thought and pursuit of a specific purpose. This essay could possibly be considered by academics as somewhat autoethnographic in nature, but for many it is a narrative based on a participant-observer who was content to instigate a gathering of like-minded “wanna-be” entrepreneurs which (surprisingly) has continued to meet weekly for more than 4 years at the time of this writing. Rather than trying to generate a movement among the local movers and shakers of a small city, the focus was upon folks who self-identified as interested in examining the feasibility of starting/expanding their own enterprise.

There is a scarcity of literature on ecosystems where faith-based organizations and people of faith serve as leaders in the entrepreneurial community. While this essay outlines only one case study, I hope it will provide an example of how people of faith can respond to a calling to unabashedly propose nonmaterial assets alongside of material assets as contributing solutions to the successful formation of businesses. While this author founded a faith-based organization in the mid-1990s, this case study articulates more of a story of how a person of faith (e.g., Judeo-Christian) serves as an unofficial leader in a small segment of the Abilene entrepreneurial community. Guinness et al. (2001) tell us an entrepreneur is a person who assumes the responsibility for a creative task (i.e., an intrapreneur), not as an assigned role, of an inherited duty, but as a *venture of faith*, including risk and danger, in order to bring into the world something new and profitable to mankind. In my way of thinking, anyone who “ventures out” to bring these things to the world are “entrepreneurs of life.” These activities are driven by *faith*. This faith may not be described as the Judeo-Christian variety but is faith, nevertheless, characterized by being the substance of hopes and the evidence

of the yet unseen. In this sense, I believe the account of this case study can be applied to multiple audiences of who want to bring into this world something new and profitable.

## **The Story**

In the spring of 2015, I was completing the facilitation of a nationally recognized entrepreneurship training course. This 30-hour program was presented over a 10-week time frame to local folks who had expressed an interest in starting their own business but having no real idea of how or where to begin. As was my custom, I pulled on local business owners and professionals as guest speakers for the purpose of supplementing the academic curriculum being offered. Toward the end of the program, I realized that only a very few of these adult students would really make the effort and take the risk of starting their own enterprise. For many, this course was very informational where organic interpersonal relationships could be fostered.

As we came to the close and “graduation” of these 12 students, I privately spoke with three students whom I thought were really interested enough to take the entrepreneur plunge. My invitation was that if they were interested, we could meet on a weekly basis to investigate next steps together in their journey toward self-employment. We decided to meet for lunch every week at a local sandwich shop that allowed us to meet in a spare room wherein my primary purpose was to provide encouragement and any type of support as each person took steps to build their business. There were some weeks where only two of us showed up for lunch but that was okay. It did not take long for others to hear about our lunch gatherings, and since we did not have any specific agenda—anyone could attend. Generally, we would ask any new folks to tell us about their entrepreneurial aspirations and what actions they had taken to start realizing those dreams. Soon we started having five to eight people join us for lunch—still no real agenda except mutual encouragement, sharing of ideas, making suggestions, and discussing local resources for pursuing the development of our business ideas. Most of the attendees were now folks who never attended any of the entrepreneurship training sessions that I had been conducting through the local workforce center over the past couple of years. We had been meeting every Wednesday, but some of the regular attendees thought that Mondays would be a better day for their respective schedules, so we started to meet every Monday for lunch. The original lunch location was downtown, but parking was difficult; so, we decided to meet at various restaurants around town. The thinking was that if we moved the lunch location from the south side, to the north side, to mid-town, etc., then it would provide a broader base of opportunity for people to attend who may not have time to drive across town each week. This way, our lunch locations were more accessible to more people.

My adoptive role as a coordinator of these lunch location gatherings launched me into formalizing my website and building a calendar of events which ended up being a discipline to keep myself organized. To this day, not many of the lunch attendees have even visited the website, Venture Call LLC ([www.venturecall.com](http://www.venturecall.com)) to see where the next lunch location will be. I have made modest use of Facebook and LinkedIn to advertise these lunches and other sponsored events, but since my goal was not necessarily to build my own enterprise, I did not faithfully use those social media tools to drive enrollment or attendance. Most of the communication with the ASC has been through email and text messaging. The name of this lunch group was proposed by an early attendee after a couple of other unsatisfactory iterations that I tried to impose. The attendees comprised people who just showed up for lunch, whom I generally ask if they want to be on a distribution list wherein I send out weekly notices regarding the location of the next lunch. There was no official *membership*. Periodically, I included in the email distribution list an option for past attendees to opt out of being on the distribution list. If I did not see someone for several months, I usually extracted their names from the list; so, there is nothing procedurally determinative about the process.

I kept telling myself that when people quit showing up for lunch, so will I. They have not quit; so, neither have I. While there is a core group of people who show up on a nearly weekly basis, we never have the same constituency each week. Usually our weekly lunches have included six to eight folks in attendance and where there is no particular format. If a first-time attendee comes, I ask them to tell the group about themselves and their reason for coming. Likewise, I ask all the other attendees to share their names and business information. Since most of the weekly lunch locations are not held in sequestered rooms, I have to get all the sidebar conversations to cease for a few moments so that this information can be shared.

In January 2018, I started a “*2nd Monday*” *Lunch Event* which included a guest speaker at the lunches. From such a unique name, it communicated that the second Monday of each month would have a guest speaker address the lunch group. Generally, this speaker is a local entrepreneur or service provider who could encourage the attendees in their entrepreneurial pursuits. The power of story seems to be one of the most effective modes of encouragement for these “enterprisers,” which includes not only for-profit entrepreneurs but also non-profit practitioners and even faculty members of a local university. Our lunch location has Wi-Fi and television screens available for these presentations where I bring my laptop for the use of the presenters. The guest speakers are also encouraged to bring any handouts or marketing materials for attendees. The typical attendance for these events is about 20 listeners/questioners. This 2nd Monday lunch is still just 1 hour in length and is held monthly at the same restaurant, which does not charge us for the use of their meeting room. Each attendee is responsible for the purchase of their own lunch, which is the only cost to them.

## **Observations**

Why were people showing up every week for lunch? I have posed a question on a couple of occasions. Obviously, over the span of more than 4 years of operation, faces have come and gone, but there always seems to be a core of six to eight people who attend on a regular basis (two to four times per month.) If one of these people does not show up, it is more unusual than not. These are also the people with whom I call upon if I am unable to attend the lunch, to ensure that new folks are welcomed and to maintain some level of continuity. So, why do these regular attendees participate?

Via informal polling, I have been told a few reasons that are probably not surprising to any student of entrepreneurial social group dynamics:

- Some of these people work out of their homes. They see the lunches as an escape from their normal operation of their business.
- There have been people who are searching for new “customers” or leads who come a few times, but they generally do not stick around to actually build the type of real relationships evident in our midst.
- Some have built an identity with the group—and it is *their* group.
- The newer business owners or startups find that there is a wisdom among the other attendees that provides information, resources, and camaraderie, not easily accessed in other settings that are more formal and membership driven.
- Since the weekly lunches are located in rotating sections of town, access is somewhat of a determinant based on the amount of time that they have available for lunch.

One of the disconcerting observations is that hardly anyone accesses my website for information regarding the events or lunch. Even the most tenured attendees will text or call me about the location for the next lunch if I am a bit slow getting the notifications set via email or a Monday morning reminder text. On my homepage there is a slider with 3–4 weeks of weekly lunch schedules with links to the details of each gathering. Also, I have a posted video of the most recent guest speaker from our 2nd Monday lunch events, which, virtually, nobody watches. I could probably close down the website altogether, but (as mentioned earlier) it helps me stay organized and methodical in providing this service to our Abilene, Texas community.

In the past I have posted pictures on Facebook of the weekly lunch group, in hope of spurring interest in any followers of Facebook to join us for lunch. Once again, I have not put significant effort or money into that medium to actually build much of a following. There are people who have asked to be part of our Facebook group that I have never met, nor have they ever attended one of our events. I use my personal LinkedIn account

just to announce the 2nd Monday events or larger events. There is not any recognizable movement from that social media outlet that I can see.

My (one-person) company, Venture Call, LLC has typically hosted two larger events per annum under the moniker of The Enterprise Exchange and The Business Clinic. Explanations of those strategies can be found at <https://venturecall.com/services/>.

### **An Analysis of What Worked and What Did Not Work Well**

Making an assessment of *success factors* contributing to the longevity of the Abilene Startup Community (ASC) lunches probably falls in the category of “best guesses” rather than “best practices.” This analysis is clearly a hindsight view and not a result of finely tuned planning. I view these lunches as a very small part of the larger Abilene entrepreneurial community which is generally more formal and higher profile. Some of our attendees participate in those larger arenas but most do not. ASC seems to be more of a home for less-sophisticated entrepreneurs, startups, and hobbyists flirting with entrepreneurship. [Author’s Note: Keep in mind that this entire project did not and does not have a written business plan. The whole development is organic, just as most prosaic enterprises are. As my friends from the Recovery Community instruct: Just do the next “right thing.”]

### **Success Factors**

I would regard the following components as *essential elements* where I provide additional commentary regarding how these components were delivered. These are key ingredients that seem to be necessary contributors to the ongoing maintenance of this small entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### ***Relationship-Driven***

The cornerstone principle holding this group together will most certainly be relational, not driven by economic interests but more out of a sense of *koinonia* (Greek word κοινωμία meaning communion or fellowship) centered around “breaking bread together” (e.g., lunch). Fitting this event into the regular schedule of busy people who are going to stop for lunch anyway seems to have a particular initial appeal. There is not much risk in going to lunch with a few strangers since it does not have the same *feel* as being invited to a “meeting” that one must work into their (already busy) schedule. Once an individual attends one of the lunches, they typically get drawn into sidebar conversations with others who are interested in *what they do for a living*. It is not unusual for them to know someone already in the group, but many times, they were invited by a friend who regularly attends the lunches anyway.

### ***Inexpensive***

There are multiple lunch groups meeting around town, but frequently, they require some kind of dues or registration fee. Many of these groups are, expressly, purposed for passing on referrals in order to build the attendees' business; so, they are primarily economic-driven. This is not to say that relationships are not built in the process but just that the motivation is overtly economic. As mentioned, the cost to attend the ASC lunch is just the cost of your lunch and there is no registration.

### ***Easy Accessibility***

The weekly lunches move at a variety of locations and types of food options. While we do not go to restaurants where servers take our orders, we focus on restaurants wherein the attendees can get in and out within an hour (e.g., buffet format, ordering at the counter). As mentioned earlier, we alternate the lunch locations, intentionally, in an effort to increase accessibility to a broader audience. I have found that some restaurants seem to have a larger turnout than others. The primary exception to this rotation strategy is that the 2nd Monday lunch events with guest speakers is held at the same restaurant every second Monday of each month.

### ***Participatory Involvement***

Asking attendees to perform certain functions at the 2nd Monday events and asking them to be guest speakers talking about their businesses provide a type of *ownership and identification* that contribute to the ongoing cohesion of the group. Since ASC is seen as a voluntary group, most attendees are willing and honored to be asked to perform occasional services. Whenever I am unable to attend, there are two to three regular attendees that I will contact to provide *hosting* services for that upcoming lunch.

### ***Multiple Choices***

Not only do attendees have choices of restaurants, but within the regularity of knowing we meet every Monday, they can choose to just come to the 2nd Monday events where interesting topics and speakers present OR they can enjoy the more relaxed non-format of just getting together for lunch weekly. It is amazing how much business and connection takes place in an organic (non-predetermined) way. Additionally, the ABS also acts as a springboard for other annual events for The Enterprise Exchange and The Business Clinic.

### ***The Caveats***

Keep in mind that the following caveats are probably distinctive to, both, the Abilene market AND my own personal operating style. These are not



universal to every market, though certain principles may be valuable in any given ecosystem.

### ***Regular Contact Required***

I am uncertain if I tried to just rely on posting information about the lunches on social media that it would be enough to maintain the gathering. I do not even use such products as *Constant Contact*. Even though I have the lunch locations and dates posted on my website, very few of the attendees even think of looking there for that information. I have “spoiled” them with weekly emails to a larger audience (approximately 80 people), sent every Sunday evening. On Monday mornings, I select up to 40 folks to send a text “reminder” of the lunch event scheduled for noon that day. Should I suspend these two outreach strategies, I think that would be the end of the attendance; although, there would be a handful of folks texting me with inquiries as to the location of the lunch.

### ***Topic Importance***

I have tried to infuse a couple of the 2nd Monday events with more or less philosophic topics that were related to entrepreneurship. These seemed to be less well-attended. The biggest topical draw to hear the guest speakers on 2nd Monday lunch events seems to be centered around the power of story: how that individual started and manages their business. A secondary popular type of topic has to do with offering the attendees supplementary resources that they perceive as relating directly to the management, building, or success of their individual enterprise.

### ***Time Investment***

In my case, I do not coordinate these events with a profit motive in mind, but rather a community service motive is my driver. Once an infrastructure was set up, I probably spend about an hour a week maintaining the email distribution list, postings, website updates, etc. Also, if successful, attendees will start viewing the coordinator of the events as an *information warehouse* wherein contacts with other people can be facilitated, which takes time, as well.

### **Summary**

The Abstract for this essay indicates a worldview to which I hold, believing that *entrepreneurship* begins with a particular mindset, followed by a willingness to take action. My opinions are largely formed via experience and observation as opposed to an academic study of the topic. I am a practitioner, mostly regarding myself as a *social entrepreneur*.

*Called to a Community Venture* is a borrowed title from one of the attendees of our weekly lunches that seems to reflect back to the name of my company, Venture Call, LLC. A quick review of my website will reveal that the sense of *calling* (vocation) is central to my personal message and worldview (see Guinness, 2003). One can hear folks use the verbiage of *calling* in all sectors of our society but scarce few really stop to think that a *calling* is contingent on a “caller.” In that sense, those who are “called” are required to make a response if anything is to be done, thus becoming a “doer.” This essay is replete with my own personal observations and opinions: it seems that much of the entrepreneurial spirit exemplified by those brave souls is a result of *sovereign individuals* taking action to pursue their personal vision. In this sense, “sovereign” simply means self-governing. Entrepreneurship is not a collective exercise. That is not to dismiss the value of collaboration or even co-founders, but my observation is that most entrepreneurial enterprises are driven by a primary visionary. These may be people who are responding to market forces, but they are not collectivists who do not take responsibility for their own actions nor become owners of subsequent outcomes. The entrepreneur owns their *idea* and willingly takes responsibility for the success or failure of the implementation of that idea.

This case study would probably be best categorized as a social action that does not have monetary remuneration as a goal. For some, I suppose, this would be disregarded as an entrepreneurial enterprise; but, many of the processes and results of the development of the ASC are, indeed, symptomatic of other entrepreneurial endeavors that I weekly witness with those who attend our lunches. I keep wondering if all my efforts to maintain these lunches have any real value; but have been assured by the weekly attendance to the contrary. In addition, on occasion, a variety of attendees will individually thank me for continuing the coordination of these events. Another evidence is that I have become somewhat of a clearing house of contacts and resources. There is hardly a week that goes by where I do not receive a phone call, text, or email asking me to connect the inquirer with one of my contacts.

While not all entrepreneurs share in my particular worldview, I find that there are enough similarities to join us in a loose fellowship of the entrepreneurial mindset that is mutually beneficial to all. It seems to me that this story would be applicable and replicable in many types of settings, especially rural towns. The entrepreneurial spirit is not only embodied in Silicon Valley. In fact, it is my belief that it is embedded in any of those who are made in the image of God.

In addition to Venture Call, other resources for faith-driven entrepreneurs include Convene, Truth at Work Round Table, Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, Faith Tech, New Canaan Society, CBMC Get Connected, Leader Impact, Nashville Institute for Faith and Work Entrepreneur Support Group, The Christian Business Network, and Acumen (Faith Driven Entrepreneur, 2021).

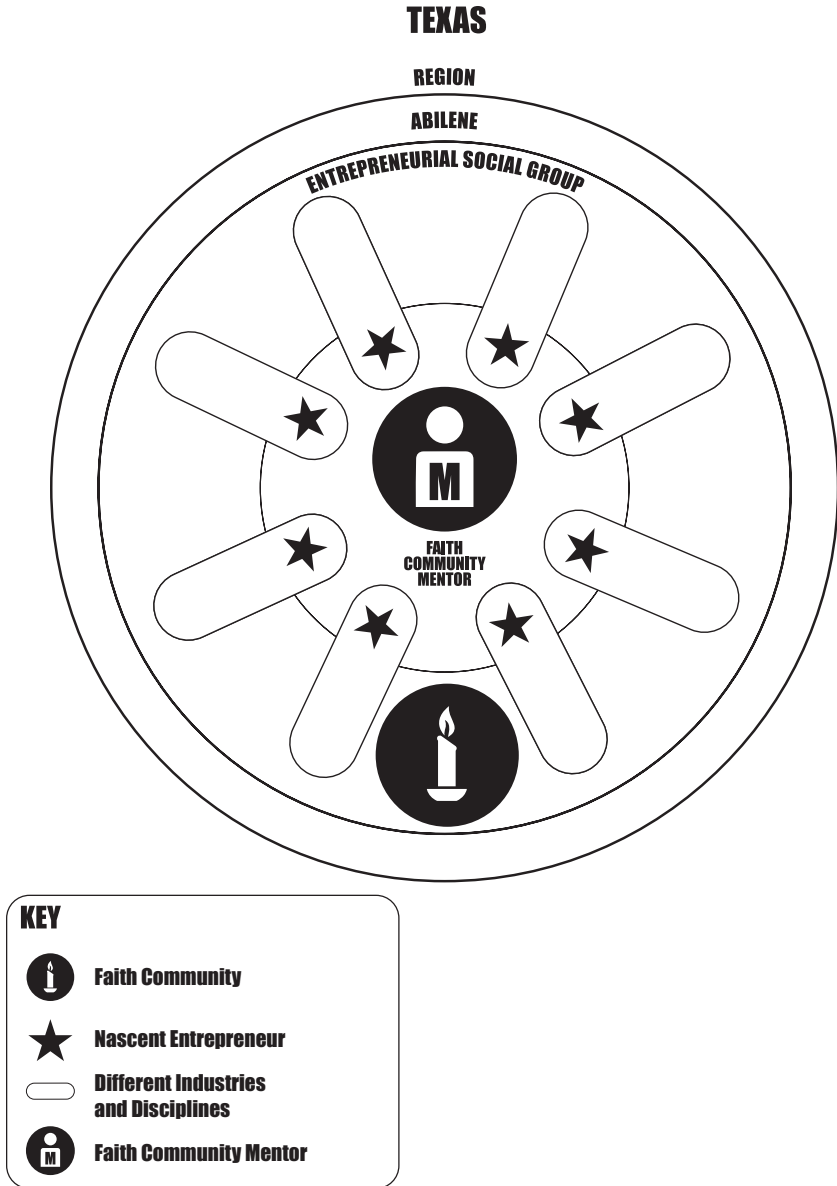


Figure 7.2 Faith Community Entrepreneurial Social Group in Abilene, Texas

## References

- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 373–395.
- Biblica. (2011). *Proverbs 27:17*. *New international version Bible*. <https://biblehub.com/proverbs/27-17.htm>

- Busenitz, L. W., & Lichtenstein, B. B. (2019). Faith in research: Forging new ground in entrepreneurship. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 33(3), <https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2017.0112>
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Faith Driven Entrepreneur. (2021). *The 10 advisory groups for faith driven entrepreneurs*. Faith Driven Entrepreneur. [www.faithdrivenentrepreneur.org/top-advisory-groups-for-faith-driven-entrepreneurs](http://www.faithdrivenentrepreneur.org/top-advisory-groups-for-faith-driven-entrepreneurs)
- Gannett, H. (1905). *The origin of certain place names in the United States*. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Guiness, O. (2003). *The call: Finding and fulfilling the central purpose of your life*. Thomas Nelson.
- Guiness, O., Koloszyk, G., & Lee-Thorp, K. (2001). *Entrepreneurs of life: Faith and the venture of purposeful living*. Navpress Pub Group.
- Heiberg, D. (Ed.). (2010). *Abilene*. Encyclopedia Britannica. [www.britannica.com/place/Abilene-Texas](http://www.britannica.com/place/Abilene-Texas)
- Lancy, D. F. (1993). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to the major traditions*. Longman Publishing Group.
- Lichtenstein, B. (1998). *Self-organized change in entrepreneurial ventures: A dynamic, non-linear model* (Unpublished dissertation). Boston, MA: Boston College.
- Lichtenstein, B. (2000). Self-organized transitions: A pattern amidst the “chaos” of transformative change. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14(4), 128–141.
- Lichtenstein, B. (2016). Emergence and emergent in entrepreneurship: Complexity science insights into new venture creation. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 6, 43–52.
- McClelland, D. C. (1961). *The achieving society*. Van Nostrand.
- Neal, J. A., Lichtenstein, B., M. B., & Banner, D. (1999). Spiritual perspectives on individual, organizational, and societal transformation. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 12, 175–186.
- Neck, C. P., & Manz, C. C. (2012). *Mastering self-leadership: Empowering yourself for personal excellence* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Newell, E. E. (2017). Entrepreneurial community success: Psychological characteristics, experiences, and identity. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 254–281). Routledge.
- Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically: Thematics in the turn to narrative. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 3–34). Sage.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.
- Venture Call. (2021). *About us*. Venture Call, LLC. <https://venturecall.com/about-us/>

# 8 A Framework for Decolonizing Community Economic Development and Entrepreneurship in Native Nations in Minnesota

*Rani A. Bhattacharyya with Bill Lewis  
and Morgan R. Clevenger*

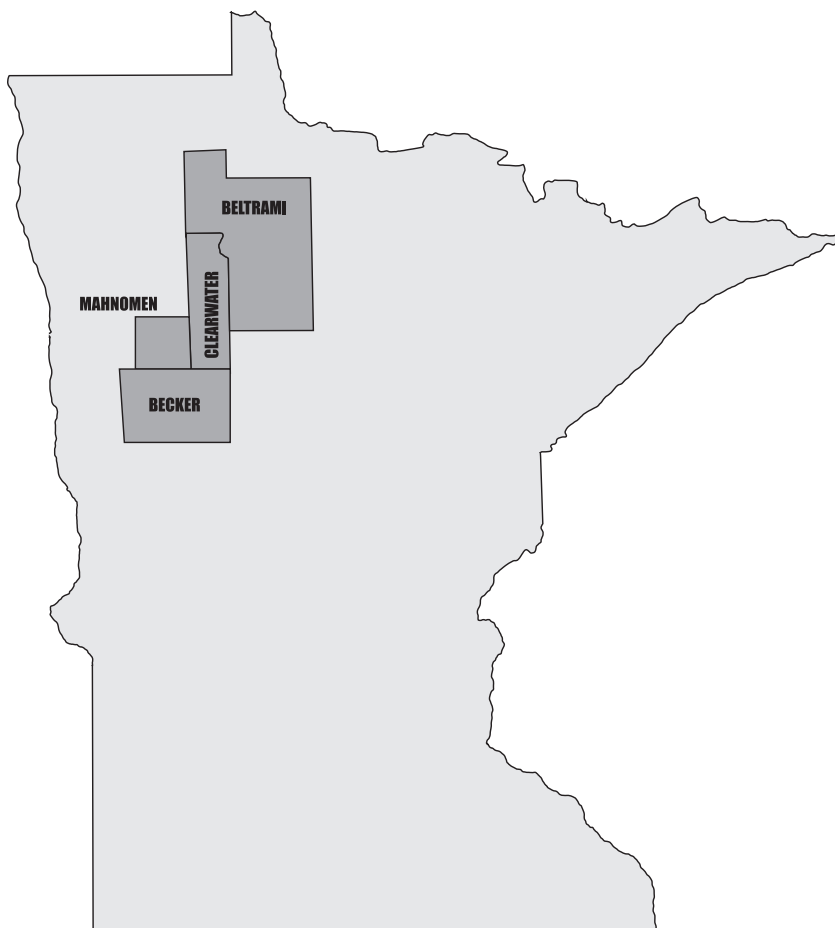
To better understand the opportunity that the University of Minnesota Extension and its community development partners inhabit to uplift the Indigenous economies of these two Native Nations and strengthen the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, it is paramount to explore thematic terms and concepts not addressed currently by Extension programs. These topics relate to considerations that should be taken into account when planning to develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem that serves both American Indian communities and their neighbors; specifically, we will review:

- Context for Assessing American Indian Entrepreneurial Success
- Context for Teaching American Indian Youth and Youth Entrepreneurship
- Relational Context Between Industry and the Entrepreneur
- Context and Factors in Assessing Tourism Entrepreneurial Success
- Regional Economic Dependence on Innovation Networks for Small Business Development

After exploring these topics, this chapter also proposes four applied research projects that can be initiated in partnership Tribal Colleges, their development partners and state Land-Grant Universities. These include:

- Understanding and articulating the Value Proposition Entrepreneurship holds for Native Nations and their neighbors,
- Assessment of current community factor effects on regional entrepreneurship rates,
- Assessment of entrepreneurial confidence in communities in utilizing these assets to develop SMEs [small and medium enterprises],
- Assessments of regional markets to better understand potential SME types that can be developed to address local consumer and visitor product and service demands, and
- The provision of case study examples of existing entrepreneurial endeavors of tribal member-owned businesses and immigrant-owned businesses.

## **MINNESOTA BECKER, BELTRAMI, CLEARWATER, AND MAHNOMEN COUNTIES**



*Figure 8.1* Map of Minnesota

### **Overview**

#### ***Time Span***

This discussion considers the historical and systemic current repercussions since the appropriation of Native American land for use, including development of the Land-Grant Universities under the Smith-Lever Act. “The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 provided additional funds for extension programs,

designed to bring their communities the benefits of new campus-based research” (Rhodes, 2001, p. 6).

### ***Methodology and Types of Data***

The discussion provided is based on the literature reviewed to provide perspective on historical disadvantage for Indigenous people.

### ***Entrepreneurial Community***

The goal of the chapter is to empower Indigenous people by righting past wrongs in the U.S. dynamics. Ultimately, educating Indigenous people and aiding them in entrepreneurship can provide a livelihood and sustainability for the long term. Next, a framework is presented through which the University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension and its partners can conceptualize their engagement with communities so as to uplift BIPOC entrepreneurs into rural regional economies.

### ***Cultural Aspects***

*The Why* expresses the Cultural Aspects to better support and build entrepreneurial communities for Indigenous people and BIPOCs.

### ***Power and Empowerment***

Perhaps the most explicit example of entrepreneurial empowerment involves the support, encouragement, and elevation of historically marginalized and disempowered groups. This case study represents perhaps the utmost sociologically important example of entrepreneurial empowerment in the book. Native Americans, the Indigenous people of Minnesota in this case, have been subject to 170 years of systematic oppression, neglect, and displacement through the settlement of White U.S. American societies in the upper Midwest, leading to a history rife with inequality and conflict between Indigenous and settler groups, leading to the loss of native lands and exclusion from the mainstream U.S. economy through a combination of lack of access to productive resources, education, information—as well as through both overt and subtle discriminatory practices. The history of Indigenous oppression in the United States is one that has come to the forefront in recent decades, prominently featured in critical theories within the sociological literature but far less of a focus in the entrepreneurship literature, where the special dynamics facing Indigenous ecosystems have received little attention.

The term “decolonialism” used here represents the reassertion and empowerment of Indigenous culture, traditional lifestyle, and sense of place and belonging in the broader economic sphere. It is the opposite of exclusion: a deliberate role to be played by Indigenous people in shaping their own

economic destiny without acquiescing (by necessity) to trends, norms, and values set by dominant economic groups that mostly trace their roots to White settler culture. It does *not* promote the dominance of any one group over any other group, but rather recognizes that Indigenous groups make very important contributions to the marketplace through their products and services. The best way to encourage such contributions is through entrepreneurial support and education that is sensitive to Indigenous values, and an ecosystem ethic that embraces Native American culture on equal footing with offerings from the mainstream economy. The value of such offerings speaks for itself.

This case study is unique in that it explores how a legacy “settler” institution—U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Extension—can play an important role in researching and understanding the inner workings of Indigenous entrepreneurial ecosystems in Minnesota, and also how such institutions can be adapted to empower BIPOC communities more broadly by decolonizing notions of power and knowledge and by embracing Indigenous knowledge as equal and mutually beneficial. These implications can be extended to other institutions who seek to engage BIPOC populations more authentically and in the spirit of genuine partnership and societal benefit.

### ***Leadership Aspects***

As part of the institutionalized system that has and continues to systematically marginalize BIPOC residents of Minnesota, the University system and its Cooperative Extension are in the process of re-envisioning how their established networks and an embedded understanding of the living history of the state and its people can be used to reverse historical wrongs, and to reframe what it means to develop a culturally pluralistic society. This effort to change—and understanding the need to change—comes from the diverse areas in which the University (and more specifically the Cooperative Extension) has and continues to deliver public education and community outreach to community members residing in Minnesota, specifically in the areas of Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family Development, Community and Economic Development, and Sustainable Development. Native American scholars and tribal members have illuminated the disparity and historic malevolence of settlers.

### ***The Why***

The necessity to reconcile the history of Land-Grant Universities with the economic exploitation of Indigenous people and decolonize traditional rural economic development theory to include BIPOC perspectives has been identified by a number of sources. In the case of Native Nations, Kocherlakota (2012) suggested the primary goals of rural economic development for Native Nations are: (1) population retention and (2) restrictions on land ownership,



so as to preserve their cultural identity and sovereignty. Tuhiwai-Smith (2012) also called for a revitalization and regeneration of Indigenous cultural practices in education and community-based programs. Villanueva (2021) also provided examples from across the country as to how philanthropic work has perpetuated colonial thinking in its engagement in community development work within BIPOC communities, and also proposed that the suffering of White dominant oppressors and the BIPOC oppressed are not separate issues but need to be reconciled through dialogue and engagement by both sides.

### ***A Brief History***

The Red Lake Nation is an Indian reservation that occupies land in nine counties of Minnesota. It is the federally recognized home to the Red Lake Band of the so-called Chippewa tribe, and all of the property on the reservation is uniquely held in common ownership among all of the tribe (Brill, 1992).

In the 1600s, members of the Ojibwe tribe moved into what is now northern Minnesota. They were successful in forcing the Dakota people away from the area. They quickly developed a relationship with the French who were moving into Canada (Warren, 2009). The tribe supported the French in the French and Indian War and despite the French defeat, the tribe continued ties to French settlements in Canada.

In the 1850s, a Roman Catholic mission was established in the region (Sister Owne Lindblad, 1997). The establishment of a school for girls followed and, over the years, many of the tribal members adopted the Catholic religion. In 1863, an early treaty was completed with the United States for various parts of the reservation. In the next decades, much of the original land was ceded as Minnesota began to fill with new settlers.

The late 1800s saw many attempts to take land away from the reservation, culminating in the 1898 Battle of Sugar Point (Matseri, 1987, pp. 269–275). In the early 20th Century, attempts to further reduce the size of the reservation ended. The reservation holds a “closed status” in that the State of Minnesota has no legal jurisdiction in the area, with the tribal government and the federal Bureau of Indians Affairs holding law enforcement and government authority.

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, discussion focuses on the need to decolonize the way entrepreneurship and business value is understood by (1) land grant universities and (2) BIPOC. Then a framework is presented through which the University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension and its partners can conceptualize their engagement with communities so as to uplift BIPOC entrepreneurs into rural regional economies. The nested spheres of civic action (see Figure 8.2) include:

- Decolonizing entrepreneurship education
- Decolonizing business networks

- Decolonizing community entrepreneurial climate
- Decolonizing community economics

These spheres represent the growth stages of BIPOC entrepreneurial awareness and engagement within their community. Each sphere is dependent upon the lower spheres to sustain its identity and distinctiveness within its larger environment. Several case examples highlight economic research and education efforts being undertaken in Northwest Minnesota by the University of Minnesota Extension. They are provided as examples of research and education that can help to decolonize regional economic systems and allow for the inclusion of BIPOC entrepreneurs in the economic and civic life of the regions and communities where they reside.

### **Decolonizing Perceptions of Entrepreneurship and Business Value for BIPOC Communities**

The necessity to reconcile the history of Land-Grant Universities with the economic exploitation of Indigenous people and decolonize traditional rural economic development theory to include BIPOC perspectives has been identified by a number of sources. In the case of Native Nations, Kocherlakota (2012) suggests the primary goals of rural economic development for Native Nations are (1) population retention and (2) restrictions on land ownership so as to preserve their cultural identity and sovereignty. Tuhiwai-Smith (2012) also calls for a revitalization and regeneration of Indigenous cultural practices in education and community-based programs. Villanueva (2021) also provides examples from across the country as to how philanthropic work has perpetuated colonial thinking in its engagement in community development work within BIPOC communities. He proposes that the suffering of White dominant oppressors and the BIPOC oppressed are not separate issues but need to be reconciled through dialogue and engagement by both sides.

### ***Reconciling the Role of Land-Grant Universities and Cooperative Extension in Perpetuating Settler Colonialism Ideology in Minnesota***

This section briefly reviews the origins of how the Land-Grant University concept was and is still intended to primarily benefit assimilated members of mainstream U.S. American society, and outline how the University of Minnesota still has financial obligations to the Indigenous communities that co-inhabit lands within or adjacent to the state of Minnesota.

Ever since the origins of the Land-Grant University concept (with the Smith-Lever Act), the Cooperative Extension has been charged with providing research and education on local, regional, state, and national concerns. Yet as Peters (1998) noted:

Extension work was seen both as a means of increasing the efficiency and productivity of agriculture, and as a means of developing a vital

rural culture of active citizens. . . . What developed in practice, however, even before the Cooperative Extension System was brought into being in 1914, was a gradual triumph of narrow economic goals and specialized expertise and an increasing marginalization of the civic mission and public work tradition. The dilemma of choosing between civic and economic goals in extension was resolved in large measure at the expense of its civic mission.

(pp. 131–132)

The goal of enhancing democratic thinking and civic engagement, in addition to economic prosperity in rural parts of the United States was, in part, influenced by the concept of cultural pluralism that was part of the transcendentalist movement that occurred in the United States in the late 19th Century.

This ideal mission for the Minnesota Cooperative Extension, to create a culturally pluralistic society, was and continues to be overshadowed by the settler colonial perspective held by U.S. American civic leaders in the 18th Century where “as opposed to enslaved people, whose reproduction augmented their owners’ wealth, Indigenous people obstructed settlers’ access to land, so their increase was counterproductive” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 387). The Morrill Act of 1862—known as the Land Grant College Act—provided federal funding for the creation of higher education institutions (Christy & Williamson, 1992; Key, 1996). The “Land-Grant Act” was introduced by Congressman Justin Smith Morrill (R-Vermont), who envisioned the financing of agricultural, mechanical, and home economics education accessible to all social classes. Duderstadt (1999/2000) indicated that “The Morrill Act and the other land-grant acts stimulated the states to create public universities to help develop the vast natural resources of the nation . . . while broadening opportunities to the working class” (p. 37). Furthering the context, Clevenger et al. (2021) said,

President Abraham Lincoln signed the bill, giving each state 30,000 acres of public land for each senator and representative based on the 1860 census. Most of the land was sold and proceeds were either used to create an educational institution or to establish an endowment fund to provide support for the colleges in each of the states.

(p. 61)

Goodluck et al. (2020) also explained that “The Morrill Act of 1862 granted that land to states to be sold for the benefit of fledgling universities; altogether, it would raise nearly \$18 million for 52 institutions by the early 20th Century” (para 6). Goodluck et al. (2020) also note that through The Morrill Act, the state of Minnesota originally acquired 94,631 acres of land to fundraise for the University of Minnesota. These lands were originally ceded by the U.S. treaties of July 23, 1851 with the Sioux (Medewakanton

and Wahpekuta) and Sioux (Wahpeton and Sisseton Bands), and the U.S. Treaty of August 2, 1847, by the Chippewa of the Mississippi and Lake Superior. The United States paid the tribes \$2,309 for these acres, which the state of Minnesota, in turn, parceled up as properties for private use at a total of \$579,430 that went toward seeding the endowment of the University of Minnesota. This calculation represents a 251:1 rate of return for the University. Adjusting for inflation, this means the United States paid \$77,603 to the tribes and the University of Minnesota gained \$10,622,888 in endowment principal representing a 137:1 rate of return. Additionally, the University still retain the mineral rights to 240 of these acres—the current value of which has yet to be publicly disclosed (Lee et al., 2021).

As part of the institutionalized system that has and continues to systematically marginalize BIPOC residents of Minnesota, the University system and its Cooperative Extension are in the process of re-envisioning how their established networks and an embedded understanding of the living history of the state and its people can be used to reverse historical wrongs and to reframe what it means to develop a culturally pluralistic society. This effort to change—and understanding the need to change—comes from the diverse areas in which the University (and more specifically the Cooperative Extension) has and continues to deliver public education and community outreach to community members residing in Minnesota, specifically in the areas of Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family Development, Community and Economic Development, and Sustainable Development.

### *Decolonizing Assumptions of BIPOC Entrepreneurial Success*

Any effort to decolonize economic development in regions where BIPOC live and work must begin with a rethinking of assumptions about how entrepreneurship and business success are defined. Many federal, state, and local agencies, non-profit organizations, and foundations have attempted to tackle the longstanding issue of poverty during the past four decades with entrepreneurship programs targeting American Indian communities. Results indicate mixed success. The research of Swinney and Runyan (2007) posits that unlike traditional start-ups in the United States, Native American start-ups are not necessarily intended to be sold. Often, they are intended to serve the long-term employment needs of family and friends.

In a similar line of thinking, Lee (2009) explains that

traditional Indigenous education is rooted in developing individuals who can contribute to the well-being of the community. . . . One's natural environment and current realities become the basis of one's intellectual and personal development with the end goal of education in Native contexts being contribution to community life.

(p. 23)

This statement is especially relevant considering that 70% of American Indian youths are enrolled in rural public schools in the United States (Demmert et al., 2006). Gallagher and Selman (2015) also explore this unique communal obligation aspect of American Indian businesses to develop a new term called a “Warrior Entrepreneur.” This term blends the basic goals of an Indigenous modern-day warrior (an Indigenous individual who works toward establishing peace, social unity, and implementing decolonization processes) with the characteristics of an Indigenous entrepreneur (a tribal member who attempts to establish a new business based on “who they are,” “what they know,” and “who they know”) (Swinney & Runyan, 2007, pp. 77–78). There are some detractors of Swinney and Runyan’s theory regarding differential modes for entrepreneurial development between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, but Foley (2012) found similar characteristics in his study of Indigenous and other minority peoples in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. Benson et al. (2011) also discovered promising results in their quantitative analysis of 26 years’ worth of data from the Lakota Fund operating on Pine Ridge Reservation. Contrary to general assumptions about micro-lending as a purely re-distributional method of economic development, their study found that micro-lending from the fund did increase the real per capita income for residents on the reservation.

Anderson et al. (2006) also contended that community and family commitments should not be romanticized as a pre-colonial aspect of U.S. American Indian culture. They remind us that Native Nations throughout the country developed trade and commerce relationships long before European settlement, with many of the agriculturally oriented tribes adopting agricultural cooperatives similar to those today.

The nomadic, or seasonally rotating nations, operated within economies based on family businesses and independent entrepreneurs. Russell-Mundine (2012) also propose that Indigenous researchers and non-Indigenous researchers need to work together to decolonize the power structures within research design, so that projects align with the community and economic development goals of Indigenous communities versus purely the research aims of dominant culture academic institutions. In the post-disciplinary vein, the aim is to use “soft power” to remain open to the future, open to dialogue and debate, and to ensure that as critical scholars to not become entrenched in views and unable to welcome others (Coles et al., 2006; Hollinshead, 2010).

Concerning the application of Western theories of entrepreneurial development with BIPOC immigrant populations, Wood et al. (2021) also suggest that mainstream applications of entrepreneurship programs as empowerment tools for women from collectivist cultures ignore collectivist perceptions of the terms “power” and “self” and therefore fail at truly helping intended beneficiaries achieve their own specific power goals within their community. Dutta (2015) also suggests that subaltern (or post-colonized) societies

like India resist dominant (Western) concepts of development by disengaging in Western lead theoretical conversations concerning development and instead focus their communicative and academic efforts in engagement with other subaltern societies only, to generate development models that truly empower their citizens and preserve their resource base. Yet Bhatia and Ram (2001) suggest that for immigrants to the United States, who originate from non-Western and non-European countries, the concept of their “acculturation” into U.S. society should be viewed as remaining in a constant fluid and negotiable state, depending on their personal capabilities.

Focusing these thoughts on the effectiveness of entrepreneurial development in uplifting BIPOC business owners in Northwest Minnesota, it becomes apparent that to be more intentional, inclusive, and engaging with BIPOC business owners and potential entrepreneurs is needed to allow more space and time for the motivational attributes of entrepreneurs and their societal contributions to be heard and understood at deeper levels within our communities, beneath the simple transactional activities of day to day business.

### **Civic Spheres Through Which to Enact Decolonization of Regional Economic Systems**

The following section provides an overview of four spheres of action (see Figure 8.2) that are key to the development of a regional economic system that uplifts BIPOC residents as potential entrepreneurs.

**Community Economics:** refers to knowledge acquisition and decision making by local units of government and economic and community development professionals of explicit knowledge concerning financial and labor flows involved in the innovation, production, and consumption of goods and services traded within a community.

**Entrepreneurial Climate:** refers to the values, attitudes, and beliefs that inform the tacit knowledge community members have toward supporting local business development, growth, and articulation of public value.

**Business Networks:** refers to the formal and informal constellation of individuals and institutions that businesses rely on to acquire resources to establish, grow, and transition their businesses to meet the needs of the businesses target markets.

**Entrepreneurship Education:** refers to the institutions within a community that provide business owners implicit knowledge concerning the skills needed to successfully align trade opportunities into formalized entities that contribute to the well-being of the community at large. This sphere also encompasses the actions taken to impart tacit knowledge to youth of their civic and individual responsibilities within a community.

*Table 8.1 Business Entrepreneurial Performance Scales in Relation to Community Spheres of Civic Action*

<i>Touch Points Between Business and Communities in Entrepreneurial Development (Russell &amp; Faulkner, 2004)</i>	<i>Potential Evaluative Scales for Entrepreneurial Performance Within Each Sphere of a Community</i>	<i>Spheres of Civic Action That Support Entrepreneurial Development and Associated Community Capitals (Emery &amp; Flora, 2006)</i>
5) Regulated chaos at renewed tenuous conditional equilibrium	Steps in developing new Distribution Channels (Pearce (2008), Enterprise Performance and Place Identity (Hallak et al., 2012)	Decolonizing community economics (relationships to build, natural, financial, and political Capital)
4) Transition to a new phase that reflects the old	Entrepreneurial Culture Index (Breazeale et al., 2015)	Decolonizing entrepreneurial climate (cultural capital)
3) Positive feedback/self-healing enablers	Chazdon et al. (2013) and Enterprise Performance and Place Identity (Hallak et al., 2012)	Decolonizing business networks (social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking)
2) Deregulated chaos	Capacity to Trust (Brunetto et al., 2007)	Decolonizing entrepreneurship education (human capital)
1) Triggering circumstances	Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (Hallak et al., 2015)	Developing youth entrepreneurial self-efficacy (human capital)

Visually, these spheres of action can be arranged concentrically as shown later to replicate the growth process of civic engagement of a BIPOC entrepreneur. The block arrows represent formal information and resource flows between the various spheres of action, while the curved arrows represent indirect and informal flows of resources in value creation within a community resulting from decisions based on the analysis and application of the potential entrepreneurial performance assessments (see Table 8.1).

In applying such a model to the communities and region of Northwest Minnesota, we can begin to understand where and how BIPOC businesses are engaging with these touch points in their community, or if they are not. Setting a baseline of metrics to evaluate these touch points would enable economic and community development professionals, civic leaders and educators better understand the gaps in civic support that BIPOC entrepreneurs are experiencing and would provide a basis for proactive efforts to fill these gaps.

## MINNESOTA

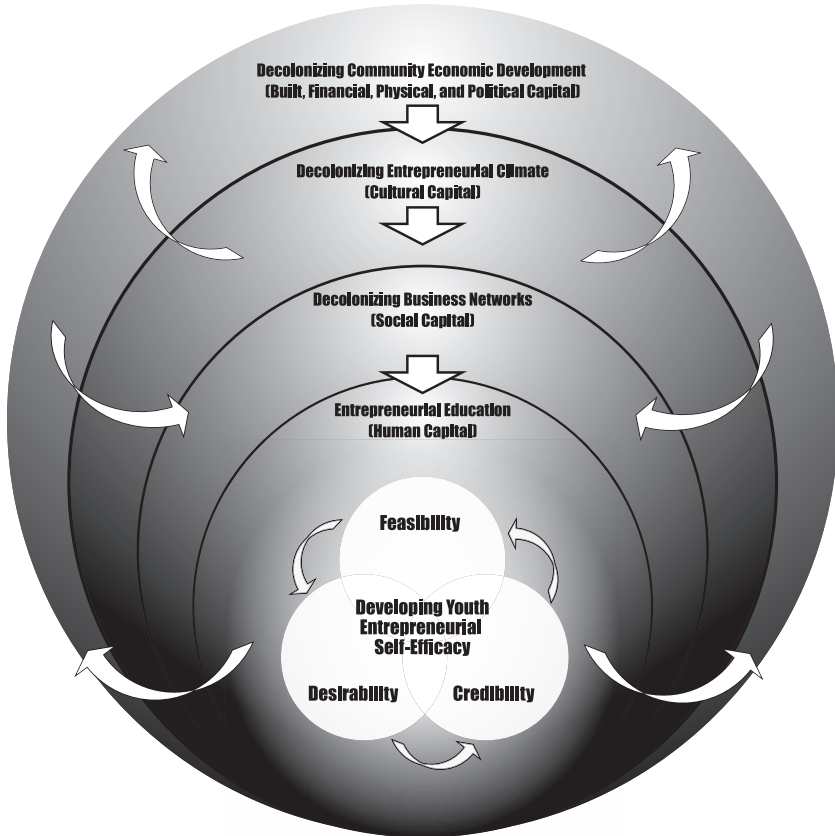


Figure 8.2 Decolonization of Community Economic Development

### *Decolonizing Youth Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Education*

The education received in the United States at both the secondary and post-secondary levels is critical in transmitting who and what people see as role models for the future. Decolonization of these institutions should encompass more culturally inclusive concepts of self-efficacy, as well as more experiential modes of entrepreneurial learning to create a more inclusive learning environment that fosters entrepreneurship for mainstream and BIPOC students. In a study of youth and latent entrepreneurship in the EU and the United Kingdom, Greene (2005) found that the United States is quite different from its European counterparts. Greene discovered that the United States has one of the lowest risk-averse scores of entrepreneurial



communities worldwide and also one of the highest entrepreneurially active youth groups (ages 18–24). Greene also explains how, despite the enthusiasm behind entrepreneurship, the failure rate of business establishment and profitability for youth remains higher than in other age cohorts. Specifically highlighted are three market failures called “asymmetries” as the potential causes:

1. The benefits of self-employment may be unknown to them (desirability);
2. The benefits of expert advice from an outside firm may be unknown to them (feasibility); and
3. Financial institutions are unable to assess the risks and rewards of lending to small firms (credibility).

(Greene, 2005, p. 9)

Examples of mainstream elementary-level engagement with entrepreneurial content included classroom activity and/or discussion about the importance of building entrepreneurial skills, which in theory would help increase the desirability by youth to act on their entrepreneurial intentions. On the secondary education level, however, teachers used one of the following, three times more often than their elementary level counterparts:

- entrepreneurship games,
- personal finance and economy activities,
- business plan component write-ups, and
- problem-based learning objectives.

All of these activities can help to strengthen a youth’s perception of how feasible their entrepreneurial intentions are. At the elementary level, Rampaul et al. (1984) also found strong correlations between Indigenous students’ scoring in self-concept, academic achievement, and teacher expectation, observing that the lower expectations teachers had of students, the lower self-concept and academic achievement was shown by students in grades 3 and 4. Smokowski et al. (2014) also found, in the case of Lumbee American Indian youth in North Carolina, that when Lumbee youths were provided opportunities to think about and envision their future selves more often (i.e., engage in future-orienting activity), they were less prone to exhibit depressive symptoms (p. 351). Dreyer (1994) also suggests that, to enhance educational curricula so that it is more identity-focused than main stream educational materials, the following attributes should be incorporated into lesson plans and classroom activities:

- (a) Exploration, which will help students exercise responsible choice and self-determination,
- (b) Role playing and social interaction across generations,

- (c) Activities that engage students in analyzing and evaluating their concepts of time and connecting events of the past to present, and
- (d) Activities that support self-acceptance and positive feedback from teachers and counsellors.

The emphasis of mainstream education on internal entrepreneurship, however, also contradicts the findings of Lipka et al. (2007), where the use of expert-apprentice and joint-activity teaching models improved Yupiaq students engagement with and access to academic concepts embedded in Math in Cultural Context curricula (MCC). For Moberg (2014), adopting a teaching approach through entrepreneurship, rather than about it, increases the chances for students to strengthen non-cognitive skill development (p. 513). In summarizing these ideas, decolonization of entrepreneurial education for BIPOC youth means that more experiential forms of entrepreneurial education be introduced in elementary school, rather than just at the secondary level. Such efforts would increase both the students' perceptions of desirability and the feasibility in developing their own business. Even more so if they are able to engage with BIPOC entrepreneurs in these experiences.

Lareau (2011) is also careful to point out that there are differences in the type of education that students receive, based on the philosophical orientation of their parents toward parental roles in educating children. There are two approaches she identifies in her ethnographic work. The first is that of concerted cultivation; and the second parenting approach is that of accomplishing natural growth. According to Larau, this second approach is most commonly adopted by poor, low-income families. If either approach is taken in its extreme, Larau also suggests that deficiencies develop within children that affect their ability to successfully integrate into society and accomplish their professional goals. Therefore, a question exists as to where a balance between these extremes lies. So, while decolonization efforts can be made within the educational system, there still may be socioeconomic differences within the home of BIPOC students that influence how youth engage with and benefit from these structured efforts. This means that more informal educational opportunities should also be provided to BIPOC youth to increase their exposure to entrepreneurial experiences (Gines and Sampson, 2019). In summary, the literature suggests that efforts to decolonize entrepreneurial education should include activities that bolster the development of self-efficacy in BIPOC youth and also be more experiential in teaching youth through the entrepreneurial process, rather than about it. [For more information about education of Indigenous America and tribal schools, see Benham and Stein's (2003) *The Renaissance of American Indian Higher Education: Capturing the Dream*, Warner and Gipp's (2009) *Tradition and Culture in the Millennium: Tribal Colleges and Universities*, and Boyer's (2015) *Capturing Education: Envisioning and*

*Building the First Tribal Colleges.* See also the American Indian College Fund at [standwithnativestudents.org](http://standwithnativestudents.org)]

### ***Decolonizing Business Networks***

Here, literature is reviewed on how entrepreneurs utilize regional economic development networks and suggest how they could be leveraged to support rural BIPOC entrepreneurship.

Greve (1995) suggests that the establishment of a business can be organized into three phases: (1) idea development, (2) organizing the founding of a firm, and (3) running of a newly established firm. Through each of these stages, Greve suggests that entrepreneurs use their networks to gain insights to (a) organize their firm and (b) run it. They gain this insight by adopting knowledge and routines already proven effective by existing businesses within their networks. In addition to this know-how, new business owners also require a workforce, capital, and distribution channels for their product or service. These other resources are complimentary to the financial capital and knowledge an entrepreneur brings to a firm and are either replicated or combined with other new information in the experiential learning the entrepreneur undertakes to establish their new firm (pp. 3–4). The speed at which talent, information, and resources move through an entrepreneurial ecosystem can affect entrepreneurs at each stage in their lifecycle (Kauffman Foundation, 2020). Yet entrepreneurial ecosystem benefits (Lichtenstein & Lyons, 2001) may be fleeting for minority, women, and immigrant entrepreneurs (MWIs), whose support systems and social networks may be poorly developed or insular. Thus, we must acknowledge and take stock of the unique challenges and obstacles encountered by MWIs (Gibbs et al., 2018). The majority of business assistance services in Minnesota are offered through the state’s Department of Employment and Economic Development and address market access issues that new entrepreneurs face when entering an existing industry. More recently DEED has also developed the Launch, MN program that is focused on strengthening a “regional hub and spoke model” for strengthening regional networks (DEED, 2021).

Villanueva (2018) stated (based on his experience in the philanthropic sector):

Ninety-two percent of foundation CEOs and 89% of foundation boards are White, and only 7–8% of foundation funding goes specifically to people of color. The same dynamics basically hold true across what I call the loans-to-gifts spectrum, including bank loans, venture capital, municipal bonds, and even social and ethical finance, impact investments, and humanitarian aid. Here the statistics are equally dismal: The management of financial services is 81% White, and 86% of venture capitalists and more than 96% of angel investors are White. On the receiving side, 42% of minority-owned firms are

denied bank loans as opposed to only 16% of White-owned firms. A measly one percent of venture capital goes to Black and Latin[x] entrepreneurs.

Villanuva's findings suggest that reinforcing the current existing network structures in Minnesota may not be the best networks to support BIPOC entrepreneurship.

Another aspect of entrepreneurship networks to consider is a rural versus anywhere context. Korsgaard et al. (2014) have developed a spectrum of entrepreneurship for application in rural areas. By creating two polarity types—"Entrepreneurship in the Rural" and "Rural Entrepreneurship"—small business development specialists can distinguish between start-ups that can start up anywhere versus those that draw on the unique features of a particular place to build their product, service, and brand. The essential difference between the two is that a firm developed as "entrepreneurship in the rural" can easily be re-located since its location in a rural space is primarily based on resource availability and incentives. A firm developed as a "rural entrepreneurship" initiative is very difficult to extricate from the local environment. For example, a farm and the agricultural sector as an industry that primarily operates as a rural entrepreneurship in three ways:

1. Deepening or increasing the value of a given unit of production as can be seen by organic farming;
2. Broadening and including new activities, such as agritourism located at the interface between society, community, landscape, and biodiversity (Van der Ploeg & Renting, 2004, p. 235); and
3. Re-grounding, in which rural ventures engage with new sets or patterns of resources (Kitchen and Marsden, 2009); for example, shifting from traditional agriculture to tourism or energy production (Van der Ploeg & Renting, 2004, p. 235).

Huijbens et al. (2008) use these examples and others to make the distinction between "entrepreneurship in the rural" and "rural entrepreneurship" as a question for economic and community developers to consider when developing services and networks that their local small businesses and entrepreneurs need to thrive. While many BIPOC businesses exist on the margins of mainstream U.S. society, they are central to the development of their communities of color, and for many BIPOC communities, their most robust community asset is their culture. Because of this, it is often times used as a resource in the development of tourism destinations like cultural corridors in urban contexts; or as in the case of Indigenous communities, casinos and other recreational amenities. Hammer and Malual (2021) have also found in their qualitative study of BIPOC entrepreneurs in Wisconsin that the majority of interviewed entrepreneurs relied solely on their family connections for information concerning the management and growth of their

businesses, due a lack of trust and awareness of business service providers in their respective host communities. This suggests that traditional business service providers could help BIPOC entrepreneurs reframe how they view their businesses (i.e., as rural entrepreneurs rather than entrepreneurs in the rural).

Emery and Flora (2006) also support the idea that helping communities to re-envision their resources as different banks within the community can lead individuals toward identifying new connections and linkages between resources that were previously overlooked. It is from their work that the concepts of human, cultural, and social capital emerge, along with built, financial, natural, and political capital. Identifying business network assets in the Emery and Flora model opens up new ways for business network leaders to re-think what assets they provide BIPOC businesses they interact with.

In summary, decolonizing the business networks that BIPOC entrepreneurs rely on may include staffing more financial institutions with BIPOC and also helping BIPOC entrepreneurs cultivate more local connections to establish a place-based orientation in their business operations versus operation as a business that can be established anywhere.

### ***Decolonizing Community Entrepreneurial Climate***

The third sphere of civic action is decolonizing a community's entrepreneurial climate. It is important to revisit how a community's cultural climate defines what youth learn, what adults obtain skills for, and how organizations and individuals decide resource allocation within a community. Bird and Wennberg (2014) have also found that regionally, "the number of family (based) start-ups to be positively associated with municipalities that are rural, have a higher number of pre-existing small businesses, and are dominated by favorable attitudes toward small business" (p. 433). Breazeale et al. (2015) also explored the idea that for entrepreneurs to succeed, developers need to understand the perceptions of local entrepreneurial culture and develop a set of indicators that examine a community's entrepreneurial climate.

Brizek and Poorani (2006) also suggest that current literature supports a more interdisciplinary approach in entrepreneurial development and education versus the traditional industry-based one. Linking this to Northwest Minnesota context, Deschenie (2007) actually toured the White Earth Tribal and Community College and the Leech Lake Tribal College and felt that tribal college faculty wear many hats while educating others and still honoring their tribe's cultural and traditional views, especially when developing business management and administration programs.

Kennedy et al. (2017) refer to the ability to navigate multiple cultures for American Indian business owners, as the art of "code-switching" between Western and American Indian cultures. They also suggest that out of necessity, code-switchers become adept at when to blend the two value systems

and when to prioritize one value system over another. Also, in the context of Indigenous entrepreneurship, Foley and O'Connor (2013) found that

entrepreneurial activity is possibly a modern development in the Australian sample as formal tertiary education attainment has increased, which in turn influences the Indigenous entrepreneur's bridging networks. It is the complexity and development of their cultural capital within the dominant culture of the settler society business world that creates further research interest.

(p. 289)

This suggests that further study of Indigenous entrepreneurial use of their cultural capital to develop linking social capital with other communities could provide increased value in the entrepreneurial development of member-owned businesses.

### ***Decolonizing Community Economics***

In *Community Economics*, Shaffer et al. (2004) envision community economic development occurring as a star across the space of community (p. 7). They also make the assumption that all markets are perfectly competitive (p. 8), yet as the Minnesota example described at the opening of this chapter outlined: social rules that valued the labor and resources owned by Black slaves and Indigenous peoples made markets imperfectly competitive from the very founding of the United States. The social, economic, and health repercussions of this continue to be felt by these populations and other BIPOC residents across the country. The community economic development model presented in this chapter is an attempt to re-center what community economics implies for communities of diverse cultural backgrounds. By centering the model on the experience of an individual as a potential business owner, examples have been provided to illustrate how these four levels of community engagement by a business can be more inclusive of BIPOC residents. In this section, more exploration of how a specific focus on the tourism industry can provide a way of perceiving a community's economy in a new, BIPOC-inclusive economic system.

In an analysis of the Wairarapa area of New Zealand, Ateljevic (2000) found most businesses seek distribution channels primarily on the national or international level. At the same time, however, the recent economic rejuvenation efforts to replace agriculture with tourism are attributed to local businesses and authorities. Searching for rationality for this, Atejevic suggests that an industry sector's distinctiveness (or brand) comes from its ability to mobilize a collective entrepreneurial climate within a specific locality. A community's brand can sell externally while the connections between local products and services are what local actors (i.e., businesses, associations, public sector, and other organizations) can develop.

In 1980, Butler transformed both the economic and tourism fields by introducing the concept of the Tourism Area Lifecycle (TALC). Its purpose is to identify, predict, and in some cases, prevent a tourism destination from evolving through various lifecycle stages. Butler (1980) said, "There can be little doubt that tourist areas are dynamic, that they evolve over time" (p. 5). Lifecycle changes are a result of physical changes to the location and also changes in visitor preferences and needs. There are six main stages for a destination: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline or rejuvenation (Butler, 1980). Since its introduction, the model has been most commonly used as a linear predictive tool, yet a unique aspect of Russell and Faulkner's (2004) work adds a new component to the model. This new addition is a chaos cycle theory that entrepreneurs and other small businesses experience when making decisions about their business in relation to the larger environment of the tourism destination. The stages a business goes through in the chaos cycle include the following: (1) triggering circumstances, (2) deregulated chaos, (3) positive feedback/self-healing enablers, (4) transition to a new phase that reflects the old, and (5) regulated chaos at renewed tenuous conditional equilibrium.

As Russell and Faulkner (2004) stated

It is evident that there are many types of entrepreneurship manifested at different stages of the lifecycle. The type of activity is dependent upon the unique characteristics of the entrepreneur, the prevailing environmental conditions, and particular stage of the destinations' development.

(p. 525)

But what makes an entrepreneur successful at any one of these stages of development? Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2007) suggested that one of the key factors indicative of entrepreneurial success is an entrepreneur's capacity to trust. In their study of 158 small-to-medium size enterprises, they found that low levels of trust among professional network members led to decreased levels of members engaging in partnerships for collaborative marketing and supply needs. Citing Saxien, Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2007) also suggest that prolonged imbalance between mistrust and reliance on interdependency can hinder the ability of an individual's capacity to recognize new business ventures. To measure these assumptions, Brunetto and Farr-Wharton used a matrix of six trust variables. Lerner and Haber (2000) also found a strong correlation between an entrepreneur's locus of control (decision-making) and the profitability of their enterprise. Surprisingly, they also found that very little, if any, correlation exists between the number of tourism businesses in an area and the profitability of each business. There was a slight correlation between individuals with previous family exposure to entrepreneurship to select entrepreneurial careers, but this did not

extend to profitability in their new ventures. Additionally, McEvily and Zaheer (2004) explain that industry network facilitators can also develop a network of trust both up and down supply chains depending on the needs of its members.

It is clear from the literature that success factors for entrepreneurs are a tenuous balance between internal and often personal skills and external factors of assistance. While Northwest Minnesota has many external resources such as financing, infrastructure, and technical assistance, it still lacks the motivational forces that reinforce self-efficacy and strong place identity to strengthen an entrepreneur’s internal locus of control. Hallak et al. (2015) grouped their entrepreneurial performance scale into three sub-groups: Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Enterprise Performance, and Place Identity. While Hallak, Brown, and Lindsey add a fourth element of community support and suggest that physical qualities of place may attract visitors, it is the civic relationships between the businesses and community that ensure the success or failure of a destinations’ sustainability (Hallak et al., 2012).

To reframe the discussion, however, Pearce (2008) suggests that all entrepreneurs (including those in the tourism field) have five ways to assess their distribution channels. Assessment of distribution channels is important for two reasons: (1) it is how a business’s product or service gets to customers; and (2) it is based on the formal agreement that one business has with another (or many) regarding how that product or service is marketed or transported. Pearce also argues that small-to-medium size businesses (SMEs) in the tourism sector do not spend enough time conducting this type of analysis. His five types of distribution channel assessment are listed in Table 8.2.

*Table 8.2* Distribution Channel Assessment

<i>Type of Distribution Channel Assessment</i>	<i>General Definition</i>
Structural	Refers to the physical supply chain of a good or service (in the case of tourism, this refers to how travelers get linked to particular destinations)
Behavioral	Refers to studies on the specific attitudes and behaviors of a segment of travelers
Functional	Refers to an analysis of the job tasks involved in bringing a product or service out of production and into a sale
Evaluative	Refers to return on investment or comparative cost analysis across distribution channels
Strategic	Anderson et al. (2006) describe this channel as <i>a series of trade-offs and compromises that align the company’s resources with what it should do to satisfy its target customers and stay ahead of its competitors</i>



In addition to offering these five approaches, Pearce also suggests that SMEs consider the following seven steps in developing new distribution channels (p. 328):

1. Identify the distribution needs and preferences of each customer segment targeted
2. Identify supplier's distribution needs
3. Identify functions to be performed to meet the distribution needs of the customer and supplier
4. Evaluate alternative ways by which these functions might be performed
5. Decide on the distribution mix
6. Implement the distribution strategy
7. Monitor and evaluate the distribution strategy

Coaching established BIPOC businesses through these steps would help address the ongoing support service need of relatively new entrepreneurs who have completed SBDC training but are still unable to maintain financial solvency due to a limited understanding of their market channeling options. The community's role in doing this is still open to debate, meaning that the provision of such services could take a variety of forms. The ideal outcome or "product" of such programs would be what Johnstone and Lionais (2004) called the "Community Business Entrepreneur" and includes the following qualities in an individual (p. 229):

1. An ability to clearly describe and communicate a vision;
2. An ability to identify and gain access to new sources of capital;
3. Ability to tap into the significant value-added contributions of volunteers; and
4. Ability to modify a business structure to ensure pursuit of community benefit over personal gain.

As Johnstone and Lionais (2004) stated:

It is only by stepping out of society's perception of their traditional roles that these individuals become the triggers of entrepreneurial processes. Their formal roles added credibility to their proposals. Community Business Entrepreneurs thus appear to depend on their formal roles in the community to access trust and resources but they must step outside the traditional perception of those roles to trigger entrepreneurial activity.

(p. 228)

Johnstone and Lionais also suggest that community business entrepreneurs are needed if we are to support entrepreneurial development in communities

that have depleted or exhausted resources, both human and natural. In using the term “depleted communities,” they are also careful to delineate the two geographical locations that communities inhabit, which is that of space and place. Specifically, they state that, “Places are not simply sites of production and consumption (like space), they are human areas of meaningful social life where people live and learn. They are locations of socialization and cultural acquisition” (p. 219).

In reviewing Black Hawk’s autobiography, Pratt (2001) compares the writings of the Sauk leader with those of European writers at the same time. In both instances, the writings concern tensions building between European settlers and the American Indian people as the U.S. American Indians were being displaced from their traditional homelands. Pratt emphasized that in writing this autobiography, Black Hawk was looking for a means or method to ensure the cultural survival of his people. Likely what Black Hawk was looking for was, in a way, a collective of community business entrepreneurs. A group of new leaders within the community that could help reestablish the logic of place in Indigenous economic thinking that colonization dismantled. It has been 132 years since Black Hawk wrote that autobiography and BIPOC and settler communities still struggle to reestablish a logic of place in Northwest Minnesota.

To decolonize the predominantly White culture of this part of the state, more code-switchers need to be embedded in the educational systems, economic development authorities, lending institutions, social action agencies, and political units, so that each community can uplift and learn from the many voices that call Northwest Minnesota home and consider it a place to conduct business. Through such diversification, we would be better positioned to support, recognize, and engage with BIPOC community business entrepreneurs that are rural entrepreneurs versus entrepreneurs in the rural. To sustain value systems between the various service providers within a tourism destination or region, it is imperative that as Fath et al. (2019) suggest that “a healthy economic metabolism must also specifically be ‘regenerative,’ meaning it must continuously channel resources into self-feeding, self-renewing, self-sustaining internal processes. In human systems, this means reliable, steady and significant funding for education, infrastructure, innovation, and entrepreneurship” (p. 18).

In summary, tourism is a tertiary sector of the economy and because of this, it requires a number of supporting systems or levels of community engagement to support its industry members. A significant asset of BIPOC in developing entrepreneurial endeavors is their cultural capital. By (1) re-centering community economic activity on the lifecycle and place-specific needs of BIPOC entrepreneurs and (2) assisting BIPOC entrepreneurs cultivate regenerative value chain connections to their host communities, business service providers and educators can more effectively attract, cultivate, and support nascent BIPOC entrepreneurs in Northwest Minnesota.

## **Examples of Cooperative Extension Work to Decolonize a Regional Economic System From Northwest Minnesota**

This section provides examples of how applied research and education by the University of Minnesota Extension conducted in partnership with communities throughout Northwest Minnesota are addressing some of the issues identified in the second section of the chapter.

### ***Decolonizing Entrepreneurship Education***

Revisiting Greene's (2005) asymmetries that influence successful youth entrepreneurship, we can identify potential gaps where applied research by land grant colleges and universities can be of assistance in informing not only economic development professionals but other educators as well. These asymmetries again include:

- The benefits of self-employment may be unknown to them (desirability);
- The benefits of expert advice from an outside firm may be unknown to them (feasibility); and
- Financial institutions are unable to assess the risks and rewards of lending to small firms (credibility).

When an entrepreneur experiences high levels of these three components of self-efficacy, they are better able to identify, navigate, and utilize the entrepreneurial assets of their home communities and the regional economic systems. Efforts are being made to provide case study examples of existing entrepreneurial endeavors of tribal member-owned businesses and immigrant-owned businesses in Minnesota. UMN Extension has partnered with the Minnesota Indigenous Business Alliance and the Northwest Regional Development Commission to collect the stories of these emerging entrepreneurs. In developing these case studies, Extension staff are working to provide opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to learn about both the desirability and feasibility of becoming entrepreneurs.

In 2019, with the *Zhooniyake Today* project, the Minnesota Indigenous Business Alliance identified ten American Indian-owned businesses operating in the Duluth area of Minnesota. Along with the Cooperative Extension, and the University of Minnesota Duluth, MNIBA trained two students in the practice of appreciative inquiry and videography techniques. The students then interviewed four of the self-selected businesses whose videos were edited and then posted to the MNIBA YouTube site. One of the responses from James Aubid, a successful owner of the contract painting firm Mesabi Painting and Decorating, LLC (and a member of Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe), summarizes the essence of what Indigenous entrepreneurship offers members of Native Nations:

A lot of times these days you hear stories about adversity, you know this happened to me, and our historical trauma and you know we spend a lot of time verbalizing that . . . and we walk over to those ashes and we sit down in there and we stay in there. You know I sat in my ashes for 20 years, thinking about my previous life and . . . what I did wrong and what I could have done better. Eventually you gotta get up out of those ashes. You have to want more, you have to be ambitious. Our ancestors, think about what they've done and then the small percentage of Native Americans who've made it through all of that stuff. You know I'm pretty sure they don't want to still see us today facing adversity, when there is so much opportunity around us. You have to want more, it's all right there in front of your grasp.

(Aubid, 2019)

In taking the appreciative inquiry lessons learned from the Zhooniayke Today pilot project, the Cooperative Extension has reached out to the Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) to better understand the stories of immigrant entrepreneurs as well in the Northwest corner of the state. As Low et al. (2005) point out, both measures of (regional) entrepreneurial depth, income and revenue, were higher in counties with a greater percentage of foreign-born workers, suggesting that fresh infusions of knowledge and human capital create entrepreneurial value.

In 2015, the Cooperative Extension also partnered with the Gizhiigin Arts Incubator and White Earth Tribal and Community College to offer a seven part training on E-marketing strategies for members of the White Earth Nation. Through providing modules on SEO, Social Media, Managing Online Reviews, Web Analytics, Marketing Strategy Development, Marketing Your Website, and Mobile eMarketing, the Extension was providing hard skill curricula content to Indigenous artists that did not have experience with using digital media platforms to promote their work. In each of these examples, the Extension's work was focused on the central sphere of action, namely strengthening BIPOC's self-efficacy and confidence in their marketing skills.

## **Decolonizing Business Networks**

In 2019, the Cooperative Extension engaged with the 4-Directions Development, Inc. as one of seven communities across the state of Minnesota to pilot the "Community Capitals and Our Community" project. In this pilot project, a community group was coached through application of the Community Capitals Framework suggested by Emery et al. (2006) and then asked to apply the framework toward addressing a development issue within their community. In the case of 4-Directions Development, Inc. (a native community development financial institution (CDFI), the community group engaged in the pilot was a group of tribal employees working on entrepreneurship

education, micro-lending, and grant writing for the Nation. The final output of the project was a series of three statements in which the group:

- (1) stated three development goals that became the focus of the CDFI,
- (2) stated how they could mobilize their greatest asset to achieve each goal, and
- (3) stated how they could draw on the assets of others in the community to achieve each goal.

The CDFI director was so impressed with the process that she recommended it to the Northwest Minnesota Foundation as a potential engagement tool to help communities throughout the region move from discussion to action when considering both entrepreneurship and community development goals. This engagement with the Red Lake Nation holds promise of how a multi-dimensional approach to understanding community assets may be able to support economic development professionals and business owners better understand how their community's characteristics can support and influence the success of businesses in the region, both on and off the reservations. This project empowered 4-Directions Development (as a business service provider) to reframe how to leverage its accessible human, cultural, and financial capital to better serve its entrepreneurial clients.

In 2013, the Extension partnered with the Warroad Convention and Visitors Bureau to conduct a Tourism Assessment Program to better understand its tourism assets through the lens of the Community Capitals Framework. This internal, external, and peer assessment of the community provided Warroad community leaders a comprehensive view of what they have to offer tourists and what existing markets they could leverage to attract more visitors. In addition to the initial project, the Extension came back again in 2015 to conduct a Ripple Effect Map of the projects impacts in the community since the initial assessment. The REM process allowed project participants and residents to reflect back on their community tourism development activities to see how they had progressed toward achieving the developmental goals recommended in the project report.

Both of these projects empowered community leaders to re-examine the resources available within their communities and also re-envision how they could leverage their human, cultural, physical, social, political, build, and financial capital to better support businesses they serve.

### ***Decolonizing Entrepreneurial Climate***

Another project being implemented statewide in Minnesota to uplift Native Nation communities into the larger economic system in the state has been the development and piloting of a Community Entrepreneurial Climate Assessment (CECA) for communities, as suggested by Breazeale et al. (2015). The process of engaging with American Indian economic development professionals,

entrepreneurs, and the non-tribal business service providers they work with will be based on IAP2 (2018) principles of public participation which include consulting, involving, collaboration, and empowerment of community partners.

The first half of this project (which included consultation and involvement) provided an entrepreneurship in Indian Country in Minnesota, and an introduction to how a community's collective culture or attitude and value toward entrepreneurship influence the trust levels that entrepreneurs have in the service providers they work with. Native and non-native partners have provided feedback on community statements included in the CECA assessment that cover the following topics: Diversity and Change Climate, Business Discouragement Climate, Focus on Local Climate, and Business Promotion Climate.

Using this feedback in the second half of the project (which includes collaboration and involvement), the Extension will engage community partners and Native Nations to attend a Tribal Economic Development Summit, where the role of entrepreneurship in Indigenous communities will be explored, along with implications for how a blended system of values needs to be developed between Native Nations and their neighbors for all to gain economic prosperity.

Since 2019, the Extension has also been implementing a statewide Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference. The two day conference brings together small business development professionals, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, local policy makers, and economic specialists to learn about entrepreneurial support services that are offered in different sub-regions of the state. The conference host communities rotate around the state annually and are usually no bigger than 10,000 in population. The primary goal of the conference is to serve as a regional networking opportunity for regional and statewide participants to better understand the entrepreneurial development assets utilized by the host community through small breakout sessions dispersed at host venues in the community's downtown area versus the traditional convention center format of similar conferences. Participants are encouraged to register in groups so they can collectively learn how the host community's assets are being leveraged and potentially implement similar initiatives in their hometowns. Based on feedback from participants from 2019, efforts were made to make the 2020 focused conference more inclusive of the BIPOC business community by inclusion of presentations by service providers whose primary clients were Somali, American Indian, and Latinx. Implementing this CECA project and the CEC conference address the needs that Johnstone and Lionais (2004) and McEvily and Zaheer (2004) suggest communities have for cultivating Community Business Entrepreneurs and also Network Facilitators.

### ***Decolonizing Community Economics***

Other examples of increasing local understanding of area distribution channels has been through the application of the Extension's *Economic Impact Analysis, Retail Market Analysis and Visitor Profile* research programs to better

understand potential SME types that can be developed to address local consumer and visitor demands. These projects have been used by regional economic development professionals and SBDC consultants to inform the feasibility of new enterprises coming into a community or existing financial flows between workers, businesses, and consumers. They address Pearce's (2008) 1–3 stages in development of new distribution channels. Some of these projects have included:

- a retail trade analysis for the City of Mahanomen that surveyed local market retail spending;
- a market area profile study for the City of Waubun to inform a feasibility assessment of a closed grocery store reopening;
- a visitor profile and economic impact study in partnership with Shooting Star Casino that identified average expenditures and purchasing preferences by visitors in the local community;
- a visitor profile and economic impact study of the Beltrami County fair;
- an economic impact analysis of tribally owned operations of the White Earth Nation that helped to identify the industries benefitting the most from induced effects of tribal employee spending within, as well as and adjacent to the White Earth Indian Reservation; and
- an economic impact analysis of American Indian healthcare payments in the north central region of the state.

All of these projects were efforts to incrementally develop a knowledge base within the region among economic developers and community leaders concerning formal revenue flows between different communities and industry sectors within the region adjacent to American Indian reservations. Through eliminating these information gaps, the regional economic development community is working to reduce the barriers to entrepreneurship not only for area youth but also for adult aspiring BIPOC entrepreneurs as well.

### **Future Directions for Decolonizing Community Economic Development and Entrepreneurship in Northwest Minnesota**

In considering additional actions, the University of Minnesota Extension could take to serve as a bridging agent between Native Nations and their neighbors within regional economic systems. Efforts are being made to better understand the role that education plays in nurturing and cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset in youth and young adults in Northwest Minnesota.

#### ***Providing Pathways to Entrepreneurship in Youths and Young Adults***

In the case of the Nebraska Extension, they have developed two pathways toward entrepreneurship that maybe of potential value in addressing the structure–experience balance needs of Northwest Minnesota's diverse population of aspiring youth and young adult entrepreneurs. The first, called

Handcrafted Entrepreneurship, takes a participant through a design thinking process in the first session and then transitions the learning experience into an introduction to the basics of business planning, once participants have created an artistic product (in Nebraska's case, handcrafted cloth products). The second pathway called Upstarts Academy builds on the structured learning of the classroom to introduce students in grades 7–12 to local businesses, and structures the lesson plans around having the students problem solve these local business needs over a semester long partnership.

What is interesting about both of these examples of Extension programming is that they align with Moberg's (2014) suggestion that teaching occurs through participants engaging in entrepreneurial behavior versus just learning about entrepreneurial concepts through lecture and theory. Handcrafted Entrepreneurship provides a path into entrepreneurship that aligns more with Larau's concept of natural growth (starting first with design thinking and then progressing into analytical business thinking), while Upstarts Academy's path aligns more with Larau's concept of concerted cultivation (problem solving with and for business leaders in the community).

In initial discussions with community partners in Northwest Minnesota, four communities have expressed an interest in exploring the potential of Handcrafted Entrepreneurship in their communities. Specifically, because it offers the possibility of cross-cultural exchange not only between various ethnic groups but also between different age groups within their communities. Designing a similar program for their communities is being valued as a way to sustain crafting skill transmission across these boundaries. UMN College of Liberal Arts has also expressed an interest in exploring this program possibility further in partnership with the Extension to extend their outreach to greater Minnesota.

In conversations about the potential value of Upstarts Academy in the region, local vocational educators in the high schools are being considered as potential partners. Yet there is a scarcity of high schools in the region that provide a business, or business management focus to these vocational tracks. Only 2 out of the 28 school districts in the region offer such a program.

Additionally, these vocational programs are funded through Perkins grants, which already require local business review and input in curricular content, but not all the vocational teachers engage these business partners fully in the design of their respective programs. These issues are symptomatic of the region's historical dependence on its industrial base, and may need to be re-considered by local education and workforce development authorities if they hope to successfully transition to the knowledge economy and maintain a thriving population in the region.

### ***Provision of Seamless Engagement Between All of the Extension's Programs for Native Nations and Their Neighbors***

When considering the multi-faceted nature of the Extension: Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family Development, Community



and Economic Development, and Sustainable development, engaging with a rural community can be overwhelming to community leaders and decision makers. This is especially true for BIPOC leaders in these communities, since their organizations are often understaffed and consistently seeking sources of financial stability.

In 2021, UMN Extension is just beginning to develop a system through which all of its touchpoints within a given community can be understood. But in talking with counterparts at the Red Lake Nation College Community Education Program and also the White Earth Nation Tribal and Community College Community Education Program, there have been numerous questions from these partners as to how the University of Minnesota Extension's program fit together to provide comprehensive support to the communities they serve. The same has been true when engaging with the Northwest region's Latinx and Somali populations as well. One suggested framework from the White Earth Tribal and Community College that could help guide this partnering process and address some of the suggestions offered up by Chin and Wulforth (2004) is a framework called the CIRCLE. "The CIRCLE incorporates Western concepts of community capacity building and parallels the values of community-based participatory research. Both the philosophy and method, however, go beyond the assumptions and methods of most mainstream approaches" (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006, p. 597).

## Conclusion

The foundational belief of this framework is that American Indian communities and their neighbors develop, as the professional skills of their members are jointly developed. In an academic context, this would mean that both the University of Minnesota's Extension and the Tribal College Community Education programs approach each other on equal terms in teaching and learning versus one leading the other down a path of capacity building. One potential goal of such a partnership could be building a seamless educational system that residents could use to develop their skills in becoming Community Business Entrepreneurs.

## References

- Anderson T. L., Benson B. L., & Flanagan T. E. (2006). *Self-determination: The other path for Native Americans*. Stanford University Press.
- Ateljevic, I. (2000). Circuits of tourism: Stepping beyond the 'production/consumption' dichotomy. *Tourism Geographies*, 2(4), 369–388.
- Aubid, J. (2019). *Jamie Aubid interview*. YouTube. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtbkgMCQfhI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtbkgMCQfhI)
- Benham, M. K. P. A., & Stein, W. J. (Eds.). (2003). *The renaissance of American Indian higher education: Capturing the dream*. Routledge.
- Benson, D. A., Lies, A. K., Okunade, A. A., & Wunnava, P. V. (2011). Economic impact of private sector micro-financing scheme in South Dakota. *Small Business Economics*, 36, 157–168.

- Bhatia, S., & Ram, A. (2001). Rethinking “acculturation” in relation to diasporic cultures and postcolonial identities. *Human Development*, 44(1), 1–18.
- Bird, M., & Wennberg, K. (2014). Regional influences on the prevalence of family versus non-family start-ups. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 29, 421–436.
- Boyer, P. (2015). *Capturing education: Envisioning and building the first tribal colleges*. Salish Kootenai College Press.
- Brill, C. (1992). *Red lake nation: Portrait of the Ojibway life*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Brizek, M. G., & Poorani, A. A. (2006). Making the case for entrepreneurship: A survey of small business management courses within hospitality and tourism programs. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, 5(2), 37–48.
- Breazeale, N., Fortunato, M. W-P, Allen IV, J. E., Hustedde, R. J., & Pusharskaya, H. (2015). Constructing a multi-dimensional measure of local entrepreneurial culture. *Community Development*, 46(5), 516–540.
- Butler, R. W. (1980). The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: Implications for management resources. *Canadian Geographer*, 25(1), 5–12.
- Brunetto, Y., & Farr-Wharton, R. (2007). The moderating role of trust in SME owner/manager’s decision making about collaboration. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 45(3), 362–387.
- Chin, J. F., & Wulforth, J. D. (2004). Importance of equity in cross-cultural research. *Journal of the Idaho Academy of Science*, 40(2), 10–21.
- Chino, M., & DeBruyn, L. (2006). Building true capacity: Models for Indigenous communities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 6(4), 596–599. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2004.053801>
- Christy, R. D., & Williamson, L. (Eds.). (1992). *A century of service: Land grant colleges & universities, 1890–1990*. Transaction Publishers.
- Clevenger, M. R., MacGregor, C. J., & Sturm, P. (2021). *Partnership motives and ethics in corporate investment in higher education*. Advances in Higher Education and Professional Development (AHEPD) Book Series. IGI Global.
- Coles, T., Hall, C. M., & Duval, D. T. (2006). Tourism and post-disciplinary enquiry. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(4), 293–319.
- DEED. (Minnesota Department of Employment, and Economic Development). (2021). *Launch MN Network*. <https://mn.gov/launchmn/community/network/>
- Deschenie, T. (2007). Accelerating native prosperity takes all of us. *Tribal College Journal*, 18(3), 8–9.
- Demmert, Jr., W. G., McCardle, P., Mele-McCarthy, J., & Leos, K. (2006). Preparing native American children for academic success: A blueprint for research. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 45(3), 92–106.
- Duderstadt, J. J. (1999/2000, Winter). New roles for the 21st-century university. *Issues in Science and Technology*, 16(2), 37–44.
- Dutta, M. J. (2015). Decolonizing communication for social change: A culture centered approach. *Communications Theory*, 25, 123–143. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12067>
- Emery, M., Fey, S., & Flora, C. (2006). Using community capitals to develop assets for positive community change. CDPractice: Promoting Principles of Good Practice. *Community Development Society*, 13. [www.comm-dev.org/publications/cd-practice](http://www.comm-dev.org/publications/cd-practice)
- Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. (2020). *Glossary terms: Entrepreneurial ecosystem*. Entrepreneurship ecosystem building playbook 3.0. [www.kauffman.org/ecosystem-playbook-draft-3/glossary-and-resources/](http://www.kauffman.org/ecosystem-playbook-draft-3/glossary-and-resources/)

- Foley, D. (2012). Teaching entrepreneurship to Indigenous and other minorities: Towards a strong sense of self. Tangible skills and active participation within society. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 12(2), 59–74.
- Foley, D., & O'Connor, A. J. (2013). Social capital and the networking practices of Indigenous entrepreneurs. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 51(2), 276–296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12017>
- Gallagher, B., & Selman, M. (2015). Warrior entrepreneur. *American Indian Quarterly*, 39(1), 76–94.
- Gibbs, S. Singh, R. P., Butler J. S., & Scott, C. (2018). The role of networking, entrepreneurial environments, and support systems in the creation, survival and success of ventures founded by minority, women, and immigrant entrepreneurs. *New England Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 21(2), 74–80. Accessed 2020, September 6, <https://doi.org/10.1108/NEJE-10-2018-018>
- Gines, D., & Sampson, R. (2019). *Building entrepreneurship ecosystems in communities of color*. Kansas Federal Reserve Bank.
- Goodluck, K., Ahtone, T., & Lee, R. (2020). The land-grant universities still profiting off Indigenous homelands. *High Country News*. [www.hcn.org/articles/Indigenous-affairs-the-land-grant-universities-still-profiting-off-Indigenous-homelands](http://www.hcn.org/articles/Indigenous-affairs-the-land-grant-universities-still-profiting-off-Indigenous-homelands)
- Greene, F. J., (2005). *Youth entrepreneurship, latent entrepreneurship, market failure, and enterprise support*. Working Paper No. 87 of the Center for Small and Medium Sized Businesses. University of Warwick, Coventry.
- Greve, A. (1995). Networks and entrepreneurship—An analysis of social relations, occupational background, and use of contacts during the establishment process. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 11(1), 1–24.
- Hallak, R., Brown, G., & Lindsay, N. J. (2012). The place identity-performance relationship among tourism entrepreneurs: A structural equation modelling analysis. *Tourism Management*, 33(1), 143–154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.02.013>
- Hallak, R., Assaker, G., & Lee, C. (2015). Tourism entrepreneurship performance: The effects of place identity, self-efficacy, and gender. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(1), 36–51.
- Hammer, D., & Malual, J. (2021). Entrepreneurs of color in Wisconsin: Bridging the gap in resources to mobilize potential. *Community Development*, 52(2), 169–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2020.1854803>
- Hollinshead, K. (2010). Tourism studies and confined understanding: The call for a new sense post disciplinary imaginary. *Tourism Analysis*, 15(4), 499–512.
- IAP2. (2018). *Spectrum of participation*. International Association for Public Participation. [https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum\\_8.5x11\\_Print.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf)
- Johnstone, H., & Lionais, D. (2004). Depleted communities and community business entrepreneurship: Revaluing space through place. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 16, 217–233.
- Kennedy, D. M., Harrington, C. F., Verbos, A. K., Stewart, D., Gladstone, J. S., & Clarkson, G. (2017). *American Indian business: Principles and practices*. University of Washington.
- Key, S. (1996). Economics or education: The establishment of American land-grant universities. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 67(2), 196–220.
- Kitchen, L., & Marsden, T. (2009). Creating sustainable rural development through stimulating the eco-economy: Beyond the eco-economic paradox? *Sociologia Ruralis*, 49(3), 273–294.
- Kocherlakota, N. (2012). *What's different about economic development in Indian country? Growing economies in Indian country: A National Summit*, Washington, D.C. [www](http://www).

- minneapolisfed.org/speeches/2012/whats-different-about-economic-development-in-indian-country
- Korsgaard, S., Muller, S., & Tanvig, H. W. (2014). Rural entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship in the rural – between place and space. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavioral Research*, 21(1), 5–25.
- Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race and family life* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.
- Lee, R., Ahtone, T., Pearce, M., Goodluck, K., McGhee, G., Leff, C., Lanpher, K., & Salinas, T. (2021). Land-grab universities: How the United States funded land-grant universities with expropriated indigenous land. *High Country News*. www.landgrabu.org/
- Lee, T. S. (2009). Building native nations through native students' commitment to their communities. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 48(1), 19–36.
- Lerner, M., & Haber, S. (2000). Performance factors of small tourism ventures: The interface of tourism, entrepreneurship and the environment. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 16, 77–100.
- Lichtenstein, G. A., & Lyons, T. S. (2001). The entrepreneurial development system: Transforming business talent and community economies. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 15(1), 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124240101500101>
- Lindblad, O. (1997). *Full of fair hope: A history of St. Mary's Mission, Red Lake*. Park Press Quality Printing.
- Lipka, J., Sharp, N., Adams, B., & Sharp, F. (2007). Creating a third space for authentic biculturalism: Examples from math in a cultural context. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 46(3), 94–115.
- Low, S. Henderson, J., & Weiler, S. (2005). *Gauging a region's entrepreneurial potential*. Economic Review. Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank. Vol 90 (Q III). www.kansas-cityfed.org/documents/47/2005-Gauging%20a%20Region's%20Entrepreneurial%20Potential.pdf
- Matseri, W. E. (1987, Fall). *Battle of sugar point: A re-examination*. Minnesota History.
- McEvily, B., & Zaheer, A. (2004). Architects of trust: The role of network facilitators in geographical clusters. In R. M. Kramer & K. S. Cook (Eds.), *Trust and distrust in organizations: Dilemmas and approaches* (pp. 189–213). Russel Sage Foundation.
- Moberg, K. (2014). Two approaches to entrepreneurship education: The different effects of education for and through entrepreneurship at the lower secondary level. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 12, 512–528.
- Pearce, D. G. (2008). Tourism distribution: from structure to strategy. In S. J. Page & J. Ateljevic (Eds.), *Tourism and entrepreneurship perspectives (Advances in Tourism Research)* (pp. 313–333). Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Peters, S. J. (1998). *Extension work as public work: Reconsidering Cooperative Extension's civic mission* (Doctoral dissertation). UMI Company. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.
- Pratt, S. L. (2001). The given land: Black Hawk's conception of place. *Philosophy & Geography*, 4(1), 109–125.
- Rampaul, W. E., Singh, M., & Didyk, J. (1984). The relationship between academic achievement, self-concept, creativity and teacher expectations among native children in a Northern Manitoba School. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 30, 213–225.
- Rhodes, F. H. T. (2001). *The creation of the future: The role of the American university*. Cornell University.
- Russell, R., & Faulkner, B. (2004). Entrepreneurship, chaos, and the tourism area lifecycle. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 556–579.

- Russell-Mundine, G. (2012). Reflexivity in Indigenous research: Reframing and decolonizing research? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *19*, 1–6. Special Issue: Beyond the Margins (Critical Tourism and Hospitality).
- Smokowski, P. R., Evans, C. B. R., Cotter, K. L., & Webber, K. C. (2014). Ethnic identity and mental health in American Indian youth: Examining mediation pathways through self-esteem, and future optimism. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, *43*, 343–355.
- Swinney, J., & Runyan, R. (2007). Native American entrepreneurs and strategic choice. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, *12*(3), 257–273.
- Tuhiwai-Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
- Van der Ploeg, J. D., & Renting, H. (2004). Behind the ‘redux’: A rejoinder to David Goodman. *Sociologica, Rurales*, *44*(2), 234–242.
- Villanueva, E. (2018). Money as Medicine: A prescription for healing the dysfunctional colonial dynamics at play in philanthropy and finance. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/money\\_as\\_medicine](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/money_as_medicine)
- Villanueva, E. (2021). *Decolonizing wealth: Indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance*. Barrett-Koeler Publications.
- Warner, L. S., & Gipp, G. E. (Eds.). (2009). *Tradition and culture in the new millennium: Tribal colleges and universities*. Information Age Publishing.
- Warren, W. W. (2009). *History of the Ojibway people, based upon tradition and oral statements*. Minnesota Historical Society.
- Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, *8*(4), 387–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>
- Wood, B. P., Ng, P. Y., & Bastian, B. L. (2021). Hegemonic conceptualizations of empowerment in entrepreneurship and their suitability for collective contexts. *Administrative Sciences*, *11*(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci11010028>

### **Additional Reading**

- Ateljevic, J. (2009). Tourism entrepreneurship and regional development. In S. J. Page & J. Ateljevic (Eds.), *Tourism and entrepreneurship perspectives (Advances in tourism research)* (pp. 149–172). Butterworth–Heinemann.
- Brewton, K. E., Danes, S. M., Stafford, K., Haynes, W. (2010). Determinants of rural and urban family firm resilience. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, *1*(30), 155–166.
- Chazdon, S., Scheffert, D. R., Allen, R., & Horntvedt, J. (2013). *Developing and validating University of Minnesota extension’s social capital model and survey*. University of Minnesota Extension. University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy. <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/171657>.
- Chang, J. Y. C., Benamraoui, A., & Rieple, A. (2014). Stimulating learning about social entrepreneurship through income generation projects. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, *20*(5), 417–437.
- Cruz, E. P; Queiroz Falcao, R. P., & Cuba, R. (2020). Market orientation and strategic decisions on immigrant and ethnic small firms. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, *18*, 227–255. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10843-019-00263-2>
- Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education. (2010). *Consortium of entrepreneurship standards Matrix overview*. Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education. [www.entre-ed.com/Standards\\_Toolkit/5stages\\_overview.pdf](http://www.entre-ed.com/Standards_Toolkit/5stages_overview.pdf)

- Demmert, Jr., W. G. (2011). Culturally based education: Promoting academic success and the general well-being of Native American students. In M. C. Sarche, P. Spicer, P. Farrell, & H. E. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *American Indian and Alaska native children & mental health* (pp. 255–267). ABC-CLIO, LLC.
- Draycott, D., & Rae, D. (2011). Enterprise education in the schools and the role of competency frameworks. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 17(2), 127–145.
- Dreyer, P. H. (1994). Designing curricular identity interventions for secondary schools. In S. L. Archer (Ed.), *Interventions for adolescent identity development* (pp. 121–140). Sage Publications.
- Dudensing, R. M., Hughes, D. W., & Shields, M. (2011). Perceptions of tourism promotion, business challenges: A survey-based comparison of tourism businesses and promotion organizations. *Tourism Management*, 3, 1453–1462.
- Doherty, W., Hilberg, S., Epaloose, G., & Tharp, R. (2002). Standards performance continuum: Development and validation of a measure of effective pedagogy. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 96(2), 78–89.
- Eyal, O., & Inbar, D. E. (2003). Developing a public school entrepreneurship inventory: Theoretical conceptualization and empirical examination. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, 9(6), 221–244.
- Fath, B. D., Fiscus, D. A., Goerner, S. J., Berea, A., & Ulanowicz, R. E. (2019). Measuring regenerative economics: 10 principles and measures undergirding systemic economic health. *Global Transitions*, 1, 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glt.2019.02.002>
- Franklin, R. J., Morris, M. H., & Webb, J. W. (2013). Entrepreneurial activity in American Indian Nations extending the GEM Methodology. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 18(2). <https://doi.org/10.1142/S108494671350009X>
- Fullagar, S., & Wilson, E. (2012). Critical pedagogies: A reflexive approach to knowledge creation in tourism and hospitality studies. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 19, 1–6. Special Issue: Beyond the Margins (Critical Tourism and Hospitality).
- Haas, C., & Furman, N. (2008). *Operation recreation: Adventure challenge. Teaching programming through problem-based learning theory*. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, College of Health, University of Utah.
- Huijbens, E. H., Hjalager, A., Björk, P. Nordin, S., & Flagstad, A. (2008). Sustaining creative entrepreneurship: The role of innovation systems. In S. J. Page & J. Ateljevic (Eds.), *Tourism and entrepreneurship perspectives (Advances in tourism research)* (pp. 55–73). Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Jacob, V. (2017). *Counseling Asian Indian immigrant families: A pastoral psychotherapeutic model*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64307-6>
- Kwan, L. Y-Y. (2018). Institutional and value support for cultural pluralism is stronger in innovative societies with demanding climate. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49(2), 323–335. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022117746773>
- Lofstrom, M., Bates, T., & Parker, S. C. (2014). Why are some people more likely to become small-business owners than others: Entrepreneurship entry and industry specific barriers. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 29, 232–251.
- McGranahan, D. A., Wojan, T. R., & Lambert, D. M. (2011). The rural growth trifecta: outdoor amenities, creative class, and entrepreneurial context. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 11, 529–557.
- Morrison, A., Rimmington, M., & Williams, C. (2016). *Entrepreneurship in the hospitality, tourism and leisure industries*. Routledge.

- Müller, S., & Tanvig, H. W. (2014). Rural entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship in the rural- between place and space. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 21(1), 5–26.
- Obschonka, M., Silberstien, R. K., Canter, U., & Goethner, M. (2015). Entrepreneurial self-identity: Predictors and effects within the theory of planned behavior framework. *Journal of Business Psychology*, 30, 773–794.
- Porter, M. E., & Stern, S. (2001). Innovation: Location matters. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 42(4), 28–36.
- Ruskovaara, E., & Pinhkala, T. (2012). Teachers implementing entrepreneurship education: classroom practices. *Education + Training*, 55(2), 204–216.
- Saeed, S., Muffato, M., & Yousafzai, S. Y. (2014). Exploring intergenerational influence on entrepreneurial intention: The mediating role of perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*, 18(2/3), 134–153.
- Sandhu, N., Hussain, J., & Matlay, H. (2015). Entrepreneurship education and training needs of family businesses operating in the agricultural sector of India. *Education + Training*, 54(8/9), 727–743.
- Schenkel, M. T., D'Souza, R. R., & Braun, F. C. (2014). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, intent and intensity: Does experiential training enhance or inhibit predisposition? *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.1142/S1084946714500058>
- Seikkula-Leino, J., Rukovaara, E., Ikavalko, M., & Rytkola, M. T. (2010). Promoting entrepreneurship education: The role of the teacher? *Education + Training*, 52(2), 117–127.
- Shaffer, R., Deller, S., & Marcouiller, D. (2004). *Community economics: Linking theory to Practice* (2nd ed.). Blackwell Publishing.
- Shapiro, A., & Sokol, L. (1982). Social dimensions of entrepreneurship. In C. Kent, D. Sexton, & K. Vesper (Eds.), *The encyclopedia of entrepreneurship* (pp. 72–90). Prentice Hall.
- Solomon, G. (2007). An examination of entrepreneurship education in the United States. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 14(2), 168–182.
- Williams, D. R. (2004). Youth self-employment: Its nature and consequences. *Small Business Economics*, 23, 323–336.
- Wilcox, J. (2016). *About*. The Southern Entrepreneurship Program. [www.thesep.org/](http://www.thesep.org/)

# 9 Little Town, Layered Ecosystem

## A Case Study of Chattanooga, Tennessee

*Yasuyuki Motoyama, Emily Fetsch, Chris Jackson,  
and Jason Wiens with Bill Lewis*

### **Overview**

#### ***Time Span***

Like many cities, Chattanooga today is painted with many events and experiences of the past. However, this chapter focuses on efforts in Chattanooga between 2010 when the city and local Electric Power Board announced the Gig, a one-gigabit fiber internet service to residents and businesses and 2016, when those local efforts were materializing as the Innovation District.

The case study builds on the rich history of Chattanooga with more current analysis.

#### ***Methodology and Types of Data***

The primary method was 18 semi-structured interviews that the authors conducted mostly in April and May 2015, interviewing a range of organizations from public, non-profit, and private sectors. The information was further supplemented with public and internal reports and websites of those organizations, as well as an archival search.

#### ***Entrepreneurial Community***

This case study focuses on an Innovation District, not a singular entrepreneur's venture. Thus, an entrepreneurial community is viewed with coordination from among public, private, and government support.

#### ***Cultural Aspects***

Chattanooga has several cultural influences as discussed in the history section. The area has developed a culture of entrepreneurship with an inclusive ecosystem goal by including support organizations, events, start-up and tech launches, and entrepreneur networking. Thus, Chattanooga has embraced entrepreneurship beyond just the official organizations that perform that



function. In a way, Chattanooga has woven entrepreneurship into its civic pride. The culture of entrepreneurship in Chattanooga has developed to the point where events like Gigtank and 48 Hour Launch attract Chattanoogaans who have nothing to do with entrepreneurship. The residents are intrigued about these events and the companies that participate. This pride reflects the concept of the Chattanooga Way, where the success of Chattanooga entrepreneurs is a proxy for the success of the city and its citizens.

### *Power and Empowerment*

One can imagine an ideal entrepreneurial ecosystem where leaders and feeders (see Feld, 2012) work together seamlessly, overcoming institutional boundaries to sharing information and responsibilities in a way that it removes bureaucratic and resource barriers for entrepreneurs. Of course, this is often times not the case—institutions may work in relative isolation from one another, sometimes leaving important service gaps or creating unnecessary overlap, or worse—a spirit of competition and rivalry instead of collaboration and working toward a mutual goal. This case study from Chattanooga, Tennessee shows how a “layered” ecosystem comprising institutions from multiple sectors and with different geographic foci can collaborate effectively to empower entrepreneurs. Truly in Feld’s (2012) spirit of “feeder” organizations, this layered ecosystem has developed an encouraging, cheer-leading cultural overlay that demonstrates real and sustained engagement with the small business sector beyond just supportive rhetoric or unrealized planning efforts. Chattanooga provides a strong example of how a leadership style of being present with entrepreneurs creates an empowering and encouraging culture of innovative venturing on the ground.

### *Leadership Aspects*

Three layers of intertwined supporting organizations provided leadership for the development of the Innovation District: (1) the non-profit sector through two philanthropic foundations, (2) four direct entrepreneurship support organizations that are for-profit, and (3) four organizations in the public sector, including the mayor’s office, thus governmental support.

### *The Why*

Because Chattanooga had received media attention through its Gig, the high-speed, one-gigabit fiber internet service, the goal was to identify that hub of the infrastructure as well as its environment for entrepreneurship, and to explore the infrastructure, which included deeply rooted, multiple layers of supporting organizations with decades of efforts in community and economic development in the area.

## **A Brief History**

Chattanooga, Tennessee (see Figure 9.1) has been the site of human habitation dating back more than 10,000 years. The famed Chickamauga Mound in the community dates back to the 8th Century (Moore, 1915). The Cherokee Native Americans were still living in the area when European settlers began to arrive. Chief John Ross established Ross's Landing in 1816, a center for the region's Cherokee settlements.

In 1838, Native Americans were forced to leave the region and were moved to assigned Indian territories in what is now Oklahoma. The U.S. Army placed an internment camp at Ross's Landing, as the natives were moved on what has become known as the "Trail of Tears" (Rozema, 2003). In 1839, Ross's Landing became part of the new city of Chattanooga and the area quickly grew owing to its strategic river location. The railroads came to the area in 1850 and Chattanooga became known as the place "where cotton meets corn," owing to its agricultural trading-based economy.

During the Civil War, Chattanooga was a key Confederate source of small weapons manufacturing and the area became a military target (Hughes, 1991). Repeated critical Civil War battles were fought in the area and the Battle of Missionary Ridge, where Union general Ulysses Grant led the northern troops to victory, was a defining moment during the war. After the war, the city became a major railroad center with an industrial and manufacturing economy.

The modern Chattanooga has a well-diversified economic base of both manufacturing and service industries. In the 21st Century, the establishment of a Volkswagen automobile plant added to the city's industrial base. The emerging changes to the entrepreneurial environment in Chattanooga, Tennessee reflect its rich entrepreneurial history. Community involvement, government action, and entrepreneurship in Chattanooga have been continuing themes throughout its history and has been defined by several key events.



*Figure 9.1* Map of Tennessee with Hamilton County Noted

*An Early Entrepreneurial Spirit*

When the train came to Chattanooga in 1850, Chattanooga became an important location for both corn and cotton industries (Ezzell, 2010). At the turn of the 20th Century, Chattanooga was again able to capitalize on its geography to create economic opportunities. In 1899, three Chattanoogaans acquired exclusive rights to bottling Coca-Cola (Ezzell, 2010). The bottling company grew to be one of the primary economic drivers in Chattanooga, strengthening the local economy. The legacy of the Coca-Cola bottling company continues today through the Lyndhurst and Benwood philanthropic foundations, which were started by the company's founders and their family members.

But Coca-Cola was not the only business in town. Manufacturing continued to grow, including the iron-making industry. By the 1920s, Chattanooga, Tennessee was second in the country in the production of steam boilers and hosiery products (Ezzell, 2010). In addition, Chattanooga had entered into the life insurance industry with Provident Life and Accident Insurance Company which was founded in 1887 (Company-Histories.com, 2013).

*The Great Depression*

During the Great Depression, like much of the country, Chattanooga was hit hard economically. In fact, more than one-third (35%) of Chattanooga was unemployed and the average per capita income was \$170 per year (Public Organization B). However, it did benefit from the development of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), a New Deal program (Ezzell, 2010). Created in 1933, one central focus of TVA was the "delivery of low-cost electricity" into areas that had long gone without (Tennessee Valley Authority, 2021). As a result of TVA's presence, the Electric Power Board (EPB), a non-profit agency of the City of Chattanooga, was formed in 1935 to serve as a power distributor of TVA's resources. Before its arrival, 90 percent of Chattanoogaans did not have electricity in their homes (Public Organization B). Electricity brought industry to Chattanooga, which helped to create jobs and counter the economic loss suffered during the Great Depression.

*"America's Dirtiest City"*

In 1969, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that Chattanooga was "America's Dirtiest City," a result of years of pollution from its major industries, including multiple foundries and an ammunition plant. The announcement galvanized both public and private stakeholders in Chattanooga toward action. In the words of one interviewee, "we pretty much already knew the core of the downtown was unlovable but we could really make it unlivable" (Public Organization C) if the pollution continued. Throughout the 1970s, in conjunction with the emergence of the Clean Air

Act, the major challenges facing Chattanooga's environmental well-being were addressed. In addition to increased environmental action, many of Chattanooga's worst business polluters closed their doors. For example, the Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant closed; it stopped production after the end of the Vietnam War. However, this had consequences as the decline of manufacturing jobs resulted in decline in population (Flessner, 2012).

### *Waterfront Renewal*

The city continued to push itself, not only wanting to stop being the dirtiest city but also wanting to be a city that celebrated the close proximity to its environmental treasures. With the mission of implementing a plan for both development of the downtown and the Tennessee River, public-private partnerships began to emerge to restore Chattanooga's waterfront. In 1982, a task force, funded by the Lyndhurst Foundation, was formed to help determine the best course of action. The task force proposed a park to be placed along the waterfront, along with the construction of an aquarium. The River City Company was created to enact these two proposals with the help of financial contributions from local foundations and financial institutions (River City Company, 2021). In 1992, the Tennessee Aquarium was built and became the country's largest fresh water aquarium. In addition, Mayor Bob Corker announced his 21st Century Waterfront Plan in 2002. The plan was the most recent revitalization effort and was almost entirely completed by 2005, when Mayor Corker left office. Today, Chattanooga is known as a scenic city for lovers of the outdoors (Smith, 2011).

### *Government Restructuring*

As a mid-size Southern city, Chattanooga was not immune from the legacy of slavery, segregation, and disenfranchisement. In the late 1980s, more than 20 years after the Voting Rights Act, *Brown vs. Board of Commissioners of City of Chattanooga, Tennessee* appeared before federal court. In the case, the plaintiffs (racial minorities) contended that the at-large system for select Chattanooga's Board of Commissions violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as well as the U.S. Constitution because it overly favored the White racial majority (Bahner & Gray, 2015). Two years later, the ruling found that the Chattanooga form of government was discriminatory (Center for Constitutional Rights, 2007), and the judge ordered that a new government be formed (Hightower & South, 2011). When the city had to restructure its government, it developed a representative system based on nine districts, which led to the creation of three majority-minority districts (City of Chattanooga, 2015). According to the Brookings Institution, this change had three major effects. First, it increased minority representation in the city government. Second, it allowed "the mayor to function as a much stronger chief executive." Under the commission style of government, the mayor was only one of the commissioners, and any effort to address a major issue in the

city required intense coordination among multiple commissioners. Finally, “it opened city government to new ideas, as none of the nine newly elected council members had served in city government before” (Eichenthal & Windeknecht, 2008).

## **Introduction and Background of the Gig and the Innovation District**

One of the physical visions of how entrepreneurship is started can be a spark of inspiration, sometimes between co-workers, sometimes in the classroom, sometimes in the shower. Once that spark is lit, the belief is that it will carry individuals through all the challenges they face. Of course, not all entrepreneurs fit this fantastic archetype. But a similar story can be made for entrepreneurial ecosystems, local systems around entrepreneurs, and their supporters. One spark, whether it is an unexpected shock, a specific success story, or an intentional effort can change the attitude and trajectory of entrepreneurship in a region.

While such events are not common, it can be argued that the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Chattanooga, Tennessee was irrevocably changed in 2010 when the city debuted the Gig, a one-gigabit fiber internet service, to residents and businesses. Its genesis was in EPB, the Electric Power Board, after city leaders wanted to know how EPB could do more for the city. It was this push that kick-started the development of the modern Chattanooga entrepreneurial ecosystem, collecting the existing efforts from foundations and individuals and acting as the impetus for a number of entrepreneur support organizations.

The Gig, while acting as a catalyst for entrepreneurship over the past 7 years, was not developed with entrepreneurship as the accompanying growth strategy. One interviewee noted how the goal of using the Gig as a sweetener for existing firms to move to Chattanooga did not pan out, and the growth through entrepreneurship happened organically. He says:

What the Gig did was say you're first in something technology related, now everybody says, we got to stay first, we have to do something. It really wasn't the idea that we're going to focus on entrepreneurship. The idea was we're going to get [the Gig] and we're going to get all these huge businesses, and then when it didn't happen, entrepreneurship was the backup plan. I say that not to degrade entrepreneurship but to be realistic about what it is that sometimes your backup plan is your best plan. You just didn't know it yet.

(Public Organization A)

The bookend of this time period, as it relates to entrepreneurship support in Chattanooga, lies in the new Innovation District. Creating a single location or area where people can congregate and find resources, advice, or

combine skills is Chattanooga's attempt to capitalize on the success they have seen since the arrival of the Gig. The Innovation District also aims to ensure that the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship remains a part of the fabric of Chattanooga. By purchasing and revitalizing the Edney building in downtown Chattanooga as the first physical location of the Innovation District and convening the successful entrepreneurship support organizations that have blossomed since the introduction of the Gig to be part of the District, Chattanooga is deliberately nurturing the inputs that contribute to a growth-friendly entrepreneurial ecosystem. What Chattanooga's future holds for entrepreneurs is still to be determined, but the infrastructure is developing to facilitate entrepreneurial growth.

However, throughout this report, we perceive this creation of the Gig, the Innovation District, and the opening of the Edney Building is a process, not an end of efforts to promote entrepreneurship. It is a process because myriad layers of organizations are involved, and the designation and purchase by the public sector, though important, was only a partial picture of the entrepreneurship scene in Chattanooga. It is also a process because the establishment of the Innovation District is a tool to promote entrepreneurial efforts in Chattanooga.

In this chapter, the primary goal is to shed light on who was involved and how they were involved in the broad spectrum of entrepreneurship promoting efforts. A brief historical review of Chattanooga was reviewed because the roots of the current players of entrepreneurship go back at least a century and are related to several key moments in the past. Second, classification and explanation of the types of entrepreneurship support groups, namely local foundations, direct support organizations, and the public sector. The third section analyzes the role of the Mayor's Office and the public sector in developing an environment for entrepreneurship in Chattanooga. The fourth section explores migration patterns and the reasons the entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship supporters chose Chattanooga. The fifth and final section lays out the implications and lessons learned from Chattanooga for others, especially for mayors and their offices.

### ***Major Supporters of Entrepreneurship in Chattanooga***

The substantial changes that were made in countering pollution, renewing the Tennessee River waterfront and restructuring the government were undertaken by a combination of foundations, community organizations, government officials, and everyday citizens. With regard to entrepreneurship specifically, we have identified four strands of groups that have created and supported the environment for entrepreneurship in Chattanooga. The first group includes the foundations and angel investment capital, which provide the money and networks to the organizations and businesses that are generating entrepreneurial progress in Chattanooga. The second strand includes the entrepreneurial support organizations that

provide space, resources, and expertise to the startups. The third key part is the public role—the Mayor’s office, the Enterprise Center, and the Electric Power Board—that thinks strategically about how their governmental infrastructure can help facilitate entrepreneurial growth. And finally, the emergence of the Innovation District, a public–private enterprise to create a specific concentrated space in the Chattanooga landscape for entrepreneurial development. Figure 9.2 expresses this complex web of supporting players.

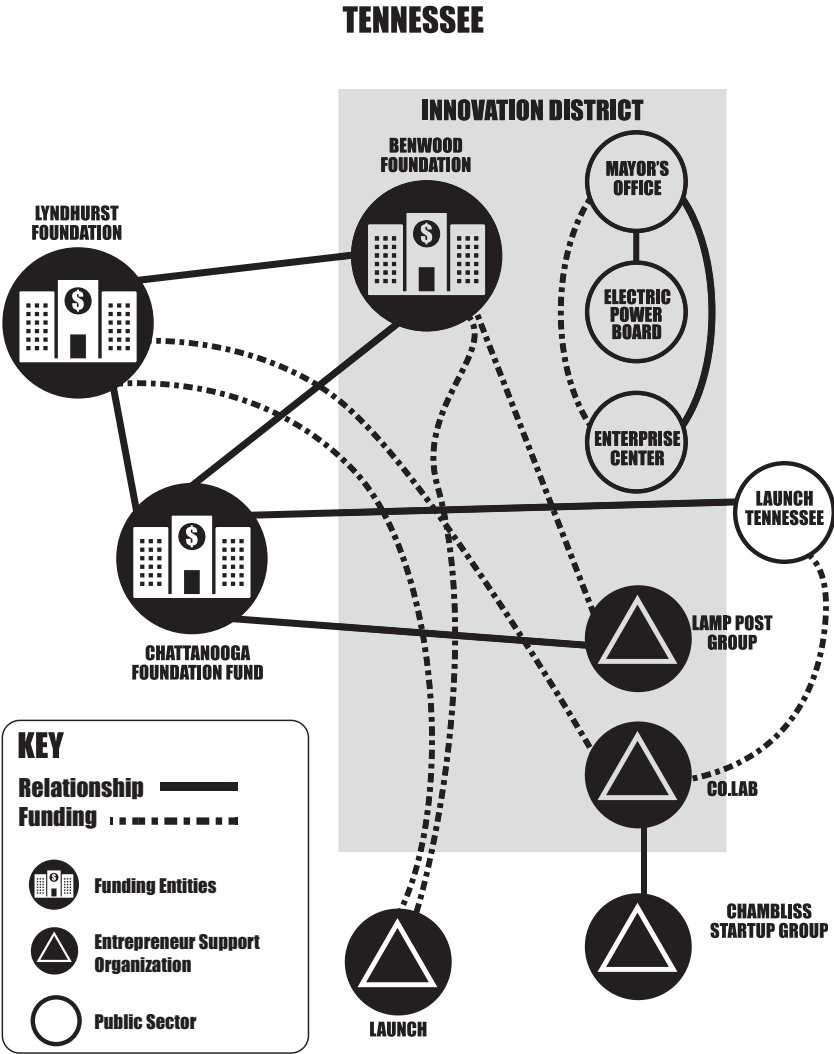


Figure 9.2 Innovation District of Chattanooga, Tennessee

### ***Foundations and Funding***

The first strand is the two philanthropic foundations that have played substantial roles in the general redevelopment of Chattanooga, and, hence, later influencing the entrepreneurship environment. The Lyndhurst and Benwood Foundations were established by individuals with family ties to the founders of Coca-Cola Bottling dating back to 1899 (Coca Cola, 2021). This connection to the Atlanta company generated an influx of wealth to Chattanooga, which at one time possessed three quarters of the philanthropic money in the state of Tennessee (Public Organization A; Support Organization A).

#### *Lyndhurst Foundation*

In 1938, the son of John T. Lupton, Thomas Carter Lupton, established the Memorial Welfare Foundation which would become the Lyndhurst Foundation. The areas of focus for the Lyndhurst Foundation have changed throughout the years, but an emphasis on the improvement of Chattanooga proved constant. Thomas Carter Lupton died in 1977, leaving the Foundation to his son John (Jack) T. Lupton, who quickly established himself as an essential part of the Chattanooga community. He was known as a problem solver. He was a person who would call decision makers into a room to develop a plan to counter a problem. Among those interviewed, many suggested that Jack Lupton's mindset was "you go big or you go home" (Local Foundation A). He developed a reputation where people did what he told them to, which resulted in Chattanooga tackling some of its major problems, with heavy involvement from key decision makers and philanthropic money.

#### *Benwood Foundation*

In 1944, George Thomas Hunter launched the Benwood Foundation in tribute to Benjamin F. Thomas, his uncle and one of the three founders of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. Hunter had apprenticed and worked for the bottling company and eventually became its president after his uncle's death in 1914 (Benwood Foundation, 2021). Like the Lyndhurst Foundation, the Benwood Foundation has a strategic focus on the development of Chattanooga by enhancing its culture, talent, competitive advantage, and sense of place.

The roles and accomplishments made by these two foundations in the areas related to entrepreneurship can be summarized in the following four areas: promoting general redevelopment, funding CO.LAB, influencing the Gig, and leading to the establishment of the Chattanooga Renaissance Fund.

#### *Emphasis on Chattanooga Redevelopment and the Waterfront*

In the 1980s, both Lyndhurst and Benwood helped lead a revitalization effort of the Chattanooga downtown, as well as its waterfront along the



Tennessee River. In 1986, the River City Company was created with the help of funding from both foundations to “implement a 20-year twenty-two mile blueprint for Chattanooga’s riverfront and downtown development” (River City Company, 2021). Jack Lupton continued to be the facilitator of change as he played a key role in this development. He wanted “to see Chattanooga turn and he made another sizable investment in River City” (Public Organization C) and the Waterfront Aquarium (Local Foundation B). The people involved in the River City Company continue to influence the direction of Chattanooga. For example, Ken Hays and Ann Coulter were key players in the waterfront development and are now the backbone of the Enterprise Center. The development of the downtown and waterfront continued into the 21st Century with a 3-year, \$120 million development project (Local Foundation B). Currently, there are efforts to repopulate the downtown residency and to redesign Miller Park, which is located in the middle of the downtown area.

### *Entrance Into Entrepreneurship*

After the redevelopment of the Chattanooga waterfront and downtown, many in the community were asking “what’s next?” Sarah Morgan, then program officer at the Lyndhurst Foundation and current president of the Benwood Foundation, led the foundations to become a major leader in the effort to redevelop the city. The foundations served as “catalysts that helped jumpstart [the] community, entrepreneurially and otherwise” (Support Organization B). They helped establish Create Here which morphed into CO.LAB, of which the two foundations provide half of its funding. CO.LAB would not be the lasting force that facilitates successful entrepreneurship without the strong financial support of the foundations. The foundations have also been supporters of the Gig Tank and 48 Hour Launch.

### *Chattanooga Renaissance Fund*

The Chattanooga Renaissance Fund (CRF) also played a large role in the growth of entrepreneurial activity. The CRF is an angel fund founded by key members of the entrepreneurial community. Chattanooga Renaissance Fund invests in seed and early-stage companies with a focus on “entrepreneurs that are beyond the ‘idea on the back of a napkin’ but are still searching for mentorship and positive connections” (Chattanooga Renaissance Fund, 2021). The Chattanooga Renaissance Fund found its funding by a variety of actors, including the individual investors, as well as an investment from the Benwood Foundation.

All six of the original funders have previous experience in this area (Chattanooga.com, 2011). They include two members of Lamp Post (Miller Wilborn), a serial entrepreneur and founder of Causeway (Steven Culp), a lawyer specializing in startup clients, the Chief Financial Officer for the

Lupton Family office (David Belitz), and the CEO of Launch Tennessee (Charlie Brock). They began having conversations in early 2009 about how to organize angel investment capital and eventually raised \$3 million to begin CRF in early 2011 (Public Organization D). CRF was interested in providing capital to local startups to recognize the tradition of entrepreneurship in Chattanooga, as well as continue to re-establish “the entrepreneurial community that will carry forward the area’s legacy of entrepreneurship [sic] which will continue the growth and development of our city” (Chattanooga.com, 2011).

### ***Entrepreneurial Support Organizations***

The financial and network support of those foundations became the backbone of several non-profit organizations that directly provide services to entrepreneurs. During our discussion with support organizations and the entrepreneurs they support, we identified five support organizations that we will introduce in this section.

#### *Company Lab (CO.LAB)*

The first organization that has been a key player in the development of the entrepreneurial community in Chattanooga is Company Lab (CO.LAB). Starting in 2010, CO.LAB specifically targets entrepreneurs in the early stage of their venture in conjunction with its plan to retain and nurture creative and innovative individuals to promote a more vibrant city. Now, CO.LAB acts as an entry point for many prospective entrepreneurs and a hub of entrepreneurship development in the city.

One of the programs provided by CO.LAB is Co-Starters, which aims to serve aspiring entrepreneurs. Here, Chattanoogaans, who are considering entrepreneurship, enroll in a 9-week course that provides them with mentoring, community support, and other business resources. The students pay for the class (on a sliding scale based on their ability to pay) and the class represents a consequential source of income for CO.LAB.

CO.LAB also hosts two different accelerator programs. The first is an in-house accelerator designed for entrepreneurs that are ready to scale up their company. A 100-day program at CO.LAB headquarters, the accelerator accepts high-growth startups and connects them with mentors, potential investors, and teaches them valuable strategic skills. This program is the next step for companies that have high-reaching goals for growth and investment. The second is the GigTank accelerator program. This program helps founders use the Gig—the metropolitan-wide high-speed internet that has become part of Chattanooga’s identity—to expand the potential of their businesses. GigTank, which accepts applications and startup groups from across the country, is summer long and boasts mentoring services, industry experts, and leaders in broadband and entrepreneurship as part of the

services it provides. GigTank serves a number of important functions as the highest profile accelerator in Chattanooga. Originally developed to specifically take advantage of the powerful one gigabit internet, GigTank has morphed in a general high-tech accelerator program that attracts a diverse group of businesses that are taking advantage of new technology.

While many of the accelerator programs that CO.LAB and the other entrepreneurship support organizations service local entrepreneurs, GigTank has a more national reach, with as many as 25 percent of the participants from outside the Chattanooga area (Public Organization D). Finally, GigTank, while hosted by CO.LAB, is an event that is supported by other entrepreneurship support organizations in Chattanooga, including Lamp Post Group. An interviewee familiar with CO.LAB said:

The board decided that rather than staking out their respective territories . . . [CO.LAB and Lamp Post] were going to cooperate with each other and they were going to work together to do something and that set the tone. That had its first expression in the first GigTank in 2012.  
(Support Organization C)

The collaboration instead of competition between the different entrepreneur support groups allows startups to find the help that best suits them and creates companies that are more likely to succeed.

CO.LAB's value to the Chattanooga entrepreneurial ecosystem is not just limited to its programs. An important function of CO.LAB is to be an informal place where curious, prospective, inexperienced, or new entrepreneurs, at various stages of business formation, can come to talk to individuals who know the landscape and can help to map out their next steps. In this way, CO.LAB strives to be the entry point for those who want to engage in entrepreneurship, in whatever form it manifests itself. An interviewee described the importance of the process and the perception of the community by saying: "Nobody is turned away. That's . . . one [of the] simple rules: take the meeting . . . just take the meeting. It doesn't matter who asks" (Support Organization C). These meetings with potential entrepreneurs then lead them to the services and resources CO.LAB provides, from an informal mentoring track, to a structured accelerator program.

The community feeling that emanates from CO.LAB is what they believe has brought their success in developing a culture of entrepreneurship in Chattanooga. While they also serve as an organizer and supporter of events like 48 Hour Startup and tech lunches, engaging the community on their terms allows entrepreneurs to work toward their goals with a sense of comfort.

One final aspect of CO.LAB that confirms the closeness of their relationship with the entrepreneurial community in Chattanooga is the way that the mentors and employees embrace an ephemeral concept known as the Chattanooga Way. This dovetails with CO.LAB's desire to be an entry point

for all Chattanooga entrepreneurs, because CO.LAB and the greater Chattanooga population see their individual success as Chattanooga's success. This can be seen through their events, such as GigTank's Demo Day and the attendance by local Chattanoogaans. CO.LAB wants to help entrepreneurs and see them succeed because they, with the rest of Chattanooga, see that success as a way for Chattanooga to grow through the business growth. An interviewee explained the importance of the CO.LAB as a sort of "front door" for entrepreneurs:

I think having [CO.LAB] there as an organizer, as a front door, as a place where, "hey, if this is a city you want to try something, you show up and we'll help you navigate," I think that's been great. I think they've learned a lot, grown, expanded, contracted. I think they're figuring it out. They're continuing, thankfully, to try and figure out what exactly they need to be doing for the community, which is a perpetual thing you need to be doing or else it becomes static.

(Support Organization A)

### *Chambliss Startup Group*

The second major entrepreneurship support organization is the law firm Chambliss, Bahner, and Stophel, P.C. (known hereon as the law firm), particularly through Chambliss Startup Group. Chambliss Startup Group is a project by the law firm to provide low-cost legal services to startups and young firms in Chattanooga so that they can design and build their companies to succeed. The group started in 2011 and offers free monthly legal clinic hours at CO.LAB, legal services for startups that advance through certain entrepreneurship events such as 48 Hour Launch and Will This Float? and hosts social events for startups to engage with legal professionals. The law firm also acts as legal counsel for the Electric Power Board, which is the operator and service provider of the one gigabit internet throughout Chattanooga.

Chambliss Startup Group was founded from the connection between Rick Hitchcock, shareholder at the law firm and Sheldon Grizzle, co-founder of the CO.LAB. Hitchcock already had experience in the startup world, having taken a 3-year sabbatical from the law firm to work with a partner on a hydroelectric vehicle startup. Hitchcock and others at the law firm had been attending some of the events at CO.LAB and other places and wanted to give back to the community in this way. An interviewee described the desire of the firm to be a part of the startup community:

I think at the core of the law firm there's a community service piece of it. It's something that the firm emphasizes, to be involved in some sort of service to the community . . . it became obvious that to make the startup community work, there needed to be an engagement with

the professional services that the startups needed in a different way than they had before.

(Support Organization D)

From that mindset, Chambliss Startup Group has been an active presence in the entrepreneurship support arena. In CO.LAB's Co-Starters class for aspiring entrepreneurs, the startup group wrote the legal chapter of the class. The free legal clinic hours that Chambliss provide happen at CO.LAB. And Chambliss Startup Group hosts startup social events for entrepreneurs and legal staff to break down the disconnect that exists between the two communities.

There are two main drivers for the formation of Chambliss Startup Group. One is the already mentioned community spirit aspect of the law firm. But the other is a more self-interested reason. Chambliss Startup Group sees the work they do with startups and entrepreneurs in Chattanooga as not just a way to engage with the startup community in Chattanooga, but to start relationships with the clients of the future. An interviewee explained how some of the law firm's oldest and largest clients were Chattanooga entrepreneurs long ago. He says: [The law firm] wants "to be involved in building relationships with the next wave of entrepreneurs. It's a big wave . . . [they] want to help make it bigger" (Support Organization D). This perception is based on their strategy such that the mix of older and younger companies is important to a healthy entrepreneurial ecosystem, and institutions in Chattanooga work to see those young companies thrive.

### *Lamp Post Group*

The third organization that acts as an integral piece of the Chattanooga entrepreneurial ecosystem through funding and resource provision is Lamp Post Group. Lamp Post Group works as a for-profit incubator and startup investor in Chattanooga, providing different levels of support, based upon how advanced the company is. Lamp Post was started in 2010 by a group of six Chattanoogaans with startup experience. Now, Lamp Post stands out as a starting line for startup companies.

Lamp Post works as a sort of venture incubator in Chattanooga. It provides investment to companies looking for the type of venture capital that is less common in smaller cities, mentoring to founders looking to grow their companies, and working spaces for collaborative efforts. Their model involves a number of different levels of support, including passive investments, a sidecar fund for Y-Combinator Demo Day, and other investment options. This strategy of different types of support for entrepreneurs at different stages and levels of success is not necessarily a novel way to design a venture capital group or incubator. But in Chattanooga, this kind of support organization did not exist before Lamp Post and others. Lamp Post has since developed a level of trust with Chattanoogaans and fills a role

in the ecosystem (Support Organization A). Without the collection of resources Lamp Post provides, high-growth potential startups would find themselves at a disadvantage and look outside Chattanooga to find the support they need.

Another benefit Lamp Post provides to the Chattanooga entrepreneurial ecosystem is a sort of conduit to the “professional” investment community. Many of the entrepreneur support organizations in Chattanooga, public or private, have a specific focus on city-building and local economic development through entrepreneurship. Lamp Post espouses some of the same goals but brings a level of sophistication and a broader experience from their experience of running, selling, and investing in startups. While there is some self-interest that drives their desire to invest and see Chattanooga companies grow and be successful, they also understand how Chattanooga entrepreneurship needs to reach investors and customers beyond the city, state, and region. They believe that successful entrepreneurship by Chattanoogaans can be a way for Chattanooga to grow and develop, but it cannot be just through local investors. An interviewee describes this idea:

There are a handful of companies that either have or are in the process of raising money from West Coast funding. That’s really where the economy gets hyper-charged is when you take money from outside and put it in [to Chattanooga]. Because if it’s just Chattanooga money investing, that’s kind of circular. But when you get outside capital that really enhances things.

(Support Organization A)

While Lamp Post does provide the links to outside capital, investors, and resources to companies looking to fulfill their potential, it is also motivated by the desire to make Chattanooga a place where people believe that they can succeed. This attitude drives Lamp Post’s philosophy that success breeds more success. Lamp Post sees investing in startups not just as a revenue source but those successful investments as an opportunity to invest in more young, growing companies. An interviewee familiar with Lamp Post describes the thinking:

You don’t see Ferraris in the parking lot. They’re plenty of . . . [investors at Lamp Post] who could drive a million dollar car if they wanted to. But they don’t want to because you know what a million dollar car is? A million dollar car is four more startups. It just is. . . . The energy level at places like Lamp Post where people are trying to make their dreams happen, and in teams, and up all night, it’s intoxicating.

(Support Organization A)

These are the opportunities that Lamp Post wants to make possible. Through their investment and their mentoring, and working spaces, Lamp Post wants

to create an environment of possibility in Chattanooga that does not discourage potential entrepreneurs from taking their chance because they think that is not done in Chattanooga. Lamp Post wants to create an environment where entrepreneurship is not just the domain of a specific geographic region. An interviewee explains:

Five years ago, if I'd wanted to start a company, I'd go to San Francisco, raise the money, and play the game. But I didn't think it was fair that because I have the access I have the advantage. I don't think having access should be the demarcation between getting to start a company and not.  
(Support Organization A)

### *Launch Chattanooga*

Since the arrival of the Gig internet service in 2009, Chattanooga has been discovering the entrepreneurial energy that exists with the region. The startup community has blossomed and the combined efforts of the city government, the entrepreneur community, and entrepreneurship support groups have developed strong ties. However, the outlook for entrepreneurship in Chattanooga is not universally sunny. There remain challenges and groups of people who fail to fully engage with the entrepreneurial engine in Chattanooga.

One group that is trying to address some of these challenges is Launch Chattanooga. Launch Chattanooga was founded in 2011 by Hal Bowling, who previously had been at CO.LAB. In founding Launch Chattanooga (no connection to Launch Tennessee), Hal and the team at Launch Chattanooga saw the opportunity to reach out to parts of Chattanooga that had not been as closely a part of the ecosystem. Launch Chattanooga:

Started in 2011 with the idea of . . . adding more inclusiveness . . . [in] a city . . . [trying] to encourage entrepreneurship. [Launch Chattanooga's] work is focused exclusively on marketing to under-resourced, low-wealth entrepreneurs who might not typically have access to the same resources that others might.

(Support Organization E)

Engaging with different populations than the stereotypical entrepreneur, ranging from individuals who had previously been incarcerated to immigrants, Launch Chattanooga wants to provide the opportunity inherent in entrepreneurship to those who may need that opportunity most desperately. It is an intentional effort to reach a segment of the population that may not have considered entrepreneurship or felt that they were welcome. Launch Chattanooga's effort has been described by asking:

How are we actually making a better Chattanooga? . . . if we don't have an inclusive ecosystem that allows every segment of Chattanooga

culture to begin to connect with the entrepreneurship drive and conversation . . . it's about bridging the gap so that they see themselves as part of what's happening in Chattanooga and not "that's what's happening over there."

(Support Organization E)

This kind of effort to include among the entrepreneurial inspiration that has expanded to different parts of Chattanooga grants ownership of the movement not only to the city as a whole but also to those for whom entrepreneurship can be the beginning of the pursuit of a dream.

From this idea of infusing a sense of inclusiveness into the entrepreneurial ecosystem comes a sense of identity. Launch Chattanooga is working to help low-income and traditionally disadvantaged populations succeed through entrepreneurship, but more broadly, Launch Chattanooga wants to strengthen the identity of the city. And because the identity of a city is not just tied up in the successes of one company here or there but when the greater population can feel its power, Launch Chattanooga wants to continue to help Chattanoogaans realize their entrepreneurial potential. Their vision is a unified Chattanooga where there are not:

two separate Chattanoogaes . . . one really successful one and one that's left behind. [Launch Chattanooga wants] . . . to make sure that everybody is moving forward and the rising tide is lifting all boats. . . . Maybe the only question is that everybody approaches it differently.

(Support Organization E)

### *Launch Tennessee*

A fifth organization dedicated to providing resources for entrepreneurs, in Chattanooga and beyond, is Launch Tennessee. Although Launch Tennessee is a statewide organization, it has strong Chattanooga roots and is particularly connected with CO.LAB. Launch Tennessee is a "public-private partnership focused on supporting the development of high-growth companies in Tennessee" (Launch Tennessee, 2021). The Economic Development Council of Tennessee came to the realization that the work of the organization would benefit from a public-private partnership, rather than an entirely government-sponsored program.

It began in 2013 when the governor of Tennessee asked Charlie Brock, then CEO of CO.LAB, to run the network. Launch Tennessee is a compilation of nine regional accelerators and seven tech transfer offices. In Chattanooga, CO.LAB acts as the regional accelerator affiliated with Launch Tennessee. Launch Tennessee acts as a sponsor for all the regional accelerators and helps startups succeed by focusing on five areas: entrepreneurship, commercialization, capital, corporate engagement, and outreach (Launch Tennessee, 2021).



Launch Tennessee is closely connected to Chattanooga, not only because one of their nine accelerator sites is located there but also because it is the hometown of CEO and President Charlie Brock. He was intricately tied to the entrepreneurial community in Chattanooga before he left to join Launch Tennessee. He is a founding member of the Chattanooga Renaissance Fund and left behind a legacy of leadership at CO.LAB. Launch Tennessee operates “[with their nine accelerators,] [they] get them to match dollars based on support locally and then . . . provide some programmatic support and sharing best practice” (Public Organization D).

### ***Public Role***

Along with the foundations, investment fund, and both local and statewide entrepreneurial support organizations, the public approach to supporting entrepreneurship has also played a large role to shape the entrepreneurial infrastructure in Chattanooga.

### *Electric Power Board*

The emergence of the Gig was the impetus for the entrepreneurial renaissance in Chattanooga. Yet the launch would not have been possible without the Electric Power Board (EPB). EPB is a unique feature of the Chattanooga landscape, as it is a utility company that is a non-profit entity, owned by the city of Chattanooga (Public Organization B). The public nature of EPB provides a “community grounding that EPB has as a customer-focused, locally-owned electric system, but it also grows out of [the president’s] desire to find ways to do things better and different” (Support Organization D).

During his term, Mayor Kinsey (1997–2001) pressed Harold DePriest, CEO of EPB, about how EPB was contributing to Chattanooga. Senator Bob Corker, during his term as mayor of Chattanooga (2001–2005), asked EPB if they could “provide businesses with downtown telephone services cheaper than what we were getting from the traditional carriers as one more incentive to bring businesses back downtown” (Public Organization B). In 2010, DePriest told a group of leaders that EPB believed they were going to have one of the smartest smart grids in the country because of the fiber.

Since the launch of the Gig, the EPB estimates that 91 companies have been founded in Chattanooga, with approximately \$50 million in venture capital from six different firms (Public Organization B). In addition, firms from Charlotte, North Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia, and Nashville, Tennessee, are “beginning to come to Chattanooga looking for investment opportunities” (Public Organization B). While these companies are not solely attributable to the presence of the Gig, EPB believes that the Gig did provide an incentive to these companies to begin their business in Chattanooga.

When the Gig was developed, according to one interviewee, it was believed its influence was going to attract big business to Chattanooga.

However, that plan did not come to fruition and entrepreneurship emerged as a way to take advantage of the Gig and promote economic activity in Chattanooga. It was through a failed attempt at appealing to big business that they discovered that local people and local business and startups could benefit from the emergence of the Gig (Public Organization A).

### *Enterprise Center*

The Enterprise Center is a semi-public entity designated by the mayor to coordinate and lead the Innovation District and entrepreneurship. The Innovation District is an intentional development of an entrepreneurial space in Chattanooga's downtown designed to help create density within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

This Enterprise Center, emerged from the Chattanooga Forward Task Force created by Mayor Berke, focused on the areas of "Gig, Technology, and Enterprise" (Public Organization C) with the goal of determining how to "maximize the 'Gig' opportunity" (Enterprise Center, 2021). The task force comprised influential players who had been informally discussing this topic but now was able to connect with the newly elected mayor to formalize the meetings.

Currently, the Enterprise Center is run by Ken Hays, who is closely connected with previous Chattanooga mayors. He ran his former business partner Mayor John Kinsey's campaign and then served as his chief of staff. In addition, he worked with Senator Bob Corker to help revitalize the downtown area, taking advantage of public-private partnerships (Public Organization C).

The building that will be the central feature of the Innovation District will be the Edney building. It is a 10-story, 90,000 square foot building previously owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Mayor Berke and Harold DePriest helped the Enterprise Center make a deal to purchase the building for "favorable terms," with a price tag of \$1.3 million (Public Organization C). DePriest had leverage because of EPB's historical partnership with TVA.

While the Enterprise Center plays the primary role to coordinate, plan, and implement the Innovation District, the city has played a role in developing the space. For example, the Mayor's office absorbed the cost of getting the building inspected before purchase. In addition, the Enterprise Center is partially funded by the city and it was an organization put together by him, so "for practical purposes, it's the city" (Public Organization A).

### *The Innovation District*

One of the ways in which Chattanooga is trying to harness its newly found entrepreneurial energy is through the development of the Innovation District. The Innovation District spans a 140 acre area of downtown

Chattanooga that aims to promote innovative activity and house startups, accelerators, and other business support organizations such as the Chattanooga public library, EPB and Society at Work, who started the first public workspace in Chattanooga.

The Innovation District, which plans to encompass an urban, walkable part of the city, was the brainchild of Mayor Berke's Chattanooga Forward Task Force, specifically the Gig, Technology, and Entrepreneurship group. In the group's report, one of their recommendations was for the city to engage in a public-private partnership to fund and develop the buildings and companies that would exist in the Innovation District. This public-private partnership structure has a long history in Chattanooga. Instead of only engaging with government officials and government funding, this arrangement allowed the mayor's office and individuals like Ken Hays of the Enterprise Center, to work with developers to buy the building that will serve as the centerpiece of the Innovation District. Not only did this public-private partnership ease funding costs, but also the Mayor's office took advantage of some of the existing entrepreneurship support organizations in Chattanooga to populate the Innovation District. Instead of spending resources on a new, state-funded accelerator, the city is designating CO.LAB as the Innovation District accelerator.

From a city perspective, the Innovation District is an approach to concentrate the types of groups that catalyze innovation. This sort of centralization gives Chattanooga a singular place to rally around and point to as the place where new ideas are born. One interviewee stated that this intentional effort, along with the ability of the organizations to work together toward common goals, can be how the Innovation District achieves the most good. He says:

What we really need in the Innovation District . . . [is] a community project. That's what will tie together the people in the Innovation District. What I mean by that is it could be no carbon, it could be talent development, it could be whatever, but we need a common project that we're all working towards that gives us a reason for, not the people on the board of the Enterprise Center, they are organized, but it gives us an organizing tool for business owners and managers and the Innovation District and work together on something that's beyond their business that again builds those relationships, provides those collision opportunities, and gives people a reason to say, "oh that's why . . . I'm in the Innovation District."

(Public Organization A)

For entrepreneurship in Chattanooga, the Innovation District can help develop a level of density and connectivity that strengthens a growing ecosystem. When programs are not adversarial to each other and resources are not monopolized but put to their most effective use, a vibrant ecosystem for

entrepreneurship can emerge. Chattanooga's Innovation District is a deliberate attempt to foster this kind of ecosystem that perpetuates entrepreneurship and innovation as a self-sustaining growth wellspring.

### ***Mayor Berke's Contributions***

Within the public sector, we identify heavy involvement by the Mayor of Chattanooga with various entrepreneurship efforts. In this section, we organize his authority and involvement in two approaches. First, the mayor exercised his support through his official powers. Mayor Berke did not come into office with an entrepreneurial background but worked in the law field before entering politics. Nevertheless, he initiated the task force of Technology, Gig, and Entrepreneurship. While this was one of the six task forces, he clearly elevated the entrepreneurship issue as one of the highest priorities of the city. In this process, he convened influential players on this topic at one table and set the vision of the city government. The other five task forces were: Sports and Outdoors, Entertainment and Attractions, Housing, Downtown, and Arts.

As described, the task force was developed to the permanent operation of the Enterprise Center, designated by the mayor, and the Center plays an important coordinating role in entrepreneurship. The establishment of the Edney Building was initiated by the mayor, and the original plan was that the city government would design and own the building. However, the mayor quickly realized that the private sector could fill that role. Then, the mayor changed the process so that the Enterprise Center sets the criteria for the design and operation of the building but only coordinates bits from the private sector (Public Organization A). This shift to the public-private partnership coordinated by the non-profit entity, the Enterprise Center, is welcomed by entrepreneurship community leaders as it would remove the bureaucratic process (Public Organization C).

Second, the mayor's influence included his soft supports. Mayor Berke has assumed the role of entrepreneurial cheerleader, which entrepreneurial leaders in Chattanooga appear to deeply appreciate. Berke's interest in, and promotion of success by entrepreneurs is viewed as an asset. One leader believes that the "biggest thing that politicians can do, and [Mayor Berke] does [is] . . . showing up and supporting the entrepreneurial community" (Support Organization A). This also creates a feeling of legitimacy for entrepreneurship:

Lending his credibility and the credibility of the office of the mayor to say that and do that, that's really helpful because credibility is a big deal as a startup, because no one knows who you are.

(Support Organization A)

In addition to the convening role described earlier, the mayor brings in important players when needed. For instance, the planning of the Innovation

District required coordination with the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, since the university owned properties next to the District. Initially, the university, with its heavy teaching mission, showed little interest in this planning. Then, the mayor called the president of the university and arranged a meeting between the university officials and the Enterprise Center (Public Organization A). Being an elected official, the mayor can exercise such influential coordinating and connecting roles.

These cheerleading and coordinating roles are not given by the elected authority but evolve with the continuing efforts to communicate with local leaders. For instance, he periodically participates in a meeting related to “Tech Goes Home,” a program funded by the city and the Benwood Foundation that provides computers and internet access to low-income school children. Moreover, he participates in other monthly meeting with the local foundations to help coordinate the funding.

### ***Place Attractiveness***

Throughout our interviews, we observed a variety of migration patterns and their causes among Chattanoogaans, which lead us to strikingly different findings about the place attractiveness and migration patterns from the currently popular practice proposed by Richard Florida. In his influential work, *the Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida (2002) concluded that the “creative” people are attracted to places with tolerance and diversity, measured by openness to gays and Bohemians, and those “talented” people create innovations, contributing to economic development of the region. San Francisco, Washington DC, Austin, and Boston, the usual high-tech hubs, rank highly in his creative index. While Chattanooga ranked 237 out of 276 metropolitan areas, we find many people coming to the region, enjoying the region, and being proud of it. This is particularly puzzling because, as explained previously, Chattanooga was the dirtiest city in the country in the 1960s and 1970s. How can we explain the attraction to the city?

We are fully aware that interviewing people currently residing in Chattanooga is inherently biased because we are omitting people who moved out of the area. However, we can still identify patterns of people migrating to the region and their reasons for locating in Chattanooga. The majority of the people we interviewed in the context of entrepreneurship are not from the area but from nearby areas, such as Asheville (NC), Atlanta, Memphis, and Knoxville, or even from distant locations, such as London, Costa Rica, Florida, and New Jersey. Of the people from Chattanooga, several people attended prestigious private schools on the coasts, such as Stanford, Princeton, and Harvard, but came back for family and other personal reasons. Others had bright careers elsewhere but decided to come back when they successfully sold their businesses and wanted to start their next project closer to home. Another migrating pattern we observed is that people attended local colleges (University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, and

the small, private Covenant College) and stayed in the area. The last pattern is based on employment, including a job of a spouse.

In sum, we find various reasons that people come and come back to Chattanooga. It does not seem that people rationally calculate the economic and local environmental factors, such as diversity and tolerance, and migrate, but the migration patterns are mixed with employment, social, family, and other personal reasons.

We supplement this analysis with the American Community Survey 2007–2011 5-year data. At the macro-level, Chattanooga metropolitan area's population grew from 476,523 in 2000 to 528,143 in 2010 (10.8 percent). Around 2011, Chattanooga gained people not only from nearby metros, such as Atlanta (1,580), Nashville (936), Knoxville (573), and Memphis (486), but also from major coastal areas, such as Tampa (315), Orlando (300), Washington DC (236), Los Angeles (205), Raleigh-Durham (182), Riverside (151), and Boston (100). These gains exceeded far more than out-migration in each of those areas. Chattanooga did lose some population to unexpected places, such as Macon-Warner Robins, GA (a net loss of 178), Lakeland-Winterhaven, FL (168), and Jacksonville, NC (44), but these numbers are small compared to the net migration listed earlier. Clearly, Chattanooga is not losing its talent to the major diversity and tolerance areas proposed by Florida, but different migration factors are present, and Chattanooga is gaining.

## **Implications**

Altogether, Chattanooga has seen entrepreneurial growth. There are dynamic and responsive groups of support organizations that work with different kinds of entrepreneurs and a greater density and concentration of entrepreneurs within Chattanooga. While Chattanooga's entrepreneurship focus was the result of an unrelated advance in internet technology through the Gig, Chattanooga entrepreneurship support organizations, public figures, philanthropic foundations, and private groups worked to sustain the momentum that had been created. In discovering how entrepreneurship can be a viable growth strategy for the city, these groups paved the way for future success and continue to provide space and resources that facilitate entrepreneurial growth.

Organizations come in a variety of shapes and sizes and serve the needs of different entrepreneurs and their companies. The teams at CO.LAB and Chambliss Startup Group are aimed at helping entrepreneurs in the early stages of firm formation. Their actions as a welcoming place where those who are just starting out can find advice and mentorship that help put their startup on the right track. Lamp Post Group provides not just incubation space and advice but also acts as a venture capital source for local, high-growth companies. Launch Chattanooga works with the parts of the Chattanooga population for whom entrepreneurship has not been the easiest

path to economic independence. There are also public organizations such as the Enterprise Center and Launch Tennessee, which are involved in the entrepreneurial process, organizing city and state efforts to share best practices and match local support dollars. And there are the foundations, Benwood and Lyndhurst, which have supported Chattanooga development for a number of years and have directed their recent philanthropic energy toward entrepreneurship.

But Chattanooga has embraced entrepreneurship beyond just the official organizations that perform that function. In a way, Chattanooga has woven entrepreneurship into its civic pride. The culture of entrepreneurship in Chattanooga has developed to the point where events like Gigtank and 48 Hour Launch attract Chattanoogaans who have nothing to do with entrepreneurship. The residents are intrigued about these events and the companies that participate. This pride reflects the concept of the Chattanooga Way, where the success of Chattanoogaan entrepreneurs is a proxy for the success of the city and its citizens.

The work of the EPB provided the infrastructure of the Gig, which presented the impetus for the spark of entrepreneurial energy that runs through Chattanooga. Even the commercial redevelopment of the Chattanooga downtown has created urban space where collision opportunities can blossom.

Beyond the dedicated organizations, the mayor and his office can be an influential force for entrepreneurship, both formally and informally, and inwardly and outwardly. In Chattanooga, the Chattanooga Forward Task Force brought to light, among other causes, the ways in which the city could embrace entrepreneurship as a way to take advantage of the city's existing resources. It brought together members of each of the historically important institutions in Chattanooga, including the foundations, city and real estate developers, and business leaders, who valued entrepreneurship. Recently, the formation of the Innovation District and organizing the physical space that allows for entrepreneurship support organizations to better collaborate is another step to capitalize on the momentum of the entrepreneurial energy in Chattanooga.

There is value in the more informal capacities that a mayor possesses. Chattanoogaan entrepreneurs and the support organizations have noted how impactful it was when Mayor Berke attended entrepreneur competitions or events and took an interest in their success. By lending the gravity of his office to these events, the events gained a sense of legitimacy that has attracted more entrepreneurs who sense that exciting things are happening in Chattanooga. Similarly, the network of relationships that mayors develop can be invaluable in facilitating connections between rising entrepreneurs and business leaders, academic institutions, and government agencies. Catalyzing these kind of interactions can create partnerships to seize opportunities that otherwise may fall by the wayside. Beyond Chattanooga, Mayor Berke also makes a point to be a sort of cheerleader for Chattanooga's

entrepreneurs. Creating an environment where entrepreneurs are not just nurtured and encouraged, but celebrated, helps both current entrepreneurs and primes the ecosystem to better support future entrepreneurs.

We would like to summarize the roles of the mayor to promote entrepreneurship.

- Identify major players who are involved in entrepreneurship. Those people may be not only in non-profit entrepreneurship support service organizations or philanthropic foundations but also in the private sector, such as real estate and redevelopment organizations.
- Be a cheerleader for entrepreneurship. A mayor could do so by officially designating a task force of entrepreneurship or instituting entrepreneurship buildings. Alternatively a mayor could promote implicitly by attending entrepreneurship-related events and talk about emerging and successful entrepreneurs to legit them.
- Convene and broker entrepreneurship supporters. A mayor can connect entrepreneurs or support organizations to university or large company in the area.

We believe that this story of Chattanooga has wide implications. It is true that some organizations and history of Chattanooga are unique, and other cities do not enjoy assets like multiple, large-scale endowed foundations or the public utility company under the municipal control. At the same time, that is precisely our rationale for studying Chattanooga as a case study. Each city is unique and has specific assets to the region: Contributing foundations may not need to focus on entrepreneurship or technological infrastructure, but those foundations with various and broader economic development missions can engage and provide financial and network resources that will be the backbone to the environment related to entrepreneurship. The core people involved in the past redevelopment efforts will carry the valuable networks as well as economic development expertise to mobilize, coordinate, strategically develop, and implement a new initiative oriented to entrepreneurship. Gig Tank was definitely a product of the fiber network, but it is only a programmatic tool to train and connect entrepreneurs, and the more important element is people, resources, and organizations to initiate and operate such training programs. None of these can take place easily or be formed overnight, but many other cities have those fundamental assets. The way Chattanooga organized all those assets can be applied to other places.

## References

- Bahner, T. M., & Gray, R. W. (2015). The other Brown case: The promise of the U.S. Constitution at work in Chattanooga. *The Federal Lawyer*. [www.bakerdonelson.com/files/uploads/documents/brownchattanooga2013.pdf](http://www.bakerdonelson.com/files/uploads/documents/brownchattanooga2013.pdf)
- Benwood Foundation. (2021). *About*. Benwood Foundation. [www.benwood.org/about](http://www.benwood.org/about)



- Center for Constitutional Rights. (2007, October 9). *Brown v. City of Chattanooga* [filed August 8, 1989]. *Center for Constitutional Rights, 55 Years*. <http://ccrjustice.org/home/what-we-do/our-cases/brown-v-city-chattanooga>.
- Chattanooga Renaissance Fund. (2021). *About Us*. Chattanooga Renaissance Fund. <https://chattanoogarenaissancefund.com/about-us/>
- Chattanoogan.com. (2011). *Local business leaders launch Chattanooga Renaissance Fund*. The Chattanooga.com: Chattanooga's Source for Local Breaking News. [www.chattanoogan.com/2011/3/15/196730/Local-Business-Leaders-Launch.aspx](http://www.chattanoogan.com/2011/3/15/196730/Local-Business-Leaders-Launch.aspx)
- City of Chattanooga. (2015). *City charter* [cited June 29, 2015]. [www.chattanooga.gov/citycouncil/city-charter](http://www.chattanooga.gov/citycouncil/city-charter)
- Coca Cola. (2021). *History*. The Coca Cola Company. [www.coca-colacompany.com/company/history](http://www.coca-colacompany.com/company/history)
- Company-Histories.com. (2013). *UnumProvident Corporation*. Company-Histories.com. [www.company-histories.com/UnumProvident-Corporation-Company-History.html](http://www.company-histories.com/UnumProvident-Corporation-Company-History.html)
- Eichenthal, D., & Windeknecht, T. (2008, September 17). *A restoring prosperity case study: Chattanooga Tennessee*. [www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2008/09/17-chattanooga-eichenthal-windeknecht](http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2008/09/17-chattanooga-eichenthal-windeknecht).
- Enterprise Center. (2021). *Our strategic initiatives*. The Enterprise Center. [www.theenterprisectr.org/](http://www.theenterprisectr.org/)
- Ezzell, T. P. (2010). *Chattanooga*. Tennessee Encyclopedia. <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/chattanooga/>
- Feld, B. (2012). *Startup communities: building an entrepreneurial ecosystem in your city*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Flessner, D. (2012, July 17). Chattanooga's population growth outpacing other cities. *Chattanooga Times*. [www.timesfreepress.com/news/news/story/2012/jul/17/chattanooga-returning-the-city-growth-population/82655/](http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/news/story/2012/jul/17/chattanooga-returning-the-city-growth-population/82655/)
- Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. Basic Books.
- Hightower, C., & South, T. (2011, October 13). *Brown v. Board of Commissioners shifted form of government to boost minorities*. *Chattanooga Times Free Press*. [www.timesfreepress.com/news/news/story/2011/oct/13/court-case-dramatically-shifts-form-of/61337/](http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/news/story/2011/oct/13/court-case-dramatically-shifts-form-of/61337/)
- Hughes, M. A. (1991). *The struggle for Chattanooga, 1862-1863* (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Arkansas.
- Launch Tennessee. (2021). *About Launch Tennessee*. Launch Tennessee. <http://launchtn.org/about/>
- Moore, C. B. (1915). *Aboriginal sites on Tennessee River*. Franklin Classics.
- River City Company. (2021). *About river city company*. River City Company. [www.rivercitycompany.com/about](http://www.rivercitycompany.com/about)
- Rozema, V. (2003). *Voices from the trail of tears*. Blair.
- Smith, E. (2011, September 13). *Outside magazine praises, slams Chattanooga in cover story*. *Chattanooga Times Free Press*. [www.timesfreepress.com/news/news/story/2011/sep/13/a1-magazine-praises-slams-scenic-city/58721/](http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/news/story/2011/sep/13/a1-magazine-praises-slams-scenic-city/58721/)
- Tennessee Valley Authority. (2021). *Our history*. Tennessee Valley Authority. [www.tva.com/about-tva/our-history](http://www.tva.com/about-tva/our-history)

# 10 A Meta-Analysis and Conclusions

## Relevance of Developing Entrepreneurial Communities to Empower Entrepreneurs

*Michael W-P Fortunato and Morgan R. Clevenger*

### **On the Long Trends of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems and Entrepreneurial Communities**

As noted by Audretsch et al. (2021), “entrepreneurship is a multi-level phenomenon” (p. 2). Our work on fettering out *entrepreneurial community* as a level of analysis to some extent responds on shortcomings of “everything” seemingly being an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and our own search for why ecosystems matter Stam’s (2015) reflections:

The mere popularity of the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach is by no means a guarantee of its profundity. Seductive though the entrepreneurial ecosystem concept is, there is much about it that is problematic, and the rush to employ the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach has run ahead of answering many fundamental conceptual, theoretical, and empirical questions. The phenomenon at first appears rather tautological: entrepreneurial ecosystems are systems that produce successful entrepreneurship, and where there is a lot of successful entrepreneurship, there is apparently a good entrepreneurial ecosystem. Such tautological reasoning ultimately offers little insight for public policy. Secondly, the approach as yet provides only long laundry lists of relevant factors without a clear reasoning of cause and effect. These factors do provide some focus, but they offer no consistent explanation of their coherence or their interdependent effects on entrepreneurship—and, ultimately, on aggregate welfare. And third, it is not clear which level of analysis this approach is targeting. Geographically, it could be a city, a region, or a country. It can also be other systems, less strictly defined in space, such as sectors or corporations. So, the approach offers insufficient adequate explanations and has not been clearly demarcated.

(p. 1764)

While our first (Fortunato & Clevenger, 2017) and second books (Clevenger & Fortunato, 2022) discussed the entrepreneurial collective through a

leadership and cultural theoretical lens, in this book we turned our attention toward the deliberate cultivation of entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities through field research. Perhaps a bias may show from our backgrounds in community, economic, and leadership development, but we believe very strongly that the power of stories, analyzed reflexively, and robustly through a solid analytic frame, can provide immense insights that not only shed light on how to improve entrepreneurship, entrepreneurialing, and ecosystem development cognitively but also resonate deeply with the reader's own experiences. This book therefore provides a diverse array of data and case studies regarding the cultivation and dynamics of entrepreneurial communities, entrepreneurial ecosystem development (whether local or regional), and entrepreneurial social groups through the lived experiences of actors and supporting agencies, through new insights for education, and through supporting empirical and anecdotal evidence. The aims of book have contributed to the conversation by:

- (1) Building on our first work, this book provides applied examples that embody the theories, principles, and processes that enhance entrepreneurial ecosystem development and entrepreneurial community development.
- (2) Offering an alternative approach to a “prescription” for entrepreneurial communities, demonstrating multiple viable paths toward entrepreneurialism rooted in a citizen-driven culture as evidenced in the United States in Indiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Nova Scotia, Canada.
- (3) Providing an authoritative overview of entrepreneurial community development, ecosystems, and leadership through the current day, as an educational guide or classroom applied text for students and researchers.
- (4) Illustrating strategies for both formal and informal community leaders for building alliances from scratch, creating a voice and forum for local entrepreneurs, and keeping busy people coming back for more.
- (5) Developing real, actionable implications and suggestions for individuals as diverse as researchers, economic development practitioners, current and former entrepreneurs, local leaders, and policy makers.
- (6) Tackling the sometimes complex theoretical world of entrepreneurship in plain language that is accessible to anyone.

Aldrich (1990) began using the biological workings from ecology as a metaphor to understand the complex relationships in entrepreneurial communities. Ecosystems develop at multiple levels (Cain, 2012; Corno et al., 2014; Fortunato, 2017; Mazzucato, 2013) and there are nuances within entrepreneurial ecosystems—led and forged by entrepreneurs—and entrepreneurial communities—which include multiple entrepreneurial ecosystems as well as a wide range of *feeder organizations* (e.g., K-12,

higher education credentials or programs, co-curricular offerings, national programming such as 4-H and Junior Achievement, and incubators) and *support organizations* (e.g., governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and a range of funding agents) (Clevenger, 2017). Aldrich and Wiedenmayer (1993) explored entrepreneurial activity at various levels including intra-population (i.e., firms and density), to inter-population (i.e., competition in an industry), and then at societal-levels (e.g., cultural norms, governmental policies, both micro and macro considerations). Cain (2012) said,

Cultivating a business environment is no different [than a biological ecosystem]—you are assessing and strengthening a system, loosely characterized by accessibility to mentors, knowledge centers, like-minded partners (leadership), capital, workforce (talent), and the desirability of the city, town, or place in which you operate.

(p. 6)

Throughout this book, we have provided documentation provided by scholars and practitioners across the United States and Canada that entrepreneurial social groups and entrepreneurial ecosystems differ from—but are highly related to and embedded within—entrepreneurial communities. Adding to the complexity are multiple entrepreneurial communities within regions, states, and nations. The key difference is that ecosystems are dynamic, generative, and inhere in the relationship between actors and their environment. Like communities, ecosystems carry with them “system ethics,” but like entrepreneurship, they also connote a degree of destruction and turnover to benefit the entire system. *Entrepreneurial communities* are often viewed as an “ideal state,” by contrast, that exists quite happily in perpetuity and does not necessarily focus on system change and evolution (central to ecosystems). However, an *entrepreneurial ecosystem* is typically self-actualizing for business productivity whereas an *entrepreneurial community* includes non-business organizations and actors.

We anticipate that this book opens up the potential for researchers and practitioners alike to guide answers to the following questions—questions that we have pondered ourselves since the first book:

- (a) How do entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities differ?
- (b) What can the field of community development tell us about developing more entrepreneurial communities?
- (c) What hope is there for smaller, fragmented, or declining communities in terms of developing an entrepreneurial community or helping entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurial ecosystems? Is it possible, or is it a lost cause?

As we hope you saw throughout this book, there are *many* options available for making communities more entrepreneur-friendly. We aim to lift up the voices of smaller, ordinary, non-flashy, not-necessarily growth-oriented (but perhaps a little), everyday environments and economies that have taken strides to improve their local entrepreneurial climate. We also hope to elucidate some key practices and analytic points that tie these communities together, and that offer some promising suggestions for how to make *any* community more entrepreneurially minded, entrepreneurially supportive, and just a bit more entrepreneur-friendly. To borrow from the old adage, “it takes a village to raise a child;” in our own experience and the experience of those communities and scholars featured in this book, it takes a village to raise an entrepreneur, too.

### **Revisiting the Role of Entrepreneurship in Economic Development**

For the authors, a major motivation of supporting entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities is to support a system of economic development that is more holistic, more robust to risk and uncertainty, more tailored to improving human life across the world, and less tethered to abstract goals of economic growth as a proxy for genuine human development. Economic development in the United States generally happened organically and followed basic governance and commerce development in support of enterprise. Economic development combines social and human capital with physical resources such as venture capital, access to technologies, infrastructure, and the availability of a skilled and trained workforce in service of the ultimate goal of generating economic growth in a bounded geographic area. Entrepreneurs have only recently been considered a cornerstone of mainstream economic development policy (Audretsch, 2007) even though the link between entrepreneurs and economic growth and development has been understood for much longer (see Schumpeter, 1934). Effectiveness of economic development “depends on various factors in the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, notably including knowledge bases, absorptive capacity, competition, networks of people, diversity, and culture” (Qian, 2018, p. 163). This regionality draws the matter closer to entrepreneurs instead of the macro perspective nationally.

There are three main viewpoints on what economic development *is*. The first view is that “the ultimate goal of economic development is to build assets and create wealth,” which “is produced by entrepreneurs” (Lichtenstein & Lyons, 2010, p. 3). Thus, “entrepreneurs create local jobs, wealth and growth, and are themselves innovative users of other assets and resources” (Henderson et al., 2007, p. 81). The second viewpoint is that “economic development is defined as the expansion of capacities that contribute to the advancement of society through the realization of individuals’, firms’, and communities’ potential” (Feldman et al., 2016). The third is “economic

development seeks to achieve long-term sustainable development in a nation's standard of living" (Porter, 2000, p. 19). Thus, *how* economic development is defined systemically influences approaches to policy making and implementation—which affect entrepreneurs. Varying definitions also contribute to a sense of confusion among ecosystem participants, elected officials, communities, and economists. It is also worth noting that economic development is *not* synonymous with economic growth (Arndt, 1987; Blakely & Leigh, 2010; Feldman, 2001, 2014; Feldman & Zoller, 2012; Feldman et al., 2016; Felsenstein, 2001; Flammig, 1979; Greenwood & Holt, 2010; Shaffer et al., 2006).

*Economic development* is concerned with structural support and facilitative processes to aid improvement in societal conditions based on economic activity. It is largely a qualitative concept inherent in processes of economic change and well-being, with typically “better” outcomes being defined as “development.” *Economic growth* is a quantitative idea, considered a change in the size of the economy within which businesses, entrepreneurs, and consumers work. Feldman (2001) noted that entrepreneurship is central to economic growth. Economic growth often comes from increased capacity as agglomeration from increased population, more businesses, and clusters centering around specific types of business or industry, thus a positive growth spiral (Delgado et al., 2010). Higher education is also used to promote economic growth through knowledge spillovers and labor market pooling (Neave & van Vught, 1994).

Economic development, by contrast, is about a qualitatively improving economy—one that “gets better” over time for those who participate in the economy. The link between entrepreneurship and economic development dates back to Schumpeter (1934), who saw *creative destruction*, or the replacement of outdated industries with newer ones that better serve the public, as serving the dual goals of both growth and development. As noted in Chapter 6, economic development is often anchored around academic institutions (see Etzkowitz, 2014; Fortunato et al., 2019; Orazbayeva et al., 2019). And “higher education produces an educated workforce and citizenry,” which enriches the environment for entrepreneurship and entrepreneuring that are catalysts in economic development (Lane, 2012, p. 16). Abel and Deitz (2011) said, “Indeed, the amount of human capital in a region is one of the strongest predictors of sustained economic vitality” (p. 1), which is why knowledge spillover effects often create path-breaking new businesses that improve society (Henderson, 2007; Audretsch & Lehmann, 2005).

Entrepreneurs accept risk-taking and serve as role models to instill self-confidence and action for the creation of economic exchange (Johannisson & Nilsson, 1989). Economic development deals with economics—the basics of supply and demand, and the creation and satisfaction of demand for better-quality amenities. Traditional business is often reactionary in filling gaps by providing what is needed and wanted in a market *ex post*. The

supply side can be disruptive by providing new products and services that make older ones obsolete. The supply method provides for positive deviance, disruption, and entrepreneur-centric decision making. Both demand and supply are realized through the agency of individuals or by organizations taking action to improve life and meet needs more effectively—or to satisfy those needs with better products and services. This supply concern includes “more conscious thought and behaviour and considers coordination and increasing returns to adoption, social sanctions, informational differences, uncertainty, legitimacy, naturality, and lack of power/resources to deviate” as differentiating factors (Dequech, 2013, p. 81).

There are five forms of economic offerings: commodities, goods, services, experiences, and transformations (Doeringer et al., 1987; Gilmore & Pine, 1997; Klein, 1977; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). *Commodities* are widely used, basic offerings delineated by price and volume availability, such as milk, regional fruits and vegetables, haircuts, funerals, and items everyone uses. *Goods* typically have a greater value than commodities, and early introduction of new items (i.e., invention) comes with higher price tags. Think of a new technology device or transportation means. *Services* are tailored, intangible means or methods, which are sometimes difficult to evaluate or compare. Service meets individualized needs, so quality and desirability is in the user’s view. Examples might be a massage, chiropractic care, or food delivery. *Experiences* and *transformations* are more recent economies that continue to grow. Both may include the earlier three economies but have a goal to evoke excitement and embed memories for a lifetime. *Experiences* include sky diving, all-inclusive resorts, destination weddings, or extravagant hotel or theme park immersions. Finally, *transformations* go beyond luxury products and services, to creating long-term, lasting impacts through change experiences. Education is one type of transformation but so are career-to-work programs, fitness, spiritual, or re-development of an area (e.g., house flipping, urban downtown revival, or major industrial or residential developments). Consider the enterprise focus throughout all of these five categories.

Goldstein et al. (1995) outlined eight major activities of higher education that most likely aid in regional economic development: (1) knowledge creation, (2) graduates transitioning into the local workforce, (3) transfer of knowledge, (4) technology and innovation, (5) capital investment, (6) regional leadership, (7) knowledge infrastructure production, and (8) influence on regional activities and milieu. However, Fortunato et al. (2019) noted, “many of these impacts cannot be measured and quantified easily because they inherently are in relational processes of human and institutional development, situation around more subjective ideas like human capital development, leadership, influence, and the quality of innovation” (p. 160).

Growing entrepreneurial economics includes two important factors: compositional factors and contextual factors (Stam & Bosma, 2015). *Contextual factors* focus more on the culture of the environment (i.e., entrepreneurial

community) and culture desired of the acting entrepreneurs (see Casson, 2010; Fogel et al., 2006; Pilon & DeBresson, 2003), whereas *compositional factors* are generally unique population characteristics or resources of a region specifically for entrepreneurs (i.e., entrepreneurial ecosystem). For example, *contextual factors* include “feeders and supports” to aid entrepreneurial behavior across industries and sectors. Examples of feeders in these community resources may range from proactive K-12 programming to college and university entrepreneurship centers and educational credentials (see Fogel et al., 2006). Feeders may come from family-owned businesses, where a family and friend culture for the acceptability of entrepreneurship is tolerated and encouraged. Supports include the regional culture, labor market structure, and economic development focus that joins forces to support the various levels of entrepreneurial ecosystems, clusters, and supra-regional entrepreneurship climate. The *compositional factors*—supporting entrepreneurial ecosystems—are resources focused specifically for entrepreneurs such as *financing* (see Black et al., 1996; Evans & Jovanovic, 1989; Fogel et al., 2006; Holtz-Eakin et al., 1994), *incubators* (see Parisi et al., 2018; Theodoraki et al., 2020), *mentors* (see Lichtenstein & Lyons, 2010; Spigel & Harrison, 2017; Stam & Spigel, 2017), and business specific *networks for entrepreneurs* and peer coaching by business people only (see Kutzhanova et al., 2009; Newell, 2017; Ruef, 2010).

There are good reasons for the locational inertia of entrepreneurs, reasons that all relate to the fact that the process of starting a new firm is eminently social. In other words, entrepreneurs are hardly lone individuals who rely primarily on their individual extraordinary efforts and talents to overcome the difficulties inherent to the formation of a new firm.

(Stam & Bosma, 2015, p. 326)

Thus, entrepreneurs function best in entrepreneurial ecosystems of peers within an entrepreneurial community with a wide range of relevant feeders and support networks. Further, Stam and Bosma (2015) noted several mechanisms promoting entrepreneuring: “experiential learning, vicarious learning, self-selection of risk prone workers, competition, and entry barriers” (p. 328). Even when deeply guided by technology and technological concerns, entrepreneurship still remains in the domain of *human* interaction and interdependence, and we expect these human ideas and interactions to continue to exist, adapt, and evolve well into the future. It may be precisely the adaptable nature of human interaction that makes the study of ecosystems so appealing and attempts to define an “ideal ecosystem” so concerning. As Taleb (2012) has pointed out repeatedly, complex human systems are always prone to unforeseen tail risks (also called *black swans* in his lexicon), and that very unforeseen nature of economic, social, and environmental phenomena requires far more than more complex planning:



it requires a continuously adaptable system that relies heavily on diversity, long trends (preferably thousands of years, according to Taleb, who even avoids drinking any beverage that has been around for less than that amount of time), and continuous adaptation. As one cannot predict where the next shock to the global economy may arrive and in what form, one similarly cannot predict where solutions to those unexpected changes will arrive, and in what form.

Entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurial communities are like any ecosystem and community: they are complex mechanisms that are very old and that have sustained life since the beginning of bartering, trade, and entrepreneurship. The focus in this book is simply those same old, “antifragile” mechanisms—just intentionally directed at launching ideas that serve society in any place, at any time, facing any situation. From an entrepreneurial community viewpoint, we might take the ecological imagery to a rose garden. The garden celebrates a wide range of types, colors, sizes, and genesis of roses. There are also hybrid roses. The roses need support—soil, enriching nutrients, sun, water, and sometimes catalysts (i.e., fertilizers)—with each rose specimen needing a different combination. Let alone considering the wide range of other plants and even hard-structure in a garden—and birds, bees, worms, fertilization, humans, and nature—contribute! Thus, an entrepreneurial community needs to realize there is diversity in entrepreneurs, fields, industries, histories, and culture that combine to make up a community itself. From entrepreneur research, demographics continue to document stories of males and Whites as dominant majorities (Hayter et al., 2018). Celebrating this achievement is important, but just like the rose garden—there is room for more rose variety, so there is more room for more entrepreneurs of variety—aka diversity, considering examples as youths and seniors; women as much as men; LGBTQIA+; ethnicity and religious variety; veterans; the disabled; immigrants; Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), Latinx and Asian, etc.

### **Meta-Analysis: Key Lessons From the Case Studies**

In this section, the case studies presented in Chapters 3 through 9 are viewed together. Using a simple thematic analysis as suggested by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), Yin (2009), Creswell and Poth (2018), and others, a goal is to isolate and identify the most relevant overarching themes that matter to entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurial community builders—those that are grounded not only in the phenomenological nature of the genesis of entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities but also those that can be practically utilized by others as guides for supporting and launching new entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted the importance of finding “‘metanarratives’ or universals that hold true regardless of the social conditions” (p. 26). Such universals transcend negative conditions, hierarchies and power, and challenging or

problematic situations or dynamics and may be transferable. Drawing from seven diverse cases, we acknowledge that these key themes are our own interpretation and represent those consistent findings that appear to converge around the lessons that we as researchers and builders found to be most insightful, surprising, or impactful. Different researchers may have different interpretations or alternative insights to those presented here, as different lessons are likely to hold strong relevance for different people. Table 10.1 provides a summary of the parameters of each case study, which is the overarching methodology.

The case studies presented here are very diverse in their focus, methods, participants, purpose, and stage of development. The following sections attempt to draw out key insights from the research that may be useful to the modern entrepreneurial community (or entrepreneurial ecosystem) builder and to other entrepreneur researchers. Key thoughts include the genesis of ecosystems emerging anywhere; the importance of size, context, and purposes; the value of entrepreneur social groups; the process being “more than just entrepreneurialism”; realizing the layers of “feeders” and “supports” aiding entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial communities in early stages; leveraging power and empowerment; leveraging resources such as leaders and policy; and appreciating Lewin’s *Force Field Analysis* dynamics in the process of entrepreneurial community development (see Schwerling, 2003).

### ***The Genesis of New Ecosystems Can Come From Anywhere***

In *Startup Communities* (2012), Feld described the importance of an entrepreneur-led ecosystem. This common-sense strategy purports that ecosystems led by entrepreneurs tend to convey the ethics, intentions, incentives, and motivations of entrepreneurs to others, lending these ecosystems immense credibility by “speaking an entrepreneur’s language.” However, in many younger and non-traditional entrepreneurial communities, clearly feeders and outsiders play a central role as well in catalyzing efforts, convening the right people, aligning funding, developing a vision, and perhaps especially, in legitimizing the effort. After all, feeders typically exist in the same communities as entrepreneurs and may have just as cohesive of vision for the community’s future. Whether or not they have the ability to actualize that vision without the help and support of entrepreneurs is another matter, which may be why early leader-feeder pairings occur so often in the case studies presented.

Until recently, the Cooperative Extension Services programming by the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been an organization whose historical purpose was to disseminate agricultural knowledge to farmers to raise productivity and alleviate poverty, now positions itself as a government-provided entrepreneurial feeder and support organization as a catalyst that was explained in the cases in both Minnesota’s Native Nations and rural Nebraska. It is rare to hear about entrepreneurship being preached from a

Table 10.1 Meta-Analysis Comparison of the Case Studies

<i>Case Study Location</i>	<i>Research Methods</i>	<i>Entrepreneur Focus</i>	<i>Culture and Diversity</i>	<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Entrepreneurial Climate Grade (McMillan, 2019; Toft et al., 2020)</i>
Northeastern Pennsylvania (8 counties)	Survey, Interviews	Regional Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Entrepreneurial Communities	Multi-faceted; predominantly White and male; highly educated; tech-oriented	Multiple levels: entrepreneurs, local leaders (formal and informal)	B
Nebraska (3 counties)	Observation, Narrative	Entrepreneurial Communities	Rural	Public University-led	F
Indiana (Madison)	Interviews	Entrepreneurial Community	Music industry	Music industry-led; Government-focus	C-
Nova Scotia (Halifax)	Interviews	Entrepreneurial Social Group, Entrepreneurial Ecosystems	Unemployed/Underemployed; predominantly male; highly educated	Entrepreneur-led	B
Texas (Abilene)	Narrative, Auto-ethnography	Entrepreneurial Social Group, Entrepreneurial Ecosystems	Faith-based	Mentor-led	B
Minnesota (four counties)	Literature Review	Entrepreneurial Community	Indigenous people of Red Lake Nation and White Earth Nation	University-led	B
Tennessee (Chattanooga)	Interviews	Entrepreneurial Community	Nonprofit Foundations; tech-oriented	Foundation-led, Entrepreneurs, Government	C

pulpit at church, but one mentor's calling in Abilene, Texas, crystallized a social group of learners and peer-to-peer mentors that appears to have the primordial ingredients of a vibrant entrepreneurial social group. In similar fashion, unemployed and underemployed individuals in Halifax, Nova Scotia became a vibrant entrepreneurial social group. Music lovers from multiple sectors of the local economy and even the government concocted the Madison Music Movement in Indiana as a way to boost their local economy while getting to enjoy more of what they love: live, local music. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, a Gig and internet service provided the backbone of a technology infrastructure with support from philanthropic foundations, entrepreneurship support organizations, and the public sector including government; and, likewise, in Northeastern Pennsylvania, a concerted effort was organized by economic development agencies, the State of Pennsylvania, local communities, nonprofit organizations, higher education, and entrepreneurs to foster a focus on technology, information, and knowledge in a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem supported by numerous entrepreneurial communities.

The lesson here for entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial ecosystem development, community development builders, and entrepreneurial communities is simple: do not wait. It is not necessary to wait for any particular organization, such as a local university, or entrepreneurial meetup group, or local angel group, to take action before you do. *You* may be the catalyst the community has been waiting for, particularly if you can serve as an effective convener of others, and in the entrepreneurial spirit, identify an *opportunity* and a *purpose* for taking action on entrepreneurship. This consideration is an important segue into the next topic, which stresses the importance of purpose in generating ecosystem energy.

### ***Size, Context, and Purpose Matter***

Trends come and go. While the great industrialists provided ingenuity, cash, and momentum to grow the U.S. economy—world wars happened; entrepreneurial geniuses created businesses that grew into large corporations, and many eventually diversified globally causing enormous downsizing; the dotcom era came and went; recessions created roller coaster economics as have political administrations. Both self-empowerment and citizenship responsibilities in support of a democracy and free enterprise system provide momentum, passion, and foundational energy needed as the backbone of the economic system and business culture in the United States.

From the results of these studies and their findings, we see support that the beginnings of any ecosystem or entrepreneurial community start small—much as Feld (2012) described. However, in these case studies, it was identified that the initial groups comprise entrepreneurs *or* institutional actors of non-entrepreneurs—or often *both*. While small, these initial groups often gain momentum over time, scaling up to a level that makes sense for the

context of the group. One thing that can be observed in all cases is that these initial groups share a clear, strong *sense of purpose*. Actions made by a group are intentional and deliberate, and whether formally or informally stated, there is a shared vision among participants in terms of the direction, goals, and mission of the group. In some, the mission is very clearly about supporting entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneuring. In others, such as in Madison, Indiana, it is about something else—like music—that acts as a vehicle for new business creation. For ecosystem and community builders, an important lesson is to gather the initial group of stakeholders, preferably entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs alike, and to cultivate a sense of shared purpose. This banding together could be an informal understanding of what the group seeks to do based on shared interests and passions, or a more formalized charter, mission statement, or web presence that crystallizes the group's intentions.

### ***Entrepreneur Social Groups Matter***

As focused on in the Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Abilene, Texas, case studies, entrepreneur social groups are important for self-identity, acceptance, and common language and understanding of, by, and for entrepreneurs only (Newell, 2017; Porcar & Soriano, 2018; Ruef, 2010). Entrepreneur social groups were also discussed in NEPA. Higher education was also an identity paramount in NEPA and Halifax with emphasis from universities in Nebraska and Minnesota as well. Creation of identity acceptance individually and shared collectively is important to mitigate the feeling of being ostracized (Newell, 2017). Being in a minority of populations such as a faith community (Texas), of being unemployed (Nova Scotia), or being Native American (Minnesota) are often feelings of being ostracized and different. Thus, affinity through entrepreneur social groups provides support and joint experience in facing challenges with the community and existing social and power structures. However, while entrepreneurs interact with their entrepreneurial social group, support organizations, and other community members, they maintain their relatively individualistic identities, which “can also be a challenge” (Newell, 2017, p. 274). Thus, there is a responsibility and ethic in entrepreneurial systems. Bayraktar (2016) provided a thoughtful expository on responsibility labeled as “traps” to be aware of and avoid, which can *inhibit* creating entrepreneurial cultures:

- (1) “My Command”: Trap of Control
- (2) “My Worldview”: Trap of Similarity
- (3) “My Best Way”: Trap of Preservation
- (4) “My Organization”: Trap of Individual Identity

(pp. 83–90)

To counter these traps, facilitators to support positive modeling as facilitating mechanisms include empowerment, diversification, exploration, and collectivization (Bayraktar, 2016, p. 92).

### ***It Is Often About More Than Entrepreneurialism***

The emergence of entrepreneur social groups, entrepreneurial ecosystems, entrepreneurial communities, and a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem in these case studies was frequently about more than traditional economic development concerns. In Nebraska, it was about getting beyond survival toward remote communities that can thrive on their own. In Abilene, Texas, it was about serving a higher calling through service to others through commercial means. In Madison, Indiana, it was every bit about a love of music and raising local quality of life as it was about engaging in a holistic economic development strategy. Even in Chattanooga, Tennessee, the idea of civic pride became a central motivation, with the mayor's own participation in entrepreneurship events granting legitimacy to the process and building enthusiasm, excitement, and a belief that participants were part of something important. Similar sentiments were resounded in NEPA across entrepreneurial communities and realization of pride and coordination in cities with regional and state support structures. The same was true for Nebraska, where entrepreneurship and emergent organizations like *Build Hastings* served as a vehicle for including youth and revitalizing entire sections of communities.

### ***Layers of “Feeders” and “Supports”—and Their Importance in the Early Stages***

Many of the case studies presented here exhibited *layers* of both involvement and support at multiple levels of action (i.e., local, regional, state, federal) and across multiple sectors (i.e., entrepreneurs, private sector, nonprofits, government). Using an effectual logic, many communities and ecosystems drew broadly from the resources available to them and involved a wide range of supporting participants who, within an ecosystem or community, were given the opportunity to interact. As discussed in Chapter 7, *panarchy* is the change and evolutionary mechanism of interactions—from the local neighborhood to a global panacea. Often, facilitating, constraining, and blocking conditions utilizing both formal and informal modalities (i.e., government policy vs. culture) could be found at work in these seven case studies. These framework conditions in turn affected a community or an ecosystem under study, and may have influenced the very idea for that ecosystem or community to emerge in the first place.

***Leveraging Power and Empowerment***

Noted especially in the Minnesota case study from the Red Lake Nation and White Earth Nation, there is an important theme of the *empowerment* of people through entrepreneurship, and the understanding that such empowerment occurs most readily when communities come together to take action. Power is, as Foucault (1990) argued, best understood *ex post*. Power is not something that any one person possesses, like a store of riches. Power is often understood after the fact, apparent in who got their way, which is often a surprise. Examples are plentiful of groups who organized, created an identity, and overcame incumbent power structures to claim a modicum of power for themselves. Indeed, a quote that is frequently attributed to Margaret Mead reads, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” This familiar story-line is the bedrock of the sociological literature on social movements, but there is no reason to think it only applies to activists and political aims. The same idea applies equally to entrepreneurs and their supporters who are capable of organizing to create an *entrepreneurial* identity for their community, spaces and places for entrepreneurs to engage collectively, and a broader mission that guides entrepreneurial action. It is indeed a social movement of sorts, just not one that involves marching and picketing for a cause, and it is the source of empowerment—*collective self-empowerment*—through entrepreneurship.

In this book, several examples are illustrated of organizations where empowerment occurs, with entrepreneuring situated as a vehicle for bringing people out of their current circumstances. In every case, this was done with the help of a mentor, a support network, an entrepreneurial social group, supportive institutions across all sectors, helpful policies, and often, a combination of several of these. However, empowerment often represented the transcendence of a current state to a better, future state. This process was most evident in Minnesota’s Red Lake Nation and White Earth Nation, where Native Americans wanting to foster entrepreneurs sought to work together to decolonize entrepreneurship development programming by creating *their own* programs, systems, and interpersonal networks that could work in tandem, at an equal level of power, with incumbent support organizations. The focus here is on creating *their own* ecosystem through organization, identity, and collective effort. Note that the effort is directed not at the individual entrepreneur or firm level, as is commonly done, but at the *community* and *ecosystem* level, where participants have sought to create an empowering structure that deeply understands Native culture in Red Lake and the very old history of the people there, and uses that understanding as a starting point for creating a unique and culturally appropriate support system that frees them from a sense of powerlessness and subordination under mainstream American entrepreneurial support systems. The Red Lake community became empowered when they organized themselves, and this power was not given to them by any authority.

While Red Lake is a clear example of empowerment and decolonization, other examples exist in these case studies as well. In Nova Scotia, the unemployed and underemployed turned to entrepreneuring, and mentorship, as a way of moving beyond wage employment situations that were substandard and insufficient. In Madison, Indiana, the community took ambitious steps to compete with larger cities to become their own version of a “music city” in a noted challenging industry for profitability. Nebraska’s communities sought to chart a different, more prosperous future, rather than a dismal present in a remote area with a declining agricultural base, and to do so through entrepreneurial action. Chattanooga, Tennessee, and NEPA forged intentional technology frameworks to foster entrepreneurs, to partner multiple agencies and sectors, and to create high-paying jobs within various technology industry areas through collective actions, including policies and leveraging multiple types of funding. In short, entrepreneurship not only is a means to achieve economic development but can also be viewed as a pathway toward overcoming circumstances in places that are struggling, or where people have been historically oppressed, or where people are unemployed or underemployed or find themselves in multi-generational poverty. Entrepreneuring shifts the power structure toward both the individual and the collective as well as what the *community* controls, and away from macro-level factors that are beyond the control of community affairs.

### ***Leveraging Resources From Leaders and Policy***

When entrepreneur opinion and feedback is not taken into consideration, they are often experiencing neglect or abandonment by policy makers (Curran et al., 2000). Politicians and local organization leaders view entrepreneurs as key actors in an entrepreneurial community benefitting from or being inhibited by laws, regulations, and policies. But for economic development, the goal is to have “productive entrepreneurship” as explained by Henrekson and Sanandaji (2011) whereas entrepreneurs and their work “legitimizes the institutions that foster it by creating demonstrable new wealth, products, and jobs” (p. 56). Said differently, community leaders’ focus should be aimed at considering what is in the best interest of an entrepreneurial community (Korsching & Allen, 2004). Thus, part of the culture of an entrepreneurial community must include participation and open communication (Vigoda, 2002). The communication includes feedback, impressions, ideas, and opinions by entrepreneurs (Henrekson & Sanandaji, 2011). As seen in the case studies, national government programming via Cooperative Extension was discussed in Minnesota and Nebraska and SBDCs in NEPA. State government had a role in NEPA. And local governments were key in the case studies of Indiana, NEPA, and Tennessee. Additionally, the nonprofit sector’s leaders were noted as involved in the



cases of Nebraska (e.g., arts council), NEPA (NEPA Alliance), and Tennessee (Benwood and Lyndhurst Foundations).

### ***Lewin's Force Field Analysis in Entrepreneurial Communities***

Any community can be conceived as a collection of social forces acting on one another at any given time. Even market forces act upon economic actors, including entrepreneurs, in a variety of ways as to create opportunities for new entrants, while destroying old spheres of opportunity—the essence of Schumpeterian creative destruction. As discussed in Chapter 2, social forces can be facilitating, blocking, or constraining (Cronshaw & McCulloch, 2008). The same is true for entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems. One of the key lessons from the case studies is that facilitating, constraining, and blocking conditions often do not take the form of formal institutional supports and constraints. Rather, participants in the research often mentioned the importance of culture in either supporting or defeating entrepreneurial action. In other cases, the presence or absence of formal support structures for entrepreneurs created blocking conditions. In some cases, however, this also represents an opportunity at the ecosystem level to build new formal support structures that can enhance and facilitate entrepreneurial action: somewhat of a “meta-entrepreneurial” opportunity that inheres in building structures to support entrepreneurship, rather than a pure micro-level entrepreneurial opportunity.

We contend that Lewin's force fields provide an excellent—and long-forgotten—framework for mapping ecosystems that take the analysis beyond a mere ingredient list of “what's there,” toward a more robust understanding of the power of social forces in producing resultant outcomes (Lewin, 1939, 1942, 1943, 1946; Lewin & Lippitt, 1938). This framing tells the researcher or builder more about how work actually gets done, or what is standing in the way. It also provides a way of incorporating quantitative analysis into the mapping of ecosystem frameworks, although one caveat may be to avoid allowing analyses to devolve into hyper-quantitative (i.e., over-engineering) that suppressed the efficacy of Lewin's work in the first place. The idea is to create a general understanding of the direction of social forces, which are pushing harder, which are standing in the way, and what opportunities remain for building facilitating conditions that either overcome opposing forces (i.e., activism) or side-step blockages (i.e., building new pathways and programs) to achieve better entrepreneur outcomes.

### **Where From Here?**

The phenomenon of entrepreneurship needs to be more aware of culture, diversity, and particularly language describing the actors and the environments. In a post-hero era, inclusion, culture, identity, and entrepreneurship for good must be emphasized and embraced (Ogbor, 2000). While

acknowledging the past—whether good or bad—the future must be proactive, inclusive, equitable, and mindful. Entrepreneurs are typically considered thinkers, movers-and-shakers, and explorers of new territories (Gartenstein, 2019). While entrepreneurs focus on their idea, product, service, process, or leadership role, there ought to be an awareness of the rest of the ecosystems, actors, organizations, governments, and interest lines (Theodori, 2005). These interest lines include the economy, support organizations, human resource investment and utilization, strategy, and cohabitation in the ecology.

Ryan (2004) noted draining trends at the start of the 21st Century with brain drain, “live first, work second” ethic, and companies attracting talent became a major concern undergirding workplace challenges for organizations and entrepreneurs. Each nation has fluctuations of birth rates, aging populations, and pendulum attention to entrepreneurship, or technology, or whatever trends and benchmarks prevail at the time. Drucker (2016) said “in developed countries, the dominant factor in the Next Society will be something to which most people are only beginning to pay attention: the growth in the older population and the rapid shrinking of the younger generation.” Ryan (2004) noted that newer generations (Gen X, Gen Y, and Gen Z) are skeptical, savvy, self-reliant, and swift. Thus, these individuals—particularly in the United States—have an overall environment to be accepted as entrepreneurs. In tandem, the aging population often has the time, dedication, and resources to explore becoming an entrepreneur. Look at Grandma Moses or Colonel Harland Sanders. From a community perspective, Lichtenstein and Lyons (2010) have provided a framework to foster entrepreneurs, culture, and entrepreneurial community supports. Entrepreneurship takes process and systems thinking, planning, mindful choice and action, and community (Hjorth, 2015). And as we morph into a heavy virtual interactive world and a market environment dominated by e-Commerce, we are left to ask questions about the role of humans—human *entrepreneurs*—well into the future. Our focus on ecosystems and communities as *human organizations comprised of networks of interaction* should thus be no surprise.

### ***Limitations***

In this book, the chapter authors and editors had to make choices about what to discuss, and how to discuss it. We could not fit all the literature, interesting ideas, and framings that have been proposed on every angle of entrepreneurial social organization, or the book would have been unusable for readers. Instead, we took the approach of curating ideas around key themes of culture, leadership, networks, emergence, support, resources, empowerment, underrepresented entrepreneurs, and attitudes about entrepreneurship from both entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. Each chapter provides an “Additional Reading” list of valuable resources, and some chapters include “Other Resources” with links to helpful programming.

We took a strong stance on writing about non-traditional entrepreneurial communities, especially in their early stages, as a way to examine these unique collectives prior to their development (see Davidsson, 2009, on the bias of only interviewing current entrepreneurs—and we feel this applies to ecosystems as well). We also made attempts to include more traditional, urban-focused ecosystems like the emerging regional ecosystem in NEPA and the socially and institutionally layered approach in Chattanooga with its small-urban focus.

We have therefore unabashedly focused on the *human, cultural, and institutional* side of ecosystems, in an attempt to elevate this area of the literature. We focused less on traditional, high-growth, capital-infused ecosystems (think Silicon Valley, Boulder, Boston, and others). This in no way implies that we do not see such ecosystems or communities as valuable, nor do we see ourselves in any kind of “opposing camp.” We do not seek to create a heterodoxy in the ecosystem literature. Instead, we simply wish to broaden the scope of theory, research, and practice to recognize and appreciate proto-ecosystem and proto-community behavior with entrepreneurship as a deliberate purpose and an understanding of entrepreneurial communities. For those readers seeking the latest insights on capital usage, ideal team size and structure, technology infusions, and at which point and in what amount to properly inject venture capital funding, we recognize that this book provided a thinner focus on these traditional foci. We instead appeal to entrepreneurship thinkers to think holistically about how the social, cultural, and institutional contexts shape these traditional foci, especially in places where ecosystems and communities are just emerging.

This book did not explore creativity or innovation. As Schumpeter did, we view creativity and innovation as basic to the art of entrepreneurship. Similarly, this book did not explore a deep conversation on funding—which could fill volumes—nor the sub-field of social entrepreneurship, which is growing and distilling its role between nonprofits and “for-profits with a conscience” and B Corporations.

### ***Future Research***

Many scholars could, in retrospect, look at their work and realize the stratification between an entrepreneurial ecosystem and elements that are really part of the bigger entrepreneurial community. Retrospectives and re-evaluation could benefit the field of entrepreneurship by providing a degree of precision in how ecosystems emerge and operate, while also bringing that focus to special populations with diverse social, economic, environmental, and cultural situations that impact outcomes on the ground. A few examples of such populations include rural areas; impoverished areas or nations; under-represented racial and ethnic groups; Indigenous entrepreneurship; gender disparity; illicit, informal, or dark entrepreneurship; digital communities; specialized industries like music, agriculture, or arts; and higher education.

### *Rural Areas*

In both a Western and non-Western global context, entrepreneurship has a different flavor in rural areas due to lower population densities, lower local demand, lower access to talent and resources, and a host of other supposed barriers (Dabson, 2001). However, rural areas are also quite entrepreneurial despite these barriers because they tend to possess different industries that are critical to the global economy, and that are not possible or feasible in urban areas (Fortunato, 2014; Henderson, 2002). We have made mention several times of research by Miles and Morrison (2020) and Roundy (2017), who have examined rural and small town entrepreneurial ecosystems. These authors suggest that a different ethos is at play in building entrepreneurial activity in such places, often beginning with a deep understanding of the importance of interpersonal relationships and interdependencies, and an “effectual” logic that begins with a survey of the community’s culture and assets as a starting point for development work. These approaches may differ from those more traditionally capitalist in nature, seeking to build high-growth investment and development in places where such activities are not understood or appreciated. However, this in no way puts down the important contributions that rural entrepreneurs make to the broader economy, especially in industries like agriculture, specialty manufacturing, energy, and environmental management (see Henderson, 2002, for an analysis).

### *Impoverished Areas or Nations*

The rural trends seen in the previous section gain additional importance in an international context, where many of the “developing” nations are currently experiencing a rapid state of urbanization toward capital-rich commercial and industrial centers (Henderson, 2002); while many other nations remain steadfastly rural in nature. In such contexts, business and entrepreneurship can aid to alleviate poverty, which typically happens at an entrepreneurial community level—rarely an individual (Martin & Zedillo, 2004; Peredo, 2015). This view has “entrepreneurship and its resulting enterprise as an instrument of poverty alleviation” (Peredo, 2015, p. 263). Four distinguishing characteristics:

- (1) They are endogenous grassroots activities and organizations that may in some way be identified with place-based, geographically defined communities.
- (2) Communities, in this account, are not merely the environment in which a form of entrepreneurship takes place; they are its primary agents.
- (3) They exhibit a collective form of entrepreneurship that results from the inter-relationships among individuals, families, and communities.

- (4) The enterprise they develop and operate are aimed at profit as a means to social, ecological, cultural, and political ends for the community and its members.

There is an emergent literature on the role of pragmatic, informal, incremental, and low-tech entrepreneurship in developing nations (see work by Hirsch-Kreinsen, including Hirsch-Kreinsen, 2008). This literature shifts the focus from creating momentum behind high-growth entrepreneurs toward using entrepreneurial thinking and highly effectual, pragmatic logics to solve problems locally, even to the point of developing a localized specialty that could eventually become export-oriented. How ecosystems and clusters form, expand, and thrive in such conditions are still a cogent area for future research, as is the impact that such emergent ecosystems have on the economic and social development of the society around them. Such research includes multiple goals, often emphasizes economic development in its base level (Martin & Zedillo, 2004), and sometimes includes challenges to be navigated and mitigated.

#### *Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Groups*

As time passes and collectively researchers and census takers segment racial and ethnic representation in better and more specific questions and related data summaries, a clearer picture of the diversity in the United States emerges. From the 2020 Census, representation is White (61.6%), Hispanic or Latinx (18.7%), Black (12.4%), Asian American (6%), Native American Indian (1.1%), and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (0.2%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). However, accessibility for underrepresented entrepreneurs is different than larger audiences (Bewaji et al., 2015). Future research could explore best practices and entrepreneurial communities including racial and ethnic diversity.

#### *Indigenous Entrepreneurship*

Anderson et al. (2006) indicate that Native Americans have to be determined to build entrepreneurial communities. Chino and DeBruyn (2006) promoted a four-step model for empowerment and working together to include the creation of bonding and belonging to identify common ground, skill building for expertise, promoting interdependence of working together, and promoting commitment for resolution and change. Foley (2012) and Foley and O'Connor (2013) promote this framework as building social capital. Organizing and planning are key to implementing entrepreneurship or other programming (e.g., education, health) (see Chapter 13).

*Gender and Entrepreneurship*

How supportive is an entrepreneurial community to all entrepreneurs? Traditionally, women entrepreneurs have been predominantly seen as secondary to men (Ahl, 2004, 2006). Significant research has documented (see The Diana Project™) that women face obstacles (Affholder & Box, 2004; Braidford et al., 2013). Many obstacles have been cultural or institutional in nature, or contextual and societal structure and power, which accounts for much of the cross-national variation in female entrepreneurship (Better-Reed et al., 2007; Brush et al., 2009; Muntean, 2013). Harrington (2017) suggested consideration of multiple sub-ecosystems tailored to specific industries, technologies, interest areas, and women. Sub-ecosystems for female entrepreneurs could be identified separately to focus on different types of networks, processes, and reflection of success. For example, a noted central difference between men and women is the predominance that men aim for financial success and often growth, while women consider financial success as merely one of a multitude of reasons to be an entrepreneur (Manolova et al., 2012). Hence, women often view *entrepreneurial success* in regard to flexibility for a quality of life in a community and recognize place-based needs other than employment and income (Beers, 2011; Hanson, 2009; Jennings & Brush, 2013). In this regard, it is possible that female entrepreneurs will act to emphasize the community logic, adding to the cohesiveness of the ecosystem, rather than only the entrepreneurial-market logic that guides new firms (Roundy, 2017). Female-friendly entrepreneurial ecosystems or entrepreneurial community support networks are likely to be more resilient because women's networks tend to include more non-entrepreneurs as well as more women (Brush et al., 2009; Hanson & Blake, 2009). Thus, continued research on ways to create empowering conditions for such communities and ecosystems to emerge is likely to be a fruitful area of research and development going forward.

*Illicit, Informal, and Dark Entrepreneurship*

While not a focus of our work, it is important to acknowledge dark, illicit, and “off the books” entrepreneuring. These activities and sub-fields have existed for centuries and illuminate a combination of sociological, anthropological, mafiological, criminological, entrepreneurial, and business literatures (Bayraktar, 2016; Méndez et al., 2020; Smith & McElwee, 2015). Some entrepreneuring becomes culturally moral based on social mores while others are against universal principles.

Despite being a subjective and culturally situated topic, the role of morality regarding just what types of entrepreneuring are considered “legal,” “honest,” “fair,” and “justified” can be an important social and cultural facilitator and/or suppressor of action. Just as educational organizations and

youth development programs in the United States will not accept funding from tobacco- or alcohol-related companies, many are beginning to question entrepreneurs, businesses, and corporations on “market-embedded morality” (see Shamir, 2008). Cannabis is another example. Medical research has exhibited usefulness to treat diseases or conditions, while others also consider cannabis for recreational use. In the United States, it is not legalized universally. Many consider cannabis legitimate while others view it as deviant.

Responsibility is of key concern as well as marketing segmentation and issues of political agendas, ethics and moral debates, and civility tying to issues of diversity including race, gender, age, affluence, nationality, etc. It was Merton (1959) who discussed the fine line between legitimacy and deviance based on the opportunity structure in a community. For those communities that incentive particular social actions (let us say entrepreuring), entrepreuring is valued and socially reinforced, and thus allowed to thrive. For those communities that reject entrepreneurs and entrepreuring as valuable, this does not simply stifle the entrepreneurial fire in humans—it may just send them underground, where the real opportunities lie. Understanding where the line between moral and immoral entrepreneurship is situated, and how communities may tacitly incentivize both legitimate and illegitimate forms of entrepreneurship, is certain to be an interesting focus in ecosystem and community research going forward.

Criminal entrepreneurship (in most countries) considers sometimes abusive, illicit, illusive, and/or illegal practices. Pop culture sometimes romanticizes such. Think *The Godfather*, *The Untouchables*, *Gomorrah*, *Scarface*, *Goodfellas*, *City of God*, *Breaking Bad*, the *Oceans* film series, *Wall Street*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, or *Ozark*. These types of movies and television shows center on an entrepreneur, passion, making money, family and/or community, and even a twisted sense of good intentions through illicit or illegal means. This spiral entails rural criminal activity, mafia, gangs and gangsters, drugs, prostitution, violence, murder, and white-collar crime. Aims usually become destructive (cf. Beaver & Jennings, 2005; Fisher & Langan-Fox, 2009; Kets DeVries, 1985; Miller, 2015). Entrepreneur attributes become distorted creating abuse of power, obsessive passion(s), poor self-reflection, lack of mindfulness (think Johari window), inflexibility, disposable relationships (aka burning bridges), and dysfunction (Bayraktar, 2016).

### *Digital Communities*

Digital communities have emerged over the last half century (Barkanic et al., 2018). Digital entrepreuring includes not only products and services but also the logistics and software angles.

Autio et al. (2018) highlighted innovation and digital technologies; Sussan and Ács (2017) explored digital ecosystems and entrepreneurial ecosystems; Salamzadeh and Ramadani (2021) reported on digital entrepreneurship; and

Barkanic et al. (2018) indicated that the digital economy needs to have skilled, trained, and educated workers; thus, higher education has an important role to play in supplying workers and digitally minded entrepreneurs.

### *Specialized Industries (Like Music, Local Agriculture, and the Arts)*

Increasingly, entrepreneurial ecosystems are emerging around specialized industries like music, local agriculture, the arts—and others, including specialty manufacturing, craft, and different takes on food and beverage offerings. As we saw in the case study of Madison, Indiana, what may differentiate these communities from an industrial cluster is the wide participation and depth and density of social relations that often go well beyond the central industry—and the deliberate focus on using the central industry as a catalyst to create new business more generally, even in industries that may not support (but are supported by) the central industry. In general, the differences between an industrial cluster and an entrepreneurial ecosystem with a targeted focus are an important theoretical distinction to be made worthy of greater conversation. How do specialized ecosystems, especially when populated by smaller operators in trendy fields, differ from a traditional industrial cluster with its agglomeration economies, dense networks of suppliers and buyers, and talent pool that has a tendency to migrate from firm to firm, expanding the knowledge of the total network?

As this conversation continues, it should be noted that traditional economic development techniques are increasingly geared toward specialty and “DIY” industries, including maker spaces (like the *Phoenix Forge*, see <https://phxforge.com/>), arts incubators (like the University of Chicago’s *Arts Incubator*, see <https://arts.uchicago.edu/artsandpubliclife/ai/>), food corridors (like the erstwhile and highly successful *Taste Test York*, see [www.tastetestyork.com/](http://www.tastetestyork.com/)), and others. As in the music example, these are not necessarily industries that traditionally spawn large, high-growth firms that generate large employment bases. Instead, they are typically populated by smaller, self-employed or small-employment operators that enhance the local quality of life. These industries may, in turn, create an environment that is appealing to top talent and recruiters alike (Hicks et al., 2016), an idea recognized by participants in the Indiana case study in Chapter 10. Such findings change the focus of entrepreneurship ecosystem and community development away from a focus on gazelles and toward a focus on an improvement in general quality of life, which may in turn be attractive to business investment capital.

### *Higher Education*

In the 21st Century, higher education will continue to be key in supporting economic development and entrepreneurship (Jain et al., 2009). However, reduction in potential enrollees with dips in birth rates, resurgence of technical and trades colleges, and emphasis on entrepreneurship may hone quality



and quantity. However, as discussed in Chapter 5 on entrepreneurship, there is an inverse relationship between high knowledge performance test scores and high entrepreneurial activity in any given country (Zhao, 2012). “Educational practices and societal factors that help students achieve academically may hamper entrepreneurial qualities and reduce creativity” (Zhao, 2012, p. 58). Entrepreneur culture refers to “the degree to which entrepreneurship is valued in society” and reflects “how ‘common’ starting up a business is in a particular region” (Stam, 2017, p. 3). We call this “cultural acceptability.” In the United States—and likely other countries as well—a pendulum swings for entrepreneurship and entrepreneuring to be cool, in fashion, or acceptable as a priority, and then there are dry periods where it is not.

## **Conclusion**

In regard to the importance and impact of entrepreneurs, Newell (2017) eloquently summarized:

Entrepreneurs are vital components of entrepreneurial communities. They can provide a multitude of benefits including job creation and creative decision making to the community. Further, their existence within the community can be an indication of an entrepreneurial community’s success in valuing and promoting entrepreneurial endeavors. In the early stages of entrepreneurial community development, successful (or potentially successful), entrepreneurs must be identified for involvement and inclusion within the community. As reviewed, however, this process is not easy. A thorough understanding of an individual, the situation, and their previous experiences is necessary when identifying those who may bring entrepreneurial benefits to the community. The advantage to this complexity, however, is that many types of people have the potential to contribute to an entrepreneurial community that is structured to foster entrepreneurial development. Excellent educational systems that promote entrepreneurial role models and early entrepreneurial experiences, a community-wide appreciation and acceptance for multicultural perspectives, and a community designed to protect some level of risk taking can all help encourage entrepreneurs to join [and participate actively in] the community.

(pp. 273–274)

Likewise Ryan’s (2004) admonishment for due diligence in building entrepreneurial communities included entrepreneurs role modeling to inspire others to become entrepreneurs, realizing the power and responsibility an entrepreneur has—specifically entrepreneur leaders, investing in technology and infrastructure systems, and balancing a portfolio of types and sizes of entrepreneur and businesses in a community (aka diversity). These scholarly reflections capture a sound truism and resounding magnitude of both

identity and process—culture, entrepreneur development, and entrepreneurial community creation take time and combine the science of management and planning with the art of social sciences and the establishment of support systems and networks from all sectors.

While much research and theoretical work has been done, Audretsch et al. (2021) note that “entrepreneurship is a concept that has inherent difficulty in empirical analysis” (p. 10). Hence, why work like this book and admonition from Ullhøi and Neergaard (2007):

Entrepreneurship research cannot be approached at arm’s length. Indeed, most entrepreneurs would agree that it is necessary to have been in an entrepreneur’s shoes to know what it takes. Entrepreneurship researchers should therefore be willing, at least occasionally, to get their hands dirty. It is in and through a close interaction with the field that we become familiar with and gain new insights into entrepreneurial phenomena.

(p. 478)

It is our hope that these case studies help to represent an opening of thinking about the nature of entrepreneurial ecosystems and communities. Grounded in very old social and ecological ideas that have sustained the self-organization of life for millennia, an entrepreneurial ecosystem or community thus promotes the same self-organization through an effectual context: adapting to changing situations on the ground given whatever is around in the service of making life better for others. This perspective is the essence of market-based interactions, as people are typically glad to exchange their own time, energy, and labor for those things beyond their own grasp that can improve their lifestyle. But such an understanding evades more abstract ideas about economic growth, or technological innovation, or creating jobs for others. Such an evaluation may include all of these things to the extent that this is what society needs at the time. However, a focus only on designing ecosystems to maximize such activities is much like planting an entire forest only to grow and harvest the benefits of redwood trees—what we miss are the long-trends and “embedded wisdom” of that ecosystem: the idea that things may have evolved the way they did for a very good reason, tested and reaffirmed by millennia of overcoming shocks and crises, and thus displaying humble robustness to such phenomena.

## References

- Abel, J. R., & Deitz, R. (2011). *Do colleges and universities increase their region's human capital?* Federal Reserve Bank of New York Staff Reports. Staff Report No. 401. [www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/research/staff\\_reports/sr401.pdf](http://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/research/staff_reports/sr401.pdf)
- Affholder, J., & Box, T. M. (2004). Struggles of female entrepreneurs. *Proceedings of the Academy of Entrepreneurship*, 10(1), 3–8. [www.alliedacademies.org/public/Proceedings/Proceedings14/pae-10-1-no04.pdf#page=7](http://www.alliedacademies.org/public/Proceedings/Proceedings14/pae-10-1-no04.pdf#page=7)

- Ahl, H. (2004). *The scientific reproduction of gender inequality: A discourse analysis of research texts on women's entrepreneurship*. Copenhagen Business Scholar Press.
- Ahl, H. (2006). Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30, 595–621.
- Aldrich, H. E. (1990). Using an ecological perspective to study organizational founding rates. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 14(3), 7–24.
- Aldrich, H. E., & Wiedenmayer, G. (1993). From traits to rates: An ecological perspective on organizational foundings. In J. A. Katz & R. H. Brockhaus (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior, firm emergence, and growth* (Vol. 1, pp. 145–195). JAI Press.
- Anderson T. L., Benson B. L., & Flanagan T. E. (2006). *Self-Determination: The other path for native Americans*. Stanford University Press.
- Arndt, H. W. (1987). *Economic development: The history of an idea*. University of Chicago Press.
- Audretsch, D. B. (2007). *The entrepreneurial society*. University Press.
- Audretsch, D. B., & Lehmann, E. E. (2005). Does the knowledge spillover theory of entrepreneurship hold for regions? *Research Policy*, 34(8), 1191–1202.
- Audretsch, D., Mason, C., Miles, M. P., & O'Connor, A. (2021). Time and the dynamics of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development: An International Journal*, 33(1–2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2020.1734257>
- Autio, E., Nambisan, S., Thomas, L. D. W., & Wright, M. (2018). Digital affordances, spatial affordances, and the genesis of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 12, 72–95.
- Barkanic, S., Chen, J., Fitzgerald, B., & Hughes, D. (2018). *Creating purposeful partnerships: Business and higher education working together to build regional talent ecosystems for the digital economy*. Business Higher Education Forum (BHEF). Funded by the National Science Foundation under Award DUE-1331063. [www.bhef.com/publications/creating-purposeful-partnerships](http://www.bhef.com/publications/creating-purposeful-partnerships)
- Bayraktar, S. (2016). Do entrepreneurs really create entrepreneurial cultures? When intentions do not match actions. *Journal Review of Social, Economic, and Administrative Studies*, 30(2), 79–98.
- Beers, M. (2011). Women-led businesses find value in social responsibility. *Florida International University News*. <http://news.fiu.edu/2011/10/fiu-report-women-led-businesses-find-value-in-social-responsibility/32879>
- Beaver, G., & Jennings, P. (2005). Competitive advantage and entrepreneurial power: The dark side of entrepreneurship. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 12(1), 9–23.
- Betters-Reed, B. L., Moore, L. L., & Hunt, L. M. (2007). A conceptual approach to better diagnosis and resolution of cross-cultural and gender challenges in entrepreneurial research. In A. Fayolle (Ed.), *Handbook of research in entrepreneurship education* (Vol. 1, pp. 198–216). Edward Elgar.
- Bewaji, T., Yang, Q., & Han, Y. (2015). Funding accessibility for minority entrepreneurs: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 22(4), 716–733.
- Black, J., De Meza, D., & Jeffreys, D. (1996). House prices, the supply of collateral, and the enterprise economy. *Economic Journal*, 106(434), 60–76.
- Blakely, E. J., & Leigh, N. G. (2010). *Planning local economic development: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Braidford, P., Stone, I., & Tesfaye, B. (2013). Gender, disadvantage and enterprise support—lessons from women's business centres in North America and Europe. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 20(1), 143–164.

- Brush, C., de Bruin, A., & Welter, F. (2009). A gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 1, 8–24.
- Cain, C. (2012, May–June 6). The entrepreneurial ecosystem: Think biology 101. *The Small Business Advocate*.
- Casson, M. (2010). Entrepreneurship, business culture, and the theory of the firm. In Z. J. Ács & D. B. Audretsch (Eds.), *Handbook of entrepreneurship research: An interdisciplinary survey and introduction* (2nd ed., pp. 249–272). Springer.
- Chino, M., & DeBruyn, L. (2006). Building true capacity: Models for Indigenous communities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 6(4), 596–599. <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2004.053801>
- Clevenger, M. R. (2017). Perceptions of entrepreneurs and community: From historical roots to a contemporary kaleidoscope. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 10–50). Routledge.
- Corno, F., Lal, R., & Colombo, S. (2014). “Entrepreneurship & new venture creation” key elements of the entrepreneurial ecosystem facilitating the growth of ICT entrepreneurs in Italy. *European Scientific Journal*, 2, 330–345.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Cronshaw, S. F., & McCulloch, A. N. (2008). Reinstating the Lewinian vision: From force field analysis to organization field assessment. *Organization Development Journal*, 26(4), 89.
- Curran, J., Rutherford, R., & Smith, S. L. (2000). Is there a local business community? Explaining the non-participation of small business in local economic development. *Local Economy*, 15(2), 128–143.
- Dabson, B. (2001). Supporting rural entrepreneurship. In M. Drabenstott & K. H. Sheaff (Eds.), *Exploring policy options for a new rural America* (pp. 35–48). Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.601.4265&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Davidsson, P. (2009). *The entrepreneurship research challenge*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Delgado, M., Porter, M. E., & Stern, S. (2010). Clusters and entrepreneurship. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 10(4), 495–518.
- Dequech, D. (2013). Economic institutions: Explanations for conformity and room for deviating. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 9(1), 81–108.
- Doeringer, P. B., Terkla, D. G., & Topakian, G. C. (1987). *Invisible factors in local economic development*. Oxford University Press.
- Drucker, P. F. (2016). *Managing in the next society*. Routledge.
- Etzkowitz, H. (2014). The entrepreneurial university wave. From ivory tower to global economic engine. *Industry & Higher Education*, 28(4), 223–232.
- Evans, D. S., & Jovanovic, B. (1989). An estimated model of entrepreneurial choice under liquidity constraints. *Journal of Political Economy*, 97, 808–827.
- Feld, B. (2012). *Startup communities: Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem in your community*. Wiley.
- Feldman, M., Hadjimichael, T., Lanahan, L., & Kemeny, T. (2016). The logic of economic development: A definition and model for investment. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 34, 5–21.
- Feldman, M., & Zoller, T. D. (2012). Dealmakers in place: Social capital connections in regional entrepreneurial economies. *Regional Studies*, 46(1), 23–37.
- Feldman, M. P. (2014). The character of innovative places: Entrepreneurial strategy, economic development, and prosperity. *Small Business Economics*, 43, 9–20.

- Felsenstein, D. (2001). Analysing local growth promotion: Looking beyond employment and income counts. In D. Felsenstein & M. Taylor (Eds.), *Promoting local growth: Process, practice, and policy* (pp. 29–41). Ashgate.
- Fisher, R., & Langan-Fox, J. (2009). Passion, uncertainty, and successful entrepreneurial action. *6th AGSE International Research Conference*, Adelaide, Australia.
- Flamming, R. (1979). Economic growth and economic development. Counterparts or competitors? *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 28(1), 47–61.
- Fogel, K., Hawk, A., Morck, R., & Yeung, B. (2006). Institutional obstacles to entrepreneurship. In M. Casson, B. Yeung, A. Basu, & N. Wadeson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of entrepreneurship* (pp. 540–579). Oxford University Press.
- Foley, D. (2012). Teaching entrepreneurship to Indigenous and other minorities: Towards a strong sense of self. Tangible skills and active participation within society. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 12(2), 59–74.
- Foley, D., & O'Connor, A. J. (2013). Social capital and the networking practices of Indigenous entrepreneurs. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 51(2), 276–296. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12017>
- Fortunato, M. W. P. (2014). Supporting rural entrepreneurship: A review of conceptual developments from research to practice. *Community Development*, 45(4), 387–408.
- Fortunato, M. W-P. (2017). High- and low-entrepreneurial communities: A multiple case study. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 177–235). Routledge.
- Fortunato, M. W-P, Alter, T. R., Clevenger, M. R., & MacGregor, C. J. (2019). Higher educational engagement in economic development in collaboration with corporate powerhouses. In M. R. Clevenger & C. J. MacGregor's (Eds.), *Business and corporation engagement with higher education: Models, theories, and best practices* (pp. 151–178). Emerald Publishing.
- Fortunato, M. W-P., & Clevenger, M. R. (2017). *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries*. Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality: An introduction*. Vintage.
- Gartenstein, D. (2019, January 25). What do entrepreneurs contribute to society. *Small Business Chronical*. <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/entrepreneurs-contribute-society-78923.html>
- Gilmore, J. H., & Pine, II, B. J. (1997). Beyond goods and services. *Strategy & Leadership*, 25(3), 11–17.
- Goldstein, H., Maier, G., & Luger, M. (1995). The university as an instrument for economic and business development: U.S. and European comparisons. In D. D. Dill & B. Sporn's (Eds.) *Emerging patterns of social demand and university reform: Through a glass darkly* (pp. 105–139). Pergamon.
- Greenwood, D., & Holt, R. (2010). *Local economic development in the 21st Century: Quality of life and sustainability*. M. E. Sharpe.
- Hanson, S. (2009). Changing places through women's entrepreneurship. *Economic Geography*, 85, 245–267.
- Hanson, S., & Blake, M. (2009, February). Gender and entrepreneurial networks, In R. Hassink (Ed.). *Regional Studies*. 43(1), 135–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400802251452>
- Harrington, K. (2017). *Entrepreneurial ecosystem momentum and maturity: The important role of entrepreneur development organizations and their activities*. Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. [www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Entrepreneurial\\_Ecosystem\\_Momentum\\_and\\_Maturity\\_2017.pdf](http://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Entrepreneurial_Ecosystem_Momentum_and_Maturity_2017.pdf)

- Hayter, C. S., Nelson, A. J., Zayed, S., & O'Connor, A. C. (2018). Conceptualizing academic entrepreneurship ecosystems: A review, analysis, and extension of the literature. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 43, 1039–1082.
- Henderson, J., Low, S., & Weiler, S. (2007). The drivers of regional entrepreneurship in rural and metro areas. In *Entrepreneurship and local economic development* (pp. 81–102). Lexington Books.
- Henderson, V. (2002). Urbanization in developing countries. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 17(1), 89–112.
- Henrekson, M., & Sanandaji, T. (2011). The intersection of entrepreneurship and institutions. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 7(1), 47–75.
- Hicks, M. J., Faulk, D., & Devaraj, S. (2016). *What comes first, people or jobs? Evidence and lessons for Indiana*. Center for Business and Economic Research, Ball State University.
- Hirsch-Kreinsen, H., & Jacobson, D. (2008). *Innovation in low-tech firms and industries*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Hjorth, D. (2015). Sketching a philosophy entrepreneurship. In T. Baker & F. Welter (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to entrepreneurship* (pp. 41–58). Routledge.
- Holtz-Eakin, D., Joulfaian, D., & Rosen, H. S. (1994). Sticking it out: Entrepreneurial survival and liquidity constraints. *Journal of Political Economy*, 102(1), 53–75.
- Jain, S., George, G., & Maltarich, M. (2009). Academics or entrepreneurs? Investigating role identity modification of university scientists in commercialization activity. *Research Policy*, 38, 922–935.
- Jennings, J. E., & Brush, C. G. (2013). Research on women entrepreneurs: Challenges to (and from) the broader entrepreneurship literature? *Academy of Management Annals*, 7, 663–715.
- Johannisson, B., & Nilsson, A. (1989). Community entrepreneurs: networking for local development. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 1(1), 3–19.
- Kets DeVries, M. F. R. (1985). The dark side of entrepreneurship. *Harvard Business Review*, 63(6), 160–167.
- Klein, B. H. (1977). *Dynamic economics*. Harvard University Press.
- Korsching, P. F., & Allen, J. C. (2004). Local entrepreneurship: A development model based on community interaction field theory. *Journal of the Community Development Society*, 35(1), 24–43.
- Kutzhanova, N., Lyons, T. S., & Lichtenstein, G. A. (2009). Skill-based development of entrepreneurs and the role of personal and peer group coaching in enterprise development. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 23(3), 193–210.
- Lane, J. E. (2012). Higher education and economic competitiveness. In J. E. Lane & D. B. Johnstone's (Eds.), *Universities and colleges as economic drivers: Measuring higher education's role in economic development* (pp. 1–30). SUNY Press.
- Lewin, K. (1939). Field theory and experiment in social psychology: Concepts and methods. *American Journal of Sociology*, 44(6), 868–896.
- Lewin, K. (1942). Field theory and learning. In N. B. Henry (Ed.), *The forty-first yearbook of the national society for the study of education: Part 2, the psychology of learning* (p. 215–242). University of Chicago Press.
- Lewin, K. (1943). Defining the “field at a given time”. *Psychological Review*, 50(3), 292–310.
- Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, 2(4), 34–46.
- Lewin, K., & Lippitt, R. (1938). An experimental approach to the study of autocracy and democracy: A preliminary note. *Sociometry*, 1(3/4), 292–300.

- Lichtenstein, G. A., & Lyons, T. S. (2010). *Investing in entrepreneurs: A strategic approach for strengthening your regional and community economy*. Praeger.
- Manolova, T. S., Brush, C. G., Edelman, L. E., & Shaver, K. G. (2012). One size does not fit all: Entrepreneurial expectancies and growth intentions of U.S. women and men nascent entrepreneurs. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 24, 7–27.
- Martin, P., & Zedillo, E. (2004). *Unleashing entrepreneurship: Making business work for the poor*. Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. United Nations Development Programme. [http://ycsg.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/unleashing\\_entrepreneurship.pdf](http://ycsg.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/unleashing_entrepreneurship.pdf)
- Mazzucato, M. (2013). *The entrepreneurial state: Debunking public vs. private sector myths*. Anthem Press.
- McMillan, J. (2019). *2019 Startup ecosystem rankings*. Startup Blink. <https://report.startupblink.com/>
- Méndez, O. J. M., Clark, M., & Martínez, M. G. C. (2020). The dark side of entrepreneurship: An exploratory conceptual approach. *Economía: teoría y práctica*, 28(53). <https://doi.org/10.24275/etypuam/ne/532020/montiel>
- Merton, R. K. (1959). Social conformity, deviation, and opportunity structures: A comment on the contributions of Dubin and Cloward. *American Sociological Review*, 24(2), 177–189.
- Miles, M. P., & Morrison, M. (2020). An effectual leadership perspective for developing rural entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Small Business Economics*, 54(4), 933–949.
- Miller, D. (2015). A downside to the entrepreneurial personality? *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 39, 1–8.
- Muntean, S. C. (2013). Wind beneath my wings: Policies promoting high-growth oriented women entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 5, 36–59.
- Neave, G., & van Vught, F. A. (Eds.). (1994). *Government and higher education relationships across three continents: The winds of change*. IAU Press/Pergamon.
- Newell, E. E. (2017). Entrepreneurial community success: Psychological characteristics, experiences, and identity. In M. W-P. Fortunato & M. R. Clevenger (Eds.), *Toward entrepreneurial community development: Leaping cultural and leadership boundaries* (pp. 254–281). Routledge.
- Ogbor, J. O. (2000). Mythicizing and reification in entrepreneurial discourse: Ideology-critique of entrepreneurial studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(5), 605–635.
- Orazbayeva, B., Davey, T., Plewa, C., & Galán-Muros, V. (2019). Engagement of academics in education-driven university-business cooperation: A motivation-based perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(8), 1723–1736.
- Parisi, E., Miglietto, A., & Peirone, D. (2018). Business incubators and entrepreneurial networks: A methodology for assessing incubator effectiveness and performance. In E. G. Carayannis, G. B. Dagnino, S. Alvarez, & R. Faraci, (Eds.), *Entrepreneurial ecosystems and diffusion of startups* (pp. 139–167). Edward Elgar.
- Peredo, A. M. (2015). Poverty, reciprocity, and community-based entrepreneurship. In T. Baker & F. Welter (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to entrepreneurship* (pp. 263–280). Routledge.
- Pilon, S., & DeBresson, C. (2003). Local culture and regional innovation networks: Some propositions. In D. Fornahl & T. Brenner (Eds.), *Cooperation, networks, and institutions in regional innovation systems* (pp. 15–37). Edward Elgar.
- Pine, II, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy*. Harvard Business School Press.

- Porcar, A. T., & Soriano, D. R. (Eds.). (2018). *Inside the mind of the entrepreneur: Cognition, personality traits, intention, and gender behavior*. Springer.
- Porter, M. E. (2000). Location, competition, and economic development: Local clusters in a global economy. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 14(1), 15–34.
- Qian, H. (2018). Knowledge-based regional economic development: A synthetic review of knowledge spillovers, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 32(2), 163–176.
- Roundy, P. T. (2017). Hybrid organizations and the logics of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/211365-017-0452-9>
- Ruef, M. (2010). *The entrepreneurial group: Social identities, relations, and collective action*. The Kauffman Foundation Series on Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Princeton University Press.
- Ryan, R. (2004, Fall). The next generation of entrepreneurs: How to attract, keep, and grow them. Perspectives: Community Development. *Spectrum: The Journal of State Government*, 37–39.
- Salamzadeh, A., & Ramadani, V. (2021). Entrepreneurial ecosystem and female digital entrepreneurship—lessons to learn from an Iranian Case Study. In S. Rezaei, J. Li, S. Ashourizadeh, V. Ramadani, & S. Gërguri-Rashiti (Eds.), *The Emerald handbook of women and entrepreneurship in developing economies* (pp. 317–334). Emerald Publishing.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1934). *The theory of economic development*. Harvard University Press.
- Schwerling, R. E. (2003). Focusing leadership through force field analysis: New variations on a venerable planning tool. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 24(7), 361–370.
- Shaffer, R., Deller, S., & Marcouiller, D. (2006). Rethinking community economic development. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 20, 59–74.
- Shamir, R. (2008). The age of responsabilization: On market-embedded morality. *Economy and Society*, 37(1), 1–19.
- Smith, R., & McElwee, G. (2015). Informal, illegal, and criminal entrepreneurship. In T. Baker & F. Welter (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to entrepreneurship* (pp. 245–262). Routledge.
- Spigel, B., & Harrison, R. (2017). Toward a process theory of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 12, 151–168.
- Stam, E. (2015). Entrepreneurial ecosystems and regional policy: A sympathetic critique. *European Planning Studies*, 23(9), 1759–1769.
- Stam, F. C. (2017). Measuring entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Discussion Paper Series 17–11*, Utrecht School of Economics.
- Stam, E., & Bosma, N. (2015). Growing entrepreneurial economies: Entrepreneurship and regional development. In T. Baker & F. Welter (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to entrepreneurship* (pp. 325–340). Routledge.
- Stam, E., & Spigel, B. (2017). Entrepreneurial ecosystems. In R. Blackburn, D. De Clercq, & J. Heinonen (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of small business and entrepreneurs* (pp. 407–422). Sage.
- Sussan, F., & Ács, Z. J. (2017). The digital entrepreneurial ecosystem. *Small Business Economics*, 49, 55–73.
- Taleb, N. N. (2012). *Antifragile: Things that gain from disorder*. Random House.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *SAGE handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (2nd ed.). Sage.



- Theodoraki, C., Masseghem, K., & Audretsch, D. B. (2020). The effectiveness of incubators' co-opetition strategy in the entrepreneurial ecosystem: Empirical evidence from France. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 1–14.
- Theodori, G. L. (2005). Community and community development in resource-based areas: Operational definitions rooted in an interactional perspective. *Society and Natural Resources*, 18, 661–669.
- Toft, G., Jeserich, N., & McCabe, L. (2020). *Michigan entrepreneurship score card* (Sixteenth annual edition). Small Business Association of Michigan. VP Demand Creation Services. [www.sbam.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/SBAMScorecard2020\\_Digital-2.pdf](http://www.sbam.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/SBAMScorecard2020_Digital-2.pdf)
- Ulhøi, J. P., & Neergaard, H. (2007). Post-script: Unresolved challenges In H. Neergaard & J. P. Ulhøi (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship* (pp. 477–479). Edward Elgar.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *Race and ethnicity in the United States: 2010 census and 2020 census*. U.S. Census Bureau. [www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/race-and-ethnicity-in-the-united-state-2010-and-2020-census.html](http://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/race-and-ethnicity-in-the-united-state-2010-and-2020-census.html)
- Vigoda, E. (2002). From responsiveness to collaboration: Governance, citizens, and the next generation of public administration. *Public Administration Review*, 62(5), 527–540.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Vol. 5). Sage.
- Zhao, Y. (September 2012). Flunking innovation and creativity: East Asia's highly touted test scores in math, science, and reading are masking important failures in developing innovators and entrepreneurs. *Kappan Magazine*, 94(1), 56–61.

### ***Additional Reading***

- Baker, T., & Nelson, R. E. (2005). Creating something from nothing: Resource construction through entrepreneurial bricolage. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50, 329–366.
- Baker, T., & Welter, F. (2015). *The Routledge companion to entrepreneurship*. Routledge.
- Drucker, P. F. (1946). *Concept of the corporation*. The John Day Co.
- Drucker, P. F. (1984). Doing good to do well: The new opportunities for business enterprise. In B. Harvey, L. Liebman, & C. S. Schelling (Eds.), *Public-private partnership: New opportunities for meeting social needs* (pp. 285–293). Ballinger Publishing Company.
- Fortunato, M. W-P., & Alter, T. R. (2018). *Entrepreneurship, community, and community development*. Routledge.
- Johannisson, B., & Monsted, M. (1997). Contextualizing entrepreneurial networking. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 27, 109–137.
- Mason, C., & Brown, R. (2014). *Entrepreneurial ecosystems and growth oriented entrepreneurship*. OECD. [www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/entrepreneurial-ecosystems.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/entrepreneurial-ecosystems.pdf)
- Ng, E. S., Stamper, C. L., Klarsfeld, A., & Han, Y. J. (2021). *Handbook on diversity and inclusion: A research compendium*. Edward Elgar.
- Peredo, A. M., & Chrisman, J. J. (2006). Toward a theory of community-based enterprise. *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 309–328.

### ***Other Resources***

- The Diana Project™*. [www.babson.edu/academics/centers-and-institutes/center-for-womens-entrepreneurial-leadership/diana-international-research-institute/research/diana-project/#](http://www.babson.edu/academics/centers-and-institutes/center-for-womens-entrepreneurial-leadership/diana-international-research-institute/research/diana-project/#)

# Index

- accelerator 21, 57, 269, 270, 275, 276, 278  
actor(s) 21, 153, 164, 191, 241, 286, 287, 299, 300, 301  
adapt/able xxiv, 13, 15, 16  
alliance 3, 6, 21, 56–57, 162, 165, 246, 286, 300  
authority 121, 211, 228, 262, 277–280, 298
- barrier(s) xix, xxv, 13, 17, 28, 39, 67, 69, 114, 122, 125, 157–158, 179, 250, 260, 303  
BIPOC 226–252, 292  
Black 54, 64, 181, 239–241, 292, 304  
boundary/ies 10, 49, 113, 251, 260  
business venture 21–22
- capacity 15, 18, 112, 142, 171, 234, 242, 252, 288–289  
capital xxv, 2–3, 21, 32, 40, 55–56, 63, 78–80, 92, 102, 136, 154, 172, 188, 200, 234–248, 269–276, 281–282, 288–290, 302–307  
capitalism 21, 92, 95, 100, 238, 303  
cluster 2–3, 67, 124, 289–291, 304–307  
collective xi, 1–4, 9, 15, 19, 60, 96, 136, 138, 140, 164, 172, 177, 189–190, 221, 241, 245, 249, 285, 296–299, 302–304  
competition 2, 5, 44, 58, 69, 86–87, 91–92, 98–100, 149, 156, 260, 270, 282, 287–288, 291  
cooperate/ion 8, 87, 147, 270  
Cooperative Extension 9, 114–125, 224–231, 246–252, 293, 299  
cooptation 99  
curriculum 14, 70, 101, 215  
cycle(s) 97, 120, 177, 238, 242, 245
- disentrepreneurship 22  
domain (of activity) 162, 274, 291
- ecology 3, 8, 19, 112, 177, 183–191, 198–206, 286, 301  
economic growth 12, 132, 146, 161, 166, 288–289, 309  
efficiency 21, 82, 229  
entrepreneurial action iii, 1, 4, 19–21, 41–42, 164, 205, 298–300  
entrepreneurialism 293, 297  
entrepreneurial social group 167–168, 177, 211–222, 294–298  
entrepreneurship iii, xi–xii, 1, 13, 18–21, 31, 61, 69, 70, 75–76, 91–96, 112, 177, 181, 185–187, 191, 194, 198, 203–205, 212, 221, 269, 289–291, 296–299, 302–308  
entrepreneurology 21, 95, 308  
equity (human) 16–17  
exploit/ation 189
- failure 70–73, 135, 185, 198, 203, 221, 236, 243  
feeder(s) iii, viii, xxiv, 1–3, 6, 19–20, 29, 101, 260, 286, 291–293, 297  
force field 13, 293, 300  
framework conditions 297  
funding 21–22, 58, 63, 79, 91–95, 102–103, 105, 121, 126, 230, 238, 245, 266–274, 278–280, 287, 293, 302
- gay *see* LGBT  
generation/al 4, 43, 78, 93, 101, 145–146, 156, 177, 214, 236, 299–301  
geography 18, 59, 149, 262
- high-entrepreneurship 99, 166
- inclusion 16–17, 91, 229, 249, 300, 308  
incubator xxv, 4–6, 21, 32, 42, 56, 70, 77, 92, 100–102, 119, 172, 247, 272, 281, 287, 291, 307

- Indigenous xii, 9, 41, 54, 224–252
- infrastructure xvii, 9, 15, 20–21, 40, 57, 92, 97–98, 102, 104, 117–125, 143–144, 147, 152, 160, 163, 172, 188, 220, 243–245, 260, 265–266, 276, 282–283, 288–290, 295, 308
- initiative 2, 8, 14–15, 58, 101–102, 113–122, 125, 137, 157–158, 161–162, 186, 239, 249, 283
- K-12 20, 101, 286, 291
- levels (of analysis) 1–3, 17, 29–30, 39–40, 60–61, 285
- Lewin's Field Analysis 13, 293, 300
- LGBT 292
- low-entrepreneurship 15, 99
- measure(ment) 12, 191, 197, 203, 242, 247, 280, 290
- metric 3, 99, 234
- new business xi, 142–146, 232, 238, 242, 296, 307
- omnipreneur/ship 2, 18, 21, 33
- outlier 7, 59
- People of Color *see* BIPOC
- powerlessness xii, 298
- practice(s) xii–xiii, 7, 11–15, 30–32, 39, 58, 68, 125, 140, 203–206, 212, 218, 226–230, 246, 276, 280, 288, 302–304, 308
- practitioners xii–xiii, 1, 14, 92, 116, 129, 139, 167, 204, 216, 286–287
- productivity 21, 40, 55, 71, 82, 226–230, 287, 293, 299
- profitability 31, 135, 180, 200, 214–215, 236, 242–243, 299
- risk (entrepreneurial) 4, 15, 18, 22, 42, 135, 139, 164, 170, 177, 186, 197–204, 212–218, 235
- rural xii–xiii, xxiv–xxv, 8–9, 14, 17, 45–46, 65, 112–119, 124, 128, 154, 158, 163, 170–172, 183, 226–232, 239–240, 245, 252, 293–294, 302–306
- SBDC 6, 21, 72, 78–79, 94–96, 100, 104, 244, 250, 299
- self-employment 93, 135, 163–164, 177, 179, 205, 215, 236, 246
- self-empowerment 72, 114, 178, 212, 295, 298
- social action 10–11, 17, 221, 245
- social network/ing 15, 32, 194
- socioculturaldynamics 2
- sociology iii, 39
- software 66–68, 306
- spin-off 33, 183
- student 32, 57–60, 71, 92, 121–122, 166, 215–217, 235–238, 246, 251, 269, 286, 308
- suburban xxiv, 45, 65, 102, 158
- talent xxiv–xxv, 14, 44, 56–58, 71, 92, 112, 121–123, 136, 142–150, 154, 159–161, 188, 238, 267, 278–281, 287, 291, 301–303, 307
- technical (expertise/education) 55–56, 65, 79, 95–98, 129, 194, 243
- theory xii, 13, 30, 39–40, 59–60, 67, 101–102, 104, 112, 167, 177, 182–184, 187, 192, 202, 227–229, 232, 236, 242, 251, 302
- transformation/al 186, 290
- urban xii–xiii, xxiv, 14, 17, 44–45, 62, 65, 102, 112, 148, 163, 171–172, 239, 278, 282, 290, 302–303
- U.S. economy 226, 295
- venture *see* business venture
- vocational 75, 221, 251
- White 41, 45, 64, 91, 226–229, 238, 245, 263, 292, 304
- World War II 43–44, 51, 54, 93, 120, 214