



# Community Development

Applications for Leisure,  
Sport, and Tourism

EDITED BY

Erin Sharpe,  
Heather Mair,  
and Felice Yuen

# **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS FOR LEISURE, SPORT, AND TOURISM**



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**TO FERN,  
A STEADY FORCE  
FULL OF WIT AND KINDNESS.**



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## FOREWORD

*By Karen Fox*

This book sits within a North American tradition beginning in the 1800s that connected recreation with community development. With industrialization came individuals and groups, such as George Williams and the Young Men's Christian Association (1844), the Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association (1885), Jane Addams and the Hull House (1894), and the Playground Association of America (1906). All of these "founders" were recreation practitioners. Scholars since then have understood the potential of recreation to contribute to individual and societal well-being while inculcating dominant societal norms including religious participation, protection and nourishment of children, health, nationalism, productive citizenship and labor, and responsible work practices.

While these aims and relationships are important, less space in traditional scholarship has been devoted to understanding how leisure may, in fact, undermine—even harm—community development. Peukert (1987) wrote about everyday life in Germany under Hitler. His social history suggested leisure was the focus of controlling Germans through outlawing "deviant leisures" and framing organizations such as the "Brown Shirts" (an organization similar to the Boy and Girl Scouts) to report on other citizens, especially Jews. Although an extreme example, leisure and recreation historically were used to support dominant and normative governmental practices and reify racial distinctions and fragment Indigenous cultures worldwide. Framing the social world as a binary of leisure and work closes the spatialization of leisure spaces to the range of contradictory, paradoxical, and harmful as well as beneficial ways recreation can be used in service of societal goals.

This collection takes up a range of factors affecting the relationship between community development and recreation: planning assumptions and structures, class and racial influences on engagement processes, grassroots approaches, critical consciousness through young adult literature, questions about the relationship between community and economic development, and issues of inclusion, social justice, and community empowerment. As such, they create assemblages of complicated processes that contribute to, shape, and

affect the dynamics of community, recreation, and development (Turnbull, 2003).

In a world of diversity and fluidity, the challenge for leisure/recreation practitioners and scholars becomes more complex and potentially exciting if we can become comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The term 'community development' in a globalized and diverse world is problematic and carries with it a history of colonialism, Western expansion and hegemony, and neoliberal agendas in addition to being situated in a changing contentious world with nation-states and minority groups struggling over control. This volume initiates a discussion about the ways leisure, sport, and tourism might conceptualize the relationship with community development. The volume builds upon existing research and programs, extends or reframes theoretical approaches, questions, and posits alternative frameworks for playing with the intersection of community development, leisure, sport, and tourism. Its strength and relevance comes from the authors' willingness to seriously and playfully explore the limits, implications, and variations of community development relevant for recreation and leisure studies as well as construct alternative spaces for leisure practices. Whether it is reconceiving planning as a 'human arena' potentially facilitating how an individual comes to understand the self and communities, an exploration of how whiteness and privilege color community development and recreation, conceiving of a compassionate pedagogy for community and recreation facilitation, or returning to young adult literature and storytelling for knowledge, this collection interweaves current theories, ethical frameworks, practices, and critiques relevant to recreation and leisure practitioners and scholars.

Such a collection helps orient leisure practice and scholarship within larger international and North American currents of diversity, struggles over Indigenous rights and standing, economic and global agendas, political agendas that use leisure as power over or exclusion of others, the value of leisure beyond social and economic benefits, and the hegemonic commitment to an autonomous, self-initiating individual self. As the voices herein unfold spaces within

dominant and “status quo” approaches in governments and academia, there are some voices yet to be heard.

I invite readers to hear the shifting of leisure practice and scholarship related to community development **and** notice the work that has yet to be done. Edited volumes such as this allow readers to reflect upon where the field has been and the aims of current research while inviting contemplation about what is missing, what still needs to be changed, and how larger societal forces or groups might critique or find the field wanting. For instance, the underlying community development framework still aligns itself with existing, dominant views of nation-states, healthy communities, individual psychological and physical well-being, and economic structures. As Lewis, Mowatt and Yuen (Chapter 9) point out, the majority of recreation and academic programs are white, middle-class individuals and groups focused on helping or making changes in non-white, low-income individuals and groups.

Given recent international events such as recessions and economic struggles, contagious diseases, environmental changes, mobility of large numbers of people, violence as a method for addressing grievances or differences, and sovereignty movements, successful leisure practice and scholarship might want to consider our role and connection with any of these and become responsive to the implications of these ripples at local, national, and international levels. This sensitivity requires theories, models, and programs that embrace multiple theories, views and approaches *and* a critical lens about the limits and harms that dominant and accepted ways of leisure practice and scholarship are complicit in processes that have excluded or harmed other peoples.

This volume initiates a number of conversations that can lead into discussions about what is absent. Some areas to consider are: care and stewardship for non-human communities; praxis grounded in other ways of knowing and being such as Indigenous perspectives; support and acceptance of scholars and experts from other ethnicities, Indigenous groups, and nations; our unintentional contributions to climate change, and nurturing leisure that challenges, resists, or shifts dominant ways of doing and being at leisure. Finally, and critically, leisure research and practice must seek to understand how some processes of community development may be intimately linked with colonialism, imperialism, violence, and globalization to the detriment of groups and people who are resisting or devising alternative ways of being.

This volume contributes to an ongoing discussion around the relationship of community development,

sport, tourism, and leisure. Clearly, the frameworks, ethics, and goals of community development are being contested and employed in multifaceted ways that open space for multiple and alternative ways of being and knowing. There is innovation, appropriation, and modification from other practices and disciplines outside of sport, tourism, and leisure, and a commitment to equality and equity. In such a world of difference, multiplicity, and change, the authors support a leisure research and practice as humble and humbling.

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**PART A**  
**GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**



# 1

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LEISURE: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

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*Erin Sharpe, Felice Yuen, and Heather Mair*

Putting together a book like this forces one to ask: *what is leisure and why do so many scholars and practitioners argue it has an important role to play in community development?* Hopefully, this book will give you the tools you need to respond to that question and to engage members of society in a broader dialogue about leisure and community development. We also, however, don't want to shy away from the issue that leisure and its fields of practice—sport, tourism, recreation—are not always benign. In fact, we can draw a link between leisure (particularly leisure behaviors such as consumption and travel), and what are becoming increasingly serious threats to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental well-being of our neighborhoods. Indeed, our seemingly disposable electronic gadgets clog landfills and their production processes are laden with social and environmental problems. Our endless 'screen time' keeps us and our children indoors and arguably disconnected from the realities of life in our local communities. Our holiday travel to sunny and interesting destinations in faraway places serves to reinforce social and economic inequalities and has clear environmental repercussions. And so, while the main point of this book is to encourage you to think about the potential of leisure, we want you to think critically about leisure and to challenge your own assumptions about what the link is (and could be) between leisure and community development. Further to this, we encouraged contributing authors to write chapters that moved beyond an uncritical acceptance of the relationship between leisure and community and to create space for mindful dialogue through which to examine this relationship, warts and all.

### UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY

#### COMMUNITY OF THE PAST

When you think of community, warm and cozy thoughts might come to mind. Characteristics such as *tightly*

*knit*—where everyone knows everyone, and *stable*—where you are continually surrounded by family, or friends that feel like family, who are willing help with child care or offer you some sugar for your coffee because you have run out, can be used to describe community (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993). Some of you might think about your grandparents who lament on how a sense of community has been lost in today's society. This sense of community is typically associated with classic historical conceptualizations of community, which can be referred to as *Gemeinschaft*—a term coined by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887. The closeness of relationships and the closeness of physical proximity are what make *Gemeinschaft* possible (Tönnies, 1957). However, as argued by Shaffer and Anundsen, "as tightly knit and stable as most old-style communities were, they were also homogeneous, suspicious of outsiders, socially and economically stratified, emotionally stifling, and limited in opportunities for personal and professional development" (p. 6). Indeed, communities of the past were typically exclusive and considered in the realm of geographic space.

#### COMMUNITY OF THE FUTURE

While we aim to create community, we are not aiming to build the communities our grandparents once knew. Rather, we are striving for a community that is heterogeneous and dynamic, with members that are interdependent, committed to one another, participate in common practices, and identify themselves as a part of something bigger than the sum of their individual parts (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993). Such a community requires a sense of solidarity. *Solidarity* encompasses, 1) *a shared identity*, which comes from shared place, interest, affiliation, and ideology and 2) *shared norms*, which involves a code of conduct or social norms (Bhattacharyya, 2004). While there is a sense of solidarity that unites members, the kind of community we are advocating for is also inclusive and heterogeneous.

### SOLIDARITY

Solidarity is a key concept in community development; however, it is also a concept that is difficult to define. Most scholars think of solidarity as sense of community based on shared understandings, feelings of togetherness, and common interests or values (Borner, 2013). Zimiles (2009) uses the term solidarity interchangeably with cohesion. Bhattychara (2004), who views the promotion of solidarity as a key goal of community development, defines it in terms of shared identity and shared norms. However, perhaps solidarity also requires something *from* us rather simply giving something *to* us. Schweigert (2002), for example, defines solidarity as “shared membership characterized by mutual care and mutual respect, that is, a sense of belonging enriched by a commitment to human dignity—to love one’s neighbour as oneself” (p. 33). For Schweigert, community exists when we engage with one another through *relations of care*; it is the *principle of action* that defines community.

(Pedlar & Haworth, 2006). For example, a running group where members share an appreciation for physical activity, health, and well-being can be conceptualized as a functional community. In this textbook we encourage you to consider the social dimension of community. One way to understand community from a social perspective is to consider the community spectrum by Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) (see Figure 1.1). This spectrum can also be viewed as an evolution of community. As connections and bonds form within the functional community, a conscious community may eventually evolve. Members in a conscious community recognize their interdependence with each other and with others. This interdependence tends to foster a willingness to embrace new people and ideas, rather than exclusivity and homogeneity (Shaffer & Anundsen). Eventually attitudes and behaviors of the group become so internalized that they become a part of natural everyday behavior and solidarity is solidified. Shaffer and Anundsen identify this normalcy of a conscious community as deep community.

There are numerous definitions of community, with some focusing on social interaction, while others relate to geographical space and the functionality of community (Allen, 1991). As previously mentioned, community as a geographical space is the way in which community is traditionally viewed. For example, community is the pre-industrial village, a small town, or the local neighbourhood. A functional community can be described as a community of purpose, where there is a shared activity or project that brings members together

#### Application Question

*Think of an example for each type of community on the spectrum. Would you consider these communities a positive or negative contribution to society? We often think of community as something that is good, but it is important to highlight that community does not necessarily lead to good things, rather it is the goal of the community (e.g., cure for cancer, white supremacy) that reflects the benevolence or malevolence of the community.*

Functional	Conscious	Deep
Focuses on external task: supports physical, social well-being of members. Traditionally slow to change and structured according to a hierarchy of fixed roles. Pays little or no attention to group process.	Focuses on internal dynamics and external task. Attends to whole system: individual and group development, process as well as task, interaction with larger communities. Characterized by openness, fluidity, diversity, roles sharing, use of group skills, regular renewal.	Conscious group skills/processes and systems orientation are so ingrained they are part of natural everyday behavior.

FIGURE 1.1 COMMUNITY SPECTRUM (SHAFFER & ANUNDSEN, 1993, P. 17)

## THE LOSS AND REVIVAL OF COMMUNITY

As we mentioned earlier, some of you might have heard your grandparents remarking on a loss of community. They certainly aren't alone. Numerous researchers have observed the breakdown of social networks in Western society (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1996; Oldenburg, 1998; Putnam, 2000). The weakening of community bonds (Putnam, 2000), the loss of public space (Oldenburg), along with the decline of civic consciousness and sense of obligation (Bellah, et al., 1996) are noted as major concerns in the erosion of communities. *Why is this happening?* Individualism, consumption, and privatization have become dominant pillars of Western society and we have come to adopt and accept these ideologies as measurements of success. In other words, independence, economic wealth, and individual choice are indicative of a high quality of life, but our focus on achieving this status has contributed to the loss of community. Globalization has also been identified as a culprit in the loss of community as it threatens individual rights and freedoms (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Ife and Tesoriero (2006), argue that the neoliberalist approach, which was an attempt to solve social problems, has in fact made them worse. That is, the dismantling of government structures and services and replacing them with private-sector, market-driven approaches have contributed to the decline of community and the unravelling of our social fabric.

### NEOLIBERALISM

A way of organizing our lives socially, politically, and economically, which has at its core the assumption that the market system is the best way to allocate our access to goods and resources efficiently and, some would say, fairly. The hallmarks of neoliberalism are individualism, reduced government involvement in the lives of everyday people, increased public and private partnerships, and the increasing marketisation of every aspect of life (e.g., water, clean air, heritage, health, public space).

Leisure has played its part in the shift within individualization towards consumption and privatization, and ultimately the loss of community. Specifically, the focus on individual choice and autonomy in leisure provision and research has constrained attempts to develop a framework that moves beyond individualism (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). This textbook is a response to a call for action (Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Hemingway, 1999;

Hutchison & McGill, 1995; Coalter, 1998; Glover & Stewart, 2006; Mair, 2009). Our response is founded on a social and political philosophy called *communitarianism*. There are varying divisions within this philosophy, such as democratic communitarianism—which argues that we can only flourish through community, or radical communitarianism—which believes that minority rights can be compromised at the expense of community values and traditions (Pedlar & Haworth, 2006). Nonetheless, the heart of communitarianism is social relationships (Arai & Pedlar) and the belief that community is needed for personal development and fulfillment (Pedlar & Haworth). Mutual support, reciprocity, and solidarity are essential components as communitarianism attempts to balance individual rights with collective responsibility and duty (Arai & Pedlar). We encourage you to consider communitarianism as an alternative to individualism and join us and the other authors in this textbook as we discuss ways in which leisure and leisure-service providers can engage in community development.

### WHAT DOES LEISURE HAVE TO DO WITH COMMUNITY?

Felice writes: When I tell people I teach and do research in the field of leisure studies, they generally laugh and say something like “So, you get to study how to have fun. Lucky you!” I laugh along and reply “Yeah, but it’s more than that. I study how leisure can be used as a context to build communities.” I tell them about how leisure can be used as a vehicle for youth to be engaged in their communities, how leisure can be used as a bridge for women re-entering society after incarceration, how leisure can bring newcomers and locals together, and the list goes on. Leisure is the carrot to community building (I tell my students it’s the chocolate); it’s what motivates people to participate in community. Below is a quote that explains leisure’s connection to community. It’s a quote that I keep around in my back pocket and use quite often (thanks to my Master’s and Ph.D. advisor):

*People are not interested in the project of community building. It is the thing, its charms and traditions, that have captivated their good will.*

—Albert Borgmann, 1992, p. 136



Leisure is the thing! Leisure is the charm and the tradition!! Participating in community is way more exciting with leisure in it. Leisure is a powerful tool. It can contribute to environmental degradation, social isolation, marginalization, and reinforce stereotypes, but it can also be used to develop and maintain the kind of relationships, skills, and capacities required for strong inclusive and heterogeneous communities. And yes, lucky us, we have the honour and privilege of using it in our practice.

## UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENT

Let's now consider the other aspect of our title. What is *development*? Chambers (2004, p. 3) argues that we generally think of development as *good change*. Encompassed in this definition is the notion that development is both a vision and a process. Thinking about development requires us to consider our vision of society—in other words, what we think of as good, as well as the process of change that moves communities and societies closer to that desirable vision. However, even this simple definition raises a number of important questions. For example, what sort of change matters? Is my vision of 'good' the same as yours? Whose values and interests underlie the process of change (Sumner & Tribe, 2008)? These questions become even more heightened when development unfolds as part of a process of planned change or community intervention. Among advocates and scholars of development there are strongly conflicting views regarding the vision, processes, or even the legitimacy of 'doing development'. Anyone involved in development practice must consider deeply the values and interests that underlie their work, as well as be able to consider these 'post-development' critiques. Let's now wade into the definitions and debates.

### DEVELOPMENT AS A VISION

Thinking about development as a vision leads us to consider the intent of development. If development is about good change, what do we think of as good? Again, here there is not one consistent answer. Our vision of a desirable society or community has changed over time, and visions of development also differ when considered through different theoretical or philosophical perspectives.

There is certainly one dominant view that the development vision is about an improvement of social conditions. In the early decades of development (1950s and 1960s), notions of improvement of social conditions were closely tied to notions of *modernization*.

At this time, development was primarily about introducing countries and communities to the technologies and processes they might need to better engage in the kinds of social, economic, and political systems that characterize the West (Thomas, 2004). We can imagine the kind of development work that might be undertaken under this vision of development; the focus would undoubtedly focus on so-called 'developing' countries and initiatives might focus on introducing Western techniques of production to industries such as healthcare, agriculture, or manufacturing (Thomas, 2004).

The development-as-modernization vision has been critiqued on a couple of fronts. One critique is that it is very Western-centric; this vision has been characterized as the 'following in the footsteps of the West' approach as it establishes the societal conditions of the West as the ideal that is to be emulated and ideally achieved (Thomas, 2004). The Western-centric critique is one that the development field continues to wrestle with, as it raises questions about the values and societal visions that are being idealized through development. As we noted at the beginning of the chapter, Western society is not necessarily a societal model worth emulating as it has a number of its own problems (perhaps caused by *over-development*!) including obesity, inequality, and environmental degradation.

### DEVELOPMENT AS WESTERNIZATION

The idea of development as Westernization has been discussed in a famous speech by the well-known philosopher and social critic Ivan Illich. Illich was invited to give an address at a conference for U.S. students volunteering in Latin America. In the address, which has since been titled "To Hell with Good Intentions," Illich (1968) challenged the students to think deeply about what it is that their presence in Latin America might really be doing. In his biting and sarcastic style, Illich told the students that they were no more than "vacationing do-gooders" who were working not as developers but as "salesmen . . . for the middle-class 'American Way of Life.'" In other words, their presence and position as 'developers' worked to position Western values and practices as those which should be desired and emulated. Illich's address, given in 1968, is certainly of its time; however its questions and concerns have kept their potency.

A second critique is that this vision views development too narrowly. The modernization vision conceptualizes development primarily in terms of improving the productive capacity of societies and communities. Over the years, people have argued that the development vision needs go beyond expanding economic potential to include other factors that shape the extent to which people are able to realize their potential (Thomas, 2004). A broader umbrella that envisions development as *realizing human potential* takes into consideration factors such as health, hygiene, safety, security, and community. It also considers access to important institutions such as the education and legal system. Promoting inclusion, belonging, and recognition of marginalized groups is also part of this broader vision of development.

The definition of community development as presented by the United Nations captures this idea. The United Nations defines community development as “a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance on the community’s initiative” (United Nations, 1955, p. 6). This vision of development is also closely aligned with a philosophy of *social justice* because it suggests that access to basic human rights must be in place in order for human potential to be fully realized (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). Social justice refers to principles of equity and justice for all people, regardless of race, gender, ability, status, sexual orientation, physical makeup, or religion, with emphasis on those who are underrepresented or underserved (Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006; Rawls, 1999). Young (1990) extends this definition and emphasizes that “justice should be concerned not only with fair distribution of resources and advantages, but should also strive toward “institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation” (p. 39). In other words, it is not sufficient to redistribute wealth or resources and assume all is just, because the oppressive structures that contribute to inequality would remain intact.

### HOW CAN WE ENGAGE IN SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Political theorist Iris Marion Young (1990) would tell us to adopt a *politics of difference*, which argues “that equality as the participation and inclusion of all groups sometimes require different treatment for oppressed or disadvantaged groups” (p. 158). To fully understand this

statement let us examine the meaning of equality. *Does equality mean sameness or fairness?* Sameness indicates that every person is treated according to the same principles and standards. This idea of equality means that all participants of municipal recreation centers are charged the same user fees. Fairness acknowledges that we need to give special treatment towards disadvantaged groups. Equality in the realm of fairness means that municipal recreation centers in lower-income neighborhoods would charge lower user fees than other areas of the city. Sameness has dominated the quest for equality, causing much criticism when change is made based on fairness. A politics of difference recognizes the world is structured to privileges certain groups such as men, the economically wealthy, and people who are white. In acknowledging this discrepancy, we strive for change by providing extra support to those who are disadvantaged such as women, the economically poor, and visible minorities. Young suggests social policies and adopting “a principle of representation for oppressed groups in democratic decisionmaking bodies” (p. 158) as specific ways that we can move towards social justice.

Another strand of thinking about the development vision shifts away from a focus on improving economic and social conditions and towards a focus on expanding freedom, choice and agency. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has been influential in promoting this vision. For Sen (1999), development is not something to be bestowed on people. Instead, development is about engaging in a process of expanding the freedoms that people value and enjoy. Bhattacharyya (2004) describes this development vision:

The ultimate goal of development should be human autonomy or agency—the capacity of people to order their world, the capacity to create, reproduce, change, and live according to their own meaning systems, to have the powers to define themselves as opposed to being defined by others. (2004, p. 12)

A vision of development as the expansion of human freedom involves two kinds of work. It involves removing major sources of ‘unfreedom’, including poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, social deprivation, neglect of public facilities, as well as intolerance (Sen, 1999). It also involves working with people and communities

in the expansion of assets and strengthening of capabilities of people to participate in, negotiate with, influence and build accountable institutions that affect their lives. Capabilities that can be strengthened include human capabilities such as good health, education, production and other life-enhancing skills; social capabilities like leadership, trust, and the ability to organize, and political capabilities such as the capacity to represent oneself or others, access information, or participate in political life (Sen, 1999). For Sen, development is ultimately a process of empowerment.

### AGENCY AND EMPOWERMENT

Agency and empowerment are terms that are at the heart of community development. They are sometimes used interchangeably, because they both relate to a process of *increasing power*. Agency is, as Bhattacharyya and Sen describe, about freedom: it is “what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important” (Sen, 1985, p. 203). Empowerment is a process of *expanding and realizing agency*. McArdle (1990), for example, describes empowerment as “a process whereby decisions are made by the people who have to wear the consequences of those decisions.” Rappaport (1987) defines it as a process through which people gain greater control over their lives, such that they are more able to realize their life goals and dreams. Empowerment requires work at both the individual and institutional level, as it may be that our ability to exert agency is restricted by broader social or institutional constraints (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007).

### DEVELOPMENT AS A PROCESS

Thinking about development as a process leads us to consider how it is that societies and communities change. Thomas (2004) reminds us that societies and communities are dynamic; the conditions in which we live and the values by which we live are in a process of ongoing and imminent change. However, when we think about development, most often we associate it with a process of intentional social or community change. The work of ‘development agencies’ certainly fits this conceptualization. Development agencies, working globally and locally, embark on projects and programs that have intended change-oriented goals and objectives.

Processes of community change do not necessarily have to be restricted to the work of development agencies.

Much community change can (and should!) be undertaken in less formally organized ways, directed by individuals or groups of volunteers who are simply passionate about a change and willing to work to make it happen. For example, examine Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan’s (2012) definition of community development. They describe community development as “a process that entails organization, facilitation, and action, which allows people to establish ways to create the community they want to live in” (p. 297). Note how this definition captures the elements of community development while also keeping open the options for who can be the actors or agents in this change process.

Although self-organized community development continues to be fundamentally important, recent decades have been characterized by a proliferation of development agencies, to the point that we now refer to them collectively as the *development sector*. In fact, we imagine the main audience of this book as those who are working as ‘developers’ in agencies that are to some degree entrusted with the development of groups and communities. Working in this role, although exciting and rewarding, is also highly complex and can at times be ethically ambiguous. This is because development agencies are “entrusted with the responsibility of acting on behalf of another—in this case to try to ensure the ‘development’ of the other” (Thomas, 2004, p. 41). This is no small task. Indeed, the history of development is one of agencies abusing this trust—for example, falsely claiming to have the capacity or the legitimacy to act on behalf of a community. A fundamental question that needs to be answered is whether the interests of those being developed are represented through the actions of the agency acting on their behalf (Thomas, 2004). For any agency, the answer must be a clear yes.

There are also broader and more fundamental questions being asked of contemporary development work. For example, an important critique has been raised by ‘post-development’ scholars who argue that rather than ‘good change’, development may in fact do more harm than good. For example, Esteva (1985) and Escobar (1995) contend that development is a ‘myth’—that rather than creating community change, development simply creates an opportunity for more powerful entities (nations, groups) to intervene in and control the community in the name of development. Development has also critiqued for how it may work to reproduce troubling narratives about communities and nations as the ‘needy other’ (Todd, 2011). Critics argue that narratives such as these actually *constitute* the problems that they claim to analyze and solve (Escobar, 1995).

## THE TROUBLE WITH DEVELOPMENT?

Erin writes: I was confronted with the question of whether development work was doing more harm than good in my early years of teaching community development. In one class, I required students to work with a local community development agency that had received funding to run after-school programs in neighborhoods that had been identified by our region as ‘high priority’ based on a range of indicators related to family income, education, and health status. Most student groups planned a recreation program of some kind, such as a Halloween dance, a sports program, or a video-making project. In the last class of the term, students reported on their experience. One student talked with enthusiasm and pride about her group’s program. She talked about what her group did and how much she enjoyed it. ‘It felt so good to help those kids in need’, she said.

Her comment has stayed with me for many years. It sparked my own thinking about what this course was actually accomplishing. For example, how was this course reasserting distinctions between the students (as heroic helpers) and the community members (as needy others)? Might the consequences of the Othering and hierarchy reinforced in this class outweigh the direct benefits of the programs? This is what Escobar (1995) means by development actually constituting the problem, in that the act of constituting a people as ‘in need of development’ gives legitimacy to actions (e.g., intervention, control, removal of rights) that are ultimately oppressive and disempowering.

### Application Question

*People are often drawn to work for development agencies out of a desire to ‘help,’ or ‘make a difference.’ However, Cook (2008) contends that this is a stance that also positions the host culture as ‘in need of help’. Reflect on this idea in relation to your own motivations and experiences. What is driving your interest to learn more about community development?*

So, what are we to make of the definition of development as good change? Although appealing for its simplicity, we can see that it is too limiting a definition. Development work is not inherently good, ethical, or heroic (Todd, 2011). Instead, it is complex, ethically ambiguous, and best viewed as a *cautious practice* (Todd, p. 118) that requires us to engage in ongoing and reflexive questioning regarding its ‘goodness’ and ultimately, who it is good for.

## UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS A FIELD OF PRACTICE

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE ‘DAY-TO-DAY’

Heather writes: When I was a university student, some of my best friends were activists! I always admired how engaged they were, how politically-savvy they seemed to be, and how they were so deeply committed to living their lives in-tune with a commitment to social justice. Then, one day, I found myself at a large, international protest. I was marching alongside my friends and feeling I was a part of a global movement to claim space to talk about the political, social, environmental, and economic implications of unjust international trade practices. Not long after that, I was in a store, staring hard at the various labels and packaging and working to make choices about what I was purchasing that adhered to my own social justice goals. I realized that these experiences, coupled with a growing involvement in the labor movement, meant I too was becoming an activist . . . or perhaps I was trying to live my life in a way that made the principles of social justice and community development come to life. I was trying to live, enact, and practice a set of ideals about the way I wanted the world and humans to be (socially-conscious, environmentally-aware, and civically-engaged).

Today, I can’t say I’m in deep with the activist community but I do always feel a sense of connectedness with them—or what we might call solidarity—and I will always defend and support their right to claim space to talk about those issues that are essential to ensuring a just and meaningful life for all. I still try to think hard

about my consumption and travel patterns (in leisure and in work) as well as to be aware of my very privileged place in society—or what we might call agency. I use my status as a teacher and a professor to point out the ways we all need to be working hard to redress gender, race, and class power imbalances in society. When I teach in this area, I am most heartened when I see my students becoming both more critical of the way the world is but also more hopeful about their role in shaping how the world should be. I want my students to see how community development is a life’s project—a project that we continually undertake in every area of our life.

If the main elements of community development are that it promotes solidarity and agency, then the practice of community development means working to ensure that these elements are protected and fostered. This might seem a bit abstract and you might find yourself asking “well, how do I promote solidarity and agency for

people in communities?” The answer is complicated, of course, but here are some things you might find yourself *doing* if you become a community development practitioner. Most simply put, you might be involved in one or more of a series of roles: process, technical, organizational, advisory or challenging, resource, or system. Following Cavaye (2006), they are listed below with a few examples to give you a better picture. Most of all of the chapters included in this book will also offer examples of these and others roles a community development practitioner may be involved in. As you read along, try to imagine yourself in one or more of these roles.

Of course, no one practitioner can do all of these things; and so quite possibly the single most important task of the community development practitioner is to identify her own skills and to recognize her weaknesses and to then build a team, which includes people who can add their own knowledge and skills into the process. In this way, skills such as group development, educating, facilitating, representing, establishing trust, forming partnerships, also become important (as if the first list

Roles	Examples of Duties and Responsibilities
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping members of communities identify concerns, needs and priority issues</li> <li>• Suggesting and conducting techniques for community engagement, group formation and decision-making</li> <li>• Helping develop leadership skills among community members</li> </ul>
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informing members of communities about the technical issues involved in community economic analysis</li> <li>• Providing technical information about the feasibility of development options</li> <li>• Directing people to sources of information</li> </ul>
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping members of communities organize committees or working groups</li> <li>• Facilitating the formation and function of existing or new community groups</li> </ul>
Advisory or Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenging existing views among members of the community</li> <li>• Suggesting alternative ways of addressing issues</li> <li>• Advising members of the community on process or action options</li> <li>• Awareness-raising and stimulation of critical thinking</li> </ul>
Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing information about funding options and requirements</li> <li>• Assist members of communities in recognizing and using existing resources</li> </ul>
System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that networks function effectively</li> <li>• Seeing that members of communities and groups liaise with outside individuals, groups and other communities</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 1.2** ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER (ADAPTED FROM CAVAYE, 2006)

wasn't long enough!). (Ife & Tesoreiro, 2006; Hutchison & Nogradi 1996). Indeed, community development is hard work and because it is so oriented towards process, there are no hard and fast rules about what will work in any given situation. That's why those who write and think about community development talk about *principles* and not *answers*. All you can do is work towards sticking with the principles of community development and be open to having to change direction if things aren't working.

Additionally, a good practitioner works themselves out of a job or at least a particular project! Writing about the work of community development after more than 30 years of experience, Langin and Ensign (1998) argue, the mindset of community development practice demands that the practitioner “. . . should always be thinking of his [sic] withdrawal, of his [sic] leaving. He is not meant to be a fixture there. He is to be there in such a way that his ultimate goal is the non-necessity of his continuing to be there.” (p. 133)

When thinking about community development practice as a way of living, it is important to realize that just as the ability to embrace the various roles outlined above, practice is also about knowing yourself—what we call reflexivity—and being able to identify your own assumptions, values, and yes, even weaknesses as is noted above. There are many chances throughout the book to do some deep thinking about who you are and how that will shape your approach to community development and we encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities to engage this inner learning. As Langin and Ensign (1998) describe, the Community Developer is a ‘lighthouse’—particularly important in times of turbulent and so along with skills, a number of general personal and interpersonal ways of being are also important. To this Langin and Ensign add, being nonjudgmental, impartial, and empathetic. Being a really good listener. Being who you say you are. Being reliable and available. Keeping your personal issues to yourself.

## PRAXIS

Praxis is the ongoing ability to link practical action with theoretical assumptions and ideas about social change, which shape that action. Practitioners do not just follow a set of rules unthinkingly, they are in a constant dialogue with themselves, others, and with community development theory in order to continue to learn, reflect, and act in purposeful ways.

All of this introspection and action, shaped by critical self-awareness—or praxis as is described above—leads to, as Ledwith notes (2005, p. 3), a process that is:

“based on confidence, critical consciousness and collectivity, consciousness being the linchpin between the two. Confidence grows as people begin to question their reality, and act together for change. Collective action grows in strength as individuals form groups, groups identify issues and develop projects, and projects form alliances that have the potential to become social movements.”

As you move through the book, we hope you can see how community development is not some set of prescribed outcomes but a life-long journey, which full of learning, changing, and acting to meet challenges. Importantly, is also incredibly rewarding.

## WHERE THE BOOK GOES FROM HERE

The book is divided into three major sections and we encourage you to move in and between the sections as topics and ideas strike you. The first section, **Part A: Guiding Principles and Theoretical Frameworks**, is designed to help you develop a familiarity with major concepts, theories and principles that undergird community development thinking and practice. **Part B: Community Development Practice** includes very practical descriptions and reflections upon community development in action. The last section, **Part C: Contemporary Context and Future Directions**, includes chapters that take the principles and practice of community development more directly into our substantive field of leisure studies (as comprised of sport, tourism and recreation).

Even after reading this brief introductory chapter, we hope it is becoming clear there are likely as many theories and ideas about community development as there are scholars and practitioners! Nonetheless, each of the authors involved with this book adheres to a common set of principles—principles that demand a consistency with notions of praxis, critical reflexivity, and a sense of ‘cautious optimism’ that community development is a journey worth undertaking.

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