Against Extraction:
Leveraging the Institution to Amplify Community Knowledges via Participatory Methods

Hi, everyone! I'm so happy to be here with you today: special thanks to Professor Vetter, who invited me, as well as the other folks responsible for organizing and attending this event today. I know weekends are very precious, and increasingly so by this point in the spring semester.

So, today I'll be sharing a bit about the work I've been doing over the last several years, as I finished up my Ph.D. and started in my current position at WVU. This talk centers on two related questions that I have been turning over in my head for awhile now: **[SLIDE]**

Who are we accountable to, in our work? And how can we honor that accountability?

I'm going to be a bit more reflective and informal in my tone, for two reasons: 1) I'll be sharing some material I'm still thinking through, as I am revisiting my dissertation and preparing for the book project that has come out of that process; and 2) I want to emphasize my positionality, as junior faculty that very recently went through the very process you are working through, in planning and writing your dissertations, getting a job, and then transitioning into teaching, research, and life after graduate school. **[SLIDE]**

Today, I'll work through the following topics:

- Community knowledges, which frame my understanding of the work I've been doing;
- The extractive tendencies of institutions, which are broad and indiscriminate;
- Participatory methodologies, which go by a lot of different names but at their core, focus on disrupting traditional power dynamics and co-creation of knowledge;
- My own use of participatory methods throughout my dissertation project, what they yielded, and how they might respond to these extractive tendencies;
- And finally, I'll conclude by speculating a bit on how we might think of research design in terms of accountability and responsibility: to ourselves, to our peers, and to our communities. **[SLIDE]**

So, before I talk about my current work, I'll tell you a bit about my scholarly path. My work largely examines how communities work together to foster social change, oftentimes through digital technology. This line of inquiry actually emerged from the writing classroom. When I first started teaching at the college level, I was interested in how digital platforms—online petitions, social media, and even anonymous applications—could be used to bring about change in students' lives. I realized, though, that these platforms were just one part of the work of change, which has led me to approach the relationship between technology and community action more holistically, through community-based teaching and research. **[SLIDE]**

My dissertation involved community-based research, in which I facilitated a participatory action research project with 11 community organizers working to address economic disparities, environmental risk, the opioid epidemic, and other issues, in communities across Appalachia. We used photovoice, which is a visual research method that I'll explain more in-depth in a bit. By documenting their experiences organizing around public problems, participants confronted monolithic representations of their region, articulated their own nuanced accounts of life in rural areas, and crafted strategies for community-focused development that privilege people over profit. And one of my big takeaways from this work is that if we invite community knowledge into the academic sphere and use our academic privilege to amplify these knowledges, we might craft more effective coalitions to tackle complex public problems. **[SLIDE]**

My [Community] Knowledge

So, because I'm a storyteller, I'm going to start at the beginning.

During the first year of my PhD, a family member who I was very close to passed away. I grew up in Cincinnati, but both sides of my family are from southeastern Kentucky, and I went to college in Kentucky, so I have an intimacy with Appalachia that people often don't initially read onto me. It's actually really common for people in Cincinnati, or Dayton, or Detroit, or Chicago, to have Appalachian roots, as people left their small towns to find more economic opportunity in the mid-20th century, which is how my family ended up in the Cincinnati area. There's a lot of work on urban Appalachians out there, but I didn't know that until I really started this research. **[SLIDE]**

I bring up my positionality here because it's an important part of this research that I'm sharing with you, because it shapes my motivations, and what I'm saying to you today.

Anyway, I go to southeastern Kentucky for this funeral, and I just remember standing in that funeral home, which was literally filled with people. At the time, I was really questioning the value of the work I was doing, what difference I was making, etc. And honestly, as weird as it sounds, standing in that small town funeral home, I had this realization: This is who I want my work to serve, I want to do work that engages with the concerns of Appalachian, rural people. My people. **[SLIDE]**

So, I go back to Indiana, re-energized, and here's where I'll skip some of the details: this new path of mine was not initially well received. There was a lot of skepticism, and some outright dismissals of what I wanted to do, so I put this all on the back burner for several years. I kept working with digital platforms and questions of representation, and who's being heard. And then in my big meeting to ask a faculty member to chair my dissertation, she asked me directly, "What about your hillbilly stuff?" And everything changed.

Between that conversation with my chair and my prospectus defense, the project changed dramatically. It went from "Oh, I can do this?" to a pretty robust theoretical framework for looking at technology innovation in rural Appalachian communities, complete with possible cases--none of which panned out, I'll add.

And then, between my prospectus defense and the dissertation defense about a year and a half later, it changed even more: but in ways that were meant to be. Charles Bazerman has this article about the serendipity involved in research, and I really believe in it now, if I didn't before. I went from having a very theory-heavy approach to looking at development in the Appalachian region, to a radically different framework based on deep and meaningful relationships with people living in communities affected by those development processes.

This personal account is nested in a much larger ecology of events, and data, and lived experiences of the community organizers that I worked with throughout my dissertation. And those experiences, which they so generously shared with me, capture the complexities of community knowledges that one dimensional understandings of technical expertise or content expertise don't capture. And while there are obviously exceptions to this rule (indigenous work, feminist theory, emancipatory approaches, popular education, narrative methods, and many more interventions are there, doing this work), academic structures still largely frame expertise as this thing you earn by studying, rather than something that you develop, just by being a member of a community, so I think we have to actively argue for alternative understandings of expertise. **[SLIDE]**

The Institution and Extraction

Extraction has been on my mind for awhile, since my dissertation initially focused on technology development in communities that had historically been dominated by extractive industries like coal; however, as the project evolved, I was pushed to consider the layered economic, social, cultural, and of course, environmental effects that extractive industries have, especially on rural communities. And as I started writing, and grappling with the difficult ethical questions that come with doing person and community-based research, I started to think about research as, in some ways, inherently extractive.

This isn't really a new idea. There's a ton out there about research ethics, and in terms of community engagement and service learning, the idea of reciprocity, but extraction is a really interesting way into this conversation, because it's a very evocative metaphor that can startle us. So, there are a couple of other ways that "extractive research" specifically has been used in our field's landscape. **[SLIDE]**

First, in their introduction to the 2015 *Technical Communication Quarterly* special issue on research methodologies, McNely, Spinuzzi, and Teston outline a range of research approaches in technical communication. They assert that oftentimes, research can be "extractive" as scholars "seek salience about a particular concern," requiring us to "bracket

the complexity of practical activity" (p. 5). Put more plainly: researchers tend to isolate their findings from the circumstances that shape those findings. And while this approach is admittedly necessary in some cases, it also has the tendency to over-simplify problems and solutions.

Second, "Extractive research" is a term that has been used to describe transnational, translingual research that colonizes populations through the application of hegemonic frameworks in local contexts (Kouritzin & Nakagawa, 2018), which has really problematic results.

I bring up these descriptions of extractive research because they're not exactly what I'm talking about, but they get at some of the same issues that I'm concerned with, namely, ignoring context and taking things of value for personal gain. And I don't have a clear solution for this dynamic: the very nature of research, as the act of gathering, involves taking information on some level, so there's an inherent tension between researchers and communities; but I do think that we need to engage that tension even if it is uncomfortable to address. **[SLIDE]**

Just as there are scholars and teachers embracing and legitimizing community knowledges, there are people addressing this dynamic I'm talking about in different ways. For example, in technical and professional communication, which is my primary subfield, we're saying that we're in a social justice turn, in which we are seeking to "redistribute and reassemble—or otherwise redress—power imbalances that systematically and systemically disenfranchise some stakeholders while privileging others...to actually make social, institutional, and organizational change happen" (Angela Haas, Michelle Eble, 2018, p. 4). Thee are so many folks doing this work, and there's actually a great collection from Godwin Agboka and Rebecca Walton that should be out in 2021 about social justice methods in technical communication, but my point is that there is a landscape in which these conversations are happening, where we might think critically about extractive structures.

Today, I'll focus on one approach through which we might work against extraction by using our resources as academics to work alongside community members: participatory methodologies. **[SLIDE]**

Participatory Methodologies

Most simply put, participatory methodologies position participants, rather than academic researchers, as a study's driving force. Rooted in emancipatory modes of thought, participatory methodologies provide space for academic expertise and community expertise to inform one another. And I'll say here that academics are experts, we do have expertise; but our expertise isn't inherently better or more valuable than other kinds of expertise. **[SLIDE]**

Since participants often design and execute projects alongside their academic counterparts, they pose questions and use tools that respond to concerns that *they* have identified. Further, the outcomes of participatory projects are often multiple: obviously, academics publish on their findings, but oftentimes, there are deliverables that serve communities, as well.

In participatory projects, knowledge materializes from communities in the service of those communities, rather than being theorized by academics and passed down for public consumption. Participatory methods place community members in a position of authority, marking their experiences as being equally legitimate to information derived through more traditional research designs.

Additionally, with a focus on community knowledges, participatory work often draws on embodied experiences. As a result, methods that are aligned with participatory methodologies encourage rich descriptions of life, including story circles, drawing, writing, mapping, photography, videography, and more. These tools allow participants to capture the complexities of difficult issues, preventing the extraction of problems from their circumstances and knowledge from communities.

Participatory approaches to research are one way that we can use our institutional privilege, and in a small way, challenge extractive practices that permeate every level of academia. **[SLIDE]**

My Methods

So I facilitated a participatory project with 11 community organizers in Appalachia, who were all part of a yearlong fellowship program dedicated to fostering a just economic transition in the region. As part of this work, they were trying to address deeply rooted problems: among them, water crises, rural gentrification, and political disenfranchisement. **[SLIDE]**

I wasn't initially planning on working with this particular group. I didn't know the fellowship existed until literally the morning after my prospectus defense, when I got an email through the Appalachian Studies listserv calling for applications to the fellowship. I did some more research, realized that the fellowship was overseen by the Highlander Center for Education and Research, which has a really rich history of community organizing. I decided to reach out, and a couple months later, things were starting to come together.

What I just told you is a really tidy narrative, when the reality is, that whole period was really uncertain. I talked to probably 30 different groups, trying to find someone who was interested in collaborating with me on a participatory project. I ran into a lot of dead ends, and I never even expected Highlander to get back to me, so I was shocked when one day, the staff member overseeing the fellowship reached out.

This was about six months before the start of the fellowship, so in addition to building a relationship, we made some decisions about the collaboration: I would be facilitating a participatory project; it would last the duration of the fellowship; fellows would be involved in its design; and it would be part of an internal, informal assessment of the fellowship's impact. At this time, I suggested that photovoice might be a good method, and the staff agreed. During the interview and matching process for the fellowship, they talked to applicants about the project, so fellows were also on board from the start. **[SLIDE]**

So, why photovoice? Photographs have historically been used to extract power from rural Appalachia by rendering its inhabitants as poor and ignorant. Utilizing photographs that have been captured *by* Appalachians, then, has the potential to re-cast these narratives and the power dynamics they reinforce. With photovoice, also called Participant Generated Imagery, participants document their daily lives through photos, often supplemented with written reflections. And then, rather than just handing over their data to researchers, participants interpret their photos and reflections alongside researchers in focus groups or interviews. As a result, these co-researchers, a term that I'll use interchangeably with participants, actively shape the development of a project. **[SLIDE]**

So, in June 2018, I finally met with my co-researchers in person to hash out specifics during the program's orientation weekend. We had three main goals for this orientation: first, to cultivate confidence in the project and its possibilities; second, to map out logistics; and third, to guide the fellows towards questions that could frame the project.

I can talk more about that orientation session if anyone is interested, but basically, I had a plan derived from one handbook I found about field methods in sociology and my own teaching experience, and that plan was thrown out almost immediately. This reminded me that adapting to participant needs was an important component of my role as facilitator in this community-based research that I wanted them to have ownership of. At the end of a three hour session, they had questions that they all agreed on.

But: before I share those questions with you, I want to take a second and share the ones that I went into this process with. Of course, I had my own research questions, as a researcher, but I also needed to be able to articulate them for another: IRB. I had to get this research approved before I could officially contact and recruit these participants. And that was a process filled with cognitive dissonance for me, since ideally, a participatory project emerges with input from the co-researchers. But, IRB is not designed for research like this, so: more on how I managed this in a second.

Anyway, I didn't share these research questions with them, because I wanted them to frame the project. **[SLIDE]**

1. How do relationships between place, people, and technology shift during economic, cultural, and social transformation?

2. When given the opportunity, what narratives and moments emerge from people engaging this work on the ground?
3. Further, how might this new or increased visibility empower stakeholders in rural regions as they navigate the complexities of a modern, interconnected world? **[SLIDE]**

And theirs:

1. How might various forms of wealth be converted into people power?
2. How do you see the past, present, or future of this place's economy, culture, or society? Is the just transition framework useful in understanding these elements?
3. What is the relationship between building the world we want and challenging or resisting harm?

These are really evocative questions with no easy answers. This complexity was intentional, as co-researchers expressed their frustration with simple questions and simple representations of their region. And, to return to IRB, these questions found their way back to this institutional account, as they were the basis for photo prompts, and focus group and interview questions, which were added as amendments to the original IRB protocol. **[SLIDE]**

The project, which took place over the course of a year, had three distinct but layered stages, each designed to build upon the data collected in the others. All of the co-researchers took photos and wrote reflections on a regular basis. We had three focus groups, where we used their photos as prompts for discussion. And then I conducted site visits to three communities, one each in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, where co-researchers engaged in individual interviews and participatory mapping.

I got a small grant to compensate co-researchers for their time, which I think was especially important, as they were working in the nonprofit sector and were not making a living wage, and I wanted to acknowledge their labor in whatever ways I could, as part of these questions about reciprocity and extraction. I'm not saying that this mitigates my responsibility or accountability on that front, but I do think we have to grapple with the material realities of the world we live in alongside our participants, and paying them through small grants is one way to funnel institutional resources to people who can really use them, and use them well.

The participatory nature of this project created a significant amount of uncertainty as this partnership formed, but it also allowed our collaboration to develop in meaningful ways that served co-researchers and their communities first, and, I think, guarded against the development of a one-way intellectual property pipeline. **[SLIDE]**

Outcomes; Community Knowledges

As co-researchers took on their own work by advocating for vulnerable members of their communities, our project became a space for them to reflect on their daily work and to consider larger patterns they saw across the group. Co-researchers used our project to question the motives of outside parties and the outcomes of their work in the region, to articulate community-focused accounts of problems and solutions, and to amplify nuanced representations of Appalachia and its people through public-facing work. As a result, they were able to build power and assert their agency in their communities and the region as a whole, and to confront extraction on multiple fronts. And while they would have done that if we had this project or not, the space this project provided enhanced and housed those efforts. **[SLIDE]**

Though co-researchers were incredibly generous with this project and supported it, I'm an academic. I was a PhD student gathering data and writing about our project for my dissertation, and so I was benefitting from the work they shared with me. I sat with this tension throughout our project, which became palpable multiple times. For example, right before our first focus group, several co-researchers ran into a film crew working on a documentary film about the future of the energy industry in the United States. After fielding what they felt to be insulting questions about their communities, our conversation in the focus group turned towards the constant stream of outsiders looking to gather information from Appalachians.

One participant explicitly voiced his frustrations with academics that come into the region and take intellectual property to "store it away in the Ivory Tower." Jackson said: **[SLIDE]**

> There's this dichotomy too where like, obviously we have shit to say. We have knowledge that other folks don't, that folks want from us. But at the same time, people from the mountains are supposed to be stupid or backwards or ignorant or whatever, and behind the times.

As a result, information is taken from these communities, "distilled through this filter of power," and then credited to the outsider who gathered the information. Jackson suggested that this imbalance was especially egregious, given how "the labor we have to spend increases when folks don't do their homework, and come here…expecting us to have all the answers and the direction for them." Other co-researchers chimed in with stories of newspaper reporters and creative writers that had approached them and asked incendiary questions that required them to engage in unreciprocated emotional labor.

The irony of this conversation unfolding during a focus group that I was facilitating is not lost on me. And though Jackson said moments later that this "wasn't a passive aggressive" way to tell me he wasn't happy with my presence or the project (given that he was doing person-based research while pursuing his own advanced degree), this moment did shape the interactions that I had with participants for the rest of the project. While I had been very up front with everyone about my commitment to reciprocity and supporting their work in any way I could, I was less eager to talk with them about the difficulties of navigating that commitment to reciprocity and the fears I already held about taking knowledge from

co-researchers for my own research. But this moment urged me to be just as vulnerable with the fellows as they had been with me, as they shared their daily lives and struggles, and so I voiced my concerns that echoed Jackson's to the entire group. I believe that such openness transformed our project, as participants started to share their ideas about how academic-community partnerships could be more equitable. Many of their ideas were deeply embedded in their specific contexts, but ultimately, each came back to shared struggle. Jackson said, "it's the way you go about it, making sure that there is that reciprocity, that there is some sort of mutual benefit that is super important—but that is never done."

Later in the project, another co-researcher told me that she felt, "We need allies everywhere," including in government, higher education, and the media. While I don't think this comment absolves researchers from the ethical concerns that we have to grapple with when we conduct research alongside communities, I do think it urges us to frame our work as collaborators, partners, and allies. We must pursue these difficult questions that unsettle our status as researchers, as we search for models that benefit community efforts more than they capitalize on them. **[SLIDE]**

In addition to questioning the ends of academic knowledge, co-researchers used our project to reflect on the ways they saw other forms of technical expertise superseding community-based understandings of problems. And for many of them—acting simultaneously as institutional representatives to communities and community advocates to institutions—reconciling these two approaches to problem solving was a major part of their work. They consistently noted the value of technical experts' efforts to help communities address complicated issues, but expressed frustration with the privileging of those experts' accounts over community-based insights. Our project served as a hub for them to build confidence in the notion that community knowledges are equally as valid as technical expertise. **[SLIDE]**

Ira, whose work revolved around documenting a water crisis, spent a lot of time cultivating connections to community members through social media and interpersonal interactions. For example, she was involved in managing Facebook pages that community members went to for information about meetings, actions, and even the quality of the water on any given day. A digital hub controlled by community members proved to be important for residents in her area, since so much discourse surrounding the water situation emerged from technical and legal experts. And though Ira thought the advocacy work that lawyers and scientists were doing was important, she noted the uneven power dynamics that their investigation reinforced. Midway through her placement, she asked, **[SLIDE]**

"What's best case scenario out of this investigation? Like, what happens when people talk about [these outside groups and people] as this godsend? That sort of dynamic makes me nervous…What happens when that's over? What power have we built here when it's so based in expert knowledge?" Ira's questioning of technical expertise is a powerful rhetorical move that strengthens her own efforts to honor community knowledges—efforts that included

collaborating on community-based oversight systems and aggregating official notices about the crisis, which located agency in local stakeholders.

This was a theme throughout the project, as participants often found themselves in this weird third space, where they were trying to listen to community members in order to build power, but also acting as representatives of nonprofit organizations. By documenting their organizing work, participants began to assemble a body of strategies that they could use to resist dominant institutions that contributed to the marginalization of vulnerable community members—including methods for engaging and protecting community-based knowledges, instead of defaulting to technical experts who were oftentimes taking community insights and framing them with slightly fancier words. **[SLIDE]**

Finally, participants used our participatory project as an opportunity to assemble a collection of different aspects of Appalachian life. As they curated their photos individually and collaboratively during focus groups, patterns began to emerge. Together, their efforts challenged stereotypical and simplistic renderings of Appalachians as hillbillies. (See Bradshaw, 2018; Snyder, 2014; Vetter, 2018; Webb-Sunderhaus, 2016, for more on the material implications of this stereotyping.) **[SLIDE]** While they did capture pictures of mountains, coal infrastructure, and quiet rural streetscapes, their collection of photos did not contain the type of ruin porn one might expect in a collection of images of Appalachia. Instead, co-researchers captured a region filled with possibility: community gardens surrounded by new construction, posters and schedules from events for diverse groups of people, especially youth-oriented organizations; protests about national issues like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and many, many public performances of music and displays of art.

But even as they located themselves in progressive circles committed to social justice efforts, they encountered displays that mirrored dominant representations of the region. In our second focus group, we reflected on conflicting representations of Appalachia that sometimes surfaced in their photos: **[SLIDE]** for example, images of young people protesting a Neo-Nazi rally juxtaposed with pictures of a Trump bus in a major city in West Virginia selling Trump merchandise.

Baxter pointed to the importance of "naming the nuance and how industry and politicians…come in and prey on people based on…differences." They continued **[SLIDE]**:

> I just always try to think about why, why people in Charleston would buy a Trump shirt or whatever. And just thinking about the nuance of that, and how people who don't have a lot of monetary wealth would support someone who they thought was giving them something different, even if he *was* a fascist…I think my pictures show a lot of the complications of Appalachia instead of this bullshit media narrative that is like Trump Country or, look at this leftist in Appalachia, how weird and wild! Because neither of those things are true. There's complication and nuance here that I think is never represented in media, but I really tried to show in my photos.

In this moment, Baxter brought up a tension between simplistic narratives casting Appalachia as an overtly conservative space, and its actual political diversity, shaped by a history of progressive labor politics and collective action. Repeatedly, co-researchers came back to this tension and puzzled over how to forward more nuanced narratives about Appalachia in light of widespread understandings of the region as fundamentally flawed (an acceptance bolstered by the success of J.D. Vance's 2016 memoir *Hillbilly Elegy*). **[SLIDE]**

Co-researchers repeatedly stated that having dedicated space within the fellowship to share their photos and stories was integral to their daily work, primarily because it helped them to identify patterns across their experiences and to build relationships with one another as they tackled similar problems. In addition to voicing their reflections within our project space, they shared their findings through personal blogs, online publications focused on the region, and public performances. Co-researchers used our project to directly challenge harmful narratives and problematic stereotypes in spaces completely unrelated to our participatory project, suggesting that these types of projects can be generative outside of academic research purposes.

I will say, for complete transparency: originally, our project was supposed to yield some sort of collective, outward facing deliverable. We talked about making their photos a public archive, kind of like 100 Days in Appalachia and other collections, we talked about making a guide if other groups wanted to do photovoice, we talked about exhibitions and art installations, and more. But: in March of last year, there was a fire at Highlander that was set by neo-Nazis, and when something like that happens, an organization struggles, and that trickled down into the fellowship. That combined with the difficulties of nonprofit work, made it so that participants were content with what we had built, in terms of a space for reflection. I point this out to emphasize how unpredictable this research can be; to me, I thought we needed some clear product; but to them, to have this space to connect and strategize and dream, was just as important.

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Conclusion

So, as I wrap up here, I'm happy to talk about any aspect of this project. Like I said, I'm going back to this and starting to map out a book project, so I'm seeing everything a little bit differently now. I'll add that seeing where the fellows are now is really interesting. I have some thoughts about that, and about working in the nonprofit sector in the region, but you can ask me about that if you want.

A methodological approach to research that is participatory in nature can be really powerful, and is one way to combat models of research that position people as passive subjects, rather than active participants--models that are extractive. It allows us to use our institutional

privilege in perhaps unexpected ways, so that we can channel some resources and support to communities that we work with and care about.

I want to point out that approaches to research aren't all-or-nothing affairs, or at least, I don't think that they should be. A project or study isn't necessarily participatory in nature or not participatory at all; you can incorporate participatory elements into your projects in different ways and at different stages. So, even with mine: I would call it a participatory project, for sure, because of the ways that co-researchers were able to shape the project and take it to places I never imagined, but it didn't start with an organic conversation with that group of people, which is what I think some purists would probably require.

But I'd argue that a participatory approach is a spirit that can guide your work in different ways. For example, you could have conversations with your participants about the project and its design, asking them to help you frame it, and how the project might support their needs, while acknowledging that labor; or, after you conduct interviews, you might move beyond member checking for accuracy and interpretation, and invite them to actively reflect on their responses. And you might already do this. I just think we don't talk very much about participatory work in our field, or at least when I was thinking through this, I had a really hard time finding people that were doing this work and publishing about *how* to do it.

So, I want to present to you this heuristic (which is admittedly, very, very bare bones right now) that I hope can help us think through some of the questions we might have about accountability, participation, and extraction, as we think through current and future projects. **[SLIDE]**

	Give	**Take**	**Receive**
Me, the researcher			
Institution			
Field			
Participants			
Community			

Like I said, extraction is this frame that's been on my mind. And just like there's not an easy economic or environmental fix for the fallout that has come from extractive industries, I don't think there's a magical solution for extraction in academic spaces. But I do think presenting a more nuanced vision of what's going on, and what we can do--similar to what I think my co-researchers did in their work of documenting life in Appalachia--is one step towards confronting problematic patterns.

So, in thinking through this heuristic, there are a few questions that might be helpful.

- What is the institution asking of you, and what is it taking? What does it take from communities around you? What does it ask us to take from those communities?
- On the other hand, what does the institution provide?
- Obviously, as researchers, we take information from participants, the field, communities around us, and what can we give back? What of ourselves, what material resources?
- What is your ultimate goal as a researcher? What is your ideal outcome, or outcomes?

This wouldn't capture everything, if you were using it as a planning tool. And honestly, it should probably look different at different times during your project. It's a reflective tool that can help us navigate the research process, like memoing or journaling, and can help us to unpack our methods, and how much we are receiving vs. how much we are giving to these different stakeholders.

If I can return to my starting story, something that I got out of this project that I wouldn't have put on this chart at the start was a much stronger embrace of my own Appalachian roots. I was so used to constantly justifying why I was the person to do this work, but through the comradeship I found with my co-researchers, I ended up feeling very confident in my desire to do this work. Another unexpected thing that happened was that I became very close with several of these people, and have worked with them beyond the project, and I think that sort of interpersonal bond that can be built between a researcher and a participant is something we don't talk about very much.

Further, this work has shifted my approach. For example, rather than seeing compensation for participating in a study as a way to get people to participate, I see it as a way to direct institutional privilege into communities in ways that bolster the work that's already being done. I see our partnerships with community organizations, whether we're teaching or researching with them, as a way to really find out what stakeholders want and need, and then to support them in their efforts, rather than coming in and diagnosing their problems. I see grants as a mechanism for fostering deep engagement with our communities. And so on. **[SLIDE]**

I'd love to talk more about this heuristic in the Q&A, but for now, I'll just say that I hope my experiences going through this process can help you to think through your own design and work that you'll be doing over the next few years. I'll leave you with this question, or rather, this pair of questions: **Who are we accountable to, in our work? And what steps can we take through our research to hold ourselves accountable to those people?**

Thank you.