Social Capital and Socio-Cultural Sustainability:

Mountain resort tourism and the community of Steamboat Springs

Natalie Kooi Sim Ooi

Bachelor of Sport and Outdoor Recreation/Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Hons), Monash University

Department of Management
Faculty of Business and Economics
Monash University
Australia

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Statement of originality

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Abstract

Mountain resort tourism, in particular ski tourism, has brought about significant change to many alpine communities within North America. Providing an alternative to past industries such as ranching, agriculture, mining, and logging, tourism has been heralded by some as a panacea for the revitalisation of what are largely declining economic bases, whilst others have described it as a destructive force that has brought about many economic, environmental, and socio-cultural concerns. Although significant recognition exists within the academic literature regarding the various economic and environmental impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, there appears to be a lack of detailed and targeted examination of its socio-cultural sustainability.

My research addresses this gap within the mountain resort tourism literature by focusing on this often overlooked dimension of sustainability. This is achieved through using social capital as a conceptual lens to examine the networks, norms, and resources that form a part of our everyday socialisation. While social capital has been widely adopted within sociology, its use in exploring tourism phenomena has thus far been limited. This is despite its ability to highlight the various sociological processes and interactions that occur within tourism-dependent communities and how they have been affected by tourism development.

Adopting an ethnographic case study design, I immersed myself within the community of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, living and participating in the daily activities of community members for ten months spanning the winter and summer tourism seasons. During this time, I undertook 53 qualitative interviews with a range of community members from various interest areas to help illuminate many of the socio-cultural issues faced as a result of mountain resort tourism. I accompanied these with participant observation of both special events and day-to-day activities, which were recorded in a field work journal. This was alongside photographs that were captured to provide a complementary visual record of my observations and experiences, as well as the analysis of relevant documentation in the form of council and county reports and plans, the local newspaper, local websites, and magazines.

Overall, my research identified mountain resort tourism as having brought about a wide range of impacts that have affected the social capital components of networks, norms, and resources in numerous ways. These effects include the strengthening of community bonding networks, the reinforcement of social norms, and the mobilisation of shared
resources through collective action; all of which highlight the existence of such positive aspects of socio-cultural sustainability as a sense of community, democratic community participation, collaboration, and empowerment. At the same time, mountain resort tourism was found to have contributed to such negative social capital outcomes as the social exclusion and isolation of newcomers and other marginalised groups within the community, the creation of anti-social norms in response to its many impacts, resource inequities both within Steamboat Springs and between the surrounding communities, and a growing sense of powerlessness. These outcomes appear reflective of the socio-culturally unsustainable nature of mountain resort tourism as they can be seen as negatively affecting quality of life, a sense of community ownership and attachment, the ability and willingness of many community members to democratically and equitably participate, and the likelihood of inter-community collaboration, whilst also exacerbating socio-economic class distinctions.

This raises a number of socio-cultural concerns for the community of Steamboat Springs in regards to the long-term sustainability of mountain resort tourism. In particular, my research highlights the importance of more effective tourism governance, with the community needing to address such issues as future community ownership, democratic and equitable community representation, increased government transparency, and the development of intra- and inter-community bridging networks in order for the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism to be achieved. At the same time, the potential for social capital to act as a heuristic device to guide the examination of the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism can also be noted. This is because of its ability to go beyond the identification of mountain resort tourism impacts to explore how individuals, groups, and organisations within tourism-dependent communities have responded to tourism development and its effects on their everyday lives, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of tourism sustainability within a mountain resort community context.
List of acronyms

ASC - American Skiing Company
CAA – Community Agriculture Alliance
CSA - Community supported agriculture
LMD - Local marketing district
LNB – Location neutral businesses and employees
LPS - Land preservation subdivisions
LTV – LTV Aerospace Corporation
NSAA - National Ski Areas Association
PDR - Purchase of development rights
SSCRA – Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association
SSRC – Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation
SSWSC - Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club
TNC - The Nature Conservancy
URA - Urban renewal authority
USFS – United States Forest Service
YVLT – Yampa Valley Land Trust
YVSC – Yampa Valley Sustainability Council
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Chapter 1. Introduction

Introducing the author

This research represents a culmination of my own personal interests as an avid skier and outdoorswoman and my fortuitous introduction to the community of Steamboat Springs, Colorado in the winter of 2008. After deciding to take a year off between my honours studies and the beginning of my PhD candidature to travel and explore the USA, I was drawn to Colorado for its world-class skiing, having long harboured a desire to experience mountain resort living. While planning for this trip, a close American friend (who has since become my fiancée) told me of his favourite Colorado ski destination; the small, relatively isolated mountain resort community of Steamboat Springs located in North-Western Colorado. He described it as a true Western community that hosts a fantastic ski resort where the cowboy hat is an official part of the uniform for employees. Given the intriguing nature of his description, it was not long before I contacted the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC), secured myself a job and visa sponsorship, and packed my bags.

For five months, I worked within the ski rentals department for the SSRC where I was exposed to the many highs and lows of the skiing lifestyle. One of hundreds of seasonal employees, I worked for low wages in a relatively menial job with no guaranteed hours and lived in shared employee housing that was reminiscent of my frugal undergraduate university days. However, much of this was of no concern as the wages and basic living conditions were offset by a free season ski pass which gave me the opportunity to ski as much as my work schedule would allow. My aim, along with that of many of my co-workers, was to ski as much as possible, often at the expense of work if the conditions were right. It was this desire to ski that formed the basis of much of our everyday conversations and interactions, providing us with a common bond that was also shared by many others within the community.

After five months and the closure of the resort, it was time to move on. However, at the end of this time, I could not shake off the feeling that my experiences within Steamboat Springs had been somewhat superficial. While I had made some great friends with other young seasonal workers, I was intrigued by the apparent depth and breadth of the community that existed beyond the mountain base area. From my limited interactions with the wider community, it appeared that there was a strong sense of community ownership and pride in
spite of the continuous transience brought about by the seasonality of mountain resort tourism. This was something that I had not noticed in my travels to other neighbouring resort destinations.

Following further related discussions with some friends from back home who had also worked and lived in various mountain resort communities throughout North America, I began to examine the literature on the North American ski industry. Books such as the *Downhill Slide* by Hal Clifford and *Devil’s Bargains* by Hal Rothman provided some fascinating insight into the different ways in which skiing and ski tourism has affected mountain communities within the American West. While my experience within Steamboat Springs typified much of what was written regarding such issues as the high costs of living, the lack of permanent jobs, the seasonality of employment, and the limited availability of affordable housing, I also felt there was something unique about the sense of community I had identified within Steamboat Springs, along with the community’s seemingly close relationship with its resort. It was this “something” which triggered a desire to gain a deeper understanding of mountain resort tourism and its effects on surrounding communities, in particular regards to such socio-cultural aspects as a sense of community. This inspired my return to Steamboat Springs and the undertaking of this PhD research project.

**Introduction to the research**

Skiing and ski tourism have played an important role in the creation and development of mountain communities and the alpine way of life within North America since the mid-1800s. A necessary form of winter travel before its transformation into a recreational pastime (Rothman, 1998a), skiing gained popularity post World War II as the birth of ski resort developments made it an increasingly accessible sport to the masses (Clifford, 2002). Since then, the combination of increased societal wealth, transportation access, and exposure to the sport, alongside the corporatisation of the resort industry in North America, has helped transform ski tourism and resort development into a billion dollar industry (Allen, 1993).

However, the North American ski industry has faced numerous challenges over the years, including, but not limited to, climate change (Scott, Dawson & Jones, 2008; Scott & McBoyle, 2007; Scott, McBoyle, Minogue & Mills, 2006), a decline in participation (Hudson, 1999; Clifford, 2002), competition amongst other leisure and vacation activities (Clifford,
2002), and wider global economic trends (Gill & Clark, 2006). This has brought about some significant changes to the industry which include the expansion of ski resorts, and a shift in focus from the sole provision of recreational skiing opportunities to investment in real estate and resort destination development (Clark, 2006a, 2006b; Clifford, 2002; Fry, 2006). With ski resorts seeking to broaden their market appeal, this shift from tourism to real estate development has proven to be a key economic driver for many North American resort corporations (Thomas & Russell, 2006). This is in addition to the extension of the winter tourism season to include a summer component, as resort corporations have actively sought to complement and utilise their existing winter facilities to help cover infrastructure investments and high overhead costs (Hudson, 1999; Needham, Wood & Rollins, 2004; Price, Moss & Williams, 1997). Although such transformations have helped to reduce some of the issues related to tourism seasonality and improve the overall economic profitability of tourism, they have also contributed to existing negative impacts resulting from ski tourism, whilst creating additional challenges that are affecting the lives of local residents.

Today, mountain resort tourism can be seen as one of the most significant causes of human intrusion within mountain regions. On the one hand, it has helped to rejuvenate declining rural communities through the stimulation of local employment and economic growth (Clifford, 2002; Di Stefano, 2004; Rothman, 1998a). This has contributed to the development of improved health, recreational, and educational facilities and a higher standard of living within mountain resort communities (Kariel, 1989; Kariel & Kariel, 1988). On the other hand, the growing popularity of these communities has also attracted large numbers of developers and investors who have raised the prices of rental and housing options (Gill, 1997a; Lorah, 2003, 2006), placing increased pressure on community resources and services (Gill, 1997b). This has led to an increase in sprawl development and the fragmentation of the rural alpine landscape (Gill & Williams, 1994; Power, 1996), amongst other negative impacts.

These impacts highlight significant concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of mountain resort tourism (Clark, 2006c), with the past focus on economic growth without regard for the community and environment having become increasingly recognised as problematic (Gill, 2000). As a result, numerous studies have examined the growth and development of mountain resort tourism in North America and around the world, providing valuable insights into a range of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts. Yet although many of these studies have acknowledged the existence of various socio-cultural issues, there appears to be limited targeted examination of the socio-cultural sustainability of
mountain resort tourism. This can be seen as reflective of much of the broader sustainable tourism literature, which has tended to more explicitly emphasise the economic and environmental sustainability of tourism development (George & Reid, 2005; Jackson & Morpeth, 2000). Although this is not surprising given the current concerns surrounding the economic and environmental implications of climate change for tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 2008), particularly in regards to the vulnerability of the ski tourism industry (Elsasser & Messerli, 2001; Scott et al., 2008; Steiger & Mayer, 2008), there appears to be a need for research that places greater focus on the achievement and maintenance of socio-culturally sustainable tourism.

This disproportionate emphasis that has been given to the economic and environmental aspects of sustainability also raises questions as to the definition of sustainable tourism and its various dimensions. Despite having been the subject of constant and rigorous debate, examination of the academic literature indicates that there exists much conceptual vagueness in regards to what constitutes sustainable tourism (Sharpley, 2000, 2009). Nevertheless, while there is no one universal definition, several commonalities have been found to exist. These include the long-term maintenance of natural, built, and human resources for current and future well-being (Bramwell & Lane, 2000); the equitable distribution of benefits (Bramwell & Lane, 2000); the importance of growth and development limitations (Jackson & Morpeth, 2000); and the satisfaction of both residents and tourists (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; World Tourism Organisation [WTO], 2012). Sustainable tourism can therefore be understood as that which is concerned with the non-declining well-being of the resources upon which the tourism industry relies, so that the quality of the environment, the quality of life for residents, and the quality of the experience for the tourist are not compromised (WTO, 1993, as cited in Flagestad & Hope, 2001).

While a range of social concepts and theories have been adopted over the years to help examine these key components of sustainability and those stakeholders that are central to the tourism-community relationship, social capital has had growing appeal as a tool for understanding the everyday relationships that make up our social reality (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009). A multi-dimensional concept that focuses upon the resources and norms available within social networks (Butler, 2005; Putnam, 1993), social capital has been utilised throughout the social sciences within urban and rural community studies (Di Pasquale & Glaeser, 1999; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Zissi, Tsonline, Skapinakis, Savvidou, & Chious, 2010), and more recently, within sustainable community development research in
both the developed and developing world (Dale & Onyx, 2005; Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Narayan, 1999; Roseland, 2000; Serageldin & Grootaert, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). However, the use of social capital within the sustainable tourism and mountain resort tourism literature has thus far been limited. This is in spite of its ability to examine the complexity and heterogeneity of the tourism-community relationship, given its focus on societal structures, processes, values, and behaviours (Field, 2003). It is for these reasons that my research uses social capital as a conceptual lens for examining the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

**Research problem, aim, and objectives**

My review of the mountain resort tourism, sustainable tourism, and social capital literature highlights a number of research gaps. While many studies have examined the numerous impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism which have raised significant concerns regarding its long-term sustainability, research has yet to specifically examine the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. This tendency to overlook the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability has also been acknowledged within the wider tourism literature, with limited research having focused upon such socio-cultural aspects as equity, fairness, and social justice (Bramwell & Lane, 2008). At the same time, although a range of sociological theories have been adopted to examine the complex nature of tourist-community relationships, social capital has not been widely utilised within a tourism, or more specifically, sustainable tourism context.

Therefore, my research aim is to bridge the social capital and sustainable tourism literature within a mountain resort tourism context by:

‘Using social capital as a conceptual lens for examining the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs’

This goes beyond the simple identification of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, with the use of social capital and its focus on social relationships and the underlying norms and resources that govern these, seen as a way to illuminate the various aspects of community life within a tourism-dependent community.
Thus, the objectives of my research are:

- To examine the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and how they have affected the community of Steamboat Springs
- To examine how these impacts affect social capital within the community of Steamboat Springs
- To examine how this use of social capital can contribute to a better understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs

**Research justification and contribution to knowledge**

My research builds upon existing academic knowledge and makes a contribution to the mountain resort tourism, sustainable tourism, and social capital literature in the following areas.

**The socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism**

Although a number of the socio-cultural issues faced by mountain resort communities have been identified within the academic literature, most notably through the work of Gill (1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2000, 2007) and colleagues (Clark, Gill & Hartmann, 2006; Gill & Williams, 1994; Williams, Gill & Ponsford, 2007), much of the research on mountain resort tourism has tended to focus upon the economic and environmental challenges. This is arguably the result of the reliance of the ski tourism industry upon the vagaries of climate, in particular, snowfall (Elsasser & Burki, 2002; Elsasser & Messerli, 2001; Hamilton, Rohall, Brown, Hayward & Keim, 2003; Koenig & Abegg, 1997; Scott et al., 2008; Scott & McBoyle, 2007; Wolfsegger, Gossling & Scott, 2008). However, as sustainability requires the balanced reconciliation of economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions (Bramwell & Lane, 2008; Onyx, 2005), there appears to be a need for greater acknowledgement of the socio-cultural aspects of mountain resort tourism.

This is emphasised by the fact that many who live within and surrounding mountain resort communities are attracted to the quality of life heralded by these destinations (Power &
Barrett, 2001), of which community relationships with tourists and the tourism industry play a significant part. While these interactions between mountain resort community residents, tourists, and the tourism industry have been acknowledged in previous studies (Clark et al., 2006; Getz & Jamal, 1994; Kariel, 1989; Perdue, 2004a), what seems to be required is a deeper examination of the everyday lives and needs of these community residents and how they are affected by tourism development (Saremba & Gill, 1991). My research therefore builds upon this current lack of in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of mountain resort tourism. This can be combined with existing research on its economic and environmental concerns to provide a more detailed and holistic understanding of tourism sustainability.

My research also contributes to the limited qualitative examination of social impacts and socio-cultural sustainability within the wider tourism field. Much of the research that has focused upon the socio-cultural aspects of tourism has tended to be quantitative in nature, as demonstrated through the cataloguing and listing of social and cultural impacts, alongside the development of indicators for measuring socio-cultural sustainability (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005; Besculides, Lee & McCormick, 2002; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; King, Pizam & Milman, 1993; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Although such research has successfully identified a range of socio-cultural impacts and indicators associated with tourism development, what appears to be lacking is the provision of detailed insight on community perceptions regarding each of these impacts and their subsequent consequences (Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2012). My use of qualitative techniques to explore the socio-cultural dimension of mountain resort tourism therefore provides a more in-depth understanding as to its impacts, as well as the associated behaviours, values, and characteristics of those community members who experience such impacts, thus allowing for greater comprehension of some of the roots of concern regarding tourism development (Deery et al., 2012).

The use of social capital to examine socio-cultural sustainability

Within the tourism sustainability literature, there exists an extensive body of cross-disciplinary studies which have utilised a range of social theories to help identify key elements, stakeholders, and relationships that are central to the development of sustainable tourism and the tourism-community relationship. These include social exchange theory (Ap, 1992; Andereck et al., 2005; Byrd, Bosley & Dronberger, 2009; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon,
stakeholder theory (Myers, Budruk & Andereck, 2011; Perdue, 2004a), collaboration theory (Hall, 1999; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Selin, 1999), and interactional/field theory (Matarrita-Cascante, Brennan & Luloff, 2010), amongst many others. Each of these theories applies their own specific perspective that frames, analyses, and filters understanding of the various social relationships and processes that occur.

While social capital has had growing appeal within the social sciences as a tool for examining the consequences of sociability, its use in examining sustainable tourism has been limited. However, as social capital acknowledges the deep-rooted cultural traditions and values that influence the way we socialise, interact, and manage our resources (Barraket, 2005), its use in examining the socio-cultural aspects of sustainability is arguably logical. This is especially the case considering its ability to capture the essential components of social life that play an important role in the development of beneficial outcomes for individuals and communities, which can be helpful in examining community capacity for change (Cox, 2000). Thus, given the potential for social capital to contribute to the examination of sustainable development (Barraket, 2005; Jones, 2005; Serageldin & Grootaert, 2000), my research uses it to examine the community of Steamboat Springs, in order to provide a better understanding of the socio-cultural issues faced as a result of the rapid growth and development of mountain resort tourism.

**The use of social capital as a heuristic device**

Since the rise in popularity of social capital as a result of Putnam’s (2000) seminal book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, the examination of how various social phenomena affect social capital at both an individual and collective level and the consequences that result, has been largely achieved through the quantitative measurement of a range of social capital indicators (Onyx & Bullen, 2000; Portes, 2000; Stone, 2001; Stone & Hughes, 2002). However, due to the absence of consensus regarding both the definition and measurement of social capital (Fukuyama, 2001; Ville, 2004), it has been argued that ‘debate has seen the conceptualisation of social capital race ahead of the development of tools for measuring it empirically’ (Stone, 2001, p. 1). This has led to a number of difficulties regarding its operationalisation.
In response, Schuller (2000) has suggested the use of social capital as a heuristic device; an artificial construct that helps guide the exploration of sociological phenomena (Scott & Marshall, 2009). This qualitative approach to research recognises that the strength of social capital may be in its ability to act as a conceptual lens that helps focus our understanding of sociological phenomena, as opposed to precisely measuring its existence, given that we do not yet seem to be in a position to clearly delineate and define its boundaries (Onyx, 2005). Indeed, the many definitions of social capital appear indicative of the difficulties involved in quantifying what is an abstract and complex sociological construct (Dale, 2005a). The utilisation of social capital in this manner therefore acknowledges and embraces both the breadth and complexity of the concept, as well as that of the social world it examines, which is something that other more structured research approaches are not able to facilitate (Schuller, 2000).

**Ethnographic approach to tourism and social capital research**

While tourism research has progressed significantly over the years, it has been argued that its tendency to adopt a positivist approach that focuses on the tangible and objective has unnecessarily limited the development of tourism as a social science (Botterill, 2001; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). This is because although tourism involves the examination of objective “facts” and “things”, such as the existence of hotels and tourism attractions, the majority of tourism research seeks to go beyond these to investigate their implications for the environment, residents, businesses, communities, and other stakeholders (Ryan, 2005). It is therefore the “tourism experience”, and its multiple social constructions which are of key interest within tourism research (Ryan, 2005). However, as tourism is based upon complex social interactions and interrelations between people within a specific place (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004), this tourism experience is not easily examined or objectively measured. Therefore, qualitative approaches to research that acknowledge the multiple constructions of reality are required (Ryan, 2005).

One such qualitative approach that has become increasingly legitimised within tourism has been ethnography (Cole, 2005; Palmer, 2001); the contextualised understanding and representation of people and their experience of their worlds (Till, 2009). A practical approach to research which involves deliberate and systematic examination of phenomena within its natural surroundings (Hammersley, 2010), ethnography has been adopted to explore
the construction and experience of identity through tourism (Palmer, 2005), the overlap between pilgrimage and tourism (Badone & Roseman, 2004), and such diverse examples of the tourist experience as that of backpacker tourists (Muzaini, 2006; Sorensen, 2003) and wilderness guides within nature-based tourism (Rantala, 2011), amongst many others. Ethnography has also been deemed appropriate for the exploration of a diverse range of phenomena within tourism-dependent communities, whether natural disaster recovery (Leopold, 2011), tourism entrepreneurship (Tucker, 2010), or as is more relevant to my research, social conflict (Yang, Ryan & Zhang, 2013), and the effects of tourism on host communities (Smith, 1978).

However, my review of the academic literature suggests that an ethnographic approach to research has been limited within a resort community context. To my knowledge, ethnography has also yet to be used to examine social capital, despite the growing recognition of the need for further qualitative inquiry of social capital due to its highly nuanced and subjective nature (Tonts, 2005). My research therefore makes an original contribution to the resort tourism and social capital literature through my adoption of an ethnographic case study research design.

**Practical contribution to community and tourism planning**

In addition to the above theoretical contributions, my research provides a practical contribution to the community of Steamboat Springs by increasing community awareness of the various issues affecting the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. Such awareness is important and necessary in order for community members to more accurately determine the appropriateness and suitability of future tourism development decisions (Moss & Godde, 2000). At the same time, a better understanding of how the community perceives mountain resort tourism is crucial for community leaders and the tourism industry so that hostile reactions to community decisions can be avoided and a balance of costs and benefits achieved (Deery et al., 2012). By highlighting the socio-cultural challenges and opportunities that have resulted from mountain resort tourism, both at a community and regional level, my research can assist with future tourism and community policy and planning initiatives.
**Research paradigm**

A research paradigm is a ‘basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways’ (Guba & Lincoln, 2004, p. 17). My research adopted an interpretive social science paradigm where the focus of the investigator is lived experience and social reality; how people understand their worlds, creating and sharing meaning in their lives (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This interpretive perspective allowed for the exploration of socially constructed reality within the community of Steamboat Springs, with the multiple perceptions of community members emphasising the complex and dynamic nature of the mountain resort tourism context.

**Ontology**

Ontology concerns the nature of reality and being; its form and how it is shaped, often through relationships between one being and another (Ponterotto, 2005). My interpretive approach to research is shaped by an underlying social constructivist ontology known as *ontological relativism*, where there exists an understanding of both locally and specifically constructed and co-constructed realities (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). This approach acknowledges that multiple meanings are constructed as people engage and form relationships with the world around them (Crotty, 1998).

Thus, rather than search for an objective “truth”, my research accepts the subjectivity surrounding community members’ perceptions, with the assumption being that these different perceptions and understandings of the world all shape different versions of the truth (Roth & Mehta, 2002). At the same time, I acknowledge my own construction of reality, with my interpretations shaped by my lived experiences and interactions as a researcher within the community (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). As people construct meaning in different ways, even in regards to the same phenomena, my research therefore highlights the importance of examining multiple perspectives as ‘each one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). This is important given that the experience of community is one that is highly personal, being different for males and females,
the young and the old, and even those who are affluent and those who are not (Crow & Allan, 1994).

**Epistemology**

Epistemology relates to the study of knowledge, acquisition of knowledge, and the relationship that exists between the knower (community members of Steamboat Springs) and the would-be-knower (researcher) (Ponterotto, 2005). Under an interpretive paradigm, this relationship can be described by a subjective and transactional epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 2004), where the interaction between the knower and would-be-knower becomes a central focus of the research as findings are co-constructed together through interactive dialogue and interpretation (Ponterotto, 2005). In entering into the community of Steamboat Springs, I sought to explore, illuminate, and then interpret the perceived reality of community members. By immersing myself within the community to experience first-hand the lives of community members and share meaning through participating in their day-to-day experiences, I was able to understand the constructed meanings which members of the Steamboat Springs community have assigned to mountain resort tourism and the many ways in which it affects their lives.

**Overview of my research design and methodology**

As tourism is positioned within specific contextual and complex cultural settings (Matarrita-Cascante, 2010), I adopted an ethnographic case study research design to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. This qualitative, value-laden enquiry was deemed suitable for addressing my research aims and objectives, due to the way it focuses upon the constructs and behaviours unique to individuals and the socio-cultural context in which they are situated (Ponterotto, 2005). Over ten months, I lived and participated within the community of Steamboat Springs, during which I sought to interpret and make sense of the various processes and meanings that community members assign to the world around them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). I achieved this through interacting with a broad range of community members and using such research methods as in-depth qualitative interviews, participant observation of everyday occurrences and special events, photography
to produce a visual record of my experiences within the community, and document analysis. I then undertook a qualitative content analysis to process my data, which resulted in a number of key themes and concepts that form the basis of this thesis.

**Overview of thesis structure**

In Chapters 2 and 3, I present a detailed review of the literature that relates to my research aim. In consideration of the various fields over which my research spans, my literature review is split over two chapters. In Chapter 2, I focus on sustainable tourism and social capital, whilst in Chapter 3 I more specifically examine mountain resort tourism development and its resulting impacts. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of my research design, methodology, and analysis process in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 5, I provide background information and context on the community of Steamboat Springs, which includes a brief historical overview of the ranching and agricultural, mining, and tourism industries and how these have developed and become intertwined over time. This sets the scene for the presentation of my research findings.

In Chapter 6, I address my first research objective by examining the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism. This is followed by Chapters 7, 8, and 9, in which I address my second research objective. In each of these chapters, I examine one of the key components of social capital (networks, norms, and resources) so that a deeper understanding of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and their effects on social capital can be achieved. In Chapter 10, I then draw upon the social capital outcomes identified in each of these chapters and examine how these can assist in providing a more detailed understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs. This addresses my third and final research objective.

I then conclude with Chapter 11, where I sum up the key findings from my research and highlighting the practical management and theoretical implications. This is accompanied by a discussion on my research contributions, along with the various limitations and areas that I have identified for future research.
Chapter 2. Literature review: Sustainable tourism and social capital

Introduction

This chapter examines the academic literature pertaining to sustainable tourism and social capital. I begin by providing an overview of the sustainable tourism literature, placing particular focus on the often overlooked socio-cultural dimension. This is followed by an acknowledgement of the past use of social theories within tourism studies to examine sustainable tourism development and the tourism-community relationship. I then provide a critique on social capital and its various components and outcomes, as well as its use within tourism and wider studies, before concluding this chapter with a discussion on the proposed value of social capital as a heuristic device and its potential for examining the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

Sustainable tourism

While tourism has increasingly been viewed and adopted by many communities around the world as a way to enhance economic opportunities (McCool & Moisey, 2008), it has also been recognised for its ability to impart a range of impacts on surrounding communities and regions. Although some of these impacts have contributed to economic, socio-cultural, and environmental well-being, others have been found to have more negative effects (Beeton, 2006). As a result, sustainable tourism has become a key objective of many tourism development policies and practices (Sharpley, 2000), with the aim being to achieve long-term economic benefits whilst minimising the negative environmental effects of tourism and improving community socio-cultural well-being to ensure the continued survival of tourism and tourism-dependent communities (Choi & Turk, 2011).
Defining sustainable tourism

The popular application of sustainability within a tourism context appears to have largely originated from the 1987 publication of the Brundtland Commission report titled *Our Common Future*. This report broadly defined sustainable development as a process that seeks to meet the needs of current generations without negatively affecting the ability of future generations to do the same (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This understanding of sustainable development has since become a central theme within tourism studies, forming the basis for subsequent numerous and varied definitions of sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development (Saarinen, 2006). Such definitions include that by Butler (1993), which posits sustainable tourism as that which is in a form that can be viably maintained in an area for an indefinite period of time. More specifically, the World Tourism Organisation [WTO] (2012) defines it as ‘tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities’. In their conceptualisation of sustainable tourism, Bramwell and Lane (1993) also highlight the complex interactions that exist between the tourism industry, host communities, visitors, and the natural environment, alongside the need for long-term viability and the continued existence of quality natural and human resources.

Within each of these definitions, a number of commonalities can be identified. All indicate a current dissatisfaction with present tourism practices and the need for change (Hughes, 1995). The importance of maintaining the integrity of resources (natural, built, and human) for current and future well-being, and the equitable distribution of economic, socio-cultural, and ecological benefits within society is also widely recognised (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). This is in addition to the need to constrain tourism development through the setting of limits in order to ensure its sustainability and the achievement of both tourist and host community satisfaction (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Jackson & Morpeth, 2000; WTO, 2012). Furthermore, the intertwined nature of tourism with its host communities is commonly acknowledged within these definitions, with people forming a key component of the tourism experience (Beeton, 2006; McKercher, 1993). Thus, the sustainability of host communities can also be seen as an important part of sustainable tourism, given that tourism rests on the assurance of the continued and improved socio-cultural and economic well-being of human communities (Richards & Hall, 2000a).
Despite these many similarities, a universal definition for sustainable tourism has yet to be achieved, leading to some criticism that it has become all things to all people (Butler, 1999). There also appears to be differences in opinion surrounding the definition and distinction between sustainability and sustainable development, both within and beyond a tourism context. Porritt (2005, p. 21) attempts to clearly separate the two by acknowledging sustainability as the desirable end goal; ‘the capacity for continuance into the long term future’, while sustainable development is the process by which sustainability is attained. However, this distinction of terms is not consistent throughout the academic literature, thus contributing to conceptual vagueness (Reboratti, 1999). Yet in spite of this lack of consistency and agreement, both sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development can be understood as important concepts, having contributed to the tourism planning, development, and management discourse by providing tourism stakeholders with a platform from which they can negotiate and reflect on its many and varied consequences (Saarinen, 2006).

Amidst this lack of agreement surrounding the definition of sustainable tourism, my research acknowledges that while there is no universally accepted definition of sustainable tourism, there is growing consensus on the holistic inclusion of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions; the need for intra- and inter-generational equity in the sharing of tourism costs and benefits; and the need to protect resources now, and for future generations through the setting of limits (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Jackson & Mopeth, 2000). At the same time, the importance of distinguishing between sustainable development as the process and sustainability as the outcome is recognised (Porritt, 2005), with my research particularly focused upon the outcome of sustainable tourism within a mountain resort tourism context. For the purpose of my research, sustainable tourism is therefore defined as tourism which is viable, equitable, and accountable for its economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts, while addressing the needs of the host community, the natural environment, and the tourist, both now and into the future.

**Dimensions of sustainable tourism**

As discussed above, although no singular definition of sustainable tourism currently exists within the academic literature, it is widely accepted as consisting of environmental, socio-cultural, and economic dimensions (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Bricker, Daniels &
Carmichael, 2006). Each of these needs to be harmoniously incorporated to ensure that tourism remains sensitive to the long-term capabilities of the natural and socio-cultural environment, achieves financial benefits for the host community, whilst also satisfies tourists’ needs (Timothy, 1998; Wyder, 2001). In this section, these three dimensions and the more recent acknowledgement of a political dimension of sustainable tourism will be briefly discussed, before greater attention is turned to the various components that make up the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism, upon which my research is primarily focused.

As tourism is largely dependent upon the natural environment, sustainability has often been equated with ecological issues (Jackson & Morpeth, 2000). This focus on the ecological or environmental dimension of sustainable tourism acknowledges the finite nature of many of the natural resources in the world and the need to protect them for current and future generations (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). Environmentally sustainable tourism is therefore that which seeks to conserve and preserve the natural environment upon which tourism relies to ensure its existence for future generations (Roberts & Tribe, 2008).

However, as tourism is largely an economic activity, there is also the need for tourism businesses and the industry to be economically feasible (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). Economically sustainable tourism refers to the ability of tourism businesses to make a profit and contribute to the economic success of the tourism industry and local community (Roberts & Tribe, 2008). In particular, it is concerned with optimising the rate of tourism development, whilst also seeking to distribute economic resources equitably throughout the host community (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006).

In comparison, the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism addresses the various needs and priorities identified by residents and host communities (Cooke, 1982). This includes acknowledgement of such values as equity and democracy (Sachs, 1999), respect for a community’s culture and identity through the promotion and protection of local cultural characteristics (Muller, 1994), and the provision of mechanisms for community participation and involvement to ensure that cultural issues of identity, belonging, and morality are addressed (Cooke, 1982; Robinson, 2000). Such participation encourages local involvement in tourism planning, thereby empowering residents to control their lives whilst also strengthening community cohesiveness and solidarity (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Swarbrooke, 1999).

In addition to these three core dimensions of sustainability, there has been recent recognition of the need for further examination of the role of political influence on tourism,
with issues of power and politics central to our understanding of sustainable tourism (Scheyvens, 2003). In particular, governments can be seen as playing an important role in determining the sustainability of tourism development through their ability to dictate the type and amount of development, and issue or limit building and planning permits, zoning restrictions, and so forth (Ryan, 2002). Discussions of tourism sustainability should therefore acknowledge the presence of political influence in the production, governance, and consumption of tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Coles & Church, 2007), with power playing a significant role in the achievement of sustainable tourism at the community level and above.

As power relations are inherent in the everyday social interactions that occur between community members (Allen, 2003; Timothy, 2007), many of these concerns regarding politics and power appear to overlap with the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability. At the same time, the importance of community political participation can also be seen as a central aspect of achieving socio-cultural sustainability (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010). Therefore, for the purpose of my research, there does not appear to be the need to separate politics and power from the socio-cultural dimension of tourism sustainability, with these two important components incorporated into my understanding of socio-culturally sustainable tourism.

**Socio-culturally sustainable tourism**

While there has been considerable debate surrounding sustainable tourism and sustainable development, much of this discourse has focused upon the importance of economic and environmental sustainability, with recognition of the socio-cultural dimension less prominent, if not altogether absent (George & Reid, 2005; Jackson & Morpeth, 2000). This is posited by Robinson (2000) as a result of the more opaque nature of socio-cultural sustainability and the resulting difficulties in its measurement. The dependency of tourism upon the natural environment also provides another possible explanation as to why discussions have predominantly concentrated on environmental sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 2008; Liu, 2003; Sachs, 1999).

However, as sustainability is a field of investigation that is based upon society and society-oriented problems (Sachs, 1999), it can be argued that the main concern of tourism-dependent communities should be on how they can change their preconditions towards development so that viable relationships between society and the natural environment occur
over time (Becker, Jahn & Stiess, 1999). This requires a greater understanding of community value systems and traditions upon which both the preservation of the natural environment and economic success depend (Robinson, 2000). Increased attention therefore needs to be paid to the social and cultural aspects of communities and their socio-cultural well-being (Richards & Hall, 2000b).

Despite a lack of research dedicated to the specific examination of socio-culturally sustainable tourism, a number of key components necessary for its achievement can be identified. These have been found within the few studies that have concentrated upon socio-culturally appropriate tourism development (Cooke, 1982; Robinson, 2000; Ryan, 2002; Sofield, 2003); the sustainable community development literature, with tourism and the resources upon which it depends being ‘intrinsically linked to the social fabric of the host community’ (McKercher, 1993, p. 8); and the wider fields of sustainable tourism and sustainable development. These components include equity, democratic community participation, empowerment, a respect for cultural values and traditions, and an improved quality of life.

Sustainable tourism acknowledges the need for both intra- and inter-generational equity, with equity defined as the provision of fair and equal opportunities that recognise varying stakeholder needs for both current and future generations (Sharpley, 2000; Timothy, 1998). Equity is considered to be a necessary component of a sustainable society, with its absence resulting in social division between individuals and groups (Sofield, 2003). This reduces the likelihood of shared interests, mutual respect, strong social norms, and the desire for association (Halpern, 2005). Socio-culturally sustainable tourism is therefore that which requires both the benefits and costs associated with tourism to be broadly and equitably spread throughout host communities, in order to prevent such division (Swarbrooke, 1999).

One way in which this can be achieved is through citizen participation; the foundation of any democratic society and an important mechanism for enhancing community control (McAndrews & Draper, 2006). A cornerstone of sustainable tourism (Bramwell & Sharman, 2000; Choi & Turk, 2011; Swarbrooke, 1999), the importance of community involvement in tourism planning and development is based on the democratic maxim that those who are most affected by a decision should be able to directly participate in the decision-making process (Roseland, 2000; Woodley, 1993). Democratic community participation is therefore the process where all relevant stakeholders are involved in a way in which everyone is able to contribute in an equitable manner (Haywood, 1988; Roseland, 2000). This does not
necessarily mean that all involved will come to full agreement, but rather that there is compromise and a willingness to identify shared mutual interests and concerns so that there is no substantial disagreement (Roseland, 2000).

Democratic community participation also extends beyond the provision of equal opportunities for contribution within the tourism planning and development process to include the ability of local residents to mobilise and put pressure on local government to ensure that sustainable measures are undertaken. This can take the form of grassroots efforts such as voluntary environmental groups or other citizen-led organisations and initiatives (Roseland, 2000). Community participation can also occur through the electoral system, with the ability and power to vote further giving community members a say (Roseland, 2000). These various opportunities for democratic involvement can be extremely beneficial for host communities, helping to prevent the loss of resident control over tourism development to outside interests (Magnan & Seidl, 2004).

Such meaningful participation in the tourism decisions that affect their lives can also contribute to the achievement of community empowerment (Lyons, Smuts & Stephens, 2001). Empowerment is the increased capacity to act, where authority, choice of actions, and control through the acquisition of knowledge and skills lie in the hands of the host community as opposed to central government or outside investors and developers (Lyons et al., 2001; Timothy, 2007). “Grassroots empowerment” through locally initiated stakeholder participation is one such example (Tosun & Timothy, 2003), playing an invaluable role in creating a greater sense of ownership amongst residents, whilst also improving their ability to contribute to tourism development plans (Choi & Turk, 2011; Timothy, Singh & Dowling, 2003). This more equitable sharing of decision-making power within communities may lead to greater community control and the more balanced distribution of tourism benefits (Mitchell, 2008; Woodley, 1993), as widespread inclusion tends to represent broader community interests and not just the voices of the powerful (Roseland, 2000).

Socio-culturally sustainable tourism should further respect the cultural integrity of a community (Magnan & Seidl, 2004), with a community’s cultural values and traditions important to its identity and consequently, its cohesiveness and pride (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). This can be achieved through the respectful incorporation of local culture within tourism activities and products in the form of handicrafts, art, customs, and cuisine, as it reflects the character of the host community whilst also allows the local culture to remain independent and alive (Muller, 1994; Simpson, 2001). Through conserving cultural values
and traditions, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the host community as these characteristics form a key part of the sense of community and belonging of residents (Simpson, 2001).

A sense of community and belonging can also be understood as an important aspect of *quality of life* (McCool & Martin, 1994). Quality of life refers to how people view or feel about their lives; their fulfilment with their experience in the world (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011). A broad concept that incorporates both a subjective and objective component (Sirgy, Rahtz, Cicic & Underwood, 2000), the subjective dimension includes feelings of contentment, well-being, happiness, satisfaction, and belonging; while the objective dimension examines various environmental, economic, and social conditions, as measured through crime rates, employment rates, family structure, income, and so forth (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011). As tourism has the potential to negatively affect community quality of life through its many impacts (Andereck & Jurowski, 2006), sustainable tourism recognises the need to maintain a high standard of living for residents through the improvement or provision of quality public services (Castellani & Sala, 2010), the optimisation of economic benefits, and the protection of the natural and built environment (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). This can all be achieved through encouraging meaningful community participation, with local residents being more inclined to collaborate on tourism initiatives that seek to protect the unique attributes of their community (McAndrews & Draper, 2006). Community participation can therefore assist in maintaining or even enhancing quality of life for the local community, whilst also integrating tourism into the community, thus increasing the likelihood of its socio-cultural sustainability (Haywood, 1998).

From this examination of the various components of socio-cultural sustainability, what can be noted is their highly interrelated nature, with the presence of one influencing the presence of another. In particular, the provision of opportunities for the democratic participation of community members in the tourism decision-making process, and its subsequent contribution to increased community capacity and feelings of empowerment, appear essential for assisting in the equitable distribution of resources, the protection of community culture and identity, and overall quality of life. My research therefore understands socio-culturally sustainable tourism to be that which is equitable and democratic, providing fair and equal opportunities for current and future generations to participate and get involved; empowers local communities and respects their cultural values and integrity; and contributes to an improved quality of life.
The use of social theories to examine sustainable tourism

Over the years, a number of social theories have been used within tourism research to provide a theoretical framework for the examination of the components and dimensions of sustainable tourism and the tourism-community relationship. This has been necessary due to the complexity and heterogeneity of the field, with each theory providing a different way of examining the various empirical problems associated with tourism (Cohen, 1979). As acknowledged in Chapter 1, some of these theories include social exchange theory, stakeholder theory, collaboration theory, and interactional/field theory, amongst many others.

Social exchange theory is ‘a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation’ (Ap, 1992, p. 998). Originating in the field of psychology, social exchange is viewed as a comparative process where individuals and groups weigh up the costs and rewards of particular relationships and scenarios, choosing those in which they can maximise the benefits and minimise the costs (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Ward & Berno, 2011). Over the years, it has been used extensively within tourism at both an individual and collective level to examine and explain differing attitudes and support towards tourism, tourism impacts, and tourism development (Andereck et al., 2005; Ap, 1992; Byrd et al., 2009; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Ward & Berno, 2011).

The origins of stakeholder theory can be found within the field of management, beginning with the seminal work of Freeman (1984) in his development of a stakeholder approach to strategic management. This theory acknowledges the existence and legitimate interests of stakeholders; ‘any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organisation’s purpose’ (Freeman, 1984, p. 53). Importantly, no one set of stakeholder interests is seen as having priority over another (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Within tourism studies, stakeholder theory has been used to examine the numerous stakeholders affected by tourism development, with particular attention given to the diversity of residents and their differing attitudes towards tourism (Perdue, 2004a; Myers et al., 2011). These studies highlight the importance of understanding stakeholders and their needs and concerns in order to achieve sustainable tourism (Perdue, 2004a).

Building on from the identification of various stakeholders and their differing interests is the notion of collaboration; a joint-decision making process through which key stakeholders constructively explore differences in opinion and search for solutions (Gray, 1989).
Collaboration theory is viewed as a dynamic and flexible process that incorporates the diverse viewpoints and varying levels of influence of multiple and interdependent stakeholders (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Selin, 1999). These collaborations can take on many different forms, with one of the most common being partnerships; regular interactions between parties that are governed by agreed upon rules to address a common issue or goal (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). Within the tourism literature, collaborations and partnerships have been identified as playing an important role in dealing with the various challenges and opportunities that arise in the planning and development of tourism (Getz & Jamal, 1994; Gill & Williams, 1994; Murphy, 1988). This is due to their ability to provide a vehicle through which common concerns and aims can be identified and collective responses forged (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Selin, 1999).

To more broadly examine tourism-dependent communities, an interactional/field theoretical perspective has also been adopted to highlight the networks and associations that are essential to the way in which individuals socialise, communicate, and undertake community efforts (Bridger & Luloff, 1999; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010). From this perspective, communities are seen as dynamic entities that consist of a number of distinct social “fields” or “groups” that overlap without clear boundaries, with individuals able to interact and be a part of more than one field at a time (Kaufman, 1959; Wilkinson, 1991). These different social fields are linked through the existence of a “community field” that integrates and cuts across these other social fields, arising out of shared community interests and the willingness of individuals and organisations to collectively address these interests (Bridger & Luloff, 1999; Wilkinson, 1991). This focus on the emergence of the community field within tourism research has assisted with the identification of power structures and the importance of local relationships and linkages for the achievement of sustainable tourism practices within community-based tourism initiatives (Bridger & Luloff, 1999; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010).

Despite the fact that these social theories and concepts have proven valuable in the examination of tourism and tourism sustainability, they were not found to be entirely suitable for my research for a number of reasons. While social exchange theory has commonly been used within tourism research to examine stakeholder attitudes and support for tourism (Ap, 1992), this was not my primary research aim. In regards to stakeholder theory, although it highlights how various stakeholder groups are affected by tourism and their differing concerns (Perdue, 2004a), its tendency to attribute equal importance to all stakeholder groups and their interests arguably ignores the resource differential and subsequent power inequity.
that exists between stakeholders (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). As equity and democratic participation have been identified as key components of socio-culturally sustainable tourism (as discussed above), the limitations of stakeholder theory in explicitly acknowledging resource and power inequalities therefore minimises its relevance to my research as a theoretical framework.

Unlike stakeholder theory, collaboration theory does acknowledge the difficulties in balancing stakeholder interests due to the unequal concentration of resources and power amongst certain stakeholders (Davies, 2002). However, the scope of investigation in collaboration theory tends to be relatively narrow, with it commonly used to focus upon formal collaborative initiatives that have evolved within a particular tourism destination (Getz & Jamal, 1994). A limitation of collaboration theory is therefore its lack of acknowledgement of the informal relationships and interactions that also form an important part of socialisation (Badura, 1986). This is particularly relevant for the examination of tourism-dependent communities such as my case study context of Steamboat Springs, with residents interacting not only amongst themselves but also with tourists and amenity migrants.

In comparison, the adoption of an interactional/field theoretical perspective appears to provide a more holistic way to examine the sustainability of tourism development and the communities in which it occurs. This is because of its focus on the social processes that take place between individuals and groups, both within and across different social fields as they come together to address common interests (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010). However, as this interactional approach tends to focus on these areas of shared interest; the commonalities found within the “community field”, what it arguably overlooks are those marginalised individuals and groups that for whatever reasons, do not share common interests with the rest of the community. This is not to say that this perspective does not acknowledge the diversity of individuals and groups that comprise a community and the various barriers to social interaction that exist. Rather, its predominant focus is simply not on obtaining a detailed understanding of what is preventing those who are excluded from community social networks and interactions (Bridger & Luloff, 1999).

Given that social capital also examines the social interactions and processes that occur within communities (Butler, 2005), but does not specifically concentrate on those which encourage the achievement of mutually beneficial interests, this concept and its use within tourism and the wider academic literature was further explored. What became apparent was that although social capital has enjoyed increased popularity within the sociology literature,
its use has been limited in the examination of tourism and tourism sustainability (McGehee, Lee, O’Bannon & Perdue, 2010; Jones, 2005). This is despite the fact that social capital can be utilised to examine numerous aspects of social life, unlike social exchange theory or collaboration theory, where the former focuses primarily upon the exchange of resources and power between individuals and groups (Ap, 1992), while the latter concentrates on formal networks and their development (Kaufman, 1959; Gray, 1985).

Although this breadth in focus that is attributed to social capital has been heralded as both a major benefit and criticism of the concept (as will be discussed in greater detail below), it does allow for the widespread examination of such areas of socio-cultural interest as the achievement of cooperation and collaboration through the creation of both informal and formal networks; the existence and development of norms, resource, and power differentials between various stakeholders; and the potential for communities to act collectively to address mutual interests and objectives. With all of these aspects of social life arguably relevant to examining the tourism-community relationship, social capital was therefore deemed to be the most appropriate lens through which the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism could be examined. Further justification that more specifically addresses its merits in examining socio-cultural sustainability is provided towards the end of this chapter, once a more detailed understanding of the concept has been established.

**Social capital**

Social capital has gained increasing attention within academia and policy debates over the last couple of decades as it has been used to inform economic and community development strategies around the world. Most notably, the work of Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 1993), Coleman (1988, 1994), and Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000), has been acknowledged as providing the foundations of the concept, with Putnam (2000) most recently credited for the widespread popularity of social capital within the social sciences and the wider policy realm (Blackshaw & Long, 2005).

According to Bourdieu (1986), the production and reproduction of social capital is only of concern for those individuals seeking to improve and establish their social position amongst associates within the upper echelons of society. He defines it as those actual or potential resources that can be accessed through one’s network of social relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). In this manner, the development and maintenance of social capital is seen
to be a form of accumulated labour; the result of the continuous and deliberate investment of one’s own resources through a series of social exchanges (Bourdieu, 1986). These efforts provide individuals with access to resources possessed by the collective, which can in turn be converted into economic capital and institutionalised within society, highlighting the fungible or transformable nature of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1993). With such access perceived to be determined by the social status derived from one’s membership to social networks, this understanding of social capital therefore emphasises the importance of an individual’s ability to access quality social networks (Bourdieu, 1986).

In comparison, Coleman (1988, 1994) perceives social capital as being relevant not only to the wealthy, but also to the poor and marginalised within society. Defining social capital by its function, he conceptualises it as those social networks, norms of reciprocity, obligation, and trust that allow people to act collectively and cooperatively. Of particular interest to Coleman (1988) is the importance of network closure and its ability to create a sense of obligation and corresponding sanctions that monitor and guide the behaviour of those actors that exist within a social network. Unlike Bourdieu (1986), he does not perceive social capital as being completely fungible in nature or solely in the possession of an individual. Rather, social capital is understood as being specific to particular activities, being the asset of both the individual and the collective that results from the distribution and utilisation of social structural resources (Coleman, 1994). Furthermore, social capital is acknowledged as being neither desirable nor undesirable (Coleman, 1988). Rather, it simply allows certain actions to occur through providing the necessary networks, resources, and sanctions (De Filippis, 2001).

Putnam (1995a, p. 67) also defines social capital by its function, being those ‘features of social organisation such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’. Through his examination of civic engagement as a form of social capital development and maintenance, Putnam (2000) emphasises the importance of social connectedness and trust, with the presumption being that the more individuals connect with others, the greater the trust that evolves. This understanding of social capital therefore extends beyond the individual, with social capital perceived as being an attribute of the community (Putnam, 1993, 1995a, 2000).

Table 1 summarises these three central contributions to the development of social capital, highlighting the various definitions, components, and levels used in its conceptualisation.
As outlined in Table 1, although a number of similarities can be identified, there are also several distinct differences. Despite there being consensus regarding the importance of social networks and connections, varying emphasis has been placed on the different components or facets of social capital. For Bourdieu (1986), the possession and distribution of resources within social networks is of central importance, with Coleman (1988, 1994) also acknowledging the importance of resources to aid in the achievement of particular actions. However, Coleman (1988, 1994) further perceives the role of effective norms, sanctions and trustworthiness to be central to the understanding of social capital. This is similar to Putnam (1995b, 2000) who views these norms of trustworthiness and reciprocity as crucial to encouraging cooperative behaviour in the achievement of mutually desired outcomes. Additional differences include the level at which social capital is conceptualised, with Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 1993) perceiving social capital to be solely of interest to the individual, whereas both Coleman (1988, 1994) and Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) recognise its value as an instigator of mutually beneficial action for collectives.
While such variations in the conceptualisation of social capital can be understood as inconsistencies in the theoretical development of the concept, they can also be argued as highlighting the inherent complexities and contradictions that exist in our everyday relationships and interactions (Schuller, 2000). Thus, in order to capture such complexity, social capital is a necessarily broad and multidimensional concept (Pantoja, 2002). As a result, although there is a degree of consensus regarding the key components that make up social capital, a lack of agreement still surrounds its precise definition (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This reflects the fact that much of our understanding of what constitutes social capital remains open to interpretation and debate (Schuller, 2000).

As no single universal definition of social capital currently exists, my research combines key elements highlighted by Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 1993), Coleman (1988, 1994), and Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) to broadly conceptualise social capital as the social networks, norms (including, but not exclusive to trust and reciprocity), and resources that facilitate cooperation and collective action at both an individual and collective level. My use of social capital as a heuristic device therefore seeks to identify and examine the social networks, norms, and resources that characterise the various relationships and interactions which occur within the community of Steamboat Springs, whether individually or in the various social groups and organisations that make up their everyday lives. This is in addition to those that exist at an inter-community level between Steamboat Springs and the surrounding communities, given the ability for the impacts of mountain resort tourism to extend beyond its host community. Given that there have been few in-depth, qualitative examinations of social capital within the tourism field (as will be discussed further in this chapter), such an exploratory and inclusive definition of social capital is necessary as a more narrow focus could potentially limit my ability to gain a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

**The components of social capital**

Over the years, research on the central importance of social networks, norms, and resources to the understanding of social capital has extended beyond the work of Bourdieu (1993, 1984, 1986), Coleman (1988, 1994), and Putnam (1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000) within a variety of academic fields. Although researchers have adopted differing definitions, it is their common acceptance of networks, norms, and resources as key components that has helped to
provide some identifiable points of reference and delineate some boundaries as to what constitutes social capital in place of the existence of a universal definition (Onyx, 2005).

**Networks**

An underlying theme throughout the social capital discourse is that of quality social networks and relations (Stone & Hughes, 2002; Dale, 2005b). Networks are the structural element of social capital (Stone, 2001), existing in a number of forms and at various levels within and between communities (Field, 2003). These systems of connections and interactions are what allow for the sharing of knowledge, values, beliefs, and ideas which play an essential role in encouraging collaborative activity (Field, 2003; Sparkes, 2005).

Networks can be both formal and informal in nature, with formal networks being those that exist within an institution, providing clearly delineated positions, hierarchies, and rules which govern actions and interactions (Lin, 2001). On the other hand, informal networks are those with a less rigid social structure which form a part of our everyday face-to-face interaction with others (Badura, 1986). While such categorisation of formal and informal networks is useful in identifying the various characteristics of these different forms of social involvement, these two types of networks are not mutually exclusive in nature, with both being important in the creation and maintenance of trust and reciprocity (Cox, 1995).

Networks can also vary in regards to density and dispersal, with each network existing within a wider set of networks (Field, 2003). Dense bonding networks are those that are made up of strong supportive ties which tend to be inward-focused, while dispersed bridging networks are those that are outward-focused and branch out and connect with other social worlds (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009). Both bonding and bridging networks provide the social structure for the development of bonding and bridging social capital, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

**Norms**

Norms are the internal valuations that people attach to particular types of actions (Ostrom, 2003). They are the expectations, whether their own, that of others, or both, as to whether an action is right or wrong (Coleman, 1987). Similar to moral heuristics that guide
and regulate behaviour, norms provide groups with a shared knowledge of what may or may not be undertaken and the consequences and sanctions that result (Ostrom, 2003). These sanctions then provide either reward or punishment for undertaking a prescribed action, thus encouraging positive behaviour while helping to prevent negative behaviour (Coleman, 1987).

Although norms have been widely recognised as a central component of social capital, there has been a tendency within the social capital literature to focus primarily on the norms of trust and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). As a result, there appears to be limited acknowledgement of additional norms which may also constitute social capital. This has arguably resulted in a lack of broader understanding of norms as a component of social capital, particularly in regards to their different types, degrees of influence, and the varying levels at which they exist. Nevertheless, a more comprehensive examination of norms can be found within the broader field of sociology.

Sociological research has identified norms as being either personal or social in nature, with personal norms defined as those that are self-enforced through self-enhancement or self-deprecation, while social norms are those that emerge out of social interaction (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). These social norms guide and constrain social behaviour through sanctions enforced by other members within the social network in which these norms exist (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Although personal norms play an important role in determining the way in which an individual may behave, it is the social norms that are shared within groups that appear most relevant to my research, given the importance of social interaction and influence to the concept of social capital.

Within the sociology literature, social norms have further been categorised as either descriptive or injunctive in nature, with these two types being conceptually and motivationally distinct (Cialdini, Reno & Kallgren, 1990). Descriptive norms describe what is considered to be typical behaviour amongst a group of people, influencing individual actions by providing evidence as to how others act within a given situation (Cialdini et al., 1990; Reno, Cialdini & Kallgren, 1993). In comparison, injunctive norms are the ‘rules or beliefs as to what constitutes morally approved and disapproved conduct’ (Cialdini et al., 1990, p. 1015). Thus, where descriptive norms simply inform and specify what is done, injunctive norms highlight what ought to be done (Cialdini et al., 1990; Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Both of these types of social norms reflect wider community beliefs and societal demands for the existence of specific conditions (Sparkes, 2005), with the communication of these shared
expectations helping to facilitate cooperation between individuals and create functioning and liveable communities (Halpern, 2005).

However, social norms that exist within a community are rarely uniform, varying substantially between individuals and associations, as well as across various situations and time (Edwards, 2004; Ostrom, 2003). This is demonstrated by the formation of sub-cultures within a community that allow for the emergence of less popular and at times conflicting norms to be shared amongst particular groups (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). This also highlights the ability for multiple norms to exist within a community, with the type and salience of a norm determining the degree of influence that it may exhibit at any given time (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Thus, what constitutes acceptable behaviour in a situation is subject to negotiation, particularly in new and/or unfamiliar contexts (Halpern, 2005).

Furthermore, not all norms necessarily constitute a component of social capital, with those that do being those that encourage cooperation and collaboration amongst groups (Halpern, 2005). These norms therefore tend to mirror such traditional values as honesty or trustworthiness, reciprocity, the keeping of commitments, and reliability (Fukuyama, 2001). As discussed above, it is trust and reciprocity in particular, that are the two most commonly recognised norms that form a component of social capital (Stone & Hughes, 2002).

**Trust**

Trust is the expectation of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour of community members (Fukuyama, 1995a). Derived from both past and present experiences with others, as well as expectations of the future, trust is influenced and framed by the culture of a community which permeates everyday life (Cox, 1999). Likened to a lubricant that provides the grease that ensures various transactions run smoothly, trust helps individuals to access resources and benefits that exist within social networks (Putnam, 2000).

A number of different types of trust have been found to exist, including personalised, generalised (social), and institutional (civic) trust. Where personalised trust is the trust that we have in people we know, generalised trust is the trust extended towards strangers (Pretty & Ward, 2001). This is different to institutional trust which is the trust that is held in formal institutions of governance, referring to the perceived fairness of rules and regulations, government procedures, and the resolution of issues (Cox, 1997).
Fukuyama (2001) demonstrates the role that these various forms of trust can play as a component of social capital in his conceptualisation of a “radius of trust”. Referring to the circle of trust that exists within or even extends beyond a group of people, Fukuyama (2001) explains how for those groups that do not encourage cooperation and teamwork, the radius of trust is often restricted to a small number of decision-makers within the group. On the other hand, when open dialogue and collaboration is encouraged amongst all group members, the radius of trust tends to be larger, even extending beyond the group if there are ties that link group members with other networks. This highlights how trust can play an important role in developing cooperation within and between networks to help bridge divergent interests (Cox, 2000). Additionally, the existence of trust allows things to get done without the need to depend on bureaucracy and the enforcement of law and regulations (Cox, 2000).

**Reciprocity**

Trust is also commonly related to the norm of reciprocity; the provision of a service or act that benefits others at a personal cost, but is undertaken with the trusted expectation that such behaviour will be returned at some undefined date in the future (Onyx & Bullen, 2000). Reciprocity can be either direct (personalised) or indirect (generalised), with direct reciprocity being a straightforward “quid pro quo” exchange between two individuals (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009), whilst indirect or generalised reciprocity does not include the same expectation that a good turn will be repaid equally and automatically. Rather, it is the assumption that kindness will be returned at some point in the future, but not necessarily by those that benefited from the action (Newton, 1997). It is this generalised reciprocity that has been acknowledged as ‘the touchstone of social capital’ (Putnam, 2000, p. 135), playing a central role in the exchanges between people within networks (Western, Stimson, Baum & Van Gellecum, 2005). As individuals are more likely to participate in reciprocal behaviour if there is trust that their actions and assistance will be reciprocated in the future, reciprocity is therefore also dependent upon the trustworthiness of the social environment in which it exists (Coleman, 1988). However, while trust and reciprocity are related and often conflated, they are not interchangeable in nature (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009).

Within the social capital literature, the question as to whether trust and reciprocity are antecedents, components, or outcomes of social capital has been widely debated (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009). In particular, differences in opinion appear to exist as to whether trust
and reciprocity should be acknowledged as integral components of social capital, or simply independent factors that are a consequence of the existence of social capital (Field, 2003). For example, Lin (2001) argues that while causal relationships may be drawn between social capital and norms of trust and reciprocity, it should not be assumed that they constitute social capital in and of themselves. However, Glanville and Bienenstock (2009) emphasise that trust and reciprocity should be viewed as components of social capital as they are necessary in ensuring the effective functioning of network ties and relationships. Given that widespread support does exist for such inclusion of trust and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988; Cox, 1995; Fukuyama, 2000, 2001; Putnam, 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 2000), my research acknowledges these norms as vital components of social capital. At the same time, as trustworthy and reciprocal behaviour can also be understood as a positive outcome or consequence resulting from the existence of social capital, my research recognises it as such where identified.

**Resources**

As a component of social capital, resources can be defined as those goods which are valued within a society and embedded within an individual’s network or associations (Lin, 1982, 1999a). These can be either personal or social in nature, with personal resources being those possessed by the individual, while social resources are those accessed through both direct and indirect ties. It is these social resources which constitute a component of social capital, but only once activated and mobilised within a network structure (Lin, 2001). This can be demonstrated through the example of money, which may begin as a personal resource but then becomes a social capital resource once it has been invested, either directly or indirectly, within social ties in order to pursue a particular action (Lin, 2001).

According to Lin (2001), resources can further be categorised as social, economic, and political, with the possession of different types of resources having the ability to influence one’s social standings within society in different ways. Social resources include such things as a breadth of connections, which can play an important role in elevating the position of an individual within a society, thus allowing them to be characterised as being of a “high status”. This process of status attainment can be understood as the mobilisation and investment of resources for returns in socioeconomic standings which bring about a corresponding effect on an individual’s reputation (Lin, 2001). Economic resources refer to things like money, with those individuals who possess significant amounts seen to be wealthy and typically positioned
within the upper-class of society. Political resources include such things as organisational knowledge, which can contribute to greater authority within a social structure and in turn provide greater power to an individual (Lin, 1999a).

As various forms of power can be noted as accompanying the possession and utilisation of these different types of resources, those who have greater access to resources therefore tend to occupy more desirable positions within society than those who do not. This highlights a fundamental inequality in the distribution of social capital within society, given that access to resources, and ultimately the allocation of power, is unequal in nature (Narayan, 1999). Thus, while some people are constrained by the nature of resources that exist in their social connections, others are able to uphold claims against those trying to access the same resources, as these resources are already within their possession (Field, 2003). Such an example of the unequal distribution of resources and the subsequent influence attributed to those individuals and groups in their possession, demonstrates the interrelated nature of resources and power.

**Power**

Power has been defined in numerous ways over the years within the academic literature. According to Weber, (1978a, p. 53) it is ‘the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance’. This conceptualisation includes such types of power as domination, manipulation, and coercion, with each being instrumental in nature; that which is exercised at the expense of others and held over them to obtain leverage (Allen, 2003). Power can also be symbolic in nature, being the recognition that accompanies a particular social status or class, or that which is derived from the naming and describing of particular individuals, groups, and institutions (Bourdieu, 1989). The capacity of people or individuals to work together in order to effectively achieve a common aim can further be interpreted as a form of power (Arendt, 1969; Parsons, 1963). This results from social interaction and the collective mobilisation of resources to achieve mutually desirable outcomes (Allen, 2003). Termed as “associational power” (Allen, 2003), it requires the existence of others as it is only generated through the ability of collectives to think and act together within and across various levels of society (Arendt, 1969).

In addition to these distinct conceptualisations of power, there appears to be differences in opinion regarding the relationship between resources and power. While Weber
(1978a, 1978b) likens power to a resource in that it is something that is possessed and held over others, Giddens (1984, p. 16) makes a conceptual distinction between resources and power, defining resources as ‘the media through which power is exercised’ within a social collective. This latter approach is also adopted by Allen (2003), who notes that resources are those capabilities that mobilise and sustain the exercise of power, whether it is power held over others, or power through others. The work of Lin (2001), Narayan (1999), and Field (2003) within the social capital literature also distinguishes between power and resources, with power being what is exercised as a result of the distribution and possession of resources.

My research similarly adopts this separation of resources and power as two distinct but highly interrelated concepts. However, as the presence of one is often associated with the other, both resources and power are examined together, given that the distribution and use of resources within a society often results in power differentials (Giddens, 1968). At the same time, my research acknowledges that many different types of power exist and that power can also be an outcome or consequence of social capital (similar to trust and reciprocity), with those feelings of empowerment or powerlessness that result from either community collective action or marginalisation being relevant examples. Thus, power is recognised as being associated with both the distribution and mobilisation of resources as a component of social capital, whilst also being a potential outcome of the presence or absence of social capital.

Although the structure of my thesis allocates a different chapter for these three components of social capital so that a detailed examination of each can be undertaken, it is understood that in reality, the social networks, norms, and resources that constitute social capital are closely interrelated and much more difficult to separate. As a result, my discussion within each of these chapters is not restricted to any one component. For example, my examination of the way in which the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism have affected community networks also acknowledges the role of trust, while my analysis of resource and power differentials further recognises the importance of network formations and linkages. Such cross-referencing between these various components of social capital was found to be necessary in order to accurately illustrate the complex and intertwined nature of the concept.
Beyond distinguishing between the various components that constitute social capital, the academic literature has also categorised it in a variety of ways. While Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) and subsequent authors have examined social capital by clustering its components into structural (networks), relational (norms, trust), and cognitive (shared resources, goals, and culture) dimensions, other categorisations have gone beyond this grouping of components to examine the different types of social capital that exist. Most commonly, this has included the recognition of the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital.

Bonding social capital refers to the localised trust and reciprocity that exists within tightly-knit networks (Stone & Hughes, 2002). By focusing on the internal characteristics of a group of actors (Adler & Kwon, 2002), bonding social capital tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneity, subsequently creating strong in-group loyalty and a sense of solidarity (Putnam, 2000). Although this helps to reduce opportunistic behaviour as shared norms, combined with a fear of exclusion, encourages desirable actions (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002), bonding social capital can also be restrictive in nature. This is because it constrains the type and availability of resources available to members, accentuating the inequalities that exist both within and between networks (Field, 2003). Communities that exhibit high levels of bonding social capital therefore tend not to be as “open” as others, with exclusivity being a defining element of bonding social capital (Dale, 2005a). This can in time turn into strong out-of-group antagonism (Putnam, 2000).

In contrast, bridging social capital tends to be characterised by inclusive and open networks which encourage the development of generalised reciprocity, thus leading to the creation of broader social identities (Macbeth, Carson & Northcote, 2004; Putnam, 2000). This is useful for both information diffusion and access to external resources (Putnam, 2000), as overlapping networks and social ties make resources and opportunities that exist in one network accessible to members of another (Stone & Hughes, 2002). Bridging social capital has also conceptually been extended to incorporate linking social capital; a special form of bridging social capital which concerns the vertical bridging of resources and power across different levels of society and influence (Halpern, 2005; Taylor, 2004).

This categorisation of social capital as either bonding or bridging capital is not a matter of choosing one over the other, as individuals and groups are able to bond along some
social dimensions whilst simultaneously bridge across others (Putnam, 2000). Rather, a balanced combination of the two is ideal, with the bridging of those excluded as a result of tightly-bonded networks necessary for the development of community-wide social capital (Flora & Flora, 2003).

**The outcomes of social capital**

Until recently, much of the academic research on social capital has focused on the positive outcomes of social capital, heralding it as an asset of successful civil societies due to its assumed inherent representation of good (Cox, 2000). In particular, Putnam (1993, 1995a) has been strongly criticised for his overemphasis on the positive nature of social capital, with his examination seen as selective in that it fails to acknowledge such things as power relations, which play an integral role in social relations within various groups and organisations (De Filippis, 2001). Nevertheless, through the work of authors such as De Filippis (2001), Portes (1998, 2000), and Portes and Landolt (1996, 2000), there appears to be growing recognition that social capital can be put towards both positive and negative uses, and that the outcomes of social interactions are rarely straightforward, with wider implications often resulting from the deliberate investment in social capital.

From a positive perspective, social capital has been most widely associated with the creation of a *civil society* (Cox, 1995, 1996; Edwards, 2004; Fukuyama, 2001; Onyx & Bulleen, 2000). Civil societies can be understood as the social area that exists between the family and the state which recognises the importance of communalities, care, trust, and the nurturing of positive social norms that foster stability and equality (Cox, 1996; Edwards, 2004). At the same time, a civil society also acknowledges that while there are differences within and between groups, there still exists a common notion of humanity (Cox, 1995, 2000). Thus, diversity is accepted, inequality rejected, and the importance of compromise acknowledged (Cox, 1995).

This understanding of social capital as providing the foundation upon which civil societies are built (Cox, 1995), further links to more specific notions of community and the care and sense of belonging that it entails. High levels of social capital have been argued as fostering a *sense of community* or “community spirit” (Macbeth et al., 2004; Zissi et al., 2010); the feeling that members belong and matter to one another, and the shared understanding that their needs will be met through their commitment to remain together
This sense of community can be understood as consisting of four elements: membership, feelings of influence and ownership, integration, and a shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Membership determines who is a part of the community and who is not through the establishment of boundaries, the personal investment of individuals, and a sense of belonging and identification. Feelings of influence and ownership are developed through community participation, while integration occurs through the sharing of similar values and goals and the reinforcement and cohesiveness that accompanies that. Finally, a shared emotional connection is that which results from the interaction and building of bonds that accompanies one’s investment in relationships and the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). A sense of community can further be understood as overlapping with the related notion of community attachment; ‘the extent and pattern of social participation and integration into the community, and sentiment or affect toward the community’ (McCool & Martin, 1994, pp. 29-30). This can be seen as another outcome of social capital, with the creation of formal networks for civic engagement important in developing community attachment (Crowe, 2010; Moisey & McCool, 2008; Tosun & Timothy, 2003).

Cooperation has also been acknowledged as a key outcome of social capital by authors such as Putnam (1995a) and Coleman (1998). Described as the glue that connects people together in order to work towards a common objective (Dale, 2005a), cooperation is generated through the reciprocity and trust that is sustained through social networks (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009). This willingness to work together can further contribute to a sense of empowerment; those feelings of personal and collective efficacy that result from greater community engagement (Benn & Onyx, 2005; Macbeth et al., 2004). Other positive outcomes of social capital that have been identified include the lowered transaction costs that result from the presence of trust (Ville, 2004), the promotion of decision-making that is in the best interests of the community (Macbeth et al., 2004; Putnam, 2000), and the encouragement of innovation and change through the successful dissemination of information (Maskell, 2000; Mayer, 2003).

However, high levels of social capital can also translate to a variety of negative outcomes. These include social exclusion, which refers to the various social and institutional processes that prevent certain individuals and groups from interacting with one another (Narayan, 1999; Portes, 1998); and social isolation, where people are completely without social support or connectedness to others (Hawthorne, 2006). Additionally, while trust and
reciprocity can help to strengthen community bonds and develop internal cohesiveness and solidarity, these tightly-knit connections can also result in a sense of “us” and “them”, which views those on the outside as threatening (Fukuyama, 2001; Karlsson, 2005). This can lead to the division of social classes and power inequities (Narayan, 1999), where unequal opportunities to participate within various groups exist, thereby reinforcing inequality. Such segregation can further manifest itself in the form of powerlessness; the belief that one’s life is subject to external forces and beyond one’s control, thus contributing to feelings of mistrust (Mirowsky & Ross, 1983). Additionally, when such division generates a strong sense of solidarity that is grounded within the shared experience of outside discrimination and adversity to mainstream society, the creation of downward levelling norms can also result. These norms seek to discourage individual efforts to fit into mainstream society, with individual success stories seen as undermining group cohesion (Portes, 1998). This has been noted amongst immigrant populations where individuals who seek to obtain a good job and join the middle-class mainstream are singled out and ridiculed, with these norms restricting their individual freedom (Portes, 1998).

Social capital can also be put to anti-social uses in order to achieve negative outcomes, with communities high in social capital capable of acting in immoral or antisocial ways towards outsiders (Karlsson, 2005). This is most clearly demonstrated through the norms and internal cooperation that is shared amongst members of the Ku Klux Klan and the Mafia (Fukuyama, 2001). While a high level of social capital has undoubtedly contributed to the cohesion of these groups, the malevolent actions that it is put towards results in a range of negative outcomes for the wider society in which they are embedded (Fukuyama, 2001).

Thus, the categorisation of social capital as “good” or “bad” is arguably too simplistic, with the intention of its use being a key determinant of the nature of its outcomes (Dasgupta, 2003; Onyx, 2005). Furthermore, as social capital in one context may be considered unsocial in another (Krishna & Shrader, 2002), the presence of social capital should not always be assumed as something that is good. My research therefore recognises the potential for both positive and negative outcomes to result from the existence of social capital within the community of Steamboat Springs.
Past uses of social capital

Social capital has been used to study a range of social phenomena within numerous academic disciplines over the years. From its initial systematic definition by Bourdieu (1986) and then Coleman (1988), followed by its popularisation by Putnam (1993, 2000), social capital has been adopted extensively to examine individuals and collectives around the world within such diverse fields as management (Burt, 1997; Inkpen & Tsang, 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), leisure (Blackshaw & Long, 2005; Son, Yarnal & Kerstetter, 2010; Spaaij, 2009; Tonts, 2005), and health (Fujiwara & Kawachi, 2008; Kunitz, 2004; Lomas, 1998). Of interest to my research, however, is the utilisation of social capital within community settings and its recognition as a tool for community and sustainable development, particularly within a tourism context.

Given its focus on social interaction and the various outcomes of sociability that result, one of the most popular uses of social capital has unsurprisingly been to explore the many facets of community life. Numerous urban and rural community studies have sought to identify the existence of social capital (Onyx, Edwards & Bulleen, 2007; Zissi et al., 2010), together with its contribution to different processes of community change and development (Butler & Robson, 2001; Forrest & Kearns, 2001). The generation of social capital through community participation and the mobilisation of public pressure has also been an area of research interest (Pretty & Ward, 2001; Purdu, 2001; Silverman, 2001; Taylor, 2000). This is in addition to urban-rural comparisons of social capital (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004; Hofferth & Iceland, 1998; Onyx & Bulleen, 2000), and the effects of urban-rural interactions on the development of social capital (Maru, McAllister & Stafford Smith, 2007).

Such widespread adoption of social capital within a community context has also led to its increased popularity within the development and policy-making realm. Offering a way to ‘bridge sociological and economic perspectives and to provide potentially richer and better explanations of economic development’ (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 227), social capital has been utilised as a development strategy at the community-level and beyond (Gittel & Vidal, 1998). This has most notably been through the efforts of The World Bank and other such organisations focused upon the state of developing countries (Narayan, 1999; Serageldin & Grootaert, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

However, beyond its use within the developing world, the examination of social capital in regards to sustainable development still appears to be in its preliminary stages, with
my review of the academic literature only identifying two sources that acknowledge the overlap between these two concepts. Roseland (2000) highlights the value of social capital in understanding sustainable development, acknowledging its role in providing the social infrastructure that contributes to a community’s ability to mobilise resources and connect to outside information and expertise. Additionally, the edited book by Dale and Onyx (2005), Social Capital and Sustainable Community Development: A Dynamic Balance empirically examines the relationship between social capital and sustainable community development in what are predominantly small rural communities. In particular, this collection of studies demonstrates the role that social capital can play in encouraging positive community action towards sustainable community development.

**The use of social capital in tourism**

The use of social capital also appears to be comparatively lacking within the tourism literature, having only recently gained traction within the field (Zhao, Ritchie & Echtner, 2011). Nevertheless, while its use has been limited, it has thus far been diverse, with social capital having been adopted in such wide-ranging areas as events, tourism entrepreneurship and grassroots development, and the examination of changes to host communities as a result of tourism development.

A number of studies have embraced the potential of social capital in examining the socio-cultural aspects of the event experience. This includes research on the creation of social capital through the hosting of events (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Misener & Mason, 2006), the ability of events to foster cohesiveness amongst attendees (Wilks, 2011), as well as the effects of social capital in the form of spousal influence on attending arts events (Upright, 2004). In regards to tourism entrepreneurship, research has examined both the role of social capital in determining tourism entrepreneurship (Zhao et al., 2011), as well as its importance in developing grassroots, cultural tourism initiatives as coping strategies for rural communities (Johannesson, Skaptadottir & Benediktsson, 2003). Additionally, social capital has been used to illustrate the productivity of small-scale tourism businesses, with bridging networks, alongside the existence of cultural capital, found to be influential in the development and success of small-scale tourism entrepreneurial businesses (Karlsson, 2005).

Social capital has further been applied as a conceptual tool to examine those changes leading up to, and resulting from tourism development. Research by Jones (2005)
demonstrates how social capital can help with understanding the process of social change surrounding the formation of a community-based eco-tourism venture in Gambia. McGehee et al. (2010) explores the relationship between length of residence of tourism stakeholders and social capital, and the relationships that exist between the existence of social capital and other forms of capital (natural, economic, cultural, political, human, private built, public built) to gain a better understanding of rural tourism development in Virginia, USA.

Most applicable to my research, however, has been the work of Nordin and Westlund (2009) in their use of social capital to examine changes that have accompanied the development of mountain resort tourism in Are, Sweden. This study conceptualises social capital as a consideration of the stages of development and change as outlined by Butler’s (1980) life cycle model. Findings show that as Are has gone through various stages of development from a small mountain community to an international ski resort destination, so too has its social capital, having followed a pattern that corresponds to the life cycle model. Nevertheless, while this study examines social capital in the context of mountain resort tourism development, it does not focus upon the sustainability of such development.

Currently, the examination of social capital within sustainable tourism appears to be limited to a theoretical paper by Macbeth et al. (2004), which identifies social capital as a part of SPCC; social, political, and cultural capital. This discussion emphasises the potential of social capital in determining community readiness for development and the ability of tourism to assist in the creation of sustainable regional communities. My research therefore contributes to the limited empirical research on social capital within a sustainable tourism context by using it to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs.

**Criticisms of the use and measurement of social capital**

Although social capital has been adopted extensively within a wide range of academic disciplines, it has also attracted much criticism as to its suitability and relevance as a theoretical concept, in part due to its seemingly elastic nature (De Filippis, 2001). Argued as being too vague to be a useful concept (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009), the lack of a universal definition for social capital has resulted in each research field or even study, choosing and creating whatever definition best suits their particular focus (Serageldin & Grootaert, 2000; Zhao et al., 2011). However, Dale (2005a) questions these attempts to
consistently define, measure, and quantify social capital, arguing that the desire for finer discriminations may actually lead to the loss of the integrity of the concept; most notably, its inherently complex and multidimensional nature.

Other issues surrounding the use of social capital include that of logical circularity where the components that determine the existence of social capital are also used to measure its outcomes (Portes & Landolt, 1996; Stone, 2001; Tonts, 2005). This has tended to be a criticism of social capital at a collective level, such as when social capital is measured by the quality of governance and the development of effective policies, yet its existence is simultaneously inferred from these same outcomes (Portes, 2000). Another concern regarding the conceptualisation of social capital at the level of the community and beyond includes the common assumption that the benefits accrued belong to the collective as a whole (Portes, 2000). This overlooks the fact that communities, states, and nations are not homogenous in nature, with social capital unevenly distributed within and across societies (Fukuyama, 1995b).

A further challenge has been in achieving consensus on the measurement of social capital (Fukuyama, 2001). While the use of indicators to measure the existence of social capital has been a common approach, the ability to draw explicit links between these indicators and the formation of social capital is arguably tentative. This has been noted in regards to Putnam’s (1993, 2000) use of formal group membership as an indicator of social capital, with the act of joining a group not necessarily leading to social capital creation (Edwards & Foley, 1997). Rather, it can be argued that it is the relationships formed and the culture shared with other members within these groups which builds social capital (Edwards & Foley, 1997). These indicators also commonly fail to take into account the qualitative differences that exist between groups and institutions such as the various types of groups, their interactions, and the resulting effects on cohesion (Fukuyama, 2001).

Such issues are arguably the result of an overemphasis on the quantification of social capital rather than the acceptance and recognition of its highly subjective and complex nature (Tonts, 2005). As social capital deals with social relationships and interactions between people, the tendency to use quantitative measures may be unsuitable for representing such qualitative processes (Cox, 1999). This is because although these quantitative measures can identify the number and type of networks that exist, they are less capable of determining the quality of these networks (Dale, 2005a). Also, many acts of sociability that occur outside of formal networks and groups have consequences that cannot be easily captured through the
quantitative measurement of a specific set of predetermined indicators (Fukuyama, 1995b). Many quantitative techniques therefore do not appear to sufficiently encompass social capital in its entirety, with qualitative methods that explore the “how” and “why” being more suitable for examining the social aspects of community and associational life (Sculler, 2000). This is not to say that quantitative measures of social capital are not valuable in advancing the field of social capital, but that not all areas of human social life can be precisely measured, with the immeasurable often providing the value and richness that defines human nature (Dale, 2005a).

In order to ensure that my use of social capital is both conceptually and methodologically sound, the abovementioned concerns are addressed in the following ways. Adopting a similar position to Dale (2005a), my research recognises the difficulties in trying to precisely measure the existence and amount of social capital, and therefore each of its three components (networks, norms, and resources) are used as guiding constructs to examine my research objectives. This separates them from their outcomes (for example, social exclusion, empowerment, and a sense of community), so as to avoid logical circularity. However, it is acknowledged that in some instances, as discussed above in regards to trust and power, the ability to determine the direction of causality between the components and outcomes of social capital is blurred. This is not considered to be a fault of the concept, but an integral aspect of the complexity and richness of social capital.

Although the extrapolation of social capital beyond the individual has been met with criticism, my research does examine social capital at numerous levels, with the most comprehensive understandings of social capital also having been argued as those that are multidimensional and incorporate different levels and units of analysis (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). At the individual level, this involves the examination of the differences and similarities in the type and distribution of social capital that exists amongst community members, groups, and organisations, with recognition that such variations and inequities are what can help to provide a more detailed understanding of socio-cultural sustainability within a mountain resort tourism context. At an inter-community level, the social capital that exists between Steamboat Springs and the surrounding communities is examined, with these outlying regions also affected by mountain resort tourism. This is done in a way which avoids treating these communities as homogenous and static wholes (Jones, 2005), with my research focusing on the qualitative characteristics of these inter-community relationships, such as power relations, inequality, and social exclusion, as opposed to quantitatively aggregating levels of social capital across individuals and networks (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).
The use of social capital as a heuristic device

In further response to many of these criticisms, it can be emphasised that although social capital may never be precisely measurable, its value in highlighting new issues, stimulating fresh ideas, and encouraging the creation of innovative policies and initiatives is no less diminished (Schuller, 2000). Rather, it is its ability to do all of this that needs to be more widely recognised, with the complex and fluid nature of social processes requiring a less rigid examination than is possible through the use of precise quantitative measures (Schuller, 2000).

Thus, as outlined in Chapter 1, what is proposed by Schuller (2000) is the use of social capital as a heuristic device; an artificial construct that guides the exploration of social phenomena (Scott & Marshall, 2009). This is because the current understanding of social capital is not yet strong enough for precise and definitive quantitative measurements to be made, with existing quantitative efforts to isolate various relationship factors arguably inappropriate for examining the interrelated and overlapping nature of social interaction (Schuller, 2000). This viewpoint is supported by Cox (2007) who acknowledges that although current inconsistencies exist in the conceptualisation of social capital, it should still be recognised as a useful tool for explaining and predicting social processes, with the messy nature of human actions benefitting from potentially overlapping and sometimes contradictory heuristics. Given the gulf that currently exists between the theoretical conceptualisation of social capital and its measurement within empirical research (Stone, 2001), the use of social capital as a heuristic device can therefore provide a valuable contribution to academia, as it embraces the complexity and fluidity of social capital.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of how the use of social capital as a heuristic device is proposed. Each of the three components of social capital that have been identified within the academic literature (networks, norms, and resources), are used as guiding constructs to assist in examining the various impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism to provide a better understanding of its socio-cultural sustainability. This is achieved by focusing on how mountain resort tourism has affected each of these social capital components, and the various positive and negative social capital outcomes that result. As discussed previously in this chapter, these outcomes include such positive examples as a sense of community, democracy, equity, and community participation, in addition to such negative examples as social exclusion, powerlessness, and economic and political inequities. All of
these outcomes can be seen as indicative of either socio-culturally sustainable or unsustainable behaviour, with this overlap between the outcomes of social capital and indicators of socio-cultural sustainability to be discussed further below.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

In this manner, social capital is understood to be a process or an effect of practice that stems from the engagement of individuals in social relationships (Johannesson et al., 2003), resulting in both positive and negative outcomes. Thus, it is not the property of an individual or community that can be quantitatively measured, but something to be qualitatively probed through examining each of its components to understand how people form and use their social relationships (Johannesson et al., 2003). By using it as a heuristic device, social capital can assist in illuminating the interactional nature of the community to provide a more detailed understanding of the socio-cultural ramifications of mountain resort tourism on Steamboat Springs and surrounds.

Choosing social capital to examine socio-cultural sustainability

Although the use of social capital to examine sustainable development has yet to become widespread within a tourism context, there has been acknowledgement within the tourism literature of its ability to provide insight on social interactions and the capacity of communities to undertake and maintain tourism projects (Beeton, 2006; Moscardo, 2008; Pearce, 2008). This potential for social capital to examine sustainability has also been recognised within the community development literature, where many of its positive
outcomes such as community capacity, cooperation, the desired enhancement of community commitment and ownership, and the potential for residents to act collectively to achieve mutual goals are seen as indicative of community sustainability (Gittel & Vidal, 1998). Given that the focus of social capital is on the sociological interactions that make up our everyday lives, its value in identifying and examining the various components of socio-cultural sustainability should further be recognised.

To begin with, social capital highlights the social inequities that exist within a collective through its reflection of existing power structures. Thus, it can be used to examine such things as the marginalisation of individuals that results from their lack of ability to access necessary resources (Roseland, 2000). Its focus on the ability/inability of community members to collaborate and contribute to local and regional decisions in a democratic manner also emphasises the importance of quality relationships between the community, local government, and the tourism industry to ensure sustainable tourism can be achieved (Macbeth et al., 2004). Social capital further acknowledges the importance of cultural values through its focus on the collective norms that characterise social interaction, with such norms being dependent upon these cultural values (Dale, 2005a). The examination of social capital outcomes such as social cohesion and solidarity, social trust and cooperation, and a sense of community can also provide a better understanding of quality of life (Cox, 1995, 1996), with these subjective aspects of quality of life indicative of tourism sustainability. Furthermore, without a degree of empowerment and community control over various development processes and outcomes, community commitment and capacity building is difficult to sustain, thus affecting the achievement of long-term sustainability (Gittel & Vidal, 1998).

This manner in which social capital and its various components mirror those associated with socio-cultural sustainability demonstrates the potential for social capital to act as a guide for the examination of socio-culturally sustainable tourism. By using social capital as a heuristic device to specifically focus upon the various social issues and complexities that arise from mountain resort tourism, my research can gain a deeper understanding of community relationships and the way in which the individuals, groups, and organisations that form the community of Steamboat Springs are able to deal with such changes. This is because the examination of the different types and distribution of social capital can provide a useful gauge of community capacity in achieving positive social outcomes (Cox, 2000). The value in using social capital is therefore in its ability to identify both the quantity and quality of community relationships, with these networks, the cultural values upon which social norms
are based, and the resources that exist within, all providing a critical link between social capital and sustainability (Barraket, 2005; Dale, 2005a; Tansey, 2005).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I provided an in-depth examination of the academic literature on sustainable tourism and social capital. I identified the need for future research exploring the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism, with existing research having predominantly focused upon the economic and environmental dimensions of tourism sustainability (Bramwell & Lane, 2008; Liu, 2003). Additionally, although the use of sociological theories to examine sustainable tourism has been widespread, empirical research that uses social capital to specifically examine the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism has yet to be undertaken. This is despite the fact that social capital focuses upon the networks, norms, and resources that are essential to our everyday social interactions and processes (Butler, 2005; Putnam, 1993). My research therefore proposes the use of social capital as a heuristic device to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism within a mountain resort tourism context, with the overlap between the various components and outcomes of social capital and those aspects that make up the socio-cultural elements of sustainability, further demonstrative of its potential.

In the following chapter, I shift the focus of my literature review to the more specific examination of mountain resort tourism and the various impacts that result.
Chapter 3. Literature review: Mountain resort tourism

Introduction

This chapter reviews the academic literature pertaining to mountain resort tourism. This includes an examination of the growth and development of ski tourism, and the subsequent transformation of Steamboat Springs from a ski tourism to mountain resort tourism destination. This is identified by two key changes: the inclusion of a summer tourism product; and the shift in focus to real estate development and amenity migration. I then critique the various meanings attributed to the notion of community within the tourism and sociology literature, and its relevance and use within a mountain resort tourism context. In conclusion, I examine the various economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts that have been identified as resulting from mountain resort tourism.

My examination of the academic literature on the growth and development of ski tourism and its shift to mountain resort tourism places particular emphasis upon research from North America; most of which has been undertaken in mountain resort communities within the Rocky Mountain West region where Steamboat Springs is located. This is because significant differences can be found in the evolution and structure of ski resort tourism around the world. Ski resort development and destination management in North America has predominantly followed a large-scale corporate structure of governance that is synonymous with a “pro-growth” model of development (Gill & Williams, 2011), where a handful of ski corporations own and operate many ski resorts and associated hospitality and retail businesses (Clifford, 2002; Gill & Williams, 2006; Thomas & Russell, 2005/06). On the other hand, ski resort destinations in Europe and elsewhere, have more commonly evolved under a community-focused structure of governance that includes greater decentralisation of ownership and leadership (Flagstad & Hope, 2001; Franch, Martini, Inverardi, Buffa & Marzani, 2005). This has led to different strengths and weaknesses, and subsequently different concerns faced by these two models of governance (Flagstad & Hope, 2001).

For this reason, my research focuses on the North American model of corporate ski resort development, of which my case study of Steamboat Springs is an example. This allows for a more relevant comparison of similarities and differences. Nevertheless, these mountain resort tourism studies from around the world still play a vital role in informing my research,
largely through their contribution to my understanding of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism.

**Ski tourism in the Rocky Mountain West**

Although the American West has long been a region tied to its natural resources, whether timber, minerals, or the ranching and agricultural use of open space (Nelson, 2001), the steady decline in the economic growth of these traditional industries over the years has resulted in the transition of many mountain communities from resource-based economies to economies reliant upon tourism, recreation, and scenic landscapes (Dimantchev & Osterman, 2011; Lorah, 2006). In particular, it has been the development of ski resorts throughout the Rocky Mountain West that has transformed past ranching and mining communities into ski tourism destinations (Mill, 2007; Rothman, 1996).

While the first commercially run ski resort was created at Sun Valley, Idaho in 1935 (Mill, 2007; Rothman, 1996), it was not until post World War II that ski resort tourism become a significant economic industry within North America. This was due to such societal changes as a greater distribution of wealth, longer periods of vacation time, the development of roads, and the improvements in the safety and comfort of skiing equipment; all of which contributed to the increased popularity and accessibility of skiing for the masses (Hudson, 1999; Rothman, 1996, 1998b). This success brought about the corporatisation of resorts towards the end of the 1960s, with multinational corporations investing significant amounts of capital to improve transportation, skiing infrastructure, and achieve further growths in profit (Rothman, 1998b). This continued into the 1980s until the growth of the industry declined as a result of rising land prices, interest rates, and increased societal and environmental concern towards large-scale resort development (Clifford, 2002; Mill, 2007). In response, many multinational corporations sold off their resorts, bringing about the consolidation of resort ownership and leaving the ski industry in the control of three major resort corporations: Vail Resorts, Intrawest ULC, and up until its dissolution in 2008, the American Skiing Company (ASC) (Clifford, 2002).

This most recent shift to a large-scale corporate model of ownership in North America where a handful of resort corporations own a multitude of ski resorts and associated businesses (Flagestad & Hope, 2001), has brought numerous changes to the industry. By
establishing a dominant base from which to operate (Gill & Clark, 2006), the consolidation of several resorts under the one corporate entity has provided a means for these resort corporations to leverage the capabilities and resources of each resort in a way that best addresses corporate aims for profit maximisation (Gill, 2007). In particular, through investing their leveraged resources into the associated areas of accommodation, hospitality, retail, entertainment, and the creation of complementary recreational experiences such as heli-skiing/heli-boarding (Intrawest ULC, 2013), these resort corporations have shifted the focus from ski tourism development to the provision of a more diversified mountain resort tourism product within North America.

The shift from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism

According to Clark (2006c), the expansion from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism development has been one that has been largely motivated by profits, with the need to improve share values and satisfy investors all stemming from the increased accountability of resort corporations to their shareholders. With skier and snowboarder numbers having remained relatively constant over the past decade (National Ski Areas Association [NSAA], 2009), the focus for resort corporations has shifted from the maintenance and development of ski tourism facilities to the creation of more holistic mountain resort tourism destinations as part of efforts to increase shareholder returns. This has been characterised by two key competitive strategies: the push to extend the tourism season through the incorporation of a summer tourism product; and the increased development of real estate offerings to encourage second-home ownership and other forms of amenity migration. Amenity migration can be defined as the attraction of individuals to high amenity locations such as mountain resort communities, often for the beauty of the natural surroundings and the higher quality of life (Gripton, 2009; Price, et al., 1997). This shift from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism has in many ways altered the nature of the modern ski industry, mountain resort tourism destinations, and the communities that reside within them.
The incorporation of summer tourism: Extending the tourism season

In recent years, the stagnation of growth in the ski tourism industry, the high level of capital investment and overhead costs associated with ski resort operations and infrastructure, and the more recent threat of climate change, have all led to the growing recognition amongst many mountain resort tourism destinations of the need to extend the tourism season through the formal development of a summer tourism product to ensure long-term economic sustainability (Williams, Gill & Chura, 2004). Figures by the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) in 2009 indicate that overall numbers and visitation within the North American ski industry have remained relatively constant over the years, taking into account seasonal variations in snowfall and the 2007 economic crisis. Yet according to Spring (2001), who draws upon data from the National Skier/Rider Opinion Survey, although visitation rates have remained close to the 54 million mark for more than a decade, overall numbers of skiers and snowboarders have dropped, with an increased frequency in visitation accounting for the relatively constant figures. Despite this lack of consensus regarding whether overall skier/snowboarder numbers have stagnated or are in decline, it appears to be widely recognised that there is a lack of overall growth that is affecting the industry’s viability. This can be largely attributed to the increasing age of skiing’s core Baby Boomer participants (Rademan, 2003), with the NSAA recording an average age of 48 years in the 2008/09 season (NSAA, 2009).

What has therefore resulted from this ageing core population and the stagnation or decline in skier and snowboarder numbers has been an increase in competition between resorts to attract visitation (Clifford, 2002). This has manifested itself in the form of substantial investments in infrastructure such as ski lifts, grooming and snowmaking equipment, the expansion of skiable terrain, and the offering of additional amenities to improve the ski resort destination experience (Clifford, 2002; Spring, 2001). However, these capital investments are also accompanied by high overhead costs related to the installation, operation, and maintenance of infrastructure and equipment. This has led to a reduction in operating profitability for many of the larger ski resorts in recent years (NSAA, 2009).

Furthermore, climate change has brought about the very real possibility of shorter winters and longer summers within many mountain regions around the world (Thomas & Russell, 2005/06). As identified by Scott et al. (2008) through a series of future climate change models for the winter tourism-recreation sector in the Northeast region of the USA,
the existence of natural snow becomes increasingly scarce in all future scenarios, with only four of the 14 ski areas examined considered economically viable by the turn of the next century. This is due to the limited number of days for which they have sufficient snow cover to remain open (Scott et al., 2008). Climate change therefore represents a notable threat to the ski tourism industry (Steiger & Mayer, 2008), having the potential to bring about significant economic ramifications for communities and businesses that are heavily invested in ski tourism and the associated development of real estate (Scott et al., 2008).

In order to address these issues, many mountain resort tourism destinations have begun to formally develop and market a summer tourism product to complement the well-established ski tourism industry during the winter months. However, given that this shift in focus from ski tourism to summer tourism has been a relatively recent phenomenon, there appears to be limited research that examines summer tourism development, whether from the perspective of the tourism industry and their aims and challenges faced, or from the perspective of tourists and their needs and expectations. This is reflected in much of the academic literature on climate change adaptation within the ski tourism industry, where despite widespread acknowledgement of the importance of summer tourism diversification as an appropriate business strategy (Elsasser & Burki, 2002; Koenig & Abegg, 1997; Scott & McBoyle, 2007; Wolfsegger, et al., 2008), further research as to what such diversification may entail is limited.

Nevertheless, a number of studies have begun to acknowledge the substantial investment required for the development and maintenance of ski tourism infrastructure and machinery, and the role that summer tourism can play in addressing some of these costs. In their examination of summer tourist needs and expectations in Whistler, British Columbia, Needham et al. (2004) discuss how the development of mountain biking and hiking products that utilise existing ski tourism infrastructure have proven popular within many North American resort communities, with most ski areas operating one or more lifts within the summertime. Case study research by Milne, Bremner and Delpero (2006) on Ohakune Resort in New Zealand has also examined diversification efforts in the form of summer tourism activities such as mountain biking and horse riding that extend beyond traditional national park-based activities. Similar endeavours have also been identified in Colorado mountain resort communities by Perdue (2004a), with the active development of summer tourism offerings such as golf courses, mountain biking, music festivals, and non-seasonal amenities
such as conference facilities, common amongst ski resort corporations to address their high infrastructure costs.

Mountain resort tourism research has also begun to acknowledge how this shift from ski tourism to the provision of year-round mountain resort tourism is part of a broader push to attract not only winter tourists, but also a larger market of visitors which includes those second-home owners who are enticed by the recreational and lifestyle incentives offered by mountain resort communities (Gill & Clark, 2006). Given the ageing population of skiers and more broadly within society, the development of luxurious residential opportunities and an accompanying diverse range of tourism services and amenities may serve as an attraction for wealthy older people, enticing them to relocate as second-home owners or other types of amenity migrants (Clark, 2006b; Thomas & Russell, 2005/06). In some cases, this diversification into real estate has even been found to be a greater priority for resort corporations than the provision of resort tourism itself (Thomas & Russell, 2005/06).

**From tourism to amenity migration: Real estate development and the attraction of second-home owners**

The incorporation of real estate as a key form of capital investment has become widely recognised as a central component of the strategic success of modern resort corporations throughout North America (Gill & Clark, 2006). Within Colorado, ski resorts have had to compete for share within a stagnant marketplace, with real estate providing an important source of income beyond ski resort operations, expansions, and improvements (Perdue, 2004a). In particular, the sale of hotel and condominium ownership has led to a reduction in the percentage of “cold beds” during the off-seasons, whilst also provided a continuous revenue stream to resort corporations through unit sales and yearly management fees (Walter, 1997). This shift in focus from skiing to real estate has further contributed to the increased development of accompanying facilities and services such as restaurants, accommodation, ski schools, retail outlets, equipment rentals, travel services, and tour operators (Gill & Williams, 2006); all of which have helped to create an all-inclusive experience that encourages more frequent and future visitation. The expansion of the resort destination experience can therefore be seen as an important and lucrative development strategy (Snow, 2008), which in some cases even rivals and exceeds earnings made from commercial resort operations (Clark, 2006b).
This interest and imperative towards real estate development and growth is acknowledged by Gill (2000) in her case study examination of the mountain resort community of Whistler, British Columbia in Canada. Applying the concept of the “growth machine” (Molotch, 1976; 1993), where ‘nested interest groups with common stakes in development use the institutional fabric, including the political and cultural apparatus, to intensify land use and make money’ (Molotch, 1993, p. 31), Gill (2000) highlights how the rapid development of Whistler over the years can be largely attributed to the interests of a small group of “local elites”. These include such stakeholders as the ski resort, realtors, investors, and property owners, who have used their influence and power in local planning and development processes to respond to the rising property demands of permanent and semi-permanent amenity migrants (Keller & Beiger, 2008). Over the years, however, this pro-growth model of governance, where participation in decision-making processes is limited to an elite and senior few (Pierre, 1999), has since evolved into a more corporatist, community-driven form of governance in an attempt to comprehensively integrate sustainability principles (Gill & Williams, 2011). Yet in spite of this shift, Gill and Williams (2011) acknowledge that the community of Whistler still appears to be influenced by its original growth-focused approach to governance, due to the fact that its political and regulatory system remain largely committed to continued growth, and the influence of changing economic, socio-cultural, and political realities.

These efforts by resort corporations to attract repeat visitation (particularly through second-home ownership) through real estate development and the creation of a more holistic resort destination experience, can be seen as part of a cross-over from tourism into the wider trend of amenity migration or lifestyle migration; the social phenomena of the movement of people to places that are perceived as having greater environmental and cultural qualities (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009; Gosnell & Abrams, 2011; Moss, 2006). With both tourists and amenity migrants conceptualised as existing somewhere within the tourism-migration nexus (Coles, Duval & Hall, 2005; Hall, 2005; Williams & Hall, 2000, 2002), much discussion has been had within the academic literature as to the blurring and overlap between these two groups.

To begin with, tourists and amenity migrants have commonly been defined in regards to their motivations. While amenity migrants can be separated from other forms of migrants in that they tend to move to particular locations for pleasure and the search for an improved quality of life rather than for economic reasons such as employment (Chipeniuk, 2004; Travis,
many tourists and amenity migrants have been noted as sharing similar motivations for selecting a destination. These include, but are not limited to, climate and the scenic natural environment (Chipeniuk, 2004; Nelson, 2006), unique and diverse recreational amenities (Glorioso & Moss, 2007; Moss, 2006), and the small-town lifestyle that is commonly offered within rural tourism-dependent communities (Jobes, 2000). However, in addition to these shared motivations, amenity migrants have also been found to be motivated by such things as high quality community services concerning health, education, communications (Williams & Gill, 2006), and the search for a “simpler existence” (Moss, 2006). This indicates that not all amenity migration is necessarily instigated by tourism, even though tourism has been recognised as playing a key role in generating migration flows and vice versa (Bell & Ward, 2000; Williams & Hall, 2000).

Tourists and amenity migrants are also frequently distinguished by their length of stay, whether temporary or permanent in nature (Hall, 2005). Tourists tend to visit destinations without harbouring permanent intentions to reside or earn a living, while amenity migrants are those who seek to settle within their destinations, whether permanently, seasonally, or intermittently (Glorioso & Moss, 2007). Those amenity migrants who move permanently to a destination are largely acknowledged as being a form of migrant, whereas those of a more semi-permanent nature, such as second-home owners, are commonly labelled as either “partial tourists” or “partial migrants”, with a lack of consistency regarding their characterisation found within both the tourism and migration literature (Cohen, 1974; Hall, 2005). For example, while Muller, Hall and Keen (2004) consider second-home owners to be tourists, albeit tourists that often visit for longer durations of time, Aronsson (2004, p. 76) perceives second-home owners to be ‘neither tourist nor permanent resident nor both at the same time’, often possessing the temporary visitation characteristics and motivations of tourists whilst also exhibiting attributes of a more permanent lifestyle. The conceptualisation of second-home owners is further blurred by the fact that tourists can transition into amenity migrants, moving permanently to areas which they have visited before, with this progression at times separated by an initial advancement from tourist to second-home owner (Moss, 2006). As explained by Williams and Hall (2002), few amenity migrants move either permanently or semi-permanently to places they have not previously visited on a regular basis.

Regardless of whether a second-home owner is considered as a tourist or amenity migrant, their growing numbers within mountain resort communities around the world have
been linked to the development of resorts and their supporting facilities and infrastructure (Johnson, Maxwell, Brelsford & Dougher, 2006; Moss, 2006; Muller, 2006). A key component of the new mountain resort economy (Travis, 2007), second-home owners have become an integral part of the success of mountain resort tourism within the Rocky Mountain West, with over half of the total properties available within such Colorado mountain resort communities as Aspen, Vail, Breckenridge, Telluride, and Steamboat Springs, being second-home residences (Magnan & Seidl, 2004). Second-home owners can therefore be seen as a significant part of the tourism industry and a contributor to societal change within these mountain communities and regions (Moss, 2006).

**Other forms of tourism-related amenity migration**

Although not all forms of amenity migration may be tourism-led, mountain resort tourism has further been acknowledged as enticing a range of amenity migrants beyond second-home owners due to the lifestyle and various recreational and cultural opportunities on offer within mountain resort communities (Glorioso & Moss, 2007). These include seasonal workers, “footloose” economically-active migrants (Beyers & Nelson, 2000), and the more commonly identified affluent retirees (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009; Price, et al., 1997; Williams & Gill, 2006); many of whom are also second-home owners.

At one end of the socio-economic spectrum, the relatively low barriers of entry for tourism service positions (Muller, 2006), have provided a number of opportunities for seasonal workers; typically lower-income amenity migrants, who are attracted to tourism destinations because of the recreational opportunities available (Williams & Hall, 2002). These seasonal workers, otherwise referred to as tourist-migrant workers (Williams & Hall, 2002), tourist workers (Bianchi, 2000), or mobile resort workers (Adler & Adler, 1999), have been found to ‘transcend the dualistic division between work and tourism’ (Bianchi, 2000, p. 107), engaging in periods of work to support their recreational interests (Williams & Hall, 2002). Similar to second-home owners, seasonal workers have been defined as neither tourist nor migrant given that their boundaries between work, tourism, and leisure are blurred (Bianchi, 2000). Many are therefore not seen to be economically motivated in the “conventional sense” (Bianchi, 2000), instead demonstrating only a conditional commitment to work in order to support their primary recreational and leisure aims (Boon, 2006).
As an aside, an important distinction that has been made within the academic literature is that between seasonal workers and economic migrants. Economic migrants are defined by Glorioso and Moss (2007) as being typically low-income, immigrant workers who move to high-amenity destinations, either permanently or semi-permanently, for the economic opportunities provided by tourism development and amenity migration. While economic migrants are similar to seasonal workers in that they tend to work menial, low-paying tourism jobs, they differ in that they are not considered to be amenity migrants, being primarily attracted to mountain resort destinations for the economic opportunities provided, as opposed to the range of amenities and quality of life (Glorioso & Moss, 2007). Although many of these low-wage immigrant workers play a necessary role in filling the intensive menial labour demands required by high-amenity destinations such as mountain resort communities (Clifford, 2002; Nelson & Nelson, 2011), there appears to be limited research that specifically examines economic migrants within the academic literature.

At the other end of the spectrum, retirees represent a significant proportion of amenity migrants, reflecting the wider demographic and social changes within society of the “greying” of a large percentage of the population (Williams & Hall, 2002). These retired individuals have been identified as migrating to high amenity regions for a wide range of lifestyle reasons. These include the recreational opportunities available, the high quality community services, as well as the small-town feel of many resort communities, with many often becoming active participants within the local community (Perdue, 2004a). Commonly affluent and non-dependent upon employment opportunities or local economic structures, retirees often have the freedom to move wherever they desire and for various lengths of time, whether for a short visit, seasonally (as second-home owners), or more permanently (Williams & Hall, 2002). Some retirees have further been noted as choosing to return to employment upon their permanent relocation to a mountain resort community for the social opportunities and sense of belonging to the community it provides (Perdue, 2004a), while others take on various entrepreneurial ventures to capitalise on the demand for tourism and amenity migration-related services (Glorioso & Moss, 2007).

Fitting somewhere in-between these two categorisations, both in regards to age and socio-economic status, are the growing numbers of economically active amenity migrants. Termed as telecommuters (Glorioso & Moss, 2007), consultants (Perdue, 2004a), entrepreneurial migrants (Williams & Hall, 2000), location neutral businesses and employees (LNBs) (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10), or more colloquially, “modem cowboys” or “lone
eagles” (Lorah, 2006), these individuals tend to be highly educated, middle-aged, and of middle-upper class (Perdue, 2004a). Henceforth referred to as LNBs, being the term adopted by the community of Steamboat Springs, these individuals predominantly earn their income through investment returns and transfer payments (Glorioso & Moss, 2007), or through the information technology and service industries where location is irrelevant to employment opportunities (Clark, 2006b). As is the case with retirees, LNBs are often attracted by the recreational lifestyle offered within mountain resort communities, as well as the quality of community facilities and amenities, which includes the provision of necessary telecommunication and transportation services required for their work (Perdue, 2004a). This is in addition to high quality schools, medical services, and arts and entertainment programs; all of which are provided through a large tax base that funds the relatively small numbers of permanent residents within mountain resort communities (Perdue, 2004a).

These seasonal workers, retirees, and LNBs are all included within my case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs, alongside second-home owners and tourists, as investigation into these different forms of amenity migration can contribute to our understanding of the way in which tourism and such associated dynamics of mobility are interwoven into the social fabric and change of resort communities (Bianchi, 2000). Their inclusion is also important as the attraction and relocation of tourists and amenity migrants to what were once comparatively remote, rural, mountain communities, has been found to have altered the very nature of these communities (Price et al., 1997). This includes changes to what community means and encompasses, particularly within the specific context of mountain resort tourism.

**Understanding community in the context of mountain resort tourism**

The question of what constitutes community has been widely discussed within the academic literature over the years, with the diversity, complexity, and popularity of the concept having resulted in a multitude of meanings and interpretations (Hoggett, 1997). In their efforts to understand “community”, researchers have adopted socio-cultural, geographic, ecological, and tourism-related perspectives, with each focusing and placing particular weight upon key definitional elements such as space, time, social interactions, shared values,
interests, aspirations (Hall, 2000), and the acknowledgement of competition and change (Warren, 1977).

From a socio-cultural perspective, community can be understood as revolving around processes of human interaction and engagement (Flora & Flora, 2003). As individuals connect with one another to form relationships and ties with others of common interests, residence, attachments, and shared experiences (Crow & Allan, 1994), a sense of commonality and understanding is created, leading to the development of a sense of community. This can be defined as the affective or felt component of community, being the shared belief that the needs of members will be met (Beeton, 2006; Day, 2006). Such feelings of community belonging and attachment have featured heavily in traditional conceptualisations of community; many of which focus on post-war rural communities, small towns, and working-class communities within urban settings (Day, 2006; Murdoch, Lowe, Ward & Marsden, 2003). Based around notions of proximity, continuity, and stability, with rapid and unexpected changes seen to threaten community viability and integrity (Day, 2006), these communities are conceptualised as tight-knit social structures that create a consensual and united whole within the confines of a particular place (Murdoch et al., 2003).

However, this perception of community as being homogenous and with limited internal conflict has tended to portray them as being inherently good (Richards & Hall, 2000a), with all external influences that threaten the status quo seen as inevitably bad (Huntsinger, 2002). While this understanding arguably provides an over-simplistic and romanticised notion of community; one that represents both a paradise lost, and a paradise that is hoped to be found (Bauman, 2001), such solidarity, loyalty, and close network ties have been identified as being very real for those that exist within (Crow & Allan, 1994). Thus, it is not necessarily a lack of agreement surrounding the existence of such feelings of community attachment and belonging that is of issue, but the incompleteness of such a socio-cultural conceptualisation of community, with this past tendency to focus primarily upon the positive aspects neglecting the varying degrees of embeddedness that can exist within any social network (Crow & Allen, 1994).

In contrast, a geographic approach to understanding community delineates and binds a spatial area in which residents of a community inhabit and interact with one another (Jobes, 2000). From this perspective, communities can be recognised as ‘clusters of people and organisations concentrated in space’ (Warren, 1977, p. 207). However, it has been argued by Theodori (2000) that location and space cannot form the sole basis for its definition, with
“community” being inherently different to “municipality” or “county”; two concepts that are defined purely in territorial terms. Additionally, the increasing disembeddedness of community from its geographic roots, as appropriated by various social, cultural, and ethnic groups that have given the term new meanings, such as “communities of faith”, the “gay community”, and the “Islamic community” (Hoggett, 1997; Richards & Hall, 2000a), further highlights the difficulties of solely adopting a geographical perspective of community.

Yet although not all communities are geographically situated (Onyx, 2005), location and space are key defining elements for tourism-dependent communities as tourism is heavily reliant upon the natural environment and is the experience of both people and places (Bridger & Luloff, 1999; Hall, 2007). As defined by Clark (2006b), communities within a mountain resort tourism context are those situated within a mountainous landscape in close proximity of commercial resort operations. The inclusion of spatial elements in understanding mountain resort communities is also relevant given that geographic mobility is a key feature of tourism-dependent communities (Richards & Hall, 2000a). Mountain resort communities are frequently dominated by temporary lodgings catering for tourists and amenity migrants who visit for varying periods of time for primarily recreational and entertainment purposes (Dorward, 1990). Such mobility within a community can be understood as transience; the continuous in- and out movements and migration patterns of temporary tourists and residents that contribute to the undulating nature of tourism-dependent communities (Rothman, Bates & Eckhardt, 1977). As transience can affect a community’s interacting system of social networks (Onyx, 2005), recognition of not only location and space, but also geographic mobility, is therefore necessary when conceptualising such communities.

For Gill (2007), an ecological approach to the examination of tourism-dependent communities that builds upon these geographical elements is therefore deemed more appropriate. This approach is based upon the definition of community by Warren (1977, p. 208), where community is perceived to be an ‘aggregation of people competing for space’, thus acknowledging the relationship between people and place as being one of competition. This perspective encapsulates the dynamic nature of tourism-dependent communities as it describes people as being bound together in a particular place by need and not sentiment; cooperating as a result of mutual interdependence and competing for the constrained and differentiated use of space to address particular values and needs (Gill, 2007).

Within a mountain resort tourism context, an acknowledgement of such change and dynamism is important in understanding community, as the influx of permanent and semi-
permanent amenity migrants has significantly altered the demographic composition of mountain resort communities. This has led to much conflict regarding who makes up these communities, patterns of community participation, and what it means to live in these mountain resort destinations (Jobes, 2000; Shumway & Otterstrom, 2001). This is because new arrivals bring with them new perceptions and expectations regarding community involvement, real estate development, land use, and the natural environment (Magnan & Seidl, 2004). However, this diversity in values, beliefs, and levels of community attachment between individuals and groups, along with the resulting conflict and division, can also be argued as an inherent part of the process of defining these communities, with the creation of these social distinctions helping to construct boundaries that delineate who is and is not a part of the community (Brent, 1997).

From these varying perspectives, community can thus be understood as a fluid term with diverse meanings that is fraught with contention. In particular, the growing diversity in groupings and affiliations in society and the rise in geographic and social mobility (Richards & Hall, 2000a), have contributed to the growing acceptance that a singular and undifferentiated notion of community may no longer be relevant (Day, 2006). Instead, “community” is increasingly accepted as connoting a multitude of meanings and experiences for different people, with its many interpretations resulting from the various social positions, connections, and personal characteristics that exist within (Crow & Allan, 1994). My research therefore acknowledges the many difficulties involved in defining community within a mountain resort tourism context, with not only geographical boundaries and mobility being of importance, but also socio-cultural and ecological dimensions, especially when considering the competition that results from limited space and resources within alpine regions. These issues will be examined in further detail in Chapter 4, where I outline my conceptualisation of community in regards to my case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs.

The following section builds upon this examination of community within a mountain resort tourism context by focusing on the various impacts that result from mountain resort tourism and their effects on surrounding communities and the natural environment. In particular my research acknowledges the influx of tourists and amenity migrants, and the rapid growth and development of tourism infrastructure and services; both of which can be seen as having brought about significant change.
The impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism

As noted by Godde, Price and Zimmermann (2000, p. 12), the growth and modernisation of the ski resort industry has led to the passing of ‘the age of mountain remoteness’, with many alpine communities having been introduced to growing numbers of tourists and amenity migrants from around the world. This has resulted in various impacts as the increased demand for mountain resort tourism has brought about radical changes for what were previously remote communities. Table 2 provides a summary of impacts that have been identified within the mountain resort tourism literature. Given the broad nature of these impacts and the overlap of mountain resort tourism with such relevant research fields as amenity migration and the growth and development of the American West, the literature pertaining to these areas was also examined in order to obtain a more detailed understanding of these impacts and their widespread effects.
### Table 2. Mountain resort tourism impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Academic literature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Impacts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in real estate values</td>
<td>Gill (1997); Lorah (2003, 2006); Power (1996); Venturoni, Long and Perdue (2005); Riebsame, Gosnell and Theobald (1996); Williams &amp; Gill (2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of affordable housing</td>
<td>Clark (2006b); Gill (1997b); Gill and Williams (1994); Hall and Muller (2004); Lorah (2003); Perdue (2004b); Venturoni et al. (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in cost of living</td>
<td>Clifford (2002); Gill and Clark (2006); Moss (2006); Murphy (1985)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased employment opportunities</td>
<td>Lorah (2006); McAndrews and Draper (2006); Murphy (1985); Nelson (2001); Travis (2007); Williams and Hunter (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonality of employment</td>
<td>Boon (2006); Di Stefano (2004); Jolliffe and Famsworth (2003); Magnan and Seidl (2004); Murphy (1985); Thomas and Russell (2006); Power (1996); Venturoni et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of economic diversity/overdependence on tourism</td>
<td>Clifford (2002); Culbertson, Turner and Kolberg (1993); Di Stefano (2004); Elsasser and Messerli (2001); Kariel (1989); Krannich and Petzbelka (2003); Milne, et al. (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The delocalisation of investment for mountain resort tourism development</td>
<td>Clark (2006b); Clifford (2002); Franch et al. (2005); Gill and Williams (2006); Hudson (1999); Lorah (2006); Rothman (1998a)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-cultural Impacts</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved provision of facilities and services</td>
<td>McGibbon (2000); Moss (2006); Williams and Hunter (2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strain on existing infrastructure and services</td>
<td>Clifford (2002); Gill (1997a); Lorah (2003); Murphy (1985); Power (1996)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased homogeneity of mountain resort communities</td>
<td>Clifford (2002); Dorward, 2006; Fry (2006); Williams, et al. (2004); Lorah (2003, 2006); Mill (2007); Rothman (1998a); Thomas and Russell (2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gentrification</td>
<td>Culbertson et al. (1993); Glick (2001); Hartmann (2006a); Lorah (2006); Rademan (2003); Rothman (1998a); Theobald, Gosnell and Riebsame (1996); Thomas and Russell, 2006; Travis (2007); Williams and Gill (2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Down-valley migration</td>
<td>Clark (2006b); Clifford (2002); Gill and Williams (1994); Hartmann (2006b); Gober, McHugh and Leclerc (1993); Johnson et al. (2006); Krannich and Petzbelka (2003); Lorah (2006); Perdue (2004a, 2004b); Riebsame et al. (1996); Tigges and Fugui (2003); Travis (2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Environmental Impacts</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased human pressure on the natural environment</td>
<td>Booth and Cullen (2001); Buckley, Pickering and Warnken (2000); Franch et al. (2005); Hudson (1996,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Academic literature</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>The effects of snowmaking</td>
<td>Clifford, 2002; Elsasser and Burki (2002); Hudson, 1999; Scott et al. (2006); Scott and McBoyle (2007); Steiger and Mayer (2008); Wolfsegger et al. (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentation of the natural landscape: Rural sprawl and the loss of open space</td>
<td>Clark (2006b); Gill and Williams (1994); Gosnell and Travis (2005); Hartmann (2006a, 2006b); Holechek (2001); Johnson et al. (2006); Knight, Wallace and Riebsame (1995); Krannich and Petrzelka (2003); Mitchell, Knight and Camp (2002); Riebsame et al. (1996); Sullins, Theobald, Jones and Burgess (2002); Theobald et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosystem and habitat destruction</td>
<td>Lorah (2006); Monz (2000); Rademan (2003); Riebsame et al. (1996); Theobald, et al. (1996)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As can be noted in Table 2 and in the following review of each of these impacts, I have separated them into economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions, with tourism research having typically categorised and examined them in this manner (Ap, 1990; Besculides et al., 2002; King, et al., 1993; Liu & Var, 1986; McKercher, 1993; Murphy, 1985; Williams & Hunter, 2002). While it is possible, and has been common practice, to categorise tourism impacts as either economic, socio-cultural, or environmental in nature, it is also important to recognise that tourism does exist within a complex and interwoven system (Moisey & McCool, 2008), with some impacts crossing-over between these dimensions. At the same time, although tourism has been widely acknowledged as having both beneficial and detrimental effects on surrounding communities and the natural environment (McKercher, 1993; Murphy, 1985), to dualistically categorise tourism impacts as either positive or negative is difficult and potentially misleading, as what may be considered a benefit to some, may come at a cost to other people and/or places (Clifford, 2002). Thus, as can also be noted in Table 2 and in the following literature review, I have chosen not to use such positive and negative categorisations. Rather, I critically examine those tourism impacts that have been identified in the literature and their potential to have both positive and negative effects, and for whom.

Finally, my examination of the literature recognises that while mountain resort tourism has been identified in previous studies as contributing to all of the abovementioned impacts, it is not necessarily the sole cause. In particular, the role and contribution of globalisation in
shaping the growth and development of mountain resort tourism has been significant, with the rise in human mobility and the desire to visit and migrate to mountain resort communities having brought with it a flow of capital investments that have transformed these communities into the tourism destinations that they are today (Gill & Clark, 2006). Additionally, many of the changes that can be found within mountain resort communities such as a higher standard of living, improved education, the increased importance of information technology, ageing Baby Boomers, and growing environmental awareness and concern simply parallel those faced by broader society (Gill, 2000; Kariel, 1989). My research therefore acknowledges these wider societal trends and the effects of globalisation, particularly the economic recession of 2007, and their contribution to our understanding of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism.

**Economic impacts**

Numerous economic impacts have been identified within the academic literature as having both positively and negatively affected mountain resort communities. These include an increase in real estate values and the cost of living, a subsequent lack of affordable housing, an increase in employment opportunities - albeit the majority being seasonal in nature, and growing concerns regarding the overreliance of mountain resort communities on tourism development. This is made evident by a lack of economic diversity and the delocalisation of tourism investment, which can be understood as the shift in economic control from within the community to outside corporations and investors (Clark, 2006b).

**Increase in real estate values**

The process of land-value inflation is well-documented within growing mountain resort regions (Riebsame et al., 1996). This rise in real estate prices has largely been attributed to tourism development, with its creation of “positive externalities” in the form of ski lifts, ski trails, and other facilities and amenities having made mountain resort communities increasingly desirable places to live and visit (Clifford, 2002). This is in addition to the constraints of growth as a result of the limited space within alpine environments (Lorah, 2006; Williams & Gill, 2006), with competition for land and housing by second-home
owners, more so than any other group, having translated into increased real estate prices (Gill, 1997a; Power, 1996).

This has been most clearly demonstrated by research within the Colorado mountain resort communities of Aspen and Vail. In Pitkin County (Aspen), the average home price in 2004 was found to be in excess of $1 million USD, while in Eagle County (Vail), it was in excess of $550,000 USD (Venturoni et al., 2005). This is compared to the average USA home value of approximately $100,000 USD for the same year. Given that these figures represent the average housing prices for the entire county, this highlights how property inflation often extends beyond the mountain resort community and into surrounding areas, as more and more people have moved into these adjacent regions, further pushing property values up (Gill & Clark, 2006). While this dramatic increase in real estate values is beneficial for existing homeowners within these communities and the surrounding regions who choose to sell or develop their land, it appears to be largely prohibitive for those who are renting and on limited incomes, contributing to a lack of affordable housing and subsequently, residential displacement (Krannich & Petrzelka, 2003).

**Lack of affordable housing**

Affordable housing has been identified by Clark (2006b) as one of the most significant policy issues for mountain resort communities located in the Rocky Mountain West. As discussed above, the inflation of land and property values driven by the external demands of tourists and amenity migrants has placed further pressure on already limited housing stock (Gill & Williams, 1994). This has raised rental and ownership prices to a level that has made it hard for permanent residents to obtain housing (Hall & Muller, 2004).

In particular, affordable housing for tourism service workers is of greatest concern, with these employees amongst the least paid within mountain resort communities (Clark, 2006b). The combination of high real estate values, which claim a large proportion of their already limited incomes; and the diminished availability of housing as increasing numbers of second-home owners purchase what are often already limited numbers of properties (Clark, 2006b), means that many of these tourism service workers, alongside other low-middle income workers such as teachers, firemen, policemen, government workers, and health workers, are forced into living in overcrowded conditions in shared apartments or mobile
homes, or move elsewhere and commute (Gill, 1997b; Perdue, 2004b). What commonly results is the “hollowing out” of mountain resort communities as these low-middle income workers move out into surrounding, more affordable areas and commute in to work (Clifford, 2002; Rademan, 2003). This has significantly affected both down-valley migrants and the adjacent communities in which they reside, as will be discussed further below in regards to gentrification and down-valley migration.

**Increase in cost of living**

Accompanying the rise in real estate values has also been the increase in cost of living within mountain resort communities. Although mountain resort tourism has led to a greater variety of choice regarding urban-style amenities and services that are attractive to growing numbers of tourists and amenity migrants, research has found these changes to have contributed to an inflation of goods and services (Moss, 2006). This has placed additional economic pressures on local residents, with the escalation of price having affected the ability of many to afford goods and services, especially given the normalised practice of raising prices during peak seasons to maximise tourism returns within many tourism communities (Murphy, 1985). This has been identified as further contributing to the unaffordability of resort communities for many local residents and seasonal workers, forcing many to move down-valley to surrounding areas where the cost of living is more affordable (Johnson et al., 2006).

**Increased employment opportunities**

Despite such increases in the costs of land and living, mountain resort tourism has commonly been found to be supported to some degree by local residents due to its contributions to the economic base of mountain communities; one of which includes job creation (McAndrews & Draper, 2006; Williams & Hunter, 2002). As noted by Murphy (1985), tourism has provided communities with a way in which to diversify their employment opportunities beyond existing industries and even within tourism itself. Most recently, the increased attraction of such tourism-led amenity migrants as LNBs to mountain resort communities, has introduced a range of new jobs that commonly pay higher wages than those
within the tourism industry (Lorah, 2006). The rising popularity of amenity migration has also been identified as having stimulated other areas of the economy such as the creation of legal, health, technology, and engineering companies, with a growth in professional services required as increasing numbers of people move to these communities (Centre of the American West, 1997). This has resulted in improved employment opportunities beyond the tourism industry and the related areas of retail, hospitality, and accommodation services (Nelson, 2001).

However, with such professional or managerial jobs being limited in number, much of the employment available within mountain resort tourism destinations still appears to be within the tourism industry, which commonly pays low wages, provides minimal benefits, and does not offer many opportunities for future career advancement (Krannich & Petrzelka, 2003). Thus, although the demand for mountain resort tourism has provided a greater range of employment opportunities and generated the need for more workers, the menial and low-paying nature of much of this employment still arguably prohibits many of these workers from living within their place of work (Venturoni et al., 2005).

**Seasonality of employment**

Many of the jobs associated with mountain resort tourism have also been found to be seasonal in nature (Jolliffe & Famsworth, 2003; Krannich & Petrzelka, 2003; NSAA, 2009; Thomas & Russell, 2006). Tourism seasonality is defined as cyclical variations in tourism demand (Jolliffe & Famsworth, 2003), with the seasonal variations in second-home usage that are also common within mountain resort communities further exacerbating these cyclical visitation patterns (Hall & Muller, 2004). As highlighted by Murphy (1985), one of the key concerns regarding tourism seasonality is the way in which it concentrates the generation of large amounts of revenue into short periods of time leaving employees, businesses, and communities with the challenge of remaining successful for the rest of the year.

For employers, seasonality requires the continuous recruitment, selection, training, and firing of staff, being an inefficient and resource-intensive process that places additional stress on businesses (Jolliffe & Famsworth, 2003; Murphy, 1985). For employees, the seasonal nature of visitation means that many struggle to make a living during the off-seasons when work is scarce, with underemployment and unemployment common (Magnan & Seidl,
As acknowledged by Di Stefano (2004), this is representative of the mountain resort community of Whitefish, Montana, where residents are commonly unemployed during the tourism down-periods of spring and fall. These negative effects on tourism employees and employers that are associated with seasonality can be seen as further reiterating and contributing to much of the abovementioned concerns regarding the low-paying and menial nature of tourism employment (Krannich & Petrzelka, 2003; Venturoni et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, Power (1996) argues that the seasonal nature of tourism employment may actually be complementary or even desirable for those looking for additional work to supplement their existing incomes or support other economic and lifestyle pursuits. Within mountain resort communities in the American West, this can include semi-retired amenity migrants who may be supplementing their retirement funds through entrepreneurial ventures, but may not want to work year-round (Joliffe & Famsworth, 2003); seasonal workers whose primary commitment is to their chosen recreational endeavours (Boon, 2006; Duncan, 2008); and even ranchers who pursue part-time work during the quieter winter months on the ranch, with the peak winter tourism season providing them with opportunities to earn additional income (Power, 1996). In these cases, the seasonal availability of work arguably complements the desire of these individuals to work part-time or for only certain times of the year, thus providing a win-win situation for both tourism employer and employee (Boon, 2006).

Lack of economic diversity/overdependence on tourism

The overdependence of many mountain resort communities on tourism development can also be seen as an impact resulting from mountain resort tourism, given that their economic success is often intimately linked with their ability, and that of the surrounding natural environment, to attract sufficient tourists and new residents (Lorah, 2006). While tourism has undoubtedly injected much needed investment and revenue into many mountain resort communities (Di Stefano, 2004), their reliance on tourism has arguably left them vulnerable to economic fluctuations and downturns caused by wider socio-economic events such as economic recessions (Krannich & Petrzelka, 2003; Milne et al., 2006). Furthermore, as tourism development in mountain resort communities is often based upon ski tourism, the importance of snowfall means that these communities are commonly reliant upon the vagaries of weather, with significant investment and employment opportunities tied both directly and indirectly to the existence of sufficient amounts of snow (Elsasser & Messerli, 2001). This
dependency on tourism and tourism-related concerns has therefore been argued by Krannich and Petrzelka (2003) as the substitution of one form of economic dependence for another, with mountain resort communities facing the same vulnerabilities of the past boom-bust cycles of the ranching and mining industries upon which they used to rely (Culbertson et al., 1993). Thus, although tourism has commonly been viewed as a viable economic alternative to declining agricultural, mining, and logging industries, the overdependence of many mountain resort communities on tourism is not without its own inherent problems (Di Stefano, 2004).

**The delocalisation of investment for mountain resort tourism**

In order to support the increased popularity of mountain resort tourism over the years, large amounts of external capital investment not commonly found within surrounding communities have also been required to fund a variety of facilities and services (Clifford, 2002; Lorah, 2006). These include the installation of high-speed lifts and the development of accommodation, retail, and hospitality offerings; all of which can be seen as part of an attempt to remain competitive and increase profitability by capturing a greater share of the total ski industry’s profits (Gill & Williams, 2006; Hudson, 1999). While such developments have been proven necessary for the continued success of many mountain resort tourism destinations, the resulting delocalisation of investment has also shifted much of the control and decision-making capabilities from the local community and into the hands of resort corporations (Franch et al., 2005).

This externalisation of investment has been identified as contributing to feelings of disenfranchisement within surrounding mountain communities, with the dominance of resort corporations having reduced opportunities for local input into the tourism development strategies that are having a direct impact upon their lives (Franch et al., 2005). Resort corporations have also been found to support those coalitions that seek to promote growth, thereby influencing local electoral processes to allow for further real estate and resort development (Clark, 2006b). Additionally, the ability of resort corporations to divert capital earned from one resort to another has meant that the profitability of one resort does not necessarily translate to a return in investment for that same resort (Clark, 2006b). Although this provides resort corporations with greater economic flexibility, this can be seen as putting business interests over those of the community, thus affecting the quality of life and attitudes of local residents towards tourism development (McAndrews & Draper, 2006). This loss of
community control to competing and more powerful external capital investment interests therefore has the potential to negatively change community attitudes towards tourism development (Rothman, 1998a).

**Socio-cultural impacts**

Various socio-cultural impacts associated with mountain resort tourism that can have both positive and negative effects on surrounding communities have also been identified within the academic literature. These include the improved provision of facilities and services, additional strain placed on existing infrastructure and services, the increased homogeneity of the built environment, gentrification, and down-valley migration.

**Improved provision of facilities and services**

Mountain resort tourism has been acknowledged as having the potential to increase the quality of life and standard of living of local residents (Godde et al., 2000; Hudson, 2006; Long, Perdue & Allen, 1990). This can be noted in the way that tourism and amenity migration have contributed to an improved variety and quality of tourism and community facilities and services within host communities (McCool & Martin, 1994). As noted by McGibbon (2000), increased tourist demand for cultural activities within the Tirolean Alps, has encouraged the creation of restaurants, bars, and nightclubs that have enhanced local quality of life, with community members free to share these same services. Similarly, in their research on the tourism industry in British Columbia, Canada, Williams and Hunter (2002) identified the inclusion of cat-skiing and heli-skiing operations and the subsequent rise in tourism visitation and spending, as having positively contributed to the development of local communities. This resulted in the creation of recreational ski programs, subsidisation of local access to ski programs and facilities, sponsorship of social services and community events, development of new restaurants and retail stores, and the improvement of health and communication infrastructure; all of which increased community vitality and pride. Such infrastructural development within mountain resort communities has also been acknowledged by Moss (2006) as a key facilitator for amenity migration, with “comfort amenities” relating to quality schools and education, health care facilities, and transportation, in growing demand.
Strain on existing infrastructure and services

However, despite the provision of these extra facilities and services, mountain resort tourism has also been found to place additional strain and pressure on host communities and the natural environment, due to the increased competition with tourists for access to public spaces and facilities. As acknowledged by Murphy (1985), increased numbers of tourists and amenity migrants to the mountain resort community of Banff, Alberta have resulted in significant social costs in the form of higher levels of congestion, crowded streets, slower traffic, limited parking, and longer lines at the supermarket, especially during periods of peak demand. Additionally, the growth in population that accompanies mountain resort tourism can add further pressure to existing public services such as road maintenance, snow ploughing, and police and fire protection (Lorah, 2003; Power, 1996). This requires the hiring of extra staff which places greater financial burden on local governments, with the supplementary property taxes recouped often not enough to cover the costs of these services (Gill, 1997a; Lorah, 2003). The resulting effect can therefore be a decline in facilities and services, with the social cost shared between both tourists and residents (Murphy, 1985).

Such competition between tourism and community interests is further emphasised by the existence of limited funds and the need for mountain resort communities to remain competitive with other tourism destinations. This results in local governments often addressing tourism interests before those of the community, as was acknowledged by Gill (1997a) in her research on the mountain resort community of Whistler, British Columbia. Here, tourism development was initially found to have been placed before the provision of much needed community services such as child care, schools, recreation centres, library services, health services, and spiritual needs. As noted by Clifford (2002), this can lead to overburdened schools, public services, and social agencies; all of which can negatively affect community quality of life.

Increased homogeneity of mountain resort communities

Mountain resort tourism development has also been associated with an increased homogenisation of place. According to Williams et al. (2004), the growth in popularity of mountain resort tourism destinations has led many local hotels, restaurants, and retail stores to be replaced by larger national chains, which has arguably diminished the distinctive
characteristics of these destinations that once rendered them as unique. This loss of distinctiveness is commonly referred to as “Aspenisation” (Lorah, 2003), being a process of cultural change that is not only limited to the mountain resort community of Aspen after which it is named.

In particular, it is the corporatisation of ski resorts and their introduction of a “cookie-cutter” approach to management and design that have most commonly been identified as contributing to the homogenisation of the mountain communities in which they are situated (Thomas & Russell, 2006). Intrawest ULC, a North American-based resort corporation that owns resorts across North America (including Steamboat Springs, Colorado), is one such example, having become famous for its “new village” model that has introduced a standardised approach to development within several of its resorts (Clifford, 2002). Through carefully controlled signage, lighting, design, visibility, and accessibility, these mountain base area “villages” provide a uniform and concentrated resort experience that incorporates various recreational, retail, and hospitality options which cater for a range of tourists’ needs (Clifford, 2002; Mill, 2007). While they provide a safe and familiar holiday experience for tourists and amenity migrants, this “Disneyesque” transformation of mountain base areas has arguably brought about the ‘contest for the soul of a place’ (Rothman, 1998a, p.11), with not only local businesses, but also the individual identity of these mountain resort communities perceived as being lost (Fry, 2006).

**Gentrification**

Growing numbers of primarily affluent tourists and amenity migrants have further been acknowledged as contributing to the reshaping of local cultures, known as the “gentrification” of mountain resort communities (Culbertson et al., 1993; Rothman, 1998). This process of gentrification is fuelled by the significant purchasing power and demands of these tourists and amenity migrants, with their expectations regarding a certain range and quality of recreation, transportation, hospitality, and accommodation options bringing about the development of an increased selection of facilities and services (Williams & Gill, 2006). This can positively be noted as having provided more diverse recreational and shopping facilities (Rothman, 1978), better educational, health, communication and financial options (Williams & Gill, 2006), and greater cultural opportunities, such as the introduction of cultural events and activities and the development of various organisations dedicated to the
arts, culture, and entertainment (Colorado College Rockies Project, 2010; Culbertson et al., 1993; Thomas & Russell, 2006).

However, gentrification has also been identified as having amplified existing class distinctions by separating those that can afford to live within these mountain resort communities and those that cannot (Glick, 2001). As noted by Theobald et al. (1996), what has become typical in mountain resort communities is the rapid growth of luxury residential and commercial developments, which has brought about a growing division of wealth between tourism service workers and affluent homeowners. This is because over time, rising costs have allowed the wealthy to remain while the lower and middle-classes are pushed further and further down-valley (Rademan, 2003). Such exacerbation of class distinctions has also been identified as having spread beyond mountain resort communities and into the rural landscape of the American West (Travis, 2007). In these surrounding regions, the appropriation of land for the development of hobby ranches, homesteads, and other non-traditional uses appears to have further contributed to the displacement of local residents and the development of rural sprawl, with both issues discussed in greater detail below.

**Down-valley migration**

In the context of mountain resort communities, down-valley migration refers to the movement of residents and workers out of core resort areas and into adjoining communities and surrounding regions (Hartmann, 2006b). As discussed above, this has been attributed to the lack of affordable housing and rising costs of living which have forced many low-middle income workers such as immigrants and tourism service employees to migrate down-valley (Gill, 1997b). This has resulted in the “bedroom” community effect, where workers reside and sleep in bedroom or commuter communities (Clark, 2006b), and travel to-and-from the resort area for work and other activities.

The creation of bedroom communities and the increase in long-distance commuting has been widely acknowledged within the literature pertaining to the Rocky Mountain West, with the majority of Colorado mountain towns within an hour’s drive from a mountain resort found to have experienced rapid growth as a result of down-valley migration (Riebsame et al., 1996). Resort communities such as Aspen, Colorado and Jackson Hole, Wyoming have been identified as being reliant on workers who are sprawled across counties and mountain passes
to service tourism needs (Krannich & Petrzelka, 2003; Sopris Foundation, 2007). In their examination of the changes in land use and development within Colorado mountain regions, Riebsame et al. (1996) also acknowledge the role of Colorado communities such as Kremmling, Rifle, and Leadville in housing many of the workers from major ski resort destinations like Steamboat Springs, Aspen, and Vail. Further attention has been placed on the town of Leadville, Colorado by Clifford (2002), who examines its transformation from a small mining community into a bedroom community for the many immigrant workers employed by Breckenridge and Vail resorts.

Down-valley migration can therefore be seen as having created a pattern of long-distance commuting that has spread the influence of tourism development beyond the geographic boundaries of these mountain resort communities, drawing the wider region into a process of regional gentrification (Clark, 2006b; Travis, 2007). This can have a negative effect on surrounding bedroom communities as they are commonly left to provide necessary public services such as bilingual education systems and health and social welfare services for these down-valley migrants, thereby subsidising and absorbing their social costs (Perdue, 2004a). At the same time, these surrounding communities often do not benefit from the tax revenues brought in by mountain resort tourism (Clark, 2006b). Such inequality in the distribution of costs and benefits therefore places a substantial burden on these adjacent rural communities and their limited tax bases, whilst creating and/or further enhancing divisions already exacerbated by gentrification between increasingly upscale mountain resort communities and their more affordable, neighbouring communities (Hartmann, 2006b).

At the same time, the need to commute long distances has also raised concerns regarding community cohesion and structure for both resort communities and bedroom communities as down-valley migrants become split between the two: the one where they work and tend to shop; and the other where they sleep (Johnson et al., 2006). As commuting takes away much of the time they have to participate and become civically engaged, down-valley migrants often remain uninvolved in either community (Johnson et al., 2006). This affects their ability to develop notions of community attachment and belonging (Tigges & Fuguitt, 2003). Thus, while commuting has been found to provide many down-valley migrants with such economic benefits as greater employment opportunities (Tigges & Fuguitt, 2003), there also exists a significant socio-cultural trade-off in regards to community participation and involvement and the subsequent development of a sense of community.
Environmental impacts

Tourism is also a phenomenon that exists within, and is largely dependent upon, the natural environment in which it is located (Moisey & McCool, 2008). This is especially true for mountain resort tourism where the satisfaction gained from the mountain environment and landscape forms a fundamental aspect of the tourism experience (Gill & Clark, 2006). However, while mountain resort tourism has often been presented as a more environmentally desirable alternative to past extractive industries such as logging, mining, and agriculture (Hudson, 2006; Power, 1996), many of its activities have brought about environmental impacts that have affected the fragility of the alpine environment and arguably damaged the natural resources upon which the industry so heavily relies (Thomas & Russell, 2005/2006). In spite of these negative effects, mountain resort tourism has also helped to raise community awareness of environmental issues, which in turn has contributed to the formation of environmental protection groups and land management strategies (Mitsch Bush, 2006).

Increased human pressure on the natural environment

The construction of ski resorts is undoubtedly an environmentally intensive process that requires major landscaping and the reshaping of the natural environment in order to build roads, car parks, firebreaks, reservoirs, sewage treatment ponds, ski slopes, ski lifts and towers; all of which have been found to contribute to such negative effects as deforestation, erosion, and the scarring of mountain slopes (Booth & Cullen, 2001; Buckley et al., 2000). The push towards the expansion of skiable terrain as a key development strategy for many ski resorts has also been identified as placing additional pressure on what are already fragile alpine environments (Franch et al., 2005; Hudson, 1999). This is in addition to existing concerns surrounding vehicular traffic and pollution (Franch et al., 2005), waste and sewage (Hudson, 1996), deteriorating air quality as a result of wood-burning stoves within tourism accommodations (Krannich & Petrzelka, 2003), and the effects of snowmaking (Hudson, 1996).
The effects of snowmaking

As previously acknowledged in this chapter, climate change has been widely accepted around the world as a significant threat to the ski resort industry, with the success of ski tourism reliant on the continued existence of snow (Elsasser & Burki, 2002). In response, artificial snowmaking has been adopted extensively, not only within North America, but also worldwide (Elsasser & Burki, 2002; Scott, et al., 2006; Scott & McBoyle, 2007). As noted by Wolfsegger et al. (2008) in their research on Austrian ski resort managers, snowmaking was identified as the most important climate adaptation tool, both now and into the future. Within North America, these findings are supported by figures presented by the NSAA (2009), with 100 per cent of ski resorts in eastern North America, 94 per cent in the mid-west, and 91 per cent in the Rocky Mountain region utilising snowmaking systems. This is to supplement the natural snowfall to ensure the existence of a consistent skiing surface throughout the season, as well as to extend the operating season to increase visitor numbers (NSAA, 2009).

While studies on the effects of climate change on the ski tourism industry have recognised the ability of snowmaking to reduce the current and future operating risk of ski resorts (Scott et al., 2008; Wolfsegger et al., 2008), this growing reliance on snowmaking requires access to large quantities of water (NSAA, 2009; Wolfsegger et al., 2008). As discussed by Franch et al. (2005), a medium-sized ski slope of approximately 20 hectares requires 20 million litres of water and approximately 500,000 kilowatts of electricity to provide sufficient artificial snow coverage. For those ski resorts that do not have their own reservoirs, the withdrawal of such large amounts of water from local streams can inhibit the upstream movement of trout and increase the chance of fish eggs being exposed and freezing (Hudson, 1999). For those that do have their own reservoirs, they significantly expand the ecological footprint of a resort, with pumping systems, pipes, and the construction of the reservoir itself causing additional environmental damage (Wolfsegger et al., 2008).

Furthermore, the energy intensive nature of snowmaking and its high operational costs raises questions regarding its economic viability (Steiger & Mayer, 2008). These concerns are further emphasised by the likelihood that the cost of snowmaking will continue to increase beyond the percentage volume of artificial snow that can be made, given that snowmaking will have to occur at warmer temperatures in the future, thus requiring even greater energy inputs (Scott et al., 2008). In consideration of such economic and environmental costs, it has therefore been argued that snowmaking should only be viewed as a short- to medium-term
climate change adaptation strategy (Steiger & Mayer, 2008), with more long-term planning approaches arguably necessary for the continued survival of the ski resort industry (Elsasser & Burki, 2002).

**Fragmentation of the natural landscape: Rural sprawl and the loss of open space**

As mountain resort tourism destinations have increased in popularity, the development of hotels, condominiums, golf courses, shopping malls, luxury homes, and other associated developments can all be seen as affecting the natural environment by consuming much of the limited open space available within narrow mountain valleys (Power, 1996; Rothman, 1998a). This has contributed to rural sprawl, ‘a pattern of rural residential settlement characterised principally by low densities and scattered development’ (Johnson et al., 2006, p. 294). Frequently extending far beyond the core resort area (Hartmann, 2006a), rural sprawl has been acknowledged as being difficult to control, given that the spread of housing and commercial developments along major highways often goes beyond the county jurisdiction in which the resort development is located (Gill & Williams, 1994).

This outwards encroachment of development from mountain resort communities into the surrounding rural landscape has been identified as bringing about a reduction in ranching and agricultural operations and the loss of open space (Gosnell & Travis, 2005; Krannich & Petrzela, 2003; Rowe, Bartlett & Swanson, 2001). Although not widely acknowledged within the mountain resort tourism literature, such sprawl development has been the focus of many studies examining growth and development within the American West, particularly concerning amenity migration, whether tourism-led or otherwise. This is largely because of the increased popularity of “ranchettes”; luxury non-commercial ranching properties of relatively small acreage (35 acres or less) that are subdivided from larger ranches and sold as private residences (American Farmland Trust, 2000; Mitchell et al., 2002).

Ranchette development has been acknowledged as one of the most unique land-use features within Colorado mountain regions, alongside the growth and development of mountain resort tourism (Riebsame et al., 1996). It has been identified as the primary threat facing the ongoing viability of traditional ranching operations and communities (American Farmland Trust, 2000), having contributed to the fragmentation of what were once large tracts.
of open ranchlands (Holechek, 2001), whilst inflating agricultural land values. This has further encouraged the sale and subdivision of working ranches to amenity migrants (American Farmland Trust, 2000). Within Colorado, approximately 154,000 acres of open ranchland have been sold every year since 1964 for ranchette development (Sullins et al., 2002). This has created a landscape matrix that consists of a few small towns and mountain resort communities surrounded by isolated residential subdivisions and commercial developments (Theobald et al., 1996). What has resulted is a “landscape irony” where such development has compromised the surrounding scenic landscape that attracted many tourists and amenity migrants in the first place (Clark, 2006b; Theobald et al., 1996). Such fragmentation of the ranching landscape can therefore be seen as contributing significant environmental, economic, and socio-cultural effects within mountain resort regions.

**Ecosystem and habitat destruction**

The development of both public and private lands to accommodate for tourism amenities and housing needs has also brought about the destruction of wildlife habitats and the overall degradation of biodiversity. Down-valley sprawl of housing and commercial developments has reduced the winter habitat for many migratory wildlife species (Lorah, 2006), whilst also disrupted local ecosystems by limiting their ability to function as an interactive whole (Riebsame et al., 1996). Increased human density and the accompanying development of buildings, roads, and fences have also contributed to a rise in exotic species and predation by domestic animals (Knight et al., 1995). Additionally, for those larger species that require bigger habitats such as moose and wolves, the fragmentation of the land that has resulted from the development of roads, fences, and other constructions has raised the potential for conflict between humans and wildlife (Riebsame et al., 1996). Mountain regions have thus been identified as ‘shrinking islands of biodiversity’ (Rademan, 2003, p. 17), as mountain resort tourism and the subsequent increase in human pressure has created what are often permanent effects due to the high sensitivity of alpine environments (Monz, 2000).
Formation of environmental protection groups and land management and conservation strategies

On a more positive note, as public awareness of the environmental pressures associated with tourism development has increased, so too have community demands for more environmentally-sound practices, with the growth of mountain resort tourism having given local residents and groups a common cause around which to rally (Hudson, 1996; Saremba & Gill, 1991). As noted by Hudson (2006), the identification of concerns by local communities, environmental advocates, and recreationalists in the face of mountain resort tourism development has brought necessary environmental discussions into the open, and provided these groups with opportunities to work together and develop stronger and more unified plans. This has resulted in the formation of various community grassroots organisations that are specifically concerned with addressing the environmental impacts associated with mountain resort tourism in order to preserve the natural environment.

In their examination of the mountain resort community of Canmore, Alberta, Getz and Jamal (1994) identified the importance of such grass-roots, non-profit organisations as the Bow Corridor Organisation for Responsible Development (BowCORD), which was developed by local citizens to address the pace and type of tourism development within the region. In her case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs, Mitsch Bush (2006) discussed the formation of Vision 2020 (now 2030), a collaborative grassroots initiative to define the desired future for the region; the development of a local steering committee for the creation of the 1995 Routt County Open Lands Plan that focused upon land management and conservation strategies; and the creation of the Yampa Valley Land Trust (YVLT), a non-profit land trust organisation to initiate the creation of conservation easements. By providing democratic platforms from which community members can address various concerns, these organisations can be seen as encouraging the translation of community responsibility into community action, thus creating socio-cultural positives from environmental negatives (Beeton, 2006).

Of these examples, the use of conservation easements has become a particularly important land preservation tool that has been adopted throughout the American West. Conservation easements are defined as the legal separation of the ownership of land and development rights, where development rights are sold to a land trust while the landowner remains in control and ownership of the land within the legal limits of what has been
stipulated in the easement (Wright, 1993). This places permanent restrictions on ranching landowners and their ability to subdivide their property into smaller parcels (Conservation Partners Inc., 1995), whilst providing them with monetary compensation and tax breaks so that they can continue with their operations and preserve the ranching landscape for the future (Holechek, 2001). These conservation easements have proven to be an important land protection tool within the Rocky Mountain West through their ability to ‘protect the significant recreational, ecological, agricultural, open space, and/or historic values of the land’ (Wright, 1993, p. 21).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I reviewed the academic literature on the development of ski tourism within North America, and the subsequent shift that has occurred from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism through the extension of the tourism season and the increased focus on real estate development and the attraction of amenity migrants. This was followed by my analysis of the difficulties surrounding the conceptualisation of community within a mountain resort tourism context, and the examination of the many economic, socio-cultural, and environment impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism.

With the theoretical aspects of my research having now been addressed, I move on to discussing my research design and methodology, through which my use of social capital to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism is made possible.
Chapter 4. Research design and methodology

Introduction

This chapter examines my chosen research design and methodology. This includes a discussion on my adoption of an ethnographic case study research design, my chosen data collection methods (qualitative interviewing, participant observation, photography, and document analysis) and my use of both purposive and snowball sampling techniques for selecting research participants. I then provide a detailed explanation of my data interpretation, analysis, and reduction processes, before acknowledging the various issues surrounding the credibility of my research, and the associated ethical considerations.

My research is a qualitative, value-laden inquiry that emphasises the quality of processes and meanings, as opposed to the experimental examination and measurement of their quantity, intensity, and frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This is because both tourism and social capital are complex phenomena that occur within particular contexts and settings (Dale, 2005a; Matarrita-Cascante, 2010), thereby benefitting from detailed examination which explores and unravels such complexities. In undertaking such an examination, I adopted an emic perspective; an insider's view using community members' explanations, language, and knowledge bases to describe and understand that which is being studied (Jennings, 2001). This allowed me to gain in-depth insight and understanding into the various perceptions and concerns surrounding the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

Research design

A research design refers to a flexible set of guidelines that provides a logical plan to approaching research (Yin, 2003a). It connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and determines how the researcher is situated within their world of examination and the appropriate methodology to be used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). I found both ethnography and case study inquiry to be complementary and suitable approaches for addressing my research
aim, with the complexity of tourism at times calling for alternative research modalities to be considered and used conjointly (Beeton, 2005).

**Ethnography**

Ethnography can be defined as ‘a methodological and practice-based approach to understanding and representing how people – together with other nonhuman entities, objects, institutions, and environments – create, experience, and understand their worlds’ (Till, 2009, p. 626). An ‘attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context’ (Tedlock, 2003, p. 165), ethnography requires the researcher to be placed in the day-to-day life of their subjects for a significant period of time so that intimate familiarity with the setting of interest and those within can be achieved (Emerson, 2001). This involves examining, capturing, and then representing the multiple meanings and perceptions behind the way in which the identified population of interest interact, converse, behave, and regard one another and even themselves (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This is achieved through the use of visual images, carefully recorded words, events, and happenings that may help to illuminate human experience and knowledge within the area of research or concern (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Pink, 2007).

I deemed such a detailed approach to research as beneficial for a number of reasons. Firstly, it recognises the construction and reconstruction of multiple viewpoints and responses to the world, thus being consistent with my social constructivist ontology (Hammersley, 2010). Secondly, it enabled me to explore phenomena within the social context in which it occurred, thereby achieving a more holistic understanding of the situation at hand (Brunt, 2007). I also saw ethnography as a way to gain deeper insight into the complex and multidimensional nature of social capital, with many of its components being intangible and intrinsic; held in the minds of community members and thus not often easily understood or apparent to those outside of the community (Uphoff, 2000). Through ethnography, I was therefore able to situate myself within the community of Steamboat Springs and over time, uncover hidden social structures, barriers, and norms that were not necessarily obvious, but important to the way the community functions.

Given the complexity of the world and its multiple realities, my aim as an ethnographer was to examine the everyday lives of community members, as well as my own
personal experiences, to construct as clear of an image as possible to the reader as to how mountain resort tourism has affected the community of Steamboat Springs. This required my own inclusion of self within the research, where I played a central part as the conduit through which the surrounding world was analysed. As a result, my role within the community and the issue of subjective reflexivity must be acknowledged, having shaped the nature and particularities of my research.

The role of “participant-as-observer”

According to Gold (2001), there are four roles that ethnographers can adopt within the field: the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant, and the complete observer. While the complete participant is one whose true identity and purpose remains unknown to those who are observed, the participant-as-observer role allows the researcher to participate in the daily lives of their subjects and develop relationships with them, as both parties are aware that these relationships are for the purpose of research (Gold, 2001). In comparison, the role of the observer-as-participant adopts a more formal approach to research where the ethnographer is less involved with their subjects, utilising formal observation methods over informal observation and participation (Gold, 2001). This is different to the complete observer who is removed from any form of social interaction with their subjects, with the aim being to observe people in ways where it is either unnecessary for them to be personally taken into account, or they are unaware of the observation at hand (Gold, 2001).

I found the most appropriate ethnographic role for my research inquiry to be that of the participant-as-observer. This role allowed me to actively participate within daily community life and develop relationships with a range of community members, whilst also observe and photograph everyday activities and special events, analyse relevant documentation, and discuss my research in greater depth within a more formal interview setting. As a participant-as-observer, I was also able to be overt about the nature of my research at all times (Patton, 2001). This open approach to discussing my presence within the community proved beneficial, with the majority of community members being curious and genuinely interested in my research, and therefore happy to volunteer information and their own personal insights. Furthermore, as a participant-as-observer, I was able to actively join in community activities and meet up with community members on numerous occasions and in a
variety of social contexts beyond the formal interview setting. This provided me with the opportunity to observe situational differences, such as how certain social groupings and their norms influence the interactions and thoughts of community members, thus allowing me to gain a much deeper understanding of the community of Steamboat Springs.

**Subjective reflexivity**

Reflexivity within ethnographic research emphasises both the presence and position of the researcher, recognising that as the researcher interacts with the researched, reality is created (Emerson, 2001). This conscious use of the self as a resource for making sense of others requires researchers to question and acknowledge how they affect the co-production of data through their interactions (Aull Davies, 2008; Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). It is this explicit recognition of the personal influence of the researcher that allows ethnography to go beyond simple observation and note-taking, to discovering and analysing socially constructed relationships and their meanings both amongst the researched, and between the researcher and the researched (Karp & Kendall, 2001). Thus, a necessary part of my ethnography was the systematic and critical acknowledgment of my own interactions, thoughts, perceptions, and overall presence within the community of Steamboat Springs (Aull Davies, 2008).

As Steamboat Springs is a predominantly white, Caucasian community, my extended presence as a twenty-six year old, Australian female of Asian heritage was not something that could be easily ignored. I therefore consciously chose to live in the low-cost employee accommodation apartments provided by the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC), “The Ponds”, which placed me amongst many transient, seasonal workers from all around the world. This proved to be a good fit as I was surrounded by a diverse range of people from various backgrounds and thus, did not seem out of place. At the same time, this exposure to both local and international resort employees gave me insight and access into the daily happenings of the many seasonal workers who contribute to the tourism industry.

During my time within the community, I therefore adopted and embraced a position similar to that of a seasonal worker. This allowed me to establish a few basic friendships within this group as would be reasonably expected within the context of my research. These friendships allowed me to gain access to information and activities that I may otherwise not have been privy to; all of which proved beneficial for the closer examination of this younger,
Transient segment of the community. However, as over-rapport can lead to the problem of over-identification with participants, thus making it difficult to ask challenging questions or probe research areas in fear of jeopardising friendships (Patton, 2001), I took care not to become overly friendly with my research subjects. Instead, I chose to maintain some distance within these relationships, which surprisingly did not prove to be a challenge. This was because my short-term stay within the community was common amongst seasonal workers, and thus they understood that the friendships I developed could only go so far.

Beyond these young seasonal workers, my interactions with the wider community took place in a range of settings and contexts on a daily basis. These included everyday conversations in downtown Steamboat Springs, as well as those I had while out skiing at the resort or while hiking on the many trails within the county. I also became familiar with many community members through attending various events, government meetings, or through my requests for formal interviews. These multiple opportunities to interact with community members allowed me to develop a sense of familiarity and trust with my research participants, as they consistently saw me around town observing and photographing everyday situations and events, and talking to people for the purpose of my research. As they became increasingly familiar with me over the ten months I resided within Steamboat Springs, many community members proved to be extremely candid and forthright with their thoughts and experiences. Furthermore, many assisted me in gaining the information I sought, either by participating in a formal interview or introducing me to friends and acquaintances that could share their particular knowledge or insight on relevant areas of investigation.

An important point to note is that throughout this ethnographic data collection process, my research topic evolved in response to community members’ responses and illuminations. My original research scope sought to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of ski tourism, with a specific interest in the relationships between the community of Steamboat Springs, the SSRC, and the community-run ski facilities at Howelsen Hill. This focus on ski tourism was a result of my past experience within the community and my understanding of the importance of ski tourism to the community. However, after a number of interviews and everyday discussions with community members, I came to realise that there also exists a summer tourism product (of which I was previously unaware), which has had growing success over the years. Many community members talked extensively about the significance of summer tourism and the various effects it has had on the community; some of which I noted as being similar to those associated with ski tourism. As a result, participants
often found it difficult to separate winter and summer tourism impacts, with many of these perceived as affecting the community year-round. This was especially noted in regards to the impacts resulting from second-home ownership on the community.

After much deliberation with my supervisors, I therefore came to the conclusion during my winter data collection phase that my research would be incomplete if I focused solely on ski tourism and its impacts, with tourism having developed into a year-round product within the community of Steamboat Springs. In response, I expanded my research scope beyond ski tourism to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of year-round mountain resort tourism, which resulted in an additional five month data collection period over the summer tourism season of 2011. Thus, as a result of the co-construction of knowledge through social interaction and the formation of relationships with community members (Aull Davies, 2008), my understanding of the community and the issues they face regarding the growth and development of mountain resort tourism was altered, encouraging me to broaden my research focus.

I further accounted for reflexivity through the analysis and inclusion of my own experiences within the community of Steamboat Springs as an integral part of the data collection, interpretation, and analysis processes. As I collected, sorted, analysed, and reduced my data into key themes and concepts, I found myself constantly balancing my own pre-conceived perceptions of the community and mountain resort tourism, as informed by the existing literature, with those perceptions held by community members. This was in addition to my own co-creation of reality as a result of my interactions with community members and my evolving understanding of community life (Aull Davies, 2008). As will be acknowledged further on in this chapter under the interpretation of data, this continual reflection on my own thoughts and presence throughout the various stages of my research process played a central role in shaping my research (Aull Davies, 2008). By including my own subjective thoughts and experiences, I was able to provide a level of detail and depth of understanding that would not have been achieved with other quantitative, or even qualitative, approaches to research (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982).
Case study research

Case study research investigates current phenomena in real-world application, often where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2003b). This makes it an appropriate research design for highlighting complexities and providing rich and detailed insight into the intricacies that make up everyday life (Stake, 2003). At the same time, it encompasses a wide variety of evidence within the research setting (Yin, 2003b). For these reasons, I deemed a case study inquiry to be suitable for addressing my research aim, whilst also providing an appropriate complement to ethnography.

Due to its capacity to examine issues relating to tourism and policy in detail, case studies have been widely adopted within tourism research (Beeton, 2005). This can be clearly noted within the mountain resort tourism literature, as depicted in Table 3.
Table 3. Selected case study examinations of tourism within mountain resort communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Case Study Example(s)</th>
<th>Single (S) or Multiple (M) Case Studies</th>
<th>Research Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culbertson et al. (1993)</td>
<td>Yampa Valley, CO</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sustainable tourism development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franch et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Dolomites, Italian Alps</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Mass ski tourism impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getz and Jamal (1994)</td>
<td>Canmore, AB</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Collaborative tourism planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill and Williams (1994)</td>
<td>Aspen, CO Whistler, BC</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Growth management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasanta, Laguna and Vicente-Serrano (2007)</td>
<td>Central Spanish Pyrenees</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Impact of ski resort development on surrounding municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milne et al. (2006)</td>
<td>Mt Ruapehu, NZ</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Relationship between snow sport areas and local economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theobald et al. (1996)</td>
<td>East River Valley, CO</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Development pattern of land use conversion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of Gill and Williams (1994), all of these studies have adopted a single-case study approach to research. This popularity of single-case studies as a research design for the investigation of phenomena within a mountain resort tourism context can be seen as a result of its ability to provide powerful and in-depth insights within a research setting (Siggelkow, 2007). Such detailed investigation into a particular case can contribute knowledge which may not have been previously identified, or has yet to be the focus of examination by researchers, despite being common within other similar cases (Stake, 1995;
Yin, 2003a). Thus, although a lack of generalisability of findings is an often cited criticism in single-case study research (Gummesson, 2000; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003b), much can be learnt from these individual cases.

Given that there has been limited detailed examination of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the academic literature, a single-case study inquiry seemed most appropriate. This is because rather than seeking representation of the world through highlighting the typicality of my case, my aim was to acknowledge and represent the complexities surrounding the phenomena being examined (Stake, 1995, 2003). Thus, I was not looking to provide generalised findings on mountain resort tourism impacts, but an in-depth understanding of the various ways in which mountain resort tourism has affected the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs.

**Single-case study: Selecting the community of Steamboat Springs**

My selection of the community of Steamboat Springs as an appropriate single-case study was based on a number of reasons. Steamboat Springs is a mountain resort community located within the Rocky Mountains in Colorado where skiing and tourism represent a $2.6 billion dollar industry annually (Snow, 2008). It has a long relationship with ski tourism, with the ski facilities at Howelsen Hill having played an integral role in the historical evolution of skiing within the United States. Similar to many other mountain resort communities, Steamboat Springs has also experienced a shift in focus from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism development over the years, as signified by the diversification into summer tourism and real estate development. However, unlike many other mountain resort communities within Colorado that are clustered together along the I-70 highway and share a number of ski resorts between them, the geographic isolation of Steamboat Springs from other resorts and resort communities means that a clearer relationship between the SSRC and the community of Steamboat Springs can be drawn. This is preferable for the examination of the tourism-community relationship in a mountain resort setting, with the overlapping nature of other resorts and communities having the potential to cause confusion as to who lives and works where, and who identifies with which community.

As was outlined in Chapter 1, my prior knowledge and experience of the community also contributed to my selection of Steamboat Springs. Given that I was familiar with its
geographical layout, I was able to quickly orientate myself and get settled as a researcher within my surroundings. My continued acquaintance with a few community members and my understanding of some of the “inner-workings” of the community, such as where the “locals” hang out, also meant that I was able to comfortably immerse myself within the community after a short period of time and begin my data collection. This was beneficial given my strict time frames for data collection and my desire to examine quite a broad area of research.

**Determining the boundaries of the community of Steamboat Springs**

Case study research is a complex and integrated system with boundaries that highlight those features that exist within a study and those that do not (Stake, 2003). Defining my case study and unit of analysis was therefore an important step in ensuring that my phenomenon of interest remained as my primary focus. As my research examines the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs, I determined my case study to be the community of Steamboat Springs. More specifically, I identified my unit of analysis or research population as being those individuals that make up the community of Steamboat Springs (*community members*). I chose the term “community member” instead of “community resident” because of the significant proportion of second-home owners, down-valley migrants, and the nature of seasonal employment that accompanies the tourism industry. As a result, many people who make up the community of Steamboat Springs do not necessarily consider themselves residents, despite being an integral part of the community.

In consideration of the various perspectives that surround the conceptualisation of community (as discussed in Chapter 3), I chose not to adopt any single definition that would potentially restrict my understanding of the community of Steamboat Springs and portray it as a homogenous, bounded entity. Rather, I sought to provide a way for those who perceive themselves to be community members to be collectively identified. I therefore developed my own relatively inclusive definition of the community of Steamboat Springs, as delineated by the green shading in Figure 2.
My conceptualisation of the community of Steamboat Springs was largely developed through examining the mountain resort tourism and amenity migration literature, as well as the academic literature pertaining to the geographical, socio-cultural, and ecological elements of community (refer to Chapter 3). This resulted in the inclusion of the permanent residents of the City of Steamboat Springs, alongside such groupings of individuals as down-valley migrants, seasonal workers, and second-home owners. My additional inclusion of ranchers can be seen as specific to my case study, with ranchers being of significant cultural and historical relevance within Steamboat Springs and Routt County. However, as depicted in Figure 2, not all individuals within these groups are considered to be a part of the community of Steamboat Springs. Such inclusion was dependent upon whether they identified themselves as being members, or were perceived to be members of the community of Steamboat Springs. This was examined both directly and indirectly, either through the forthright questioning of individuals, or through the observation of their social interaction and engagement with other community members (Flora & Flora, 2003).

One important point to note is that although the existence of economic migrants has also been acknowledged within the academic literature (as discussed in Chapter 3), being those individuals who migrate to places such as mountain resort communities primarily for the economic benefits provided by tourism development and amenity migration (Glorioso & Moss, 2007), they were not included in my examination of the community of Steamboat Springs. This was not by choice, but simply because I was unable to find and gain access to
sufficient representatives from this segment who spoke a working level of English. I was therefore unable to obtain a detailed enough understanding of economic migrants within Steamboat Springs that I would be comfortable representing within my research. These constraints are further discussed in Chapter 11 under research limitations and areas for future research.

As resort communities can be defined geographically by their proximity to a resort operation (Clark, 2006b), I began my conceptualisation of the community of Steamboat Springs by using the geographical boundaries that delineate the City of Steamboat Springs and all permanent residents that dwell within them. This region includes both Howelsen Hill and Mt Werner; two key elements that have not only shaped the geographic, but also the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental landscape within which community members are situated. However, my research also acknowledges the population growth that has accompanied the development of mountain resort tourism, and the corresponding construction of nearby housing estates such as Steamboat II, Heritage Park, and Silverspur. As these developments exist within close proximity to Steamboat Springs (approximately five miles), those people who reside within these estates were also included within my definition of the community of Steamboat Springs, with the majority carrying out most of their day-to-day activities within the city limits.

My research further recognises the ability of communities to exist beyond specific geographic boundaries by incorporating down-valley migrants as community members of Steamboat Springs; many of whom are also seasonal workers who are attracted to mountain resort regions due to the available employment opportunities (Clifford, 2002; Hiemstra, 2008). This is because although these individuals from surrounding bedroom communities may not be able to afford to live within Steamboat Springs, they often spend significant amounts of time working and socialising there, and thus it is possible that they form a sense of attachment over time. However, as noted in Figure 2, I am also aware that this may not be relevant for all down-valley migrants, with the long-distance commute between Steamboat Springs and where they reside also having the potential to negatively affect their ability to participate and engage within the community.

Amenity migrants, such as second-home owners and seasonal workers, are another group that I also deemed relevant to my understanding of the community of Steamboat Springs. Seasonal workers were included in my research, despite often being perceived as uninvolved within the mountain resort tourism communities in which they work (Magnan &
Seidl, 2004). This is because some of them do transition from being semi-permanent amenity migrants to more permanent residents over time, often developing strong attachments to resort communities (Perdue, 2004a). While such a transition has more commonly been acknowledged within the academic literature in regards to second-home ownership (Beyers & Nelson, 2000; Hall & Muller, 2004; Halseth, 2004; Moss, 2006); I still chose to incorporate this avenue of inquiry into my research given that seasonal workers often form a large proportion of the population within mountain resort regions (Magnan & Seidl, 2004).

Similarly, second-home owners have been identified as being both involved and disengaged within the mountain resort communities in which they reside. On the one hand, the limited interest that they tend to display in regards to community services and developments that do not directly benefit them, alongside their inability to vote, can be seen as affecting their level of engagement and inclusion as community members (Hall & Muller, 2004; Lorah, 2006). On the other hand, high levels of place attachment and strong notions of belonging have also been attributed to second-home owners, with both the physical location and the communities in which their second-homes are situated providing owners with a sense of identity and membership (Aronsson, 2004). In some instances, second-home owners have even been found to identify with more than one “home”, having invested significant time, money, and effort into their second residence (Aronsson, 2004). Additionally, many second-home owners share similar motivations to permanent residents for choosing mountain resort communities, and therefore possess just as keen an interest in participating and contributing to the well-being of the community as more permanent residents (Venturoni et al., 2005). Thus, I have included those second-home owners who identified themselves as being a part of the community of Steamboat Springs within my research.

Finally, the Western ranching heritage of Steamboat Springs and the role and influence of ranchers in the development of the ski resort (as will be discussed further in Chapter 5), highlights the significant relationship that exists between many ranchers within Routt County and the community of Steamboat Springs. In particular, those ranchers who live in the ranchlands immediately surrounding Steamboat Springs and have direct personal connections to the intertwined heritage of skiing and ranching within Steamboat Springs, together with those who hold additional jobs or are actively involved in various non-profit organisations based in Steamboat Springs, were seen as most likely to identify with the community of Steamboat Springs. For these reasons, they were also included within my research population.
The role of theory in case study research

According to Yin (2003a), the use of theoretical concepts to guide both the design and collection of data is instrumental for the successful completion of case study research. I identified a range of relevant concepts through an extensive cross-disciplinary review of the academic literature pertaining to tourism impacts, sustainable tourism, tourism-host community relationships, mountain resort tourism, the use of social theories within tourism, and social capital. This was in addition to my exploration of research within the related areas of sustainable development, community development, rural growth and development, and amenity migration. Such a detailed examination of the literature helped guide my research by identifying potential issues and areas of interest to look out for within my case study.

With social capital having yet to be used as a heuristic device for examining socio-cultural sustainability within a mountain resort tourism context, I chose not to utilise any of the existing measurement devices and frameworks currently associated with the concept. This was because many of these frameworks are quantitative in nature, and thus I was concerned that they would limit the scope of my research. In particular, I did not want to prevent the in-depth exploration of certain components of social capital, which may appear to be more relevant in my case study context than has been identified in others.

However, in the interest of full disclosure and researcher reflexivity, it must be acknowledged that upon immersion into the community, I did initially fall into the trap of trying to see, hear, and participate in absolutely everything that was going on (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Although I had established boundaries for my investigation, as based upon my examination of the academic literature, I found myself determined to capture all aspects of the community in fear that I would otherwise not be faithfully representing the experiences and perspectives of community members (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). While this open approach to research soon proved unwieldy, this initial, albeit confusing, stage did provide me with a wealth of background information on community members and the nature of their everyday lives, which helped shed further insight on later findings that I obtained.

Needless to say, after a month or two of fastidiously examining everything that had to do with the community of Steamboat Springs, I became overwhelmed with the amount of data I had accumulated. This forced me to take a step back and re-examine my research objectives and narrow my scope of investigation by adhering to my initial boundaries. From this point onwards, I undertook a more focused and streamlined approach to my data collection, taking...
particular care to reduce my questioning in interviews, note-taking, photography, and document analysis to include only those topics, conversations, and experiences that were directly relevant to my research topic. By doing this, I was able to concentrate on examining the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and their effects on social capital, so that detailed information regarding the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism could be obtained.

**The role of context in case study research**

Context can help provide fundamental meaning to research by creating a backdrop from which the researcher can analyse and make sense of the data. As tourism exists within a geographic, economic, ecological, socio-cultural, and political context (Cohen, 1979), acknowledgement and understanding of these multiple contextual stances in which it is situated is necessary in order to understand the relevant sociological interactions and processes that occur within the case. I have therefore incorporated a background chapter (refer to Chapter 5) that outlines the history, culture, and geographic location of the community of Steamboat Springs, along with its past and present relationships with tourism to ensure such contextual meaning is retained. I perceived this to be a necessary inclusion, as it provides important layers and richness which contextualise my research findings.

Furthermore, as human behaviour, thoughts, and feelings are partly determined by the context in which they take place (Gillham, 2000), I also acknowledged the importance of capturing context during my data collection process. This included conscious efforts to frame my observations and interactions within the situations in which they were embedded, which involved taking detailed field notes that described my physical surroundings (where I was and why) and the historic background of topics discussed with community members (what happened in the past and how it informs perceptions held today). This was in addition to acknowledging broader contextual factors that affected the opinions of community members, such as the economic recession. I also took note of my mood and that of community members whom I observed or interviewed, along with other subjective feelings and how these affected the data obtained (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2007). I then recorded, analysed, and retained these notes alongside my interview transcripts, photographs, relevant documentation, and other field notes to ensure that I appropriately considered the context in which my data was collected and how it shaped the nature of my interpretation. This detailed incorporation of
context-specific data helped me to explore and express the unique complexities and social structures of this case (Stake, 1995), as captured through my own thoughts and observations, as well as the multiple perceptions of community members.

**Data collection methods**

Within my ethnographic case study, I adopted an integrated approach to research that included several data collection methods to ensure that the desired insight and depth of understanding of the community was achieved (Emerson et al., 2007). This included qualitative interviews, participant observation, the capturing of photographs as a visual record, and document analysis, with each of these different methods displaying their own strengths and weaknesses (Gillham, 2000). All of my data was collected during two five month periods: from November 20th, 2010 until April 23rd, 2011; and from July 3rd 2011 until November 18th 2011. I selected these timeframes as they covered the peak winter and summer tourism visitation periods, thus ensuring that the widest possible range of community members were available for representation in my research. This was particularly relevant in regards to second-home owners and seasonal tourism workers; many of whom only stay during these peak seasons. These data collection periods also covered the transition periods in between the peak tourism seasons and the quieter months, which allowed me to gain a more complete understanding of the seasonal fluctuations experienced by community members as I was able to compare the community at both busier and quieter times.

**Qualitative interviewing**

Qualitative interviews are a social interaction/interchange based upon the sharing of knowledge (Jennings, 2005). These interviews recognise the existence of different perceptions and emphasise the unravelling of the various meanings of interviewees’ experiences and situations so that their point of view can be better understood (Kvale, 1996). For these reasons, I deemed qualitative interviews to be a complementary data collection method to my adoption of a social constructivist ontology and ethnographic case study inquiry; both of which recognise the multiple constructions of reality and the active participation of the researcher as a central component of the research process (Hammersley, 2010).
Over a ten month period in Steamboat Springs, I conducted 53 interviews in situ with a broad range of community members (refer to Appendix A). This allowed for the ‘multiple realities, truths and perceptions’ contained within individual lived experiences in the community to be examined (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 157). These interviews were held in a variety of settings, with some taking place at private locations such as work offices and homes, whilst others were conducted in public places such as cafes, restaurants, the library, and other community spaces. I left the selection of the interview setting largely to the interviewee so that they could choose somewhere convenient where they felt comfortable conversing with me, thus aiding in the creation of a more relaxed interview environment. This was unless they chose somewhere that was inaccessible due to my primary reliance on public transportation.

With the exception of one interview, all were held on a one-on-one basis so that issues surrounding group dynamics would not interfere with the willingness of interviewees to share information, especially that which would go against popular opinion (Aull Davies, 2008; Gillham, 2000). For that one interview, an exception was made purely for practical reasons as the only opportunity I had to meet these interviewees (husband and wife) was after a function which brought them into Steamboat Springs from their home within the surrounding ranchlands. All of my interviews were conducted face-to-face, with each lasting for approximately one to two hours. This style and length of interview provided me the opportunity to build deeper relationships and rapport with participants (Czaja & Blair, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

From the outset, I clearly explained the aim of my research and framed these interviews as a joint exploration of the research topic as opposed to a ‘mining of information’ on my behalf (Aull Davies, 2008, p.121). As participants shared their perspectives on mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs and its effect on their lives, I constantly prompted them for clarification and elaboration so that I could explore and capture their various expressions, opinions, and thoughts on their everyday lives (Patton, 2002). These questions and prompts also helped to ensure that my understanding of what was being shared was as intended. Each interview was therefore unique, as the knowledge gained was both situational and conditional (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

To ensure that all relevant areas were covered, I used a basic interview guide to help with the flow of conversation when interviewees ceased talking about a particular topic (refer to Appendix B). Each guide was tailored specifically for my interviewees to ensure that I
addressed their particular areas of knowledge or interests, and related them back to the wider themes of mountain resort tourism and its associated impacts, socio-culturally sustainable tourism, social capital, and the tourism-community relationship. These guides helped me to establish horizons within which I jointly examined with interviewees specific meanings and statements that were relevant to my research (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). As interviewing progressed, I also drew upon data that I had already obtained from prior interviews and other data collection methods to help link interviewee responses to themes and issues that were emerging within the field (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). This incorporation of my growing knowledge of the community helped me to further hone in on particular areas of interest with my interviewees, thus allowing for a more detailed examination of relevant topics as they arose.

I recorded each interview with a digital voice recorder so that I could concentrate on its development and the context of the interaction and surroundings that sound recording was unable to capture (Aull Davies, 2008). Each interview was transcribed within one week of it being conducted to ensure it remained fresh in my mind. For ease of reading and interpretation, all words, repetitions, and hesitations that were not necessary to the illumination of meaning or context were taken out. I then checked each transcript against the original recording for accuracy and to minimise the de-contextualised interpretation of the oral recording (Kvale, 1996). As will be discussed further under research credibility, this was followed by member checking where I sent all of the transcripts to my interviewees for review. The resulting interviewee comments and requests were then addressed, and each transcript adjusted accordingly.

**Participant observation**

Participant observation involves the immersion of researchers within the field where they take part in the activities of their research subjects, while making detailed observations of their subjects within their usual situational and social context (Belsky, 2004). It is a common data collection method used within ethnographic research, allowing researchers to establish themselves within the community to explore, experience, and therefore represent everyday social life within the research setting (Emerson et al., 2007). During the ten months I lived within the community of Steamboat Springs, I was able to experience many different aspects of everyday life, gaining an insider’s perspective on community interactions and socialisation

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processes in a variety of situations (Cole, 2005). This participation in, and observation of, everyday life and events provided me with a shared basis of understanding with community members (Aull Davies, 2008), which allowed for more meaningful and open discussions about the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

I divided my observations over the ten months into two categories: everyday observations, and observations of special events. Everyday observations involved taking notes on community members as they went about their day-to-day lives. This included the types of activities undertaken and how their time was used; community-tourist interactions on the mountain, downtown, and in other shared spaces; participation in community meetings with a range of local government and non-profit organisations; and my own personal interactions and conversations with various community members in both private and public settings. My observation of special events involved examining the behaviour and experiences of community members and tourists, alongside my own, as I participated in various tourism and community events. These events included such pivotal community and tourism celebrations as the opening and closing day of the Steamboat Ski and Resort during the winter and summer; the Winter Sports Carnival; the USA Pro Cycling Challenge; and the holiday celebrations of Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s Eve, Valentine’s Day, and the Fourth of July. This was in addition to other smaller events such as the Summer Pro Rodeo Series, the Strings on the Mountain concert series, community fundraising events, community sporting competitions and races, the Saturday Farmer’s Market, and the First Friday Artwalk, amongst many others.

Throughout my time within the field, I endeavoured to be as active as possible within the community, attending all of the abovementioned events and participating in many of the more common everyday activities. In the winter, I skied at both the ski resort and Howelsen Hill, while in the summer I joined community members in hiking in the surrounding Mt Zirkel Wilderness and cycling around town. I also attended community cinema screenings, art exhibition openings, music concerts, community yoga sessions, house parties, and so forth. I shopped at the grocery store and used local facilities such as the library, cafes, parks, and trails. I visited local houses, ranches, and drove around all neighbourhoods within the community. I commuted to Denver (the nearest metropolitan centre) over Rabbit Ears Pass, visited surrounding communities, and utilised flights out of the regional airport to experience the local transportation options available to community members and tourists. It was through participating in these activities that form a part of the everyday reality of the community that I
was able to observe, uncover, and experience implicit meanings and behaviour that may have been second nature to community members and thus not addressed in the more formal interview setting (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Kvale, 1996). These conscious attempts to unearth all aspects of community living were vital to my understanding of mountain resort tourism and the community of Steamboat Springs.

At all times I carried a fieldwork journal so I could take note of important conversations and observations, and describe the physical and contextual settings in which they occurred. This ensured there was an ‘ongoing stream-of-consciousness’ regarding my research (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 539), with all observations and thoughts contemporaneously recorded where possible (Emerson et al., 2007). When I found myself in a situation where I was unable to immediately take notes, for example when I was skiing, hiking, or engaged in casual conversation with community members, I made every attempt to ensure that at the next available opportunity these were recorded.

My observations largely focused upon emerging themes relating to my research and how community members interacted and behaved with their local surroundings, towards one another, and with the numerous tourists. I also observed how these interactions differed within various settings and contexts over the peak winter and summer tourism periods, as well as during the quieter off-seasons. By examining not only what was said by community members but also what was actually done (Gillham, 2000), I was able to gain a more thorough understanding of community perceptions and behaviour. Every observation made was then recorded in one of two electronic fieldwork log sheets. One was specifically for the day-to-day observations that occurred within the context of everyday life (Appendix C), and the other was for the various events held within the community (Appendix D).

**Photography**

Accompanying my observations of both special events and everyday community life was my utilisation of photographs as a way of capturing my experiences within the community of Steamboat Springs. Photography has long been included in ethnography as an appropriate methodology for examining the human experience, with the capturing and production of images providing a visual record of what has occurred in the field (Aull Davies, 1999; Pink, 2006). At the same time, the inclusion of photographs can also be seen as a form of data representation, complementing ethnographic field notes and writing (Crang & Cook,
2007), whilst also increasing the immediacy of understanding for the reader by showing and describing phenomena, or supporting a particular explanation that may be hard to describe as vividly using words alone (Aull Davies, 1999; Crang & Cook, 2007; Gobo, 2008). Although it was not my main method of data collection, I included photography to provide my readers with a multi-sensory approach to ethnography that incorporates the visual with the cognitive, thus giving them a greater sense of being there and an understanding of the community that can be more readily translated (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998).

As Steamboat Springs is a popular tourism destination, I found that the simple act of having a camera wherever I went actually helped me to mingle and blend in with the many tourists visiting the community. This allowed me to take photographs of community events and gatherings, as well as the physical surroundings without being viewed as inappropriate or threatening in nature (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998). My approach to photography was both purposeful and serendipitous in nature, including excursions outside of Steamboat Springs to capture the open ranchlands, ranchette developments, as well as the “feel” of some of the surrounding communities. This was in addition to more impromptu photography while hiking with other community members, attending events, skiing, or simply walking around downtown.

**Document analysis**

Documents are a rich source of qualitative material that emerge from within the research context, but also provide information on the particular context itself (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). My analysis of documents assisted in contributing detailed background knowledge on a range of past and current community issues, thus adding a certain depth and contextual richness to my case that complemented data obtained through my other data collection methods. Within the community of Steamboat Springs, the documents that I examined included the local newspaper (*Steamboat Today*), both electronically and in print; local tourism and real estate magazines; plans and policies from the various local government departments; City Council meeting agendas and memos; and electronic and website communication from the SSRC, non-profit organisations, the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association (SSCRA), and other community groups that were publicly available.

Due to the sheer quantity of archived newspapers and documents available within the community, I found that it was not possible to examine all potentially relevant documentation,
both past and present, within my limited PhD timeframe. Thus, I narrowed my focus and concentrated on all issues and publications that were produced during my ten months spent within the community. I also included community and tourism development plans and proposals that were still current and being implemented by the council during the data collection time-frame, regardless of how long ago these documents were created. This is not to say that historical newspaper articles and documents were not considered relevant to my research, with the history of mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs providing the context within which current issues are situated. Rather, these archived documents that relate to past tourism developments and conflicts were categorised as relevant literature that helped to inform my case study inquiry, as opposed to being research data that needed to be analysed.

**Identification and selection of research participants**

My ethnographic case study inquiry of the community of Steamboat Springs considered all community members to be valid research participants. As previously identified within this chapter, this included the permanent residents of the City of Steamboat Springs, alongside those seasonal workers, down-valley migrants, second-home owners, and ranchers who either explicitly or implicitly expressed themselves as being a part of the community of Steamboat Springs. While I was able to draw upon a wide range of community members and their experiences, thoughts, and perspectives through participant observation and photography, I needed to be more selective in identifying and choosing research participants for my qualitative interviews due to my limited timeframe. I therefore adopted both purposive (P) and snowball (S) sampling techniques to recruit participants (refer again to Appendix A).

My aim was to include community members from a wide range of interest groups and segments so that the diversity of the community would be represented. Community members who were identified as knowledgeable or familiar with various aspects of the community were therefore selected in hope that they would share their information and expertise (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Using the two sampling techniques, I contacted 78 community members for my qualitative interviews, with a total of 53 agreeing to participate (68 per cent). The 25 community members whom I contacted but did not participate, were a mixture of non-responses (19), refusals (1), and in some cases (5), a result of an inability to find time within our respective schedules due to work and other commitments.
Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling, also referred to as convenience and judgemental sampling, involves the selection of participants based on both their appropriateness for inclusion and ease of access (Jennings, 2001). Upon arriving within Steamboat Springs, I spent the first two weeks conversing with community members around town, scouring the local newspaper, and examining various websites to educate myself on the various aspects of the community. From these different information sources, I began to develop an idea of the areas of the community from which I wanted representation. I then employed my own judgement to determine the suitability of particular community members as interviewees based upon their roles and positions within these various areas. Those selected were contacted via email if a relevant email address was publicly available. This email included an electronic letter of introduction to my research (refer to Appendix E), accompanied by my explanatory statement (refer to Appendix F). If I did not receive an email reply within two weeks, I then followed this initial contact with a phone call if a phone number was available through public records. Of the 44 people chosen through purposive sampling, I received ten non-responses, one refusal, and one situation where the community member and I were unable to organise a suitable time, thus resulting in 32 interviewees.

Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is where interviewees are contacted via recommendations and referrals (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). These referrals were obtained at the end of each of my interviews, where I would ask interviewees whether or not they knew of anyone else who would be able to contribute to my research based upon the interview that had just taken place. Many interviewees volunteered at least one name and their contact details, providing me with a wealth of contacts I could follow up on. This yielded a range of participants whom I otherwise would have not been aware of, or would not have had access to, thus proving useful once I had exhausted all of my existing contacts through my own information search.

It is important to note that as snowball sampling relies upon social networks (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981), some of the recommendations made by interviewees were for community members that had similar and overlapping interests and roles. Therefore, I did not necessarily contact all referrals in an attempt to prevent over-representation from any one
community segment. However, if a community member was recommended by multiple people, I did seek their participation due to their apparent importance and expertise within the community. At the same time, many community members were found to hold multiple positions and have numerous interests within the community, and therefore snowball sampling also allowed me to move from one network of interest to another and access community segments that I was previously unaware existed. Overall, I contacted 34 participants via snowball sampling, through emails or phone calls depending on the contact details provided. Of these 34, I received nine non-responses and was unable to meet up with another four community members, leaving me with 21 interviewees who were contacted in this manner.

Data analysis and interpretation

As ethnography not only refers to the research approach but also both the written account of a people (Hammersley, 2010), my interpretation, analysis, reduction, and written representation of data also forms an essential part of my ethnographic case study.

Interpretation of the data

As interpretation within qualitative research is co-constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), my role as an ethnographer was central to the data collection and analysis processes. My interpretation of what I saw and how I understood and perceived community members’ interactions, reactions, and feelings towards mountain resort tourism determined who I chose to interview, the observations recorded, photographs taken, and the documents analysed. My interpretations also played an important part in the analysis and reduction of data (Ryan & Bernard, 2000), with the identification and selection of themes that I perceived to best represent community members’ thoughts and feelings influencing the categorisation and refinement of my data. Although I have acknowledged the multiple perspectives and constructed realities that exist within the community through the inclusion of different, and at times contradictory, experiences of community members (Stake, 1995), the limited scope of my thesis and the breadth of perspectives examined meant that I was not able to successfully include everything within this final thesis. Thus, what I have presented is a selection of the range and depth of themes and concepts that I believe best allowed me to make informed
judgements regarding the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs.

**Data analysis**

In order to analyse and interpret my data, I adopted a qualitative approach to content analysis. I undertook this simultaneously with the data collection process so that the key themes I identified could be evaluated in relation to their empirical setting. This allowed for reflection and comparison with the real-world context from which they emerged (Jennings, 2005). I then further analysed and organised these themes in regards to knowledge derived from the academic literature to form the conceptual and analytical structure of my case study. In particular, I used the mountain resort tourism impacts identified in Table 2 (refer to Chapter 3), and the various components of social capital (networks, norms, and resources), as theoretical guides to help organise and categorise my data. This resulted in two master documents; one that addressed the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, and the other that focused upon the components of social capital. I then closely examined these two data sets for any overlap or evidence of links between mountain resort tourism impacts and social capital; how one affected the other, and vice versa.

Overall, I avoided the structured line-by-line coding techniques that are common within quantitative applications of content analysis as I thought it was important to retain the wider meaning and context of interviewees’ stories. Instead, I identified themes as they arose within the data, with both the explicit text and internal textual meanings; the latent content that considers what is not always explicitly said (Aull Davies, 2008), included for analysis. By acknowledging such latent content, the subtleties and hidden meanings that lay within my data were examined and included in my research (Gillham, 2005). I further incorporated vignettes and excerpts of my own personal insights and experiences, together with those of community members, amongst my research findings. These complement one another to form an integrated narrative that portrays the multiple perceptions that exist within the community of Steamboat Springs.

Due to the depth and breadth of available data, my analysis consisted of multiple stages. Figure 3 depicts these stages, beginning with my data collection all the way through to my creation of a master document of themes and concepts, as achieved through both manual data analysis and the QSR NVivo9 data software analysis package.
Analysis of qualitative interviews

The analysis of my qualitative interviews was a lengthy process. This included the preparation of interview transcripts and the identification, refinement, elaboration, and categorisation of themes. These themes were then compared across interviews and my other data collection methods to ensure that a holistic understanding of the research setting was obtained (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).
The interview transcription process consisted of an initial audio replay of my interview recording, the transcription of my interview, followed by the simultaneously process of reading and listening to my prepared transcript to ensure accuracy. This final stage helped me to minimise decontextualisation of the data (Kvale, 1996), as I was able to analyse the written words of interviewees whilst at the same time listen to their voice intonation, inflections, and pace of speech to provide a more accurate representation of the actual interview (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). I chose to begin this interview analysis process while I was still collecting data as it allowed me to identify relevant themes which I was then able to pursue with subsequent interviewees.

Upon completion of my data collection and interview transcriptions, I began a more thorough analysis of my interviews. I did this without the assistance of the QSR NVivo9 data software analysis package as the manual process of highlighting, writing notes, and re-writing relevant quotations and themes greatly assisted in my familiarisation with the data. As I read through each completed transcript, I highlighted key passages and stories that depicted themes and concepts relevant to my research, making notes within page margins to elaborate on and clarify these emerging themes. I then organised these notes and exemplars into two separate master data categories on mountain resort tourism impacts and the components of social capital (refer to the left-hand side of Stage 2, Figure 3). To demonstrate the depth of this manual data analysis, a snapshot of some of the relevant themes and sub-themes that were identified under the broad master data category of mountain resort tourism impacts are depicted below in Table 4.
Table 4. Manual data analysis: Example of identified themes and sub-themes

1. Tourism as the ‘life-blood’ of the community
   1.1. Tourism is what brought people here
   1.2. Shift in economic reliance to tourism
   1.3. The town that tourism built – the positive benefits from tourism development for the community
   1.4. Ski resort tourism and what it has brought to the community
   1.5. Development of the tourism product
   1.6. Tourism off-seasons and the push for year-round tourism – balancing the trade-offs
   1.7. Reliance on sales and lodging taxes
      1.7.1. Viewing tourists in terms of ‘dollars’ and ‘pillow counts’ and ‘visitor numbers’
      1.7.2. Shifting the tax burden onto tourists second-home owners
   1.8. Everything is related to tourism – everything is marketed
   1.9. Balancing tourism and community needs
      1.9.1. Taking care not to price Steamboat out of the market
      1.9.2. Balancing tourism-community use of facilities and services
   1.10. Impact of tourism on the surrounding communities

2. Ranching-tourism relationship
   2.7. Ranching and winter tourism
   2.8. Ranching and summer tourism
   2.9. Love-hate relationship between tourism and ranching
      2.9.1. Rancher creation of tourism
      2.9.2. Issues that result from the ranching-tourism interface
         2.9.2.1. Conflict over the Western ‘image’ and tourism marketing and promotion of Steamboat Springs
         2.9.2.2. Effects of tourism on intergenerational ranching
         2.9.2.3. Rising costs of land and insufficient means of income
         2.9.2.4. Ranching no longer economically viable
         2.9.2.5. Land fragmentation and subdivision
         2.9.2.6. Real estate development within the open lands
         2.9.2.7. Effects of tourism on ranching sense of community
         2.9.2.8. ‘Deep pocket’ ranchers – amenity migrant ranchers
         2.9.2.9. Feared loss of ranching from Routt County
      2.9.3. Rancher incorporation of tourism products and services
Once this process of analysis was completed with all of my 53 interviews, I combined the resulting themes, exemplars, and notes with my manual analyses of relevant documentation and the photographs I had taken.

**Analysis of participant observation**

My field notes from my observations within the community also resulted in a large body of documentation that required detailed analysis to identify themes and concepts relevant to my research aim. I began by separating my observations of events and everyday life, which allowed me to compare the ordinary with the extraordinary; the differences between organised tourism-community experiences and those more common in everyday community life. As most of these field notes were written by hand in my journal as I participated in events and everyday situations, I electronically transferred these onto my computer usually on, or within a day of the observation so that my thoughts were still fresh in my mind. Using the QSR NVivo9 data software analysis package, I created individual nodes for each identified theme and attached relevant notes and observations to these. As the number of nodes began to accumulate, I grouped them together to form detailed tree diagrams for the two broader data categories of mountain resort tourism impacts and social capital (refer to the right-hand side of Stage 2, Figure 3). To demonstrate this process, a snapshot of the tree diagram that represents the various themes and sub-themes related to social capital is depicted in Figure 4 below. This particular excerpt from the overall tree diagram refers to the themes relating to community norms. Data from my document analysis process were also incorporated within these tree diagrams, with the QSR NVivo9 data software analysis package used to analyse both my participation observations and field notes, and any electronically available documents from within the community.
Figure 4. Tree node diagram for social capital related themes
**Analysis of photography**

During my ten months within the community of Steamboat Springs, I captured hundreds of photographs which I organised into various folders according to their occasion (for example, “skiing on mountain” or “Downtown Halloween Stroll”) or the various themes that arose during the data collection process (for example, “ranchette development” or “second-home neighbourhoods”). I then manually analysed and categorised these photographs according to themes that had been identified from my interviews and observations (refer to left-hand side of Stage 2, Figure 3). I chose manual analysis over the use of the QSR NVivo 9 data software analysis package due to the inability of the program and my computer to process such large image files. As I gradually refined my themes, I also reduced the number of photographs I had. Only those that were seen to best describe and illuminate my written data were kept as a part of my data set. My approach to data reduction for photography was similar to that which I employed for my other data, as will be discussed in greater detail below.

**Analysis of documentation**

As depicted in Stage 2, Figure 3, I undertook both electronic and manual analysis of relevant documentation during my time within the community of Steamboat Springs. For those documents that were electronically available, such as newspaper articles, council documents, and community web pages, I utilised the QSR NVivo9 data software analysis package. This allowed me to analyse a large quantity of data and categorise and combine identified themes with my analysis of my field notes from participant observation. As discussed above in regards to participation observation, this utilisation of the QSR NVivo 9 data software analysis package involved creating individual nodes for each theme that arose, which were subsequently grouped together using tree diagrams that examined the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and social capital (refer to Figure 4). For those documents available only in print (magazines, council plans, advertisements, pamphlets), I undertook manual analysis where I highlighted key passages that related to emerging themes, before transferring and combining them with relevant data from my manual interview and photograph analyses. This resulted in the formation of both manual and electronic master data categories, from which further reduction of the data was undertaken.
Data reduction

The process of data reduction can be represented as a funnel structure where each stage of analysis progressively clarifies the research scope and findings (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). I found this step-by-step process of identifying, refining, and consolidating themes to be an important and necessary part of my research, with the nature of ethnography resulting in the collection of a large and often unwieldy data set. As shown in Figure 3, I began reducing the quantity of my data at Stage 2 by identifying key themes (both manually and electronically) within my transcripts, field notes, photographs, and relevant documentation, before subsequently placing them into master categories. This resulted in the manual and electronic creation of tree diagrams (as depicted in Table 4 and Figure 4) under the broad master categories of mountain resort tourism impacts and social capital. At Stage 3, I then compared these manual and electronic master categories and consolidated them into one category on each of the topic areas of mountain resort tourism and social capital. This was followed by my simultaneously examination of these remaining two categories on mountain resort tourism and social capital at Stage 4, so that overarching themes and relevant sub-themes and how they all connect and intertwine with one another could be uncovered. It was at this stage that I actively sought to examine how my data on these two areas linked together to provide insight into the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. This final analysis and reduction of my data was then consolidated into a single, electronic master document at Stage 5, which formed the basis of my final narrative.

Credibility of qualitative research

Of concern throughout my entire research process was the attainment of research credibility. Research credibility has traditionally been determined by the positivist criteria of reliability and validity (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982), with reliability referring to the replicability of the research inquiry with the assumption that there exists only a single, valid version of the truth (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982); and validity defined as the extent to which the chosen research method(s) study what they had sought to study (Gummesson, 2000). However, there has been growing consensus within the academic literature regarding the inappropriate nature of such criteria to determine the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982; Seale, 1999). As argued by Seale (1999), the
imposition of reliability and validity within qualitative research is nothing more than an attempt to gain artificial consensus, given that there is no one objective truth but multiple realities which can be constructed in different minds. At the same time, Kvale (1996) states that the absolute attainment of reliability and validity in qualitative research is difficult due to the sensitivity of such research to the specifics of the ever-changing human environment.

I found these concerns to be applicable to my research for a number of reasons. Firstly, my adoption of a social constructivist ontology acknowledges the existence of multiple realities and reflexivity (Aull Davies, 2008), thereby negating the assumption that there is only a single, objective truth. Secondly, the personal nature of my ethnographic data collection also limits the relevance of the criteria of replicability to both my research methods and findings (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982; Seale, 1999). Furthermore, although the very nature of ethnography addresses the concern raised by positivist validity regarding the ‘artificial divorce between theory and method’ (Evans, 1988, p. 210), my achievement of external validity; the degree to which findings are generalisable beyond the immediate scope of the study (Yin, 2003b), was not possible or even desirable. Rather, my immersion within the community of Steamboat Springs sought to examine the various socio-cultural aspects that are specific to the community, with these personal, subjective, and contextual aspects forming an integral part of my research.

The necessary conditions for attaining positivist validity and reliability can therefore be seen as irrelevant within a qualitative research context (Flick, 1992). Instead, comparability and translatability have been suggested as being more suitable as criteria for examining the credibility of qualitative research (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). This is because research credibility does not necessarily need to be demonstrated through proof of generalisability, so long as detailed description of all transactions, processes, and contexts is provided that allows the reader to vicariously experience the research setting (Seale, 1999).

Comparability can be defined as the ability to compare research methods and findings with other similar or dissimilar contexts, while translatability refers to whether methods and findings can be adopted to suit other research settings (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). This is in contrast with precise transferability, which is unattainable and undesirable due to the important and personal role played by the qualitative researcher (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). To achieve both comparability and translatability, I endeavoured to produce substantial amounts of ‘incontestable description’ on all aspects of my case (Stake, 1995, p. 62). In my fieldwork journal, I included in-depth descriptions of not only what was happening, but also
where it was happening and why. I also captured various contextual factors, characteristics of community members, and the emergence of key themes and constructs through detailed field notes and photographs. In addition, I carefully recorded my research methods and my data analysis, interpretation, and reduction processes, so that future comparison and translation by researchers to other mountain resort communities or beyond can be undertaken. As noted by Guba and Lincoln (1981), it is this recognisability of description of a given experience by those who have lived it, which is much more important than the exact replicability of that experience when trying to understand complex human behaviour.

Nevertheless, while absolute consistency goes against the social constructivist vein of my research, I still needed to ensure that I was accurately interpreting and representing the information provided by community members. I achieved this through member checking, which involved communicating and discussing my findings with participants to ensure that the thoughts and perceptions that I had captured through field notes, photographs, and interview transcriptions were truthful representations (Stake, 1995). I also discussed key themes as they arose from my research with these participants, allowing them to actively contribute and build upon my ideas and thoughts; agreeing, as well as disagreeing with particular themes I had identified or the importance I had placed on them. Member checking also provided them with the opportunity to express any issues that they had, which ranged from privacy and anonymity concerns to ensuring that I acknowledged particular issues and areas of the community that I had previously been unaware of, thus prompting additional exploration. This helped to improve the credibility, quality, and depth of my research, whilst also further developing my relationships with participants as they were included in a different dimension of my research (Emerson & Pollner, 2001).

Member checking also involved the provision of critical feedback on my interview transcriptions by the relevant interviewees. Within the two weeks following an interview, I would email the transcription to the relevant interviewee for validation and correction to ensure that their beliefs and opinions were appropriately captured. I then gave them the opportunity to omit or elaborate on anything that was discussed during the interview. While I acknowledge that this allowed interviewees to sanitise their responses in a way which may not be entirely truthful or accurate (Diener & Suh, 1997), I believe that my use of multiple research methods of both a self- and non-self-reporting nature helped address this concern as I was able to compare the various perceptions of community members with one another, as well as with my own.
Triangulation or crystallisation

Associated with this discussion on the limited relevance of reliability and validity as appropriate criteria for examining the credibility of qualitative research is the role of triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources of evidence to achieve convergence, with the idea being that information that comes from different angles can help elaborate and illuminate the research phenomenon (Decrop, 1999, 2004). However, while it has often been used as a strategy for achieving research validation within qualitative research due to the difficulties inherent in the absolute attainment of reliability and validity, triangulation assumes that there are fixed viewpoints from which triangulation occurs (Richardson, 2000). This has brought its usefulness in examining the many and transmutational perspectives of the world that are often investigated within qualitative research under increased scrutiny.

In recognition that there are more than three points of view of the world, Richardson (2000) therefore proposes the use of crystallisation, where the central focus for obtaining validity is imagined as being a crystal, with the numerous possibilities and angles of approach to research highlighting the multiple perspectives of the social landscape. This acknowledgement of multiple realities deconstructs the traditional fixed approach to validation to allow for a deeper, more complex understanding of the subject matter at hand (Richardson, 2000). I achieved crystallisation largely through my search for interviewees from a broad spectrum of the community to ensure that multiple perspectives were represented. Using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, I actively sought participants from both typical and atypical segments of the community (Decrop, 2004). This required a search outside of the obvious social circles, with my aim being to examine all socio-economic classes, interest areas, job types, and residency statuses. This inclusion of potentially contradictory and conflicting viewpoints was important in ensuring that my personal beliefs and perceptions as a researcher did not limit the scope of the research undertaken (Seale, 1999).

Ethical considerations

In line with Monash University’s ethics requirements, my research was approved by Monash University’s Human Research Ethics Committee on September 1st 2010, prior to the
commencement of my fieldwork (refer to Appendix G). After my initial data collection phase, I submitted an amendment to my original research proposal to include an additional five months of data collection so that I could examine the summer tourism season within Steamboat Springs. This was approved on April 28th 2011, prior to the commencement of my second round of data collection (refer to Appendix H). As required, I also provided an explanatory statement (refer again to Appendix F) and consent form for all interview participants (refer to Appendix I) which outlined the nature of my research, what could be expected from me as the researcher, and the manner in which I would use and store the data collected.

Throughout all stages of my research, I also adhered to strict codes of confidentiality. I removed names and identifying characteristics from my written data to ensure the anonymity of my interview participants, and anyone who was described to me or contributed to my observations. These were replaced with false names (as denoted by *), general descriptions of community members’ roles within the community (for example, “rancher” or “seasonal worker”), or an interview number that only the corresponding interviewees and I are aware of, which allowed me to ensure anonymity without losing context when using selected vignettes.

I also sought permission for the use of third-party material, with the inclusion of the map of Routt County (Figure 5) in Chapter 5, and the summer tourism promotional material (Figure 6) in Chapter 8, having been approved by the relevant organisations. In regards to the photographs I took of community members, I obtained permission where possible and necessary. This was relevant for those photographs taken on private property and any which portrayed a small number of community members. However, as many of my photographs include large crowds at various events, my ability to gain individual permission was not a reasonable expectation nor deemed necessary. Nevertheless, I did ensure that care was taken in my selection of photographs for this thesis and the accompanying written text so as not to incriminate particular individuals or tie them to specific thoughts and beliefs that may negatively affect their social standings within the community. Although the inclusion of such data could have assisted in providing further weight to some of my arguments, this would have affected the integrity and ethics of my research and potentially affected future community relationships and access for myself and other researchers.

Finally, I attempted to remain truthful and faithful in my representation of stories, conversations, and interactions with participating members of the community of Steamboat Springs at all times. I found the process of constructing meaning with community members to
be rewarding and humbling, as many personal stories and difficulties were shared alongside positive accounts of mountain resort community living. Any information that was shared “off the record”, or was requested to be removed from an interview transcript was therefore treated as such. After all, it was not my intention to reveal the identity of individual community members and their personal feelings and thoughts on mountain resort tourism. Rather, I sought to use these personal accounts to gain an understanding of the many and varied ways in which mountain resort tourism has affected their lives. In this manner, I hope that I have given voice to a wide range of community members, many of whom may not otherwise have been heard.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed my research design and methodology. Within the framework of an ethnographic case study research design, I utilised four data collection methods (qualitative interviewing, participant observation, photography, and document analysis), with interviewees sampled using both purposive and snowball techniques. Once my data was collected, I undertook a lengthy and multiple-stage process of data interpretation, analysis, and reduction so that key themes relating to my research objectives could be identified. At all times, I sought to ensure that my research methods, processes, and findings were comparable, translatable, and ethical, thus achieving research credibility.

The following chapter includes some background information on my single-case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs. This is provided to help situate my research findings, which will be discussed and analysed within the subsequent chapters.
Chapter 5. Case study context

Introduction

This chapter provides the context for my case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs. This is important as human behaviour, thoughts, and feelings are in part determined by the situation and context in which they occur (Gillham, 2000). I begin with a brief summary of the geographical whereabouts of Steamboat Springs and Routt County. This is followed by an outline of the historical development of Steamboat Springs, which incorporates details on its settlement, its long-held relationship with skiing, the growth and development of ski tourism, and its shift to mountain resort tourism over the years. I then conclude with information on the ranching, agriculture, and mining industries within Routt County, thereby highlighting how tourism is only one of several influential players within the region.

Routt County, Colorado

Routt County encompasses 2,231 square miles of mountainous terrain and open ranching and agricultural land in the Rocky Mountain region of northwest Colorado, (Routt County, 2011). In 2010, population estimates indicated a permanent population of approximately 23,989 (Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association [SSCRA], 2011/12a), with the majority of these residents living within the townships of Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Oak Creek, and Yampa (refer to Figure 5). While all four of these townships were at one time of relatively equal size, the introduction of tourism with the inception of the ski resort in 1958, has since led to the rapid growth in population and economic significance of Steamboat Springs. However, ranching, agriculture, and mining still exist within the county, as is typical within many regions of the American West.
Figure 5. Map of Routt County, Colorado

Source: Routt County GIS (2010)
Steamboat Springs, Colorado

Sitting at 2050m and surrounded by mountain peaks of up to 3660m, Steamboat Springs is located within central Routt County in the Yampa Valley, approximately 260km northwest of Denver; the state capital of Colorado. It is the administrative centre for the county and the largest township with a permanent population of approximately 12,088 as of 2010 (SSCRA, 2011/12a). Steamboat Springs possesses a strong ranching and agricultural heritage and is also an international mountain resort tourism destination that is home to two world-class ski areas: Howelsen Hill, and Steamboat Ski and Resort on Mt Werner. Dubbed “Ski Town, U.S.A®” for its long history of skiing and its record of producing the greatest number of winter Olympians within the United States, Steamboat Springs is both a skiing centre for North America and a ranching and agricultural community that still possesses many of the strong cultural traditions of the American West (Seidl, Ellingson, Magnan & Mucklow, 2007).

Photograph 1. The City of Steamboat Springs from Howelsen Hill. Source: N.Ooi
Historical beginnings of Steamboat Springs and Routt County

Cattle ranching and agriculture have played a central role in the survival, apportionment of private land, and development of industry and culture in Steamboat Springs and Routt County since the arrival of the first European Americans in 1874 (Seidl et al., 2007). In 1908, the introduction of the Moffat railroad provided increased opportunities for sending cattle to market, resulting in the growth of the local cattle industry (Burroughs, 1962). The development of the railroad also helped the growth of the mining industry within Routt County, with gold, silver, and then later coal proving to be lucrative (Writer & Company, 1994). In particular, the coal mining townships of Oak Creek and Phippsburg experienced rapid growth through their connection to the railroad, with Oak Creek being the largest township in the county at the time (Wickenden, 2011).

Steamboat Springs has also historically been a summer tourism destination since the 1890s, offering fishing, hunting, and scenic landscapes. However, it was not until the arrival of the first passenger car in 1909 and attempts by the community to enter into the mineral springs’ tourism trade, that tourism became a relatively successful industry (Rothman, 1998a). Named after the sound of its bubbling springs which were thought to be similar to that of an arriving steamboat (Rothman, 1998a), Steamboat Springs, alongside the communities of Hot Sulphur Springs and Idaho Springs, soon helped tourism to replace gold as the biggest lure to the state of Colorado (Wickenden, 2011).

By 1913, Routt County was therefore already an established cattle producing and agricultural growing region, mining centre, and summer tourism destination (Rothman, 1996). The combined success of these industries allowed Steamboat Springs to flourish up until the economic depression of the 1930s, when the drop in coal and cattle prices led to a decline in both the local economy and population (Culbertson et al., 1993). This was not remedied until 1961 when the introduction of ski tourism and the installation of the first ski lifts provided an opportunity for revitalisation, thus marking the next period of significant economic growth for the region (Culbertson et al., 1993).
The history of skiing in Steamboat Springs

Skiing has historically been of great importance to Steamboat Springs and Routt County. An essential form of transportation by homesteaders, skis were used to stake claims, deliver mail and supplies, feed cattle, and undertake many other activities that were necessary for survival throughout the long and isolated winters (Towler, 1987). However, it was not until 1913 with the arrival of Carl Howelsen, a champion Norwegian ski jumper who brought his own enthusiasm and talent for the sport, that skiing became a central recreational focus within Steamboat Springs (Rothman, 1998b). His passion for skiing resulted in the organisation of the inaugural Winter Carnival in 1913 to feature ski racing and ski jumping, which was followed the subsequent year with the creation of the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club (SSWSC); a local club in charge of organising the Winter Carnival and the training of local youth to ski (Rothman, 1998a).

Carl Howelsen is also credited with building the first ski jump in Steamboat Springs in 1917 on a hill that was later named in his honour; Howelsen Hill (Purdy-Gmuender & Gmuender, 1997). Howelsen Hill was, and still remains as, the primary training ground for the SSWSC. Post-World War II, it was further developed to include a downhill ski slope, thus also becoming a recreational skiing centre for the rest of the community (Rothman, 1998a). It is currently the oldest, continuously running ski area in Colorado and one of the few international ski jumping complexes in North America (Writer & Company, 1994). The SSWSC is also the oldest ski club west of the Mississippi and the first to make skiing an accredited part of the school curriculum in 1944 (Towler, 1987). In addition, it is the only club in the nation to provide training in three disciplines: Nordic, Alpine, and Freestyle. It is also the home club for more Olympic and World Champion skiers and members of the US Ski Team than any other community in the USA (Towler, 1987). The introduction and involvement of Carl Howelsen, his development of Howelsen Hill, and the impetus he provided for the creation of the SSWSC, is therefore widely recognised as having formed the basis for the skiing identity and the Olympic legacy of “Ski Town, U.S.A®” for Steamboat Springs today.
Olympic legacy of “Ski Town, U.S.A®”

First referred to as “Ski Town” in the headline of a January 1947 Associated Press newspaper article, Steamboat Springs was acknowledged as having a population of 1,700 people, of which 1,685 were skiers, with all others being children under the age of one year (Towler, 1987). This original “Ski Town” moniker has since developed over time into the title and brand of “Ski Town, U.S.A®”, with Steamboat Springs proving itself as one of the best winter sporting centres within North America (Towler, 1987). Since 1932, 71 athletes have made 117 Winter Olympic appearances at the Winter Olympic Games. Most famously, this includes Buddy Werner, a local ranch youth whose world-wide skiing success in the 1950s brought international fame and recognition to American skiing (Rothman, 1998b). With his untimely death in an avalanche in Switzerland in 1964, an Act of Congress was passed on February 1st, 1965 to rename Storm Mountain, upon which the ski resort in Steamboat Springs had recently been built, to Mt Werner in his honour. A ski run on the mountain is also named after Buddy Werner (Buddy’s Run), along with this monument shown in the photograph below, which sits at the top of Storm Peak.

Photograph 2. Monument of Buddy Werner at the top of Storm Peak, Mt Werner. Source: N.Ooi
Yet, despite having produced multiple generations of skiing champions and Olympians, it was not until the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympics that Steamboat Springs claimed its first home-grown Olympic medal, with a bronze in the men’s moguls (Olsen, 1999). Most recently, Steamboat Springs celebrated their greatest Olympic success with a silver medal at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics in the Men’s Nordic Combined team event, and an individual silver medal in the Men’s Nordic Combined. Thus, the Olympic success and legacy of Steamboat Springs continues to this day and remains a key source of community pride.


The development of mountain resort tourism

While skiing had long been a part of the culture and way of life within Steamboat Springs, it was not until the development of the ski resort that tourism became central to the economic base of the community (Mitsch Bush, 2006). Through the efforts of local ranchers, the first ski resort in Steamboat Springs was built in 1958, remaining locally owned until the need for large-scale investment resulted in its sale to outside corporate owners in 1969. Around the same time, the proposed hosting of the 1972 Winter Olympics in Colorado led to significant development and investment interests in the creation of a secondary ski resort,
Lake Catamount Resort. This proved to be a turning point in community attitudes towards outside investment and ski tourism development, with dissent openly expressed for the first time. Over the years, such tension between the community of Steamboat Springs and tourism development has continued, with the numerous changes in corporate ownership and the increased focus on real estate development having altered the nature of community and tourism governance. Combined with the inclusion of a summer tourism product, these changes represent the gradual shift in focus that has occurred over time from the provision of ski tourism to mountain resort tourism.

**The cowboys and their skis: The creation of the ski resort**

The development of the ski resort in Steamboat Springs was not the result of outside investment interests, but the culmination of local efforts to provide greater skiing and economic opportunities within the Yampa Valley. As stated by a local rancher, John Fetcher, in his report to the stockholders (as cited in Towler, 1987, p. 108):

‘The residents of Steamboat Springs almost literally built Mt Werner with their bare hands. While most ski areas have sprung up because of the foresight of outside influences, Mt Werner grew out of the love of a community for a sport, its determination, pride and the natural terrain necessary for a great ski hill’.

This idea to develop a ski resort on Storm Mountain was envisioned by Jim Temple, a local rancher who had acquired ski resort experience at Sun Valley, Idaho (Rothman, 1998a). To self-finance the venture, he sold part of his family ranch to buy land surrounding the base of Storm Mountain and created the Storm Mountain Corporation in 1958 with another local rancher, John Fetcher. Ground was broken on July 6th 1958, with the first ski lift installed by 1961 with the support of the local community. Throughout the early 1960s, additional improvements financed by these two ranchers were made, including the installation of three lifts and the creation of numerous ski runs.

However, as other ski resorts began to develop and improve across the state, the need for improved financing to remain competitive required outside investment. By 1969, the energy and resources of John Fetcher and Jim Temple had been drained and the Storm Mountain Corporation was renamed and sold to LTV Aerospace Corporation (LTV), a subsidiary of the multinational corporation Ling-Temco-Vought of Texas (Rothman, 1998b).
Despite later efforts, this marked the end of local ownership of the ski area, with the future of the resort from this point onwards in the control of outside corporations and investment interests.

Colorado and the Winter Olympics: Lake Catamount Resort

Amidst the sale of the ski area from the local ranchers to LTV in 1969, Routt County faced another development prospect; an additional ski resort and community at Pleasant Valley, approximately seven miles up-valley from Steamboat Springs (Mitsch Bush, 2006). Despite strong opposition by residents of Steamboat Springs and Routt County, developers purchased the necessary ranchland for the creation of the resort and began building a dam to create Lake Catamount in 1976. This was despite this proposal having been initially disapproved by the Routt County Planning Commission, before this decision was overturned by the Routt County Commissioners in 1974. This resulted in protests by the Routt County Planning Commission and the many citizens who had previously voiced their opposition to these development plans (Gosnell Schneider, 1994).

With financial difficulties halting the development in 1978, it was not until 1981 that plans for Lake Catamount resumed (Mitsch Bush, 2006). This time, the aim was to develop a ski area surrounded by a golf course, 3,000 housing units, 250,000 square feet of commercial retail space, and 1,000 hotel rooms (Mitsch Bush, 2006). All of this was seen as complementary to what already existed in Steamboat Springs, and would arguably allow the region to become more competitive with other Colorado ski resort destinations (Gosnell Schneider, 1994). In spite of significant opposition, yet again from local environmentalists, ranchers, and skiers; the United States Forest Service (USFS) authorised the construction of Lake Catamount Ski Resort in 1993. However, the loss of a financial partner in 1995 led to the development being put up for sale once again. This encouraged the formation of the Yampa Valley Land Trust (YVLT); a grassroots, non-profit land conservation organisation, which sought to raise the funds to buy and preserve Lake Catamount.

Although the YVLT was not successful and the development was eventually sold to Okemo Mountain Resort in 1996, these efforts by the community led to the creation of a partnership between the YVLT and Okemo Mountain Resort. What was proposed and subsequently agreed upon was a much smaller development that cancelled the ski area permit with the USFS and refunded all lots previously sold (Mitsch Bush, 2006). Today, this small-
scale development is home to the private Catamount Ranch and Club which has retained much of the land as open space through the implementation of conservation easements, with only a limited number of homes and facilities replacing the original large-scale development that was planned (Mitsch Bush, 2006). Thus, although the development of Lake Catamount was unable to be stopped by the community of Steamboat Springs, their active involvement through protests and the creation of the YVLT helped to minimise the size of this development and preserve much of the ranching open space within the area.

**The corporatisation of the ski resort**

In 1969, the sale of the Storm Mountain Corporation to LTV signified the beginning of the delocalisation of ski tourism investment within Steamboat Springs, with what is now titled as the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC), having passed through the ownership of five different corporations since this initial sale. Although a necessary move due to the lack of resources, energy, and knowledge of ski resort management by the ranching founders, this introduction of outside investment and the subsequent development of the resort brought with it some major changes to the community (Rothman, 1998b). During the first five years of ownership by LTV, the population of Routt County rose from 6,170 to 8,060 (Rothman, 1998b), with growth and investment of this scale having never previously been experienced within Steamboat Springs. It was this initial shift to a large-scale corporate ownership structure of governance that marked the beginning of the economic transition of the community from a ranching and agriculture base to the increasingly significant ski tourism industry (Rothman, 1998b).

By the early 1980s, this transition was complete, with ski tourism generating more than 60 per cent of the sales tax revenue within the entire county (Rothman, 1998b). At the same time, the growing interest of developers in establishing housing tracts and estates led to a rapid rise in real estate values and property development within Steamboat Springs and surrounds (Rothman, 1998b). This adoption of a pro-growth model of development reflected a shift in focus from ski tourism to the more holistic creation of a mountain resort tourism experience, as was most notably consolidated through the change of ownership in 1996 to the American Skiing Company (ASC). This brought about perhaps the most controversial decade of ownership (Freiberger, 2009), with the ASC’s interest in base area and real estate development of significant concern to the community (Rothman, 1998b). These concerns
were exacerbated with the ASC’s construction of the Steamboat Grand Hotel, with its standardised design raising fears that they were bringing a homogenised mountain resort tourism experience to Steamboat Springs.

Nevertheless, by the end of 2001, the SSRC was once again up for sale as a result of financial difficulties experienced by the ASC. Amongst a number of interested buyers was a partnership between local Steamboat investors and the owners of Okemo Mountain Resort (who also own the Lake Catamount development) to bring ownership of the resort back within the community. After attempts to reach an agreement with this group failed, alongside plans to sell to another corporation (Triple Peaks LLC), the SSRC was finally sold to Intrawest ULC in 2007; the current owner today.

**Intrawest and the SSRC**

Intrawest ULC was founded in 1976 as a real estate firm before it expanded into mountain resort development during the mid-1980s. By combining its expertise in real estate development and mountain operations through the creation of base area “village” offerings (as discussed in Chapter 3), Intrawest ULC has since established itself in North America as a leading mountain resort developer at a number of destinations including Mont Tremblant in Quebec, Blue Mountain in Ontario, Steamboat Springs and Winter Park in Colorado, Snowshoe Mountain in West Virginia, and Stratton Mountain in Vermont (Intrawest ULC, 2013). This is in addition to its ownership and management of: Canadian Mountain Holidays, the largest heli-skiing operation in the world; Club Intrawest, a private resort club that has numerous locations worldwide; and a network of other resort villages and hotels within North America. Today, Intrawest ULC is currently owned by the private equity firm Fortress Investment Group LLC (Intrawest ULC, 2013).

Although Intrawest ULC’s focus as a resort corporation has largely revolved around the development, management, and sale of commercial and residential real estate options, their approach within Steamboat Springs has been a little different. Given that much of the mountain base area real estate had been previously sold off by the ASC in order to address their mounting financial issues, Intrawest ULC has focused primarily on the improvement and operation of on-mountain facilities, with other lodging companies, private owners, and local businesses providing much of the ancillary service products such as restaurants, accommodation, and retail outlets. The exceptions to this are the Steamboat Grand Hotel and
a small number of mountain rental equipment and retail stores in the mountain base area, which are still owned and managed by the SSRC. This is unlike many other mountain resort destinations such as Vail, Colorado, where the corporation owns the on-mountain operations and the majority of surrounding restaurants, retail stores, and accommodation options (Clifford, 2002).

The shift from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism

As discussed above, the shift from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism within Steamboat Springs has been a gradual process that has accompanied the development and change in ownership of the SSRC over the years. Beginning in the late 1970s and accelerating during the 1990s under the ownership of the ASC, this transition from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism has been made evident by both the extension of the tourism season to include a summer tourism product, and the increased focus on real estate development and amenity migration.

Balancing seasonality: Summer tourism development

Accompanying the growth of ski tourism throughout the 1970s and 1980s was the increased recognition by the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association (SSCRA) of the need to balance the seasonality of ski tourism. In 1984, the SSCRA became the driving vehicle for the development of a summer tourism product, particularly through their role in implementing a dedicated funding mechanism provided by local businesses via a rescinded vendor’s collection fee for summer tourism marketing. Since then, the SSCRA has taken charge of the marketing of Steamboat Springs as a summer tourism destination, while the SSRC is responsible for winter tourism marketing.

The summer tourism product in Steamboat Springs has developed significantly over the years with events in particular, playing a significant role in encouraging tourism visitation. While some of these events have been created by the SSCRA and SSRC to attract increased visitation, others include local community races, celebrations, and fundraisers; some of which have become tourist attractions in their own right. For example, the Tour De Steamboat and the Steamboat Marathon are two popular community sporting events which also attract large
numbers of tourists and amenity migrants. Other major sporting events include Ride the Rockies, the USA Pro Cycling Challenge, the Mountain Soccer Tournament, and the Triple Crown softball and baseball; all of which are state- and nation-wide sporting events that have helped increase exposure for the community of Steamboat Springs as a recreational tourism and sporting destination.

Photograph 4. USA Pro Cycling Challenge 2011, Lincoln Ave, Steamboat Springs. Source: N.Ooi

In addition to some of these larger events that draw significant numbers of visitors to Steamboat Springs every year, there are a variety of smaller-scale events which help to enhance the tourism experience. These include the Steamboat Springs Pro Rodeo Series, a summer tradition that dates back to the community’s beginnings with competitions held every Friday and Saturday evening; the Strings Music Festival, which is a summer concert program that provides music and theatre performances; Seminars at Steamboat, a series of dialogues and discussions on public policy issues by nationally recognised experts; the free summer and winter music concert series; and the Steamboat Springs Farmers Market, which has become a local gathering spot and gives local growers and producers the opportunity to sell their products to both the community and visitors. Appendix J provides a table of all of these events and more for the summer tourism season of 2011, with this broad showcase of sports,
entertainment, arts, and Western culture central to the success of summer tourism development within Steamboat Springs.

Alongside these events, a wide range of outdoor recreational activities have long attracted tourists to Steamboat Springs and the surrounding area. As depicted in the following photograph that I took upstream of the 13th Street bridge in downtown Steamboat Springs, opportunities for white-water rafting, kayaking, tubing, and fly-fishing are abundant and easily accessible, with the Yampa River directly flowing through town.

Photograph 5. White-water rafting on the Yampa River. Source: N.Ooi

Other popular summer and autumn recreational activities within Steamboat Springs and Routt County include hiking, hunting, and both road and mountain biking. Overall, the growing success of these events and activities in attracting tourists to Steamboat Springs can be noted in the numbers, with approximately 250,000 tourists visiting Steamboat Springs in the summer, as compared to the 350,000 that come during the winter (SSCRA, 2011/12b).

“Bike Town USA” initiative

The most recent addition to the development of the summer tourism product has been the push for the creation of “Bike Town USA”. In 2009, a small group of biking enthusiasts
formed the “Bike Town USA” initiative; a grassroots collaboration that aims to promote economic development, lifestyle enhancement, and tourism visitation through the establishment of Steamboat Springs as a summer biking destination (Steamboat Springs Bike Town USA Initiative, 2010). Since then, this initiative has sought to identify and develop the various biking strengths within the community, which most notably include the wide variety of trails, infrastructure, and terrain; all of which make Steamboat Springs and the wider Routt County a suitable location for cross-country biking, downhill mountain biking, road riding, and cruiser bike riding. The tourism and economic aim of the “Bike Town USA” initiative is therefore to develop and rebrand the community of Steamboat Springs in the summertime as a world-class biking destination, with this adoption of the “Bike Town USA” moniker seen as complementary to the existing “Ski Town, U.S.A®” identity held by the community. This initiative is still currently in its early stages, having only been implemented for the first time during the summer of 2011.

**Real estate development and the rise in second-home ownership**

Over the years, the introduction of ski tourism, its subsequent rise in popularity, and the additional development of summer tourism, have contributed to the growth and expansion of the population of Steamboat Springs and Routt County. From 1990 to 2009, the population of Routt County rose from 14,088 to 23,469 people (67 per cent), with Steamboat Springs’ share of that population rising by 42 per cent from 7,109 to 12,172 people (Department of Planning & Community Development, 2009). During this same period of time, the number of housing units (all single-family homes, condominiums, townhouses, and luxury estates) increased by 59 per cent in Routt County (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). This was in spite of the drop in real estate development as a result of the economic recession in 2007, with an additional 2,219 housing units added in Steamboat Springs from 2000 to 2009, thus raising the total number from 7,089 to 9,308 (Department of Planning and Community Development, 2009).

However, according to Gooding (2010), this magnitude of development that has occurred within Steamboat Springs has far outweighed the growth in population from 2000 to 2009, with a rise in second-home ownership providing a probable explanation for the increase in real estate. This is supported by the growing vacancy rate, which has risen from 40.27 per cent to 45.32 per cent over the same time period (Department of Planning & Community Development, 2009).
An escalated demand for real estate by second-home owners has also been observed in the ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs, with 71 per cent of ranch sales that occurred in Routt County from 1990-2001 going to non-local buyers; the majority of whom were identified as amenity buyers (Gosnell & Travis, 2005).

Yet at the same time, this increase in vacancy rates seems to be slowing down. This has been attributed to the growing number of retirees who appear to be transitioning from second-home owners into full-time residents, and the rising number of telecommuting professionals who have permanently migrated into the community (Department of Planning & Community Development, 2009). These two categories of amenity migrants therefore appear to be contributing to the current growth and diversification of the population and economy of Steamboat Springs.

**The growth of the “residential/lifestyle economy”**

The term “residential/lifestyle economy” has been adopted by the community of Steamboat Springs and the wider Routt County to describe the growing number of amenity migrants who are moving into the region and are not dependent upon the local economy for income (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). This largely refers to retirees, and telecommuters who earn their income remotely (Glorioso & Moss, 2007). These mostly permanent amenity migrants have been identified as being attracted to Steamboat Springs for the range of natural, recreation, and cultural amenities which have made it a popular mountain resort tourism destination (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). This “residential/lifestyle economy” is therefore seen as being closely related to the mountain resort tourism industry, with the improved facilities and services that have accompanied mountain resort tourism playing a significant role in attracting these often wealthy individuals.

Population trends indicate continued growth within the older demographic, with the percentage of people aged 45 to 64 years old in Routt County having increased nearly 51 per cent since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Many of these appear to be retirees who have chosen to move to Steamboat Springs, having sufficient economic means to comfortably reside within the community. These retirees appear to be attracted by the desirability of the location, the recreational lifestyle, the quality of health care amenities, and other amenities and services that have developed as a result of mountain resort tourism (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10).
Countering this ageing trend within the community is the rising number of footloose employees and businesses (Beyers & Nelson, 2000), commonly referred to as location neutral businesses and employees (LNBs). Although not mutually exclusive from the retiree segment, LNBs appear to represent a slightly younger demographic (between 35-50 years of age) within the community (SSCRA, 2011/12b). They are the fastest growing economic sector within Routt County, with the 1,500 LNBs that have been identified accounting for approximately eight per cent of wages and contributing somewhere between $70-80 million USD to the economy (SSCRA, 2011/12b). These LNBs include remote employees for large corporations, as well as such diverse organisations as Wing-Time Buffalo Wing Sauce; Steamboat Investment Advisors, LLC, a financial investment firm; Storm Peak Innovations, a software development company and technology incubator; and Little Moon Essentials, a mineral bath and skin care company; amongst others. Some of the largest companies within Routt County are also LNBs, with head offices for Smartwool, a merino wool outdoor clothing manufacturer; ACZ labs, an environmental testing laboratory; and TIC Holdings, a heavy industrial construction contracting company; all located within Steamboat Springs.

The role and value of ranching, agriculture, and mining

Photograph 6. Sculpture of the rancher, skier, and miner representing the main industries of Routt County, Lincoln Ave, Steamboat Springs. Source: N.Ooi
Unlike many other ski resort destinations located within Colorado, Steamboat Springs is unique in that it is a community that had already carved out an identity for itself, both culturally and economically, prior to the introduction of ski tourism (Rothman, 1998b). Since the installation of the first ski lift in 1961, however, mountain resort tourism has come to dominate what was once a region that was largely reliant upon the traditional extractive industries of mining, ranching, and agriculture. Nevertheless, in spite of the unparalleled growth of tourism having affected each of these industries, all can still be found to play an important role within the county, whether economically, socio-culturally, or environmentally.

In regards to mining, the Peabody Twentymile Coal Mine located outside of the township of Hayden is one of the largest coal producers in Colorado and the largest taxpayer within Routt County. In 2008, the mine employed 515 people and shipped 8.6 million tons of coal; more than 25 per cent of Colorado’s total coal production (SSCRA, 2011/12b). Most recently, natural gas and oil exploration has become of significant interest for outside investors, with speculative land purchases common throughout the county and the wider Northwest Colorado region. Yet although mining and natural gas and oil exploration are significant economic contributors within the county as a whole, their influence on Steamboat Springs has been of lesser significance in comparison to some of the other townships. This is because limited mining and exploration has occurred within Steamboat Springs, and in the immediate surrounding areas, since the original exploration for gold in the late 1800s. Instead, it has been the community of Hayden that has established a much stronger association with mining over the years, due to its close proximity to the mine.
What does appear to be of greater importance and relevance to both community members and tourists within the community of Steamboat Springs, is the continued existence of ranching and agriculture. Throughout Routt County, cattle ranching and the associated farming of alfalfa and hay continue to be production staples, with other crops and produce that are grown and raised in the region including sheep, horses, wheat, barley, and oats (SSCRA, 2011/12b). This is in addition to the raising of exotic livestock such as buffalo and ranch-raised elk (Mitsch Bush, 2006). Recent growing interest in community supported agriculture (CSA), the production and sale of local produce to consumers, has also led to a rise in the number of small-scale ranching and agricultural operations such as Elkstone Farm, Firefly Mountain Produce, Rockin J Cattle, Villard Ranch, Bar A Ranch, and Yampa Valley Beef, amongst others (Northwest Colorado Products, 2011). Although these small-scale operations appear indicative of the strength of ranching and agriculture within the county, the direct economic value of all ranching and agricultural activities is still less than a half of one per cent of the total personal income earned within Routt County (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10).

Yet despite its minimal direct economic contribution, the continued existence of ranching and agriculture has been found to provide an active link to the Western ranching culture, being commonly described by tourists and residents as what defines and shapes the “rural character” of the region (Conservation Partners Inc., 1995). In addition, the open ranchlands within Routt County (as depicted in Photograph 8) that provide the scenic natural backdrop in which tourism and recreational activities take place, form a central component of the mountain resort tourism experience. As identified by Ellingson, Seidl and Mucklow (2006) in their research on the value of the ranching landscape within Routt County, 50 per cent of summer tourists stated that the loss of open ranchlands would affect their length of stay and subsequent expenditure within the county, resulting in potential losses of approximately $8 USD million annually for the Steamboat Springs economy.
Photograph 8. Open ranchlands, Carpenter Ranch, Hayden. Source: N.Ooi

This highlights the importance of the continued existence of working ranches as an essential part of the rural character of Steamboat Springs, for the scenic value of the open ranchlands, and for the subsequent indirect economic revenue provided through increased tourist expenditure and length of stay. As noted within the Routt County Open Lands Plan, the true value of ranching and agriculture should therefore be recognised as a combination of its productive output, and the tourism benefits provided by the maintenance of the ranching landscape (Conservation Partners Inc., 1995).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I covered a range of background information to provide the context for my case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs and the wider Routt County. Beginning with their geographic location, I discussed the ranching, agricultural, mining, and skiing heritage of the area, before focusing upon the historic development of ski tourism and the shift to mountain resort tourism through the adoption of a summer tourism product, the inclusion of real estate development, and the attraction of amenity migrants. This was followed by my acknowledgement of the continued existence and importance of ranching, agriculture, and mining alongside mountain resort tourism.

In the next chapter, I begin my analysis and discussion of my research findings by addressing my first research objective pertaining to the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism.
Chapter 6. Mountain resort tourism impacts

Introduction

In this chapter, I address my first research objective by examining the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and how they have affected the community of Steamboat Springs. While there has been a tendency within the tourism literature to divide these impacts into economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions (as discussed in Chapter 3), I acknowledge the inherent difficulties associated with such categorisation as many impacts overlap between these dimensions. I also recognise how the classification of impacts as either positive or negative is highly complex and difficult to ascertain, as what may benefit some, can negatively affect others. I have therefore avoided such categorisations within this chapter, instead choosing to focus on how any one impact can have both positive and negative aspects, and bridge economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions.

Increase in sales tax revenues: The ‘town that tourism built’

Within the city limits of Steamboat Springs, 4.75 per cent of the total sales tax collected is remitted to the local government, alongside an additional one per cent accommodation tax for tourism lodging and rentals, and a two per cent local marketing district tax within the mountain base area. While this sales-based taxation system distributes the tax burden amongst tourists, amenity migrants, and permanent residents alike, the additional accommodation and marketing district taxes levied specifically within the mountain base area where a concentration of tourism activity occurs, means that tourists tend to pay the highest tax rates within the city. Tourists therefore appear to be of significant economic importance to the community of Steamboat Springs, with their spending estimated as supplying 35-40 per cent of the total sales tax revenue for the city (SSCRA, 2011/12b). Of this, approximately 55-60 per cent is generated during the winter tourism season, courtesy of the high-spend, luxury ski tourism market (SSCRA, 2011/12b).

Such contributions to the local tax base can be seen as an indirect benefit of tourist expenditure, having been used to fund infrastructural improvements and community services (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). As noted by many community members, tourist spending and the
subsequent increase in discretionary funds, has allowed the community to develop and improve the range and quality of amenities and services available. This has led to the commonly recited phrase that Steamboat Springs is the ‘town that tourism built’, with the Bud Werner Memorial Library, Howelsen Hill, the Yampa Valley Core Trail, Howelsen Ice Rink, the Steamboat Springs Community Centre, the free Steamboat Springs’ bus transit system, and the direct airline service at the Yampa Valley Regional Airport being just some of the facilities and services that have benefited from additional tax dollars. As explained by a location neutral business (LNB) owner:

‘Definitely one of the great things in this town you feel is that everything we have: the library, the community centre, the great trails, all the services and all the amenities; it’s paid for by people that are only here for one week of the year. I mean, we only have to trade beds with ten thousand of them at a time!’ (Interviewee 42)

However, alongside the economic recession in 2007 and the resulting decline in tourism visitation and spending, there has been an accompanying decrease in sales tax revenue from its peak of $19,726,038 USD in 2007, to $16,558,792 USD in 2010 (SSCRA, 2011/12c). Given that these tourism dollars are used to fund both tourism and community facilities and services, this decline has highlighted the economic vulnerability associated with relying upon tourist spending as the predominant economic base. As recognised by Interviewee 19: ‘We have had to cut back our government people. We’ve laid off people, we’ve cut back their number of hours they’re working, we’ve cut back services’. This need to implement such austerity measures as a Friday furlough, which has reduced the work week to four days for all city employees, is just one example of the difficulties that result from the community being so heavily dependent upon tourism and its contribution to the sales tax base.

Increase in land and property values

At the same time, the rapid rate of development and investment that has occurred in mountain resort communities to attract tourists and amenity migrants has led to increased competition for space and housing, and subsequently, the escalation of real estate values (Gill, 2007). This is illustrative of the situation in both Steamboat Springs and Routt County, with real estate values having risen significantly over the years, even after the effects of the economic recession are taken into consideration. Statistics for Routt County show that the median sale price for a single-family home rose from $230,000 USD in 1998 to $422,300 in
2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), having reached $470,000 in 2008 prior to the effects of the economic recession (BBC Research & Consulting, 2009). In Steamboat Springs, real estate values have experienced even greater inflation, with the average price of a single family home worth approximately $700,000 USD in 2010, having risen to $735,000 in 2007 (Yampa Valley Housing Authority, 2010). This is in comparison to the national average of $242,300 USD in 2011 for all new homes sold (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). This dramatic escalation in property value over the years can be seen as one of the most significant socio-economic impacts experienced by the community of Steamboat Springs (Mitsch Bush, 2006).

As highlighted in the above statistics, property inflation has occurred not only in Steamboat Springs, but also in the other communities within Routt County. According to the 2009 Routt County Housing Needs Assessment Report, all housing units within all communities, aside from single-family homes in Yampa, have more than doubled in price from 1998 to 2008 (BBC Research & Consulting, 2009). In particular, there has been a dramatic increase in the price of housing units in Oak Creek and Hayden, with these two communities being the closest to Steamboat Springs. This demonstrates the “ripple effect” caused by rising property values within a resort community, where the increased unaffordability of real estate has pushed many residents out into neighbouring communities, which in turn has inflated the property values in these surrounding regions (Gill & Clark, 2006).

Rising numbers and demands of tourists and amenity migrants have also contributed to the subdivision of ranches and farms to develop ranchettes (Mitchell et al., 2002). As discussed in Chapter 3, the desire for these luxury rural residences has brought about a change in land use patterns within mountain regions, resulting in growing competition for land and an accompanying increase in land values that has encouraged ranchers to sell-off large acreage tracts. This shift towards ranchette development was explained by a representative of a sustainability-focused non-profit organisation in the following way:

‘The boom in real estate in the 90s, starting in the 90s up until it just dropped, a lot of folks would go out and buy ranchland specifically to subdivide it into thirty-five acre tracts...But it was all about real estate development because real estate was the hot commodity. I mean, it was going like gang busters here’ (Interviewee 36).

With the prices obtained for these rural subdivisions being substantially more than can be gained from ranching and agricultural production (American Farmland Trust, 2000), the current market valuation of private ranchland within Routt County is up to 20 times or more
than the productive value of the working ranches that sit upon it (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). As stated by Interviewee 14, a local rancher: ‘you could spend maybe five hundred dollars an acre for a cow. That land is in the five thousand right now. So you can’t buy land and rent cows on it’. Thus, in spite of the decline in real estate prices after the 2007 economic recession, the valuation of property within Steamboat Springs and in the surrounding ranchlands still remains very high.

**A lack of housing affordability**

This rise in real estate values has been identified within past studies, and is supported by my own research findings, as having contributed to a lack of affordable housing within Steamboat Springs (Culbertson et al., 1993; Garren, 1995). According to the Routt County Housing Needs Assessment, housing affordability is determined by the percentage of cost burdened households; those households paying more than 30 per cent of their income in housing costs, whether for housing rentals or home ownership (BBC Research & Consulting, 2009). Documents from 2007 indicate that 34 per cent of renters and 48 per cent of home owners within Routt County are considered to be cost burdened, with the high price of real estate combined with the low wages associated with tourism, minimising housing affordability for many community members (BBC Research & Consulting, 2009).

This lack of housing affordable is further made evident by the affordability gap that exists between average house prices and average wages. Although the average house price in Routt County in 2008 was $470,000 USD, an individual earning the average yearly wage ($38,376 USD) was found to be unable to afford a home priced any higher than $106,700 USD after accounting for taxes, insurance, and utilities (BBC Research & Consulting, 2009). With housing prices in Steamboat Springs being predominantly higher than that within Routt County, such a gap in affordability is even more pronounced.

As a result, affordable home ownership options within Steamboat Springs are limited to small condominiums or mobile homes, with only a few townhouses and single-family homes priced between $180,000 to $270,000 USD existing within city limits (Robert Charles Lesser & Co., 2008). While these options are suitable for singles living with roommates or couples not planning to have children, those who do have children or are considering children have been identified within the Steamboat Springs Workforce Housing Demand Analysis as having limited options (Robert Charles Lesser & Co., 2008). This has been found to have
contributed to the loss of many residents aged between 30-49 years old (Robert Charles Lesser & Co., 2008). As explained by a human services representative: ‘the middle-class eventually gets squeezed out’ (Interviewee 13), leading to either their permanent departure or migration down-valley. This consequently results in long-distance commutes and the creation of sprawling bedroom communities (Riebsame et al., 1996), with these issues discussed in greater detail below.

**Increase in cost of living**

Mountain resort tourism has also been acknowledged as inflating the price of goods and services, making it difficult for community members to afford basic necessities (Milne et al., 2006; Moss, 2006). Although community members such as Interviewee 33 acknowledged that tourism has brought greater food and retail options to Steamboat Springs: ‘we wouldn’t have good coffee...good bread, whatever’, other community members argued that the corresponding rise in the cost of goods and services has limited their ability to visit local restaurants, stores, and even attend certain events. As explained by Interviewee 23, the significant mark-up that has been put in place to capitalise from tourists has meant that she can no longer afford to patron local businesses: ‘I’m not going to pay an extra forty bucks just because you happen to be located in Steamboat. I can’t afford to do that and be paid twelve dollars an hour on the other side’. I too found that while I enjoyed visiting many of the downtown stores to look at the clothing, art, and trinkets on offer, the prices charged by many of these businesses were noticeably higher than elsewhere, and certainly beyond the affordability of many low-income tourism service workers. Thus, although the tendency for local businesses to inflate prices for tourists is commonplace (Murphy, 1985), this has also raised the costs of goods and services beyond the means of many community members in Steamboat Springs. As emphasised by Interviewee 23: ‘we’ve gotten into a system now where the locals really have been priced out of the marketplace’.

The significance of these escalating costs which have resulted from mountain resort tourism is also made evident through comparisons of self-sufficiency levels in Routt County; the necessary income required by individuals to meet basic needs without public or private assistance (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). In 2007, the self-sufficiency level at the Federal Poverty Level was noted as $9,570 USD for individuals or $19,350 USD for a family of four per annum. However, in order to be self-sufficient within Routt County, the required amount
for an individual was found to be $22,361 USD or $61,490 USD for a family of four per annum (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). Furthermore, those wages relating to tourism were identified as the lowest when compared to any other employment sector in Routt County in 2007. Accommodation and food services provided wages below the self-sufficient level at $19,265 USD, while the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector ($23,421 USD), and the retail sector ($26,121), both paid just above the self-sufficiency level (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). As a result, many tourism service workers appear to be faced with above average costs whilst receiving below average pay (Clifford, 2002), thus making the affordability of housing and goods and services a key issue within Steamboat Springs.

The need for multiple jobs

In order to address these high costs of living, the need to hold more than one job so that they can make ends meet was an issue that was identified by many community members. Although this impact has not been widely discussed within the tourism literature, this seems to be a commonplace reality for both seasonal and full-time workers. As stated by Interviewee 18, a young adult who at one point was working five jobs at the same time: ‘it’s hard to have just one job because you can’t…it’s not like the big corporations where you’re going to make a lot of money’. This issue was also acknowledged by another young adult who explained how many of her friends rely on additional sources of income because of the low wages and high costs, despite holding full-time professional jobs: ‘I know a whole bunch of executive directors that have waitressing jobs, or babysitting. They babysit or have little side gigs’ (Interviewee 2). A county employee similarly recognised the need for many of her staff to balance professional and part-time jobs: ‘Over half of my staff here in this department works more than one job. And that’s just what it takes to live here, because it’s so expensive’ (Interviewee 29). Thus, as summed up by Interviewee 16, ‘it takes three jobs to live in Steamboat’.

Many ranchers also mentioned how they work additional jobs to supplement their lifestyle, with rising property values and the increase in costs of ranch operations having diminished what are already relatively low profitability levels within the industry (Yarbrough, Kapela & O’Brady, 2006). As noted by Interviewee 9, a multi-generational rancher within the county:
‘Because of the ski resort, the value of the land has gone sky high...[so] if you do not have an unlimited resource of money you can’t buy ground here, buy your equipment, and make your ranching operation work’.

As a result, all of the ranchers in Routt County with the exception of one large family operation were found to be reliant upon additional sources of income. These include jobs in retail, real estate sales specialising in ranches and ranchettes, and events security for the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC), as well as working as assistants to state government representatives and as paid staff within ranching and agricultural non-profit organisations. As explained by Interviewee 9, the only other alternative is that ‘if you’re going to ranch, you’ve got to have a wife that works in town’.

Seasonality of employment

Mountain resort tourism is also by nature a seasonal industry, with fluctuations in tourism demand throughout the year presenting a number of challenges for both tourism workers and their employers (Murphy, 1985). As discussed in the previous chapter, significant efforts have been undertaken by the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association (SSCRA) to develop a summer tourism product to complement the existing ski tourism season in response to this issue of seasonality. While this has improved opportunities for businesses, allowing many to remain open year-round or for longer periods of the year, the quieter off-seasons of spring and autumn still result in a corresponding decrease in employment (Magnan & Seidl, 2004).

According to the Steamboat Springs Workforce Housing Analysis Demand, the number of seasonal workers currently exceeds the number of full-time employees in those industries related to mountain resort tourism such as leisure, hospitality, and construction (Robert Charles Lesser & Co., 2008). Thus, despite the extension of the tourism season, there still remains a significant fluctuation in visitation, meaning that many local businesses have to let employees go at the end of one season, and then hire new ones before the start of the next. As explained by Interviewee 35: ‘it’s hard for long-term businesses when you can’t employ people full-time.

Seasonality was also found to present challenges for workers, with the majority finding it difficult to secure sufficient and reliable employment that allows them to remain
within the community year-round. As stated by Interviewee 19: ‘everybody gets laid off in April and you’ve got to go find something else to go to or you go back home’. This was explained by a representative from the Department of Human Services as bringing about a cyclical nature to the assistance needs of the community, with those people who are laid off from work at the end of the ski season often needing government support for basic goods until the beginning of the summer tourism period. For those that leave to work elsewhere for the summer, they also require assistance upon return while they are waiting for snow at the beginning of the ski season. I found this observation to be relevant to a number of the seasonal workers whom I lived amongst, with many of my neighbours applying for unemployment benefits and food stamps at the end of the winter and summer tourism seasons. As recognised by Interviewee 29, this is a part of the ‘ebb and flow of how it works’ in Steamboat Springs, with this reliance upon public assistance at certain times of the year placing significant strain on community and government funded services.

However, although many employees struggle with the seasonality of work within Steamboat Springs, for others it appears to be desirable as it provides them with the time to be able to pursue their recreational interests. As explained by one tourism employee, many people come to the community specifically to recreate, with full-time work not necessarily their first priority:

‘I think it’s the kind of breed of people that come to a town like this. They’re okay with not making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year…we’re okay with piecing it together and having multiple jobs’ (Interviewee 49).

For many ranchers, the seasonality of work also seems to be largely beneficial as it allows them to support their primary source of income during the quieter winter months on the ranch (Power, 1996). Nevertheless, my interactions and conversations with other community members whom I found to be working seasonally suggest that apart from these two groups, the majority would still prefer to have a greater number of permanent job opportunities that would allow them to comfortably remain within Steamboat Springs year-round.
Limited career opportunities

As can be noted from the above discussion, although mountain resort tourism has increased the number and types of jobs available within Steamboat Springs, they are often seasonal and relatively menial in nature. As stated by Interviewee 33, a county employee: ‘many of the jobs associated with the resort industry are low paying jobs with no benefits’, such as working as a ski instructor, rental assistant in a ski store, waiter/waitress or barman/woman in a restaurant, or a concierge or bellboy at a hotel. Furthermore, many of these jobs offer limited scope for future career development or advancement (Krannich & Petzelka, 2003), as was captured by another phrase that I commonly heard within the community: ‘Steamboat’s long on jobs and short on careers’.

My observations and conversations with a range of community members supported these comments, with very few professional employment opportunities seemingly available during the ten months I lived within the community. I found that not only was the competition for professional jobs high, but also the competition for any part-time or seasonal positions that could potentially lead to full-time opportunities. This was the experience of a friend Emily*, a seasonal ski instructor for the resort who was looking for a more permanent job with the United States Forest Service (USFS) where she could utilise her degree in environmental science. Due to the competition for jobs with the USFS, given the potential for moving up within this organisation, she had to volunteer and fight to obtain even a low-paying, menial position on the summer trail maintenance crew. This was despite having previously held a more senior position with the USFS elsewhere in Colorado.

Such competitiveness was also noted amongst young teaching graduates, with one aspiring art teacher, Ben*, unable to find a teaching position in the two years he had been living in Steamboat Springs. As a result, he had resorted to working as a children’s ski instructor in the winter and as a driver for a resort accommodation provider in the summer to make ends meet. Interviewee 35, a local nurse who had also struggled to find work in her profession when she first arrived in the community, summed up these difficulties as a result of the fact that ‘most people, if they get a job and they like it, they stay with it until they die!’ This was a common sentiment expressed by community members, with widespread recognition of the limited professional positions, as compared to the amount of interested applicants seeking to live in Steamboat Springs.
Therefore, the community’s focus on economic development in recent years has turned to the rising number of LNBs and their potential for economic diversification and job creation within Steamboat Springs. As discussed in Chapter 5, LNBs are the fastest growing economic sector within the region, with many being permanent amenity migrants attracted to the tourism facilities and recreational lifestyle available. However, in spite of the rapid growth and diversification of this industry, the number of permanent positions available is still limited, with the majority of LNBs being either self-employed or small start-up businesses with few staff members. As noted by Interviewee 19, it is only the larger LNBs such as Smartwool, TIC, and ACZ labs that have the capability to provide a substantial number of full-time jobs. Thus, although LNBs have been recognised as a promising complement to the tourism industry and the future economic development of Steamboat Springs, the industry still appears to be in its preliminary stages of growth.

**Gentrification**

Another impact resulting from the growth and development of mountain resort tourism has been the gentrification of Steamboat Springs. This has been a result of the influx of wealth that has accompanied tourists and amenity migrants over the years, as demonstrated by the $23.5 million USD economic gain in personal income (income earned from both labour and non-labour sources such as dividends, interest, rental, and other investor activity) that was posted in Routt County in 2007 as a result of migration (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). This is in addition to the large percentage of part-time residences and inflated land and property values that can be found within the community (Robert Charles Lesser & Co., 2008).

This process of gentrification has brought with it significant cultural changes, such as an increased range of cultural and artistic offerings designed to address the interests and desires held by many affluent tourists and amenity migrants (Besculides et al., 2002). As noted by Interviewee 29:

‘One of the things we’ve seen since this second-homeowner boom is more culture. These people who are coming here; they’re sophisticated, they have money, they collect art. So now they want art galleries, they want to go out, and they want to have wine festivals and they want to have Strings in the Mountains’.
This has led to such creative endeavours as the Strings Music Festival, the Emerald City Opera, the free summer and winter concert series sponsored by the SSRC and the City of Steamboat Springs, and the bands and DJs that perform within the various restaurants and bars during the winter and summer tourism seasons. My daily examination of the entertainment guide within the local newspaper also uncovered a diversity of weekly artistic and entertainment options, ranging from bluegrass music to contemporary ballet, as well as gallery exhibitions, art shows, historic exhibitions at the Treads of Pioneer Museum, and dance and theatre performances by such renowned organisations as the Perry Mansfield Performing Arts School and Camp, to name a few.

Additionally, the rise in wealthy second-home owners and permanent amenity migrants appears to have mirrored a growth in non-profit organisations dedicated to the promotion of local arts and culture in Steamboat Springs, increasing from four in 1990 to 20 in 2008 (Weinstein, 2010). According to Interviewee 19, it is these amenity migrants who have played an important role in developing the profile of the arts within the non-profit realm, providing the necessary funding, time, interest, and often expertise. One commonly mentioned example was in regards to the creation and success of the Strings Music Festival; a non-profit organisation with a large membership base including many second-home owners and retirees. Over the 25 years that this organisation has existed, it has managed to garner the necessary sponsorship and donations to develop a permanent world-class concert venue (the Strings Music Pavilion), as well as attract a number of premier, international acts that many tourists and amenity migrants come to Steamboat Springs to watch perform.

Further still, the redevelopment of much of downtown Steamboat Springs can be acknowledged as being a part of the gentrification process. An increased variety of restaurants, bars, cafes, and stores, such as chocolatiers, galleries, and other specialty retail outlets can all be seen as catering to the expectations and demands of growing numbers of tourists and amenity migrants (Williams & Gill, 2006). While many of these are not necessarily affordable or of interest to community members, the construction of the more widely used Yampa Valley Core Trail for biking and walking has been of great benefit for the community. Conveniently connecting the mountain base area to downtown Steamboat Springs, my regular observations and use of this trail during the time I spent within the community highlighted its popularity amongst both tourists and community members alike.

However, the popularity of mountain resort tourism has also created an elite landscape of vacation properties and second-homes (Halseth, 2004), with the arrival of middle-upper
class amenity migrants having transformed the built environment through the construction of luxury housing developments (Nelson & Nelson, 2011). This includes the construction of Edgemont and One Steamboat Place; multi-million dollar condominium developments located at the base of Mt Werner, as well as the luxury housing estate, The Sanctuary, located on the Rollingstone Ranch Golf Course, amongst many others.

Photograph 9. One Steamboat Place, mountain base area, Steamboat Springs. Source: N.Ooi

These high-end real estate developments arguably provide a physical representation of the rising inequities in wealth between tourism workers and many of the second-home owners and amenity migrants for whom they are employed to serve (Hartmann, 2006a). This can be seen as contributing to the exacerbation of existing class distinctions within the community, as will be explored further in Chapter 9.
**Down-valley migration**

The down-valley migration of community residents and workers has also been widely acknowledged as an impact resulting from mountain resort tourism within the academic literature (Clark, 2006b; Gill & Williams, 1994; Hartmann, 2006b; Johnson et al., 2006). This was found to be of concern in Steamboat Springs where the increased unaffordability of housing and the rising costs of living have displaced long-term residents and workers into the surrounding communities of Oak Creek, Hayden, Yampa, and even Craig in the neighboring Moffat County. As explained by Interviewee 17, a long-term Routt County employee: ‘a regular Joe like you and me, we can’t afford to live here...So the middle class lives in Craig or Hayden or Yampa and drives into work’. In particular, family considerations and the desire for home ownership were identified by community members as two key reasons for down-valley migration. As stated by Interviewee 51, her decision as a single mother and tourism employee to move to Craig was so that she could afford to rent a house as opposed to live in a shared apartment in Steamboat Springs. For Interviewee 53, a lack of housing affordability was also the reason for down-valley migration, with the particular desire to own her own home resulting in her relocation to Craig:

‘I’d lived in Steamboat for eight years. I bought a trailer house. And I really wanted to [stay]. I loved living in Steamboat, but I wanted a house. I couldn’t afford one up here, so that’s why I moved to Craig’.

In 2000, 46 per cent of the working population in Steamboat Springs were found to be down-valley migrants, with 27 per cent of these identified as tourism service workers (Clark, 2006b). More recent figures show that a significant number of these down-valley migrants (approximately 1,323 workers) commute daily from Craig in Moffat County (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10). Steamboat Springs has thus become reliant upon both the surrounding communities within Routt County and the adjacent Moffat County to affordably house their workforce. As noted by Interviewee 8: ‘if we didn’t have those communities, we would not have enough workforce, period’.

However, while it has been largely assumed within the academic literature that most tourism workers who live in these surrounding communities and commute are those who cannot afford to reside within the mountain resort tourism destination itself (Clark, 2006b), my research identified others who have specifically made the choice not to reside in Steamboat Springs. Interviewee 33 gave the example of some county residents she knew who
had chosen to move to Oak Creek and Hayden because of the smaller and quieter nature of these communities: ‘They’re very proud of where they live. They don’t want to live in Steamboat. They didn’t just move there because it’s cheap. They want to be there’. With Steamboat Springs having grown so fast over the years, these surrounding communities are seen by some as providing a more stable social environment, with the constant in-and-out migration experienced in Steamboat Springs having occurred to a lesser degree. Nevertheless, although these individuals have not relocated due to prohibitive costs, their reasons for moving down-valley still appear to be related to the development of mountain resort tourism.

Regardless of the motivations behind such down-valley migration, my research shows that it has had a number of effects on the communities surrounding Steamboat Springs. As more people have moved outwards from the resort area, there has been a corresponding sprawl in development, as well as a rise in real estate values due to the greater demand for housing within these bedroom or commuter communities (Clark, 2006b). While this has provided homeowners and investors with a positive economic gain, it has also raised concerns that those who have relocated to these areas as down-valley migrants, will be made to move even further down-valley to more affordable regions over time or permanently migrate elsewhere (Gill, 1997b).

Down-valley migration has also had an effect on the surrounding communities in regards to sales tax revenue and the subsequent funding of the education system. Many down-valley migrants, in particular those who still live within Routt County and work in Steamboat Springs, acknowledged that they do most of their shopping within Steamboat Springs due to the greater variety of grocery and retail stores available. As noted by Interviewee 19: ‘They have to come here to buy because this is where Walmart is, this is where City Market is, this is where Ace Hardware is’. However, in doing so, they are contributing to the City of Steamboat Springs’ sales tax revenue, which benefits schools within Steamboat Springs at the expense of those in the surrounding communities. As explained by Interviewee 20, the half-cent sales tax that is attributed to all of the school districts within the City of Steamboat Springs means that the additional sales tax generated within city limits through tourism and the spending of commuters has led to increased funds, which have in turn contributed to smaller class sizes, improved technology, and thus an overall higher quality education.

This has encouraged many families living in the surrounding communities to send their children to schools within Steamboat Springs so that they too can benefit from the better facilities and teaching provided. As a result, the adjacent Hayden school district has
experienced a drop in enrolment numbers from 579 students in 1998, to 420 students in 2010, to 383 students in 2011, with families either leaving the county to find work opportunities elsewhere or enrolling their students in Steamboat Springs (Boyer, 2011). Similarly, the South Routt school district has experienced a drop in enrolment from 442 students in 2008 to 390 students in 2011 (Boyer, 2011). This reduction in numbers has translated to fewer dollars available to pay staff, run school buses, and diversify the curriculum, thus resulting in a loss of educational services (Boyer, 2011). This has contributed to a poorer quality of education, with the Hayden and South Routt school districts scoring lower in all three areas of reading, writing, and mathematics than the Steamboat Springs school district in 2011 (Colorado Department of Education, 2012). With such inter-community differences arguably the consequence of a lack of funds available for education within these surrounding communities, what appears to have resulted is a reinforcing cycle where the schools in Steamboat Springs continue to improve while the school districts of Hayden and South Routt struggle for sufficient enrolment numbers and funding. This can be seen as exacerbating inter-community inequalities, as will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

The dangers associated with commuting and the loss of time spent on mountain roads are two additional concerns that were identified by community members as being associated with down-valley migration. Interviewee 24 stated how ‘commuting can be deadly here’, because of the narrow county roads, congestion from cars driving in-and-out of Steamboat Springs, and long commutes. These dangers are further exacerbated in the wintertime by snow and ice on the roads, with heavy snowfall commonly bringing about rock falls that stop traffic and cause accidents. My own experiences driving along the US Highway 40 heading west from Steamboat Springs out to Hayden and Craig during both the winter and summer mirrored many of these concerns. In particular, I found the roads to be narrow in certain places and the speed at which some people were travelling, especially in the snow, to be quite intimidating.

Additionally, while commuting is seen as necessary by some in order to earn higher wages and access better employment opportunities, the time required to travel to-and-from work is time which cannot be recovered. As a result, commuters appear to have less opportunity to be involved in various personal, family, and community activities (Tigges & Fuguitt, 2003). Interviewee 51 noted this as being one of her key frustrations with living in Craig, as her two hour daily commute prevents her from socialising and making more friends in Steamboat Springs.
Thus, whether the move down-valley is a worthwhile trade-off in quality of life for many of these down-valley migrants is questionable, with the dangers and time associated with commuting not necessarily translating into the desired and expected quality of mountain resort living (Clifford, 2002). However, as pointed out by Interviewee 30, the affordability of these surrounding communities does provide people with the option to be able to remain relatively close to Steamboat Springs, which is still seen by many as being better than having no choice to remain in the area at all. As summed up by Interviewee 51, a down-valley migrant living in Craig, Colorado: ‘I know a lot of people would rather not commute, but what are you going to do’?

**Subdivision of surrounding ranchlands**

Beyond the development of luxury housing units within Steamboat Springs and the down-valley migration into surrounding communities, an additional change to land use that has occurred in Routt County as a result of mountain resort tourism and the associated increase in numbers of amenity migrants is the trend towards rural subdivision. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (2007), there has been a significant decline in large-scale ranches of more than 180 acres in Routt County from 426 down to 225 since 1954. During this same period, there has been a corresponding increase in the number of ranches of less than 180 acres, from 127 to 335. With the total acreage of ranchland having remained similar over the years within Routt County, what these changes in ranch size indicate is the increased subdivision of land into smaller parcels for the development of luxury ranchettes (Routt County Master Plan, 2003; Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10).

From 1990 to 2001, 64 per cent of the total acreage of ranchland sold within Routt County (156,203 acres) went to amenity migrants, followed by investors, developers, and then traditional ranchers (Gosnell & Travis, 2005). As discussed above, this subdivision of land by ranchers has been stimulated by increasing production costs and the declining profitability of ranching, combined with the significant rise in land prices as a result of the growing demand for ranchettes (Gosnell & Travis, 2005; Holecheck, 2001; Yarbrough et al., 2006). In addition, the ability to subdivide ranchland into 35-acre tracts in the state of Colorado without the requirement of county planning approval, has further made the process of ranchette development easier within the county. Many ranchers in Routt County have thus turned to the subdivision of their land to keep ranching operations afloat, or have sold out completely:
‘Their business is selling off chunks of their land. They sell off thirty-five acres for three hundred thousand dollars and they live on it for a few years...and then they sell another chunk of it off. And they just break the ranches up. I mean, almost all the big ranches within the immediate Steamboat area have been pretty much broken up’ (Interviewee 26).

This can be noted within the following photo which depicts the rural landscape directly south of Steamboat Springs. What can be noted here is the extent of such rural subdivision, with the fragmented nature of the landscape emphasised by the many ranchettes that dot the open valley floor and scenic ridgelines.

Photograph 10. Ranchette developments south of Steamboat Springs. Source: N.Ooi

These ranchettes appear to be largely perceived by many community members, whether ranchers or otherwise, as eroding the rural character of Steamboat Springs. As described by Interviewee 4:

‘If a rancher loses his land, it becomes subdivided and what it turns into a lot of the time would be like ranchettes...I don’t like to see these giant houses. You know, one dotted here, another one there, and it’s sort of there for no reason and mostly abandoned for most of the year’.

As a result, many community plans and reports have identified the importance of conserving open ranchland to retain the Western culture of the region. These include the Steamboat Springs Community Area Plan, Vision 2030, and the Routt County Open Lands
Plan, amongst others. Of particular interest to the community has been the protection of the open valley floor and the ranching and agricultural operations that maintain this rural space; both of which have been emphasised as forming an essential part of the Western ranching heritage and lifestyle that tourists and amenity migrants, as well as community members, seek and associate with Steamboat Springs (Conservation Partners Inc., 1995). As explained by Interviewee 29: ‘that’s what people come to Steamboat specifically for…it’s that open-space land tied to tourism’. Isolated ranchette developments and their creation of roads, buildings, and houses that compromise the open and scenic rural landscape (Clark, 2006b), are therefore seen as affecting this integral part of the Western culture and heritage upon which the tourism experience also depends within Steamboat Springs and Routt County.

The subdivision of larger ranches into 35 acre lots has further been acknowledged within the Routt County Open Lands Plan as having brought about negative environmental effects on surrounding ranching and agricultural operations. As many of the amenity migrants who own these ranchettes are absent for much of the year, 35 acres is often too large to properly manage, with their ranches commonly becoming a one acre home-site surrounded by 34 acres of poorly maintained land. This has led to a number of environmental management issues for adjacent ranching operations, especially in regards to weed and pest control (Conservation Partners Inc., 1995). Ranchette development has also been identified as consuming large amounts of productive agricultural land, whilst also preventing the efficient management of agriculture and wildlife due to the fencing and parcelisation of these small-scale subdivisions (Conservation Partners Inc., 1995).

For many community members, the subdivision of the rural landscape has thus become a source of contention. Not only has the rising costs and declining profits forced many ranchers to sell out and move elsewhere, it has also affected the viability of ranching and agricultural operations for those who remain (as will be discussed further in Chapter 8). The subdivision of land and the development of ranchettes for the growing numbers of tourism-led amenity migrants can therefore be seen as having brought about significant economic, socio-cultural, and environmental change to the traditional Western landscape of working ranches (Travis, 2007).
Development of land conservation strategies

In order to address many of these concerns regarding mountain resort tourism development and the associated loss of ranching operations over the years, a number of volunteer groups and grassroots initiatives have been created within Steamboat Springs and Routt County. These organisations seek to develop various land conservation strategies, and can be traced back to the Lake Catamount Resort proposal and the creation of the Yampa Valley Land Trust (YVLT); a non-profit land conservation organisation that specialises in the implementation of conservation easements to conserve the natural, scenic, agricultural, and historic values of both public and private open lands within Northwest Colorado (Yampa Valley Land Trust [YVLT], 2012). Since its inception, the YVLT has worked alongside many other community organisations such as the Routt County Cattleman’s Association and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to address the strong community desire to retain as much of the working, open agricultural landscape as possible in the face of mountain resort tourism and its associated development. As explained by Interviewee 9 and others from the ranching segment of the community: ‘over and over and over again, that theme came forward – ‘We don’t want to lose agriculture. We don’t want to lose our open space’.

Of particular significance to the large-scale preservation of the rural landscape surrounding Steamboat Springs has been the creation of the Routt County Open Lands Plan in 1995. In response to growing community concerns surrounding the increased subdivision of ranchlands for tourism-led amenity migrants, a steering committee was created and a series of public meetings held to discuss various conservation issues and solutions. From these collaborative efforts, eight strategies were identified under an Open Land Protection System to assist in the protection of ranching operations and the rural landscape from the growth and development associated with mountain resort tourism. Amongst these, the creation of a purchase of development rights (PDR) program to fund conservation easements and the encouragement of land preservation subdivisions (LPS) have proven particularly successful within the county.

Funding for conservation easements has been provided at both state and national levels, as well as through the local PDR program; a tax initiative passed by county residents that added a one-mill increase in county property taxes from 1997 onwards. This has provided ranchers with an option to sell their development rights, with the additional money received assisting them in maintaining their ranching operations. The success of this grassroots funding
initiative for the implementation of conservation easements within Routt County has also been recognised by other counties within the state of Colorado and beyond, as a leading example of land preservation and conservation in the face of development pressures (Alexander & Propst, 2002; Armstrong, 2009; Mitsch Bush, 2006). Since the creation of the PDR fund in 1997 and its renewal in 2006 for another twenty-year period, approximately 96,162 acres of private land (6.7 per cent of the county) has been placed in conservation easements; open land that will be preserved forever for its environmental, agricultural, and scenic values (Steamboat Magazine, 2011). This highlights the importance of the working ranching and agricultural landscape to the community of Steamboat Springs and Routt County, not only for its scenic contributions to mountain resort tourism (Ellingston et al., 2006), but also in spite of it. As explained by Interviewee 14, a multi-generational rancher:

‘I had an individual and he said, ‘Well what do I get out of that [the PDR program]? Can I walk on your land?’ And I said, ‘No’. But I said, ‘You can drive up the Elk River Valley and you’ll never see houses over there. That’ll never be a golf course’. And he said, ‘That’s good enough for me’."

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed the various impacts that have resulted from mountain resort tourism within Steamboat Springs, whilst acknowledging their interrelated and overlapping nature. Although the rise in real estate values and cost of living attributable to the gentrification of Steamboat Springs has contributed to improved community facilities and services, it has also resulted in a lack of affordability for many, which has subsequently led to down-valley migration. At the same time, the low-paying, seasonal nature of employment provided by mountain resort tourism, and the minimal career opportunities available has further amplified the high costs faced by many community members. Within the surrounding rural landscape, escalating land and property values have also affected ranchers, encouraging the sale and subdivision of ranchlands. This has brought about a number of environmental and socio-cultural concerns, instigating the formation of various grassroots initiatives that have sought to develop land conservation strategies for the future preservation of the Western ranching culture and lifestyle within Steamboat Springs and Routt County.

This discussion on mountain resort tourism impacts forms the basis for my following three chapters where I address my second research objective; how these impacts have affected
the various components of social capital within the community of Steamboat Springs. In Chapter 7, I focus on networks and the process of network development, before turning my analysis to community social norms in Chapter 8. This is followed by a detailed examination of resources and the associated exercise of power in Chapter 9.
Chapter 7. Social networks

Introduction

This chapter addresses my second research objective by examining the various patterns of social network development within the community of Steamboat Springs and how these are affected by the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism. Networks are a central component of social capital, being the social connections and ties within which shared resources and values can be accessed (Field, 2003). These can be informal or formal and dense or dispersed, with dense social networks providing the structure for bonding social capital, and dispersed for bridging social capital.

I begin this chapter with a discussion on the strong bonding networks that can be found within the community of Steamboat Springs. This is followed by an examination of how mountain resort tourism appears to have affected the ability of tourists and amenity migrants seeking to become a part of the community (newcomers), to develop and maintain social networks. In particular, I focus on the high barriers of entry preventing their access to informal social networks, as well as the various time and monetary constraints that are affecting more formal avenues of network development; both of which can be seen as contributing to such negative social capital outcomes as the social exclusion and isolation of newcomers and other community members.

Bonding social capital: ‘Everybody knows everybody’ in Steamboat Springs

The notion of Steamboat Springs as a tightly bonded community was continuously emphasised by community members and also evident within my own observations of their interactions, with the feeling that ‘everybody knows everybody’ having seemingly carried forth from the community’s small town beginnings prior to the rapid growth of mountain resort tourism. As illustrated by a long-term community member in his description of Steamboat Springs when he first arrived in the 1970s:
We’d walk down the streets and you literally, at that point, although we think it’s that way now; you knew everybody. People were yelling across the street because you were the only people here. And the grocery store used to be one of those places where I’d go and it would take forever to get out because you knew everybody’ (Interviewee 44).

Although mountain resort tourism has since brought about a dramatic increase in population and the constant in-and-out movement of tourists and amenity migrants, I still found this perception of Steamboat Springs as a close-knit community to be widely shared. As likened to a game of pool by Interviewee 28, a City Council representative: ‘it’s like...you’re one ball, and you go out and touch this one, but then that one goes off and touches this one, and then you know, just constantly moving in and out. We’re always inter-connecting’.

However, this is not to say that the growth of the community that has accompanied the development of mountain resort tourism has not affected the degree of familiarity shared amongst community members, with a reduced level of acquaintance typical within small communities that have experienced an influx of newcomers (Branch, Hooper, Thompson & Creighton, 1984). This was the experience of Interviewee 9 who was one of several long-term community members who expressed nostalgia over the lost sense of recognition and knowledge of others which she used to enjoy. Thus, although many community members currently talk about how ‘everybody knows everybody’, this appears to be more a figure of speech that represents the intertwined nature of the community, as compared to its literal translation in the past. A more appropriate description of the interconnectedness of the community can therefore be understood as that expressed by Interviewee 26: ‘you can’t go anywhere in Steamboat without running into somebody you know’.

Either way, this strong sense of familiarity shared amongst community members seems to be reflective of the dense, personalised networks characteristic of a high level of bonding social capital that has traditionally been acknowledged within many rural and regional communities (Macbeth et al., 2004; Onyx & Bulleen, 2000). It is these tightly woven networks that form the structure of bonding social capital through which trust and reciprocity; the willingness to take risks based upon the confidence that others will respond in expected and supportive ways, is developed (Benn & Onyx, 2005; Onyx & Bulleen, 2000). For Interviewee 5, this lack of degree of separation within the community has fostered some close-knit relationships, which have proven beneficial in the upbringing of his children by
inhibiting negative behaviours and providing a protective security network: ‘Having a girl who’s a teenager now, she can’t get away with anything!’

I further observed the existence of bonding social capital in the everyday willingness of community members to help those within their social networks. As explained by Interviewee 13, a human services representative, this is a central part of the informal pattern of socialisation within Steamboat Springs, with it being important for community members to have ‘efficient social networks to get by and get the job and keep the job’, given the high cost of living and the limited well-paying job opportunities available. Community members also discussed the various “local’s perks” that they receive as a result of knowing particular bartenders or restaurant managers and owners, with many unable to afford to go out downtown without these various discounts. For Interviewee 37 who grew up in Steamboat Springs, he recognised these perks as being a key component of his social interactions within the community and the way in which he manages to get by: ‘I have a free gym membership. I have a free place to stay. I get all kinds of free food and other free services around town’. As summed up by Interviewee 13: ‘the mentality around town is you take care of your own’.

While these sentiments appear to reflect a nostalgic and romanticised representation of the community of Steamboat Springs, similar to that of the traditional, homogenous rural community as discussed in Chapter 3 (Murdoch & Marsden, 1994; Murdoch et al., 2003), my own experience did reflect this high degree of interconnectedness between community members. Using Interviewee 44’s abovementioned example of the grocery store, I found this to be one of several hubs of social interaction and activity. During the ten months I lived within the community, I commonly found myself having to carefully navigate my way around the store as people would frequently and unexpectedly meet one another and stop for a lengthy chat in the middle of the aisles. However, by the end of my stay, I too found it difficult to do my weekly shopping without stopping to catch up with those community members whom I had become acquainted with through my research, thus allowing me to personally experience the density of these informal social networks for myself.

However, it also became quite quickly apparent that these bonding social ties characterised by trust and reciprocity are not inclusive and accessible to all, with the very nature of bonding social capital being inward focused as it build walls and reinforces exclusive identities (Putnam, 2000; Spaaij, 2009). On the one hand, these tight social networks seem to have enabled the community to constitute, maintain, and reproduce itself over time (Glover & Hemingway, 2005), despite having undergone significant and rapid
growth as a result of mountain resort tourism. On the other hand, they also seem to have encouraged network closure and the social exclusion of newcomers. Thus, despite the continued existence of high levels of bonding social capital within the community of Steamboat Springs, the perception that ‘everybody knows everybody’ may be too inclusive a description of community social interaction, with many newcomers remaining excluded due to their inability to develop sufficient network connections.

“Farewell’ is a local motto: Transience and informal network development

Although it can be argued that such a high level of bonding social capital exists within the community of Steamboat Springs in spite of the rapid growth and development of mountain resort tourism, it must also be considered that it may be in fact a product of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism. In particular, those impacts that have been acknowledged as contributing to a high degree of transience can be seen as affecting community levels of trust, subsequently reinforcing existing bonding social capital whilst limiting the development of bridging social capital. This appears to have inhibited the ability of newcomers to develop networks and establish themselves amongst more permanent community members, thus resulting in their social exclusion.

As discussed in Chapter 6, many people are enticed by the mountain resort lifestyle offered by Steamboat Springs, only to be faced with high costs of living, a lack of affordable housing, seasonal employment, and limited career opportunities. These impacts have contributed to down-valley migration whilst also encouraged transience, as people have permanently migrated elsewhere where the cost of living is more affordable. As stated by Interviewee 13: ‘we’re seeing people leave because they can’t afford to live here anymore, because they rent and they can’t buy, because they can’t find jobs for their livelihoods’. This transience is perceived by Interviewee 19 to be a function of the tourism economy, resulting in the continuous coming and going of not only tourists and seasonal workers, but also other amenity migrants who despite their initial plans to live permanently within Steamboat Springs, are forced to leave after a period of time: ‘For those who can’t afford it, our prices, that person...these employees, they’re here three to five years, they move on. They don’t stay’ (Interviewee 49). As estimated by Interviewee 21, a senior representative of the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC), he believes that he has seen a turnover of approximately
50 per cent of the community during his twelve years of living in Steamboat Springs, with most people having struggled to keep up with the costs of mountain resort living over time.

From a social capital perspective, such transience appears to have significant ramifications for newcomers seeking to develop social networks within the community of Steamboat Springs. This is because limited job stability and part-time work inhibits the ability of individuals to form informal social ties both within, and beyond the workplace (Putnam, 2000). This decreases their chance of developing lasting friendships that allow and encourage them to put roots down, thus contributing to residential instability (Putnam, 2000). In turn, this affects the wider community as the motivation for more permanent residents to seek out new friendships is inhibited by the rapid and continuous turnover in population (Sampson, 1988), which can disrupt a community’s wider system of interconnected social networks (Onyx, 2005).

This was described in a poignant article within the local newspaper titled ‘Farewell is a local motto’, where a local reporter highlighted the many difficulties faced by community members in developing and maintaining friendships as a result of transience:

‘I feel like this month my entire circle of friends is moving away. That’s only barely an exaggeration. Five people I’ve been close to have or will pack up and leave town in the latter two-thirds of this month. And I’m not that close with too many people. That’s how it is in a place like Steamboat Springs, though. Sure, people move to and from everywhere all the time. But it’s different in Steamboat...This place isn’t “forever” for everyone, or even most people...So it goes in Steamboat, which draws in, entertains and sends on tens of thousands more than it ever lures back permanently. There will be more to take their place — people, anyway. Friends? I can pessimistically say “I don’t know,” but optimistically assure myself there will be. People are always coming to and going from this town. That is Steamboat Springs, and I love it and I hate it. Farewell, friends’ (Reichenberger, 2011).

As acknowledged by Reichenberger (2011), the lack of permanency within the community seems to have instilled a degree of hesitancy amongst community members towards newcomers, with only a slight sense of optimism that friendships lost are friendships easily replaced: ‘People are dubious, suspicious of how long you’re going to stick around because it’s difficult’ (Interviewee 13). The constant arrival and departure of newcomers has therefore led to many community members purposely avoiding them as, ‘we know they’ll always leave and so it’s a protective thing’ (Interviewee 28). In particular, I found young
adults to harbour a strong desire to guard their existing social networks, with the predominantly low-paying, seasonal nature of work and the lack of permanent career opportunities available for this age group, contributing to a higher degree of transience. As was the experience of Interviewee 18, a young adult in her late twenties: ‘people are here, you build a good friendship, but they can’t survive here and then so they leave in two or three years...for a while, it was like I had new friends every year’. For those young adults who have grown up in Steamboat Springs with the rapid development of mountain resort tourism, this transience was noted as being a part of their social reality since childhood: ‘Growing up, my best friend kept moving away. My elementary school best friend moved away, and then my middle school best friend moved away. It’s just the way the community is’ (Interviewee 37).

In response to this constant turnover, long-term community members such as Interviewee 9 explained how over time they have become less willing to include newcomers in their everyday lives as more often than not, they leave soon after: ‘All of a sudden you hear they’re gone and then you never hear from them again. I feel, personally, like I’ve been used’. This appears to reflect an increasing lack of openness and trust held by community members towards newcomers, with constant mobility having the ability to destroy whatever social bonds may have been established between those who have left and those who remain (Portes, 1998). Such uncertainty regarding whether newcomers will stay or go seems to have contributed to the development of strong in-group solidarity amongst existing community members, with all newcomers separated and categorised as threatening to the existing social fabric (Karlsson, 2005).

These strong bonding networks and the lack of bridging social capital; an ‘inclusive orientation by the dominant community groups’ (Flora & Flora, 2003, p. 227), can therefore be seen as creating high barriers of entry for entering the community that have excluded newcomers and limited their ability to develop informal friendship ties. As explained by Interviewee 20, a long-term resident, this exclusion is a protective mechanism that is adopted by community members as ‘you can only go through that cycle so many times before you get a wee bit jaded’. This was reflective of my own experience and that of many young seasonal workers that I came to know during my time in Steamboat Springs, with a number of them seeking to transition into becoming more permanent community members.

While many of the seasonal workers I met had established friendships amongst themselves that were based upon their shared living arrangements or through their employment, my housemate, John* was the only one that I know who had managed to
become accepted within an informal social network which included more permanent community members. This was through the invitation of a co-worker, Amy*; a permanent resident who has lived in Steamboat Springs for over eleven years. After two years of being acquainted with John, she finally demonstrated a willingness to include him, and luckily myself as a friend of his, into her circle of friends. This provided us with a degree of access to a whole different social scene that we were previously not privy to. With the high barriers of entry preventing newcomer access to these informal networks indicating the ‘supreme importance of social connections’ within the community (Cox, 1995, p. 1), it was clear that without Amy, I would not have had the opportunity to become associated with her more permanent social network of friends.

In discussing these difficulties regarding network entry and social exclusion with Amy, she explained how as long as someone is prepared to “vouch” for you, both in regards to your permanency and your personal character, then other community members within the group are also generally happy to take the time and effort to get to know you. While it was clear that I was not going to become a permanent addition to the community due to my limited stay within Steamboat Springs, we established a mutual friendship where she hoped that my increased exposure to the community would help convince me to return permanently upon completion of my PhD to work at the local community college. As John had already lived in Steamboat Springs for three years and had expressed interest in staying longer, Amy believed he had displayed the necessary signs of permanency to warrant his inclusion, especially considering that they had discussed going into business together in the future.

However, this willingness to include newcomers or others such as myself without the likelihood of permanency appears to be rare within the community. Such exclusion seems to largely be an attempt by community members to protect existing connections and identities (De Filippis, 2001). Thus, those newcomers who lack a connection to more permanent community members seem to have limited informal socialisation opportunities beyond those relationships formed with other newcomers. As noted by Interviewee 2, this process of entering and becoming integrated within the community is not easy, despite Steamboat Springs commonly being described as being friendly and welcoming by both tourists and community members alike: ‘The people keep their cards close. There’s a funny little something there and it takes, it takes a while, way longer than you’d think’.

My research therefore suggests that the move to a new locality does not necessarily guarantee opportunities to participate and become integrated within the community (Crow &
Rather, the existence of bonding social capital without sufficient bridging social capital appears to be largely prohibitive for newcomers seeking to develop informal social ties within Steamboat Springs. This highlights how social capital in the form of strong social bonds is not an inherently positive aspect of communities, with the social exclusion of newcomers from informal social networks contributing to their marginalisation (Crow, 2004). Thus, in addition to the economic barriers faced by many newcomers, there also seem to be significant social barriers that are limiting their opportunities for informal network development. These can be understood as further perpetuating the likelihood of their transience within the community, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10.

**Formal network development: The need to ‘do in order to know’**

In the face of such transience however, I did discover an alternative method of network development within Steamboat Springs; a “local way” which outlines a pattern of engagement through which one can become accepted (Jobes, 2000). This appears to revolve less around informal socialisation opportunities and more around formal participation in groups and organisations. I found such expectations for formal participation to also be a social norm within the community (as will be discussed further in Chapter 8), with the social structure provided within these formal organisations seemingly playing a very important role in the everyday interactions of community members (Lin, 2001). This was made evident by the numerous sporting associations, coalitions, government commissions, boards, and councils that exist alongside the 250 non-profit organisations that serve Routt and Moffat counties; the majority of which are based within Steamboat Springs (Yampa Valley Partners, 2009/10).

For newcomers entering into the community, such organisations can be seen as one of the few, if not only, open invitations for network development. As stated by Interviewee 22, this is because newcomers are seen as a way to maintain community buy-in and the widespread support necessary to sustain these groups and their differing needs. I personally became aware of this desire to attract and retain newcomers through my own attempts to connect with some of these organisations so that I could gain a better understanding of their role within the community. After sending out some initial emails, it was not long before I was invited to attend various meetings, with one particular non-profit organisation even asking for my assistance in planning an event after I had attended only two meetings. As explained by a
relatively newer community member, Interviewee 30, who had also experienced such community eagerness when he expressed interest in being involved with this same organisation: ‘if you show up to a couple of meetings, they’re going to try to reel you in’!

In addition, these formal networks seem to be more open in nature due to the likelihood that those newcomers who express interest in joining them, actually plan on becoming permanent members of the community. As expressed by Interviewee 23 who is an executive director of a local non-profit organisation, her experience with volunteers has demonstrated that the priorities and interests of the more transient people within the community often do not extend much further beyond the desire to ski and have a good time. Rather, it is those individuals, many of whom are retirees who are either already socially embedded within the community or are newly-arrived and seeking to become more connected and involved, that make up the vast majority of her volunteers:

‘We don’t really get a lot of the transient ones…most of ours are pretty ingrained in the community that we get…This is where they live. This is where they decided to retire, and they have chosen to be a part of the community. So we have less of those people that are truly second-home owners that might own two or three places and they go to Arizona during the winter or whatever’.

With civic engagement often associated with greater residential stability (Putnam, 2000), a willingness to commit to a particular group therefore appears to be one way in which transients can be separated from newcomers within Steamboat Springs. While these newcomers may at first be less likely to be formally involved with the community, the process of settling down often consists of exchanging or adding to informal ties through formal association and participation in community affairs (Putnam, 2000). From my observations and conversations with community members, this transition process could be noted in the way that newcomers would initially socialise with other newcomers, before joining various community organisations and becoming more active members of the community. This would then commonly result in their creation of informal social ties and friendships with more permanent members of the community. As described by Jobes (2000, p. 54), the gradual process of establishing oneself within a community is achieved when newcomers become ‘givers rather than merely receivers’.

Given these strong expectations for community involvement, I found a wealth of formal opportunities to exist within Steamboat Springs for newcomers to meet and engage with others: ‘There’s a lot of activities, there’s a lot of outlets to do things…You could be busy
every night of the week, every day of the weekend’ (Interviewee 13). Interviewee 12 similarly acknowledged that there are an ‘astronomical’ number of groups with ‘an organisation for everything and all you have to do is connect to it’. Such varied opportunities therefore appear to have led to the common saying that you need to ‘do in order to know’ within Steamboat Springs, as participation within these formal networks of association is how newcomers can build those informal relationships which are normally denied to them. As noted by Interviewee 32 in regards to her involvement with some local sporting clubs and City Council: ‘I found that my friendship groups have been formed mostly through the activities that I participate in...that’s how I meet the people that I end up spending time with and hanging out’.

However, the onus appears to be on newcomers to put up their hand and get involved, with many community members emphasising how they do not have the time to be actively sourcing and recruiting new volunteers into their various organisations: ‘You can’t expect the community to come to you. You know, the doors are open for people that want to come into Steamboat and contribute something’ (Interviewee 42). This was reiterated by Interviewee 19, an amenity migrant and semi-retiree who found his entry into the community to be relatively seamless, despite not knowing anybody in Steamboat Springs. As he was aware of the importance of civic engagement as a necessary part of the process of developing friendships and network connections within the community, he attended a range of different meetings and volunteered for a number of different tasks; many of which he didn’t really want to do but undertook regardless:

‘The phone’s not going to ring unless you make it ring. And therefore, you’ve got to do things to make it ring. And the more you want it to ring, the more you volunteer, the more you get involved. And some things you may not want to do, but you do them anyway, only because you’re getting to chat with somebody, getting to know somebody’.

My research therefore indicates that civic involvement is an important vehicle for community social networking (Gilchrist & Taylor, 1997). This is because the various formal network opportunities that exist within the community provide social structures through which newcomers can develop and maintain a more extensive range of contacts (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). As social capital is both facilitated and reproduced by such engagement in civic life (Lyons, 2000), the participation of newcomers in sporting teams, art and cultural activities, and other organised groups, gives them a host of opportunities to develop social ties they would otherwise not be exposed to. Thus, from a social capital perspective, while these
organisations may address and nurture particular interest areas shared by newcomers, the real value of these formal network structures is arguably in their ability to mitigate the more exclusive nature of informal social ties within the community, providing an avenue for newcomers to meet others and develop community relationships (Ville, 2004). This highlights the importance of both formal and informal network structures for social capital development (Cox, 1995).

The effects of time and money: Constraints on formal network development

In spite of these various formal opportunities for social network development through civic involvement, I did identify both time and monetary constraints that seem to be preventing the participation and engagement of newcomers, as well as that of community members within Steamboat Springs. As discussed above and in Chapter 6, the high costs of living and rising property values, combined with the seasonality and low-paying wages characteristic of tourism-related employment, have made living in Steamboat Springs increasingly unaffordable for many newcomers and community members. This has contributed to the need to work longer hours and multiple jobs, which in turn has affected the time and energy that they have available for participating within various groups and associations.

Of those newcomers and community members who are struggling to make ends meet, I found that many are not even aware of the wide variety of formal opportunities for affiliation within Steamboat Springs, let alone community expectations of involvement: ‘A lot of people, they just don’t even have an awareness...because they’re busy working three jobs and they’ve got kids in school’ (Interviewee 26). Even amongst those who are mindful of the numerous groups and organisations that exist, the need to work long hours and multiple jobs to afford the high cost of living has placed significant constraints on their civic engagement, regardless of their interest. As acknowledged by Interviewee 2, a representative of a youth organisation, the ability to participate within the community, whether it is getting involved in local politics, volunteering for a non-profit organisation, or becoming a member of sporting clubs and associations, is a luxury that many living in Steamboat Springs do not have:

‘Some of those families just don’t have the energy to get up in there and let their voices be heard because they’re tired, you know? They really are. They’re doing all they can
just to get their kids fed at night and in to bed ...I mean, that’s just a luxury. That’s just not an option’.

I also found the nature of civic involvement within the community to not always be conducive for those tourism employees who work late at restaurants and bars, or for those with young families, as government meetings and other boards and commissions often extend late into the night:

‘You get people standing there talking at eleven o’ clock at night. And you know where people that have got to be at work at seven are? Home in bed. They’ve got kids. Yeah they’re at home with their kids, not at some public meeting somewhere’ (Interviewee 26).

Nevertheless, a lack of time and money is not an issue for all newcomers and community members looking to develop social networks. In particular, as many retirees are often non-reliant upon the local economy, they tend to possess the necessary time and money to become civically involved (Putnam, 2000). This was reflected in my own experiences attending various community activities and meetings, where I commonly found myself amongst only a handful of others who were not retirees. As explained by Interviewee 26, these retirees are ‘people with leisure time and [so] they have time to get involved’.

However, as Steamboat Springs is a tourism-based economy dependent upon a large proportion of menial and seasonal work, I did find both time and money to be significant constraints faced by many newcomers and community members. As supported by Putnam (2000, p. 189), ‘the most obvious suspect behind our tendency to drop out of community affairs is pervasive busyness’, with such economic pressures as job insecurity and low-wages often taking away the time to be able to participate and develop social capital. Interviewee 26 identified this as being the reality for those newcomers and community members who are struggling to make ends meet: ‘They’re gone all day. I mean, they just don’t become involved in the community’. This can be seen as limiting their engagement within the community, with those who have had to move down-valley further constrained in their ability to connect to the community and develop social capital through participation in both formal and informal networks and activities (Besser, Marcus & Frumkin, 2008).

Thus, although there are a number of organisations that provide a formal network structure through which newcomers and community members can develop social connections, my research indicates that the lack of time and money experienced by many has affected their ability to participate and become involved. This has left many of them isolated from both
formal and informal social networks. Together with the social exclusion of newcomers, this isolation highlights how the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism have negatively affected social capital development within the community of Steamboat Springs.

A lack of interest in formal network development

As an aside, it must also be noted that not all newcomers and community members are necessarily interested in participating in the many groups and organisations within Steamboat Springs. Instead, I found that many choose to spend any free time they have on recreation or even simply relaxing. This was acknowledged as being the case for Interviewee 49, a tourism employee, with the importance he places on recreation limiting the time he has available for networking within the community: ‘I don’t have enough time...recreating cuts in a lot, because we need to recreate. My wife is like, ‘You can just stop going rafting’. It’s like, ‘No, that’s what I do!’ Interviewee 22, a city employee, further explained how this strong recreational focus that is shared amongst community members in Steamboat Springs has meant that ‘people don’t want to give up a weekend’, whether for volunteering or organising a community event. Rather, they prefer to partake in recreational activities and spend time with their friends. Some community members even joked about how some of the churches have had to change their times of worship in order to accommodate those unwilling to give up their mornings for skiing on the weekends:

‘You can either fight this culture or kind of roll with it. Like say the Steamboat Christian Centre, they hold a service on Saturday night that is probably as big as the Sunday service because, ‘Don’t interfere with my ski day!’ (Interviewee 20)

For Interviewee 13, she acknowledged that her lack of desire to be constantly involved in formal groups and associations has made it difficult for her to meet people and create social ties within the community:

‘I’m not that much of a doer. I’m a doer, but I need down time. And so I think part of my struggle is that I don’t necessarily want to add more activities to my life. I want to add people’.

Thus, it appears that it is not only a lack of time and money that is preventing some newcomers and community members from developing social networks and connecting with others, but also a lack of interest in having to formally commit to, and participate within,
various community groups and organisations in order to do so. This further emphasises the importance of informal social ties in the construction and maintenance of community bonds (Cox, 1995; Gilchrist & Taylor, 1997), given that formal participation and engagement within the community is not possible or even desirable for all newcomers and community members.

Conclusion

In this chapter, my research demonstrated how the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism have affected patterns of socialisation and the process of social network development within the community of Steamboat Springs. Traditionally a small, rural community exhibiting tightly bonded networks, mountain resort tourism has contributed to a high degree of transience, which has maintained and encouraged the creation of these tightly-bonded networks. This has prevented the development of bridging networks, which has translated into the reinforcement of bonding social capital and a lack of bridging social capital. This has led to the formation of high barriers of entry into the community and the exclusion of newcomers from informal social networks. As a result, opportunities for newcomers to develop social networks and relationships appear restricted to formal participation within community organisations and groups, which may subsequently lead to the creation of informal networks and connections. However, given that many newcomers and community members also face time and monetary constraints, their ability to become civically engaged and develop social capital within Steamboat Springs seems to be limited.

In the following chapter, I examine the social norms which characterise these informal and formal social networks, with particular focus placed upon how they have been affected by mountain resort tourism.
Chapter 8. Social norms

Introduction

This chapter addresses my second research objective by examining some of the social norms that exist within the community of Steamboat Springs and how these have both shaped, and been shaped by the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism. Social norms are learned judgements that reflect the common beliefs within a community (Sparkes, 2005). They can be either descriptive or injunctive in nature, with descriptive norms outlining what is typically done, while injunctive norms specify what ought to be done (Cialdini et al., 1990). These norms are important as they clarify expected actions within a particular social context and provide a common understanding of what is considered to be socially appropriate behaviour.

I begin this chapter by identifying those traditional social norms that constitute a component of social capital in Steamboat Springs, henceforth referred to as “social capital norms”. This is followed by a discussion on the limitations on the effectiveness of these social capital norms in regulating community behaviour and the way in which they have influenced, and been influenced by mountain resort tourism. I then examine other social norms which appear to have more recently developed within the community in response to mountain resort tourism. Although these norms do not constitute a component of social capital, they are included within my research due to their capacity to affect existing social capital within the community.

The traditional social capital norms of Steamboat Springs

While social norms help to guide and regulate behaviour by expressing whether an action is considered to be right or wrong (Coleman, 1987; Ostrom, 2003), social capital norms are those which more specifically encourage and facilitate cooperation amongst groups, thus commonly mirroring such values as honesty, trustworthiness, reciprocity, and reliability (Fukuyama, 2001; Halpern, 2005). In light of its ranching and agricultural heritage, many of the social capital norms that exist within the community of Steamboat Springs appear
to be based upon the traditional cultural values of the American West, having been passed down through the generations of ranching families and shared amongst community members over the years. Although it is the widely celebrated individualistic values of courage, competence, hard-work, and self-reliance that have been commonly associated with this traditional culture of the American West, the cooperative values of trust and the union of family and community have also played a necessary role in the continued survival of ranchers over the years (Whitney & Lee-Ashley, 2005).

It is these cooperative values that form the basis for what my research has identified as the traditional social capital norms of the community of Steamboat Springs. These include a commitment to family, community involvement and association, and Western friendliness and hospitality, with trust and reciprocity found to be an underlying presence amongst these norms. Injunctive by nature, these norms provide a set of “moral heuristics” for what is considered to be socially appropriate community behaviour (Cialdini, Kallgren & Reno, 1991; Ostrom, 2003). In particular, they can be seen as playing a vital role in the functionality and liveability of the community of Steamboat Springs, with their ability to inspire pro-social behaviour and bring community members together resulting in such positive social capital outcomes as a sense of community and an improved quality of life (Halpern, 2005; Sparkes, 2005; Western et al., 2005).

The commitment to family

The importance of family is characteristic of the ranching culture of the American West, with family obligations and responsibilities having traditionally formed a central aspect of the ranching lifestyle (Field, 2002). This commitment to family is demonstrated through the tightly-knit kinship ties that commonly bind ranching families together, with these strong relationships enabling them to work cooperatively on the land, as well as manage the social isolation that was, and still is commonly experienced within the American West today (Hine & Faragher, 2000). Although the majority of community members in Steamboat Springs no longer live and work together on family ranches, I found the significance placed upon family to still be strong, with generations of ranching families having passed down this norm and shared it with the wider community. As stated by Interviewee 46: ‘Steamboat is a family town; people are big on family in Steamboat...It’s a great place to live with a family, to raise a family’.
Similar sentiments were also expressed by Interviewee 23 in regards to the high level of involvement of parents within their children’s lives: ‘A lot of people that live here are very family-focused. People are willing to give up that extra meeting or that extra money so that they can coach their kids’ soccer league’. Such parental dedication to their children within the local schools was further acknowledged by Interviewee 24, an employee of the Steamboat Springs school district:

‘There’s more parents in the classrooms at those [Steamboat Springs] schools than there are at any other elementary schools [in the region]. And I know that for a fact... And they make a commitment. I mean, they could be out skiing or hiking or whatever, but they’re making a choice to be in the school’.

This emphasis placed upon family was most clearly demonstrated through the various family-oriented community events that I attended during the time I spent living within the community. One event that was particularly memorable was the Downtown Halloween Stroll held on the 31st of October every year. As is depicted in the photograph below, I, along with what seemed like every family within the community, congregated in downtown Steamboat Springs, which had been partially closed to provide a safe and contained environment in which children could trick-or-treat. This community initiative was developed in response to growing concerns surrounding the safety of local children when visiting tourist rentals and vacant second-homes.

Photograph 11. Downtown Halloween Stroll, Lincoln Ave, Steamboat Springs. Source: N.Ooi
As I walked around this downtown area, the importance of this family celebration to the community was made evident through the widespread participation of local businesses through the decoration of their stores, and the help provided by many volunteers in distributing candy for the children. This was in addition to the efforts of parents in creating and dressing up in full costume with their children. My personal observations of this event and what I perceive to be its depiction of family values seem to reflect those held by many community members, with the Downtown Halloween Stroll being the most commonly stated example of the local commitment to family. One community member even went so far as to explain how this event was the deciding factor in choosing Steamboat Springs as a place to live, as it highlighted to him the emphasis placed upon family within the community.

Community involvement and assistance

Beyond the expectations and obligations of the family, the isolation of many communities within the American West has also contributed to the development of a strong intra-community norm regarding participation over the years (Wulfforst, Rimbey & Darden, 2006). This has traditionally included the involvement of community members in such activities as crop harvests and the raising of barns, with the exchange of work between neighbours an essential component of the ranching lifestyle (Hine & Faragher, 2000). Historical accounts of life within and surrounding Steamboat Springs in its early ranching days reflect this importance placed on community participation and support, with the remote nature of the region, long distances, and high levels of snowfall often separating it from the outside world (Wickenden, 2011). As explained by Interviewee 11, whose family has long been affiliated with ranching in the region:

‘When the flu epidemic was going round - the influenza epidemic, my grandmother would go out every morning with a big pot of soup and stew for the ranchers that were sick in the area. And if she couldn’t ride her horse, she walked and carried it. And they said many of the people in the valley owe their life [to her].’

This willingness to get involved and help one another by caring for those in need was acknowledged by community members as a norm that has carried forth to this day:

‘The character here is quite high. People are volunteering into all kinds of organisations, helping out in many different ways. Somebody gets injured in a traffic accident
and doesn’t have medical insurance; you get five hundred people coming to a restaurant for a fundraiser’ (Interviewee 19).

My own experiences attending and participating in some of these fundraisers and volunteer days reflected this sentiment held by Interviewee 19. In particular, I found the volunteer-run Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners to be particularly memorable as key examples of the willingness of many community members to help one another. Along with many other volunteers and local businesses, I cooked and donated food, whilst others took time out from own family celebrations to serve those less fortunate within the community. As can be noted in the photograph below, many of those who benefitted from these meals included young adults who were away from their families and did not have the desire to cook a Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner for themselves, and low-income families who did not necessarily have the means to be able to do so.

Photograph 12. Community Christmas dinner, Steamboat Springs Community Centre. Source: N.Ooi

Beyond the provision of community assistance, other forms of social interaction and participation have also been identified by Hine and Faragher (2000) as having helped construct the notion of community amongst ranchers within the American West. Where homesteading women would sew and quilt together as a means of socialisation, men would
play sport or join volunteer organisations. Ranchers also demonstrated their involvement within their communities through the creation of unions and other political associations to protect and advance ranching interests (Hine & Faragher, 2000). Whether to improve ranching wages and conditions or to combat the social isolation of ranching life through the social construction of communities, these cooperative efforts have further played a central role in the development of the American West (Hine & Faragher, 2000).

Within Steamboat Springs, these various types of informal and formal associational participation can be seen as having formed the basis for what is still considered to be expected behaviour to this day. As discussed in Chapter 7, civic engagement within formal groups and organisations is a central aspect of everyday community life, with over 250 non-profit organisations existing within Steamboat Springs and Routt County. These cater to a range of health, human services, sustainability, and artistic needs, alongside other clubs and groups that address various other recreational and entertainment interests. As a result of this large number of formal associations and the subsequent expectations for community participation, Steamboat Springs has commonly been described as a community that is ‘civically on steroids’ (Interviewee 20).

**Western hospitality and friendliness**

Due to the remote nature of many communities within the American West, the opening of your home to travellers was another norm traditionally shared amongst ranchers, being essential to their past survival (Owen, 2004). While this understanding of hospitality in Steamboat Springs can be seen as having transformed over time from the provision of food and shelter to the fostering of an inviting atmosphere for the many tourists and amenity migrants who come to visit, this widely-held expectation to welcome strangers appears to have remained strong amongst community members over time:

‘People say that people are just so friendly here and reach out, and I think that’s the Western ethic that’s been impressed upon all of us by the people who’ve lived here much longer than we have… [They] welcomed everybody to the valley and they taught us how to live here and then how to share our culture with others’ (Interviewee 12).

My interactions with community members largely reflected this friendly nature described above by Interviewee 12. Whether I was walking down Main Street or sitting on a
chairlift on the ski mountain, I found that I was constantly greeted and welcomed by community members, with many also taking the extra couple of minutes to find out more about who I was, what I was doing, and whether I was enjoying myself. My perceptions of Steamboat Springs as an inviting and friendly community were similar to those held by many other community members, tourists, and amenity migrants that I met. As noted by Interviewee 45, a representative of the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC): ‘what I have heard people say is, ‘You go to a store downtown and I can’t believe how friendly people are’. And it’s like, those people are from here and they’re genuinely interested in whether you’re actually having a good time in their town’.

The pervasiveness of this norm was also acknowledged in the way in which it has shaped community-tourist interactions. As further stated by Interviewee 45, visitors are commonly surprised by the welcoming nature of community members:

‘I get a lot of comments… ‘Well I understand how you can train eight hundred people up on the mountain to be friendly, but how do you train the checkout lady at Safeway? She is so friendly. They guy that works in the gas station, how do you train him to be friendly to people?’ And it’s really noticeable and I think it’s really important to our guests when they come here that it’s not training that makes the townspeople friendly, there’s something else there that’s genuine’.

Thus, as explained by Interviewee 21, another representative of the SSRC, employee training that is provided by the ski resort is not focused on teaching their staff to be friendly to tourists. Rather, it simply acts as a reminder, given the way in which this norm already governs community behaviour: ‘We really don’t need to tell people how to behave because they naturally get it’. This hospitable behaviour demonstrated by community members can therefore be described as a social capital norm that both guides community behaviour and defines the character of Steamboat Springs as a community and a mountain resort tourism destination. As advertised by the Steamboat Springs’ Visitor’s Guide for the winter of 2010/11:

‘Steamboat Springs’ friendliness is something we all hang our hat on. It’s what sets this community apart from other resorts and it’s what keeps people coming back. It’s more than just great service and hospitality; it’s genuine caring and treating our visitors as our guests’ (SSCRA, 2010/11, p. 56).
Trust and reciprocity

The strength of these social capital norms in encouraging cooperative behaviour within the community of Steamboat Springs can also be attributed to the underlying existence of trust and reciprocity. Normative components of social capital in their own right, trust and reciprocity play a central role in fostering cooperation and collaboration amongst individuals and groups within communities (Cox, 2000). Where trust provides the foundations for community expectations of behaviour, reciprocity provides the moral imperative attached to community membership to conform to these desired expectations (Glover & Hemingway, 2005; Kenworthy, 1997).

In Steamboat Springs, I found direct trust and reciprocity to exist within the tightly-bonded personal relationships held between community members and their families, neighbours, and friends; each demonstrating their care and commitment to one another. In a more generalised sense, I also found trust and reciprocity to exist in the shared community expectations and mutual obligations to welcome and positively interact with tourists and amenity migrants, as well as participate within various community groups and organisations. This existence of both personalised and generalised trust and reciprocity within and amongst these other social capital norms, highlights the complexity and overlapping nature of these high levels of civic involvement, social trust, and reciprocity (Putnam, 2000).

Limitations of the effectiveness of social capital norms

Despite the seemingly widespread adherence to these social capital norms within the community, the variable extent to which they govern behaviour must also be acknowledged. As norms are learned behaviours, the degree to which they are influential depends upon whether they are acquired by community members and the extent to which there are expectations that others will do the same (Ostrom, 2003). The specific characteristics of the situational context can also be seen as affecting the salience of a particular norm, with their influence differing from one situation to another and over time (Cialdini et al., 1991; Staub, 1972). I found both of these conditions to be relevant to the stories told by community members regarding the way in which the norm of Western hospitality and friendliness has governed community behaviour towards tourists participating in the summer Triple Crown tournaments.
A sporting competition that brings thousands of amateur athletes into the community during the summertime, the Triple Crown tournaments are a central fixture of the summer tourism calendar in Steamboat Springs. At first, these tournaments were designed to cater for large numbers of adult softball and baseball players whom Interviewee 27, a city employee, described as being known ‘more so for playing late into the night, drinking all night, [and] getting into fights at the bars’. This was also acknowledged by Interviewee 32, a City Council representative: ‘They would come to town and they would drink and they’d puke on the street, and they’d cat-call at women walking by’. As these tournaments had been introduced into the community during a period of steady economic growth, with the contributions of tourism to sales tax revenue having constantly risen since the initial development of the resort, many community members perceived these tournaments to be an unnecessary burden, and therefore saw no reason as to why they should have to deal with Triple Crown tourists. Thus, it did not take long before there was widespread resentment towards these tourists, with the exhibition of friendly and hospitable behaviour no longer deemed salient. As described by another city employee, Interviewee 22, this resulted in the transformation of community behaviour where ‘we saw bumper stickers that were saying, ‘No more Triple Crown,’ and some situations where that Western friendly town didn’t seem to exist’.

However, with the economic recession of 2007 came a drop in tourist visitation and spending, which seemed to act as a reminder to community members of the importance of Triple Crown tourism and the money it attracts to the local economy. As stated by Interviewee 18, a representative of the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association: ‘when we have a good economy, people just take it for granted...but just more recently in a down economy, we’re seeing the value’. Consequently, community members explained how behaviour towards Triple Crown tourists seems to have improved, with more people willing to once again adhere to community expectations to be friendly and hospitable towards them. In addition, an agreement between Triple Crown organisers and City Council to stop hosting adult games and focus solely on youth competitions has allowed the event to align more closely with its normative beliefs surrounding family. This seems to have further increased community support for the event and strengthened what could be seen as the declining influence of the social capital norm of Western hospitality and friendliness towards Triple Crown tourists.

Thus, my research supports the notion that norms are constantly subject to negotiation (Edwards, 2004; Halpern, 2005), and thus their degree of influence is not ‘uniformly in force
at all times and in all situations’ (Cialdini et al., 1990, p. 1015). As demonstrated by these Triple Crown tournaments, community members in Steamboat Springs perceived the applicability of the norm surrounding community hospitality to be open to exceptions and modifications. This included the economic climate, with Triple Crown initially seen as a nuisance during a period of tourism economic growth, and then later as necessary in light of the wider global effects of the economic recession on tourism sales tax revenue in Steamboat Springs. This highlights how the influence of a norm can vary as a function of specific conditions, with the particular situation in which the interaction and sharing of norms takes place being important in understanding the degree of normative influence exerted in any given context (Staub, 1972).

**Social capital norms and mountain resort tourism**

Although the influence of social capital norms in governing community behaviour has been shown to vary depending upon the situation within Steamboat Springs, these norms still appear to have played an important role in its development as a mountain resort tourism destination, forming the basis upon which it is marketed and branded. In reverse, mountain resort tourism also seems to have influenced the development of these social capital norms through using them as core attributes for tourism destination branding. While on the one hand this can be seen as having reinforced and strengthened these norms, on the other hand, there are also fears surrounding the rapid growth of mountain resort tourism and the subsequent dilution of these norms. This appears to be of particular concern for the ranching segment of the community, with a diminished sense of trust and reciprocity attributed to the influx of tourism-led amenity migrants in the ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs.

**The influence of social capital norms on mountain resort tourism**

In my examination of social capital norms, I became aware of not only their importance in governing much of the everyday behaviour of community members, but also in the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs as a mountain resort tourism destination. As the social capital literature has yet to acknowledge the potential for social capital norms to influence the marketing and branding of destinations, I draw upon the tourism destination
branding literature in this section, where the importance of community culture and values in the evolution and creation of tourism destination brands has been recognised.

A destination brand is defined as ‘a name, sign, or symbol representing the core values of the place offered for tourism consumption’ (Gnoth, 2007, p. 348). Destination brands seek to comprehensively capture within a simplified message the essential social, cultural, natural, and economic values held by a host community that are commonly linked to a destination’s “sense of place” (Williams et al., 2004). As argued by Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott (2003), this is because the competition for tourists is no longer fought over the physical components of a destination and its brand, but over the experiential and symbolic elements that affect the hearts and minds of tourists. Thus, successful tourism branding is that which represents existing values that are firmly held by the community (Urde, 2003), with such values needing to be “live”, in that they truthfully represent the nature of a destination, and “interactive”, in that they are relational in nature and can be shared and conveyed to others (Gnoth, 2007).

Within Steamboat Springs, the social capital norms regarding the importance of Western hospitality and friendliness and the commitment to family, can be seen as representing these “live” and “interactive” values which are central to the marketing and branding of both the community and resort. Recognised by the National Geographic as one of the 25 best ski towns in the world in 2012, Steamboat Springs was also acknowledged as the eighth best overall mountain resort destination for the 2011-12 winter season by SKI magazine as a result of the size and quality of the ski resort, and the friendly, down-to-earth, Western character of the community (Berman, 2012; Teasdale, 2012). As highlighted by Interviewee 43, a representative of the SSRC:

‘Genuine Western hospitality, family-friendly; it’s a great place to bring the entire family. A lot of our branding and imaging goes towards that. And it’s a great ski area. It’s a great mountain, great snow; great runs. But what we feel sets us apart from the other resorts is the genuine friendliness’.

Steamboat Springs has also been widely promoted as a family-friendly destination, and Steamboat Ski and Resort as a family-friendly ski resort (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation [SSRC], 2012a). This commitment to family is demonstrated through the resort’s provision of a wide range of quality children activities and programs, which includes their pioneering of the Kids Ski Free™ initiative where children under the age of 12 are allowed to ski free with a parent or grandparent (SSRC, 2012a). Over the years, the Steamboat Ski and Resort has thus been identified as the number one family resort in North America by SKI.
These two traditional social capital norms have therefore become a central component of the “personality” of the destination brand (Urde, 2003), with their inclusion acknowledged by community members as being the result of their pervasiveness within the community. As noted by Interviewee 21, this has forced both the SSRC and the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association (SSCRA) to adopt them as the basis of their branding, with it difficult to successfully market the community as anything else:

‘It’s not going to evolve beyond those brand attributes because it’s small, rural, family-friendly, and that’s just kind of part of the culture here. It’s so engrained that even if we wanted to change it, we couldn’t change it. It is what it is’.

Furthermore, the strength of these norms in influencing the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs can be seen as providing the community with a point of differentiation. This has since become a source of cultural identity and pride (D’Hauteserre, 2001; Gnoth, 2007; Saraniemi & Ahonen, 2009; Williams et al., 2004). As explained by Interviewee 1:

‘You can go to a resort anywhere. You can go ski. A lot of places in the world have good skiing. We’re not the only ones. But again, like I said, it’s the community that separates Steamboat from everyone else’.

The influence of mountain resort tourism on social capital norms

While these traditional social capital norms have strongly influenced the branding of Steamboat Springs as a mountain resort tourism destination, the explicit communication and endorsement of these norms through tourism marketing and destination branding also appears to have reinforced their significance within the community at the same time. Given that norms need to be communicated in order to continue to exist and have an effect on behaviour (Cialdini & Trost, 1998), the constant emphasis placed on the hospitable and family-friendly nature of the community, as transmitted via magazines, television, tourism brochures, and community-tourist interactions, has provided community members with a frequent reminder of what is considered to be socially appropriate behaviour. As depicted in Figure 6 below, a summer tourism advertisement for Steamboat Springs, the images used can be seen as
symbolising both the family-friendly nature and Western feel of the community, whilst the accompanying text explicitly highlights the hospitality and friendliness of the community.

**Figure 6. Summer tourism advertisement of Steamboat Springs**

![Steamboat Springs, Colorado is an American icon suspended in time by the folklore of the west. Alive with history, Steamboat is immersed in deep western roots that shape the character of the town. Here, you'll find a century-old frontier community with a spirit all its own, thriving on the comforting appeal of the great outdoors and rolling, wide-open spaces. For visitors of any age, the Old West excitement of Steamboat Springs keeps them riding back to town year after year. Genuine western hospitality greets you as you settle into a luxury hotel room, spacious condominium or rustic guest ranch cabin. Steamboat is 157 miles west of Denver with Yampa Valley Regional Airport just 22 miles from town.](image)

Source: SSCRA (2009)

Such explicit reinforcement of these traditional norms of Western hospitality and friendliness and the family-focused nature of the community, has assisted in the maintenance and development of social capital, which is acquired and sustained through the habituation and sharing of norms with others (Fukuyama, 1995b). This has in turn, helped to strengthen these particular norms, which can help foster a greater sense of belonging and attachment to the community and the brand (Kemp, Williams & Bordelon, 2012). This link between the endorsement of social capital norms and the development of a sense of community will be discussed further in Chapter 10, with a sense of community being both a positive social capital outcome and a component of socio-cultural sustainability.

However, my research also identified some concerns held by community members that the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism have begun to dilute these traditional
social capital norms, despite their use within the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs. As noted by Interviewee 17: ‘we’ve talked about that there’s so many people coming so fast that they’re going to swamp the culture’. For Interviewee 22 as a city employee, his fears surround what he perceives to be a lack of desire for community involvement; something he attributes to the constant transience experienced within the community (as discussed in Chapter 7). Interviewee 46 expressed apprehension regarding the loss of family-friendly values, as he does not believe that many of the young seasonal workers who have come to Steamboat Springs, place the same importance on family that other community members do. I also found such concerns to exist amongst the ranching segment of the community, where the introduction of amenity migrants and their differing motivations and approach to land use and management has led to a number of conflicts. These appear to have diminished the salience of the norms of trust and reciprocity, resulting in a limited willingness for ranchers and amenity migrants to support and assist one another, as has long been considered appropriate neighbourly behaviour within the American West (Hine & Faragher, 2000).

**Ranchers and the norms of trust and reciprocity**

Trust and reciprocity can be seen as defining features of rancher relationships within the American West, with cooperative behaviour being both a time-honoured tradition and a necessity due to the often limited resources available to ranchers (Decker, 1996). As explained by Interviewee 14, a local rancher: ‘going back to when my dad moved to Clark in 1949, it was critical that you worked together with your neighbours’. This knowledge shared amongst ranchers within Routt County that they can depend upon one another when in need, has helped provide many with a source of security and comfort that has allowed them to develop a shared sense of expectation and obligation; both of which can contribute to the formation of durable relationships over time (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009). As noted by Interviewee 14 of his longstanding relationship with a rancher that works downriver from his property: ‘He knows that I’m up the river if he needs help and he’s not there by himself’. This is not to say that ranchers form an entirely cohesive segment within the community, but that the mutual need for assistance from one another over the years seems to have helped established a widespread understanding of the need to help your neighbour and others nearby, in spite of any personality conflicts and past disputes that may have occurred. This highlights
the existence of social trust and reciprocity; norms which can assist in bridging divergent interests over time (Cox & Caldwell, 2000).

However, as the popularity of mountain resort tourism has grown over the years, the accompanying influx of tourists and amenity migrants has led to a rapid rise in real estate values, which has in turn encouraged the sale and subdivision of ranchland surrounding Steamboat Springs. As discussed in Chapter 6, this has created an increasingly fragmented rural landscape as working ranch operations have become increasingly separated from one another by 35-acre or larger ranchette developments. Consequently, many ranchers in Routt County have found themselves situated next to ranchettes, with either permanent or semi-permanent amenity migrants as their new neighbours:

‘It used to be you had a family ranch here and a family ranch here and a family ranch here. What has now happened is that this one may have saved, this one may have sold to someone who is now a second-home owner….and so the distance between this and this has become even greater because you don’t even share fences; you may not share your water or any of that type of thing anymore’ (Interviewee 9).

Although there are many reasons for buying ranchettes, amenity migrants tend to be motivated by the promise of ‘residential privacy, peace, and quiet’ (Routt County, 2003, p.16). Yet this is at odds with the expectations held by ranchers regarding the importance of developing strong community relationships which encourage cooperative behaviour. These varying expectations and obligations regarding social interaction and community involvement have been recognised as contributing to a number of neighbourly disputes over time. In particular, there has been much concern surrounding the different ways in which these disputes are typically handled between these groups. Where ranchers have traditionally been governed by a cultural system which relies upon adherence to such cooperative norms as trust and reciprocity, thereby placing preference towards the informal resolution of neighbourly disputes and community issues (Ellickson, 1991), amenity migrants have been found to commonly rely upon outside intervention by lawyers and other formal institutions (Huntsinger & Hopkinson, 1996; Huntsinger, 2002). As described by Interviewee 9:

‘A new phenomenon that has happened is that this new land owner who comes from a completely different world, when you have trouble with that fence line it used to be that neighbour just went and talked to them and said, ‘You know, we’ve got to get this squared away and I’ll get my cattle off your place.’ What happens now is that this landowner, rather than say to his ranch manager, ‘Try to figure it out,’ will pick up his phone, call his lawyer
and have your lawyer call. So it’s presented a whole different set of dynamics for those of us who have never dealt with lawyers, you know?’

This was the experience of Interviewee 14 who explained how he went to move his cattle one day only to find that his access to the neighbouring property, which had been granted for generations, had been blocked off without a word communicated between himself and his new neighbours. Not long after, he received a letter from their lawyer with a claim filed for wrongful trespassing on their land.

While this use of lawyers may derive from a lack of cultural understanding or also be a result of practical reasons, given the semi-permanent nature of many of these amenity migrants, it has been largely interpreted by ranchers in Routt County as an unwillingness to develop positive social relationships on their behalf. Instead, the reliance on contracts has shifted the focus from trusting and reciprocal relations to the efficient enforcement of formal sanctions (Gambetta, 2000). This has resulted in both parties being less willing to collaborate and work cooperatively together, which has brought about a dissipation of what Interviewee 36 believes to be the generalised trust that used to characterise the ranching segment of the community: ‘It’s like, what happened to our community? It used to be the handshake community’.

Yet after a closer examination of this situation, my research suggests that while many rancher-amenity migrant relationships do appear to be strained, this does not necessarily equate to an overall loss of trust and reciprocity amongst ranchers. Rather, the use of contracts and litigation that enforce cooperative behaviour (Fukuyama, 1995a) have increasingly formalised relationships between ranchers and amenity migrants, with the resulting distrust of amenity migrants seemingly having reinforced the personalised sense of trust and reciprocity that is shared amongst ranchers. This has led to the strengthening of existing bonding social capital between ranchers, as the reinforcement of these close-knit social ties appears to have limited their willingness to interact and develop friendships and working relationships with their amenity migrant neighbours. The resulting social exclusion of amenity migrants from ranching relationships can be seen as reflective of that experienced by newcomers to Steamboat Springs (as discussed in Chapter 7). With such exclusion being a negative social capital outcome, this raises concerns regarding the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs, as will be examined further in Chapter 10.
The development of social norms in response to mountain resort tourism

Alongside these social capital norms, my research also uncovered various other social norms that seem to be influential in determining the actions of community members; some of which appear to have developed in response to mountain resort tourism. These include the perceived acceptability of drug and alcohol use amongst young adults, the adoption of an ‘ethic of poverty’ by certain middle-upper class community members, and the expectation and pressure to be ‘living the dream’ felt by many newcomers. While these can be interpreted as behaviour irregularities that indicate a deviance from positive social norms (Levine & Moreland, 1998), they can also be understood as an important part of the formation of sub-cultures amongst particular segments within the community, with norms often varying between different groups (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Edwards, 2004). However, although these norms seem to strongly influence behaviour within certain groups, they are not perceived as forming a component of social capital as they do not encourage cooperative actions, with some even fostering negative attitudes and behaviours. Nevertheless, I have included them within my research, due to their ability to affect the development and maintenance of social capital.

Drug and alcohol usage amongst young adults

My experiences within the community of Steamboat Springs suggest that a partying culture and the subsequent normalisation of drug and alcohol use amongst young adults, has accompanied the growth of mountain resort tourism. This can be largely attributed to the desires and expectations of tourists to have fun whilst on vacation, with alcohol consumption perceived as being a central component of the mountain resort experience. As noted by Interviewee 2, a representative of a youth organisation: ‘a lot of us sort of directly correlate that [partying culture] to it’s a resort town; people come here and they’re on vacation, they’re having fun, they’re drinking’. This tendency for tourists, particularly young adult tourists, to use high levels of drug and alcohol while on vacation is well supported within the academic literature (Bellis, Hughes, Bennett & Thomson, 2003; Josiam, Hobson, Dietrich & Smeaton, 1998; Ryan, Robertson, Page & Kearsley, 1996).
However, such deviant tourist behaviour appears to have influenced the behaviour of more permanent community members within Steamboat Springs over time, with the partying culture and lifestyle having become an everyday part of their reality. This was made evident through such comments as: ‘people are here partying all the time’ (Interviewee 6); ‘marijuana’s pretty integrated into the culture here’ (Interviewee 2); ‘alcohol is like wild here’ (Interviewee 2); and ‘there’s a lot of drugs; a lot of sex’ (Interviewee 49). In particular, my research suggests that this partying culture can be most commonly associated with the behaviour of young adults within the community where there seems to be undue importance placed on drug and alcohol usage. As noted by Interviewee 4, a young adult who has grown up in Steamboat Springs, alcohol and marijuana have become a central part of mountain resort living for young adults, with many initially attracted to the community for the skiing and partying: ‘A lot of these people drink a lot, party a lot... they could ski and have fun and work and drink and do drugs; weed’. This was also perceived to be the case by Interviewee 46, a seasonal worker, who noted that many young adults, the majority of whom are seasonal workers, are ‘only interested in smoking and drinking’, with much of their everyday activities revolving around or incorporating drug and alcohol use.

Such frequent consumption of alcohol and marijuana appears to have become an established norm amongst young adults that has developed alongside the growth of mountain resort tourism. Descriptive in nature in that it specifies what is considered to be typical behaviour (Cialdini et al., 1990; Reno et al., 1993), it also appears to be downward-levelling in nature. This is because it is not representative of the mainstream actions of the community and appears to have helped generate a strong sense of solidarity amongst those who prescribe to this behaviour (Portes, 1998).

Such common use of drugs and alcohol amongst young adults was found to be implicitly endorsed in a number of ways. In regards to alcohol, the growing number of restaurants, bars and liquor stores that have accompanied the growth of mountain resort tourism and their constant advertising of “happy-hour” specials and bulk sales can be seen as sending out a message to young adults that alcohol consumption is a normal, everyday activity:

‘You look around, you open the newspaper; two page spread on Central Park Liquor or happy hours or things like that. People are coming here for a vacation and vacation involves drinking a lot of times and the happy hours. So there’s just an overwhelming culture surrounding that’ (Interviewee 15, representative of a youth organisation).
At the same time, the role that alcohol consumption plays in the everyday socialisation of young adults appears to have further emphasised its social acceptability. As noted by Interviewee 18, a young adult, the easy accessibility of bars both at the mountain base area and downtown means that most of the social activity within the community tends to revolve around alcohol consumption:

‘When I worked up at the mountain, it was really easy to just go over to Bear River, go over to Gondola Pub and Grill. Even working here, to just go downtown and get happy hour. But a lot of the social events really revolve around alcohol’.

The significance of alcohol amongst young adults also seems to be implied within the commonly touted phrase that ‘beer is the currency of Steamboat Springs’. As highlighted by one seasonal worker, Ryan*, a lot of the exchanges between young adults within the community are not monetary in nature, with beer and even marijuana at times, being substitute forms of payment. My own experiences reflected this, with a six pack of beer being all that was required to provide a visiting friend with a rental snowboard and helmet for the day. Ryan then explained how these beers are commonly pooled together and shared amongst workers at the end of the day, thus forming an integral part of after-work socialisation.

My interactions with other young adults in Steamboat Springs also clearly demonstrated the central importance of alcohol and marijuana in the majority of everyday activities. Many popular community events such as the First Friday Artwalk, where downtown businesses display the work of local artists and offer free canapés and alcoholic drinks, were seen by many young adults as an opportunity to meet up with friends and get drunk before heading out to the bars. Tubing on the Yampa River in the summertime was considered incomplete without numerous cans of beer and joints. Skiing constantly involved taking “safety stops” on the mountain where my companions would go into the trees to smoke marijuana, as well as frequent visits to one of the many bars on the mountain to have a drink. This was commonly followed by an end of the day drink on the slopes or at a nearby bar, as depicted in the following photograph of myself, and other young adults.
All of this was in addition to the daily drinking and smoking that I witnessed within people’s homes and apartments, with these frequent examples of drug and alcohol use highlighting the extent to which such behaviour is normalised amongst this segment of the community.

Within the academic literature, the ability for social norms to influence drug and alcohol use is well supported, with implicit social pressure; those feelings of obligation to drink alcohol for social reasons, together with the direct modelling of drinking by friends and family, acknowledged as contributing to the increased consumption of alcohol amongst adults (Abbey, Scott & Smith, 1993). Research that more specifically examines the behaviour of young adults has also identified social pressure as being a key motivating reason for drug and alcohol use (Webb, Ashton, Kelly & Kamali, 1996). Furthermore, social pressure has been recognised as a key predictor of initial use and experimentation with both alcohol and marijuana amongst adolescents (Graham, Marks & Hansen, 1991; Nation & Heflinger, 2006).

However, while my research findings highlight a connection between mountain resort tourism and drug and alcohol use amongst young adults, my ability to determine the social outcomes of this norm is less clear. Anecdotal evidence from conversations with public health and youth non-profit organisation representatives, alongside my own experience of living amongst many young seasonal workers, seem to suggest a link between the frequent use of drugs and alcohol and a variety of negative social outcomes such as vandalism, road
accidents, and skiing-related accidents, amongst others. My examination of the local jail report and police record also highlighted the large number of arrests associated with young adults in regards to driving under the influence (DUI), driving in the possession of an open container, the possession of drugs (marijuana or otherwise), as well as other more sporadic drug and alcohol related crimes. Nevertheless, I was unable to determine whether these negative social outcomes are definitively linked to the increasingly normalised use of drugs and alcohol amongst young adults as it requires a more specific examination of cause and effect, thus going beyond the scope of my research.

Therefore, although other studies have managed to establish a connection between the misuse/abuse of alcohol and various negative social outcomes such as property and violent offences amongst youth and young adults (Fergusson, Lynsky & Horwood, 1996; U.S. Department of Justice, 1999), the availability of alcohol and violent crime (Speer, Gorman, Labouvie & Ontkush, 1998), and the availability of alcohol and motor vehicle accidents and fatalities (Kelleher, Pope, Kirby & Rickert, 1996; Scribner, Mackinnon & Dwyer, 1994), my research is unable to make such claims. However, given the seemingly widespread use of drugs and alcohol amongst young adults, I do recommend this to be an area for future examination, as will be discussed further in Chapter 11.

The adoption of an ‘ethic of poverty’

As discussed in Chapter 6, the gentrification of the community of Steamboat Springs has accompanied the growth and development of mountain resort tourism, with the influx of affluent tourists and amenity migrants contributing to an increased gap in wealth. This was found to have brought about an interesting reactionary response by some middle-upper class community members who have adopted what Interviewee 31 describes as an ‘ethic of poverty’ that seeks to clearly distinguish them from wealthy tourists and amenity migrants. A descriptive norm that characterises the actions of what people within a particular group are doing (Reno et al., 1993), this ‘ethic of poverty’ has led this group of middle-upper class community members to exaggerate their economic hardship and hide their wealth to ensure they are not mistaken for these wealthy “others”. Rather, they seem to want to appear more similar to those community members who are struggling to make ends meet. As explained by Interviewee 2, although these community members are financially sound with some even
considered as wealthy, ‘they’re just not showy with it because that’s not cool here, to be showy’.

This desire for middle-upper class community members to play down their financial worth was described by Interviewee 2 as being most evident in the way that many have tried to obtain low-income scholarships for their children, despite their financial capabilities. Having grown up in an environment where the requirement for economic assistance was seen as a source of embarrassment and not something to be widely advertised, Interviewee 2 stated her surprise when she realised that the qualification of their children for financial aid is actually a source of pride for this segment of the community:

‘[Where I come from], you don’t ever want to come across as not having means. You know, you have pride...you might not talk about money a lot but you certainly wouldn’t boast if your kid got a scholarship to college because that would imply that you’re not sitting pretty. Out here, it’s the exact opposite. Parents are getting their kids qualified for scholarships that they don’t even deserve, and then they’re talking about it all over town... People love to convey that they don’t have money’.

As further clarified by Interviewee 2, many of these children do not deserve these scholarships because even though their parents are able to show tax returns which indicate a low income, many are trust fund recipients or in a similar situation where there is money coming in that does not necessarily qualify as income. Thus, it is not because of financial need that assistance is sought after but rather, the low-income status that scholarships for the private Lowell Whiteman School or the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club (SSWSC) provide. These scholarships help these middle-upper class individuals to establish a commonality with other community members; many of whom are genuinely struggling to make ends meet. Such association with the lower-classes is seen as preferable to being compared with wealthy tourists, and/or amenity migrants who are members of such private clubs as the Catamount Ranch Club or the gated luxury housing estates of Sidney Peak Ranch or Storm Mountain Ranch. As noted by Interviewee 2, what these middle-upper class community members are doing is ‘trying to distinguish themselves from those people that have just come in’. However, the resulting contradiction is that ‘there are kids getting scholarships to go to Whiteman, yet [these] kids are riding thousand dollar mountain bikes to school’ (Interviewee 2).

My own interactions and conversations with this group of community members did confirm their existence and their desire to want to appear poorer than they really are. I found
that they would often discuss their latest overseas holidays or their most recent purchase of a new pair of skis or snow-mobile, only to finish the conversation with an emphasis on how the community has become increasingly expensive beyond their means. Some would even go so far as to highlight how they were struggling to provide the basic needs for their children, such as school clothes and books, thus forcing them to commute to Denver on a regular basis where supplies are significantly cheaper.

While this adverse community response to wealth has yet to be acknowledged within the mountain resort tourism or social capital literature, my own personal experiences and conversations with community members indicate that such reactionary behaviour is a result of the growing tension surrounding the affluence that has been introduced into the community of Steamboat Springs over the years. Manifesting itself as a form of “reverse snobbery”, these attempts by certain middle-upper class community members to play down their wealth and be more closely aligned with those who are struggling to get by on a day-to-day basis, as opposed to the ‘super wealthy’, appears representative of growing divisions within the community based upon socio-economic class. This segregation along the lines of wealth will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter, in particular regards to the inequitable distribution of resources amongst these socio-economic classes.

The expectation and pressure to be ‘living the dream’

Another social norm that I identified during my time within the community was the pressure to be ‘living the dream’ that is shared amongst many newcomers. Through my interviews and everyday conversations with community members, it became apparent that many of these tourism-led amenity migrants come to Steamboat Springs in search of an improved quality of life, motivated by such things as the range of recreational opportunities, the beauty of the surrounding environment, and the existence of a ‘real community’. Their expectations for mountain resort living are therefore commonly high, as explained by Interviewee 44, a long-time community member: ‘Expectations are not low, and I’m sure everybody you talk to, expectations; you can sense it everywhere. Everybody’s been told that you’re supposed to have it all’.

This appears to have contributed to the widespread perception held by newcomers that everybody in Steamboat Springs must be ‘living the dream’. This “dream” can be understood as the opportunity to reside in a friendly, beautiful mountain resort community where there
exists a high quality of amenities and services and a wide range of recreational opportunities. This idyllic portrayal of the community seems to be further reinforced by such frequently overhead comments as ‘I’m lucky to live in Steamboat (Interviewee 45)’ and ‘I’ve found the greatest place on earth to live (Interviewee 42)’, all of which emphasise the “perfection” of Steamboat Springs, or as Interviewee 28 describes it, her ‘first heaven’.

However, this perception that everyone who lives in Steamboat Springs is happy and content overlooks the various economic and social difficulties faced by many community members. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the high costs of living and the limited number of well-paying, permanent positions have resulted in a lack of affordability, which has forced many newcomers and community members alike to seek additional employment and move down-valley in order to remain self-sufficient. This has restricted the time they have available to develop supportive formal and informal social networks, often leaving them socially isolated. As acknowledged by Interviewee 24, a representative of the Steamboat Springs school district: ‘people come here from somewhere else, so they leave their support system behind… [And] it takes a while to create a new support system’. Thus, it soon becomes apparent to newcomers that this notion of Steamboat Springs as a perfect community where everybody is ‘living the dream’ is not necessarily a truthful reflection of the everyday reality experienced by many community members:

‘They’ve heard about buddies moving to a ski town and loving it, making it work. What they don’t realise, what the buddy doesn’t tell them is like, ’I’ve hardly had money to pay rent. [Instead they hear], ’I’m skiing eighty days a season man!!!’ That’s what they hear on the phone. It’s that dream. It’s that total dream. It’s a little harder than that though, huh!’’ (Interviewee 30, local business employee)

I found this statement to be illustrative of the experience of a couple of my neighbours who would constantly talk about how they were in Steamboat Springs ‘living the dream’ or ‘living everybody else’s vacation’. This was despite the fact that neither of them seemed to enjoy their jobs and had limited work during the off-seasons, with both therefore reliant upon assistance from their parents in order to pay the bills. These statements therefore did not appear to truly reflect their situation but instead, those sentiments that they believed they were supposed to feel. Thus, this notion of ‘living the dream’ seems to be more of a social pressure and expectation; an injunctive norm that characterises what most ought to be doing within the community (Cialdini et al., 1991). As explained by Interviewee 2:
'I think they believe that they’re supposed to be very happy here….Like if I am going to be happy anywhere, it’s going to be [Steamboat]. I’m going to be happy here. It’s so beautiful here, people are so nice here’.

However, this common perception of Steamboat Springs as the ‘end-all, cure-all, perfect place’ (Interviewee 2) is problematic for newcomers when they are confronted by the economic and social reality of their situation. As identified by Jobes (2000) in his examination of the illusions and disillusions of amenity migrants in Bozeman, Montana, feelings of inadequacy and failure are often what result when expectations of how life should be are not met. Many newcomers therefore struggle to come to terms with the realities of mountain resort living, leading to disillusionment which at times can be both tragic and devastating (Jobes, 2000). I found this to be relevant to my research, with many community members drawing a connection between this pressure to be happy and ‘live the dream’ with a lack of fulfilment when these expectations are not met. In some cases, this disillusionment was perceived as having contributed to such undesirable social consequences as depression and suicide. While conversations with relevant non-profit organisations confirmed the existence of high levels of depression and suicide within Steamboat Springs and Routt County, I was unable to verify this perceived causal link, being outside the scope of my research. However, given the severity of what has been suggested by community members, there appears to be a need for future investigation into this area, as will be addressed further in Chapter 11.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the various norms that exist within the community of Steamboat Springs and how these have shaped, and been shaped by the development of mountain resort tourism. Of key importance was the acknowledgement of several social capital norms that are based upon the traditional cooperative values of the American West. These include a strong commitment to family, community involvement and assistance, and the exhibition of hospitable, friendly behaviour. Although the salience of these norms was found to be dependent upon the situational context in which they exist, their overall strength can be seen as forming a central part of the community’s identity, having played a significant role in influencing the marketing and promotion of Steamboat Springs as a mountain resort tourism destination.
This adoption of social capital norms as a part of the destination brand also appears to have contributed to their reinforcement. Such endorsement can be seen as developing a greater sense of community; both a social capital outcome and component of socio-cultural sustainability, to be discussed further in Chapter 10. Yet at the same time, mountain resort tourism is also perceived by some community members as having diluted these social capital norms, particularly the diminished extent to which norms of trust and reciprocity are extended out by ranchers towards amenity migrants. This appears to have encouraged the creation of bonding social capital amongst ranchers at the expense of their amenity migrant neighbours, thus resulting in the negative social capital outcome of social exclusion.

Furthermore, my research identified various social norms which have developed in response to mountain resort tourism and its associated impacts, including the acceptability of drug and alcohol use amongst young adults, the desire for middle-upper class community members to play down their wealth and adopt an ‘ethic of poverty’ to distinguish themselves from affluent tourists and amenity migrants, and the social pressure experienced by newcomers to be ‘living the dream’. These norms can be seen as affecting social capital by contributing to a number of negative social outcomes within the community, as will be acknowledged further in Chapters 10 and 11.

In the following chapter, I examine resources and the associated notion of power, and how the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism have affected their distribution and use within the community.
Chapter 9. Resources and power

Introduction

This chapter addresses my second research objective by examining how the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism have affected the accumulation and distribution of resources, and the subsequent exercise of power within the community of Steamboat Springs. As a component of social capital, resources are those valued goods, whether personally held or accessed through one’s social connections, which are activated in order to pursue a particular action (Lin, 2001). Such an understanding of resources and power in all of its guises is important, given the complex and often disguised nature of resource and power distribution within communities (French & Raven, 1959).

I begin this chapter with an examination of the resources that have contributed to the power of “locals” in the form of a higher social status. This is followed by an exploration of the effects of mountain resort tourism on the many and varied ways in which resources and power are distributed throughout the community. This includes an analysis of the growing importance attributed to monetary wealth and its exacerbation of socio-economic class divisions, the mobilisation of community resources and power in the form of community collective action, the intra-community dominance of the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC) as a result of their significant economic and political resources, and similarly, the economic and political dominance of Steamboat Springs at an inter-community level. Whether such resources and power are employed to achieve personal gain or mobilised to address a collective need, they appear to play an important role in social capital development within the community, and between the community of Steamboat Springs and the surrounding region.

Attaining “local status”: The importance of local knowledge and social networks

During my stay within Steamboat Springs, I identified a distinction between those who are considered to be “locals” and those who are not, with a higher social status and degree of importance seemingly attributed to locals over other community members. On first
glance, this categorisation appeared to be determined by the length of time that individuals have resided within the community, with those who were born and raised in Steamboat Springs most widely identifiable as locals. For everyone else, ‘the first thing people always ask you here is how long have you lived here? It’s like the badge of honour. It’s a distinguishing factor’ (Interviewee 26). Thus, the longer someone has lived in Steamboat Springs, the more “local” they seemed to be.

However, upon closer scrutiny, I noted that while length of residence is a distinction that is shared amongst locals, it does not appear to be what confers a higher degree of status. Rather, this status seems to result from the common possession and activation of particular resources such as an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the community that comes from personal experience and through social connection with others. At the same time, access to an extensive social network also appears to be important, providing locals with additional resources and benefits.

My research identified such in-depth knowledge and understanding to include the learned importance of the traditional social capital norms of the community through social interaction (as discussed in Chapter 8), as well as knowledge gained through lived experience. This includes a familiarity with a wide range of community members and their histories, as well as a detailed understanding of the cultural, historical, geographical, and even recreational characteristics of the community; as obtained over time through long-term occupation and association (Fountain & Hall, 2002). As explained by Reichenberger (2011), a reporter for the local newspaper:

‘Who among non-native locals can honestly claim to have had the slightest idea what “Nordic combined” entailed before putting down roots in this ski town? We become better skiers and snowboarders because we are around it every day all winter. We become river forecasting experts because we see the waters lap closer and closer to our favourite bars, and we soak up old-timers’ tales of melting patterns on Storm Peak face’.

Although much of this knowledge and understanding can be understood as a personal resource, being one’s own experiences that are individually possessed and internally held (Lin, 1999b), the process of gaining and sharing such knowledge through conversations, stories, or even through the demonstration of one’s improved ability to forecast water levels, arguably transforms it into a social resource; that which is shared and made accessible through one’s direct and indirect ties (Lin, 1999b). It is this accrual and distribution of local...
knowledge and understanding as a social resource that seems to contribute to one’s “local status” within Steamboat Springs, with status understood as being both a form of power and an attribution of social honour or social esteem (Weber, 1978a).

Additionally, the social relationships held by locals can be seen as another significant and distinguishing resource within their possession. From my observations and conversations with these long-term residents, I found that many have developed extensive social networks over time through both informal methods of socialisation and more formal participation and membership in associations and groups. Many of the locals whom I became acquainted with also appeared to be heavily involved with numerous community groups and organisations, particularly within the non-profit realm. Some were even noted as having established several of these groups themselves, such as Historic Routt County, the Colorado Cattlemen’s and Cattlewomen’s Associations, Community Agriculture Alliance (CAA), and Mainstreet Steamboat Springs, amongst others. I further identified many locals as being politically active within local government as members of City Council, one of the three Routt County Commissioners, or as members of various boards and commissions.

While such high levels of involvement and socialisation are arguably rewarding experiences in their own right (Field, 2003), these formal and informal social networks can also be seen as providing locals with access to resources beyond those personally held. My research identified these resources to include such things as timely information on job openings, social contacts that can assist in finding work, everyday gossip, as well as free food and drinks at many of the restaurants and bars, with these resources seemingly playing an essential role in helping many locals to survive on a day-to-day basis (as discussed in Chapter 7). This highlights the importance of bonding networks, with access to these closely-knit ties providing the social structure through which these resources are attained. Therefore, alongside an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the community, the ability for locals to continuously acquire and activate resources through their various formal and informal social networks has helped separate them from other community members and build their reputation. This affirms and reaffirms their social status within the community (Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001).
The growing importance attributed to wealth

While my above discussion highlights the importance of such social resources as local knowledge and social connections in order to gain power in the form of recognition and status as a local, the growth of mountain resort tourism and the accompanying gentrification over the years, has brought with it a shift in community attitudes regarding money and its significance. As rising numbers of affluent permanent and semi-permanent amenity migrants have moved into the community, greater focus appears to have been placed upon the distribution and influence of money, which has both increased community interest in, and the importance attributed to, those considered to be wealthy. However, alongside such recognition of these “haves” has also come greater acknowledgement of the “have-nots”, with the growing emphasis on money also highlighting the rising resource inequities and socio-economic class distinctions that have accompanied mountain resort tourism development and the gentrification of the community. This seems to have led to a growing sense of community mistrust and feelings of powerlessness as a handful of affluent individuals are perceived as using their socio-economic standings to influence local government for their own personal and political gain.

The creation of a ‘culture of money’

Given its history as a summer tourism destination and a successful ranching and agricultural community, there has long been a presence of wealth amongst certain segments of the community of Steamboat Springs. However, as was discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, it has been the growth of ski tourism and the subsequent development of mountain resort tourism over the past thirty or so years, which has brought a significant influx of money into the community. Although this increase in wealth can be traced back to the initial growth period of ski tourism, many community members explained how the attitudes surrounding money were quite different back then compared to what they are today:

‘Back in the ‘70s, everybody was less class conscious. It didn’t matter how much money you had. You know we used to say, ‘Everybody puts on their pants the same way.’ And you may have leather pants and you may have holey jeans, but you all do the same thing’ (Interviewee 12).
As identified by Clifford (2002), this was a time in society when mountain resort communities were enclaves, separated from mainstream America through their shared focus on skiing and recreation. Many of the individuals who were attracted to such communities during this time therefore tended to place greater priority on skiing over the earning of profits (Rothman, 1998b). Thus, as noted by several long-term community members such as Interviewee 36, ‘those people that had money didn’t want other people to know’, because money was not deemed to be as important a resource as your skiing ability or social connections, beyond what was needed to pay for rent and food. As further explained by another long-term community member, Interviewee 33:

‘People would come into the Cameo in the ‘70s and you didn’t know, literally, if you were sitting next to a multi-millionaire trust-funder whose father ran the LA Times, or some guy who was on his last dime. And it didn’t matter. It mattered what kind of person you were. It did matter how well you could ski, but it also mattered how you contributed to the community and if you were an artist or all these different facets of human life’.

However, with the rapid growth of ski tourism and more noticeably, the shift to mountain resort tourism and its attraction of amenity migrants, long-term community members expressed how significant changes in community perceptions and attitudes towards money have occurred. In particular, the increased numbers of affluent tourists and amenity migrants that have accompanied the growth of mountain resort tourism have introduced a number of socio-economic challenges (as discussed in Chapter 6), which can be seen as having contributed to the intensified focus on money, or the lack thereof, for those struggling to make ends meet. As noted by Interviewee 13, a human services representative: ‘people are so focused on making money and surviving, you know? Just making a buck. Everybody is. It’s [the community’s] truly obsessed’. Community members therefore discussed how over the years, they have become increasingly aware of who has money and how much, given its inequitable distribution. As expressed by Interviewee 37 on what it was like to grow up in Steamboat Springs during this growth period of the 1980s-90s: ‘It’s always been like you’re very cognisant of how much money your neighbour has. There’s kind of a culture of wealth worship here’.

Thus, it appears that while it used to be a person’s knowledge, experience, and social relationships that were valued and emphasised, being what ‘established the priority or pecking order in the community’ (Interviewee 37), many community members now perceive Steamboat Springs to be a community where the possession and distribution of money is
paramount. As further explained by Interviewee 37, the everyday focus for many community members now seems to revolve around who is a Fortune 250 or 500 CEO and who made how much money from this or that investment or development: ‘That’s the conversation instead of, ‘So and so did this for the community, ‘you know?’ This seems to have created a ‘culture of money’, with those in its possession attributed with greater recognition and influence than would have been given in the past. My research has shown this to be most clearly evident in regards to the growing socio-economic segregation of the community.

Resource inequalities and the distinction of classes: The “haves” and the “have-nots”

Just as a degree of wealth has always existed within Steamboat Springs, so too have class distinctions, with various economic and social divisions based upon status and class having long segregated rural communities (Crow & Allan, 1994; Hine & Faragher, 2000). However, the growth of mountain resort tourism and the accompanying ‘culture of money’ surrounding the rising numbers of affluent tourists and amenity migrants over the years, can be seen as having exacerbated these socio-economic differences within the community. As noted by Interviewee 36, a long-term community member: ‘I think there’s more stratification now than there was in the past. And it’s more, there’s more focus on that stratification than I would say years and years and years ago’. This growing discrepancy in the distribution of wealth seems to have led to the polarisation of community members as either ‘poor’ or ‘super rich’ (Interviewee 13), with the middle-class commonly perceived as having moved elsewhere to find greater opportunities outside of Steamboat Springs. The subsequent ‘have, have-not perspective’ (Interviewee 33), therefore appears representative of what Hartmann (2006b) describes as the segregated nature of mountain resort communities.

Such socio-economic distinctions within Steamboat Springs are made explicit through the various luxury housing developments which separate community members based upon monetary wealth. These include amongst others, the multi-million dollar Edgemont and One Steamboat Place condominiums at the base of the mountain, the luxury housing estate of “The Sanctuary” on the Rollingstone Ranch Golf Course, and even many of the stand-alone luxury homes located in-between downtown Steamboat Springs and the mountain base area (one of which is depicted in Photograph 14). I found these luxury developments to be a dominating presence within the community, being a physical representation of a whole other parallel
existence, or what Interviewee 31 described as the ‘affluent world’; something which is clearly distinct from the everyday reality of most community members.

My research also identified two luxury gated communities, Storm Mountain Ranch and Sidney Peak Ranch; both of which are located within a ten minute drive from Steamboat Springs. At Sidney Peak Ranch, the exclusivity accompanying multi-million dollar property ownership is further emphasised by the inclusion of private membership at the Catamount Ranch and Club. Consisting of a world-class championship golf course, a private lake, and a range of other amenities, club membership starts at $80,000 USD, thus being beyond the reach of the vast majority of community members. However, as noted by one of the club’s golf instructors, given the large amounts of money at the disposal of most of the members (of whom many are second-home owners), they also commonly belong to various other private clubs of this same calibre or above around the country.

This possession of such significant economic resources has provided affluent community members with the ability to freely associate or disassociate with particular groups, as exhibited through their membership and ownership choices within private clubs and luxury housing developments. By choosing such private membership and luxury ownership options, these wealthy individuals appear to have purposefully separated themselves from the rest of the community, with such attempts at differentiation further emphasised through their naming as the wealthy upper-class or the “haves” by the rest of the community. This can be seen as
attributing both status and influence to these wealthy individuals in the form of symbolic power; power that is afforded through the designation of social status or through the naming and describing of individuals, groups, and institutions (Allen, 2003; Bourdieu, 1989, 1992).

Additionally, as those of comparable socio-economic class are more likely to bond together (Laumann, 1966), these exclusive clubs and luxury housing developments tend to attract others within the community of a similarly affluent nature, further reinforcing the social stratification of the community. This notion that those within the same socio-economic class often interact with others of similar socio-economic standings has been extended by Lin (2001) to incorporate the possession of resources, with the assumption being that those who hold comparable types and amounts of resources are also more likely to interact with one another, given that they often occupy similar social positions. Such an assumption recognises that differential opportunities exist within the social structure of a community (Lin, 2001), with those of a higher socio-economic class not only possessing a greater amount of money, but also having access to superior resources, opportunities, and levels of authority that exist within their social networks (McLeod & Nonnemaker, 1999). Applying this notion to my research, it can therefore be argued that not only do the wealthy in Steamboat Springs have more time to participate in various community groups and organisations that allow them to create a wide range of social networks (as discussed in Chapter 7), their networks are also more likely to be well-endowed with resources, being those that are formed with others of similar socio-economic status within private clubs and/or luxury housing developments.

My research therefore highlights how the ability to access and activate quality resources beyond those personally held, can provide affluent community members with greater opportunities to develop social capital. This demonstrates how ‘not all social capital is created equal’, with the socio-economic location of social capital instrumental in determining its value and ability to facilitate action (Edwards & Foley, 1997, p. 693). For the “haves” in Steamboat Springs, it is their possession of and superior access to resources which has allowed them to differentiate themselves socio-economically from the rest of the community. This has provided them with greater power and influence, as well as greater opportunities to develop social capital, which has been perceived by some community members as having being used to push personal political and development interests at the expense of the broader community.
Community perceptions of powerlessness

In my everyday conversations with community members, a common concern that was raised was that there are some wealthy individuals who have utilised the economic resources at their disposal to gain political influence over development decisions from which they personally gain. This affluent group have been described by Interviewee 7 and other community members as forming a ‘higher order’ within the community who have ‘really gotten into the middle of a lot of the political discussions’ by either holding positions as City Council representatives or through their ability to influence such representatives. This has resulted in the widely-held perception that these wealthy and politically active individuals play a significant role in orchestrating ‘backroom deals’ (Interviewee 33), with such perceived ‘hidden processes of control’ (Giddens, 1968, p. 267), especially in regards to their support for what has been termed as the ‘indiscriminate growth’ of Steamboat Springs, seen as demonstrative of their political dominance over others.

As a result, a number of community members such as Interviewee 13 have begun to question whether the personal development interests of City Council representatives or those connected to them, have affected their ability to be objective when making decisions regarding whether or not to approve proposed development projects:

‘The little that I’ve learnt so far ties them [City Council members] to business interests in town that leads me to believe that they’re not as balanced a governing body as I would like them to be...people will tell you there’s a lot of development interest in there’.

Other community members similarly indicated that these ‘development interests’ are responsible for much of the growth that the community has experienced over the years, with the way in which these affluent few can influence the government planning approval process seen as a reflection of the instrumental power at their disposal; power which is exercised at the expense of others (Allen, 2003). This perceived concentration of power amongst an elite few appears representative of a pro-growth model of governance, with Molotch’s (1976; 1993) growth machine concept evident in the actions of such local elites as government representatives, the SSRC, real estate developers and wealthy investors.

This was particularly noted to be the case with the recent City Council approval of a Walgreens pharmacy, an issue that I followed throughout my time spent within the community. Through my analysis of newspaper articles, attendance of relevant City Council
and Planning Commission meetings, and the many conversations I had with a wide range of community members, I found that many community members perceived the approval of the Walgreens pharmacy to have occurred in spite of strong community opposition and the numerous developer requests for concessions that allowed them to violate various development codes and ordinances. As explained by Interviewee 3, this was one of several recent examples of how the influence of this elite, affluent few has left the City Council willing to ‘negotiate away many of the community benefits because they were looking at helping the developer’. Such development issues have further fuelled the belief regarding the existence of an influential pro-growth coalition, whose power enables them to shape a lot of policy ‘behind closed doors’ (Interviewee 34). This perception that there is ‘a whole lot of power in the hands of few’ (Interviewee 13) that is being used to address personal monetary interests over those of the wider community appears to have contributed to a growing sense of mistrust regarding the transparency of government representatives in their decisions.

Community members described how this has subsequently resulted in their unwillingness to participate and engage with the political process, as they perceive that their efforts will not make a difference in light of the influence held by this ‘higher order’. As described by Interviewee 37 who has grown up in Steamboat Springs: ‘a lot of the people who have been here forever and have been involved historically, are so exasperated about the way that things have gone that they’ve given up’. Similarities were also noted in the experience of Interviewee 22, a local government representative: ‘The other thing I’ve noticed in Steamboat is folks coming to meetings less and less. You know, ‘I just don’t have the time,’ or, ‘You’re going to do whatever anyway. Why should I come to meetings?’

Community participation in Steamboat Springs thus appears to be highly sensitive to existing power relationships. This is because the unequal distribution of resources and the perceived lack of transparency regarding community decisions can contribute to the growing disenfranchisement of many community members (Richards & Hall, 2000b). As ‘communities such as Steamboat get a bit jaded’ (Interviewee 20), what therefore results is a sense of collective indifference (Moisey & McCool, 2008). This can result in feelings of powerlessness; those feelings that one’s life is shaped by forces beyond one’s control (Mirowsky & Ross, 1983). As noted by Beeton (2006), such sentiments are commonly found within tourism communities where development has left community members with the feeling that control is increasingly out of their hands. This powerlessness was described by
Interviewee 37 as something that is ‘always in your face. You always know that you’re being left behind and you’re not in control, you know?’

However, although these perceptions are widely shared amongst community members, they are not necessarily always justified. On the one hand, many of the suspicions regarding the instrumental power of the wealthy do appear to be legitimate, as is widely perceived to be the case regarding the Walgreens development. My conversations with community members and my analysis of City Council minutes and other relevant documentation did highlight how research undertaken by both the Steamboat Springs Planning Department and the Steamboat Springs Planning Commission, and their resulting recommendations against this development, were ignored by City Council representatives. Instead, the overwhelming majority decided to vote against these staff recommendations and their own development code. Nevertheless, it is important to note such behaviour is not unique to Steamboat Springs, with very few governments in society being neutral conveners of power (Reed, 1997).

On the other hand, the perception and widespread cynicism that the “wealthy elite” are behind any and every undesirable government decision appears excessive and perhaps indicative of further underlying issues. These include an overall community resistance to change, or at least the rapid pro-growth model of governance that the community has followed over the years, which has the potential to contribute to rising tensions between the socio-economic classes. As explained by Interviewee 21: ‘Steamboat to this day, Steamboat doesn’t deal well with change, even though it’s changed a lot’. Interviewee 13 also acknowledged that she has tended to oppose much of the growth that has been endorsed through City Council because of the difficulties faced by the community in keeping up with the rate of development associated with mountain resort tourism:

‘The change to Steamboat Springs happened so quickly...nobody ever put infrastructure or systems or policies in place to address the quick change...the fact is that in a decade, this community has changed so drastically demographically, economically, that it’s dealing with some growing pains’.

Thus, some of the negativity held towards those who are affluent and politically active may instead be reflective of broader development concerns, with mountain resort tourism and the accompanying rapid rate of change having led to both a perceived and real loss of sense of control for the community.
Furthermore, my interactions with a range of community members also indicated that some of these frustrations could also be the result of envy towards the wealth possessed by amenity migrants, particularly amongst those who were born and raised within Steamboat Springs. As identified by Interviewee 4 who grew up in Steamboat Springs, when you have ‘rich skiing people’ who have come from elsewhere living in the same space as those who have been struggling for a long time to make ends meet, ‘there’s going to be some resentment. I don’t think it’s really expressed much, but I think it really is there. I feel resentment sometimes’. These negative feelings of jealousy that have been fostered by the inequitable distribution of tourism benefits may in fact represent social disempowerment (Scheyvens, 2003), thereby having the potential to further contribute to the perceived sense of powerlessness within the community.

Therefore, what my research has found is that although there may be a group of certain affluent individuals who are purposefully exercising the power at their disposal to influence political planning processes to achieve their desired ends; they cannot be assumed as being representative of the entire wealthy segment of the community. Additionally, they are not necessarily responsible for all planning conflicts and disagreements within the community, with a variety of other factors also potentially of relevance. As a result, the true extent to which many community members are powerless, as compared to those that possess significant economic and political resources, is difficult to unravel. This is particularly relevant when the many and varied examples of collective action and the resulting demonstrations of associational power within the community are also taken into consideration.

**The power of collective action**

Through living and participating within the community of Steamboat Springs, I also became aware of the many instances where community members have come together to contest or address a range of impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism over time. This propensity towards collective action was explained by community members as part of the blessing of being a small community where personal efforts are felt to make a wider difference:
‘Steamboat is a small enough community that you get a group of people together and make changes happen. You can see the community start to respond just by bringing something to awareness’ (Interviewee 29, county employee).

My research identified various examples of such community mobilisation within Steamboat Springs, beginning with the proposed development of Lake Catamount Resort; one of the first of many community attempts at collective action in response to the development of mountain resort tourism.

As outlined in Chapter 5, the Lake Catamount Resort proposal included the development of a ski resort and dam just outside of Steamboat Springs, bringing about much opposition within the community. As described by Interviewee 6, a county employee: ‘everybody was involved. You couldn’t be here and not be involved. The people really spoke up against it’. This was reiterated by Interviewee 33 who explained how the community rallied together in protest, with hundreds of people demonstrating their disapproval by attending town hall meetings to challenge the developers. Although these collective efforts managed to attract outside interest and support from such national environmental organisations as the Sierra Club (Mitsch Bush, 2006), it was ultimately the inability of developers to finance the venture that eventually halted development. Nevertheless, these efforts were still perceived by community members as having played a pivotal role, as they united many segments of the community together for the first time, whilst also instigated the development of the Yampa Valley Land Trust (YVLT). This resulted in the eventual renegotiation of the Lake Catamount Resort project to incorporate a much smaller amount of development and the implementation of conservation easements to protect the open ranchland (Mitsch Bush, 2006).

Another example of community collective action in response to mountain resort tourism has been the efforts of the ranching segment of the community in addressing the encroaching development of ranchettes and the escalating tensions between their new amenity migrant neighbours within the ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 8, conflicts between these two groups and the resulting inclusion of lawyers were seen as threatening existing ranching methods of operation, thus bringing ranchers together to collectively lobby the county government for assistance. Of particular importance to the ranching segment of the community was the protection of their rights to successfully manage their properties without fear of litigation, as well as the protection of the ranching landscape from further subdivision (Conservation Partners Inc., 1995). Such efforts resulted
in a series of public meetings to determine the best course of action. This led to the creation and subsequent initiation of the Routt County Open Lands Plan; a collection of land management and development alternatives which have played an instrumental role in ensuring the continued existence of ranching and ranchlands within Routt County today.

Most recently, a group of biking enthusiasts have come together with the goal of raising the biking profile of the community through the creation of the “Bike Town USA” initiative. As outlined in Chapter 5, this is a grassroots collaboration which aims to improve biking facilities and services, but also recognises the potential for bike tourism within the summertime. What started as an idea in 2009 has since become a reality through numerous volunteer efforts. These include working bees to develop and maintain bike trails, the collective lobbying of City Council to purchase the Emerald Mountain land parcel where many cross-country biking trails are situated, and collaborative talks between the SSRC and the community to improve downhill mountain biking facilities and host a series of community biking competitions and events on the ski mountain (from which the following photograph is taken). As can be noted in the background, this has recently led to the creation of the Steamboat Bike Park by the SSRC, which is where this particular race was held.

Photograph 15. Downhill mountain biking competition on Mt Werner. Source: N.Ooi
Through the culmination of these various community efforts, the vision of Steamboat Springs as “Bike Town USA” was implemented for the first time in the summer of 2011, and is now becoming increasingly recognised as a viable summer tourism slogan and option for future tourism development.

However, discussions with community members also identified collective efforts of a less constructive nature, as made evident through a number of “bumper sticker” campaigns. These appear to have provided the community with an alternative way to collectively voice their opinions against the various impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism. As explained by Interviewee 21, a senior representative of the SSRC, past conflicts surrounding the corporate take-over by the American Skiing Company (ASC) saw the production of, ‘More Boat, Less Otten,’ and ‘Just say no to ASC,’ bumper stickers that referred to Les Ottens, the CEO of the ASC, and his desires for extensive real estate development around the resort. Interviewee 5 gave the example of the ‘Steamboat is overcooked’ sticker which targeted a local developer, Jim Cook, when he replaced a mobile home park in downtown Steamboat Springs with mixed residential-commercial buildings. As discussed in Chapter 8, the initial negative response to the introduction of Triple Crown baseball tournaments also resulted in the ‘Say no to Triple Crown’ campaign, while the push for summer marketing and tourism development was also contested by the community through the ‘Stop the brutal marketing of Steamboat’ campaign.

Regardless of whether these community initiatives have been of a positive or negative nature, they all appear to illustrate the existence of associational power; the medium through which resources and obligations are collectively pooled and activated to effectively facilitate collective action (Allen, 2003; Parsons, 1963). These resources and obligations can be seen as including the local knowledge of community members, familiarity with the local government process, various social relationships between community members, and the shared community expectation to get involved. This is in addition to the specialised legal, financial, fundraising, and management skills held by particular individuals, amongst others. By collectively utilising these various resources and obligations, community members have been able to mobilise themselves to exert sufficient pressure on relevant decision-makers. This has helped ensure that their interest are successfully articulated and achieved (Gilchrist, 2000).

Whilst such associational power reflects the existence of a high level of social capital, it can also be understood as acting as a vehicle for further social capital development (Onyx, 2005). This is commonly the case when communities are faced with change, with outside
conflict often acting as a catalyst for collective action (Selin & Chavez, 1995). As can be noted through the community’s protests against the Lake Catamount Resort proposal and the lobbying of ranchers in their efforts to regulate the behaviour of newly arrived amenity migrants, the mobilisation of associational power in both of these instances was in response to what were perceived as external threats. These threats encouraged community members to bridge existing divides and work together to address external challenges. This provided the impetus for social capital development in the form of “grassroots democracy”; local, self-determined attempts to address the various challenges brought about by mountain resort tourism (Stettner, 1993). Thus, these examples highlight how conflict can at times be positive (Pearce, Moscardo & Ross, 1996), particularly when sufficient levels of social capital already exist within a community to help facilitate the necessary collective action required.

Additionally, the tendency for the community to address the various challenges imposed through collective action can be seen as having contributed to such positive social capital outcomes as community empowerment. This notion of collective efficacy provides community members with the feeling that they are able to take charge of the community and challenge outside interests (Tosun & Timothy, 2003). This gives them a sense of control that accurately balances optimism and realism, as well as the importance of personal freedom and mutual support (Mirowsky & Ross, 1983), thus leaving participating community members with the feeling that the locus of control lies in their hands (Timothy, 2007). As noted by Interviewee 19:

‘We have a lot of people that care. And therefore because they care, we have a lot of vocal opposition to things. And the more people who care, the stronger you become...In my opinion, we’re not led by the builders or the real estate people or the ski area. We’re led by the people who live here. And we’re led by a lack of apathy’.

Such strong voluntary involvement and ‘commitment to participatory democracy’ therefore appears demonstrative of the community’s desire for a more collectivist or corporatist approach to governance than the existing pro-growth model which places much of the political power and influence within the hands of a select few (Pierre, 1999, p. 381).

However, despite the existence of this sense of empowerment that has resulted from the mobilisation of associational power through collective action over the years, my research also identified a number of concerns regarding the community’s desire to act collectively. As argued by Interviewee 37, while many of the recent collective efforts undertaken by the community such as the “Bike Town USA” initiative demonstrate a willingness on behalf of
community members to respond to particular special interest areas, there no longer appears to be that desire which existed in the past to take on broader community concerns:

‘In my view, people are very involved and energetic about their interest areas, whether that’s protecting the Yampa River, getting new bike trails, or whatever. But when you talk about the larger trajectory of where we’re going and what the circumstances of living here are like economically, it’s there where I feel people don’t think they can have a voice. And I think apathy and frustration is what results’.

Thus, although strong feelings of empowerment exist in regards to smaller issues or special interest concerns, the perceived unwillingness and inability of some to take on wider concerns that have resulted from mountain resort tourism can also be argued as indicative of a lack of efficacy. While a number of reasons were put forth to explain what Interviewee 37 described above as community ‘apathy and frustration’, I found the majority of community members to attribute such feelings to the abovementioned disparity in wealth and power. In other words, many community members perceive themselves as powerless to challenge such large-scale concerns, given that they tend to be tied up with the influential interests of the wealthy.

With proponents existing on either side, whether supporting the existence of community empowerment on the one hand, or the increasing inability of community members to act collectively and make a difference on the other, I found it difficult to gauge the representativeness of such feelings. My experience within the community identified both community enthusiasm and apathy, with some community members extremely passionate and willing to challenge what they perceive to be personal interest decisions made by government representatives. However, I did also find many others who were only interested in addressing their own special interest areas, such as the maintenance of bike trails. As was discussed in Chapter 7, this seemed to be because many of these community members have a limited amount of time and energy to be able to take on anything further.

Yet regardless of whether these perceptions of powerlessness are widespread within the community of Steamboat Springs, the fact that they exist at all does raise some concerns given that associational power exists only through actualisation (Arendt, 1958). This sense of powerlessness, whether justified or not, can therefore diminish community efforts to collectively mobilise resources to address the various impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism. As a result, the consequential effects of this growing sense of disenfranchisement
that has resulted from resource and power inequities and the ability for exploitation by a few, whether perceived or real, requires further examination. This will be provided in Chapter 10.

**The dominance of the SSRC**

Given the community’s intertwined history with ski tourism and more recently, mountain resort tourism, my examination of the distribution and influence of resources would also not be complete without an analysis of the power relationship that exists between the SSRC and the community of Steamboat Springs. As discussed in Chapter 3, the evolution and consolidation of the ski industry within North America has occurred in such a way that a large proportion of ski resorts are controlled by only a few resort corporations. These corporations, one of which is Intrawest ULC (with the SSRC being a subsidiary), have been portrayed as having a dominating presence within the mountain resort communities in which they operate, with their size, economic resources, links to outside investors, and diversification into surrounding real estate development perceived as having left many communities powerless in the face of corporate decisions (Clifford, 2002; Glick, 2001; Rothman, 1998a). With domination defined as a form of power that allows one to impose their will upon another (Weber, 1978b), the sole presence and size of these resort corporations, combined with the significant economic and political resources at their disposal, is what can be seen as giving these corporations power over mountain resort communities.

In Steamboat Springs, the SSRC is the sole owner of Steamboat Ski and Resort; the largest and only corporate-owned ski resort within the community. While Howelsen Hill (which is owned by the City of Steamboat Springs) also provides recreational skiing opportunities, its limited number of ski runs and primary focus as a training facility for the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club (SSWSC) means that it is not, and does not aim to be, financially competitive with the SSRC as a ski resort operation. As the largest employer within Routt County, the SSRC is therefore the dominant ski resort, employing approximately 1,800 wintertime workers every year (SSCRA, 2011/12b). As explained by Interviewee 13, a human services representative:

‘Ski Corp is the largest employer in town and then when you look at all of the other businesses that rely heavily on tourism, it becomes apparent that there aren’t too many job opportunities that exist within the community that aren’t in some way tied’.
Through my interviews and other less formal conversations, I found that this dominance over employment was met with both relative indifference and negativity from community members. Although frustrating, many community members seemed to simply accept that a part of the reality of mountain resort living is that there are limited job opportunities beyond those offered by the resort. At the same time, however, there were a few community members who expressed more negative sentiments towards the SSRC’s control over employment. This was in particular regards to the high prices charged for season ski passes, which has forced many, especially those with families who would otherwise choose to work elsewhere, to seek employment with the SSRC in order to obtain free employee and dependent ski passes. As explained by Interviewee 23, a human services representative:

‘This is what you see a lot of the mums have to do. They have to go work up on the mountain because they have to get those passes. They’re not working for the eight bucks an hour. They’re working for the passes’.

This appears to have caused some tension in the relationship between these community members and the SSRC, as they described how instead of being able to choose to work for the SSRC, they feel as if they have no choice, given the control that the SSRC has over both the job market and their ability to ski.

The economic dominance of the SSRC was also made evident through the amount of revenue it generates. With the ski resort being at the epicentre of the winter mountain resort experience in Steamboat Springs, the SSRC is undoubtedly responsible for attracting the majority of the 350,000 tourists who bring in 55-60 per cent of sales tax revenue for the city during the winter months (SSCRA, 2011/12b). In addition, the SSRC’s ability to attract tourists and their subsequent spending can be seen as having a flow-on effect, which brings about further economic benefits for the wider community:

‘Everything we do, it brings sales tax revenue in. Not just here [on the mountain], but also the ripple effect of the other businesses in the community, whether it’s restaurants or other hotels, other property management companies, taxis, everything’ (Interviewee 43, representative of the SSRC).

As a result of their significant contribution to the local economy and tax revenue base, the SSRC is commonly provided with the opportunity to become involved with a variety of local planning and development boards and commissions: ‘They want to hear what we have to say about certain issues, so we get invited to the table a lot with things that are going on in
the community’ (Interviewee 43). This has resulted in the creation of various private-public partnerships between the SSRC and the City of Steamboat Springs and the Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association (SSCRA); all of which have helped address a number of tourism development and improvement interests for the resort. These include the development of an urban renewal authority (URA) that is responsible for upgrades and improvements in the base area of the resort, and a Local Marketing District (LMD) Board of Directors which assists with the SSRC’s marketing and funding of the local air service program, amongst others.

Although these private-public partnerships can be seen as forms of meaningful participation that resemble a degree of empowerment through community involvement (Timothy, 2007), they can also be argued as reflecting the predominant interests of those with the most power within a community (Hall, 2003). In this case, it is the SSRC that appears to hold the most power, with the recognition and authority that comes with being the largest employer and most significant attraction of the tourism industry providing it with both economic and political dominance. This is not to say that such partnerships do not also benefit the wider community, with the additional tourism visitation and spending that is secured through such base area improvements and guaranteed air service being positive contributions to the wider community. However, it must be acknowledged that these partnerships appear to exist primarily to cater for the needs of the SSRC.

From a social capital perspective, such economic and political dominance exercised by the SSRC in the pursuit of private interests seems to have brought about both positive and negative social capital outcomes. This is because their dominance represents a conflict between the development of individual, or in this case organisational, social capital and the broader social capital that exists within the community. While the abovementioned private-public partnerships have assisted the SSRC in achieving such desirable outcomes as the redevelopment of the mountain base area and improved tourist access, these partnerships also appear to have undermined collective social capital, as the ability of the SSRC to utilise its profitable network connections is not necessarily reflective of wider community expectations of fairness and equal opportunity (Portes, 2000). This illustrates how the development or maintenance of social capital may provide beneficial private goods for some, but at the same time have wider externalities that may or may not be positive for the rest of the community (Putnam, 2000). Thus, while the SSRC has provided such “public goods” as an increased number of jobs and the provision of improved facilities and services, their dominance over the job market can also be seen as a “public bad”, with the limited opportunities for job mobility
and the rising price of ski passes meaning that many community members are dependent upon the resort for both employment and the ability to ski.

However, it does appear that the SSRC has become increasingly aware of such negative community sentiments surrounding its dominance and has therefore invested in a number of initiatives to combat this. To begin with, a variety of collaborative partnerships and initiatives have been fostered between the SSRC and a range of community groups and organisations to bring about mutually beneficial community outcomes. One of these is the collaboration between the SSRC and the CAA in the hosting of Rendezvous Ranch Days; an event which showcases the ranching industry and promotes awareness of the importance of ranching and agriculture within the region. This event appears to have helped strengthen relationships with the ranching segment of the community, whilst also reinforce the Western, family-friendly norms upon which the branding of the resort is based (as discussed in Chapter 8). Another community partnership is that which is held with the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC). This has brought about the implementation of recycling options throughout the resort and a Zero Waste initiative for SSRC sponsored concerts and events, with both initiatives having improved the environmental sustainability of mountain resort tourism and the wider community.

Additional efforts by the SSRC include its philanthropic endeavours through the creation of specific corporate funds for charity, education, recreation, and environmental sustainability (SSRC, 2012b). These exist alongside the many volunteer commitments expected of senior management staff to further develop and improve community relations. As explained by Interviewee 21, a senior representative from the SSRC:

‘I require everybody that works for me to stay engaged in one way or another. So everything from whether it’s the Housing Board or Rotary, downtown business association, Community Foundation; we try to stay engaged in all the major ones so that everybody...so there aren’t any surprises. People have information, we know what’s happening in the community; community knows what’s happening out here. And it works’.

These examples, along with many others, can be seen as illustrative of the various attempts by the SSRC to foster social capital in the form of goodwill; the intangible assets such as a brand or reputation which reflect organisational efforts in building close relationships (Ville, 2005). By creating a positive presence within the community, the SSRC appears to have helped strengthen their connection to the community, thus instilling a greater
sense of obligation and reciprocity in community members to support and trust in its operations and decisions, in spite of its dominance. As explained by Interviewee 21:

‘There’s a difference between leading and pushing. If we push then we kind of cross over the line - ‘That’s Ski Corp trying to be dominant’. And so you have to find that...we can’t do that because people react badly.’

This indicates awareness on behalf of the SSRC regarding the need to improve their image as the dominant organisation within the community, with the establishment of goodwill in the form of a strong and trusted reputation being an important aspect in managing relationships and differences in opinion (Cox, 1995; Ville, 2005). My research identified that most community members were familiar with the efforts undertaken by the SSRC, with many acknowledging how the current senior management team have worked hard to show their dedication and commitment to the community by supporting a wide range of causes and initiatives. This seems to have helped mitigate many of the negative impacts resulting from the economic and political dominance of the SSRC and foster greater community trust and support. As explained by Interviewee 20, he trusts that the senior management team have the best interests of the community at heart, despite their obligations to investors, as many are long-term community members themselves. Thus, the relationship between resort corporations and the communities in which they operate is one that should not automatically be assumed as being a simple matter of corporate domination over the community (Gill, 2007), with the efforts of the SSRC in cultivating social capital playing an important role in balancing its economic and political dominance through engendering community trust and support.

The dominance of Steamboat Springs within Routt County: Addressing the ‘800 pound gorilla’

As my conceptualisation of the community of Steamboat Springs includes some of those individuals who reside in the surrounding region beyond the city limits (as discussed in Chapter 4), my research extended beyond the City of Steamboat Springs to examine the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and their effects on social capital at an inter-community level. This allowed me to identify the rising inequality in the distribution of economic resources within Routt County and the subsequent instrumental power that appears
to be exercised by the community of Steamboat Springs in the form of dominance over the surrounding communities of Hayden, Oak Creek, and Yampa.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, while at one point in time these four major townships were of relatively equal size and economic importance, the growth of mountain resort tourism has led Steamboat Springs to become the largest township, the administrative centre of the county, as well as the focus of much of the economic activity within the wider region. This rise in dominance can be seen as having exacerbated existing tensions between the communities; many of which are based upon long-standing high school sporting rivalries. As explained by Interviewee 33, a county employee:

‘Some people in Hayden, Oak Creek, and Yampa, can’t stand Steamboat Springs. And some of that goes back to old high school athletic rivalries. Some of it goes to the perception that people from Steamboat think they’re better than other people or they’re all rich or they’re all snooty’.

This reference to the community of Steamboat Springs as being wealthy and upper-class can be linked to the abovementioned struggles associated with a growing class divide; this time between the communities of Routt County. This is because while Steamboat Springs is only separated by twenty miles or so from Hayden and Oak Creek, the growth of mountain resort tourism and the accompanying influx of wealthy tourists and amenity migrants has resulted in a ‘huge gulf in income’ (Interviewee 20).

One area in particular that appears to have caused significant tension between Steamboat Springs and the surrounding communities has been the lack of control afforded to county residents over the allocation and use of their taxpayer dollars to develop and maintain roads and services for the many tourism-led amenity migrants attracted to the open ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs. As explained by Interviewee 6, a county employee:

‘The county has no control if someone wants to split off thirty-five acres from their ranch and sell it to somebody else. But when that person builds their house on thirty-five acres, they’re also going to expect the ambulance to show up. They want their roads. They want their kids to be picked up at the bus stop... We’ve got seven hundred miles of county roads in this county and we’ve got a decreasing budget for everything’.

Many county residents who live outside of Steamboat Springs have therefore come to acknowledge the ‘unintended consequences of having subdivisions’ (Interviewee 6), as a significant portion of their taxpayer dollars have been spent on ploughing and maintaining
these additional roads, despite many of these amenity migrants only residing in their ranchettes for short periods of time each year. Furthermore, as many of these amenity migrants tend to spend all of their time and money within Steamboat Springs, whether skiing, shopping, or visiting the restaurants and bars, these residents within the surrounding communities are unable to derive any direct benefits from their presence. This was acknowledged by Interviewee 28 as being one of his key concerns regarding the recent push for the “Bike Town USA” Initiative, with county taxpayer dollars expected to fund the maintenance of county roads and trails, even though the economic revenue generated by bike tourism will be concentrated within Steamboat Springs. This highlights the current inequality in the distribution and use of economic resources that belong to the entire county to address some of the costs associated with mountain resort tourism development, in spite of the fact that the majority of benefits will be retained within Steamboat Springs.

Such inequality can also be noted in the issue raised in Chapter 6 regarding the attribution of the half a cent sales tax within the City of Steamboat Springs to its schools. Of concern to county residents is that such a tax only benefits those schools within the Steamboat Springs school district, even though many county residents do most of their shopping in Steamboat Springs and therefore contribute to this tax. Once again, the benefits appear to be retained within Steamboat Springs, further exacerbating the economic resource inequality that exists between the communities. This has led to a growing sentiment shared amongst wider county residents that they are made to ‘always feel like they’re step-children’ (Interviewee 20). As further explained by Interviewee 29, a county employee: ‘It somewhat breeds some animosity, you know, because they get really sick of Steamboat having all the good stuff; all the services and all the amenities that they don’t have in those communities’.

This is not to say that all wider county impacts have been negative, with my research also acknowledging that mountain resort tourism has provided many residents within these surrounding communities with greater opportunities for employment through the resort and other tourism-related industries (as discussed in Chapter 6). However, this dependence on Steamboat Springs can also be seen as a source of inter-community conflict. This is because on the one hand, these communities want to retain their individual identity and not be seen as nondescript bedroom communities that surround the core resort area, which often provides the central identity for the entire valley (Hartmann, 2006b). Yet on the other hand, they recognise the necessity of Steamboat Springs as an economic centre for the county:
‘We have these communities out here that are very, very proud of their identity and in many cases hate Steamboat. But they also have that connection to Steamboat and mostly through jobs, and so it’s that eight hundred pound gorilla that you have to love and hate at the same time’ (Interviewee 9).

My research therefore shows how inequalities in power exist, not only between stakeholders within a community, but also between communities and the wider society. Within a mountain resort tourism context, as the power for decision-making for the whole valley system is commonly located within the core resort area (Hartmann, 2006b), these relationships between resort communities and their surrounding communities tend to be characterised by inequality. This can be noted in the way that the community of Steamboat Springs has imposed various negative impacts associated with mountain resort tourism upon the wider county, whilst at the same time benefitted from the increased economic revenue, thereby exerting its power over the surrounding communities, seemingly at their expense. This dominance through imposition (Allen, 2003; Weber, 1978b), has led to the commonly held perception within the county that there is a ‘‘Fort Steamboat’ mentality’ (Interviewee 28), where the community of Steamboat Springs is seen as only doing what is good for itself, without regard for the surrounding region.

This demonstrates how the domination of Steamboat Springs over its surrounding communities has affected inter-community relationships, with the growing resentment felt towards Steamboat Springs by these outlying communities limiting their willingness to develop bridging social capital. At the same time, this lack of bridging networks at an inter-community level seems to have contributed to the strengthening of existing bonding social capital within these surrounding communities, resulting in a form of reactive solidarity which has further diminished their desire to reach out and communicate with Steamboat Springs. As explained by Interviewee 28, a City Council representative:

‘I was working really hard to try to get representation from Hayden and Oak Creek and Yampa on this project that I was working on, and Hayden basically slapped me in the face and sent me out the door....So you know the hang-over’s on both sides’.

My own experiences within Steamboat Springs and in visiting Hayden, Yampa, and Oak Creek mirrored this sentiment expressed by Interviewee 28, with the majority of residents within these surrounding communities seemingly keen to distance themselves from Steamboat Springs.
While this may simply be part of their attempts to retain their own identities in the presence of the dominance of Steamboat Springs: ‘a lot of folks in those areas don’t want to be too associated with Steamboat’ (Interviewee 2), this lack of bridging social capital can also be seen as reducing the prospects for future collaborative initiatives which may help achieve communal goals that are beneficial to all communities involved (Flora & Flora, 2003). As can be noted within the abovementioned example given by Interviewee 28, this appears to be because the absence of bridging social capital has minimised the likelihood of developing shared interests and mutual respect between communities, and thus the ability to develop cooperative visions (Halpern, 2005). This raises questions regarding the current socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs, both in regards to the imposition of its various costs upon surrounding communities without the receipt of the majority of benefits, as well as the subsequent effects on inter-community relationships, which can be seen as hindering the potential for cooperative and collaborative behaviour. These will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 10.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I highlighted the complex distribution of resources within and across all levels of the community and the various manifestations of power that can result. Much of this power can be identified as power over others, including the domination of Steamboat Springs over other communities within the county, the dominating presence of the SSRC within Steamboat Springs, the class distinctions separating the “haves” from the “have-nots”, and even the status attributed to locals. However, my research also demonstrates how the wielding of power is not limited to those individuals and organisations that possess the greatest amount of resources (Allen, 2003), with the different examples of community grassroots initiatives demonstrating how associational power can also be achieved through the collective mobilisation of resources possessed by many.

Such variation in the distribution of resources and expression of power has led to numerous outcomes for social capital development both within the community of Steamboat Springs and between Steamboat Springs and surrounding communities. For those individuals that possess or have access to particular resources, whether it is local knowledge and an extensive social network, or monetary wealth and influential connections, their ability to exercise power can be seen as beneficial to their personal accumulation of social capital.
Furthermore, the willingness of many to undertake collective action represents both the existence and development of social capital at a community level, as it brings various community members together in the face of adversity to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

However, one’s ability to accumulate social capital may also come at the expense of others. This was noted in regards to the group of wealthy and influential community members who are perceived to have used the resources and power at their disposal to influence development decisions for their own personal gain. While their personal activation of economic and political resources has helped them to build their own social capital, it has seemingly contributed to a growing sense of powerlessness amongst other community members, which has had a detrimental effect on the wider creation of social capital within Steamboat Springs. At an inter-community level, the resentment associated with the dominance of Steamboat Springs within Routt County also appears to have negatively affected social capital development, stifling the creation of bridging social capital between communities. Nevertheless, the efforts on behalf of the SSRC to offset their dominance by cultivating goodwill seems to have led to a more balanced relationship with the community of Steamboat Springs.

In the following chapter, I further analyse these social capital outcomes resulting from mountain resort tourism that have been identified in Chapters 7, 8, and 9. This is achieved by linking them to the literature regarding socio-cultural sustainability, thereby addressing my third and final research objective; how the use of social capital can contribute to a better understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs.
Chapter 10. Social capital and the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism

Introduction

This chapter addresses my third and final research objective by examining how my use of social capital has contributed to a more detailed understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs. As was depicted in the conceptual framework provided in Chapter 2 (refer to Figure 1), this involves linking my findings from the previous chapters on the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, their effects on social capital (networks, norms, and resources), and the subsequent social capital outcomes, to the various components of socio-cultural sustainability. In this chapter, I build upon this framework to provide a more nuanced depiction of the various social capital outcomes that result from mountain resort tourism, and the way in which they indicate socio-culturally sustainable or unsustainable behaviour.

As was proposed in the second half of the conceptual framework, and will be discussed throughout this chapter, the various social capital outcomes that result from mountain resort tourism impacts and their effects on the components of social capital do appear to be indicative of socio-cultural sustainability. My findings, however, have identified a much more complex and inter-connected relationship. Whereas the original conceptual framework simply proposed that the existence of positive social capital outcomes would indicate the existence of socio-culturally sustainable behaviour, and the existence of negative social capital outcomes would indicate socio-culturally unsustainable behaviour, my research has found that particular social capital outcomes (both positive and negative) can be more specifically aligned with certain aspects of socio-cultural sustainability. These aspects include quality of life, community participation (and the associated notions of democracy, equity, and empowerment), and intra- and inter-community equity, forming the basis of my discussion in this chapter. Figure 7 depicts the complex relationship that exists between the various social capital outcomes identified in my research and these three indicators of socio-cultural sustainability. This is a modification of the second half of the conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 2 that shows how the social capital outcomes identified in Chapters 7, 8, and 9 can
assist in providing a more in-depth understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

Figure 7. Elaboration of the relationship between social capital outcomes and socio-cultural sustainability

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Capital Outcomes</th>
<th>Socio-cultural sustainability</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
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<td>• Reinforcement of social capital norms</td>
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<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
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<td>• Dilution of social capital norms</td>
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<td>• Social exclusion</td>
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<td>• Diminished quality of life</td>
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<td>COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION</td>
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<td>Socio-culturally sustainable behaviour</td>
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<td>• Meaningful community participation</td>
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<td>o Community empowerment</td>
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<td>o Community cooperation and collaboration</td>
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<td>Socio-culturally unsustainable behaviour</td>
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<td>• Limited meaningful community participation</td>
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<td>• Limited willingness for community participation</td>
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<td>INTRA- AND INTER-COMMUNITY EQUITY</td>
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<td>Socio-cultural sustainable behaviour</td>
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<td>• Increased inter-community political equity</td>
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<td>Socio-culturally unsustainable behaviour</td>
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<td>• Intra-community economic inequities</td>
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<td>o Socio-economic segregation</td>
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<td>o Lack of social cohesiveness</td>
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<td>• Inter-community economic inequities</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Limited inter-community collaboration</td>
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Positive
- Mobilisation of resources and associational power
  o Community grassroots initiative
  o Community collective action

Negative
- Economic and political inequities
- Powerlessness
- Lack of trust

Positive
- Inter-community collaboration

Negative
- Intra-community
  o Inequitable distribution and influence of economic resources
- Inter-community
  o Inequitable distribution of economic costs and benefits
Mountain resort tourism and quality of life

Throughout my discussion and analysis of my research thus far, I have identified that mountain resort tourism has brought about both beneficial and detrimental impacts to the community of Steamboat Springs. These have contributed to a number of social capital outcomes, which can be seen as affecting the quality of life of many community members and those seeking to become community members. In particular, it is the subjective aspects of quality of life; the emotive, internal judgements of well-being identified through such value-laden concepts as community attachment (Andereck & Jurowski, 2006; Diener & Suh, 1997; Theodori, 2000) and the parallel feelings of a sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Ryan, Agnitsch, Zhao & Mullick, 2005), that appear to have been most significantly affected.

On a positive note, the endorsement of social capital norms for the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs (as discussed in Chapter 8), demonstrates how mountain resort tourism can enhance the sense of community shared amongst community members. However, the negative social capital outcomes of social exclusion, isolation, and feelings of powerlessness that were identified in Chapters 7, 8, and 9, also highlight how mountain resort tourism can have an adverse effect on feelings of community attachment. As quality of life is a key component of socio-cultural sustainability (Myers et al., 2011), this raises concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of mountain resort tourism and the community of Steamboat Springs, given the inter-dependent relationship that exists between tourism and community sustainability (Beeton, 2006; McKercher, 1993; Richards & Hall, 2000a).

Reinforcing a sense of community: The endorsement of social capital norms

As identified in Chapter 8, successful destination branding relies upon the use of core values held by the host community to ensure that its cultural identity and pride are accurately portrayed (Gnoth, 2007). Within Steamboat Springs, I found this to include the adoption of such social capital norms as Western hospitality and friendliness and the commitment to family, with both having become defining characteristics of the community and an integral part of its branding over the years. Through their constant promotion and marketing, the importance of these norms seems to have been reinforced within the community, subsequently influencing the way in which community members act towards one another and to visitors.
the same time, the emphasis placed upon these place-specific norms appears to have assisted in the development of a sense of community; both a positive social capital outcome and contributor to feelings of subjective well-being and quality of life (Macbeth et al., 2004; Perkins, Hughey & Speer, 2002). This is because the use of such an intrinsic aspect of the community’s identity as a central part of the tourism brand has helped to strengthen these unique socio-cultural characteristics (Jamrozy & Walsh, 2008), fostering and developing a greater sense of community amongst community members as they feel that these promotional efforts truly reflect their positive norms and values (Kemp et al., 2012).

Additionally the utilisation of these norms within the destination brand can be seen as respectful of the cultural integrity of the community. While the branding of Steamboat Springs does include general Western imagery and themes, its focus on the traditional community norms that define Steamboat Springs is seen as providing a more specific and accurate reflection of the local culture that all community members are able to identify with. As explained by Interviewee 47, a local business entrepreneur:

‘It’s about the people. It’s about a sense of belonging and friendliness. To me, that’s the real character. It’s not about barns and horses and cowboys. Yeah you can find that if you drive out into the country and that’s a neat thing, but that’s not really the everyday existence that most of us live’.

With socio-cultural sustainability implying ‘respect for social identity and social capital, for community culture and its assets’ (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006, p. 1276), the adoption of these social capital norms for the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs as a tourism destination does therefore appear demonstrative of socio-culturally sustainable mountain resort tourism. This is because these norms embrace and respect the place-specific characteristics of the community and destination that clearly represent who they are (Kemp et al., 2012), whilst also remind community members of their importance as a central part of the community’s culture and identity.

However, my research also identified fears that the rapid growth and development of mountain resort tourism has helped dilute these norms, despite their widespread communication throughout the community and beyond. As was discussed in Chapter 8, a number of community members raised concerns regarding the way in which transience has limited the extent to which newcomers identify and connect with such norms, and the way in which many seasonal workers do not subscribe to the same family-friendly values of the community. This perceived weakening of community social capital norms seems to be
negatively affecting the quality of life of community members, given that it is such norms, along with a community’s economic and environmental values, that contribute to a sense of place and community (McCool & Martin, 1994; Walsh, Jamrozy & Burr, 2001). This may become a significant issue in time to come if the negative outcomes resulting from the growth of mountain resort tourism are seen to outweigh the reinforcement of community social capital norms through the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs.

Thus, an important consideration for the attainment of socio-culturally sustainable tourism is how a sense of community and attachment amongst community members can be maintained, whilst at the same time allowing for the destination to be shared with large numbers of tourists (Lew, 1989). Given that my research has demonstrated how the endorsement of social capital norms has strengthened the sense of community by reinforcing the importance of Western hospitality and friendliness and the commitment to family, I recommend the continued adoption of these social capital norms as key characteristics for the branding of Steamboat Springs. Such sustained emphasis will hopefully outweigh their potential dilution as a result of the transience associated with mountain resort tourism.

Community attachment and ownership: The effects of social exclusion, isolation, and a perceived sense of powerlessness

As identified in Chapters 7 and 8, issues of transience and conflicting norms have resulted in a lack of bridging social capital extended out towards newcomers and amenity migrants. This has contributed to their social exclusion from various informal networks of socialisation. In addition, the constraints of time and money discussed in Chapter 7 have prevented the formal participation of many community members, with those who are struggling with the economic pressures of living within the community, and those commuting into Steamboat Springs from surrounding communities of particular concern due to their increased likelihood of disengagement and social isolation. In Chapter 9, my research also highlighted the feelings of marginalisation and powerlessness shared amongst community members that have accompanied the development of mountain resort tourism and its attraction of wealthy tourists and amenity migrants over the years. This was found to be the result of the widely held perception that there are a small group of affluent residents who are using their significant economic and political resources to influence community decision-making processes for their own personal gain. It is these three social capital outcomes of
social exclusion, social isolation, and powerlessness, which can be seen as negatively affecting such subjective aspects of quality of life as community attachment and ownership within the community of Steamboat Springs.

In regards to social exclusion, my research has demonstrated how newcomers and amenity migrants have faced particular difficulties in becoming accepted as a part of the community. This is because of their limited ability to develop the necessary informal friendships and relationships that help establish positive feelings of attachment; an important contributor to the affective aspects of quality of life (Connerly & Marans, 1985). This association between the informal social ties held by an individual and their attachment to a community has been widely acknowledged within the academic literature (Crowe, 2010; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Manor & Mesch, 1998; Ryan et al., 2005; Sampson, 1991), with people commonly understood as being defined by their relationships to one another and the broader society (Cox, 1995).

At the same time, my research found that many of these newcomers and amenity migrants are also unable to more formally partake in community groups and organisations due to constraints of time and money. This seems to have inhibited their development of positive social bonds, which can help to minimise feelings of isolation and marginalisation (Son et al., 2010; Western, McCrea & Stimson, 2007). As civic engagement through formal participation is central to the development of community attachment (Moisey & McCool, 2008; Tosun & Timothy, 2003), such social isolation further appears to have negatively affected the quality of life of these newcomers and amenity migrants.

Finally, as people tend to be more attracted to, and involved within, communities where they perceive themselves to be influential (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), feelings of powerlessness can also be seen as having negatively affected quality of life within the community of Steamboat Springs. This is because the diminished desire of many to become involved in a community where they feel as if they have no voice or sense of control has contributed to a lack of participation. Such powerlessness can be seen as weakening community solidarity and attachment to tourism and other development outcomes (Moisey & McCool, 2008). This highlights the essential role that community participation plays in improving quality of life and achieving tourism and community sustainability (McAndrews & Draper, 2006), and therefore the importance of ensuring that continued opportunities for both formal and informal community participation exist.
In examining these issues surrounding community ownership and attachment, my research took particular note of the greater degree to which social exclusion and isolation has been experienced by young adults where transience is most prominent. Although this group consists of many seasonal workers who come to Steamboat Springs for its recreational opportunities and partying lifestyle and are largely disinterested in becoming involved within the community, I also found others who expressed a desire to become accepted as more permanent members of the community. However, this was seen to be quite difficult, given that these young adults tend to face greater economic difficulties, largely due to the seasonal and menial nature of much of the employment available to them, as well as higher barriers of network entry that result from widely held expectations regarding their transience. At the same time, the downward-levelling social norm regarding the acceptable usage of drugs and alcohol that was identified as governing much of their behaviour (as discussed in Chapter 8), seems to have further diminished the willingness of community members to open up their social networks and invite them in. This is because many community members see these young adults as being primarily interested in drinking and partying, rather than becoming active participants within the community. Thus, they are perceived as contributing little beyond their ability to fill the many seasonal and menial tourism positions on offer: ‘They’re just cannon fodder. Load them in and blow them up because there’s four right behind them’ (Interviewee 20).

With such attitudes towards young adults being prevalent within the community, many therefore appear limited in their ability to integrate and establish extensive formal and informal social ties within the community. This makes it hard for them to put down permanent roots and develop those feelings of attachment that contribute to a willingness to be active and involved community members, which seems to have affected the current and future stability of the community of Steamboat Springs. As explained by Interviewee 23, a human services representative: ‘that’s the one group that we’re probably kidding ourselves thinking that they’re staying, because they’re not’. This is of significant concern given that residential stability, as measured through length of residence, is an important contributor to the development of community attachment (Crowe, 2010; Sampson, 1988, 1991).

Such social exclusion can therefore be seen as perpetuating the likelihood of transience amongst these young adults, whether newly arrived or having lived and worked in...
Steamboat Springs for a number of years. This has contributed to the “hollowing out” of the community (Rademan, 2003), where the middle-aged and middle-class can no longer afford to remain. This skews the demographics of the community, with Steamboat Springs increasingly becoming a place for the seasonal and transient young, and the wealthy and retired old. As explained by Interviewee 16, at one end of the spectrum you have a relatively closed loop of young, low-income adults who come as seasonal workers and leave soon after, with very few able to make the transition into becoming more permanent members of the community. On the other hand, you have a similarly closed loop of wealthy, permanent and semi-permanent retirees who come in their mid-late fifties and then stay for ten, twenty years, before the challenging climate encourages them to move on. What is missing is what Interviewee 20 refers to as the ‘breeding stock’ for the community; those in the middle that can help to link these two loops together to create a more stable and permanent population base. This missing group of middle-aged and middle-class residents arguably includes those who would have normally transitioned from being a low-income young adult, but are instead forced out of the community prematurely due to the various economic and social barriers faced.

As a result, several long-term community members have begun to recognise that what is lacking is a core group of younger, permanent community members who are willing to ‘take over the reins’ of the community. Whereas past collective efforts, such as the community protests against the Lake Catamount Resort proposal, are perceived as indicative of the willingness of the older generation to stand up against mountain resort tourism development and its subsequent impacts, there are questions as to whether that same degree of commitment and attachment to the community is shared amongst younger adults. This is seen to be largely a result of their transience, which has raised concerns regarding future community ownership:

‘What happens when that group moves off? Is there some new solid group that really has some ownership feel? Or does it [the community] lose that?’ (Interviewee 44, long-term community member)

In having spent a significant amount of time in the company of many of these younger adults, I also found that their interest in engaging with community matters was relatively limited. This was primarily because very few of them saw these issues to be of concern, as they did not expect to remain in Steamboat Springs beyond a couple of seasons due to the prohibitive costs and limited job opportunities.
My research therefore suggests that the effects of mountain resort tourism on the process of social network development, the subsequent outcomes of social exclusion and isolation, and their effects on community ownership and attachment are currently not of a socio-culturally sustainable nature. In particular, given that community engagement is necessary to ensure the future solidarity of community networks and the development of community attachment (Crowe, 2010), there appears to be a need to find a way for young adults to stay and become involved within the community. This is because ‘there’s value in having people that put roots down in communities, because they’re more invested, they’re more engaged community citizens than the revolving door’ (Interviewee 29).

**Addressing future community attachment and ownership**

Although no specific course of action has yet to be undertaken to target the permanency of young adults within the community, one associated industry to tourism that has become increasingly recognised for both its potential as an economic development tool and its attraction and retention of young-middle aged adults, is that of location neutral businesses and employees (LNBs). These amenity migrants have become an important part of the shift from ski tourism to mountain resort tourism within Steamboat Springs (as discussed in Chapter 5), being motivated by the perceived high quality of life and tourism recreational opportunities on offer. While many LNBs are small start-up companies with limited employees or “footloose” employees working for larger corporations (Beyers & Nelson, 2000), others are larger organisations that offer a growing range of permanent jobs than what was previously available. These LNBs have been acknowledged as providing more opportunities for young adults to be able to obtain permanent and higher paying employment within Steamboat Springs:

‘There are over seven hundred location neutral businesses in Routt County. They generate millions of dollars of economic activity in the local community. And what’s the need for the infrastructure? No need for infrastructure. What kind of jobs do they bring in? Great jobs - high paying jobs that are outside the boom and bust economy’ (Interviewee 39).

At the same time, community members are beginning to recognise the ability for LNBs to address the “hollowing out” of the community, with the majority of location neutral employees aged between 35-50 years and of middle-upper socio-economic class (SSCRA, 2011/12b). Although the number of jobs created by LNBs is still limited, many community
members noted that the jobs that are provided by LNBs tend to pay sufficient wages which allow employees to be able to afford the high costs of living and contribute to the economy through their everyday spending. This can be seen as helping both the economic stability of the community (especially when tourism visitation is down), as well as its residential stability, with most LNBs having made a purposeful decision to permanently relocate to Steamboat Springs. This is not to say that the growth of the LNB industry is a perfect solution for addressing transience and residential instability, given the limited opportunities and the specialised skill sets required in some instances. However, with the seasonal nature of mountain resort tourism and the remoteness and size of the community being significant barriers for many other industries, the promotion and development of LNBs seems to be an important first step towards dealing with transience and residential instability.

With sustainability including the ‘capacity for continuance into the long term future’ (Porritt, 2005, p. 21), my research highlights how there is a need for ongoing focus on improving economic and residential stability in order to increase community attachment and ownership amongst community members in the long-term within Steamboat Springs. Although current efforts to attract and retain LNBs appear to be preliminary in nature, they indicate a degree of community recognition regarding the issues surrounding transience and residential instability, with this segment of the community demonstrating significant potential in bringing both economic and socio-cultural benefits. In particular, the high-paying nature of the industry and the interest that many have in formal community involvement means that a lot of the economic and social barriers that seem to be preventing greater engagement amongst young adults may not be as significant for this segment of the community. LNBs may therefore be more able and willing to participate and establish positive relationships within the community, which can lead to the development of feelings of community attachment and ownership that seem to be lacking amongst many younger seasonal workers.

While my research has largely shown how the various social capital outcomes resulting from mountain resort tourism have negatively affected community attachment and ownership, this is not to say that a strong sense of community and belonging does not exist amongst community members. Through my own interactions with community members, I found that there does appear to be a high level of civic engagement and pride regarding the committed and involved nature of many of its members. As acknowledged within previous chapters, this is evident through the normative expectations for community involvement and
assistance and the resulting large number of non-profit organisations. This is in addition to the various examples of collective action discussed in Chapter 9, such as the community protests against the Lake Catamount Resort development, the creation of the Routt County Open Lands Plan, and more recently the creation of the “Bike Town USA” initiative. My own observations and experience attending community events such as the Downtown Halloween Stroll (as discussed in Chapter 8), further provide examples of the commitment and willingness of many community members to volunteer and get involved.

Therefore, it seems that it is not a low quality of life, as identified by the subjective notions of community attachment and a sense of community, which is the issue. Rather, it is the potential for mountain resort tourism to gradually erode away at these positive sentiments through contributing to such negative social capital outcomes as social exclusion, social isolation, a perceived sense of powerlessness, and the dilution of social capital norms. Of particular concern is the continued and future development of feelings of community attachment and ownership, given the economic hardships faced by young adults and others, and their current limited ability to form the necessary informal and formal ties with other community members.

**Mountain resort tourism and community participation**

During my time within Steamboat Springs, I also identified numerous examples of *community participation*; the philosophical basis of sustainable tourism (Choi & Turk, 2011). Although the opportunity for community input regarding ski tourism development has been limited over the years as a result of the dominance of the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC), I found this to be balanced out by a high level of community involvement in the more recent growth and development of the summer tourism product through the community-led “Bike Town USA” initiative. At the same time, widespread community participation in the creation of grassroots initiatives in response to the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism appears to be largely illustrative of such social capital outcomes as *democracy* and *empowerment*; both of which are also central to the achievement of socio-cultural sustainability. However, the various time and monetary constraints discussed above that have limited widespread community participation, also raise concerns regarding the truly democratic and equitable involvement of community members. This is in addition to the issue of government transparency, which seems to have affected the willingness of many.
community members to participate in local government processes as they feel increasingly powerless in the face of more influential forces. The effects of mountain resort tourism on community participation can therefore be seen as both socio-culturally sustainable and unsustainable in nature.

Community participation in the planning and development of mountain resort tourism

While much of the sustainable tourism literature has emphasised the essential inclusion of the community in the planning and development of tourism activity (Bramwell & Sharman, 2000; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Pearce et al., 1996; Swarbrooke, 1999), the difficulties associated with achieving this in practice have also been widely recognised (Hall, 2003; Muller, 1994; Reed, 1997; Sofield, 2003). These difficulties have commonly been attributed to the difference in relative power held by certain individuals and organisations, thus allowing some to address their aims more readily than others (Hall, 2003; Reed, 1997; Sofield, 2003). This appears to be the case within mountain resort communities like Steamboat Springs where the nature of the ski resort industry is such that it largely revolves around the decisions of a dominant resort corporation, and the community is given minimal opportunity to contribute to the tourism decision-making process (Clifford, 2002; Rothman, 1998a).

As discussed in Chapter 9, the activation of resources possessed by the SSRC is made evident through their economic dominance, which comes from both the community’s reliance on the resort for employment and the sales tax revenue generated by its operations. This is in addition to their political influence, which can be seen as a subsequent result of such economic dominance. While this private use of social capital by the SSRC has helped contribute to “public goods” in the form of enhanced opportunities for employment and the development of facilities and services, it has also limited opportunities for job mobility, leading to the subsequent dependence of many community members on the resort. Although more recent efforts by the SSRC to develop social capital in the form of goodwill can be seen as attempts to address this imbalance of power and the negative perceptions held by some, community members do not appear to have the ability to become more significantly involved within their tourism decision-making process.
Much of this can arguably be attributed to the fact that the SSRC itself is a subsidiary of a much larger resort corporation, Intrawest ULC, which is in turn owned by Fortress Investment Group LL. As a result, many of the decisions regarding the SSRC are made outside of the community, beyond the control of both the SSRC and the community of Steamboat Springs. As noted by Interviewee 21, a senior representative of the SSRC, the reality of their operations is that ‘you work for an ownership group and you do whatever the ownership group wants to do’. Thus, while a degree of autonomy is given to the SSRC to make smaller-scale decisions; some of which have resulted in positive collaborations and partnerships with community groups (as discussed in Chapter 9), many of the long-term decisions regarding the future direction of the resort are heavily influenced by external managers and investors. This illustrates how mountain resort communities such as Steamboat Springs and the organisations that exist within, are often unable to contribute actively to the tourism planning process, with much of the control that is implicit within notions of community participation residing elsewhere (Beeton, 2006). The achievement of truly empowered and meaningful participation that is reflective of socio-culturally sustainable tourism, where community members have access to the information and resources required to be able to contribute to the decision-making process (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010), thus appears difficult to achieve in regards to the development of ski tourism within Steamboat Springs.

However, the creation of a complementary summer tourism product over the years has provided the community with the opportunity to become more actively involved in the summer tourism planning and development process. As discussed in Chapter 9, this can be most clearly illustrated through the efforts of the “Bike Town USA” initiative where the mobilisation and activation of collective resources and associational power through a variety of volunteering, lobbying, and collaborative efforts has helped shape and redevelop summer tourism in Steamboat Springs. While the summer events calendar is still an integral part of the summer tourism product (refer to Appendix J), this biking initiative has provided a central focus and identity around which more permanent summer tourism offerings such as downhill mountain biking and cross-country mountain biking can continue to be developed.

With the community seeking to raise biking awareness and improve the facilities available on the one hand, and the tourism industry seeking to expand and improve its summer tourism visitation and spend on the other, this initiative appears to have combined both community and tourism interests through the development of positive, synergistic,
working relationships. Originating from within the community, such grassroots involvement can be seen as contributing to greater feelings of community ownership and empowerment. This is because community participation in the tourism decision-making process has played a central role from the early development stages to its implementation, and also now in ensuring its ongoing success (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Cole, 2006; Mitchell, 2008; Scheyvens, 2003). Thus, although it is still too early to determine the economic success of the “Bike Town USA” initiative, having only been executed for one summer tourism season, it seems to be an example of socio-cultural sustainable tourism development; that which is based on the goals and priorities that have been identified by the host community, endorsed by the host community, and provides opportunities for community participation (Cooke, 1982).

Community empowerment: The development of grassroots initiatives

In addition to the “Bike Town USA” initiative, the community of Steamboat Springs has shown its propensity for collective action through the creation of a number of other grassroots initiatives. As discussed in Chapter 9, many of these appear to be in response to the conflict and change that has accompanied the growth of mountain resort tourism. This includes the past mobilisation of social capital resources and associational power in the form of community protests against the Lake Catamount resort development, the lobbying efforts of ranchers to protect the ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs from tourism-led amenity migration, and even the various bumper-sticker campaigns that have protested against the rapid development of mountain resort tourism. Through these displays of associational power, community members have demonstrated their ability to work together to influence the outcome of tourism decisions, thus contributing to an increased sense of empowerment amongst those involved.

These examples of the collective mobilisation of resources and power can be seen as representative of a more inclusive, corporatist approach to governance that is ideologically aligned with the principles of socio-cultural sustainability (Gill & Williams, 2011). This is because community involvement within the tourism decision-making process, or at least in determining its outcomes, can help to create a shared sense of empowerment amongst participating community members. Such feelings of collective determination that outside interests can be challenged through collective action and the amassing of relevant knowledge (Onyx, 2005; Timothy et al., 2003), may in turn contribute to an increased sense of
community ownership and responsibility for involvement within the planning, development, and management of tourism; all of which are necessary to ensure that the principles of sustainability are upheld (Timothy et al., 2003; Tosun & Timothy, 2003). By working together to counter what are perceived to be detrimental impacts resulting from external pressures, communities such as Steamboat Springs have therefore demonstrated their ability and desire to take control over their own destiny; a necessary step towards achieving socio-culturally sustainable tourism objectives (Butler, 2005; Goodall & Stabler, 2000).

However, while empowerment represents some of the feelings held by certain community members, others have also expressed their concerns that the past willingness and ability of community members to mobilise against the various issues faced no longer remains (as discussed in Chapter 9). With the development of mountain resort tourism over the years having led to the growing impression that power and influence is increasingly attributed to the wealthy, many community members described feelings of powerlessness that have limited their desire to get involved in these community-led initiatives. This is in conjunction with the constraints of time and money that have been found to affect the involvement of many within the community. These concerns highlight the existence of a number of issues regarding the truly democratic and equitable nature of community participation and thus, the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs.

Democratic and equitable community representation: The ‘squeaky wheel’ vs. the ‘silent majority’

As discussed in Chapter 7 and above in regards to the effects of mountain resort tourism on quality of life, my research has identified a number of constraints that have limited the ability of many community members from becoming more civically engaged within Steamboat Springs. Due to increased costs of living and the commonly low-paying, seasonal nature of employment available, many community members are faced with long hours, the need to work multiple jobs, and/or a long commute down-valley in order to make ends meet. This has minimised their opportunities to become more involved in the planning and development of tourism, as well as in attempts to address its various impacts through community grassroots initiatives; both of which are important vehicles for social capital creation and the attainment of socio-culturally sustainable tourism.
These constraints appear to have contributed to what has been referred to as the ‘squeaky wheel’ phenomenon. This is where a small group of citizens who are commonly older and more affluent, and thus have the time and money to participate, tend to be heavily involved and vocal within community and tourism planning and development processes. Although it is predominantly those ‘with a dog in the fight’ or those who ‘stand to benefit or gain’ (Interviewee 36) from within this group that get actively engaged, it is the fact that they are able to participate when they want to that is of great significance. This is because there exists within the community a ‘silent majority’ who lack the time, money, awareness, and often simply the desire to get involved. As noted by Interviewee 24, it is these community members who are often underrepresented within decision-making processes:

‘You’ve got these people that are not involved for different reasons, either work or drugs; substance abuse. And then you’ve got the people who have the time and energy on the other end’.

This can lead to the disproportionate representation of particular groups and their interests over others, as those who complain the loudest are often the ones whose areas of concern get addressed. As acknowledged by Interviewee 25, a City Council representative: ‘We’re still a place where the squeaky wheel gets oiled’. In particular, many community members perceive developers and wealthy, older amenity migrants; many of whom appear to be “not in my backyard” proponents concerned for their quality of life (Marien & Pizam, 1997), as being heavily influential within the community. This is despite the fact that their interests do not necessarily represent those of the wider community. As explained by Interviewee 26:

‘When they say ‘we’, they mean me. They don’t mean ‘we the community’. They claim to speak for the community, but know they don’t because the vast majority of people are just trying to get by. It’s the vocal minority. That’s what it is’.

This highlights how the provision of opportunities for community involvement in tourism decision-making does not automatically equate to increased sustainability, as the right to participate is not the same as having the capacity to participate (Jamal & Getz, 1999). Rather, constraints of time, finances, and even a lack of awareness amongst less visible community members have left them largely uninformed about tourism decisions and that the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes even exist (Jamal & Getz, 1999). However, as all community members in Steamboat Springs are affected by tourism development decisions, their capacity to directly contribute to its outcomes is arguably
necessary in order for tourism to be of a socio-culturally sustainable nature. Thus, while there are various opportunities for community involvement within Steamboat Springs, greater efforts to empower the ‘silent majority’ appear necessary so that a more democratic representation can be achieved. This will allow for conflicts of interest to be resolved and common areas of interest to be identified, thus increasing the likelihood of achieving more sustainable and equitable outcomes (Bramwell, Henry, Jackson, & van der Straaten, 1996).

Although efforts to incorporate all segments of the community within tourism-specific plans have yet to be undertaken within Steamboat Springs, the importance of widespread community participation has been recognised by the Steamboat Springs Planning Department in their most recent update of the Steamboat Springs Area Community Plan, of which tourism is a significant part. Towards the end of my stay within the community, innovative attempts to obtain greater representation from less vocal segments of the community were being discussed, with the hope of increasing their involvement in future planning decisions. One idea included hosting interactive presentations in local bars or at community events where community members can poll and share their opinions on the spot. The possibility of carrying out these presentations during work hours at the SSRC was also discussed, thus allowing young seasonal workers and immigrant workers; two segments of the community who are largely unengaged and underrepresented, to participate. Although these ideas were yet to be fully implemented before I left the community, they demonstrate a willingness and degree of local government understanding of the importance of accessing and identifying opinions from all areas of the community to ensure that not only the voices and interests of the ‘squeaky wheel’ are heard. As emphasised by Interviewee 37, although a large proportion of these seasonal and immigrant workers will most likely be living elsewhere by the time the proposed changes in the plan come into effect, it does not mean that their opinions are not valuable:

‘Even though they’re a transient population, they’re still an important part of our community, and so their ideas matter because I think they’d probably have a good perspective on how better to accommodate the next generation of transient workers, you know?...that’s our community too. I mean, they personally aren’t going to be here, but their demographic is always going to be here’.

As noted by Interviewee 37, given that both of these groups tend to experience different challenges within the community to others who are not within similar positions, their inclusion may help to provide new and different insights into tourism and what it means for it to be sustainable; insights which may otherwise be overlooked by the more typically involved
middle-upper class segments of the community (Tosun & Timothy, 2003). These attempts at making community and tourism governance more inclusive through the widespread solicitation of community members may therefore help to enhance the democratic and equitable nature of tourism’s costs and benefits, with such efforts to gain broad community representation an important part of achieving sustainable tourism (Choi & Turk, 2011). While not all community members may necessarily be satisfied with the final decisions made, given the diverse and heterogeneous nature of the community, what is important is that such opportunities for involvement provide community members with a better understanding of how and why they have come about, in addition to the feeling that they have had a legitimate chance to contribute to the process.

Local government transparency

Another concern regarding community participation that was identified in my research is the growing sense of powerlessness that seems to have arisen from the perception that public policy is increasingly being shaped behind closed doors. As discussed in Chapter 9, the notion that government representatives are being unduly influenced by developers and others with moneyed interests has resulted in a lack of trust towards both local government representatives and processes. Such distrust and unclear lines of communication between community decision-makers and the rest of the community, can be seen as having formed barriers to the implementation of sustainable tourism practices. This is because cynical attitudes towards local government decisions can reduce the willingness of community members to get involved (Berry & Ladkin, 1997). This appears to have affected the development of social capital and feelings of empowerment which are essential to achieving and maintaining socio-culturally sustainable tourism.

My own experiences within the community of Steamboat Springs support these perceptions regarding the continued existence of a pro-growth approach to governance where this is a lack of community involvement in local government issues, despite the overall high level of community involvement within the non-profit realm and attempts by some to make decision-making processes more participatory in nature. As I attended various City Council meetings, I came to recognise the same handful of older community residents who would show up every month, alongside any special interest groups who specifically wanted to voice their opinion on particular agenda items. At the same time, my conversations with those
community members who form the ‘silent majority’ indicated how many feel that it is pointless to show up to these meetings. This is because although City County representatives appear attentive to their concerns, their presence does not seem to make any difference to the final decisions made. As noted by Interviewee 13, a human services representative, the opportunity to express your concerns is not the same as being able to influence City Council decisions:

“You can show up and shout all you want every Tuesday...And it doesn’t matter. You can show up every Tuesday and shout for an hour, they’ll put you on the agenda alright. They’ll even be polite and listen!”

Such opportunities for community presentation should therefore not be mistaken as community participation (Garren, 1995), with the ability for community members to meaningfully contribute to local government decisions seemingly limited.

This presents a major challenge to the community of Steamboat Springs and the establishment of positive relationships with their local government, as many members no longer seem to trust that local representatives have their best interests at hand. This highlights a need for greater government transparency within decision-making processes to help build trusting relationships between the community and local government. This can be achieved through improved communication of the relevant issues at hand, the ways in which community members can contribute, and even explanations as to how decisions are reached. This may encourage greater accountability on behalf of government representatives, thus ensuring that their decisions are in the best interest of the community, as opposed to their own. While no planning process is perfect due to the ability of personal interests and social relations of power to underpin and undermine tourism and community development (Hannam, 2002), it is hoped that such attempts to make these government processes more open may help to regain community trust as members feel that they are included in, and made aware of, relevant negotiations and planning (Hall, 2003).

This is important as despite the strength of associational power demonstrated by the community and its contribution to the building of social capital, it is the local government that is ultimately responsible for approving or disapproving community and tourism development plans; decisions which may or may not affect social capital development (Flora & Flora, 2003). It is also the role of local government to ensure that both private and public interests are represented to ensure that it is not just the powerful and influential individuals and groups that are heard (Edwards, 2004). Therefore, without the increased transparency and
accountability of government actions, the resulting loss of community confidence in the ability of local government and the willingness of community members to support their decisions, may lead to adversarial conflicts which entrench mutual suspicions (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). This may bring about an increased propensity for community conflict, which may damage future community-government relationships and the potential for tourism governance success (Bramwell & Lane, 2000).

In regards to community participation, the degree to which mountain resort tourism is socio-culturally sustainable therefore appears varied within the community of Steamboat Springs. While overall levels of community participation seem to be high, especially in regards to the grassroots creation of the “Bike Town USA” initiative and the various examples of collective action that have developed in response to the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, the ability to participate and the subsequent feelings of empowerment that can result from such participation, are not equally shared amongst community members. This is because the involvement of many is constrained by a variety of economic and social factors, with a lack of government transparency also affecting the likelihood of widespread community participation as many community members feel powerless in their ability to make a difference.

**Mountain resort tourism and intra and inter-community equity**

In conjunction with these issues surrounding the equitable participation of community members, my research also uncovered examples of both intra- and inter-community inequity, as demonstrated through the varying quality of social networks and the subsequent distribution and access to resources. Within the community of Steamboat Springs, such inequity appears to be largely attributable to the influx of affluent tourists and amenity migrants that has accompanied mountain resort tourism, with their wealth having exacerbated existing socio-economic class divides and contributed to the growing socio-economic segregation of the community. At an inter-community level, inequities regarding the distribution of the costs and benefits resulting from mountain resort tourism seem to have led to increased resentment and a lack of willingness on behalf of residents within the surrounding communities to collaborate and establish inter-community networks. This highlights how different individuals, groups, and even communities can benefit or suffer
disproportionately from tourism development (Richards & Hall, 2000a), thus raising concerns regarding its socio-cultural sustainability at both an intra- and inter-community level.

**Intra-community equity**

As discussed in Chapter 9, mountain resort tourism and its attraction of affluent tourists and amenity migrants has contributed to a growing inequality regarding wealth within the community of Steamboat Springs. Over the years, this process of gentrification has brought about a cultural shift, where greater importance has been placed upon the distribution of money and the influence it provides to those in its possession. This emphasis on wealth has resulted in the common distinction between the “haves” and the “have-nots”, illustrating the socio-economic disparity that exists within the community. As noted in Chapter 8, this has led to an interesting reaction amongst some middle-upper class community members, with their adoption of an *‘ethic of poverty’* highlighting a desire to distinguish themselves from the more affluent members of the community. Thus, it is not only the wealthy newcomers that are exacerbating these class divisions through their private clubs and gated luxury housing developments, with those who are less affluent also keen to separate themselves from these wealthy “haves”.

My own experiences and observations of the community clearly reflected such socio-economic segregation. Through living and socialising with many low-income seasonal workers, I became aware that their interactions with the wealthier segment of the community are mostly limited to those that take place as a part of their job, or to conversations that are had on chairlifts while skiing on the mountain. Additionally, I found that the upper class tends to move in totally separate social circles from the lower class as they frequent high-end restaurants and bars, are members of private clubs such as the Catamount Ranch and Club, and even affiliate themselves with different non-profit organisations. These include the more cultured groups within the community such as The Strings Music Festival, Seminars at Steamboat Springs, and the Emerald City Opera. Thus, an observation that I frequently made within my fieldwork journal was how I felt that the lower socio-economic segment of the community (amongst whom I was situated) were living in a totally separate world to the wealthy, despite sharing much of the same physical space.

Whether enforced by the “haves” or the “have-nots”, such socio-economic segregation seems to illustrate a lack of social cohesion and community solidarity (Berger-Schmitt, 2002).
This inequitable distribution and influence of resources can be seen as reinforcing class disparities, diminishing the desire for integration, understanding, and tolerance of intra-community differences between the socio-economic classes (Hulse & Stone, 2007). Thus, given that socio-cultural sustainability depends on social cohesiveness and the willingness of community members to work together to control their own lives (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006), the way in which mountain resort tourism and its introduction of wealthy tourists and amenity migrants has exacerbated existing socio-economic divisions within the community does not appear to be indicative of socio-culturally sustainable behaviour.

**Inter-community equity**

My research also identified the existence of inequality at an inter-community level, with mountain resort tourism having burdened the surrounding region with much of its costs while largely concentrating its benefits within Steamboat Springs. In Chapter 9, I highlighted how the economic resource contributions that have benefitted Steamboat Springs have come at a cost to surrounding communities in the form of down-valley migration and the use of county tax payer dollars to cater for tourism-related facilities and services from which Steamboat Springs primarily gains. As captured in Photographs 16 and 17, this has resulted in significant differences in the built environment within Steamboat Springs, as compared with that of surrounding communities, such as Oak Creek.

*Photograph 16. Main Street, Oak Creek. Source: N.Ooi*
It is therefore of no surprise that many of the residents in these smaller communities go to Steamboat Springs to do their everyday shopping, with communities like Oak Creek lacking the necessary facilities to be self-sufficient. As discussed in Chapter 9, this has resulted in inter-community tension as their spending contributes to sales tax revenue which is only used to improve the schools and facilities within Steamboat Springs, instead of all of those within the county. These frustrations appear to have contributed to the creation of barriers which have prevented collaboration and a lack of trust, tolerance, and inter-community understanding (Gilchrist, 2000; Richards & Hall, 2000a), thus affecting the development of bridging social capital.

This raises concerns regarding the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism as communities such as Steamboat Springs are embedded within larger societies and socio-cultural, economic, and environmental systems which influence, and are influenced by development decisions (Dale, 2005b). The complexities of tourism and its widespread effects therefore means that no single group, or in this case community, should be left out of the planning and resolution of tourism issues (Getz & Jamal, 1994). Rather, the development and management of tourism should be more inclusive in nature, involving the collaboration of stakeholders from both within and beyond the host community to ensure that not only are its negative impacts minimised, but that such impacts, whether positive or negative, are also more equitably distributed (Moisey & McCool, 2008; Teo, 2002). This is especially the case given that many of the communities surrounding Steamboat Springs are currently bearing much of the costs of mountain resort tourism, such as the housing of the low-income workforce, the increased traffic and congestion on the roads, the loss of sales tax revenue, and the lost sense of community as many down-valley workers lack the time and money to
become active community participants due to the time spent commuting to Steamboat Springs every day.

However, the development of the summer tourism product and the implementation of the “Bike Town USA” initiative can be seen as presenting an opportunity for increased inter-community collaboration. This may help improve the current inequitable distribution of costs and benefits and thus, the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. Given that races such as the USA Pro Cycling Challenge and other smaller-scale road cycling events have pushed tourism outside of Steamboat Springs and into the surrounding region, the right to be included within tourism decision-making processes that have previously been the domain of the community of Steamboat Springs, has become more widely recognised amongst county residents. Thus, there appears to be a need for concerted efforts on behalf of community leaders to overcome existing communication barriers through the shared recognition of the mutual benefits of collaboration that can come from the creation of inter-community bridging networks. This is important as it is these bridging networks which can help improve access, share information, distribute power, and ensure its transparency (Perkins et al., 2002; Taylor, 2004); all of which is vital for achieving socio-cultural sustainability.

From the perspective of those residents living within the surrounding communities, such collaboration may also assist in achieving more equitable decisions. This is because they are given improved access to a platform from which they can voice their concerns (Moisey & McCool, 2008). Such an opportunity for dialogue may also have the potential to bridge inter-community differences and identify common norms and values amongst what may otherwise appear to be widely diverse interests (Dale, 2005a). This has already been proven possible within Routt County through a past county-wide initiative, “Vision 2030”, which identified similarities amongst the key values that are held by Routt County residents. In addition, inter-community collaborative efforts may also help to provide the surrounding communities with the chance to be involved in making relevant tourism decisions. This can help to increase the likelihood that both tourism costs and benefits are more fairly distributed (Walsh et al., 2001). Such recognition and inclusion of these communities is arguably necessary as their residents, values, and interactions with tourists also form an integral part of the mountain resort tourism experience that is associated with Steamboat Springs.

While there are currently a number of county-wide development plans that incorporate tourism, some of which have helped highlight the competing demands that exist between tourism and the larger system within which it operates, a more focused and collaborative
regional approach to tourism development has yet to be undertaken. This is in spite of the widespread distribution of mountain resort tourism impacts throughout and beyond Routt County, and the community’s acknowledgement of the importance of maintaining a sense of community and quality of life in the face of tourism growth and development, both within Steamboat Springs and in the wider region (Steamboat Springs, 2004). Thus, as socio-cultural sustainability does appear to be a goal for Steamboat Springs, there is arguably a need for a more regional approach to understanding the distribution of mountain resort tourism products and impacts, and creating directions for future growth.

At both an intra- and inter-community level, the inequitable distribution of resources highlights a number of socio-culturally unsustainable aspects of mountain resort tourism. Within the community of Steamboat Springs, the reinforcement of socio-economic differences can be seen as having affected community cohesion and integration. At the same time, the burden placed upon surrounding communities to deal with many of the costs associated with mountain resort tourism without the benefits, seems to have limited the establishment of inter-community collaborations. This is despite the potential for such collaborations to improve the sustainability of both community and tourism development within the county. From a social capital perspective, this lack of equity therefore appears to be affecting the development of bridging social capital and thus, the willingness of community members and county residents to overcome past conflicts and improve communications for the benefit of all involved.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I addressed my final research objective by examining how my use of social capital has contributed to a more detailed understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. From my analysis and discussion of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and their effects on social capital, what has been achieved is a much more comprehensive understanding of the issues affecting and contributing to the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. While quality of life appears to have been negatively affected by the social capital outcomes of social exclusion, isolation, and a perceived sense of powerlessness, the reinforced sense of community that has resulted from the constant and explicit communication of the social
capital norms of Western hospitality and friendliness, and the commitment to family within the community, can be seen as countering this to a degree. The importance of community participation in achieving socio-cultural sustainability was also identified, with feelings of empowerment arising from the in-depth involvement of the community in the planning and development of the summer tourism product, as well as through the collective action of community members through various grassroots initiatives. At the same time, issues of democracy and equity were raised, as community participation still appears to be largely unrepresentative of the heterogeneous nature of the community. Additionally, the inequitable distribution of costs and benefits at an intra- and inter-community level were found to have affected community cohesiveness and solidarity, as well as the likelihood of collaboration, thus negatively affecting the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

Although my research seems to portray mountain resort tourism as being largely unsustainable in its current state, to state this in absolute terms would be overly simplistic. This is because alongside the various negative social capital outcomes that have resulted from mountain resort tourism, there have also been positive effects, with mountain resort tourism having assisted in the development of social capital in a number of ways. What can further be noted is that although my use of social capital has been useful in achieving a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism, the existence of social capital does not necessarily equate to socio-cultural sustainability. For example, while the negative social capital outcomes of social exclusion, isolation, and feelings of powerlessness are all demonstrative of a high level of social capital, they have undoubtedly bought about socio-culturally unsustainable outcomes. I will further summarise such complexities surrounding the link between social capital and socio-cultural sustainability, alongside other key research findings in the following chapter.
Chapter 11. Conclusion

Introduction

In this final chapter, I summarise my key research findings and conclusions. I then discuss the practical implications faced by the community of Steamboat Springs, and the theoretical contributions and limitations of my research. This is followed by my agenda for future research and some final concluding remarks.

The socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs

My research adopted an ethnographic case study research design to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs. This was achieved through addressing my three research objectives which sought:

- To examine the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and how they have affected the community of Steamboat Springs
- To examine how these impacts affect social capital within the community of Steamboat Springs
- To examine how this use of social capital can contribute to a better understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs.

I began this thesis with a thorough review of the literature pertaining to sustainable tourism, social capital, and mountain resort tourism in Chapters 2 and 3. I then discussed my ethnographic case study research design and data collection methods in Chapter 4, before providing some background information and context on the community of Steamboat Springs in Chapter 5. This was followed by a discussion and analysis of my research findings.

In Chapter 6, I focused upon the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism in order to address my first research objective. While my research found mountain resort tourism to have significantly contributed to the sales tax revenue of Steamboat Springs and the
improvement of various facilities and services, it was also noted as having brought about an increase in land and property values, both within and in the ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs; a subsequent lack of housing affordability; increased costs of living; a need for many community members to work multiple jobs; and down-valley migration for those who can no longer afford to live in Steamboat Springs. The nature of much of the employment associated with mountain resort tourism also highlighted how there are limited permanent career opportunities for community members, with the majority of jobs on offer being seasonal and menial with few options for advancement. Additionally, the attraction of increased numbers of tourists and amenity migrants was identified as having brought about the gentrification of Steamboat Springs and the subdivision of the surrounding ranchlands, with the growth of mountain resort tourism having spread beyond the geographic boundaries of the City of Steamboat Springs. Although this has encouraged the development and implementation of land conservation strategies, a significant degree of rural fragmentation has still occurred, thus negatively affecting the ranching lifestyle upon which much of the culture and heritage of the community is based.

To address my second research objective, I used the components of social capital (networks, norms, and resources) as a heuristic device to more closely examine these mountain resort tourism impacts and their ramifications. In Chapter 7, I focused upon how such impacts as the high costs of living, seasonality of employment, and limited career opportunities have contributed to a high level of transience, which has affected the development and maintenance of both formal and informal social networks. In regards to the informal social networks that exist within the community, my research identified transience as having led to a growing sense of mistrust surrounding the permanency of newcomers. This has encouraged the formation of strong bonding social capital amongst established community members, and subsequently the exclusion of newcomers. As a result, opportunities for these newcomers to develop social networks seem largely restricted to participation within more formal groups and associations. However, the formal participation of both newcomers and more permanently established community members was also found to be impeded by time and monetary constraints, thus limiting their ability to develop the necessary supportive social networks which encourage them to remain within the community. This has further inhibited the development of social capital, with those who are excluded and/or constrained identified as being less engaged and socially isolated from the rest of the community.
In Chapter 8, I examined how the traditional social capital norms of commitment to family, community involvement and assistance, and Western hospitality and friendliness have helped shape, and been shaped, by the development of mountain resort tourism through their adoption for the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs. At the same time, I identified various concerns regarding the growing numbers of tourists and amenity migrants and their potential to dilute these social capital norms. In particular, the influx of tourism-led amenity migrants into the ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs has resulted in conflicts with existing ranchers due to the different cultural expectations of rural living. This has diminished the norms of generalised trust and reciprocity that ranchers extend out to amenity migrants (characteristic of a lack of bridging social capital), while strengthened the personalised norms of trust and reciprocity shared amongst remaining ranchers at the expense and social exclusion of these amenity migrants (characteristic of the reinforcement of bonding social capital). My research also highlighted the existence of some additional social norms that seem to have developed in response to the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism. These include a partying culture that has grown alongside mountain resort tourism and the resulting social acceptability of drug and alcohol use amongst young adults, the increased gentrification of the community that has led to the adoption of an ‘ethic of poverty’ by a group of middle-upper class community members, and expectations for an improved quality of life which have placed strong social pressures for newcomers to be ‘living the dream’.

In Chapter 9, I explored how the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism have affected the distribution and use of social, economic, and political resources and the subsequent exercise of power. I found gentrification to once again be a significant impact, with a rise in affluence having led to the increased importance of money and the exacerbation of class distinctions. This has provided those in the possession of money with greater economic and political influence within the community, leaving those of a lower socio-economic status feeling increasingly powerlessness in their presence. My research also identified the economic and political dominance held by the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC) within Steamboat Springs, and at an inter-community level by the community of Steamboat Springs; both as a result of the growth of mountain resort tourism. This dominance of the community of Steamboat Springs within Routt County was noted as having affected inter-community relationships, with the inequitable distribution of costs and benefits resulting from mountain resort tourism limiting the willingness of the surrounding communities to develop bridging networks. However, my research also found more positive examples regarding the mobilisation and exercise of resources and power, with associational
power existing within the various grassroots, collaborative initiatives that have been created to address the issues arising from mountain resort tourism development and its impacts. This more participatory approach to community and tourism governance was depicted through such community efforts as the Lake Catamount Resort protests, the creation of the Routt County Open Lands Plan, and the “Bike Town USA” initiative, which have all contributed to increased feelings of empowerment; a positive social capital outcome as well as an important component of socio-cultural sustainability.

In Chapter 10, I addressed my third and final research objective by linking my examination of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and their effects on the components of social capital to socio-cultural sustainability. On a positive note, my research found the adoption of community social capital norms for the marketing and branding of Steamboat Springs as a mountain resort tourism destination to have helped maintain a sense of community; a subjective aspect of quality of life which forms a key component of socio-cultural sustainability. My research also identified various examples of democratic community participation such as the “Bike Town USA” initiative, which has helped encourage intra-community collaboration and the development of feelings of empowerment; both of which are fundamental to the achievement of socio-cultural sustainability. However, the social capital outcomes of social exclusion, isolation, and a sense of powerlessness were also found to have negatively affected quality of life by diminishing feelings of community attachment and a sense of community, thus raising concerns regarding future community ownership. These outcomes were further identified as having limited the ability and willingness for democratic and equitable community participation, thereby contributing to the ‘squeaky wheel’ phenomenon and the existence of the ‘silent majority’. This is in addition to the inequitable distribution of economic and political resources within the community, which has reinforced socio-economic segregation between the “haves” and the “have-nots”. At an inter-community level, this has led to the unwillingness of surrounding communities to work collaboratively with Steamboat Springs to address current and future issues resulting from mountain resort tourism.

From this discussion and analysis of my research findings, two key points can be identified as affecting the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within Steamboat Springs:

- The existence of strong bonding social capital, but a lack of bridging social capital
- The role of power in community and tourism decision-making processes
While the existence of bonding social capital was extensively discussed throughout Chapter 7 (as shared amongst established community members at the exclusion of newcomers), 8 (as shared between ranchers at the exclusion of their amenity migrant neighbours), and 9 (as shared within the communities surrounding Steamboat Springs), my research identified a lack of bridging social capital at both an intra- and inter-community level to balance it out. This is of concern for the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism as both forms of social capital are important for collective well-being (Narayan, 1999). Although tightly-knit social networks and high levels of localised trust assist in the development of empowerment, solidarity, and exclusive loyalty (Benn & Onyx, 2005), they can also create “structural distortions” that prevent the sharing of knowledge due to competing and conflicting interest (McCool, 2009). Thus, communities also require more secondary networks of association in order to achieve greater integration and inclusion of all types of people (Gilchrist, 2000; Narayan, 1999).

Bridging social capital is therefore important, due to its ability to break down barriers that are currently affecting communication, the building of trust, and the development of a shared understanding and respect between individuals, groups, and communities (Halpern, 2005). These open and inclusive network structures play an important role in improving the effectiveness of tourism governance for the achievement of sustainable tourism objectives, as they encourage cooperation and coordination across various groups and policy domains (Bramwell, 2011; Ruhanen, Scott, Ritchie & Takaczynski, 2010). As a result, there appears to be a need to develop bridging networks within Steamboat Springs, and between Steamboat Springs and the surrounding communities, to improve socio-cultural sustainability at both an intra- and inter-community level. This is particularly in regards to addressing issues regarding community attachment and quality of life, and the achievement of democratic and equitable community participation.

My use of social capital also proved useful in identifying the complexity and persistence of power relations (Woolcock, 2001), with my research acknowledging power as a central presence in regards to the planning of mountain resort tourism and in dealing with its many and varied impacts. This explicit recognition of power can be seen as important as it is not equitably distributed within and between tourism communities, with various collaborations, partnerships, and discourses that reflect the relative and changing power of stakeholders, present at any given time (Gill, 2007). In particular, I found such inequities in power to be a result of the varying distribution and influence of resources, with those in the
possession of greater economic and political resources, such as wealthy retirees or outside development interests, seemingly having more power at their disposal. Their subsequent ability to seemingly dominate much of the decision-making processes regarding mountain resort tourism development appears to have contributed to a growing sense of powerlessness shared amongst many of the less affluent community members.

My research also identified many different forms of power within Steamboat Springs, such as dominance and the symbolic power associated with socio-economic status that is exercised by the wealthier and more influential members of the community. This was in addition to the associational power generated through the collective mobilisation of resources, which I found to be more widely accessible by the rest of the community. One example of this was the collective efforts undertaken by the ranching segment of the community in creating the Routt County Open Lands Plan (as discussed in Chapter 9). This flow of power from a grassroots level upwards demonstrates a more corporatist approach to tourism governance, with democratic community involvement contributing to increased feelings of empowerment and efficacy (Selin & Chavez, 1995). This demonstrates the more socio-culturally sustainable nature of such inclusive community participation. Through recognising these various forms of power and their subsequent outcomes such as “grassroots empowerment” (Timothy et al., 2003), inequality (Onyx, 2005), and feelings of powerlessness (Sofield, 2003), my research was therefore able to highlight the important role that power can play within, and in response to, community and tourism decision-making processes. As power underpins and at times undermines tourism development (Beeton, 2006), such an understanding of the flow of power is arguably essential in achieving effective governance for the development of sustainable tourism.

However, my research has also shown that while social capital has proven helpful in examining the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism, the existence of social capital does not necessarily equate to socio-cultural sustainability. This is because the struggle between balancing inclusion and exclusion; developing social cohesion whilst embracing diversity (Taylor, 2004), highlights how social capital can have both positive and negative outcomes; some of which can occur at the same time. This was most clearly noted within my research in regards the high levels of bonding social capital discussed in Chapter 7.

In this chapter, my research showed how the increased transience experienced within the community has helped strengthen the bonding social capital shared amongst established community members, thus bringing about such positive social capital outcomes as increased
community solidarity, a strong sense of social identity, and the reinforcement of personalised trust and reciprocity amongst those included. At the same time, such bonding social capital was found to have contributed to the social exclusion and isolation of newcomers, with these negative social capital outcomes affecting such components of socio-cultural sustainability as quality of life, democratic community participation, and notions of equity and empowerment (as discussed in Chapter 10). Thus, a high level of social capital does not necessarily mean that it is evenly distributed or used for pro-social purposes. Rather, what it shows is that there is a justified need to manage the creation and maintenance of social capital, so that new and more inclusive or adaptive forms of social capital can be facilitated for the wider community (Halpern, 2005).

My research therefore demonstrates how the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism and their effects on social capital have brought about some valuable economic and socio-cultural contributions to the community of Steamboat Springs, while also raised various concerns regarding its socio-cultural sustainability. In particular, although examples of participatory democracy can be noted through various forms of community collective action and organisation, the social exclusion and isolation of certain individuals and groups, limited bridging networks, underlying power relationships and political agendas, and a growing lack of trust, appear to reflect socio-culturally unsustainable behaviour.

Overall, this points to the conclusion that mountain resort tourism requires much more effective governance within the community of Steamboat Springs and the wider Routt County in order to be socio-culturally sustainable. Good governance is a central element of achieving a holistic and balanced approach to sustainable tourism development, requiring democratic and equitable community participation that embraces the notions of inclusive community participation and collaboration (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Dredge, 2006a). This can be achieved through ensuring the presence of certain conditions, such as trust, power, access to knowledge, and the coordination and cooperation of numerous actors (McCool, 2009), with these conditions being fundamental to the successful development and implementation of tourism policies, and thus the effectiveness of sustainable tourism governance (Bramwell, 2011).
Practical implications for the community of Steamboat Springs

My research gives rise to a number of practical implications regarding the participation and engagement of community members within tourism-related decision-making processes. This is in order to achieve more effective governance and the improved socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. As identified and discussed in Chapter 10 these implications include:

- The need to address future community ownership
- The need for more democratic and equitable community representation
- The need for increased government transparency
- The need to develop intra- and inter-community bridging networks

A high level of transience and subsequent lack of residential stability appears to be of significant socio-cultural concern for the community of Steamboat Springs due to the issues it raises regarding future community ownership. This is of particular relevance to young adults, amongst whom transience seems to be most common, with such instability limiting their ability to integrate and develop extensive formal and informal social ties within the community. This high degree of mobility can be seen as creating substantial challenges for sustainable tourism governance (Dredge & Jamal, 2013), as few young adults appear to be able to establish those feelings of community attachment and a sense of community which provide them with the socio-cultural incentive to remain. Without this sense of attachment, care, and responsibility towards the community and the sustainability of future tourism development, these young adults can be seen as lacking the interest and motivation to get involved in tourism planning and development. Given that such local engagement is an important aspect of effective tourism governance (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010), transience and its effects on community ownership and attachment thus appears to be a key issue within Steamboat Springs. This is a noteworthy concern for the community as it is these young adults who if they remain and are given the opportunity to become involved, that will become future custodians of the community.

Although this issue has been acknowledged by some long-term community members, there is yet to be widespread recognition of the need to address this problem through targeted action. In the meantime, the growth of the LNB industry seems to have provided increased employment opportunities for young adults, whilst also attracted new permanent residents; many of whom are relatively affluent in nature. These LNBs can be seen as contributing to
residential stability, as they are more likely to be able to remain over the long-term, given their ability to deal with the various economic and social barriers to entry that have resulted from mountain resort tourism. Closer examination of the socio-cultural value of the LNB industry by those groups concerned with community planning and development, such as the Steamboat Springs Planning and Community Development Department, may therefore prove beneficial for the community, with the potential of LNBs to improve residential stability important in ensuring that feelings of community attachment and ownership, and thus a willingness to take an active role in the shaping of tourism policy remain strong into the future.

Greater recognition of the numerous issues affecting community participation within Steamboat Springs also appears necessary, with the commitment of all stakeholders to an inclusive and participatory approach to tourism governance necessary for the achievement of effective sustainable tourism processes and outcomes (Wray, 2011). As my research highlighted in Chapter 7, constraints of time and money have led to the social isolation of many community members, thereby minimising their ability to get involved. This has contributed to the ‘squeaky wheel’ phenomenon where those who possess sufficient time and money are active participants, and those who do not form the ‘silent majority’. However, given that sustainable tourism requires opportunities for the silent voices of a community to be represented (Ryan, 2002), there seems to be a need for more democratic and equitable community representation within Steamboat Springs. While there appears to be an evolving shift towards such a participatory or corporatist approach to tourism governance, as made evident by the various examples of community collective action over the years, there does still currently appear to be a small group of community members who largely claim to represent the interests of the wider community (Dredge, 2006b).

This highlights a need for improved efforts to reach out to a more diverse range of community members, with representativeness and inclusiveness being essential components of governance that can help move communities closer to achieving positive sustainability outcomes (Dredge, 2006a). In the case of Steamboat Springs, improved socio-cultural sustainability can be achieved through adopting similar efforts to those undertaken by the Steamboat Springs Planning Department for their latest update of the Community Area Plan, which includes the hosting of interactive presentations at local bars and events (as discussed in Chapter 10). By seeking widespread representation from community members, a deeper understanding of community opinions, feelings, and concerns regarding future tourism
development or even mountain resort tourism in general, beyond those held by a small panel of tourism and government representatives, can be gained. These efforts may also educate a larger segment of the community on upcoming tourism proposals which they may otherwise not have been aware of. While such inclusiveness may result in greater contestation regarding plans for tourism and community development (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010), it may also allow for more detailed knowledge of community member experiences to be incorporated. This can assist in the creation of a more representative vision of sustainable tourism governance that may also engender greater community ownership (McCool, 2009).

Further affecting community participation is a growing sense of powerlessness which seems to have resulted from the widely held perception that the decisions of government representatives are influenced by a handful of wealthy interests (as discussed in Chapter 9). This apparent concentration of power amongst an elite and influential few appears to have diminished the willingness of many community members to get involved, as feelings of mistrust have soured community-government relationships. As noted by Wray (2011), such mistrust towards local government limits the ability for effective governance and the achievement of sustainable tourism objectives, as community members are not supportive of government decisions due to considerable questions regarding their legitimacy and representativeness of the wider community’s interests.

Thus, there appears to be a need for local government representatives to address this lack of trust and its consequent effect on community-government relationships, given that social capital is able to be ‘dissipated by the actions of governments much more readily than those governments can build it up again’ (Fukuyama, 1995b, p. 362). One way in which this may be achieved is through improving the transparency of the decision-making process of City Council representatives. Such transparency is a necessary component of effective tourism governance, given its importance in developing community trust and ultimately, the ability of the community to pursue sustainable tourism initiatives (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Ruhanen et al., 2010). While current protocol in Steamboat Springs requires those with direct personal interests (such as investment in, or ownership of, a company submitting a development proposal) to abstain from voting on particular decisions, a number of community members have also emphasised the importance of extending this declaration of personal interests to include the activities of spouses and other family members. This would more clearly highlight to the community those additional influences which may be affecting City
Council decisions, whilst also encourage representatives to be more self-aware of the potential biases they hold.

Additionally, although City Council representatives are obliged to take into consideration the concerns of community members that are presented within council meetings, there are currently no mechanisms in place that ensure representatives have adequately considered and addressed these concerns in their final decisions. This is despite many community members having frequently and publicly expressed their frustration regarding their lack of understanding as to how these final decisions are made. As discussed in Chapter 9, this was found to be the case in the approval of the Walgreen’s pharmacy, with government representatives seen to ‘say one thing and then do another’ (Interviewee 31). By including a mandate that requires City Council representatives to publicly report the reasons for their decisions and how these address (or do not address) the concerns raised by the community, this may also make government representatives more accountable for their actions and reduce the likelihood of them acting in self-interest.

Furthermore, if community members feel as if their participation is legitimate, their willingness to more actively voice their opinions and attend City Council meetings may increase. Such government openness may lead to an improved two-way communication process; one that moves beyond tokenistic expressions of concern to active involvement and exchange (Marien & Pizam, 1997). This is important as without such meaningful and proactive engagement of community members within tourism governance processes, the achievement of socio-culturally sustainability tourism will arguably remain an idealistic notion (Ruhanen, 2013).

Finally, my research has demonstrated the importance of developing bridging networks at an intra- and inter-community level. With mountain resort tourism having exacerbated existing class distinctions through the introduction of wealthy tourists and amenity migrants, there seems to be a need for the enhanced development of bridging social networks that branch out over such social divisions (Glanville & Bienenstock, 2009). This requires considerable investment in the development of communication and trust between tourism actors and others within the community (Cole, 2006), being a necessary step for building community cohesion, solidarity, and embracing the diversity of individuals and groups that exist (Putnam, 2000). Although individuals and groups of varying socio-economic status cannot be forced to interact and associate, with those of comparable socio-economic class often preferring to bond with one another (Laumann, 1966), changes to the environment
can still be made that encourage or at least allow for such interactions between classes to occur. These could include adopting such practices as placing government restrictions on the future development of private clubs and gated communities (Halpern, 2005), with these explicit markers of wealth reinforcing the socio-economic divide and thus encouraging the segregation that can be currently found within the community of Steamboat Springs.

At an inter-community level, my research has also identified how the growth and expansion of mountain resort tourism beyond Steamboat Springs, particularly during the summertime, may be a great opportunity for improved inter-community relations. This may subsequently lead to greater inter-community collaboration, where the benefits and not just the costs of mountain resort tourism are able to be shared by all stakeholders. Similar to the Vision 2030 project undertaken from 2007-2009 which sought to identify shared values and aims for the future direction of Routt County, what is therefore required is a more tourism-specific plan that focuses upon current and future tourism interests within Routt County, or even the wider north-west Colorado region. This can help to identify common tourism objectives and a shared tourism vision, as well as provide an outline of current and potential tourism opportunities that exist for the surrounding regions.

This placement of tourism within the broader context of regional development goals, can help to highlight areas of compatibility and incompatibility between communities (Marcouiller, 1997), thereby identifying areas that require cooperation and coordination across different policy domains within Routt County and the wider North-West Colorado region. This may provide the basis for inter-community discussions regarding the equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of tourism activities. Such a formal, collaborative, and integrated approach to tourism governance may also contribute to the empowerment of surrounding communities, as a greater sense of responsibility and adaptability for more sustainable tourism outcomes throughout the entire region is created (Flora & Flora, 2003). This may enhance the capacity for inter-community social capital development and thus, socio-cultural sustainability.

In conclusion, there appears to be an overarching need for tourism governance in Steamboat Springs to evolve from its current model of pro-growth, where much of the decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of influential elite, to a corporatist model that is much more inclusive and democratic in nature (Pierre, 1999). This shift in focus would require changes to the role of City Council representatives and other local government officials to that of “enablers” rather than “providers” (Vernon, Essex, Pinder &
In this manner, rather than implementing a “top-down” approach to governance where community members perceive themselves to be largely powerless in their ability to influence tourism decision-making processes, local government representatives would play a key role as facilitators and drivers of community policies and plans that have been created in an equitable and representative manner (Ruhanen, 2013; Wray, 2011).

Such a shift in tourism governance has been undertaken within the mountain resort community of Whistler, BC, which has evolved from an investor-driven model of growth characterised by limited community input in decision-making processes, to a highly democratic community-driven approach to governance (Gill & Williams, 2011). This new approach to governance is guided by comprehensive and integrated principles of sustainability in the form of “The Natural Step” framework, which provides a clearly specified pathway to the achievement of sustainable development (Gill & Williams, 2008, 2011). Despite experiencing difficulties in maintaining the sustainability principles and priorities of this new approach to governance due to changing economic, socio-cultural and political realities, this corporatist model of governance has proven to be beneficial through its incorporation of widespread and meaningful community engagement (Gill & Williams, 2011).

With Steamboat Springs already exhibiting some examples of participatory community involvement in the tourism governance process through such initiatives as the creation of “Bike Town USA” and the community protests against the Lake Catamount Resort proposal, what is arguably necessary to further improve the sustainability of mountain resort tourism is a more targeted and formalised approach to community participation within the tourism governance process. As discussed above, this can be in the form of a community-driven regional tourism plan that emphasises democratic community participation and posits tourism development within wider economic, socio-cultural, and environmental policy considerations. More broadly, however, a comprehensive shift towards a corporatist form of governance may also require the adoption of a clearly defined set of sustainability objectives, similar to those embraced by Whistler, to better guide the future development and of mountain resort tourism. This is therefore a suggested area of investigation for community planners and government representatives in Steamboat Springs and Routt County as a way to improve the effectiveness of mountain resort tourism governance for the achievement of socio-cultural sustainability.
Research contribution

In addition to these practical implications for the community of Steamboat Springs, my research has also provided a number of theoretical contributions to the mountain resort tourism, sustainable tourism, and social capital literature. These include information on the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism, the importance of examining mountain resort tourism within a regional tourism system, seasonal workers, the linking of social capital and socio-cultural sustainability, the use of social capital as a heuristic device, and the value of an ethnographic approach to tourism and social capital research.

The socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism

Through the use of social capital as a heuristic device, my research has contributed to the lesser examined socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism within a mountain resort tourism context. This was achieved by going beyond the simple identification of the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism to explore how individuals, groups, and organisations within Steamboat Springs, as well as those within surrounding communities, have responded to mountain resort tourism development and its effects on their everyday lives. This helped me to gain a detailed understanding of some positive examples of socio-cultural behaviour, as well as a number of issues which are preventing the attainment of socio-culturally sustainable mountain resort tourism. As tourism has the capability to generate profound socio-cultural concerns for host communities (Haywood, 1988), such an in-depth understanding of these issues is arguably important.

My qualitative examination of the socio-cultural dimensions of tourism has also contributed to the broader tourism impact and sustainability literature. Addressing concerns such as those raised by Deery et al. (2012) regarding the paucity of in-depth qualitative research that adequately examines the “why” surrounding resident perceptions of tourism social impacts, my research has provided a more complete understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism by not only examining the various impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, but also the values and behaviours of community members that surround these. Furthermore, as qualitative methods such as ethnography and interviewing have largely been underused within research on tourism socio-cultural impacts and sustainability (Deery et al., 2012), my research has demonstrated how the adoption of these
techniques can help with the detailed examination of these concepts. This builds upon existing quantitative research that has tended to list tourism impacts and sustainability indicators, without providing detailed information as to the meanings and nuances surrounding these findings (Deery et al., 2012). My academic contribution therefore extends beyond the mountain resort tourism literature, to include wider tourism studies that examine the socio-cultural dimension of tourism development and sustainability.

The examination of mountain resort tourism within a regional tourism system

As discussed in Chapter 4, my research adopted an ethnographic case study design to examine the community of Steamboat Springs, with my conceptualisation of the community including some of those individuals and groups who reside beyond the geographical boundaries of the City of Steamboat Springs. My research focus therefore extended into the wider region of Routt County and Northwest Colorado. This allowed me to acknowledge the integral role that the surrounding ranchlands and neighbouring communities of Hayden, Craig, Yampa, and Oak Creek have played in the overall success of the regional tourism system. By examining tourism within a broader geographical context, I was able to uncover a number of competing and conflicting goals and ideologies that exist within the wider regional system. These include those tensions held between ranchers and newly-arrived amenity migrants, and between Steamboat Springs and the surrounding communities, with my findings demonstrating how tourism is only one of many influential interests within a larger system (Moisey & McCool, 2008; Moss & Godde, 2000). This highlights the need for synergistic planning between tourism and other regional development goals in order for socio-cultural sustainability to be achieved (Timothy, 1998).

Seasonal workers

My research has also provided a detailed examination of seasonal workers. These are a relatively overlooked group within both the tourism and amenity migrant literature (Muller, 2006), with past studies having tended to concentrate on second-home owners; many of whom are affluent retired and semi-retired amenity migrants (Hall & Muller, 2004; Gripton, 2009; Happel & Hogan, 2002; Kuentzel, 2005; Rodriguez, 2001; Travis, 2007). As I lived
amongst many seasonal workers during my time within the community, I interacted with them on a daily basis and was able to gain an in-depth understanding of their everyday reality. My experience with this segment of the community therefore provided some valuable insights regarding the various socio-cultural challenges faced by this often uninvolved, unengaged, and commonly unexamined segment of tourism-dependent communities.

**Linking social capital and socio-cultural sustainability**

My research has also contributed to the academic literature by using social capital as a heuristic device to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. While the use of sociological concepts and theories to examine sustainable tourism has been widespread, there has been no research to date that has adopted social capital to examine sustainability within a mountain resort tourism context. This is despite the growing recognition of the potential for social capital to contribute to our understanding of both sustainable community and tourism development (Barraket, 2005; Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2005; Jones, 2005; Pantoja, 2002; Serageldin & Grootaert, 2000).

My research addressed this gap in the literature by examining whether the use of social capital could assist in providing a better understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism. With social capital being a new way of exploring the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability (Porritt, 2005), my research found it to be a useful concept that provided detailed and focused insight on a range of socio-cultural components that are integral to the achievement of sustainability. This is due to the ability of social capital to highlight the effects of tourism development on quality of life (Macbeth et al., 2004); identify the breadth and quality of networks between individuals, groups, and communities; and emphasise the importance of these networks in communicating shared values and forming the basis for collaboration (Barraket, 2005; Dale, 2005a). This is in addition to its acknowledgement of the existence and distribution of various forms of power, and their contribution to such outcomes as powerlessness and empowerment (Dale, 2005a; Onyx, 2005), as identified through the examination of community participation or the lack thereof, and the importance of democratic community participation within decision-making processes (Tansey, 2005). My use of social capital has therefore shown how it can highlight various community issues and concerns that are affecting the socio-cultural sustainability of
mountain resort tourism. This demonstrates its future potential for examining socio-cultural sustainability, both within a tourism context and beyond.

**The use of social capital as a heuristic device**

Alongside the increased popularity of social capital as a sociological concept for examining the social world, has been the rush to define, measure, and identify its various components and outcomes at an individual and collective level (Dale, 2005a). As a result, much of the research pertaining to social capital has been largely quantitative in nature (Onyx & Bullen, 2000; Portes, 2000; Stone, 2001; Stone & Hughes, 2002). However, for a concept that stresses the processes as much as the products, the need for greater qualitative applications of social capital to examine the various mechanisms that exist behind these processes has been recognised (Woolcock, 2001). This is because many of the subtleties associated with social capital, such as the dynamics of power and exclusion, and shifts in social norms and trust, are likely to be accessible only through qualitative methods of investigation (Patulny & Svendsen, 2007).

In response, my research addressed this limited qualitative use of social capital by using it as a heuristic device to examine the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism within the community of Steamboat Springs. As this qualitative approach to research uses the key components of social capital as guiding constructs for exploration, this meant that I did not have to be concerned with trying to “fit” my experiences within a rigid sociological framework that may or may not have catered for the often contradictory and inconsistent nature of human actions (Cox, 2007). Instead, I was able to freely engage with, and immerse myself within, the everyday lives of community members. This freedom to explore the complexity and fluidity of social relationships allowed me to challenge the narrow limits and definitions that currently confine our understanding of social capital. This was evident in my examination of various social norms and the existence and exercise of numerous forms of power; two areas which have received limited attention to date within the social capital literature. Through such a thorough examination of the community, I was therefore able to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex relations and interactions that make up the community of Steamboat Springs, and how they have been socio-culturally affected by the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism.
Ethnographic approach to tourism and social capital research

My adoption of an ethnographic case study design also provides a contribution to the academic literature, with ethnography having had limited application within a resort community context, or in the examination of social capital. This is despite the value of ethnography having long been utilised within tourism studies (Cole, 2005; Palmer, 2001). By using ethnography within a case study context, I was able to become a part of the social reality of community members by living amongst them, experiencing in situ the social interactions and processes that make up their everyday lives and how they are affected by mountain resort tourism. My immersion into the community for extended periods of time also allowed for a more complete examination and understanding of the community, as I was personally able to collect my data and undertake much of my preliminary analyses within the natural, geographical, and socio-cultural context in which it was situated. This helped me to gain a depth of knowledge and insight that is not commonly obtained within a resort tourism context, whilst at the same time examine in detail how social capital can be used to provide a deeper understanding of socio-cultural sustainability.

Limitations

Despite my best efforts to address the various issues that were raised throughout my research process, my research does contain several limitations. These predominantly relate to concerns surrounding my access to immigrant populations, my choice to adopt a single case study design and the subsequent generalisability of my findings, and the limited amount of time that I was able to spend within the community of Steamboat Springs.

Although gaining access to community members was largely unproblematic, one constraint I did face was the language barrier that prevented me from communicating with various immigrant populations; the majority of whom were identified as economic migrants. Having come from places such as Mauritania, Senegal, and Latin America - particularly Mexico, I found that many possessed only a basic understanding of English and therefore seemed to prefer to socialise predominantly within their ethnic groups. This made it difficult for me to integrate with these migrants and truly understand their lives and experiences, such as what brought them to Steamboat Springs, how they obtained their jobs, and what perceptions they hold of the rest of the community. While I did manage to spend a small
amount of time amongst a handful of foreign economic migrants from the Philippines and Jamaica, some of whom spoke sufficient English, their preference to also keep to themselves made it difficult for me to gain a detailed understanding of these immigrant populations and their everyday experiences and challenges. As a result, I was unable to include them within my research.

As my research focused upon the community of Steamboat Springs, it is also important to reiterate that my findings are particular to this case study. Caution should therefore be exercised in making generalisations to other mountain resort communities or tourism destinations, given that my aim was not to produce replicable and generalisable findings (as discussed in Chapter 4), but gain detailed insight into an area which had previously been unexamined. Nevertheless, I do believe that many of the issues identified within my case study are comparable and translatable (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982), being similar to those faced in other tourism-dependent communities. This includes my identification of social exclusion, isolation, and powerlessness and their effect on community attachment and quality of life; resource and power inequities and the way in which they have influenced community participation and collaboration; as well as the various manifestations of power in the form of economic and political dominance, collective action, and the reinforcement of socio-economic class divides.

One final constraint that limited my scope of investigation was that of time. While the many months I spent within the field provided me with the opportunity to experience firsthand the peak summer and winter tourism seasons and the transition periods surrounding these, my research would have undoubtedly benefitted from a full year or longer of immersion. However, given that my PhD was a three year program and that there were strict visa regulations regarding my length of stay within the USA, I was unable to visit for longer than ten months. Although this was a sufficient amount of time to gain in-depth insight into the everyday lives of community members within Steamboat Springs and examine the impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, to fully understand the inner-workings of a community is a complex task; one that can always benefit from more time. Furthermore, although it was not my aim to operationalise my research findings and assist in the planning and development of sustainable tourism policies for the community of Steamboat Springs, this would have been a welcome addition. However, because of time constraints, I was only able to provide a number of brief recommendations for the community in response to the practical implications that have resulted from my research (as discussed above). Regardless, it
is hoped these will still be of use to community and tourism planners, providing them with new insights while also validating their own beliefs and experiences regarding the best way to address some of the socio-cultural issues raised by mountain resort tourism.

**Areas for future research**

As has been acknowledged above and in my previous chapters, my research has identified a number of areas which could benefit from further investigation. These include a more detailed examination of norms as a component of social capital, the role of power in tourism, the social outcomes that result from drug and alcohol use amongst young adults, the effects of mountain resort tourism on psychological well-being, the adoption of an `ethic of poverty’; the experiences of immigrant populations, the regional effects of tourism development, and additional case study and longitudinal research on the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism.

**A deeper understanding of norms as a component of social capital**

Much of the research on norms within the social capital literature currently pertains to trust and reciprocity, with limited recognition of other norms that may also constitute social capital. As discussed in Chapter 2, although Fukuyama (2001) has acknowledged that social capital norms can go beyond trust and reciprocity to include reliability, the keeping of commitments, and complex religious doctrines, amongst others, the majority of studies on social capital do not yet appear to have recognised the existence of such additional norms. Furthermore, despite the wider sociology literature having extensively examined the various characteristics of norms, such as the multiplicity of their nature, their degree of influence, and their various types (Cialdini et al., 1990; Cialdini et al., 1991; Cialdini & Trost, 1998), these characteristics have not been widely discussed within the social capital literature.

Thus, there appears to be a need for social capital researchers to draw upon this existing body of knowledge so that a more comprehensive understanding of the different types and characteristics of social capital norms can be achieved. Although my research has endeavoured to do this by examining those social capital norms other than trust and reciprocity that exist within the community of Steamboat Springs, more research is necessary.
to achieve further insight into these norms and their influence and importance as a component of social capital.

The role of power in tourism

While power and the potential for conflict can be seen as key areas of significance when examining the tourism-community relationship (Pearce et al., 1996), it has been argued that tourism research has had a past tendency to overlook the significance of power relations within community settings, especially in regards to collaborative tourism planning efforts (Reed, 1997). Furthermore, even when power relations have been addressed, research has frequently assumed that stakeholder involvement within the collaboration process is significant enough to overcome power imbalances and meet community needs (Reed, 1997). However, as identified by other tourism studies and my own research findings, power relations can disrupt social relationships and the collaborative process at an intra- and inter-community level (Church & Coles, 2007; Coles & Church, 2007; Sofield, 2003). Thus, it seems that greater research attention needs to be paid to the role of power and influence within the tourism development process.

This can be achieved through the use of sociological concepts such as social capital (as was demonstrated in my research), or through the use of other specific theories of power; both of which may provide a way for the various modalities of power and its distribution and use to be examined. As was found within my research, this can include a greater understanding of the ability to influence and be influenced, as contingent upon the capability of one’s resources to enhance or diminish their individual and societal position (Lin, 2001); the mobilisation of resources in the collective actions of individuals where ‘otherwise quiet voice multiply and are amplified’ (Putnam, 2000, p. 338); and the way in which empowerment and powerlessness shape tourism development (Church & Coles, 2007).

The social outcomes resulting from drug and alcohol use amongst young adults

As discussed in Chapter 8, although my research identified mountain resort tourism as having contributed to the development of a social norm surrounding drug and alcohol use
amongst young adults within Steamboat Springs, my ability to link this norm to a variety of negative social outcomes was beyond the scope of my research. Despite anecdotal evidence suggesting that the normative use of drugs and alcohol is connected to higher incidents of substance abuse and drug and alcohol related crimes, further research is required to more closely examine the cause and effects of these negative social outcomes. This can potentially be achieved by implementing more quantitative methods of investigation so that correlations between social pressure, drug and alcohol availability, rates of drug and alcohol use, and drug and alcohol related incidents can be identified.

Given that tourists do tend to engage in risky behaviour such as drug and alcohol use and abuse whilst on holidays (Bellis et al., 2003; Josiam et al., 1998; Ryan et al., 1996), such research is necessary to help provide a deeper understanding of the effects of this increased exposure on young adults within tourism-dependent communities. This is important because research on teenagers and young adults and their drug and alcohol habits, has already identified connections between social norms and drug and alcohol use (Abbey et al., 1993; Graham et al., 1991; Nation & Heflinger, 2006; Webb et al., 1996); alcohol availability and use (Treno, Grube & Martin, 2003); and drug and alcohol availability and the rate of drug and alcohol-related incidents (Fergusson et al., 1996; Kelleher et al., 1996; Scribner et al., 1994; Speer et al., 1998; U.S. Department of Justice, 1999).

**Mountain resort tourism and its effects on psychological well-being**

Another area that requires further investigation is in regards to the potential contribution of mountain resort tourism to depression and suicide. As discussed in Chapter 8, these negative social outcomes are potentially a result of the inability of many newcomers to live up to their own expectations and those held by the community to be happy and successful and ‘living the dream’. While my research was able to highlight various difficulties which have prevented many newcomers from achieving this dream, my ability to link this failure in ‘living the dream’ with depression and suicide, was tenuous at best. This is not to say that such a connection does not exist, but that it was simply beyond the scope of my research. However, with suicide levels perceived as being very high within the community of Steamboat Springs and the wider Routt County, an examination of the potential for mountain resort tourism to contribute to unrealistic expectations, which may consequently result in depression and suicide when these are not met, may prove to be a valuable line of inquiry.

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The adoption of an ‘ethic of poverty’

As was also discussed in Chapter 8, the tendency for certain middle-upper class community members to adopt an ‘ethic of poverty’ in order to distinguish themselves from wealthy tourists and amenity migrants, has yet to be acknowledged within the tourism or social capital literature. An interesting and unexpected finding, this form of “reverse snobbery” may benefit from further examination, especially in regards to its prevalence in Steamboat Springs, as well as within other mountain resort communities or even resort communities in general. Given the ability of this norm to exacerbate existing socio-economic divides by emphasising the separation of the “haves” and the “have-nots”, greater recognition of this ‘ethic of poverty’ may help contribute to efforts which seek to address social cohesion and integration, especially in those communities where there is a growing class differential.

The experiences of immigrant populations

As discussed above in regards to my research limitations, as many immigrant workers within Steamboat Springs were found to only speak a small amount of English, my ability to interact with them and include them in my research was limited. However, my conversations with those few economic migrants whom I did find to speak a working level of English offered some anecdotal evidence that the socio-cultural challenges they face may be slightly different to those that I identified amongst other groups within the community, considering their tendency to associate in tightly-knit ethnic groups and their limited interaction with the wider community. As the number of these immigrant workers has risen dramatically in response to the rapid development of mountain resort tourism over the years (Perdue, 2004b), a more detailed understanding of this growing segment within tourism-dependent communities therefore appears necessary.

While existing research in this area has identified a pattern of linked migration between the gentrification of high amenity communities and the existence of these low-wage immigrant workers (Hiemstra, 2008), there has yet to be an in-depth examination of the various issues facing economic migrants, such as the development of a sense of community and belonging (Nelson & Nelson, 2011), and the way in which their existence exacerbates socio-economic class disparities within mountain resort communities (Rademan, 2003). This knowledge could help to provide a greater understanding of what brings them to specific
resort communities over others, their aims and expectations, the permanency of their stay, and the various challenges that they face. Research that specifically focuses on this largely unexamined population could therefore significantly contribute to not only the mountain resort tourism literature, but also the wider nexus that exists between tourism and migration.

The regional effects of tourism development

While the wider regional effects that mountain resort tourism has beyond its host community have been acknowledged within the academic literature (Clark, 2006a; Gill & Williams, 1994; Hartmann, 2006b; Lasanta et al., 2007; Riebsame et al., 1996), research that specifically focuses upon surrounding “bedroom communities” and down-valley regions that are affected by tourism development is limited. As my research has identified, this is despite the fact that many of these outlying communities are often left to deal with resource inequities and the negative impacts associated with tourism, without benefitting from the positive aspects beyond an increase in employment opportunities. With down-valley migration being of particular concern within mountainous regions due to the limited amount of available land, and thus the significant distance over which the effects of tourism has occurred (Sopris Foundation, 2007), there is arguably a need for further research on the various concerns and issues faced by these down-valley communities. Such knowledge could contribute to a more regional and integrated understanding of mountain resort tourism development.

Additional case study research on the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism

Further ethnographic case study research on the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism may also serve to clarify and elaborate on my findings, thus assisting in the advancement of discussions on the socio-cultural issues associated with tourism development. Such research could be undertaken within other mountain resort communities in the Rocky Mountain West or around the world. In particular, a cross-cultural examination of the effects of mountain resort tourism on the tourism-community relationship may prove to be interesting and beneficial, given the differences that exist between the corporate model of the ski tourism industry in North America, as compared to the more community-oriented model that can be found within Europe and other regions (Flagstad & Hope, 2001).
Longitudinal comparison

Although my research within Steamboat Springs was undertaken over a ten month period, I was still only able to provide a snapshot in time of the community and their various socio-cultural challenges faced. Future research within the community of Steamboat Springs could therefore look to gain a longitudinal understanding of the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism as it goes through various stages of growth and development, and its corresponding effects on social capital.

Final remarks

Within my ethnographic case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs, what has been of great interest to me is the many and varied socio-cultural concerns and challenges surrounding mountain resort tourism. Prior to undertaking this research, I was largely unaware of many of these issues, with my perceptions of the community being predominantly positive. Of all the mountain resort communities that I had previously encountered during my travels within the Rocky Mountain West, Steamboat Springs had always stood out as a town with an identifiable community; one with strong ties to its Western ranching and agricultural heritage that had somehow managed to merge the old with the new, with both long-term and newly arrived residents proud to call Steamboat Springs home. Although my past experiences working as a seasonal employee for the SSRC meant that I was familiar with the community and some of the more obvious impacts resulting from mountain resort tourism, such as the lack of housing affordability and the high costs of living, my understanding of the socio-cultural ramifications of these impacts was limited. It was not until I began this research and started to closely examine community relationships and become acquainted with community members from all areas and backgrounds, whether tourism-related or not, that the extent to which mountain resort tourism has affected everyday sociological processes and interactions became apparent. This is not to say that a strong sense of community and pride in its Western culture does not still exist, but that there are a range of issues that have threatened, and are continuing to threaten, the relationships, culture, and values of the community of Steamboat Springs.

Through lengthy in situ examination, what I have come to realise is that although the image of a Western family-friendly community that is widely marketed around the world is
reflective of some of its key cultural values and social norms, this portrayal of the community barely scratches the surface of what is a much more complex social reality. In many ways, Steamboat Springs can be described as being rather eclectic in nature, with mountain resort tourism having exposed the community to a wide range of people over time, whether ranchers, ski bums, seasonal workers, wealthy retirees, or more recently, location neutral businesses and employees. These groups can be seen as possessing both similar and different ideas and values; some of which have been found to conflict. This can be noted through the changes in the physical environment in the ranchlands surrounding Steamboat Springs, with luxury housing developments and gated communities causing tensions between ranchers and amenity migrants. Additionally, the shift in community mentality from the importance of local knowledge and experience towards a ‘culture of money’ seems further reflective of these tensions.

The community of Steamboat Springs thus appears to be one that is in constant transition, as determined by the ups and downs of mountain resort tourism. Although it struggled to keep up with the rapid growth in demand of the industry until the economic recession in 2007, the subsequent slowdown in the economy has forced the community to re-examine both the benefits and costs associated with mountain resort tourism and seek alternative avenues for future development. This is whilst also maintaining the environmental and socio-cultural integrity upon which it has become renowned as a tourism destination. Therefore, my research arguably comes at a valuable time, with this current period of reflection optimum for highlighting the importance of moving beyond a predominantly economic pro-growth focus of development to recognising and more explicitly addressing the socio-cultural issues surrounding mountain resort tourism. This may require a shift to a more inclusive and participatory approach to governance.

As economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental factors are continuously subject to change, the quest for sustainability is a continual process of re-evaluation to ensure that tourism continues to operate in harmony with the local environment, economy, and community values and culture. In this manner, the communities upon which it depends can be seen as beneficiaries, as opposed to victims of tourism development (Wahab & Pigram, 1997). What my use of social capital as a heuristic device has offered is a detailed approach to examining the socio-cultural elements of the community of Steamboat Springs, with my analysis of network structures, social norms, and the distribution of resource and power demonstrating the diverse ways in which mountain resort tourism has affected the various
segments of the community, as well as those residing in the surrounding region. This has provided some interesting insights into the complexity of the community of Steamboat Springs, and the numerous challenges that are faced and need to be addressed if the sustainability of mountain resort tourism is to be achieved.
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Appendices
## Appendix A. Log of interview participants

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<th>Community Role/Interests</th>
<th>Sampling</th>
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<td>Sampling</td>
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<td>13/04/11</td>
<td>Mountain base area</td>
<td>Entrepreneur within the hospitality industry</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/09/11</td>
<td>Local house</td>
<td>Second-home owner</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/09/11</td>
<td>Local house</td>
<td>Tourism industry employee</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/10/11</td>
<td>Local business office</td>
<td>Bike Town USA advocate/Location neutral employee</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10/11</td>
<td>Starbucks Café</td>
<td>Commuter from Craig, CO</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/10/11</td>
<td>Local house</td>
<td>Second-home owner</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/11/11</td>
<td>Canton Restaurant, Lincoln Ave</td>
<td>Commuter from Craig, CO</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For each interviewee, only a broad, primary description is provided, in order to retain their anonymity.
Appendix B. Interview guide

Participant Background

- Participant’s story:
  - What brought them to Steamboat?
  - What do they do?

Mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs

- Winter tourism
- Summer tourism

Impacts of mountain resort tourism

- Types of impacts:
  - Positive/Negative
  - Social/Cultural/Economic/Environmental/Political/Technological
- Impacts on the community
  - Impacts on surrounding communities

Exploration of social capital components

- Networks and connections
  - Individual level
  - Community level
  - Steamboat and beyond
- Norms
  - Trust
  - Reciprocity
  - Others – cultural values?
- Power
  - Community
  - SSRC
  - Local government

Community of Steamboat Springs

- Different sub-community groups
- Meaning of community
- Importance of community
- Current and future challenges resulting from tourism
Housekeeping:

- Lastly, do you know of anyone else who would have something interesting to contribute and be interested in participating and volunteering some of their time to discuss the role of the ski resorts on the community of Steamboat Springs?
- Courtesies and thank you for time
- Also mention, that if possible, I would like to send out a copy of the interview transcript to ensure that it is a faithful representation of the interview that took place today, and you are free to make comments as you see fit.
- Get an email or mailing address to send the transcript too, and provide a time-frame reference (2 weeks) when it will be sent to the respondent
# Appendix C. Everyday observation log book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activities/details</th>
<th>Thematic notes and ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WINTER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-11-10</td>
<td>SS Transit Bus</td>
<td>Riding the bus from City Market Plaza to The Ponds</td>
<td>• International workers&lt;br&gt;• Seasonality&lt;br&gt;• Community against development&lt;br&gt;• ‘come for winter, stay for summer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-11-10</td>
<td>Steamboat Ski and Sport Rental Store – Gondola Base</td>
<td>Social visit</td>
<td>• Cost of living&lt;br&gt;• Deals and tips on the side&lt;br&gt;• Base area developments and changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-11-10</td>
<td>Integrated Community Centre, Oak St</td>
<td>Spanish conversation class</td>
<td>• Migrant Hispanic population and seasonal employment&lt;br&gt;• Community integration of foreigners and locals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-11-10</td>
<td>Steamboat Springs City Council Planning Department</td>
<td>Meeting with Planning Department</td>
<td>• Community planning and development&lt;br&gt;• Discussion of project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01-12-10</td>
<td>Library Hall, Bud Werner Memorial Library</td>
<td>Slideshow on the Wild places of Northwest Colorado – Moffat County</td>
<td>• Community support and turnout</td>
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<tr>
<td>02-12-10</td>
<td>Library Hall, Bud Werner Memorial Library</td>
<td>Community Cinema – ‘The Calling’</td>
<td>• Problem with the youth&lt;br&gt;• ‘Party town’ issues&lt;br&gt;• Drug and alcohol abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-12-10</td>
<td>Integrated Community Centre, Oak St</td>
<td>Spanish conversation class</td>
<td>• Alcohol and marijuana abuse in town&lt;br&gt;• Freedom of speech issues&lt;br&gt;• ‘Non-glamorous side of ski town living’</td>
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<tr>
<td>07-12-10</td>
<td>Steamboat Ski Mountain</td>
<td>Conversation on ski lift</td>
<td>• Growth and change of ski resort development over the years&lt;br&gt;• Relationship between tourists and locals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Activities/details</td>
<td>Thematic notes and ideas</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-12-10</td>
<td>Steamboat Springs City Council Planning</td>
<td>Discussion with Planning Department</td>
<td>• Powder days</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-12-10</td>
<td>Steamboat Ski Mountain</td>
<td>Ski Locker Rooms Chairlifts</td>
<td>• Ski Corp providing socialisation opportunities for the elderly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Suicide</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Winter Sports Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-12-10</td>
<td>Steamboat Transit Bus</td>
<td>Heading downtown</td>
<td>• Construction lull</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Base area development</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Real estate development</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-12-10</td>
<td>Steamboat Ski Mountain</td>
<td>Skiing</td>
<td>• Work to ski</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Steamboat as a vacation destination</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Skiing as the reason for living in Steamboat</td>
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<td>04-01-11</td>
<td>Citizen’s Meeting Room, Centennial Hall</td>
<td>City Council Meeting</td>
<td>• Community passion</td>
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<td>• Community participation in the planning and development process</td>
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<td>• Community voicing their opinions</td>
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<td>04-01-11</td>
<td>Planning Department, City Council</td>
<td>Presentation for Planning Department</td>
<td>• Discussion of my research</td>
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<td>• Discussion of methodology</td>
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<td>• Discussion of further applications</td>
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<td>06-01-11</td>
<td>Steamboat Ski Mountain</td>
<td>Ski With an Ambassador Tour</td>
<td>• History of the mountain</td>
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<td>• Geographical information</td>
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<td>• Environmental information</td>
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<td>11-01-11</td>
<td>Bud Werner Memorial Library, Library Hall</td>
<td>PBS Community Cinema Screening hosted by Horizons</td>
<td>• Representation from the disabled community</td>
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<td>• Community support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community celebration of the achievements of Horizons and their members</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-01-11</td>
<td>Centennial Hall</td>
<td>Planning Commission Meeting</td>
<td>• Walgreens big box development proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Increased employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Council strict building design codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Activities/details</td>
<td>Thematic notes and ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-01-11</td>
<td>Tap House, Downtown Steamboat</td>
<td>Monday night Poker Night</td>
<td>• Community integration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Everybody knows everybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community socialisation opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-01-11</td>
<td>Sweetwater Grill, Yampa Ave, Downtown Steamboat</td>
<td>Talking Green Networking Event</td>
<td>• Sustainability organisations</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community sharing and raising awareness of sustainability programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUMMER</td>
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<tr>
<td>03-07-11</td>
<td>Around town</td>
<td>Wandering around town to get a ‘feel’ of the community during the summer tourism season</td>
<td>• Summer crowds</td>
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<td>• Different type of summer visitor</td>
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<tr>
<td>08-07-11</td>
<td>Treads of Pioneer Museum</td>
<td>Brown Paper Bag Lunch Series – The Gay Family and the evolution of ranching in the valley</td>
<td>• Western ranching culture and heritage</td>
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<td>• Second-home owner community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Tourism and real estate boom effects on ranching</td>
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<td>• Community heritage</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-07-11</td>
<td>Rodeo arena</td>
<td>Pro Rodeo Series – summer</td>
<td>• Western culture and values</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Community-tourist interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Marketing and image of Western cowboy community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-07-11</td>
<td>Fish Creek Falls, private property</td>
<td>Hike and hanging out with locals</td>
<td>• Summer tourism crowd and congestion on trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Community openness and friendliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-07-11</td>
<td>Yampa Valley Botanical Park</td>
<td>Strings Music Free Lunchtime concerts</td>
<td>• Second-home owner crowd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Second-home owner non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Community inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-07-11</td>
<td>Centennial Hall</td>
<td>City Council Meeting</td>
<td>• Volunteering</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Reliance on sales and lodging tax</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Airport costs and air travel reliance</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Locals vs. second-home owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Activities/details</td>
<td>Thematic notes and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-07-11</td>
<td>Around town</td>
<td>General thoughts</td>
<td>• Noise pollution&lt;br&gt;• Second-home owner involvement in community&lt;br&gt;• Economic development</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-07-11</td>
<td>Around town</td>
<td>Conversations with community members</td>
<td>• Exploitation of immigrant workers&lt;br&gt;• Summer tourism focus shift to downtown from base area in winter&lt;br&gt;• Infill development in community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-07-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>General thoughts</td>
<td>• Community connections&lt;br&gt;• Importance of knowing people for job opportunities&lt;br&gt;• Maintaining community contacts to get ahead&lt;br&gt;• Work as a central node of connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-07-11</td>
<td>Yampa River</td>
<td>Tubing</td>
<td>• River runs through it&lt;br&gt;• Community use of recreational amenities&lt;br&gt;• Community-tourist interaction&lt;br&gt;• Free community facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-07-11</td>
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<td>General thoughts</td>
<td>• Central role of alcohol in community events&lt;br&gt;• Drugs and alcohol a point of socialisation for youth</td>
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<td>26-07-11</td>
<td>Mesa Schoolhouse</td>
<td>Historic Building Use</td>
<td>• Conversion and utilisation of historic buildings&lt;br&gt;• Historic preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-08-11</td>
<td>Strings Pavilion</td>
<td>Seminars at Steamboat</td>
<td>• Second-home owners&lt;br&gt;• Second-home owner non-profit&lt;br&gt;• Retiree lifestyle community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-08-11</td>
<td>Treads of Pioneer Museum</td>
<td>Brown Paper Bag Lunch Series – Steamboat in the 60s</td>
<td>• Second-home owners&lt;br&gt;• Storytelling for sharing heritage and culture&lt;br&gt;• Tourism bringing greater jobs and opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Activities/details</td>
<td>Thematic notes and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10-08-11 | Carpenter Ranch                               | Conversation with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) | • Land conservation and easements  
• Oil and gas and coal mining issues  
• Rancher-tourist conflicts  
• Private property rights  
• County roundtable discussions  
• Adversity to change  
• Sustainability of ranching and agriculture  
• Impacts of Steamboat tourism on surrounding communities and ranches  
• Real estate development in the county |
| 20-08-11 | Tourism employee’s house at the mountain base area | BBQ for a friend’s birthday | • Choice to not have kids – 30s crowd  
• Seasonality of jobs |
| 23-08-11 | International immigrant’s house in downtown Steamboat Springs | BBQ for a friend’s birthday | • Work as a node for connections  
• Immigrant community  
• Community integration of Latinos  
• Language barriers |
| 25-08-11 |                                                | General thoughts         | • Substance use and abuse amongst youth  
• Mountain transient community  
• Living the dream  
• High expectations  
• Lack of opportunities  
• Isolation and loneliness  
• Difficulties in socialising with more permanent members of community |
| 11-09-11 |                                                | General thoughts         | • End of summer tourism season  
• Quiet ‘community time’ |
<p>| 25-09-11 | Bus from mountain base area to apartment       | Bus conversation          | • Local status |
| 26-09-11 | Craig, Colorado                                | Examination of the town   | • Comparisons between Craig and Steamboat |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activities/details</th>
<th>Thematic notes and ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02-10-11</td>
<td>Ranch in North Routt County</td>
<td>Visit to a local ranch</td>
<td>• Ranching lifestyle&lt;br&gt;• Neighbouring issues&lt;br&gt;• Ranching traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-10-11</td>
<td>Tourism employee’s house at mountain base area</td>
<td>Barbeque dinner with friends</td>
<td>• Youth and seasonal work&lt;br&gt;• Transitioning between the seasons&lt;br&gt;• Youth friendship circles and breaking in</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-10-11</td>
<td>Library Hall</td>
<td>Community Yoga session</td>
<td>• Community participation&lt;br&gt;• Everybody knows everybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-10-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>General thoughts</td>
<td>• Using Olympic star power to appeal to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-10-11</td>
<td>Steaming Bean Café</td>
<td>General conversations with community members</td>
<td>• Community revolves around skiing&lt;br&gt;• Airline tax subsidy</td>
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<tr>
<td>03-11-11</td>
<td>Interviewee’s house</td>
<td>Social catch-up with interviewee and family</td>
<td>• Growing up in Steamboat&lt;br&gt;• International workers&lt;br&gt;• Ethnic diversity in Steamboat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-11-11</td>
<td>Steamboat Springs High School</td>
<td>Final football game of the season for the Steamboat Sailors</td>
<td>• Youth hang-out&lt;br&gt;• Community sporting interests spread thin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-11-11</td>
<td>Bus to downtown Steamboat Springs</td>
<td>General conversation</td>
<td>• Community unemployment&lt;br&gt;• Job availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-11-11</td>
<td>The Grand Ballroom, The Steamboat Grand Hotel</td>
<td>Local community theatre satire</td>
<td>• Anti-law enforcement&lt;br&gt;• Medical marijuana use&lt;br&gt;• Alcohol&lt;br&gt;• Real estate and construction industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-11-11</td>
<td>Library Hall</td>
<td>NW Colorado Local products store</td>
<td>• Local products movement&lt;br&gt;• Community support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-11-11</td>
<td>Library Hall</td>
<td>Community cinema screening – ‘The Greenest Building’</td>
<td>• Community sense of place&lt;br&gt;• Restoration of historic buildings&lt;br&gt;• Physical links to community history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Activities/details</td>
<td>Thematic notes and ideas</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>18-11-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Final thoughts</td>
<td>• Importance of history for communities</td>
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<td>• Community changes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Personal thoughts and experiences</td>
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## Appendix D. Event observation log book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site Visit</th>
<th>Reason for Visit</th>
<th>Activities/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WINTER</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 24/11/10   | Steamboat Ski and Resort             | Opening Day for Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC) Scholarship Day to raise funds for the Winter Sports Club | • Went skiing on the mountain  
• Observation of who was and wasn’t skiing and why not  
• Community spirit and fundraising |
| 26/11/10   | Downtown Steamboat Springs – front of Courthouse | Lighting of downtown street Christmas Trees                                      | • Lighting of the trees  
• Community carolling  
• Hot chocolate and cookies  
• Community lucky raffle for $100 downtown spending |
| 3/12/10 - 5/12/10 | Nordic combined Continental Cup, Howelsen Hill | Hosting of the World Cup B ski jumping and racing carnival | • Small crowd  
• Lots of support for hometown Olympians |
| 11-12-10   | Downtown Steamboat Lincoln Ave between 6th and 9th | Merry Mainstreet event Santa Torchlight Parade                                 | • Santa parade  
• Community support of local business  
• Community holiday spirit  
• Community and tourist holiday celebration |
| 18-12-10   | Ski Time Square                      | Christmas Celebration                                                            | • Reindeers and pony rides for children  
• Mr and Mrs Clause  
• Torchlight Parade  
• Lighting of the Christmas tree  
• Tourist celebration |
| 22-12-10   | Off the Beaten Path II – base of Sheraton Hotel | Local Connection book signing event                                               | • Providing a “local” experience for tourists  
• Encouraging business and linking mountain base area to downtown |
| 25-12-10   | Community Centre                     | Community Christmas Feast                                                        | • Christmas feast for community and tourists  
• Holiday celebration |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site Visit</th>
<th>Reason for Visit</th>
<th>Activities/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 31-12-10   | Gondola Square – Mountain Base Area                 | New Year’s Eve Celebrations       | • Community socialisation opportunities  
• Community generosity and sense of community |
| 07-01-11   | Downtown Steamboat                                   | First Friday Artwalk              | • SSRC tourist celebration and experience  
• Marketing the ski and snowboard school  
• Maintaining the ski resort’s image |
| 18-01-11   | Steamboat Ski and Resort                             | Cowboy Downhill                    | • Community celebration  
• Steamboat Art Community  
• Community-tourist interactions |
| 23-01-11   | Bear River Bar and Grill and Steamboat Ski Area      | Vintage Ski Fashion Parade and Race| • Celebration of skiing in the community of Steamboat Springs  
• Honouring past skiing icons and Olympians  
• Community celebration |
| SUMMER     |                                                     |                                   |                                                                                   |
| 04-07-11   | Downtown Steamboat Springs and Howelsen Hill         | 4th of July celebrations          | • Community pride  
• Patriotism  
• Community-tourist interactions  
• Community marketing and celebration |
| 09-07-11   | Bald Eagle Ranch                                    | 31st Annual Balloon Rodeo          | • Tourism event  
• Tourism-community interaction  
• Marketing of western image in name |
| 10-07-11   |                                                     |                                   |                                                                                   |
| 15-07-11   | Howelsen Hill base                                  | Free summer music concert series   | • Community event  
• Community socialisation opportunity  
• Community participation |
| 17-07-11   | Strings Music Pavilion                               | Strings Music Free Community Concert| • Second-home owner crowd  
• Second-home owner non-profit |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site Visit</th>
<th>Reason for Visit</th>
<th>Activities/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 06-08-11 | All over town                        | Steamboat Wine Festival                   | • Community inclusion  
• Community participation  
• Wealthy event – class disparities  
• Second-home owner market  
• Community fundraising |
| 19-08-11 | The Depot                            | Opening for the All Arts Festival         | • Wealthy event – second-home owner crowd  
• Artistic side to community  
• Second-home owners bringing art and culture to the community |
| 20-08-11 | Hayden                               | Routt County Fair                         | • Community pride  
• Western heritage and culture celebration  
• Ranching community  
• Sense of community and belonging |
| 20-08-11 | Downtown Yampa St                    | All Arts Festival Stroll                  | • Artistic side to the community  
• Tourist-community interaction |
| 27-08-11 | Downtown Steamboat Springs and Meadows Parking Lot | USA Pro Cycling Challenge             | • Community pride  
• Community participation  
• Bike Town USA  
• Biking interest and identity within the community |
| 11-09-11 | Downtown Yampa River                 | Rubber Ducky Race                         | • Community fundraising  
• Family-friendly community and event  
• Community support |
| 16-09-11 | Gondola Base Area                    | Steamboat 3rd Annual Oktoberwest Festival | • Local produce  
• Community participation |
| 30-09-11 | The Grand Hotel                      | Steamboat Bike Summit                    | • Bike Town USA  
• Community awareness and communication  
• Rebranding the summer tourism |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site Visit</th>
<th>Reason for Visit</th>
<th>Activities/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 30-09-11 | The Grand Hotel            | SSRC Winter Hiring Clinic             | • Youth entitlement  
                                                     |                                                                       | • Disposable youth  
                                                     |                                                                       | • Seasonality                                                        |
| 02-10-11 | Steamboat Ski and Resort   | Final bike race for the season        | • Biking interest and identity                         |
| 31-10-11 | Downtown Steamboat Springs | Halloween Stroll                      | • Community celebration  
                                                     |                                                                       | • Community socialisation and gathering  
                                                     |                                                                       | • Sense of community                                                  |
Appendix E. Letter of introduction

Date
Address of interviewee

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT IN STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

My name is Natalie Ooi and I am a PhD student from Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. I am a past employee and community member of Steamboat Springs interested in undertaking PhD research on the Steamboat Springs community. My PhD topic explores the sustainability of mountain resort tourism; a topic area that may be highly beneficial to both you and the community. I am writing to enquire as to whether you and your staff may be interested in participating and cooperating with my research.

My research seeks to examine how members of the Steamboat Springs community perceive the impacts of tourism, both positive and negative to affect their everyday lives. Exploring the roles and relationships that exist between the Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation, Howelsen Hill, and the local community, this research may assist in identifying relevant issues and concerns that can help contribute valuable information to the sustainable planning and development of future tourism and community policies.

This research proposes a case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs during the winter and summer seasons from November 20th 2010 to April 23rd 2011, and from July 3rd 2011 to November 18th 2011. Fully funded by Monash University, I will require no financial assistance for my stay in Steamboat Springs. This letter is simply a letter of introduction and a call for expressions of interest in regards to my proposed PhD topic. Attached is an explanatory statement detailing the nature of this research project in greater depth.

I am hoping that this project is of interest and that you will agree to be interviewed by me. I am seeking to interview a range of community members, including employees of the local council, employees of the ski industry, as well as participants from a range of other community arenas. Furthermore, any assistance through the provision of relevant information and contacts for this research topic would be greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Ooi, Monash University

Email:
Appendix F. Explanatory statement

November 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2011

Explanatory Statement

Exploring the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs, Colorado

My name is Natalie Ooi and I am conducting a research project in conjunction with Dr Jennifer Laing and Dr Judith Mair in the Faculty of Business and Economics towards a PhD in Business and Economics at Monash University, Australia.

The aim of this research is to explore the sustainability of tourism development within a mountain resort community context. This research will examine how the development of the winter and summer tourism product can affect the everyday lives of community members of Steamboat Springs. It is hoped that the information obtained in this research can contribute to sustainable community and tourism development policies that enhance the quality of life within a mountain resort community.

Steamboat Springs has been selected due to its popularity as a world-class mountain resort destination and its historic association with skiing and ski resort development within North America. Steamboat Springs has also been selected for its unique affiliation with both a corporate (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation) and community (Howelsen Hill) ski resort. Furthermore, Steamboat Springs has been selected due to its efforts to expand and develop its summer tourism product to further build upon its image as a mountain resort tourist destination.

This research involves a case study examination of the community of Steamboat Springs. During a five month winter tourism period from November 2010 to April 2011, and a five month period from July to November 2011, I, the researcher, will be living and participating within Steamboat Springs to familiarise myself and establish working relationships within the community. I plan on doing in-depth interviews with a range of community members, as well as undertaking participant observation and document analysis of any archived records of Steamboat Springs and its historical relationship with both summer and winter tourism. Participation in the interview is expected to take no more than approximately one hour.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate, you may only withdraw prior to the approval of the interview transcript. All data will remain confidential with pseudonyms used to protect the identity of participants. Any information provided will not be able to be linked, both through name or identifiable characteristics, to the relevant participant.

Storage of the data collected will adhere to Monash University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of this study in
the form of a written thesis will be submitted for publication. In addition, data obtained in this study may be used for further publications, conferences, and reports but individual participants will remain unidentifiable.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Natalie Ooi at

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:</th>
<th>If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research CF10/2201 - 2010001241 is being conducted, please contact:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Jennifer Laing</td>
<td>Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Lecturer</td>
<td>Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Research Unit</td>
<td>Building 3e Room 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>Research Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berwick Campus</td>
<td>Monash University VIC 3800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph:</td>
<td>Tel: +61 3 9905 2052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td>Fax: +61 3 9905 3831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au">muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you

Natalie Ooi
Tourism Research Unit
Monash University, Berwick Campus
Appendix G. Ethics approval

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 1 September 2010
Project Number: CF10/2201 - 2010001241
Project Title: Exploring sustainable ski tourism development in Steamboat Springs, Colorado
Chief Investigator: Dr Jennifer Laing
Approved: From: 1 September 2010 To: 1 September 2015

Terms of approval
1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel): Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. Future correspondence: Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. Annual reports: Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. Final report: A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. Monitoring: Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. Retention and storage of data: The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Cannly
Chair, MUHREC

c: Assoc Prof Lionel Frost, Miss Natalie Ooi
Appendix H. Ethics amendment approval

Monash Human Ethics - CF10/2201 - 2010001241

MRO Human Ethics Team (Adm) to Jennifer, Lionel, me

PLEASE NOTE: To ensure speedy turnaround time, this correspondence is not
all investigators on correspondence relating to this project, but it is the responsi-
investigators are aware of the content of the correspondence.

29 April 2011

Dr Jennifer Laing
Department of Management
Faculty of Business & Economics
Berwick Campus

Dear Researchers

CF10/2201 - 2010001241: Exploring sustainable ski tourism development

Thank you for submitting a Request for Amendment to the above named projec

This is to advise that the following amendments have been approved and the p
September 2010.

1. Expand the research focus from ski tourism development to encompa

Thank you for keeping the Committee informed.

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Assoc Prof Lionel Frost; Natalie Ooi

Human Ethics - Monash Research Office
Building 3E, Room 111
Monash University, Clayton 3800
Phone: 9905 5490
e-mail: muhrec@monash.edu

This e-mail (including all attachments) is intended for the named recipient only.
must be treated in accordance with the Information Privacy Act (Vic) 2000 and i
in error, please inform the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committi
copy this e-mail (including attachments), delete the e-mail (and attachments) fr
interfered with, may contain computer viruses or other defects. MUHREC gives
doubts about the authenticity of an e-mail purportedly sent by MUHREC, plea
Appendix I. Consent form

Exploring the socio-cultural sustainability of mountain resort tourism in Steamboat Springs, Colorado

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records.

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher □ Yes □ No
I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped and/or video-taped □ Yes □ No
I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required □ Yes □ No

I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage prior to approval of the interview transcript without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from this interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the interview will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Participant’s name

Signature

Date
### Appendix J. Summer tourism events calendar 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event name</th>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Organiser(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/06/11</td>
<td>30th Annual Steamboat Marathon</td>
<td>Sporting: Running</td>
<td>Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association (SSCRA)</td>
<td>Running marathon race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/06/11 – 12/06/11</td>
<td>Triple Crown Mountain Magic</td>
<td>Sporting: Softball</td>
<td>Outside event organiser, City of Steamboat Springs</td>
<td>National softball tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/06/11-16/06/11</td>
<td>Ride the Rockies</td>
<td>Sporting: Biking</td>
<td>Outside event organiser</td>
<td>Road bicycle tour across Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/06/11 – 19/06/11</td>
<td>Rocky Mountain Mustang Round Up</td>
<td>Sporting: Car racing</td>
<td>SSCRA</td>
<td>Mustang car exhibition and race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/06/11 – 19/06/11</td>
<td>Triple Crown Mountain Magic Tournament</td>
<td>Sporting: Baseball</td>
<td>Outside event organiser, City of Steamboat Springs</td>
<td>National baseball tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/07/11 – 04/07/11</td>
<td>108th Cowboys’ Roundup Days</td>
<td>Western, Sporting: Rodeo</td>
<td>SSCRA, City of Steamboat Springs</td>
<td>Community’s Western 4th of July celebrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/07/11</td>
<td>Art in the Park</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>SSCRA</td>
<td>Largest arts and craft festival showcasing local and non-local artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/07/11-10/07/11</td>
<td>31st Hot Air Balloon Rodeo</td>
<td>Western, Sporting: Hot Air Ballooning</td>
<td>SSCRA</td>
<td>Hot air balloon festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-07-11 – 17/07/11</td>
<td>Mountain Soccer Tournament</td>
<td>Sporting: Soccer</td>
<td>Steamboat Springs Youth Soccer Association</td>
<td>Youth soccer tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/11 – 17/07/11</td>
<td>Tour De Steamboat</td>
<td>Sporting: biking, Fundraiser</td>
<td>Kent Ericksen Cycles</td>
<td>Bicycle road ride to fundraise money for the Sunshine Kids annual Steamboat ski trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/07/11 – 07-08-11</td>
<td>Triple Crown World Series</td>
<td>Sporting: Softball</td>
<td>Outside event organiser, City of Steamboat Springs</td>
<td>National softball tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event name</td>
<td>Event type</td>
<td>Organiser(s)</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/08/11 – 07/08/11</td>
<td>Steamboat Wine Festival</td>
<td>Fundraiser, Food &amp; Wine</td>
<td>Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports (STARS)</td>
<td>Wine Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/08/11 – 07/08/11</td>
<td>Ride 4 Yellow</td>
<td>Fundraiser, Sporting: Biking</td>
<td>Ride 4 Yellow</td>
<td>National biking fundraiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/08/11 – 13/08/11</td>
<td>Wild West Relay</td>
<td>Sporting: Running</td>
<td>Outside event organisers</td>
<td>Relay running race from Fort Collins to Steamboat Springs, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/08/11 – 21/08/11</td>
<td>Steamboat All Arts Festival</td>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td>SSCRA</td>
<td>Collaborative art and cultural event including: dance, vocals, musicals, visual art, literary art, and culinary art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/08/11 – 27/08/11</td>
<td>USA Pro Cycling Challenge</td>
<td>Sporting: Biking</td>
<td>Outside event organisers, City of Steamboat Springs, SSRC, SSCRA</td>
<td>Nation-wide road cycling event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/09/11 – 04/09/11</td>
<td>Wild West Air Fest</td>
<td>Western, Vintage Airplanes</td>
<td>SSCRA</td>
<td>Vintage aircraft show which incorporates a Western flavour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/09/11 – 18/09/11</td>
<td>Steamboat Oktoberwest</td>
<td>Food &amp; Wine</td>
<td>SSCRA, Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation (SSRC)</td>
<td>Showcase of local and other breweries, and a showcase of local lamb products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>