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SOCIAL CAPITAL, SOLIDARITY, AND COHORT EFFECT –AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AMONG UNION MINERS IN HARLAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

SOCIAL CAPITAL, SOLIDARITY, AND COHORT EFFECT – AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AMONG UNION MINERS IN HARLAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

The coal industry exercises a pervasive influence on mining communities in Appalachia, even though it exerts enormous damages on the environment and makes limited contributions to employment and the advancement of the communities. One explanation for this paradox offered by Bell is a depletion of social capital among coalfield residents in Central Appalachia (2009). Her data suggests that the “ripping away” of the region’s strong union identity lead to a resocialization, “from a ‘we’ mentality to an ‘I’ mentality, thus demising the store of social capital” (2009:655). My research aims to interpret how social capital resources among union miners was translated to solidarity in the mining community, and how the union generated social capital and fostered solidarity among miners and their families. This research finds that the union was both a creator and a preserver of social capital. The coalfield residents demonstrated a high degree of social capital and solidarity in terms of a sense of reliability, dedication to collective activities, and intimate extended networks. Furthermore, the union’s strategies of holding regular meetings, organizing large-scale strikes, promoting collective identity, securing public benefits, and electing charismatic leaders were of great significance for the production of both social capital and solidarity.

KEY WORDS: Mining, Paradox, Union, Social Capital, Solidarity

Feng Hao

May 1, 2011

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BY

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THESIS

FENG HAO

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

2011

SOCIAL CAPITAL, SOLIDARITY, AND COHORT EFFECT
– AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AMONG
UNION MINERS IN HARLAN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Feng Hao

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Dwight B. Billings, Professor of Sociology

Lexington, Kentucky

2011

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This thesis is dedicated to the miners in Harlan County, Eastern Kentucky.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Theoretically speaking, coal should be a boon for local economies because it stimulates employment, improves infrastructure, attracts investment and provides “spin-off benefits in everything from more jobs for maintenance workers to an increase in coffee sales at the local diner” (Goodell 2006:31). However, rather than being a blessing for Kentucky, the third largest coal producer in the United States, the mining industry brings everything but wealth. After billions of tons of coal have been extracted over the past thirty years, Kentucky remains one of the poorest states in the United States. Based on data provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission, per capita market income of Kentucky is less than one half of the national average; the unemployment rate is the highest in Appalachia (2002-2011); and the high school and college completion rates fall far behind those of the majority states (1980,1990,2000). As a national resource supplier, Kentucky is “a periphery on the fringe of the dominant, core society” (Walls 1978:2). In addition to economic poverty, coalfield dwellers also suffer from various forms of environmental pollutions caused by unconstrained mining (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2005).

Nevertheless, the coal industry still maintains pervasive influence, and most of the affected populations do not participate in opposition movements, which make “community organizing a particularly daunting task” (Bell 2008:34). The

coal companies' calculated efforts at ideological manipulation can be an explanation for the paradoxical phenomenon that "communities continue to support industry, even though industrial practices have detrimental social and environmental effects" (Bell and York 2010:116). Earlier research also suggests that social capital depletion and the lack of solidarity among miners and their families are principal obstacles for mobilization (Gaventa 1980). Bell (2009) argues that a depletion of social capital among coalfield residents in Central Appalachia may contribute to low levels of collective action against injustice. In her study, Bell examines whether the coal industry is responsible for the low levels of social capital found in the southern coalfields of West Virginia. Her findings suggest that the de-unionization of the region may be partially responsible for the decline in social capital in the Appalachian coalfields. Her data suggests that the "ripping away" of the region's strong union identity, and the conflict that this brought about among residents, has led to a re-socialization of the community, "from a 'we' mentality to an 'I' mentality, thus depleting the store of social capital" (2009:655).

In order to reverse this situation, various tentative approaches have been proposed for social capital reconstruction. Based on the *Photovoice*¹ project enacted in the coal-mining town of Cabin Creek, West Virginia, Bell witnessed the improvement of civic engagement and reinforcement of social cohesion

¹ Photovoice is a method "using participant-produced photography as a means of giving voice to marginalized persons in the community" (Bell 2008:34)

among community members. The participatory method “empowers participants and builds social capital within the group” (2008:38). In her study of variation in social capital, Bell indicates that the union cohort enjoys higher social capital compared with the younger, non-union cohort of residents. At the end of her paper, Bell speculates that the transformation of culture from “the survival of ‘us’ to the survival of ‘me’ exemplifies the difference between union work and nonunion work” (2009:655).

At present, confronted with the enormous damages caused by Mountaintop Removal (MTR), it becomes increasingly important to reunite miners and their families to fight against employment decline and environmental pollution. Therefore, through an in-depth analysis of interviews with aged miners, my research intends to examine how the social capital of the union miners was translated to solidarity on the mining community level, and how the union intentionally generated social capital and strengthened solidarity among miners and other members from mining communities.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Bourdieu reintroduced the Marxist economic term “capital” to sociology and defines it as accumulated labor. Capital includes all kinds of material goods “that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought in a particular social formation” (1977: 178). He makes the distinction among different kinds of capital and refers to *economic capital* as the ownership of monetary rewards; *cultural capital* as the possession of intellectual qualification; and *social capital* as “the aggregate of actual or potential resources” which are linked to a durable network (1986:248). The concept of social capital fills a lacuna in the traditional theoretical framework of capital, which ignores the role of non-market interactions in affecting individual or collective behaviors and shaping social or cultural outcomes (Habtom and Ruys 2007). Putnam makes similar classifications of capital and contends that physical capital is physical objects; human capital is properties of individuals; and social capital is connections among individuals. He argues “just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups” (Putnam 2000:19).

1. Development of Social Capital

Social capital is a latent resource that accrues when a person establishes relationships with people and provides them with services. In response to benefits, receivers feel obligated to offer something of value in return (Silverstein,

Gans, and Yang 2006). As a modern classic in the social science literature, the research on social capital can be dated back to Marx's writings about how capital emerges from social relations and Durkheim's study on social integration (Lin 2001; Schyns and Koop 2010; Turner 2003). Hanifan first used the term to highlight the importance of community involvement in the schooling system (1916). Bourdieu and Coleman are considered pioneers in developing the concept, and Coleman firmly and finally placed the concept into the intellectual agenda (Putnam 2000). After being scrutinized and invigorated by numerous scholars, social capital has risen to a remarkable prominence in social science. The recent publication of *Bowling Alone* by Putnam further broadens and enriches the content of this concept (Woolcock and Narayan 2000).

At present, the notion has been applied to explain a wide range of phenomena. The intensified tragedies in Africa such as political instability and distorted economies is mainly caused by high ethnic fragmentation (Easterly and Levine 1997); the short life expectancy in Russia is closely related with the paucity of inter-personal associations (Kennedy, Kawachi, and Brainward 1998); and the thriving township village enterprises in People's Republic of China are primarily promoted by the cooperative culture (Weitzman and Xu 1994).

2. Definition of Social Capital

Social capital is an elastic term with different definitions in multiple fields and is conceived as both a cause and an effect (Resnick 2001). Although researchers define it in many ways, most of them agree that social capital consists of "socially

embedded resources that actors draw upon through their social ties for instrumental purposes” (Haynes and Hernandez 2008:60). As a notion that is both cultural (cognitive perceptions) and structural (objective networks), social capital is summarized as a collection of resources located in the structure of relationships, which can be mobilized for certain purposes (Lin 1982; Norris and Inglehart 2004; Uphoff 1999). That demonstration is based on the perspective of Coleman, who conceives social capital as the ability to employ social resources (1988; 1990), and the viewpoint of Bourdieu, who frames social capital operationally as accrued actual or virtual resources acquired by individuals or groups through the possession of “more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:119). The explanation is also promoted by Paxton, who conceptualizes social capital as a subjective tie embedded in an objective network (1999). This dual-dimensional definition captures both the cultural and structural elements of social capital. The component of subjective tie is seen as a form of cultural beliefs while the distribution of embedded resources via social relations implies structural networks (Lin 2006).

3. Solidarity and Its Connection with Social Capital

Among many studies of solidarity, few of them connect it with the notion of social capital even though, as Bell (2010) points out that “social capital is a concept that is closely related to solidarity” (Bell 2010). In most cases, solidarity, which reveals the closeness of either the physical network such as frequent

interactions or the cultural tie such as the agreement on certain norms, is only considered one component of social capital. (Colclough and Sitaraman 2005; Flap and Völker 2001).

Solidarity focuses on the degree of trust, sense of familiarity, and bonding relations between individuals and the collectivity (Carpiano 2006). Furthermore, it also demonstrates the cohesiveness of collective identity and the efficacy of collective action. Durkheim describes solidarity as “the totality of bonds that bind us to one another and to society, which shape the mass of individuals into a cohesive aggregate” (1984:331). Chai and Hechter conceptualize solidarity as “the extent to which members comply with their corporate obligations to contribute to the group’s joint goods” (1998:35-36). Collins considers solidarity as an outcome of shared commitments and involvement obligations that resulted from repeated social actions (1990). Through holding communities together, strong solidarity is conducive to the mobilization of collective actions for addressing common issues (Sarason 1974).

In a study of assessing social capital level among medical workers, Hofmeyer and Marck adopt a measurement scheme and include solidarity as one component to explore the willingness of group cooperation (2008). Similarly, when examining the correlation between social capital and psychiatric morbidity in rural communities of Greece, the researchers formulate a massive survey and incorporate solidarity as one variable to test the connections among patients (Tseloni, Zissi, and Skapinakis 2010).

I argue that solidarity is an accumulation of individual factors of social capital, translated into the potential for collective action. Social capital is a term that inherits the essential meaning of social solidarity since Durkheim's study of anomie over a hundred years ago (Lochnera, Kawachia, and Kennedyb 1999). The inter-connectedness of solidarity and social capital is reflected in Babou's study, which employs "social capital" to understand the mechanism of "brotherhood solidarity" within Muslim communities in New York (2002). On the other hand, solidarity, while building upon social capital, brings the concept to a functional level that encourages participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (DeGraaf and Jordan 2003). For instance, an intervention program aiming to reduce women's vulnerability to intimate partner violence and HIV finds that changes in social capital, both through stimulating participation in social networks and through mobilizing mutual trust, is conducive for the enhancement of solidarity (Pronyk, Harpham, Busza, Phetla, Morison, Hargreaves, Kim, Watts, and Porter 2008). Furthermore, in a review of Protestant entrepreneurial network of nineteenth-century, Caglioti concludes that solidarity can increase the cohesiveness of a group of people on the basis of the promotion of "closeness and bonding social capital" (2008:224).

Thus, there is an intimate relationship between these two concepts. Social capital is the basis for the generation of solidarity. Solidarity, which leads to action, is the outcome of high social capital plus collective identity. In other words, social capital is necessary for the creation of solidarity, which can be used

to promote cooperation and facilitate access to aggregate resources (Mladovsky and Mossialos 2008)

4. Components of Social Capital

The “objective network” is an association linking separate individuals to a connected space. The connection includes informal ties with families and workmates; generalized relationships with local people; and relationships through institutions (Stone and Hughes 2002). Or based on Putnam’s categorization, it consists of both *bonding*, which engenders a sense of belonging and usually applies to a limited number of individuals, as well as *bridging*, which refers to a wider outreach and involves a large number of people. Putnam contends *bonding* is an inward-oriented network that “constitutes a kind of sociological superglue” and that *bridging* is an outward-oriented network that functions as “sociological WD-40” (2000:23). Those links are strengthened by the existent solidarity and are conducive for its accumulation (Granovetter 1995). The social network is an important component in social capital since “social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors. It is not lodged either in the actors themselves or in physical implements of production [such as purposive organizations]” (Coleman 1988:98).

The subjective ties are constituted by certain elements including mutual trust and social norms. As “a lubricant that eliminates the need for third-party insurers or enforcers” (Paxton 1999:101), “trust” can promote collaborations even without rewards and penalties (Onyx and Bullen 2000). Drawing on Simmel’s

perspective, Möllering defines trust as “a state of favorable expectation regarding other people’s actions and intentions” (2001:412). Fukuyama considers trust to be a key element of social capital and the basis upon which solidarity is formed and achieved (1999). “Reciprocity” refers to “norms of cooperative behavior whereby people are inclined to support and help each other” (Ahern and Hendryx 2003:1196). It is a defining feature of social capital and also has profound influence for the creation and accumulation of solidarity (Molm 2010). Taylor depicts it as “a combination of short-term altruism and long-term self-interests” where people give benefits to others in return for benefits received (1982:28). Another important social norm is “civic participation” which is “any of several mechanisms intentionally instituted to involve the lay public or their representatives in administrative decision-making” (Beierle and Cayford 2002:6). Putnam contends that civic participation is of great significance for social capital construction. He also claims that the process of working collaboratively with groups of people is favorable for solidarity improvement, especially for people who are affiliated through either geographic proximity or similar interests (2000).

In sum, social capital is “the level of connectedness, involvement, and trustworthiness among people” (Putnam 1995:67). Close social networks, strong mutual trust, and agreements about social norms of reciprocity and civic participation can generate solidarity and contribute to various kinds of social well-being such as effective management (Ohno, Tanaka, Sakagami 2010), low

levels of crime rates (Hipp 2010), mental health (Spalter 2010), and high educational quality (Goksen and Cemalcilar 2010).

Chapter Three

Organization, Union, and the Production of Social Capital

1. Organizations and Social Capital Generation

While many quantitative studies have documented the positive correlation between social capital and a range of economic and cultural outcomes, few emphasize the assessment of whether and how social capital can be intentionally generated. Since social capital can promote solidarity and facilitate “various ends for the members of a group and for the group as a whole” (Paxton 1999:93), it becomes ever more important to decipher mechanisms of social capital creation. Etzioni proposes that a community characterized by “a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals...and a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meaning” (1997:127) is critical for community reinvigoration. Tönnies also argues that a closely connected community *Gemeinschaft* rather than an impersonal society *Gesellschaft* is beneficial for the growth of solidarity (1957). That perspective is aligned with that of Durkheim, who contends tightening and strengthening the public fabric, especially through occupation groups, to promote the vitality of organizations is an effective way to build solidarity (Durkheim 1984). The cognizance of organizations’ significance for social well-being is echoed by modern researchers. Putnam considers social organization as a platform to encourage “coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (1995:67). After a study of ten groups in the towns of Moffat, Routt and Jackson in northwest Colorado, Wagner and Fernandez-Gimenez

conclude that the interactions within certain organizations are critical for the building of social capital and solidarity (2009).

At present, a variety of organizations are active throughout the world and “represent a significant countertrend against declines in social capital and civic engagement” (Walker and McCarthy 2010:315). Several tentative studies have been carried out to evaluate the involvement of assorted kinds of groups, organizations, and institutions for social capital creation. In a study of leisure episodes, researchers find that community gardens, which are collective ventures that entail the formation of social networks, serve as lubricants for creating social capital by bringing together the collective resources of neighbors to address pressing neighborhood issues (Glover, Parry, and Shiness 2005). Based on the narrative analysis of twelve interviews with participants of Families and Schools Together (F&ST), Terrion indicates that the F&ST contributes to the production of social capital. Through cultivating a sense of connectedness as well as facilitating human interactions, F&ST reduces risk factors in vulnerable families (2006). After a study of African American and Latino communities of Multnomah County, Oregon, researchers conclude that the application of a community-based participatory intervention promotes alleviation of health disparities, decreases depressive symptoms, and enhances social support among participants (Michael, Farquhar, Wiggins, and Green 2008).

In addition to “actual” organizations that promote social capital, “virtual” organizations that are based on the internet provide an alternative approach to

generate social capital. Spending a significant amount of time in the virtual world with people of shared interests can facilitate the construction of social networks (Huvila, Holmberg, Ek, and Widén-Wulff 2009), generate emotional support (Procopio and Procopio 2007), cultivate mutual-help initiatives, and motivate active participation (Drentea and Moren-Cross 2005).

2. Labor Union and the United Mine Workers of America

Perhaps more than any other type of organization, labor unions are known for their ability to promote solidarity among their members. The principal goal of labor unions is to mobilize workers for collective action “in support of their interests to redress the power imbalance between those who provide labor and those who control the conditions of its use through their ownership or management of productive resources” (Durrenberger 2007:75). Through organizing different forms of gatherings, the workers are able to discuss with each other individual concerns and common issues at work (Brodkin & Strathmann 2004). Labor unions also initiate rallies or strikes that strive for decent working conditions for the employees (Collins 1974). All those operations are conducive for generating social capital among workers either by building objective networks or by strengthening subjective ties. Moreover, the collective identity engendered via these activities is significant for building solidarity and facilitating collective actions. For this research, I adopt the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as a case study in solidarity and social capital production.

I choose the UMWA because of its long history and extensive record of achievements within the labor movements of the United States. Founded on January 22, 1890, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) is a North American labor union created to organize coal miners for “action and purpose, in demanding and securing by lawful means the just fruits of toil” (Fox 1990:22). Under united leadership, miners actively participated in union activities to fight for shared benefits. According to records, more than 180,000 miners from Colorado, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia joined the eight-week national bituminous coal miners’ strike in 1894 (Illinois 1894); around 15,000 miners took part in the Westmoreland County coal strike in 1910 (McDonough 1997). During the union’s peak around 1940, nearly a half-million miners were covered under the agreements signed by the UMWA with mine operators throughout the nation (Fox 1996).

Through a number of collective actions, the union made evident progress toward successful unionization and the establishment of collective action, which brought considerable economic and social gains to its members. Many unfair policies such as payment of wages in scrip, long ton weights, the company-store, and a monopoly on housing were ultimately abolished. Miners throughout the country “reap the harvest of the seeds sown those cold winter days in Columbus” (Fox 1990:iii). The benefits included retirement pensions, the passage of laws to protect child labor and ensure safe working conditions, and the protection of personal dignity (Garland 1983).

3. Contextualization: the United Mine Workers of America in Harlan County, Kentucky

Harlan County belonged to district nineteen of the UMWA, which included Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee (Fox 1990). It is located in the southeastern corner of Kentucky with an area of 478 square miles and a population of approximately 70,000 in 1940. During World War I, a combination of factors such as the increased demand for coal and labor shortages provided impetus to coalfields unionism. Tillman Cadle, one aged miner recalled that:

When this war broke out, they knew there was going to be a big demand for coal. Then the union officials, they took advantage and come into that area, and began organizing. They knew that the coal companies would not put up a fight because they'd want [to] make quick dollars out of this wartime coal (come from the archive).

In the spring of 1917, some union organizers began the process of recruiting fifteen hundred Harlan miners into three local UMWA chapters (Titler 1972). Union chapters are “a territorial branch of a larger national or international organization chartered to negotiate, enforce, and service contracts on behalf of its members” (Durrenberger 2007:75). As described by Portelli, twenty-five hundred miners were present when the UMWA Organizer William Turnblazer delivered a speech on June 10, 1917. More than half of those present joined the union after the speech and “by July 1918, all the miners in Harlan except Bensham [town] and Lynch [town] were organized” (2011:176). The enthusiasm for the union and the spirit for collective fighting of Harlan Countians in a later era are recorded in

the film, *Harlan County USA*, which won the Oscar in 1976 for best documentary film.

Before the arrival of the union, the company dominated the lives of poor miners in almost every way. The local residents described the severe conditions in various ways. Hugh Cowans indicated that miners worked under all kinds of oppressive conditions and “it was just like slavery” (come from the archive). Julie Cowans asserts that “you didn’t really live, you just existed” (come from the archive). Coal Companies viewed profit as the sole objective and “funded, built, and governed company towns, and maintained control in all aspects of community life” (Burns 2007:3). Jim Garland asserted that “many people hold the view that life in the coal mining camp was the next thing to life in the penitentiary” (Garland and Ardery 1983:50).

By 1925, more than two thirds of the miners in Appalachian coal fields lived in company towns and Harlan County had more than twenty-five coal camps (Shifflett 1991). The towns were under the rule of owners and “the sovereignty of the state and the rule of law stopped at the camp’s gate” (Portelli 2011:118). The superintendent hired many deputy sheriffs, who were appointed by the county sheriff but paid by coal operators to govern the camps. Julie Cowans, a union activist described the coal camp life as follows:

They had guards to let you in and guards to let you out. Like a concentration camp or something. And we grew up under those conditions. You didn’t get in that camp without permission and you didn’t get out of that camp without permission (come from the archive).

Furthermore, the company issued scrip in coalfield communities to exert economic control over miners. Scrip was a private currency that was only acceptable at the stores owned by coal companies. Therefore, miners were forced to purchase goods from the company stores at prices that were twenty-five to forty percent higher than prices at other stores (Jones 1985). Jim Garland described the scrip system:

The coal operators paid their men twice a month, generally every other Saturday, but between paydays they issued scrip against each miner's account. The bookkeeper kept a record of each miner's tonnage in one column and of the amount of scrip drawn in another. Since house rent, the price of coal for the miner's family stove, doctor bills, and the miner's burial fee were charged each month against his tonnage, in addition to the scrip which had been issued and spent by the miner's wife, he often would receive no pay at all (Garland and Ardery 1983:89).

Scott summarizes that in a company town, "the coal operator served not only as the employer, the landlord, and the merchant, but also as the government and the law" (1995:15).

In order to maintain a basic living, Tillman Cadle recalled that people had to work "ten, twelve, fourteen hours a day in the mines" and Hugh Cowans described how sometimes he "[went] in the mines at five o'clock in the morning and came out at 12 o'clock the next day" (come from the archive) to make "two or none dollars" (come from the archive). Costello reveals that "wages in some cases were as low as twenty-eight cents a ton for pickmen underground, and \$2 for ten or more hours a day, for other". Under that situation, the company

weighmen even took off the weight of loaded coal. Costello describes “where the average weight used to be 4,400 pounds on each car, when the miners had check-weighmen, under non-union conditions it was only around 3,400 pounds” (1972:5). The mine owners would work men until they were totally exhausted and pay them as little as possible. Portelli indicates that according to the early stories, “men were not the most precious beings in the mine” before the union came (2011:141).

After the arrival of the union, people were organized to win and improved wages, defend benefits and strive for better working conditions. The union held mass meetings and initiated collective actions to bring miners together. Burns considers the existence of union to be critical for “the lives of miners, their families, and their communities” (2007:31). While documenting the union activity, Portelli cites a local slogan said that “God, Guns, and Guts made the UMWA” (2011:5). The long-time joint efforts that overcame blacklisting, eviction, and hunger have brought about many achievements such as the eight-hour working day, wage increase, and health and retirement benefits (Laslett 1996).

In addition to the UMWA, another labor union, the National Miner’s Union (NMU), also came to Harlan County, Kentucky in 1930s and made contributions to miners’ rights. The NMU persuaded miners to oppose the unfair treatment of the coal companies and strive for higher payment, decent working conditions, and better medical compensations (*Harlan & Bell Kentucky* 1972). The importance of the NMU’s function was even more evident when the UMWA endured

membership decline. The uniqueness of the NMU, such as its communist feature, make the examination of both the UMWA and the NMU more complicated. Therefore, this research only focuses on the analysis of the UMWA and its role in producing social capital among miners as well as other members from the mining communities in Harlan County, Kentucky.

4. Research Questions

Building on the social capital and solidarity literatures, as well as the contextualized information of labor unions, I use the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as a case to examine the following two questions:

- What is the mechanism by which social capital felt among union miners was translated to solidarity among mining communities?
- How did the union intentionally contribute to the production of social capital and the strengthening of solidarity among union miners and within working class coalfield communities?

Chapter Four

Method

1. Data Description

The major data set for this research is a portion of oral histories conducted by Alessandro Portelli with people from Harlan County who were young adults during the period of the UMWA membership in the 1940s. In addition, I also referred to other files about the UMWA in Harlan County in the 1940s, such as Jim Garland's narrations about mountain life (Garland and Ardery 1983) and the documentation of prevalent union songs (*Music of Coal* 2007).

In order to explore the fascinating culture of Harlan County and the inside lives of miners who worked there, Portelli carried out more than one hundred and fifty oral history interviews between 1983 and 2009. The interviews provided him with unprecedented access to original sources that reflected various facets of the local environment. His major strategy for selecting interviewees was "word of mouth" or snowball sampling. He started his interviews with familiar people, such as academic scholars of the Appalachian Studies Center of University of Kentucky, consultants of the Highlander Research and Education Center, and employers of Crank's Creek Survival Center. Then, based on recommendations from his initial interviewees, Portelli made contacts with others. Consequently, people with diverse occupational backgrounds such as journalists, musicians, veterans, and preachers told stories of Harlan County, which finally composed the book of *They Say in Harlan County* (2011). Most of Portelli's interviews are

archived at the University of Rome, and seventy-three interviews are housed at the University of Kentucky.

I selected sixteen of Portelli's interviews for my analysis based on three criteria. First, all the interviewees must have been either union miners or connected with the UMWA through local networks. Secondly, the audio recordings of the interviews must have been archived in Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at University of Kentucky. Thirdly, I only selected those interviews for which there were interview transcripts.

Most of the selected interviewees were born at the beginning of the twentieth century and the interviews were conducted in 1990s, at a time period when some interviewees were in their seventies. Thirteen of the interviewees were males who worked as miners, union organizers, or union activists. Three female interviewees either worked in the coal mines or had a family member who did. During the interviews, they told about the beginning of mining industry in Eastern Kentucky, the development of the UMWA both regionally and nationally, and the evident changes brought by the union. Most of the stories that were told about the union took place in the 1930 and 1940s. Many consider this time period a "golden age" for the UMWA, as a solid groundwork of solidarity and power had been laid during the struggles of the preceding decades. Detailed information about the sixteen interviewees is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Interviews with Miners and Their Families

Name	Date of Birth	Gender	Occupation	Interview Date
Below, James	1916	Male	Coal Miner, Union Organizer	Aug.28, 1991
Burke, Parris	1919	Male	Coal Miner	Aug.25, 1991
Cadle, Tillman	1902	Male	Coal Miner, Union Organizer	Nov.20, 1989
Campagnari, Ben	1917	Male	Union Miner	Oct.28, 1988
Cowans, Hugh	1920	Male	Coal Miner, Union Organizer	Sep.28, 1983
Cowans, Julie	1925	Female	NA*	Sep.28, 1983
Crusenberry, Sudie	1934	Female	Coal Miner, Union Activist	Nov.23, 1989
Davidson, Bobbie	1939	Female	Union Miner	Nov.2, 1990
Deaton, Junior	1927	Male	Coal Miner, Union Organizer	Aug.15, 1991
Donald	1928	Male	NA	Aug.25, 1991
Ellis, Ray	1911	Male	Union Miner	Sep.9, 1993
Johnson, Mossie	1918	Male	NA	Oct.11, 1993
King, Otis	NA	Male	Union Miner	Dec.23, 1989
Messer, Mickey	NA	Male	Union Miner	Nov.3, 1988

Table 4.1, (Cont.)

Tipton, Jeff	NA	Male	Coal Miner, Union Organizer	Oct.24, 1988
Whitfield, Bryan	1901	Male	Coal Operator	Nov.1, 1990

*NA means that specific information was not indicated during the interviews.

Source: Alessandro Portelli (2011)

2. Data Analysis

Qualitative narrative analysis provides findings that are based on themes, patterns, and relationships, and results in studies that are context specific (Budd, Thorp, and Donohew 1967). It is one of numerous research methods used to analyze textual data (Lindkvist 1981). Researchers regard narrative analysis as a flexible method of data analysis and Downe-Wamboldt contends that the goal of this method is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (1992:314). Given the features of social capital that can be seen to take many forms, Coleman asserts, “its current value lies primarily in its usefulness for qualitative analysis” (1990:304). I adopted this method to analyze the transcripts of sixteen interviews with union miners, non-union miners, and their families. Directed coding and summative coding are two primary strategies employed to analyze the narratives and summarize patterns.

With directed approach, the analysis begins with prior research or existing theory as guidance for clarifying key coding variables (Mayring 2000). Since

social capital is mainly constituted by objective networks and subjective ties, my initial coding scheme includes social networks, mutual trust, norms of reciprocity, and civic engagement. In addition, I created an additional category of “solidarity” to code the text that represents collective identity and collective action.

The summative approach starts with identifying and quantifying certain words that can reflect the research subject. For this research, the occurrence of specific keywords that could indicate high social capital and strong solidarity, such as “*brotherhood*” and “*union man*” were separated and calculated. Since this approach goes beyond mere word counting and includes the explanation of the context, I also examined the words to reveal their underlying meaning such as *close networks*, *shared obligation*, and *dedicated commitment* (Babbie 1992).

Interpretive analysis is an iterative process of decontextualization and recontextualization (Ayres, Kavanaugh, and Knafel 2003; Morse and Field 1995). Beginning with the largely undifferentiated mass of information found in the interview transcripts, the data were sorted and organized after comparison, contrast, and labeling. According to the predetermined codes, I first read through the transcripts. Then all text that on first impression could serve as indicators of social capital and solidarity were highlighted and coded. The recording units classified in the same category were presumed to have similar connotations. In addition, the changes brought by the union were documented separately to represent how the union mobilized miners’ devotion to the collective enterprise.

Furthermore, interviewees' concern about the diminishing union influence as well as the massive unemployment and outmigration were sorted to display the seriousness of the current situation. A detailed coding scheme is provided as follows.

3. Coding Scheme

Table 4.2 Coding Scheme

Social Capital and Solidarity	
Social Network (SN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Familiar colleagues mentioned and close personal-relationship described during the interview. ➤ Various forms of organizations initiated by the union that connect miners together to cultivate friendship and membership.
Mutual Trust (MT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stories and labels that display reliability and confidence in union cohorts. ➤ Comments that suggest constant trustworthiness and support to the union when confronted with setbacks and difficulties.
Norms of Reciprocity (NR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stories of receiving assistance from union miners when confronted with difficulties. ➤ Stories of giving assistance to others who need support and encouragement.

Table 4.2, (Cont.)

Civic Participation (CP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attitudes towards union activities. ➤ Union's role to encourage and promote active engagement.
Solidarity (S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Comments that indicate miners' sense of belonging, class identity, and attitude towards "scabs" (strike breakers). ➤ Comments that reflect miners' voluntary dedication to collective action and union's enterprises.
Certain Terms	Brother (hood); Union Man; Union People; My Boy; We; Us; Our; Together; Strike; March.
Comparison Between the Life with and without the Union	
Unfair Company Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Long Working Hours and Low Payment. ➤ Dangerous Working Conditions and Irresponsible Compensation Policy. ➤ Child Labor Abuse. ➤ Scrip Policy adopted by the Company Store. ➤ Coercion Policy employed to govern the Coal Camp.

Table 4.2, (Cont.)

Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Eight-hour Working Policy and Wage Increase. ➤ Safer Working Conditions and Better Hospitalization Conditions. ➤ Passage of Labor Protection Laws. ➤ Retirement Benefits and Pension Policy.
Current Situation	
Diminishing Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The description of the diminishing influence of the UMWA in terms of declining membership and lost public support.
Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The description of the severe situation of job losses.
Depopulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The description of the massive out-migration due to the increasingly destitute community.

Chapter Five

Findings

1 Social Capital and Strong Solidarity

1) Spirit of Mutual Trust and Reciprocity

The first indicator of union miners' cohesion was the spirit of mutual trust and reciprocity. Number of interviewees provided examples of reciprocity. For instance, James Below said he "prayed a million times" for his partner George Hobbs, with whom he worked for many years, when he was leaving the current mine to work elsewhere. In order to avoid being assassinated while holding open meetings, William B. Jones, a senior member of the UMWA and also a staunch organizer, told Tillman Cadle, "you watch my back, I can watch out front". Tillman Cadle described his experience of defending one African American's dignity when the superintendent refused to talk to him. As one of the union representatives, Tillman Cadle argued "as long as they won't talk to Tom Long [the African American miner] there, I don't want to talk to them." The UMWA also formulated a no-discrimination clause in the obligation stated that "I will never discriminate against a fellow worker on account of creed, color, or nationality" (Garland and Ardery 1983:114). At that time, both Tillman Cadle's actions and the union clause were unusual in the South, where people did not express opposition to racial discrimination. That clause not only asserted equality within the union but also contributed to the solidarity building among

union members, which was unprecedented for such a racially hostile environment at that time.

The sense of reliability lasted until recently with some retired miners expressing an understanding of and a confidence in the UMWA President Richard L. Trumka. Trumka became the president of the UMWA in 1982, which was a period when the union was enduring diminishing influence and dwindling membership. He spent his term restoring members' belief in the union and negotiated a new contract with the coal companies. Hugh Cowans contended that President Trumka had done a tremendous job and had struggled to do the best he could. Cowans said his "heart goes out to Trumka" and was ready to do anything if he needed. He also offered his understanding of reciprocity as:

All unions hook up together. If you [are] in trouble, then I am in trouble. And we all give out support one to another.

Jeff Tipton, a union organizer who worked in the mines for fourteen and a half years, depicted the norms of reciprocity as an image of people who try their best to help each other and "work hand in hand" while confronted with setbacks and difficulties. Additionally, this unique spirit was not merely limited to union miners but extended to the other members in mining communities such as their colleagues, families, and neighbors.

2) Enthusiasm and Dedication to Union Activities

Another expression of the collective identity among union miners was their enthusiasm and dedication to union activities. They took the participation in strikes or marches as a great honor and considered those experiences as valuable memories in their lives. The impetus for being organized was demonstrated in a union song:

United we stand, divided we fall
For every dime they give us a battle must be fought
So working people use your power, the key to liberty
Don't support that rich man's style of luxury
And there ain't no way they'll ever keep us down.

Sudie Crusenberry, who claimed to have inherited this union spirit from her father, said she enjoyed strikes and “feel like it is justice.” While talking about a strike in support for African American miners, Tillman Cadle described how the organizers went to seven local mines and successfully mobilized all the miners. That strike occurred in 1940s with more than one thousand miners participating (Fox 1990). Some of the participants were not union members or even miners, but they joined the strike to express their support of the collective activities. This was one evident incidence that illustrates that the wider working-class community increasingly displayed strong solidarity with the union, whether or not they themselves worked in the mines.

Additionally, many of the interviewees told about events surrounding the Battle of Evarts in 1931 in Harlan County when over 2,000 miners and community members attended a rally held by the UMWA to fight against wage cuts. Tillman Cadle said he knew a number of miners who were jailed after the

battle, and Ray Ellis, who belonged to the union, recalled much of the county “to be a solid union” during that strike. The attitudes towards union actions gradually formed a local culture best described by James Below who said, “Harlan County People fought for what they got”. Jeff Tipton also said, “union means a lot more” to local people and “when you took the obligation, it meant something to you. That’s because people had to fight for everything.” Warwick and Littlejohn view such essential cultural beliefs as a kind of capital which consolidates collectivity and “is transmitted and sometimes modified from generation to generation” (1992:85).

3) Intimate Networks

The third indicator of union miners’ cohesion was their close connections with one another. Most of the interviewees described experiencing an intimate network with coworkers either through casually mentioning a number of names or recalling stories that happened several decades ago. For example, when talking about Italian immigrants, Ben Campagnari said “we had Vincent Bellati, Joe Bellati, and Mike Miller, [who were] the strongest union men.” Hugh Cowans, who started working in the mine at thirteen-years old, could remember almost all the early UMWA organizers in Kentucky, stating, “I can recall George Tinder, Turnblazer, and Ralph Bunts and Virg Hampton, Martin Herd, Napoleon Hayes, Wash Hall.” Hugh Cowans said he was a one hundred percent United Mine Worker and was called “Martin Luther King of the coal fields” by his

fellow miners. The clear memory of former colleagues suggested that they were strongly linked together, either as miners or union participants.

Furthermore, based on the widespread local networks of families, relatives, and friends, those relations were gradually transferred to other people who might not belong to the union or were not even employed. Jeff Tipton summarized these extensive union linkages:

We think here everybody got some UMWA ties, grandma, granddad, brother, sister, or something. It goes all the way back to the early nineteen hundreds.

Bulmer (1978) indicates that the overlapping ties of work, leisure, and neighborhood were conducive for the development of a special bond of solidarity that was reflected in the union. Furthermore, the interconnectedness of the various facets of mining life formed close-knit communities, which highly strengthened the solidarity among the residents, both miners and their families (1978).

4) Collective Terms

The collective terms used by the interviewees such as “*brother*”, “*brotherhood*” or “*my boy*” signified the solidarity among union miners and their families. Tillman Cadle said “in the union we always addressed each other as *brothers*.” Jeff Tipton recalled that the command to “never treat your ‘brother’ wrongly” was in the union oath and that “a lot of people done that.” Mickey Messer considered there to be a sense of *brotherhood* in the union which improved miners’ collective strength.

Moreover, when mentioning union activities, Sudie Crusenberry said that “*we* had protested [at] the courthouse steps”. When documenting the achievements obtained by long-term union efforts, Tillman Cadle’s expressed that “*we* had a child labor law” and “*we* had an eight hour law” to index a sense of joint accomplishment. Hugh Cowans said “God has blessed me and brought *us* this far”. Jeff Tipton described the union educational program by saying that “one thing President Trumka is trying to do is to educate *our* people”. For most of the time, activity participants and policy beneficiaries included of people beyond the union. Therefore, the frequent use of certain words such as *we*, *us*, and *our* suggested collective identity among community members and the transfer of *brotherhood* from union miners to their families, neighbors, and friends.

In sum, union miners and segments of the wider community demonstrated high social capital and strong solidarity in various ways. Those aspects included, but were not limited to, spirit of mutual trust and reciprocity, enthusiasm and dedication to union activities, intimate networks, and the frequent use of collective terms. James Below reported that people prayed everywhere for the union when confronting suppression by the company and the government. The motto, “kept body and soul together,” stated by Julie Cowans reflected the essential significance of the close physical connections and strong mutual-dependency among union-identified coalfield residents.

2 Union’s Strategies for Social Capital Production

1) Holding Regular Meetings

In his analysis of the function of ritual gatherings to renew solidarity, Durkheim concludes that “people’s commitment to shared values requires periodic revitalization” (Crow 2002:20). For example, some political parties and institutions have anniversary conferences to provide members with the opportunity to revivify common goals and values. Similarly, in order to strengthen social relationships and construct collective identity, the union also held regular meetings during which miners could get information about the union’s development and achievements. They discussed issues concerning member benefits such as medical insurance and pension policies in those gatherings. The interviewees had fond memories of these reunion events. Tillman Cadle recalled a “mass meetings in Pineville” and Hugh Cowans narrated the rallies held in Verda after the early union organizers came to Kentucky. Based on a description by Taylor, the Pineville meeting was held on March 1, 1931 with many leaders present, including veteran organizer Lawrence Peggy Dwyer. The union leaders outlined the need for organization and for mobilizing workers to support unionized efforts. The Verda meeting was held in 1937 and presided over by local President William Turnblazer, who delivered the feature speech to about 4,000 miners (1990).

Those meetings provided sparks to the UMWA officials to initiate a new drives for organizing Harlan County by establishing local unions and recruiting new members. Taylor reports that more than six hundred miners joined the union after the Verda rally (1990). Hevener also documents the effects of weekly

meetings held in the summer of 1937, when more than sixty-five percent of the county's miners had joined the union before August. In addition to massive rallies, a number of clandestine meetings were also held throughout the coalfields (1978). Tillman Cadle indicated that "when they started organizing, they'd have these big mass meetings on Saturdays. They'd have little meetings back at the mines where they worked". According to Bauman, those meetings were significant in cultivating the sense of togetherness by "unloading of the burden of individuality" (1995:47) when people assembled together to address common issues.

Bourdieu considers these types of durable networks as institutionalized relationships that can provide members with collective assistance (1986). Moreover, networks that are strengthened by the existing solidarity often clearly delineate structures, roles, and rules, which can promote cooperation and further reinforce collective identity (Caglioti 2008). Through holding meetings, an intimate connection among miners was gradually constructed, which provided a solid basis for the cultivation of collective consciousness.

2) Organizing Collective Actions

The second approach employed by the union to produce social capital was to organize collective actions, such as strikes, marches and protests. The local union initiated many weekend marches to solicit members. On March 15, 1930, a march of twenty-seven hundred miners brought in three hundred new union members. In early April, 1930 a twenty-five hundred person march recruited another five

hundred members (Hevener 1978:36). Based on Hevener's depiction, local organizer William Turnblazer encouraged the miners to "fight and fight and fight against this terrible degradation that is being heaped upon you and your families" (1978:34). Some union songs also mobilized the miners to join the strike such as the one composed Aunt Molly Jackson:

Strike for Union conditions, boys, that's seventy cents a ton.

Get together like big brothers, boys, till a victory you have won.

And another one composed by John Edward Sturgill said:

Now come on, boys, you can give me your hand.

You can join the UMWA if you want to be a man.

Through those collective activities, miners were brought together to protest mining companies' exploitation and strive for the benefits of union membership. Those strikes also helped miners to realize that they had to stick together or they would never win anything.

Based on the summative coding strategy, the words *strike*, *march*, and *protest* were mentioned frequently by the interviewees to demonstrate their confidence and expectation for being involved in such activities. Hugh Cowans considered it important "to be organized because there is strength in unity" and Jeff Tipton stated that "we should work hand in hand with different groups [and with] everybody working together you can get a lot accomplished". The union provided ample support for the strikers by distributing enough "food, meat,

flour, sugar, potatoes, coffee, and canned goods” to keep them going in hard times (Henever 1978:166).

Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti contend that involvement in collective activities is a critical feature of social capital (2003). Durkheim considers strong social solidarity to be a product of the “shared existence of actions and reactions called into play between the consciousness of individuals” (1982:56). Successful fighting not only brought material advantages but also psychosocial influences because “common memories of past struggles have undoubtedly helped to bind a community” (Dennis, Henriques, and Slaughter 1969:14). Based on Scott’s description, one union miner considered those strikes as a victory for local residents and he raised his children on tales of miner heroism and union benevolence (1995). Therefore, the union contributed to the production of social capital by physically bonding miners together and cultivating a collective conscience among other people from mining communities.

3) Promoting Collective Identity

Additionally, union efforts contributed to social capital creation by delineating class identity and promoting collective identity (Crow 2002). It fostered an “us” versus “them” sentiment with regard to “union miners” verses officials, deputies, and “scabs”. “Scabs” were miners who choose to work despite strike action or against the will of other employees. Miners used the terms “*union men*” or “*united mine workers*” to distinguish themselves from the “*company men*”. Miners usually viewed deputy sheriffs as criminals, tools of the operators, cold-blooded

killers, and gun thugs, and union members considered them enemies. Julie Cowans regarded herself as a “one hundred percent union man²” and Otis King also said that he would not work with scabs and “a man worth to me had to be a union man.” Those terms illustrated miners’ devotion to union activities and showed their respect to those who contributed a lot in organizing. The evident oppositions between different classes were revealed in the union song:

They say in Harlan County, there are not neutrals there.
You will either be a union man, or a thug for J. H. Blair³.
Oh workers can you stand it? Oh tell me how you can!
Will you be a lousy scab, or will you be a man?
Don’t scab for the bosses. Don’t listen to their lies.
Poor folks ain’t got a chance. Unless they organize.
Which side are you on? Which side are you on?

Furthermore, union miners displayed contempt or abomination for the scabs. Mickey Messer, who stated he believed in the union as much as he trusted God, despised scabs by refusing to talk to or associate with them. When explaining the famous phrase of “which side are you on,” Otis King, who had a strong sense of belonging to the union, considered scabs and union men as two opposed classes in a mining community. The antipathy against scabs often appeared in the lines of union songs. Jim Garland said sometimes “rather than walking up to a gun thug and saying ‘you are a bastard,’ which might have resulted in a shooting, we could express our anger much more easily in unison with song lyrics” (Garland

² Julie Cowans identified herself “union man” despite being a woman.

³ J. H. Blair was the infamous sheriff of Harlan County who organized the anti-union violence to challenge union activities.

and Ardery 1983:161). Becky Ruth Brae sang a part of one Sudie's song during the interview with Sudie Crusenberry:

Even a devil can't stand the smell
of a cooking scab on a griddle in hell.
So go on back to your master on earth
and tell that they don't even want a scab in hell.

Because of the union's efforts discussed above that facilitated the production of social capital, miners demonstrated strong adherence to the union and selfless sacrifice for the collective enterprise. Tillman Cadle said "I have been fighting for the working class of people all my adult life" and Julie Cowans stated that "we have fought for the United Mine Workers. That is our life". Sudie Crusenberry even stated that her strong belief in the union was similar to her faith in the Bible and Church. That spirit was also reflected in a song composed by Jack Orville:

Don't forget me little darling, when they lay me down to rest.
Tell my brothers all the loving words I say, let the flowers be forgotten.
Sprinkle coal dust on my grave, in remembrance of the UMWA.

Those commitments steadily became the solid basis for the growth of social capital and solidarity among massive number of union miners and other community members (Tilly and Tilly 1998).

4) Securing Benefits

As Hevener states, the Harlan miners' struggle for unionization is "an attempt to remedy unsatisfactory working conditions" (1978:14). There was a strong impetus among miners to escape the control by coal barons. Through securing benefits, the union obtained miners' loyalty through the norm of reciprocity. On

one side, miners enjoyed benefits brought by the union and supported the union more firmly and dedicatedly. On the other side, the union mobilized miners' participation and strengthened collective identity. Ultimately, that mutually beneficial relationship contributed to the initiation of collective action as well as the production of both social capital and solidarity. Around 1930, the coalfields were often portrayed as a place full of "ramshackle housing, malnourished children, a devastated environment, crippled and short-breathed workers" (Fox 1996:545). Local miners decided that "they might just as well die fighting as die of starvation" (Hevener 1978:11). Ultimately, they chose to organize to resist the deterioration of working conditions and rectify the grievances. The UMWA accepted that reality as challenges and dedicated itself to making every improvement within its power.

As for the union's stated objectives, Jeff Tipton summarized that "we are in here trying to bring people's standard of living up; we are in here trying to help people from being threatened; and we are fighting for them every day." Therefore, the intention to escape from a powerless life dominated by the coal companies promoted the miners to support unionized efforts. Hugh Cowans said "I see some good in there" and Parris Burke, who worked forty-two and a half years in the mine, indicated that getting something better and helpful was a primary impetus for him to join the union. Similar feelings were also revealed in the interview with Mickey Messer, who asserted "the union's been good to me

and my family” and Ray Ellis who stated there was a hope for living improvement while adhering to the union.

The major change brought by the union was the establishment of a contract system within which miners’ economic security was protected under the banner of unionism. Hugh Cowans reported that when the union came in, “another contract was made and we got a raise”. Mickey Messer recalled that the union strike forced the companies to increase wages and even provide vacations. Based on Garland’s report, a concession gained by the UMWA was the introduction of portal-to-portal pay mechanism:

The union wrote a clause in the contract stating that a miner was to be paid a minimum amount of money for each day that he showed up at work, even if the mines were not running because of something beyond the miner’s control. Before this, anyone who was not a day man would not be paid anything except for the tonnage he loaded, regardless of how many hours he might have spent in the mine working (Garland and Ardery 1983:108).

Additionally, miners did not have to suffer from working overtime because of the passage of Eight Hour Working Law. According to a study of Fishback, the shift from completely nonunion to fully union would increase the miner’s hourly earnings by 10% in 1920s (1992).

Another obvious improvement that motivated miners’ commitment to the union was improved medical conditions. Mining was an extremely dangerous industry at the beginning of the twentieth century. Each year there would be 3 to 4 deaths, 5 to 6 permanently disabled, and 150 to 200 badly injured within every thousand miners who worked a full year (Fishback 1996). Therefore, a

responsible hospitalization system was beneficial to miners. Initiated in 1890, the UMWA proclaimed to introduce “any and all well defined and established appliance for the preservation of life, health and limbs of all mine employees” (Derickson 1996:224). During a time without welfare or employment compensation system, the local union was in charge of taking care of sick or injured miners. Recorded by Hevener, the malnutrition-induced diseases in the 1930s had taken away more than two hundred children’s lives (1978). Companies paid limited attention to these injuries because once the miner “was able to work again, he might just move to another mine” (Garland and Ardery 1983:128). Furthermore, workers were easy to come by.

Before the union’s arrival, Harlan County only had “two [medical] facilities [that] provided ninety-four beds to serve sixty-four thousand people” (Hevener 1978:19). The union started ten hospitals in Appalachia in 1956 including one in Harlan County (Krajnovic 1997). Those hospitals were staffed with the nation’s best respiratory disease specialists to treat miners’ ailments and helped to bring “quality medical care to a historically underserved area” (Portelli 2011:268). Throughout the twentieth century, the UMWA did more than any other institution to treat the plague of occupational injuries among miners.

Bobbie Davison described the excellent conditions of the Memorial Hospital in which people did “what you needed to medically for the patients”. Junior Deaton recalled the hospital card issued by the UMWA which “paid for everything, no exception”. Ray Ellis explained the free medical treatment and the

high responsibilities of the union hospital that “even sent [patients] to John Hopkins or Mayo Clinic” if they were unable to perform a surgery beyond their ability. Jeff Tipton said “there would not be a hospital in Appalachia if it had not been for the United Mine Workers building it.” Similarly, Junior Deaton asserted that “We would never have decent hospital in the country if it hadn’t been for the UMWA.” Such shared feeling of gratitude to the union was critical to bond miners together and fight for the common goals. Mickey Messer summarized the contributions of union to his life as follows:

I worked in the union mines and we lived good, and if it hadn’t been for the union, we wouldn’t have lived good, you know. We had plenty of food to eat, and we had the essentials of life: automobiles, cars, you know, stuff like that. Of course, when we...when we didn’t have the union, we didn’t have money to buy those things with. You just made enough money to kind of eat on, buy a few clothes that was it.

5) Selecting Charismatic Leaders

In addition to holding regular meetings, organizing collective actions, promoting collective identity, and securing miners’ benefits, a charismatic leadership that contributed to bind individuals together and strengthen group solidarity. Leaders can stimulate the growth of social capital and solidarity within and across organizations in various ways. A leader’s behavior is closely related to the collaborative group relationship, which can engender the vigor of individual members (Carmeli, Ben-Hador, Waldman, and Rupp 2009).

Within the coalfields, union leaders emphasized eliminating coal operators’ paternalistic control and promoting liberty among miners. During the interviews,

the name of *John L. Lewis* was mentioned many times by the miners. As the President of the UMWA from 1919 until his retirement in 1960, Lewis won significant gains for union members, such as wage increases and the establishment of union shops that sold goods at cheaper prices than company stores (Dubofsky and Tine 1977). He devoted himself to understand miners' aspirations and helped the union to impact the entire U.S. labor movement. Ultimately, Lewis earned respect and admiration from both supporters and opponents. Singer comments that Lewis was "a man with few friends but numerous subordinates, admirers, and enemies" (1996:105).

In the strike that occurred on April 1, 1946, Lewis proposed "a royalty for every ton of coal extracted to finance miners' health and retirement plan" (Portelli 2011:256). Even though he was heavily fined three years later for violating a back-to-work injunction, the new contracts increased royalties and brought benefits to all the miners. As a larger-than-life symbol of the American working class and industrial unionism, Lewis claimed to understand the miners' will because he was one of them. Hugh Cowans expressed his gratitude for Lewis, stating, "Lord bless us and sent the man along in '37, '38"; Donald described Lewis as the miners' savior who "brought them out of darkness". Mossie Johnson praised Lewis that "he is one of my real protégés. I love that man, because he helped us so much." Mickey Messer argued that Lewis "was probably one of the greatest union organizers and leaders of all time." One

anonymous interviewee even stated that “we baptize you in the name of the father, the son, and John L. Lewis.”

Lewis even earned respect from the coal operators, with whom he always fought with for the benefits of union miners. Bryan Whitfield commented that “John L. Lewis, he had a tough reputation. A big man. One of the most gracious men I ever saw in my life. He was the most powerful man in the United States.” In that turbulent period, for many miners and the general public, Lewis *was* the UMWA. Praise for Lewis also appeared in the lines of union songs:

Then along came a man, brave as any lion.
He called us together and asked to join.
Long as we may live we will love ‘*Daddy John*’.
For the many good things that he has done (Portelli 2011:226).

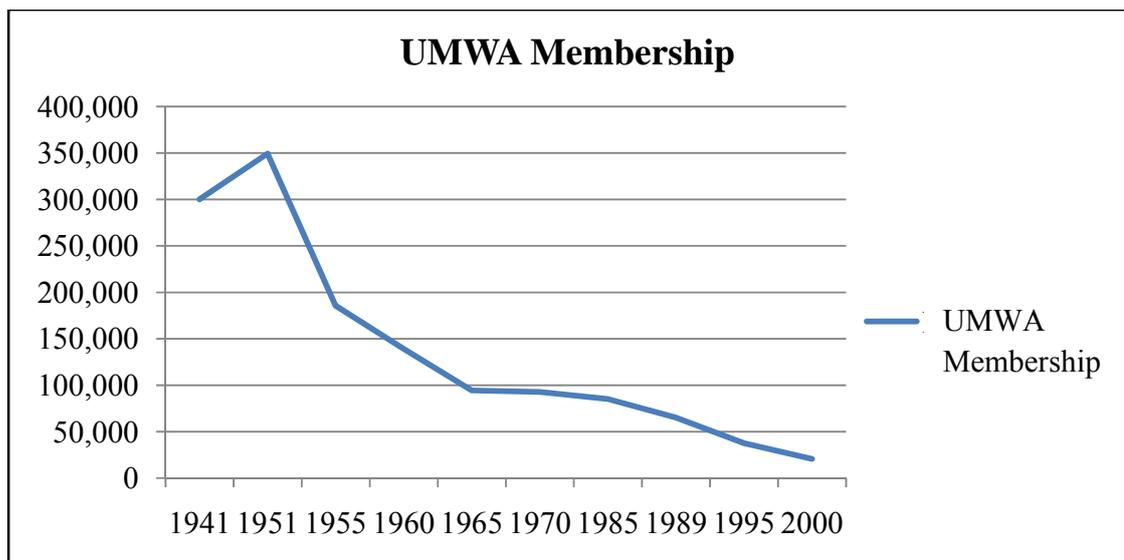
Portelli summarizes that “the larger-than-life image of John L. Lewis...meshed with the miners’ own culture, their religion, and their company-town experience to shape a projective identification with the leader” (2011:227). Such shared feeling facilitated the transmission or replacement from the paternalism of the coal camps to the paternalism of the union. That attitude was further reinforced when the union brought benefits and many covers of UMWA publications displayed images of poor miners receiving checks from Lewis as well as images of Lewis signing relief documents. Consequently, Lewis’ leadership glued miners together and contributed to the construction social capital (Kozlowski and Ilgen 2006).

Chapter Six

Discussion

In terms of figures, union membership declined by 79 percent within the mining industry between 1953 and 1997 (Hirsch and Macpherson 1998). As indicated in Figure 6.1, mechanization, job losses, and the pressure of money and time caused the UMWA to lose 240,000 members in the last sixty years. Union miners represent only 42 percent of all employed miners during the early 2000s (Burns 2007). The loss of miners is the principal factor that makes it difficult for the union to maintain its position in coalfields. Ultimately, a historically important generator of social capital has virtually vanished and in Appalachia like elsewhere, “the solidarity of union halls is now mostly a fading memory of aging men” (Putnam 2000:81).

Figure 6.1 National UMWA Membership 1941-2000



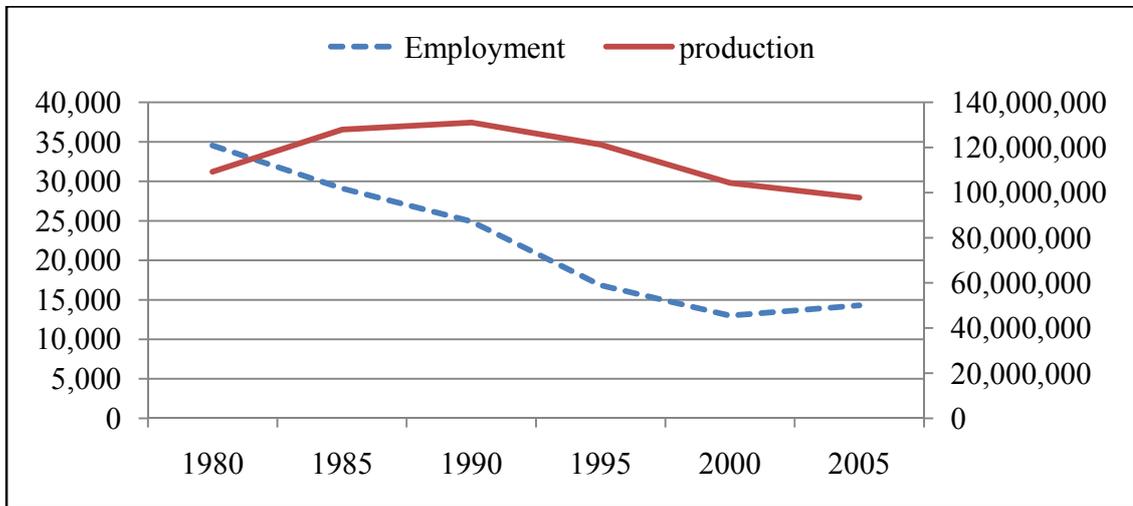
Source: Burns (2007)

In recent years, the UMWA has experienced a full-on attack by union-hostile multinational corporations, such as Massey Energy. Consequently, the union has gradually lost influence in the mining communities and has been less and less successful organizing miners for collective bargaining (Burns 2007). The challenges by powerful corporations make it difficult to mobilize workers to defend past gains and fight for current goals. Some multinational coal companies, like Massey Energy, adopt “union-busting” strategies such as black-balling union miners from employment opportunities. The companies force the miners to choose between standing in solidarity with their union to the detriment to their families’ well-being, or agreeing to work in a non-union mine so that they can provide for their families (Bell 2009). Meanwhile, the increasing prevalence of Mountaintop Removal (MTR) has resulted in severe employment and environmental problems.

The diminishing of the union has caused the miners to lose a once powerful weapon to fight against the coal operators. During the interviews (conducted in 1990s), Donald recognized that the union was on the decline, and Jeff Tipton reflected that the local people currently “did not have the union at heart.” As described by Portelli, a historian and his labor history class found that “most of the young miners [of today], who came from UMWA families, were not interested in the union” (2011:351). The coal companies engaged in union-busting to facilitate their exploitation of the labor force and to maintain the ideology manipulation upon the mining communities (Burns 2007).

The application of continuous mining machines, longwall mining machines, and MTR mining have increased mining productivity dramatically in Eastern Kentucky, from 1.71 tons/miner/hour in 1977 to 2.78 tons/miner/hour in 2006 (Kentucky Office of Energy Policy, Division of Fossil Fuels Utility Services, Kentucky Coal Association 2008). According to a study in West Virginia, Bell and York state that “the same amount of coal could be extracted in the twenty-first century by employing only one sixth the workers required in the mid-twentieth century” (2010:122). As a result, efficient machines make the vast workforce of coal miners no longer necessary. Nationally, the coal industry has lost 108,000 employees since 1950 (Bockosh, Fotta, and Mckewan 2002). Regionally, based on the following figure, annual coal production in Eastern Kentucky has remained stable at around 120,000 tons in the past thirty years, while employment has declined substantially from 34,521 in 1980 to 14,290 workers in 2005 (Energy Information Administration, Office of Coal, Nuclear, Electric, and Alternate Fuels 2005).

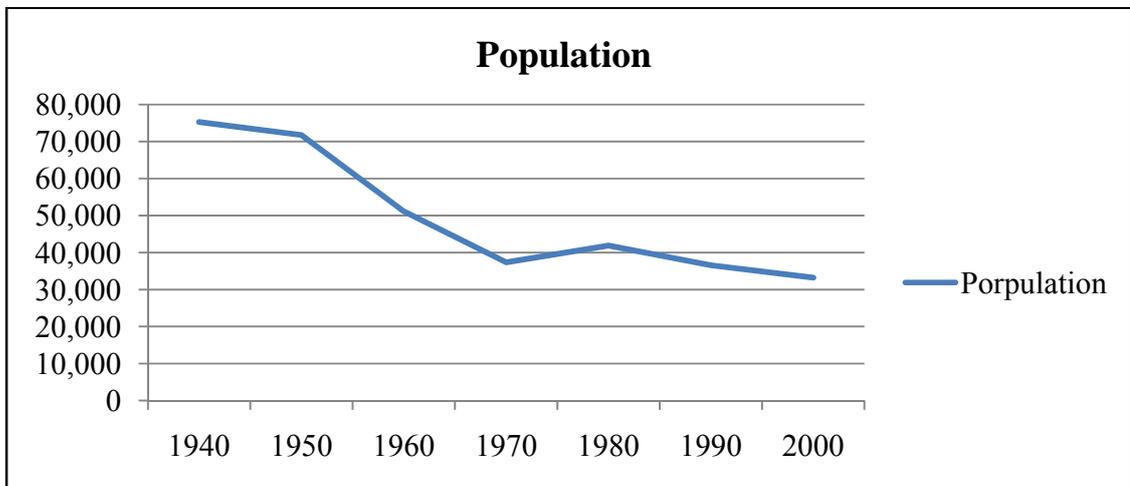
Figure 6.2 Mining Employment and Coal Production of Eastern Kentucky 1980-2005



Source: Energy Information Administration, Office of Coal, Nuclear, Electric, and Alternate Fuels (2005)

While recalling his hometown, Ellis stated, “this county had seventy some thousand [miners] in the forties and now it’s down to about thirty-five hundred.” As Burns indicates, “coal production continues to climb even as employment dwindles, leaving the paradoxical situation of a jobless coal boom in Eastern Kentucky” (2007:98). Because of massive job losses, many Harlan people were forced to leave and seek working opportunities in other places. Consequently, figure 6.3 shows that Harlan population shrank from 75,275 in 1940 to 33,202 in 2000 (Census of Population 1940 and 2000).

Figure 6.3 Harlan Population 1940-2000



Source: Harlan County, Kentucky (Formed 1819).

Moreover, the development of technology in coal extraction and processing enables people to “adjust natural systems to meet social needs, rather than adjusting social systems to meet naturally occurring ecosystem realities” (Gould 2009:101), which has caused severe damages to coalfield communities (Bell and York 2010). MTR, in particular, has directly impacted 1,200 miles of headwater streams and buried 724 miles of streams in Appalachia in the past two decades (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2005). Additionally, the impoundment of coal slurry, a fluid produced by coal-washing that consists of both toxic chemicals and fine particles, endangers people’s safety and health (Orem 2006). A disaster that occurred in 2000 in Martin County, Kentucky, released 250 million gallons of slurry and damaged over 70 miles of streams and rivers (Eades 2000). Other egregious consequences of mining include respiratory illness (Ohio

Valley Environmental Coalition 2005), blasting accidents, and the loss of hunting and farming grounds (Bell and York 2010).

In this situation, the described approaches above to mobilize union miners and their families to oppose detrimental operations and protect living environment are increasingly significant for current organizers. Since this research was conducted on the basis of a limited number of interviews and only focused on the UMWA, an extended study of a large number of union miners and non-union miners as well as other unions could complement the current project. In addition, the modern environmental movement organizations perform a similar task to what unions did in the past by protecting public benefits and helping to solidify new bonds, identities, and collective actions. Nationally, those organizations have enjoyed an exploded membership growth from 125,000 in 1960 to 6.5 million in 1990 (Bosso 1995; Mitchell 1992). Therefore, what lessons can be drawn from the union's history to form new alliances, whether those approaches are applicable to today's situation, and how to employ these lessons or alternative ones to mobilize local residents' fight for decent working conditions and a living environment are subjects that need further examination.

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Presentations:

"Social Capital, Solidarity, and Cohort Effect---An Analysis of the Production of Social Capital within Union Miners in Harlan County, Kentucky." Presentation at the Second Annual Research Symposium held by The Appalachian Research Community. April 2, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.
(<http://www.appalachiancenter.org/SocialCapitalSolidarityandCohortEffect>)

"One-Sample Hypothesis." Guest Presentation at a sociology course of SOC303: Quantitative Research Methods. March 1, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

"Social Capital, Solidarity, and Cohort Effect, Analyze the Production of Social Capital within Union Miners." Presentation at the First Annual Dimensions of Political Ecology Conference on Nature Society. February 18-19, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

"Globalization of Soccer." Guest Presentation at a sociology course of SOC380: Globalization---A Cross-Culture Perspective. September 17, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.