

Same, same but different: understanding the role of community identity in sustainability

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Abstract only

Sustainability efforts can vary based on community needs as what is important to one community may not be so for another. Mining communities can vary greatly depending on the type of mining activity, the resource being mined, the workforce structures used by the mine, as well as whether mining activity was introduced or not. The aim of this study was to explore mining community residents' perceptions of community identity and the implications for community sustainability. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in three Australian mining communities (a remote, purpose built, mining community; a rural, agricultural community where mining was introduced; and a rural, purpose built, mining community). Common themes were identified within the interview data through an interpretative phenomenological analytical framework which provided an in depth examination of the lived experiences of participants. Preliminary analyses suggest that the mining industry contributed to community identity within the purpose built communities to a greater extent than in the community where mining was introduced. Mining activity forms the reason for the purpose built communities' establishment and therefore, these communities place greater importance on mining activity for their overall sustainability. Taking these community identity differences into consideration will make community sustainability efforts more effective.