Measuring Community Capacity: Does it Impact Quality of Life: Results from a South Dakota Study

Mary Emery and Joshua Fergen
South Dakota State University

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Does community capacity impact quality of life?

- Current theory of change underlying much of community development assumes a link
- Case studies provide examples
- Qualitative research to support this theory
Taking a quantitative approach

• 6000 surveys
  • Oversampled rural
  • Oversampled native majority
  • 41.45% return rate
  • Consulted with Don Dillman on design and delivery strategy
Standard quality of life indicators

- Availability of services
- Quality of services
- Quality of natural resources
- Cost of living
- Safety
• 49.5% of rural residents rate accessibility of local transportation services as poor or very poor
• Availability of quality and affordable housing a challenge facing rural SD
• Lack of good jobs in a reasonable driving distance coupled with a lack of variety in local business

• Safety and emergency services fairly positive review
• Natural capital items ranked the highest
• Belief that residents care about the community and police protection is good
- Housing (quality and affordability), affordable daycare, access to transportation services and variety of local businesses have the poorest ratings
- High natural capital
- Safe community with high quality emergency services
- Residents care and high quality of parks and recreational areas
- Over 20% rate affordable daycare as poor
Higher natural, built and financial capital

Access to good medical services, emergency services, natural qualities and parks and recreation areas ranked on top.

Transportation, street maintenance, and affordable care for senior citizens among poorest rated qualities
• Rural capitals significantly lower than micro and metro for several capitals

• Natural capital perceived as highest for rural, micro, and metro respondents

• Rural residents hold negative perceptions for their financial and cultural capitals
Rural and urban differences

Rural:
• High natural capital (air, water, resources)

• Rural low: financial and built capitals - accessibility of local transportation, availability of good jobs within a driving distance, variety of local businesses, availability of quality housing, and availability of affordable housing

• Rural is significantly different from micro or metro EXCEPT for natural capital
Rural and urban differences

Micro and Metro:
- Only significant difference is cultural capital
- Both micro and metro report higher quality of life than rural
- Housing (quality and affordability), affordable daycare, access to transportation services and variety of local businesses have the poorest ratings for both micro and metro
- Safe community with high quality emergency services
- Residents care and high quality of parks and recreational areas
- Slightly higher built and financial for metro
Community capacity

- 23 indicators
  - Solving our own problems
  - Supporting small business
  - Up to date vision and plan
  - People from different groups get along
  - People volunteer and donate
  - Young people have a voice
  - Regional cooperation
  - Move from talking to doing

- Factor analysis – 2 factors
  - Civic engagement (volunteering, helping others, cooperating, getting along)
  - Leadership (how we work, having a vision, planning ahead, incorporating youth)

- Significant differences between Rural-Micro and Rural-Metro
Standardized regression coefficients for variables in linear regression for quality of life capitals

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<th>Human</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>Political</th>
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<th>Social</th>
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<td>.297**</td>
<td>.272*</td>
<td>.416**</td>
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<td>Leadership Capacity</td>
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<td>.210**</td>
<td>.284**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance Needs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-.101*</td>
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<td>Adj R</td>
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* = significant at .05 level
** = significant at .01 level
Also included Putman’s variables

• Volunteer
• Vote
• Participate in organizations
• Attend church
• Faith-based organizations most attended
• Lower levels of participation in local government, fraternal, and youth related organizations for micro
• Sports and recreation participation strong among respondents
Differences in Mean Scores of Trust: Rural, Micro, Metro

- Community Trust
- State Trust

Community Trust: • Generally, people have trust in each other

Correlations between Trust and Capitals

<table>
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<th>Natural</th>
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</tbody>
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- Significant differences between Native and non-Native respondents

Differences in Mean Scores of Trust for Native and Non-Natives

Community
- Native
- Non-Native

State
- Native
- Non-Native
Conclusion

- Micro and metro residents report a higher quality of life
  - Natural capital high among all residents
  - Financial, human, and built capital significantly higher for micro and metro
  - Biggest problems: adequate and affordable housing, accessibility of public transportation, and maintenance of road infrastructure

- Rural communities have less capacities than their micro and metro counterparts
  - Factor analysis: 2 factors (civic engagement and leadership)
  - Civic engagement capacities higher than leadership capacities
  - Civic engagement = stronger influence on political and social capital
  - Leadership = slightly stronger influence on financial and built capital

- Highest form of organization participation = religious services (just under 50%)

- People are generally trusting, except for significant differences between Native and non-Natives

- Distance to resources = negative influences on quality of life
Next steps

• Look at differences in social capital indicators
• Wellness and indictors
• Policy implications
What did we learn?

• Not so much difference between metro and micro in SD
• Rural and non-rural are very different on a number of indicators
• In SD housing and transportation are critical problems
• Native outcomes significantly lower on most items
What did we learn?

• The company that does the sampling produces biased samples
• Over sampling in native majority actually results in higher chance of whites being included