

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RURAL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

by

DESIRÉE D. FREDERICKSON

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

August 2014

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Acknowledgements

Thank you first and foremost to my Thesis Committee, Dr. Rebecca Hegar, Dr. Richard Hoefler, and Dr. Andrea Cimino. I could not have chosen a better group of people to guide me through the thesis process. They were each extremely supportive of my vision for this study, displayed a huge amount of confidence in my abilities, and provided me with excellent feedback. Dr. Hegar provided me with irreplaceable rural community development knowledge and experience, met with me outside of the office to get a better sense of my project, and demonstrated an eye for detail that is most appreciated. Dr. Hoefler gave me excellent feedback in regard to theory inclusion, the IRB process, and study feasibility. Dr. Cimino contributed a knowledge of Participatory Action Research that was instrumental in the process of planning my methods, and I greatly appreciate the amount of time she spent ensuring that I completed it accurately and logically. Additionally, I want to thank John Dillard, Chris Kilgore, and Robin Dickey for providing me with information that supported the research process.

Second, I cannot give enough thanks to my family and friends. I especially want to thank my Grandmother Willadene and my Aunt Mary who showed interest in my work; my father who offered a place for me to complete my research; my fellow superheroes in research, Don and Cara, who provided guidance and encouragement throughout the process; Isabel and Ali for their support and editorial feedback; and Stephanie who understood my purpose before I did.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to express my intense gratitude to all of the community members who made this project possible. Thank you so much for your patience, assistance, interest, openness, and *time*. I am forever grateful.

June 20, 2014

Abstract

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RURAL
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Desirée D. Frederickson, M.S.W.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2014

Supervising Professor: Rebecca Hegar

This study explores the impact of social capital on community development in a rural community in Texas. There is very little research on social capital relative to community development. Much of the research that has been conducted is focused on measuring the level of social capital among different groups. Utilizing methods of Participatory Action Research—interviews, focus groups, and town hall forums--this study explores the association of social capital with rural community development. This study reviews relevant literature, explains the methods used, provides data analysis and findings. This study concludes with findings and recommendations that support the belief that the development of social capital is integral to overall community development.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Study Introduction

This thesis project involves an exploratory study of social capital utilizing participatory action research (PAR). This research addresses two questions: “In a diverse rural community, does an increase in social capital increase equality among different groups”, and “as social capital is linked, does a rural community experience greater development?”

Most literature asserts that social capital is high in rural areas and can be used to develop a community, although there is some debate about the inclusive, autonomous nature of social capital within diverse communities. The effectiveness of using social capital as a rural community development tool has not been fully explored through empirical studies. Currently, most social capital studies of a community have been conducted on a large, quantitative scale and do not explore the impact of developing social capital within a community. This study examines the impact of increasing a community's social capital.

There are generally two reactions that occur when people arrive in the city of Giddings. Either the person experiences a sense of nostalgia because the community resembles a familiar place, or the person overlooks the unique qualities of the city. Unless a person has experienced the “hometown hospitality” of a small community, the strengths of the community are not apparent in passing. The strengths of the community become apparent as the community's social capital is explored.

Relevance to Social Work

As this study was conducted, the Chamber of Commerce, EDC, and City Council of Giddings were engaged in discussing the appropriate method for developing the

community. One of these organizations has tried to include community members in various meetings to discuss ideas about the community's development but notice of these meetings is spread through word of mouth. Therefore, the meetings are attended by the same, key members of the community. This single-sided discussion, or top down approach, to a community's development may cause conflict within a community because of a possible mismatch between the ideas and priorities of the leaders and those of the community members (McKenna & Main, 2013). The development of social capital within the community may prevent this conflict by creating a more inclusive environment and method of communication. This study will inform social workers of the impact of developing social capital within communities.

Literature Search Process

The literature to support the study of social capital and rural community development was mostly discovered through multiple journals and with the assistance of the University of Texas at Arlington's online library's resources. Some of these resources included databases such as EBSCOhost and Academic Search Complete, Social Work Abstracts, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Electronic books found through the library's website, books in print such as course textbooks, and books that I found at my local library were also useful.

Initially, the search included keywords and phrases such as rural community development; community development; and rural + development. As the search became more specific in regard to social capital, keywords and phrases such as social capital; rural + social capital; community development + social capital were used. These searches were limited to results that are scholarly with references available.

The abstracts and journals reviewed for inclusion initially included all articles that discussed rural community development: the benefit of a community theater, financial

incentives such as tax abatements, tourism, and social capital. It was discovered that the majority of research in rural community development referred to social capital. Then only the abstracts and journals that discussed the use of social capital within rural communities were included. There were not many articles referring to the use of social capital within the United States so many of the studies that are referenced are ones that were completed abroad, mostly in Africa, Australia, Canada, and Europe. Most of the studies that have used social capital in the United States were completed by doctoral students.

Community Choice Process

This community was chosen in consideration of a few variables: 1.) size, 2.) location, 3.) potential for growth, and 4.) openness to newcomers. The size of the community needed to be manageable with a population of approximately 5,000 residents, and the location needed to be approximately 50 miles from any place with a population of more than 20,000 residents and at least an hour from a major city. Additionally, the community needed to be within driving distance from the Austin area. This information was discovered with the use of a map of the counties around Austin and online resources such as City-Data and the U.S. Census. After discovering its size and location, its potential for growth and openness to newcomers needed to be explored. The researcher had the opportunity to attend a Giddings City Council Meeting which informed the researcher of the city's potential for growth and the city's openness to newcomers.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Social capital development among rural communities in the United States is underrepresented in academic research. The literature that does exist emphasizes the measurement of social capital that is present within networks, groups, families, and communities. Much of the research has also been developed outside of the United States. Integrated into much of the research is the proclamation that rural communities need social capital in order to thrive. While there is little empirical evidence illustrating the impact of developing social capital within a rural community, much has been written about the impact social capital may have on a rural community. A high level of social capital has been associated with safer communities, less suicides, less crime, more studious students, and better health. In contrast, communities with high crime rates, high levels of drug use, more suicides, less successful students, and poorer health are generally associated with low levels of social capital (Agnitsch, 2003; Binswanger, 2007; Vermaak, 2009).

While research suggests that social capital is the glue that holds a rural community together, there have not been many studies conducted to measure levels of social capital within communities. Although social capital was introduced as early as 1986 through Bourdieu's (1986) work, the concept did not become prevalent in research until 1995. Bourdieu (1986), "Coleman (1990) and Putnam (1993, 1995) were pioneers in designing the social capital paradigm, introducing it to the social sciences and applying their views in western and European societies" (Vermaak, 2009, p. 401).

Putnam's highly publicized *Bowling Alone* (1995) spread the concept by describing how people have become less connected with each other, expressing the

belief that the level of social capital within communities is diminishing. As a result of Putnam's work, researchers have begun to explore the social capital of communities. Although social capital is now referred to as the most needed capital—the other capitals being environmental, physical, economic, political, human, information, spiritual, and cultural --within a rural community there is still some confusion about its impact (Homan, 2011, p. 40).

Social capital has been explored within micro, meso, and macro contexts for several different purposes. These contexts include whole communities, specific populations within a community, family units, and businesses. The purposes vary from comparing communities and people of different ages, to studying the impact of social capital on economic development, social networks, mental health, relationships, and technology use. Although social capital has been utilized in different contexts and for varying purposes, the literature reflects a lack of understanding about the impact of social capital on community development. Some researchers have found the method of measuring social capital to be a challenge and have discovered that its purpose can be exclusive in nature, oppressing some while empowering others. In contrast, some benefits of employing social capital are that it is referred to as the most important capital for a rural community and can contribute to developing other forms of capital within a community. The significance of social capital is its impact on a community's amount of trust among community members.

Definitions

Social Capital

Putnam (1993) defines social capital as “the ‘features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate co-operation for mutual benefit’” (Akram & Routray, 2013, p. 761). This definition concerns social capital between

organizations whereas Homan (2011) defines social capital on a more inclusive level: "individual and community wealth derived from active engagement of individuals with other members of the community and with what might be called 'community life.'" (p. 42).

Social capital is the measure of interactions, affiliations, and feelings of trust among community members. As Putnam and Homan's definitions illustrate, there are different ways to apply the concept of social capital. These levels include micro, meso, and macro social capital (Akram & Routray, 2013). Social capital can be measured within the individual, a small group such as a family unit or within an organization, and within a community such as a neighborhood or town. Additionally, social capital has three sub-components: bonded, bridged, and linked social capital (Akram & Routray, 2013). Bonded social capital exists when groups with the same values and interests work together to further a cause; bridged social capital applies between more distant groups working together to further a cause; and linking social capital occurs in "relations between different social strata in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed by different groups" (Talbot & Walker, 2007, p. 483). Stone (2001) effectively describes the differing impact of bonding and bridging social capital: "Essentially, bonding capital is important for daily life, but bridging capital and associated generalised forms of trust are essential for achieving sustainability" (p. 343).

Community Development

The definition of community development has evolved as the concept of community participation and the inclusion of community members became more important to community development practitioners and community members. In 1956, the United Nations defined community development as:

The process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate communities into the life

of the nation, and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress. (Sanders, 1970, 20 as cited in Lohmann & Lohmann, 2005, p. 130)

When critics determined that the definition allowed government entities to dictate community changes and did not give enough power to community members, the definition was revised to be more participatory and community driven: "Community development involves local *empowerment* through organized groups of people *acting collectively* to control decisions, projects, programs, and policies that affect them as a *community*" (Rubin & Rubin, 1986, p. 20). Similarly,

the Community Services Unit (2000) of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which employs social workers, defines community development as 'a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of others (i.e., the agencies), to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities.' (Lohmann & Lohmann, 2005, pp. 131-132)

Community development has come to mean more than improving the conditions of a community. It has come to refer to the development of the people within the community.

Social Capital Studies

Studies that explore social capital within communities as a whole include the study of micro-financing (Akram & Routray, 2013) and other economy-related efforts (Binswanger, 2007), a comparison of three rural communities and their levels of social capital (Agnitsch, 2003), an assessment of social capital based upon email and telephone communication patterns (Crank, 2007), a focus on whether internet usage bonded and bridged social capital (Stern & Adams, 2010), and the study of how social capital can improve youth mental health (Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, & Bearsley-Smith, 2008). Social capital was explored on the meso level to determine the social connectedness of an immigrant population within a community (Bolton, 2011), use of social capital in the improvement of small enterprises (Bułkowska & Chmurzyńska, 2011), influence of social

capital on an adult online learning community (Duncan, 2004), and levels of social capital within groups who participate in rural development projects (Teilmann, 2012). Social capital was also used on the micro level to determine if age is a factor on a person's level of social capital (Davis, Crothers, Grant, Young, & Smith, 2012), the levels of social capital within families (Sampson, Goodrich & McManus, 2011), and the difference among 24 small retailers in their use of social capital within a rural community (Frazier, & Niehm, 2004).

Challenges

The challenges of utilizing social capital to study the development of a community include a lack of empirical evidence that social capital will lead to increased development, confusion about the concept of social capital, potential negative impacts of building social capital, and difficulty in measuring social capital. As noted earlier, a high level of social capital is believed to benefit a community in a multitude of ways, including a low rate of crime. However, Deller & Deller (2010) state that "social capital is necessary but not sufficient to deter crime" which makes one wonder if social capital is all that influential in a community's health (p. 269). Social capital has become a confusing concept because, as Bolton (2011) has observed, people mention their 300 friends on Facebook when referring to a high level of social capital. In the same way that individuals relate social capital with a number instead of relationships built on trust, groups within Giddings may focus on participation rather than relationship building in the development of social capital.

Although social capital has been cited as an asset to facilitating community development and uniting groups to further a cause, the concept has also been criticized for ignoring the differences between groups. Arneil (2006) writes that social capital gives power to some over others and that a lack in social capital stems from growing inequality

among different groups and “the historical reality of exclusion, assimilation and eradication in the civic life of America” (p. 211). Likewise, Ring, Peredo, & Chrisman (2010) express their concern that social capital can be negative if it leads to excluding others (p. 177), and Shortall (2008) states that the “social capital debate neglects considerations of power and social inequality” (p. 454). Unfortunately, this is not the only concern that is associated with the concept of social capital. Vermaak (2009) believes that there are “four negative consequences of social capital: exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on group members, restrictions on individual freedom and downward leveling norms” (p. 404). Lastly, as studies have shown, social capital is difficult to measure (Vermaak, 2009, p. 401).

Benefits

The use of social capital to develop a community is considered beneficial because the concept focuses on a community’s assets, is believed to be the most beneficial source of capital for a rural community, and may lead to the development of other forms of capital. Social capital is a form of assets-based development in which “community development practitioners and local citizens work together as partners in identifying available assets, connecting them in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1983 as cited in Lohmann & Lohmann, 2005, p. 131). When a community lacks assets, Binswanger (2007) believes that social capital is the one capital that is most needed. In this same line of thinking, Alston (2002) writes that social capital is key to development and states that the “enhancement of social capital, the building of trust, networks and enriched interactions at the community level are considered key to rural revitalization” (p. 339). Additionally, Homan (2011) encourages the development of social capital, stating that a “community rich in social capital will likely undertake efforts to develop other forms of capital that may be in short supply in the

community” (p. 42), and Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, & Bearsley-Smith (2008) state that “two aspects of social capital – that is, sense of community and neighbourhood cohesion –are high in rural communities” (p. 190).

Theory

Social capital has been utilized within studies as a theory and a concept. It has also been used in conjunction with theories such as social resources theory and regime theory (Agnitsch, 2003), asset-based community development (Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, & Bearsley-Smith, 2008), social network theory (Frazier & Niehm, 2004), and social learning and social exchange theories (Tirmizi, 2005). In this study, social capital is utilized as a component of systems theory. Systems theory refers to the concept that every change within a system impacts the whole system (Netting, Kettner, McMurtry, & Thomas, 2004). In this community, social capital may be developed within the community’s organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, EDC, and City Council, and this small change may have a large impact on the community’s development, such as a mutual understanding and plan for improving the community.

The benefit of using systems theory is outlined by Homan (2011): “Systems theory helps us understand that the actions of a group of people within the community can positively or negatively affect the health of the community and its members, resulting in an opportunity or a risk” (p. 37). If the organizations within the community determine that they will not work together, then the result may be negative to the community as a whole. Organizations and groups within the exosystem are examined to explore how they impact the macrosystem (Homan, 2011, p. 90). This theory has been chosen for two reasons: 1. this theory is most relevant, and 2. it “is so much a part of social work that it has become part of the definition of that profession: ‘The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behavior; of social, economic, and cultural

institutions; and of the *interaction* of all these factors' [emphasis added]" (NASW, 1973, pp. 4-5 as cited in Homan, 2011, p. 90).

The City of Giddings

Giddings was laid out as a town "in 1871, when the Houston and Texas Central Railway came through" the area (Lee County Historical Survey Committee, 1974; Texas State Historical Association, 2010). The town is named after one of two brothers, one was a stockholder in the railroad and one was a railroad engineer (Texas State Historical Association, 2010). Figure 2-1 is the stockholder, J.D. Giddings (Giddings 100th Geburtstag, 1971). The area was sold to settlers and became a site where freed slaves bought property after the Civil War. The leading institutions in Giddings were religious organizations, the first being Methodist followed by the J.D. Giddings Masonic Lodge. In 1874, Giddings became the county seat of Lee County (Texas State Historical Association, 2010). Figure 2-2 is the city in 1908 (Texas Escapes, 2013). The city was incorporated in election on December 19, 1913, and the town officially became "The City of Giddings" (Lee County Historical Survey Committee, 1974). Between the early and late 1980s, the area experienced an oil boom which led to an increase in the city's population from approximately 2,000 to a population of approximately 5,000 (Texas State Historical Association, 2010).



Figure 2-1 J.D. Giddings



Figure 2-2 Community in 1908

Today, the city has a population of 4,881 (United States Census Bureau, 2010).
The population is 43.3% Caucasian alone, 42.7% Hispanic or Latino, 11.7% African

American alone, and a small percentage of “other.” Giddings differs slightly from the ethnic demographics of Texas: 44.5% Caucasian alone, 38.2% Hispanic or Latino, 12.3% African American alone, and a small percentage of “other” (United States Census Bureau, 2010). The 2012-2013 report cards for the school district of Giddings illustrate that the city is experiencing a change in its demographics. The district’s demographics display a growing Hispanic population and a decreasing Caucasian population from the high school to the middle school to the intermediate school to the elementary school. This is exemplified by looking at the difference between the high school and the elementary school. The high school consists of 649 students--46.2% Hispanic and 41.3% Caucasian students, and the elementary school consists of 612 students--61.8% Hispanic and 24.5% Caucasian students. The contrast between Figures 2-3 and 2-4 also emphasize that the population within Giddings has changed since it was first incorporated (Lee County Historical Survey Committee, 1974, p.104; Giddings Elementary School, 2014).

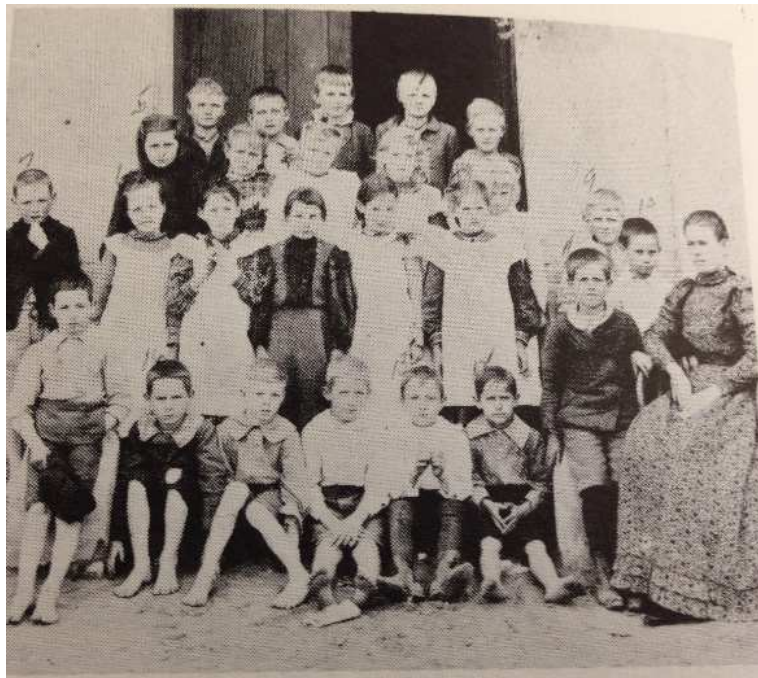


Figure 2-3 Second Grade Class in 1897



Figure 2-4 Elementary School Students in 2014

In contrast, the percentages of males and females within Texas and Giddings are similar with 50.3% females and 49.7% males in Texas and 49% males and 51% females in Giddings (United States Census Bureau, 2010; City-data.com, 2013). However there is a significant difference in regard to the percentage of people who have graduated high school and the average household income: 80.8% of Texans have graduated high school with a median household income of \$51,563 and 63% of Giddings' citizens who are over the age of twenty-five, have graduated high school with an average household income of approximately \$35,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2010; City-data.com, 2013). The 2012-2013 School District Report Card indicates that the percentage of economically disadvantaged students is slowly increasing from grade level to grade level with percentages of 55.2% in the high school and 83.7% in the elementary school. The School District Report Card also illustrates that the distinctions between the schools are decreasing from three academic distinctions at the high school level to none at the elementary school level.

Giddings is located at the intersection of Highway 290 and Highway 77. Highway 77 runs north to south from Dallas to Brownsville, and Highway 290 runs east to west between Austin and Houston. The location of these highways within the middle of the city

gives Giddings access to a large volume of people and traffic and also gives the community members convenient access to other shopping options. As many rural communities find, the hometown stores experience problems because of “[c]ompetition from large scale discount and chain stores, easier access to nearby larger communities, and non-store retailing options” (Frazier & Niehm, 2004, p. 23). Giddings’ shops, a few of which are illustrated in Figure 2-5, find it difficult to compete with prices of commercial shopping options (Lane, 2012). This has caused quite an impact on the financial and social capital of the city. The community’s leaders are currently exploring ways to increase the economic capital of the city by determining the potential for tourism, tax abatements, and more affordable housing options. The city receives a majority of its revenue from utility sales & services, \$8,606,000, followed by city taxes with revenue of \$2,696,405. For fiscal year 2014, Giddings reported total revenue of \$13,904,135 (Giddings, Texas, 2014).



Figure 2-5 Community in 2014

At the time of this study, the community's organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, EDC, and City Council were in the process of determining the best development method for the community. One of the organizations believed that the development of tourism is most significant to the growth of the community; one believed

that increasing sales taxes and bringing in high-paying jobs by attracting new, big businesses to the area will be most effective in increasing the financial viability of the city, and the third believed that the desires of the community members are most important when considering the development of the community.

Chapter 3

Methods

Introduction and Rationale

The role of the social worker in macro practice has historically been rooted in improving neighborhoods or other groups, and it has evolved to include the practice of community development. In the practice of community development, Homan (2011) describes the impact that a community change agent can have on a community; he uses an analogy of a person walking into his/her neighbor's home and making recommendations which the homeowner views as criticisms. One way to alleviate some of these defensive reactions is to include community members in the change process. It is also important to include community members in the change process if the change agent plans to provide a recommendation to the community that will be sustained after the change agent has left the community. Participatory action research is one way to include community members in the research process. This method is relevant to this type of study for two reasons: 1) it has not yet been used in the study of social capital, and 2) it is directed by the input of community members.

Participatory action research involves community members within the community. This approach meets "principles of participation, cooperation, collaboration, translation, empowerment, and a balance of research and action" (McKenna & Main, 2013, p. 114 as cited in Israel et al., 2003). There are some factors that had to be considered before implementing this method, such as:

'who is participating, in what and for whose benefit' (Cornwall, 2008, p. 269); the details of what a collaboration between researcher and community should look like (e.g. the process of identifying priorities or engaging community members) (Fisher, 1997; Israel et al., 2003); and what concepts such as 'empowerment' look like in the eyes of the community and the researcher. (McKenna & Main, 2013, p. 114; Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006)

PAR “focuses on research whose purpose is to enable action. Action is achieved through a reflective cycle, whereby participants collect and analyse data, then determine what action should follow” (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006, p. 854). In other words, put “colloquially, you get the people affected by a problem together, figure out what is going on as a group, and then do something about it” (Kidd & Kral, 2005, p. 187).

Since PAR is a reflexive approach that responds to the needs of the people who are involved, every PAR project is “a ‘custom job’ and results in vagueness and ambiguity when the need arises to describe methods that can range from the traditional systematic survey (e.g., Camardese & Youngman, 1996) to storytelling, sharing of experience, and drawings (Ornelas, 1997)” (Kidd & Kral, 2005, p. 187). This study uses a qualitative approach of semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A), focus groups, and town hall forums. This semi-structured interview process provides flexibility in the process of eliciting further information from interviewees. This process allows for the consideration of community members’ various perceptions of the community.

This research addresses two questions: “In a diverse rural community, does an increase in social capital increase equality among different groups”, and “as social capital is linked, does a rural community experience greater development?” These questions are important because the literature indicates that social capital is an effective tool for rural community development. However, there is limited literature regarding the subject as it relates to increasing social capital within a community. In addition, there is a limited amount of information to indicate if increasing social capital has a negative impact on minority populations within a rural community.

The exploratory nature of this study is necessary in that there are no similar studies to refer to, and the focus is on gaining insights and familiarity for later investigation. In other words, this research promotes a better understanding of social

capital and generates new ideas with the goal of formulating new research questions and establishing directions for future research.

Data Collection

Procedure

The process involved first gathering a group of the community's leaders – Mayor, EDC Advisory Board Member, EDC President, Superintendent, Director of the Food Bank, County Judge, County Commissioner, Mayor Pro Tem, Library Director, City Manager, Director of the Lee County Youth Center, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, City Council Member and business owner, and Tourism Director—to provide input of the interview questions. Experts such as organizational theorist “Mary Follett and social work educators such as Lindeman called attention to the potential role to be played by small primary groups working to strengthen local areas within larger communities” (Netting, Kettner, McMurtry, & Thomas, 2012, p. 42). This small group of leaders includes those people who are known as the “movers and shakers” within the community. Once the leadership group made their edits and additions to the interview questions and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process was completed, the interviews began. Throughout the interview process, the researcher obtained informed consent from interview participants (see Appendix B). The interviews were collected during the County Fair which lasted for three days. The interviews lasted for approximately 15 minutes.

The first day approximately ten interviews were conducted with mostly Hispanic interview participants with the assistance of a bilingual Hispanic female. All of the community members who were approached participated in the interview process although two participants gave very short responses. The second day the researcher attended the activities for seniors of the community and had the opportunity to interview approximately seven Caucasian community members. Afterwards, the researcher visited

the Barbeque Cook-off section of the Fair and found many Caucasian interview participants. The interview participants were obliging and suggested other people for the researcher to interview who were also mostly Caucasian. Approximately twenty interviews were collected. The third day the researcher analyzed her data, determined which community members were not well-represented in the interviews such as males and African Americans, and sought out community members who reflected this diversity. Approximately twenty interviews were collected. Overall, 53 interviews were completed. Once the interviews were completed, focus groups and town hall forums were held.

The priority of the data collection process was to interview those people who provided a better understanding of the community until the point of saturation was reached and no new information emerged. At first, interviewing a diverse group of people who reflect the city's demographics seemed like an inclusive method, but Caucasian people were most accessible which means that the research is more reflective of the views of community members who are Caucasian (McKenna & Main, 2013, p. 121).

After these interviews, focus groups and town hall forums were conducted to better understand the data received from the interviews. During the New Horizons Lions Club—a social club that serves its community—the social atmosphere and methods to address the need were discussed. During the Rotary Club—a business oriented organization—the development of businesses within the community was discussed. The town hall forums were held for approximately 20 minutes. Once these discussions were complete, the researcher assembled the group of community leaders to discuss the results of the research process. The way that the leaders utilize this information will illustrate if linking different forms of social capital within the community furthers the community's development and whether changes to the development plan reflect the needs of all community members.

Participants and Recruitment

The researcher conducted 53 interviews, six focus groups, and two town hall forums. All of the interviews, focus groups, and town hall forums were conducted in person. The target number of interview participants was 30; however, in an effort to include as many representative perspectives within the community, 53 interviews were conducted. Participants were recruited at the County Fair.

This recruitment process was not inclusive of the whole community since some community members did not attend the County Fair. In an effort to be more inclusive and gain more perspectives, the researcher conducted six focus groups with various groups—senior citizens, elementary school teachers, college youth, high school seniors, and a group of leaders-- and two town hall forums with two influential and well-known, active groups within the community – the New Horizons Lions Club and the Rotary Club of Giddings.

The participants for the focus groups and town hall forums were recruited by contacting leaders within the community. The leaders of the Lee County Youth Center, three schools within the district, and Senior Center were contacted to arrange the focus groups. Two groups from the Lee County Youth Center, one school within the district, and two groups from the Senior Center participated in the focus groups. The leaders of two Lions Clubs, a Study Club, a Historical Commission, the Rotary Club of Giddings, a Masonic group, and a group of ministers were contacted to arrange the town hall forums. The New Horizons Lions Club and Rotary Club of Giddings participated in the town hall forums.

Analysis

Technique

It is the goal of this analysis to understand the experience of community members, what kind of development community members would like to see in the city, if racial identity affects responses, and how this information relates to social capital within the community. This analysis should provide the information to address this study's two research questions: "In a diverse rural community, does an increase in social capital increase equality among different groups," and "as social capital is linked, does a rural community experience greater development?"

The discovery process for this type of study includes qualitative content analysis which "focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967; Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish & Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990)" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Text includes data received in interviews, open-ended questions, and focus groups (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This technique is appropriate because its goal, and the goal of this study, is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278 as cited in Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). The phenomenon under study in this research is the impact of social capital on rural community development.

Themes

The data for this project were collected with the input of the group of community leaders who guided the project. The data are categorized into different themes based on the responses of the participants. After assessing the data, there were three themes identified as to the reason participants came to live in the community: family, job or business, and location. There were three kinds of development desires stated the most:

job opportunities, grocery options, and activities for youth. Additionally, three themes were identified in the interest of the community's leaders: community members' interest in expanding big business, having a community theater, and tourism. The number of people who mentioned that they value the social capital of the community is also noted if the interviewee stated that they value any of the following: everybody helps everybody; it's like a big family; everyone knows everyone; people; friendliness; and everyone works together. Additionally, those who did not mention a value of social capital are noted for their similarities. The data are organized by category and analyzed by calculating the percentage of participants' responses in each category.

The categories include ethnicity; how the participant came to live in the community; presence of social capital; business development; job opportunities; grocery options; housing development; youth activities; movie theater; community theater; and tourism. Questions 1-5 are open-ended but question 6, "Would you like to see the community change in any way," would elicit a yes or no response. However, question 6 was generally addressed by question 2: "Please tell me a little about how/where your needs are met," and question 6 generally did not need to be asked. The responses to all of these questions identify how people feel about their community, whether they feel connected to the community, if their needs are being met by the community, and how they would like the community to develop. The notes from the interviews were completed by hand.

The focus groups and town hall forums further explore the themes that were discovered during the interview process. The themes discussed in the focus groups include: the community's social atmosphere, business development, social activities, the dissemination of information, youth activity development, the impressions of college-age youth, the changing demographics of the city, and the experience of senior citizens within

the community. The focus of the discussions varied by the group: the seniors discussed the social atmosphere and dissemination of information within the community; the high school youth discussed activities for youth; the teachers discussed all of the main themes thoroughly; the college youth discussed the social atmosphere and the development of the community; and the leaders discussed some of the research that was found during the interviews, focus groups, and town hall forums. The focus groups took an average of 30-45 minutes and all of the notes were completed by hand. Once the focus groups finished, the notes were analyzed for themes and information that corresponded with the responses from interview participants. The town hall forums explored business development and social inclusion within the city.

Input from Community Leaders

The researcher met with leaders within the community to discuss the questions for the qualitative research. The group of leaders included a City Council Member and Giddings business owner; a commissioner; the Library Director; the Director of the Lee County Youth Center; an EDC Advisory Board member; the County Judge; the Tourism Director; the Mayor; District Superintendent; and the Director of the Food Pantry. All of the leaders were very interested to see the results. Some of them were interested to see what people would say so that they could represent them better politically, while others were interested to see if their predictions of interview participants' responses would be accurate. Leaders consistently stated that people in Giddings do not welcome change. For example, one leader stated, "People within the community may express that they want things to change, but when the changes are in progress, there are a lot of barriers to overcome." This was attributed to the German background of many people within the city who think conservatively and collectively. The proportion of Caucasian people within Giddings who attend the German Lutheran Church is approximately 85% (religious leader

#2). A few of the leaders mentioned that the current change of interest is the addition of an HEB grocery store.

There was also a lack of Hispanic representation among the community leaders of Giddings. When trying to provide names of some Hispanic leaders, a community leader could only name one. The Director of the Lee County Youth Center stated that the Hispanic leaders are generally more involved in their churches and within their smaller community and are generally overlooked as leaders within the larger community. The EDC Advisory Board Member stated that the question concerning communication preferences with leaders may become a discussion of “them” versus “us”, a feeling she herself felt before her husband became involved with the city’s politics. The Tourism Director made it clear that the results would not influence her preference for the growth of tourism, but she would try to tailor her work to the needs of the community. Some of the leaders’ predictions are accurate and represented among the themes.

The responses to the interview questions, focus groups, and town hall forums as well as the knowledge of how the leaders of the community use the study results in their community development plans will determine how the development of social capital has impacted the community. This analysis provides the researcher with the information necessary to know if linking social capital has led to greater community development.

Chapter 4

Results

This study sought to discover facts related to the level of social capital among participants, how participants would like to see their community develop, and if ethnicity impacts participants' level of inclusion. The data is presented in narrative, percentage, figure, and table formats. In order to maintain the anonymity of participants from small ethnic minorities within the community, they are grouped as "others." Figure 4-1 illustrates the ethnicity of community members who were interviewed. Of the 53 community members who were interviewed 53% are Caucasian, 28% are Hispanic, 11% are African American, and 8% are Other (Indian, Lebanese, and biracial). There was a higher percentage of Caucasians accessible for interviewing at the County Fair which resulted in a higher percentage of Caucasian responses.

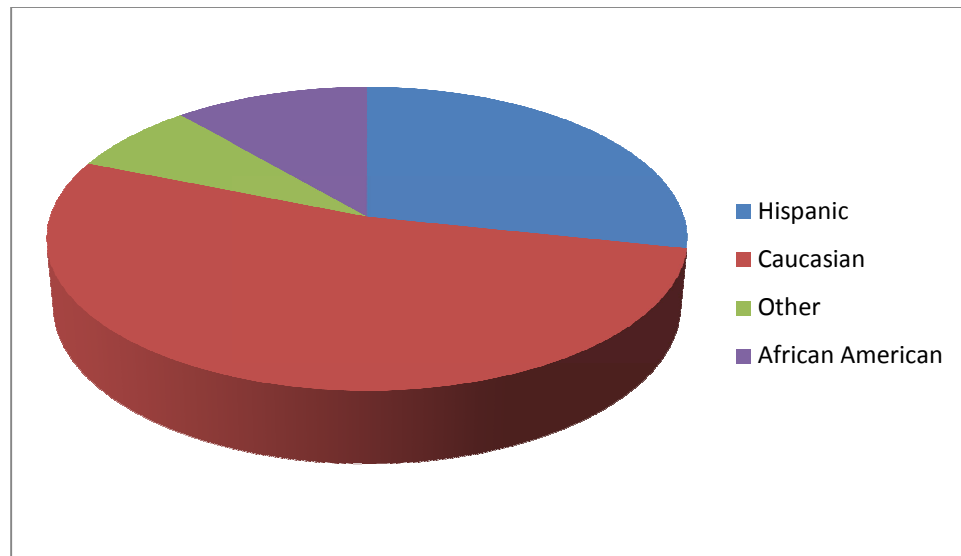


Figure 4-1 Ethnicity of Participants

Even though the participants were recruited at the County Fair, there was only one participant who was not an active member of the community. As Figure 4-2 shows, participants came to be part of the community for three reasons: 1.) 53% because of

family, 2.) 36% due to job or business, and 3.) 10% for location. Family reasons include returning to care for elderly parents, a family-owned business, and children. Two interviewees spoke of these trends: “Lots of friends when ready to settle down, return” (interview participant #23), and “I will return after I finish school because it’s a good place to raise a family” (interview participant #31). Job or business reasons include developing a business or working in the community, generally in the oil or manufacturing industry or as a teacher. For example, interview participant #45 stated that “half the teachers at the school are native community members and half are new to the community.” Lastly, location includes aspects of the city’s size, availability of land, and location in reference to hometown or major cities. One interviewee “wanted out of [the city]” (interview participant #18). The one person who did not respond with one of the above-mentioned answers was only in town to attend the County Fair.

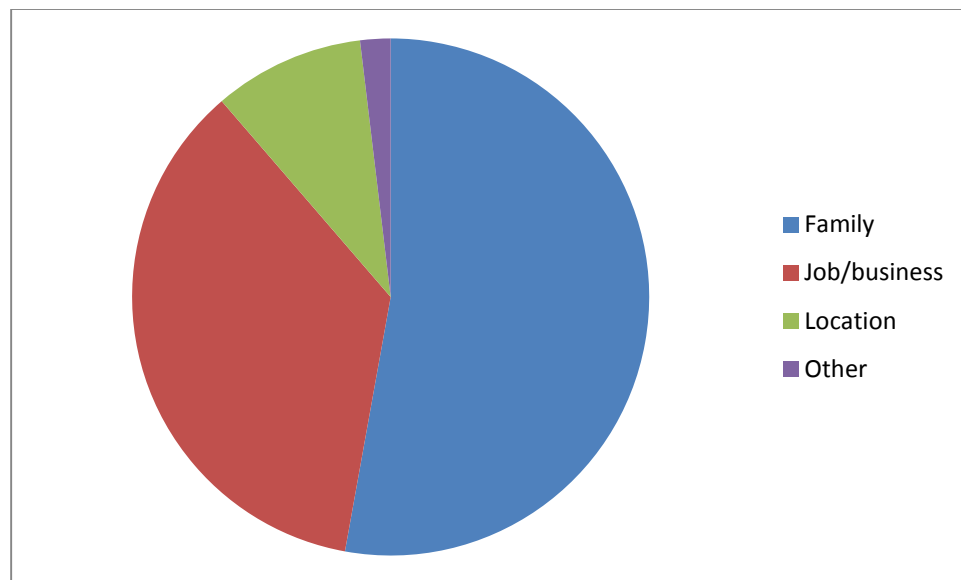


Figure 4-2 How Participants Came to Live in the Community

In response to what they value about the community all participants mention the same, repeated information. In regard to education for children, the school system is

highly valued by parents; however, recent high school graduates mentioned that there are fewer opportunities for students at the high school level in comparison to schools in larger cities. For example, the high school does not offer as many dual-credit courses or “not as many AP classes” as high schools with more resources (interview participant #7).

In reference to education for adults, the nearest community college is approximately twenty minutes from the city, and the nearest 4-year college is about 50 miles from the city. Those community members who decide to attend college, attend classes at the local community college and then transfer to a 4-year college, attend a 4-year college directly after high school, or attend some classes at the local community college and then return to the community. Of the interviewees, 4% report no formal education, 7% did not graduate from high school, 21% possess a high school diploma, 33% took some college courses, 4% have an Associate’s Degree, 22% have a Bachelor’s Degree, and 9% have a Master’s Degree.

When the question of resources for employment, goods, health, and social activities was asked, respondents had some very similar responses which are represented in Figure 4-3. Of interviewed participants, 28% identified the need for more activities for youth to prevent them from engaging in hazardous activities such as “pasture parties” which encourage alcohol use. One participant stated that it is “culturally normal for kids to drink” (interview participant #19), and one asked: “Where do high school kids go for fun” (interview participant #30).

Also in terms of social activities, a few interview participants mentioned a lack of activities for single adults and senior citizens. Interview participant #17 said that “you have to leave to meet girls” because most community members are related or married.

Thirty percent of the interview participants stated a need for more job opportunities such as better employment benefits and more options for young professionals. In terms of employment benefits, one interviewee stated that

“the majority of people, even blue collar workers, feel they should earn more or do different work—not manual, hard labor—so they look for work elsewhere, leaving the \$7.50 an hour positions open to those who have to take it to provide for their families because there are no other job options. A wage increase would help me support my family and prevent people from leaving.” (interview participant #4)

Those jobs which do offer better benefits are coveted and have very low turnover rates. For example, interview participant #25 stated: “Most office jobs people have held for at least 20 years,” and it is “hard for a person to get a job if they do not know anyone.” Additionally, there are other factors that impact job acquisition: job experience, level of education, past transgressions, and gender: one interviewee was hiring for a position but most of the applicants “can’t read or write basic English” and had “fast food experience only” (interview participant #26); “if you have any prison time on your record then the best job you’re going to get is one at McDonald’s” (interview participant #2); and “it’s easier for a man to make money because there are oil field jobs” (interview participant #16). With all of these employment barriers, it is not surprising to hear interview participant #33’s observation: “People I grew up with are not here because there aren’t any good jobs” (interview participant #33).

Fifty-eight percent of interview participants stated a need for more businesses such as manufacturing/industry, clothing stores, restaurants, and medical care. The manufacturing/industry businesses are desired for the economic opportunities they may provide. One participant stated that “when the oil boom left, a lot of business declined” (interview participant #25) and another reported that the community needs a variety of business opportunities “because when you depend on just one kind of market then it can cause the town problems” (interview participant #18). Additionally, clothing stores are in

demand because there is currently only one, and it does not offer enough variety; restaurants are desired because most of the restaurants available are Mexican restaurants and Barbeque restaurants; and the medical service that is available is closed during weekends and holidays. One participant described his view of the city's amenities as "Mexican food and gas stations – that's it" (interview participant #11).

Seventy-nine percent of participants stated a need for more grocery options such as more variety, better produce, lower prices, and consistent availability because the current grocery store options do not fulfill these needs. Unfortunately, the inability of the city's grocery stores to fulfill the needs of its residents causes a two-fold economic problem. First, community members are travelling outside of the community to purchase their groceries. Of the interview participants who mentioned where they shop, 82% purchase items outside of the community. Some people justified buying things out of town and stated that they "try to buy here" (interview participant #18) and "mostly shop here" (interview participant #29), but sometimes they need organic or gluten-free products or other items not offered at the local grocery stores. In contrast, some interviewees were frank about their reasons for shopping outside of the community. One participant said that "two cars of groceries at HEB is \$200 compared to a ½ car of groceries from Brookshire's for the same price" (interview participant #1) and another stated that if s/he needs "a lot, \$200-300 worth of groceries, then [s/he] shops in Bastrop" (interview participant #18).

Second, some community members are not in a financial situation to afford costly groceries. One participant stated that people who are living in poverty "shop locally so run out of benefits" because "you pay so much more here" for groceries and "lots of people [living in poverty] end up running out of money [for food] before the month is over" (interview participant #26). Additionally, interview participant #27 stated that seniors'

“financial situation equates to paying bills first, then medicine, and if anything is left then food” which suggests that unless the food is affordable, seniors will lack food. The community does offer a Food Pantry which is described as serving “A LOT” (interview participant #28) but having “hours [that] are sporadic and inconvenient” which prevents some community members from accessing its resources (interview participant #26).

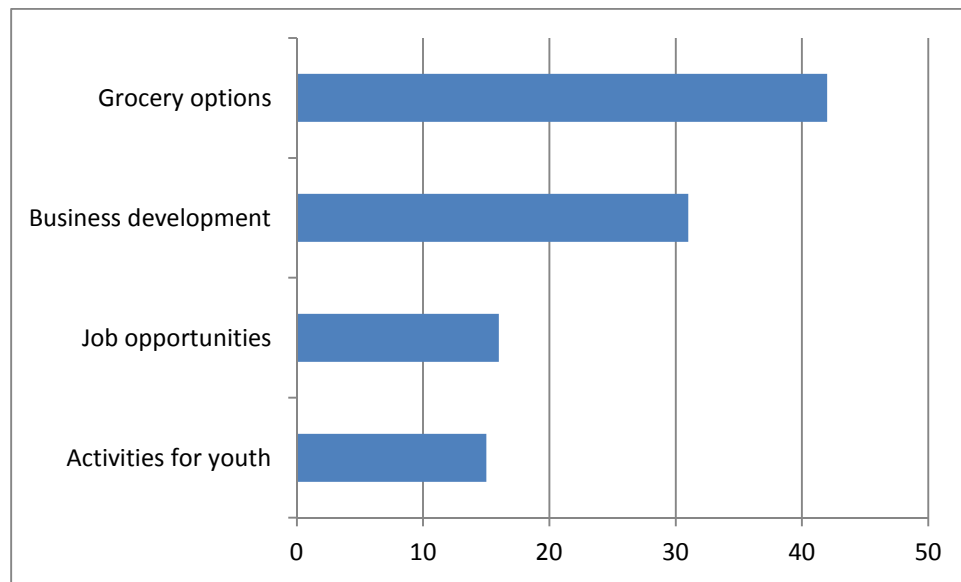


Figure 4-3 Unsolicited Changes Desired by Participants

In terms of housing, participants did not mention any difficulty. Most of the interview participants are homeowners and live a few miles outside of the city. One couple new to the area stated that they did not have any problem locating a house to buy and are pleased with their home. Similarly, those participants who attended a religious institution are satisfied with their involvement and did not mention any difficulties. Additionally, very few problems were mentioned in terms of transportation. Most of the interviewees own their own vehicle, and they mentioned that the city does have one taxi and a bus for seniors. The seniors that were questioned about the usefulness of the bus stated that the bus serves their transportation needs for the most part, but there are

“instances when seniors have to wait all day at a doctor’s office because the bus cannot always wait for them to finish their appointment” (interview participant #25).

In discussing the cultural needs of participants, there were mixed responses. Some are pleased with the cultural activities offered through their church and with the community’s annual events, and others stated that “there is no culture here” in terms of the arts (interview participant #11). A few participants would like to see an art gallery and a community theater. Similarly, people had mixed responses to the question of annexation of surrounding geographical areas. Some did not have much of an opinion about it, and others felt strongly about it. Overall, most people would support annexation if it benefits the community. The only concern that people expressed is whether an expansion would impact the surrounding communities or affect the small-town atmosphere of Giddings.

Ninety-six percent of participants value something about the community with 73% of them valuing the social capital -- the friendliness of the community and how everybody helps everybody and knows everybody and works together. The comment that “it’s like a big family” was repeated by many participants. Sixty percent of the Hispanic participants (9 of 15), 67% of the African American participants (4 of 6), 75% of the Other participants (3 of 4), and 85% of the Caucasian participants (23 of 28) value the social capital within the community. Some participants provided examples of how everybody helps everybody and works together: the community “can raise 50 thousand in a fundraiser” (interview participant #21); a community member “lost [her] husband and the community pulled together to help by having a benefit to raise money” (interview participant #24); and “you won’t ever see a fundraiser flop and there are plenty of volunteers” (interview participant #28). Participants also provided examples of how the community resembles a family: “When there’s a tragedy, people come together” (religious leader #1) and

“three or four years ago someone’s house burned down because of lightning and before the fire was even out, people were providing clothes for the family and another family arranged for them to stay in a house while their house was being rebuilt.” (interview participant #24)

The inclusive nature of the social capital within the community was also discussed during the interviews: “If people in the community know about the situation then they try to help” (interview participant #24) and the “community gets together when needed, no matter your race” (interview participant #5).

Other aspects of the community that are valued are the healthy environment, sense of peace, safety, size, conservative values, and school system. Table 4-1 illustrates the values of those participants who do not perceive or value the social capital within the community. There are some interesting observations to note in the information presented in the table. First, there are only three interview participants who identified as speaking only Spanish, and they are all represented in the table and of the 15 Hispanic people who were interviewed, five are represented in the table. To highlight how these cultural differences may impact a community member’s perception of social capital, Figure 4-4 illustrates participants’ perception of social capital relative to their language knowledge. Second, none of the participants are natives of the community. They have been in the community for an average of 13.6 years.

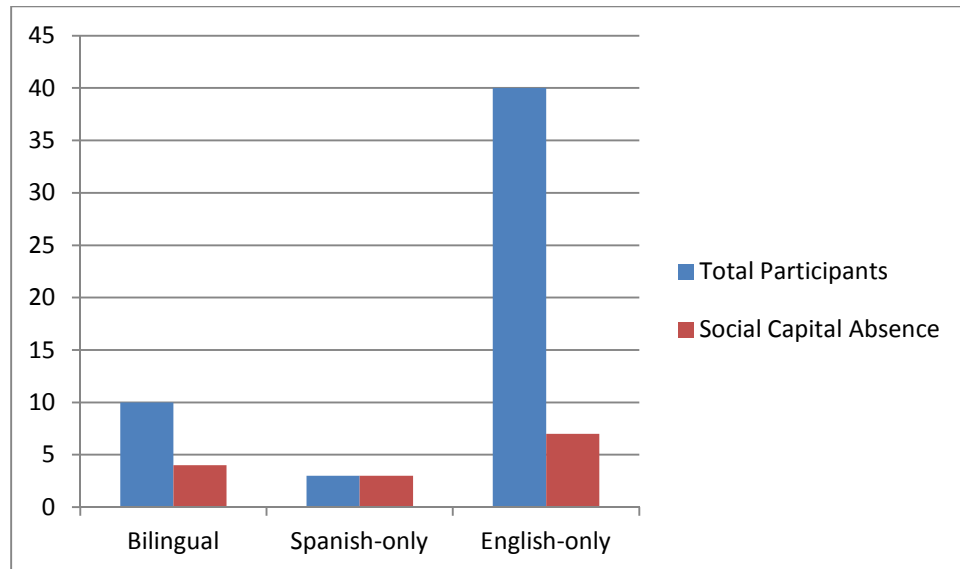


Figure 4-4 Social Capital Presence Relative to Language Knowledge

The community's perception of social capital is impacted by differences in culture and birthplace. In reference to culture, various cultures are represented in the community, and two of these cultures have distinctively separate communities within the community. Interview participant #14 stated, "The German and Hispanic communities co-exist." In general, the communities as wholes do not affiliate except during religious and educational activities. This partly stems from a language barrier. One participant stated, "I don't know how to communicate with leaders in the community and because of my [undocumented] status I'm scared" (interview participant #4). Some of this fear may originate in a lack of perceived support. Religious leader #2 stated, "People were initially angry with bilingual mass and the Mexican population," and "people want to be really prejudiced." For example, one participant stated that she was the first Hispanic employed in her position, and it had caused some controversy because some people were not receptive to the change. One participant emphasized this divide by stating, "They are living in our country, they should speak the language" (interview participant #13). The

divide is noticed by some of the interview participants, one of whom stated that people in the Hispanic community “want support [to feel included and welcome] from people even if undocumented” (interview participant #6).

However, there is at least one project to help “bridge race relationships and break barriers” -- the Food Pantry (religious leader #1). Additionally, interview participant #16 stated that younger generations are more accepting, and “older people don’t reach out” to Spanish-speaking people (interview participant #16). Interview participant #16 also stated, “English-speaking Spanish people get along fine.” The two cultures also seem to get along at times — “Hispanic food and juices unite people” because they are enjoyed by all and people are united during worship (religious leader #2).

In reference to birthplace, there is a divide between those who were born and raised in the community and those who have relocated or married into the area. Those who have relocated to the area appreciate the community and the people but find that it takes a long time to feel included. For example, two interviewees stated, “It takes a while to get in the group, but once you do, people are genuine and honest” (interview participant #9), and “this community is a hard community to crack because they hang out with their own so it takes a while for them to let you in, but once you are in, they are amazing and friendly” (interview participant #14). However, some newcomers find it more challenging to be accepted than others. One of the interviewees referenced in Table 4-1 state, “It’s a tight-knit, close community but if you’re an outsider [like me], you ain’t getting in” (interview participant #11), Other participants stated: “If you don’t know people, then you have no chance [in the community]” (interview participant #3) and people in the community “don’t like outsiders making suggestions to better the community” (interview participant #22). People who know members of the community and have become leaders acknowledge an irony of the situation: “People saying, ‘we need people here’ but want

them to 'stay out of the way' (community leader #1). This "stay out of the way" mentality has been observed by religious leader #1 who stated that "people move on when they realize that they can't change the city because you have to change people's attitudes."

Lastly, 11 of the 14 participants who display a lack of social capital as a value came to the community for work-related reasons. This is a significant number because the study includes a total of 19 participants who came to the community for employment purposes. The data shows that more than half, 56%, of participants who are in the community for employment do not perceive a sense of social capital. Figure 4-5 illustrates employment compared to family and location reasons for joining the community and the level of social capital associated with each reason.

Table 4-1 Participants Who Lack Social Capital as a Value

Race	Language	Length of time in the community	Reason for being in the community	Valued aspects of the community
African American	English	7 years	Husband's job	Near husband's job
African American	English	30 years	Job	Nothing
Caucasian	English	4 years	To attend high school	Small town
Caucasian	English	1 day	County Fair	Barbeque and beer
Caucasian	English	6 years	Job	Tight-knit, close community but if you're an outsider [like me], you ain't getting in
Caucasian	English	25 years	Husband's job	Small town, conservative values, respect, expectations for kids
Caucasian	English	10 years	Job	Small town

Table 4-1—Continued

Caucasian	English/Spanish	26 years	Job	Family
Hispanic	English/Spanish	35-36 years	Job	Family
Hispanic	Spanish	7 years	Job	No comment
Hispanic	Spanish	21 years	Family	Peaceful; obtained a job when he arrived
Hispanic	Spanish/English	4-5 years	Job	Safe; good quality of life; relaxed
Hispanic	Spanish	11 years	Husband's job	Peaceful
Other	Native language/English	4 years	Job	Smaller community

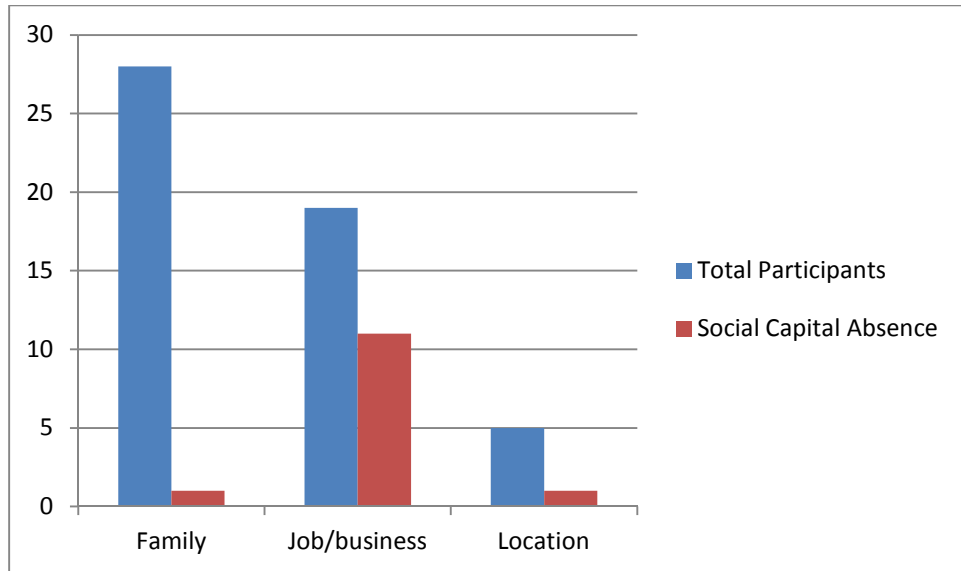


Figure 4-5 Level of Social Capital Relative to Reason for Being in Community

In addition to the cultural divide, “there is a socioeconomic divide. Youth don’t mix with people who are not on their level; the youth will even attend a youth group outside of their own church in order to mix with youth of their own socioeconomic level” (religious leader #2). This divide is fostered by the “mentality of entitlement among

younger generations who have grown up with money” (religious leader #1). Some of the people who are impacted by this divide are people who are elderly, single parents, homeless, and people who require mental health services. Interview participant #25 stated that the “elderly are falling between the cracks because no one provides in-home service,” and interview participant #26 stated that there is a “need for rental assistance and cheaper rental homes” because single parent families are struggling (interview participant #26). Additionally, interview participant #2 stated that “there are homeless people, and there is no shelter so they have to rely on friends,” and interview participant #7 stated that “there is not any real, therapeutic help here because people here are not open to it. They believe it’s for crazy people.”

The community’s level of social capital is not only impacted by its acceptance of people, it is also impacted by community members’ perceptions of political and social organizations. The most influential groups within the community are the Lions Clubs, Rotary Club, City Council, EDC, and Chamber of Commerce. The Lions Clubs work together to improve the community, but the “Lions Clubs and Rotary Club butt heads” which may prevent the organizations from acting in the best interests of the community (interview participant #29). Similarly, “in politics, things were being railroaded by individuals with their own personal agenda” (interview participant #21) who “wanted things a certain way and wanted to use money in a certain way that was not representative of the people” (interview participant #24) and prevented other collaborations: “The City Council in the past wouldn’t talk to EDC about tax incentives” (interview participant #22). This lack of communication led to a lack of understanding within the community which impacts the community’s perception of social capital: “EDC gives people empty buildings but wouldn’t help HEB with a tax break” (interview participant #24).

It was discovered through the interviews and discussions that participants' level of connection to the community depends on their level of involvement with community members and community activities. Those interviewees who are involved in their community through a city or county job or a club such as a Lions Club, the Rotary Club, or another well-attended club have a great sense of loyalty and commitment to their community. Those who are new to the community and became involved, usually through the assistance of someone already involved in the community, or who worked outside of the community and recently found work within the community observed an immediate difference in their connection to the community. Those who are not involved express less satisfaction in their connection to the community. When asked about their lack of involvement, interview participants stated that they do not have time to get involved or have no interest.

One reason interviewees are less connected to the community if inactive with community members or community organizations is the way information is disseminated to community members. When interview participants discussed an event or situation within the community such as a city council topic, some participants were uncertain about the result of the decision. They assumed the discussion was over since they had not heard anything more about the topic which gives the impression that information is not consistently or thoroughly conveyed to the community. The only information source people mentioned outside of word of mouth conversations is the city newspaper, but most people who were questioned about the newspaper stated that it is a type of "tabloid" and "not very informative" (interview participant #43). People stated that the community's newspaper is a type of tabloid because it covers information that the courthouse makes available such as car accidents and criminal incidents within the area. Also, there is a lack of information in Spanish, and Spanish speakers "don't know where to get

information” (interview participant #4) because “all [information is] in English” (interview participant #6).

Those people who are involved and connected to the community through organizations know at least one leader of the community, if not a group of them, and feel comfortable calling his/her cell phone to communicate an issue. Those who are not as connected to the community did not know how to contact the community’s leaders and stated that they would locate a phone number to contact the correct person or go to a location where they interact with city employees. For example, interview participant #1 stated, “I guess I would go where my sister pays the light bill.” The method of communicating by phone is preferred because it is convenient, and a few of the participants also stated that they were not sure if the leaders were technologically savvy enough to use electronic methods of communication. Interview participant #16 stated, “Emails are not as familiar to people because people [leaders] are old” (interview participant #16).

Approximately 96% of the interviewees mentioned what they would like to change something about Giddings prior to question 6. So instead of asking if the participant would like to see the city change, the participant was asked if he/she would like to see the development of a movie or community theater or tourism. The responses are illustrated in Figure 4-6. Of those participants who responded, 36% are interested in the development of a movie theater if it shows popular films and is priced similarly to the theaters in surrounding communities; 40% are interested in a community theater; and 34% support the idea of tourism. On the topic of tourism, 33% of participants were unaware of the tourist qualities of the community and made comments such as: “The biggest tourist spot is Buc-ee’s” (community leader #2), “What’s there to see” (interview

participant #8), and “There is no tourism here; it’s an oil field town” (interview participant #11).

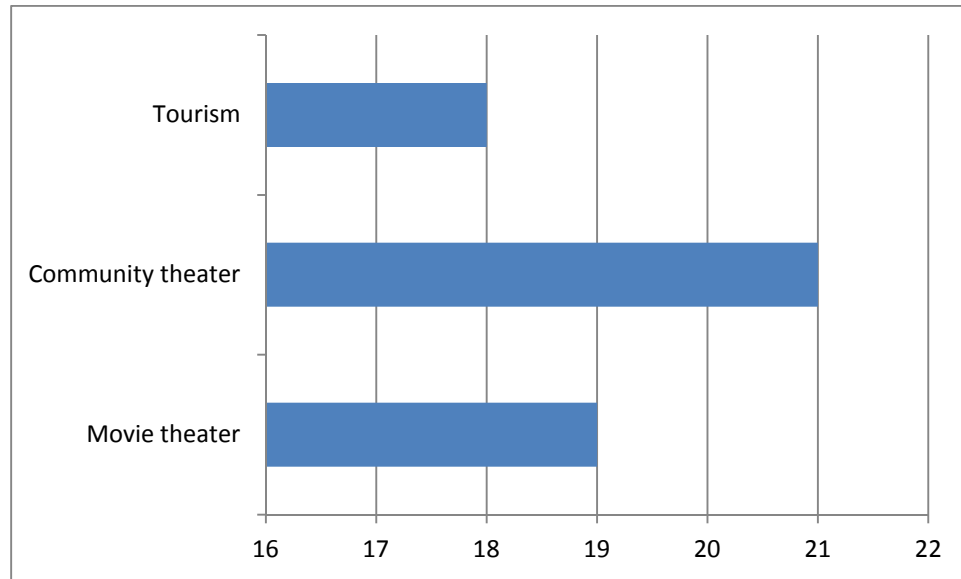


Figure 4-6 Solicited Changes Desired by Participants

The question of a Farmer’s Market was only discussed once because the first respondent stated that the community has a Farmer’s Market every Tuesday during the summer. Similarly, the discussion of a community college was needless because most of those who were asked stated that they would be interested in having a community college in the area, but the city was considered by a community college in the past and it did not happen. The questions of expanding big businesses or supporting locally owned businesses were also unnecessary because the participants answered this question while describing how they meet their needs.

Throughout the interviews, community members reported that the community does not want change: “people don’t like change here” (interview participant #7); German culture is very conservative, not very open to new ideas, keep it the same, not very forward-thinking” with “incredible opposition” to changes (religious leader #1); and “A lot

of established business people who have grown up in Giddings don't want change or are slow to change" (interview participant #22). However, as Figure 4-7 illustrates, only 4% of interview participants stated that they do not want change. The other 96% of interview participants do want some aspect of the community to change. This contradicting message is encompassed in one participant's summation of community members' thoughts: "Why would we want to change?" and then 'My God, we really need to change'" (community leader #1). This contradicting message is also noted in interview participants' responses: "don't want [the city to get] bigger but would like more business variety" (interview participant #14); "Don't want it to grow but would like to see a car dealership, jobs, and HEB" (interview participant #23); and the addition of "something that draws people" was stated repeatedly by participants.

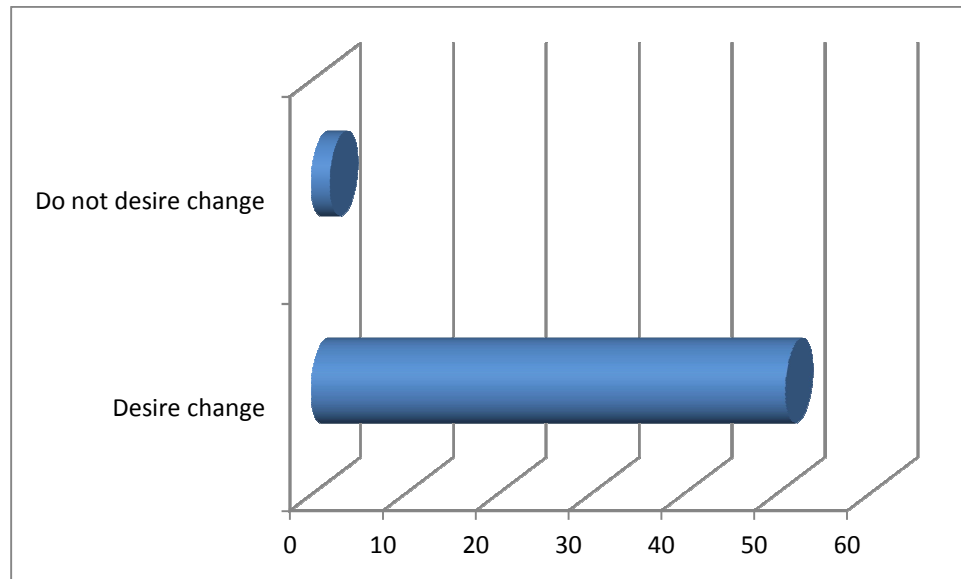


Figure 4-7 Participants Position about Change

The group of graduating high school youth included five African Americans and three Hispanic youth. Of the eight youth, two stated that they plan to return to the community once they finish college. Those who do not plan to return stated that the city

needs more opportunities such as “good-paying jobs.” They stated that there is nothing to do professionally after high school except work in the oil industry. The youth also stated a need for more restaurant options such as Chili’s and “hang-out places” such as a movie theater, a recreation center, and a dance hall. The youth are aware that the Lee County Youth Center offers recreational activities, but they consider it a place for younger youth. The youth would enjoy a recreation center that includes volleyball and basketball and is open from 4pm to 7pm during the week and 3pm to 7pm on the weekends. The youth stated that their vision for a dance hall includes ages 15 or 16 to 18 on Friday and Saturdays from 8pm to 1am. The dance hall should include a live band or rap music, a dance floor, a concession stand that resembles the one at football games, a pool table, and strobe lights or black lights. The youth suggested a charge of \$7 since the dance hall in Bastrop charges \$10.

The college young adult group included three African American participants and one Caucasian participant. Three of the young adults stated that they would have interest in staying or returning to the city if there are job opportunities because it is a nice place to live, especially when you have a family. They also mentioned that a person can buy land and homes without a problem. The potential for business development was also discussed. One of the young adults mentioned his plans for becoming a teacher in Giddings and developing a business. However, they also stated that “people do not want businesses here [in Giddings]” and that other business opportunities, such as a Walmart Supercenter, have been declined by the city. The young adults repeated some of the information collected during the interviews such as the need for fresh vegetables and clothing stores. Some of the downsides of living in a small, rural community were discussed. For example, those who are more private find that they do not have the option of privacy within a small community, and youth see the adults they are supposed to

respect—such as teachers and district administrators—in intoxicated states at events such as the County Fair. The young adults also stated that “upper class parents” will purchase alcohol for their children, which led to the discussion of classism within the community. They stated that “money separates the community.” Those who participate in the community’s clubs are generally those who are wealthy and have the time, and they are well-known among the community. Two of the young adults were raised in an apartment complex which was referred to as the “ghetto/hood” when they were younger.

The group of elementary school teachers included one Hispanic participant and five Caucasian participants. The group began with a discussion of the social atmosphere within the community. The teachers stated that the Caucasian and Hispanic cultures are segregated, and the school makes an effort to be inclusive by hosting cultural events such as a Cinco de Mayo Festival. The teachers discussed the changing demographics of the community. About thirty years ago when there was an oil boom in the community, the percentages of Hispanic and Caucasian students in the school were similar. However, when the oil boom declined, many of the Caucasian families left the community, and for the past twenty years the demographics have shifted with an ever-increasing percentage of Hispanic youth. The teachers also discussed the difficulty for newcomers. There was only one newcomer to the community within the group, and she stated that she did not have problems integrating into the community because her husband is a coach. In the discussion of disseminating information within the community, the teachers stated that they provide information to the parents on a regular basis through newsletters and automated phone calls that are in English and Spanish. However, within the community itself much of the information is communicated by word of mouth. There is a lack of Spanish information in the community’s media, and the teachers reported that they do not receive much city information from the newspaper.

The teachers mentioned that there is an active, informative website during the football season.

In the discussion of business growth, the teachers mentioned a few businesses that failed for various reasons, and one teacher mentioned the need for feasibility studies. He stated that the businesses that failed had completed a poor analysis of the market. Some teachers also stated that some businesses are not welcome because business owners in Giddings would have to increase the wages of their employees and decrease the prices of their products. The teachers also stated that the city council holds the power in the community, and every board has to have any changes approved by the city council. If the mayor were to disagree with the changes, he/she can override the board's actions. In the last six years, only one business, Rattlers, was built and has flourished. The highway bypass and extension of the city's limits was also discussed. The group stated that people with businesses do not want the bypass to occur because the town is sustained by the major highways. Also, any efforts to extend the city's boundaries even a mile requires a larger population and takes approximately five years. One of the problems with extending the city's limits is its lack of infrastructure. The area outside of the city would not be served by the utilities, police, fire department, and other resources from the city.

In discussion of the lack of activities for youth, the teachers stated that it is important to establish activities because Lee County has the highest rates of alcohol use for youth and there have been some deaths. The teachers suggested a YMCA and an activity center with music, dancing, and arcade games, or even a program such as "Mad Dads" which compels fathers to invest more time in their children's lives. One way that the fathers of "Mad Dads" become more engaged is ensuring safety on the streets and supporting a recreation center where they engage with youth and ensure their well-being.

The teachers also stated a need for apartments and single family rental properties. One of the teachers manages rentals and rarely has a vacancy for long. Another one of the teachers mentioned that the community is not progressing because people do not want the community to change. One example discussed was the difficulty of building four duplexes on an old, well-known and respected German family's land. It took three years for the development of the duplexes to be approved even though they will bring revenue to the city and are needed resources.

The last two focus groups were completed with seniors. There were two discussions because there is segregation between the groups. One of the groups is not very inclusive or considerate of the other groups' needs and interests. In the past the groups had been joined, but when there was a leadership change within the organization, the groups became separate. The first group eats at the Senior Center, and the second group attends the center to socialize and play games. The first group included four African Americans and six Caucasian seniors. The group mentioned that the Hispanic seniors in the community do not enjoy the type of food that is served at the center, and that is why no Hispanic seniors are present during the meals. The group discussed their lack of funds to provide extras for meals such as salt, pepper, and ketchup and for activities such as a prize for their monthly game of Bingo. Two seniors stated that they would purchase the items but the costs cause a strain on their financial situation since they live on a fixed income. The seniors also stated that it is too costly to maintain a subscription to the city newspaper and the newspaper does not provide useful information. The news that they hear comes by word of mouth. The seniors also discussed the lack of business growth in the community, stating that for the past twenty years a WalMart Supercenter was interested in developing in the city, but the manager of another grocery store in town did not want the competition so the city council did not

allow it to happen, and now there is a Walmart Supercenter in La Grange which is about 20 minutes to the south. The seniors stated that “the city council kills everything that comes up.” The seniors would like to see options for men’s clothing and women’s plus size clothing. In discussion of the social activities for seniors, they stated that the activities would need to be affordable for seniors. The activities that would be of interest to them include bowling, movies, exercise, and bingo. The activities need to cater to seniors’ lifestyles and capabilities. In regard to transportation, those who ride the CARTS bus find it helpful, although there are times when seniors have to wait all day in a doctor’s office before the bus can return to provide them a ride home.

The second group of seniors included twelve Caucasian community members. In discussion of the community’s social atmosphere, one participant stated that there used to be a welcoming committee in 1958 when she moved into the area. There were three churches that welcomed her to the community. They stated that if newcomers are not of the Lutheran faith or belong to one of the large community organizations such as a Lions Club or Rotary Club, then they are going to feel excluded. The seniors stated that the newspaper does not provide useful information such as information about communities outside of Giddings. This group of seniors would like to see an HEB grocery store. One senior stated that he is not sure that the city has the population to justify the development of the store, but another senior stated that a nearby community of a similar size has an HEB. The seniors would also like to see the development of an Assisted Living Center and a theater that shows movies from the 40s era to the 70s era.

In reference to the Senior Center itself, the door is not easily accessible to seniors because there are no handicapped parking spots near the door. Additionally, there is a sitting area on the patio of the center, but without some sort of covering the area becomes too hot for seniors to enjoy. Another concern is the dwindling membership.

Some seniors believe that the center would be more successful if it had a director who could spend time soliciting funds and membership for the center and arranging different activities for the seniors. The organization that provides the meals for seniors, Combined Community Action (CCA), also has difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers to deliver meals to seniors who are homebound.

During the New Horizons Lions Club town hall forum which included two African American, four Hispanic, and eighteen Caucasian community members, the social atmosphere of the community was discussed. Members were surprised to hear that some people in Giddings do not feel accepted within the community. They stated that people needed to “put themselves out there” and “can’t just stay in their homes.” Then a member of the group stood up and stated that when she moved to the community she had only about five friends for the first eight years. She stated that it was not until her husband introduced her to a Lions Club member and she became a member of the club that she began to feel a part of the community. Another member stated that she became involved because a friendly neighbor introduced her to the community. The group mentioned that they are unaware of the new people who arrive in Giddings. When the group thought about how they could learn of newcomers, they stated that new arrivals would have their first contacts with the city, the electric company, schools, the police department, and churches. Some members showed interest in implementing methods to engage new community members.

During the Rotary Club town hall forum, the business development of the community was discussed. The group reported that they want to see business growth, but they do not want to see the community change. The oil boom that is expected in the next couple of years was discussed and participants were guided to think about businesses that would flourish and maintain their success regardless of the oil boom. The

businesses that were suggested include a recreation center with an indoor swimming pool, a skating rink, a drive-in theater, and local medical care that is available during weekends and holidays.

The group stated that changes will happen regardless of feelings about change. Two disadvantages of the city's current landscape were discussed: 1.) the two major highways that run through the center of the city, and 2.) the lack of a downtown center around the courthouse. There was a debate about whether it is more important to bring people into the community in order to attract businesses or more important to bring businesses into the area to attract people. One member discussed the need for a new housing subdivision but first the infrastructure to support the houses has to be developed. One participant suggested attracting businesses that do not depend on the population size of Giddings, such as a call center. One group member stated that the city's population has dropped within the last ten years. Another participant stated that she just returned to the community after living in Austin. She also stated that her children are happier in Giddings because the sense of community in the area is greater than it was for them in Austin.

The final discussion was held in the format of a focus group with some of the community's leaders – County Judge, County Commissioner, Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, City Council member, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, two members of the Chamber of the Commerce, EDC Advisory Board Member, Library Director, and a representative of the Food Pantry. Of the people in attendance, four of them are natives of the community. The discussion included the leaders' visions for the community, some of the information from the interviews, observations of the community, changes that would benefit the community, and further research that is needed. Some of the community leaders' visions include creating new business opportunities; being proactive

about the possible highway and/or 18-wheeler bypass and more welcoming to newcomers; developing a community or recreation center, more retail shops and grocery stores, the abandoned peanut mill, more hotels, a rail system to Austin for people who commute from Giddings to Austin for work, a working depot for passenger trains, a playground for the library, a movie theater with new releases, and a casino; and adapting to the shifting demographics. One of the community leaders stated that members of the Chamber of Commerce, EDC, and City Council are beginning to have the conversation about planning ahead for a bypass. There is also discussion about planning ahead for the increase in oil production. The representative from the Food Pantry stated, we “don’t want overcompensation [in development] because of the increase in oil production.” One of the other leaders believes a drive-in movie theater is a good idea because the nearest one is approximately 1.5 hours away from the community. To address the need for an Assisted Living Center, a few of the leaders mentioned that one is currently being developed.

During the meeting, the discussion of social inclusion caused one leader to state: “I’m not German so I don’t belong.” The response by the other leaders was that the issue of social inclusion is one that every rural community experiences and it is improving within Giddings because the first oil boom brought a lot of outsiders into the community, and the city had to adapt. One leader stated, “It’s a two-way street. People join our church, and if they don’t feel accepted then they leave [instead of getting involved or continuing to try],” and most of the leaders in the room nodded their heads in agreement. In discussion of the dance hall, the leaders stated that in the past there was a band that came to the community to play every Wednesday and Friday, but when youth continued to be ticketed for being out past curfew and for underage drinking, the band quit performing in the community. After the meeting, one of the community leaders stated,

“Today I see hope at this table because each person in the room can take on one of these tasks, and we can improve our community. For example, the County Commissioner can work on the bypass, the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce can address the inclusion of newcomers, the Lions Clubs can address the needs of the seniors at the Senior Center, and the library can provide ESL classes.”

Chapter 5

Limitations and Trustworthiness

Limitations for this study include the inability for the researcher to involve every citizen within Giddings and the specificity of the study. Since much of the research was conducted at the County Fair, it excluded those community members who did not attend the event. Similarly, since the focus groups and town hall forums were held with those groups who were available, they did not include all organizations within the community. Additionally, the results are not generalizable because this study was completed in only one rural community within one state.

Additionally, being that this study is qualitative, limitations also include reactivity—the potentially disruptive effects of the researcher’s presence on participant’s beliefs and behavior; researcher bias—observations and interpretations impacted by the researcher’s preconceptions and personal opinions; and respondent bias—respondents’ questionable subjectivity such as withholding information and faulty recall.

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher used five validity procedures: triangulation, researcher reflexivity, collaboration with participants, prolonged engagement in the field, and peer debriefing. Triangulation was achieved by finding common themes across data sources and methods. The data sources refer to the participants and methods refer to the interviews, focus groups, and town hall forums that were conducted. Researcher reflexivity was a step taken by informing readers of the researcher’s biases in the discussion section of this study such as the researcher’s interest in increasing social capital within the community through the development of the community theater. This bias led the researcher to include the question of whether or not participants would like to see the development of a community theater when she conducted her interviews. Collaboration with participants occurred throughout the study

as an aspect of the PAR process. The community leaders collaborated with the researcher in developing and guiding the research questions, and then the community leaders met with the researcher to discuss her findings and provide feedback after the research was complete. The researcher also ensured the trustworthiness of this study by spending four months in the community and prolonging her engagement in the field to build trust and rapport with participants which provided the researcher with a better understanding of the community. Lastly, peer debriefing was achieved throughout the study because the researcher continually received feedback from her thesis committee members.

Chapter 6

Discussion and Reflection

Giddings recently experienced a change in its leadership with the election that was held while this study was being conducted, and this change has given the community members a sense of hope for a future that represents their needs. This study may be used to assist the leaders of the community as they move forward in their decisions concerning the development of the city. Additionally, this study may be used to inform other studies using social capital to address community development.

Rural communities are generally expected to have an abundance of social capital, and this rural community is no different. However, the cultural, social, and economical divides within this community prevent it from accessing all of the benefits that social capital may provide such as the development of other forms of capital. These divisions are caused by a lack of understanding, knowledge, and resources. The cultural division can begin to be addressed by facilitating activities that promote understanding among the cultures of the community such as adult ESL classes and community events that are inclusive of all cultures, the social division can begin to be addressed by being more aware of the experiences of new community members, and the economic division can begin to be addressed by providing resources such as financial education classes.

When asked about how they came to be in the community, most of the participants stated family reasons. For example, responses included the care of elderly parents, a family-owned business, and the desire to raise children in the community. The next most stated response was for job or business reasons. These reasons include the development of a business or employment in the community, generally in the oil or manufacturing industry or as a teacher. This illustrates that even though community members may leave the community for college or employment reasons, many natives to

the community return after some time. These responses also inform the community that many people relocate to the community for employment reasons and remain long-term. This information is helpful to know in regard to social capital. In knowing the significant number of people who are residing in the community for work-related reasons and the difficulty that newcomers face in building relationships with community members, leaders of the community may want to address the social divide to prevent newcomers from leaving which will lead to an increase in the population of their community. If so many newcomers have stayed regardless of their perception of social capital then many more may stay if the social divide is minimized.

When asked about how they address their needs, most of the participants stated that they access resources outside of their community. For example, 82% of the interview participants who discussed the location of their store of preference stated a store outside of the community. Their reasons for shopping outside of the community include: less expensive products, variety of products, fresher produce, and “specialized items” such as gluten-free and organic products. The reason stated the most was the comparison in price. One participant stated that a car-load of groceries at a store outside of the community is a fourth of the cost of a car-load of groceries at a store located within the community.

When asked about what they value about the community, most of the interview participants value something about the community. Most of the participants value the hospitality, friendliness, sense of family, and helpfulness of the community. This sense of social capital is prominent among many of the interview participants. Most of the participants who do not recognize social capital within the community are those who entered the community for employment reasons. This data suggests that community leaders are not utilizing methods to engage these newcomers.

When asked about their connection to the community, interview participants either indicated that they are very involved in the community through volunteer work or community organizations or that they are completely uninvolved. This contrast in involvement depends on the person's associations with other people within the community. For example, quite a few respondents stated that they were completely uninvolved until they met someone who introduced them to other people within the community who then engaged them in community activities, events, and organizations. Involvement depends on participants' associations because information within the community is passed by word of mouth. There is no consistent English and/or Spanish method of communication about community events and news.

When asked about their preferred method for communicating to leaders of the community, participants either indicated that they are extremely comfortable calling a leader on their cell phone or communicating with them when they see them at such and such meeting, or they are uncertain about who to talk to but would call someone in the city to find out. This level of comfort depended on the participant's relationship with community leaders.

When asked about changes to the community, the majority of respondents would like to see the development of a grocery store such as an HEB grocery store or a Walmart Supercenter. Most interview participants expressed a dissatisfaction of the current prices and available products within the community. Additionally, many participants would like to see an increase in activities for youth and young adults such as the development of a recreation center and job opportunities. These desired changes generally stem from community members' concern for the well-being of their youth and young professionals.

When questioned about the development of a movie theater, a community theater, tourism, a community college, and the expansion of the city's limits, there were mixed responses. About a third of the participants are interested in the development of a movie theater as long as it shows recent films. Similarly, about a third is interested in the development of tourism. Those who responded that they are not interested in tourism were uncertain about the idea of tourism within the community. For example, a few respondents looked confused as though they did not know why I was asking about tourism in Giddings. More than a third is interested in the development of a community theater for reasons of youth involvement, self involvement, desire for more artistic opportunities, and entertainment. In regard to a community college and the expansion of the city's limits, participants stated that there is a community college near Giddings although some community members are interested in the development of one in their community, and participants want the city to expand its limits only if it is beneficial.

During the interview and group discussions, many people stated that people within the community do not want things to change. However, 96% of interview participants stated a change they would like to see in the community. Community members would like to see their community improve in its ability to meet their needs, but they do not want to lose the small, hometown environment of their city. There is a fear that the community will stagnate and die, and there is a fear that the community will grow too large. This research has found that the community is unlikely to die because community members continue to return. The social capital within Giddings is valued and motivates people to return because they want to raise their families in a community that they trust. However, the level of social capital currently within the community is not enough to promote the development of other forms of capital such as economic capital.

The data illustrate that social capital is present but not fully accessed. There are problematic factors such as cultural, social, and economic divides. Although social capital is apparent within the community, with 73% of participants conveying an appreciation and trust of fellow community members, there are feelings of exclusion and a lack of acceptance. These feelings will only increase as the population continues to grow and change if the leaders do not address these divides.

In the final meeting with the community leaders, the researcher observed bridging of social capital as the leaders recognized some of their similar visions for the community. Some of the community's leaders also recognized how they could begin to improve the community's social capital. The leaders of the community communicated their commitment to improving the city and believe that this research has been helpful.

Many people within the community believe that the decrease in oil production caused the community to decline. However, it is generally those people who were raised in the community and have returned to Giddings to raise their families that are sustaining the community. It is understood that the aspect of the community causing people to return is the perception of social capital. This same capital may be able to prevent people from leaving. When oil is produced, there is an influx of people to the area. If these newcomers experience the social capital of Giddings, they may also want to remain in the community. Those people who have returned to the city have generally not returned to fulfill their need of economic capital. They have returned to fulfill their need of social capital. The city expects an increased production of oil in approximately eighteen months to two years. This will give the city another opportunity to increase its population and its social capital.

This study has found that in this diverse rural community, an increase in social capital can increase equality among different groups and as social capital is linked, the rural community can experience greater development.

The findings of this study are important because social capital is often understated or overlooked. When conversations begin about the need for community development, the first thought is that of economic capital. If economic capital cannot be achieved, then development processes stop. In terms of economic capital, this can include discussions of fundraising among community members which emphasizes the level of social capital among community members because those who are contacted are generally those who are well-known in the community. Unfortunately, this process excludes those who are unknown which limits the level of economic capital that can be achieved. An increase of social capital can naturally result in an increase in economic capital, as well as other capitals, within the community.

I chose to complete a study in a rural community because many rural communities are overlooked when it comes to social services. I chose this rural community because of my experience at one of its city council meetings. On my arrival, the meeting room was packed with people, and I discovered that the city council was making a decision about a controversial issue. During the meeting, I met with a community member who was extremely open and friendly, and she introduced me to one of the community leaders who introduced me to the community.

My purpose in choosing a rural community was to work with community members to address the needs within the community. Without knowing the needs of the community, I did not choose my research focus until I came to know the community. I attended a few meetings with different leaders of the community in attendance before I came to understand that the community was in the process of development. When I

entered the conversation, the development method of choice was still being discussed. In an effort to add to the discussion, I began to complete research on rural community development. I discovered that social capital is by far the most significant form of capital identified for the development of rural communities.

The method of PAR was ideal for this kind of study because it involves community members. However, I quickly found that this community is constructed of community members who are either overly involved and lack time or not involved at all. These dynamics made it difficult to complete the PAR process in the traditional manner. Instead, the PAR process was adapted to fit this community. I identified some of the key leaders within the community and engaged them in the research process by requesting them to approve my research method and questions. They also provided guidance during the research process and met with me to discuss the results once the process was complete.

During the approval process, I discovered that I had unintentionally placed the priorities of a couple of organizations above the priorities of the overall community. I made this error by spending a significant amount of time with a couple of organizations and assuming that their priorities were the community's priorities. This caused me to re-evaluate my questions and assumptions in regard to the city's priorities prior to completing my research.

Before the data collection process, I was uncertain about how I was going to connect social capital and community development. I initially thought social capital could be developed through the renovation of a community theater, and then I realized that I was placing my interests above the interests of the community. Similarly, I was very interested in the dynamics between the Hispanic population and the rest of the

community since there is such a high population of Hispanic people within the city, and I had to adjust my focus to reflect the needs of the whole community.

The data collection process began with Hispanic members of the community because a bilingual friend was able to interpret on the first day of the County Fair. Before conducting the interviews, I believed that Spanish-speaking people would be easy to locate and comfortable because they are speaking with a Spanish-speaking person. Both assumptions were wrong. We only had the opportunity to speak with three people who speak only Spanish and two of the three were very uncomfortable and brief in their responses.

During the interviews, I found that many of the participants had similar things to report. The main topic that was emphasized and repeated consistently was the desire for an HEB grocery store or Walmart Supercenter. I determined that the point of saturation was reached about seven participants into the research process, but I continued to conduct interviews with the expectation that I would discover more information.

Even after all of the interviews, I was uncertain about what information I had discovered. I only knew for sure that other than the desire for more grocery stores, there were divides within the community. I knew that there were cultural and social divides but was not sure about any others until the last week of my research when I conducted the focus groups. It was during one of these conversations that I discovered the economic divide. It took me some time to become aware of this divide because participants did not mention it during the interviews, and I found that my associations were with people of one class – generally those associated with the upper class.

In looking back at my research methods, there are a few things that I would have done differently. First, I would have spent more time understanding the experience of the African American community. Second, I would have spoken with a group of Spanish-

speaking community members in a place of their choosing where they could be comfortably surrounded by people they trust. Third, the final meeting with the community's leaders was rushed. I would have guided the discussion in a different manner to ensure that more of the topics were discussed thoroughly.

During this process, I learned the importance of understanding how a community has come to develop and what draws people to the community. For example, this community is significantly different than the communities that surround it, and it is different because it was developed differently. Giddings resulted from railroad and oil industries which attracted mostly German and Hispanic populations to the area. The community was built on blue-collar workers who generally worked hard for the success they have achieved. In the past, the city has been developed in response to the needs of these industries. For example, the community has train depots and railroads that were developed during the train industry and empty buildings and oil rigs that were developed during the oil boom. I learned that rural communities cannot be grouped because although they may have some similarities, they are all very unique and different because rural communities are mostly defined by their people and not their industries.

Since community members are so influential, PAR is an excellent method to use in a rural community. First, this method allows the researcher to build relationships with community members, providing a level of trust that assists in the research process. More importantly, this method allows the researcher to work with community members to make changes which empowers community members and ensures that the results will be helpful to the community. This process also ensures that any action that occurs as a result of the research will be sustained and supported by community members.

Additionally, I learned that the field of social work is underutilized in this rural community. During the time of my research, there was only one social worker who

worked in Giddings. There are two main social service facilities in the city. One facility staffs the social worker, and the other facility is staffed by caseworkers. I was not surprised by this situation, but I was surprised to find that many of the social service workers I spoke with do not live in the community and are not engaged in community activities or with community members who do not seek their services. I understand that the agencies serve other communities as well, but this lack of engagement does not benefit Giddings. I believe it is a social worker's responsibility to become involved in his/her community and to assist in its development. If there were more social workers in Giddings, perhaps some of its divides would have already been addressed. It is important for social workers to explore employment opportunities in rural areas because they are often overlooked.

Chapter 7

Recommendations and Plan of Action

Throughout this research process, there have been discussions about other communities and what they do or do not offer to their community members and business developers. Instead of focusing on other communities, the people of Giddings need to focus on the feasibility and success of projects that will benefit the members of their community. Their community is unique and rich in its own way.

Based on the results of this research, there are four things that will immediately increase the level of social capital in Giddings. First, a welcoming committee needs to be established so newcomers will feel included and welcome. Second, a consistent and reliable source of information needs to be implemented in English and Spanish and community members need to be notified of this method in English and Spanish. Third, a rotating sponsorship needs to be developed to support the needs of the seniors at the Senior Center such as the need for condiments during meals and prizes for monthly activities. Fourth, a covering needs to be placed over the table on the patio of the Senior Center to protect seated individuals from the sun. These additions will minimize the social divide and some of the economic divide.

There are two other additions that will benefit the community but will take a little more time to develop. These additions include English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adult learners and cultural activities that celebrate the cultures of community members such as a Mexican Bingo (Loteria) and German Fest (Volks Fest). Both of these additions to the community will assist in minimizing the cultural divide.

Additionally, there are some additions that will be long-term development projects. These projects should include changes that are desired by community members: improve grocery prices and options; make the door to the Senior Center

accessible for people who are handicapped; develop a recreation center for community members and a dance club for youth; and determine the feasibility of developing a movie theater for the community. A drive-in movie theater may be successful and increase the city's revenue since the nearest one is located an hour and a half away. These changes will increase the overall social capital within Giddings as the city's leaders begin to address the needs of community members. The building of trust, networks, and enriched interactions within the community can revitalize Giddings and result in the development of other forms of capital that are in short supply.

Appendix A
Interview Questions

1. First, how did you come to be in this community?
 - a. Native? *Explore number of generations and ethnicity*
 - b. Moved here? *Why? With whom?*
 - c. Moved away at any point (ex: college)? *If so, why leave and why return?*
 - d. Affiliation with business/school/org?

2. Please tell me a little about how/where your needs are met. (Exploring which needs are not being met within the community.)
 - a. Education - *kids/self*
 - b. Employment – *consider lack of jobs*
 - c. Housing – *consider lack of affordable housing*
 - d. Goods – *food, clothes, etc. – consider lack of affordable groceries*
 - e. Social – *consider language barriers/activities for various age groups*
 - f. Cultural –*consider cultural barriers*
 - g. Health – *consider lack of medical services*
 - h. Religious
 - i. Transportation – *consider lack of public transportation*
 - j. Family connection
 - k. Resources -- *consider lack of knowledge*

3. What do you value about this community?
 - a. Quiet/peaceful/rural
 - b. Community members/support
 - c. History
 - d. Easy place to live, get things done, commute

4. What makes you feel connected to this community?
 - a. Involvement? *Determine how- sports/orgs*
 - b. Family? *Including family history*
 - c. Church? *Determine which*
 - d. Employment? *Determine where*

5. If you had a problem, how would you feel comfortable communicating the issue to the leaders of the community? What makes this method preferable?
 - a. City council meetings
 - b. Voting
 - c. Membership within an organization
 - d. Through word of mouth
 - e. Personal conversation
 - f. Website

6. Would you like to see this community change in any way? If so, what changes would you like to see?
 - a. Expand big business
 - b. Farmer's Market
 - c. Community theater
 - d. Support and expand locally owned shops
 - e. Community college
 - f. Tourism

For statistical purposes, I'd like to know some basics about you. Can you tell me your: Race, age within the decade range, level of highest completed education, number of children, length of time within the community, primary language, and employment status.

Appendix B
Consent Form

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Desirée Frederickson, Office of Graduate Studies, desiree.frederickson@mavs.uta.edu.

FACULTY ADVISOR

Rebecca Hegar, Social Work, rhegar@uta.edu.

TITLE OF PROJECT

The role of social capital in rural community development.

INTRODUCTION

You are being asked to participate in a research study about rural community development. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinuing your participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

PURPOSE

The specific purpose of this research study is as follows: To find out the circumstances that drew you to this community, your experiences while living in this community, and how this community is addressing your needs.

DURATION

Participation in this study will last approximately 15 minutes.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The number of anticipated participants in this research study is 50.

PROCEDURES

The procedures which will involve you as a research participant include:

1. Answering six interview questions.
The interview will be documented in writing. Your words will be written exactly as they are heard, word-for-word, by the researcher.
2. Providing some basic information about yourself for statistical purposes.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

Participating in this research may benefit the community. Any information learned through these interviews will be communicated to the leaders of the community and social/civic organizations within the community so they may better understand the values and needs of community members and take these values and needs into consideration as they explore methods for community development.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no perceived risks or discomforts for participating in this research study. Should you experience any discomfort please inform the researcher, you have the right to quit any study procedures at any time at no consequence.

COMPENSATION

No compensation will be offered for participation in this study.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

There are no alternative procedures offered for this study. However, you can elect not to participate in the study or quit at any time at no consequence.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in any or all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequence.

CONFIDENTIALITY

There will not be any records kept to identify you as a subject. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a participant. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway; it will be anonymous. The IRB at UTA has reviewed and approved this study and the information within this consent form.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. Data collected from this study will be stored in the Social Work Department for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a participant. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway; it will be anonymous. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA Institutional Review Board (IRB), and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above. The IRB at UTA has reviewed and approved this study and the information within this consent form. If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, the University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law.

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Signature and printed name of principal investigator or person obtaining consent
Date

CONSENT

By agreeing to continue with this interview, you are providing your implied consent to participate, understand the information provided to you about the study, and are at least 18 years of age.

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Biographical Information

Desirée D. Frederickson has spent most of her life in a classroom. After high school graduation, she completed her Bachelor of General Studies in English and Government at Texas Woman's University, and then she went on to complete her Master of Arts in English at Texas Woman's University. Desirée then volunteered in the Peace Corps as a teacher at a university in Kazakhstan and is now completing her Master of Social Work Degree in Community and Administrative Practice. She will be taking a sabbatical from her "life-time-in-the-classroom" status to explore a career in community practice. Sometime in the future, however, Desirée does plan to reclaim her status in pursuit of her Doctorate in Social Work.