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1-10-2018

Relationships between Connection to Community, Perceived Community Outcomes and Individual Well-Being

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Vogt, Becky, "Relationships between Connection to Community, Perceived Community Outcomes and Individual Well-Being" (2018). *Cornhusker Economics*. 938.

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Cornhusker Economics

Relationships between Connection to Community, Perceived Community Outcomes and Individual Well-Being

Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	1-5-18
Livestock and Products,			
Weekly Average			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.....	117.97	118.00	119.00
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	155.15	177.43	185.07
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	137.84	154.80	158.94
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	201.84	207.08	207.99
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated	57.97	59.20	66.01
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	79.12	82.66	77.58
Slaughter Lambs, woolled and shorn, 135-165 lb. National.	141.36	134.53	127.92
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	347.30	388.43	369.87
Crops,			
Daily Spot Prices			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W.			
Imperial, bu.	2.97	3.26	3.45
3.26Corn, No. 2, Yellow Columbus, bu.	3.17	3.12	3.20
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Columbus, bu.	9.10	9.10	8.81
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow			
Dorchester, cwt.	4.82	5.51	5.99
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	2.88	2.74	2.83
Feed			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	*	*	*
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	70.00	87.50	90.00
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	65.00	82.50	82.50
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	110.00	144.00	145.50
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	43.50	44.00	45.25
* No Market			

Community attachment or connection to a community has been shown to be related to numerous items. The Knight Foundation's Soul of the Community project found positive correlations between community attachment and local GDP growth. They also found higher levels of community attachment were related to community social offerings, openness of the community to different types of people and aesthetics of the community. Community attachment has also been related to decreased mobility of residents (people attached to their community are more likely to want to stay there). However, is community attachment also related to perceived change in the community and perceived powerlessness of the community? In addition, is community attachment related to individual well-being? Data from the 2017 Nebraska Rural Poll (conducted in the spring of 2017) can examine these questions.

The Knight Foundation defines community attachment as an emotional connection to a place that transcends satisfaction, loyalty and even passion. Attachment can be operationalized in various ways. In the 2017 Nebraska Rural Poll, respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with various statements about their community. Two of those items cover emotional connection: "I feel connected to this community" and "I have a good bond with others in this community." Most rural Nebraskans agree or strongly agree that they have a good bond with others in their community (63%) and that they feel connected with their community (54%).

These two items were combined to create a scale of community connection. The values of this scale range from 2 to 10. For these analyses, the responses were divided into two categories: low connection (values of 6 or less) and high connection (values of 7 or more).

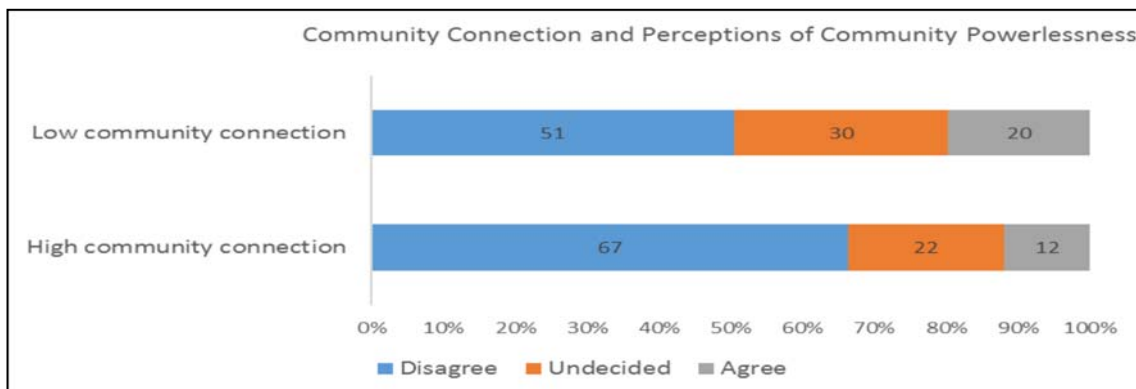
Community connection has a positive relationship to perceived community change. Persons with higher levels of connection to their community are more likely than persons with less connection to believe their community has changed for the better this past year. Over four in ten (43%) persons with high levels of

connection to the community say their community has changed for the better, compared to less than one-quarter (24%) of persons with low levels of community connection. This same pattern occurs when asked about the future of their community. One-third (33%) of persons with high levels of community connection believe their community will be a better place to live ten years from now, compared to less than one in five (19%) persons with low levels of connection to their community.

	Community Change		
	Worse	About the same	Better
<i>When you think about this past year, would you say...My community has changed for the...</i>			
Lower levels of community connection	26%	51%	24%
Higher levels of community connection	13%	44%	43%
<i>Based on what you see of the situation today, do you think that in ten years from now your community will be a worse place to live, a better place or about the same?</i>			
Lower levels of community connection	28%	53%	19%
Higher levels of community connection	13%	54%	33%

While perceptions of community change are important to gauge residents' feelings about how their community is doing now and how they think it will operate in the future, measuring their feelings about the perceived powerlessness of their community can help determine if residents believe their community is capable of achieving its desired future. There is a relationship be-

tween connection to the community and its perceived powerlessness. Persons with high levels of connection to their community are more likely than persons with less connection to *disagree* that their community is powerless to control its own future, 67% compared to 51%.



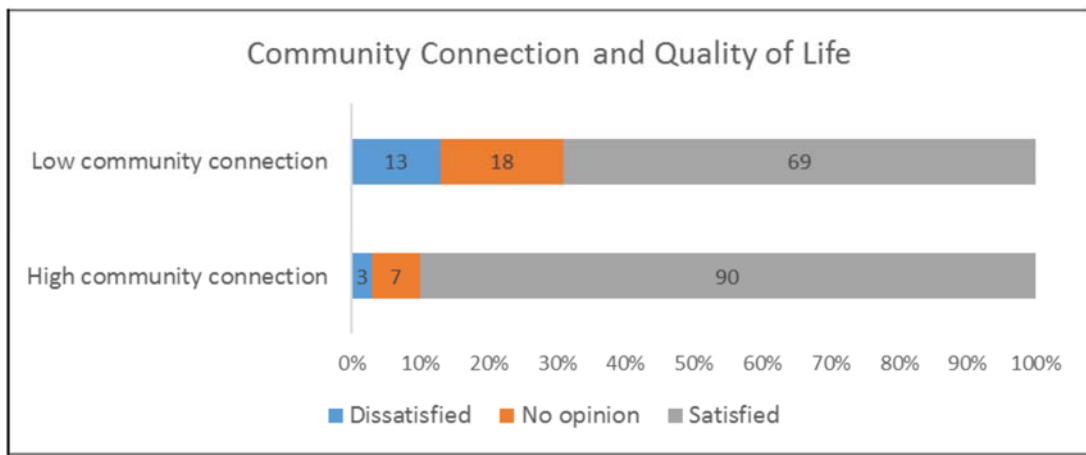
Now the relationships between connection to community and individual well-being and quality of life are examined. There is a positive relationship between connection to a community and individual well-being. Persons with high levels of connection to their community are more likely than persons with low levels of connection to believe they are better off compared to

five years ago (58% and 43%, respectively). And, the same relationship occurs when asked about expected future well-being. Just over one-half (51%) of persons with high levels of connection to their community expect to be better off ten years from now, compared to 44 percent of persons with low levels of community connection.

	<i>Individual Well-Being</i>		
	Worse	About the same	Better
<i>All things considered, do you think you are better or worse off than you were five years ago?</i>			
Lower levels of community connection	24%	33%	43%
Higher levels of community connection	11%	31%	58%
<i>All things considered, do you think you will be better or worse off ten years from now than you are today?</i>			
Lower levels of community connection	21%	35%	44%
Higher levels of community connection	12%	37%	51%

Similarly, there is a positive relationship between connection to community and satisfaction with quality of life. Nine in ten (90%) persons with high levels of connection to their community are satisfied with their

general quality of life. In comparison, just under seven in ten (69%) persons with low levels of connection to their community are satisfied with their general quality of life.



In summary, high levels of connection to their community are related to positive perceived change in the community, low levels of perceived community powerlessness, higher individual well-being and higher satisfaction with quality of life. While this relationship does not imply causation, it is important to consider in community development work. If stronger connections are fostered between residents and their community, positive outcomes such as economic and population growth can occur.

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