

Emerging Traits and Characteristics

- ### 1. Turbulence
- Rapid changes
 - Social and economic change is never equal in its impact; produces gains for some and losses for others
 - Externally driven social changes → powerless
 - As losses mount → grief → anger → reaction

- ### 2. Anxiety
- Fear of the future, because the past has produced so much change (losses)
 - Are rural people more anxious?
 - Fear of additional losses
 - Fear of prosperity

- ### 3. Weaken social institutions
- Social institutions brings people of dissimilar interests together (unlike special interest groups)
- Local government, schools, hospitals, libraries, etc.

- ### 4. Decline in civility
- Less tolerant
 - Less respect
 - Unyielding positions
 - Divided communities
 - Legal vs. ethical decisions

5. Widening gaps between groups/sectors

- Age, income, & generational differences
- Race or ethnic background
- Local versus state versus federal regulations
- Commodity interests along regional lines
- Rural–Urban differences
- Newcomers versus long–term residents

6. Consolidation of business enterprises

- Emergence of national and international chains and franchises in
- Retailing
- Processing/Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Banking

7. Occupational changes

Moving from a nation of self–employed entrepreneurs, business persons to one of hired managers and employees

Independent businesses, storekeepers, farmers, self-employed occupations formed the basis of rural employment

8. Callousness

- Indifference, apathy, & in cases disdain
- Erosion in community and trust, tearing of the social fabric
- Blaming the victim
- Orientation to individual rather than group or collective needs, “what is good for me?” rather than “what is good for the community?”

Are these trends creating a “*distrustful culture*”?

- Where people no longer know each other
- Where people no longer trust each other
- Where extreme individualism is primary
- Diminished respect, communication, and cooperation

Traits of a distrustful culture

- Legal representation
- Formalized contracts
- Fear of liability
- Less personal contact
- Formal communication
- Legalism vs ethical
- Suspiciousness

Is it possible that we are creating a distrustful rural culture, where:

- Many choose not to live because:
- Fear of others, fear of being taken advantage of
- Where there are perceived limited opportunities?
- Diminished attachment to community

What factors have contributed to the drift towards distrustfulness?

- Population change
- Changing role of women, the historic carriers of civic spirit
- Multiple job holding
- Hectic Lifestyles
- Aging population
- The hassles of public leadership

Building Social Capital

- Communication
- Trust
- Cooperation



The Role of Educators in Building Social Capital

- Creating opportunities for youth leadership in community development
- Providing youth with entrepreneurial skills for changes in the food and fiber system
- Developing a sense of community
- Networking
- Building sense of belonging
- Demonstrating civic duty and responsibility
- Bringing people of diverse backgrounds, interests and talents together—community building

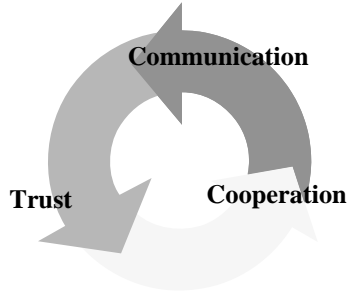
Need to Restore the Art of Neighboring

Neighbor as a verb
versus
Neighbor as a noun

In the past community development was about building things..roads, schools, churches, industrial parks, etc..

Now it appears the future of community development is about building or strengthening social capital

Towards Building Social Capital



THANK YOU