



# FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL **1** Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics

Community Situational Analysis

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## Learning Objectives

At the end of this session...  
you will be able to:

- **Explain** the value of a situational analysis
- **Conduct** a situational analysis
- **Link** the results of a situational analysis to a planning, decision-making, or action process





## Why We Do This

“It ain’t what you don’t know that gets you into trouble. It’s what you know for sure that just ain’t so.”

– Mark Twain

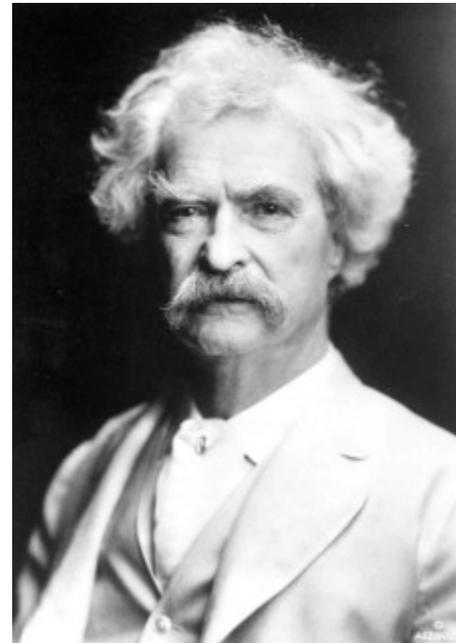


Photo credit:  
Mark Twain House & Museum.



## A Common Scenario

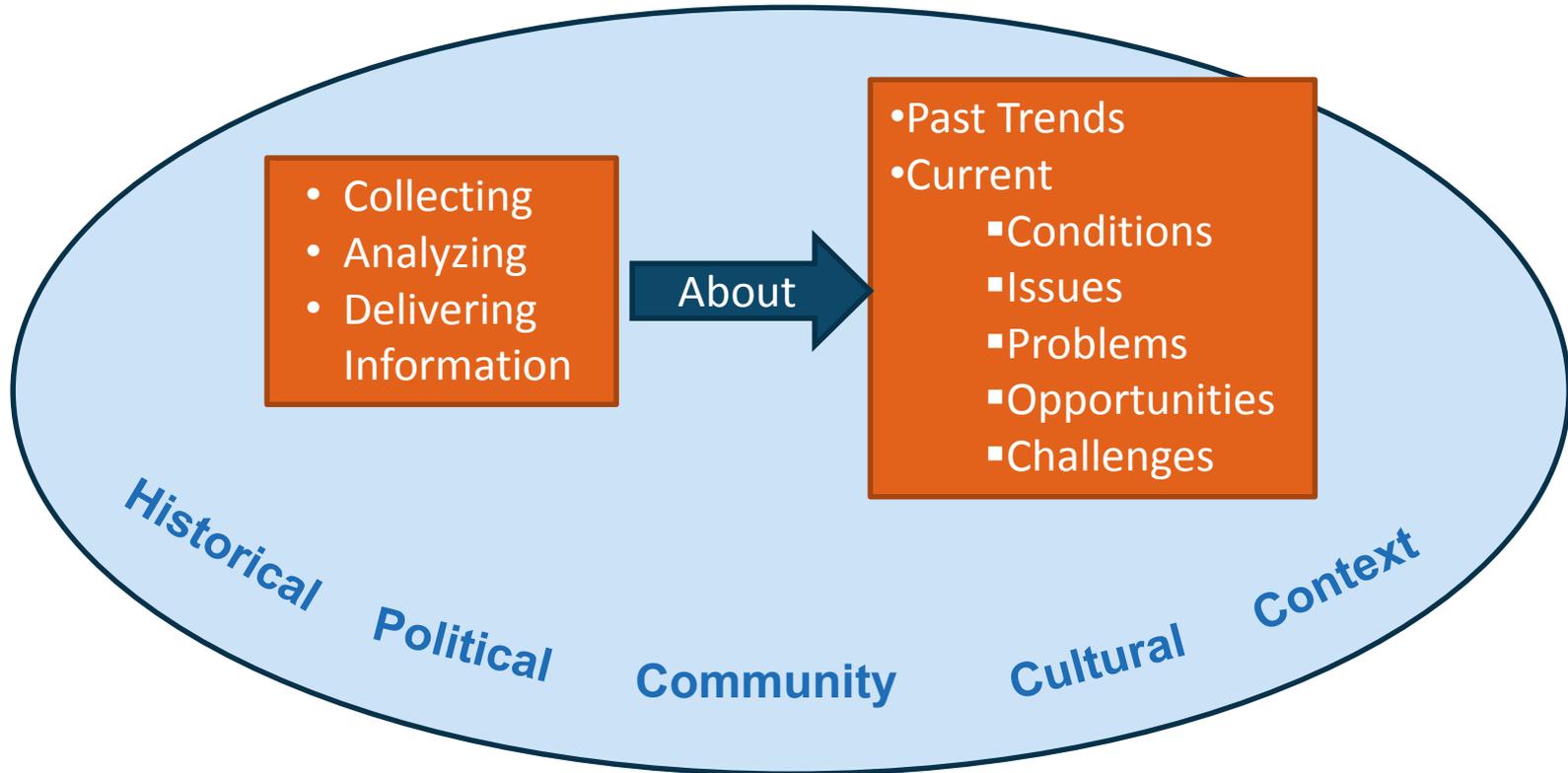
- You have been asked to help the community identify a solution to an issue that has been a source of conflict and contention.
  - What led the community to the **current situation**?
  - How the **different sides** of the conflict view the situation and its possible solutions?
  - What **support** exists for any of these solutions?





# What is Situational Analysis?

## Systematic Methodology





## Key Step in the Development Process

- Where are we now?
  - **Situational analysis**
- Where do we want to be in the future?
  - Develop a guiding vision for tomorrow
- How do we get to the future we desire?
  - Develop and implement a plan – then evaluate





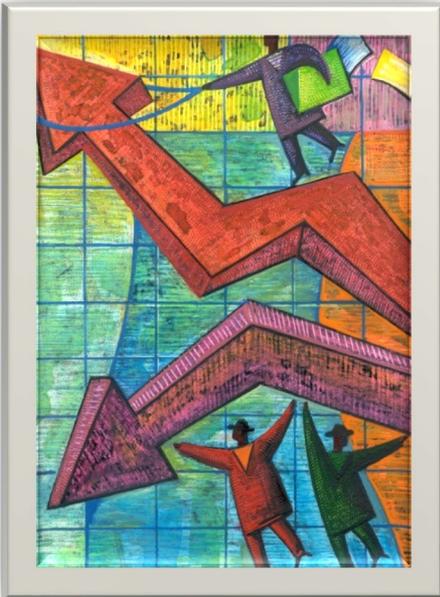
## Ways to Use Situational Analysis

- Define the current situation
- Clarify community values
  - Who are we?
  - What do we stand for?
- Identify action options
  - Clarify what might be done.
- Consider consequences of potential actions, options
- Identify supporters, opponents





## Telling the Story



- **Background** on development within the community
- **Trends** in the social, demographic, and economic composition of the community
- Social, economic, and environmental **processes** operating in a community
- **Functioning** of community systems and dynamics



# FOUNDATIONS OF PRACTICE

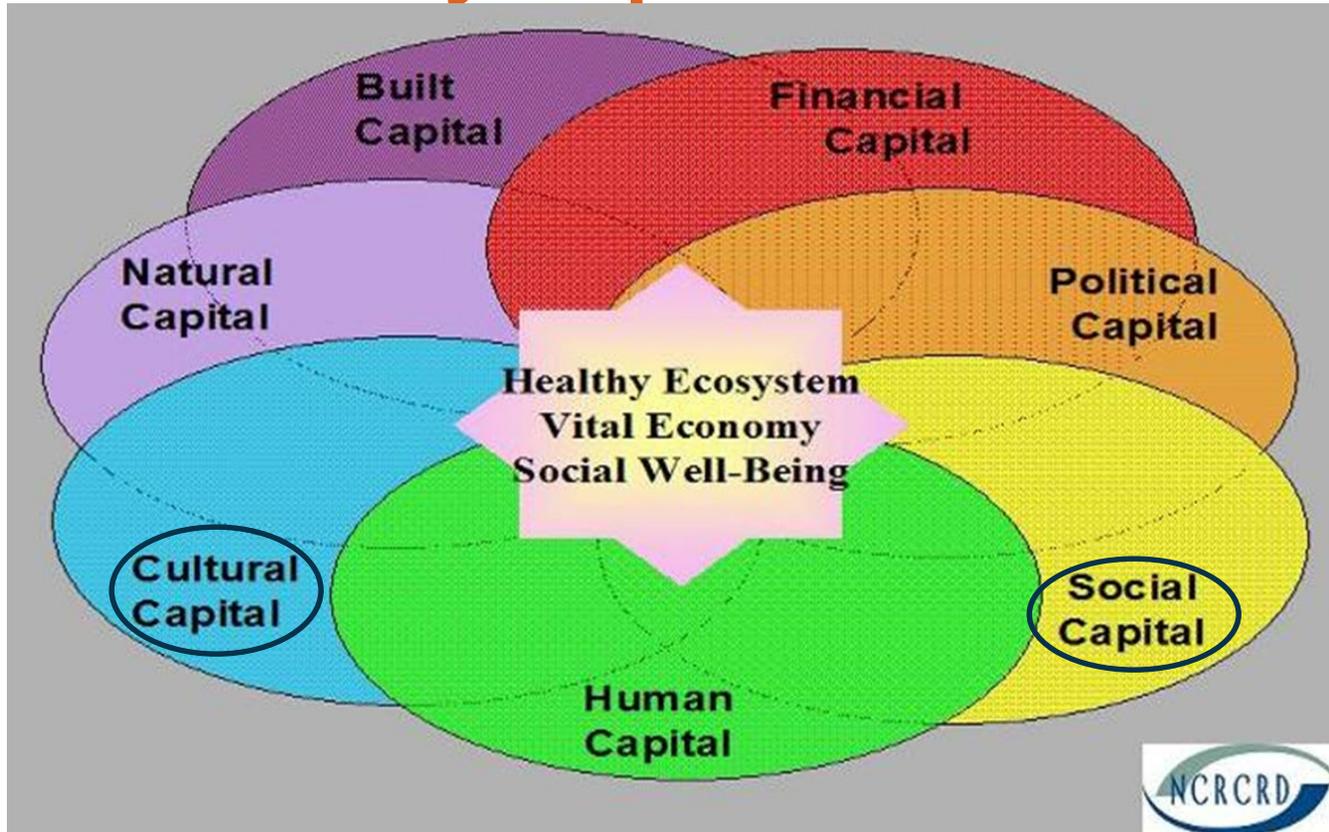
IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL

1

Understanding Communities and Their Dynamics

## Community Capitals Framework

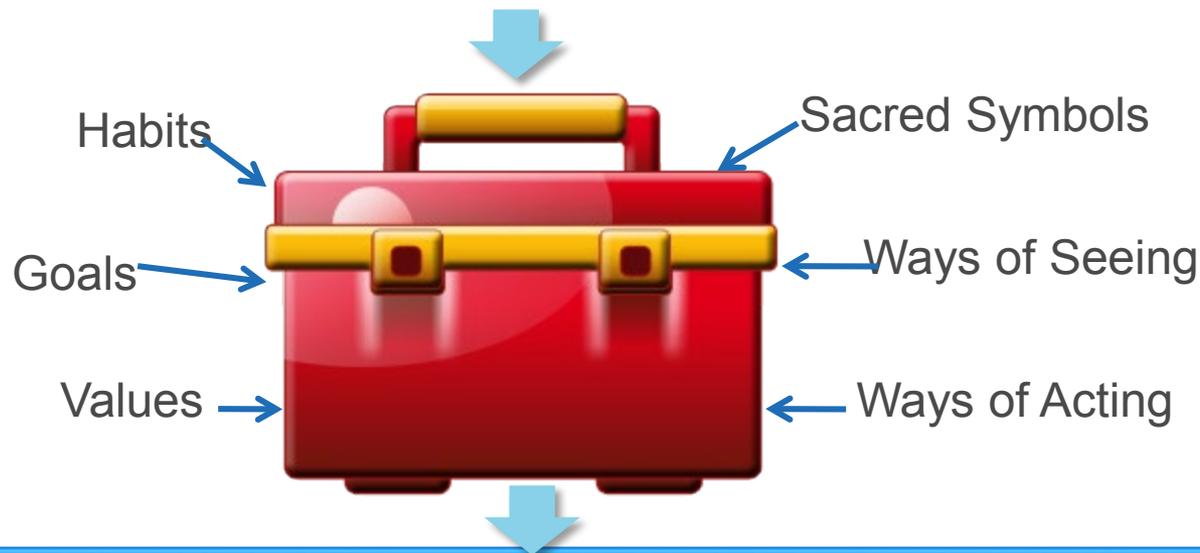


Source: Foundations of Practice: CD Core Competencies for Extension Professionals for the North Central Region



# Situational Analysis & Cultural Capital

Historical Conditions and Unique Structural Dimensions



- Interprets the meaning of past, current, and possible future events
- Comes to understand possible action strategies
- Defines its essential characteristics and experiences



## Situational Analysis & Social Capital

Facilitating Coordination & Cooperation for Mutual Benefit



- **Characteristics** of social organizations such as trust and social norms
- **Social networks** linking people together within the community and to resources outside the community
- **Willingness** to become engaged in the civic life of the community



## Process of Situational Analysis



- Define the purpose
- Gather existing data
- Identify information gaps
- Determine what additional information is needed and how to collect it
- Collect and analyze required information
- Create a report with recommendations
- Share with community



## Extension Roles in Situational Analysis

- Convener
- Facilitator
- Resource
- Examiner
- Networker





## Components of a Situational Analysis

- SWOT
- Data examination
- Key informant interviews
- Focus groups
- Network analysis
- Preparing the “report”





## SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

- An **environmental scan** of the **internal** strengths and weaknesses and **external** opportunities and threats that can influence a community decision
- A **frequently used** method for situational assessment.



## Reasons for SWOT Analysis



- Explore possibilities
- Identifying opportunities for success
- Clarify directions and choices
- Determine where change is possible
- Adjust and refine plans mid-course
- Organize communications
- Organize information gathered
- Identify external/environmental realities



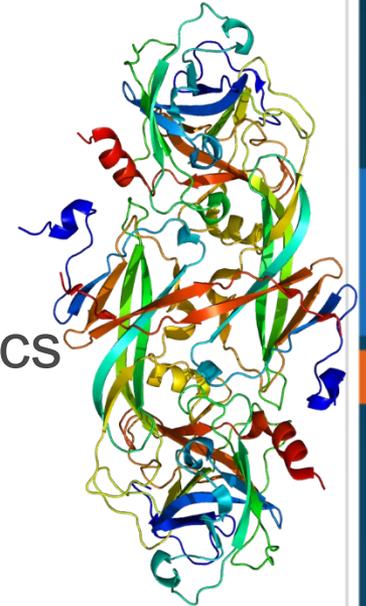
## SWOT Analysis Example

	Positive	Negative
Internal factors	<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Technological skills</li><li>&gt; Leading Brands</li><li>&gt; Distribution channels</li><li>&gt; Customer Loyalty / Relationship</li><li>&gt; Production quality</li><li>&gt; Scale</li><li>&gt; Management</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Absence of important skills</li><li>&gt; Weak brands</li><li>&gt; Poor access to distribution</li><li>&gt; Low customer retention</li><li>&gt; Unreliable product / service</li><li>&gt; Sub-scale</li><li>&gt; Management</li></ul>
External factors	<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Changing customer tastes</li><li>&gt; Liberalisation of geographic markets</li><li>&gt; Technological advances</li><li>&gt; Changes in government politics</li><li>&gt; Lower personal taxes</li><li>&gt; Change in population age-structure</li><li>&gt; New distribution channels</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Changing customer tastes</li><li>&gt; Closing of geographic markets</li><li>&gt; Technological advances</li><li>&gt; Changes in government politics</li><li>&gt; Tax increases</li><li>&gt; Change in population age-structure</li><li>&gt; New distribution channels</li></ul>



## Components of PEST Analysis

- **Political Factors**
  - Government Situation, Organization, Finances
- **Economic Factors**
  - General Conditions, Income Distribution
- **Social (Socio-Cultural) Factors**
  - Population Demographics, Health Statistics
- **Technological Factors**
  - Service Delivery, Communications





## Purpose of Looking at the Data

Create a picture of a community based on information

- Answer questions that define a community
- Identify and describe relevant trends
- Compare the community with others in the region, state, or nation





## Our Role & Data Examination

- Connect community to external data sources
- Help the community interpret the meaning and implications of the data
- Emphasize importance as part of planning or development process
- Provide information for community grant writing





## How to Do an Analysis of Trends

- Temporal (Time) Focus
  - Point-in-time
  - Change over time
- Distribution Focus
  - Across space (e.g., residence)
  - Within categories (e.g., types)
- Comparative Focus
  - Other geographic areas (e.g., counties)
  - Between groups (e.g., race/ethnicity)





## Data Sources

- Identify Appropriate Sources
  - What do you want to know
  - Why do you want to know it
  - How do you want to know it
- Types of Data Sources
  - Primary (Surveys, Reviews, etc.)
  - Secondary (Published, Derived, etc.)





## Direct Data Collection

- Surveys
  - Can capture a variety of topics:  
Attitudes, Beliefs, Behaviors,  
Attributes, Preferences
  - Can be self-selected or scientific
  - Can be biased by bad questions
- Content Analysis
  - Understanding interactions and decisions on how it recorded
  - Reality and remembrance can differ





## Cautionary Notes on Data Examination

- It is easy to get and give different impressions
- You need to consider:
  - What are they **counting**? (Not counting?)
  - How are they **counting** it?
  - Effects of **definitions** and **measurements**
  - **Time frame** being used
  - Influence of small **numbers** on **percent change**





## Common Sources of Secondary Data

Data	Common Federal Sources
Population	Census Bureau State Data Centers
Economic	Bureau of Economic Analysis Census Bureau County Business Patterns
Housing	Census Bureau Housing and Urban Development
Health	Health and Human Services Vital Statistics Centers for Disease Control
Workforce	Bureau of Labor Statistics Census Bureau



## Common Sources of Secondary Data

### Other Federal Sources

American Fact Finder	<a href="http://factfinder.census.gov">http://factfinder.census.gov</a>
Regional Economic Information Service	<a href="http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis">http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/reis</a>
Census Quick Facts	<a href="https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217">https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217</a>
Census of Agriculture	<a href="http://www.nass.usda.gov/census">http://www.nass.usda.gov/census</a>
Data and Statistics about the U.S.	<a href="https://www.usa.gov/statistics">https://www.usa.gov/statistics</a>



## Components of a Situational Analysis

- SWOT
- PEST
- Data examination
- ***Key informant interviews***
- Focus groups
- Network analysis





## Reason for Key Informant Interviews

- Selected individuals in a community who have **unique perspectives** on the issue
  - Positional leaders (Power of the **Position**)
  - Reputational leaders (Power of the **Person**)
- Key informants are persons who are either **involved with the issue**
  - As a part of their job or as a volunteer **OR**
  - Because they are knowledgeable about the community, its citizens, and its history





## Reason for Key Informant Interviews

Provide “insider information” about a community

- What people think are the **important issues** or **problems**
- How people **understand** or **give meaning** to an issue
- What people identify as the **causes** or **roots** of the issue or problem
- Which **strategies** or **actions** people believe are possible or effective





## Reason for Key Informant Interviews

Some purposes in community development activities:

- Define the **nature** of an issue
- Enumerate the community **stakeholders**
- Identify community-based **resources**
- Identify action **alternatives**





## Extension & Key Informant Interviews

- General Tasks for Extension
  - Help **identify** key informants within the community
  - Conduct key informant **interviews**
  - Help the community **interpret** the results
- Benefits of Interviews for Agents
  - **Learn about** the taken-for-granted way of life in a community
  - **Establish relationships** with influential members of the community





## Process for Key Informant Interviews

- **Determine** the critical information you need
- **Develop** open-ended questions
- **Identify** persons to interview using a snowball approach
- **Conduct** interviews
- **Evaluate** responses
  - Key phrases
  - Commonalities/differences discussed
  - Ideas/issues not addressed

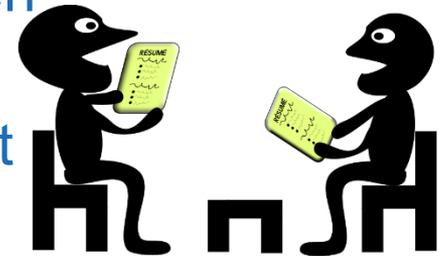




## Key Informant Interview Example

Help me understand views on proposed land use change

- How are people looking at this proposal?
- What are the people who support this proposal arguing?
  - What are their hopes for what will happen if this proposal passes?
  - What are their fears if the proposal is not passed?
  - Can you tell me who I should talk to if I wanted to learn more about the views of those in favor of this proposal?

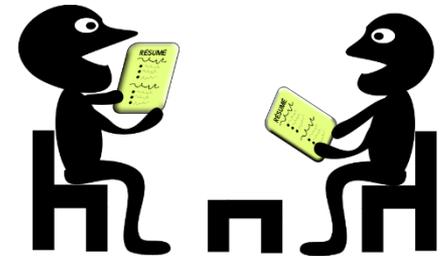




## Key Informant Interview Example

Help me understand views on proposed land use change

- How are people looking at this proposal?
- What are the people who oppose this proposal arguing?
  - What are their fears as to what will happen if this proposal passes?
  - What are their hopes if the proposal is not passed?
  - Can you tell me who I should talk to if I wanted to learn more about the view of those opposed to this proposal?





## Cautionary Notes on Key Informants

- Time intensive but relatively inexpensive
- Assure consistency in the process
- Manage the data results
- Accuracy and comprehensiveness of “sample” of key informants
- Ensure diversity of interests
- Cross-cutting issues require key informants from all spheres of influence in the community





## Components of a Situational Analysis

- SWOT
- PEST
- Data examination
- Key informant interviews
- ***Focus groups***
- Network analysis





## Focus Group Defined



- A semi-structured interview with a small groups (8-12 participants)
- Encourages flexible and creative discussions
- Engages participants in discussions of issues more effectively than one-on-one interviews
- Each person can react, contrast, or add to what others have said



## Reason for Focus Groups

- Creative group thinking is needed
- Issue or problem is complex
- New perspectives are needed
- Ideas, perceptions, and assessments are needed quickly
- Need background information
- Need to understand viewpoints of different groups
- Need to set priorities, or to identify problems, constraints, costs or benefits, or potential impacts of potential actions





## How to Conduct a Focus Group

- Define the desired information outcome
- Determine the best mix of persons
- Develop several questions to guide the discussions
- Identify a facilitator or train local facilitators
- Conduct focus group and record discussion
- Interpret results from session





## Example of Focus Group Use

### Focus Group in a Community Visioning Process

- Local residents were trained to facilitate a focus group discussion with their civic organization or in their neighborhood using the following set of questions.
  - **Heritage:** What do you cherish about this community and want to see preserved for the future?
  - **Change:** If you could change just one thing to make this a better place to live and work, what would you change?
  - **Vision:** Imagine this community as you would like it to be in 10 years. Describe how it will be different.
  - **Action:** Given this vision for tomorrow, what does this community need to start doing now to get there?



## Example Focus Group Responses

- Heritage
  - “Small town” atmosphere and the qualities of life that come with rural living
  - Beauty of the natural environment
  - History and heritage of the community – in particular the importance of family farming in defining a sense of identity and a way of life.
- Change
  - Beautification and renovation of downtown and riverfront
  - Expand and diversify the economic base by increasing employment opportunities and strengthening the retail sector
  - Identify ways to address youth-related problems



## Example Focus Group Responses

- **Vision**
  - Thriving economy providing employment and retail choices to residents and generating new income for local government
  - Revitalized downtown with beautiful river front area
  - Clean, attractive natural environment that is cherished by all
  - Retain cherished qualities of small town life regardless of size
- **Action**
  - People need to be committed by becoming more involved in decision-making, community service, community affairs.
  - Economic development must become a key focus
  - Initiate a community clean-up and create a long-term commitment to enhancing environmental quality



## Cautionary Notes on Focus Groups



- Quality depends on selection criteria and participants' willingness to participate
- Deciding on how to capture the content important
- Having a skilled facilitator paramount



## Components of a Situational Analysis

- SWOT
- PEST
- Data examination
- Key informant interviews
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- ***Network analysis***





## Network Analysis Defined



### Social Networks Defined

- Web of social relationships that link organizations through individuals who occupy positions in several organizations
- At the heart of decision making, authority, and power in the community



## What Network Analysis Involves

- Diagramming social relationships
  - Individual and organizational level
  - Relationships that link community outside its boundaries
- Identifying who serves on what boards or who knows whom

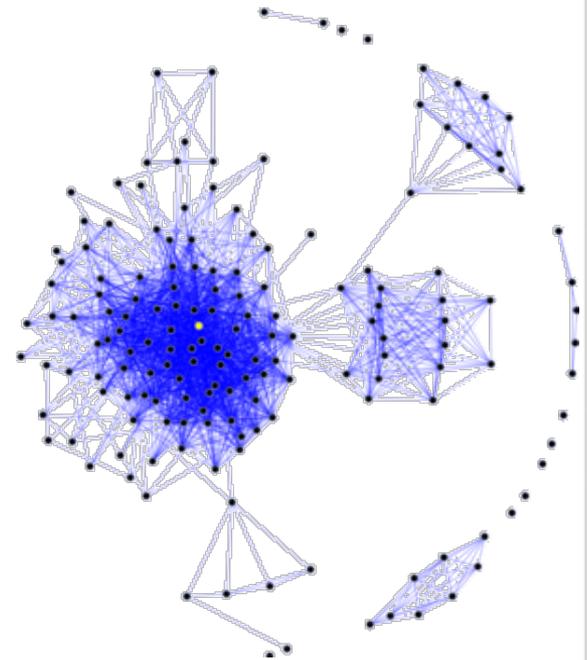




## Network Analysis Usefulness

Useful when you need to:

- **“See”** the social relationships in the community
- **Understand** how social ties make individuals’ decisions about participating interdependent
- **Use** the social relationships to **influence** a wide range of individual and social outcomes



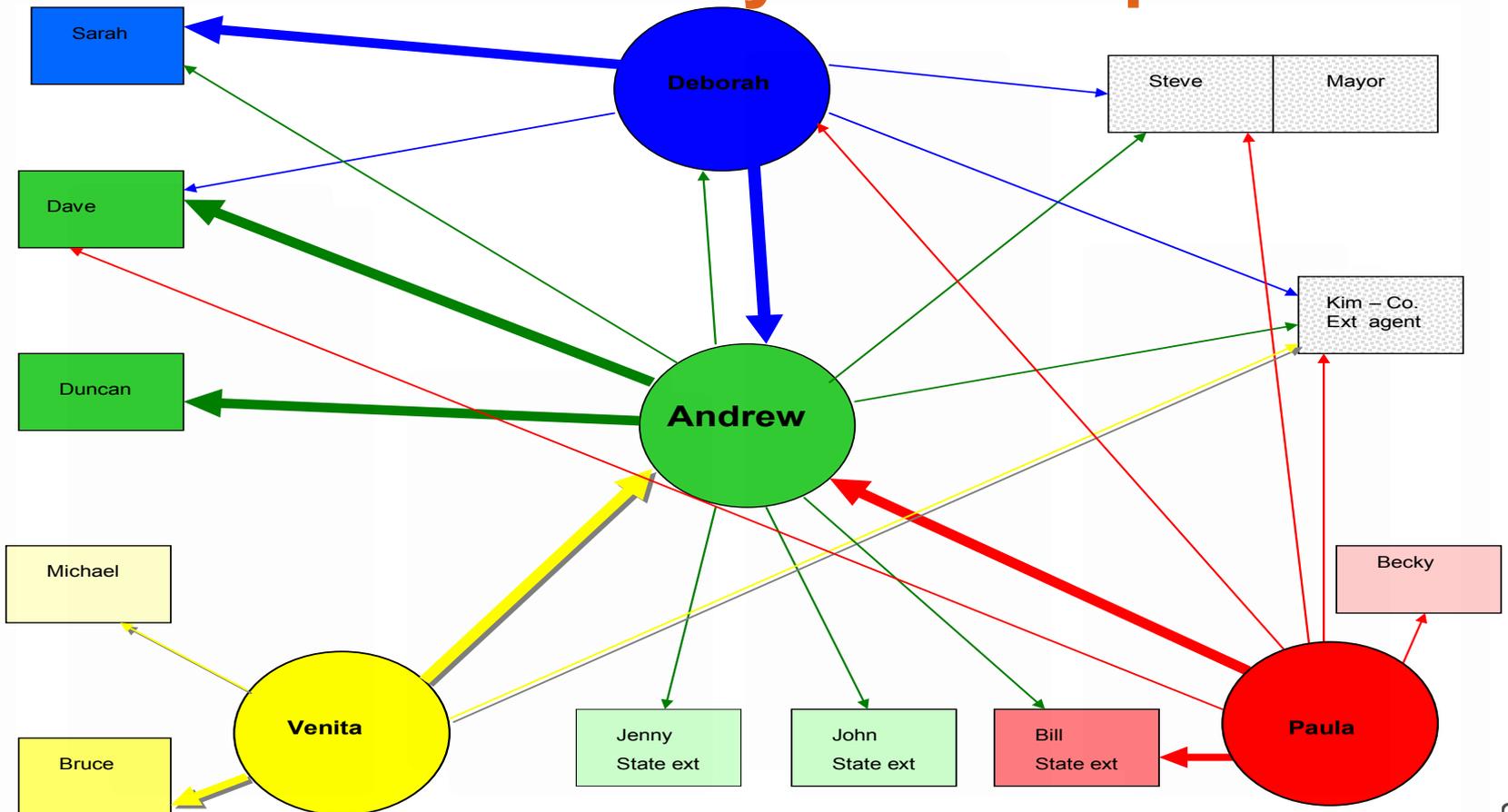


## Network Analysis Example

- A new Ag/Natural Resources County Agent in Kentucky used this method to identify their community's leadership structure. The agent began with the members of the Ag Advisory Council and then branched out from there asking these questions:
  - If you wanted to learn about how farmers in this area thinking about an issue, who would you talk to?
  - If you wanted to be sure that farmers in this area learned about a new service or program, how would you do this?
  - If you wanted to get farmers in this community to participate in a new program, how would you go about doing this?
  - Who would you say is someone that farmers in this community look up to?
  - Who do farmers in this community ask for advice?



### Network Analysis Example





## Cautionary Notes on Network Analysis

- Time involved in interviews
- May be resistance to the revealing of underlying networks of influence



But an important way to identify local influentials and those with extra-local networks



## Uses of a Situational Analysis Summary

- Defines **assets and resources**
  - What **skills and resources** do we have?
  - What do **we do** (produce) ?  
What do **we know** (how to do)?
  - What do **we need** that we might be able to **provide ourselves**?
- Identifies the **cultural capital** and **social capital** that can be mobilized for development.





## Uses of a Situational Analysis Summary

- Locates community influentials who have power based on their ability to network and build coalitions
- Identifies networks that link:
  - Persons with organizations
  - Organizations and institutions
- Provides a context for discussing public issues and making public choices





## Situational Analysis is a Beginning Point for Community Development Efforts

*The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.*

*Albert Einstein*



*The greatest challenge to any thinker is stating the problem in a way that will allow a solution.*

*Bertrand Russell*