

**Building Communities
from the Inside Out:
Drawing Upon Community Assets to
Overcome Poverty**

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Asset Based Community Development: The Theoretical Support

“The impetus for action within a community evolves from the relationships between individuals within a geographic setting”

**(Kauffman, Harold, “Toward an Interactional Conception of Community.”
Social Forces, 1959)**

When the field of interaction is strengthened & focused within the community setting, public good functions develop & the community is in a position to better manage their resources.

Asset Based Community Development: The Theoretical Support

“The substance of community is social interaction.”

(Wilkinson, Kenneth, *The Community in Rural America*, Greenwood Press, 1991).

- A) Community is an emergent phenomena.
- B) Two types of fields of interaction exist within a community.
 - 1) Social field-within social fields individuals pursue self interest.
 - 2) Community field-cuts across social fields-the actions in this field serve to coordinate other functions.

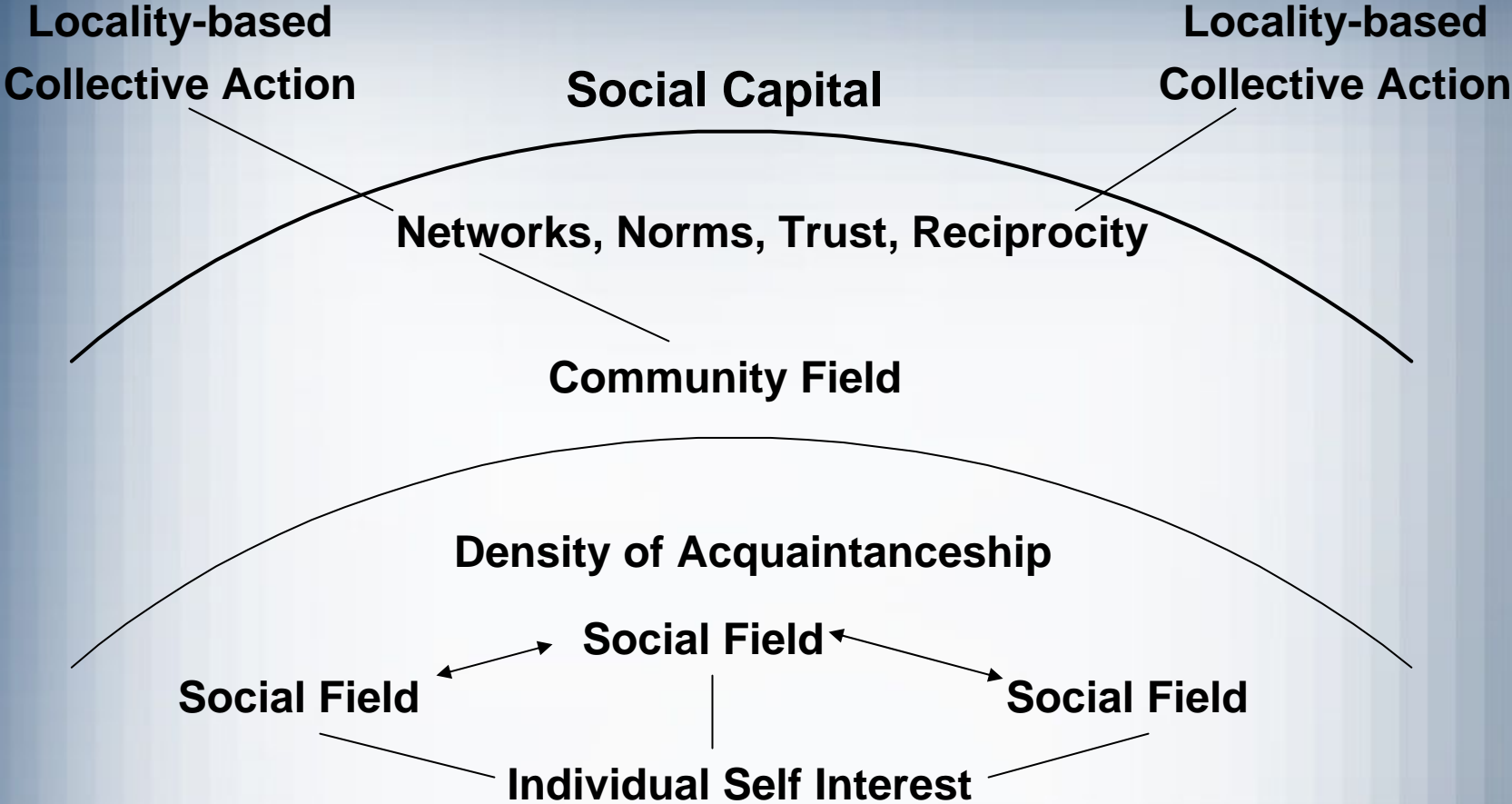
Asset Based Community Development: The Theoretical Support

“Social Capital (includes) those features of social organization which facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit enhancing a community’s ability to benefit from investments and physical and human capital”

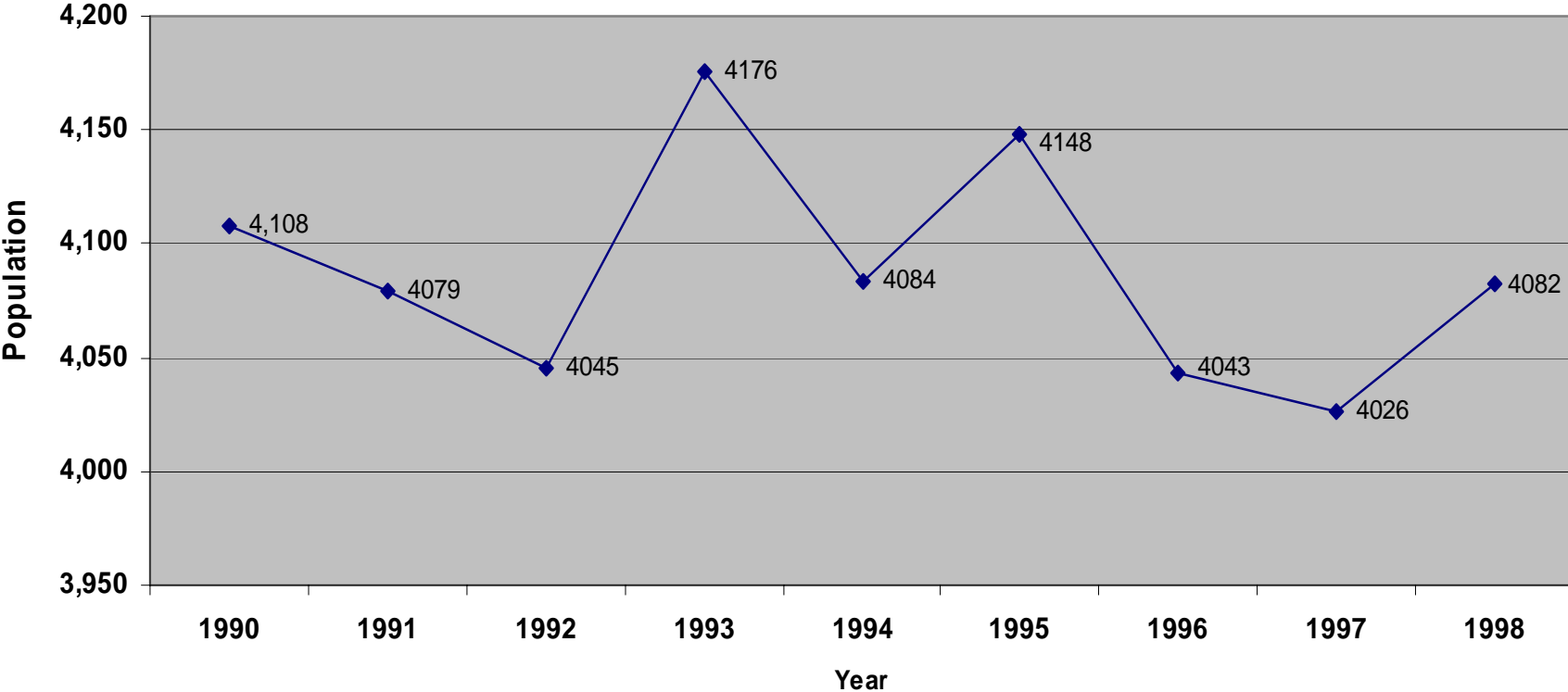
(Putnam, Robert, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy.* 1993, pp. 35-36).

The concept of Social Capital links to shared visions and mobilization.

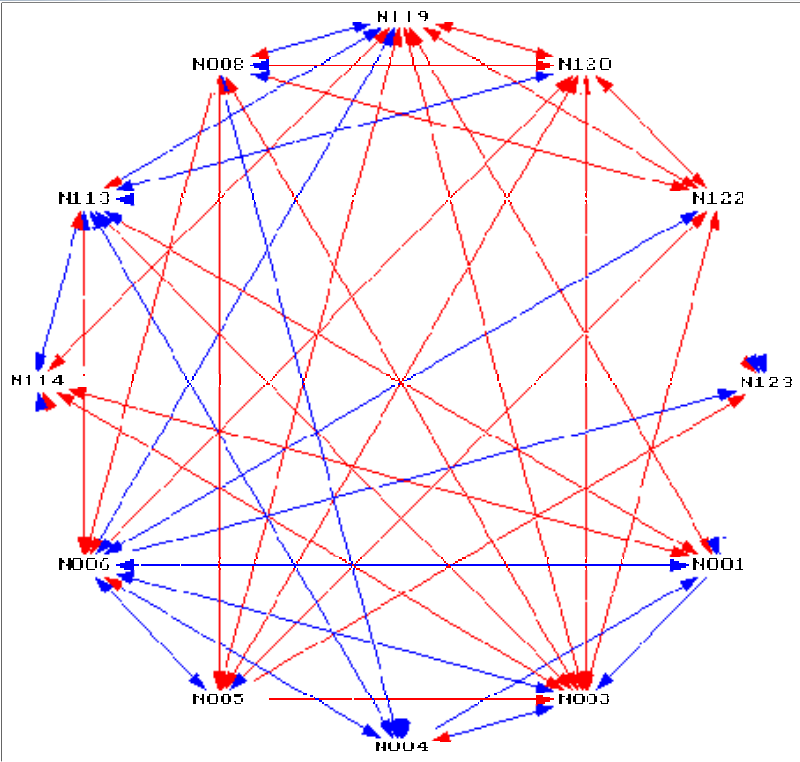
Figure 1: Relationship Between Individual Interest, Social Fields, Community Fields & the Development of Social Capital



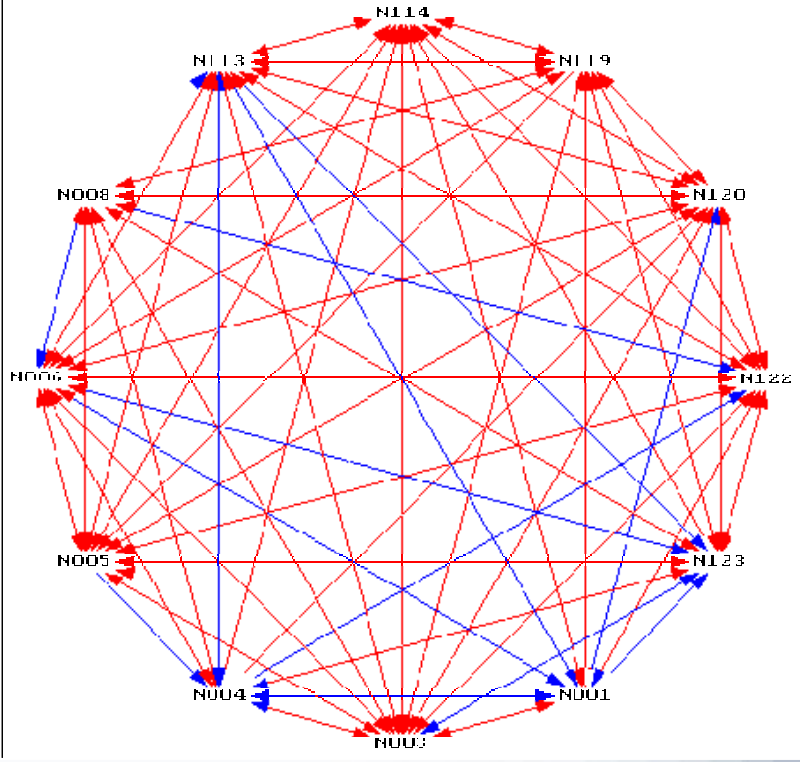
County A Population Change



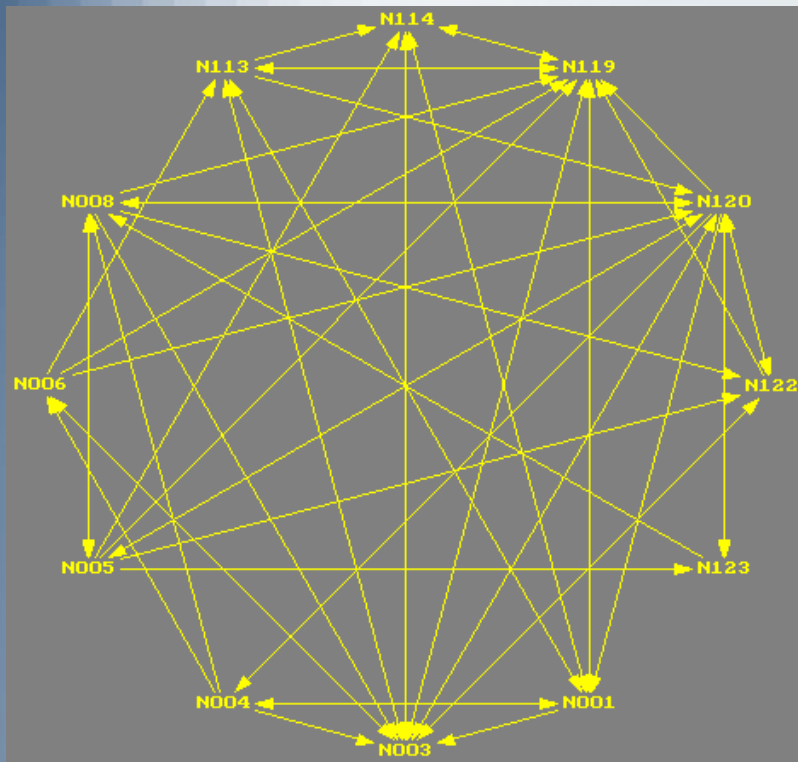
Before Personally



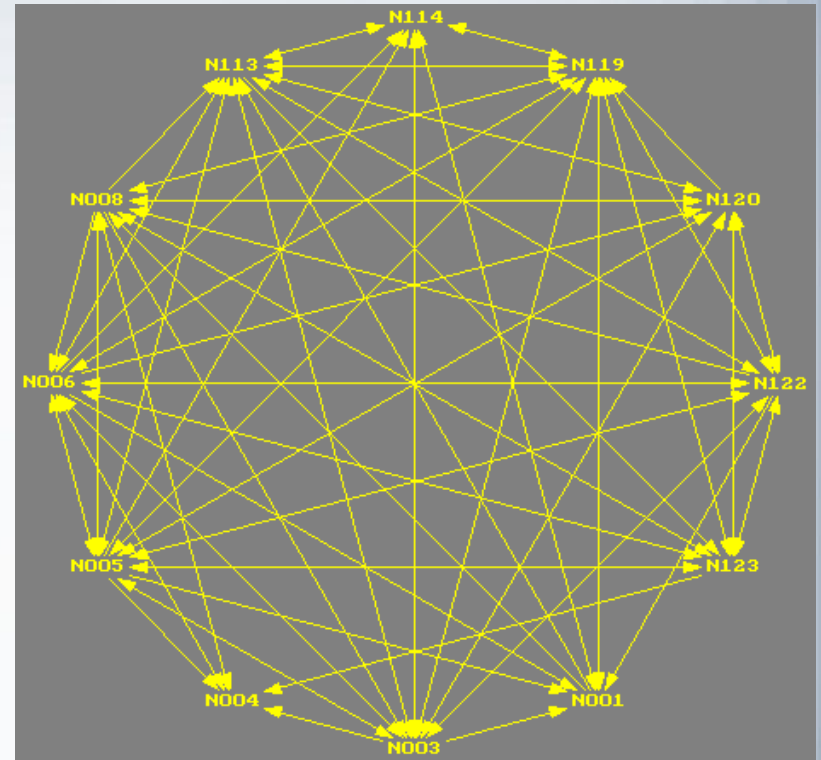
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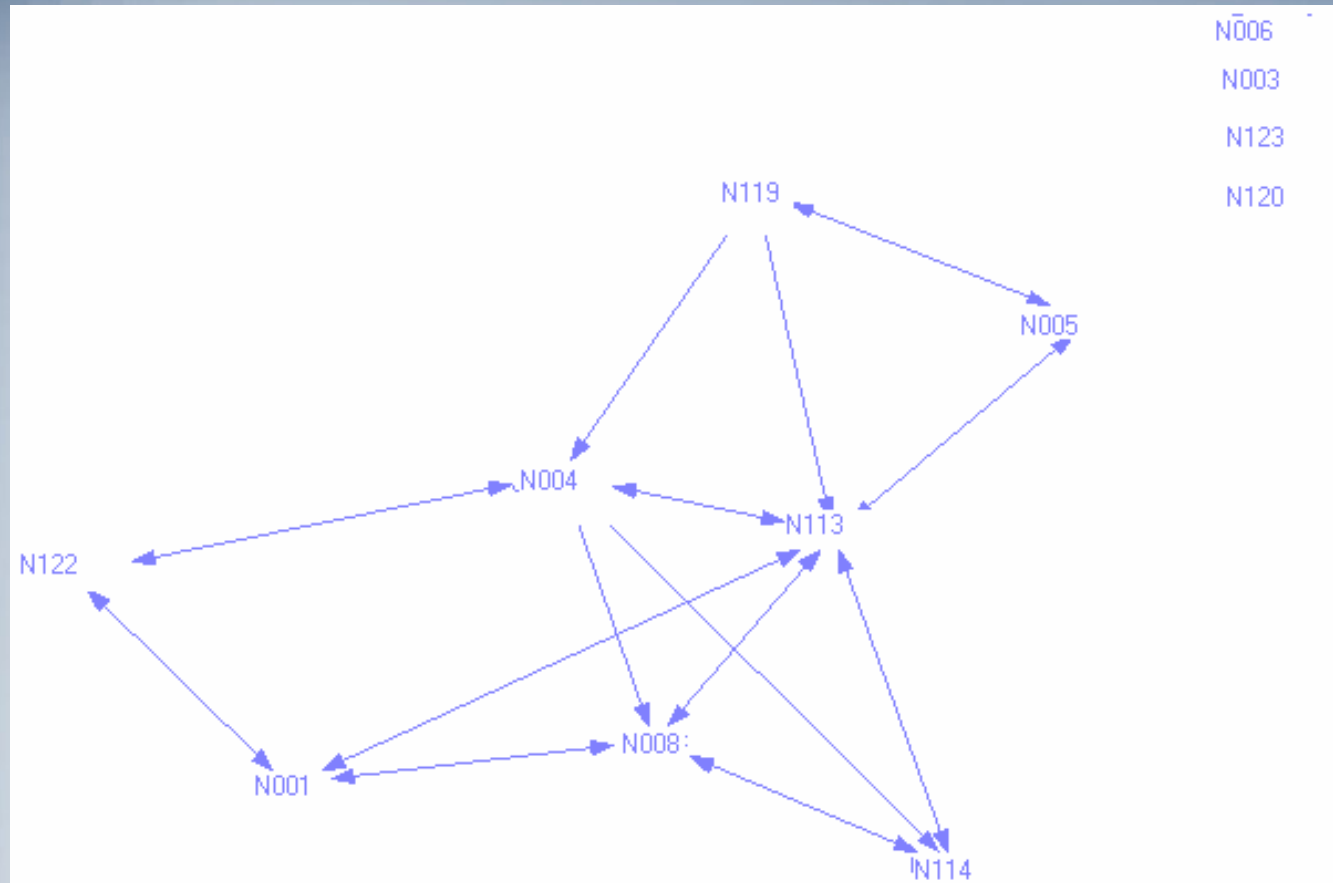
Before Professionally



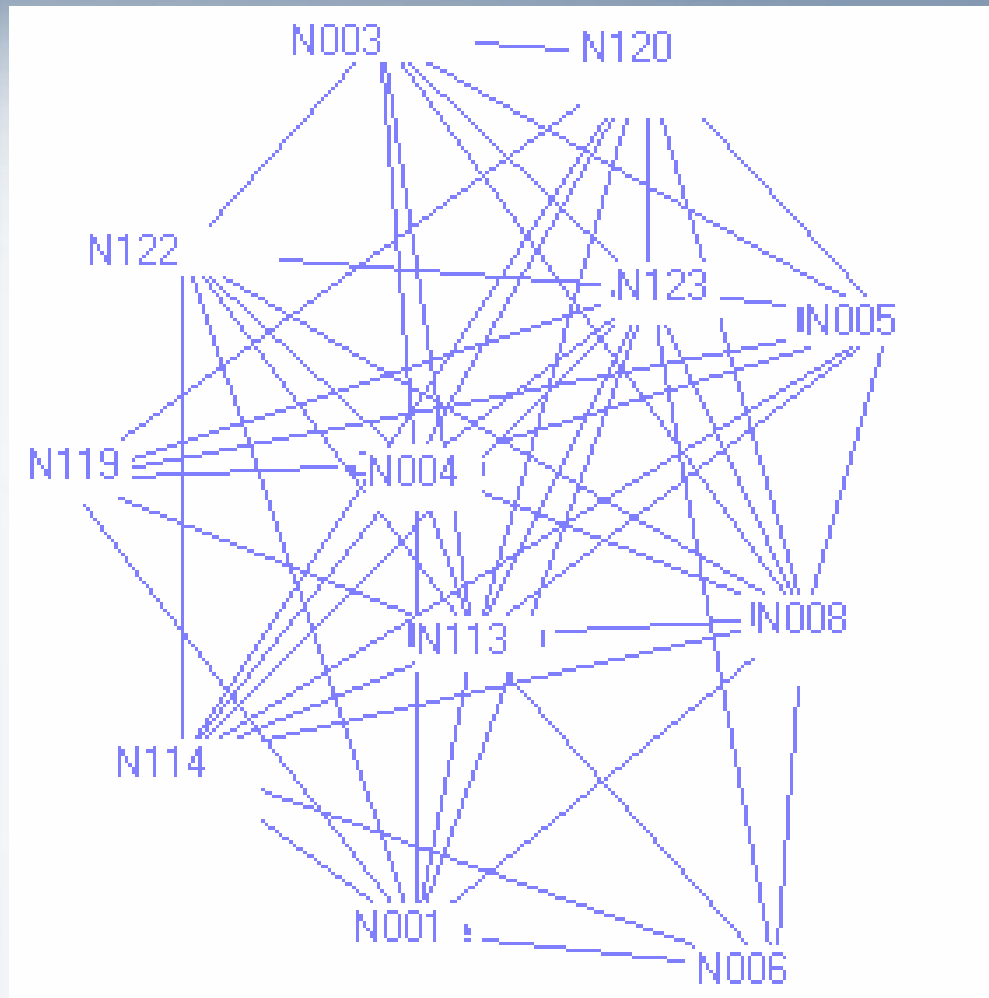
After Professionally



Network Cliques Time 1



Network Cliques Time 2



Projects Funded

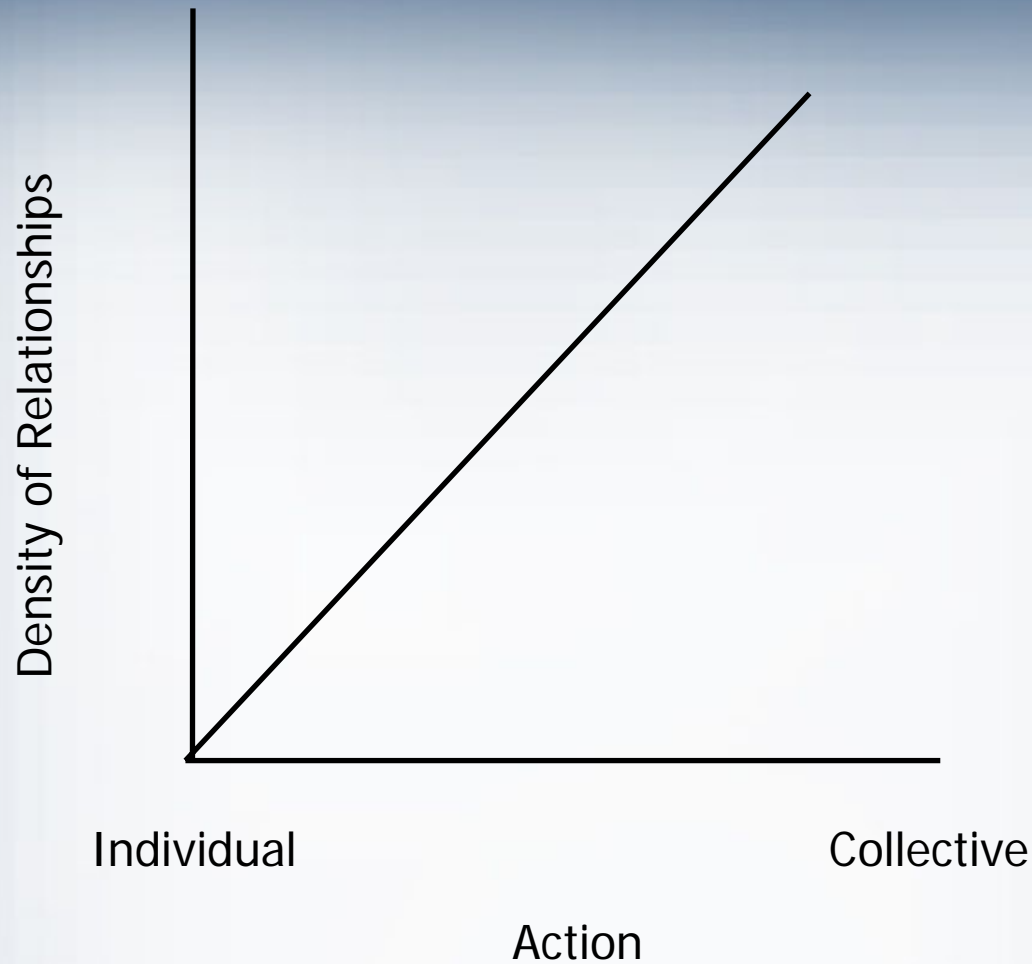
<u>1996</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Reap	\$1,000.00
Task force	
livestock	\$750.00
crops	\$750.00
education/technology	\$750.00
<u>1997</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Bio-Stimulant	
Wheat Particle Board	
<u>1998</u>	<u>Amount</u>
4-H Kids to D.C.	\$1650.00
Young Farmers Banquet Speaker	\$500.00
Hay Coop	\$5000.00
Legumes in CRP to enhance grazing	\$1500.00-
\$4500.00	
Student Internship	\$250.00
Leadership Town A	\$500.00
Board Members to Covey Training	

Projects Funded.....continued

1999	Amount
Clearing houses for excess Alfalfa	\$500.00
Dairy Coalition	\$5,000.00
Hay Coop	\$45,000.00
U.S. Ag Alliance	\$300.00
Town A Library	\$1,000.00
Farmers Day Golf	\$100.00

2000	Amount
Prairie Rhythms Project	\$1,500.00
Community Garden	\$3,000.00
Women's Marketing	\$2,500.00
PolyPay Sheep Alliance	\$20,000.00

Presumed Relationship Between Networks & Decision Making



Asset-Based Community Development

A - ASSET

B - BASED

C - COMMUNITY

D - DEVELOPMENT

Asset-Based Community Development

- Asset-based community development (ABCD) is a concept pioneered by John P. Kretzman & John L. McKnight.
- ABCD - very different philosophical base from more “traditional” approach to community development.
- Foundation for the “traditional” approach is identifying a community’s needs, deficiencies & problems.
- Foundation for ABCD is an exciting journey of discovering a community’s capacities & assets.
- There are other differences between the traditional & the ABCD approach.

Asset-Based Community Development

Traditional Path 1

Basis: Needs
Goal: Institutional Change
Conversation: Problems & Concerns
Change Agent: Power
View of Individual: Consumer, Client

Needs based on community
“Problems”

Unemployment, gangs,
truancy, broken families,
housing shortage, crime, child
abuse, illiteracy, welfare,
dropouts, etc.

Alternative Path 2

Assets
Building Communities
Gifts & Dreams
Relationships
Producer, Owner

Assets based on community
“Treasures”

Youth, elderly, artists,
churches,
schools, businesses, parks,
libraries, cultural groups,
community colleges, clubs,
hospitals, farms, ranches, etc.

Asset-Based Community Development

- The ABCD approach sees the community as a “treasure chest” to be built upon. Resources from outside the community (e.g., external grants) should be used only as a last resort in order to fill “gaps.”
- Asset mapping and asset mobilization are very different concepts.
- Asset mapping is an inventory of the community’s treasure chest. In the process of this inventorying, important relationships are developed. However, asset mapping is NOT an action step.

Asset-Based Community Development

- Asset mobilization IS an action step. Mobilizing assets for collective action requires organizing and harnessing the relationships that exist within the community.
- There are at least six important categories of assets within any community: the assets of individuals, the assets of associations, the assets of institutions, economic linkages and business assets, the natural resources and previous processes and plans for community and economic development.
- A holistic ABCD approach is inclusive and includes all five categories of assets. This is ideal; however, in some cases, the community may not be able or willing to undertake such a comprehensive approach.

$$\mathbf{A} + \mathbf{C} = \mathbf{D}$$

Assets + Community = Development Initiatives

- Greene County, Tennessee
 - Livestock Cooperative
- Trinity County, California
 - Trinity Kids First Collaboration
 - Hyampom University
- Arthur, Nebraska
 - Wolf Den Grocery Store

Building Community from the Inside Out:

- Draws on all assets
- Provides opportunities for new economies to emerge
- Provides opportunities for the poor

Contact Information

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