

SAMPLE OF DISSERTATION

INDUCING COMMUNITY WELLNESS: THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN COMPLEX LIVING SYSTEMS' DYNAMICS, COLLECTIVE-LEARNING, AND WELLBEING- BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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INDUCING COMMUNITY WELLNESS: THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN
COMPLEX LIVING SYSTEMS' DYNAMICS, COLLECTIVE-LEARNING, AND
WELLBEING- BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation

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by

D. Wuagneux

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Abstract of Dissertation

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The Problem

While Vermont enjoys one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation (4.0%), the release of the projected 1998 state budget indicates that nearly 40% of the state's 1.8 billion dollar budget is spent on social services. The obvious discrepancy between resources provided by the state and the well-being of the inhabitants has led to the conclusion that the state's community development efforts are inadequate.

Despite the implementation of a multitude of community development strategies, Vermont's sluggish economic growth has led to virulent competition between communities for limited state monies and out of state commerce. The number and percentage of families and communities requesting financial assistance has increased; correspondingly, the state has continued to increase social services.

Recent research indicates that there is a relationship between increases in social services and retarded community development; further, contemporary studies indicate that the internal forces that drive community evolution also affect community development as it relates to well-being and quality of life. It is the objective of this study to discover what individual and group processes promote, and obstruct, community development as it relates to quality of life; and, how best to effectively simulate well-being- based community development that is both sustainable, by ease of replication, and inexpensive, by using community systems in place.

Method

The review of related literature focused on the complex nature of community systems, and the intricate behavior patterns of individuals in groups from interdisciplinary perspectives. The body of research studied included works from myriad fields: behavioral psychology, sociology, biology, cultural anthropology, education, etc. All data was analyzed in context with secondary and tertiary data, and experts in field then validated the resulting product.

Findings

Although the related literature spans numerous disciplines, underlying patterns emerged. These include: (1) all living organisms progress through cycles of balance and imbalance in order to develop, (2) if progression is artificially managed from outside the organism, actual development is disrupted, (3) well-being is symbiotically embedded in an individual's self-view, (4) self-

view is improved by learning to overcome barriers, (5) group learning stimulates improved satisfaction with the group, and triggers cooperative behaviors.

These findings support the recommendation that community development programs in Vermont incorporate strategies that induce collective learning, which may be utilized as a template for continued discussion. The study is concluded by suggestions for program implementation, modification and evaluation, and the recommendation for continuing research.

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