

Rural Conversations

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The Significance of Perceptions of Rural

Cheryl L. Hudec, Jessica Burk, Usha Brandon, Colter Ellis, and Gene L. Theodori

Rural-Urban Connection—

With every legislative redistricting process, the potential for rural programs and policies becomes increasingly disadvantaged, as the number of votes representing less-densely populated areas is further reduced. It has been recognized that rural people and places need to acquire strong advocates to build support for rural development programs and policies. The most likely advocates are those persons with a sense of attachment and positive feelings toward rural areas (Theodori 2004).

Likely advocates for rural areas also have a superior understanding of the rural-urban connection. Geographically, rural and urban areas of the United States are connected by transportation systems and supply chains. Rural and urban regions are also connected socially, economically, and environmentally by activities involving land use, natural resources, migration and settlement patterns, demographic changes, access to services and employment, and tourism. "The

increasingly complex connections between urban and rural areas are beginning to be recognized but 'still have a relatively limited impact on development of policy and practices'" (Mylott 2009:3; Tacoli 1998).

Understanding the overall experiences and perceptions of both urban and rural community leaders about rural places and people is critical to guiding advocacy and building support for rural policy. Previous studies aimed at discovering the common perceptions of rural areas have concluded that "rural America was commonly viewed in two ways – from a 'rural utopia' and a 'rural dystopia' lens" (Beaulieu and Israel 2011:170). According to Beaulieu and Israel (2011:170):

For those who see rural areas through a "rural utopia" lens, rural life is simple and wholesome, local residents are hard working, independent-minded, and compassionate. Most believe that people are living in rural areas willingly, despite the many challenges that a rural existence presents. Even though the difficulties they face are monumental, rural residents want to tackle these problems with limited

interference from outsiders. Those who view rural America through a "rural dystopia" lens, on the other hand, tend to highlight negative features of what they perceive rural life to be about – backward, impoverished, poorly educated, small-minded, and constituted of people with little ambition or interest in making life better for themselves or their communities.

In the fall of 2011, researchers in the Center for Rural Studies at Sam Houston State University surveyed a random sample of 664 community/economic development professionals and city/county officials in Texas to gather information on their perceptions of the people, places, and communities in rural Texas, as well as their views on economic development efforts therein.

The sampled individuals represented a variety of organizations, including local economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, utility districts, and city and county governments. A personalized email was sent to each of the sampled individuals inviting him/her to complete the online survey. After the initial

Story continued on page 4.

Let's Start a Conversation

Texas Rural Innovators Conversations—

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Heartland Center for Leadership Development's annual training event that provides guidance and instruction for rural community leaders regarding professional, economic, and community development. The event was held in Nebraska City, Nebraska. The theme of this year's institute was: "Pathways to Community Vitality: Helping Small Towns Succeed."



Joni Coursey with Nocona, Texas EDC learned and shared at the Heartland Center's program in Nebraska.

I would say that this event was one of the *best* development conferences I have attended in the years I have been in my position at the Center for Rural Studies at Sam Houston State University. The program consisted of a mix of formal presentations and lots of *informal conversations and sharing* about individual initiatives.

More than anything, the sessions helped me to understand what *community development* really looks like, and why *community and economic development* really go hand-in-hand.

It is unfortunate that leaders in rural Texas cannot experience such events on a regular basis. The benefits were very clear to me as I talked with leaders from Nebraska's very small cities and towns where they have regular access to such training. I would highly encourage anyone from any

state looking for some inspiring and innovative ideas for their rural communities to attend.

During the institute I was especially impressed with the informal conversations held between participants. I think the participants gained significant value from this sharing. It caused me to consider starting similar conversations among Texas leaders and residents about pertinent rural issues.

Such a conversation does not have to occur in a physical location; with today's technology, it can happen online. After all, this saves resources and time for all of us.

Texas Rural Innovators offers a discussion board at: <http://www.ruraltx.org/conversations>.

I would like to encourage a conversation on this discussion board about a particular theme: "**Capturing Community Wealth.**"

With each generation, a vast amount of wealth passes from one generation to the next. In rural Texas, much of that wealth will migrate to the major metro areas in Texas and beyond, *unless* we take measures to counteract that out-flow.

Here are some questions to respond to:

- Is your community witnessing this transfer of wealth?
- What types of issues do you foresee (or have seen) with this wealth transfer?
- Is your community taking any action to address the issue?
- If so, describe the action or initiative.
- If not, why not? What is preventing your community from taking action?
- What questions do you have about the transfer of wealth?

Please take five minutes to respond to any or all of these questions regarding Community Wealth Transfer and Capture. By sharing our own experiences and realizing commonalities, we can move forward progressively addressing issues such as this one.

-Cheryl Hudec, Associate Director, Center for Rural Studies, Sam Houston State University



The Art of Economic Development in Texas

Texas Cultural Trust—

The arts are a catalyst for economic development. In 2010, the Texas Cultural Trust developed a study, “The Art of Economic Development” to look at how five cities across Texas used the arts to stimulate their local economies. The study included quantitative economic data along with short documentary films of each city including process and strategy. The purpose of the study was to document how the arts can be used as an economic development tool. Instead of the usual suspects like Dallas, Austin and Marfa, where successes are already well known and documented, the focus was on “the unusual suspects” - small- to medium-sized cities whose best practices might be emulated. Twenty cities were analyzed before landing on a final list of five: Amarillo, Clifton, El Paso, Rockport and Texarkana. Each city varied by geography, assets, size, economic base and approach.

Located approximately thirty-five miles northwest of Waco, Clifton is a prime example of the power of the arts when used for economic development. Clifton has emerged as a leading art community by leveraging the arts, the natural environment, taking advantage of the proximity to larger metro areas, and capitalizing on the generosity of local citizens. The town is home to several nationally renowned artists, including members of the Cowboy Artists of America. Clifton’s approach to the arts focuses on: 1) attracting artists to live and work in the region, 2) building an arts center by repurposing an empty and dilapidated building, 3) incorporating the arts as a key part of downtown revitalization, and 4) growing a retirement community linking arts and quality of life.

Clifton is the largest community in Bosque County with a current population of 3,500 residents. Despite its small size the town has attracted over twenty nationally renowned artists to live in Bosque County. The Bosque Art Center illustrates how a dedicated group of local citizens can turn an empty building into a vibrant community asset. Over the past twenty-five years, the Bosque Art Center has leveraged its original \$33,000

endowment into roughly \$3.7 million in private financial support and other contributions. This represents a return on investment of over 100 to 1. The combination of resident artists and the Bosque Art Center was integral to the resurgence of downtown Clifton. Since 2007, nearly fifty percent of new business startups, expansions, and relocations as well as remodeled buildings are located in the downtown. The majority of these new businesses are galleries, restaurants, retail shops, and other entertainment attractions catering to art tourists. In Bosque County, the arts are a significant economic development

and tourism driver. Approximately twenty percent of total tourism and visitor spending in the County is art and culture related. Over the past 5 years, this cultural arts tourism has generated \$220,000 in local and \$688,000 in state tax revenues. The Bosque arts Center attracts more than 11,000 visitors annually to a city with a population of 3,500.

Since opening in 1981, the Bosque Arts Center has served as the driving force for Clifton’s cultural arts scene. Not only has the Bosque Arts Center become the gathering place for local artists and aficionados, building on the success of the Center, the community has experienced a new commitment to reinvesting in downtown. Clifton citizens and public leaders have expanded the attractiveness of downtown by commissioning public art and improving public infrastructure. It is through these efforts and projects that Clifton has created a thriving arts community.

How do other communities emulate the success of Clifton? Every community has assets that might be leveraged: underutilized facilities,

abandoned movie theaters, unique terrain to excite artistic expression. Marfa is a perfect example. One art installation has created an international destination.

The Texas Cultural Trust, established in 1995, is a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to inspire, integrate, and illuminate the arts in Texas. The Texas Cultural Trust provides leadership to promote and highlight the importance of the arts in educating our children and sustaining our vibrant Texas economy. The Texas Cultural Trust produces original research and studies the impact of the Arts and Culture Industries on the Texas economy.



The Cliftex Theatre in Downtown Clifton



Clifton, TX

Downtown Clifton

To learn more about the Texas Cultural Trust and its programs, please visit, www.txculturaltrust.org. The full report and eight videos highlighting each city and featuring video testimonials from business leaders across Texas can be viewed at <http://www.txculturaltrust.org/programs/economic-development/>.



Story continued from page 1.



Gonzales County
Courthouse
Gonzales, Texas

Despite the importance of rural Texas to the state as a whole, rural people and communities are struggling economically.

email invitation and two follow-up emails, a 28% response rate was achieved. This resulted in 186 completed surveys. This article reports selected findings from that survey.

Respondent Characteristics

Survey respondents were 59 percent male and 41 percent female. The age of respondents ranged from 24 to 76, with the average age being 53. One-third of the

respondents (32 percent) had earned a college degree; another one-third (34 percent) had completed a graduate or professional degree. Roughly three in four respondents (77 percent) were white. Approximately eight in 10 (80 percent) reported a total household income of \$75,000 or more during 2010. Concerning political party affiliation, 56 percent of respondents indicated that they were Republicans, 19 percent reported that they were Democrats, and 23 percent

specified that they were Independents. Two percent selected the “Don’t know” response category. When asked to indicate the size of place where they currently resided, roughly 10 percent said in “a city of 100,000 or more people.” Nine percent indicated “a city of 50,000 to 100,000 people.” Eight percent stated in “a city of 25,000 to 50,000 people.” Twenty-four percent specified in “a town of 10,000 to 25,000 people.” Thirty-seven percent reported “a town of 10,000 or fewer people.”

Lastly, 12 percent claimed to live in “the countryside outside of a city or town.”

Perceptions of Current and Future Economic Development Efforts in Rural Texas

It seems reasonable to expect that individuals who live in more rural areas would hold differing perceptions of rural Texas and views regarding those who live in rural areas compared to their counterparts who live in more urban places. Therefore, for the analysis which follows, respondents were sorted on the basis of size of place of residency.

Rural areas are home to many of the industrial, agricultural, cultural, and natural resources that make Texas a great state. Despite the importance of rural Texas to the state as a whole, rural people and communities are struggling economically. Texas is not alone in this respect. Research indicates that the social and economic fabric of rural areas throughout the United States has been progressively weakened by a number of regional, national, and global changes over the

past few decades. Transformations in economic, demographic, social, and spatial organization have had profound impacts on rural areas all across this country. As in most other states, rural localities in Texas have been hard hit by these structural-level occurrences. On average, rural areas within Texas maintain lower per capita incomes, higher poverty rates, greater levels of aged dependency ratios with fewer workers to support those over age 65, and lower labor force participation rates than do urban areas. In addition, the quantity and quality of many amenities and public services are frequently inadequate to meet the needs of rural Texans. In rural Texas localities, pressing needs exist for job creation, increased incomes, economic growth, modernization, improved service delivery, and business recruitment, retention and expansion activities.

These challenges emphasize the need for economic development efforts in Texas and have led to initiatives designed to improve rural economies, although such

initiatives have had varying degrees of success. Understanding the experience and perceptions of these community leaders is critical to guiding future economic development efforts and to understanding the different needs of communities with varying geographic and demographic characteristics.

Assessing Perceptions of Economic Development and Urban Influence in Rural Texas

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following two items: (a) “The economic development of rural communities in Texas is necessary for their survival,” and (b) “Urban areas control the economics of rural Texas.” Regardless of size of place of residency, respondents overwhelmingly believed that the economic development of rural communities in Texas is necessary for their survival (Table 1). In response to the item suggesting that “urban areas control the economics of rural areas in Texas,” over half of the respondents who reside in towns with populations of 25,000 or fewer or in the

Table 1: Perception of Economic Development and Urban Influence in Rural Texas

| Statements | Agree | Undecided | Disagree |
|--|---------|-----------|----------|
| | Percent | | |
| The economic development of rural communities in Texas is necessary for their survival. | | | |
| A city of 100,000 or more | 88 | 6 | 6 |
| A city of 50,000 to 100,000 | 93 | 7 | 0 |
| A city of 25,000 to 50,000 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| A town of 10,000 to 25,000 | 98 | 2 | 0 |
| A town of 10,000 or fewer people | 95 | 3 | 2 |
| The countryside outside of a city or town | 90 | 0 | 10 |
| Urban areas control the economics of rural areas in Texas. | | | |
| A city of 100,000 or more | 47 | 12 | 41 |
| A city of 50,000 to 100,000 | 43 | 7 | 50 |
| A city of 25,000 to 50,000 | 46 | 31 | 23 |
| A town of 10,000 to 25,000 | 53 | 15 | 32 |
| A town of 10,000 or fewer people | 58 | 24 | 19 |
| The countryside outside of a city or town | 55 | 15 | 30 |

countryside agreed with the statement. Concomitantly, a majority of respondents who reside in cities with populations of more than 25,000 either disagreed or were undecided with the statement.

Assessing Perceptions of State Support of Economic Development Options in Rural Texas

Respondents were asked what priority (high, medium, low, not a priority) they believed the state of Texas should give to each of 10 activities to improve rural economies. Response categories were coded 3 = high priority, 2 = medium priority, 1 = low priority, and 0 = not a priority. Mean scores were calculated for each of the 10 items. High scores reflected high priority; low scores reflected low priority. Mean scores for all respondents (overall) and by size of place of residency are reported in

Table 2.

Overall, respondents believed that the promotion of tourism in rural Texas should be given the highest priority from the state when it comes to fostering economic development in rural areas. The second and third priority options included promoting the development of telecommunications networks and the development of small businesses in rural Texas. An examination of the selected economic development options by size of place categories revealed that respondents prioritized them slightly differently. For example, respondents who live in towns with populations between 10,000 and 25,000 believed that the promotion of Texas agricultural products should be given the highest priority from the state, whereas those

respondents who live in the countryside were most likely to endorse the promotion of small businesses. Regardless of where the respondents lived, though, promoting the development of retail shopping centers in rural Texas was viewed as the least popular economic development option.

The results of this study show that leaders in communities with fewer than 25,000 residents are the most dissatisfied with current economic trends... with the number of good jobs and feel more controlled by the larger economies of urban areas.

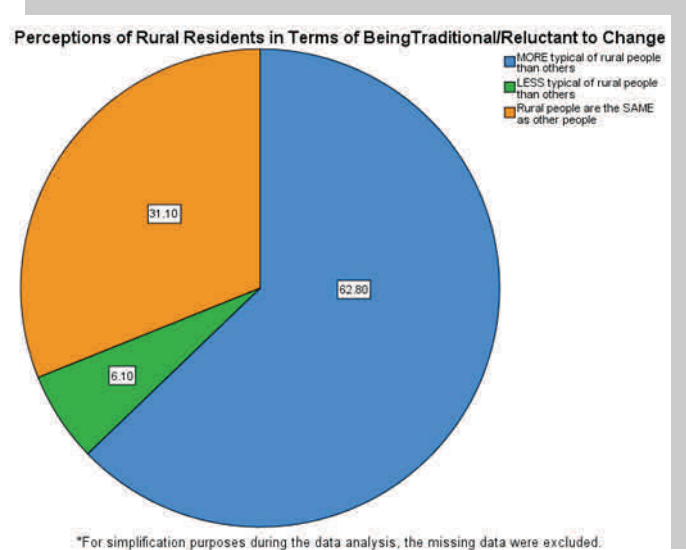
Table 2: Perception of Selected Economic Development Options for Rural Texas

| Development Options | Overall | Mean Scores | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | A city of 100,000 or more | A city of 50,000 to 100,000 | A city of 25,000 to 50,000 | A town of 10,000 to 25,000 | A town of 10,000 or fewer people | The countryside of a city or town |
| Promote tourism in rural TX | 2.65 | 2.38 | 2.86 | 2.62 | 2.68 | 2.64 | 2.70 |
| Promote the development of telecommunications networks in rural TX | 2.64 | 2.33 | 2.93 | 2.38 | 2.60 | 2.70 | 2.79 |
| Promote the development of small businesses in rural TX | 2.63 | 2.35 | 2.64 | 2.38 | 2.65 | 2.67 | 2.85 |
| Promote the development of existing industries in rural TX | 2.62 | 2.44 | 2.93 | 2.38 | 2.68 | 2.67 | 2.45 |
| Promote TX agricultural products | 2.60 | 2.44 | 2.64 | 2.54 | 2.70 | 2.54 | 2.75 |
| Promote the location of manufacturing firms in rural TX | 2.53 | 2.20 | 2.64 | 2.46 | 2.69 | 2.53 | 2.40 |
| Promote TX oil and natural gas development | 2.36 | 1.88 | 2.43 | 2.46 | 2.41 | 2.42 | 2.40 |
| Promote TX timber and wood by-products | 2.27 | 2.00 | 2.31 | 2.31 | 2.36 | 2.22 | 2.35 |
| Promote the development industrial parks in rural TX | 2.26 | 1.94 | 2.36 | 2.15 | 2.33 | 2.34 | 2.11 |
| Promote the development of retail shopping centers in rural TX | 1.74 | 1.06 | 1.31 | 1.42 | 1.97 | 1.97 | 1.75 |

Overall, respondents believed that the promotion of tourism in rural Texas should be given the highest priority from the state when it comes to fostering economic development in rural Texas.

Perceptions of Rural People in Texas

Additional findings from the survey included perceptions of rural people. Eleven characteristics of people were presented and the respondent was asked to determine whether the characteristic was more typical of rural people than others, less typical of rural people than others, or the same as other people. The results are presented in the following pages for six of the original eleven characteristics. It seems likely that rural and urban respondents would have differing perceptions of signature characteristics of rural people. Therefore, a deeper analysis was conducted that sorted respondents on the basis of size of place of residency.



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, the missing data were excluded.

Almost two thirds of respondents believe that *rural residents are more traditional and reluctant to change compared to others.*

Creating Opportunities for Healthy Communities



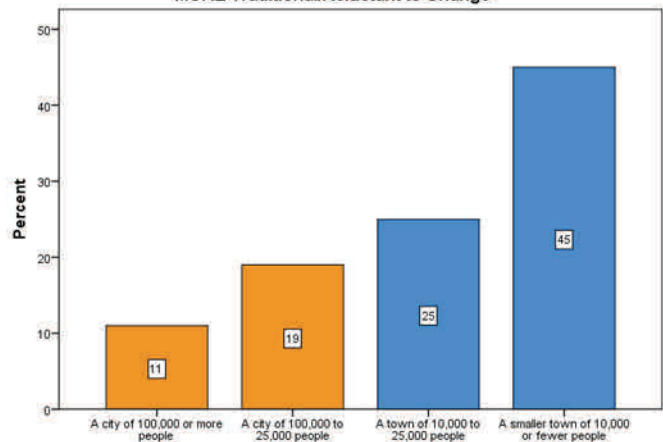
Free Online Course

This interactive course will provide basic knowledge about how our social networks, community structures and local and state policies affect our health and health behavior.

Its goals is to discuss the importance of planning and implementing public health strategies to create environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice and support health living.

[Click here](#) for more information.

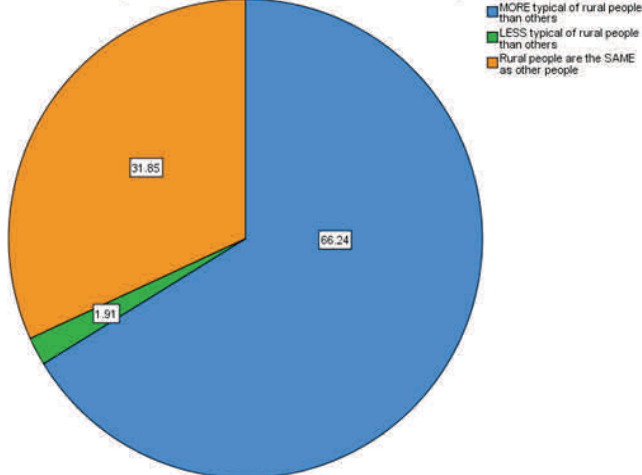
Population Distribution of Respondents who Indicated Rural Residents are MORE Traditional/Reluctant to Change



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, two population size categories were combined

Of the respondents who indicated that rural residents were more traditional and reluctant to change compared to others, the majority (70%) live in a town of 25,000 or less. Forty-five percent live in a town of 10,000 or less. In other words, *the more rural the respondent, the greater the perception that rural residents are more traditional and reluctant to change compared to others.*

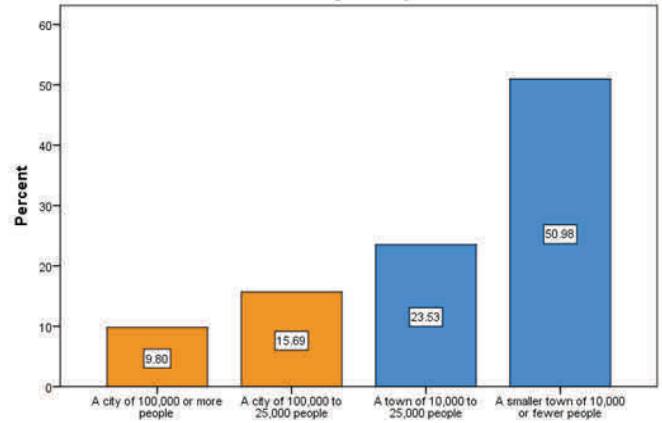
Perceptions of Rural Residents in Terms of Being Frugal/Thrifty



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, the missing data were excluded.

Almost two thirds of respondents believe that *rural residents are more frugal and thrifty compared to others.*

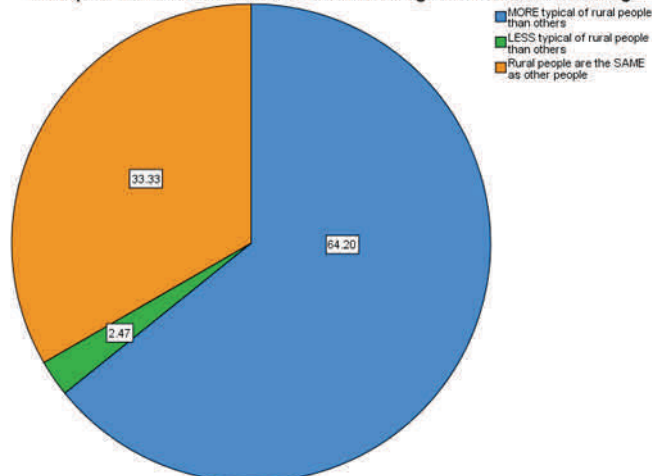
Population Distribution of Respondents who Indicated Rural Residents are MORE Frugal/Thrifty



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, two population size categories were combined

Of the respondents who indicated that rural residents were more frugal/thrifty compared to others, the majority (more than 74%) live in a town of 25,000 or less. Over half live in a town of 10,000 or less. In other words, *the more rural the respondent, the greater the perception that rural residents are more frugal and thrifty compared to others.*

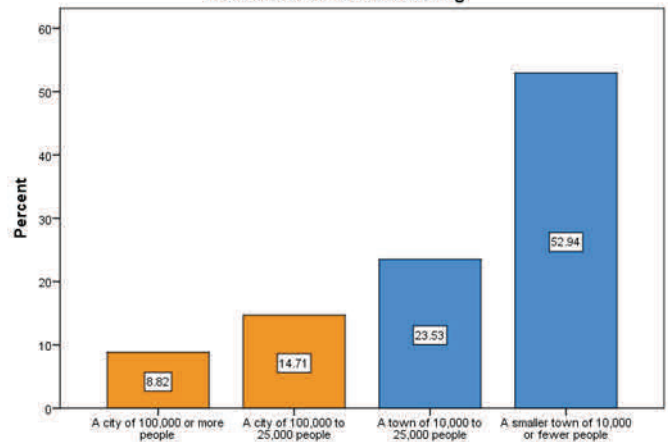
Perceptions of Rural Residents in Terms of Being Industrious/Hardworking



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, the missing data were excluded.

Almost two thirds of respondents believe that *rural residents are more industrious and hardworking compared to others.*

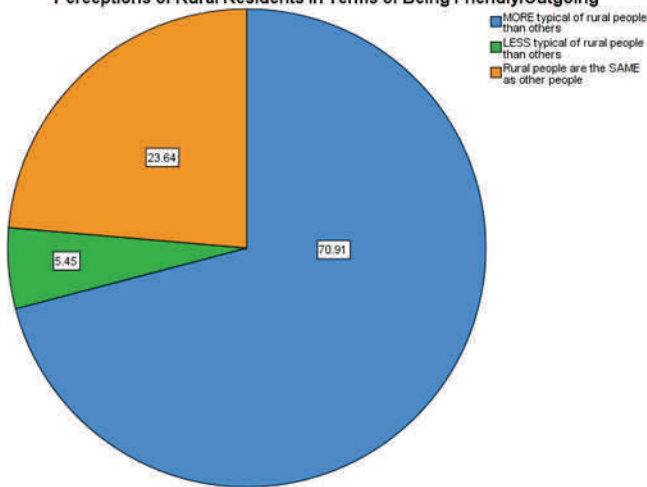
Population Distribution of Respondents who Indicated Rural Residents are MORE Industrious/Hardworking



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, two population size categories were combined

Of the respondents who indicated that rural residents were more industrious/hard working compared to others, the majority (more than 76%) live in a town of 25,000 or less. Over half live in a town of 10,000 or less. In other words, *the more rural the respondent, the greater the perception that rural residents are more industrious and hardworking compared to others.*

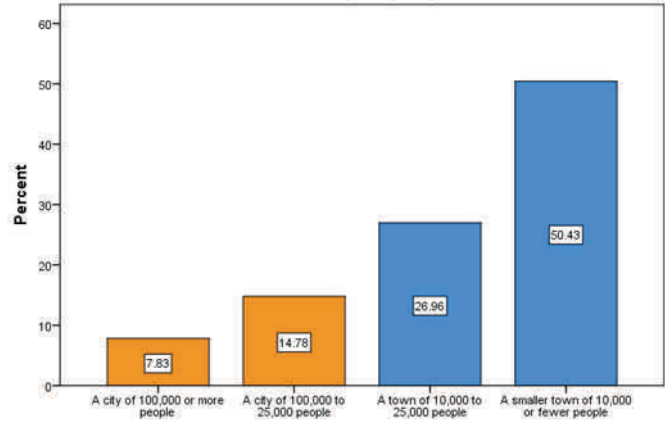
Perceptions of Rural Residents in Terms of Being Friendly/Outgoing



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, the missing data were excluded.

More than seventy percent of respondents believe that rural residents are friendlier and more outgoing compared to others.

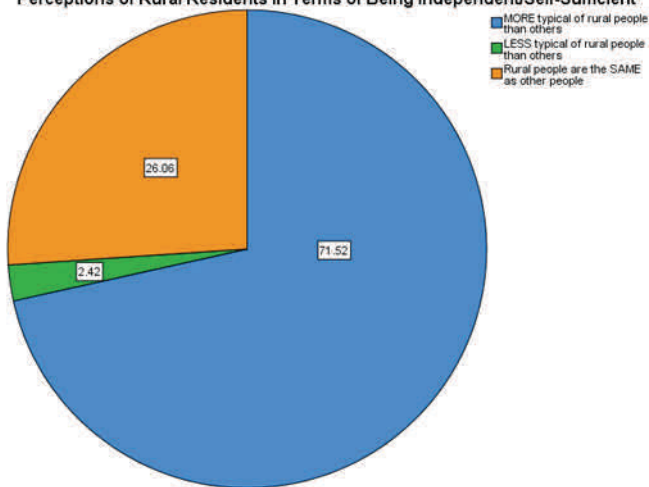
Population Distribution of Respondents who Indicated Rural Residents are MORE Friendly/Outgoing



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, two population size categories were combined

Of the respondents who indicated that rural residents were more friendly/outgoing compared to others, the majority (more than 77%) live in a town of 25,000 or less. Over half live in a town of 10,000 or less. In other words, the more rural the respondent, the greater the perception that rural residents are friendlier and more outgoing compared to others.

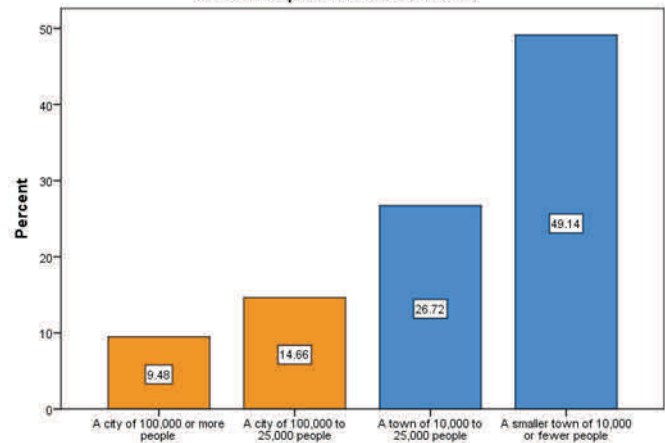
Perceptions of Rural Residents in Terms of Being Independent/Self-Sufficient



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, the missing data were excluded.

More than seventy percent of respondents believe that rural residents are more independent and self-sufficient compared to others.

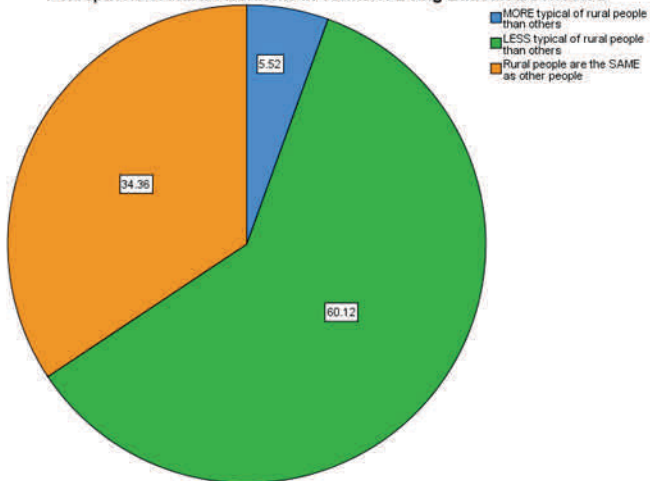
Population Distribution of Respondents who Indicated Rural Residents are MORE Independent/Self-Sufficient



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, two population size categories were combined

Of the respondents who indicated that rural residents were more independent and self-sufficient compared to others, the majority (more than 75%) live in a town of 25,000 or less. Almost half live in a town of 10,000 or less. In other words, the more rural the respondent, the greater the perception that rural residents are more independent and self-sufficient compared to others.

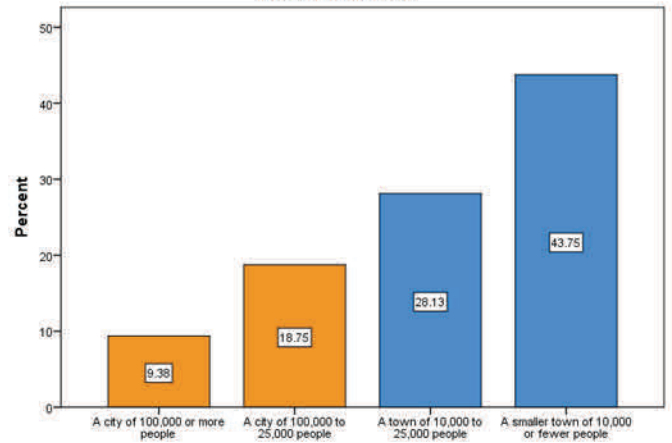
Perceptions of Rural Residents in Terms of Being Educated/Schooled



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, the missing data were excluded.

Almost sixty percent of respondents believe that rural residents are less educated and schooled compared to others.

Population Distribution of Respondents who Indicated Rural Residents are LESS Educated/Schooled



*For simplification purposes during the data analysis, two population size categories were combined

Of the respondents who indicated that rural residents were less educated and schooled compared to others, the majority (more than 71%) live in a town of 25,000 or less. About forty-three percent live in a town of 10,000 or less. In other words, the more rural the respondent, the greater the perception that rural residents are less educated and schooled compared to others.

Concluding Comments

As of the 2010 Census, the Texas population numbered 25,145,561, with the vast majority of Texans currently residing in the state’s urban areas. However, estimates from the Texas State Data Center suggest that 17 percent of Texas residents (roughly 4.2 million people) live in rural areas throughout the Lone Star State. Although these rural areas are vital components of the state’s economy and natural resource base, the people living there face certain challenges that differ from their urban counterparts when it comes to developing and sustaining their local economies.

Nearly all leaders – regardless of urban or rural place of residency – recognize that rural places are in need of economic development, but not all had the same thoughts about the best direction for economic development. The results of this study show that leaders in communities with fewer than 25,000 residents are the most dissatisfied with current economic trends. Leaders in these communities feel more controlled by the larger economies of urban areas. Our data also indicate that whereas leaders from different size places slightly disagreed on the rural development option that should receive the highest priority, all agreed that the promotion of retail

shopping centers was the least desirable option for increasing the economic viability of rural places in the state.

Furthermore, the analyses revealed that respondents viewed rural people as being more frugal/thrifty, more industrious/hardworking, more friendly/outgoing, and more independent/self-sufficient compared to others. Concomitantly, respondents perceived rural people to be more traditional/reluctant to change and less educated and schooled. A deeper analysis of these results indicate that the more rural respondents were more likely to perceive rural people as more frugal/thrifty, more industrious/

hardworking, more friendly/outgoing, more independent/self-sufficient, more traditional/reluctant to change, and less educated and schooled compared to others. These findings confirm previous research on the topic cited in the introduction of this article. Both the positive and negative perceptions identified within this study parallel with the “rural utopia” and “rural dystopia” lenses revealed within Beaulieu and Israel’s (2011) work.

Taken together, these findings help us understand what community/economic development professionals and city/county leaders think is working, what is needed, and

what is most frustrating. In addition, this study of rural perceptions helps us understand how persons both inside and outside of rural places view “rural.” Understanding these overall perceptions is critical to guiding advocacy and building support for rural development programs. Because there are no one-size-fits-all solutions for rural community and economic development, it is critical to hear the voices and heed the suggestions of those who experience these challenges first-hand.

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Texas Rural Internship Program

The Texas Department of Agriculture will soon be seeking proposals from communities interested in participating in the Texas Rural Internship Program. The program introduces urban college students to rural Texas by inviting them to live and work in a small community for four to eight weeks during the summer. The Texas Rural Internship Program, provides much-needed

interaction between urban and rural Texas, promotes rural Texas to attract and retain a talented workforce, helps develop some of today's talented college students into tomorrow's leaders, and cultivates ambassadors for rural Texas.

Through the internship program, TDA works with the Center for Rural Studies at Sam Houston State University and Texas Tech University to facilitate the pairing of students with prospective communities. Communities are responsible for assigning a local coordinator to work with a host family to provide room and board for students.

Any rural Texas community willing to host a college student intern for one or two summer sessions is eligible.

As a rural community, please begin to consider the internship program and the benefits both the intern and your community could potentially gain from participation.

For more information about the program, visit www.shsu.edu/ruralcenter.

[Click here](#) to view a video about the Texas Rural Internship Program.



Taylor Aschermann, 2012 Intern, hosted by Smithville, Texas



Erica Alexander, 2012 Intern, hosted by Nocona, Texas



Elizabeth Russell, 2012 Intern, hosted by Rockport-Fulton, Texas

Rural Events

| Who | What | When | Where |
|--|--|------------|----------------|
| November Schedule | | | |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 3 Training for Commissioners Courts | Nov. 1 | Vernon |
| Texas Rural Innovators | TLI-Grant Writing Workshop | Nov. 6 | Cross Plains |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 8 Training for Commissioners Courts | Nov. 7 | Waco |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 9 Training for Commissioners Courts | Nov. 8 | Conroe |
| Texas Rural Innovators | Webinar: Hometown Competitiveness | Nov. 13 | Lincoln, NE |
| For South Texas | Future of the Region—South Texas | Nov. 18-20 | San Antonio |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 10 Training for Commissioners Courts | Nov. 28 | Uvalde |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 6 Training for Commissioners Courts | Nov. 29 | Fort Stockton |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 7 Training for Commissioners Courts | Nov. 30 | San Angelo |
| Texas Rural Innovators | TLI-Community Excellence | Nov. 30 | Waco |
| December & January Schedule | | | |
| TORCH | Rural Multiracial and Multicultural Health Conference | Dec. 5-6 | Asheville, NC |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 5 Training for Commissioners Courts | Dec. 5 | Overton |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 4 Training for Commissioners Courts | Dec. 6 | Mount Pleasant |
| Texas Rural Innovators | Grant Writing Workshop | Dec. 6 | Refugio |
| Texas Rural Innovators | Capturing Community Wealth ... and Using it for Community Good | Dec. 7 | Fredericksburg |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 11 Training for Commissioners Courts | Dec. 11 | Edna |
| Texas Rural Innovators | Community Excellence | Dec. 11 | Abilene |
| AgriLIFE Extension | AgriLife Extension District 12 Training for Commissioners Courts | Dec. 12 | Laredo |
| TEDEC | Economic Development sales Tax Workshops | Dec. 14 | Austin |
| Texas Rural Innovators | TLI-Best Practices for Effective Boards | Jan. 29 | Bay City |

For a calendar of events visit
the Texas Rural Innovators events page at www.ruraltx.org



“Capturing Community Wealth and Using it For Community Good”

As the current older generation departs the scene, and as the baby boomers follow them, untold billions of dollars will pass from one generation to the next. In rural Texas, much of that wealth will migrate to the major metro areas in Texas and beyond, *unless* we take measures to counteract that out-flow.

This forum will tell the story of the impending transfer of wealth and share successful methods that are being used to capture that wealth before it disappears from our rural communities.

**Friday, December 7
Fredericksburg, Texas**

For more information [click here](#) or go to ruraltx.org.



HILL COUNTRY UNIVERSITY CENTER



TEXAS RURAL INNOVATORS



Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
energizing entrepreneurial communities

Ogallala Commons Community Partner Training

This event is an orientation and training for anyone interested in youth engagement and youth attraction as a means of sustaining their rural community: community leaders, extension agents, educators, agency personnel, nonprofit directors, pastors, business owners or managers.

**Monday, December 4
Plainview, Texas**

The event is FREE and includes lunch and the new guidebook, but attendees need to register by November 28th. For more information or to register, contact Darryl Birkenfeld, Director of Ogallala Commons, at [806-945-2255](tel:806-945-2255) and darrylb@amaonline.com



HOMETOWN COMPETITIVENESS[®]
A Come-Back/Give-Back Approach to Rural Community Building

“HomeTown Competitiveness” Webinar

HomeTown Competitive (HTC) is a comprehensive economic development strategy that builds on community assets and resources to rekindle residents’ belief in the future of their hometown, leading them to locally driven strategies that bear promise for revitalization and long-term sustainability.

FREE, one-hour webinar to introduce community leaders across North America to HomeTown Competitiveness, a nationally recognized strategy for putting rural communities on the pathway to prosperity! We will share the HTC framework and case studies from over the past decade where proactive communities are being transformed through entrepreneur-focused economic development, attracting young people to stay or return home, revitalizing local leadership to address key priorities and investing local wealth back into the community. This webinar will also provide opportunities to evaluate if HTC is a good fit for your community and to discuss how best to move forward with a game plan.



Tuesday, November 13

12:00 pm—1:00 pm

[Click Here](#)





**CENTER FOR RURAL STUDIES:
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The mission of the Center for Rural Studies is to assist in the building, strengthening, and maintaining of rural Texas communities.

Thank you for taking the time to explore this issue of *Rural Conversations*. Our hope is that *Rural Conversations* encourages all of us who hold a passion for rurality to work together toward the goal of allowing rural Texas to flourish.

www.shsu.edu/ruralcenter

If you would like to submit something to be published in *Rural Conversations*, please contact Cheryl L. Hudec, Associate Director of the Center for Rural Studies at ruralcenter@shsu.edu.

If you wish to be removed from the mailing list for *Rural Conversations*, please email Cheryl L. Hudec at ruralcenter@shsu.edu.

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