



Changing paradigms for rural Manitoba

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Rural communities in Canada are complex

Embedded in local, regional, provincial, national and international/global systems:

- Trade & Commerce
- Environment
- People
- Society & Culture
- Health and Well-being
- Infrastructure



Example...Human Technology (globaiaia.org)



Rural communities are, and are part of, systems

Systems theory (von Bertalanffy):

1. Systems are open and interact with environments
2. Systems acquire new properties through emergence
3. Systems are continuously evolving
4. Systems are (generally) self-regulating
5. Systems are nested



This complexity and “embeddedness” are a challenge for public policy

- Federalism
- Provincial-municipal dynamics
- Historical legacies and path dependency (Agriculture/rail vs. Services/auto/WWW)
- The role for the positive state (Ideology, politics, policy, bureaucracy and budgets)

How do we leverage change in complex systems?

Meadows (1997): Scale of places to intervene in a system

1. Constants, parameters, numbers (such as subsidies, taxes, standards)
2. The size of buffers and other stabilizing stocks, relative to their flows
3. Structure of material stocks and flows (such as transport network, population age structures)
4. Length of delays, relative to the rate of system changes
5. Strength of negative feedback loops, relative to the effect they are trying to correct against
6. Gain around driving positive feedback loops
7. Structure of information flow (who does and does not have access to what kinds of information)
8. Rules of the system (such as incentives, punishment, constraints)
9. Power to add, change, evolve, or self-organize system structure
10. Goal of the system
11. Mindset or paradigm that the system — its goals, structure, rules, delays, parameters — arises from
12. Power to transcend paradigms



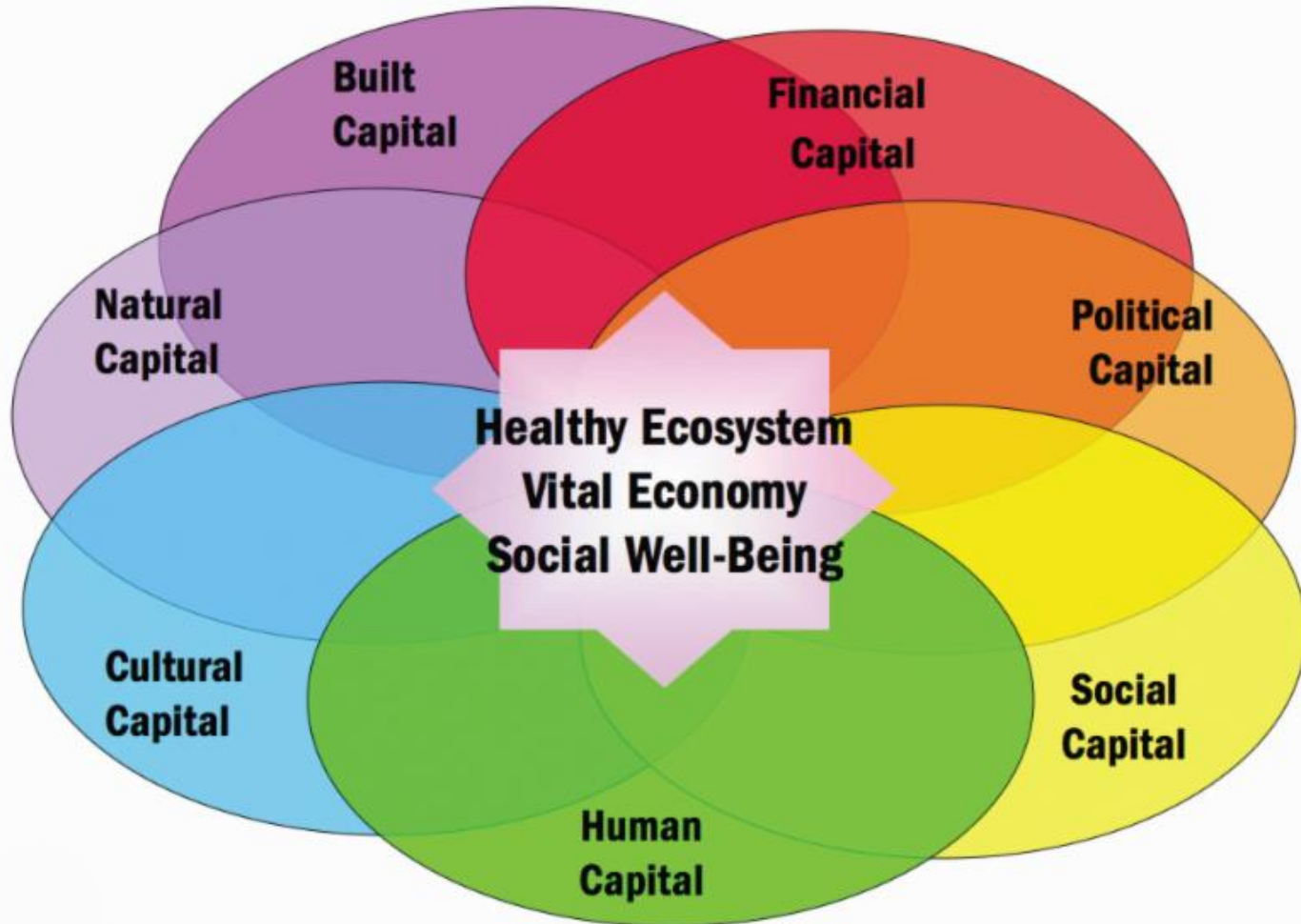
C-C-C-(C)

Many of our contemporary interventions can be categorized or understood within “The 3 C’s”:

1. Capacity
 1. To decide
 2. To act
2. Collaboration
3. Competition
4. Capital(s)



Rural Community Capitals (Flora and Flora 2013)



What characterizes successful/sustainable/entrepreneurial and healthy rural communities? – Assets, not liabilities

1. Investment, programming and evaluation in all 7 different capitals
2. Each capital, and its interaction with the others, is important
3. Partnerships and linkages between and within capitals are functionally meaningful
4. Investment in one capital can yield returns in multiple capitals (up to 7 “bottom lines”)
5. Investment and evaluation in all 7 capitals is important



How does this help rural policy-making and development?

- Shifts the emphasis from deficits to assets
- Can help structure and link planning, design, implementation and evaluation questions
- Can support scenario modelling
- Can be used as an engagement tool
- Provides an integrated, and integrative, framework for considering rural development
- Can be used to structure S-M-LR indicators



What could these indicators be?

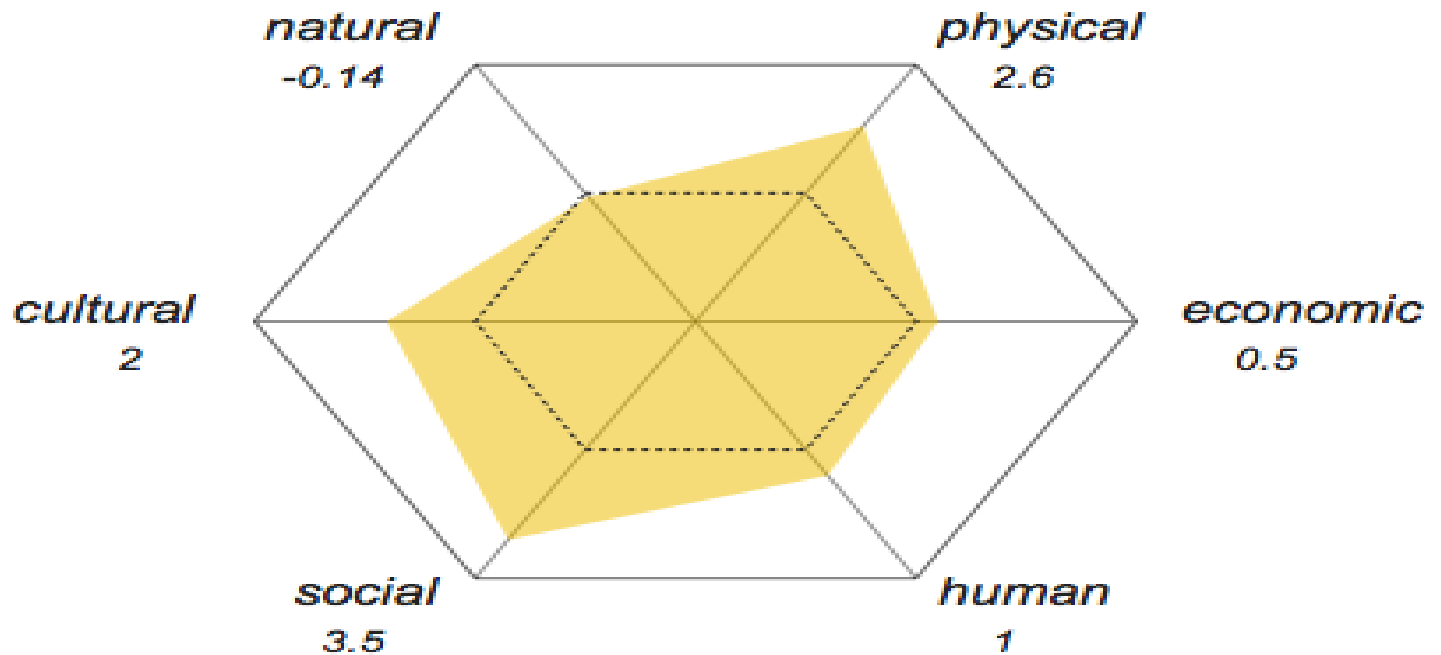
Assets or Stocks:

- Land, Soil, Water, Air, Minerals, Non-renewables
- Infrastructure, Land, Transportation, Housing
- Labour, \$\$\$, Economic structures
- Education, Health, Well-being
- Citizenship, Safety, Between & within-group connections
- Cultural Heritage, Identity, Diversity



An example...

Community Capital Scan (ccscan-ca.csd)



Which means...?

- “Rural policy” could be integrative and holistic (systems)
- Rural development could be multi-sectoral and even inter-sectoral
- There are multiple “bottom lines” to consider and include in planning, policy and implementation
- What we see depends a lot on where we stand.



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