



Community Resiliency Role of the Retail Sector in Easing Sudden and Slow Motion Economic Shocks

**Linda S. Niehm, Iowa State University
Barbara J. Frazier, Western Michigan University
Leslie D. Stoel, The Ohio State University**

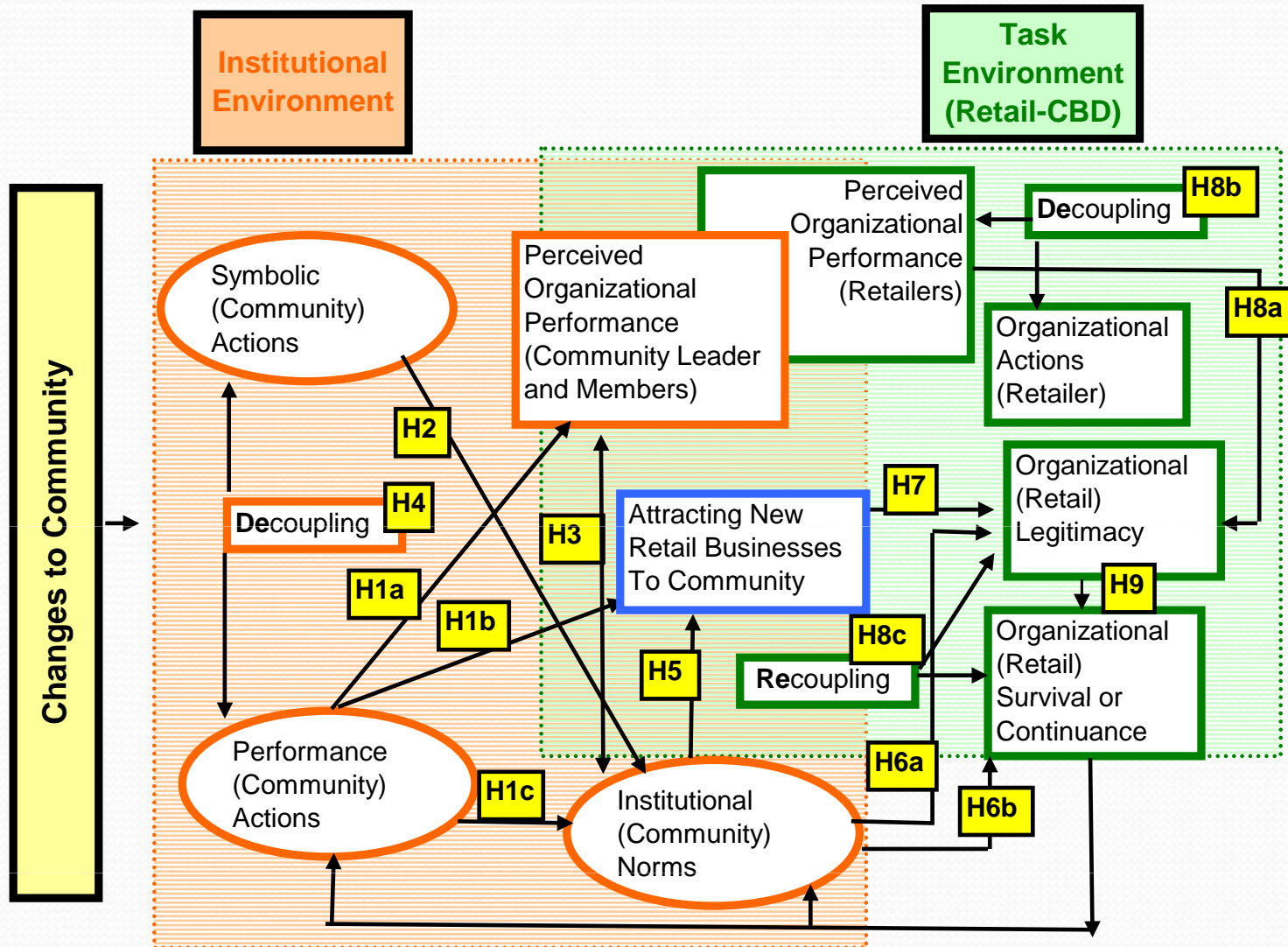
Project Overview

- Project Background
 - We address the overlooked contribution of the retail sector to rural community resilience.
 - Profiling the contribution of local retailers to resiliency within the institutional structure of rural communities provides enhanced understanding of factors that lead to long-term business, community sustainability, and the retention and attraction of younger residents and entrepreneurs.
- Project Objectives
 - Profile contribution of local retailers to resiliency within the institutional structure of rural communities.
 - Provide enhanced understanding of factors that lead to long-term business, community sustainability, and attraction/retention of younger residents and entrepreneurs.

Years 1 and 2: Objectives and Methods

- Research Objectives:
 - Examine effect of the institutional environment on the ability of communities to attract new retail businesses.
 - Examine effect of the institutional environment on the task environment of retail organizations.
 - Examine differences in institutional and task environments in resilient and non-resilient communities.
- Mixed methods approach
 - **Preliminary qualitative interviews** informed our survey development.
 - **Community resiliency index** developed to identify more and less resilient rural communities; worked with project collaborators in 8 states.
 - **In-depth phone surveys** were conducted with retailers, community leaders, and residents in the selected resilient and non-resilient communities in **Year 1**.
 - **Quantitative results** triangulated with our preliminary qualitative research in **Year 2**; research articles developed.

Multi-State Survey & Testing of Proposed Model



Rural Community Profiles

	More resilient communities (n=16)	Less resilient communities (n=16)
Population Size	Range: 2,682-17,056 Mean : 5,764	Range: 1,959- 17,375 Mean : 7,318
Region Score	Range: 411.42 – 442.38 Mean : 425.1	Range: 392.98 – 439.60 Mean : 416.2
Community Score	Range: 418.10 -483.25 Mean : 435.7	Range: 328.31 – 423.96 Mean : 384.0

Study communities include 2 'more resilient' and 2 'less resilient communities' in 8 states (MI, IA, KY, OH, NE, GA, OR, VA).

Years 1 & 2: Data Analysis and Findings

- Residents' perceptions of community's performance actions influence perceptions about performance of local retailers, community's ability to attract new retail businesses, and community-level institutional norms relating to openness to change.
- Residents' perceptions of community's symbolic actions are important because they influence the openness of institutional norms.
- When decoupling of community performance and symbolic actions is prevalent:
 - community is not perceived to be successful in attracting new retail businesses, and
 - perceptions of organizational performance suffer.
- When residents perceive that organizational actions of community retailers are congruent with institutional norms, they also believe the community is better at attracting new retail businesses.
- Analysis found no effect of institutional norms on attracting new retail businesses.
- Limited support for predictive capabilities of Community Resiliency Index; further refinement underway.

Outcomes: Years 1 & 2

Conference presentation

Frazier, B. J., Stoel, L. & Niehm, L. (2010). The Influence of the Institutional Environment on Community Perceptions of Rural Retailer Performance. International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference, Montreal, Quebec, CA.

Manuscripts in process:

The role of the institutional environment in attracting and retaining small businesses in rural communities. *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*.

Organizational survival in rural communities: The roles of business attraction, community social norms and perceived organizational performance. *Journal of Small Business Strategy*.

Does community attractiveness translate to business attractiveness? An institutional perspective of rural U.S. communities. *Journal of Rural Studies*.

Year 3: Educational Objectives

- **Objective 1:** Engage college learners in rural community development and entrepreneurship.
- **Objective 2:** Build diagnostic tool for community leaders to:
 - assess the institutional environment in a rural community and predict success in attracting new retail businesses.
 - assess the local institutional environment and develop appropriate strategies for success.

Year 3 Outcome:

Rural Entrepreneurship Unit

- Three module unit piloted in two states Spring 2011.
- Student teams partnered with rural community and business leaders to apply community resiliency concepts to local retail sector issues.
 - Forty four students in two communities participated in pilot.
 - Community A: pop. 2,000, agricultural community
 - Community B: pop. 6,000, urban proximity
- Student teams conducted community analysis, developed business proposals, toolkits.

Post Pilot Assessment: Student Perceptions

5= strongly agree/1 = strongly disagree	University A (Mean)	University B (Mean)
Information was interesting	4.13	4.47
Understanding of rural entrepreneurship issues	4.54	4.94
Appreciation for positive aspects of entrepreneurship	4.73	5.0
Appreciation for negative aspects of entrepreneurship	4.73	4.82
Agree/ career opportunities for younger people in rural communities	2.82	3.64
Agree/rural communities offer attractive lifestyle	3.0	3.29

Post Pilot Assessment: Community Participants

5=Strongly agree/1=strongly disagree	(Mean)
Participating in this project was useful.	4.9
Participating in this project was enjoyable.	5.0
Better understanding of issues related to younger individuals and my community.	5.0
Interested in participating in a project like this again.	5.0

Educational Outcomes

- Frazier, B., Niehm, L., Stoel, L. (accepted for presentation, November 2011). Community resiliency module: Connecting learners with rural entrepreneurship opportunities. International Textile and Apparel Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- Frazier, B., Niehm, L., & Stoel, L. (in progress). Rural entrepreneurship module: Enhancing the retail sector through a college service learning project. *Journal of Case Studies in Education*.
- Rural entrepreneurship unit dissemination via Internet (November 2011).
- eXtension module in development (Spring 2012)
 - For 'Entrepreneurs and Their Communities' Community of Practice: Building Entrepreneurial Communities
 - Title: Community Resilience Capacity Assessment: Strengthening Rural Communities & Local Businesses

Community Resilience Calculator

- Online tool under development (December 2011)
- To be used with eXtension website; will enable communities to calculate resiliency score

The screenshot shows the 'Community Resiliency Project' web application. At the top, there is a red navigation bar with a home icon. Below this is a control bar with buttons for 'Add County', 'Reset All', and 'Populate Data'. A yellow box labeled 'NLS[2]' highlights the 'Add County' button. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Primary County' (a text input field), 'Resiliency Scores' (a table with five rows: 'Attract Young Residents', 'Educational Attainment', 'Community Stability', 'Employment Rate', and 'Families Above Poverty', each with a corresponding input field), and 'Economic Stability' (a table with two rows: 'Median Income 2010' and 'Median Income 2000', each with an input field). A yellow box labeled 'NLS[3]' highlights the 'Median Income 2010' input field. To the right of these sections is an 'Employment Diversity' section with a list of industry categories and input fields: Agriculture, Arts, Construction, Educational, Health, Social, Finance, Information, Manufacturing, Other, Professional, Public Administration, Retail Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Wholesale Trade. A 'Reset Values' button is located at the bottom of the 'Economic Stability' section.

<http://resiliency.ehe.osu.edu/>

Slide 12

- NLS[2]** Can we show a pic of this....or have ready by the time of the conference? Perhaps I can refer to it on the website during the presentaiton? If possible this would be a great addition.
Niehm, Linda S [AESHM], 10/12/2011
- NLS[3]** At my NC 1030 meeting Glenn Muske said again how eXtension is really pushing for usefuil materials and moduls for entrepreneurs and small business owners...he mentioned he is working closely with Mary Peabody, so I have another source through Glenn if we need it.
Niehm, Linda S [AESHM], 10/12/2011