

Changes in Local Recreation Patronage in Iowa Small Towns 1994 – 2014

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to better understand the potential impact of recent investments in recreation and entertainment facilities on local residents' use of these services inside and outside of their local communities. The Vision Iowa Program publicly invested \$228,000,000 which initiated almost \$2 billion in new public facilities and improvements in 91 of the 99 counties in Iowa. The Iowa Transportation Commission approved \$1.3 million in funding for recreational trails.

Data

- Comes from surveys the ISU Sociology Department sent out to the same small towns in 1994, 2004, and 2014 to ask about perceptions and activities
- One small town (population 500 - 10,000) was randomly selected from each of Iowa's 99 counties to participate.

The Question

Do you use recreation/entertainment mostly in or mostly outside of town?

The Choices

1. Mostly inside the community
2. Mostly outside the community
3. I do not use this service

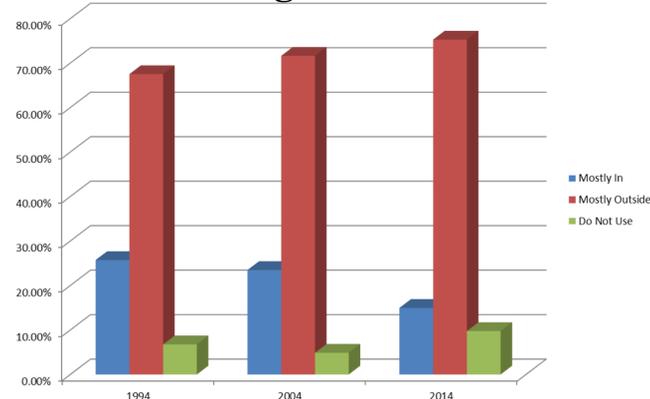
Methods

Once the variables that may affect an individual's decision to use recreation and entertainment mostly in or outside of town were determined, the Stata program was used to analyze possible correlations. The Stata program is a data analysis and statistical software. A multinomial probit regression was used to determine which individual, community, and social capital measures were important factors for predicting recreation and entertainment choices. A correlation was considered statistically significant using a value of $\alpha = 0.1$. The next step was to calculate the average marginal effects for the statistically significant variables to measure the instantaneous rate of change.

Research Questions

1. How has usage of entertainment and recreation changed over the decades in Iowa?
2. What are variables that affect a person's decision to use recreation and entertainment mostly in or out of a small community in Iowa?
3. Does social capital play a part in this?

How has usage of entertainment and recreation changed over the decades?



Variables

Individual Demographics

Age
Income
Gender
Number of years resided in community

Community Features

Distance to nearest metropolitan area
Median household income
Overall rating of government services
Overall rating of community services
Attitude that the town has a lot going for it
Attitude that the town is like living with a close group of friends

Social Capital

Proportion of adults know by name in the community
Proportion of close, personal friends in the community
Proportion of relatives in the community
"Clubs and organizations are interested in what is best for all residents"
Attendance at rec groups
Total number of local groups belong to

	Mostly In	Mostly Out
Age	+	-
Income	-	+
Gender	0	0
Number of years resided in community	+	-
Distance to nearest metropolitan area	0	0
Median household income	-	+
Overall rating of government services	0	0
Overall rating of community services	+	-
Attitude that the town has a lot going for it	+	-
Attitude that the town is like living with a close group of friends	0	0
Proportion of adults know by name in the community	-	+
Proportion of close, personal friends in the community	+	-
Proportion of relatives in the community	+	-
"Clubs and organizations are interested in what is best for all residents"	0	+
Attendance at rec groups	0	0
Total number of local groups belong to	+	-

+ or - represents the direction of the effect if the variable is statistically significant. If it is not statistically significant, 0 is used.

Social Capital

The associations made about the social capital variables support the key factors of closed social capital: social relationships, trust, and access to resources. For example, for each additional group that an individual belongs to, the probability of using services in town increases by 0.53.

Conclusions

People in Iowa small towns are starting to use recreation and entertainment services more outside of their communities, therefore using less inside their communities. The reasons correlated to their choice to use services inside or outside of the communities include:

- Individual Demographics - age, income, and number of years resided in the community
 - Community Features - median household income, overall rating of community services, and the attitude that the town has a lot going for it
 - Social Capital - proportion of adults know by name in the community, proportion of relatives in the community, Clubs and organizations are interested in what is best for all residents, proportion of close personal friends in the community, and the total amount of groups belong to
- The latter two associations indicate a strong link to social capital as an influence.