MEASURING COMMUNITY EMBEDDEDNESS NEAR ARMY INSTALLATIONS: A FEASIBILITY STUDY

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Goal: Define and create composite indicators for measuring community embeddedness

The ARI-SDAD collaboration seeks to understand the relationship between the Soldier’s community and Soldier performance and behavior.

Research Questions:
- What is community embeddedness, and what characteristics of a community promote embeddedness?
- How does community embeddedness differ in counties with an Army post to surrounding counties?

COMMUNITY EMBEDDEDNESS LITERATURE

Community embeddedness is often studied in terms of job embeddedness, measured using surveys of employees. Community embeddedness refers to social links made within an individual’s community, quality of community fit, sacrifices made by those who live in community.

This project conceptualizes embeddedness as “the degree to which certain county factors interact with presence of Army installation to contribute to an individual’s interest in staying or moving out of that county.”

COMMUNITY EMBEDDEDNESS INDEX FOR VIRGINIA AND OKLAHOMA COUNTIES

Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia (Caroline County) Used for training active and reserve troops for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force

Fort Sill, Oklahoma (Comanche County) Home to the Field Artillery Training Command; One of four Army Basic Combat Training locations

DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS

Findings: Using the Social Determinants of Health literature to guide variable selection, we found that counties with higher levels of income tend to have lower rates of community embeddedness. Some of the factors in our model illustrate aspects of the place that lead to embeddedness (rurality, driving to work; urban indicators: air pollution, segregation). Other factors indicate aspects of individuals within counties that point to their ability and willingness to leave (income, population, percent white, commute time, voting patterns).

Next steps: Future models should control for race and income and include data from all counties within the U.S., as there may be particular factors that are more prevalent in Virginia and Oklahoma than in the rest of the country. Other frameworks and methods, such as network analysis, should also be considered.

We could also explore other potential proxy outcomes other than migration patterns, which might not be the best way to capture embeddedness.

References