

# Community Involvement The Impact of the Citizen Engagement on the Social Sustainability Scores

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## Community Involvement

### The Impact of the Citizen Engagement on the Social Sustainability Scores

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### Abstract

Present study investigated impact of involvement in community project on social sustainability. Two communities chosen for this study shared only one characteristic - in both communities culture related projects were created. Questionnaire was administered to residents who were involved in these projects and to those residents who were not included. Residents were required to report their satisfaction with community, as well as trust, concern and optimism for politics, environment, economy, and wellbeing.

Results suggest that involving residents in these two communities was connected with being more optimistic about people and culture, potentially due to the nature of the projects.

Additionally, those who were involved reported more concern about changes that happen in the economy and that those changes would affect their community.

**Keywords:** sustainability, social sustainability, community project, involvement of residents

## Introduction

### Sustainability

Sustainability as a concept can be used to describe any activity that can be endlessly upheld (Johnston, Everard, Santillo, & Robert, 2007). In terms of environment, sustainability requires that a community “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (“Our Common Future,” 1987). The idea is that if state of the environment and social conditions are to persist and support our existence for an extended period of time, then our lifestyles need to be modified (McMichael, Butler, & Folke, 2003). This modification is mainly associated with honouring the carrying capacity of the environment we inhabit (Chiesa, Manzini, & Noci, 1999), carrying capacity being the utmost consumption in some region by which the nature, economy, civilization, and people are not negatively affected (McIntyre, 1993).

The concept of sustainability became the buzzword in discussion of our way of life as emerging economic development caused the environment to degrade (Chiesa, et al., 1999). The development of industrialization and an increase in urban areas left a negative impact on the environment which turned out to be bad for both the present day and the future (Colantonio, 2007). Additionally, it became important to understand that all human activities are connected to the environment one way or another. In some cases, the impact on the environment seems to be unavoidable but we should at least understand which actions lead to the biggest impact. Doing so is not easy because the actions tend to be interconnected. For example, rapid development of tourism demands more infrastructure and transport; excessive

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transportation leads to the pollution of the air and affects the farming (Steiner, Martonakova, &Guziova, 2003).

The three main components of sustainability are: environmental, economic, and social (White, 2013). Environment component is defined as capability of humans to survive, create waste, get food, and use natural resources without wearing out all of the Earth's natural resources (UNEP, 2006). Usage of earth's resources, environment management, and the efforts at preventing pollution are the main concern in discussion of environment sustainability (Massotte, Pierre, &Corsi, 2015). The main reason why environmental sustainability is of importance is because human life relies on clean air, potable water, and on animals and plants for food (Goodland, 1995).

Social component deals with the society - education, standard of living, and opportunity of citizens to have access to equal resources; main goal being to lessen the poverty (Basiago, 1999). For some authors, social sustainability is defined as a practice of taking care of and conserving the way of living that is favourable to a community (Vallance, Perkins, & Dixon, 2011).

Economic component deals with economic development and growth, analysis of profits and costs, and research and development. The goal of practicing economic sustainability is "to combine ecological and social goals of sustainability through economic means" (Soini,&Birkeland, 2014). The organisation and structure of creating goods should satisfy the current utilization of the goods while ensuring there will be enough goods for the future (Basiago, 1999).

The three main sustainability's components were not equally valued throughout the history. Environmental component has been mentioned as the one that should get the most attention while it took some time for the economic and social to be considered equally important (Colantonio, 2009). In recent years, cultural sustainability appeared as a fourth

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component, because it has been noted how culture moulds the manner in which we conduct ourselves, perceive things, and assign meaning to things (“Four pillars”, n.d.). Before it was suggested as a separate component, cultural sustainability belonged under social sustainability (Soini, Birkeland, 2014).

## Social Sustainability

Social sustainability is an approach used to develop favourable and sustainable place by analysing and having knowledge of what people’s needs are from their everyday life (“What is social sustainability”, n.d.) Social sustainability is defined through the growth which is in harmony with the environment and civil society that also strengthens social unification and well-being of the society (Polese&Stren, 2000).

The well-being of one person depends on his individual satisfaction with his career, sociability, finances, lifestyle choices, and feeling safe in the community. Career well-being tends to be the most important aspect cause not looking forward to one’s daily activities decreases satisfaction in other areas of life. Social well-being is concerned with other people in a person’s life and relationship with them. Financial well-being is the ease of spending money; the concern is not only about the amount of money a person has, but also whether that money brings any benefit to that person and those around him. Lifestyle choices are important because they affect the daily life of a person, such as food, beverage, physical activity, and sleep. Community well-being or the sense of safety in the community enhances the person’s overall satisfaction with life (Kruger, 2010).

Well-being is one feature that belongs under social sustainability; other ones are connected to how positive person is about the possible changes of his environment, politics, economy, and culture and his potential to make a change (Magee, Scerri, & James, 2012). For example, for the environment, person will look at the current ecological problems and express his trust that the problems will be solved and that the environment will be capable of mending

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itself after the community's handling. For politics, person will assess his trust in the authority and government, as well as hope for the minorities to live peacefully in his community. For economy, support of the government and the allocation of wealth have the biggest priority. If the economy is to be sustainable, community's consumption should be in accordance with the environment. Finally, for culture, preservation of extant beliefs and acceptance of different cultures, rituals are seen as determining the community.

Components that make social sustainability are: development sustainability, bridge social sustainability, and maintenance social sustainability (Vallance et al., 2011). The first one, development sustainability, looks at whether people have their basic needs met. Basic human needs are divided into physiological and safety needs. Physiological needs of humans can only be satisfied with water, food, warmth, and rest; safety needs can only be satisfied with security and safety (Maslow, 1954). Second one, ridge social sustainability, emphasizes a long-term connection between the people and the environment. This relationship can be done by completely changing, or just adjusting human practices so they support the environment to get a positive outcome. Third one, the maintenance social sustainability, ensures that all the preferred traditions and practices of one group stay preserved and maintained because they enhance their quality of life. Identifying traditions and places that a group wishes to keep maintained in most cases means that a certain lifestyle has to be nurtured (Vallance et al., 2011).

Another approach to the components of the social sustainability encompasses: satisfaction of basic needs, reduction of any disadvantage caused by certain disability, promotion and awareness of a person's responsibility towards today's and future generations, acceptance of cultural diversity, control of the social capital, promotion of tolerance, and bilateral decision-making (Baines & Morgan, 2004).

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The third approach to the basics that make social sustainability are social equity and sustainability of communities (Bramley, Dempsey, Power, & Brown, 2006). Social equity involves justice and equal allocation in the society so that everyone has an opportunity to have a job and use local services and sustainable community looks at the society as whole and how it functions as one body.

In such approaches to social sustainability, the obstacle that tends to stay in the way of social sustainability is the person's dissatisfaction with his basic needs being met (Bhatti & Dixon, 2003). People cannot worry about anything else if their basic needs are not met because nothing else seems important. The biggest priority has always been given to safety; if a person does not feel safe in his environment, he will not engage in social contact with people of his community nor will he be willing to think about sustainability. On the other hand, it is also important to understand that people sometimes have difficulty with letting go of their behavior and patterns that are not sustainable. An example of it would be a household where all members own a car; instead of all of them sharing a car or using public transport, each member opts to have a car. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to remove all the existing or potential problems that may 'help' people to neglect sustainability even the slightest (Vallance et al., 2011).

## Social Sustainability of Development Projects

Sustainability is not just being used to evaluate existing communities, but also as a guiding principle in various projects. A certain project can only be socially sustainable if it comprises the balanced living environment where there is an increase of well-being with a decrease of inequality (Chan & Lee, 2007).

Social sustainability of development projects can be affected through: provision of social infrastructure, availability of job opportunities, accessibility, townscape design, preservation of local characteristics, and ability to fulfil psychological needs (Chan & Lee, 2007).



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Provision of social infrastructure gives priority to the amenities crucial to the society. Those amenities are seen as important because they increase the social gatherings in one neighborhood which increases the wellbeing. Availability of job opportunities increases prosperity of the community because social and psychological issues decrease once there are enough job opportunities which change the perspective of the citizens on their neighbourhood. Accessibility influences social sustainability because citizens of one community wish to have everything within their arm's reach – their home should be close to their work and close to places where they socially interact with others. Townscape design points out the appealing appearance of the neighbourhood because people care about visual appearance and planned neighborhoods create uniqueness which increases the sense of belonging among the citizens of that neighbourhood. For example, pedestrians not only make the community safer but also advocate social interaction inside the community. Preservation of local characteristics affects the social sustainability because heritage proves the identity of a community and should be conserved for all generations to have as a reminder - especially new generations because heritage connects them with the past they were not able to experience personally (“Benefits of heritage”, n.d.). Finally, the ability to fulfil psychological needs is seen as crucial. When citizens feel safe in their environment, and when they are involved in development projects, their satisfaction grows.

## Involvement of residents

Involvement of residents means that they take part in some project inside their community, where they contribute with their opinions and decision-making skills (Bassler, Brasier, Fogle, &Taverno, 2008). Such involvement should be active and should strengthen the relationship between the residents and governance because their communication becomes better while they develop understanding regarding the same issues.

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When doing any project inside the community, local governance should be aware of the residents' expectations. Residents expect and sometimes even demand that they get to participate in project's development process, particularly if the project will disturb the economy and social aspects of their community (Mxhosa, 2017).

The initial steps when planning to involve the residents in development projects include recognizing who belongs to the community and what their interests are, and then administering them with project proposal which both the residents and the developers have to review together ("Why is community involvement", n.d.). While reviewing it, all existing and potential needs, requests, concerns, and solutions need to be addressed or at least mentioned. Everything discussed during the review of the proposal needs to be summarized and clarified with the community - their input should guide any further negotiations. Finally, after making a decision, it is common that residents are asked for the opinion on the future actions of that project.

Potential benefits of involving residents are numerous. The projects that have residents involved as participants have increased probability of success and of being welcomed by the whole community (Bassler, et al., 2008). Considering the fact that residents have local knowledge, they may offer different solutions compared to the governance or developers. Sometimes getting to see what is happening 'behind the project', clarifies all issues and increases community's understanding as to why decisions were made. Group of residents who often feels neglected by the rest of community will more likely feel valued once they get a chance to contribute with their opinion. Regular meetings with residents prevent big problems that may happen later on because residents already expressed their opinions.

Any kind of involvement of residents requires a fair amount of time, resources, and communication process and materials should be free of any jargon words, and available in additional languages if needed ("Community Engagement", n.d.). Not involving residents

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increases a chance of disrupting the economy, environment, and social aspect of the community, meaning that sustainability of the community gets affected (Morrissey, 2017). Having faith in residents and ultimately involving them, should result with a happy and empowered community (Brassler, et al., 2008).

## Methods

This study examined the sustainability scores assigned by residents engaged in community development projects and residents who were not involved in such projects. Furthermore, this study analysed the satisfaction of residents with their community, their positive attitudes regarding the economy, ecology, politics, and culture, as well as their potential to make a change within the community. The aim of this research paper is to find out whether community development projects enhance the social sustainability, or perception of the neighbourhood by engaging the residents.

The survey model was based on Magee, Scerri, and James's (2012) Social Sustainability Survey which measures community sustainability. Few questions from the original survey have been changed to reduce the length of the survey, and some questions on demographics were added as they were of interest for this study. The questionnaire was administered in English and Croatian language. In the case of Croatian language, questions were modified to better fit the language.

The survey consisted of 41 questions out of which five were about gender, age, completed level of education, years of living in the community, community involvement and an open ended question inquiring about the nature of the development project participants may have been involved in. Four questions measured the level of satisfaction with participants' wellbeing ( $\alpha=0.8$ ) on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 meant "not at all satisfied" and 7 means "extremely satisfied". The other 32 questions were separated into four categories: political, ecological, economic, and cultural. Each category consisted of eight questions that

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measured participants' level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 meant "strongly disagree", and 7 meant "strongly agree". The participants were not provided with the information on the categories, nor were the categories separated in the questionnaire. Every category assessed person's sense of trust ( $\alpha=.76$ ), concern ( $\alpha=.66$ ) and optimism ( $\alpha=.67$ ) within the community.

This questionnaire was administered to two groups. First group were residents from Rochester, USA who live in Coalition of Northeast Associations [CONEA] community, and residents of that community who were involved in community project which dealt with renewal of the neighbourhood through sustainable housing development (Lehman & Royce, 2016). Second group were residents from Dubrovnik, Croatia who live in the town, and residents of that town who were involved in Capital of Culture project which enables communities to enhance the overall sustainability through culture related projects, giving cities international recognition which ultimately increases the sense of belonging ("European Capitals", n.d.).

## Participants

Questionnaire was administered to 40 participants. Four questionnaires were not returned. From 40 distributed surveys, 16 were completed by the Rochester residents, and 20 from Dubrovnik residents, and all of them were valid. Residents who were involved in CONEA community project and Capital of Culture project made up 44.4% of the sample; Rochester and Dubrovnik residents who were not involved in such projects counted for 55.6%. Out of the whole sample, most participants were females (58.3%), and majority of participants were 31-50 years old (44.4%). 27.8% of participants have been living in the community for 20-29 years, and 25% for 6-19 years. All other socio-demographic data is available in Table 1.

Several hypotheses were tested:

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H1: There is a difference in sustainability scores assigned by residents engaged in community development projects and residents who are not involved in such projects.

H2: Higher well-being scores will be reported by residents engaged in community development projects.

H3: There is no difference in sustainability scores assigned by residents who are from Rochester and residents who are from Dubrovnik.

## Results

### Descriptive statistics for the sample population

The statements with the highest ratings were related to the optimism about the politics ( $M=5.64$ ,  $SD=1.60$ ), trust in the culture ( $M=5.61$ ,  $SD=1.49$ ) and concern for the politics ( $M=5.58$ ,  $SD=1.50$ ). Those highest rated statements were ‘People can learn to live with people who are culturally different from themselves’, ‘I feel comfortable meeting and talking with people who are different than me’. ‘I am concerned about the corruption of local political institutions.’ (Table 2).

The statements with the lowest ratings were related to the trust in the economy ( $M=2.67$ ,  $SD=1.69$  and  $M=2.42$ ,  $SD=1.48$ ) and the environment ( $M=2.14$ ,  $SD=1.51$ ) for the statements: ‘Our economy is adequately protected against competition from foreign-owned businesses’, ‘Wealth is distributed widely enough to allow all people in our locality to enjoy a good standard of living’, ‘Conserving natural resources is unnecessary because alternatives will always be found.’

Among the categories, wellbeing was rated the highest ( $M=4.61$ ,  $SD=1.25$ ), while economy the lowest ( $M=3.65$ ,  $SD=.73$ ) (Table 3). Sense of concern was rated the most and sense of trust the least. Highest scores were reported for sense of concern ( $M=34.86$ ,  $SD=.80$ ) and lowest for the sense of trust ( $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=.78$ ) (Table3).

### Correlation

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When analysing the connection among the categories, it has been noted that participant's feelings and perceptions regarding the environment are correlated with culture ( $r=.55$ ,  $p=.00$ ) the most, following the correlation between the environment and politics ( $r=.54$ ,  $p=.00$ ), and culture and politics ( $r=.44$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Slightly smaller correlation could be found between environment and wellbeing ( $r=.43$ ,  $p=.00$ ), economy and culture ( $r=.40$ ,  $p=.01$ ), politics and wellbeing ( $r=.38$ ,  $p=.02$ ), and finally politics and economy ( $r=.33$ ,  $p=.04$ ). On the other hand, their wellbeing is not at all correlated with culture ( $r=.26$ ,  $p=.11$ ) and economy ( $r=.22$ ,  $p=.18$ ) (Table 4).

Generally analysing, trust and optimism are more correlated which means the more trust one has, one is more optimistic. There is no correlation for concern with trust and optimism (Table 5).

### Differences between participants: Questionnaire items

*Involvement.* Participants who were involved in projects reported higher scores ( $M=5.44$ ,  $SD=1.31$ ) than residents who were not involved ( $M=4.50$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ) in the item 'I am concerned that global economic change will affect our locality.'  $F(1,34)=4.22$ ,  $p=.04$ . Another significant difference was noticed among the residents who were involved ( $M=4.88$ ,  $SD=.71$ ) in projects compared to those who were not ( $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=1.92$ ) for the statement 'Most people can be trusted most of the time.',  $F(1,34)=8.97$ ,  $p=.00$  (Table 6).

*Gender.* Male participants reported higher scores ( $M=6.07$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ) than female residents ( $M=4.38$ ,  $SD=1.80$ ) for the statement 'How satisfied are you with being part of your community?',  $F(1,34)=10.07$ ,  $p=.00$ . Statement 'How satisfied are you with the balance between your work and social life?' had higher scores from male ( $M=5.00$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ) participants than from female ( $M=4.00$ ,  $SD=1.61$ ),  $F(1,34)=4.25$ ,  $p=.04$ , as well as statements 'Hard work and initiative alone is enough to get ahead financially.' (male participants:  $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=1.05$  and female participants:  $M=2.57$ ,  $SD=1.66$ ),  $F(1,34)=4.44$ ,  $p=.04$  and

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‘Current levels of consumption in our locality are compatible with an environmentally sustainable future.’ (male participants:  $M=4.53$ ,  $SD=1.06$  and female participants:  $M=2.62$ ,  $SD=1.53$ ),  $F(1,34)=17.39$ ,  $p=.00$  (Table 7).

*Education.* Participants who finished high school as a highest level of obtained education, reported the highest scores ( $M=4.10$ ,  $SD=1.96$ ) for statement ‘Our economy is adequately protected against competition from foreign-owned businesses.’ and participants who have Associate’s Degree as the highest level of obtained education reported the lowest scores ( $M=2.00$ ,  $SD=1.26$ ),  $F(3,32)=4.29$ ,  $p=.01$ . Participants who obtained Master’s Degree as the highest level of education reported higher scores ( $M=5.67$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ) for the ‘I am concerned that global economic change will affect our locality.’ and those who finished high school as the highest level reported the lowest scores ( $M=4.20$ ,  $SD=1.47$ ),  $F(3,32)=2.93$ ,  $p=.04$ .

Those who obtained Associate’s Degree as the highest level of education reported the highest scores ( $M=4.17$ ,  $SD=1.16$ ) compared to those who have Master’s Degree that reported the lowest scores ( $M=2.17$ ,  $SD=1.19$ ) for statement ‘I can influence people and institutions that have authority in relation to my community.’  $F(3,32)=5.00$ ,  $p=.00$ . Participants who have high school as the highest level of obtained education reported the highest scores ( $M=4.70$ ,  $SD=1.25$ ) for ‘Places of learning, health, recreation, and faith are distributed across our locality in a way that ensures good access by all.’ statement, compared to participants who have Associate’s Degree as the highest level that reported the lowest scores ( $M=2.00$ ,  $SD=1.26$ ),  $F(3,32)=3.24$ ,  $p=.03$  (Table 8).

*City.* Participants from Rochester reported higher scores ( $M=5.88$ ,  $SD=1.79$ ) for ‘How satisfied are you with being part of your community?’ than participants from Dubrovnik ( $M=4.45$ ,  $SD=1.79$ ),  $F(1,34)=6.76$ ,  $p=.01$ . Those from Rochester also reported higher scores ( $M=4.13$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ) than those from Dubrovnik ( $M=2.30$ ,  $SD=1.38$ ) for ‘Governments make

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decisions and laws that are good for the way I live locally.’,  $F(1,34)=15.74$ ,  $p=.00$ . Participants from Dubrovnik reported higher scores ( $M=6.24$ ,  $SD=.91$ ) than participants from Rochester ( $M=4.75$ ,  $SD=1.69$ ) on ‘I am concerned about the corruption of local political institutions.’ Statement,  $F(1,34)=11.57$ ,  $p=.00$ . Statement ‘Conserving natural resources is unnecessary because alternatives will always be found.’ had higher scores from Rochester ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=1.42$ ) participants than from Dubrovnik participants ( $M=1.60$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ),  $F(1,34)=6.60$ ,  $p=.01$ . Rochester participants reported higher scores ( $M=4.44$ ,  $SD=1.59$ ) on ‘Continuing economic growth is compatible with environmental sustainability.’ than Dubrovnik participants ( $M=2.40$ ,  $SD=1.27$ ),  $F(1,34)=18.25$ ,  $p=.00$ . Statement ‘People living in our locality are free to celebrate publicly their own rituals and memories, even if those rituals are not part of the mainstream culture.’ had higher scores reported from Rochester participants ( $M=5.38$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ) than from Dubrovnik participants ( $M=4.25$ ,  $SD=1.44$ ),  $F(1,34)=5.66$ ,  $p=.02$ . Statement ‘I feel that I can influence the generation of meanings and values in relation to our way of life.’ had higher scores from Rochester participants ( $M=4.19$ ,  $SD=1.55$ ) than from Dubrovnik participants ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=1.53$ ),  $F(1,34)=4.01$ ,  $p=.05$ . Rochester participants also reported higher scores ( $M=3.50$ ,  $SD=1.50$ ) on ‘Our economy is adequately protected against competition from foreign-owned businesses.’ statement compared to Dubrovnik participants ( $M=2.00$ ,  $SD=1.55$ ),  $F(1,34)=8.50$ ,  $p=.00$ , as well as on statement ‘I can influence people and institutions that have authority in relation to my community.’ (Rochester participants:  $M=4.13$ ,  $SD=1.45$  and Dubrovnik participants:  $M=2.85$ ,  $SD=1.59$ ),  $F(1,34)=6.11$ ,  $p=.01$  (Table 9).

## Differences between participants: Category scores

*Involvement.* Participants who were involved in projects reported higher scores ( $M=4.76$ ,  $SD=.55$ ) than residents who were not involved ( $M=4.20$ ,  $SD=.94$ ) in terms of attitudes towards culture,  $F(1,34)=4.34$ ,  $p=.045$  (Table 10).



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*Gender.* From the male and female participants, attitudes towards wellbeing, were scored higher by the male ( $M=5.13$ ,  $SD=.81$ ) participants than the female ( $M=4.23$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ) ones,  $F(1,34)=4.95$ ,  $p=.033$  (Table 11).

*Age.* Participants who are over 66 years ( $M=5.45$ ,  $SD=.26$ ), reported the highest scores on the politics, while participants who are 31-50 years old, reported the lowest scores ( $M=3.99$ ,  $SD=.90$ ),  $F(3,32)=3.18$ ,  $p=.03$  (Table 12) .

*Education.* Economy scores were ranked highest by participants who finished high school ( $M=4.15$ ,  $SD=.67$ ), and the least by participants who have Bachelor's Degree ( $M=3.25$ ,  $SD=.78$ ),  $F(3,32)=2.86$ ,  $p=.052$  (Table 13).

*City.* Additionally, participants from Rochester ( $M=3.82$ ,  $SD=.69$ ) reported higher scores for trust items, than participants from Dubrovnik ( $M=3.31$ ,  $SD=.80$ ),  $F(1,34)=4.04$ ,  $p=.05$  (Table 14).

## Discussion

This study examined whether there would be difference in sustainability scores reported from residents who were involved in community project compared to those who were not involved - regarding their sense of trust, concern and optimism for the environment, politics, culture, and economy within their community. Study was administered to Rochester and Dubrovnik residents to test three hypotheses: 'There is a difference in sustainability scores assigned by residents engaged in community development projects and residents who are not involved in such projects.', 'Higher well-being scores will be reported by residents engaged in community development projects.', and 'There is no difference in sustainability scores assigned by residents who are from Rochester and residents who are from Dubrovnik.'

The first hypothesis was partially proven. The study done on Rochester and Dubrovnik residents suggests that residents who were involved in projects are more concerned that changes in the economy may leave an impact on their community. They overall have more

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trust in people and for the culture, compared to non-involved residents. The reason behind this may be that their awareness for the economy and culture is higher because they dealt with them more when developing project than those who were not involved. Another reason may be the fact that not involving residents increases a chance of disrupting the economy, environment, and social aspect of the community, which means that sustainability, would negatively get affected. The nature of the project could also be taken into the consideration because both projects are more focused on culture than on politics, environment, or the economy.

Second hypothesis was not proven. There seems to be no enhancement in wellbeing scores by people who were engaged in project. Both involved residents and non-involved reported roughly the same scores for the statements on the satisfaction with their environment, feeling of safety, sense of belonging, and balance between life and work, and the whole wellbeing category reported the most positive results. Significant correlation of wellbeing is only with environment and the economy, which means that if a person is positive about environment or economy, is also positive with the wellbeing. On the other hand, there is no correlation between wellbeing and culture.

Interestingly enough, this study suggests the most differences between residents when looking at their place of residence which disapproves third hypothesis. This study suggests that residents from Rochester feel more satisfaction because they are a part of their community than residents from Dubrovnik. They perceive their community to be more opened to the diversity of others, meaning that people who have different rituals are able to publicly practice them.

Rochester residents reported less awareness for the environment compared to Dubrovnik residents. The reason for this could be the cultural difference for the

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environmental sustainability – Europe is reported as more conscious about the environment than the USA ('What makes Europe', 2009).

Regarding the government, residents from Rochester have more faith that government works in their best interest and that they can have a say in dealings about the community. Additionally, they reported more satisfaction and positivity about the economic growth and they feel protected from the foreign businesses. These results were unexpected because it has been noted how trust between individuals and institutions dropped in recent years in the USA (Gould & Hijzen, 2016). On the other hand, residents from Dubrovnik reported lower scores, which can be connected with their high concern that political organizations in their community are corrupted.

Other interesting results, which were not of the interest of this study, are regarding the gender differences. Male participants reported more satisfaction with work and life balance while female participants feel less satisfaction with belonging to their community. Male individuals also feel that the levels of consumption will not endanger the future. Both groups reported slightly negative scores for the statement how working hard should be enough to stay improve finances. When generally looking at the gender sustainability differences, there tends to be mention of the gender inequality, and on the importance of closing the gender gap which may justify these results (Stevens, 2010).

In short, this study overall suggested potential benefits of involving the residents in community projects, as well as cultural differences among residents in terms of sustainability scores. Another interesting factor to consider might be the gender difference and how males and females feel and perceive sustainability.

## Limitations and Further Research

Due to the several limitations of this study, results cannot be generalized. Sample size was rather small because not that many people participated in both projects, and the period to

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collect the required results was limited. The nature of projects could be a factor that influenced the feeling of involvement in residents because both projects were culture related and did not have many environmental or political elements. Further research to be conducted should include larger and more representative sample. Additionally, community projects should be similar if not the same in nature so that the results could be generalized. Considering the results of this preliminary study, differences between cultures could be further investigated.

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# Community involvement

Table 1. *Frequencies for socio-demographics*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	19-30	6	16.7	16.7	16.7
	31-50	16	44.4	44.4	61.1
	51-65	11	30.6	30.6	91.7
	66 or older	3	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Gender	Male	15	41.7	41.7	41.7
	Female	21	58.3	58.3	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Education	high school	10	27.8	27.8	27.8
	associate's	6	16.7	16.7	44.4
	degree				
	bachelor's	8	22.2	22.2	66.7
	degree				
	master's	12	33.3	33.3	100.0
	degree				
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Involvement	Yes	16	44.4	44.4	44.4
	No	20	55.6	55.6	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	
Years of living in the community	less than 5	3	8.3	8.3	8.3
	6-19	9	25.0	25.0	33.3
	20-29	10	27.8	27.8	61.1
	30-35	5	13.9	13.9	75.0
	more than 40	4	11.1	11.1	86.1
	all of my life	5	13.9	13.9	100.0
	Total	36	100.0	100.0	



Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics for items*

	N	Mean	Std. D.
Learn to live with culturally different people	36	5.64	1.606
Feel comfortable talking with people different than me	36	5.61	1.498
Concerned about the corruption of local institutions	36	5.58	1.500
Concerned about effect of global change on my community	36	5.28	1.542
Satisfaction with being part of the community	36	5.08	1.763
Free to express beliefs	36	5.06	1.723
Concerned that a slump in economy will affect our locality	36	5.03	1.362
Concerned that global economic change will affect our locality	36	4.92	1.422
Concerned about the decline in vitality of cultural institutions	36	4.86	1.641
Satisfaction with feeling of safety	36	4.83	1.682
People in locality free to celebrate their rituals and memories	36	4.75	1.500
Good access to places of nature in our locality	36	4.75	1.645
Concerned politically-motivated violence will affect our locality	36	4.56	1.382
Economic development should be excluded from wilderness areas	36	4.44	1.904
We can meet local needs for basic resources	36	4.44	1.843
Satisfaction with work-life balance	36	4.42	1.500
To sustain economy needs for consumer goods need to be fulfilled	36	4.17	1.732
Outsiders live comfortably in our community	36	4.17	1.935
Satisfaction with environment	36	4.11	1.389
My identity is bound up with local environment and landscape	36	4.08	1.592
Most people can be trusted most of the time	36	4.03	1.682
Concerned that global cultural values will affect our locality	36	3.92	1.442
Places of learning, health, recreation are easily accessed by all	36	3.81	1.849
Decisions made in the community are for interest of community	36	3.78	2.140
Government support economic growth	36	3.64	1.743
Feel that can influence generation of values in relation to way of life	36	3.61	1.609
Experts will find a way to solve environmental problems	36	3.58	1.519
Can influence people with authority in relation to my community	36	3.50	1.875
Current levels of consumption are sustainable	36	3.42	1.645
Economic growth compatible with environmental sustainability	36	3.31	1.737
Outside experts can be trusted with local issues	36	3.25	1.402
Government makes good laws for the way I live locally	36	3.11	1.635
Hard work and initiative are enough to get ahead financially	36	3.00	1.512
Economy protected against foreign owned businesses	36	2.67	1.690
Distribution of wealth allows everyone to have good standard	36	2.42	1.481
Unnecessary to conserve nature because alternatives exist	36	2.14	1.515
Valid N	36		

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Table 3: *Descriptive Statistics for categories*

	N	Mean	Std. D.
Wellbeing	36	4.6111	1.25562
Culture	36	4.4549	.83781
Politics	36	4.1979	.88861
Environment	36	4.0035	.73526
Economy	36	3.6563	.73276
Valid N	36		
concern	36	4.8611	.80942
optimism	36	4.3681	.94205
trust	36	3.5417	.78646
Valid N	36		

Table 4: *Correlations for wellbeing, politics, environment, economy, and culture*

		Wellbeing	Politics	Environment	Economy	Culture
Wellbeing	Pearson	1	.380 <sup>*</sup>	.437 <sup>**</sup>	.226	.267
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.022	.008	.185	.115
	N	36	36	36	36	36
Politics	Pearson	.380 <sup>*</sup>	1	.543 <sup>**</sup>	.338 <sup>*</sup>	.446 <sup>**</sup>
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022		.001	.044	.006
	N	36	36	36	36	36
Environ ment	Pearson	.437 <sup>**</sup>	.543 <sup>**</sup>	1	.317	.552 <sup>**</sup>
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.001		.059	.000
	N	36	36	36	36	36
Economy	Pearson	.226	.338 <sup>*</sup>	.317	1	.407 <sup>*</sup>
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.185	.044	.059		.014
	N	36	36	36	36	36
Culture	Pearson	.267	.446 <sup>**</sup>	.552 <sup>**</sup>	.407 <sup>*</sup>	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.115	.006	.000	.014	
	N	36	36	36	36	36

Table 5: *Correlations for trust, concern, and optimism*

		trust	concern	optimism
Trust	Pearson Correlation	1	.034	.597**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.844	.000
	N	36	36	36
Concern	Pearson Correlation	.034	1	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.844		.903
	N	36	36	36
Optimism	Pearson Correlation	.597**	.021	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.903	
	N	36	36	36

Table 6. *ANOVA results for specific items with involvement as a factor*

		N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
People can be trusted	Yes	16	4.88	.719	8.976	.005
	No	20	3.35	1.927		
	Total	36	4.03	1.682		
Concerned that global change will affect our locality	Yes	16	5.44	1.315	4.220	.048
	No	20	4.50	1.395		
	Total	36	4.92	1.422		

Table 7: ANOVA results for specific items with gender as a factor

		N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
Levels of consumption are Sustainable	male	15	4.53	1.060	17.39	.00
	female	21	2.62	1.532		
	Total	36	3.42	1.645		
Hard work & initiative enough to get ahead financially	male	15	3.60	1.056	4.44	.04
	female	21	2.57	1.660		
	Total	36	3.00	1.512		
Satisfaction in being part of the community	male	15	6.07	1.163	10.07	.00
	female	21	4.38	1.802		
	Total	36	5.08	1.763		
Satisfaction with work – life balance	male	15	5.00	1.134	4.25	.04
	female	21	4.00	1.612		
	Total	36	4.42	1.500		

Table 8: ANOVA results for specific items with education as a factor

		N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
Levels of consumption are sustainable	high school	10	4.30	1.636	5.00	.00
	associate's degree	6	4.17	1.169		
	bachelor's degree	8	3.63	1.598		
	master's degree	12	2.17	1.193		
	Total	36	3.42	1.645		
Economy is protected from foreign businesses	high school	10	4.10	1.969	4.29	.01
	associate's degree	6	2.00	1.265		
	bachelor's degree	8	2.25	1.389		
	master's degree	12	2.08	1.165		
	Total	36	2.67	1.690		
Concerned that economic change will affect our locality	high school	10	4.20	1.476	2.93	.04
	associate's degree	6	5.33	1.033		
	bachelor's degree	8	4.38	1.506		
	master's degree	12	5.67	1.155		
	Total	36	4.92	1.422		
Places of learning, health, recreation are nicely distributed	high school	10	4.70	1.252	3.24	.03
	associate's degree	6	2.00	1.265		
	bachelor's degree	8	4.00	1.690		
	master's degree	12	3.83	2.125		
	Total	36	3.81	1.849		

Table 9: ANOVA results for specific items with city as a factor

		N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
Economy is protected from foreign businesses	Dubrovnik	20	2.00	1.556	8.50	.00
	Rochester	16	3.50	1.506		
	Total	36	2.67	1.690		
Economic growth is compatible with environmental sustainability	Dubrovnik	20	2.40	1.273	18.25	.00
	Rochester	16	4.44	1.590		
	Total	36	3.31	1.737		
Levels of consumption in locality are sustainable	Dubrovnik	20	2.85	1.599	6.11	.01
	Rochester	16	4.13	1.455		
	Total	36	3.42	1.645		
I can influence generation of values in my life	Dubrovnik	20	3.15	1.531	4.01	.05
	Rochester	16	4.19	1.559		
	Total	36	3.61	1.609		
People are free to celebrate their rituals	Dubrovnik	20	4.25	1.446	5.66	.02
	Rochester	16	5.38	1.360		
	Total	36	4.75	1.500		
Satisfaction with being part of the community	Dubrovnik	20	4.45	1.791	6.76	.01
	Rochester	16	5.88	1.408		
	Total	36	5.08	1.763		
Government makes decisions that are good for the way I live	Dubrovnik	20	2.30	1.380	15.74	.00
	Rochester	16	4.13	1.360		
	Total	36	3.11	1.635		
Concerned about corruption of local institutions	Dubrovnik	20	6.25	.910	11.57	.00
	Rochester	16	4.75	1.693		
	Total	36	5.58	1.500		
Conserving natural resources is unnecessary because alternatives exist	Dubrovnik	20	1.60	1.392	6.60	.01
	Rochester	16	2.81	1.424		
	Total	36	2.14	1.515		



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Table 10: *ANOVA results for culture with involvement as a factor*

	N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
Yes	16	4.7656	.55878	4.34	.045
No	20	4.2063	.94875		
Total	36	4.4549	.83781		

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Table 11: *ANOVA results for wellbeing with gender as a factor*

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	N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
male	15	5.1333	.81759	4.95	.03
female	21	4.2381	1.39301		
Total	36	4.6111	1.25562		

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Table 12: *ANOVA results for politics with age as a factor*

	N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
19-30	6	4.4792	.88888	3.18	.03
31-50	16	3.9922	.90077		
51-65	11	4.0000	.70931		
66 or older	3	5.4583	.26021		
Total	36	4.1979	.88861		

Table 13: *ANOVA results for economy with education as a factor*

	N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
high school	10	4.1500	.67649	2.86	.05
associate's degree	6	3.6458	.74757		
bachelor's degree	8	3.2500	.78490		
master's degree	12	3.5208	.57117		
Total	36	3.6563	.73276		

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Table 14: *ANOVA results for trust with city as a factor*

	N	Mean	Std. D.	F	p
Dubrovnik	20	3.3156	.80077	4.04	.05
Rochester	16	3.8242	.69117		
Total	36	3.5417	.78646		

## Appendix

The questionnaire is anonymous and will require approximately 4-5 minutes to complete. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaires to the person who handed you this form. If you require additional information or have questions about the research process and the results obtained, please ask the person who provided you with this form for the copy of the cover letter which contains contact information for the authors of this study.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Please rate your satisfaction on a 7-point scale in which 1 stands for “not at all satisfied” and 7 stands for “extremely satisfied”.

1.How satisfied are you with being part of your community?	1 Not at all satisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely satisfied
2.How satisfied are you with the environment where you live?	1 Not at all satisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely satisfied
3.How satisfied are you with the balance between your work and social life?	1 Not at all satisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely satisfied
4.How satisfied are you with how safe you feel?	1 Not at all satisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely satisfied

Please rate your agreement on a 7-point scale in which 1 stands for “strongly disagree” and 7 stands for “strongly agree”.

5. I can influence people and institutions that have authority in relation to my community.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
6.Decisions made in relation to my community are generally made in the interests of the whole community.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
7.Outside experts can be trusted when dealing with local issues.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
8.Governments make decisions and laws that are good for the way I live locally.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
9.I am concerned that global levels of politically-motivated violence will affect our locality.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
10.I am concerned about the corruption of local political institutions.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
11.Outsiders are and will continue to be comfortable coming to live in our locality.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
12.People can learn to live with people who are culturally different from themselves.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
13. Experts will always find a way to solve environmental problems.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
14.My identity is bound up with the local natural environment and landscape.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
15.Conserving natural resources is unnecessary because alternatives will always be found.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree

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16. In order to conserve natural diversity, economic development should be excluded from substantial wilderness areas.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
17. Across our locality there is good access to places of nature.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
18. I am concerned that global climate change will affect our locality.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
19. We have a capacity to meet our local needs for basic resources such as food, water, and energy.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
20. Continuing economic growth is compatible with environmental sustainability.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
21. Wealth is distributed widely enough to allow all people in our locality to enjoy a good standard of living.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
22. Our government supports economic growth as one of its highest priorities.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
23. Our economy is adequately protected against competition from foreign-owned businesses.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
24. Hard work and initiative alone is enough to get ahead financially.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
25. I am concerned that global economic change will affect our locality.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
26. I am concerned that a slump in the local economy will affect our locality.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
27. Keeping our economy sustainable requires that our needs for a wide range of consumer goods are fulfilled.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
28. Current levels of consumption in our locality are compatible with an environmentally sustainable future.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
29. I feel that I can influence the generation of meanings and values in relation to our way of life.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
30. I feel comfortable meeting and talking with people who are different than me.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
31. Most people can be trusted most of the time.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
32. Places of learning, health, recreation, and faith are distributed across our locality in a way that ensures good access by all.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
33. I am concerned about a decline in the vitality of local cultural institutions.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
34. I am concerned that globally-transmitted cultural values will affect our locality.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
35. I am free to express my beliefs through meaningful creative activities.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree
36. People living in our locality are free to celebrate publicly their own rituals and memories, even if those rituals are not part of the mainstream culture.	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly agree

37. What is the highest level of formal or school education that you have completed?

A. Elementary school  
Degree

B. High school  
Degree

C. Associate's Degree

D. Bachelor's

E. Master's Degree

F. Doctoral Degree

38. What is your age?

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A. 18 or under      B. 19-30      C. 31-50      D. 51-65      E. 66 or older

39. What is your gender?

A. Male      B. Female      C. Other      D. I prefer not to answer

40. For how many years have you been living in your current locality? (That is, in this local place or area)

A. Less than 5      B. 6-19      C. 20-29      D. 30-39      E. More than 40

F. All my life

41. Have you participated in any project for your community? If yes, please elaborate the nature of it.

A. Yes      B. No

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