

A Tale of Two Rural Cities: Spiraling up During a North Dakota Oil Boom

By Felix Fernando and Gary Goreham

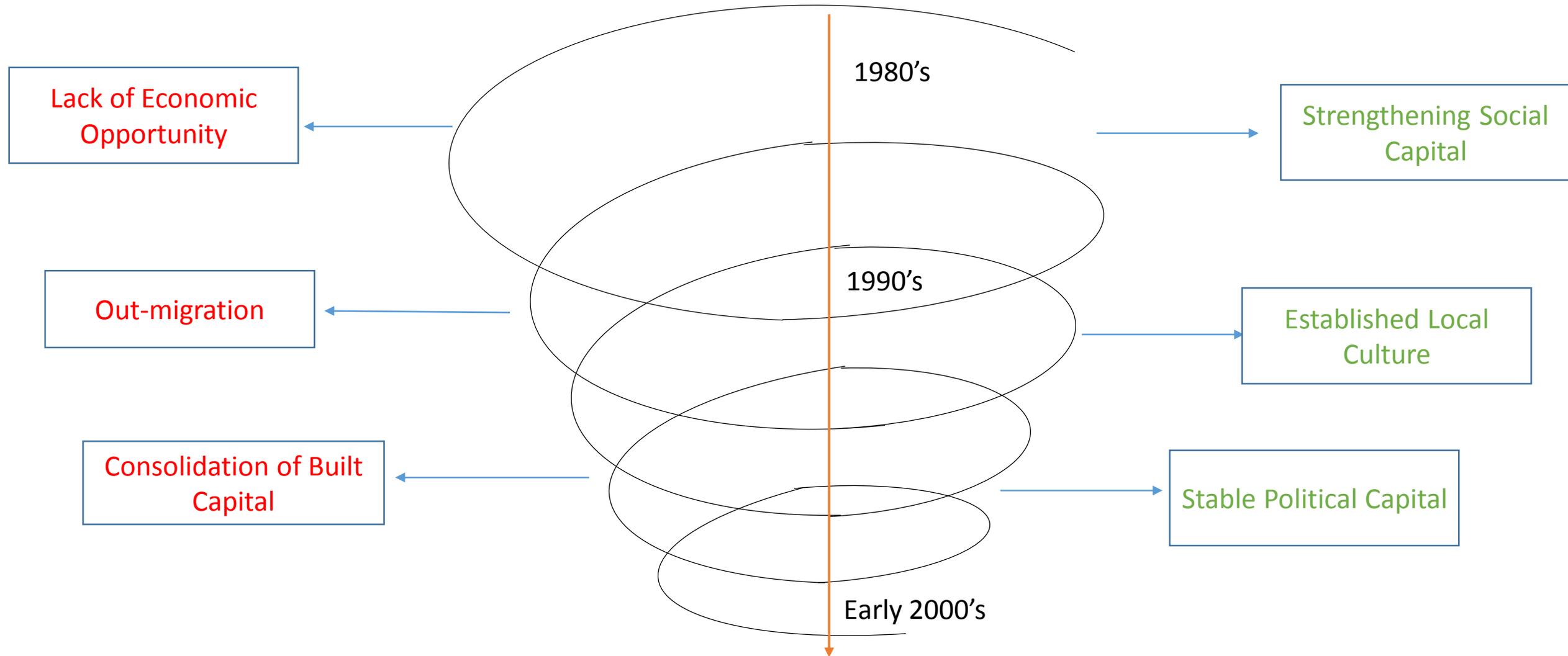
The Two Rural Cities

Minor	Major
Similarities	
County seats of two adjacent counties	
Largely agricultural based economy	
Similar local culture	
Basic community services	
Differences	
Population: 1,212 (2005)	Population: 12,109 (2005)
	Went through two previous oil booms and bust
Mostly single family housing	Single family and apartments
	State college
	Some oil jobs

Methodology

- Open-ended semi-structured interviews
 - 37 in Minor
 - 56 in Major
 - 30-45 minutes (Audio taped with participant consent)
- Chain or referral sampling
- Initial key informants
 - Mayor and city council
 - Local organizations (news paper, churches, public officials, schools)
 - Local clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions)
 - Local businesses
 - Extension service
- Data analysis
 - Transcribing and open coding
 - Focused coding (key words)
 - Thematic coding (main themes, patterns, connections)

Spiraling Down- Before the Boom



It was the best of times and it was the worst of times- Charles Dickens "A Tale of Two Cities"

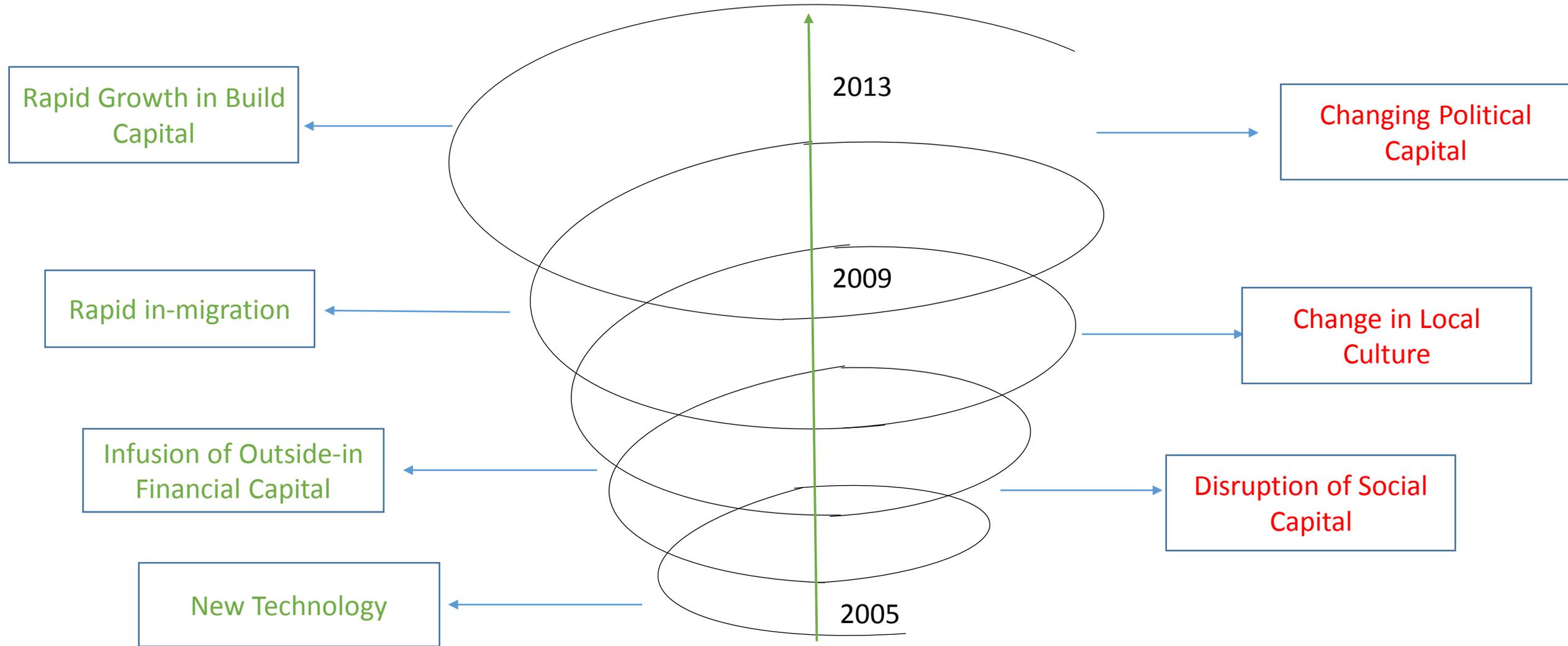
Challenges before the boom

- Farm Crisis of mid 1980's
- Lack of economic vitality (Stagnant/stable economy)
- Aging and declining population
 - People with stable economic ties
 - Out-migration of young people
 - In-migration of retirees and people who wanted to raise families
- Lack of community growth or development
 - Closure of businesses
 - Consolidation of schools and public services
 - Infrastructure additions-none
 - New housing-none or very few
- **Minor and Major weren't dying but slowly declining!!!!!!**

Assets before the boom

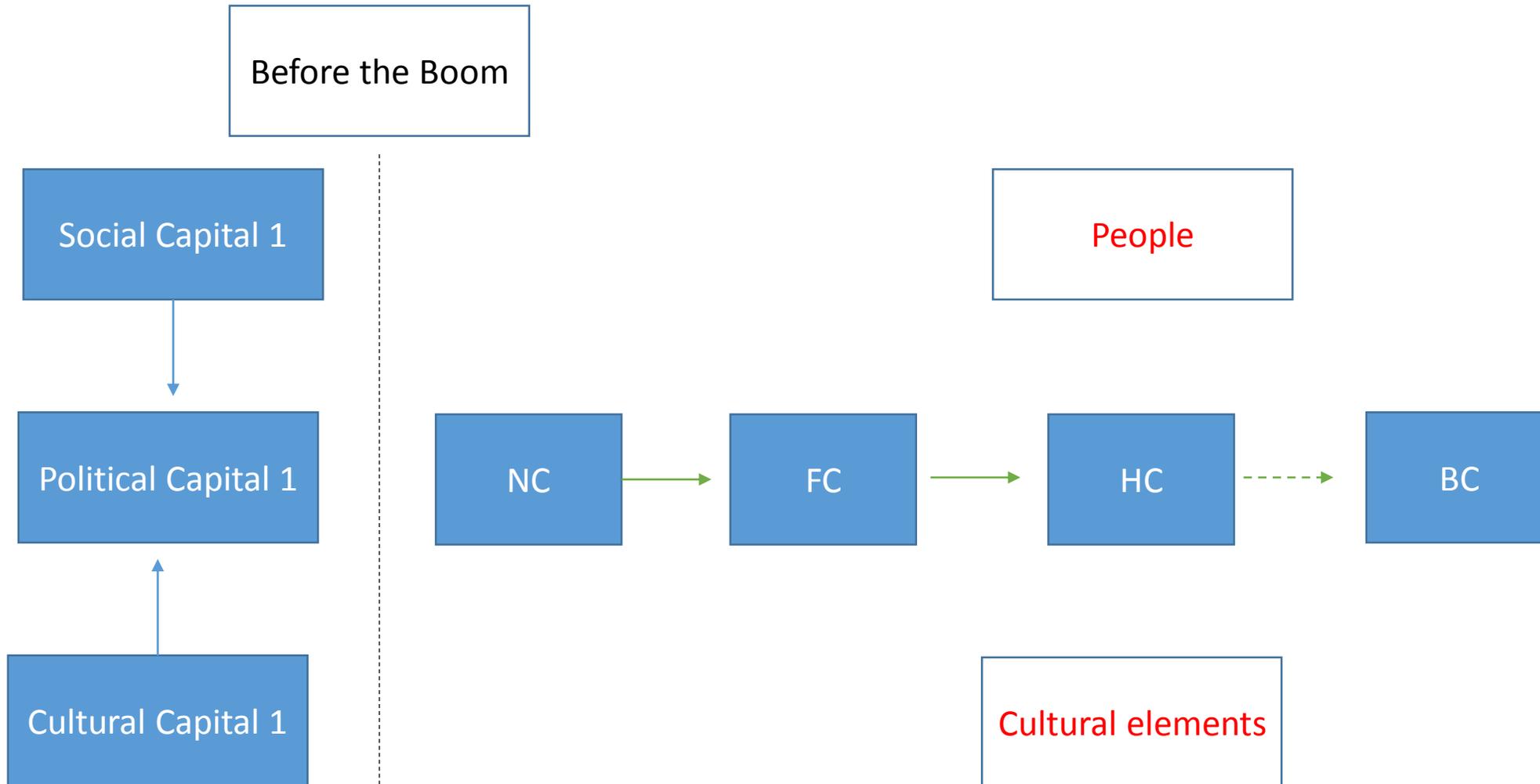
- Good local school system
- Safe environment for kids
- Community camaraderie (Strong bonding social capital)
 - Trust and unity
 - Everyone knowing each other (High degree of acquaintance)
 - Helping each other
- Basic community services (Local theatre, grocery store, parks)
- Low cost of living
- Regulation changes (1990's): “ Municipal Housing Authorities”
- Major: State college, recreation based amenities
- Just safe relaxed sleepy prairie towns!!!!!!

Spiraling Up- During the Boom

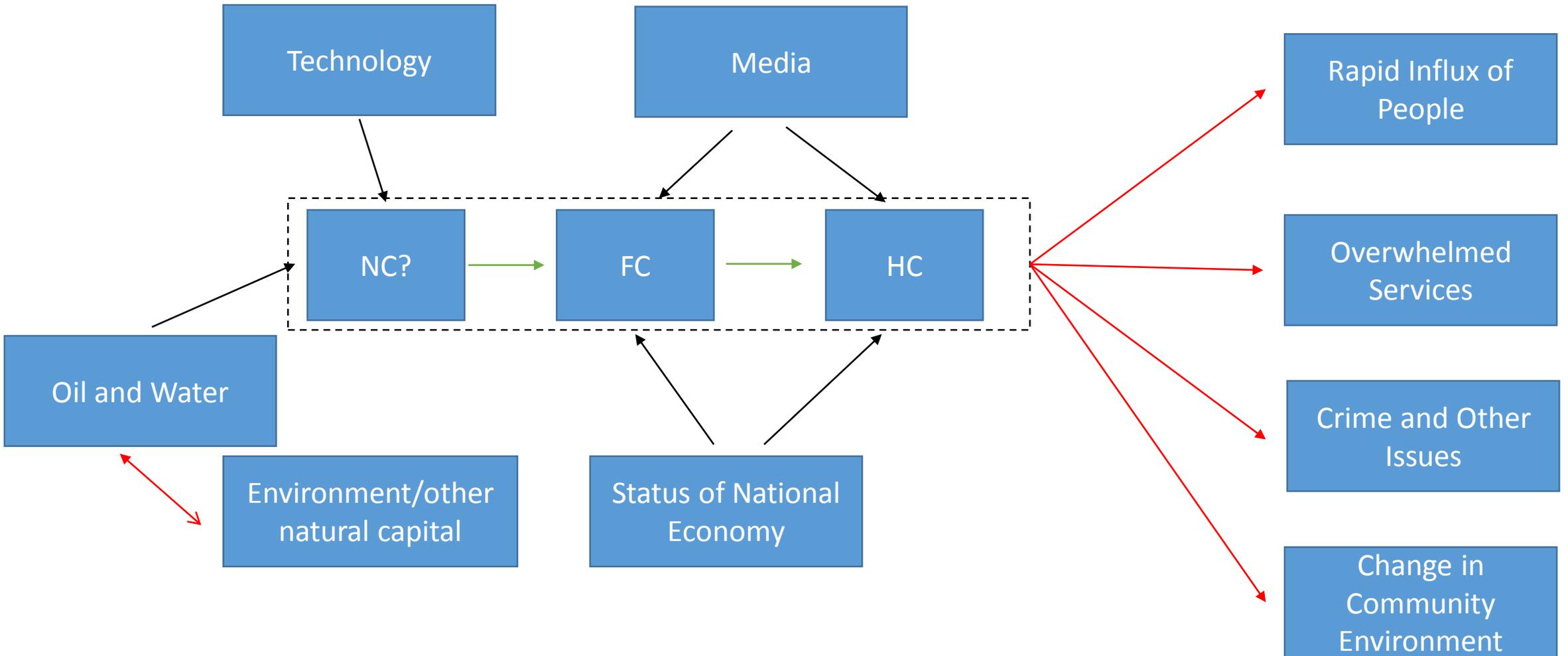


We had everything before us, we had nothing before us - Charles Dickens "A Tale of Two Cities"

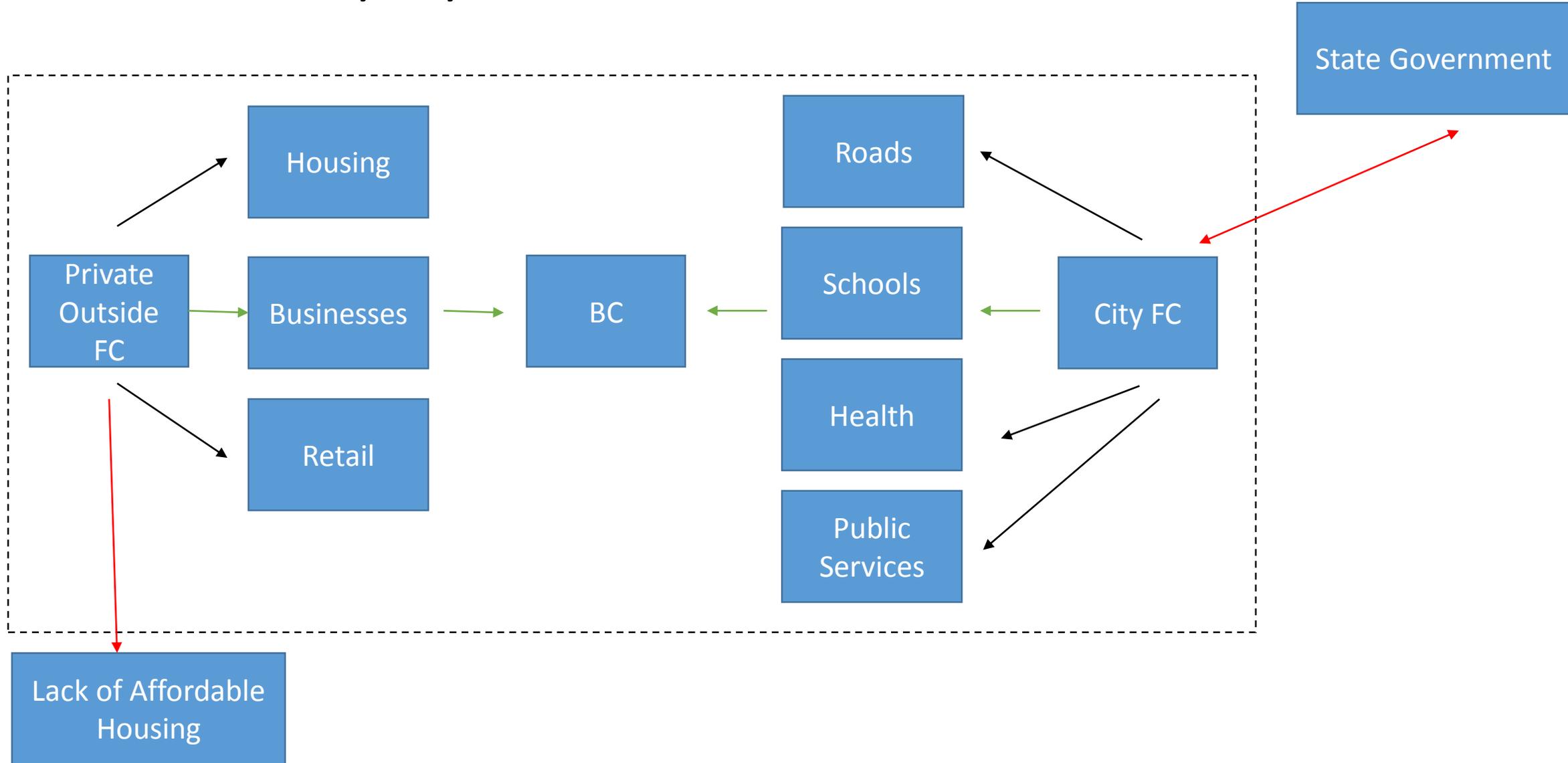
Spiraling-Up



Community System and Conditions

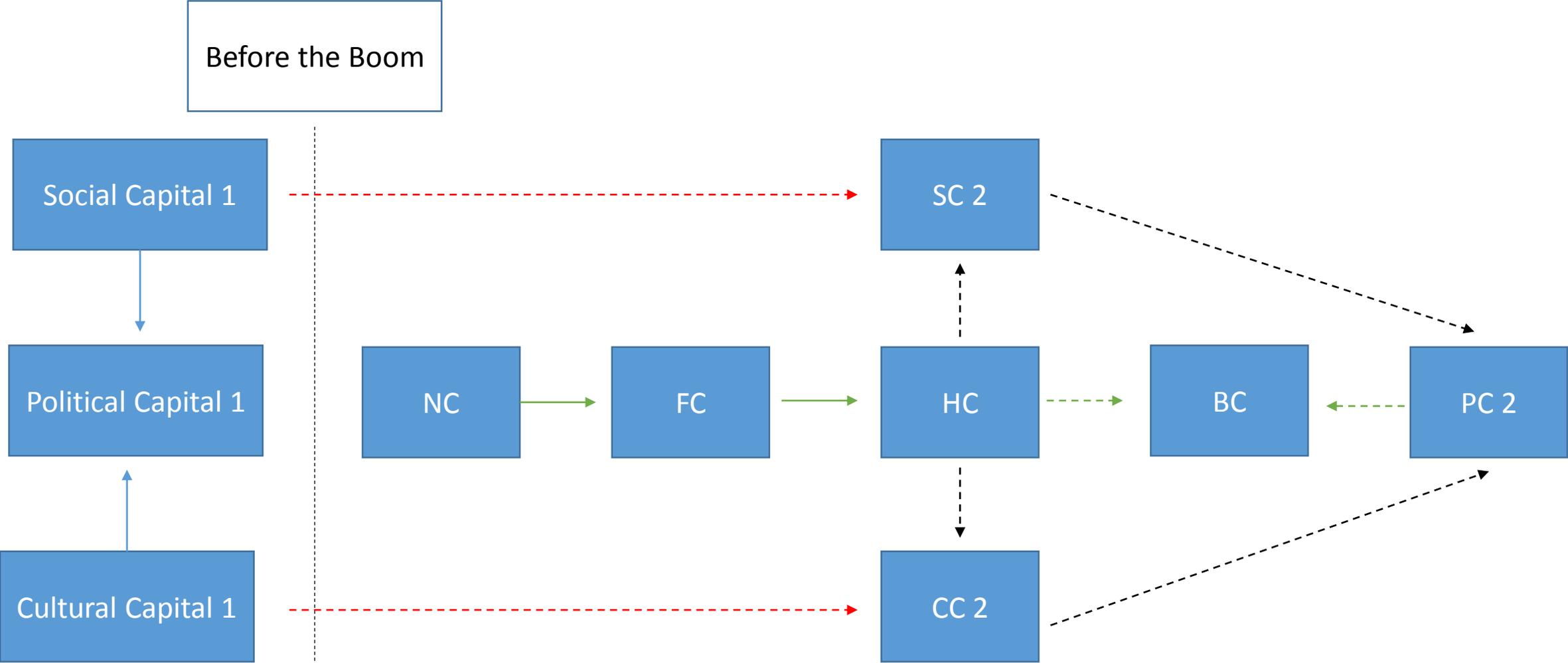


Community System and Conditions



Jobs \neq Community well-being

Long-term Community Development



Building a New Social Capital

Minor	Major
Challenges	
Very fragmented (Population: 1212 to 2060)	Still has skeletons of the old social capital (Population: 12,109 to 20,850)
Transient population	
High ratio of males to females	
Us vs. them type of mentality	
Out-migration of longtime residents and Rapid in-migration of younger people	
Assets	
Local Churches	Local Churches
Schools	Schools
Parks and recreational options	Parks and recreational options
	The "ARC"
	Local groups "Oil Field Wives" "Friendly Faces" "Down Towners"

Establishing a New Cultural Capital

Minor	Major
Challenges	
Diverse ethnicities	
Diverse religious beliefs	
Younger population (Some from big cities)	
Different languages	
Assets	
New restaurants	New restaurants
New churches	New churches
Parks and recreational options	Parks and recreational options and the The “ARC”

A New Political Capital

Minor	Major
2 city council members are new residents	All new resident contestants lost by a significant margin
Several new members on park and school board etc.	Few new members on park and school board etc.
New mayor	New mayor
New economic director (newly created position)	New economic director
New planning and economic development staff	New planning and economic development staff

Concluding Remarks

- Use of Community Capitals Framework
 - Holistic integrated systems approach
- Community development
 - Both minor and major face similar challenges and issues
 - Two communities vary in terms of the assets they possess
 - Infusion of financial capital doesn't translate into community development unless new social and cultural capital are developed

Thank You!!!!!!!!!!!!

Email: W.Fernando@ndsu.edu
Gary.Goreham@ndsu.edu

Questions?