

A Quality of Life Index for American Cities



Dan Todd

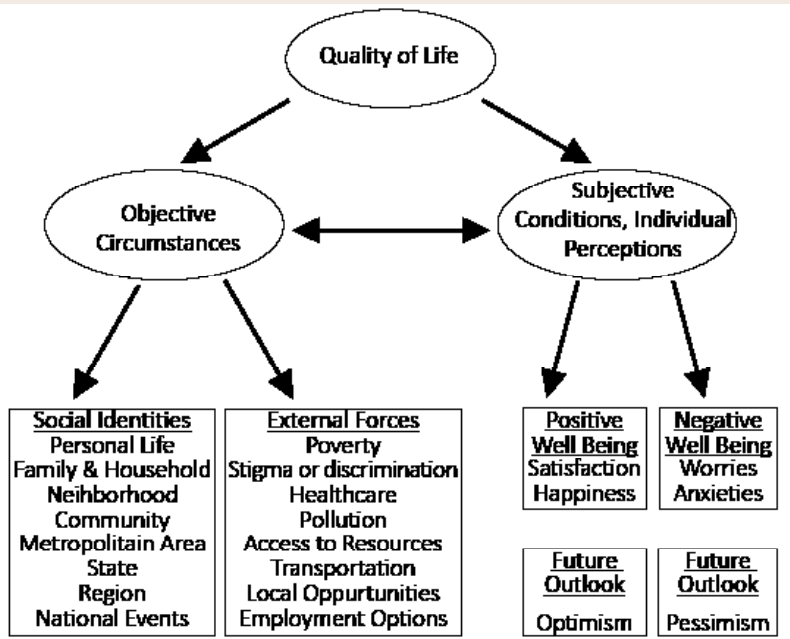
NDSU

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INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons the social sciences seek to measure and track quality of life.

However the most common use, is for interantional organizations to assess daily life and compare nations in a way that goes beyond economics.



QUALITY OF LIFE IS BOTH OBJECTIVE & SUBJECTIVE

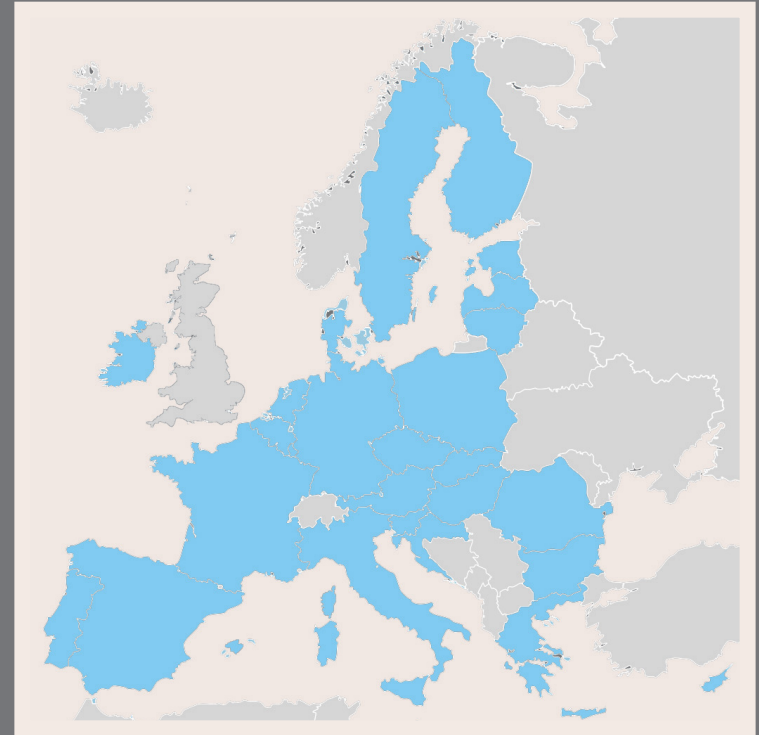
But what about the local scale?
What should be used by city government, housing agencies, community development corporations, charitable design projects, etc.
????

PRECEDENTS

SOME INTERNATIONAL MODELS INCLUDE:









- Human Development Index
- Human Wellbeing Index
- Weighted Index of Social Progress
- Personal Wellbeing Index
- World Happiness Report
- Physical Quality of Life Index
- Happy Planet Index
- Social Progress Index
- Quality of Living Report

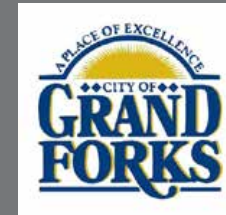
Because of a similar geopolitical structure to the United States; this project is based upon the model used throughout the European Union



CATEGORIES FROM EUROSTAT aka The European Statistical Committee

By relying primarily on nation-wide sets of information, 16 scores were totalled to achieve an index score for each city examined:

 Material Living Conditions	 Leisure & Social
 Work or Main Activity	 Economic & Physical Safety
 Health	 Governance & Basic Rights
 Education	 Natural & Living Environment
Overall Life Experience	



EUROSTAT CATEGORY	ADAPTATION FOR AMERICAN DATA
Material Living Conditions	Household Data
Work or Main Activity	Employment & Age Demographics
Health	Healthcare
Education	Educational Facilities
Leisure & Social	Public Space
Economic & Physical Safety	Economic Stability
	Physical Safety
Governance & Basic Rights	Equity
Natural & Living Environment	Environmental Pollution

Population Comparison

Bangor Metro ≈ 125% Fargo City








Bangor City ≈ West Fargo*









60% Grand Forks

75% Moorhead

* An independent city that was not included at this time

Select numbers had to be acquired directly from webpages of the city in question.

Category	Data	Explanations
Household Data	Area Median Income	Ratio of City as State Average 
	SNAP (Food Assistance) Users	Percent of households under poverty threshold - more likely to be in severe financial distress. 
Age & Employment Demographics	Metro Area Employment %	
	Youth Dependency Ratio	Population Under 14 years old Population aged 16-65 
	Elderly Dependency Ratio	Population of Retirement Age 65+ Population aged 16-65 
Healthcare	Population without Health Insurance	Percentage of Congressional District 
	Title X Providers in City	A very important health resource for low-income people to receive reproductive cancer screenings and family planning services. Unfortunately this has become controversial enough to endanger Federal funding. 

Category	Data	Explanations
Education	Ratio of Facilities	K-12 Buildings in School District Childcare Centers in City 
Public Space	Number of City Parks	Recreation Locations in Park District K-12 Buildings in School District 
Economic Security	Social Mobility Index A University Ranking Social Vulnerability Index Emergency Management Aid	Index looks at class advancement financial aid → alumni starting salary  <div data-bbox="1151 916 2030 1059" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">     </div> Ranks census tracks on 15 topics, used here as a convenient way to detect concentrated poverty.  Some issues monitored unfairly flagged Fargo for being the most populated. So many flags the count method had to be changed twice!

Category

Data

Explanations

Physical Safety

Crime Rate / 100,000 ppl

Violent Crimes



Crime Rate / 100,000 ppl

Violent Crimes + Property Crimes



Equity

Gender Wage Gap

The deficit between average Male salary and average Femal salary



Environmental Pollution

EPA Registered Brownfields Sites are recorded if cleanup is needed before any development can be done

Are there one or more sites within the city



If yes, are any bad enough for Federal status?

If no **BIGONES** regain some points

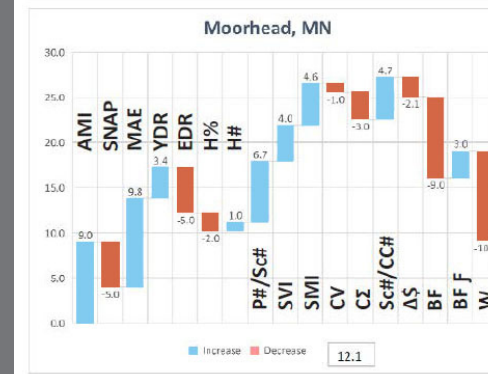
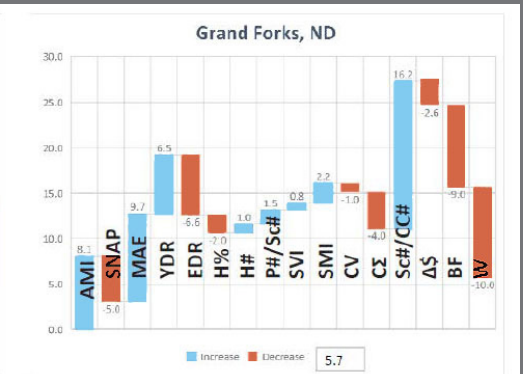
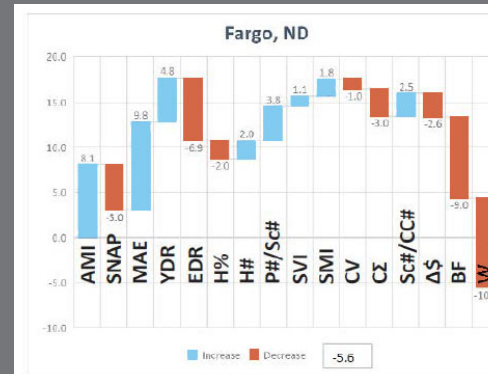
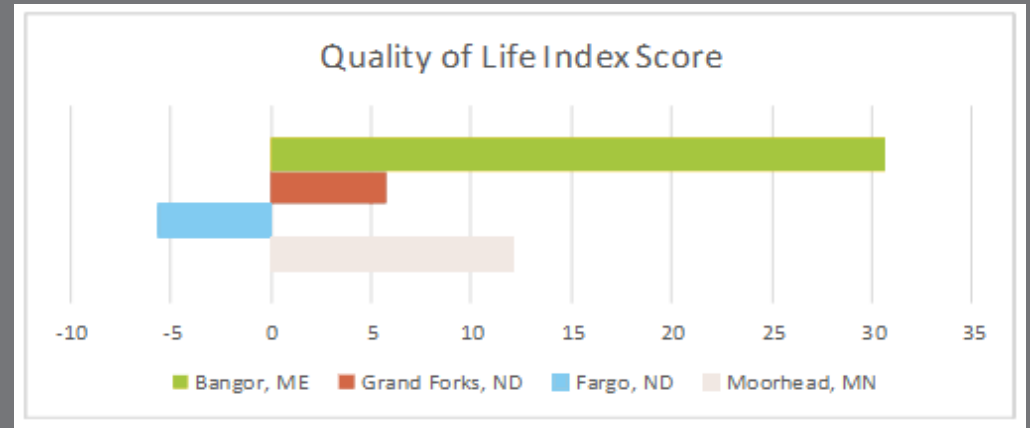
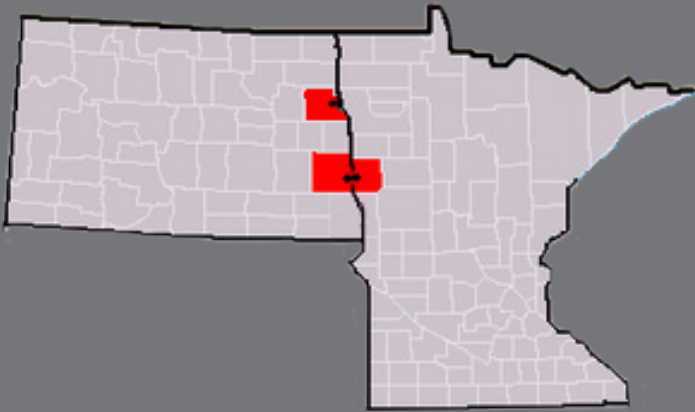
Water Quality

Any local water bodies "impaired" as defined in the Clean Water Act?



RESULTS

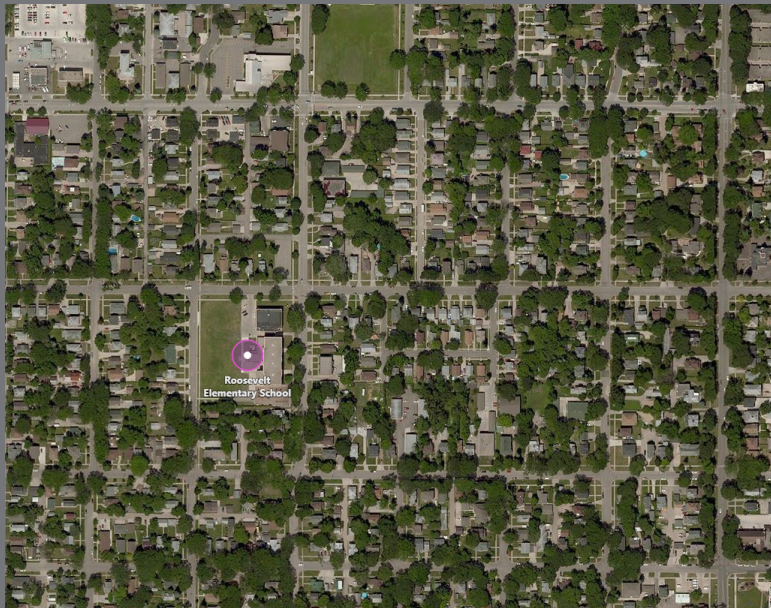
- Pollution is bad, (but it may have been wheighted too heavily)
- In using the Social Mobility Index, maybe other parts of it should have been used
- The SMI also makes it unfair to compare across regions.
- Therefore this system works best comparing “peer cities” within a region



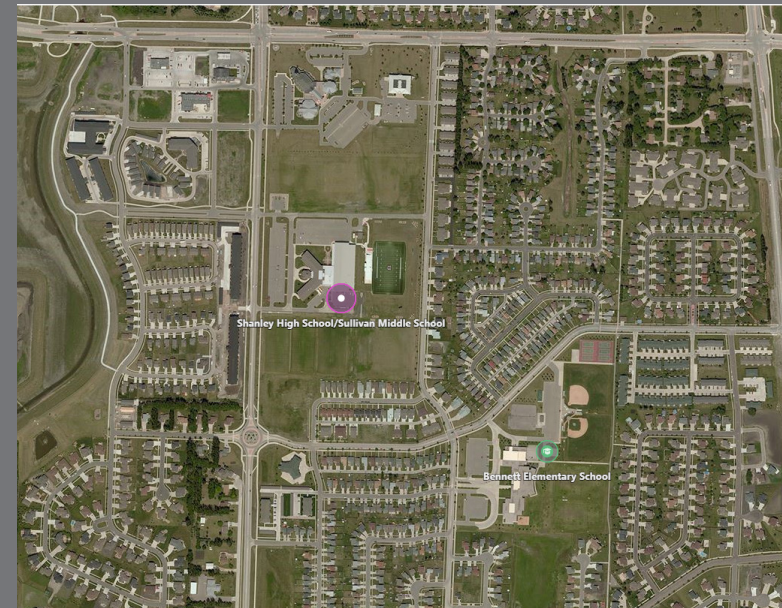
CONCLUSION

The Quality of Life index does not yet produce clear directives.

But it does support dense development and traditional neighborhood schools.



This is better for residents,
and more sustainable than



This!

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