

A SURVEY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN DECLINING RURAL AMERICAN AREAS

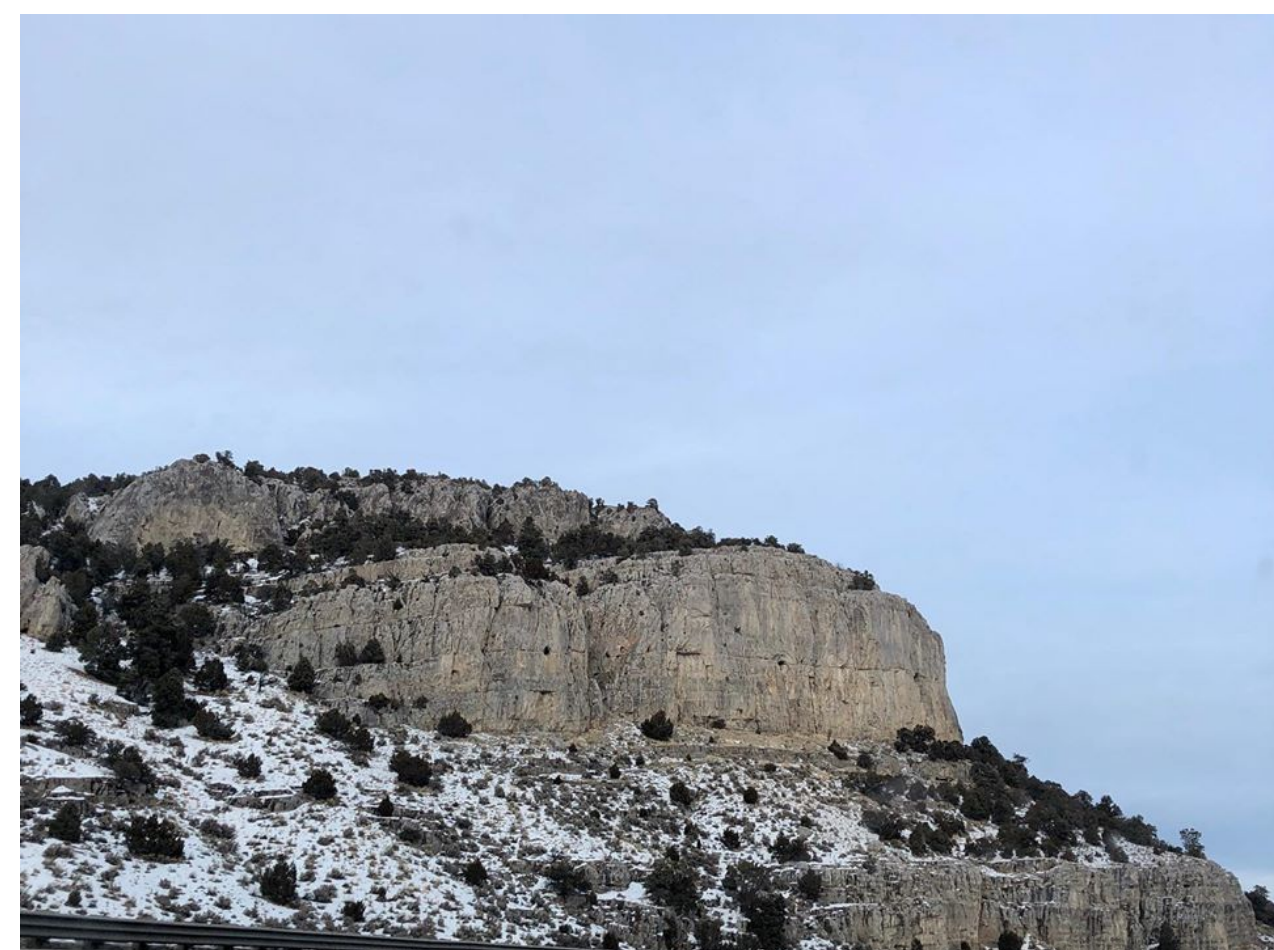
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Introduction

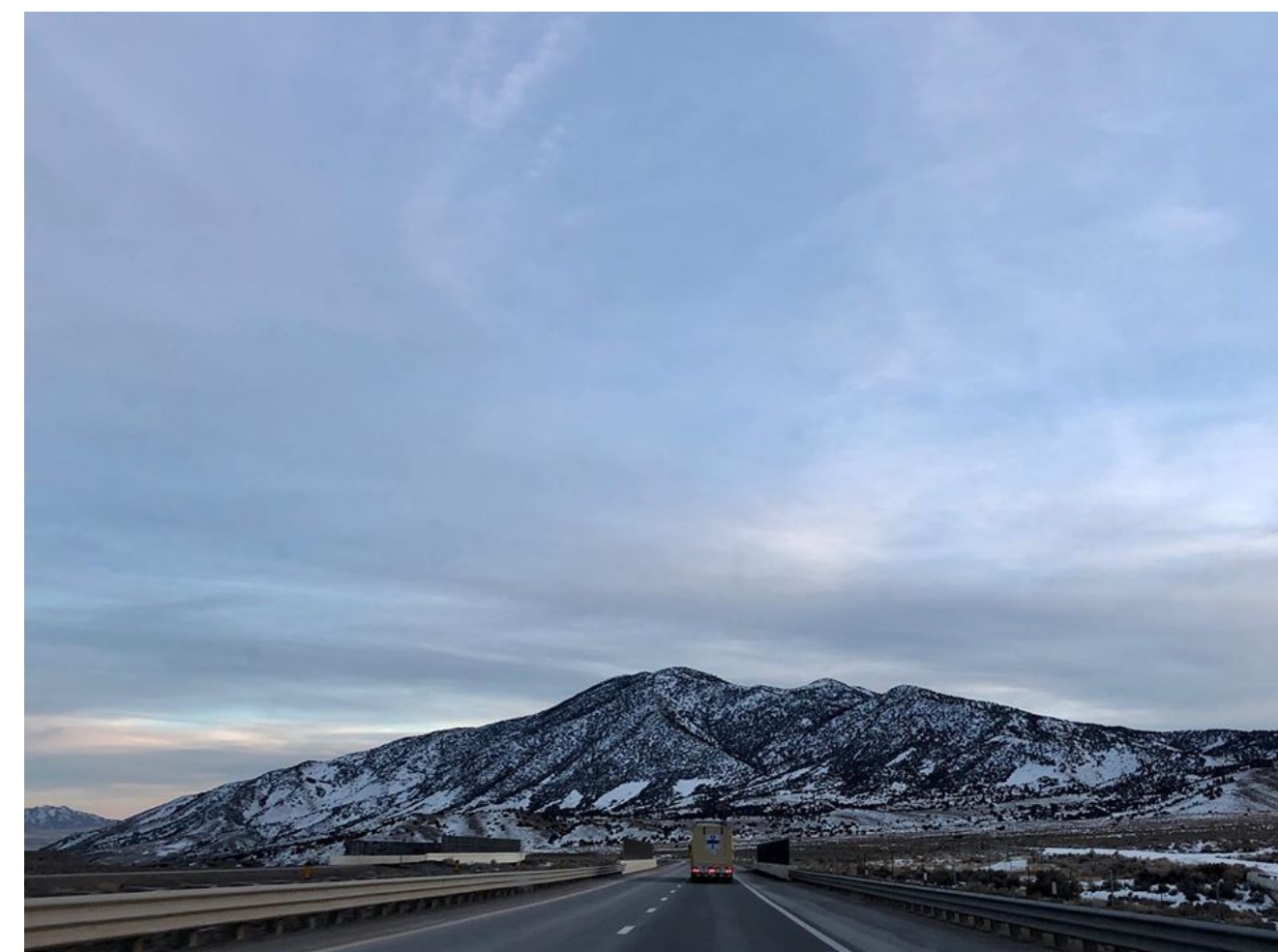
- Political interest in rural America tends to ebb and flow
- After the 2016 election of Donald Trump, Google searches, newspaper trends, and academic literature all showed increased interest in the economic decline of many rural American areas
- Most literature focuses on prescriptive approaches to “fixing” rural areas, like increasing broadband or restructuring loans
- **None have actually catalogued what these municipalities are doing themselves**

Methodology

- **Inductive analysis of 50 towns/counties from a 3007 town sample**
- **Five case studies based off of interviews and content analysis**



Central-North Utah



Southern Wyoming

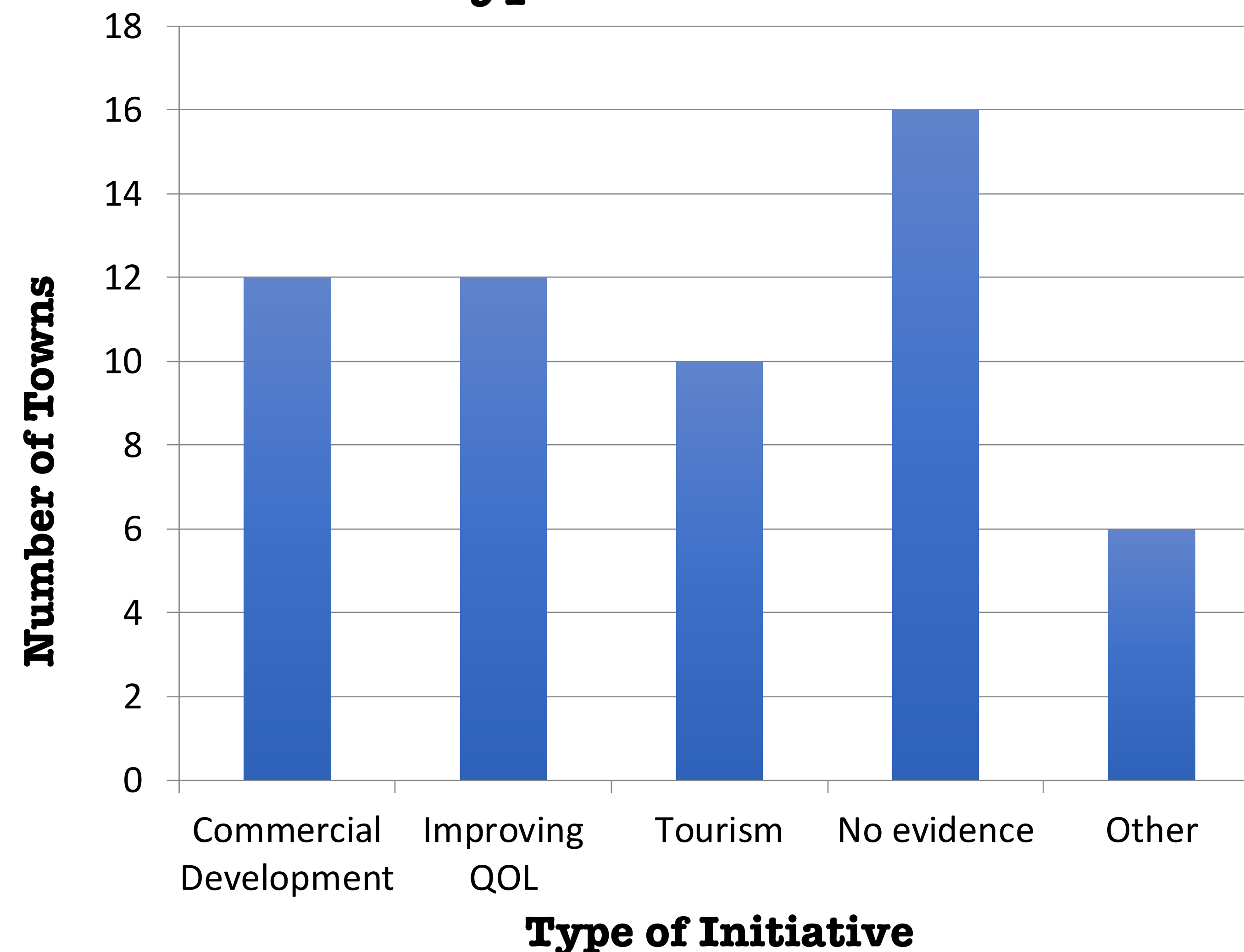


Northeast California

Research Question:

What are local governments in rural areas experiencing economic decline doing to combat it?

Types of Econ Initiatives



Conclusions

- There are several broad categories that most towns fall into:
 - commercial development,
 - improvement of services,
 - promoting tourism, and
 - no evidence
- These trends do not fall on any obvious geographic or political lines
- Prescriptive policies from academics or outside thinkers should bear in mind the wide variation of local governments' willingness and ability to combat decline

Future Studies

- **Future work could focus on understanding why some towns focus on certain types of economic development**
- **It could also seek to understand why towns that appear to be taking no action are deciding (or being forced) to do so**

Acknowledgements

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