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JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

S O C I E T Y

Volume 26, No. 2
1995

Ron Shaffer

Achieving Sustainable Economic
Development in Communities

Don E. Albrecht

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Counties

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F. Larry Leistriz
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Rita Kean
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Factors Affecting the Financial Viability of
Rural Retail Businesses

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of Community Workers' World Views

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Case Studies in Pennsylvania

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ORIGINS—Evaluation of a Statewide
Electronic Database to Aid Community
Developers

Christine A. Langone
F. Richard Rohs

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Process and Practice

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Practice Notes

- ORIGINS—Evaluation of a Statewide Electronic Database
to Aid Community Developers 240
*Heather Hoff-Hisey, Mike D. Woods, Robert Dauffenbach,
Harley Lingerfelt, and Jeff Wallace*
- Community Leadership Development: Process and Practice 252
Christine A. Langone and F. Richard Rohs

Book Reviews

- Against All Odds—Rural Community in the Information Age*
by John C. Allen and Don A. Dillman 268
Reviewed by Donald Erickson, Kansas State University
- Local Economic Development: Analysis and Practice*
by John P. Blair 269
*Reviewed by John Cyr, (Kansas) North Central
Regional Planning Commission*
- All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of
New York City* by Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers 270
Reviewed by Mary C. Lopez, University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Futures by Design: The Practice of Ecological Planning*
by Doug Aberly (ed.) 272
Reviewed by James A. Segedy, Ball State University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vol. 26

No. 2

19

Commentary

- Achieving Sustainable Economic Development in Communities 145
Ron Shaffer

Research

- Population Trends in Resource-Dependent Counties 155
Don E. Albrecht

- Factors Affecting the Financial Viability of Rural Retail Businesses 169
*Holly Bastow-Shoop, F. Larry Leistritz, Laura Jolly, Rita Kean,
LuAnn Gaskill, Cynthia Jasper, and Brenda Sternquist*

- From the Map to the Territory: An Exploration of
Community Workers' World Views 18
Richard Cawley and Ghislaine Guérard

Practice

- The Teaching of Rural Economics in U.S. Departments of
Agricultural Economics: Some Impressions
David W. Hughes and Bruce A. Weber

- Leaders' Perspectives on Rural Tourism: Case Studies
in Pennsylvania
Lisa Bourke and A. E. Luloff

EDITORS' NOTE

An important function of the Journal of the Community Development Society is to report on research conducted in the field of community development. In particular the research that we report in this journal should have research questions that pertain to the theory and practice of purposive community change. One of the more critical tasks of journal editors, then, is to ensure that proposed articles in fact have appropriate, clear, and relevant research questions. A research question, however, is a multi-faceted creature. As many of us recall from our introductory courses in research methods, there are actually three types of research questions—exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. These types of research are actually levels of knowledge: exploratory research is the beginning or discovery phase of knowledge, descriptive research is where knowledge is accumulated on a particular topic, and explanatory research is concerned with relationships among things leading to prediction. Editors, of course, strive to have the articles in their journals at the highest level of knowledge: explanatory research. Sometimes, though, knowledge of community development theory and practice needs to be reported even if is not explanatory.

In this edition of the Journal of the Community Development Society there are a few articles that have research questions that are not at the more traditional explanatory level. These include an article of commentary, and two “notes” that report on important evaluation research of community development practices. These articles contribute in a meaningful way to our knowledge of community development principles and practice.

Please send your comments and thoughts to the editors regarding any of the articles published in the Journal of the Community Development Society. Many articles stimulate thought and discussion of community development issues and the Journal can print these communications and serve as a medium of exchange for ideas. The address of the editors is located on the back of the front cover. Our email address is: rblair@unomaha.edu.

As always the editors want to publicly recognize and thank those people who provide thoughtful and meaningful input to this journal by reviewing submitted manuscripts. Since the last edition these people are:

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ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNITIES

By Ron Shaffer

ABSTRACT

The options available for communities to work toward sustainable community economic development are explored through four fundamental elements of community economic development theory. Sustainable community economic development is about changing perceptions and choices regarding community resources, markets, rules, and decision-making capacity. The idea of new knowledge and reframing issues is offered as a method to create new options. The dimensions of time, space, marginalized social-economic groups, and dynamic economies broaden the concept of sustainable development beyond the more traditional physical-biological definition.

INTRODUCTION

Community developers are increasingly struggling with fundamental questions about whether their efforts will have continuing impact and not unintentionally foreclose future options for community residents. The idea of sustainability is advanced to capture this struggle. While the concept of sustainability is influenced substantially by one's values, this paper uses four fundamental elements of community economic development theory to explore the options available for communities to work toward sustainable community economic development.

Sustainable community economic development is about changing perceptions and choices regarding community resources, markets, rules, and decision-making capacity. The idea of integrating new knowledge and reframing issues is a method to create new options. By understanding these forces, the community improves its capacity to manipulate them to the community's advantage. The dimensions of time, space, marginalized social-economic groups, and dynamic economies broaden the concept of sustainable development beyond the more traditional physical-biological definition. The balance of the paper explores the substantial shift in our conceptualization of development, and the necessary

Ron Shaffer is Professor of Agricultural Economics and Community Development Economist, University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension. An earlier version of this paper was shared at the International Conference on Issues Affecting Rural Communities, Townsville, QLD Australia, July 14, 1994.

conditions for sustainable community economic development. The paper does not reach conclusions, but attempts to summarize the thinking of one person trying to give personal meaning to an important question facing communities and those who work with them.

THE PARADIGM SHIFT

In many respects sustainable development represents a shift in paradigms about how development occurs and which aspects of development are crucial. Table 1 offers two contrasting paradigms about how our socio-economic-biological system works. No small part of the current sustainability debate is about which paradigm most accurately reflects the conditions of today and desires for tomorrow. The distinctions in Table 1 are exaggerated to expose what I believe to be the different perspectives and move us toward some general ideas regarding sustainable development.

The elements in Table 1 represent parts of two alternative views of how we frame the question of community economic development and indicate both how it will occur and the likely outcomes. These differences are not new. The first more visible appearance probably occurred in the 60s, when communities, neighborhoods, community activists, and public officials started to deal with the initiatives of the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations.

The old paradigm can be summarized in terms of more of the same, technological fixes, everyone will naturally benefit, and little connection among the elements of the community and elsewhere. The new paradigm suggests that there will be substantial transformations in how we do business; social interactions and networks are substantial parts of the fixes; conscious efforts are required to insure those we seek to help are actually helped; and the connections among all of us are stronger and often more indirect than we realize.

While these ideas have ebbed and flowed in the academic literature, policy debates, and community meetings, the emergence of the interest in sustainable development has given some legitimacy and renewed attention to how community economic development occurs and what outcomes we expect. Several themes come together in helping me make some sense of what this means in my professional career and how I might work with communities exploring their choices. The ideas contained in the concept of sustainable development help me look at how a community's economy is organized, what are key components, and how it changes over time.

Sustainable Development

In defining sustainable development, most analysts start with the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Report) definition of sustainable development as "that which ensures the needs of the present are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

Table 1. Paradigms Describing Community Economic Development

<i>Old</i>	<i>New</i>
Growth is preeminent (more of the same)	Development is preeminent (long-term transformation)
Benefits of growth will naturally trickle down and out to others	Equity considerations require conscious policy efforts
Individuals are wise and all-knowing	Individuals can comprehend only part of what is happening and needed
Technological change is either always good or will solve most problems	Technological change is only one of many possible solutions, and may not even be one of the better choices
Tomorrow will look like today	Tomorrow may look like today, but certainly no guarantee
Externalities of space, time, and class typically of minor concern and likely to take care of themselves	Externalities of space, time, social groups must be explicitly considered
Dynamic economies are growing	Dynamic economies are creating new choices, reframing of issues, changing perceptions of markets and resources, changing values
Socio-economic-biological elements are largely independent or can be treated that way	Socio-economic-biological elements are so interdependent that failure to consider linkages creates problems

needs” (1987, p. 9). The balance of the Brundtland Report emphasizes management and control over development, plus a holistic approach to problem solving. This is a perspective most community developers feel reflects their values. An overlooked aspect of the report is recognition that “development is not a fixed state of harmony,¹ but rather a process of change in which the use of resources, direction of investments, orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs” (World Commission, 1987, p. 9).

Part of the dilemma facing many of us is that the definition remains fluid. One expansion of the Brundtland definition includes

... a system that secures effective participation in decision making, provides for solutions that arise from disharmonious development, and is flexible and has the capacity for self-correction. . . . a production system that respects the obligation to preserve the ecological base for the future while continuing to search for new solutions (Sustainable Rural Communities Committee, 1991, p. 6).

¹ Schumpeter (1983) defines development as *creative destruction*.

The addition of disenfranchised groups in decision making is an important advancement. While their involvement in the actual decision making may not be a reality, the inclusion of their interests and perspectives in the choices considered is paramount. This dimension is particularly crucial to community developers.

The importance of time becomes significant when considering that many families and communities are having increased difficulty earning an acceptable standard of living and are experiencing an increasing sense of marginalization. This sense certainly places a premium on decisions favoring this generation and attempting to capture the "good life."²

For community developers, this idea of time and sustainable development should not imply maintaining or returning to some nostalgic recollection of how things once were. A form of nostalgic misdirection is that every community and its historic role should be protected from outside forces and has a right to survive. Rather, greater emphasis needs to be put on the future and what may be possible with respect to maintaining options or choices for the future.

To close this section, Dykeman's (1990, p. 6-7) definition of sustainable community economic development is particularly helpful.

... those communities that manage and control their destiny based on a realistic and well thought through vision. Such a community based management and control approach requires that a process be instituted within the community that effectively uses knowledge and knowledge systems to direct change and determine appropriate courses of action consistent with ecological principles. The process must be comprehensive and address social, economic, physical, and environmental concerns in an integrated fashion while maintaining central concern for present and future welfare of individuals and the community.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Figure 1 displays the essence of my conception of how community economic development occurs.³ The nodes in Figure 1 represent four significant elements that influence the economic change of a community (Shaffer, 1989). The diagram could be better displayed as a hologram, in motion with different images at different angles.

Two elements of Figure 1 that transcend the sustainability discussion are the need to be comprehensive in the strategies of change (Pulver, 1979) and the need

² For some marginalized groups the "good life" is rising above subsistence (Rural Sociological Society, 1993).

³ Wilkinson (1991) and others argue that developing the social system called a community is far more important than just the economic dimensions of that community. The present discussion is limited to sustaining the economic dimensions of the community rather than the general concern of sustaining the community, but they are inseparable ideas.

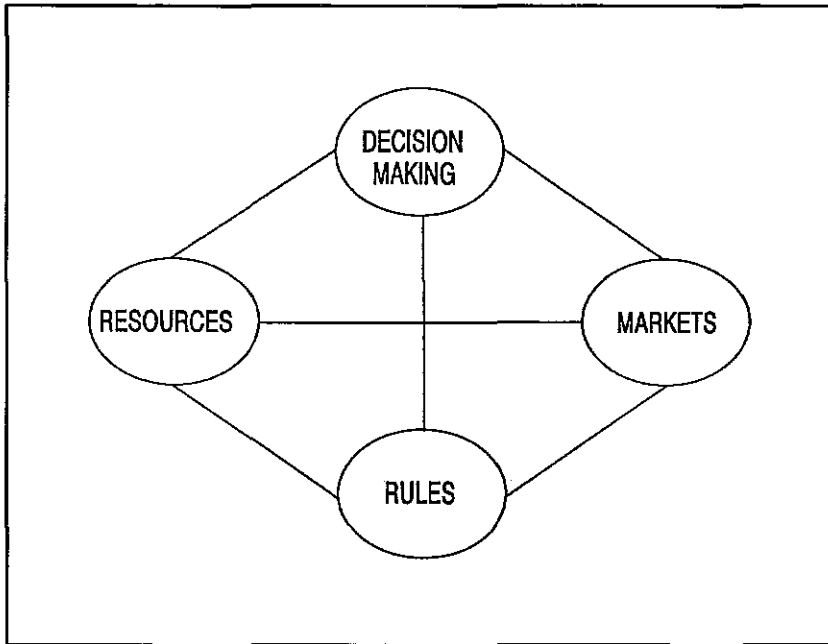


Figure 1. Crucial elements of community economic development.

to incorporate the various components of the community's economy in problem definition and the creation of options (Shaffer, 1989).

The resource node reminds us of the need to incorporate capital (financial, buildings, public infrastructure, housing), labor (workers, skills, educational outcomes), and technology (management systems, waste disposal or production, skill requirements) as important aspects of the community. Some policies communities create within this node include industrial parks, revolving loan funds, vocational training, management training, and low/moderate housing. The resource node can be thought of as the supply aspect of community's economy. It is the ability of the community to produce the desired goods and services.

The market node represents the demand side of community's economy. It is the nonlocal and local markets in which the community operates. These nonlocal markets could be international, in the next state, or in the next county. This is the export base idea of community economic development that probably best represents the old logic in Figure 1. It also represents the sense of how community economies change for an alarming portion of community and economic developers. The efforts to attract businesses to the community are the most obvious community policies emerging from this node. It is important, however, not to ignore the local market form. The local market generally affects community residents most directly. It relates to what goods and services are

available locally, customer relations, store hours, parking, and ADA access. Shopper surveys, mainstreet renovation, and parking facilities are examples of local market focus community activities.

The aspects of the community's economy contained within the rules node are the more visible legal and the less visible cultural/values structures. Examples of visible legal structures include zoning, housing safety, taxing, forms of business organization, inheritance transfers, contracts, and utility regulation. The less visible cultural/value aspects of rules are the standards of conduct that are encouraged or accepted. A recent example of this element is the communitarianism ideas present in such work as Etzioni (1993). The recent work by Putnam (1993) and the Floras (1993) on social capital is another form of the less visible cultural/value dimensions.

The decision making node involves leadership, which most community developers would feel is their *entrée*. While leadership captures some parts of this node, it really is much more comprehensive than typically found in the leadership literature. This node clearly includes distinguishing between symptoms and problems, implementation of action efforts, and how internal and external forms of knowledge are integrated.

Sustainable community economic development is about changing perceptions and choices regarding community resources, markets, rules, and decision-making capacity. While not obvious in Figure 1, sustainable development requires the use of accumulated knowledge (both scientific and experiential) to reframe questions that change the set of perceived options available. *Sustainable* must not be redefined into meaninglessness, but the choices we make regarding the four nodes of Figure 1 and their definition go a long way in making sustainable development attainable.

A dynamic economy adds the important aspect to sustainable development—recognition of the changing circumstances in which the community functions. These changes can be depletion or revaluation of a resource (e.g., groundwater, mineral deposits, scenic vistas), technological changes (e.g., genetic engineering, fiber optics), market shifts (e.g., aging population, single parent families, working couples, shifts in defense spending), changes in political-economic institutions (e.g., eligibility for federal programs, discharge standards, NAFTA/GATT) or economic structure (e.g., transnational corporations, relative decline of manufacturing employment). These changing economic circumstances alter the choice set for community response. Sustainable communities recognize these changes and create responses that allow the community to maintain and improve its economic position now and through time.

Four characteristics are associated with communities which appear to be economically sustainable (Shaffer, 1991). They are, in no order of importance: a slight level of dissatisfaction; a positive attitude toward experimentation; a high level of intra-community discussion; and a history of implementation. In a few words, communities that demonstrate the qualities of sustainability believe

they, and they alone,⁴ make and/or control their own destiny. This recognizes that while individual communities are given different economic circumstances (resources, economic structure, access to markets, growth of local markets), the sustainable community will capture the economic possibilities available.

Sustainable community economic development means using new knowledge to create new choices and options through time regarding the nodes in Figure 1. Now resources take on new meanings including assimilative capacity, marginalized groups, nonrenewable resources, lower energy use technology, and different skill sets for people. Likewise, markets start including buying locally whenever possible, recycling, consuming green products, and green lifestyles. Decision-making capacity now adds sensitivity about the biosphere, sensitivity about inter-generational implications, sensitivity about marginalized groups, and sensitivity about spatial flows. The rules of the economic game now include discharge permits and markets, compensation to people adversely affected, development impact hearings, and taxes on transboundary environmental use.

The themes that emerge from the expanded definition of sustainable community economic development lead to policies that explore how to increase community self-reliance, increase niche marketing (i.e., less volume, more value), increase ecological awareness (e.g., diversification of production from mono-culture, recycling wastes or reducing waste stream), change labor and management relations, and increase demands on knowledge and creativity.

Necessary Conditions For Sustainable Development

Economists contend that a major theme in sustainable community economic development is the externality of decisions and actions. Externalities can be both positive and negative, but are generally not accounted for in the market prices used to allocate resources across groups, space, and time.

In sustainable community economic development, time and future generations are explicitly brought into consideration for decisions and actions. If decisions and actions adversely affect future generations then current prices need to reflect that. To assert that time is important begs the question: relative to what? To argue that some resources should be preserved for the future does not answer the economic questions of what alternatives are foregone—now or in the future. Who is being impacted by the choice of preserving a resource? The end result of this blanket acceptance of future over present value could lead to the sacrificing of current legitimate interests for undefined future legitimate needs. Either condition leads to equally inappropriate decisions.

Another externality is that the benefits and costs of a decision or action are distributed spatially to separate groups, minimizing the possibility that market

⁴ The term *alone* is used to place responsibility on ourselves, not on others or external institutions. It does *not* mean isolation in action or response.

prices will create self-correcting signals. So, rather than getting corrective feedback, the system becomes self-reinforcing. The interaction between urban and rural economies is an example of spatial flows. Changes in urban markets (e.g., natural or artificial fibers, use of rain forest wood) and rules (e.g., water quality standards, prevailing wage standards) often play out in rural economies in a perverse manner. The transboundary flows of sulphur dioxide, ozone-depleting chemicals, or poorly educated migrants are other examples of externalities over space and time.

An aspect of sustainable community economic development that appears to have generated little direct discussion is the Schumpeterian (1983) idea that development is "creative destruction" with the associated economic dynamics that creates winners and losers. The sense of gains/losses may only be relative, but often is absolute (i.e., displaced worker, family, community).⁵ The inability of some adversely affected groups to contribute to decisions leads to reinforcing patterns of shifting burdens to those groups. Economists deal with this in statements about needed adjustments (migration, training, identifying new business opportunities) in a dynamic economy. It is insufficient to expect the market to handle many of the noneconomic aspects of these adjustments given asset fixity, family, gender, education, personal traits, age and race (Hite & Powell, 1993).

Some suggest that people consciously make short-run non-sustainable decisions and even imply that the economic system discourages longer term sustainable development choices. The reality is that we often do not know what the full range of options and their implications are and often do not face the choices at the same time. A minimum precondition for sustainable development is an active effort to acquire and improve access to knowledge regarding the range of choices available and their implications. This will require a substantial personal and societal investment to create a culture that explores alternatives.

SUMMARY

In summary of my thinking to this point, sustainable development explicitly recognizes increasing limits (biological/physical), given past and current economic/cultural/social norms and knowledge. It is not absolute; relative to shifting constraints, it embodies different forms of capital (i.e., renewable and nonrenewable), and has the capacity to accommodate change. Sustainable development incorporates linkages between economic and ecological issues and is sensitive to distribution across generations (time), space, socio-economic groups, and economic sectors.

⁵ An example of gains/losses and creative destruction is contained in the recent ending of the cold war. Most would agree that it represents a structural transformation and opens a host of new choices, but some communities, tied to the defense industry, obviously see themselves as losing.

Recognizing that changing norms, knowledge, technology, and markets lead to shifting needs for capital, labor, and space, I contend that sustainable community economic development is less a natural/physical/biological and more an institutional phenomenon. Sustainable development is less an issue of technical feasibility, and more an issue of what policies, behaviors, and institutions are required to achieve it in practice. Have we framed the questions appropriately? For example, energy is associated with economic growth,⁶ so it has been assumed that we must increase energy use to have economic growth. If we adopt energy conserving technology or if we adopt new product configurations (lower hydrocarbon content), we can conserve energy usage and still have growth and development.

The preceding example exemplifies the importance of re-framing questions from either/or to multiple options. The paradigm shifts (see Table 1) that must occur include reframing the growth/non-growth dichotomy; market/state directed dichotomy, and the assumption that since marginalized groups will not improve their relative position, absolute growth is the only choice available. There is a need to explore new procedures with new partners. For example, collaboration rather than competition becomes the guiding principle (Bryson & Crosby, 1992). Some of the new processes that sustainable communities will need to master include negotiation and conflict management skills. A crucial component is accumulating and incorporating new knowledge into the choices considered and made (Buxbaum & Ho, 1993).

Sustainable development, in its most admirable form, consciously reminds us that the system we are dealing with is complex (e.g., time, marginalized groups, and externalities) and that the stock of resources (e.g., physical, social, human capital) used to produce the outputs desired is both nonrenewable and renewable. It is not a "no growth" concept, but one in which different forms of growth are encouraged. It recognizes that a dynamic economy is not a euphemism for growth, but refers to changing choices, reframing issues, changing perceptions of markets and resources, and changing values. Nostalgia is replaced with the reality of changing needs and functions. Insistence on maintaining some historic view (e.g., production processes or community role) will only delay making needed choices. Economic choices are guided by both market and nonmarket (including intergenerational) values. There is concern about how change is creating increased disenfranchisement based on gender, skills, ethnicity, space, or economic status. The pursuit of sustainability implies an effort to increase access to decision making and to provide a fuller array of knowledge for decision making.

⁶ Energy is also associated with development, to the extent electricity transforms how we conduct our lives.

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POPULATION TRENDS IN RESOURCE-DEPENDENT COUNTIES

By Don E. Albrecht

ABSTRACT

Resource-dependent communities in the United States have a history of economic instability and population decline. In this article, national county-level data were used to compare population trends during the 1980s of resource-dependent counties with counties economically dependent on other sustenance activities. It was found that resource-dependent counties were significantly more likely to experience population declines during the 1980s than other types of counties. This relationship remained significant even when the effects of several variables were statistically controlled.

INTRODUCTION

The westward expansion of the United States consisted largely of settlers being attracted to areas where valued natural resources were plentiful enough to provide the means of making an economic livelihood. These valued resources included minerals, timber, fisheries, and the soil and water for agriculture. Typically, soon after the resource development began, a community would emerge in the area to provide services for persons utilizing the resource. From the inception of these resource-dependent communities, their social, economic, and demographic destiny was largely determined by the fate of the resource on which they were dependent (Luloff & Swanson, 1990). The natural processes and social processes were very much intertwined (Saint & Coward, 1977).

For decades, resource-dependent communities have been a consistent theme in community research (Machlis et al., 1990). The large and growing literature on resource-dependent communities has consistently shown numerous differences in comparison to communities based on other industrial processes (Field & Burch, 1988). Most prominently, resource-dependent communities appear to have substantially lower levels of community stability (Machlis & Force, 1988) relative to population trends (Beale, 1974; Murdock & Leistriz, 1979), social conflict and well-being (Krannich & Greider, 1984; Gamson, 1966), and institutional structures (Landis, 1938; Kaufman & Kaufman, 1946; Muth, 1986).

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Several aspects of resource-dependent communities make them susceptible to such instability. As Gilbert (1982) noted, these communities are dependent on biological processes that are technologically modifiable, but certainly not totally controllable. Thus, weather or other factors can dramatically influence production. Another factor is that these communities are susceptible to the depletion of the resource on which they are dependent. In many mining communities, for example, the discovery of a resource and the subsequent depletion of that resource would lead to a dramatic cycle of boom and bust (Luloff, 1990). Likewise, in timber and fishery communities, the depletion of the resource has led to subsequent community decline (Caudill, 1962; Humphrey, 1990; Clark, 1970; Tonkin, 1958). A third factor is that resource-dependent communities are often greatly impacted by the ups and downs of the economic market for the resource on which they depend. A variety of factors influence resource prices in national and international markets, and sometimes major fluctuations can dramatically affect demand for the product, which will subsequently influence employment levels and wages. Finally, technological breakthroughs and the development of labor-saving machines and equipment have caused major declines in the size of the work force needed in some industries, and these declines have had major consequences for communities (Berardi & Geisler, 1984).

While the literature on resource-dependent communities is diverse and extensive, important gaps remain. One of these gaps is population trends. This article will explore the population trends in resource-dependent communities during the 1980s, and compare them with other types of communities. While a body of research has examined population trends in resource-dependent communities, as well as other communities, in previous decades (e.g., Fuguitt et al., 1989), researchers have yet to update this literature with the most recent data available from the 1980s. Further, much of the previous research on population trends in resource-dependent communities has been conducted on agricultural communities (Albrecht, 1993). This study will examine trends in all types of resource-dependent communities, which includes timber communities, mining communities and fishery communities, as well as agricultural communities. In addition, this study will utilize data for all nonmetropolitan counties in the United States and will thus provide the breadth of information not available in more regionally specific studies.

Population Trends in Resource-Dependent Communities

While mining communities, in particular, have a history of rapid population growth which has resulted in the emergence of a "boomtown" literature (Kranich & Greider, 1984), the general population trend in resource-dependent communities has been one of population decline (Luloff, 1990). These population declines are evidence of the workings of a fundamental tenet of human ecology theory that maintains that a population will tend to redistribute itself

through the vital processes of fertility and mortality, and the far more efficient mechanism of migration, so as to achieve an equilibrium between population size and life chances (Hawley, 1968; Frisbie & Poston, 1975). Thus, beginning at about the end of the Great Depression, the development of a variety of labor-saving technologies greatly reduced the amount of human labor required in the natural resources industries. In agriculture, technological developments greatly increased the amount of land that an individual could operate, and resulted in the size of the average farm increasing greatly and the number of farms being reduced from over 6 million to about 2 million (Albrecht & Murdock, 1990). Similarly, labor-saving technology in other natural resource enterprises have also vastly increased the capacity of human labor and reduced the size of the work force needed (Dix, 1988; Stier, 1980).

With labor needs greatly reduced, there was a vast outmigration of persons from areas heavily dependent on employment in natural resource industries (Albrecht, 1986). Often the population losses from the heavy outmigration were made more severe because the declining work force in natural resources resulted in the closure of many businesses that had developed to serve the needs of these people (Rogers, 1982). Thus, between 1940 and 1970, the population in many resource-dependent rural counties declined by more than 50 percent (Beale, 1978; Larson, 1981). While population declines were relatively widespread throughout nonmetropolitan America during this time, research strongly showed that those counties dependent on natural resource based sustenance activities were much more likely than other counties to experience population declines (Frisbie & Poston, 1976).

After decades of outmigration from nonmetropolitan areas, the decade of the 1970s brought an unanticipated population turnaround. For the first time in our nation's history, more Americans were moving to nonmetropolitan counties than were moving away from them (Beale, 1975; Fuguitt & Beale, 1978). Although the population turnaround of the 1970s was relatively widespread, it was by no means universal in nonmetropolitan counties. Perhaps the counties least likely to experience population growth during the 1970s were those most economically dependent on natural resource industries. In particular, those counties in major farming areas and with a relatively large proportion of their work forces employed in agriculture were most likely to have population declines during the 1970s (Beale, 1988; Albrecht, 1986; Bender et al., 1985).

During the 1980s, population trends began to return to typical historical patterns, as nonmetropolitan to metropolitan migration once again exceeded the reverse flow (Beale & Fuguitt, 1990; Johnson, 1989; Richter, 1985). The limited research that is available on nonmetropolitan population trends during the 1980s has found that although most counties experienced net outmigration and population declines, those counties most heavily dependent on agriculture were most likely to have population declines and the extent of these declines was greater (Albrecht, 1993). However, researchers have yet to determine if this was true of

other types of resource dependent communities. Making such determinations is a goal of the present study.

METHODS

The analysis is based on county-level data obtained from the 1980 and 1990 Census of Population and Housing for all nonmetropolitan counties in the continental United States. The decision to use county-level data rather than data on individual communities was based on the knowledge that the use of natural resources generally occurs outside of the boundaries of the community, and that the economic and demographic consequences of changes in the way resources are used will be experienced beyond the boundaries of specific communities. Metropolitan counties were eliminated because the population of workers employed in other sustenance activities tends to overwhelm the numbers employed in natural resources in statistical analyses, and also the factors affecting migration flows are much different than in nonmetropolitan areas. After eliminating counties that were missing data on any of the variables used in the analysis, a total of 2,287 counties remained and were utilized in the study. The use of county based census data has several advantages to this type of research. First, it is convenient with the same information being available on all counties throughout the United States. The consistency of data allows cross region comparisons as well as longitudinal analyses. However, while census data show the results of changes that have occurred in a county, the processes by which these changes occurred can only be inferred.

The data will be analyzed using a combination of research procedures that will allow as complete a picture as possible of the relationship between resource dependence and nonmetropolitan population trends. First, a regression analysis will be run, using the percent change in the total population of the county between 1980 and 1990 as the dependent variable. The primary independent variable will be the percent of the labor force employed in the natural resource industries of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, which will measure the extent of resource dependence for the county.

In order to provide a more accurate understanding of the relationship between resource dependence and population trends, it is essential that the effects of several control variables be taken into account as a part of this regression analysis. The control variables utilized in this analysis will include the proportion of the labor force employed in three industries other than the natural resource industries and variables that previous studies have found to be related to population trends. The relationship between population trends and employment patterns is critical in a study such as this, as the growth and decline of various sustenance activities varies extensively across time, and from one area to another. The percent employed in manufacturing, recreational services, and other service industries will be studied in this paper. The percent of the labor

force employed in manufacturing was included because manufacturing became the leading employer of nonmetropolitan residents when natural resource employment declined (Albrecht, 1986; Elo & Beale, 1985), and at least until the 1980s, a base of employment in manufacturing typically meant much more positive population trends (Frisbie & Poston, 1975; 1976). The percent of the labor force employed in service industries was included in the analysis because employment in the service sector has been expanding for decades (Green, 1994), and by the 1980s, service industries had replaced manufacturing as the leading employer of nonmetropolitan residents (Kassab & Luloff, 1993). Examining employment in recreational services separately was warranted because many counties with a current or former high dependence on the natural resources sector may have the trees, water, or other resources to allow the development of a recreational based service sector. Thus, employment in other service industries is the proportion of the labor force employed in all service industries minus the proportion employed in recreational services.

In addition to the extent of employment in various sectors of the economy, it is also critical to consider several variables that have historically been found to be related to nonmetropolitan population trends (Beale, 1978; Fuguitt et al., 1989). The variables to be examined in this study include the total population of the county, median family income, and region. Nonmetropolitan population research has consistently shown that counties with larger populations are more likely to have positive population trends than counties with smaller populations (Johansen & Fuguitt, 1984), and consequently it is critical to control for this variable. To avoid problems of heteroskedasticity, this study will use the natural log of the total population in the regression analysis. Another variable to be controlled is the median family income, where it can be expected that there will be a movement of people from areas of lower incomes to areas of higher incomes. Finally, since migration flows to different regions of the country vary greatly and could mask the effects of variables within individual counties, it is important that region be controlled. In this analysis, counties will be categorized according to their location in one of the four census regions that include the South, West, North Central, and Northeast.

Additional analysis will be conducted using a logit analysis procedure (Swafford, 1980). This approach was selected because it will allow the effects of the independent variables to be more clearly evident. For this analysis, counties were dichotomized as having either population increases or declines from 1980 to 1990. The logit (the natural log of the odds ratio) of having a population increase as opposed to having a population decrease is then the dependent variable.

The primary independent variable for the logit analysis was industrial category. To compute this variable, the percent of the employed labor force in each of eight industrial categories was determined for each county in the analysis. These categories comprise the entire labor force. The categories were: 1) agri-

culture, forestry, fisheries and mining (the natural resource industries); 2) construction; 3) manufacturing; 4) transportation and communications; 5) wholesale and retail trade; 6) finance, insurance, real estate and business; 7) service; and 8) public administration. A cluster analysis was then run. This cluster analysis resulted in the categorization of counties into three groups based on their employment patterns. These three clusters were labeled as resource-dependent counties, manufacturing counties, and service counties (Table 1). The resource-dependent category included 363 counties. On average, counties in this cluster had 31.1 percent of their labor force employed in the natural resource industries of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining. In comparison, the other clusters had 8 and 12 percent respectively of their labor force employed in natural resource industries. The manufacturing cluster consisted of 1,240 counties that had a comparatively high proportion (26.8 percent) of their labor force employed in manufacturing industries. The service cluster consisted of 684 counties that had a relatively large proportion of their work force employed in the service industries (29.5 percent).

While industry cluster variable was the primary independent variable in the logit analysis, two control variables were also utilized. The first of these was region, which will be used in the same manner as during the regression analysis. The second control variable was population size. To use this variable in the logit analysis, the counties were dichotomized into counties with large populations, and those with small populations. The division point for this dichotomy was 17,000 people. Although somewhat arbitrary, this point split the counties into relatively equal groups and helped avoid the problem of some cells having few or no counties.

Table 1. Industrial Characteristics of Nonmetropolitan United States Counties in the Three Clusters

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Percent of Labor Force</i>			
	<i>Resource- Dependent (N=363)</i>	<i>Manufacturing (N=1,240)</i>	<i>Service (N=684)</i>	<i>Total (N=2,287)</i>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Mining	31.1	8.0	12.2	12.9
Construction	6.0	7.0	7.3	7.0
Manufacturing	5.6	26.8	10.1	18.5
Transportation and Communication	6.0	6.3	6.9	6.4
Wholesale and Retail Trade	16.8	18.5	20.5	18.8
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business	6.1	6.7	7.6	6.9
Service	23.5	22.5	29.5	24.7
Public Administration	4.9	4.2	5.9	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

FINDINGS

The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 2. Of prime importance, this table shows a strong inverse relationship between the percent of the labor force employed in the natural resource industries and the percent change in the county population between 1980 and 1990. Thus, even when the effects of the control variables were taken into account, counties heavily dependent on employment in natural resource industries were much more likely than other counties to have negative population patterns. A comparison of the standardized coefficients indicates that this was the strongest variable in the analysis.

An examination of the other variables in the regression analysis indicates that those counties with greater levels of employment in recreational services were most likely to have positive population trends, while extensive employment in either manufacturing or other service industries had negative implications for population trends. Apparently, the declines in manufacturing employment that occurred in rural areas during the 1980s resulted in population declines in counties that were dependent on manufacturing employment. However, the fact that counties dependent on service industries other than recreational services had declining population trends was more surprising.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Showing Unstandardized Regression Coefficients and Standardized Regression Coefficients of Independent Variables when Regressed on Percent Change in County Population 1980–1990 (N=2,272)

<i>Independent Variables</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>
Intercept	-0.0037	.000
Percent of Labor Force Employed in:		
Natural Resource Industries	-0.6048*	-.415
Recreational Services	3.6012*	.197
Other Service Industries	-0.9083*	-.321
Manufacturing	-0.4885*	-.379
Median Family Income	0.0000*	.218
Total Population (log)	0.0227*	.138
Regional Dummy:		
South	0.0159	.055
West	0.0145	.033
North Central	-0.0419*	-.140
F Value	147.7*	
R ²	.370	

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

For the other variables, the relationships were as expected. That is, nonmetropolitan counties with higher median family incomes, and counties with larger populations were most likely to have positive population trends. Of the regional dummy variables, only residence in the North Central region was significantly related to population trends. Here it was found that living in the North Central region had an inverse impact on nonmetropolitan population growth. Overall, the variables used in the regression analysis were able to explain 37 percent of the variation in the percent change in the population from 1980 to 1990.

In Table 3, the variables used in the logit analysis are shown in descriptive form. This table shows the 1980 population, the 1990 population, the percent change, and the percent of nonmetropolitan counties losing population for each category of all of the independent variables. The resource-dependent counties had median populations much smaller than counties dependent on other sustenance activities. The population of the average resource-dependent county was less than 5,000 in both 1980 and 1990, while it was greater than 18,000 in the manufacturing counties and more than 14,000 in the service counties. During the 1980s, the resource-dependent counties experienced a 6.7 percent population decline, while each of the other types of counties experienced population growth. Also, the proportion of resource-dependent counties experiencing population declines during the 1980s was much greater than for either of the other types of counties. The vast majority (84 percent) of the resource-dependent counties experienced population declines, while about one-half of the manufacturing and service counties had population declines during the 1980s. While the results of

Table 3. Characteristics of Nonmetropolitan United States Counties by Industrial Cluster, Region, and Population Size, 1980 and 1990

<i>Variable</i>	<i>(N)</i>	<i>Median Population</i>		<i>Percent Change</i>	<i>Percent of Counties Losing Population</i>
		<i>1980</i>	<i>1990</i>		
Industrial Cluster:					
Resource-dependent	(363)	4,648	4,147	-6.7	84.0
Manufacturing	(1,240)	18,770	18,923	2.4	46.1
Service	(684)	14,206	14,703	3.5	52.9
Region:					
South	(1,075)	16,117	16,490	3.2	46.8
West	(303)	9,355	9,956	9.4	41.6
North Central	(845)	14,643	14,067	-1.5	70.4
Northeast	(64)	33,465	35,359	6.0	21.9
Population Size:					
Small	(1,238)	8,970	8,776	-0.2	61.8
Large	(1,049)	26,482	28,474	3.0	44.2
Total	(2,287)	14,867	14,991	2.2	54.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, 1990.

this table make the effects of manufacturing and service employment seem more positive than Table 2, two factors need to be considered. First, the logit analysis was based on categorical classifications, and the dependent variable was simply whether or not the population in the county increased or decreased. In contrast, the regression analysis was based on the percent change and considered the extent of the increase or decrease. Second, Table 3 did not separate the effects of recreational services from employment in other service industries.

Relative to the other independent variables shown in Table 3, it is evident that population growth in the nonmetropolitan cluster counties was greatest in the West and Northeast regions, while the North Central was the only region to experience population declines. This finding is consistent with the regression analysis. Also, as expected, and consistent with the regression analysis, the larger counties were more likely to experience population growth than the smaller counties. Overall, the average nonmetropolitan county examined in this study had a very slight population increase—from 14,867 in 1980 to 14,991 in 1990. Just over one-half (54.1 percent) of the study counties had population losses during the 1980s.

In Table 4 the detailed results of the logit analysis are presented, as details for the 24 different combinations of counties are presented. Two of the possible 24 cells were empty as there were no resource-dependent counties in the Northeast region. This table displays how and to what degree each independent variable in the analysis affected the likelihood of a county experiencing population declines. This is done by showing how each variable contributed to the logit of losing population vs. not losing population in an additive manner. The first column shows the λ , which is equivalent to the intercept in ordinary least squares regression. The small positive number (.1473) indicates that the average county was slightly more likely to experience population declines than population increases.

The next column shows the effects of industry cluster (λI) on the likelihood of experiencing population declines while controlling for the other independent variables. Even when controlling for region and population size, being a resource-dependent county made a positive and strong contribution toward a county experiencing population declines (1.1216). Being a manufacturing county had a relatively strong negative effect (-.7581) on a county having a declining population, while being a service county had a weaker but nevertheless negative effect on the likelihood of a county experiencing population declines (-.3635).

In looking at the effects of region (λR) and population size (λP) on the likelihood of a nonmetropolitan county experiencing population loss, it is apparent from Table 4 that being in the North Central region greatly increased the likelihood of a county experiencing population declines during the 1980s, even when the effects of the other variables were controlled (1.1054). Being in the South region had a slight positive effect toward a county losing population

Table 4. Logit Analysis of the Odds of Losing Population by Industry Cluster, Region, and Population Size (N = 2,287)

Industry Cluster (I)	Sample		Effect				Logit ^a	Odds
	Region (R)	Population Size (P)	λ	λI	λR	λP	$\ln[\hat{P}/(1-\hat{P})]$	$\hat{P}/(1-\hat{P})$
Resource-Dependent	South	Small	.1473	1.1216	.2240	.2126	1.7055	5.50
Resource-Dependent	South	Large	.1473	1.1216	.2240	-.2126	1.4929	4.45
Resource-Dependent	West	Small	.1473	1.1216	-.6696	.2126	.8119	2.25
Resource-Dependent	West	Large	.1473	1.1216	-.6696	-.2126	.3867	1.47
Resource-Dependent	North Central	Small	.1473	1.1216	1.1054	.2126	2.5869	13.29
Resource-Dependent	North Central	Large	.1473	1.1216	1.1054	-.2126	2.1623	8.69
Resource-Dependent	Northeast	Small	—	—	—	—	—	—
Resource-Dependent	Northeast	Large	—	—	—	—	—	—
Manufacturing	South	Small	.1473	-.7581	.2240	.2126	-.1742	0.84
Manufacturing	South	Large	.1473	-.7581	.2240	-.2126	-.5994	0.55
Manufacturing	West	Small	.1473	-.7581	-.6696	.2126	-1.0678	0.34
Manufacturing	West	Large	.1473	-.7581	-.6696	-.2126	-1.4930	0.22
Manufacturing	North Central	Small	.1473	-.7581	1.1054	.2126	.7072	2.03
Manufacturing	North Central	Large	.1473	-.7581	1.1054	-.2126	.2820	1.33
Manufacturing	Northeast	Small	.1473	-.7581	-.6598	.2126	-1.0580	0.35
Manufacturing	Northeast	Large	.1473	-.7581	-.6598	-.2126	-1.4832	0.23
Service	South	Small	.1473	-.3635	.2240	.2126	.2204	1.25
Service	South	Large	.1473	-.3635	.2240	-.2126	-.2048	0.81
Service	West	Small	.1473	-.3635	-.6696	.2126	-.6732	0.51
Service	West	Large	.1473	-.3635	-.6696	-.2126	-1.0984	0.33
Service	North Central	Small	.1473	-.3635	1.1054	.2126	1.1018	3.01
Service	North Central	Large	.1473	-.3635	1.1054	-.2126	.6766	1.97
Service	Northeast	Small	.1473	-.3635	-.6598	.2126	-.6634	0.52
Service	Northeast	Large	.1473	-.3635	-.6598	-.2126	-1.0886	0.34

^a $\ln [P/(1-P)] = \lambda + \lambda I + \lambda R + \lambda P$

(.2240), while being in the Northeast region (-.6598) or the West region (-.6696) made it more likely that the county would have population increases. Relative to population size, being a small county made it slightly more likely that a county would experience population declines (.2126), while being a large county decreased the likelihood by the same amount.

The dependent variable (logit) was the natural log of the odds ratio of the proportion of nonmetropolitan counties with population declines during the 1980s. The values for the dependent variable can range from $-\infty$ to $+\infty$. A negative value indicates a greater proportion of counties gaining population than losing population, while a positive value indicates more counties losing population than gaining population. When the number of counties is equally divided, a value of zero is obtained. An examination of the logit column of Table 4 indicates that the type of nonmetropolitan county with the greatest likelihood of having population declines during the 1980s was resource-dependent counties with small populations, located in the North Central region (logit = 2.5869). A look at the odds ratio for this type of county indicates that the odds against such a county experiencing population growth was greater than 13 to 1. (When the odds of either outcome were equal, the odds ratio would be equal to 1. This would be achieved when the logit was 0). At the opposite extreme, the category of nonmetropolitan counties least likely to experience population declines was large manufacturing counties in the West (logit = -1.4930). The odds were only about one in five that such counties would experience population declines. Overall, the logit values indicated that for every category of resource-dependent county, the odds of experiencing a population decline exceeded those of having a population increase. In contrast, most categories of nonmetropolitan manufacturing and service counties were more likely to have population increases than population declines.

CONCLUSIONS

During the decade of the 1980s, the average populations of nonmetropolitan counties in the United States remained virtually unchanged. While there was a net outmigration from nonmetropolitan counties, this was offset by natural increases as births exceeded deaths. Both the regression and logit analyses used in this paper make it apparent that counties that were economically dependent on resource based sustenance activities were much more likely than other counties to experience population declines during the 1980s. The relationship between primary sustenance activity and population trends remained strong even when the effects of several control variables were taken into effect.

Resource-dependent counties have had a long history of economic instability and population declines. Most likely, such trends will continue as technological developments continue to replace human labor in the natural resources industries. Perhaps the likelihood of economic instability will increase as markets for

the commodities produced in resource-dependent communities become increasingly global. As a consequence, if resource-dependent communities wish to avoid continuing population declines, and the problems associated with such declines, they must find alternative employment and ways of diversifying the economy. Achieving such diversification will require all of the skills of the community development specialist.

One critical finding of this paper is that an employment base in recreational services had a strong positive effect on population trends. Thus, one option that may be viable in some resource-dependent communities is the development of a tourism industry. Where there are forests and fisheries, there may be the scenic beauty or recreational opportunities to attract tourists. Tourism, however, will certainly not be the solution for all counties, and other options must be explored.

In terms of the service industries, one area of tremendous future potential is among the elderly. For the next several decades, demographers expect a rapid increase in both the number and the proportion of elderly persons in the United States (Weeks, 1989). Researchers have found that nonmetropolitan counties that were able to attract an elderly population during the 1980s were most likely to experience positive population patterns, largely because of increases in employment in industries providing services to the elderly (Albrecht, 1993). Thus, perhaps another avenue open to community development specialists is enhancing opportunities and facilities that will make the community more attractive to the elderly. Additional research on this topic is needed.

Some of the more unexpected findings of this paper need to be the subject of additional research. A greater understanding is needed of the extent to which, and the reasons why, employment in recreational services leads to positive population patterns while employment in other services is related to negative population patterns. This research makes it apparent that an economy based on natural resources continues to be related to demographic and economic decline, and solutions to this issue deserve a high priority from community development specialists and community researchers.

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF RURAL RETAIL BUSINESSES

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ABSTRACT

Rural retail businesses have been particularly hard-hit by the economic restructuring occurring in rural areas. Small-town businesses typically have been capturing a declining share of what too often has been a shrinking market. Maintaining the viability of the rural retail sector is very important to rural communities and their residents. This paper presents results of a study of financial characteristics and performance of rural retail businesses in twelve states. Financial characteristics examined include total assets, debt, net worth, sales volume, net profit, return on assets, and return on equity.

INTRODUCTION

While the period since 1980 has been one of extensive economic restructuring nationwide, the effects of economic change have been particularly stressful in nonmetropolitan areas of the United States (Leistritz & Hamm, 1994). Nonmetropolitan areas are often characterized by dependence on one or a few key economic sectors and therefore are quite vulnerable to adverse changes in one of their basic industries. Depressed markets for the agricultural products of the Great Plains and Corn Belt states, retrenchment of the energy industry in the Rocky Mountain states and in Appalachia, and the restructuring of the manu-

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facturing sector in the Midwest and South have all led to economic stress for many rural areas (Barkley, 1993).

Economic restructuring has resulted in a variety of socioeconomic effects on rural areas, and the rural retail business sector has been hit particularly hard (Leistriz et al., 1992). Small town businesses typically have been capturing a declining share of what too often has been a shrinking market (Ayres et al., 1992; Stone, 1988). Several factors have contributed to the declining market share of the smaller rural trade centers, but whatever the causes, the effects of declining retail sales can be devastating to small towns. The continual loss of retail sales in small towns translates into loss of businesses. The loss of a key business, such as a grocery store, can be a severe blow to a small town because residents may be forced to travel more frequently to larger cities to shop, and sales of the surviving stores may suffer. Business closures also eliminate jobs for local residents and reduce the tax base of local governments.

It can be argued that the decline of rural businesses and the small towns where they are located is simply the result of the market system at work. Some rural residents, however, may experience substantial inconvenience as a result. The elderly, in particular, are sometimes limited in their ability to travel to larger communities to shop, and elderly residents comprise a large and growing segment of the rural population. In addition, persons whose livelihood is linked to natural resource-based rural industries (e.g., farming) cannot readily relocate to larger communities, but continued decline in the local retail sector may require them to make extensive trips just to obtain convenience items or parts needed for machinery repair.

While many rural residents have a vital stake in maintaining the viability of rural retail businesses, specific information available to aid such businesses in their struggle for survival is limited. Research in the following areas has been directed toward retail businesses in general: overall retail planning activities (Lyles et al., 1993; Robinson et al., 1986b; Orpen, 1985; Kelley & Young, 1983), strategic retail planning (Robinson & Pearce, 1988; Shuman & Seeger, 1986; Sexton & VanAuken, 1982), strategic versus operational planning (Shrader et al., 1989; Robinson et al., 1986a), financial planning (McMahan & Holmes, 1991), profitability strategies (Narver & Slater, 1990; Chaganti et al., 1989), and marketing strategies (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990; Walker & Ruekert, 1987). However, this general research may have only limited applicability to the problems of small rural retailers.

Similarly, available benchmark information on financial ratios for retail businesses is derived from nationwide samples that may not reflect the conditions facing rural businesses (e.g., Duns Analytical Services; Robert Morse Associates). While a few studies have attempted to focus on financial indicators for rural retail businesses (Leistriz et al., 1989), on threshold population levels for such businesses (Leistriz & Schuler, 1992), or on the effect of economic restructuring on rural communities and their retail businesses (Murdock et al.,

1987), these studies typically have been based on analyses of only a few rural communities, often in only one state. Thus, the extent to which their findings can be generalized to rural retail businesses in other states and regions is uncertain. There is a need to determine more clearly the financial status of retail businesses in rural areas and to identify the factors that are important to the financial success of rural retail firms. This information could be useful to community development practitioners as they work with business and community leaders to develop and maintain viable retail business sectors in rural communities.

This article presents results of a study that examined financial characteristics and performance of rural businesses in twelve states. Financial characteristics included total assets, debt, net worth, and sales volume. Financial performance measures included net profit, return on equity, return on assets, change in net profit, and change in net sales. Financial performance measures were evaluated with respect to a variety of business and community characteristics to determine which factors were most influential in affecting financial performance.

METHODS

Researchers from twelve states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) participated in the development of methods and data collection procedures, with the overall objective of examining retail marketing and management activities in rural communities from the perspectives of consumers as well as retailers. Data were collected from more than 450 businesses in 48 nonmetropolitan communities using both telephone and mailed surveys.

The study communities were selected through a multi-step process. First, eligible counties were selected in each state based on the predominant economic base. In Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Oklahoma, agriculturally-based counties (i.e., where agriculture directly accounted for more than 20 percent of earned income) were selected. In Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, and Ohio, manufacturing-based counties were chosen, while researchers in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Wyoming selected tourism-based counties. To be eligible for the study, counties could not be part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Within the qualifying counties, eligible communities were those with populations between 1,500 and 10,000 in 1990. Four communities were randomly selected in each state, two of which had populations from 1,500 to 4,999 and two with populations from 5,000 to 10,000.

Within the selected communities, eligible retailers were those from five Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) groups: 52, building materials; 53, general merchandise; 56, apparel and accessories; 57, furniture and home furnishings; and 59, miscellaneous retail stores. A list of all retailers in these SIC groups was obtained from Survey Sampling Inc. (SSI).

Telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of these businesses. Of 2,004 businesses contacted, 1,048 usable telephone questionnaires were obtained, for an overall response rate of 52 percent. The telephone survey emphasized questions that addressed retailers' perceptions about their communities and consumer attitudes, as well as general questions about the business (e.g., number of employees, length of time the store had been in the community, and characteristics of the owner/manager). All retailers who were interviewed by telephone were sent a follow-up mail questionnaire. The mail questionnaire focused on financial data and information regarding retailers' planning activities, competitive strategies, management activities, and attitudes, which were deemed difficult to obtain by telephone. A total of 1,048 surveys were mailed, and 456 usable instruments were returned, for a response rate of 43 percent. The information from businesses that completed both the telephone and mail surveys constituted the data base for this analysis.

RESULTS

Description of Sample

The respondent firms were distributed among the 12 states, with the number of respondents ranging from 54 in North Dakota to 22 in Louisiana. The responding firms also were broadly representative of the types of retail businesses frequently found in nonmetropolitan trade centers. The types of firms most commonly included in returns were furniture stores, hardware and building supply retailers, and gift shops (Table 1). The sole proprietorship was the most common form of business organization (47 percent of respondents) followed by corporations (32 percent) and partnerships (12 percent). Locally owned businesses dominated the sample (87 percent).

The business owners and managers who responded to the survey represented a range of age, education, and experience. About 30 percent of these business operators were less than 40 years old, 32 percent were 40 to 49, 24 percent were 50 to 59, and 14 percent were over 60. About 25 percent of the operators reported their formal education level to be high school or less, 40 percent had some post-secondary education, and 36 percent had completed college. About one-third of the respondents had owned or managed their business for five years or less while about 42 percent had been operating the business for 11 years or more. About 53 percent of the respondents were male.

When asked about their firm's profitability, about two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the firm had made a profit in 1991, while 14 percent indicated a break-even situation, and 20 percent reported a loss. About 51 percent said that their firm's profitability had increased compared with the previous year, 13 percent indicated no change, and 36 percent said that profitability had decreased. About 60 percent reported an increase in net sales, compared with the previous year.

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of Nonmetropolitan Retail Businesses in Twelve States, 1992

<i>Item</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Type of business:		
Furniture	57	12.5
Hardware, building supplies	54	11.8
Gift, novelty	42	9.2
Apparel and accessories	32	7.0
Florist	30	6.6
Drug store	28	6.1
Other	213	46.7
Business organization:		
Sole proprietorship	209	47.4
Partnership	51	11.6
Subchapter S. corporation	38	8.6
Corporation	139	31.5
Cooperative	4	0.9
Business ownership/affiliation:		
Locally owned	375	87.0
Franchise	15	3.5
National chain	12	2.8
Regional chain	23	5.3
Cooperative and other	6	1.4

Note: Totals are not identical for all characteristics because some firms did not respond to all items.

Assets and Debts

The respondents reported an average of about \$315,000 in business assets, but the range of reported values was substantial (Table 2). About 38 percent reported total assets of less than \$100,000, but 7 percent reported assets of \$1 million or more. Inventory made up 47 percent of the total value of assets. The average firm had total debt of about \$119,000 and a net worth of about \$195,000.

The ratio of total debts to total assets of the firms also is summarized in Table 2. The debt-to-asset ratio is one measure of a firm's solvency and risk-bearing ability. Firms with high ratios of debt to assets tend to be more vulnerable to increases in interest rates or decreases in revenues. One rule of thumb is that total debt should not exceed 50 percent of total assets (or 100 percent of net worth) because in such cases the creditors have more at stake than the owners (Duns Analytical Services). The average firm in this study had a debt-to-asset ratio of 40.1, indicating that its total debts were about 40 percent of the value of its assets. The median value was 28.7, and about 19 percent of the firms reported no debt. On the other hand, about 5 percent of the firms reported debts exceeding the value of their assets while another 14 percent reported debts totaling 71 percent or more of the value of their assets. All in all, about 32 percent of the firms had debts that exceeded 50 percent of the value of their assets. Thus, nearly

Table 2. Selected Financial Characteristics of Nonmetropolitan Retail Businesses in Twelve States, 1991

<i>Item</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Value</i>
Total assets:		
Mean	Dollars	315,242
Median	Dollars	150,000
Composition of total assets:		
Short-term assets	Percent	10.8
Inventory	Percent	47.1
Accounts receivable	Percent	10.7
Long-term assets	Percent	28.2
Other assets	Percent	3.4
Total debts:		
Mean	Dollars	118,770
Median	Dollars	32,000
Composition of total debt:		
Notes payable	Percent	18.2
Accounts payable	Percent	25.7
Other short-term liabilities	Percent	6.4
Long-term debt	Percent	42.5
Other debt	Percent	7.2
Net worth:		
Mean	Dollars	194,512
Median	Dollars	78,273
Debt-to-asset ratio (x100):		
Mean	Number	40.1
Median	Number	28.7
Distribution:		
No debt	Percent	18.6
1-20	Percent	25.5
21-50	Percent	24.2
51-70	Percent	12.5
71-100	Percent	13.8
Over 100	Percent	5.2

one-third of these businesses had debt levels that exceeded those recommended by Duns Analytical Services. This may hamper these firms' ability to secure financing in the future, which could limit their potential for expansion, or in some cases could place their store at risk.

In general, these businesses appear to be in a stronger financial position than the group of North Dakota rural retail businesses surveyed by Leistriz et al. (1989). Those firms reported an average debt-to-asset ratio of 50 and a median value of 46.8. The survey results can be interpreted to indicate that rural retail firms likely were in better financial condition in 1991 than had been the case during the late 1980s. For example, the North Dakota firms included in our study had a median debt-to-asset ratio of 29.0, compared to 46.8 in the earlier study

by Leistriz et al. (1989). This could indicate that economic conditions for retail businesses in this agriculturally-dependent state have improved as farm financial conditions have become better, or it could merely reflect the fact that some of the firms that had been in relatively weak financial positions at the time of the earlier study have since gone out of business, therefore improving the debt-to-asset ratio for those retailers remaining in business.

The average income and expenses of the respondent firms are summarized in Table 3. The firms' gross receipts less returns and allowances averaged about \$587,000 while the average cost of goods sold was about \$412,000. Total expenses were \$167,596, or \$141,496 before owner salary (BOS), and net profits averaged \$3,635, or \$40,903 BOS.

Financial Performance Measures

Selected financial measures for the respondent firms are summarized in Table 4. The current ratio compares the value of a firm's current assets (including cash, accounts receivable, inventory, and marketable securities) to the value of current liabilities (all liabilities that fall due within one year). This ratio measures the

Table 3. Income and Expenses of Nonmetropolitan Retail Businesses in Twelve States, 1991 (Mean Values)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Dollar Value</i>
Gross receipts less returns and allowances:	586,882
Cost of goods sold:	412,110
Other income:	7,627
Expenses:	
Advertising/promotion	9,189
Car and truck expenses	4,436
Commission for sales force	2,591
Depreciation	14,268
Employee benefit programs	3,524
Insurance (other than health)	6,280
Interest	7,946
Legal and professional services	2,136
Store/office expenses, repairs, and supplies	8,122
Rent on business property	7,156
Taxes (e.g., real estate)	7,170
Travel, meals and entertainment	1,179
Store utilities and telephone	7,199
Salaries and wages	74,086
Other	12,314
Total expenses	167,596
Total expenses before owner salary (BOS)	141,496
Net profit	3,635
Net profit before owner salary (BOS)	40,903

Note: Expense items do not add to total because data for some items were missing for a few firms.

Table 4. Selected Financial Measures for Nonmetropolitan Retail Businesses in Twelve States

<i>Item</i>	<i>Value</i>
Current ratio: ^a	
Mean	17.1
Median	4.1
Quick ratio: ^b	
Mean	4.1
Median	1.3
Net profit ÷ net worth (x100):	
Mean	28.6
Median	13.6
Net profit (BOS) ^c ÷ net worth:	
Mean	45.0
Median	22.5
(Net profit + int. pd.) ÷ total assets:	
Mean	21.1
Median	12.2
(Net profit [BOS] + int. pd.) ÷ total assets:	
Mean	31.5
Median	18.1

^aThe current ratio is computed by dividing total current assets by total current liabilities.

^bThe quick ratio is computed by dividing current (short-term) liquid assets by short-term liabilities.

^cBefore owner salary.

degree to which current assets cover current liabilities; the higher the ratio, the more assurance exists that current liabilities can be paid when due. A current ratio of 2 to 1 (2.0) or greater is generally considered good (Duns Analytical Services, 1994). The current ratio for the firms that responded to the survey averaged 17.1, although the median value of 4.1 is probably more reflective of the situation of the typical firm (i.e., a few firms with very high current ratios skewed the mean value). Only 18 percent of the firms had current ratios of less than 2.0.

The quick ratio is computed by dividing the firm's cash plus accounts receivable (liquid assets) by its total current liabilities. If this ratio is 1.0 or greater, the business is said to be in a liquid condition. That is, they have sufficient liquid assets to pay off all short-term liabilities, if necessary. For the firms surveyed, the quick ratio averaged 4.1 with a median value of 1.3. However, 44 percent of the firms had quick ratios of less than 1.0. These firms could be vulnerable to short-term cash flow problems.

The current and quick ratios of the survey firms compare favorably with national ratios reported by Duns Analytical Services and by Robert Morse Associates. Current ratio median values reported by Duns Analytical Services (Duns) for SIC Groups 52, 53, 56, 57, and 59 ranged from 2.3 to 3.9, averaging

3.0, while median values reported by Robert Morse Associates (RMA) for the same SIC groups ranged from 1.6 to 2.4, averaging 2.0. Quick ratio median values reported by Duns ranged from 0.75 to 0.95, averaging 0.8, while those reported by RMA ranged from 0.3 to 0.6 and averaged 0.4.

Net profit divided by net worth, which measures the return on the owners' equity in the firm, averaged 28.6 percent with a median value of 13.6 percent. When interest paid is added to net profit and the result is divided by total assets, the result measures the return on the firm's total assets. The return on assets averaged 21 percent for the survey firms, with a median of 12 percent. The corresponding measures calculated on a before owner salary (BOS) basis also are included in Table 4. In general, these measures of return to equity and return to assets appear to compare favorably with those reported by Duns and by RMA for retail firms nationwide.

Factors Affecting Financial Performance

To gain insights about factors that affect the financial performance of rural retail firms, selected financial performance measures were analyzed with respect to a number of characteristics of the operator, the business and its management, and the community or area where it is located. Four measures of the firm's financial performance are presented in Table 5, by selected characteristics of the operator, the business/management, and the community/area. Female operators reported a significantly higher average level of sales growth than their male counterparts, but the differences in other financial measures were not significant. Neither were the differences between age and education categories statistically significant. Persons who had operated their businesses nine years or less (the median value) reported a significantly higher level of sales growth than their counterparts with longer tenure. Many of the newer operators may represent the low-cost, rapid-growth stage of the cycle of retail growth and development often referred to as the *wheel of retailing* (Berman & Evans, 1992).

Stores that had been established in the community for less than the median length of time (19 years) reported a significantly greater level of sales growth than those that had been established for a longer time period (Table 5). Partnerships reported greater sales growth than sole proprietorships, which in turn reported larger sales increases than corporations. Other financial measures did not differ significantly by the business/management characteristics examined.

The community characteristic that was most consistently related to the financial measures was the city population change over the period 1980–1990. As might be expected, businesses located in towns that had grown during the 1980s reported significantly higher return on equity, return on assets, and change in net sales than their counterparts in towns with declining populations (Table 5). Businesses in growing towns also reported a somewhat higher percentage growth in net profit, but this difference was not significant. Businesses located in growing counties also tended to have somewhat more favorable financial

Table 5. Selected Financial Performance Measures for Nonmetropolitan Retail Businesses in Twelve States, by Selected Characteristics of Business, Operator, and Community

Selected Characteristics	Financial Performance Measures			
	Return on Equity (BOS)	Return on Assets (BOS)	Change in Net Profit (Percent)	Change in Net Sales (Percent)
----- mean values -----				
OPERATOR CHARACTERISTICS				
Operator age:				
Less than 45	.50	.34	17.4	12.5
45 or older	.33	.29	14.3	12.6
Operator gender:				
Male	.47	.28	15.7	9.6*
Female	.43	.37	16.9	18.4*
Operator education:				
High school or less	.38	.24	15.7	16.3
Some post-secondary	.42	.33	16.9	12.9
College grad or more	.51	.34	15.7	10.8
Years operator has owned/operated the business:				
More than 9 years ^a	.37	.30	15.7	8.4*
9 years or less	.55	.34	16.4	17.4*
BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS				
Business organization:				
Sole proprietorships	.41	.31	15.5	13.3*
Partnerships	.73	.50	16.9	23.3*
Corporations	.45	.29	14.8	9.5*
Years store has been in community:				
More than 19 years ^b	.44	.29	16.1	9.1*
19 years or less	.45	.36	16.1	21.4*
Prepares written short-term objectives:				
Yes	.49	.23	17.0	11.2
No	.43	.35	15.6	13.7
Prepares written long-term plans:				
Yes	.27	.20	19.7	12.0
No	.48	.33	15.3	12.9
Planning scale: ^c				
Above median value	.46	.30	14.2	12.1
Below median value	.46	.35	17.7	13.3
Management scale: ^d				
Above median value	.51	.37	14.6	12.8
Below median value	.41	.27	17.4	12.8

Table 5. Continued

<i>Selected Characteristics</i>	<i>Financial Performance Measures</i>			
	<i>Return on Equity (BOS)</i>	<i>Return on Assets (BOS)</i>	<i>Change in Net Profit (Percent)</i>	<i>Change in Net Sales (Percent)</i>
----- mean values -----				
COMMUNITY/AREA CHARACTERISTICS				
Rural/urban setting: ^e				
Rural, adjacent to metro	.45	.28	18.2	14.8
Rural, remote	.44	.34	15.2	11.8
City population, 1990:				
Less than 5,000	.42	.37	17.8	12.5
5,000 or more	.47	.28	15.5	12.9
City population change, 1980-1990:				
Increase	.78*	.52*	17.0	17.1*
Decrease	.35*	.25*	15.8	11.3*
County population change, 1980-1990:				
Increase	.53	.36	16.3	13.8
Decrease	.43	.30	16.0	12.4

^aThe median length of time operators had owned/operated the business was 9 years.

^bThe median length of time the business has been in the community was 19 years.

^cThe planning scale was formed by summing the responses to questions 1-22, part 1 of the mail survey.

^dThe management scale was formed by summing the responses to questions 1-7, part 3 of the mail survey.

^eCounties were classified based on ERS-USA policy impact codes. Source: Economic Research Service (1992).

*Significantly different based on Tukey test with $\alpha = 0.05$

measures than those in declining counties, but these differences were not statistically significant.

Financial Characteristics by Business Type

Selected financial characteristics of the types of businesses most frequently encountered in the study are presented in Table 6. Firms engaged in retailing hardware and building supplies had substantially higher levels of total assets and net worth than most other business types, while florists and gift shops had lower than average levels of total assets and net worth. Furniture stores also reported a relatively low average level of net worth and high debt-to-asset ratio. The financial characteristics of the various types of businesses were somewhat parallel to those reported by Duns, which also indicated that retailers selling building materials tended to have relatively high levels of total assets and net worth, while florists and gift/novelty shops had lower than average total assets and net worth.

Table 6. Average Assets, Debt, Net Worth, and Net Profit for Nonmetropolitan Retail Businesses in Twelve States, by Business Type

<i>Business Type</i>	<i>Total Assets</i>	<i>Total Debt</i>	<i>Net Worth</i>	<i>Net Profit</i>	<i>Net Profit (BOS)</i>	<i>Debt-to-Asset Ratio</i>
----- mean values -----						
Furniture	200,699	67,346	126,333*	17,214	31,747	58.5
Hardware, building supplies	553,349*	228,918	369,298*	45,287	68,546	32.7
Gift, novelty	117,178*	53,378	59,431*	23,423	28,506	49.1
Apparel, accessories	275,765	79,041	153,173	3,374	23,659	40.7
Florist	92,018*	31,345	65,838*	16,815	19,448	39.5
Drug store	265,524	90,079	175,445	78,508	107,194	39.3
Other	337,950	128,001	213,927	-2,714	6,949	35.0

*Significant difference in means at $\alpha = .05$ using Tukey Test.

Selected financial performance measures are presented for the major types of businesses in Table 7. The business types with relatively high average returns on equity included florists, drug stores, and furniture stores. These same business types also ranked highest in return on assets; however, the differences among firm types were not statistically significant for either measure. Furniture stores, on average, enjoyed the greatest increase in net profit compared to the previous year, followed by hardware and building supplies, while gift shops had the largest average increase in net sales. However, the differences among business types were not statistically significant.

Table 7. Selected Financial Performance Measures for Nonmetropolitan Retail Businesses in Twelve States, by Business Type

<i>Type of Business</i>	<i>Financial Performance Measures^a</i>			
	<i>Return on Equity (BOS)</i>	<i>Return on Assets (BOS)</i>	<i>Change in Net Profit (Percent)</i>	<i>Change in Net Sales (Percent)</i>
----- mean values -----				
Furniture	.70	.56	23.3	12.0
Hardware and building supplies	.28	.15	17.7	9.0
Gift, novelty	.39	.30	14.8	15.4
Apparel and accessories	.14	.16	14.9	13.3
Florist	1.00	.46	16.1	11.2
Drug store	.92	.52	12.4	11.4
Other	.30	.24	14.5	13.8

^aNo significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ using the Tukey Test.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was employed to gain additional insights regarding factors affecting financial performance. Regression analysis is a multivariate statistical technique which provides estimates of the systematic effect of a particular independent variable (e.g., city population change) on a dependent variable (e.g., return on equity), while taking account of the effects of other independent variables (e.g., business type, operator attributes, etc.). Two regression models were estimated using data from the survey. Both models were estimated by ordinary least squares (OLS) regression using the stepwise regression option of the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The partial F probability level to exclude a variable was specified at 0.15. The dependent variables for the two models were return on equity (Model 1) and return on assets (Model 2), both measured before owner salary (BOS).

Variables considered for inclusion in the models were the characteristics of the operator, the business, and the community/area and the business/management strategies that were summarized in the previous tables. Proxy and dummy variables were used to represent such attributes as type of business and form of business organization.

The following hypotheses were formulated for the regression analysis:

Hypothesis 1. Changes in town and county population were expected to be positively related to the two measures of returns (i.e., return on equity, return on assets), while the relationship between town and county population and rates of return was deemed indeterminate. The reasoning was that population *growth* would reflect an expanding clientele base for most businesses but that towns or counties with large (but not necessarily growing) populations would likely have not only more potential customers but also more competing businesses.

Hypothesis 2. The various business planning and management scales (where high scores reflected more active management styles) were expected to be positively related to returns on equity and assets, while the business environment scale (wherein a high score corresponded to a more risky environment) was hypothesized to have a negative relationship.

Hypothesis 3. Operator education was hypothesized to be directly related to the return on equity and return on assets, as was the time that the operator had owned or managed the business. It was anticipated that operators with longer tenure would have been better able to develop a loyal customer clientele and to tailor their product line to customer needs.

Hypothesis 4. Corporations and partnerships were hypothesized to have higher returns than sole proprietorships, as the former types of business organization should be able to obtain capital more readily.

The results of model estimation are shown in Table 8. Variables that were selected for the model explaining return on equity included the change in the town's population from 1980 to 1990 and scales reflecting the firms' use of a variety of competitive strategies, the firms' personnel planning efforts, and the operators' assessments of the local business environment. Three business type variables (drug store, florist, and furniture store) also entered the model. Each of these business types tended to earn higher returns on equity than the reference group (the "other" business category, Table 1).

Returns on equity were positively associated with the community's recent population change (i.e., businesses in growing towns tended to earn higher returns). Returns on equity were positively associated with the firms' personnel planning but negatively associated with the importance the managers attached to competitive strategies. Returns on equity were negatively associated with the manager's assessment of the riskiness of the local business environment (i.e., managers who reported low returns viewed local business conditions as more hostile or risky than those with high returns). The number of years the respondent had managed or owned the business also entered the model, but was not significant at the 10 percent level. Overall, the regression model explained about 22 percent of the variation in return on equity.

Table 8. Regression Results Explaining Returns on Equity and Assets

Variable Description	Model 1—Return on Equity		Model 2—Return on Assets	
	Estimated Coefficients	Standard Error	Estimated Coefficients	Standard Error
X ₀ Intercept	3.55*	1.07	0.23	0.22
X ₁ Change in town population, 1980-90	0.03*	0.01	—	—
X ₂ Competitive strategy scale	-0.03*	0.01	—	—
X ₃ Business environment scale	-0.09*	0.04	—	—
X ₄ Personnel planning scale	0.07**	0.04	0.06*	0.02
X ₅ Town population, 1990	—	—	-0.00*	0.00
X ₆ Management scale	—	—	-0.02**	0.01
X ₇ How many years respondent has owned or managed business	-0.01	0.01	—	—
D ₁ Business type—drug store	0.91*	0.35	0.29	0.19
D ₂ Business type—florist	0.94*	0.37	—	—
D ₃ Business type—furniture	0.65*	0.27	0.40*	0.14
D ₄ Business organization—partnership	—	—	0.24	0.15
	N=130 ^a R=0.22		N=143 ^a R=0.19	

*Significant at 5 percent.

**Significant at 10 percent.

^aMissing observations were omitted.

Variables selected for the model explaining returns on assets included the town's population in 1990, scales measuring the frequency with which respondents engaged in various management activities and in personnel planning efforts, the drug store and furniture business types, and the partnership form of business organization.

The town's 1990 population also was negatively related to returns on assets. The management scale was also negatively related to return on assets (i.e., managers who reported high returns engaged in management activities such as comparing actual sales with planned sales less often than those with lower returns). Partnerships reported relatively high returns (compared to the reference group, corporations), as did drug stores and furniture retailers, but the partnership and drug store variables were not significant at the 10 percent level. Overall, the model explained about 19 percent of the variation in return on assets.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study provide some insights regarding the characteristics and financial performance of rural retail firms. Although many observers have commented on the economic problems of rural retailers, the retail businesses represented in this study generally exhibited reasonable financial strength. About two-thirds reported that their operations had been profitable over the past year, and more than half reported that their profits had increased between 1990 and 1991. Measures of solvency and liquidity also indicated that most firms were in a relatively strong financial position. Comparison of these results with those from studies conducted in the "farm crisis" period of the 1980s suggests that the financial situation of rural retail businesses has improved in recent years. Whether this is a result of an improved retail business climate in rural areas or merely reflects the fact that many firms in weak financial positions have gone out of business is a topic for future research.

Analysis of factors affecting the firms' return on equity and return on assets revealed the importance of community characteristics in determining profitability. The recent change in town population was an important variable determining return on equity, giving support to the view held by many local economic development groups that local economic and population growth will benefit local retailers. On the other hand, the population of the town was negatively related to return on assets, indicating that being located in a small town does not necessarily dictate an unfavorable financial outcome for a retail business.

The study findings can be used by community development practitioners as benchmarks for comparison when analyzing businesses in their own communities.

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FROM THE MAP TO THE TERRITORY: AN EXPLORATION OF COMMUNITY WORKERS' WORLD VIEWS

By Richard Cawley and Ghislaine Guérard

ABSTRACT

This article presents an analysis of the world view of six community workers. To uncover the community workers' assumptions about their work, their clients and their understanding of social change, the researchers used language analysis. Language analysis is based on the assumption that vocabulary provides access to what and whom people see as important. After subjecting the workers' texts to a vocabulary scanning process, factorial analysis graphics representing the workers and the words most associated with them were interpreted. Particular attention was given to the workers' understanding of social change. The use of factorial analysis permitted the identification of similarities and differences in the workers' world views. It also allowed themes to emerge in which different visions were opposed. These themes showed a resemblance to what Rothman has identified as variables in his article on community development models. The workers fell into two distinct groups. One group favored a mixture between locality development and social planning. They favored planned change, a facilitator role and a collaborative approach to social relationships. The other group was closer to the social action model of intervention. They can be defined as orienters and influencers who saw society in conflict between the system and its victims. The analysis has shown differences in vision between men and women and a difference between one worker and the other five concerning her vision of her constituency. Her discourse reflected a personal view of actors and relationships while the other workers tended to identify more with groups or institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Using a new methodology for the exploration of the world view of community workers, vocabulary factorial analysis, the authors have examined how community workers perceived social change, how they viewed the various actors involved in their work, and how the workers perceived the community work process. The article pursued two main objectives. One was methodological and sought to verify and demonstrate the utility of the method used. The second goal was to open up directions to pursue for further research and questions to explore concerning community development theory and practice. The research

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material, consisting of interviews with six community workers, was used as a pre-test for further and much broader research.

Because they were dissatisfied with the findings revealed by content analysis of the interviews, the authors adopted a semiological approach to the analysis of the material. Using the word as a significant sign to study an individual's world view, the workers' discourse was linguistically deconstructed in order to examine it from another perspective and in another sequence than the sentence, the paragraph and the text. Based upon the comparative redundancy of the words used by the community workers, which was then computerized in factorial analysis, *maps* (factorial analysis graphs) of the community workers' visions of their work were constructed. These maps positioned the workers in relationship to each other according to the words they used the most often, the *actors* that they mentioned most frequently and the verbs used.¹ The positioning of the workers on the graphs was, by itself, reflective of the different visions they held and of the different approaches these individuals took to their work and view of their constituents. The researchers used these maps, with the positioning of the workers and the words that reflected concepts such as change, as a guide back to the territory, to the texts, in order to reconstruct the community workers' discourses and to make sense of their visions.

The interpretation of the factorial analysis graphs allowed the researchers to identify underlying themes in the different visions expressed by the workers. These themes emerged as variables such as their view of their constituency, how they saw the basis for action, and action strategies. The researchers discovered in these themes a resemblance to the variables contained in Rothman's models of community work. They used Rothman's threefold description of models of community work to locate the different workers' visions of their work as a basis for the analysis of the workers' different approaches to their work (Rothman, 1974). This also allowed a comparison between the variables revealed by factorial analysis and Rothman's variables. Consequently, a third objective of this research was to investigate how the data revealed by factorial analysis compared with Rothman's models and how it might contradict it or add to it.

A Description of the Workers and the Material Analyzed

In examining the research literature of community development, little can be found that seeks to examine the attitudes, values or work habits of community workers (Donnemeyer & Passewitz, 1991). Yet in any community development activity the worker is a central and indeed critical figure in the process, one who has a great deal to do with the success or failure of the project but whose real significance may often be lost on both community participants and on the

¹ The word "actor" is used for any social actor, be it an individual, a group or an institution.

community workers' employers, as well as on funding agencies and other stake-holders in a community project.

The research reported here focused on the community workers' views of themselves, their work, clients and views of social change. Who were these persons called community workers? What motivated them to do this work? How did they view the significance of this work and the importance of their own contribution to it? How did they understand the social change processes in which they were involved? The workers were asked a series of open-ended questions designed to get them talking about their work in ways that were comfortable to them. The interviews were tape-recorded and the results transcribed at a later date. The interviews produced a wealth of information in the detailed conversations, from one and a half to two hours in length.

The six workers consisted of two men and four women.² Three were working in Montreal and three in Ottawa. Flo was a community worker in a Montreal YMCA and has a BA in Applied Social Science. Bill worked for a para-public community agency in Ottawa and had received an MSW degree. Bob was a worker in a Centre Local de Services Communautaires in Montreal (part of the network of public health and social service agencies in Quebec), and had an undergraduate degree in sociology. Lucy worked for the City of Ottawa in one of the city community centres and had received a recreation diploma from a community college. Sally was employed by a non-governmental community development organization in Montreal and had a BA in Applied Social Science. Alice was a community animator for a public housing tenants' association in Ottawa and had no post-secondary education. All workers had five or more years of experience.

The initial examination of the data gave the researchers only a very general flavour of the material presented and gave little indication of any differences among the workers. They reported that rewards in doing community work were "working with people" and "seeing things happen." Frustrations had to do with "slowness of external agencies," "limited resources," "community factionalism," and long hours of work. Changes over time in their work activities had to do with a general move towards pragmatism, with workers describing a tempering of their initial idealism and a setting of more realistic and attainable goals. They also spoke of using more collaborative approaches in working with community residents. In speaking about their understanding of social change, workers emphasized the need for collective action and for lobbying. In discussing their strengths the workers talked about being "person-oriented," and having

² For the purposes of the article the names of the workers have been changed to preserve their anonymity. They will be referred to as Flo, Bill, Bob, Lucy, Sally and Alice. The questions posed to the workers were derived from many conversations with community workers as they talked about their work in earlier work carried out by one of the authors and with modifications suggested by Dr. Gillian Walker, who has taught community work at the School of Social Work, Carleton University, Ottawa, and who also identified the workers interviewed in Ottawa.

“organization ability” and “group skills.” In discussing their lack of skills when they began this work, they spoke of their ignorance of the community, of the need to learn how to organize their time, and of the need for “people skills.” They identified the kind of further learning opportunities they wanted as informal, especially in networking and exchanging with other community workers. They reported that their time was spent mostly in connecting with people face to face and on the telephone. Concerning major influences in their lives, they all reported that a person was most influential—teachers, senior colleagues or parents.

Although this analysis gave interesting information on certain aspects of the workers’ everyday preoccupations, their world views and the assumptions that guided them remained obscure.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Language Analysis

To explore the material in more depth and to uncover the workers’ world views, the authors chose a language analysis approach as their main methodology, believing that analyzing their language would uncover the workers’ world views. The methodology is founded in the intellectual traditions of *énonciation* (Benveniste, 1966; Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980), conversation analysis (Pittenger et al., 1960; Labov & Fanshel, 1977) and social semiotics (Kress & Hodge, 1988). Language analysis is based on the assumption that when people talk, they will repeat over and over again 1) what is important to them and those by whom they are surrounded; 2) what kind of environment they live in; 3) what and whom they like or dislike; and 4) their values, belief systems and interactive patterns. By identifying the redundancy in their use of language, the researchers will then be able to gain access to the workers’ visions of their work, of the world in which they practice, of the community members and of other social actors.

No matter what else human beings may be communicating about, or may think they are communicating about, they are always communicating about themselves, about one another, and about the immediate context of the communication (Pittenger et al., 1960).

Factorial Analysis

After an initial reading, followed by an analysis and interpretation of the workers’ interviews, the researchers considered each worker’s text as a total unit and analyzed it using factorial analysis.³ This multi-correlation method permit-

³ This methodology requires the use of several computer programs. In this case researchers used commercial and privately developed programs linked to Macintosh technology. Beginning with *Microsoft Word*, a word processing program, each worker’s text was scanned separately with a

ted the comparison of the different workers' discourse and use of vocabulary. This computer-based method reproduced graphically what might be described as a map of the workers' world views (Figure 1). This map was interpreted by the researchers who were then able to make sense of the different visions by examining the relationship between the workers themselves and the words that appeared in proximity to them.

Rothman's Models

Community development is based on the idea of planned change as a way of intervening in human society towards positive ends. Although it is not often discussed, this idea rests upon certain assumptions about society and human nature that have implications for practitioner behaviour in the conduct of their work. Change processes, however, are not viewed in the same way by all social interveners. Jack Rothman described in detail three models of community organization practice currently in operation in the United States. These are: *locality development* (his term for community development); *social planning*; and *social action*. While he recognizes that the three models often overlap in practice, Rothman argues that each is separable from the others and that they stem from different historical traditions in the pursuit of social change, which in turn are embedded in significantly different philosophical assumptions about human nature and human society. His description of these models is sufficiently detailed to reveal both the underlying assumptions as well as to describe the implications for practice.

Locality development implies the "broad participation of a wide spectrum of people" in setting goals and in taking action in community change and is the model favoured by adult education-oriented community developers. Social planning is an approach that "emphasizes a technical process of problem-solving;" one that is rational, planned and controlled, and which places the control of the process in the hands of technically trained experts. The social action approach "presupposes a disadvantaged segment of the population that

vocabulary frequency program called *ATA* which stands for *Analyse Textuelle Automatique* (Richard, 1990). *ATA* generates a list of vocabulary frequencies for each worker's text. It then constructs a table comparing the statistical use of each worker's words. This table was in turn transferred to *Statview SE* and finally to a factorial analysis program called *MacFact* (Brunet, 1991). This last program generates a series of graphic displays showing the relationship of frequently used words to each other and to the people using them. Used in this way, this approach develops an intertextual comparison of word frequencies, comparing the material from each of the six interviews to the others. Four different graphic displays were developed: one compared the nouns used five or more times by at least one of the workers; one compared the verbs mentioned eight or more times by at least one of the workers; another compared the various actors mentioned by the workers; the fourth graphic displayed all the words mentioned ten or more times by at least one of the workers. The redundancy factor chosen was dictated by what the analysis program could readily display in the graphic representation.

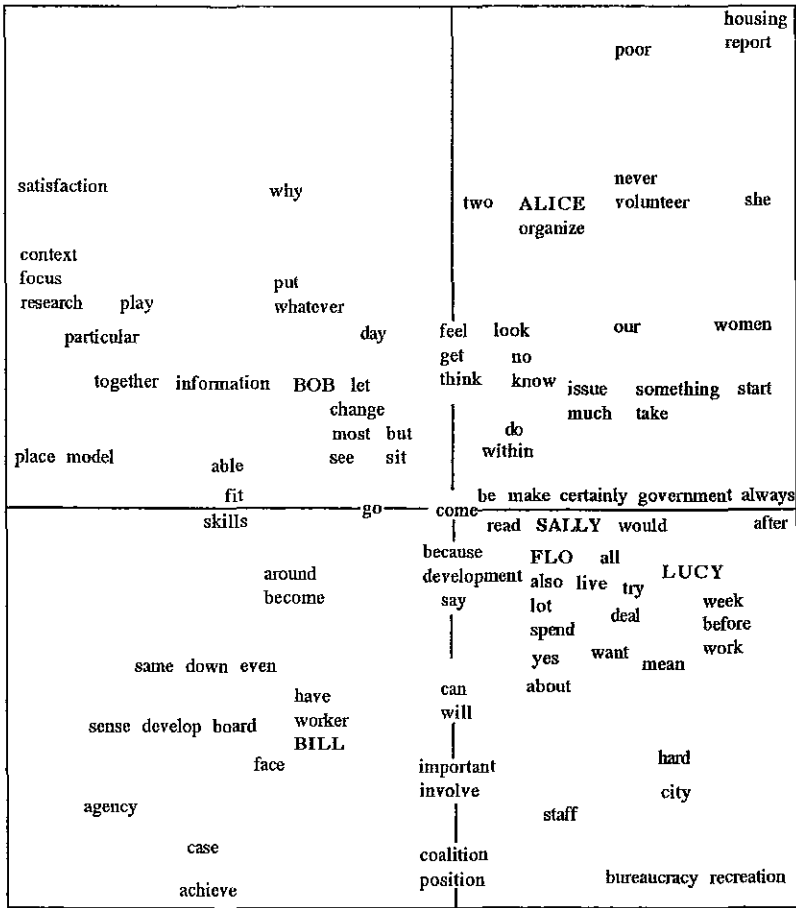


Figure 1. Words appearing ten or more times in the text of at least one worker.

needs to be organized” and “seeks a redistribution of power (and) resources.” (Rothman, 1974, pp.23f)

The authors chose to use Rothman’s description of social change models in order to provide a basis for comparing the results of the analysis of the community workers’ discourse against a known body of theory in community intervention work. As will be seen, the workers’ views of social change enabled us to locate them in respect to Rothman’s models.

Rothman elaborated twelve practice variables that differ according to the model favored in community organization practice. Some examples of them are: the goals pursued by the interveners; their conception of the population or constituency they deal with; their change strategies. A vocabulary analysis approach has the advantage of deconstructing the workers’ discourse in a way that will permit easy comparison with these variables. For example, the locality

development approach sees the community participants as citizens; social planning conceives of them as consumers, and social action protagonists see their constituency as victims. Such differences, if they appeared in the material analyzed, would show up on a graph of words used in reference to the actors in the community (Figure 2).

Words such as *poor*, *system* and *class* are closer to the social action model, which sees the constituents as victims oppressed by the class system. Alice would then be described as a protagonist of this model. Bob can be associated with social planning in viewing his constituents as clients. The vision held by Lucy, Sally and Bill, identifying the population as citizens, was more congruent with locality development. Of course, one variable alone is not enough to arrive at a conclusion, but the factorial analysis graphs may permit a link with many more variables.

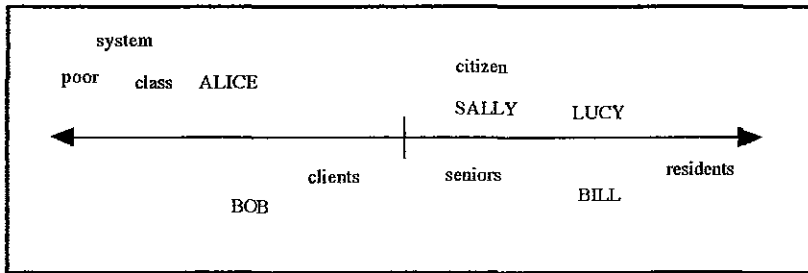


Figure 2. Words used in reference to community actors, selection from axis 1.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

A General View of the Four Factorial Analysis Graphics

An overview of the positioning of the workers on the different graphics gave the researchers an interesting insight into their world views and how they differed from each other. The graphic displaying all words occurring ten or more times showed the two men in the same part of the graph (Figure 1). The women's discourse similarly grouped them together. This less detailed map of the territory gave credence to the assumption that men and women might differ in their view of community intervention processes. When, however, an examination was made of the other graphic displays, a more definitive picture emerged. In the examination of more detailed maps, some differences between the men and the women became less apparent while at the same time other and quite unexpected differences became visible. In graphs of the words used for community actors, of verbs used, and of nouns used, two of the workers were always placed at some distance from the other five, indicating that they used different words, both

nouns and verbs, than the other workers. What was the difference between Alice and Bob as compared to the others, and how did this show up in their discourse?

From an analysis of the data display from the actors graph and the verb graph, it will be possible to observe how useful this methodology can be in uncovering the assumptions behind community workers' discourse. The interpretation of these graphs will be linked to the Rothman models and their variables.

Factorial analysis graphs are interpreted in accordance with the axis they situate themselves on. Words are situated on an axis according to a statistical correlation. There is an unlimited number of axes in factorial analysis but in general, axes 1, 2 and 3 carry the most weight and are the most significant. In interpreting these axes, the researcher can see the emergence of a theme. The further away from the center of the axis, the more the words can be seen in opposition and linked to the individual closer to them. The closer to the center, the more the words, and concepts that they carry, are shared by all individuals concerned. In the graphics displayed in this article, axis 1 is horizontal and must be interpreted from left to right. Axis 2 is vertical and must be interpreted from top to bottom.

Actors Graph

Axis 1: The Personal vs. the Institutional. In the graphs of words used to identify community actors, Alice and Bob are on the left side of axis 1, Sally, Lucy and Bill are on the right side (Figure 3). Flo's data were not significant on this axis.⁴ Axis 1 shows a marked contrast at the extremes between the words that represent the personal and familial, as indicated by the use of such words as *women, men, mother, poor, and sons*, on the left side, used by Alice and Bob. This is in contrast to the impersonal and institutional emphasis indicated by such words as *everybody, somebody, boss, citizen, CAS (Children's Aid Society), forum, and residents* on the right, used by Sally, Lucy and Bill.

Axis 1: Social Action vs. Social Planning. Another contrast can be seen between those words on the left that imply a social action approach (*system, class, authority, society, organizer, movement, us/them*) used by Alice and Bob (Figure 3). At the right of the axis appears the kind of language which deals with planning and relations with and between existing institutional frameworks (*board, municipal, developers, branch, regional, residents*) used by Sally, Lucy and Bill. This is the social planning approach Rothman speaks of as "problem-solving with regard to substantive community problems (1974, p. 24)." Near the centre, words are used (*citizen, people, participant*) that echo Rothman's description of the locality development approach where he sees them as "col-

⁴ Data will not prove significant on an axis if not sufficiently correlated. This is usually due to the fact that an individual does not situate his or her discourse on the general theme of the axis. Flo's vision would be neither personal nor institutional, thus not focusing on social actors.

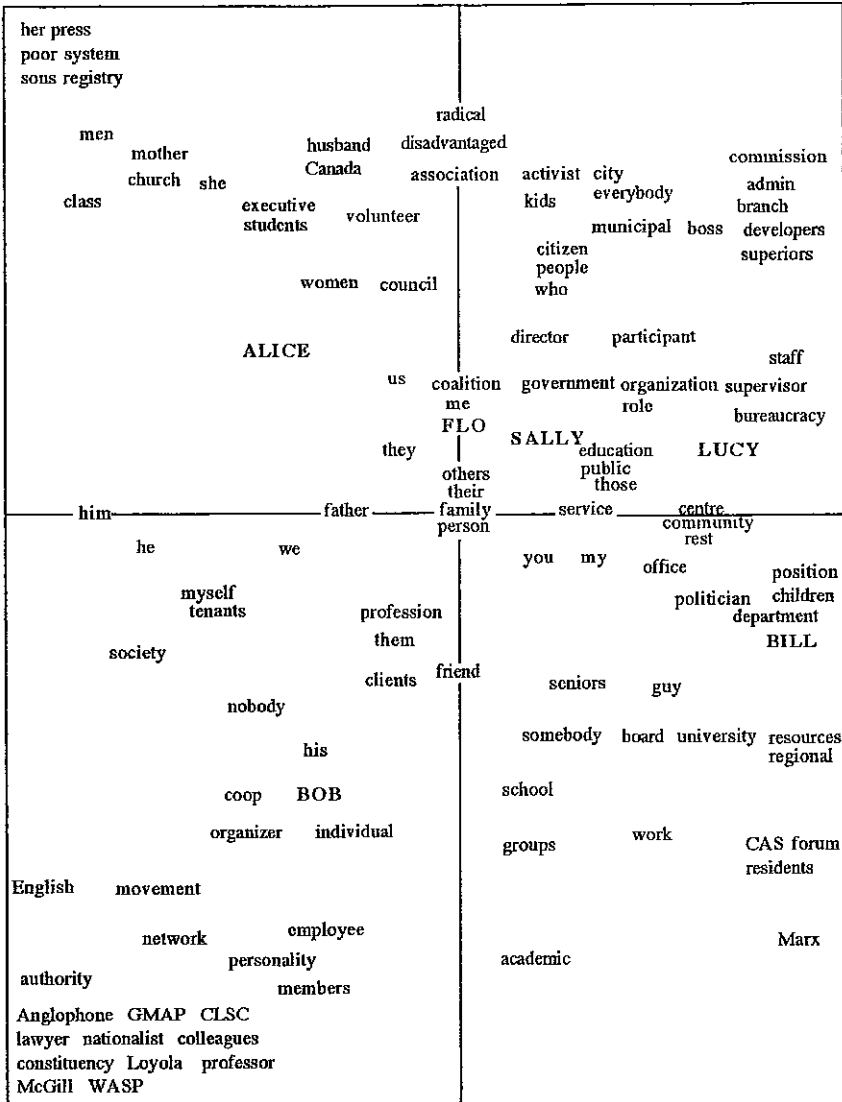


Figure 3. Actors graph axis 1 and axis 2, distribution of words and workers.

laborators in a common venture.” These are words used primarily by Sally but, as their position suggests, their use is shared by most of the workers. Taken together, the words used on the left dimension of axis 1 represent a combination of the concrete, personal and individual in contrast to the other end of the axis, which represents again the concrete, but now the institutional and organizational.

Axis 2: Action Basis vs. Theory Basis. On axis 2, reading from top to bottom, Alice, Flo, Sally and Lucy are on the upper side of the axis, Bob and Bill are below it. The men are grouped together and so are the women. The general flavour of the words used by the women gives both a personal and political sense of commitment to their discourse. They speak of *kids, women, poor, disadvantaged* and of *class, system, coalition*. The men on the other hand use such words as *profession, position, society, residents, organizer, Marx, academic, authority, colleagues*. These words convey a more detached view of their work and perhaps represent a more theoretical view of the intervention work in which they are involved. The women refer to community workers as *volunteers* and *activists*, while the men use the word *organizer*. The words on top convey a personal and ideological commitment that the word *organizer* does not.

Conclusions, Axes 1 and 2 of the Actors Graph. Axis 1 represents the workers' views of the socio-political. They do not share the same "assumptions concerning community structure and problem conditions" or the same "goals of community action," which are two variables in Rothman's models (1974, p. 24). The class system and the oppression can be contrasted to the other pole, where the worker is specialized in working with groups of people in need of help and advocacy, to deal with institutions that can both oppress and help them. For the first, problems result from faults in the system as a whole. For the others, there is a stance of working with the system as it is, and helping people gain the best from it. On axis 2, we witness the workers' motivation or drive to accomplish this work. For the workers who are women, the motivation comes from relationships with people and the commitment is strong as revealed by the words *volunteer* and *activist*. For the men, the motivation seems to be much more intellectual and grounded in the world of theory.

The Four Quadrants. Another way of viewing these graphs is to examine them in terms of the four quadrants. Quadrants represent the positioning of individuals in both axes. They make it possible to visualize the words and concepts that are more closely related to a particular worker. The researcher has to be cautious in interpreting quadrants. Words near the center can be related to other individuals as well as the ones that appear in that quadrant. Words far from the center, both vertically and horizontally, give more reliable information. Looking at Figure 3, we find that Alice is by herself in the upper left quadrant. Sally and Lucy are together in the upper right quadrant. Bill is in the lower right and Bob in the lower left.

Alice's words are of the personal (*sons, mother, husband, she*) and the systemic/political (*system, poor, class, press*). She shares the systemic/political views of Bob but she also and uniquely uses language that is highly personal. Her approach might be described as the personal/political and Bob's as the theoretical/political.

Sally and Lucy use language consistent with their own professional roles as they relate to others in their respective roles (*supervisor, staff, citizen, public*), and with the institutions with which they professionally engage (*city, municipal, commission, government, organization, bureaucracy*). Bill has a similar use of language. People are referred to by role (*seniors, groups, residents*). Institutions form a vital part of Bill's relationships (*CAS, board, university, school, department, office*).

Bob uses language that relates to particular institutions (*CLSC, McGill, Loyola*) and to people in role (*professors, members, employee, tenants*). Sometimes these carry a pejorative flavour (*WASP, nationalist, them*). He also presents a concern with the systemic/political (*society, movement, authority*). He seems to use language that would place him in what Rothman refers to as the role of the social activist worker who sees intervention work in terms of shifting power and resources to the underdog, using confrontational methods. Flo, Sally, Lucy and Bill, on the other hand, all seem to view their work as taking place within the system in a more collaborative fashion with little confrontation. This is what Rothman would describe as using the locality development and social planning approaches. The language of these workers indicates that they operated as enablers and facilitators.

Verb Graph

Axis 1: Orienters vs. Facilitators (Influence vs. Support). Figure 4 shows verbs used at least 8 times by one or more workers. In examining axis 1 of the verb graph, a comparison was first made between the verbs located on the left side and those on the right side. Sally, Lucy and Bill are on the left side of axis 1. Here are found such verbs as *enable, energize, support, help* and *provide* which indicate that they have a view of the role of the worker as supportive and facilitative. Other verbs such as *develop, achieve, move, try, plan, involve* and *relate* indicate a collaborative directionality in the work as they see it. All this is in keeping with the locality development approach which is described by Rothman as working towards process goals. Alice and Bob are located on the right side of the graph and use such verbs as *interest, aware, and understand*, which indicate a social conscience view of the process of change. They also used verbs such as *elect, decide, organize, control, affect, influence* and *accomplish*, which suggest a more directive approach in working with people. This is in tune with the social action approach which Rothman describes as "crystallization of issues and organization of people to take action against enemy targets" (1974, p. 26).

Bob and Alice used verbs that emphasize change as a power-based process. They seemed to express an ideology that is overtly value-based and that sees power differences as important. These workers in their use of verbs also embraced a critical stance in their world view. In short, their view was that of the social action approach described by Rothman. They might be called *orien-*

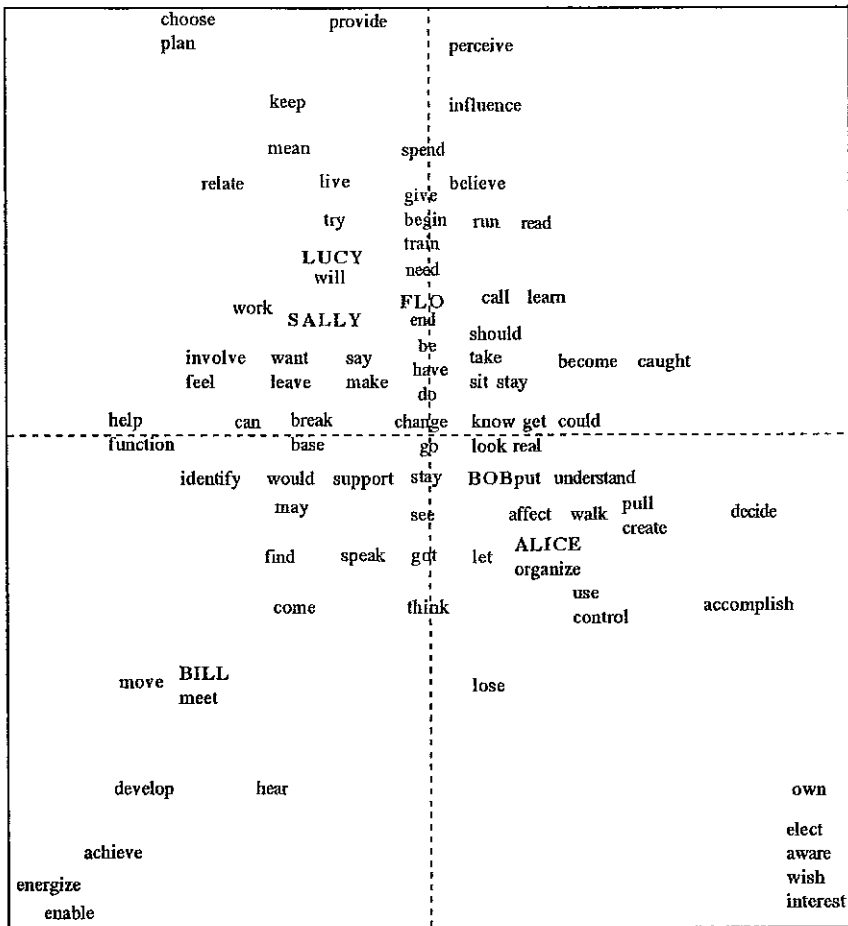


Figure 4. Verb graph distribution of words and workers.

ters, those who point the way toward social change. In contrast Bill, Lucy and Sally made use of a different set of verbs in describing their work which reveals their world view. For them, values were hidden and implicit, the system was not directly challenged. They were process-oriented assisters of change, collaborators rather than directors and initiators. They embraced what Rothman refers to as locality development. They might best be called facilitators.

Axis 2: Planning vs. Seizing the Opportunity (Accomplishing vs. Achieving). When we examine the verbs found on axis 2, the contrast is from top to bottom. We find that three of the women, Lucy, Flo and Sally, are in the top part of the graph while Bob, Bill and Alice are on the bottom. Lucy, Flo and Sally used verbs such as: *plan, choose, begin, end, influence, work, create, accomplish, train* and *run*. These verbs are associated with the process of planned

change. They also convey a "softer" view of the process, seeing its goal as *accomplishment*, while Bob, Bill and Alice saw *achieving* as the goal of the process. The verbs used by Lucy, Flo and Sally convey a reflection of the social planning model of change as Rothman sets it out, which he describes as "fact-gathering about problems and decisions on the most rational course of action" (Rothman, 1974, p. 26). At the bottom of the graph, the verbs used by Alice, Bob and Bill were *organize, energize, enable, meet, develop, decide, play, find, get, achieve* and *identify*. Taken together, these verbs convey a strong sense of immediacy, suggesting that these workers looked upon crisis as an opportunity for change. They appeared to see the beginning of the change process as *awareness*, and the outcome to be the *achieving* of something. This point of view is most compatible with Rothman's description of the social action model of community intervention where he speaks of "confrontation, direct action, negotiation" as characteristics of the change tactics used by such interveners (Rothman, 1974).

Conclusion, Axes 1 and 2 of the Verb Graph. Axis 1 shows us that there is a definite difference in the way the workers viewed their roles as practitioners. On the one hand, Lucy, Flo, Bill and Sally viewed themselves as facilitators and educators. Bob and Alice referred to influence and power. The words *get, achieve* and *play* refer to a "political game" in which their goal is to win. This is congruent with what was revealed in the actors' graph and would place Bob and Alice in the social action model, while the others would oscillate between locality development and social planning. In axis 2, Bill joins Bob and Alice in their view of change strategies. They seemed to act more in response to crisis and seize the opportunity to organize people. Flo, Sally and Lucy, for their part, engaged in planned change. We have a sense that choices were exercised and that a time line was present with words such as *begin, create* and *accomplish*.

A Summary of the Interpretation of the Actors Graph and the Verb Graph.

Four predominant themes emerged from the factorial analysis of the two axes of the actors graph and the verb graph. They are: 1) the level of intervention; 2) the basis for action; 3) the practitioner role; and 4) the change strategies. Using factorial analysis even on such a limited number of interviews permits us to see how useful this deconstructive methodology can be in exploring the differences in the world view of the community workers. Many of the themes uncovered can be related to work that has already been done by Rothman. Certain elements stand out that he does not deal with. The men and women in this small body of data don't seem to have the same motivational basis for action. Relationships and practice seemed to be at the basis of the women's action. The men seemed to view their action in more theoretical terms. Could this mean that these women were more motivated by real-life situations and the men more by values acquired

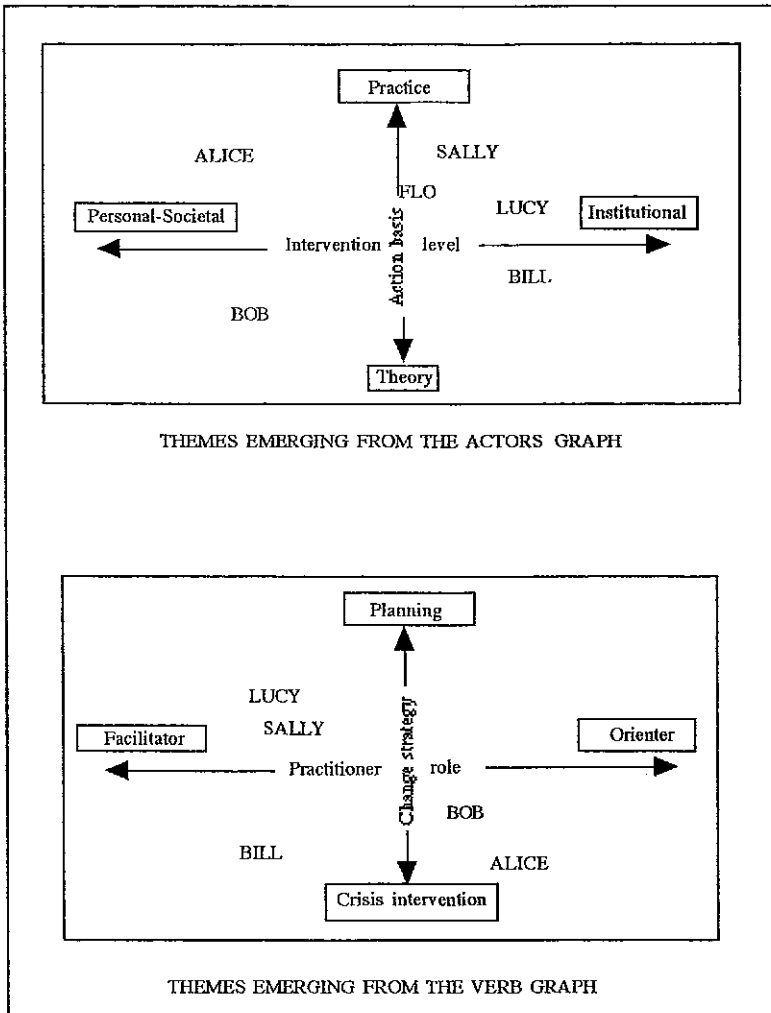


Figure 5. Emergent themes from actor and verb graphs.

in studies? It would certainly be an interesting question to pursue. These themes emerge in Figure 5.

Combining the characteristics derived by the position of the workers in the different axes and graphs would place them in four different categories. Alice was personal-societal, practice based, an orienter who favoured crisis intervention. Bob was societal, theory based, an orienter who favoured crisis intervention. (Alice and Bob can both be situated in the “social action” model of intervention. Alice can be defined as more personally connected to the constituency she works with. Her motivation was practice based while Bob’s was more

theory based.) Bill was institutional, theory based, a facilitator who favored crisis intervention. Lucy and Sally were institutional, practice based, facilitators who favored planning. Flo also favored a practice based and planning approach but she did not appear on axis 1 of either graph.

Lucy and Sally were clearly identified with locality development and social planning, these two models being closely connected to each other for them. Flo was harder to situate. The fact that she did not appear on the axis representing the intervention level and practitioner role means that either this was not a preoccupation or that she was in a space in the middle of the poles. Bill shared most of the characteristics of the social planning and locality development models but seemed to put more emphasis on power relations.

FROM THE MAP TO THE TERRITORY—CONTENT ANALYSIS ON THE THEME OF SOCIAL CHANGE

In order to verify and demonstrate the link between vocabulary factorial analysis and constructed language, the researchers returned to the text. This permits a comparison of vocabulary factorial analysis to vocabulary-based content analysis. This analysis will be guided by certain key words. Much of what has been explored in the actors graph and the verb graph is related to the change process. In order to examine the issues raised by these findings and to go deeper into the community workers' views of their work and world, the researchers decided to explore their ways of viewing social change.

The particular verbs that referred to change were identified in order to focus attention on the workers' views of the social change process, assuming that this would reveal their individual understanding of their work. Although there was some overlap in their use of these verbs, there were significant differences among them. There was considerable overlap in the verbs used by Lucy, Sally, Bill and Flo, as shown in Figure 6. They spoke of *developing*, *functioning*, *involving*, *energizing*, *enabling*, *supporting*, *moving*. Bob and Alice, however, used different verbs to refer to change. Bob spoke of *accomplishing*, *creating*, *affecting*, and *controlling*. Alice, who used none of the verbs of change used by the others, spoke of *deciding*, *organizing* and *starting*. In order to clarify these differences it was necessary to go back into the text to discover the context in which these different verbs were used.

The vocabulary frequency program used, *Analyse Textuelle Automatique* (ATA) allows the investigator to call up all the contexts in which a particular word occurs. Contexts were elicited for such verbs as: *accomplish*, *create*, *affect*, *control*, *change*, *involve*, *end*, *train*, *start*, *organize*, *move*, *make*, *support*, *influence*, *develop*, *energize*, *motivate*. These verbs, as can be inferred from the contexts in which they were used, refer to the workers' activities and represent their view of actions that are a part of the intervention process in which they, as interveners, were engaged. As such, verbs can be seen to reflect the workers'

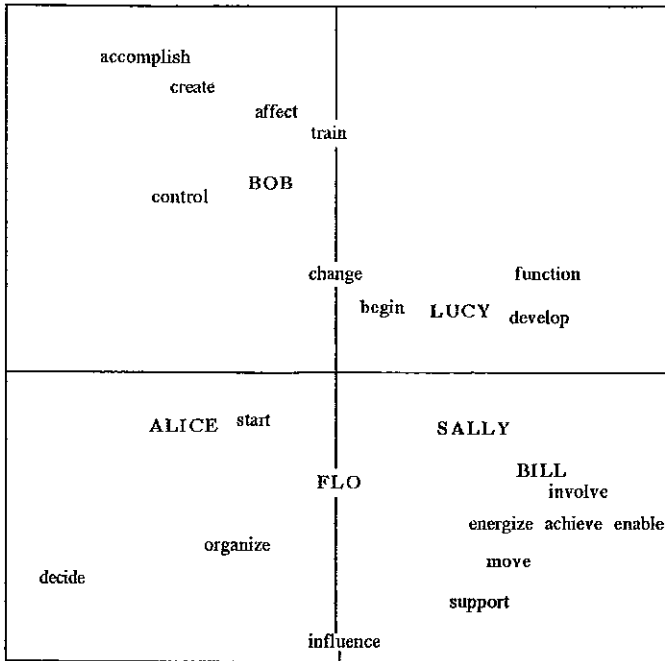


Figure 6. Verbs denoting change, distribution of words and workers.

views of the social change processes they seek to advance in their work. These verbs were embedded in contexts that yielded insights into the individual worker's view of the processes of social change as they understood it, based on their use of these verbs. It appeared that their perspective embraced both an understanding of how they worked as individuals and also reflected the way in which they customarily described doing their work.

Bob, for example, had a particular view of the social change process as revealed in the verbs he most frequently used, a use not shared by the other workers. He used such words as *accomplish*, *create*, *affect* and *control* to describe the process of social change. When he used them, they implied a view of these processes as needing the active direction of the community worker. He said for example:

that was the satisfaction, to disrupt things ... and know that you were annoying them and **accomplishing** (something).

(you need to) **create** a balance where you have power ... so that you can negotiate people ... need flexing their own muscles collectively to **affect** some outcome

I know it's more efficient to sort of **control** and get certain people elected

It appears that Bob saw social change as a process of challenging, managing and manipulating others (both opponents and collaborators) in the pursuit of what he viewed as appropriate social change goals. This corroborates the factorial analysis finding concerning the adversarial nature of Bob's approach to people. On the few occasions when other workers used these verbs, the context in which they used them makes clear that they were not expressing Bob's view of the social change process.

Bill and Flo used verbs that describe a view of social change as a general change process, akin to the problem-solving models that are a familiar feature of applied social research and social action. They also emphasized a facilitative stance on the part of the worker and a participative approach with respect to community members. Bill used the verbs *involve*, *develop*, *organize*, and *achieve*. He said:

you **involve** people in those kind of decisions and they become committed

we have to **develop** ... a sound practice wisdom as well as theory to support a community intervention

community development **organizing** does work

I think it **involves** collective action, that's my assumption of the whole social change approach

the kind of steps that we as a group can go for, to **achieve** the outcomes we are seeking

Flo used the same verbs as Bill to describe social change and added the verbs *move* and *make*. She said:

I also consciously think about how we should be **moving** next and what's the right way to **move** on different things

I was a major part in **making** that happen

These two workers viewed social change as a process with directionality, a starting point and an end point. Furthermore they seemed to view social change as a process with a conceptual shape that exists for them in their imagination. Their discourse described a generalized model of social change, in the familiar terms of the problem-solving process. They looked for and found evidence of this process model in their work and in their interactions with their communities. They used these assumptions repeatedly to describe their work. Bob also shared this view. He too saw the processes of social change as having a structure and a pre-determined shape, but he differed from them in seeing it as a process that required him to push it along in order to make it happen. Bill and Flo were more aware of the need to involve other people and of the contributions that community members can make, and they described a more facilitative approach.

In their use of verbs, Lucy and Sally displayed a view of the social change process similar to that of Bill and Flo. They also saw their part as that of facilitating a process that they observed. They saw their role as intervening helpfully. Sally referred to this when she said:

the social change we are talking about (is) how people can become **involved** in the political process

And Lucy said:

(by) lobbying the government and making organizations that represented the community and electing people ... things started to **change**

Lucy and Sally shared with Bob, Bill, and Flo a view of social change as a process that can be described, that has a developmental shape and directionality, and that has a beginning and an end. Lucy and Sally also contributed their particular view of how that change happened and how they were involved in it, a view that emphasized facilitative behaviours on the part of the worker.

When Alice's use of verbs was examined, a significant difference was found. Her discourse is noteworthy, in part, for what she does not say. Unlike the other workers, Alice seldom used verbs like *create*, *accomplish*, *control*, *train*, *move*, or *influence*, and never used them in a way that suggested they were connected with her view of social change. When her use of verbs was examined, it was found to be quite different from the other workers. One example was found in her use of *organize*, a verb that usually implies a conflictual style of community intervention. In the literature of community work, *organize* usually means a directive and interventionist view of the social change process (Rothman, 1974). In examining Alice's use of *organize*, it was found that she used this verb to describe a kind of initiating role on the part of the community worker. It meant something like "getting people together to get started," which she appeared to view as a form of collaborative consciousness-raising. Here is how she put this:

I **organized** a bunch of people, you can **organize** them in a very short period of time. They're politicized, they know it's not their fault, they know it's the system.

if I'm **organizing** English (speaking) people they feel like total failures

organizing for women in the country you just have to pull and bring them along

Alice also used verbs that none of the other workers employed often enough to be significant. She used *aware*, *decide*, *interest* and *wish* to talk about her sense of other people's realities:

what I was very **aware** of was the culture that comes from being poor

we **decided** ... the Tenants Association **decided** ... so we **decided**

I'm interested in the notion of how people view social change persons

I wish they were more grounded in the community

She was referring here to social change processes and to her part in them, but she didn't present the kind of abstract theory or mental map of how social change takes place as did the other workers. Alice revealed herself as someone who paid attention to other people's realities. The tone of her discourse brought with it a sense of a person warmly connected to, and genuinely interested in the people she is *organizing*. In her interview there was no impersonal discussion of theories of social change or descriptions of the steps in the process of what happens in community intervention work. Her involvement was personal, immediate, and felt.

CONCLUSION

Factorial analysis is a complementary tool to content analysis. Factorial analysis could appropriately be used before analyzing the text itself. In this case its application alerted the researchers to unexpected elements in the data and indicated where to look to pursue these clues. In addition to this, factorial analysis grounded that search in an objective way by its use of word frequencies and by relating these frequencies to other words used and to the particular use of them by the different community workers interviewed. Three contrasting views of community intervention were identified. They were: 1) a general, problem-solving view held by Bill, Flo, Lucy and Sally that we can classify as akin to Rothman's locality development model, which also has elements of the social planning approach described by Rothman; 2) an adversarial, power shifting approach espoused by Bob and to some extent by Alice, which was similar to Rothman's social action model; and 3) the personal, people-connected view presented by Alice, held in combination with the social action model.

The researchers found vocabulary factorial analysis to be a very useful tool. A comparison between factorial analysis and a limited vocabulary content analysis of social change verbs has shown that the two analytical approaches are closely linked. The findings in factorial analysis are not contradicted by content analysis. Going back to the text is important because it provides a richer view of the workers' world and it permits the examination of the different meanings conferred by the context for the same word. The verb *organize*, for example, does not mean the same thing to all workers in this study.

Factorial analysis proved to be a valuable and insightful tool because it permitted, through the themes revealed by the different axes, the establishment of general categories or variables. It gave a global vision of the workers' world views and the differences between them concerning these variables. In a larger and more detailed study, this could permit the development of categories leading to a different model of the community development process. The contemporary

environment has seen many changes in community development practice. Social action, for example, has suffered a major setback since the 70's. This limited study seems to indicate that locality development and social planning constitute one model, rather than two, in the views held by several of the community workers. Rothman's models do not address possible differences in world view between men and women workers. Nor does he mention the "action basis" (practice or theory, Figure 5) of the workers as a variable. This study has also brought into focus the question of the differences between workers who have "grass roots" origins, such as Alice, and those who have college or university training. Do they perceive their work in the same way? Further investigation will be needed to pursue such questions.

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THE TEACHING OF RURAL ECONOMICS IN U.S. DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS: SOME IMPRESSIONS

By David W. Hughes and Bruce A. Weber

ABSTRACT

A 1993 survey of United States agricultural economics departments found twenty-five departments teaching thirty-five courses in rural economics that focused on the economic well-being or development of rural people, communities or regions in the United States. A similar survey 10 years ago found more departments (thirty-one) teaching more courses in "rural economics" (forty-four). In the intervening decade, the courses have become more focused on community economics and regional economics tools and have given less attention to broad social issues, to the long-run dynamics of development and to analytical traditions that emphasize disequilibrium and institutional change. Slow enrollment growth in colleges of agriculture and shifts in emphasis towards agribusiness are plausible explanations for the decline in course offerings. New concepts such as teaching networks offer the possibility of increasing the emphasis on broader social issues while retaining instruction in the use of analytical tools.

INTRODUCTION

A fundamental question of community development is how to address problems faced by communities. Are such problems best addressed with tools oriented approaches such as economic base studies or with broader, often multidisciplinary analysis of underlying social forces? The success of community development practitioners in dealing with social problems is in large part based on the appropriateness of their method of analysis. Academic training influences the problem orientation and general interest of future practitioners.

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Course content can play a significant role in determining how community development practitioners will address the problems they will face as professionals.

The agricultural economics profession continues to train a number of community development practitioners. Hence, the profession is an important influence on how community development practitioners analyze community problems. Further, the number of course offerings in community development by departments of agricultural economics is one among many of the determinants of the future supply of individuals who will enter the field.

Reported here is a summary of a 1993 survey of rural economics courses in United States agricultural economics departments concerning what was being taught in the broad area of the "economics of rural development." Results from the 1993 survey are compared with results from a similar survey in 1982–1983 to see how the course offerings may have changed. At that time, 31 institutions offered 44 courses relating to the development of the United States rural economy (Cordes et al., 1984). Some possible reasons for the change in composition and number of courses are discussed.

One of the main findings of this research was a shift in course content from an emphasis on broad social problems and forces to more tools oriented approaches. The shift may arm future practitioners with better tools for analyzing certain types of community problems and issues such as moving to a new economic base in the face of structural changes. However, a number of communities face deeply rooted problems such as general underdevelopment. A broader perspective by community development practitioners may be required to address these problems. Suggestions are made concerning how teachers of rural and community development economics can more fully convey understanding of both tools and underlying social forces to future community development practitioners.

1993 RURAL ECONOMICS COURSE SURVEY

Survey Response

In December of 1992, a request was sent to the heads of agricultural economics departments to obtain information concerning rural economics courses in their departments. The letter went to 76 department heads, including those in all the 1890 and 1862 Land Grant universities. Course outlines and reading lists were requested for both undergraduate and graduate courses taught in their departments that met the following criteria: first, a primary focus on the *development or well-being of rural people, communities or regions*; second, a primary focus on *domestic* (rather than international) development; explicit attention, however limited, to *rural areas*; third, *economics* (and not, for example, sociology) as the core discipline; and fourth, the course is *currently being taught* or has been taught within the last two years (1990–1991 or later).

A post card reminder was mailed to all department heads who had not responded by late January. In February, a follow-up letter was sent to the 26 members of the Community Economics Network of the American Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) listed as teaching a rural economics course but for whom we had no course outline. The directory of the network listed the teaching, research and extension interests of most of the agricultural economics faculty likely to teach a course in rural economics at a United States land grant university. Of the 76 universities in the study group, 57 responded to the survey, including all but three (University of California at Berkeley, University of Connecticut, Rutgers University) of the 51 1862 Land Grant universities.¹

Virtually the same information was requested in the current survey and the earlier 1982-83 survey. Requested information in both surveys included instructor's name, major text (if any), whether the class was undergraduate, graduate or both, course outline and course reading list. Although the survey populations were almost identical in both studies, slightly fewer departments were surveyed in the earlier study (69). However, the 1983 response rate of 85.5 percent was slightly higher than our response rate of 75 percent. Virtually the same number of departments responded in both surveys with 59 respondents in the 1982-83 survey as compared to 57 in this study.

Twenty-five of the responding universities offered courses in rural economics. Table 1 contains information about the 35 rural economics courses offered at these universities. Most of these courses were either *community economics* (emphasizing the structure of individual communities and the policy options available to localities to influence development) or *regional economics* (emphasizing the economics of rural regions and economic techniques for analyzing these regions). Some of the courses drew on *development economics* in which the long-run issues of capital accumulation, disequilibrium models and poverty/income distribution are emphasized. Three courses dealt heavily with institutionalist issues of property rights and the analysis of institutional arrangements.

Course content and method were evaluated by reading syllabi and dividing major course topics into broad categories using our subjective knowledge. We believe that the material did not lend itself to quantitative approaches and that our approach was well suited to the purpose of this paper.

Two universities—Clemson University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VPI)—offered three courses, and six universities—Pennsylvania State University, University of Delaware, University of Maine, University of Minnesota, Oklahoma State University and University of California at Davis—offered two courses in rural economics. Shaffer's text, *Community Economics* (1989), dominated the teaching of rural economics in U.S.

¹ Follow-up phone calls confirmed that none of these three universities currently offer courses in rural economics with a concentration on domestic issues.

Table 1. Rural Economics Courses at U.S. Departments of Agricultural Economics

<i>State</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Level (U,G)¹</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Required Text</i>	<i>Year of Syllabus</i>
CA	University of California-Davis	ABS241	The Economics of Community Development and Planning Strategies	G	Refugio I. Rochin	None	Winter 1990
CA	University of California-Davis	AE148	Economic Planning For Regional U and Resource Development	U	Refugio I. Rochin	Market Centers and Retail Location: Theory and Applications. Berry & Parr. Regional Economic Analysis for Practitioners. Bendavid-Val. Cost-Benefit Analysis: A Handbook. Sassone & Schaffer.	Winter 1990
DE	University of Delaware	FREC 429	Rural Economic Development Theory and Policy	U	Steven E. Hastings	None	Fall 1991
DE	University of Delaware	FREC 826	Issues in Domestic and Foreign Rural Development	G	Steven E. Hastings	None	Fall 1992
GA	University of Georgia	AEC 471/671	Rural Economic Development and Growth	U/G	Warren Kriesel	Community Economics. Shaffer.	Winter 1993
ID	University of Idaho	AgEc 467/502	Economic or Rural and Community Development	U/G	Stephen C. Cooke	Property, Power and Public Choice. Schmid. The Retention and Expansion of Existing Business. Morse.	Fall 1992

Table 1. Continued

<i>State</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Level (U,G)¹</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Required Text</i>	<i>Year of Syllabus</i>
IL	U of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign	AE199,B	Economics of Rural Poverty and Area Development	U	Joyce F. Allen	The Economics of Poverty and Discrimination. Schiller.	Fall 1992
IL	Southern Illinois University-Carbondale	AgEc 690	Rural Economic Development	U/G	Roger Beck	Community Economics. Shaffer.	Spring 1991
IN	Purdue University	AgEc 690	Rural Economic Development	G	Kevin McNamara	None	Spring 1992
KY	University of Kentucky	AGEC 580	Economic Development Policies for Rural Areas	U/G	Stephan Goetz/David Freshwater	Community Economics. Shaffer.	Spring 1992
LA	Louisiana State University	AGEC 4503	Rural Resource and Community Development	U/G	David W. Hughes	Community Economics. Shaffer.	Fall 1992
MA	University of Massachusetts-Amherst	RES EC 482	Community Economic Development	U	David Storey	Community Economics. Shaffer.	Spring 1992
ME	University of Maine	ARE 422/528	Rural Economic Development	U/G	Steven C. Deller (now at University of Wisconsin-Madison)	Community Economics. Shaffer. Planning Local Economic Development: Theory and Practice. Blakely.	Spring 1992

Table 1. Continued

<i>State</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Level (U,G)¹</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Required Text</i>	<i>Year of Syllabus</i>
ME	University of Maine	ARE 527	Principles of Community Development	G	Dennis Watkins	Financing Economic Development-An Institutional Response. Bingham, Hill, & White. Planning Local Economic Development-Theory and Practice. Blakely. Negotiate Your Way to Success. Seltz & Modica.	Fall 1992
MI	Michigan State University	PRM 201	Introduction to Community Economics	U	A. Allan Schmid/ Lynn Harvey	The Economic Way of Thinking. Heyne. The Economics of Public Issues. North & Miller. Community Economics. Schmid, Shaffer, van Ravenswaay & Harvey. Getting to Yes. Fisher & Ury.	Spring 1993
MN	University of Minnesota	5630	Regional Development Systems	U/G	Wilbur Maki	Community Economics. Shaffer.	Winter 1993
MN	University of Minnesota	5620	Regional Economic Analysis	U/G	Wilbur Maki	Regional Economics. Hoover & Giarralani.	Fall 1992

Table 1. Continued

<i>State</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Level (U,G)¹</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Required Text</i>	<i>Year of Syllabus</i>
NC	North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University-Greensboro	AgEc 730	Rural Development	G	Robin Henning	Agricultural Development in the Third World. Eicher & Staatz.	Spring 1993
NE	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	AGEc 376	Rural Community Economics	U	Bruce Johnson	None	Spring 1993
NH	University of New Hampshire	RECO 756/856	Rural and Regional Economic Development	U/G	John Halstead	None	Fall 1992
NV	University of Nevada	AgEc 472/672 EC 472/672	Regional Economic Analysis	U/G	Thomas Harris	Urban and Regional Economics. Blair.	N/A
OK	Oklahoma State University	AgEc 4723	Rural Economic Development	U/G	Gerald Doeksen/Mike Woods	None	Spring 1993
OK	Oklahoma State University	AgEc 5713	Rural Regional Development	G	Dean Schreiner	Input-Output Analysis: Foundations and Extensions. Miller & Blair.	N/A
OR	Oregon State University	AREc 432/532	Economics of Rural Development	U/G	Bruce Weber	None	Spring 1993

Table 1. Continued

<i>State</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Level (U,G)¹</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Required Text</i>	<i>Year of Syllabus</i>
PA	Pennsylvania State University	AgEc 533	Rural Development Theories and G Analytical Methods		Stephen Smith	None	Fall 1992
PA	Pennsylvania State University	AgEc 502	Economics of Natural Resources G and Rural Development		Frank Goode	None	Spring 1992
SC	Clemson University	AREC 806	Community and Regional Economics	G	Mark Henry	Who Benefits from State and Local Development Policy. Bartik. Geography and Trade. Krugman.	Fall 1992
SC	Clemson University	AGEC 411/611	Regional Impact Analysis	U/G	Mark Henry	Forecasting Techniques for Urban and Regional Planning. Field & McGregor.	Fall 1992
SC	Clemson University	AREC 412/612	Spatial Competition and Rural Development	U/G	Buddy Dillman (Now Retired)	An Introduction to Regional Economics. Hoover.	N/A
VA	Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University (VPI)	AgEc 3304	Rural and Regional Development Policy	U	Judy Stallman	Rural America in Transition. Drabenstott & Gibson. Rural Policies for the 1990s. Flora & Christenson. Community Economic Analysis: A How to Manual. Hustedde, Shaffer, & Pulver.	N/A

Table 1. Continued

<i>State</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Level (U,G)¹</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Required Text</i>	<i>Year of Syllabus</i>
VA	VPI	AgEc 6444	Regional Economic Methods	G	Tom Johnson	Input-Output Analysis: Foundations and Extensions. Miller & Blair. Social Accounting Matrices: A Basis for Planning. Pyatt & Round.	Spring 1992
VA	VPI	AgEc 5244	Rural Development	U/G	Tom Johnson	None	Spring 1993
WA	Washington State University	AgEc 520	Regional Economics	G	David Holland	General Equilibrium Models for Development Policy. Kernal, De Melo & Robinson. Input Output Analysis: Foundations and Extensions. Miller & Blair. Social Accounting Matrices: A Basis for Planning. Pyatt & Round.	Spring 1993
WI	University of Wisconsin-Madison	AgEc 720	Community Economic Analysis	G	Ron Shaffer	Community Economics. Shaffer.	92-93 Sem II
WV	West Virginia University	AgEc 211	Rural Economic Development	U/G	Dennis Smith	Rural Planning and Development in the United States. Lapping, Daniel & Keller.	92-93 Sem I

¹ U: Undergraduate Class; G: Graduate Class; U/G: Undergraduate and Graduate Class.

N/A Means not available.

agricultural economics departments, at least at the undergraduate level, being used in almost one-quarter of the courses. The next most popular text was Miller and Blair's *Input Output Analysis* (1985), used in four courses.

Changes in the Teaching of Rural Economics, 1983–1993

Compared to ten years ago, fewer agricultural economics departments opted to teach courses in rural and community development economics and the national total of courses offered also declined. Four departments—University of Nevada, University of Maine, University of Southern Illinois, University of Illinois—started teaching rural economics courses, while ten departments—University of Arizona, North Dakota State University, Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (Texas A&M), Iowa State University, University of Tennessee, University of Florida, Ohio State University, Rutgers University, University of Connecticut, University of Vermont—stopped teaching rural economics courses. Overall, 35 courses were reported in the 1993 survey, a decline of nine classes or approximately 20 percent from the 44 courses offered ten years ago.

Figure 1 identifies the geographic distribution of rural economics courses in 1993 and the change in the number of these courses during the past decade. States added and dropped courses in most regions east of the Rockies. The only region of the country to show net growth in courses was the west. The north central region experienced a net decline of 7 courses.

Over the decade, the courses tended to focus more on local community issues and *economic tools* and less on broad social issues. Ten years ago, for example, a large share of courses (over one-third) emphasized poverty and income distribution. In 1993, less than one-quarter of the courses treated this subject. In 1983 and 1993, input-output analysis was taught in about two-thirds of the courses, but in 1993 a greater emphasis was placed on input-output analyses and other tools. In 1983, no courses taught computable general equilibrium models while in 1993 five courses covered the topic.

Although teaching methods were not addressed, it appeared that in 1993 more courses involved student application of tools in the analyses of local community issues. Some instructors called these applications case studies. At least one instructor assigned case studies in the sense used by NRSC where students are given background information about a policy problem and asked to identify and evaluate policy alternatives. Survey results led to the conclusion that there is more potential for use of case studies in rural economics courses than originally perceived by the authors.

The teaching of rural economics is in a constant state of flux. University of Minnesota, Ohio State University, North Dakota State University and University of Tennessee indicated an intention to offer additional courses during the coming years. University of California at Davis and University of Maine indicated an intention to offer fewer courses.

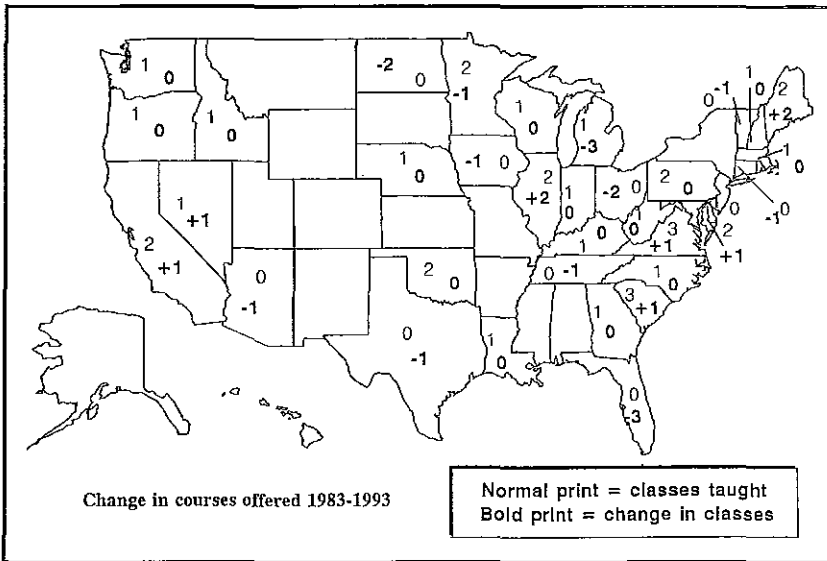


Figure 1. Location and number of rural economics courses offered at U.S. Departments of Agricultural Economics in 1993 and change, 1983-1993.

One can entertain several possible causes underlying the roughly 20 percent decline in rural and community development economics course offerings. The naturally fluid state of the distribution of course offerings makes one hesitant about reading too much into the numbers. Yet some musing about the environment in which instructors operate may provide some insight into the changing numbers, spatial distribution and content of courses.

A changing macro-environment governs education in general and in colleges of agriculture, departments of agricultural and applied economics and other departments training future community development practitioners in particular. These changes or influences are generally initiated by forces beyond the control of the various levels of academia, but carry different ramifications at each level.

A readily apparent change at the university-wide level affecting all areas of academia is a set of new technologies, especially the advent of the personal computer. Other important changes included a renewed interest in the quality of teaching and continuing budget problems. The impact of these macro forces on the content and spatial distribution of rural development economics classes is difficult to assess. Further, many of these macro forces carry similar implications for courses taught in other areas of agricultural economics and for courses in other areas relevant to community development economics. The renewed emphasis on teaching is a comparable recent phenomenon with implications for the future of all courses that are relevant to training future community development practitioners, for example.

One so-called macro force with obvious implications for course content in rural and community economics is the advent of personal computers. The dramatic growth in the use of personal computers is in all probability partially responsible for the increased emphasis on tools and the case studies approach. Computers have eased the transfer of information that students need in performing case studies. Computer programs also ease the performance of any necessary calculations. Instructors can also use simulation programs to give students hands on applications that should enhance the learning experience.

Further, increased faculty familiarity with computers has greatly enhanced our access to analytical techniques in researching relevant problems. Because teaching and research interests often intermingle, it is only natural that teaching should become more tools-oriented.

The growing emphasis on tools may also be a response to the demands of the consuming public. The business community, nonprofit organizations, and government entities look for students trained in the use of computers and quantitative techniques. In this regard, teachers may be responding to the demands for society at large.

As previously hinted, the emphasis on tools carries the potential opportunity cost of less emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches. Broad social problems and forces that do not yield themselves easily to reductionist approaches may also receive less treatment.

A different set of macro forces can be seen in the slow growth of undergraduate and graduate enrollments in colleges of agriculture across the country (Figure 2). Lack of growth in enrollment along with budgetary pressures probably explain some of the overall decline in the number of course offerings. Budgetary pressures may help explain the especially large decline in course offerings in the north central region, for example.²

Changes can also be seen within the field of agricultural and applied economics. While a growing interest exists in topics such as the economics of sustainable agriculture and international trade, the most relevant change for teaching is the recent emphasis on agribusiness. The shift towards agribusiness may be especially important for undergraduate teaching. A number of departments have either recently hired or are planning to hire faculty in this area, even in the face of budgetary problems. Like other influences, it is difficult to trace the effect of agribusiness on current course offerings in rural and community development economics.

The growth in agribusiness has mixed implications for the *future* of teaching rural and community development economics, especially at the undergraduate level. As the number of agribusiness students in our undergraduate programs

² Although it is beyond the scope of this study, an interesting research question noted by one of the reviewers was whether the decline in rural economics classes can be completely explained by a general decline in course offerings by departments of agricultural economics.

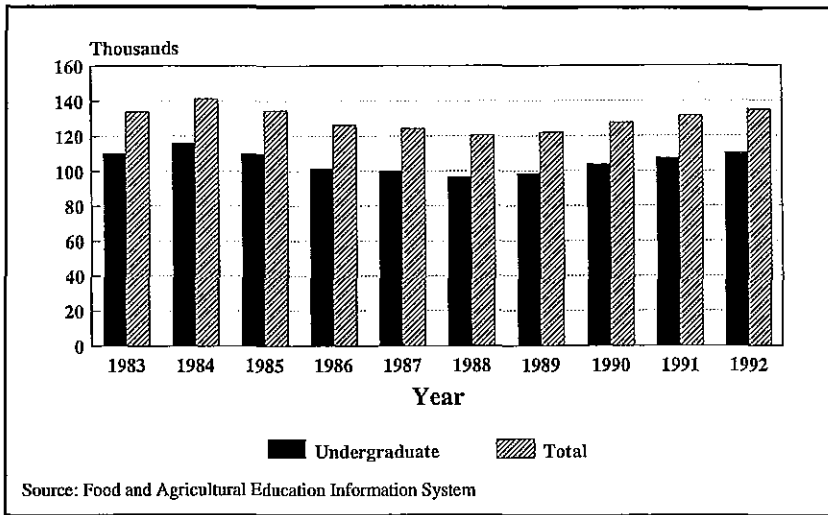


Figure 2. Enrollments in colleges of agriculture, forestry and natural resources, 1983–1992.

increases, instructors may want to consider altering the mix of classes and topics to meet the needs of such students. Location theory and spatial analysis often form a significant part of our courses and these topics are relevant to the interest of agribusiness students. Emphasizing the plant location decision and spatial markets from the viewpoint of an agribusiness firm might yield dividends, for example. Further, a business approach is pertinent to the basic activity of a number of community development practitioners who work on problems such as downtown revitalization. For individuals working in this area and for the businesses they are attempting to help, a business school approach, with an emphasis on product marketing and other related concepts, could be beneficial.

A shift towards agribusiness would in all likelihood hasten the trend towards greater use of tools and the case studies approach. As previously discussed, such a trend offers both advantages and disadvantages.

At the same time, rural and community economics are applied economics, like other components of agricultural economics. Inasmuch as the teaching mix of a department can be viewed as the outputs of a multiproduct firm (Biere, 1988), agribusiness carries a potential opportunity cost. A shift in teaching emphasis towards business principles and away from applications of economic theory may imply a shift in resources away from traditional areas of work including rural and community development economics.

On a more positive note, the macro forces operating on the different levels of academia offer an opportunity for growth in our area of study. While colleges of agriculture throughout the country undergo a process of retrenchment, they are also beginning to look beyond traditional concerns. The emphasis on new

areas of research may bode well for economists concerned with rural development issues.

The shift in emphasis is a way of avoiding or least minimizing the downsizing that will otherwise probably occur as the political power of the traditional agricultural establishment wanes. A *successful* move to a new support base of rural but not always agricultural constituency may preclude downsizing and in some cases lead to growth.

Because of renewed attention to the problems faced by rural communities, academic institutions and other public entities have shown a renewed interest in the general area of rural economic development. The push toward retrenchment and downsizing in colleges of agriculture may also give impetus to teaching and research in the broad area of rural and community development.

As pointed out in a recent *Choices* article by Debertain (1992), traditional agriculture interests groups have formed the political base for much of the commodity oriented research by economists and others in land grant institutions. As the power of such interest groups wanes, colleges of agriculture at land grant institutions and other public institutions oriented towards agriculture must tap into other areas of public support to survive. One option is to reach out to non-traditional farm groups and non-agriculture rural communities and citizens. Economists interested in problems of rural development are well positioned to help lead the shift to an increased emphasis on the more general problems of the larger rural population.³

A reorientation of resources has obvious implications for research in community development economics. Teaching will also be influenced because, especially at the graduate level, course offerings are often tied to a strong research program. The two schools which offered the largest number of classes, VPI and Clemson University, both provided examples. Both programs had at least three faculty positions that involved substantial work in the area of rural and community development economics. Both states were also well below the national average in the contribution of production agriculture to gross state product. South Carolina agriculture ranked 35th and Virginia agriculture ranked 39th among the 50 states in relative contribution of agriculture to the state economy. Neither state was among the leading states in the processing of food products (Barkema, Drabentstott & Stanley, 1990). One could argue that foresight by faculty at these two institutions has made them leaders in what we hope is a national shift towards greater emphasis on teaching rural and community development economics.

³ A related point noted by one of the reviewers was that a number of agricultural economics departments continued to offer traditional classes despite declining enrollments. Institutional inertia may be precluding the move to more relevant curricula, of which rural and community development could be an important part.

STRENGTHENING THE TEACHING OF RURAL ECONOMICS

The emphasis on tools and on a community level approach has the possible opportunity cost of less emphasis on broader social questions. Less time may also be spent examining the long run dynamics of development and in analytic traditions that emphasize disequilibrium dynamics and institutional change (Castle et al., 1990).

The emphasis on tools and the community level focus will in all likelihood remain. The challenge is, therefore, to efficiently use tools and case studies in our courses while reemphasizing broader topics such as institutional change. Those wishing to strengthen the teaching of rural economics could do several things to achieve this end.

First, the cross fertilization among the rural economists teaching rural economics could be improved. Such cross-fertilization among teachers could be obtained in a number of ways. Symposia on teaching rural economics might be held on a regular or as needs basis for example. Course outlines could be reproduced by the Community Economics Network of the AAEA or by the National Rural Studies Committee. Given sufficient demand, course outlines could be part of the 1995 edition of the Eno River Press *Development Economics Reading Lists* series. Course outlines, handouts and computer simulation programs could also be placed on an electronic bulletin board. A newly organized or existing electronic bulletin board could be used to post relevant material, including current course outlines, for access by interested parties. Journals, published symposia or books could be employed in disseminating innovative teaching methods. A set of papers concerning the teaching of regional economics at the undergraduate level published in the Fall 1992 issue of the Southern Regional Science Association's *Review of Regional Studies* is an excellent example (Blair, 1992; Bolton, 1992; Emerson, 1992; Giarratani, 1992; Kurre, 1992; & Latham, 1992). Specialized software could be developed with an emphasis on pertinent concepts and topics. Computer software similar to the SIMCITY program but adapted to problems and conditions in small rural communities would be useful for example. Perhaps one of the fiscal impact models such as the Virginia Impact Projection (Swallow & Johnson, 1987) series of models developed at VPI could be modified for such a purpose.

Second, cross fertilization with other relevant disciplines and subdisciplines such as regional economics, geography and rural sociology should also yield benefits. This type of cross fertilization could be achieved by symposia cutting across disciplines that could be held at regional science association meetings or in some other venue. Links could also be forged with other appropriate teaching groups such as the one formed by Jim Kurre of Pennsylvania State University at Erie for instructors of regional economics.

Similarly, access by those teaching rural economics courses to interdisciplinary materials that could enrich their courses could be improved. Examples of

such interdisciplinary material include *Proceedings of the National Rural Studies Committee* (NRSC). These are currently being used in rural economics courses to a limited extent. Eight papers representing various disciplines from the *Proceedings* issues were used in four of the 35 courses identified in the survey. These provided much if not all of the cross-disciplinary content of rural economics courses. An outline of *The American Countryside: Rural People and Places*, the forthcoming multidisciplinary book of readings from the NRSC edited by Emery Castle, could be made available to instructors. Likewise, information about *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*, a sociology video telecourse series and textbook by Cornelia B. Flora et. al. (1992), which includes material appropriate for rural economics courses, could be made more accessible. Other examples of pertinent interdisciplinary material include *Case Studies in Rural Development Policy*, published by the Center for Domestic and Comparative Policy Studies at Princeton University (1993) with assistance from the NRSC and the report *Persistent Poverty in Rural America* by the Rural Sociology Society Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty (1993), which included a number of prominent agricultural economists.

Distance learning techniques could be used to fill the gap in course offerings. We see the role of distance learning through satellite courses or otherwise as primarily supplemental. Students best relate to concepts when regional applications with which they are familiar can be cited and when they have personal contact with instructors. Distance learning could be used to strengthen and provide greater diversity to what is offered on a particular campus. For schools where no offerings in community development are currently available and prospects for future availability are slight, distance learning may be able to fill the need for such courses at least on a temporary basis.⁴ Schools with strong programs in community development economics such as Clemson University could become distance learning centers. Courses could be provided over the Agricultural Satellite System (AG*SAT) or through some other means.

The cross fertilization and access to a broader set of course materials would provide instructors with fresh perspectives with which to reevaluate their course outlines. It might encourage them to frame their courses more broadly to treat issues and theoretical perspectives not currently covered. It would certainly speed up incorporation of new research into coursework in a field which is ripe with new ideas and new knowledge, and which could be a growth area in the near future.

Courses in community development should prepare students to deal with broad issues that are faced by community development practitioners. Tools of analysis such as economic base studies can be helpful in attacking the problems faced by many rural communities that are currently experiencing the dislocation

⁴ The best solution in our view would be to hire an instructor in the area of community development economics.

of structural change. Other rural communities continue to have deeply rooted structural problems such as high rates of poverty and general underdevelopment. Solutions to broader socioeconomic problems require a broader perspective by the practitioners of community development. Practitioners will possess both analytical tools and a broad perspective if teachers of community development economics can successfully incorporate both approaches into their classes.

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LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES ON RURAL TOURISM: CASE STUDIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

By Lisa Bourke and A.E. Luloff

ABSTRACT

For more than a decade, rural areas throughout the United States have experienced decline and suffered difficult economic times. In response, many small and rural community economic development agencies have turned to rural tourism as a potential solution. This paper addresses responses from local leaders to tourism and tourism development activities in four nonmetropolitan counties in southern Pennsylvania. In each, perceptions of economic impacts, social change, local initiation and participation, and threats to rurality by a variety of tourism activities were examined using case study methodology. Findings suggest both positive and negative economic and social impacts were anticipated, and that local support was essential to successful tourism development. Furthermore, the impacts and community change anticipated from tourism development were found to potentially threaten levels of rurality and the success of projects in these four counties.

INTRODUCTION

Social scientists have observed, discussed, and examined the pervasive economic decline occurring in many rural areas during the last decade. This decline was primarily the result of a transition from a manufacturing and extractive base to a service economy; the former mirrored what was happening at the national level. The traditional local reliance on natural resources and manufacturing no longer provided a stable economic base. As a result, many rural economies became increasingly dependent upon service industries.

According to some researchers, tourism—a service industry—could be a major vehicle for addressing rural economic decline (Dahms, 1991; Fleming, 1988; Hester, 1990; Jensen & Blevins, 1992; Stokowski, 1992). This follows from the fact that tourism has been viewed, by some, as offering viable employment opportunities (Cohen, 1984). Further, since tourism is a clean industry, unaccompanied by the ancillary problems associated with rapid growth, it has gained interest among local government officials and citizens. As a result, the creation of various municipal, county, and state tourism agencies with rural emphases has become increasingly popular and rural tourism development has

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been encouraged by governments at various levels (Cohen, 1984; Luloff et al., 1994).

Because of the numerous natural resources found in rural areas, tourism often fits easily into new efforts at local economic development. Such sites are commonly viewed as being home to a rural mystique—an attitude greatly admired by the American public (Willits et al., 1990). Coupled with national trends indicating increased participation in recreation, growth in the popularity of antiques, and rising interest in visiting historical sites, potential for expansion of the tourist industry in rural areas clearly exists (Fleming, 1988).

On the other hand, even successful tourism development efforts have caused undesirable consequences, including increased traffic, greater demands on local services, and threats to the rural and small town nature of an area. Presumed economic benefits are often overstated because many of the resulting service jobs tend to be low-wage and/or seasonal with limited benefits. Moreover, these new businesses have tended to have non-local owners, creating increased opportunities for economic leakage from the host community (Kassab & Luloff, 1993; Kassab et al., 1994). Such impacts raise serious questions about the efficacy of using tourism as a strategy to overcome rural economic decline.

Little is known about the perceptions of local leaders and citizens or the expectations of host communities regarding tourism development. Because local response to development can influence success or even initiation, understanding response and anticipation by community decision-makers is a necessary first step (Wilkinson, 1991; Luloff, 1990). Such information is useful for understanding the potential for tourism as an economic tool in rural areas (Dahms, 1991; Fleming, 1988).

In 1991, rural tourism was a \$3 million industry that created 63,000 jobs and approximately \$17 million in local tax revenues in Pennsylvania (Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 1991). This paper summarizes local experiences with this industry in four nonmetropolitan counties. Local leaders' and citizens' responses and actions were used to measure the desirability of tourism development as well as the potential success it could bring to this region of southern Pennsylvania.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on rural tourism development highlights four main points—that rural tourism development has (1) been economically beneficial, (2) created social problems, (3) been more successful when initiated locally, and (4) threatened the rural ambiance of the host community. Many studies have demonstrated beneficial economic impacts, and these are regularly cited as providing a reason for adopting a tourist industry (Dahms, 1991; Fleming, 1988; Hester, 1990; Jensen & Blevins, 1992; Stokowski, 1992; Economic Research Associates, 1989). Cohen (1984) reported that tourism development created

jobs. Other studies also found that tourism played a major role in the economic revitalization of small towns. Walnut, Iowa, for example, boosted its economy by developing an antique drive, while the neighboring town of Dows captured tourists by developing recreational and historical attractions (Fleming, 1988). Manteo, North Carolina, revitalized its economy by re-developing as an attractive waterfront town (Hester, 1990) and St. Jacobs, Ontario, developed a tourism industry by promoting its rural and historical environment (Dahms, 1991).

To date, rural areas have not been as successful as their urban counterparts in capturing tourist dollars (Bowling, 1992). An Illinois study found nonmetropolitan regions received less benefits from travel than metropolitan. Nonmetropolitan travel expenditures were greatest for food and automobile services, yet, in Illinois, these accounted for only 15 percent of the total dollars spent by tourists. Overall, only 8.7 percent of the total dollars spent on travel in 1989 in Illinois were spent in nonmetropolitan regions (Bowling, 1992). Pennsylvania captured \$4 billion from tourism in 1991 (U.S. Travel Data Center, 1994) but only \$3 million were spent in rural areas (Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 1991).

The literature also provides evidence that social problems have been created by tourism development, which tend to be neither anticipated nor directly observed. In several cases, growth of a tourist industry has changed friendship patterns as well as types of relationships among residents of the host community (Hester, 1990; Stokowski, 1992). According to Greenwood,

Tourism's major impact on the bases of social organization, particularly in simple and traditional societies, consists of an expansion of the economic domain: some areas of life that were not primarily regulated by economic criteria become commercialized . . . [and] considerations of economic gain take a more prominent place in locals' attitudes and relationships—not only in their dealings with tourists, but also among themselves (Cohen, 1984: p. 385).

Additionally, predictions about social mobility and an opportunity for advancement are usually overstated. Cohen states:

Tourism is not a particularly effective mechanism of social mobility: while some individuals may greatly benefit from it . . . rank and file employees of the industry have limited chances for advancement . . . it has a broad base of unskilled and semiskilled workers and narrow upper echelons (1984: p. 386–387).

Tourism has also resulted in a change in lifestyle and loss of local “hangouts” for residents of the host community. Hester (1990), in planning tourism development in Manteo, North Carolina, tried to avoid such costs. He carefully developed a tourist industry which respected local culture and lifestyles and preserved the “sacred” places of local residents. One problem not avoided, however, was the dramatic increase in land prices that excluded many locals from buying land (Hester, 1990).

Additional studies have illustrated the importance of local initiative for successful tourism development. Projects inspired by local action and planned locally have been considerably more successful than those directed from outside the area (Dahms, 1991; Fleming, 1988; Gitelson et al., 1992; Hester, 1990; Jensen & Blevins, 1992). Most local initiatives begin with a local group of activists concerned about their community. These groups are more likely to consider local interests, culture, and non-economic impacts when planning tourism ventures (Fleming, 1988; Wells et al., 1991). Further, Dahms (1991) described local entrepreneurial spirit as the key to successful tourism development in St. Jacobs, Ontario. He claimed that when locals invested personally, they maintained strong interest and participation in the development of the local economy and community.

Finally, some researchers have suggested that the concept of rural tourism is problematic and inherently contradictory. Cohen (1984) implied that mature tourism development is a process of urbanization. Likewise, Noronha's model of tourism purported that when tourism was fully developed, it became institutionalized, resulting in losses of both control over the industry by the host community and its share in the benefits (as cited in Cohen, 1984). If tourism results in urbanization, then residents of rural areas need to be cautioned about such consequences.

This study investigates how these four key factors—economic benefits, social impacts, local participation, and threats to rurality—are perceived by local leaders and citizens in nonmetropolitan counties experiencing tourism development. Their perceptions provide insight into how residents of the host community tend to anticipate tourism development, and the factors that sway decision-makers to support or oppose increased tourism in their local area.

METHODS

The data employed were collected as part of a larger study on tourism in rural areas of Pennsylvania (Gitelson et al., 1992). This region contains four nonmetropolitan counties in southern Pennsylvania located between Gettysburg and Pittsburgh—Franklin, Fulton, Bedford and Somerset (Figure 1).

Interviews were conducted during February, March, and April of 1992. The following leaders were interviewed in each county: 1) the county planner, 2) a county government official (usually a commissioner), 3) the director of the tourism promotion agency (TPA), 4) a representative from the county extension office, and 5) a bank manager in the county seat. At both the county and town levels, interviews were conducted with 6) a representative of a local economic development group, 7) an editor/reporter of a local newspaper, and 8) the president of the largest chamber of commerce. In the larger towns, interviews were also conducted with 9) a local government official, 10) motel and business managers, 11) a local historian, and 12) representatives of local arts and crafts

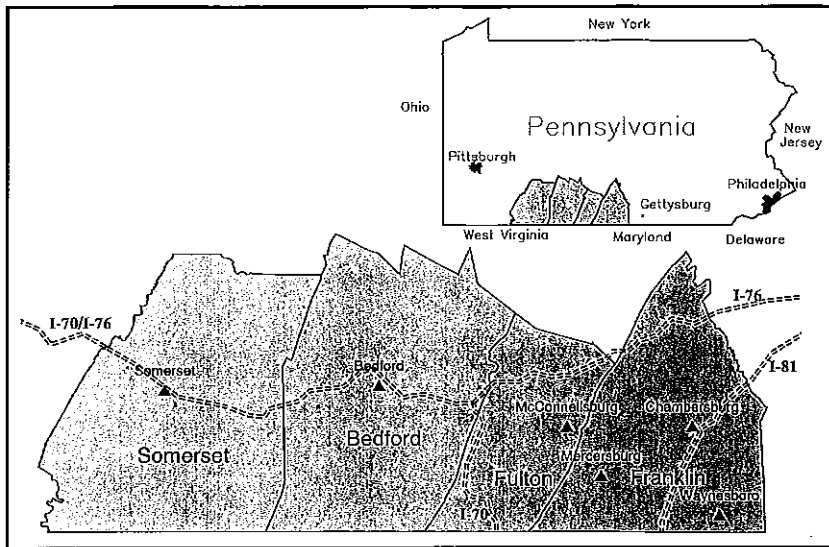


Figure 1. Map of study area.

groups. Directors of major tourist sites, managers of tourist related businesses, and individuals specifically involved in tourism projects or proposals anywhere in the county were also interviewed (Table 1).

The representatives from each county were asked a set of general questions about the area, its economy, and both present and potential tourism using a *key informant* questionnaire. Individuals directly involved in specific tourism projects or facilities were interviewed using an *action informant* questionnaire. These individuals were usually identified by the key informants. Data drawn from these interviews were used to create summaries of local projects, initiatives and perceptions, and to assess local responses and potential impacts of rural tourism in the four counties.¹

FINDINGS

Each of the four counties is nonmetropolitan but all differ in their degree of rurality. The most rural is Fulton which is the smallest county in both area and population (Figure 1, Table 2). Franklin County is the second smallest in area but has the largest population. It is the most eastern county and closest to several large metropolitan centers (Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.). Bedford and Somerset are similar in area but Somerset has a much larger

¹ In the interviews, respondents used their own definitions of rural/rurality, tourism, and successful tourism development. They were not asked to conform to academic definitions so as not to influence their own opinions (Luloff et al., 1994).

Table 1. Individuals Interviewed in Four Nonmetropolitan Pennsylvania Counties

<i>Position</i>	<i>Number of People Interviewed¹</i>			
	<i>Somerset</i>	<i>Bedford</i>	<i>Fulton</i>	<i>Franklin</i>
County planner	1	1	1	1
County government official	1	3	1	1
Tourism promotion agency director	1	1	1	1
County extension agent	1	1	1	1
Bank manager in county seat	1	1	1	1
Representative, economic development groups	1	1	1	2
Leader opposing growth/tourism development	NA ²	2	NA	NA
Newspaper editor/reporter	1	2	NA	1
Chamber of commerce	1	1	1	2
Local government official	2	1	2	4
Motel manager	1	2	1	1
Business manager	2	1	1	-
Local historian	1	1	1	1
Representative, arts & crafts groups	-	1	1	-
Store owner who sold gifts and souvenirs	1	1	1	1
Director, major tourist sites	2	3	1	2
Director, tourism information services	NA	1	NA	2
Initiator, tourism projects	4	8	3	5
Representative, tourism project or proposal	2	4	1	2

¹Because of the rural nature of these counties, many individuals have more than one role and their interview may be counted more than once.

²NA = Not Applicable

population. Somerset is the most western of the four counties, and is more accessible to a metropolitan area (Pittsburgh) than Bedford and Fulton counties.

Both Franklin and Fulton counties, while differing in size, experienced population growth of about 7 percent between 1980 and 1990 (Table 2). Franklin County had the highest income per capita and lowest poverty and unemployment rates in both 1980 and 1990. Fulton County was more similar to Bedford and Somerset counties in these individual economic characteristics, where all three approximate or exceed state averages. Unemployment rates were highest in Bedford and Somerset, but this declined in all four counties. Somerset was the only county to experience a decline in population; Somerset and Franklin increased in poverty between 1980 and 1990.

All four counties were historically dependent on natural resources, particularly agriculture and mining. During the last several decades, however, a shift to a manufacturing base and more recently to a service based economy occurred. Agriculture employed a small proportion of the labor force in each county (Table 2). While mining declined in all counties, it remained a very important industry to Somerset County. Manufacturing was important to Franklin and, to a lesser extent, Somerset and Bedford. The service industries employed a higher per-

Table 2. Characteristics of the Four Counties and State of Pennsylvania

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Somerset</i>	<i>Bedford</i>	<i>Fulton</i>	<i>Franklin</i>	<i>Pennsylvania</i>
Size (square miles)	1,075	1,015	438	772	44,820
Population (1990)	78,218	47,919	13,837	121,082	11,881,643
Population change 1980-90	-3.7	2.4	7.7	6.6	0.1
Population of largest town	8,732	4,949	2,167	16,647	—
Income per capita					
1980	\$ 6,011	\$ 5,430	\$ 5,402	\$ 6,675	\$ 7,077
1990	\$10,442	\$ 9,954	\$10,267	\$13,060	\$14,068
% individuals in poverty					
1980	11.7	14.7	14.4	7.4	10.5
1990	14.3	13.6	12.2	8.3	11.1
% workforce unemployed					
1980	10.2	12.6	7.8	4.6	7.4
1990	7.4	8.0	5.9	3.9	6.0
Value added by mining (\$ millions)					
1982	174.1	<5.0	5.1	7.4	2,936.8
1987	74.3	<5.0	<5.0	0.0 ^a	2,561.6
Value added by manufacturing (\$ millions)					
1982	128.2	81.3	<5.0	414.3	44,829.1
1987	179.6	161.7	32.0	670.2	57,605.2
Employment by industry					
% in agriculture^b					
1980	0.0 ^a	0.0 ^a	0.0 ^a	0.0 ^a	0.3
1990	0.0 ^a	0.0 ^a	0.5	0.0 ^a	0.5
% in manufacturing^b					
1980	24.0	5.1	4.7	49.0	33.1
1990	21.7	10.9	7.7	35.3	21.3
% in services^b					
1980	53.5	92.2	85.2	46.6	60.2
1990	65.8	84.3	66.5	58.8	72.0

^aCategorizations for industries are based on SIC codes, where agriculture includes 07-10 (i.e., mining is included), manufacturing includes 20-39 and service includes codes 40-89.

^bThere is a disclosure problem for these counties in agriculture where 0 reflects a small number of agricultural businesses or few people employed in agriculture.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990a, 1990b; Slater & Hall, 1992.

centage in Bedford. The 1980-1990 decade witnessed a decline in manufacturing employment and, mostly, an increase of individuals employed in services in this region. All four counties are intersected by Interstate Highway 70/76 and Franklin by Interstate Highway 81 (Figure 1), and subsequently have Interstate related businesses. While these contributed to the economy and tourist industry of each county, many were not locally owned.

Generally, tourism has been strongest in Bedford and Somerset counties, based on travel expenditures, local tax receipts, lodging receipts, and employ-

ment in tourism (Table 3). Franklin received more economic benefits from tourism than Fulton. These data also suggest that while local tax receipts have increased in all counties over the last four years, travel expenditures and employment have not. Lodging receipts declined during the 1980s in Somerset and Fulton. Somerset also experienced the most decline in percent employed in tourism during this decade. Overall, economic benefits from tourism have declined in Somerset, remained somewhat stable in Bedford and Fulton, and slightly increased in Franklin.

As suggested by these characteristics, the most potential for rural tourism exists in Somerset and Bedford. Indeed, our research found that tourism was most actively pursued here. Bedford especially has undertaken considerable efforts to expand its tourism industry in this decade. Both Somerset and Bedford were promoting historical attractions, the "rural mystique" (Willits et al., 1990), and outdoor recreation. On the other hand, Fulton County lacked the resources to develop tourism and Franklin County, with its strong manufacturing base and proximity to the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore metropolitan areas, lacked interest in this form of development.

While evidence of federal and state grant activity was found in each county (some of which were funded), the most successful tourism venture was the local festivals—as measured by numbers of tourists, longevity of effort (i.e., they developed into annual efforts), and broad-based local involvement (the festivals

Table 3. Tourism Characteristics of the Four Counties and State of Pennsylvania

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Somerset</i>	<i>Bedford</i>	<i>Fulton</i>	<i>Franklin</i>	<i>Pennsylvania</i>
Travel expenditures (\$millions)					
1988	133	63	5	51	13,300
1992	134	46	2	55	9,642
Local tax receipts from travel (\$thousands)					
1988	766	366	24	273	90,000
1992	1,920	990	140	680	134,290
Lodging receipts (\$millions)					
1982	11.1	8.4	0.5	6.1	1,096.3
1987	5.8	10.6	0.3	7.7	1,649.2
% employed in retail/tourism^a					
1980	12.8	26.5	15.8	9.7	9.9
1990	9.2	25.3	18.2	8.5	11.7
Employment from tourism^b					
1988	2,860	1,366	75	966	253,000
1992	2,740	800	10	930	160,510

^aCategorization of retail/tourism are based on SIC codes 58, 59, and 70.

^bTourism employment as defined by the U.S. Travel Data Center

Source: U.S. Travel Data Center, 1994; Slater & Hall, 1992.

are staffed by volunteers, involving most local community groups, using limited budgets and local funds). Respondents suggested that this local involvement was generally enjoyed by local residents and tended to generate a positive attitude toward outsiders coming to their area. Each county had a festival which annually attracted 20,000 visitors or more, many from outside the county. Of the fourteen festivals identified in the study, all were initiated by a few local residents and have remained locally organized on a volunteer basis. All but two were organized by community groups (with volunteer members) and the remaining two had paid directors from local chambers of commerce but involved volunteers and several community groups.

Leaders in the four counties shared some attitudes. Most wanted economic growth and tourism development, but stated that tourism should not be *the* base of their economy. Generally, their concerns centered on several issues, including (1) the typically low wage, low-skill, seasonal jobs associated with tourism, (2) the major initial expense associated with its development, (3) the lack of demand for tourism development, (4) the spending of local dollars on outsiders rather than on local residents, (5) the dependence of the tourism industry on the national economic climate, (6) purported increases in local taxes, and (7) local opposition to growth, change, and loss of local character. Most of these government officials did not perceive tourism to be the economic base of the county although the respondents from Bedford County were much more likely to acknowledge its contribution than those from the other three counties.

Franklin County

Of the four counties, Franklin had the most services, including numerous restaurants and motels. It also had the largest government staff, with multiple chambers of commerce and a large industrial development corporation. While the majority of respondents said they would like economic growth, many felt their economy was strong and that they did not want the county to become more urban. Most of those interviewed did not perceive tourism as being a large contributor to the economy, either now or in the future. Many said that current tourism consisted primarily of those stopping off major routes for gas or directions to Gettysburg. As a result, it is not surprising that the economic focus of Franklin's growth promoters (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Humphrey & Wilkin-son, 1993) concentrated on manufacturing.

Despite tourism's lack of popularity among the leaders of the county, Franklin does boast some tourist attractions. One such site is the home of James Buchanan, the fifteenth President of the United States, who was born and raised here. Many of its towns have historical buildings and areas that attracted visitors, including museums, an old jail, and some war memorials. The county also attracted outdoor recreationists, mainly to its ski resort. It also hosted several festivals, fairs and parades which ranged in size and theme. All four of its festivals were locally initiated and remained organized and promoted by local

townships. The Visitors Center in Chambersburg, located near two Interstate Highways, received more than 55,000 visitors each year (many of whom are on their way to Gettysburg), and had a staff that included 270 volunteers.

Fulton County

Fulton County's leaders and citizens viewed their local economy as being poor, agriculturally dependent, and having limited potential for tourism. Fulton had but one old and inexpensive motel and restaurant (a diner attached to the motel). Local government is voluntary and financial resources were scarce. Exacerbating this problem is the fact that Fulton County was often excluded from state tourism matching grant programs because local resources were too scarce. One individual with clear tourism interests operates both the Chamber of Commerce and the tourism promotion agency. The fact that this person promotes both business/economic development and tourism reflects the county's perception of the connections between them.

On the other hand, many respondents in Fulton County wanted neither an increase in population nor development of tourism. Rather, they wanted more jobs through local business and manufacturing expansion. They were not interested in the recruitment of a single large industry either. The reasons cited for such preferences were strong sentiments against both growth and change and concern for the preservation of their sense of rurality.

Despite the lack of resources and infrastructure, Fulton has been successful in developing particular forms of tourism. The county attracted many campers and picnickers during the summer months as well as recreationists who fished and hunted at other times of the year. A new ski resort in neighboring Franklin County attracted winter tourists seeking less expensive accommodations. The county hosted a Fall Folk Festival every October, attracting about 20,000 visitors. The festival was entirely community based, organized, and promoted, involving community-wide participation. The TPA was trying to develop a Strawberry Festival every spring but attendance at this event was approximately a thousand, primarily local residents.

Bedford County

This county had more resources and the largest staff of county and local government officials involved in tourism development in the study area. It also had many services for travelers, most of which were located near the Interstate Highway. In efforts to develop tourism, county officials worked with State and Federal agencies as well as private investors. While clearly active in tourism development, the Bedford County economy was equally dependent upon agriculture, manufacturing, and county services.

Bedford attracted tourists for outdoor recreation, to its historical sites, and offered a convenient weekend get-away for families and couples, mostly from the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area. It boasted several ski resorts, three state parks,

numerous fishing and hiking opportunities, several bed-and-breakfast establishments, and many antique stores. Coupled with its covered bridges located throughout the county and its old fort, the rural atmosphere of Bedford County was conducive to a strong tourist based economy. More than 130,000 visitor days per year were recorded in its historic village. This village was staffed by volunteers and through the employment of elders funded via a subsidized low income employment program. Bedford sponsored a large Fall Foliage Festival that attracted about 30,000 visitors each year and regularly returned profits to the community.

In addition, Bedford County was very active in America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP). This project has recently made federal funding available to develop historical sites; some of it has been used to propose new efforts. The major AIHP project in this county is a transportation museum to be located in the center of Bedford Township. There was mixed response to the project and the proposed site. Many individuals sought AIHP monies to restore historical sites, but to date these projects remain only feasibility studies.

One reason for great interest in tourism here was the proposal by the Pittsburgh Symphony to locate its summer residence in the Bedford County. Just over one mile from the center of Bedford Township is the old Bedford Springs—a huge, historic hotel located in a very picturesque setting. The Bedford Springs had the potential to house those involved with the symphony, provide a music camp for youths and music enthusiasts, and be an attractive setting for concerts while functioning as a hotel.

While some believed that the symphony would create a large tourist base for the summer and stimulate the economy, others felt that the costs of relocating the symphony and renovating the Bedford Springs Hotel would be too great, especially since the county had to guarantee an \$8 million bond. Many local tax payers felt that such a commitment was too high for a county with an annual budget of only \$5.6 million. While most government officials, growth promoters, and businesses favored the symphony proposal, many residents opposed it. In 1991–92, the issue divided the community in the Bedford area, heightened local class divisions, and fostered mistrust of local government. It resulted in dramatic debates in the local newspaper, played a prominent role in elections, and even prompted court actions. Rumors and misinformation about the issue proliferated as it was used to influence local politics. Eventually, the proposal was withdrawn by the Pittsburgh Symphony because of the vocal, local opposition and financial instability. Local growth promoters continue to seek redevelopment of “The Springs.”

Somerset County

Somerset County's economy was based upon light manufacturing, government, and service/tourism industries. Most of the economic activities were located in and near the county seat, which is located on an Interstate Highway.

The remaining towns had weak economies and most of the residents in these towns commuted to the county seat for employment. Informants in the smaller communities expressed bitterness at their inability to compete with the county seat. As in Fulton County, the Chamber of Commerce was active in tourism promotion.

While not pursued as aggressively as in Bedford County, tourism development in Somerset has occurred and some government officials were actively seeking further development opportunities. Despite its struggling economy, however, tourism was not viewed favorably by those respondents not directly involved in the industry.

Tourism in Somerset was based on outdoor recreation and historical sites. There were two ski areas, one of which operated as a year-round resort. Both were privately owned and promoted and some respondents suggested that the only local benefits were the services sought by travelers on their way to and from them. Fishing and hunting were also popular throughout the county. There are several state parks and a rails-to-trails project, funded by a private foundation, was under development. Like Bedford, Somerset County has been involved in AIHP, and has received several grants to conduct feasibility studies on the restoration of many historical sites as well as to expand its already popular museum. There are seven fairs and festivals held annually throughout the county, all locally organized and promoted. Antiquing was popular and an outlet mall attracted people from outside the county.

DISCUSSION

This four county case study raises some important issues about rural tourism. While the previous literature found that tourism development tends to provide economic benefits, not all respondents in this study perceived this to be the case. Respondents ranged in attitudes, from those who expressed the belief that tourism development would overcome economic decline and stagnation, to those who held a more skeptical view focused on its low-paying, seasonal jobs and initial costs of development. Locals found few benefits from the big, private tourist facilities (the ski resorts) and the economic benefits from others were reported as seasonal. Existent tourism was reported to provide only low-paying jobs and often required a strong financial commitment. The majority of respondents believed tourism could contribute to their economy but preferred manufacturing as a economic base rather than tourism. Such perceptions were based on potential development rather than actual impacts, but, as W.I. Thomas (1928) stated, what is perceived as real is real in its consequences.

This study also confirmed the findings of previous researchers, including fear of traffic congestion, a decline in the rural atmosphere of the county, and a loss of local "hang-outs" and town centers. Others lamented the loss of rurality and opposed growth and further changes resulting from increased development.

Not all of the social impacts identified by the respondents were negative. The various festivals promoted interaction, community participation, community pride, and a sense of community (Wilkinson, 1991). In addition, respondents reported that most, but not all, of the individuals involved in the festivals had more positive perceptions of tourism as a result of their participation in the event.

One of the most obvious findings in this study was that successful tourism projects tended to be locally initiated and promoted (Howell et al., 1987). Projects initiated by a local resident or community group tended to be more successful than those projects initiated by government officials, grants, or non-local, private interests. For example, the Pittsburgh Symphony failed because of local opposition, and in Fulton County, the Strawberry Festival, initiated by the Chamber of Commerce, was less successful than the Fall Festival which was initiated and organized by local residents and community groups. Local residents preferred to adopt tourism on an individual project basis rather than to promote it as a new economic base.

Some residents and leaders were aware of and/or afraid of growth and a loss of rural atmosphere with the development of tourism. The findings imply that some forms of tourism development increase the level of urbanization more than others. Tourist attractions, including outdoor recreation facilities, an outlet mall, festivals, antique stores, and museums were not reported to threaten the "rurality" of an area. On the other hand, major developments like the proposal to make Bedford the summer home of the Pittsburgh Symphony, which was associated with large expenditures and the potential of large numbers of people with urban characteristics coming to the county, created fear that it would detract from Bedford's rural nature. This certainly suggests that rurality is important to many residents' quality of life in southern Pennsylvania.

Finally, studies on tourism could benefit from a broader perspective. Integration of the literature on community with research on rural tourism would improve the quality of both. For example, formal tests of the growth machine hypothesis (Logan & Molotch, 1987) could determine more completely who benefits from rural tourism, and investigating the connection between tourism development, community, and the community field (Wilkinson, 1991) may provide a better strategy for fostering successful tourism development in rural areas.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

On the basis of this study, several policy implications can be identified. First and foremost, the government should not force tourism on rural places nor promote tourism as *the* or *best* solution to economic revival. Development of the industry is not always successful and not always desired. Tourism should be allowed to develop where it is wanted, on the scale it is desired, and where there

is a demand for it. Furthermore, one successful tourism project should not indicate the desire for a local economic transition.

Second, communities that act to develop tourism themselves are more likely to be successful than development thrust upon an area or designed by a growth promotion agency. *Local participation is key to success.*

Because research suggests that tourism development is most successful when initiated locally, the government should await initiation by local community residents or groups and private developers. Small grants to encourage tourism development should not be an incentive to develop but should be given to communities who have already begun tourism development and where local investments have been made. In this way, communities will apply for funds to assist their development rather than developing tourism as a means of gaining funds. At present, it seems that tourism promotion agencies apply for any available funds, regardless of need or local desire for the project that will receive the funds. As a result, grants drive many projects and development. Likewise, monies may be received by areas with successful grant writers, rather than areas with the most potential for successful development.

Allowing each community to develop in its own way is likely to be a better use of funds from state and federal grants. For instance, over \$200,000 has been spent on feasibility studies in Bedford County. Local residents believed that this money could have been spent on actual development of a tourist site.

Third, education is needed for those involved in the tourism industry. Tourism promotion agencies need to be educated on the likely determinants of successful tourism development. Many are concerned with promotional brochures and regional proposals, rather than maintaining and/or expanding the existing tourism base. For instance, advertising local community restaurants to those driving through the town may result in more dollars spent in the town than sending brochures nationwide. Likewise, expanding a local festival may be more successful than trying to initiate a completely new project.

Local residents need to be informed about local tourism developments. Open communication, including full presentation of information to community residents, is likely to lessen the number of misinterpretations and rumors about proposed developments (as in the case of the Pittsburgh Symphony), allow for genuine responses to the project, and lead to better community decisions. Further, the discussion of impacts in the planning stage is likely to avoid some potentially serious problems.

Fourth, a large, privately-owned tourist attraction should be encouraged to work with their local community. Together, private attractions and the community can entice more tourists and broaden the scope of tourist sites. This assists in promoting the community and may encourage community participation. Additionally, it contributes to the connection between local residents and the tourist economy so that locals realize the contribution of tourism. This may increase their support of the industry in the future.

Finally, the government should promote tourism equitably, with more attention to rural areas and an even distribution of funds. Very rural areas, such as Fulton County, do not have the local resources to apply for the larger matching funds grants. Because of their poor financial resource endowments, they should not be excluded from access to such funds. Also, the government should not spread its dollars too thinly. It is better to fund fewer successful projects than to provide small amounts that have virtually no impact. It must be realized by all involved in tourism development that unsuccessful projects are of no benefit to anyone.

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ORIGINS—EVALUATION OF A STATEWIDE ELECTRONIC DATABASE TO AID COMMUNITY DEVELOPERS

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ABSTRACT

Strategic planning is an important aspect of community development, and data are integral to strategic planning. ORIGINS—Oklahoma Resources Integration General Information Network System—is an electronic database which contains economic, social, and demographic data which can be used by community leaders, educators, businesses, government agencies, and decision-makers. The ORIGINS system relies heavily on computer technology, especially in the area of information transfer, to aid decision makers by providing a comprehensive data source. The data are centrally located, continually maintained and updated, easily accessible to anyone with a personal computer and a modem. ORIGINS is a cooperative effort of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma University, and Oklahoma State University—Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. ORIGINS is constantly evolving to meet the changing and growing needs of users. Training is an ongoing part of the ORIGINS efforts. Evaluation and monitoring of ORIGINS are important parts of maintaining good communication with ORIGINS users. User feedback is gained through the use of surveys and focus group sessions. This article presents an overview of ORIGINS and reports on recent evaluation efforts. The use of an electronic database in community development is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The Increasing Importance of Information

The world economy is fiercely competitive and communities are faced with the challenge of developing their own resources and unique qualities in order to develop economically and socially. Information is vital to strategic planning and community leaders, and city planners have to develop their skills as researchers in order to make more informed decisions. Information and knowledge are

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valuable commodities in a world with the information superhighway. The dissemination of information is big business and this has led to many technological advancements which make information more accessible. There are two major facets to the information superhighway: 1) FTP—File Transfer Protocol, which allows people to put information on Internet for others, or to receive information from others; and 2) Telnet—the interactive side of Internet which allows people to communicate and interact with other computers. Many electronic databases are Internet accessible and are a vital part of the information superhighway. Electronic databases keep data in a centralized location where it is updated periodically and is easily accessed with a personal computer and a modem, or via Internet (Gould, 1979). Oklahoma has developed a system which provides both FTP and Telnet options. The ORIGINS system discussed in this paper provides an opportunity for local leaders and community developers to actively participate in the information superhighway.

ORIGINS has made a difference for groups involved in strategic planning in Oklahoma. For example, the Rural Health Project of Oklahoma is involved in a strategic health planning project in northwestern Oklahoma. There are thirteen communities participating in the process, along with the State Office of Rural Health, Oklahoma University Health Sciences Center, the State Department of Health, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, and Rural Health Project, Inc. This group is responsible for researching the demographic and health data in the targeted communities, and for preparing a viable strategic health plan based on their assessments. The entire staff of Rural Health Project, Inc., took part in a one-day training seminar at Oklahoma State University to help them learn more about the data on ORIGINS and how to access it. The Rural Health Project staff enhanced their abilities as researchers by learning to use a valuable data resource. They were able to access demographic and social data, along with a series of special bulletins called “Kids Count.” These bulletins contained information on vital statistics, social characteristics, and health of children 18 and under. The people of the Rural Health Project became their own best resource for data; they can search for and access data in a timely manner without being dependant on others.

ORIGINS data have been used in countless community development efforts in the form of economic summary reports and impact analyses. Antlers, Oklahoma, is an example of a town working with the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service in a two-year effort to develop and implement a strategic plan. An array of data were used to help the local leaders of Antlers identify the community’s strengths and weaknesses, including population, commuters, labor force, sales tax, assessment, personal income, farm income, transfer payment, employment by industry, and agricultural statistics.

The History and Purpose of ORIGINS

Revitalization and development of rural economies is an issue gaining considerable momentum in the 1990's. However, rural and economic development were not always high priorities. Oklahoma had little need for information and resources to further economic development efforts in the late '70s and early '80s. The state's economy was booming and the unemployment rate was one of the lowest in the nation. However, the economy began to plummet, and by 1986 political candidates conveyed "economic development" as the state's number one policy issue. Many recommendations for state and local policy alternatives were investigated. One such recommendation was a comprehensive and readily accessible economic development database. The database was intended to relate to trends and future opportunities, be accessible to businesses considering locating in Oklahoma, assist in local strategic economic analysis including the benefits and costs of local programs, and provide a basis for planning state-level programs (Dauffenbach & Warner, 1990).

Economic Development Act of 1987

The Oklahoma Economic Development Act of 1987 was passed in response to the State's development needs and established the statutory basis for ORIGINS (Oklahoma Resources Integration General Information Network System). The Oklahoma Department of Commerce was delegated to manage a complete economic information system which would support a five-year planning process, and the economic information system was to be operated by public or private Oklahoma universities or an Oklahoma enterprise capable of providing such services in a cost-effective manner. Development and management of the economic information system was to be via contracts obtained through a competitive bidding process and would be subject to external peer review (Dauffenbach & Warner, 1990).

The overall management, implementation, and education dissemination of ORIGINS involves the cooperative effort of three institutions: Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma University, and Oklahoma State University. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce oversees the project and supplies data, Oklahoma University manages the data and handles all programming, and Oklahoma State University and the Cooperative Extension Service assist in education and training (especially in the rural areas).

Role of Data in Community/Economic Development

Strategic planning is at the heart of community/economic development and it implies forward thinking and anticipation of the future. Strategic planning is the process of identifying future goals and how to achieve them (Woods & Sloggett, 1988). Community development programs require a great deal of data for strategic planning since one of the key steps in building a strategy is to

develop basic data. Demographic and economic data are needed to determine trends and to identify strong and weak points in the community, and the data help determine what kinds of economic development the community should pursue (Woods & Sloggett, 1988). One of the main concerns communities have is simply how to locate the needed data (Woods & Doeksen, 1987). This is one of the reasons a resource like ORIGINS is so important; ORIGINS offers a wide range of economic, demographic, and social data to local leaders and community officials involved in strategic planning. ORIGINS information has been useful to state public policy makers, local officials and planners, economic development specialists, new business ventures, expanding businesses, analysts, bankers, lawyers, and librarians.

Decision makers must be adequately informed in order to make quality decisions. Data are of key importance to decision makers, community leaders, and strategic planners who compile data and then work together to develop a feasible and appropriate plan for their area, given a certain set of resources, conditions and constraints.

OVERVIEW OF ORIGINS

How to Access the System

Anyone with a personal computer, a modem, and communications software may access ORIGINS with the use of a toll-free number within the (405) and (918) area codes of Oklahoma and (202) of Washington, D.C. People outside these areas may access the system by dialing directly and may use the system for the cost of their phone call. Users are allowed 173 minutes per log-on. Users establish an account the first time they call the system and are asked to provide a brief profile.

ORIGINS training responsibilities are shared by the three institutions involved. Training sessions usually fall into one of two categories: 1) beginner workshops with 10–20 people, 2) large conferences which separate users into “beginner” and “advanced” groups. Training is an ongoing practice which replenishes the new user base and further educates advanced users on new and improving features of ORIGINS.

Types of ORIGINS Data

The data available on ORIGINS are diverse and cover a broad range of topics. Although no database can ever be all things to all people, ORIGINS was designed to meet the information needs of a variety of users in communities, educational institutions, and government.

ORIGINS contains an on-line version of the User’s Guide. A list of additional publications is available from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma University, and Oklahoma State University. ORIGINS offers a calendar

service, which lists upcoming economic events, conferences and workshops. The system also houses directories of Oklahoma agencies, congressmen, state senators, and state representatives.

ORIGINS contains the publication *Oklahoma Business Taxation and Investment Incentives*, a comparison of industrial incentives of Oklahoma and surrounding states. The Oklahoma Corporate Tax Estimator presents information on a computer program available from the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, which uses current Oklahoma tax statutes to provide a close estimate of a company's tax liabilities.

Data on the Oklahoma economy include quarterly forecasts of economic conditions for the U.S., Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan statistical areas. Some of the forecasts include: "Selected Indicators Table for the Tulsa and Oklahoma City MSAs," "Energy Markets Text," "Oklahoma Economic Indicators" (monthly updates of Oklahoma business indicators, including personal income, finance, tax collections, oil and gas, imports and exports, construction, commodity prices, and labor force), "Consumer Price and Cost of Living Indices for Oklahoma," "Estimated Cost of Living in Oklahoma Relative to the U.S.," "1991 Oil and Gas Runs by County," "Census of Retail Trade," "1987 Census of Retail Trade by County SIC," and "New and Expanded Manufacturers Report" for current quarters.

ORIGINS also contains information on the U.S. economy, and regional economic information including quarterly and annual data on personal income, wages and salaries by major companies, and per capita personal income by state and region from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). ORIGINS also contains sales subject to sales tax by counties and cities, along with enhanced county business patterns.

There are Census of Population data for Oklahoma and the United States. These data include: race, age, total housing units, selected population characteristics, selected housing characteristics, estimates of the resident population of states, income and poverty status, population of United States and states, population of rural and urban areas in Oklahoma, and population and area for Oklahoma and counties.

ORIGINS contains monthly updates on employment earnings and hours worked for the state, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Lawton, and Enid SMSA's, Oklahoma labor force data by county, and employment by industry for Oklahoma and the metropolitan areas.

ORIGINS also contains population projections, gross state product, the Oklahoma Statistical Abstract, U.S.A. Statistics in Brief, school district data, state policy data, industrial building sites, a manufacturer's directory, *Census of Agriculture*, construction permit and valve data, and Technical Resources Access Center (TRAC—an information service containing profiles of more than 1,600 technical experts in Oklahoma). Additional data are available on ORIGINS, and new data are constantly being placed on line.

Advancements and Developments in Technology

ORIGINS has been evolving since the idea for such a vast information resource was conceived. ORIGINS has introduced new technology which makes it more palatable to computer users. The addition of Rip-script software, a graphical interface, has allowed users to operate ORIGINS with a mouse, the graphic screens are more visually enticing, and menus and screens can be drawn more quickly.

ORIGINS enhanced its desirability to current users and increased its marketability to potential users by adopting Internet capabilities. The addition of Internet makes it possible for users to access Internet through ORIGINS on the toll-free number, and users may also access ORIGINS through Internet. ORIGINS users are able to send and receive E-Mail and may also telnet to specific sites of interest, including a Gopher, two Archie sites, and OUBBS (Oklahoma University Bulletin Board Service). ORIGINS also has FTP capabilities to specific anonymous FTP sites. Directions for using Internet and E-Mail are available on ORIGINS in the form of bulletins. These files can be downloaded and used as a reference for new users.

When necessary, ORIGINS has added nodes (computers connected to the system) to accommodate the volume of users as efficiently as possible. With estimated increases in user hours because of Internet accessibility, it may become necessary to implement more nodes or to ration internet user time. ORIGINS has also taken advantage of the multitude of data now available on CD-Rom. The system allows users to read ORIGINS CD-Roms from their personal computer.

ORIGINS offers several convenient features to help accommodate users. Users may "chat" with other users on-line, leave messages for each other or the systems operator, and may communicate with the systems operator on-line.

The Pros and Cons of an Electronic Database

ORIGINS is beneficial to a wide variety of decision-makers who would otherwise not be able to access such a broad array of data. ORIGINS provides a centralized location for data that is continually updated and managed and is readily accessible. ORIGINS serves the public's data needs very inexpensively and effectively, since ORIGINS can be accessed by anyone with a personal computer and a modem. ORIGINS is continually improving software and equipment in order to adapt to rapidly advancing technology.

Although ORIGINS has provided a great service for a great number of users, there is always room for improvement. The data retrievals and screen draws often seem slow. This is especially true for users with lower baud rate modems. Access time has been proven to be a critical factor in the success of database services. The trend has been to limit the number of elaborate graphics, which

slow down the screen draws, and to encourage downloading of files to avoid overuse of the system (Aumente, 1987).

Data are only as good as the interpreter, so there is no guarantee that the data will be used effectively. An effective search process involves appropriately phrasing a particular problem and knowing the general resources available through online services (Koch, 1991).

The data are currently organized by source, which can make the search process difficult for users who are looking for an explicit topic area but are unaware of the sources for the desired information. This is complicated by the lack of consistency in search methods among the multitude of databases currently available online (Koch, 1991). There are competing standards in the world of online databases, videotex, and viewdata, which can complicate hardware, software, and protocol issues (Aumente, 1987). The magnitude of data on ORIGINS make it challenging to keep data timely, and many sources publish data on a lag basis. Some users perceive the data to be outdated even though it is the most current data available at the time. Again, user education is critical for successful efforts.

Screen draws were especially slow before Rip-script and the faster baud rate modems. The toll-free number was originally offered nationwide. However, the privilege was abused and had to be revoked when people were using the "chat" feature to communicate with their long distance friends.

Past experience with ORIGINS has proven that it is difficult to permeate the rural areas and inform them of ORIGINS and its benefits. ORIGINS has caught on well in areas with more concentrated population. The number of computer literate persons, and accessibility to computers seems to be greater in these areas.

Monitoring and User Satisfaction

After the ORIGINS system was well on its way, it became important to monitor its performance and to gain user feedback to help improve on the system and better meet user needs. The focus has always been on understanding how the decision makers think and what information is vital to their decision making processes. A user survey and a focus group session were the tools chosen to gain a better understanding of ORIGINS users.

The survey was sent to 540 current on-line users. These people had logged on at least once in the six-month period prior to the survey mail-out. There were 150 questionnaires, returned for a 27.8 percent response rate.

Of the 150 respondents, 127 (84.7 percent) indicated that they were able to log on the first time they tried. There were various reasons why ORIGINS users were not always able to log on to the system. Some users stated that there was "phone garbage," or noise on the line. Several users encountered problems with the system closing them out or shutting down for no apparent reason. Others indicated problems with their own communications software or their modems.

Over 90 percent of respondents reported that they logged on less than four times a month, with 70.5 percent logging on one or two times and 20.5 percent three or four times a month (Table 1). As many as 73.3 percent of all respondents stated that they logged on to some other type of computer system. Of those, 37.4 percent connected to CompuServe, followed by 20.6 percent connecting to Internet, 17.8 percent to Prodigy, and 14.4 percent to library BBS's. There were a total of 44 different BBS's listed by users.

Census data were the most popular items of information used on ORIGINS, according to the survey. Community profiles followed closely. Population projections and employment data were the next most popular category.

The respondents rated the features of the system; 78.1 percent rated ORIGINS good or excellent (Table 2). The features with the highest satisfaction were log-on access (94.9 percent), helpfulness of the SYSOP (90.3 percent), and value of the data (82.5 percent). The features with the lowest ratings were timeliness of the data (68.0 percent) and ease of use (68.2 percent).

The users were asked to indicate the type of organization they represented; some users represented more than one. There were a total of 172 responses to this question (from a total of 150 respondents) with 23.8 percent of the total responses indicating the private sector, 13.4 percent checking higher education, 12.8 percent indicating consultants, 12.2 percent real estate, and 10.5 percent state government (Table 3).

Table 1. Frequency of Use of ORIGINS Electronic Database by Survey Respondents

<i>Response</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Log-on < 4 times/month	90.0
Log-on 1-2 times/month	70.5
Log-on 3-4 times/month	20.5
Log-on to other type of computer system	73.3
CompuServe	37.4
Internet	20.6
Prodigy	17.8
Library BBS	14.4

n=150.

Table 2. User Satisfaction with ORIGINS Electronic Database

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percent Indicating a Rating of Good or Excellent</i>
Overall Level of Satisfaction	78.1
Log-on access	94.9
Helpfulness of SYSOP	90.3
Quality of the Data	82.5
Ease of Use	68.2
Timeliness of the data	68.0

n=150.

Table 3. ORIGINS User Background

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percent by Category</i>
Private Sector	23.8
Higher Education	13.4
Consultants	12.8
Real Estate	12.2
State Government	10.5
Other	27.3

n=172 responses from 150 respondents.

Respondents listed information they would like to see on ORIGINS. Some expressed interest in political happenings and legislation. Some wanted to see election results and the status and content of legislative bills during the session. Others requested specific data on health care, health issues and vital statistics. Some needed crime and arrests data, zip code demographics, consumer patterns, voting patterns, travel traffic counts on major interstate and secondary state highways, and agricultural extension databases.

Respondents also listed their training needs for ORIGINS. Downloading was repeatedly mentioned as an area that troubled users. Some had problems performing a basic download, while others had more explicit questions about downloading. Some requested an occasional newsletter to point out new features. One user needed to know how to send and receive messages. Others were interested in hands-on training or a one-day ORIGINS overview/orientation class if it were available. Some users experienced difficulty in searching for data or were unable to tell what type of information was in the database without going through the process of opening it up.

Focus Group Session

The focus group interview concentrated on a group of experienced ORIGINS users from a diverse range of occupations. These users were able to enlighten the ORIGINS coordinators on several key issues (Table 4). Some of the participants were avid users of other bulletin boards as well. They were able to point out the potential problems ORIGINS might encounter when users learn that ORIGINS has Internet accessibility. These users worried that the system would not have enough nodes to accommodate the user traffic and suggested rationing Internet time as a plausible remedy to the potential problem. Focus group participants emphasized a need for a more efficient method of organizing the types of data available on ORIGINS. They felt the data should be organized by subject matter, not by source as it is now. There was an overall appreciation for ORIGINS and its many attributes. Participants in the focus group expressed a desire for more user friendly features. Some emphasized the need for more training of beginner users, since many new users become frustrated with

Table 4. Summary of ORIGINS Focus Group Suggestions

Responses and Suggestions

- 1) Concerned about excessive user traffic due to the Internet accessibility.
 - 2) Suggest adding nodes to accommodate the traffic.
 - 3) Suggest rationing of Internet time.
 - 4) Some perceive a need for a more efficient method of organizing the types of data.
 - 5) Suggest data be organized by subject matter.
 - 6) Overall appreciation for ORIGINS and its many attributes.
 - 7) Desire for more user friendly features.
 - 8) Requests for more beginning training seminars.
-

downloading and other basic functions of ORIGINS and simply give up. For a novice user, discomfort with computer technology can be a significant road-block.

Comparing ORIGINS With Other Boards

ORIGINS is one of many bulletin board services around the world. The March, 1994, edition of *Online Access* awarded ORIGINS "blue ribbon" status in a nationwide critique of bulletin board services (Krumenaker, 1994). The article reviewed 28 boards (this included all boards of which they were aware) and awarded blue ribbons to five. Krumenaker stressed that as of March, 1994, Kansas was the only state to have a bulletin board service which was Internet-accessible. Since then, ORIGINS has added that feature. The five most impressive boards belonged to Colorado, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Texas, and Vermont. Each of the boards was unique and offered a varied mix of data and services. Nearly half of all the boards reviewed charged at least a minimal fee and sometimes very expensive set-up and connect fees. ORIGINS was one of the systems that offered a free service or a public access for all in-state callers and those in the Washington, D.C., area code. The article praised ORIGINS for having the most extensive use of doors and gateways. They mentioned the various types of data on ORIGINS and emphasized the fact that there were at least 89 informative bulletins available in ASCII and Lotus spreadsheet form.

Plans for ORIGINS in the Future

ORIGINS is continuing to evolve as technology makes it feasible to improve the user-friendliness and palatability of the system. The addition of Internet is expected to take ORIGINS into a new dimension. The concept of indexing the data on ORIGINS is to be implemented to assist users in their search processes. There will be a push to provide more beginner training sessions.

There is a continued effort to add relevant data to the system and update data on a continuing basis. Most data are now available to the SYSOP (systems

operator) and programmer in the form of databases, which makes the process of getting data on-line much more feasible.

The coordinators of ORIGINS have made a commitment to continued feedback from users. They intend to continue focus group sessions and surveys, since keeping an open line of communication with users is vital to serving those users well. Communication with users will be encouraged by on-line features such as a comment or question line that allows users to leave messages or comments to the SYSOP before logging off. There might also be some on-line user surveys or even single questions asked just before logging off.

Community developers throughout Oklahoma have expressed interest in ORIGINS. The challenge is to make ORIGINS accessible even to those in very rural or small towns. Lack of proper equipment or discomfort with new technology are often roadblocks for beginner users. Training sessions are being offered on-site to aid those interested in accessing the data available on ORIGINS. Additional training on how to best utilize the data in community development efforts is also important. There are many training opportunities, given the strong interest.

CONCLUSIONS

Information is vital to community and economic development efforts in a very competitive world where modern technology continually improves methods of information transfer. An electronic database like ORIGINS has even more potential to benefit even larger numbers of users because of its medium of information transportation: the information superhighway. Access to reliable data is an important issue and a fundamental principle for community development practices. These data should be available for all who desire them. ORIGINS provides a public outlet utilizing the most current electronic technology.

Community/economic development relies on strategic planning in order to identify goals and achieve them. Strategic planning, in turn, depends on relevant and timely data to help identify strengths and weaknesses and to determine which economic development efforts to pursue. ORIGINS is a resource which provides economic and social data to community leaders, city planners, librarians, lawyers, educators, and entrepreneurs. ORIGINS has the potential to be a vital part of all community/economic development efforts.

ORIGINS is an example of several resourceful organizations cooperating to provide a useful resource for the public. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma University, and Oklahoma State University have all contributed their unique talents and efforts to make ORIGINS possible and continue to develop and improve the system.

ORIGINS has been part of a pioneering approach which uses computer technology in combination with data and information in efforts to help develop

Oklahoma's economy. ORIGINS recently received "Blue-Ribbon" status from *Online Access*, in a critique of electronic databases nationwide. Part of maintaining and improving the ORIGINS database is to monitor and measure its success. This is done by keeping an open line of communication with users through surveys and focus group interviews.

ORIGINS is an example of people cooperating to meet the need for economic and social data, by using the Internet technology and planning for the information superhighway of the future.

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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: PROCESS AND PRACTICE

By Christine A. Langone and F. Richard Rohs

ABSTRACT

Research on leadership program impact typically focuses on quantitative measures of knowledge gained or attitude change at the end of the program. The nature of leadership as personal development and the likelihood of unanticipated outcomes resulting from development programs lead to the need to conduct studies to determine the extent of alumni application of new skills, knowledge and attitudes. To address this issue, research was conducted on community leadership programs in Georgia using interviews, observation, and written surveys involving participants and program coordinators. Analysis of the data showed that a broad range of community members have become involved in leadership activities because they "feel responsible for what goes on" after participating in a program. Factors related to community context and program implementation affecting the nature and extent of alumni activity were also explored. These findings provide a foundation for developing successful program practices and support for the continued development of program alumni as they put leadership knowledge into practice in their communities.

INTRODUCTION

Solutions to community problems today are seldom limited to the application of information or technology (Bolton, 1991), but rather require the ability of diverse individuals to work together through a complex problem-solving process. In communities today, participation from multiple sectors is necessary and desirable. As issues become more interconnected and the role of public and private institutions becomes less distinct (Institute for Conflict Resolution and Analysis, 1994), leaders and citizens alike must develop and practice skills which allow them to work together effectively toward mutual goals and a common good. Thus, effective leadership in a community context requires a strong emphasis on collaborative leadership skills.

Rost (1991) espouses the collaborative nature of leadership by describing it as an influence relationship between leaders and followers who have mutual purposes. Leadership is a function of a community of individuals acting together (Foster, 1989). Leaders from diverse sectors representing varied interests, needs and concerns must come together in problem solving and decision making.

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In the community environment, leadership is often a function of concerned citizens rather than action by positional leaders. The notion of egalitarian or "reciprocal" leadership (Perreault, 1993) is critical in communities because one person does not control a group. Leadership is shared by many individuals at various times depending on the situation and the required leadership skills.

Leaders working in communities must be creative problem solvers. The ability to solve ambiguous problems in a changing environment requires leaders not only to find solutions, but to recognize and specify the problems as well (Lord & Hall, 1992).

The National Extension Task Force on Community Leadership (1986) defined community leadership as process involving influence, power and input into public decision making in organizations, an area of interest, an institution, a town, a county or a region. For community leaders to be truly effective, individual and group skills must move beyond holding routine offices in local activities organizations into broader decision making, policy development, program implementation, and organizational renewal. Such leadership applications require a high level of competence and broad perspective.

One recent approach to providing abundant and skilled leadership in communities has been through leadership development programs. Leadership development programs are critical in ensuring that individuals have the necessary skills to assist communities in providing quality of life for its citizens (Fear et al., 1985). The basis of many current community leadership programs is a focus on strong grass-roots involvement to meet the previously stated needs for community leadership.

Extensive resources and effort have been devoted nationwide to community leadership development. A surge in leadership development programs began in the mid-1980's in response to changing demographics, technological change, social change, and varying resource allocations which challenged local communities to seek new ideas and methods for sustaining their quality of life. Continued challenges indicate that this trend is likely to continue during this decade (Tait et al., 1991). Examples of programs designed to enhance community leadership include the Family Community Leadership Program implemented throughout the United States (Brigham, 1993), Georgia's Community Leadership Programs (Fanning Leadership Center, 1992; Langone & Rohs, 1992), Missouri's Developing Community Leaders: The EXCEL Approach (Missouri Rural Innovation Institute, 1992), the M/I Lead Program in Iowa and Minnesota (Tait et al., 1991), and Florida's IFAS Leadership Development Program (Bolton, 1986).

An outgrowth of this pattern of local community leadership development has been an interest among community developers, sociologists, and leadership educators to research program impact in the community setting. In addition, program funders, sponsors and developers have looked for evidence of program effectiveness. Research on leadership program impact has typically focused on

quantitative measures of knowledge gained or attitude change at the end of the program (Bolton, 1991; Rohs et al., 1992). Other studies investigated changes in program graduates' organizational participation (Tait et al., 1991; Bolton, 1991; Rohs et al., 1992). While these studies are useful in measuring one aspect of change after a program, they describe a very small portion of subsequent involvement of alumni in local community leadership efforts. Observation of community leadership programs indicates that alumni put their knowledge and skills to use in a variety of ways in their communities. As a result, studies designed to document alumni activity and possible community change must use a broad-based, holistic approach.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which alumni of community leadership programs in Georgia became involved in their communities and to identify factors which affected the extent of alumni involvement. In Georgia, the critical need for leadership development was identified through a comprehensive local needs assessment project in which communities analyzed local resources and developed plans for the future. A key finding was the need for a broader, better-trained leadership base. This finding was recognized by state leaders who emphasized that unified, committed local leadership was crucial to community development (Berry, 1986; Niemi, 1991). Similar conclusions concerning the need for more effective local leadership were being drawn throughout the south (Beaulieu, 1990; Soileau, 1990; Verma, 1986).

In order to determine the extent of alumni leadership activity and to determine factors affecting this activity, this study focused on 137 basic community leadership development programs implemented in Georgia over six program years. These basic community leadership programs were designed to help communities develop or expand their leadership base and equip local leaders with skills to manage and direct change in their own towns and cities.

In Georgia, 134 community leadership programs were conducted between 1986 and 1992. The typical format was for each county to have a county-wide program due to county-based operating structures in Georgia. In three metropolitan areas, multiple programs were offered to sub-regions of a county at the level where operating procedures and citizen concerns were addressed. During the six-year period, over 11,400 community citizens have been involved. The counties represented each area of the state and varying types of communities. Population of the majority of participating counties ranged from 5,700 to 56,000; 68 percent of the counties were below 20,000 population.

The programs had similar purposes: improving the skills of local leaders, increasing the number of active community leaders, and informing existing and future leaders in the area of issues confronting the community. Individual programs attempted to reach these goals by teaching skills such as communication, group dynamics, team building, strategic planning, and goal setting, along

with comprehensive discussions of current issues and community resources. Class sessions included a combination of lectures, audiovisual media, small group activities, panel discussions, field trips, retreats, group assignments, and special projects. Each program typically included 35 to 50 participants and met over several months for a total of 40 to 50 instructional hours.

Each program was initiated at the local level, based on identified needs and concerns. Multiple local program sponsors collaborated to coordinate and fund the programs. Typical co-sponsors tended to be local chambers of commerce, boards of commissioners, cooperative extension service, banks, businesses, and other groups interested in local community affairs. In addition to local sponsorship, public service units and faculty at the University of Georgia provided abundant technical assistance and instruction for community assessment, program development, educational sessions, resource development, and evaluation.

These program descriptions are purposefully general because a major program component was an in-depth community needs assessment to determine how a leadership program should be tailored to the local culture and context. This research investigated diverse program efforts designed to meet the particular needs of various communities throughout the state while maintaining integrity to similar program objectives. In addition, the programs changed over time, as sponsors and audiences discovered more effective ways to present leadership development, or as new challenges faced the community.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Effective community leadership requires a complex set of dynamic behaviors and diverse arenas for their application. The study of leadership must explore the rich contextual reality of the community environment in which leadership is practiced (Lombardo, 1978).

In addition, leadership development is a highly personal experience. Thus, programs aimed at increasing awareness or improving skills would be likely to have very diverse outcomes. Variability in individuals' readiness, previous experience, and skill affect what occurs in a program (Ackerman, 1987), how an individual interprets and interacts with the program (Russell & Kuhnert, 1992), and how each person applies behaviors.

For these reasons, traditional research approaches frequently miss important aspects of leadership (Pigg, 1990; Vaughn, 1989), the personal dimensions of leadership, and the important function of context in learning and practicing leadership behaviors. Researchers must document context, interaction, and variability in skill application.

A research methodology is required which can provide a holistic view of program alumni and their role in the community, consider multiple community settings, document flexible and adaptable programming efforts, and enable the researcher to interpret the interactions of individuals and communities as lead-

ership behaviors are practiced over time. The nature of leadership as personal development (Phillips, 1990) and the likelihood of unanticipated outcomes (Patton, 1987) lead to the need to conduct studies which can determine the extent of alumni application of new skills, knowledge and attitudes.

An open-ended, discovery oriented, multi-method approach was used to describe the developmental processes (Patton, 1990) of community leadership. Such methods lend themselves to holistic analysis of complex processes (Cook & Reichardt, 1979) such as leadership.

Because the real impact of the community leadership programs was evident through the ongoing activities of the graduates, this research attempted to gather data on such activities. A broad range of community members have become involved in leadership activities because they "feel responsible for what goes on" after participating in a program. This article documents diverse alumni activity, from forming formal alumni associations to coordinating youth leadership programs. The dynamics of group efforts and individual efforts was explored. A second research focus was directed to determining factors that affected the nature and extent of alumni activity.

To answer the research questions within the context and practice of community leadership development, a multi-method approach was used. A comprehensive multi-method design permitted the researcher to use several levels of analysis, different data collection techniques, and a variety of sources to construct a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon under study. This approach contains aspects of Patton's (1990) layered-analysis design, Yin's (1989) embedded case study, and Merriam's (1988) inductive multi-site study, which were designed to understand the processes and outcomes that occur in many sites, yet observe the effect of specific contextual variables (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

The use of a combination of approaches to study the same phenomenon (Patton, 1990) enabled the researchers to define and understand operational links (Yin, 1989), discover crucial events and decision points (Guba, 1965), collect data on complex group process and behavior (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), tap multiple perspectives, and enhance the validity of the study (Cook & Reichardt, 1979) thus allowing the researcher to support conclusions and avoid rival explanations.

Multiple-method, multiple-site designs have been used by Andrews, Ashcraft, Thullen & Lock (1992) in attempting to document common elements of leadership development programs and community action initiatives in diverse, often complex settings. A similar challenge was faced by Brigham in documenting activity of participants in the Family Community Leadership Program which was implemented across the nation, and thus faced a "wide variety of contextual conditions" (1993, p. 132).

Data Collection Methods

The phenomenon of interest in this study was the process and practice of community leadership alumni after program implementation in Georgia communities between 1986 and 1992; What really happens when a group of individuals participate in a leadership development program, and then attempt to put their skills to use? The population consisted of 134 community leadership programs. To produce a comprehensive analysis, diverse data collection methods were used at various stages of the leadership development process to provide a picture of programs, the community setting, and the individuals involved in the program including participants, alumni, sponsors, advisory committee members, program coordinators, and other key individuals. Multiple methods included surveys, interviews, participant observation, and document analysis.

Surveys

Surveys provided baseline process and values data (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) and provided assessment of the extent of shared beliefs and experiences among individuals involved in the programs. Two surveys were conducted at different stages of program implementation, one in 1990 and one in 1993. The two time periods were selected to gain data from programs soon after completion of classes and several years after program sessions had ended. Survey questions concerned programs, sponsors, participants, and activities. A combination of open-ended and close-ended questions solicited data regarding the participant selection process, the main program content and goals, skills and issues covered, budgetary and management issues, and types of local input and contributions. Open-ended questions included the following:

What types of on-going or ad hoc community groups have graduates been involved in as a result of participation in the community leadership program?

In what types of special activities have graduates been involved?

In what ways have graduates been involved in the formation of new community organizations?

In what other activities not previously described have graduates been involved?

What do you feel has been the major impact of the leadership program on your county?

What do you think are the strongest areas of your program?

In what areas would you like to improve your program?

For each program identified, a primary contact person was identified to serve as key informant (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Zelditch, 1962) and complete a survey. Key informants were selected for their knowledge of the program process and local community affairs. Individuals identified were typically alumni, program coordinators, or program advisory committee members. These roles became blurred for each individual because a common occurrence was for alumni to become active in the planning and coordination of future programs, moving from participant to alumnus to coordinator to advisory committee member.

The rate of return for the 1990 survey was 100 percent with 76 programs reporting. The seventy-six was all those initiated between 1986 and 1990 which had completed sessions at the time of the survey. For the 1993 survey, the return rate was 97 percent, resulting in 130 completed program surveys. This survey sought information from all programs, thus providing both contemporary and historical perspectives. Data reported from the 1990 survey included qualitative responses. Data from the 1993 survey included both descriptive quantitative data and qualitative responses to open-ended questions. The high rate of return was due partly to intensive follow-up and telephone calls, and also to the willingness of program personnel to respond to the survey.

Participant Observation

Through conversations with state, district, and local program coordinators, community advisory committees, participants, and alumni groups and through observation of programs in progress, a great deal of information was gained about program practices and participation. The authors/researchers served varied roles over the course of the program: state coordinator, instructors, consultant, instructor-trainer. These roles permitted access to program activities as they evolved over time. Records of individuals' remarks and the process of program implementation were recorded to provide data on individual, county or group perceptions and experiences. These observations were critical in verification of survey and interview data as well as providing process data and unanticipated reactions or outcomes (Patton, 1987). Observation of programs and alumni activity also provided valuable information used in the selection of interview sites.

Document Analysis

A series of program documents provided a picture of community participation in the programs, on-going activities, and success stories. Such materials supplied data about program processes and outcomes which could not readily be observed (Patton, 1990). This method of tracing program processes is a valuable tool in generating data (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Program documents included news articles from local papers which documented program

visibility, participant activities, records of monetary and in-kind contributions used to support programs, program brochures, copies of letters to potential participants and alumni, and program newsletters. Relevant documents from all counties were reviewed. These materials were readily available from extensive files of the state program coordinator. The document review assisted in the selection of counties to include in the interview phase.

Interviews

Interviews were used to obtain data concerning participant actions, attitudes, and perceptions of the program from multiple perspectives at different stages of program activity. Based on information provided during participant observation and document analysis, 25 subjects were selected for focused interviews (Merton et al., 1956; Sellitz et al., 1976) concerning specific aspects of similar programs, conducted by telephone when appropriate. In addition to class members, advisory committee members and co-sponsoring groups' views of local leadership activity were sought. Questions covered subjects such as program strengths, activities in which alumni were involved, suggestions for program improvement, and perceptions of community impact and change due to the leadership program. Interviews typically lasted 45 minutes.

Interview data supplemented previously collected data, provided greater depth of knowledge about activities reported through other methods, and provided alternate interpretations to findings from descriptive statistics. Interviews, conducted between 1988 and 1993, documented both current and historical perspectives. Programs for interviews were selected by purposive sampling (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Patton, 1990) to ensure diversity of geographic location, representativeness of program, unique cases, and discrepant cases. An example of a unique case was a program held collaboratively by two neighboring counties. One program was considered a discrepant case because local coordinators faced opposition from local government officials, resulting in a lower level of participation in the program.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis methods of inductive analysis (Patton, 1990) and constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were used to categorize and code statements. These processes allowed the investigators to search data from all sources for empirical categories, classifications, and emerging concepts (Denzin, 1978) related to the research questions. Sums and percentages were used on survey questions which asked for quantitative reporting, such as number of alumni groups formed. These processes resulted in descriptions of program impact as felt by those involved and observed by key informants or researchers.

FINDINGS

The research questions were aimed at determining the extent of alumni activity after participating in a community leadership program and factors which affected their involvement. By analyzing program implementation within the context of the community setting, the activities and application of alumni leadership efforts were documented. Further analysis highlighted factors related to the community environment and program implementation processes which seemed to affect the extent of alumni involvement as community leaders.

Extent of Alumni Involvement in Community Affairs

Alumni put their leadership skills to use in a number of ways depending on their personal interests, previous experience, and the needs of a particular community. Alumni were observed in a variety of leadership roles. Easiest to observe and track were visible group efforts. The two most common structured alumni activities were teaching additional leadership classes for adults, youth or special audiences and forming an ongoing alumni group. Alumni also felt the need to maintain contact with other leaders. This interest resulted in newsletters for program graduates, and providing assistance to others interested in starting or improving their community leadership efforts. Table 1 shows the number of alumni who have been involved in these activities.

Conducting Leadership Classes. In many cases, alumni put their resources into conducting more community leadership development classes (Tables 1 and 2). These classes were managed and often taught by alumni, and added greatly to the total number of programs conducted and high rate of participation over the years reported. Alumni felt that the intense effort required to implement programs was worth the result of helping more individuals become involved in local leadership.

When alumni decided to put their efforts into conducting programs, these were typically basic adult leadership programs. However, 46 percent of the programs reported sponsoring classes for special audiences (Table 1) including agri-business leaders, college students, disabled persons and youth (Table 3).

Table 1. Georgia Community Leadership Alumni Involvement in Leadership Program Activities

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Expressed interest in helping other programs (n = 115)	90	78
Conducted basic adult leadership (n = 126)	78	62
Formed alumni association (n = 128)	65	51
Conducted leadership program for special audience (n = 130)	60	46
Helped other leadership programs get started or improve (n = 127)	51	40
Published newsletter for graduates (n = 129)	21	16

Table 2. Number of Leadership Classes Offered By Leadership Alumni (n = 126)

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
One	48	38
Two	14	11
Three to five	39	31
More than five	25	20

Table 3. Leadership Programs for Special Audiences

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Youth	49	82
Agriculture	5	8
College students	3	5
Persons with disabilities	2	3
Senior citizens	4	7

Eighty-two percent of the special programs were directed at youth leadership development for high school students.

Formation of Alumni Associations. As shown in Table 1, alumni from 51 percent of the reporting programs formed an alumni association. These associations served as opportunities to refine skills, promote unity among members, network, discuss key community issues and goals, address local problems and provide input into solutions, develop programs, and improve quality of life in the community.

These organizations varied tremendously in how they operated. Some groups met as needed, while others met quarterly or monthly. The majority of alumni groups had elected officers and formal by-laws and procedures for operation, but some preferred to maintain looser association through informal contact or periodic listings of alumni.

When asked what factors were considered in deciding NOT to form a formal alumni group, one typical reason was that graduates did not want "another meeting for meetings' sake." Participants were already busy and involved and clearly stated that they did not want another regular meeting to attend. Several individuals commented that they had not developed the cohesion needed to start and maintain such a group; too many obvious differences of opinion were evident.

Support of Existing Organizations. For the programs that had not formed a formal alumni association, program graduates frequently expressed that they could be more effective working through existing groups such as the chamber of commerce, civic clubs or church groups. Others commented that they could best "make a difference in the roles we are already in, using skills learned from class."

Formation of Community Organizations. Many alumni felt that the formation of community organizations designed to address specific priority issues was needed, and therefore, their efforts were spent in chartering such groups. Examples of community organizations formed included Chamber of Commerce, Clean and Beautiful Commission, Historic Preservation Society, Project Literacy, Sister City Committee, Education Mentor Group, Dropout Prevention Committee, Jaycees, Downtown Merchants' Association, Commission on Children and Youth, Quality Education Committee, Citizens for Fair Government, and Tourism Board. The formation of a chamber of commerce was often viewed as the best means to address other critical issues such as economic development. This is understandable, given that communities most often rate economic development as the highest priority issue (Langone, 1990).

Leadership program alumni actively took on the tasks required to develop mission statements and by-laws, elect officers, recruit membership, plan and implement activities. For example, several alumni from one program became concerned about growth of neighboring counties during the classes' socioeconomic perspective. After the classes ended, these alumni promoted the formation of a local zoning board to deal with land use and growth in their own county. In another community, alumni re-activated the area NAACP.

Community-Based Efforts. More difficult to document are the more isolated efforts of groups or individuals who were active in the community leadership arena. Frequently, there are more effective ways to address local issues than through formal organizations. Many programs have reported examples of individuals who have run for office or been appointed to local, regional or state boards due to their participation in a local program. Leadership program graduates have been appointed to the Governor's Drug Commission, the state Industrial Development Authority, Georgia's Environmental Health Board, and the White House Conference on Small Business as well as local hospital authorities, zoning commissions, and strategic planning teams. Strong recognition for the accomplishments of program participants was evident in these appointments.

A common occurrence was the action of groups or individuals who had become aware of particular issues during the leadership program, and as a result, became involved in community debate, fact finding and decision making related to that issue. In one county, the driving issue was education. Several concerned alumni learned about the process of local government and boards of education, thus giving them the knowledge of community decision making needed to form a coalition which supported and publicized the need for a new high school.

These individualized, localized efforts are the "true stuff" of leadership, yet by the very nature of community leadership and its diverse application, such efforts quickly become community development issues rather than being traced back to leadership development programs. This evidence supports Jones and

Silva's (1991) emphasis on community capacity building in actual practice, not just in models or definitions.

Leadership frequently occurs in small, isolated incidents as well as during grand, coordinated events. Program alumni continually expressed an increase in their level of commitment and responsibility once they had become aware of local concerns, resources, and networks available to deal with current issues.

Factors Affecting Alumni Involvement

Interviews and survey questions asked key informants to discuss areas needing improvement in their programs. The most commonly listed weakness was lack of involvement by alumni. The reasons for this were varied and contingent on community situational factors. However, several common comments were noted. One respondent said, "People don't want busy work." Alumni activities must be meaningful. The following categories were found to be factors affecting the willingness and/or ability of alumni to practice their leadership skills.

Participant Selection. Alumni involvement often had more to do with how a program was planned and how participants were selected than with decisions made at the end of a program. Alumni commitment comes from the individuals themselves; therefore the individuals selected determined the extent of alumni involvement. For example, in counties that recruited people just to fill the class, willingness to continue involvement was not as likely. If the community did not seem to have enough enthusiastic, interested people available to commit time to leadership development, perhaps offering a program was not practical. Motivated, enthusiastic individuals become motivated, enthusiastic alumni.

Diversity of participants also appeared to be an important factor in encouraging alumni involvement. One of the greatest benefits of leadership programs for participants was the opportunity to get to know new people. Individuals who may not have had a chance to get involved in their community frequently saw the class as a means to make contacts and become involved. Some programs selected individuals who had previously been actively involved in the community. While this may be a valid indicator of commitment, these people were also those who already had too much to do and not able to commit to additional projects. A great deal of enthusiasm was evident among individuals new to a community, those ready for the challenge of leadership in a broader arena, and those who had not previously had the opportunity to become involved in community affairs.

Length of Program. The length of the program affected some graduates' willingness to become further involved. Participants in several counties expressed the need to take a break after several months to a year of leadership sessions. In an effort to balance their commitments, they felt the need to spend more time with their families, on the job, or in other community activities.

Program Design. The activities presented during classes affected the role of alumni. In programs which encouraged class discussion and allowed time to deal with local issues, participants were able to get involved and excited about issues. Several comments pointed to the need for instructors to localize the content of their subject matter so that skills or issues being discussed could be applied in real ways to real problems in the local context.

Programs that included a session on goal setting and long-range planning encouraged participants to view leadership development as an on-going process. Frequently, the final session of a program involved targeting issues and setting up a structure for group or individual assignments to accomplish these goals. This program session created the framework for participants to continue working on community issues, helped to integrate them into existing groups or agencies, and assisted alumni through the sometimes difficult phase of moving from "class participant" to "community leader" by offering support and natural transition.

One program coordinator suggested that program organizers plant the idea of alumni activity early in the program. By making alumni activity part of the original commitment to participate in the program and discussing possible action throughout the program sessions, participants will plan for continued involvement. As this coordinator said, "Participation means growth" and that is what alumni involvement is all about—continued growth brings continued involvement and involvement brings more growth.

Resources. The need for resources to support programs or activities was a concern. The desire to keep tuition costs reasonable, locating effective speakers or instructors at affordable rates, and maintaining paid or volunteer program managers were considered as barriers to continued alumni group involvement.

Local Setting. The local political climate was another important factor in alumni ability or willingness to get involved. Controversy over local issues, "turf guarding" of programs or issues, unwillingness of positional leaders to involve citizens, or a climate of unwillingness to change can prevent interested individuals or groups from acting in leadership roles.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research should be useful in improving future community leadership development efforts. Attention to the planning and implementation factors that affect alumni involvement can assist communities and educators in designing and implementing successful leadership programs. The findings provide a foundation for developing support directed to the continued development of program alumni as they put leadership knowledge into practice in their communities. The activities of program alumni indicate community needs and personal interests for involvement. Alumni feel responsible for their communi-

ties, yet look for meaningful projects and activities on which to spend their time and energy.

This information will be useful to community development professionals, program planners and evaluators, as well as in designing future research. Knowledge of these concerns can help planners design meaningful programs geared to the needs of communities and potential program participants. Evaluators who often struggle to find ways to document impact and program success can use these findings to target evaluation of actual activity or become aware of the diversity of activity, thus the need to use open-ended, discovery-oriented research and evaluation designs. Even using these methods, documenting individual efforts is difficult to trace back to a specific program, given the contextual variables and personal differences among participants. However, community developers, researchers and program evaluators need to pay attention to the more subtle outcomes. Lorraine Matusak (1993), Kellogg Foundation Leadership Scholar, described community involvement as a "termite approach" in which continual small efforts contribute to the greater effort. By focusing on only visible programs or groups formed, research may be missing the small efforts which become the basis for greater sustained effort. Comprehensive studies permit a broader view of community action, thus enabling researchers to piece together seemingly isolated efforts.

Another difficult task in tracking program alumni is the tendency of individuals to move "in and out of public view" (Trotter, 1994). A particular community issue such as the need for a new school may spur an individual or group to activity. Once a specific goal has been reached, the individuals involved may feel the need to return to family or work responsibilities. Community leaders, like everyone else, must balance multiple responsibilities, therefore, their role as a visible leader will likely fluctuate in both intensity and arena.

This research and analysis was conducted at the community level rather than studying individuals. Further research documenting individual growth and experiences would add to knowledge about leadership and leadership development.

The development of effective leaders is now, and will continue to be, a critical element in community affairs. Through the design and implementation of successful development programs, our communities can be assured of sustaining active, involved and dedicated citizenry.

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BOOK REVIEWS

ALLEN, JOHN C. and DON A. DILLMAN. *Against All Odds—Rural Community in the Information Age* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 1944, 238 pp.), paper back.

This book deals with the changes that are taking place in a small rural community (Bremer) in the eastern part of the State of Washington. Bremer does not fit the mold of most small rural communities. This agriculturally based community maintains its identity with various activities, social functions and communication. This small town has an informal as well as a formal level of exchanging knowledge about all activities taking place within the community.

The major conclusion is identifying the struggle the community citizens are having with maintaining those community-control processes and responding to the intrusions of mass society—government. The strong agricultural economic base provides for the benefits that are distributed throughout the community.

The social structure in Bremer has not changed for a long time. Most of the men in the community belong to a gun club which has become the primary policy discussion group in the community. This group meets every week primarily as a gun club to practice shooting trap and relax. Any problems that arise in the community are discussed and agreements are usually reached within that club. The community club accomplishes more for Bremer than any type of government, at any level, can do.

One of the unique aspects that was emphasized by the authors was the communication between all the members of the community. Daily greetings and short discussions about their daily mission in town is expected of residents. Everyone knows everyone else and what they are doing, even to the point of knowing how much money was being borrowed. This is understood by everyone, especially important when a major community problem arises.

The issue of the doctor retiring and leaving the community without a doctor was discussed in the community club and throughout the community. When the proposal was made to buy the doctor's house for the new physician, the "Doctors Committee" of the club sent out a letter to the community. Everyone was asked to provide a no-interest loan to buy the house from the previous doctor and sell it to the new doctor with no interest. Everyone knew how much each household could provide, which resulted in getting the doctor set up for business. This could be done by knowing the capacity of everyone to borrow or provide funds with the goal of helping the entire community.

The authors imply that rural areas are losing the congeniality and communication that has existed in the past. They made no attempts at defining new social forms based on the expanded communication capacity that is being adapted

throughout the rural areas. Projections of the social trends in Bremer would be an interesting addition which could be used to provide direction for development in a community. Bremer is undergoing changes as a result of the telecommunication era, but not as fast as other rural communities. The community fair, which almost requires everyone to participate, keeps the congeniality of the community members intact.

This book gives good examples of the different social structures that exist within a rural community and how they have either continued to function or changed. The time span for these changes covers several generations with emphasis in the last 30 years. The main idea is that the community could solve its own problems without any outside help from either the state or federal government. On the other hand, government payments to farmers are acceptable. This is a good case study of a rural community and how changes are taking place around them without being overly influenced by them.

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BLAIR, JOHN P. *Local Economic Development: Analysis and Practice*. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1995, 346 pp.) hardcover, \$39.95.

This is a book that not only explores “the economics of economic development,” as its preface goal states, but also provides material form to the professional pursuit of economic development, offering up an authoritative image of this perplexing and often perceived ethereal subject. One finds concepts common to geography, regional planning and political science interwoven with economic principle throughout Blair’s work, further underscoring the depth and dimension of the topic. While each chapter is a reference guide complete within itself, when viewed collectively the chapters admirably explain the rationale and logic behind the forces affecting local economic growth and decline.

Blair sets about his goal of describing the business and social precepts of economic development by separating the topic into a sequence of thirteen (13) chapters, the first four (4) devoted to discussing market logic, market analysis and market forces. The next five (5) focus on economic structure, issues, tools and techniques, while the final four (4) center on the role of government and how public policies impact economic development at the local level.

Throughout his discussion Blair introduces past economic observation and study, merging it with that of the present. This bit of historical insight provides the reader with a broader comprehension of economics as a discipline, permitting even the non-economist to follow the subject matter discussed, one of Blair’s prime objectives.

The writing style adopted by Blair in structuring the book is also commendable, for the chapters are comfortably read. Although he makes extensive use of economic models throughout, Blair does so in an appropriate and easily understood manner. Subsequently, one does not become lost between narrative description and mathematical portrayal of the economic forces and their consequences. There is additional value in that the chapters are supported by an extensive reference section which itself is a valuable contribution to the book as a whole.

Perhaps the greatest benefit the book offers is this, however. Many communities now employ an individual or staff responsible for furthering the development of their respective local economies. All too often this effort is poorly planned and even more poorly supported in logistic and technical terms. Now comes a book that not only provides those seeking to staff such a position with elements of a job description, but also has the capacity to act as a guide in developing strategies and focusing effort.

Local Economic Development should be read by everyone seriously involved in the profession, for it embellishes one's perspective of the subject in a refreshing way. Then too, the book should be on the desk of everyone who believes economic development is little more than blue smoke and mirrors, especially if such individuals are politicians prone to change economic policy every time results are not immediate or administrations change. "Almost by definition," Blair states in summary of the final chapter, "economic development is a forward-looking subject. Economic development planners must think strategically and plant seeds that may bear fruit only after many years." If any single argument exists to dissuade impulsive action, perhaps those in such positions can find it here.

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BINDER, FREDERICK M. and DAVID M. REIMERS. *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City*. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995, 353 pp.) hardcover, \$27.50.

All the Nations Under Heaven, authored by Frederick Binder and David Reimers carries the subtitle, *An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City*. The subtitle, although less inviting than the more lyrical main title, is a most accurate portrayal of the book's contents.

The book opens with the discovery of Manhattan Island by Henry Hudson and progresses resolutely through the Dutch experience beginning in 1621 to the tensions existing between Hasidic Jews and African Americans in the middle

1990s. Between these pages, the authors discuss the early waves of immigrants, chiefly from Europe. Later chapters address the influx of other groups of people, particularly Chinese, East Indians and Eastern Jews, among others.

Binder and Reimers faithfully trace the paths taken by these immigrants from the most impoverished neighborhoods to middle class sections of the city. With no apparent bias, the authors not only detail the uneven history of this progression from poverty to economic stability, but address some of the underlying reasons. The French Huguenots, for example, came in rather small numbers, possessed of some education and skills, and were Protestant. All of the foregoing served to allay the fears and prejudices of the nativists.

The antithesis of the Huguenots' experience was that of the Irish, who arrived in great numbers, were poor, often illiterate, and Catholic. The authors were careful to point out that those who assimilated most quickly into the cultural, educational and economic status quo fared best.

In the end, Binder and Reimers do not offer any strong assurances that New York will become a city characterized by acceptance and goodwill among its diverse populations. The authors seem convinced that the very fact of New York's multi-ethnicity will continue to force a measure of tolerance on its people. However, given the dense, often difficult and frustrating living conditions, combined with multiple and vastly differing cultural mores, the eruption of occasional violence remains a possibility.

Anyone who has experienced the often frustrating process of bringing dissimilar groups of people together in a common living environment will find value in this review by Binder and Reimers. As a public housing commissioner, I see some similarities among the previous immigrant experiences and the current backlash and resistance to scattered site low-income housing in communities across the United States.

Readers may feel a vague frustration with the authors for not pursuing more deeply the root causes of nativist bias. While making the point that certain populations did not progress as rapidly as other groups, the book does not detail the myriad and complicated reasons for this disparate advancement. In fairness, this analysis may not have been part of the authors' intent in reviewing the actual events that have transpired since the original settlement of New York City. A more thorough examination of these issues would have contributed significantly to the reader's understanding, not only of the experience of New York City, but other types of racial, ethnic and cultural interaction and assimilation as well.

All the Nations Under Heaven is compelling in its readability. The scholarship and research appear to be sound. Binder and Reimers render a detailed examination of the chronology of events which led to the vast ethnic and racial diversity that has become such a strong part of the identity of New York City. The fact that this book is a pioneer in studying this history reinforces its importance, not only in understanding the issue of cultural diversity in the various burroughs of New York City, but in other venues as well. It is interesting

to reflect that the findings of Binder and Reimers have been repeated in somewhat similar fashion in the development of other large cities in the United States. This fact alone gives the book increased worth as a socio-historical record of a very interesting and dynamic city.

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ABERLY, DOUG (ed.). *Futures by Design: The Practice of Ecological Planning*. (Gabriola Island, British Columbia, Canada/Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: New Society Publishers, 1994, 214 pp.) \$14.95, paperback.

One of the buzzwords of the 1990s is sustainability. While the concept is somewhat difficult to define, there is no lack of authors who try. In *Futures by Design: The Practice of Ecological Planning*, Doug Aberly, a bioregionalist and former town planner in British Columbia, has assembled some of the most profound thinkers in this arena to offer a community focused perspective on sustainability and ecologically sensitive community development. With commentary from a diverse group of thinkers and practitioners ranging from Jane Jacobs to Donella Meadows to Richard Register to Christopher Canfield to Fritz Steiner and others, this book offers a solid introduction to the art of ecologically based planning. As with the ever growing collection of writings on this subject (many of which employ the considerable talents of the authors assembled for this volume), there is a tendency toward generalization and identification of the problems. This book, building on a solid bioregional framework, offers an approach that is somewhat unique. Most authors are content with philosophical awakening. Mr. Aberly is not. As he states in his introduction, "This book purposefully does not include arcane permutations of academic debate over what ecological planning irrevocable is, nor does it detail a model for a universally applicable ecological utopia . . . It is a book that has been created to be *used*."

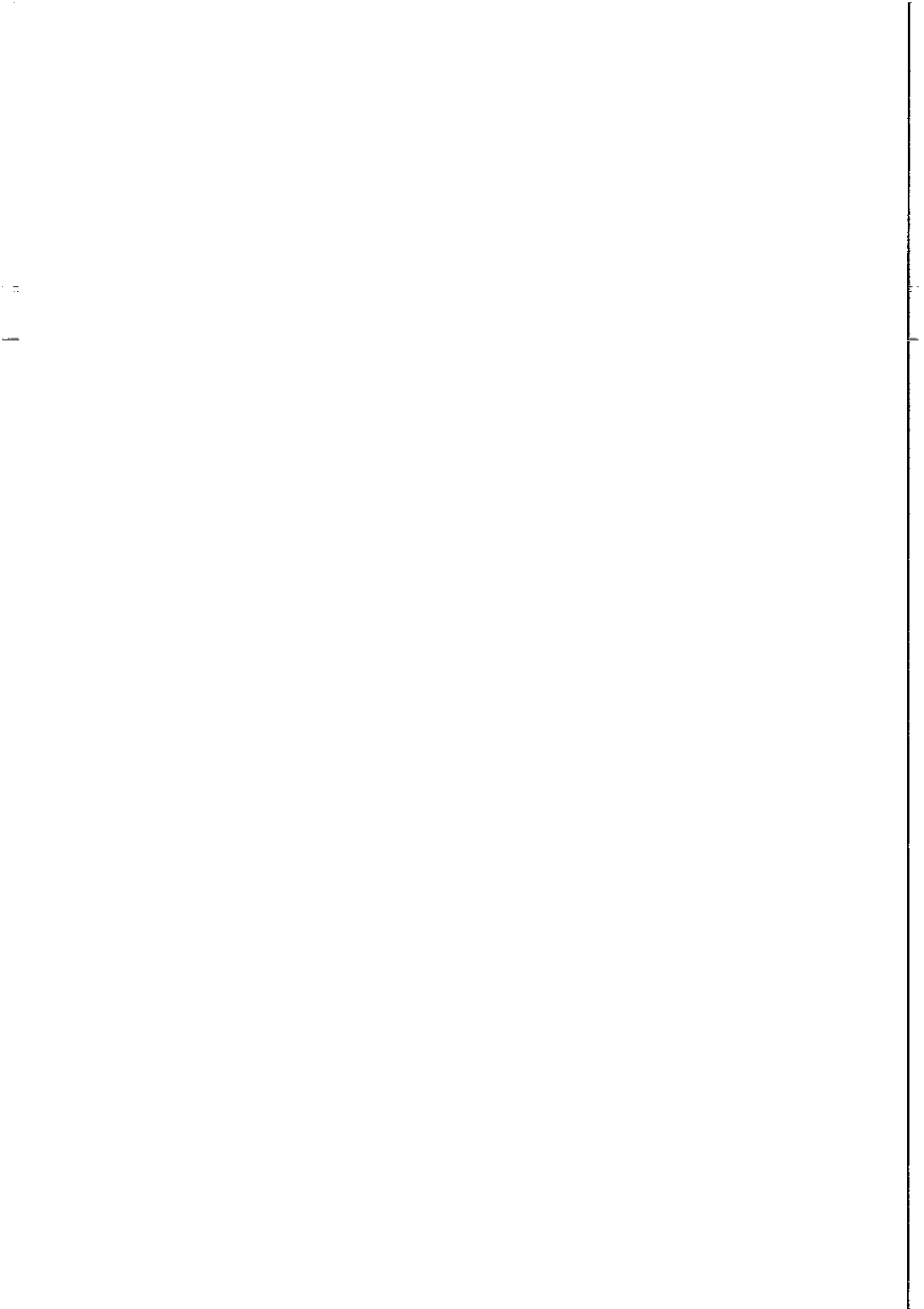
In this book, the fundamental arguments in support of the ecological basis for planning and community development (with community and development defined in the broadest sense possible) are applied to the *Cascadia* bioregion of northwestern North America. It can be argued that directing discussion toward only one bioregion severely limits the very applicability this work promises. This focus, however, allows the authors to present specific ideas and examples that would be impossible from a more universal perspective. Another refreshing approach that weaves its way into the vast majority of the proposals and case studies is realism. There is recognition that, as Richard Register states, "cities are home to almost half of humanity and are physically the largest of our creations." He further points out that with these cities come all the trappings, including buildings, streets, power lines, sewer pipes and the rest. It is in this

appreciation for the “real world” that alternatives are presented. This same approach is pursued in the other authors’ examples as well.

The greatest contribution this book makes to the growing literature on environmentally sensitive planning can be found in its applications and diversity of opinions. The contributors represent some of the best thinkers and “doers” in the sustainable communities movement. This significant benefit is also one of the book’s downfalls. The diversity of authors limits each one to a relatively brief opportunity for presenting their ideas and examples. This is somewhat remedied by a rather thorough bibliography of resources that can be investigated for more depth into a particular issue.

In short, *Futures by Design* provides a very strong introduction to the *hows* and *whys* of the “new paradigm” of community building and development.

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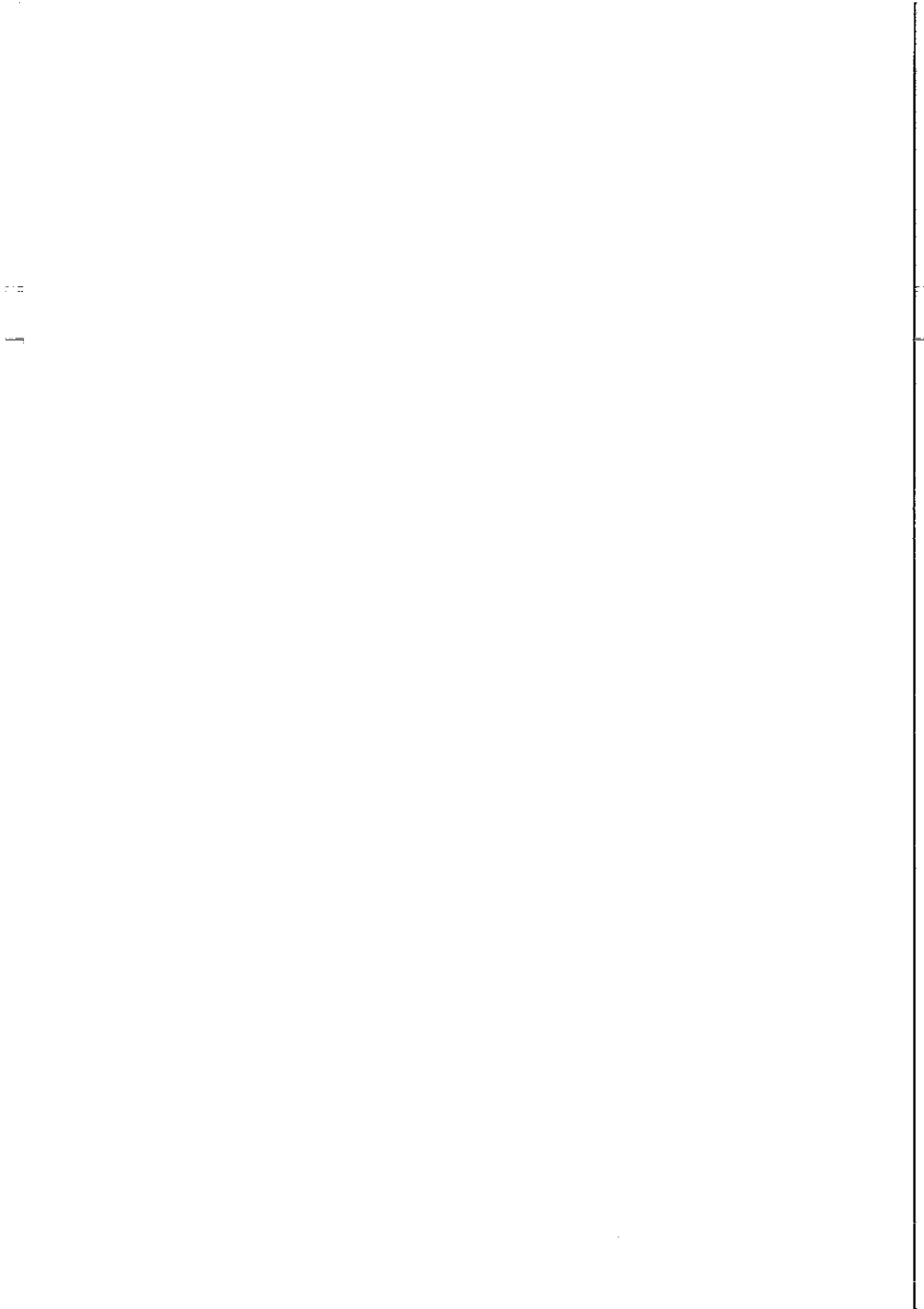
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