

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

What I have learned

Rural Research Workshop - 2012

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 - *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*
 - *Concordia University*
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 - *CRRF*
 - *NRE Research Team*
 - *Rural Citizens in our field sites*
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- I have been asked to reflect on the presentations from yesterday and provide some perspectives that might guide our thinking and discussion for today – and hopefully into the future.
 - Such reflections are never independent from the perspectives, prejudices, and frameworks that a person like myself brings to the material
 - Thus I have attempted to make some of my own perspectives clear as I discuss what we heard yesterday.



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My Reflections

- What are the differences between research and policy objectives?
- What have I learned yesterday (and before)?
- What do we do next?

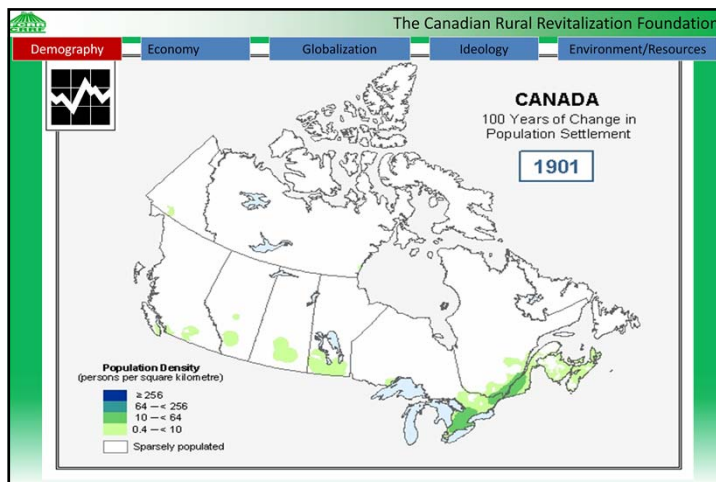
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- Thus I will:
 - Offer some comments on my understandings of the difference between the research and policy objectives among us;
 - Outline some of the things I learned yesterday – within the context of the perspectives I bring to the workshop; and
 - Make some suggestions for maintaining the research-policy connections under the current conditions of austerity and scepticism for scientific research.




• *Researchers and Policy-Makers*

- For the last 21 years, CRRF has been faced with the challenge of bringing those in the research and policy-making networks together: often in a milieu that includes those living in rural areas.
- We have also demonstrated the value of this for all parties.
- It has also placed us in a position of constant tension since the preoccupations of these two key groups are somewhat different.
 - **Researchers:** are preoccupied with **answering questions** – and getting the questions right.
 - We use various methods to do this, but they usually involve the careful use of evidence, long-term investigations, and a high level of transparency and debate.
 - Our institutions are organized for this and the rewards for our careers and performance are based on it.
 - Sometimes the questions are very specific: “What is the cost of the pine beetle infestation?”
 - And sometimes they are very general: “What are the impacts of globalization on rural communities?”
 - But answering them almost always leads to new questions – hopefully more appropriate and arising out of increased knowledge.
 - **Policy-makers** on the other hand: are preoccupied with **solving problems**.
 - Sometimes this is done with a careful consideration of evidence and systematic analysis,
 - But it is also often done using strategic decisions and tactics involving careful control of information, and occasional trade-offs of short-term goals and knowledge for long term objectives.
 - It is always done in a context of incomplete or conflicting information, however – forcing decision under the pressure of resources and time.
 - Success is most often measured by pragmatic achievements and (if the problem cannot be solved) its avoidance or the mitigation of its consequences.
- It is no wonder that we regularly hear frustration and strong difference of opinion expressed in our activities.
- But this is right where we need to be – since the work of both of these networks and partners needs to be done in order to accomplish our longer term goal: the use of knowledge for greater well-being for all Canadians.
- **Researchers:** Need to work closely with policy-makers and citizens to improve the chance that they will
 - Get the questions right; and
 - Get the appropriate evidence.
- **Policy-makers:** Need to work closely with researchers to
 - Identify the underlying problems, not just their symptomatic manifestations;
 - Verify the effectiveness of their strategies; and
 - Anticipate the problems arising.
- As is so often the case, our objectives and interests are never independent so most of us in this room blend the two in some valuable and interesting ways.
- As you will see in the following discussion about what I have learned – I am a researcher who can't keep out of the policy domain.
- In approaching the task I was given, I proceeded in the following way.
 - Given the focus of the workshop on rural futures, I went to material I had previously prepared regarding the major changes and trends that are likely to drive the future of rural Canada;
 - Identifying the types of questions that need to be answered along the way.
 - I then went through the paper topics and abstracts – particularly those that have been presented to this point in time;
 - And considered the ways in which they contributed to the questions I had about our rural futures.
 - I have organized this process within five general themes or topics: Demographic changes, Economic changes, Globalization, Ideology, and the Environment



- The first theme is in the demographic domain – where **Urbanization trumps rural population growth**
 - About 80% of population is in urban areas – and growing
- Details of the dynamics are not simple, however.
 - Urban adjacent areas (*commuting & amenities*) are growing – often with conflicts between the traditional residents and the newcomers
 - More distant areas are declining, aging, lacking labour force and other types of capacity.
- [slide from Ray Bollman]



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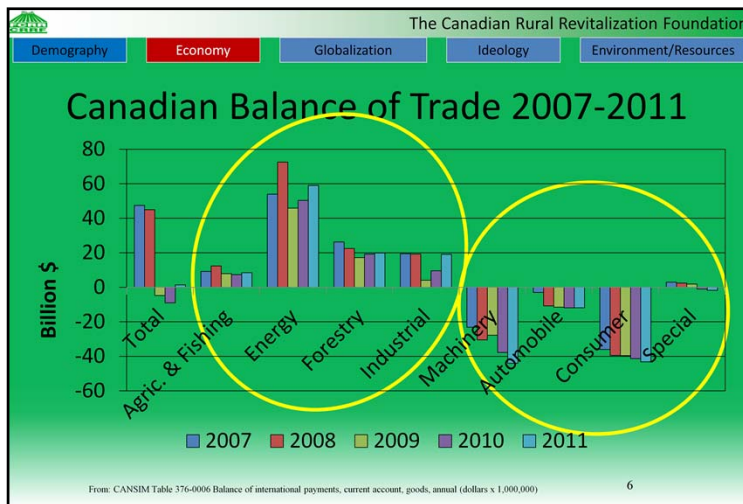
Urbanization

- Questions
 - Impacts of urbanization on rural communities?
 - Interdependencies between urban and rural?
 - Best strategies for rural communities?
- Presentations (2)
 - Both individual and local characteristics affect migration
 - Labour markets, demographics, and institutions contribute to interdependence
- To learn
 - How do environment and identity relate to interdependence?
 - What are the potential sources for rural-urban alliances?

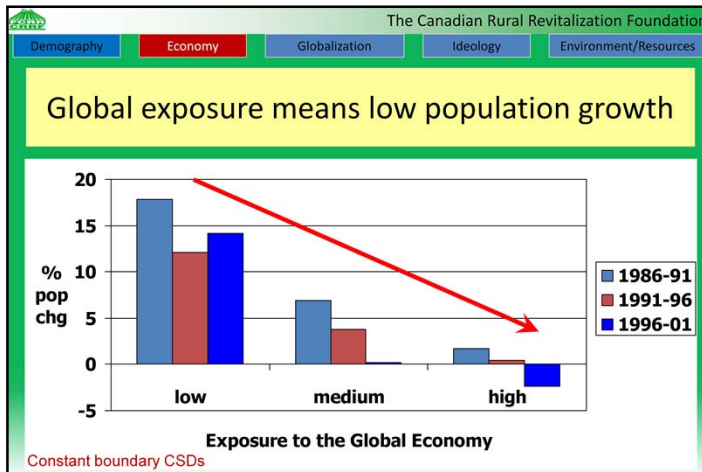
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•Some of the urbanization-related questions we need to answer for rural futures are the following.

- How does urbanization relate to rural community growth, structure, and power?
- What are the interdependencies between urban and rural places?
- What are the best strategies for rural communities to respond to these changes?
- 2 presentations (Frenette and Simms)
 - In these cases, the abstracts were promises more than results
 - The first indicated that both individual and local characteristics will affect migration to rural regions.
 - The second was a promise to identify the key elements making rural and urban locations functional regions: primarily focusing on labour market demographics and institutional availability.
- In light of the strategic importance of developing alliances with urban people and places, there is a pressing need to learn about the following.
 - How do shared environment and identities contribute to rural-urban interdependence (in addition to exchanges and institutions as already mentioned)?
 - What are the potential sources for rural-urban collaboration or alliances: food, water, environment, identity.



- The second set of factors driving our rural futures is that relating to specific elements of the economy.
- In Canada, **Commodity trade trumps manufacturing**
- In this graph of the Canadian balance of trade in goods and services – we see how the balance is positive (>) for rural-focused industries like agriculture, fishing, mining, forestry, and some industry but negative (>) for machinery, auto, and consumer items
 - It is not obvious to the general public that our ability to purchase our ipods, computers, cars, and clothes is so dependent on selling our fishing products, petroleum, and forestry resources.
 - Hence the people and communities required to service these industries become seen as a net drain on our economy.
 - Revising this ignorance of interdependency will require more proactive approaches.



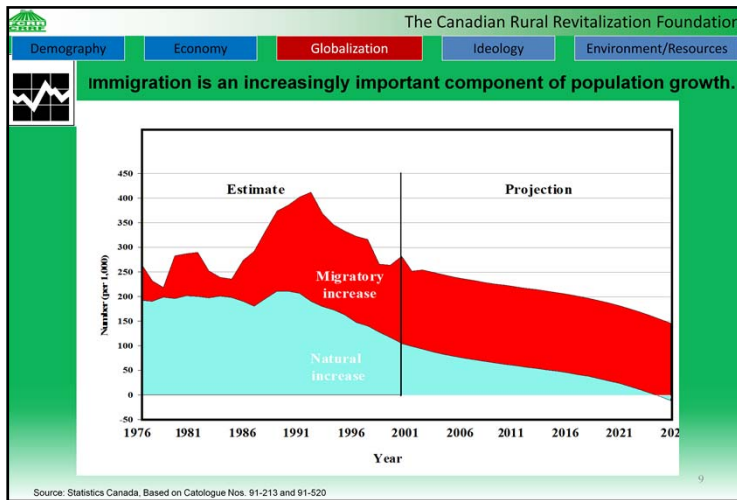
- From this point of view, there is an important lesson:
Commodities also trump communities
- Our success and dependence on commodity trade has decimated our rural communities.
- Graph showing the relationship between integration into the global economy through trade and population change for small rural locations.
 - >The more involved a community is with global trade, the more likely its growth will be lower (and in the most exposed cases: declining).
- The linkages of commodity trade have been very beneficial for our balance of payments (*80% of trade surplus contributed by primary products*) but they have undermined the population of rural communities

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Economy

- Questions
 - Can commodity trade support communities?
 - What are alternatives for rural communities?
- Presentations (10)
 - Co-ops and alternative organizations can help.
 - Social networks critical for economic development.
 - Wide range of outcomes to consider.
- To learn
 - How can communities capture more of the commodity chain?
 - Best strategies for niche markets?

- Focusing on these economic characteristics and trends, some of the research questions I posed are the following.
 - Under what conditions can commodity trade be an advantage for rural communities?
 - What are the alternatives available for those communities?
- The economic features of rural areas is obviously important to the researchers represented here as well
 - 10 of the 19 presentations address this topic in one way or another (Ketilson, Bridault, Youroukos, Vaugeois, Lang, Koster, Fiser, Odame, Joyal, Simms)
- They represent a wide range of approaches and insights. Some of the things I learned from them are the following:
 - Co-ops and alternative models of economic organization make important contributions to local economies
 - Within organizations – through increased resilience, social contributions, and flexibility
 - With respect to the organization of communications (public or private?) [Fiser]
 - I also found additional support for the case that social networks are critical for economic development
 - Through the support they provide for leadership [Youroukos]
 - Mitigation of cross-silo and cross-community barriers [Koster]
 - Potential use of social media [Odame]
 - The presentations also reflect a wide range of outcomes as important:
 - Financing
 - Labour
 - Innovation
 - Tourism
 - Governance
- Only in a few cases so far has there been attention given to the challenge posed by commodity trade, however. We need to ask questions like:
 - How can communities capture a greater share of the revenue from its resources – even within the current domination of commodity traders?
 - Under what conditions can commodity trade be an advantage for rural communities?
 - Without this, these communities are left to niche markets and constant innovation for economic survival
 - These are reasonable strategies and clearly championed by our governments – but they take on the flavour of rear-guard actions or forms of blaming the victims when the overall distribution of natural resource benefits is considered.
 - Nevertheless, we need more answers about the strategies and relative benefits of innovation and the development of niche markets for rural communities.



- The third trend I wish to highlight is related to globalization: **Immigration trumps natural increase**
- Immigration is an increasingly important component of population growth.
- In 1976, natural increase (*births minus deaths*) represented over 80% of the demographic growth in Canada. Today, the situation is almost reversed as immigration represents close to 70% of the growth.
- If current trends continue, in less than 25 years, immigration will be the only growth factor, since by that time natural increase will be negative.
- [graph from Ray Bollman]



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Immigration

- Questions
 - How can we become welcoming communities?
 - Under what conditions do we attract and retain immigrants?
- Presentations (3)
 - Wide variety of approaches
 - Complex set of factors for attraction and retention
- To learn
 - What conditions favour attraction and retention?
 - Opportunities for becoming “gateway communities”?

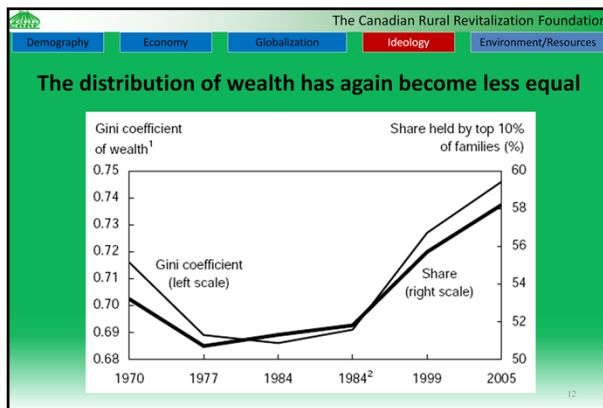
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- Some of the questions I posed in the light of this trend are the following.
 - How can we best manage the challenges that come from welcoming strangers in rural communities?
 - Under what conditions will immigrants be attracted and retained in rural communities?
- 3 of the presenters addressed this topic [Wiginton, ElDakiky, Drolet]. I learned that:
 - There is a promising variety of approaches to welcoming strangers across the country
 - This provides a valuable context in which to learn about best practices – and (more important) the processes and conditions contributing to success.
 - There are many factors involved for both attraction and retention, but we are on the way to identifying them through careful analysis
- There still needs to be a lot of work done on this topic, however – with a particular focus on small towns and rural places
- Fortunately there are research teams on the trail of these types of questions:
 - How can small towns and rural places better attract and retain immigrants
 - And – one of my own questions: It is possible for small towns to become “gateway communities” for immigrants? Embrace and improve the tendency for immigrants to move first to small towns, then to larger ones? Like a citizenship training ground. Is this a marketable role for small towns?
- On a side note – I am encouraged by the recent support for a SSHRC-supported 7-year Partnership grant on immigration to small and medium-sized communities. It is entitled “Pathways to Prosperity: New policy directions and innovative local practices for newcomer integration and attraction”. PI; Victoria Esses, Univ of Western Ontario, 2012-2019, \$2.5 million.



- The fourth long term trend has been the growth in the importance of neo-liberal ideology. Advocates argue that:
 - Gov't control over the economy is inefficient or otherwise undesirable
 - Control of the economy should be given to the private sector (with the definition of the economy enlarged to include almost all aspects of our lives)
 - This includes the privatization of most state enterprises
 - Trade liberalization (often ideological more than in practice)
 - Deregulation
 - Discipline fiscal policy*
 - Priority given to individual property rights over collective or common property rights
- From this perspective: **Consumers trump Citizens**
- Distribution of benefits and services depends more on ability to pay rather than on citizenship rights, and
- From the point of view of rural areas: Service delivery depends on density over entitlements

- Keynsian economics to Friedman economics (Fordist to post-Fordist)*
- Economic liberalism*



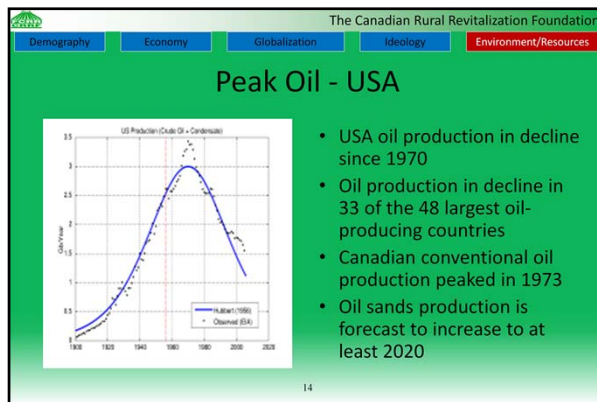
- It has meant, for example, that the distribution of wealth has become less equal
- This is disturbing – not only for the equity issues it raises, but for the potential danger it holds for social peace.
- One of the most consistent findings of sociologists and political scientists is that greater inequality leads to greater social unrest in a variety of forms. For example:
 - The rise of right wing and populist groups and ideologies
 - Demonstrations, discrimination against various political, religious, cultural, or immigrant groups
 - Polarized social discourse and increasing intolerance of others
- *In all circumstances repression without addressing the inequalities upon which the conflicts are based – simply exacerbates the situation.*
- *For the past 25 years, Canada has been on the path to greater inequality – supported by neo-liberal policies.*
- *We must do the work of identifying the reasons for this trend – and address it at its base, not try to deny or cover up the symptoms.*
 - *Our record at doing so is not that great.*
- [Graph notes:
 - 1 Excluding the value of registered pension plans (RPPs).
 - 2 1984 data re-weighted for consistency with the Survey of Financial Security.
- Sources: Statistics Canada, Assets and Debts Survey, 1984;
- Survey of Financial Security, 1999 and 2005
- From: **Revisiting wealth inequality**
- René Morissette and Xuelin Zhang
- December 2006 **PERSPECTIVES 5 Statistics Canada** — Catalogue no. 75-001-XIE]

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Neo-liberalism

- Questions
 - Which aspects support community well-being? Which don't?
 - What are appropriate alternatives?
 - Causes of rising inequality?
 - Implications for rural places?
 - How can we mitigate the negative impacts?
- Presentations (5)
 - Co-ops blend neo-liberal and collective elements
 - Community and place-based policies challenge neo-liberal
 - Social and democratic elements cannot be divorced from economic
- To learn
 - How are neo-liberal ideologies and inequality related?
 - How are neo-liberal and natural resource policies related?
 - Where do alternative approaches lead to better outcomes?

- Given the predominance of this approach, some of the questions I would ask are the following.
 - Which aspects of neo-liberal policies and programs are conducive to rural community well-being? And which aspects are detrimental?
 - In what ways are alternatives to neo-liberal approaches to growth and justice more appropriate?
 - How can they be implemented within current and future conditions?
 - What are the causes of rising inequality in Canada?
 - What are the implications for rural well-being?
 - How can the negative impacts of rising inequality be avoided or mitigated (especially within rural areas)?
- There were 5 presentations that addressed aspects of this factor (Ketilson, Vaugeois, Koster, Fiser, Churchyard)
 - Some of the presentations regarding co-ops addressed these questions indirectly as they generalized to community-based or local-based organizations of assets and property. Most notable with the discussion of communications infrastructure.
 - Co-ops appear to be successful blends of neo-liberal and collective elements – at least under certain circumstances.
 - There were also implied or possible insights from the 4 presentations considering governance at the regional or local levels. (Youroukos, Herchmer, Joyal, Gibson)
 - Their focus on the community as a basis for economic or social action carries an implied challenge to the individual focus of neo-liberalism. Reflected in much of the work on place-based policy
 - Reinforced by the studies examining the interdependence of economic and social sectors – along with the democratic culture and structures of local or regional areas.
- There is very little work here identifying the relationship between neo-liberal ideologies and inequality of wealth or natural resource management, however.
 - This gives rise to the following types of questions to explore.
 - In what ways do neo-liberal ideologies contribute to inequality in rural places?
 - In what ways do they support unsustainable natural resource policies and practices?
 - Under what conditions might they be conducive to greater equity and sustainable practices?
 - And – of course: What are alternatives to neo-liberal approaches and under what conditions would they lead to better outcomes?
- I look forward to more systematic identification of the alternatives for economic and social development.



- The final change I will highlight is the new recognition and effects of the limits to natural resources
- This is manifested in the concerns for
 - Climate change
 - Soil productivity
 - Collapse of the cod stocks
 - Forest infestations (pine beetle)
 - Water quality and availability
- We are finding that **Nature trumps resource exploitation**
- In some cases these limits emerge as a result of the mismanagement of our natural resources
 - As is most dramatically illustrated in Canada by the case of Atlantic cod
- In other cases, it is a recognition of finite resources – as with oil
 - USA oil production is in decline since 1970
 - Oil production is in decline in 33 of the 48 largest oil-producing countries
 - Canadian conventional oil production peaked in 1973
 - Oil sands production is forecast to increase to at least 2020 – with declines after that
- Early or late – the outcomes appear to be the same: a limit to the resource and necessity for alternative (hopefully less environmentally damaging).



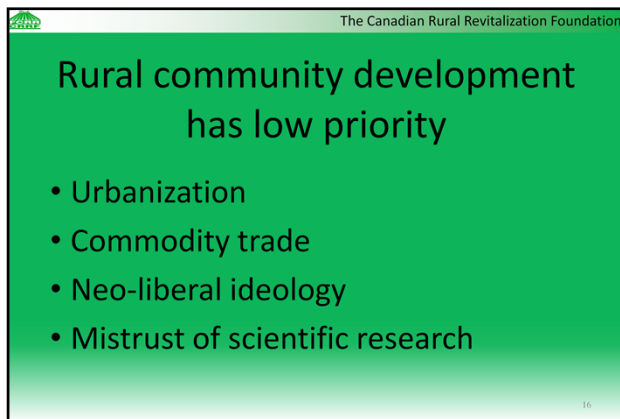
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Natural Resources

- Questions
 - Which resources are most vulnerable?
 - What sustainable alternatives do we have?
 - What are best strategies for implementing them?
- Presentations (2)
 - Context-sensitive conditions can undermine access to sustainability programs.
 - Student internships contribute to land use planning
- To learn
 - How can rural communities gain more control?
 - Can greater collaboration with natural scientists improve our knowledge and options?

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- Some of the questions I have posed to the natural resource sustainability issue are the following.
 - Which resources are most vulnerable to limited sustainability?
 - What sustainable alternatives are most promising?
 - What are the best strategies for implementing more sustainable alternatives?
- Only 2 presentations here that addressed this issue – and mostly indirectly (Churchyard, Fullerton)
 - Churchyard – by identifying some of the conditions limiting access to support for agri-environmental programs
 - Points to some of the dynamics whereby such programs fail
 - Fullerton – provides a promising approach to managing the environment through good quality land use planning.
- This still leaves many of my original questions unaddressed, however.
- We need to encourage more attention to alternative energy and community control of these options
 - This may be an instance where our ‘rural’ focus is a hindrance to our knowledge-building.
 - Since ‘rural’ has little traction in the world of research these days, we may need to rebuild our identities to include rural-related topics such as food, water, community health, the environment, energy, or natural resources.
 - For collaboration with the those in the natural sciences this might be a strategic choice:
 - Water, energy, climate, bio-chemistry, and ecology are some of the obvious links to develop.



- There is one other topic I would like to address before moving to some suggestions for action.
- Not only do we have to pay attention to these long term trends and their implications –
 - But we also need to pay attention to some of the current realities in which research and policy evaluation takes place.
- One of the most immediate and influential of these realities is the current climate for research on rural issues
- From what I have observed over the past decade or so is that: **Rural community development has low priority – especially for the federal government**
- There seem to be several reasons for this:
 - Urbanization – and therefore the political support base - continues to increase
 - In spite of the current government’s traditional base in rural ridings, we can see this shift taking place with their courting and attention to urban places
 - Canada’s economic prosperity has depended on commodity trade
 - Making resource-dependent communities increasingly vulnerable
 - Neo-liberal ideology prioritizes people over places
 - Relegating low density regions to fewer services
 - And in addition, the specific political climate has come to treat scientific research as suspect and potentially antagonistic
 - This is reflected in:
 - Reduced support for systematic data collection and analysis (especial for social and environmental issues)
 - Restrictions and control over information dissemination
 - Discounting well established research findings (e.g. the declining crime rate and global changes in climate)
- These are conditions that we need to recognize and consider when we think about building our research capacity on behalf of rural areas.



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Do More with Less

- Rely less on the federal government
- Nurture national research collaborations
- Expand collaborations with provincial and territorial governments

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- It means, for example, that we will have to do more with less.
 - And be very strategic in our response as we proceed.
- To me, this suggests three elements
 - Rely less on the federal government – while supporting the remnants of the rural and community research infrastructure
 - Develop and nurture national collaboration among rural and community research centres
 - Expand our collaborations with provincial and territorial governments.
- In recognition of this rural workshop event I would like to focus on the second one.
 - By nurturing our existing centres of research and analysis we will maintain the pool of knowledge, skills, and tools for the future.
 - As we have learned from our research with boom-bust communities – the key to survival is to make the quality of life so pleasant that people will work hard to survive over the bust – in anticipation of the next boom.
- We have the elements in place for such a strategy.



•Here is a graphic of the 28 rural research centres most directly involved in the CRRF network.

- Primary NRE centres – yellow (28)
- Centres with multiple research activities and rural focus

- Strong**—Regular & extensive sharing of intellectual, financial, personnel, and/or service assets.
- Medium**—Where there are 1 or 2 types of assets shared (financial, a conference) but only periodic sharing of other assets. There is a type of collaboration taking place but it is formal and usually circumscribed to particular times, places, or assets.
- Weak**—Some contact has been made, some interest in sharing is implied but not much has been done or only 1 or 2 encounters have occurred. They may be activated at some time in the future (as they may have been activated in the past), but for the moment they are dormant.
- Strength** - to be indicated is the maximum strength measured in the maximum year.

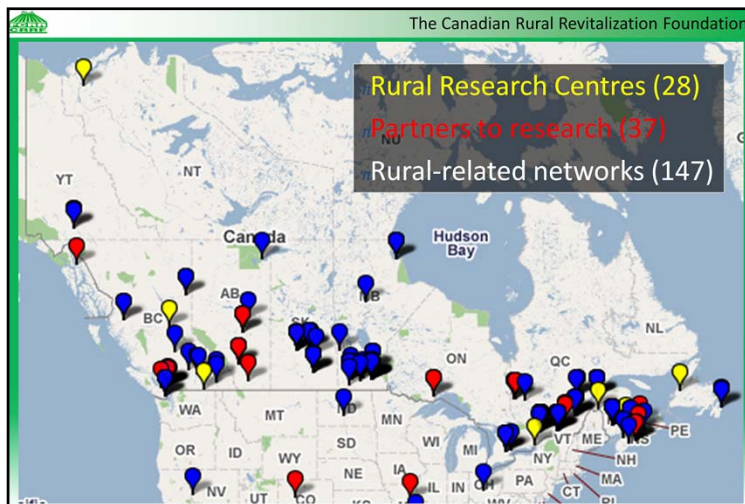
- Primary NRE centres – yellow
- description Aurora Research Institute: Aurora College
- Brandon U. - Rural Development Institute
- Canadian Plains Research Center
- Canadian Rural Health Research Society
- Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development, UNB
- Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research
- Centre for Rural Studies and Enrichment, Muenster, Saskatchewan
- Centre for Sustainable Community Development at SFU
- Chaire de recherche du Canada en développement des collectivités (UQO)
- Chaire de recherche du Canada en développement régional et territorial (UQAR)
- Chaire Desjardins en développement des petites collectivités (UQAT)
- Churchill Northern Studies Centre
- Coastal Communities Projects
- MUN - Sir Wilfred Grenfell College - Center for Environmental Excellence for Education, Technology, Research and Development
- New Emerging Team for Health in Rural and Northern British Columbia (NETHRN)
- New Rural Economy Project
- Northern Research Institute (NRI): Programs and Links
- NRE2 Partner and Co-investigator (Chouinard)
- Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan
- Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development (Penfold)
- Rural and Small Town Programme
- Rural Planning and Development - Guelph
- The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development
- The Monieson Centre - Queen's School of Business
- U. of Northern BC - Community and Development Institute
- Université de Moncton (Chouinard)
- University of Saskatchewan-Centre for Rural Studies and Enrichment
- University Research Chair in Rural Gender Studies



•We can add to those another 37 who are partners to those in the first list

•*Primary NRE Centres – yellow*

•*Partners to research – including individuals with rural research interests – red (37)*



- And another 147 that are networks related to rural research.
- These provide a pool of capacity that will be critical to our ability to address the many research questions that need answering, and
- A pool of talent into which policy-makers and practitioners may dip to help them with the thorny challenges they face and decisions they must make.
- But to do so, we need to be clever about the way in which we nurture this network.
- Primary NRE Centres – yellow*
- Partners to research – including individuals with rural research interests - red*
- Rural-related networks – blue (147)*



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A strategy for nurturing our rural research

- Identify and introduce each other
- Utilize individual strengths
- Market each other

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- We need to:
- Identify the partners and potential partners to each other.
 - Make sure we know who our partners and potential partners might be.
- Make use of our individual strengths to avoid duplication.
 - Identify the various strengths of each partner and make use of them when the need arises.
- Support each other through resources, collaboration, exchanges, and partner marketing.
 - Pass on what we learn about one another
 - Help each other over the bust periods of the research cycle – through student exchanges, encouragement, sub-contracting, and praise.

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<http://rural-research-network.blogspot.ca>

Canadian Rural Research Network (CRRN)
Réseau Canadien de Recherche Rurale (RCRR)

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FEATURED / EN VEDETTE

Rural Development Network's Rural Event Calendar

Calendrier des événements ruraux du Réseau pour le développement rural

CRRN PAGES RCRR

Opinions
 Lessons learned / Leçons apprises
 Rural Research Workshop (RRW) / Atelier sur la recherche

CALENDAR / AGENDA

English (Updated - May)
 Français (Mise à jour - mai)

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POSTS CATEGORY

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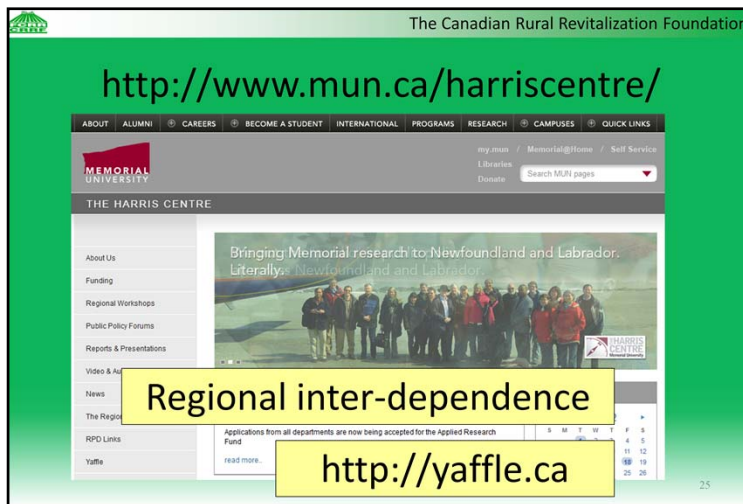
- Thanks to Alessandro Alasia and his network of volunteers we already have a good basis for the first action: identifying and introducing each other.
 - What it needs is the addition of a “Partners” or “Research Centres” category so that the various centres can introduce themselves, their research interests, and capacities
- Another approach would be to develop a “Yaffle-type” database, where Centres could be identified and potential users could search for expertise and results related to their concerns.
- The CRRF annual conference and workshops like this one also provide venues where introductions can be made and explorations conducted.
 - Each of them would be occasions where research centres can highlight their work in posters, presentations, or even special events (like “speed dating” sessions).



- CRRF has added to that process by having several meetings with research centres and researchers with an interest in rural.
 - We met on two occasions and have exchanged information about our strengths and needs in order to do our own form of “asset mapping”.
- For this workshop, I sent out a request to this network, asking them:
 - What are the top 3 or 4 research questions that you are best equipped to answer – or hope to answer?
 - My assumption was that in this way, we can divide up the work that needs to be done, focus on our strengths, and identify the gaps in our capacity.
- I received so many responses that my original intention of discussing them today was overwhelmed.
 - So instead I set up a Wiki site on which I placed those responses – plus some basic information about the Centres
- I invite you to:
 - Check out the site to learn about these centres and their activities
 - Explore collaboration opportunities with them on topics that hold your interest
 - Add information about your own centre or personal activities – or for those of you already represented, edit or add additional information as facilitated by the wiki approach
 - Offer your assistance, server, or time to build this resource as a more permanent feature of our rural research national capacity
 - At the moment I have established it in a simple format, but it could be enhanced in a number of ways by those of you who are better equipped or knowledgeable about such interactive database operations.
 - If you have the resources, talent, and time, please let me know.
- As an illustration of what I have learned from my request, here are some of the centres that you will find there.



- The Centre of Environmental Excellence at Sir Wilfred Grenfall College in Corner Brook.
- Their research and questions indicate they are involved in the exploration of Communications, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Technology



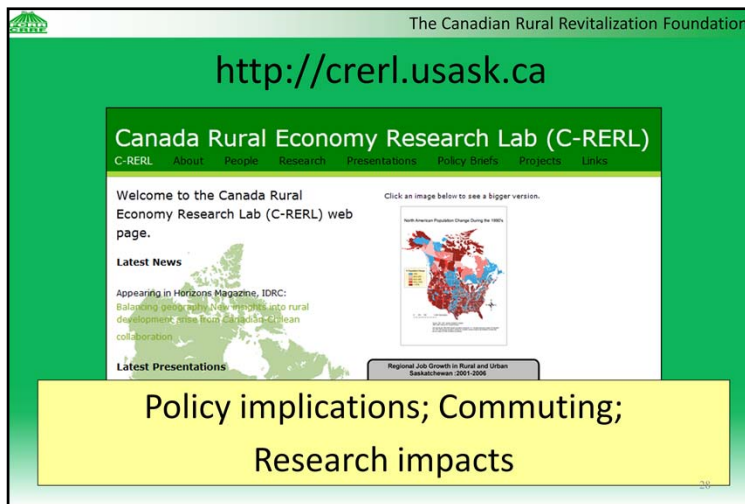
- The Leslie Harris Centre at MUN
- >When I asked them about research questions they were equipped to answer, they provided four relating primarily to regional inter-dependence.
- >They have also developed the Yaffle database system I mentioned earlier
 - Provides information about faculty projects and opportunities for regional and community-focused problem-solving
 - Integrated into a program of regional visits and knowledge mobilization



- Centre de recherche sur le développement territorial
 - An extensive network of researchers centred in Québec
- They are the “go to” place for anything related to regional development in Québec, sustainable development, the organization of enterprises, or governance.



- The Rural Development Institute, Brandon Manitoba
 - Long history of collaboration with CRRF – have provided support services throughout our history
 - In general, RDI is the centre to contact for issues relating to broadband, the relationship between general policies and local impacts, and rural immigration.
- I can also add that RDI is well set up for publication production
 - We have made good use of this expertise for the production of books (hard copy and online), monographs, reports, and pamphlets – including both editing and printing processes.
 - Added advantage of support for a rural industry.



- Canadian Rural Economy Research Lab (C-RERL), Saskatoon, SK
- C-RERL is the place to go for the analysis of
 - Economic implications of place or people-based policy
 - All things commuting – and labour flows (*cool maps*)



- Canadian Forest Service
- Research questions: there are plenty of research questions being addressed by the Canadian Forest Service: from fires and pine beetles to paper production and community sustainability.
- The team with which we have worked most closely, however, is the one focusing on Canada's resource dependent communities.

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

<http://www.unbc.ca/cdi/>

UNBC UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

INFORMATION FOR: INFORMATION ABOUT: TOOLS FOR STUDENTS LOGIN SEARCH CONTACT HOME

Community Development Institute at UNBC

- Spring 2012 - Speakers Series - Panel on Building a Sustainable Future
- NEW BOOK - "The Next Rural Economies"
- Understanding Indigenous Economic Development in Northern, Rural, and Remote Settings. Workshop Materials and E-Book
- NEW - UBCM 2011
- NEW - Research Days 2011: a showcase of rural and northern health research
- NEW - OBAC puts CDI's Community Transition Toolkit online

The Community Development Institute at UNBC is interested in two fundamental issues for communities in northern BC: community capacity and community development. By undertaking research, sharing information, and supporting education outreach, the Institute is becoming a vital

Community Linkages; Capacity; Strategies

Institute Director

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- Community Development Institute, UNBC – Prince George
- The CDI is the place to go for insights on community linkages, capacity, and strategies related to rural and northern communities.



- Centre for Sustainable Community Development – SFU
- They have a focus on a wide range of rural and regional governance issues: from revenue sharing, to infrastructure, and regionalization.
- With almost 150 rural research-related centres or people, you can see I could go on with many more examples – but I think you have got a good idea of my point
 - There is considerable capacity across the country
 - We need to find ways to tap into and build upon it



- Many of the challenges I have outlined here appear rather formidable
 - We are unlikely to overcome many, if any of them
- However I remain optimistic in our ability to continue our efforts to improve the lives and well-being of rural Canadians
- Part of this optimism is inspired by the very communities with which we work
- One of my favorite examples is the city of Inuvik – located well above the Arctic Circle and a long term veteran of the boom and bust cycles of resource-based communities.
 - At our 2008 CRRF National Conference there, we learned they have decided that the best way to deal with these cycles was to concentrate on their social infrastructure and networks.
 - If they make Inuvik an exciting and pleasant place to live, then people will fight tooth and nail to stay here when the busts come
 - And those committed residents will make sure that the negative aspects of the booms are mitigated to preserve their quality of life.
 - That is why they put so many of their boom-period resources into their schools, hospital, recreation facilities, and related personnel
 - A strategy that has paid off during the busts as people innovate to stay where they are - as long as they can.
- This is very likely to work for us
 - By nurturing our current assets, combining our collective capacities, and celebrating our achievements whenever we can – we will keep the talent with us and attract the new generation of scholars and policy analysts that will be ready for what is to come in the future.
- There is work to be done in each of your domains, but don't forget to carve out some time (and perhaps resources) for your colleagues around you – those who will inform your understandings, support you when you face the inevitable technical and fiscal challenges of our work, and celebrate your insights by moving them forward in ways you haven't imagined.
 - Check out the Wiki
 - Offer to help the network
 - Contribute your insights
 - Challenge others – always with a suggested solution

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

What I have learned

Rural Research Workshop - 2012

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