




NÉR² RENFORCER LES CAPACITÉS DES COMMUNAUTÉS RURALES À L'ÈRE DE LA NOUVELLE ÉCONOMIE


Governance for the Future

Strategic choices for the new rural conditions


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Social Sciences and Humanities
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Conseil de recherches en
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CJ Project

Governance for the Future: Strategic choices for the new rural conditions

- Thanks for invitation
- My comments rest on the experience and work of the CRRF
 - Network of researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, rural people
 - Meeting for 17 years – annual conferences and workshops
 - For last 7 years – the New Rural Economy Project
 - Macro analysis
 - Intensive case study research in 32 systematically selected rural sites
 - All across Canada
- Collaboration between researchers and policy-makers critical
 - Provide up-to-date insights and research results to people making policy
 - Provide reality-checks for researchers
- Thanks to supporters for our work
 - SSHRC – Strategic Grant on Social Cohesion
 - SSHRC – INE Grant – Building Rural Capacity
 - CRRF
 - Rural Secretariat
 - Rural people
- [Abstract: This presentation outlines insights from the New Rural Economy project (nre.concordia.ca) regarding governance in local and regional areas. The central question is “What kinds of governance are most appropriate for the new rural conditions?” A brief outline of those conditions is provided: from more diversity and knowledge-intensive industries to the increasing importance of environment and immigration. The village of Tourville is used as an example of the way in which rural communities are aging and the importance of their service industries is growing. Five key governance strategies are then outlined as responses to these new conditions: identifying local assets; learning about external conditions; building alliances across communities, regions, provinces, and nations; welcoming strangers; and celebrating local identities. Governance for the future must be inclusive, connected, innovative, and compassionate.]

Rôle de la gouvernance

What kinds of governance are most appropriate for the new rural conditions?

- What are those new conditions?
- How can rural people, groups, and communities best position themselves for these conditions?

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Theme pour cette Itinéraire: Rôle de la gouvernance dans le développement de projets territoriaux

- Bonne gouvernance et actions proactives: lorsque la recherche de solutions nécessite de recourir à des innovations organisationnelles
- I will address these issues in terms of two major questions
- What kinds of governance are most appropriate for the new rural conditions?
 - What are those new conditions?
 - Over the past 10 years we have been conducting research on the first question – with the active participation of rural people
 - We can't predict the future, but we can anticipate some of the broad directions – even though uncertainty is a major feature
- Now we have turned our attention to the second question
 - How can rural people, groups, and communities best position themselves in the face of these conditions?
- I will rush through our main responses to the first question so that I can get on to some of the strategies we are exploring related to the second

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The New Rural Conditions - 1

- Increasing diversity
- Primary industries shed labour
- Rural competitive in manufacturing
- Environment more important
- Knowledge-intensive industries
- Communication and transportation costs decreasing

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The New Rural Conditions - 1

- Increasing diversity
 - Different communities have different assets and live under different conditions
 - Therefore face different decisions and options
 - Even national programs impact individual communities differently
 - [health services – adjacent vs. non-adjacent]
- Primary industries shed labour
 - Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining
 - These communities need to find something new to export or service if they expect to survive or grow
- Rural economies are competitive in manufacturing
 - Freshwater argues that successful rural communities in the future will have a manufacturing base
 - Apedaile argues that rural Canada is becoming an habitat economy
- Environment is becoming more important (quality of life concerns)
 - This means that a pristine environment will become a community asset
 - Environmental degradation means the undermining of this asset
- Knowledge playing a greater part in the economy
 - Attracting, building, training knowledge workers becomes an important strategy
 - A learning culture is a key asset for meeting an increasingly uncertain future
- Communication and transportation costs decreasing (relatively)
 - Works both ways
 - Fewer employees needed to provide banking and government services
 - Rural services can be marketed to urban people easier
 - But the cost of moving people is increasing

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The New Rural Conditions - 2

- Youth leave, families return
- Continuing concentration of industries
- Services more centralized
- Aging populations
- Rural perceived as relatively safe
- Immigration growing
- Influence of rural declining

Distance and Density Matter

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The New Rural Conditions - 2

- Youth leave, families return
 - Youth outmigration may be okay if they are replaced
- Continuing concentration of industries
 - Less economic value captured locally
 - Less influence over corporate decisions
- Services more centralized
 - Less sensitivity to local conditions
 - Need to search for new ways to provide these services
- Aging populations
 - Demographic composition and special needs of the population are changing
 - Need to reorganize the formal and volunteer activities to meet the new conditions
 - Requires key policy changes to make this possible
- Rural perceived as relatively safe
 - Being perceived as safe is a community asset
- Immigration growing and will remain strong
 - Wider diversity of people, activities, and values
 - Wider networks and connections
- Political influence of rural declining
 - Can't rely on urban people to care about rural per se
 - Must find new ways to represent rural interests and influence policies
- Distance and density matter – and will continue to matter
 - Even with declining costs of communication, moving people is relatively expensive (economically, socially, and culturally)

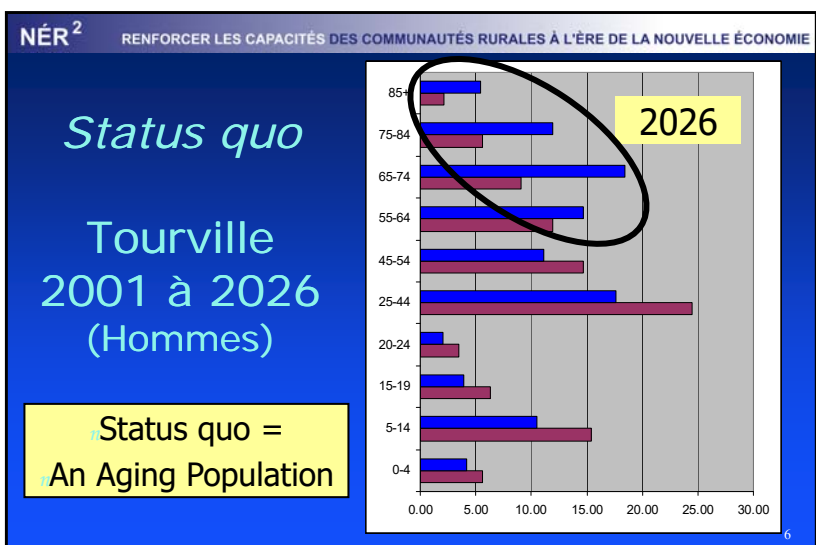
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How can rural people and groups best position themselves for these new conditions?

Inaction = Decline

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- How can rural people and groups best position themselves for these new conditions?
- I have several suggestions
 - They are not exhaustive, but reflect our results and analysis of rural conditions
- First option: Inaction – let things unfold as they have with little proactive action
 - Under the current conditions, this most likely means community decline: demographically, economically, socially



- I have taken Tourville as an example since this is now familiar to us
- Focus on demography
- These data illustrate the distribution of people in Tourville by age
 - Vertical axis – from birth to 85+ years
 - Horizontal bars indicate the % of people (males) within each of these ranges
 - Note:
 - Bars short in the bottom rows, longer in the mid ranges, then short again in the upper rows
 - Baby boom generation in middle
 - Bulge in the 5-14 range as the children of the boomers grow up
- Statistics Canada makes estimates of the population from the current period to 2026 (20 years from now)
 - Don't estimate it for Tourville, but for Chaudière-Appalaches region
 - Reflects the expected population with moderate immigration, low birth rate
 - We can use this to estimate the population distribution in Tourville for the next 20 years
- Note: Little change means an aging population (55+)
 - Declining proportion of the population in the labour force
- Governance challenge:
 - Is this the future we want?
 - How do we prepare for it?
 - More services for elderly
 - Lower incomes from traditional sources
 - Greater government dependency
- Option 2: Sustainance and growth
 - What is necessary?
 - Our research points to a number of the elements

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1. Identify and reevaluate your assets

- Knowledge-based
- Environmental
- Locally unique
- Social and cultural



Identify and reevaluate your assets (les atouts)

•Example: Cap à l'Aigle

- Looking for an economic development opportunity
- Turned to a lilac club
- Used communal and associative skills to build bureaucratic and market relations
- Used Internet and international travel (conferences)
- Now – donation of a full garden, dealing with the maintenance in a way to build social cohesion
 - Anyone want to sponsor a type of lilac? \$100 for three years
- Identified their assets, then reorganized them for the new conditions they were facing

•Knowledge-based assets

- Most farmers know how to use the Internet – many of these skills are transferrable
- Young people are more at ease with new technology – can they get the older people on line?
 - My parents are now e-mail crazy after they discovered how they could use it to keep in touch with relatives

•Environmental

- Quality of life is a strong attractor for families and knowledge-skilled people

•Locally unique

- Niche marketing to regional, national, and global markets is a key growth area in manufacturing and services
- What's special about your area that people like to see on their shirts, breakfast tables, or travel bags?

•Social and cultural

- Too often assets are considered only in terms of economic assets
- Our research shows that the traditional economic factors: economic and human capital (employment and education) only account for at most about half of the variation in local incomes
- The social and institutional factors (intangible) are as important to consider
 - That is why we have been examining: social cohesion, social capital, capacity

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2. Look beyond your gates

- Learn about general trends
- Nurture local advantages
- Integrate strangers
- Develop regional, national, international networks



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Look beyond your gates – regionally, nationally, internationally

- Example: Ste Paule
 - Faced with the closure of their school (good building, excellent teachers)
 - Children would be bussed to nearby Matane
 - Realized that city parents would be interested in their facilities, personnel, and milieu
 - Made it possible for students to be bussed to their village school
 - Kept the school open
- Learn about general trends
 - Part of the learning culture
 - How is the world changing? How do those changes provide opportunities for your local community?
 - Matane demands in Ste Paule
 - Internet is key tool: e.g. Lilac conferences for Cap a l'Aigle
- Nurture local advantages
 - Takes some imagination – some advantages may not be recognized
 - Lilacs in Cap a l'Aigle; school in Ste Paule
 - The network of Japanese women meeting to exchange herbs and recipes grew into a co-op restaurant in Awano – one of our field sites
 - Learning how to meet and mobilize is a key asset that is transferable to many other objectives
 - E.g. Cercle des fermiers; l'AFEAS
- Integrate strangers (discuss in more detail later)
- Develop regional, national, international networks
 - Doaktown, Japanese examples

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3. Build Alliances

- Food
- Water
- Environment

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- Build Alliances – bridging social capital
- Key strategic link: rural and urban
 - The fates of rural and urban regions and people are strongly linked.
- We need to work at showing the many ways in which our common environment binds us together – make the interdependencies visible
- Work from those things that urban people are already concerned about
 - (S) Food
 - Teach urban people about food production (Pick-your-own, Prairie Swine Centre)
 - Farm visits and vacations (school exchanges, Hôtellerie Champêtre, Japanese: daily, weekly visits, working vacations, popular media)
 - Direct marketing (food baskets, St-Damas)
 - Funding (French – tax dollars from food to rural development)
 - (S) Water
 - Teach about link between rural development and clean water
 - Visits, science programs, media (Canadian Gov't – teacher kits)
 - School riverbed clean-up campaigns (Appalachian school children rejuvenated a bog which had become a dump, built an environmental centre)
 - Conseil de Bassin versant de la Rivière du Sud – provide opportunities for alliances among businesses, municipalities, farmers, citizens, tourists (e.g. Miramichi watershed)
 - Funding (Japanese – surtax on water to rural development)
 - Environment
 - (S) Teach how air, water, soils are shared issues (air pollution and acid rain; agricultural stress and chemical use)
 - Centres of learning (geothermic – Springhill)
 - (S) Green communities (www.gca.ca)
 - Canard illimités – transformed from hunters to environmentalists
 - Note value of small places – small projects have big impacts

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4. Welcome strangers

- Inform yourselves
- Prepare for diversity
- Seek help



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Welcome strangers

- An aging population needs immigrants
 - Can be a focus of considerable uncertainty and anxiety
 - Needs sensitive initiatives
- (S) Inform yourself about the real characteristics of newcomers (don't rely on sensationalist media)
 - E.g. Cap-St-Ignace
 - Lived there for a year
 - After a month – greeted by our 'Godparents'
 - Visit and invitation to 'supper Canadienne'
 - Introduction and certificate
- (S) Prepare for diversity
 - Displays, events, schooling, training
 - Winkler/Altona
 - Used existing networks
 - Built special social services to facilitate integration
- (S) Seek help
 - Number of programs offered by the Quebec Immigration et Communautés culturelles
 - Sherbrooke region particularly developed in this respect – includes de la santé et des services sociale



Celebrate Local Identities

- It has been noted in much of the academic literature how globalization, mass culture, and homogenization of products has taken place at the same time that local places and specialized identities have become important.
- Local identity continues to matter – for cultural, social, personal, and economic objectives
 - Strongest case is made in the analysis of suicide (Chandler)
 - Builds social cohesion – which in turn contributes to the economic and ability of local communities to act in the face of challenges – i.e. governance
- Place matters – maybe especially as we become more mobile and informed about global events
- (S) Cap a l'Aigle made use of this for both social and economic objectives
- (S) local towns celebrate their heritage to reinforce identity for younger generations
- (S) maintaining traditional knowledge and skills not only contributes to personal growth but in the new economy may provide a valuable basis for economic opportunities.

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Governance for the future

- Inclusive
- Connected
- Innovative
- Compassionate

A Learning Community

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What qualities must governance have for these new conditions?

- Must be more inclusive
 - Seguin – includes its seasonal residents in all decisions
 - Ensures they have a good understanding of the local challenges plus provides considerable talent and networks for meeting those challenges and seeking opportunities in the future
- Needs to be connected
 - Within the community (bonding)
 - Outside the community (bridging)
 - Especially with those who are different (linking)
- Requires innovation
 - External changes require new ideas and new forms of governing
 - Not just formal governance institutions, but voluntary groups, family networks as well
 - Reassessing old forms in new ways:
 - St-Clément and school for challenged children
 - Warner hockey school
- Compassionate
 - The world is becoming more diverse
 - Urban people bringing their values and interests to rural places
 - International immigrants bringing new cultures and understandings
 - Need to understand these differences in a spirit of curiosity and compassion
- In short – need to develop a community which continually learns
 - To see the changes as opportunities
 - To bring the best of the old and the best of the new together


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