

Social Cohesion in Rural Canada

**Proposal for SSHRC Strategic Theme:
Exploring Social Cohesion in a Globalizing Era**

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SUMMARY - Social Cohesion in Rural Canada

Rural Canada is undergoing major changes. Its economy has become more open and complex, its services have been downsized, its political influence has declined, and its population has become more mobile. Most often these impacts are viewed with alarm as precursors to a fragmented and disoriented society, yet they may also reflect the reorganization of human relations to new forms of social cohesion – forms which are more appropriate for current conditions. This research will help us understand the nature of these changes as a basis for more effective responses.

The project examines changes in social cohesion as they relate to five interrelated aspects of rural life: its economy, formal and informal services, social and political participation, communication infrastructure, and the capacity of communities to deal with stresses. The research is conducted using national census and survey information, along with field work in 24 rural sites, systematically chosen as part of a national research and education project. Information regarding individual and household characteristics is combined with data regarding the communities and their organizations in order to identify the changes in social cohesion over the last 30 years, identify the processes underlying them, and develop strategic options for rural Canada.

This project will benefit researchers, policy makers, and rural citizens. It will provide researchers with a rich source of information for the analysis of social cohesion, and contribute to other projects investigating community, institutional, and rural issues. Our contact with all three levels of government will ensure that the results are relevant to the concerns of policy makers. Our commitment to local education means that rural communities will benefit by learning more about their situation, developing skills in social analysis, and establishing support networks to researchers, policy makers, and other rural people.

Social Cohesion in Rural Canada

1. Context

The issue of social cohesion raises fundamental questions regarding our existence as social beings: Why do we form lasting social groups? On what bases are people included or excluded? and, How are the conflicting interests of individuals, subgroups, and societies negotiated? (Sheleff, 1997) These questions become particularly salient where rapid social change undermines familiar systems of economic, social, or political organization.

Such is the case in rural Canada.¹ Its economic structure has become more diversified, more open, more complex, and more integrated with global, regional, and national systems. Technology and communication are altering the options of rural people. This creates crises of survival for some communities and growth for others. In all cases, the traditional bases for social cohesion are being altered. Geographic isolation, economic and social homogeneity, and community self-reliance are no longer major factors in the lives of rural people. They are being replaced by higher mobility, labour force pluriactivity, and an ethos of individualism (Freshwater and Deavers, 1992).

These changes have become an important focus of attention for policy makers and community activists as they seek to avoid social and political fragmentation. The formation of the federal "Interdepartmental Working Committee on Rural and Remote Canada", the priority given to rural issues in the 1997 throne speech, the establishment of the Rural Secretariat, and the document entitled "Think Rural" (Standing Committee on Natural Resources, 1997) all reinforce this claim.²

Unfortunately, much of the debate reflects sectoral, financial, and job-training approaches to rural policy that have disadvantaged rural communities and contributed to programs that undermine their cohesion (Fairbairn, 1997). Our project will challenge such approaches by providing information, analysis, and policy options that are more appropriate for the complexity of the rural context. To do so, we will focus on five questions related to social cohesion.

- 1. What does social cohesion mean and how can it be measured in a rural context?*
- 2. What systems promote or undermine social cohesion in contemporary rural Canada?*
- 3. How have the form and intensity of social cohesion changed over the last 30 years?*
- 4. How have changes in social cohesion affected rural communities?*
- 5. How can rural communities best position themselves in the light of our analysis?*

In addition to **answering these research questions**, our objectives are to **increase the level of comparison and collaboration** on rural issues and to **create a research base for policy development**.

1.1. Social Cohesion

In our approach, social cohesion refers to the extent to which a group or society is inclusive. At the individual level, this is a reflection of attachment among people, and at a group level, it refers to the interconnectedness of its members – in network terms: its strength and density (Wellman, 1992). Social cohesion is most apparent when the group is placed under stress. If the members turn to each other for support and remain together, we contend that cohesion is high.

This approach does not imply that high social cohesion is always beneficial. Cohesive subgroups may undermine the community in which they operate, or themselves be disadvantaged by remaining isolated and insular. Instead, it raises questions regarding the types of conditions under which social cohesion has positive outcomes. Is cohesion produced by fear or dependency likely to enhance trust, a sense of belonging, or a community's **capacity to respond to change and stress** (O'Conner, 1998)? Does it inevitably contribute to **social capital** (Flora, 1998; Wall, *et al.*, 1998)?³

1.2. Research Approach

¹ Our definition of rural includes about one third of the Canadian population (Bollman, 1992a).

² The Privy Council's Policy Research Committee also identifies the relevance of rural/urban issues to the question of social cohesion in its report (Policy Research Committee, 1999).

³ References to materials produced by investigators and collaborators are in italics.

To answer our questions we take advantage of the research infrastructure established by the project entitled *Understanding the New Rural Economy: Options and Choices* (NRE). This 5-year project was initiated in May 1997 by *The Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation* (CRRF): a not-for-profit charitable foundation of researchers, policy makers, and rural citizens. Since its initiation two years ago, the NRE project has designed a sample frame for rural research, selected 32 sites for fieldwork, established working relationships with citizens, produced community profiles in 25 of those sites, prepared a Rural Canada Database of survey, census, and field data, organized two national conferences and three workshops, and established partnerships with more than 20 organizations (including those from the USA, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Mexico, and Japan).⁴

The NRE field sites have been chosen to reflect differences on five dimensions related to global processes and a community's ability to respond to them (cf. Attachment IV):

- whether the site is *integrated or not into the global economy*,
- whether the local economy is *stable or fluctuating*;
- whether the site is *adjacent or far from a major urban centre*,
- whether it has a *high or low level of institutional capacity*, and
- whether it is *leading or lagging* with respect to employment, income, and housing (Reimer, 1998).

To include these five dimensions, the NRE project selected 32 sites. Comparisons will be made on all dimensions since they link these global processes to social cohesion.

This proposal strongly supports the **SSHRC social cohesion theme objectives** by providing a base of interdisciplinary knowledge, a research infrastructure, and an organization to disseminate the knowledge to those who can best use it. As in the past, we expect to find many of our insights reflected in government papers and policy documents (CRRF, 1994; *Apedaile and Reimer, 1996*; Standing Committee on Natural Resources, 1997).

5.1. Themes

Social cohesion plays an important part in a community's **capacity** to respond to change and stress, but the nature of the relationship is far from clear. From one point of view, cohesive communities are able to identify problems, prepare objectives, develop strategies to meet those objectives, and put them into action. From another view, cohesive networks may fracture the community and undermine the trust that is essential to collective action. Our research will identify the conditions and processes that favour these various outcomes.

The research will be structured within five themes. Each refers to structures and processes linking global changes to social cohesion and each of them has been identified through CRRF research as important for rural communities. Each will contribute answers to the five research questions.

5.1.1. Economic Theme

Growth in manufacturing and service sector employment and declining primary sector employment have important implications for social cohesion. They have introduced new bases of social differentiation by altering the structure of incomes, and the options for people to make a livelihood. Particular attention will be given to the growing evidence for a strong relationship between social cohesion and economic performance (Favreau and Lévesque, 1996; Bontron and Lasnier, 1997; *Bollman and Bryden, 1997*; *Ellison, et al., 1997*; Knack and Keefer, 1997; OECD, 1997; *Reimer and Trott, 1997*). *Bollman* will provide a context for this research by documenting how changes in employment and income distributions have created new bases of differentiation (*Bollman, et al., 1992b*). **Joyal**⁵ will focus this research by investigating how changes in global markets have affected the cohesion of rural communities through the restructuring of small and medium-sized enterprises (*Joyal, 1997, 1999*). *Dayton-Johnson* will expand the analysis by using qualitative field work and econometric methods to identify the local social mechanisms that favour better economic outcomes where there is social cohesion (1999).

5.1.2. Services Theme

Changes in rural service delivery (e.g. health, justice, welfare, postal, financial, and business services) have increased pressure on local organizations and weakened the structure of informal social supports (Stabler and Olfert, 1992; Proulx, 1997; *Rounds, 1997*; *Bruce and Gadsden, 1999*). Some of these changes undermine social cohesion while others create new alliances, organizations, or activities that integrate rural people (*Jean, 1997b*). **Halseth** will focus on third sector groups to examine how membership and financial problems jeopardize their ability to function and thereby undermine a

⁴ The Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators are among the participants in the NRE project.

⁵ *Theme Coordinators* are identified in bold font.

crucial support for cohesion (*Halseth, et al., 1999*). Pong will examine the conditions under which the closing of rural hospitals, centralization of services, and the shortages of health care providers weaken or strengthen community ties (*Kawachi and Kennedy, 1997; Pitblado and Pong, 1999*).

1.2.1. Social Theme

As the proportion of Canadians in rural areas has declined, so has their representation in centres of power, both private and public. Regional political and social organizations have become more influential than municipal groups and new forms of social networks have modified the bases of social cohesion (*Putnam, 1993; Beckley, 1996*). Under this theme, particular attention will be given to the changing relationships among public, private, voluntary, and kinship sectors. Reimer will explore how changing reliance on these four sectors alters local patterns of inclusion and exclusion (*Reimer, 1997a*). **Jean** will identify the conditions under which new forms of governance enhance social and political participation (*Jean, 1997a*). Bull will research the changing nature of public participation in natural resources management, especially in forest-related communities (*Williams and Bull, 1997*). Chouinard will investigate the extent to which networks external to the community facilitate local mobilization (*Chouinard, et al., 1999*). Trott will examine the impact of new government structures in Nunavut on the social cohesion of an Arctic community (*Trott, 1997*). Simard will treat youth as a special case to see how their migration (both leaving and returning) is likely to affect community cohesion (*Simard, 1997*).

1.2.2. Communication Theme

Rurality is redefined by reductions in transportation and communication costs. But technologies that reduce such costs are double-edged — they may increase local cohesion by making it easier to get together, but they also decrease cohesion by making ‘place’ less important (*Williamson, 1991; Green and Meyer, 1997; Halseth and Arnold, 1997; Errington and Courtney, 1999; Wilkinson, 1999*). Local cohesion may also change as “communities of interest” (such as community learning networks) form within local communities fuelled by Internet and popular media access. We will research the conditions under which these various effects occur, and identify the opportunities for building communities through technology (*Bryden, 1997; New Economy Development Group, 1998*). Under this theme, **Bruce** will consider the place of the Internet in the process (*Bruce, 1998; Bruce, et al., 1999*) and Emke will examine the role of local broadcast communication in the maintenance of community solidarity (*Emke, 1998*).

1.2.3. Community Capacity Theme

Social cohesion is an important element of a community’s capacity to deal with stresses and prepare for the future. Its impact is not simple, however. A cohesive community may be more able to act collectively, but such cohesion may cut it off from opportunities in the long term, or intensify divisions that ultimately leave it fragmented (*Jenson, 1998:36*). A dynamic approach to these processes is required. To this end, researchers on the social cohesion team will work with NRE researchers developing theory and methodology for analysing community capacity. **Beckley’s** work on community sustainability, for example, will be integrated with the community capacity work (*Beckley, 1998*)⁶. **Apedaile’s** work using complex dynamical models will provide important expertise for techniques that can adequately represent the relationship between capacity and cohesion (*Solomonovich, et al., 1997*).

2. Research Plan

Most of the research will be conducted within the structure of Working Groups: five for the *Themes*, one for *Macro-level Analysis*, and one for *Methodology and Protocol*. The task of the *Theme Working Groups* will be to answer each of the five general questions from their perspective in preparation for integration into a final framework. The research plan involves six major activities.

5.1. Framework development and data proposals

Each *Theme Working Group* will prepare a theoretical framework for analysis and identify the data necessary to answer the research questions. The *Working Group on Methodology and Protocol* will focus on definitions and indicators for social cohesion. *Wall’s* (1998) analysis of *social capital* will inform the theoretical discussion and **Wilkinson’s** research regarding the measurement of social cohesion will provide a solid foundation for designing the indicators (*Buckner, 1988; Robinson and Wilkinson, 1995*).

⁶ An index of *community capacity* is currently under development by the NRE team. It includes indicators of environmental recovery, social cohesion, financial strength, the extent of a learning culture, economic recovery and resiliency, administration and fiscal powers, and health.

5.2. Integration of field instruments

The *Working Group on Methodology and Protocol* will integrate the materials from the theme teams into instruments for the collection of data in 24 of the NRE field sites. The data will consist of community, household, and individual-level information relevant to the topic. The primary form of data collection will be **randomized surveys** using telephone and in-depth interviews.⁷ Information will be gathered from households regarding participation in the community's: 1) *economic infrastructure*; 2) *service infrastructure*; 3) *social infrastructure*; and 4) *communication and transportation infrastructure*. Questions regarding *demographic characteristics* of the household members, their *mobility*, *perceptions of the community*, and *health* will be included. Special surveys on *enterprises* and *youth* will be conducted to examine their relationship to social cohesion. *Focus groups* on specific topics will also be held as a method of data collection and evaluation of results.

This information will complement the extensive **community-level information** that has already been collected as part of the NRE project. It includes: 1) *their history*; 2) *their resource base*; 3) *the availability of government services*; and 4) *characteristics of their volunteer organizations*.

5.3. Collection of data

The data collection will be carried out by the *Field Teams* already established by the NRE project. These teams consist of a *Site Coordinator*, researchers, and local people. Local citizens will participate in the data collection as consultants and where appropriate, as interviewers.

The consistency and quality control of the comparative data will be monitored by the *Methodology and Protocol* Team as well as the *NRE Data Curator*. The procedures and format established by the NRE Data Centre will be maintained for both qualitative and quantitative data.

5.4. Analysis of the data

The primary analysis of the field data will be undertaken by the *Theme Working Groups*. A wide range of techniques will be employed, from qualitative analysis to multivariate and modelling approaches. The working groups will prepare reports based on the five research questions.

Concurrent with the preparation of field materials, the *Working Group on Macro-level Analysis* will analyse the information in the Rural Canada Database and other national sources (GSS, SLID, NPHS). This analysis will integrate the field site research into the broader framework provided by the NRE sample frame and permit comparisons of census and survey-level data with field site information to test the validity of indicators related to social cohesion.

The NRE sample frame and the instruments to be developed as part of this research will allow comparisons to be made in a number of ways. These comparisons provide the keys to answering the research questions. Comparisons **within** field sites will be driven by hypotheses formulated by the theme teams regarding the processes by which work, services, and individual characteristics are related to social cohesion. They will include comparisons over time in keeping with the dynamic nature of these processes (to answer *Questions 2, 3, and 4*). Comparisons between various indicators of social cohesion will also be conducted (to answer *Question 1*). Comparisons **between** field sites will be used to examine the relationship of community cohesion to more global processes (to answer *Question 4*). The structure of the NRE sample frame provides a systematic basis to compare the field sites to **other rural census subdivisions**. This makes it possible to examine the generalizability of the findings, test the validity of census and survey indicators, and integrate other community case studies into our analysis (to answer *Questions 1 to 4*).

5.5. Integration and verification

The integration of the material from the *Working Groups* will be assured by the presence of researchers in more than one group, the common instruments and protocols, the necessity for coordination with the *Field Site Teams*, workshop and conference presentations, the database, and the five common research questions that must be addressed. In addition, our commitment to collaboration with rural people and policy makers will force the integration of our insights.

The *fifth research question* is best addressed through intensive discussion with people directly involved in policy development and community action. In this way, the language and approach required for scientific inquiry can be modified for those who are involved in more practical applications. At the same time, this interaction contributes to

⁷ One adult member from each sampled household will be interviewed (randomly selected within a gender-stratified frame). The sample size will be up to 200 households per site. NRE research in the Southern Ontario sites provides a model for this methodology (Fuller and Nichol, 1999).

learning and increases mutual commitment. As a result, this question will be addressed through the NRE program of workshops, conferences, and local activities.

5.6. Dissemination

The *Theme Working Groups* and *Principal Investigator* will be responsible for the preparation of materials for dissemination to the Field Sites, policy makers, academics, and the general population. They will be assisted by the Internet resources of the NRE Rural Canada Data Centre. Papers and presentations for more academic audiences will be prepared by researchers and Working Groups wherever opportunities arise (see sections 6 and 7 below).

6. Team and Collaborations

The research team brings together expertise from many disciplines (see Table below). The formal disciplines of anthropology, communications, economics, fisheries, forestry, geography, and sociology are represented with research experience in health, youth, kinship, aging, community development, fisheries, agriculture, and methodology strongly represented. The team has demonstrated expertise in a wide variety of research approaches, including historical, qualitative, quantitative, survey, participatory research, case study, modelling, and statistical techniques. They have first-hand research experience in nine provinces and Nunavut. With the inclusion of the *NRE Site Coordinators*, all provinces and territories except for the new NWT are represented.

Twelve of the seventeen Social Cohesion Team members have worked together as part of the NRE Project. The success of this collaboration is demonstrated by more than 15 publications produced by these members as part of the NRE.

The **Principal Investigator** (Reimer) will be responsible for the overall management of the project, including its coordination and financial control. He will be aided by a **Steering Committee** (Beckley, Jean, Joyal) and an administrative assistant. During the first year of the Social Cohesion Project, he will be on sabbatical leave. This will provide sufficient time for him to manage the Social Cohesion Project while reducing his role as Manager of the NRE Project. By June 2001, his primary responsibility will be to the Social Cohesion activities.

Working Group Coordinators (Joyal, Halseth, Jean, Bruce, Beckley, Wilkinson, Reimer) will be responsible for the organization of their groups and related activities. The *Working Group on Methodology and Protocol* will be coordinated by Wilkinson, and the one on *Macro Analysis* will be coordinated by Reimer.

The **NRE Site Coordinators** will maintain relationships with the **Field Teams**, organize the collection of information at the local level, conduct training and education activities in the sites, and facilitate the local dissemination of materials. Apedaile, Bruce, Bull, Halseth, Jean, Leblanc, Trott, Wall, and Wilkinson are among the NRE Site Coordinators.

Social Cohesion Team			☆=Working Group Coordinator			+=Collaborator			
Person	Disciplines	Location	Working Groups						
			Econ.	Services	Social	Comm.	Capacity	Method	Macro
Tom Beckley +	sociology	CFS, Fredericton			●		☆	●	
Ray Bollman +	economics	Statistics Canada	●				●		●
David Bruce +	geography	Mt. Allison U.		●		☆			
Gary Bull	forestry	UBC			●		●		
Omer Chouinard	fisheries	U. of Moncton	●		●		●	●	●
Jeff Dayton-Johnson	economics	Dalhousie U.	●		●				●
Ivan Emke	communications	Memorial U.				●			
Greg Halseth	geography	UNBC		☆			●		
Bruno Jean	sociology	UQAR			☆		●		●
André Joyal	economics	UQTR	☆						
Patrice Leblanc	sociology	UQAT		●	●		●	●	●
Raymond Pong +	sociology	Laurentian		●					
Bill Reimer	sociology	Concordia	●	●	●	●	●	●	☆

Myriam Simard +	sociology	INRS		•					
Chris Trott	anthropology	U. of MB			•				
Ellen Wall +	sociology	Guelph	•	•			•	•	
Derek Wilkinsen	sociology	Laurentian			•	•		☆	•

We will take proactive measures to expand our **links with other researchers and initiatives** in two major ways. First, as part of the NRE project, we are frequently called upon to present our findings to government and to business groups. These often result in partnership arrangements with those groups. Second, we regularly meet individuals or organizations through the activities of the NRE project. Wherever relevant to rural issues, these contacts are followed with invitations for collaboration.

7. Training

Students are involved at all stages of the research, including theoretical development, the creation of research tools, fieldwork, surveys, community relations, data analysis, communication, and dissemination. Since its beginning in 1997, more than 23 students have been directly involved in the NRE project (9 PhD, 13 MA, 1 Undergraduate). This pattern will continue and expand. Fifteen universities are represented in the Social Cohesion team and three more in the NRE Project.

Students will also have an opportunity to learn about national census and survey information and techniques as part of the macro-analysis. The process of developing the Rural Canada Database, for example, meant that about eight students have been trained in the use of this type of data. Three of these students have been employed in jobs where the skills are used on a daily basis (two at Statistics Canada and the third as a data analyst at a major bank). We expect that this pattern will continue as a result of the social cohesion research.

We plan to integrate **rural citizens** into the project in a number of ways. This will give them training in the identification and conceptualization of problems, organization of working groups, data collection, basic analysis, communication, and strategic planning. It will be accomplished through local and national workshops, site exchanges, Internet activities, and distributed materials. These meetings also provide an excellent opportunity for **policy makers** to meet the people for whom they plan.

8. Partnership Component

The Social Cohesion Project will be an integral part of the NRE Partnership network. This means that the organizations which have expressed an explicit commitment to the issue of social cohesion will benefit from the involvement of more than 40 organizations and groups that are currently Partners with the NRE (cf. Attachment III). Using the NRE experience as a model, we expect that Partnerships will take a number of forms:

- Partners who share information, expertise, and contacts in support of the intellectual and policy objectives of the project;
- Partners who provide in-kind services (space, equipment, personnel) – most often for specific objectives;
- Partners who support workshops, conferences, and exchanges through finances or services;
- Partners who finance specific products through contracts or other agreements; and
- Partners who support our objectives by facilitating contacts, research and education opportunities, and publicity-related activities.

By providing services or resources, Partners gain access to the full range of research activities and results (with appropriate confidentiality limitations), not only related to the social cohesion study, but the NRE project as well. Representatives participate in Working Groups, come to workshops, and receive information through the NRE web site.

The various interests will be co-ordinated through the NRE Steering Committee and Principal Investigator.

Scientific integrity is maintained through evaluation by the NRE Research Evaluation Committee. Peer review will also occur through the publication of materials in academic journals. Accountability to both rural citizens and policy makers is ensured by regular participation in the CRRF program of workshops and conferences.

11. Communication and Dissemination Plans - Academic Audiences

Communication and dissemination to academic audiences will occur through the usual professional channels: presentations, panels, peer-reviewed publications, edited volumes, and books. The CRRF network provides considerable support for these purposes, having published four books (Bollman, 1992a; Rounds, 1997; Bollman and Bryden, 1997; Fuller and Nichol, 1999) and over 100 publications as a result of member activities. . The CRRF working paper series includes 11

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publications. In addition, the NRE communication infrastructure (see section 7 below) provides an opportunity to communicate to academics by providing direct contact with policy makers and rural people. Such encounters provide a valuable supplement to academic forums.

12. Communication and Dissemination Plans - Non-Academic Audiences

Communication and dissemination to non-academic audiences will be accomplished using the experience and infrastructure established by CRRF over the 10 years of its existence. It includes the following components:

- An annual **national conference**. This event is held in a rural location with a local organizing committee and international participants. By holding conferences and workshops in rural communities with local participants in the program, we ensure that all presentations clearly communicate to a lay audience. Recent locations include: Nelson, BC; West Prince, PEI; Gimli, MB; Coaticook, QC. Around 200 people usually attend with significant participation from our international colleagues.
- Regional and national **workshops**. These are also held in rural areas with about 30 people in attendance. Recent locations include: Newtown, NF; St. Donat, QC; North Bay, ON; Quesnel, BC. As with the conferences, these always include local tours and meetings with community leaders and activists.
- Ongoing contacts with the 32 NRE field sites through site visits, meetings, and exchanges.
- The **NRE Web Pages**. These contain information, results, reports, and comments related to the NRE project (<http://nre.concordia.ca>).
- Research **reports**. These are distributed by partner organizations and via the Internet.
- The CRRF **Working Papers** series. Eleven working papers have been produced in this series.
- **CRRF Publications**. The four books and many publications produced as a result of CRRF activities are designed to appeal to policy makers and rural leaders as well as academics.
- **Newsletters**. The *CRRF SCAN* (biannual) plus partner newsletters are used.
- **Flyers** "Insights and Options". This is a series produced by the NRE project for popular-level audiences. It is distributed to rural sites and policy makers.

Our commitment to communicate to public, policy, and academic audiences has resulted in research that is accessible, policy-relevant, and scientific.

8. Budget Justification

Field research in rural Canada is costly — particularly research of this scope. However, considerable gains in efficiency will be made by our collaboration with the NRE project.

The limit on SSHRC funding means that we will only be able to conduct the social cohesion study in 24 of the 32 NRE field sites. To deal with this we will 1) drop those sites from the sample frame cells that contained few census subdivisions and 2) seek funding from partners for the missing 8 sites. This will maintain the integrity of the social cohesion study should additional funds not be found.

Funding for the NRE from most of its partners comes in the form of contractual agreements for specific research products. The NRE Project has been funded over the last two years in this manner, at about \$200,000 per year. Since the social cohesion study depends on the outcome of the SSHRC competition, these organizations are unable to commit funds for this part of the work at this point in time. Should our proposal be funded, we would be in a position to negotiate specific products from these and other partners.

SSHRC funding will be used to facilitate the study of social cohesion using the NRE infrastructure as a base. The close association of the two projects makes it very difficult to determine how the allocation of funds should be split between NRE sources and SSHRC. Without the NRE infrastructure, the study of social cohesion would be much more costly. Without the SSHRC funds, the NRE project would not be able to investigate the issue of social cohesion.

To resolve this problem, we have directed SSHRC funds to those activities that are most closely associated with the collection, analysis, and dissemination of materials related to the study of social cohesion. This approach gives a slightly distorted view of some of the research activities if an examination of the budget alone is used. For example, the budget implies that field teams will be in the sites only for the preparation and collection of social cohesion data. In fact, there will be a presence of the field teams in the sites over the three years of the project since they will also be supported by funding from NRE sources.

8.1. Personnel Costs

Student salaries and benefits will be used to support the *field work*, the *theme teams*, and *macro-level analysis*. Our estimates are based on an average of \$14.00 per hour plus benefits for students. In some of the research sites, local people will be employed to assist with the data collection. They will be employed on the same basis as students. During the field work we estimate the student will spend 48 hours per week on research activities. Outside of the field, we estimate they will spend 10 hours per week during the 8 months of class time and 35 hours per week during the 4 summer months. We expect that a few of the students will be upper level undergraduates.

We estimate the equivalent of one full-time student per site for five weeks to complete the data collection and cleaning for the social cohesion surveys and interviews; one full-time student during the full year to aid in the quality control and integration of the data from the sites and analysis of the national rural database and similar surveys; plus one full-time student per working group (6) to support the bibliographic, analysis, coordination, and preparation of products related to the group. The Research Assistant for the Principal Investigator will be a graduate student. We estimate an average of three days per week for the Assistant at \$20.00 per hour.

8.2. Travel and Subsistence Costs

Travel and subsistence costs are high due to the field work component of the project and the high costs associated with travel to rural areas. Our commitment to holding workshops in rural sites typically involves extra cost in order to travel outside major urban centres. Accommodation is calculated at the rate of \$60.00/day in the field sites and \$75.00/day outside the field sites. Subsistence is calculated at \$40/day. Transportation to and from the field sites is estimated at \$200 per return trip per site. Transportation and subsistence funds are provided for student researchers and Site Coordinators.

In order to facilitate inter-site comparisons and the local learning that this can foster, we are allocating some of the funds to inter-site workshops and conference participation by local people and researchers. Transportation for these visits is estimated at \$250 per return trip and transportation to and from conferences and workshops is estimated at \$300. One such trip per site is planned.

Transportation and subsistence funds are also allocated for 2 regional workshops and 1 national workshop a year. The regional workshops will be organized by the Working Groups and the national one will be organized by the Principal Investigator. These events will be held in collaboration with other conferences in order to reduce costs. As a result, we have allocated support for only 2 people per Working Group per year and for 1 workshop per year for the Principal Investigator and Data Curator of the NRE Rural Information Centre. Additional support will come from NRE sources.

8.3. Professional Services

The logistical heart of the NRE network is the *Rural Canada Information Centre* established at Concordia University. It houses the Internet server that links all the researchers and field sites and is the repository for the qualitative and quantitative data collected through the Project. It is serviced by a Data Curator who is responsible for the maintenance of the hardware, the Web pages, and the quality of the information. Since the Curator's activities are crucial to our study of social cohesion, we will pay 40% of the costs for the operation of the Centre (the SSHRC share is \$11,000 per year).

An additional \$2,000 per year is allocated for translation of materials. Most of our materials are left in the language of their producer, but flyers, some reports, and publicity materials must be translated when they are distributed to all the field sites and to the popular media.

8.4. Non-Disposable Equipment - Computer Hardware

We have allocated \$1,000 per year for the Social Cohesion Project contribution to the purchase of additional equipment for the NRE *Rural Canada Information Centre*. This will be used for the maintenance and upgrading of the Centre's Internet server and related equipment (e.g. replacing parts, adding an additional hard drive, archiving data on writeable CD-ROMs, backup protection equipment).

8.5. Supplies and Materials

This item includes the costs for communications, the preparation of survey and interview forms, photocopying, office supplies, and publicity materials. The funds will be used by the *Field Teams, Working Groups, and Project Management*. Communication costs will be high because of the wide geographical distribution of the researchers and field teams, the telephone surveys, and the large number of working groups. Additional funds during the final year are required for the production and distribution of reports and information to all research sites, partner organizations, and the general public. We have not allocated funds for the purchase of census and survey data since most of it is available to our university-based researchers through the Data Liberation Initiative.

8.6. Distribution of Expenses

The following table provides an indication of the distribution of the total funds by several categories. It makes clear that most of the funds go to support student activities (69%). It also indicates that about 40% of the funds will be allocated to site-related activities and another 30% to the activities of the Theme Working Groups. The cost for site research is approximately \$8,300 per site. Management requires less than 18% of the funds.

Percentage of Funds by Activity and Personnel

	Students		Team		Others		Supplies	
	Salary	Trans/Sub	Salary	Trans/Sub	Salary	Trans/Sub		
site-related	18.2%	11.3%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	2.8%	4.1%	39.5%
theme-related	23.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	29.6%
dissemination-related	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	5.1%	5.5%	0.0%	2.1%	13.2%
management-related	14.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.6%	1.0%	0.0%	0.7%	17.7%
	56.2%	12.5%		13.1%	6.5%	2.8%	8.9%	\$594,600

8.7. Revenue

Three items have been included in the revenue table. Concordia University has committed \$10,000 per year for the Project. The second item identifies \$25,000 from the NRE project which has been committed to a project on Community Capacity. This project is already underway in the NRE program. Since this issue is clearly related to the Social Cohesion Project, we have identified it as part of the revenue supporting the SSHRC project.

There are other aspects of the NRE Project which support the study of social cohesion. The ongoing activities of the Site Teams, the Rural Canada Data Centre, the Workshops and Conferences are all supported by income from other sources. It is difficult to estimate how much this will be, however, let alone identify a commitment. To represent this contribution, however, we have provided a conservative estimate of \$100,000 per year.

8.8. Communication of Research

From the Table above, the percentage of funds directed to dissemination is 13.2% (\$78,500). Most of this will go to support the Data Curator's work on the Internet and production of flyers and reports. Another major portion is allocated to transportation and subsistence associated with conferences, workshops, and site visits.

It is difficult to separate the items for dissemination, since so much of our work in the sites and with partners involves the communication of our results. In fact, we have found that when working with the field site population, it is

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not sufficient to provide information alone, but it is necessary to educate the recipients in its use. This means that much of our financial allocation for site work is part of our dissemination program. This is not reflected in the figure above.

Attachment I: Letters of Commitment

1. The New Rural Economy Project of the Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation
2. Concordia University
3. Interdepartmental Working Group on Rural Canada
4. Office of Rural Health, Health Canada
5. Human Resources Development Canada
6. Statistics Canada
7. Federation of Canadian Municipalities
8. Chaire Desjardins en développement des petites collectivités
9. The Society of Rural Physicians of Canada
10. Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
11. Pacific Resources Centre
12. Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research
13. MUN/UVic MCRI Research Team
14. Rural and Small Town Programme
15. The Rural Development Institute

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