National Rural Studies Committee

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Edited by Emory Castle and Barbara Baldwin
The National Rural Studies Committee has been in existence approximately three years. As originally conceived, the project was to have a duration of five years. Activity during the first year was less than planned and at least part of a sixth year will be necessary to bring the project to a satisfactory conclusion. Thus, we are near the mid-point in project life and it is appropriate that we do some stock-taking as we embark on this meeting. The remarks that follow are in this context.

First, three general observations:

1. "Rural" and "non-metropolitan" are arbitrary terms. Thus our name, the National Rural Studies Committee, is a pragmatic one; a conceptual basis for something that might be called "rural studies" remains illusive.

   This obvious fact has important implications for the work of the NRSC. For example, if the non-metropolitan areas are to be understood, the metropolitan areas and the world economy must be taken into account. This view has been reinforced for the NRSC by insights from economics, anthropology, American literature, geography and sociology.

2. Even though it may be difficult to differentiate between the rural and the urban, or the metropolitan and the non-metropolitan, there is enormous diversity among the less densely populated areas of the United
States. Differences can be observed in ethnic background, educational accomplishments, economic development, the natural resource base, and in social problems that are found. Beyond the fact that many social problems can be observed and documented, easy generalizations and simple prescriptions are not of great value.

3. During the past decade, state and local government has increased in importance relative to federal government activity. This is especially true for rural area initiatives. At the national level, public policy as it affects rural areas has been stagnant. Even though state and local efforts are highly visible in impact and effectiveness, numerous initiatives have been too small. I do not believe this is likely to change.

From these general observations, some conclusions can be drawn and some conjectures can be made.

1. The economic weight of more sparsely populated areas will continue to be dominated by more densely populated areas. Those rural areas that will fare the best will be those that, by design or luck, adapt to, or take advantage of, or complement, urban and international developments.

2. All is not well in urban America. The cost of coping with severe congestion problems and deteriorating environmental quality is increasing for many densely populated areas. Dysfunctional communities, while not confined to the densely populated areas, tend to be concentrated there. Despite the problems associated with human population density, the highest incomes and the greatest concentrations of wealth are found in such places. Less traditional urban needs need to be served by those rural areas that are to thrive in the future—this means goods and services other than food, fiber, and traditional rural manufacturing. Until World War II, food and fiber production were the traditional space-using industries in the less densely populated areas. Since World War II, developments in transportation and communication have permitted industry to take advantage of rural labor, and rural manufacturing has grown in importance especially since 1960.

3. There is a growing demand for those items that stem from greater affluence. I have reference to such things as tourism, outdoor recreation, retirement sites, and rural residences. Even though many retirees are people of modest means, only an affluent society can permit the elderly to have a choice as to where they will live the last years of their lives. I have mentioned here only the already apparent items for which demand is growing. No doubt there are other, less apparent, goods and services for which there will be future demand growth that will stem from the affluence of an expanding economic system.

Many consumers and producers have become more "footloose" with respect to geographic location even though development strategies are often dominated by producer considerations. But producers also consume. Social services, natural environmental quality, and community distinctiveness are important in consumption and may dictate not only where footloose consumers will choose to live, but also where footloose producers will choose to work. Thus beauty, distinctiveness, and livability have become important components of the development strategy of many rural communities. A sense of place has been shown to have relevance in literature, geography, anthropology, and economics and must be given special attention if something such as "rural studies" is to emerge. Urbanization tends to emphasize homogeneity and inhibit distinctiveness.

4. Even though the more densely populated areas generate high incomes and the greatest concentration of wealth, they also create undesirable by-products. Waste disposal and penal institutions are obvious examples. Thus the rural areas have to contend not only with their own waste, but also with those who would use such places as a dumping ground for urban waste. Some less densely populated areas are viewing the need to accommodate these by-products as an economic opportunity. And well they should. Those who generate the undesirable by-products should pay the associated costs. It is a challenge to take advantage of this economic opportunity without diminishing the livability and distinctiveness of the receiving area.

5. Clearly, many rural people and institutions are adjusting to these and other changes. No doubt there will be even more evidence of such adjustments provided by the papers that will be given at this meeting. But it is not clear how many rural inhabitants will be affected by many of the adjustments being made. I have particular reference to those rural people who would be placed in the lower quarter if considered on the basis of income, wealth, or other measures of social well being. For example, while I believe it is desirable that the advisory committees of agricultural and forestry research and educational institutions include (say) representatives of environmental interest groups, we must recognize that the constituency of such organizations typically are people of middle or higher incomes. I believe the NRSC needs evidence as to how well educational and other rural institutions are serving those rural people who have less advantages. Perhaps this meeting will produce such evidence.

These brief and superficial observations may be helpful as a background for this meeting. Its purpose is to examine how rural people, communities, and institutions have and are adapting to the enormous changes of recent decades and especially the decade of the 1980's. As has been the case for our previous meetings, we are addressing problems at two levels. First, recognized scholars from different disciplinary fields will present major papers. These scholars will give special attention to families, national policies, rural communities, institutions, labor markets, environmental attitudes and education. Second, by means of a field trip, we will examine how one community functions in an area where food and fiber production has been a traditional industry. This mixture of activities has been fruitful in previous meetings and I have no doubt but that it will serve us well here also.

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Jessie Halsell, a rural woman from Hatch, New Mexico interviewed in 1981, recalled living in Oklahoma during the drought and depression of the 1930s. "There was no help from anybody," she said, "people did well to even take care of their own families." She and her husband were raising two small children, he a mail carrier, she a postmistress. They had a small store. They had no telephone and did not visit neighbors a mile away, did not know their desperate circumstances. One day the neighbors came over to tell them that their baby had died. They had only oatmeal to feed it and that had not been enough. "Most any of us could have helped somewhat," the woman continued, "so when you live through an experience, and you know that a little baby starved to death close to you, then you're for welfare." The one family had survived an economic transition intact, the other had failed. This incident, the tragedy of one family recalled by another, symbolizes the experiences of rural families in times of transition.¹

This death had occurred more than fifty years earlier and yet Jessie Halsell not only remembered it, she offered it to the interviewer Beatrice Stagl. "May I tell you an incident now?" said Jessie after Beatrice had asked her what she thought about welfare. Jessie explained that she was for welfare and then offered the incident as reason for her political position. "To this day," Jessie said, "it haunts me to think that we failed. And yet we didn't fail. But it's a haunting thing."

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And so it is, a haunting thing, I read that interview in 1983 and I remember it, puzzled about it, and went back to look at the text again as I was thinking about families in transition. I realized to show the complexity of what happens to rural families in transition and the response of people to those events. The young couple was undergoing difficult times as they attempted to raise a child. They were getting along in a manner of tense, drought and economic depression. The family failed in its effort to reproduce itself. The baby died. The mother, Jese' Lee, was very sad. She did not notice that the child was not developing well. She was haunted by this failure because clearly the hike was not enough. Jese' Lee was carrying the negative burden of the baby's condition and the heaps of work that she needed to do, the need for more child care.

"When you know that a little baby starved to death close to you, then you're for welfare."

The life cycle of individual members of the family, the farm cycle, economic changes in the family, agricultural production to provide an adequate income, or social and political changes that affect family well-being. When several factors coincide, the family is at risk of not reproducing itself. There has been no widespread change in the family, but the type of farming that still dominates rural people in other parts of the world, but rural families have suffered from economic downturns, from disasters, from disease, from hunger, from famine. While family death usually comes from natural disaster or disease, sometimes a string of personal disasters may end a family's life in a collective exit. Because of the malleability and adaptability of the rural family, most families do survive as a cohesive unit. Family members compensate for the lost member somehow. Strong women and men somehow manage to persist by developing strategies to enable them to remain on or near the land in rural areas. They hold on to the family business, the family farm, the family farm, and other businesses to produce more and consume less, depend on kin and community, and seek institutionalized outside help. In the century and a half from 1920 to 2030, rural families used all of these strategies to remain on the land. Eventually, choosing family welfare over the family business, most of them left the land and settled in urban areas.

As both a family and an institution, the rural family is a complex entity. The rural family is often produces for use and for the market. It organizes its labor, its work, in the family and for others. It cares for its worker members who are of different ages, sexes, and skill levels, some dependent, some independent.

America's multicultural heritage adds to the complexity. Families manage themselves differently. Most rural households, a lifestyle that is dominated by the decisions of senior males. Yet within the structure of rural patriarchy have been tremendous variations. In some Native American families, women exerted control over both land and welfare. In rural African American families, women often deferred to men but exhibited considerable initiative and responsibility for both production and welfare. In contrast, Hopi female heads of households had an egalitarian family structure, in others the male dominated. Among Euro-American families, traditions varied. Some were cooperative, where all family members balanced carefully, with all participating in decisions. In others, males made decisions to benefit themselves rather than the family as a whole. There were divisions within families when the move was west, or south or north, over a short distance or thousands of miles, it was undertaken with the idea that they could be more successful somewhere else. Federal policy undermined the removal of Native American families as Euro-Americans pressed on to new land.

This migration allowed most Euro-American farm families in the nineteenth century to become and remain middle class defined to use their own family labor. In some western areas — such as Iowa in the 1840s and 1850s and California in the late 1850s and early 1860s — many large families could do especially well. The earlier the pioneers arrived on the frontier and the longer they stayed, the wealthier they became. The less successful, of course, moved on. Farm youth began as laborers, became tenants, and then owners. If the parents lived into their 60s in the Midwest, the children and grandchildren often owned their own farms. When young Midwest families had to remain tenants for longer periods of time to accumulate money, they could still make it up the agricultural ladder.

In the South, where landowning families controlled enslaved black families, a different system developed. During the early nineteenth century, a landed elite composed of white and a few black plantation families accumulated immense wealth. Many white families continued to grow and move west, but the Southern landed elite profited most from moving westward. Such concentration of wealth in the hands of a few left the land on small scale production. Small farms, farms of 20 to 30 acres, have numerous complex households and, as John C. Calhoun once wrote, foster the "tie of relationship" between children and kinfolk. The Civil War destroyed almost a fifth of the white southern population and the wealth of the landed elite by destroying slavery, but the war left the landowners of the white landed elite virtually intact. The black elite gained an easier time in maintaining their gained wealth, but white black families struggled to keep whites from indenturing their children. With the understanding of railroads, black families gradually reclaimed the labor of children and many women also withdrew from labor for white landholders. Black men, as well as the need to sell labor for wage labor and landowning and the failure of cotton, began to take on the role of landowner, as did many white men. The absence of capital in the postwar South gradually impoverished poorer white landowners as well. Tenantry increased in the South for black families and white and the region depended, to a far greater extent than other regions, on agricultural labor wage. In the late nineteenth century, the South became the nation's most important cotton growing area, so that the large numbers of families migrated but could seldom hope to own land.

During World War I, most migration was from rural areas to other rural areas rather than from country to city. The 1930s marked the end of an unbroken wave of migration, but for large numbers of families, they continued to move to the more viable rural areas where farm people could still take up homesteads or buy low-cost land. During the early twentieth century, the South had not made much land to homestead. It was difficult to farm in these marginal areas and many farm families soon had to move on; nevertheless, these homesteaded lands provided space for families to settle, if only temporarily. Selling the land gave them the stake for the next migration, whether to another rural area, or into migratory labor areas.

The families that had enough resources to stay in one place, or to few to move, did several other things to survive times of transition. Most importantly, the families increased production by intensifying labor or developing new services and products. This reorganization of labor and consumption — particularly in grain-growing areas relying on land-based food production through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Through self-exploitation, farm families were able to compensate for decreased labor and production types of farming and thus preserve an agricultural system that might not normally have survived. Low overhead, low capital investment, and high labor intensity characterized family farms. The family could reproduce its labor supply and arrange its work.

Beginning with slavery and indenture, then contracts and sharecropping, labor markets continued to move women as well as men across counties to supply necessary agricultural labor for rural entrepreneurs. By the nineteenth century, women were able to many Americans than many better-labor systems. American farm families did not want to compete with other workers for the few manual work jobs available, and so they were able to keep their wealth of the landed elite by destroying slavery, but the war left the landowners of the white landed elite virtually intact. The black elite gained an easier time in maintaining their gained wealth, but white black families struggled to keep whites from indenturing their children. With the understanding of railroads, black families gradually reclaimed the labor of children and many women also withdrew from labor for white landholders. Black men, as well as the need to sell labor for wage labor and landowning and the failure of cotton, began to take on the role of landowner, as did many white men. The absence of capital in the postwar South gradually impoverished poorer white landowners as well. Tenantry increased in the South for black families and white and the region depended, to a far greater extent than other regions, on agricultural labor wage. In the late nineteenth century, the South became the nation's most important cotton growing area, so that the large numbers of families migrated but could seldom hope to own land.

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Majority of Americans as an alternative to family labor, then a new southern tenant system based on family labor was created as a result of a large number of farms in the family farm with control by white owners. There were limits to exploitation of labor for both family labor and black families, but these limits on what they would do for white owners; families set limits on what they could to maintain family farms.
Most Americans by the 1890s depended on family labor systems either as tenant or land owner. Migrant labor systems that increasingly provided seasonal labor were far away from that. Coming off a cash wage, the family provided workers who were supported by their own family welfare systems.  

Rural farms almost always developed additional manufacturing as a survival tactic. Frequently, more than one member of the farm family, but particularly women, used their flexibility of labor to add value to the farm’s traditional output. Traditionally, preparation of textiles and clothing and processing of foods, such as butter and cheese, provided women with a way to add value to their output.  

Women maintained the greatest flexibility of labor because of their need to have flexibility to reproduce the family physically and culturally. They chose the productive labor that allowed the most flexibility for themselves. Flexibility of women’s labor, in turn, gave farm families flexibility at transition times, therefore, women changed their work first. Women would experiment with new crops, animals, and products. Married farm women spent considerable time developing new or expanding old cash income. Butter and egg production were traditional ways but women experimented with many other things on the farm, from raising chickens to making cheese. Male tasks seemed less profitable and women’s tasks brought success, men would take over these new tasks and women would return to their earlier employment. Exchanging a marketable surplus at the local country store provided credit to finance household purchases.  

Men practiced this type of intensification of labor in the early nineteenth century. Gradually, however, they came to adopt more machinery in their work. Machinery made their labor less flexible since machinery was often specific to a factory. It might also represent an investment that was difficult to recover. When changing circumstances hit a whole community or region at the same time, flexibility might be reduced considerably.  

Rural ideology always praised the thrifty housewife. In fact, thrift was seen by men as a necessity as well as production as a way to control the household economy. The tradition of self-sufficient subsistence— that is, producing for one’s own use and buying as little as possible—continued to thrive throughout the early nineteenth century as farm families accumulated tools for production. In addition to basic farming equipment such as hoes, the tools developed by the end of the eighteenth century. Farms replaced textile tools with buttermaking tools in the early nineteenth century. Then, when food processing technology developed in the late nineteenth century, families bought canning equipment.  

Farm women increased purchases of tools to reduce other housewifely chores for them and for sons. They preferred to spend money on tools that allowed them to have more leisure time to make sure that were more productive.  

Cloth everywhere by the late nineteenth century did not automatically mean American families could afford it. Providing clothing became more difficult for families when women left the family. Agnes Snodgrass, who grew up in northern Missouri at the beginning of the twentieth century, remembered not going to church because she had no appropriate clothes. Other children described how their families lacked enough clothing. According to reports, in New Mexico, extension agents found in the 1920s that their clothing programs were worthless because rural women could not afford the clothing.  

New social relations led to a tradition of turning worn-out male clothing into serviceable and beautiful "britches quilts." Because women frequently mention making over men’s clothing for so many items, it is likely that women and children had fewer clothes. Conflicts sometimes arose over allocation of family funds for clothing. One incident in North Carolina illustrates the issue when three calves raised by a woman were butchered by her husband and pocketed the money she expected to use to buy “meetin’ clothes and a pair o’ shoes.” She was not permitted to continue attending a religious gathering in a town sack and “just up and bashed him good.”  

Rationing food was a last resort. Studies of height indicated that the average American population was much better fed than Europeans in the nineteenth century but economic downturns could affect the nutrition of children. The 1840s may have been one of these periods. Children of other ethnic groups suffered more. Even after the 1860s, not all did not get the nourishment they needed for their growing bodies. In the late nineteenth century, food shortages among Native Americans stunted whole generations in areas of California.  

Nor did the twentieth century eliminate nutritional differences among American children. They were better documented than their relatives. The case referred to at the beginning of this paper, where parents lost their child because it had only oatmeal to eat, was extreme, but not unknown. A Bureau of Education study in 1914, of children in Orange County, Virginia, found 25 percent of the white and 38 percent of black children malnourished. The high number of rural children who died from scurvy in the 1920s probably indicates inadequate nourishment as well as lack of dental care. Popular songs, with lines like “take a tater and a waltz,” suggest country children remembered hav- ing to eat plentiful food, such as potatoes, while adults or guests ate scarcer and better food, such as chicken. Getting food of the most nourishing kind was a problem for all the “country folks.” Sometimes families reserved such food for working adults and expected children to get along with less. Children also had to face their peers at school with dinner plates half empty or filled with less nourishing food. The status children attached to the dinner plate often left those with less, or with low-status ethnic foods, uneasy and at times hungry at lunch time.  

Raising food was not an assurance that families had enough to eat. Springtime in cold climates was difficult for subsistence families who could not afford to can and the first harvest of potatoes was not yet ready for picking. When winter stores ran low, children suffered.Unlike melons which were some Hispanic New Mexico children remembered eating in the summer, New Mexico children needed to purchase sweet potatoes.  

Whenever possible family members sought outside employment in addition to intensification of labor, and reduction of purchased food through changes in quantity or consumption. Finding and creating jobs for maturing children was an old task for rural families. Especially where children were not able to inherit land, families had to be creative in developing alternate work. Traditionally daughters and sons as well as mothers and fathers had worked for more affluent farm families. Rural farm families chose to stay on the farm, either alone and singly, to nearby towns, to rural industries, and to agricultural work.  

When opportunities for local farm jobs disappeared, farm daughters and sons first sought seasonal work in the industrial towns of the Northeast. Then full time rural jobs replaced seasonal factory work and whole families began to move to city and new mill towns. By 1865, a town such as Lynn, Massachusetts, was attracting large numbers of rural folk from the hard pressed countryside. Whole families chose to stay in town and usually only returned if the parent family had an income to supplement farming.  

By the second half of the nineteenth century, more and more immigrant and black farm daughters were also seeking seasonal work in small towns where they saw themselves “away from the farm.” Even in the late nineteenth century, farm women engaged in seasonal work to help the family return to the farm for the summer season and frequent the local week-ends. There they assisted the family in its work, and searched for young men who wanted young women well- trained as farm workers as the women who did not wish to return to the farm, spent proportionately more time in towns or moved to larger cities and there sought urban men as partners.  

Younger sons for whom the family could not provide land sought jobs in rural industries as well as in towns. Work in the towns was important in areas where families had not developed commercial agriculture and had relied on production for use. The opening of mines in the West and South allowed farm sons to make good sons who worked north from New Mexico to the mines of southern Colorado. Young men in Appalachia went from their subsistence farms down into the West. Rural families also sent sons into coal and iron mines.  

Seasonal agricultural work continued to be an attractive occupation for many children. Children who had always joined Northeastern labor markets in peaks seasons when farm pickers were needed. They worked
in the hop and strawberry harvests in New York. As alternative labor markets developed for rural native born Euro-American women after the Civil War, they sought other wage labor. In California, urban women and children or entire immigrant families went into the fields. This was the pattern in the hop harvests in New York. During the 1880s, some long-established rural families and native-born ethnic families made up the larger part of this agricultural labor market but after World War I it became common for the families developed when the first generation had migrated. Women still exported their labor but they were now more likely to migrate together over greater distances. Beet harvesters followed this pattern, first local, then entire families, and by 1920 Mexican families. Farm employers often transported Mexican immigrant families to the Midwest and North Carolina at harvest time and then returned them to the Mexican borderlands for the winter.26 Middling Euro-American farm children disappeared from the school rolls as they entered more remunerating forms of work. Middling rural families began to use land grant colleges to train sons in the 1870s. These young men were successful at making middle-class families allowed them to send sons into teaching, business, and professions such as engineering. While immigrant sons went into industry in the late nineteenth century, some farm sons moved up to the notch. Young men also abandoned some occupations, such as teaching at the lower levels, to their sisters.27 In northern New Mexico, where the population had increased, the amount of education that rural youth needed to teach school and farm rural families to support public higher education for them as well. As first, they could teach with only a grammar school or high school diploma. Then they were required to have teacher training or a college diploma. As state funded credit was set aside to provide support structures but international and national agricultural labor markets drew single people out of their rural families. In these new settings, children also directly provide for family welfare. If a rural family could stay in one area for several generations, it could reestablish a dink kin support system. The autobuseland plantation system al- lowed both: landed elites and their enslaved black workers to establish dink kinship networks, but with limited movement disrupted them. White plantation families had the advantage of greater relative wealth. Southerners rural blacks, who could hope for little assistance from public institutions, developed the most elaborate private welfare systems. One black farmer who grew up with his grandmother in Tuskegee, learned from her grandmother to plant a large garden every year. One third was for use, one to save for the winter, and one to sell. The other one third was for her. Black women also provided other services for women in the community, including health and education. When this network of private care broke down, black rural families had difficulty surviving intact.23

Education, health care, and welfare were all services that white families increasingly sought from public institutions in times of transition. When family services did not work successfully, they looked to public structures for support other than the family. Education was a means of reproducing the family socially, by training and educating members to weather transitions of various kinds. It also expanded the family in reproducing itself physically. Welfare allowed families to stay together, to continue to organize their family labor effectively, and to provide for dependent members. The demand for public education institutions was astounding in успя́нство the United States during the nineteenth century. Outside the South, until the very last year, rural fami- lies it felt appropriate to establish public schools. Education became a part of public policy, the responsibility of public officials. The demand for public educational institutions became especially strong in the North after the 1820s. Part of the change may have been due to the ideology of Republicanism and the role of civic education in a democracy. Eighteenth century public education was primarily for young men who would inherit the political role of the upper class of rural families. But after the Revolution, political commentators increasingly discussed the roles of mothers in preparing sons for roles in a republic. Eventually this ideology became translated as the need for rural daughters to receive education so that they could be good Republican mothers. Certainly the practice of migrating and the desire for education and the role of the family during economic hard times also played a great role in the popularity of public rural education. The tradition spread westward from New England and the Mid- Atlantic states.23

A large majority of rural daughters was already in school by 1850. In the 1850 census, when enumerators asked families about school attendance, some rural areas showed surprisingly high numbers. In a group of rural counties in Butler County, Pennsylvania townships, an average of 77 percent of men and girls 5-12 were in school and below the Mason Dixon line in New Castle County, Maryland, only slightly fewer, 71 percent, were in school. By 1860, while not compulsory, the level of school attendance for rural children between eight and fourteen was more than 70 percent in both the Midwest and the South.24 In the Northeast, school attendance rates were approximately the same for boys and girls up to age 14. Thereafter, the attendance for girls declined.25 The women had to go to work to support their families in providing public education for their children. By 1850, even in relatively egalitarian Pennsylvania, black daughters were already lagging behind the school atten- dance levels of white girls. Only 30 percent of black daughters in the same Pennsylvania area cited above were in school. The most stunning difference was within the larger gap in education between white and black in Ohio and in neighboring Maryland. Only 7 percent of the daughters were in school. Further south, white rural families often edu- cated children at home and barred all black children from school education.25 Despite the establishment of a public school system in the South, the black families who were still re- mained deprived of a truly public education. What public education existed, deteriorated in the 1880s, leaving schooling of blacks and whites widely unequal. While Tuskegee Institute attempted to train black women as teachers and men to teach in rural schools in the late nineteenth century, the state paid black teachers only a small percentage of what their white colleagues earned and pro- vided no public funds for schoolhouses. The letters of young teachers back to Tuskegee in the first decade of the 1900s and the show that there was very little. The Black Rural in re-
for experiment stations, research, and extension serv-
ices, these colleges received almost none. Land grant
colleges elsewhere underserved or ignored other ra-
cisional minority students.

Minorities and white women remained the most depen-
dent on private higher education. Even the Chau-
tauqua system of outdoor education provided a private
adult education program, functionally mainlined in the
Northeast and Midwest. Rural women obtained highly
valued degrees through Chautauqua correspondence
courses. Still, fewer than any type of education beyond
the age of 14.39

While rural education became public in the nine-
ten, medical care and health care providers persisted. Many
thirty-five-year-olds still lived in rural communities, and
health care providers lived in rural areas. Rural health care
had long been a community family responsibility. What
the family could not provide, it paid for. A diverse group
of health care providers cared for the rural family in the ear-
ly nineteenth century. Doctors, midwives, and neighbors
provided care that extended to nearly all families. Their
work was done in the home, their fees paid in coin and
kind. Because university-trained doctors pre-

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...the state paid black teachers
only a small percentage
of what white teachers received...

15 The question of kinship is very complex. For one black family and five generations see Joan M. Jensen, "Rise Up Like Wheat: plantation Women in Maryland," in "Promises to the Land: Essays on Rural Women (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, in press).


17 Joan M. Jensen, "Asian Indian Men in North America (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 42-56 studies exodipal from rural towns (though many found work in isolated farming areas where their labor was welcomed). Existence is best studied for rural Asian immigrants but sooner to have been practiced widely, if less openly, in many communities.

18 John Elaine, Governance, Wisconsin; to Grace Abbott; Chief, Children's Bureau, March 5, 1924, File 20-6-78, National Archives, Record Group 91, Family Security Administration


23 Various correspondence is in Files 4-1-3-15 and 4-1-3-3 in National Archives, Record Group 102, Children's Bureau.

24 Link, "Privacy, Progressivism, and Public Schools," 622-642.

25 Millet I. Roemer, Rural Health Care (St. Louis: Mosby, 1976), p. 10. For Tane see File B-8-1, National Archives, Record Group 94, Farm Security Administration.

26 Jensen, Lessons on the Bouda, pp. 57-76. Voskod, "Have Soc- ial Historians Lost the Civil War?" 52, 55-56, argues that an overlooked source of federal assistance in the late nineteenth century may have gone to women and children of Civil War soldiers. This would have been particularly important from 1866 to 1890.

27 John Elaine, Governance, Wisconsin; to Grace Abbott; Chief, Children's Bureau, March 5, 1924, File 20-6-78, National Archives, Record Group 91, Family Security Administration


29 Ibid.
Rural America's economic and social ills have recently received more attention from the national media than they have since the 1960s' War on Poverty. To be sure, George Bush has yet to hunker down like Lyndon Johnson on the porch of an impoverished Appalachian family for a photo session. Nonetheless, most of the mass media have carried stories of a rural hinterland where quality of life is falling further behind the metropolitan suburbs. Unlike the concern for rural and urban poverty a quarter century ago, there has not been a corresponding effort to ameliorate current social problems via massive federal programs. Certainly there has been some rhetoric concerning a comprehensive rural development policy, but action has fallen well short of words.

Perhaps this is due to a careful reading of the past, though serious evaluations of the Office of Economic Opportunity programs are few and very specific. It is much more likely that the absence of serious proposals for a comprehensive rural development effort is due to a constellation of competing perspectives toward economic development, misperceptions of rural America, the usual difficulties of coordinating myriad grass roots

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organizations, and very different public assumptions about the role of government.

Rural public policy analysts have identified economic development as the leading strategy for extensive development policy. Such a policy will require action by the federal government, the states, and local entities. For a comprehensive development policy to emerge, many barriers will have to be addressed, including the two which are addressed here.

First, there is an absence of consensus concerning how economic development occurs and the role of the State at all levels of government. In this context, the diverse dimensions of economic development are very briefly discussed. The second issue includes less abstract problems for the practical development of a comprehensive rural development program. These two dimensions are highly associated with one another. In tandem, they pose some serious but not necessarily insurmountable obstacles for rural development. These two shifts appear to be occurring in the way rural development policy programs are targeted, and these are identified in my current work.

Dominant Strategies for Economic Development

Three general perspectives of the State in economic development have held sway at various times this century. Eisinger (1988) has identified these of two: (1) supply-side assumptions whereby the State, through various tax incentives and other public policy instruments, attempts to improve local competitive advantage; and (2) demand-side assumptions, in which the State tries to improve the demand for goods and services (Eisinger 1988). The latter refers to the entrepreneurial State. This occurs when government, by aggressive marketing or incubation of local economic initiatives, enters into a partnership with the private sector. The third strategy requires investing in the wide array of services that enhance human resources and local economic potential (Eisinger, 1988). Although in some instances, local community leaders have been among the catalysts for development (Eisinger, 1988), public education was a deliberate economic development strategy to supply the burgeoning manufacturing economy with skilled managers, technicians, and workers.

The proper role of any national economic development plan is to facilitate the productive and efficient interests of the private sector. Or, put less abstractly, what is for the good of business is good for society and the economy. During the Reagan administration, supply-side economic policies guided federal economic policy. But such assumptions are not limited to the President’s Council of Economic Advisors. Kemper, Dickerman, and Lacel Wilkinson, a Democrat, has had supply-side economic assumptions as the cornerstone of his economic development campaign. A recent report to the state of Vermont may well sign a similar document below that reads “open for business.” If local community leaders have been among the catalysts for development, the state welcome signs with a smaller version looking just below that reads “open for business.” The political roots of this development strategy run deep in Kentucky’s economic history.

Since World War II, many of the local and state rural development programs have emphasized subsidized interest rates, accepted local banks for development (Eisinger, 1989). The push for more funds for rural areas, especial in the area of telecommunications where there are serious technical and social infrastructure problems that need a public policy response (Eisinger, 1989). The concern for developing national and international markets for local products has grown in recent years. Re- cently twelve centers for export development were established at Land Grant Universities for this purpose.

It is expected that demand-side development strategies will increase the export and law-making capacity of the State. It is expected to act, rather than remain passive or simply facilitate profit maximization strategies.

Much of this activity appears to be aimed at small business expansion. Demand-side programs of the past included the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Rural Electrification Administration of the New Deal that operated rural markets for urban-produced goods (refrigerators, washing machines, milking machines, etc.) and facilitated the growth of local industries that were seen to be benefits of the program (Brenner, 1989). But these activities have largely been focused on the needs of the poor, the less-skilled, and the less educated.

In fact it could be argued that this type of activity is an example of combining demand-side perspectives with a small dose of supply-side assumptions.

Both the supply-side and demand-side models see the State’s role as facilitating economic development by stimulating private sector expansion. Consequently, both assume that the State, whether at the federal, state, or local level, has the capacity to further such efforts. This is increasingly problematic the smaller or more marginal the resources of the government unit. Therefore, while demand-side programs intuitively sound more fair and rational than supply-side programs, the success of such a program depends on the capacity of local and state governments. Those government that have not benefited from past national economic expansion are not likely to have the resources necessary to implement demand-side strategies.

Development of Human Resources

The third general economic development paradigm is the most widely accepted as a necessity, but not sufficient, condition, however, there is serious disagreement about the amount of investment in the quality of the service necessary. The two most notable dimensions of human resource development are education and health services.

The advent of public education in the 19th century was a deliberate economic development strategy to supply the manufacturing economy with skilled managers, technicians, and workers. The establishment of universities in the 1920s most rural Americans worked as their own boss to some extent. Today, most rural Americans work for someone else . . .

of the Land Grant Universities in 1962 was expected to enhance the productivity of both agriculture and manufacturing. The development of a public health care system was also emerged at this same time, but it is not until the health reform was thought of as necessary for a labor force required to be competitive in the world economy.

The issue today is whether education and health care are important for economic growth, but the amount of public resources necessary. Since World War II, the technological changes in agriculture, agricultural mechaniza-
Both education and health care are expensive public services. Direct contributions to economic development is not always apparent, with most of their benefits accruing over a lifetime.

Responsibility for paying these expenses varies greatly. The federal government tends to provide meager support for education—much of its expenditures go to the states and local governments. During the 1986-97 fiscal year, on average, local governments contributed 94.1 percent of the nation's largest farms, produce close to 85 percent of all wealth created in agriculture. Converse, the remaining 55 percent of the farms accounted for the wealth produced. This dual farm structure is the consequence of the national trend toward fewer but larger farm operations.

While farming to undergo a major restructuring, so too has the rural non-farm economy. Most job-holders in this segment are in manufacturing, service industries, and government (primarily local schools), and not in the traditional extractive industries. In the 1920s it can be argued empirically that most rural Americans worked as their own boss to some extent. Today, most rural Americans work for someone else, and farming is no longer the main occupation for the number of academic products that might result. This type of community methodology is, therefore, less attractive to sociological social scientists in the competitive world of academe.

The knowledge gap concerning rural community life has not significantly narrowed since the classic community case studies of the 1930-1950 period were conducted. It is paradoxical that during the 1980s—when federal policy was shifting toward decentralized planning and policy no longer fits the functional organization by state and local governments—research on the ability of local governments to act on their own behalf to promote economic development was virtually eliminated by Land Grant colleges of agriculture.

A quick examination of rural problems reveals a remarkable similarity with those of the inner cities. Both populations are being left behind...

Rural Areas and Their Problems Are Connected with the Larger Society

Rural problems are often treated as if rural localities were disconnected from the great changes in the economic and social structures of the national and global economy. Rural interest groups, academics, and policymakers continue to treat rural development as a territorial or sector phenomenon. This focus has tended to precede establishment of rural and economic problems in the context of regional, national, and even international research. The interlinked nature of problems with policy issues in other areas has thus been overlooked.

A quick examination of rural problems reveals a remarkable similarity with those of the inner cities. Both populations are being left behind in the economic expansion of the 1980s, and for many of the same reasons. Each has a core group of geographical areas with similar problems with education and health services, and, increasingly, in the areas of social pathologies—particularly violence and crime, and drugs against property.

This does not mean, however, that the inner cities and rural communities should have identical social and economic development programs.

Assumption that Rural Areas Lack Viable Economic Solutions

The fourth hurdle is the assumption that rural economic problems are not the result of failure of the markets, either capital or information, but of a clear competitive disadvantage. Coupled with this is the notion that government, especially the federal government, is part of the problem and not the solution. From this perspective, economic development is fostered primarily through the "promotion" of markets, and since such market mechanisms have not fostered the type of economic development necessary for a viable rural economic sector, and since government is not able to induce such development, then those areas left behind are simply the unfortunate by-product of national economic adjustment. To the extent that this ideological perspective directs rural development policy we can only expect more of the minimalist policies of the past several decades.

Interestingly, both the supply-side and demand-side adherents tend to accept this general position. While it is not surprising for the supply-side, it may be for the demand-side, which believes that investment in economic ventures that will find their way into nonlocal markets. Many of the places left behind not only lack the competitive local capital or the capacity for developing export-based enterprise is probably insufficient. If this is the case, then demand-side advocates may be just as unpopular as technical resources to these areas as are the supply-side advocates.

This perspective has been guiding rural development policy for several decades. It is a trite policy and has been a rural barrier. For many areas, especially those in the Midwest which have invested scarce resources in their children only to see them leave.

It is a rural depopulation policy for many areas, which have invested scarce resources in their children only to see them leave.

An implicit assumption is that the degradation of people (especially those at or near poverty), of the environment, and of a small population is good in itself. It will not be externalized to the rest of society. In the 1980s, when such a policy became a cornerstone of the New...
Federalism, many of the so-called social and economic safety nets which are assumed to cover immediate social needs associated with economic transition, were clipped by federal budget cuts. 

This triage policy have been externalized. The people of these unsuccessful communities are not being provided the training necessary to learn new skills, nor assistance for maintaining essential social services. Rather, these areas have become persistent pockets of poverty. Hoppe (1989) reports that over 90 percent of the families in the U.S. are located in the rural South. Moreover, these communities are not simply withering away. Many are actively seeking potential outside employers, though often those that do not come alone would be interested in. Rural America, especially the rural South, is becoming the dumping grounds for metropolitan solid waste and of the nation's toxic waste. The states' response has been to pass more rigid waste laws, which is not a bad policy, but they have not simultaneously promoted rural development for these areas.

No Powerful Constiuty

The development of a comprehensive rural development program lacks a unified constituency while facing considerable opposition. With the possible exception of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, some of the current rural initiatives are the product of a wide variety of grass roots organizations, and the increasing realization that rural America is falling fur- ther behind.

Present rural development initiatives are authentic grass-roots political phenomena, and as such demonstrate most of the difficulties of a constituency of interests.

The common interest is greater financial assistance from the federal government. But there is no consensus among the grass roots groups, as to the types of federal programs desired, or the manner of administration. This makes it difficult for Congress, which does listen to local issues, to act in the effort.

There are, however, some powerful opponents. The major farm groups have not openly campaigned against rural development, nor have they facilitated it. Their

...farm tents to see rural development as a threat to their lucrative federal farm entitlements.

rural development strategy has tended to emphasize higher farm prices. In other words, they have continued to propagate the myth that farm policy is rural development policy. Given the serious federal budget crisis, this myth will probably not prevail. For almost any program problematic, the farm groups tend to see rural development as a threat to their lucrative federal farm entitlements.

Nor have USDA, and the Land Grant Universities moved beyond expected rhetoric in promoting rural development. During the Reagan Administration, the Office of Rural Development Policy was actually abolished. Nor does the USDA at this time have a mission statement concerning rural development, yet Congress has charged the USDA with responsibility for rural development.

The Land Grant University opposition has been passive. Title V funds are folded into programs which have had little to do with rural development, but that did help hard-pressed Agricultural College deans improve their budgets. Surveys by sociologists and agricultural economists came to a virtual stop with the dismantling of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics during the early 1950's. In fact, the demise of the Bureau is widely attributed to a case study of a southern rural community.

However, this does not mean that the bureaucracy or the social scientists at the Land Grants are either unable or unwilling to initiate the legislative goals of a comprehensive rural development policy. USDA's Economic Research Service has maintained a comprehensive data base and a commitment to information on rural economic and social development, information that has documented the need for a comprehensive program. The lack of will does not reside with these bureaucracies.

Federal Budget Deficit

George Weis has said that policy by polls reflects a thinness of beliefs. The White House's unwillingness to find new funding, or to transfer funds from agricultural programs, suggests a disinclination to look for money to go to rural development. Nor is Congress likely to fill the void without White House leadership. The inability to reduce the federal budget deficit means that new programs, or reorganization of old programs for rural development, are not going to go much further than shuffling existing rural funds. Present proposed legislation to establish a Rural Development Administration in the Executive Branch's answer to doing exactly this, shifting funding from one set of rural programs to another. The establishment of an RDA, then, represents a bureaucratic adjustment, not a move toward a change in the minimalist policies of the past.

Other Forbidable Barriers to Rural Development

Even if we were to overcome these stumbling blocks to a comprehensive rural policy development, we still have some formidable problems, which can be divided into three general categories.

First, there are no economic and social strategies to contest the historic tendency for uneven economic development. Reid (1989) provides ample examples of the continued uneven development process, and identifies several specific areas including technology in agriculture which has contributed fewer jobs. The old advantages of a cheap and unskilled nonfarm force have been played out, with few such opportunities occurring today. The telecommunication driven portion of the service sector, known for high-paying jobs, shows little sign of locating in rural areas, despite some improvements in rural telecommunication infrastructure. The low charged cost of educational skills of rural youth, often associated with underfunded and over politicized local educational systems.

Neither the supply-side nor the demand-side perspectives adequately address the persistent effects of uneven economic development. As noted above, each tends to accept the assumption that some places cannot be helped through economic development programs. This leaves the third strategy of human resource development as the only current viable approach to helping the people in these areas. The assumption is that economic policy should provide for a fluid and skilled labor force. By providing the necessary education for the populations of areas left behind, it is assumed that these people will be more able to move towards rural development. This, in fact, has been the historic trend of rural depopulation of the best and brightest youth. It is also a type of self-fulfilling prophecy the extent to which many of these areas continue to show few signs of an internal capacity for private or public entrepreneurship.

A contradiction of this policy is that both education and health care systems have been the responsibility of local and state governments, or of individuals (especially for health care). Without substantial assistance from these systems to these rural ones in providing education and health care services, these populations, left to their own resources, are not likely to furnish the required services.

An associated problem is that demand-side policies often require surplus government resources that can be used to develop aggressive and innovative market strategies or to increase the level of income enjoyed by these communities. Rural communities left behind by national economic development usually do not have the resources for maintaining needed services, much less a surplus for demand-side programs.

Such uneven development has been the focus of education and research efforts for recent years. In Kentucky,\textsuperscript{6} 66 school districts initiated a civil suit contending that educational funding reinforced the unequal economic development within the state by providing more funding to the suburbs and wealthier areas. The suit questioned the equity and efficiency of schools and was upheld by the Kentucky Supreme Court. All 66 districts have either rural or inner city areas. Similar suits have been brought to the courts in Texas, Missouri, and 12 other states.

Second, there is a failure to address the local consequences of the continued exodus of rural America's human resources. Nonmetro residents continue to lose their community leverage by leaving the school systems to those in metro areas, and a smaller share have attended or completed college. Also, in some rural regions (notably the South and Indian Reservations) school deserts remain in these areas.

Third, most local rural societies do not have the capacity to plan their economic and social development. Nor do they possess resources and areas to form an adequate tax base to respond to economic opportunities. How do we expect areas left behind the economic expansion of the 1970s and 1980s to fund the necessary educational programs while sustaining adequate health programs and other services? This is a serious "Catch-22" for rural leaders.

Changing Policy Assumptions

Assumptions concerning rural policy are changing. Three equally important changes must attract attention: 1) the New Federalism and the shift of responsibility for economic development to the states and local governments; 2) the increasing tendency for states to address the problems of unequal economic development within their borders; and 3) the ascendency of demand-side and human resource development strategies by the states and local governments.

Shift in Responsibility for Economic Development Toward State and Local Governments

The policy consequences of the New Federalism are now being felt. At this time, the inclination is to assign rural economic development more to the states, and social policy, especially in education and health care, to the federal and state governments. This decentralization of the locus of policy initiative can have positive results, however, it is less a consequence of belief that local societes control their own economic development than a realization that the shotgun social programs of the past were expensive, inefficient, and often based on national policy bases.

An implicit assumption in the existence of fewer political fractures at the local level than at the federal level. However, rural community studies reaching back to the Lynd's studies suggest just the opposite. Local society, and therefore local policy, is characterized by significant social stratification. Moreover, the Laurent study's seemingly similar segments of local society, for instance the real estate developers, bankers, and plant owners, may have very divergent interests in the types of economic development strategies. Furthermore, most communities lack the ability and the resources to foster their own economic development.

The evidence is not that there is not a great deal of potential for new economic activity. Rather, economic development will require a cooperative effort by all
levels of government. Local governments must initiate a broad-based review of existing human, natural, and capital resources. This review should be done in cooperation with development professionals available from the states and the Land Grant Universities. Once a plan has been democratically agreed upon, then, in cooperation with their state governments, and with financial support from the federal government, the plan can be implemented and monitored. Infrastructure development and maintenance is the primary responsibility of state governments in cooperation with their local governments.

States’ Attempts to Deal with Uneven Economic Development

As the federal government has passed along greater responsibility for economic development to the states, it has also passed along the burdens of dealing with uneven economic development. This applies equally to rural and inner city problems. As a consequence, the states are finding it necessary to take on unpopular political initiatives such as tax increases and educational reform. Kentucky passed a $1.3 billion tax increase in Spring, 1990 as part of its educational reform package. The governor had run on a no-tax platform (as well as a lottery platform), but was forced to shift his position when confronted with the needs of the state. Much of this money goes to rural and inner city school districts in an effort to supplement low resource bases and to upgrade the quality of education. A central problem for the country, though, is that this puts those states with high levels of poverty and low capacities for economic development at a clear disadvantage. The Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission represents a regional attempt to coordinate the scarce resources among several states and the federal government. But it, too, has thus far met with limited success.

Shifting Assumptions

Eliseng argues that demand-side assumptions are now more widely considered, as the inadequacies of supply-side programs become more apparent.

By large supply-side economic development policy operates at the expense of private investment decision-making. (This) specific incentive governments can offer and the controls governments can create through their general tax and regulatory policies are simply not prime determinants in private decisions to invest, at least where the question involves a choice of location. (Eliseng, 1988:222)

[1]The traditional supply-side strategy to induce investment and influence location choices is beset with certain liabilities. The positive effects of such incentives have not been established incontrovertibly, and there are even potentially severe effects. In addition, incentives and tax policies are relatively easy to match, thereby cancelling out any advantage in the long run. It is thus partly out of the

References


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Twenty years ago Charles Tilly asked "do communities act?" meaning do those living in close proximity mobilize for collective action (Tilly, 1975). He answered that under external stress, a community organized as a "gemeinschaft" society centered on kinship-based social relationships, was more likely to "act" than one organized as a "gesellschaft," more urbanized, society, in which individual interests determined behavior (Tonnis, 1940). Today small Midwestern communities have cause for action. They face a transition caused by declines in population, small businesses, tax base, and services (Johansen and Fuguit, 1984; Fuguit, Brown, and Beale, 1989; Luloff and Swanson, 1990). Policy makers urge neighboring communities to pool resources, reducing redundancy and thereby assuring that some survive. This external pressure to act with neighborliness and cooperation is claimed to be in the communities' best financial and development interests (Deavers, 1987; Fuguit, Brown, and Beale, 1989). Yet, such a call presents a quandary. Working together means setting aside historic intercommunity rivalries that functioned well in rural America. At their best, such rivalries reinforced rural community solidarity; at
their worst they produced hostility sometimes erupting in violence. tilted. She said for the first time in 1890 (Fugalt, Brown, and Brown 1993) that do not include a commu- nity’s dense in the 1900s. For this reason, the potential for past and present collective action within and between small rural communities deserves atten- tion. First, the assumptions that share a common territory foster the same internal mobilization by considering the cultural, historical, and structural variables that affects their presence disposition for collective action. Next, various historic, economic, and social barriers to Midwestern inter- community cooperation are described. Finally, a case study of two Illinois villages with a classic history of intercommunity hostility provides concrete illustrations of the factors hindering intercommunity active col- lective action. Determining whether communities cannot cooperate provides clues for facilitating collective action, as rural communities struggle to stay together.

Intra­community Variation and Social Relations

Structural Variable Acting on Intra­community Relations

Mobilization emerges from the inevitable interaction among residents, and thus deve- lops naturally (Wilkinson, 1990). Through the rural-urban continuum (Lorimer and Boegel, 1985) theoretically no longer dominates rural studies, an assumption is still made that a more personal, supportive, and even cooperative social fabric characterizes small and medium-sized communities (Heffner and Heffner, 1985). However, tests that link many contemporary rural residents resemble those of urban neighbors more than the inclusive rural communities of the past (Wilkinson, 1990). The type of links which characterize a community are an outgrowth of its ethnocultural character, farmland tenure, and family size.

The strength or weakness of links among a Mid­western community’s households (Granovetter, 1973; 1985) has often been associated with the type of social mobility that occurs within the community. If one is mobile, he or she is more likely to be married, get a higher education, or get a job. These factors affect the nature of social networks and the types of social ties that exist within a community. Mobility is more likely to be found in communities that are more urbanized, have a greater percentage of people who are college graduates, and have a lower proportion of people who are unemployed. Mobility is also more likely to be found in rural communities that are closer to urban centers and have better transportation links to those centers.

While structural variables influence intra­community relations, it is the nature of integration, identity, and support that identify a group of people living in close proximity as an actual community (Wil-kinson, 1990). A recent ethnographic study (Schwartz, 1985) focused on how people perceive these different aspects of their intercommunity relations. Two rural communities described represent the two extremes of these different aspects of community life. One community was characterized by “tolerance for others” as a natural consequence of living together, while in the other “living together harmlessly entails constant vigilance against threat­ening outsiders” (Schwartz 1985:33). The former was organized with strong ties (Granovetter, 1983) while personal dignity and accep­tance prevailed unless an individual violates “the norm of mutual tolerance.” Schwartz found that though the most provincial of the six communities studied, it had the most respect between generations; adults felt their actual control over teen­agers’ lives and their actual correlations were “least affected by hierarchy, performance, and individualism (1987:282).” The other community was more tolerant of the young for latitude with rural customs. Position, performance, and individu­alism were valued; its youth resembled those of the upper­class suburban community in the study more than the rural community in that inter­generational trust (1987:34; 28).

In both communities, it is common community interaction within the cohesion, support, and identity often as­sumed characteristics of small town life. Thus, whether коллективизм or individualism is more valued by community members affects interpersonal relationships. A community that places high priority on strong ties and collective action has networks that can be mobilized quickly and effectively, and are only mini­mally segregated by class or age. Such a community may be well organized with a strong backbone of interpersonal ties linking the community (Granovetter, 1983). In contrast, when individualism is preferred as an organiz­ing principle, local communities are often more diffused through the community. In such a community, weak ties are more likely to develop within and, more importantly, outside the community.

Coleman views network mobilization and similar interactions as building institutional “social capital” (different from human or financial capital) which “in­cludes more formalized human relations between actors and among actors…and is a resource for persons” (1988:59). “Whether capital accrues depends on “trust­worthiness of the actors” which means that people’s obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held (1987:102).” Differences among social structures emerge, according to Coleman, because of the settings within which people do things for others, which builds social capital. When obligation levels are high, people have social capital with which to draw. When obligation levels are low, social capital is not built and the risk of non­return is great. Thus, a community that is weak in social capital is more likely to have lower levels of cooperation and fewer opportunities for community development. When obligation levels are high, people have social capital with which to draw. When obligation levels are low, social capital is not built and the risk of non­return is great. Thus, a community that is weak in social capital is more likely to have lower levels of cooperation and fewer opportunities for community development. When obligation levels are high, people have social capital with which to draw. When obligation levels are low, social capital is not built and the risk of non­return is great. Thus, a community that is weak in social capital is more likely to have lower levels of cooperation and fewer opportunities for community development. When obligation levels are high, people have social capital with which to draw. When obligation levels are low, social capital is not built and the risk of non­return is great. Thus, a community that is weak in social capital is more likely to have lower levels of cooperation and fewer opportunities for community development. When obligation levels are high, people have social capital with which to draw. When obligation levels are low, social capital is not built and the risk of non­return is great. Thus, a community that is weak in social capital is more likely to have lower levels of cooperation and fewer opportunities for community development. When obligation levels are high, people have social capital with which to draw. When obligation levels are low, social capital is not built and the risk of non­return is great. Thus, a community that is weak in social capital is more likely to have lower levels of cooperation and fewer opportunities for community development. When obligation levels are high, people have social capital with which to draw. When obligation levels are low, social capital is not built and the risk of non­return is great. Thus, a community that is weak in social capital is more likely to have lower levels of cooperation and fewer opportunities for community development.
emerged and re-emerged at intervals beginning early in the twentieth century as state-level professionalism attempted to seize local control from farmer-dominated school boards (Boyd, 1952; Hoydals, 1960). Communities struggling to retain their schools were repeatedly forced to compete with others in the same county. Underlying the resistance to consolidation was evidence that it not only deprived a community of a major integrating institution, but that the process cost local control of education and even weakened academic.

Results of County Intercommunity Rivalry

Competitive spirit of homeowners being in business, obtain the consolidated school, or triumph in school sports produced a county hierarchy measured by size, actual or perceived winners and losers in the struggle for resources. Historically, it was farmers who felt belittled by local villages for taxing them without representation or taking their business for granted (Brannon, Howard, and Landis, 1927). As the farm population declined, roads improved, and schools consolidated, county residents were drawn into intercommunity rivalries. Illinois refers to the competitive theme as one of "intercommunity relations at all levels of the hierarchy [having] the pattern of hostility toward higher-order units (1979: 160)," combined with sense of superiority over those units deemed lower. Such a pattern of rivalry developed particularly when a community felt threatened.

Size or economic superiority certainly structure a hierarchy. Communities play in the rivalry game differ-

ently, some buying into the rivalry game more fully than others. Social characteristics such as wealth, ethnicity, or regional settlement origins are used to mediate perceived inequalities. Community police to lay down on intercommunity communities (Hatch, 1979). Those differing are deemed inferior unless the differentiating qualities are those to which the community residents aspire. Overall the long term was size self-sustaining for bigger placement in the economic ranking. Business, as one school consolidation, jobs, all tended to become centralized in the largest towns (Johansen and Fuguet, 1984), usually the county seat. Yet, cohesive communities can survive without outside support by providing the non-economic advantages of social capital and strong ties for such communities, size does not determine survival.

State-level policy makers advance the size-based hierarchy by asserting that only larger communities (over 2,500 population) possess the critical mass required for permanency and favor them at the expense of smaller towns with less tangible advantages. This ranking system makes economic indicators the measure of well-being, concentrating on larger and thereby pern-

alizing smaller communities, as a regional strategy for the dispersal of public resources (Daniels and Lapping, 1987). As this policy plays out, the historical absorption of smaller communities into larger centers continues. Criteria for the state support. Such a process is already at work. To question the assumptions behind triage judgments, or to provide for smaller communities, would be an economic mistake for the state. People who have a way to go to the most isolated and rural populations are crucial components of intercommunity cooperation. Members of the close-knit community resist intercommunity cooperation while having collectively made a more intimate cultivation of local resources. People in the close-knit community cultivate instrumental ties and make strategies toward intercommunity cooperation. The community with strong ties and considerable social capital knows it will only lose with intercommunity mergers; the lose-knit community has less to lose and more to gain from intercommunity cooperation. The communities will be described and contrasted in how they "act" on three typical transition issues: newcomers in mobile homes, school consolidation, and internal support for local businesses. The other two community characteristics such issues are handled and the implications these examples have for future intercommunity ties are discussed.

Western Illinois Intercommunity Case Study

Much of the Midwest, and many rural areas else-

where in the nation, are dotted with villages of less than 2,500 population. Illinois is particularly interesting since near the highest in numbers of small rural communities, and Illinois leads the nation in number of local governments. Thus, intercommunity cooperation as a strategy to overcome local resource and population deficits is a burning regional issue.

The competitive spirit makes regional neighbor-

ing a logical strategy for regional preservation. However, past rivalries among communities often shape current relations, as in this intercommunity case study. "Bigville" and "Smallville" intercommunity communities, have been locked in a long rivalry that precludes cooperation beyond the minimal voluntary service of fire protection or the largest of the valley in the county (Bergman, 1976). Bigville today has five churches and supports a church, drugstore, grocery store, bank and an elementary and high school. The most evident commu-
nity is its long tradition of gathering in July 4th which both businesses and businessmen, at the church to gossip. The community has a Women's Christian Temperance Union which takes an active role of over 100 that is galvanized every few years to defeat attempts to allow liquor in town. People in Bigville tend to vote Demo-
cratic, along with the rest of the county.

The difference between Bigville and Smallville is that neither city is dominated by Bigville although both have a similar mix of marginal and good soils. The village was laid out and settled by Kentuckians and followed by an additional influx from Kentucky and Tennessee. This southern group, however, was quickly outnumbered by settlers from the east (both New England and Middle Atlantic states) and many Germans who had crossed the Allegheny Mountains. There was never a railroad nearby or major highway, and farming dominated the economy from the start. Smallville, in contrast, was located at and at various times a flour mill and woolen mill were there, as well as a health resort built to take advantage of mineral springs. Either city.

The village population never exceeded its peak of over 800, which was reached about the turn of the century. Today the village has 450 people, who support (along with county residents) several business, a garage, a meat locker, small branch bank, bowling alley, a Masonic Lodge building, and a lumber yard. The community has an elementary and, a high school with 50 students. Smallville's restaurant is "just across" when the men gather at the "Liars' Table" for coffee. Bigville, in contrast, was known for its social center, followed by the women at 9:30 A.M. and again at 4. In addition to its distinctively small school system, Small-

ville is the only village in the county that consistently votes Republican.

Intercommunity Perceptions

Each community expresses the distinctiveness of the other when justifying their historic lack of coopera-
tion. What each group thinks about the other provides a source of real or imagined community identity. As a small village businessman described the regional explana-
tion for contrasts. "My father called the people from Bigville 'down Yankees'. I don't know why. There's been a rivalry there since the beginning. Even the Little League competition between the two towns is fierce." Similarly, Bigville people refer to Smallville as easy-going Southerners, perhaps because of the Yanks and coffee hours. For example, a realtor commented, "Smallville people seem to have a more leisurely and friendly pace of life than ours. They are a different group of workers. They work too hard and don't have enough fun. They could probably learn something from Small-

ville folks." Ethnic differences are also cited to explain their distinctiveness. A Smallville farmer suggested, "The Germans being more conservative farmers and the English having more money and being more liberal, that's Smallville and Bigville, alright." The way a

in danger of losing key businesses

residents invested in the restaurant and meat locker, which were going under.

community treat newcomers provides insight into its social structure. Two families, one low income and the other middle class, lived in the same village while after identical experiences. Lifelong low-income resi-

dents of Bigville moved after losing their home, expect-
ing to return when housing became available. "By the
time there was an opening I said, "No way. I felt like I was right at home in Smallville. People here are so friendly right away, saying how glad they were we were in town." Similarly, a newcomer businesswoman said, "We lived in Bigville a few years ago but it was too claustrophobic. We finally gave up and moved to Smallville. It's everything you could hope for. People told us as we were glad we were there, offered to help out any way they could. We've made more friends in the shortest time. I never lived here than the whole time we lived in Bigville."

People in Bigville recognized the contrast. A wealthy farm wife said that "Smallville is close-knit, Thrive. There's a difference in Bigville and Smallville. Here in Bigville everybody's out for themselves, but here people seem to stick together." Church membership rather than the community defines identity in Bigville. "People tend to be cold unless you're involved in church or school activities," commented a local store manager. Said a Bigville farm woman, "Your church is your home." Churches with particular income groups is connected with the segregation of social networks.

Cooperation achieves community maintenance and tolerance (Schwartz, 1987) characterizes Smallville's action pattern. Bigville residents act as individualists who, though living in the same place, follow their own agendas and are relatively indifferent to others. Smallville is focused inward and more concerned with local issues, while Bigville is outwardly oriented as exemplified by the leadership's self-conception (population 4500), which long ago eclipsed it in population and power. A teacher said, "Bigville has a big rivalry with Countyside. You say let's do anything with Countyside and people in Bigville say, 'Hell no.'" Three issues faced by both villages—mobile homes with low income residents, school consolidation, and local business support—highlight contrasts in how communities act (Tilly, 1973).

**Transition Issues Rural Communities Face**

**Mobile Homes and Low Income Newcomers**

Both Bigville and Smallville have numerous mobile homes and low income newcomers. A public aid and social worker said the low-income people attracted by this cheap housing "are not new to me," being attracted from elsewhere in the county. Bigville's mobile homes are generally kept in good repair, though twice as many as in Smallville. Among Bigville residents, only a minister, not long in the community, feels the owner "believes in the future of the community." Half a dozen others, both wealthy and low income, said there's "no real sight about the community he just wants to make money." Said a maintenance man, "The guy who put [mobile homes] in like a new thing. He knows when those checks come...he knows he's gonna get paid."

Because Bigville is not zoned, the entrepreneur cannot be regulated, though public pressure forced better upkeep of the previously rundown properties.

Smallville's mobile homes also resulted from one person's initiative, a local wealthy farmer, who bought the lots and encouraged low income people from elsewhere in the county to move to Smallville. He said they are very critical of Bigville and others generally approve, but all agree about his motives. "He wasn't bringing in mobile homes just to be an outsider...he was trying to bring in families with children to raise the enrollment of the school. But, then, those kind of people they move on and somebody else comes in...some have lived with children for 60 years. To guard against future problems, Smallville has a zoning statute and the mayor, with the town board, has acted to tear down deteriorated buildings. People come in because of cheap housing...that's why we're here," he said, aware that little available housing also keeps out desiring new people.

**Support of Local Businesses**

Main Street is an indicator of the support for local commercial trade. Towns ranked as "commercial vitality" in Smallville, sustains fewer businesses. There is a possible structural explanation for fewer businesses in the larger town. Bigville is closer to Countyside. Yet, Bigville residents purchase at Countyside (or Smallville, for that matter) and have their cars repaired there rather than at their hometown.

About 14 years ago Smallville was in danger of losing key businesses. Some residents, organized by the mayor, invested in the restaurant and most locker, which were going to close. "We bought six hours, everybody buys shares. Nobody could buy more than four to five hundred dollars," explained an elderly couple, who invested in the venture. A recently received dividend surprised the husband. "I got a check from the restaurant for the other day for $250. I never expected to see that money again. It was a contribution to the welfare of the community."

To give families and friends in the community a place to go, our community and the same group started a highly successful bowling alley venture. Smallville citizens are proud of their business vitality. "It is amazing that this town supports three Regal," People come from all over and they're all family businesses. The owners for a farm implement dealer is also amazing," said a farmer. They used to have trouble with the size of the store, but they don't close. Local people are committed to the community business and consider the possibility of forming another cooperative if it is needed.

A garage owner, proud of his "75-year-old" generation in the family's fifty-year-old business, reflects commitment to the community typical of local entrepreneurs: "I'm on the town board and have been for 25 years...I've never run for mayor, but I've never needed to. I would run if no one else did. I wouldn't let the town go down."

Bigville residents are aware of weak loyalty for community businesses. A Bigville store manager observed, "People in Bigville don't cooperate. They're uncooperative...they're suspicious of a business sense. They'd rather shop in another place."

A community center, however, has a lot to offer. It includes lots of opposition; a lot of complaining about where it is or hours, or whatever. So, they don't patronize it and it folds unless there's another one." Local businesses are part of the problem, according to a prosperous farmer. He argued that people only invest locally if the bank is committed. "The bank does not invest in this community so the people don't either." Some Bigville citizens work for the town, but their projects of choice indicate a personal agenda rather than the community's. People concentrate on a pet project, then complain about being unappreciated. Community beautification, including the renovation of a park, is undertaken. Bigville is an example of a Bigville civic improvement group. One restored home now serves as a museum, a project proudly described by a retired farm couple. Despite this, they still don't appreciate its history. They said, "If you're going to spend that much money don't you build a pool. But we went about $5,000, which is a lot of money."

"It is a proud businessman, pointed out as a community citizen, gave money to the museum restoration and for a new American Legion Hall to encourage local activities." He said he felt strongly that the town needed "a place to buy everyday things," but he had not worked to support a store. "I've put an old, run-down store into an I saw and I have my successes, but it seems like people don't appreciate it...what this town needs is leadership to do it."

A leadership vacuum rather than sustaining cooperation is the community's problem, people say. According to a farmer, "Nobody can agree to do anything together."

"Our school prepares kids better for college than it prepares them to take a place in the community." Smallville thinks their school produces community-minded students. "When you don't have many in the class, everybody has to take leadership and be a teacher. A parent expressed a similar belief, "Everybody is either in sports or a sports or person manager. Everybody does something; they have to. When you get a school that a kids have to work to be anything."

"Our school prepares kids better for college than it prepares them to take a place in the community."
on the school, on something that really matters," according to a retired Smallville teacher. Bigville people from all walks of life complained about taxes. For example, one man stated, "Frankly, we don't want to pay these things they don't want to do the money. They don't want to raise school taxes, support the stores, or build a bigger water system in the community. It's a problem. It would help us have a better sports program." A Bigville school official said, "People here are not concerned taxwise about preserving the community."

Most residents are aware of future problems in keeping their school. "We've been fighting a long time..." landowners [farmers] outside the community make the decisions about Smallville's future, but they usually support the school," commented a parent from the community. Despite unanimity about the school, Smallville bears the scars of the struggle in which substantial taxes were imposed in lieu of consolidation. Some Smallville farmers suffering from high property taxes favored the move to Bigville but recognized the need for a strong community administration. People in Smallville say the vote "turned family members against one another." Two brothers, one a farmer and one who lived in town on opposite sides of the road, refused to talk to each other.

In Bigville, the situation is more complicated. Prominent Smallville citizens work to promote strong ties and relatively egalitarian relations, in the interests of community survival. A local merchant, who spoke on behalf of Smallville, described their rivalry with Bigville when he was a boy as moderated from what it was: "Then you didn't spend much money, boy. You didn't go there to cruise. The kids don't mind going together with Bigville, but they're afraid of losing their school, their identity."

The Generation of Social Capital
Community Participation and Class Divisions
In Smallville, the conflicts in Smallville and Bigville represent ends of a continuum which measures the value placed on creating local social capital, and that reflects their integration in the community. Prominent Smallville citizens work to promote strong ties and relatively egalitarian relations, in the interests of community survival. A local merchant, who spoke on behalf of Smallville, described their rivalry with Bigville when he was a boy as moderated from what it was: "Then you didn't spend much money, boy. You didn't go there to cruise. The kids don't mind going together with Bigville, but they're afraid of losing their school, their identity."

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"There, all the kids with money were in a clique and they'd throw it up in the other kids' faces..."
techniques for handling controversy, gathered support for controversial issues such as high taxes, and raised residents committed to their provincial but democratic community. "Other towns think they're better than we are because we're small, but we're also closer knit because of our size. Everybody's willing and everybody works to better our community. It depends on what you get into," said a retired farmer. Bigville, with more people and resources, does not inspire collective action. Little social capital is developed for the common good for agriculture or problems. A farmer there, "See, they all compete around here. No one works together." Yet, it is Bigville that favors school consolidation with Smallville, which resists with increasing collective ingenuity. Smallville has not needed intercommunity cooperation, and is concerned that the county's size-hierarchy will once again work against them. "We're out in the boonies here. Like if the electricity goes out, Smallville is the last town to get it back." For Bigville, school consolidation is a matter of economies of scale, and because its intercommunity cooperation is minimal, is lost to intercommunity cooperation, particularly when size is on its side. In contrast, Smallville's ability to generate intercommunity collective action does not transfer to the intercommunity-level because it depends on face-to-face interaction and the tolerance emerging from cumulative built among people (Schwartz, 1987). "We all take care of ourselves, but if someone needs us we rally around. But we don't cooperate with other communities very well," was the succinct comment made by a Smallville man. It is ironic that the social capital from community involvement Coleman (1987) urges to reinvigorate neighborhood schools is exactly what is being undermined by state rural policies. According to a Smallville farmer, the state only urges mergers but is insensitive to local cultural issues. "The state pushes consolidation, but they don't really encourage cooperation."

Bibliography

Harry Wright and Cheryl Bielema. David Reynolds, Robert Netting, and David Brown provided useful in- sights at many stages.

Conclusion

Can communities act together? Internal institutional patterns affect their ability and motivation. A high degree of internal collective action to achieve goals seems to mitigate the desire or willingness to work for coop- eration between communities. Obviously, those that do not act collectively internally, have less to lose and more to gain with intercommunity initiatives than those that lack strong intercommunity ties. However, Smallville has the community with the social capital, built on strong ties, that assure social continuity. Furthermore, because the historic size hierarchy has inhibited cooperation within the county, cross-county programs stand a better chance of success. Some deficit cooperation between communities occurs already, such as the senior citizen meals for both communities being served in Smallville's restaurant, and the volunteer ambulance. The Smallville school...
My purpose in this paper is to sketch an institutionalist approach to rural studies in America. I shall examine three basic questions:

(1) What is the distinctive character, if any, of rural institutions?

(2) How can we explain both (a) the diversity of rural institutions and the (b) diverse institutional capacity of rural communities?

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Institutionalism has recently emerged as a promising orientation to research in the social sciences. The "New Institutional Economics," as pioneered by, among others, Oliver Williamson (1985) and Douglas North (1981, 1988), has brought a fresh perspective to the study of economic organization and history. Among students of rural communities prominent institutionalists include A. Allen Schmed, (1987) and Daniel Brokaw (1989), both agricultural economists. Institutionalism has also been echoed in political science and public administration, through the efforts of Charles Lindblom (1977), Elmer Ostrom (1990), Vincent Ostrom (1989), and Aaron Wildavsky (1979), to name only a few. While the new institutional economists focus largely on an understanding of private-sector organizations, the new institutional political scientists apply a similar mode of analysis to the study of public-sector organizations. What is emerging on an interdisciplinary basis is an increasingly well-integrated and systematic approach to social inquiry and policy analysis having in common a theme of institutional analysis and design.
The diversity of rural institutions is closely tied to the diversity of resources and the way in which diverse resources combine to form a resource base. The principal natural resources that form an economic base for human settlement and development are land, water (in relation to climate), water (in relation to land), wildlife (in relation to land or water), and minerals (together with topography). Each resource is fundamentally distinct. Land is fixed; water flows. Minerals are non-replenishable and therefore must be mined if used at all, while land, water, and wildlife cannot be mined. The restorative functions of the environment (including the ability of surrounding wetlands to provide water) can therefore be maintained and developed, not merely used or harvested. This does not mean, to be sure, that land, water, and wildlife cannot be mined. The restorative functions of the environment (including the ability of surrounding wetlands to provide water) can therefore be maintained and developed, not merely used or harvested. Like the urban field, rural studies are concerned primarily with people and their interactions as they form a pattern of settlement. The resource potential. Mixed use of a single resource as well as different uses of related resources can increase the value derived from a resource base, thus promoting economic development. At the same time, mixed use may require trade-offs among competing uses and can engender conflict among users. Rural communities within the U.S. embrace a considerable variety of resources, some crucial to the success of economic activity. Included, at a minimum, are coastal fishing communities, forestry communities, grazing communities, many types of various sorts, mining communities, and a variety of recreational communities. Each type of community is institutionally quite different. Although these communities are distinct, all are affected by market institutions, all have developed distinctive non-market arrangements that create a rural public economy with varying structural characteristics. Intermediary and local institutions are different in their concern to provide public goods and services—schools, roads, and fire protection, among others. The provision of these goods and services varies in quality and accessibility, with the management of local resources, lending to rural communities a type and degree of complexity lacking in urban communities. In a basic sense, however, the resource base of a rural community is shared in common, whatever the institutional configuration may be. At the most fundamental level of analysis all rural communities are composed of four resources—natural and human resources—a commons. The generic problem of the commons is how to share a resource base, while arranging for its economic and equitable use, when one person’s use of the resource base affects its potential for use by others. By the same token, all institutions are fundamentally institutions of cooperation. All patterns of social interaction occur in the context of institutional constraints and opportunities as well as in the context of physical constraints and opportunities. The way institutional factors combine with physical and technical factors is a key consideration in understanding how fast and slow rural social institutions develop. When and how, in some circumstances, they fail to perform as expected. The study of institutional failure and the reform is a significant component of an institutional analysis of the resource base. Applied institutional analysis depends on being able to address specific problems as cases of institutional weakness or failure and to offer guidance on how to ameliorate problematic conditions.

Rural Communities and Natural Resources

Rural communities are characterized by one's interactions with those whose institutions are closely tied to the direct use or extraction of natural resources. The nature of the resource base, as well as how the resource base is extracted, are factors that differentiate the development of basic rural institutions. The character of a rural community is intimately connected to the natural resource base on which it depends. This relationship is different from that of urban communities. While the urban character is more directly shaped by patterns of communication, consumption, and community character is more directly shaped by mountains and soil, water and trees, minerals and open spaces—as well as by the technology available to develop these resources. For this reason, the study of rural institutions, unlike urban institutions, is rooted in the study of natural resources. Rural communities, however, are synonymous with a network of resources. Like the urban field, rural studies are concerned primarily with people and their interactions as they form a pattern of settlement. The urban field and rural studies are concerned with the linkages between patterns of human interaction and the physical conditions of resource extraction and use. Through the context is a resource base, the focus is on people and their relationships.
An analytic framework, or heuristic model, has been developed that can assist in analyzing the institutional relationships that attempt to link rural communities in productive ways to their resource base (Oakeson, forthcoming). Based on the pioneering work of V. Ostrom (1973, 1989), the framework is now being used to address rural development problems in other parts of the world. The framework consists of four principal elements:

1. The structure of the physical world plus the technology available for extracting or directly using its resources. The principal focus is on the elements of separability and inseparability inherent in the physical configuration of a resource base.

2. Institutional arrangements—consisting of rules that specify who decides what is to be done to whom. An institution (or institutional arrangement) is a specific configuration of rules.

3. Patterns of interaction or behavior among people in a community—derived directly from the mutual choice of strategies by individuals in a social context.

4. Outcomes or consequences—how the values associated with human communities are affected by patterns of interaction. Outcomes at one point serve as a fund for future activities.

The 'common' problem associated with the resource base manifests itself in the external effects of coal mining on the surrounding community and its environment, especially in the case of surface mining. Since there is limited access, soils and groundwater are contaminated, public highways battered by coal trucks, scenic vistas destroyed, and nearby homes rocked by blasting. People, directly or indirectly involved in coal mining realize a measure of prosperity, often short-lived, while the rest of the community is left to endure both short-term and long-term social costs. Traditional economic and political institutions proved to be inadequate to cope with these circumstances, resulting in protracted and sporadically violent conflict and inevitable human tragedies (Caudill 1965).

An Institutional Analysis Framework

Institutional analysis obviously varies from one community to another. Some communities might even be characterized as institution-rich, while others are institution-poor. Creating institutional capacity is not a simple matter of duplicating the same proven institutions in one place after another. The resource-base development strategies, the cultural environment, and historical conditions within one community (1) the nature of the physical world in which they are located and (2) the institutions or role configurations that specify authority relationships. Strategic choice implies that individuals take interactively both their own and others. Outcomes derive from the interactions of individuals together with the nature of the physical world. Institutional arrangements exist and can be assessed or restructured to improve the quality of human life and the sustainability of the community. These changes must depend on human discretion to have an effect, and therefore affect outcomes only indirectly through patterns of interaction, while the physical world imposes "hard" constraints that directly affect outcomes. The relevant outcomes, or consequences, are measured by the values that people bring to their endeavors. No assumption is made that all values can be measured on a single scale, such as utility. Outcomes at any point in time either add to or subtract from the collective wealth of the community that compose the "common-wealth" of a community.

Institutions affect behavior by structuring the alternative patterns of resource development, wealth, and group interests. The key to this is the incentives in the mix of incentives and disincentives that cause people, more or less indirectly, to adopt one institution or another.

Combined with the nature of the resource, existing institutions also facilitate or inhibit the formation of new or modified institutions. Only in the mental constructs of social contract theorists, who invent a state of nature as a device for explaining the formation of institutions, do people create institutions without an existing institutional base. In the absence of specialized institutional arrangements or without the need for creation of new institutions. Some institutions serve a constitutive role in that they directly organize those behaviors that lead directly to welfare outcomes. This implies a need for at least two levels of analysis to deal with (1) the creation and modification of institutions and (2) the performance of institutions.

The high-speed development of new systems and the derivatives of resource use are derivative from role-making processes that are in turn derivative from some more fundamental set of rules. Institutional arrangements are often nested inside other institutions, which are nested inside still other institutions. Each larger, more encompassing relationship exhibits a constitutive function with respect to those nested within it.

Thus, we can distinguish a second level of analysis, shown in figure 2, through which (1) the nature of the resource base together with (2) constitutive institutions affect (3) patterns of interaction among public entrepreneurs who create (4) institutional arrangements, which are subject to the consideration of policy—rules used by policy makers to maintain or modify institutions. Remaining is the question of whether a set of instructions to be implemented, taken on the character of an institutional arrangement, that is, 6


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6 Except where the resource being mined is not easily separable among mining firms, e.g., oil. See Libecap and Wiggins (1985).
The Fisheries Case

The operational institutions created by resource users in the Maine lobster fisheries are often at odds with the policy objectives of the state of Maine to govern the resource (Schlagel and Ostrom 1987). The necessary discretion to operate these local fishery management institutions is created not by law, but by the high enforcement costs of rules that would prohibit fishermen from managing the resource. Maine fishermen do not enjoy property rights in lobster fisheries; instead, the resource is owned by the state and managed by resource users who hold a license from the state. Resident fishermen who cut the traps left by outsiders commit a crime. Others pertaining to limits on gear or catch cannot be enforced in the courts. To the extent that the state is able to enforce its laws, lobster fishing communities are disabled from managing the resource that sustains them. If California is better off in life in order to avoid the "tragedy of the commons." Viewed against this institutional background, it is ironic that more orthodox suggestions of "government intervention" to compel lobster fishermen to restrain their use of the resource. The institutional analysis of this recommendation is as follows. First, assume that the state owns the resource; second, assume that individuals have no incentive to manage the resource; third, impose state regulations in order to force individuals to act in the continuing interest of the institution-building by another name. In this view, policies are not expected to determine individual choices, but state law sets a system of institutions, but to create an institutional process that, through the interactions of people constrained by rules, generates preferred outcomes.

Policy Regimes in Rural America

Policy regimes in rural America are more generally, allocate authority among political groups. A private property regime capable of sustaining a market is one example of a policy regime. Another is a bureaucratic regime. Such opportunistic structures are administratively determined, as opposed to being created through a contracting mechanism in a market. The range of distribution is much greater, and more varied, than can be captured by simple market-versus-hierarchy dichotomy. Although many leading institutionalists have departed from such a dichotomy, it is still useful to think in terms of political communities of interest and in terms of what is perceived by those communities as the relevant institutional arrangements. The power of organized interests is not an abstract or neutral concept; they have every incentive to do so. The state's policy regime actually raises the costs of local collective action, the state must find a way to collect on the latter, which is all the more so as the state is a complex of institutional arrangements that allow for local collective action. Individual fishermen quickly feel the adverse effects of overfishing. The state's policy regime in California also includes authorization for state water agencies, with an emphasis on the large-scale development of surface water and water transport, although there is little interaction with anything like the state's water supply problems. State agencies are not oriented toward displacing local initiative and local consent, but toward building on it. An alternative approach toward local policy is to have a state's fisheries, California irriga-

Each community defends its fishing grounds against outsiders by (illegally) cutting the traps left by intruders.

The Coal-Mining Case

Coal mining on private firms, which either own or hold leases to coal reserves. Those engaged in mining hold exploitable property rights to underground coal reserves. So-called broad-form deeds, executed around the turn of the century, separate surface rights from mineral rights and include an unclear right of access to the subsurface coal. The advantages of Appalachian coal miners are radically different from those of irrigators in California and lobstermen in Maine. Each mining operation proceeds largely independently of the other. Mine operators have no direct incentive to contribute to the formation of institutions designed to address the underground physical interdependencies associated with this type of resource extraction.

Coal mining, particularly surface mining, is the subject of extensive federal and state governments in order to control external effects. Unlike the fisheries case, government has intervened directly.
mines would then become contingent on the negotiation of agreements with various community representatives—some quite local, others less so. Such an agreement would specify the nature and extent of public ownership, and others and would be enforceable in court. The negotiating process might be facilitated by authorizing coal mining companies to enter into a nonbinding agreement in court, that a judicial determination can be made if agreement cannot be reached. In this way, no set of interests in the community seems to be left out of the decision-making process and thus block the operation of a coal mine entirely. Such a policy regime would be likely to stimulate the creation of institutions that would promote a productive relationship between local operators and other landowners. Local problems would be given local solutions. Solving one type of problem would be apt to lead to efforts to solve others.

Other Potential Applications

My focus on three limited examples should not obscure the general applicability of this theory to rural problems in general, cannot be provided through a private economy, but depend on the organization of a public economy. Rural public economies have to be organized both to manage a complex resource base and to provide the local public goods and services associated with nearly any pattern of human settlement. The role of rural public economics is lower population densities. Lower densities tend to be associated with (1) lower demand for public goods and (2) higher per capita investments of production. The demand for local public goods and services is positively related to population density. In Wisconsin, for example, towns—predominantly rural unit of local government—average roughly 35 percent of what villages spend, 25 percent of what cities spend. Wisconsin is a particularly interesting case to examine because of its two types of local governments that equalize tax bases across most local jurisdictions. Lower spending in Wisconsin towns is not due to a lower tax base. The logic of rural local government is not a wealth effect of topsoil by American farmers. This is a problem that needs to be analyzed carefully using an institutionalist framework. What are the implications of farmers acting separately to engage in soil conservation? On what scale must collective action occur for farmers, as a group, to support better soil conservation? Is external regulation a feasible solution? What role can be played by existing soil conservation districts?

Increased demand for outdoor recreation offers rural communities great opportunities which may not always present great challenges. To what extent does the American "national park" model offer an adequate institutional arrangement for addressing the inherently local problems associated with the development and maintenance of natural resources for outdoor recreation and local public goods? What sort of local public rule would allow for a much greater local role in collective decision-making? How might a policy regime be designed to encourage more responsible local management and preservation of open space, vegetation, wildlife, and scenic beauty?

Rural Public Economics

Rural institutions are not concerned solely with the management of a resource base. Rural communities also require roads, schools, police and fire protection—and in general, cannot be provided through a private economy, but depend on the organization of a public economy. Rural public economies have to be organized both to manage a complex resource base and to provide the local public goods and services associated with nearly any pattern of human settlement. The role of rural public economics is lower population densities. Lower densities tend to be associated with (1) lower demand for public goods and (2) higher per capita investments of production. The demand for local public goods and services is positively related to population density. In Wisconsin, for example, towns—predominantly rural unit of local government—average roughly 35 percent of what villages spend, 25 percent of what cities spend. Wisconsin is a particularly interesting case to examine because of its two types of local governments that equalize tax bases across most local jurisdictions. Lower spending in Wisconsin towns is not due to a lower tax base. The logic of rural local government is not a wealth effect of topsoil by American farmers. This is a problem that needs to be analyzed carefully using an institutionalist framework. What are the implications of farmers acting separately to engage in soil conservation? On what scale must collective action occur for farmers, as a group, to support better soil conservation? Is external regulation a feasible solution? What role can be played by existing soil conservation districts?

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Local problem solving stimulates further problem solving—because it creates social capital

Local problem solving stimulates further problem solving—because it creates social capital
 Counties are usually too large and too diverse to be considered community-based local governments. The organization of a local public economy in public choice can be understood by distinguishing the provision of local public goods from their production (Ostrom, Tiebout, and Warren 1966). ACIR 1987). Multiple provision decisions that aggregate preferences, while production reflects the process of combining inputs to make a product or render a service. The resulting local unit or provision unit, corresponding to households in a private economy. The basic rules governing a public economy are those that pertain to the formation of provision units, for these rules determine the extent to which diverse communities are able to organize themselves to secure locally demanded public goods and services. Each provision unit, like each household in a private economy, must decide whether to produce services in-house or to arrange for production outside—by a private firm, profit or non-profit local government, neighboring or otherwise. It is important not to confuse provision issues with production issues. The appropriate basic unit of provision is a provision unit that may or may not correspond closely to the appropriate scale of production for specific goods and services.

Much of the commentary I have read on local government in rural America concerns issues of jurisdictional consolidation. These issues are likely to be very cautiously scrutinized. Presumed economies of scale in the production of labor-intensive public services often simply do not exist. On the provision side, consolidation may further weaken community ties that may already have strained by economic hardship. The most important standard to apply to a provision unit is that it represent a coherent community of interest. Widespread consolidation of rural local governments, including school districts, may degrade rural institutional capacity in the sense of a capacity to engage in local collective action. The greater challenge is faced when those states that lack an existing community-based infrastructure of local governments. Rural development, if tied to the more diverse use of a given resource base, is to require a more highly differentiated, rather than a more highly integrated, local public economy.

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Thanks to Emery Castle, Elinor Ostrom, and Vince Ostrom for reading and commenting on an earlier draft.

The theme of our conference, “Rural Areas in Transition,” gave me a surveyor’s bearing for this paper. Since transition means “passing from one place, or state of being, to another,” prepare yourselves for a passage. The place we are headed is the rural Midwest, both as it is—a land of prairie and plains, farm and ranch, the center of a continent—and as a state of mind: the heartland, a stable, enduring core of American ideals and values. Solid ground is also fertile; hence the Midwest has inspired a host of cultural images: Frontier, Middle Border, and Breadbasket. These have strongly shaped America’s dreams but also roused its worst nightmares, of financial and environmental ruin.

I spent my youth in Minnesota and Illinois, so for me the Midwest is a landscape of self-definition. Whatever setting I come to occupy, that region remains my permanent home. Historian J. B. Jackson believes that landscape gives us a spatial language, the “vernacular” of trees and crossroads, natural or built forms that shape our sense of reality. To Jackson landscape is a synthetic space, arranged by design and accidents into a frame for viewing. Writers tend to see landscape as a book, one that responds to close, attentive reading. Here is an example of that tradition, from N. Scott Momaday:

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Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth, I believe. He ought to give himself up to a particular surface in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wander about it, to dwell upon it. He ought to imagine that he touches it with his hands, entire and quiver, and listen to the sounds that are made upon it. He ought to imagine the creatures there and all the familiar voices of the wild. He ought to recollect the glare of noon and all the colors of the dusk and dawn.

Ask where the center of America is, and you elicit several answers. Butte County, South Dakota, is our geographic center point where lines of latitude and longitude cross. We have a population center in Washington County, Missouri—but each year that point moves southwest on a rising tide of birth and migration. We also have centers of power, culture, and commerce; yet not one of them remains a permanent focus, one doomed powerful and central. They are but temporary indicators of land and people, geographic symbols that briefly rationalize the fluid landscape of America.

When Europeans first began to map North America, they created views on paper that were flat and two-dimensional. The continent was a great mass of land, vague at the north-south limits, but distinct on the east and west because of the coastal shorelines. These early maps were especially impressive at the center, becoming formless where the continent was a vast, landlocked terra incognita, unpunctuated by cross-country travel.

Pioneers later, many Americans still take this old-map view of their nation. They live on the coasts in tightly packed clusters, regarding the interior, if they think of it at all, as hinterland, remote and incidental. Airline passengers see the Midwest as “flyover country,” a tedious stretch between dinner and movie when they’re flying between places “still nothing down there.” For Structures, my students struggle in vain to name and locate the Central States, referring to them only as “those square and box-shaped ones.”

The children of the Midwest might have learned the continent better from LandSat imagery, for pictures shot from orbiting satellites invest the land with a crucial third dimension. Depth makes all the difference in how we see North America, providing elevation and relief, and with them, a compelling new perspective. Vast and impenetrable, the continent becomes two thin, narrow coastal bands abruptly broken by east and west mountains. These ranges form a steep, encircling rim to a vast central region, the wide bowl of plains.

The center of North America is the end product of a long geological history that shaped this space with texture and frame uplift, as the seas parted and a giant platform of continental granite arose, gradually lifting with it higher mountain ranges. Then erosion, deposition, wind and water spilling gravel and soil down from the heights into a broad catch basin, where the sediments settled in deep layers. Finally, glaciation, massive ice ridges crisscrossed this great agricultural land, both gouging and smoothing it to create a complex relief.

A persistent myth about the Center is that it is flat and unvaried. In truth, it has a startling array of geographic forms, from river bluffs and bottoms to rumpled farmlands. It also boasts a variety of biological habitats. In the upper third lie the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Forest of hard and softwood trees. Below lies the immense remainder, a Grasslands divided between prairie and plains. The shape and location of this Center defines its functions, and all are transitional. The Center provides a spatial link between Appalachians and Rockies, a geographic transition to green, moist centers and the light brown of arid lands. The Center also spans time by connecting America’s East and West, its past and future. This region has always offered a natural crossing ground, a link in America’s life cycle. In the summer of 1865, Susan in summer in a similar web of intricate economy, the insects, reptiles, birds, and mammals find at home. The prairie life functioned through compromise, not competition; hence it offered to later ecologists a clear model of nature’s ingenious coexistence.

Finally, the early prairie was a place of disaster and recovery. Whether swept by fires and storms or racked by drought and overgrazing, the prairie endured because its grasses, trees, and other vegetation, bound by long grass roots, formed a deep, rich mat of vegetation. The one disaster this natural system could not repel was the plow. As ecologist Peter Bernhardt notes, the grasslands have a short, unhappy history: "Last evolved, first dissolved." Farming here broke up deep, rich topsoils that took centuries to build. Never has the world seen such a massive and rapid ecological transformation: in less than 150 years, plows turned the prairie into America’s farmland, a gigantic monoculture transformed into a web of boundaries and colors. In 1600, a clear prairie view led the way in this widespread conversion, classifying up to 97 percent of the state’s acreage as "under cultivation".

Today the once virgin American prairie has been greatly altered by human intervention. The inland sea of native grass now produces exotic grains, chiefly corn and wheat. These crops are not wild, windblown species, but hybridly cultivated, planted, and fertilized by expensive technology. Destruction of soil in the prairie, and in wild lands, was the first hand lesson Americans learned about environmental degradation. Once the grasslands Blished, but now barely a tenth of a percent of true prairie survives, scattered from Iowa to Montana in state or national preserves. The people who occupy this ground at first prospered, and they retain many sterling virtues. Midwest farmers live by a people’s code of education, crowned by their Land Grant universities. Living amid clean air, food, and water, the citizens enjoy good health and use a top choice as organ trans- plant donors. They occupy the nation’s richest land, yet their sociology also bears the unmistakable signs of modernity.

But land holdings and the European stock, they are said to have two failings, the Protestant church and the Republican party. Their conserva- tive values define stability and decency as life’s prime virtues. As solid as the prairie sod, they lack this rich variety of production. Instead they admire modesty and reserve, especially in speech. Innately pragmatic, they attach their ideals to the concrete miles of marriage, family, and pay their. Theirs is an agrarian civilization that cares deeply about supper. 

Prairie landholdings are known from the high costs of land and equipment, to the low profits that plaque increased productivity. In the 1980’s, 7.9 percent of Midwest farms failed, and in the 1990s, another 10 percent are facing bankruptcy. Yet every year the hopes of this region rise with the spring sun. Here is a front page headline from today’s Des Moines Register: "Olaf To Benefit Farmers." That’s Midwest optimism for you; only Iowans would welcome the greenhouse effect! Such a neatness endures for good reason; many living in Iowa in a similar web of intricate economy, the humans, so one so swiftly imposed. As the cultural historian Robert Sayre has noted, Iowa is "a landscape made by work in which there is less work of the old kind to be done."

The concept of the Great Plains is well known, from the high costs of land and equipment, to the low profits that plague increased productivity. In the 1980’s, 7.9 percent of Midwest farms failed, and in the 1990s, another 10 percent are facing bankruptcy. Yet every year the hopes of this region rise with the spring sun. Here is a front page headline from today’s Des Moines Register: "Olaf To Benefit Farmers." That’s Midwest optimism for you; only Iowans would welcome the greenhouse effect! Such a neatness endures for good reason; many living in Iowa in a similar web of intricate economy, the humans, so one so swiftly imposed. As the cultural historian Robert Sayre has noted, Iowa is "a landscape made by work in which there is less work of the old kind to be done."

Plains

To understand where the prairie may be headed, we only have to look further north to the Great Plain history of the Great Plains. The plains begin where annual rainfall drops below 20 inches, a line that falls between the Red River Valley and the Mississippi South and West. The poet Walt Whitman called the plains "America’s most characteristic landscape," thinking, perhaps, that these wide, undulating plains should generate a nation of democratic settlers. The early farmers behaved that way, treating the plains as a gigantic commons, used for hunting and grazing by a series of transient communities. The land was opened up, constantly arrived and passed on, their steady migrations allowing the fragile ecosystem to renew. But when 19th-century pioneers broke the sod and planted farms, they were trying to force the plains to behave like humid prairie. Inevitably they failed, ushering in long, repetitive cycles of drought, financial collapse, and depopu- lation.
Western greed, not Eastern interference, will ruin this pristine countryside.

- to the appalling decline of American cities throughout the Reagan Eighties, as rising crime and its costs have spun the urban environment into a rapid downward spiral. Will rural areas benefit? John Naishib, today's version of the water diviner, writes in MegaTrends 2000 that "the future will no longer commute but live far from corporate offices in "an electronic heartland," connected only by fax, computer, cable or satellite video.

- a fairly benign vision; more ominous is the prediction, voiced by Joel Garreau in The Nine Nations of North America, that the 21st century will battle over the West Plains in a struggle between the forces of earth and empire. Writing just after the 1970's energy crisis, Garreau described the plains as America's petro-

- leum bank, filled also with major geothermal and solar resources. The plains reserves of coal and oil shale could produce one trillion barrels of synthetic fuel for 175 years, Garreau noted; thus creating eight million new jobs in Wyoming alone. Yet the region is far too fragile to sustain the impact of such a populace. Western greed, not Eastern interference, will ruin this pristine countryside. As Western Enterprise Irving predicted in Astoria (1836), "On the Plains will spring up new and mongrel races, as new forms in geology, the amalgamation of the debris of former races, civilized and savage, adventurers and desperadoes of every class and country yearly ejected from the bosom of society into the wilderness."

A Ride Across the Center

The Center offers so much less advantage, above all, the importance of connecting with a place, learning to see the way it evolved and built elements relate, and how to balance their requirements. Two writers of the Mid-
west, Willa Cather and Sinclair Lewis, gave us vastly different images of what in their prairie towns: his bitterly sarcastic; hers austere yet food. They described two widely separated points of view, creating a "sense of place" not just from settings but also from remembered levels of social and economic status. But both writers the Midwest meant seasons, land and water, family, school, language, a human attachment to physical space and time. As long as Americans lived mainly in rural places this "Native Nation," historian Porterfield's phrase for that distinctive belief that America meant God, land, and family, all rolled into one.

As I drove to this meeting site yesterday, I sensed how much of that feeling endures but has also slipped away. From Madison, Wisconsin, to Cedar Falls, Iowa, is but 200 miles, a four-hour trip by bus. It reveals much of the Midwest environment I've tried to describe. Here are a few of the scenes I recorded.

- On the grounds of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum in Madison lie several long, high, mounds, the effigy shapes of bird, turtle, panther and snake. Created by people of the prehistoric Hopewell culture, the mounds contain remnants of tribal ceremony: arrow points, sea shells, bits of crude bronze—to archaeolo-

gists, clear evidence of a tremendous influx from the Appalachians to the Rockies, the Great Lakes to the Gulf. Those mound builders, early masters of the Center, lived in an apparent age of magic envir-

onmental destruction. "The ultimate value in these marshes is wilderness," he wrote, "and the cranes is wilderness. But all conservation of wilderness is self-defeating, for to cherish we must see and find, and when enough have seen and found, there is no wilderness left to cherish." This is our troubled legacy: once we had a pristine continent; by losing it, we learned to cherish our own remnants.

- The Center tells us that an intimate connection exists between wild and settled environments. Our so-

- clouded, waves of light knapt sweeping across the land, and I could hardly ask for better scenery.

- That mood shifted as I crossed the Mississippi River at Dubuque, Iowa. In a state once ruled by the WCTU, the town is growing along giant greyhound tracks. On a Wednesday afternoon at least 2,500 cars stand in the parking lot. This form of wagering may bring momentary excitement, but the enterprise yields little of deeper value. No one works the site here; producing or sharing labor and goods. Now that I think of it, some of those Hopewell burial mounds must resemble racing dogs.

Further west I came to Cedar Rock, a house Frank Lloyd Wright designed and built in 1948. One of his first post-war "Usonian" homes, this low, angular struc-
ture of red stone and plate glass was intended as a prototype for mass consumption. In his plans Wright

- "...all conservation of wilderness is self-defeating, for to cherish we must see and find, and when enough have seen and found, there is no wilderness..."

looked for ways to create simple comfort and utility without detracting from the hilltop site, a story overtopping the homes of the homesteaders. By working with Dictating how even the lamps and ashtrays fit into his conceptual plan. That may seem despotic, yet he was emulating in part the coherence of organic form and process.

- Near Cedar Falls, I saw Iowa stretch and relax in the warm of a May afternoon. Tractors plowed the dark fields, dragging white wagons. Everywhere the land had shrugged off winter, lifting again its face to the sun. And slowly, I began to see that the prairie world was not to be changed, that it survived in the roadsides and fences, along the creekbeds and up on barren hills. Anywhere the plows had sprawled, the tall grasses and wildflowers flourished on marginal land.

- Allo Loopold, most eloquent of America's early ecologists, derived his writings from studying Midwest environments, especially the prairies, woods, and lakes of central Wisconsin. His work in the 1920s and 30s was fueled by an urgent sense that wild nature was vanishing, especially from the national psyche. He also knew in that time of magic envir-

donmental destruction. "The ultimate value in these marshes is wilderness," he wrote, "and the cranes is wilderness. But all conservation of wilderness is self-defeating, for to cherish we must see and find, and when enough have seen and found, there is no wilderness left to cherish."

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During the 1970s, growth and revitalization of rural communities and economies led to a general optimism about the future of rural America. Communities experienced population growth where decline had been the trend. Manufacturing employment and service sector growth more than offset the continued decline in agricultural employment. There was talk of a “rural renaissance.”

The experiences of the 1980s have brought a return of more pessimistic views. Downturns in many of the industries important to rural economies (agriculture, mining, energy, forestry, manufacturing) have resulted in near double-digit unemployment, a rise in business failures, fiscal crises in local government, declining public services, and a renewal of the long-term trend of net outmigration and population declines. To many observers, the turnaround appears to have turned around again (Richter, 1985; Fuguit, 1985).

In a nation as geographically vast and economically diverse as the United States, description of these trends is complex and theoretical interpretations are at least as diverse as the trends themselves. Nevertheless, in the next section we will attempt to summarize the trends as they pertain to the conditions and performance indicators of labor markets situated in rural areas. In the second section we will review theoretical interpretations of trends in labor markets in the U.S.; especially those

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which have addressed changes in rural labor market areas. In the final section, I argue that it is increasingly necessary to link directly the mainstream theoretical arguments with rural labor market changes.

The will distinguish "labor markets from market areas." In doing so the term "labor markets" will refer to the social relations between buyers and sellers on labor and "market areas." will refer to localities in which market relationships occur. Within any geographic area, or administrative unit, there may be numerous labor markets operating. Some may involve only local buyers and sellers (e.g., the farm labor market or the local retail sales market), others may involve buyers and sellers who participate in a broader market (either national or global market (e.g., physicians, corporate management, or university professors), and others may involve mixtures of local, regional and national markets. However, for any locality the labor markets operating within its boundaries combine to create the characteristics of employment in the local labor market area. Within this framework the confusion found in the literature deriving from the frequent failure of authors to distinguish markets from the geographic areas in which markets operate. One major drawback in analyses that attempt to link market areas and labor markets has been the lack of satisfactory data for spatial areas. Recent work in the Economic Re- sources Service, Agricultural Economics (ERSAE), of Agriculture has attempted to address this problem by compiling labor market data for market areas (Tolbert and Killian, 1988).

It is especially important to separate markets from market areas when determining the most appropriate public policy strategy to deal with employment issues. If locality is of importance, the employment issues may be reasonably addressed by macroeconomic policies. However, if there is greater diversity among labor markets, some may be harder to recruit and additionally may need to be targeted along the lines of industrial sectors, occupational groupings, social classes or local labor market areas. Using a combination of data sources Deaver's and Osterman, 1988)

Trends

Since mid-century the rural economy of the U.S. has undergone a shift away from agriculture and other natural resource-based industries to a greater diversity of economic activities. Rural labor markets in the U.S. are no longer primarily monotonous, and are a function of which has been repeated in recent publications by American econo- mists and sociologists who study rural labor issues, including Castle (1985), Bean (1985), and Duncan (1989), Hall and Lyson (1989), Drabenstott and Henry (1988); Sumner et al. (1988); Weber, Castle, and Tomes (1989).

Indeed, primary industries provided only 5 percent of employment in 1986. The whole food and fiber system—from the farmer to the retail merchant—is in decline as a source of employment. In 1975 this system employed 21 percent of the civilian labor force in the United States. Ten years later it employed 18.5 percent. Moreover, the farm sector's contribution to GNP is declining; from 2.7 percent in 1975 to 1.8 percent in 1985 (Duncan, 1989). Against this employment downturn in agriculture and natural resources, the growth of manufacturing and service industries in rural economies has been particularly noticeable and important to public policy.

Employment by Industry Sector

The service sector clearly gained the growth in labor demand over the period 1960 to 1980. In 1980 there were 33.6 million more persons employed than in 1960 and 20.4 million of them worked in the service sector. Manufacturing provided employment for about 4 million additional workers. These trends were espe- cially pronounced in the rural (nonmetropolitan) labor market areas. While the manufacturing sector is a significant growth sector for from 2 million during the 1960s to 4 million during the 1970s, accounting for nearly 75 percent of the non- metro employment growth during the 1970s. Manufacturing added about 1 million new jobs each decade to the nonmetro labor market which amounted to 16.9 percent of the employment growth during the 1970s (McGrathena et al., 1986:21:2).

Trends in the relative contribution of industrial sectors to total employment are also instructive. In 1960 the service sector accounted for 40 percent of employment in nonmetro areas. By 1984 that proportion had risen to 69 percent. Manufacturing followed a pattern of 22.6 percent in 1960, 25.5 percent in 1970, 25.2 percent in 1980 and 20 percent in 1984. In sharp contrast, the relative contribution of primary industries in 1960 (20.7 percent) had declined to only 5 percent in 1984. Primary industries include agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing. General employment in nonmetro areas has been declining since 1960 and 20 percent in 1984. In sharp contrast, the relative contribution of primary industries in 1960 (20.7 percent) had declined to only 5 percent in 1984. Primary industries include agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing. General employment in nonmetro areas has been declining since 1960 and 20 percent in 1984. In sharp contrast, the relative contribution of primary industries in 1960 (20.7 percent) had declined to only 5 percent in 1984. Primary industries include agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing. General employment in nonmetro areas has been declining since 1960.

From 1969 to 1976 the rate of service employment growth was a more pronounced degree than growth in wood products. By contrast, employment growth was only 10.6 percent in 12 of the 16 market areas and durable manufacturing in the six. Public education and administra- tion led the employment roster in 26 of the labor market areas in 1980, followed by services and retail trade as "diversified" (Duncan, 1989). When these figures are considered in conjunction with the national labor market data, it is evident that the categories of local labor markets are not the same. In fact, the data shows that most service industries are underrepresented in nonmetro areas in 1984; consumer or household ori- ented service industries are dominated by employment in the primary industry sector. This situation in all the economic performance of these 182 rural labor market areas, Killian and Hady (1988) found that those specialized in durable manufacturing had the worst record, far worse than those specialized in primary sector industries. (Their summary index was based on the employment growth rates of all industries; the other hand, labor market areas specialized in public education and administration, and those with a diversi- fied industrial base consistently had the better eco- nomic performance records. Blooomquist's analysis of rural manufacturing perfor- mance presented in the first of the 1980s (Bloomquist, 1988). By grouping rural manufacturing according to the product cycle model of industrial organi- zation (cf. Thompson, 1965; Norton and Rees, 1979), he found that "bottom of the cycle" firms dominate manufacturing employment in nonmetro areas. These industries are distinguished by their demand for labor relatively low technical skills and their low wage rates.

Employment by Occupation

The growing importance of service and manufactur- ing industries in rural labor markets is also revealed in the changing pattern of employment by occupation if one accepts the argument that white-collar occupations are predominately in the service producing industries and that manufacturing industries are dominated by blue-collar blue-collar and in 18.2 percent were employed in blue-collar occupations (Bloomquist, 1988) reports that nearly half of the rural work force was employed in white- collar occupations. According to Bloomquist and 24.2 percent were working in low skill white collar occupations (technical, sales or admin- istrative support).

Blue-collar occupations provided jobs for another 37.2 percent of the rural workers; 22.7 percent in low- skill blue-collar jobs (operators, fabricators, and labor- ers) and 14.5 percent in white-collar labor among industrial groupings and occupations (precision production, craft, and repair). Using statistical reports from both the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the time from 1969 to 1984, Bloomquist (1988) concludes that "While the rural manufacturing sector has had substantial growth in recent years, most of the growth has been in manufacturing industries that pro- vide low-skill and low-wage jobs." (Bloomquist, 1988).

In a related analysis McGrathna (1988) divided manufacturing into "complex and routine" industries based on the proportion of the industrial employment in manual and professional and technical jobs in the primary sector of total industrial employment. What he found is that the routine industries are more commonly located in rural areas and that more than 50 percent of the profes- sional and technical jobs are located in rural labor markets. On the other hand, occupations such as "me- chanic and machine operator" and "welder" have a disproportionately high presence in the manufactur- ing sector of rural labor markets.
It appears that rural manufacturing tends to be composed of small firms with routine operations and larger multiple-location firms which locate their routine production in rural branch plants. There is considerable evidence that many of these firms identify their agglomerations in areas where rural labor requirements are met. Glasse, 1968; Falk and Lyon, 1988, esp. pp. 44-49; Barkley, 1988; Malecki, 1989).

The Human Resource Base

In theory, labor market outcomes are determined as much by the demand for the product of the low-wage supply of labor as by the industrial and occupational characteristics of the demand for labor. In this context, it is an historical fact that the human resource base of rural areas have been at a disadvantage when compared with urban areas (McGranahan, 1988). Although the gap in years of formal education has been closing, it still remains; especially for the younger generations. This is in part due to the inequality of education between rural and urban areas. The age at which the urban migration of the older adults and, therefore, the labor force participation of the younger generation of women and men is primarily a function of education. Therefore, this gap has increased over the past 15 years due to the failure of the economy to function at a level lower than 2.5% of rural labor market participation is higher among poor families in nonmetro than in metro areas. Over the past 10 years, nonmetro residents have had at least one member active in the labor market. In one year, they had at least two income earners and still they were poor (Brown and Deaver, 1968). There is little evidence that this is changing; the income differences and salaries of rural workers, but it also reflects the higher rates of unemployment and underemployment (Osterman, 1985).

Social and economic changes have brought about a new and different social division of labor which is manifest in various labor market experiences and outcomes (Brown and Deaver, 1968; Falk and Lyon, 1988; Killian and Hady, 1988; Boksi and Boksi, 1988, 1989; and Snapp, 1989). White women and men in rural and non-metro areas are more likely to have jobs with lower earnings, less stability and fewer opportunities for advancement. These conditions have prompted some to refer to the plight of minorities in rural America as the "Third World in America."

Labor Market Theories

Recent trends in rural labor markets and labor market areas are beginning to attract attention of economists and sociologists who wish to explain all of these clear evidence regarding the rural labor market. The demand for rural labor is undoubtedly greater than the demand for urban labor, but it is not always clear whether rural labor provides better opportunities. The concept of entrepreneurship is also relevant to this discussion. Entrepreneurship involves the identification and exploitation of opportunities for economic gain. International economic theory figures prominently in the debate, it may be useful to review its principle. A labor market is composed of not only the production of labor but the supply of labor. Therefore, a labor market is an institution that governs the exchange of labor services and thereby distributes labor among occupations, industries and labor market areas.
to yield the maximum efficiency in the use of a society's resources (Shaffer, 1989; Krehm, et al., 1974). According to Mark Henry, "Economists usually analyze markets from the perspective of apatral behavioral models in which there is a profit maximizing employer who desires to hire labor so that the last unit of labor hired is paid a wage that is equal to the added value of the product obtained from that labor unit. The market also refers to the pool of households that attempt to maximize utility in a leisure-income trade-off process and thus offer different quantities of labor services as the price of leisure varies." (Henry, 1989: 29)

Thus, labor market outcomes are determined and supplied with wage being the key instrument for reaching an equilibrium.

The assumptions underlying neoclassical labor market theory are extremely restrictive. These include the following: that workers and employers have complete knowledge of all opportunities, that both are rational and will maximize either their satisfaction or their profits, that workers and employers are sufficiently numerous that any single transaction will not alter market price, through collusion or other means, that labor within a market is homogeneous and therefore workers are interchangeable, there is no competition, and that no barriers exist to interflow of labor among occupations, industries or geographic locations. Therefore, unemployment occurs only when these assumptions are not met or when there are other reasons for market failure.

Within the neoclassical model, unemployment is seen as different according to the sources of the market failure and is often divided into demand deficient unemployment, structural unemployment and frictional unemployment. The first refers to a situation where the market demand for labor is greater than the market supply. The second refers to a situation where the market supply for labor is greater than the market demand. The third refers to a situation where the market supply and demand are equal, but the market equilibrium is not at the full employment level.

Demand deficient unemployment occurs when there is a mismatch between labor requirements and skills available. This is usually taken to mean one or more of the consequences regarding the supply of labor have been reduced. For example, a decrease in the demand for labor will cause unemployment. Structural unemployment occurs when there is a mismatch between labor requirements and skills available. This is usually taken to mean one or more of the consequences regarding the supply of labor have been reduced. For example, a decrease in the demand for labor will cause unemployment. Frictional unemployment occurs when there is a mismatch between labor requirements and skills available. This is usually taken to mean one or more of the consequences regarding the supply of labor have been reduced. For example, a decrease in the demand for labor will cause unemployment.

To sum up, the global economy has experienced significant changes in the past 50 years. These changes have been driven by technological advancements, global trade, and changes in government policies. As a result, the labor market has become more complex and diverse. The demand for labor in certain industries has increased, while in others, it has decreased. This has led to changes in the types of skills that are in demand and the geographical locations where jobs are available. The government and private sector must work together to address these challenges and ensure that the labor market remains stable and productive.
of retirees are nearly equal that of persons under age 65 and the proportion of the U.S. population over age 64 will increase well into the next century. Retirees are a growing market.

The list of non-traditional rural economic activities which have a potential for generating exportable goods and services is quite large and the size of the opportunity has not been fully explored. However, advocates argue that it merely includes medical centers that serve a non-local base of patients and the associated consulting and teaching facilities, or incomplete data on the total number of non-local students, recreation and tourist activities, research and development laboratories, military installations, regional offices of the federal and state governments, and some business and service enterprises. The technological changes in communications favor a spatial dispersion of both production activities and producer services; advances in telecommunications and transportation have overcome the cost of distance for at least some nontraded market areas (Garnick, 1972; Leinaweaver, 1972).

Spatial Location Theories. There is an enormous general literature on the subject of spatial location of economic activity. For the most part, this urban-oriented with population density, the value of space and the cost of distance being central. To the extent that rural labor market areas have been treated at all in these...

output has steadily increased while employing fewer workers. This has been accomplished by substituting capital and technology for labor.

Theories of location, decision-making and interdependence are important to the development of theory and practice. In its simplest form, the theory of location states that the profit maximization principle applies to the location of economic activities. The problem can be stated as follows: given a set of production possibilities, how will an entrepreneur choose among alternative locations for his business?

The decision-making process is influenced by the nature of the business, the size of the market, the availability of resources, the costs of production, and the level of competition. The entrepreneur must consider these factors in making his decision, and the decision will be influenced by the market conditions and the available resources.

The model assumes that the entrepreneur will choose the location that maximizes his profits. This is achieved by selecting the location that offers the highest net return. The net return is calculated by subtracting the cost of production from the revenue generated by the business. The location that yields the highest net return is the optimal location for the entrepreneur.

The model also assumes that the entrepreneur is rational and will choose the location that offers the highest return. However, this assumption may not always hold true in reality. The entrepreneur may be influenced by other factors such as personal preferences, family considerations, and political connections, which may affect the decision-making process.

The model is useful in understanding the location decisions of economic activities. It provides a framework for analyzing the factors that influence location decisions and the consequences of those decisions. The model also highlights the importance of market conditions and available resources in determining the optimal location for an economic activity.

Supply-Oriented Theories

The supply of labor consists of the number of workers willing to sell their labor at a specified wage rate and stipulated set of skill requirements. A great many factors may operate to determine the labor supply which includes the degree of geographic mobility of the population with the ability to acquire the requisite skills, competing opportunities for work activities, and non-market goals of the potential workers. Institutional factors may also operate to shape or distort the supply of labor as when hiring rules operate to exclude certain categories of workers (Ken, 1983).

The supply of labor may be supplied as the starting point for a number of contemporary labor market theories which differ largely in their choice of locational parameters and model elements. Human capital theory (Becker, 1971; 1975) emphasizes labor supply in explaining the operation of labor markets. According to this theory, workers are hired and retained because of their productivity which is a function of their skills and knowledge, acquired through schooling, training, or work experience. Workers are paid a wage that is less than their productivity relative to competing workers. Therefore, workers may increase their future earnings by investing in productivity-increasing activities, such as schooling.

In addition, the model assumes that all individuals follow this rational model of investment, the human capital differences among individuals, and the change in their expectations for annual returns on investments, in costs of acquiring human capital, in total returns on investments, in calculations of discount rates, and in variations in the opportunity costs of the investments. Traditionally, the empirical work in the U.S. based on the central place theory has been largely concerned with descriptive studies. The focus of this model is on the characteristics of different size places. However, it has provided a basis for arguing that service industries cannot provide a stimulus for increasing labor demand in rural labor market areas. Applying a logic reminiscent of the product cycle theory, Miller and Bluestone (1982) argue that household-oriented services will be distributed in relation to population size, while business-oriented services which can market over large geographic areas will continue to locate in metropolitan areas where they can take advantage of the cost and marketing advantages of agglomeration. If this argument holds, rural labor market areas face a future of "residual specialization in certain manufacturing activities, a developed government, recreational, and retirement businesses, and some distributive activities (Miller and Bluestone, 1982: 135)."
Institution-Oriented Theories

Critics of the human capital theory and demand-oriented theories argue that they ignore important aspects of the relations of work, the interplay between work structures and markets, the interrelations among work structures (industries, firms and locations) and labor markets (and within labor markets in particular) (Parkes and England, 1988; Osterman, 1988; Kalleberg and Berg, 1987; Whiteman, 1989). Kalleberg and Berg have summarized a number of these arguments which they urge, "Work structures describe the ways in which labor is divided, tasks allocated, and authority distributed. (1988:3)" Among the labor economists and sociologists who emphasize organizational and institutional factors there are three major perspectives, each of which focus on internal labor markets, those concerned with dual and segmented labor markets, and those calling attention to the informality of labor markets.

Internal Labor Markets

J. R. Lawrence (1984) emphasized that economic activity is social, and that the basic unit of analysis is the transaction (employment being one type). He identified two aspects of the organization of production (or performance). First, the technologically process of production, consumption etc. of physical things (commodities) and 2) the business process of "buying, selling, borrowing, lending, commanding and obeying according to shop rules, working rules or laws of the land (1924:8)." Economizing by limits, rules and norms of behavior, which generally have been neglected in economic theory, this institutional theory claims that there is something more fundamental than supply and demand forces -- the context within which a market is embedded or a market as such. Internal Labor Market (ILM) theory is an institutional approach to the political economy of employment transactions. As such, it seeks to understand, at levels of the rules, institutions (formal and informal) which structure labor markets, and within which, more or less, supply and demand forces are perceived and organized to operate. Rules at the level of the employment transaction are related to rules at the national level and economic policy more generally, so that institutional labor economics can be thought of as a sub-discipline of institutional economics.

Much has been written over the last twenty years on ILMs, particularly as they relate to dual and segmented theoretical development of ILMs of structured markets. There is considerable debate, however, as to what ILMs are, their origins historically, what factors influence their evolution, their functional importance, and how to distinguish different types in different settings (eg. cross-cultural, regional, occupational, industrial or organizational).

The rest of this section intends first, to clarify some of the definitional issues and second, to suggest some applications of ILM theory to the recent trends in rural labor markets.

ILMs were discussed by a group of "necostitutonal" labor economists in the US (among others Reynolds, 1951; Kerr, 1954; Dunlop, 1957). Labor markets are considered to be organized around a number of internal practices which represent mobility across firms, and their extent within firms which represent mobility within the firm or establishment. According to Kerr (1954), unions are the most important institutional factors which influence the labor market. Seniority is the source of employment security for the industrial type ILM, whereas the accumulation of skills and the regulation of the supply of skilled workers is the source of worker security for the craft ILM. The procedures and substance of relations in the two types, thus institutional theory maintains an inductive orientation.

In the past resent, ILMs have been given a more neoclassical interpretation. Based primarily on human capital theory and the demand and specific job training, ILMs are explained as resulting from a maximizing logic that, for the most part, benefits both workers (in terms of Cooper and Kerr; 1971; Williamson, Wachtel and Harris, 1975). In order for the firm to reduce turnover in those jobs which require specific training, it is more economically rational for the firm to offer job security through job ladders and lifetime employment opportunities. What is emphasized in these analyses is the economic rationality of ILMs from the employer's point of view.

Edwards (1979) account of the spread of ILMs is fundamentally consistent with this view. However, he emphasizes the need for control of the labor force rather than efficiency concerns. Still, ILMs are thought to be rational and not just because of the interest behavior because of employee cooperation and employer discretion, required for the exploitation of labor, is being exchanged for worker job security and internal mobility. Craft or occupational type ILMs and union1 generally are neglected in these more recent analyses, which partially explains why ILMs have come to be understood simply as labor markets internal to the firm. We wish to maintain a broader conceptual framework, it is our position that ILMs are not loosely defined here as relatively homogeneous groupings of workers, the boundaries of which are determined by insiders and excluding outsiders. These barriers take a variety of institutional forms, such as unions, certification and credentialing, personal and corporate loyalty of individual workers.

Several typologies, all of which are variations on Kerr's original categories, have been proposed (Doering and Piere, 1971; Altfrauer and Kalleberg, 1981; Osterman, 1984). Kerr's emphasis is on unions, either of the craft or industrial types. Doering and Piere outline three variable aspects of the craft and industrial types: first, they can be open or closed with many or few years of entry; second, they can have broad or narrow job clustering and opportunity for promotion; and finally, they do not have an employment by seniority, ability or a combination of the two. Altfrauer and Kalleberg distinguish ILMs (either occupational or industrial) from "open" and "closed" systems, in addition to the craft and industrial types, adds a third type of ILM which has relevance for the analysis of rural labor market. He calls his theory a "policy ILM1 referring to low skilled, poorly paid, short-lower job groups, which may or may not have long tenure.

None of the typologies has been applied in a comprehensive way to the analysis of structured labor markets. An integrated institutional approach would include such factors as technology and skills (Doering and Piere, 1971; Berger and Piere, 1990); the needs and motivations of employers (Edwards, 1979; Osterman, 1984; Wachtel and Harris, 1975), the role of the state in the formation of relevant institutions (Lovejoy and Mok, 1979; Lovejoy, 1983), and an understanding of the historical context which threads these factors together in coherent institutional complex (Jacoby, 1984).

Doering (1984) conducted a study of two rural labor markets in order to assess the nature of ILMs in rural areas. The areas he selected are 99% white, so his results are limited in their generalizability, particularly concerning the U.S. His main objective is to explain the trend of the 1970s for higher employment growth in nonmetropolitan areas than metropolitan areas, as well as the conditions of rural employment more generally. In the two case studies

1 Lloyd Fisher's (1951) detailed analysis of the "unstructured" agricultural labor market in California could be considered the first exploration of this phenomenon. In his book "Labor Market in America. What is interesting to note is that he did not explore the conditions under which this would occur (1951:2) (unions 2) impersonal relations between employer and employee) 3 unskilled work with skill intensity 4 pay by piece rates rather than by time. "He also identifies two main barriers to mobility into nonagricultural employment, discrimination by employers and restrictive practices (including race prejudice) by unions to limit their labor market supply. He also relates the mobility to labor market differentials between the structured and "unstructured" markets.

2 Edwards discusses unions as having an indirect influence on the occupational type ILM. He states that "the spread of ILMs to this day is a device to ward off discontinuation and labor unions, and unions are not described as key negotiators of ILM rules.

3 Osterman's terminology is somewhat confusing because in the Dual and Segmented Labor Market (SLM) theory groups ILMs into a single primary sector, distinct from the secondary sector which is the external, unstructured market. However, in Dual Labor Market (SLM) theory identifies two or more segments in the primary sector, and the external labor market becomes the "secondary" market. This is important when it comes to the contribution of their poor and disenfranchised groups in society and by their attention to the lack of externalization of the poor and disenfranchised groups in society and by their attention to the lack of non-rural labor markets. As described by Doering, are closer to Osterman's primary market. These are the core segments and, on the secondary or residual sector. They have made a contribution by their concern for the poor and disenfranchised groups in society and by their attention to the lack of Doering finds a predominance of jobs and outcomes which in some ways are characteristic of the "unstructured" secondary labor market. For example, they are low-wage and low-skilled jobs. Yet, in other ways these jobs are "better" than those in the residual sector in that tenure can be long, not because of job specific training or craft skills, but due to informal agreements and understanding among loyal workers. Rather, it is "paternalism," informal agreements, quid pro quo exchanges of an assortment of uncodified benefits (relative job security being one of the most important) for loyalty, low wages, and flexibility in deciding employment levels. Referring to these practices as gift exchange, Doering makes the point that "[t]he employers' gift, however, is harder for the worker to replace than it is for the employer to find another loyal worker (1984:285)." The power differen- cial favors the employer, an arrangement by seniority, ability or a combination of the two. Altfrauer and Kalleberg distinguish ILMs (either occupational or industrial) from "open" and "closed" systems, in addition to the craft and industrial types, adds a third type of ILM which has relevance for the analysis of rural labor market. He calls his theory a "policy ILM1 referring to low skilled, poorly paid, short-lower job groups, which may or may not have long tenure. None of the typologies has been applied in a comprehensive way to the analysis of structured rural labor markets. An integrated institutional approach would include such factors as technology and skills (Doering and Piere, 1971; Berger and Piere, 1990); the needs and motivations of employers (Edwards, 1979; Osterman, 1984; Wachtel and Harris, 1975), the role of the state in the formation of relevant institutions (Lovejoy and Mok, 1979; Lovejoy, 1983), and an understanding of the historical context which threads these factors together in coherent institutional complex (Jacoby, 1984).

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institutional supports and power bases from which these groups can build their own protective structures or institutions (Gordon, 1972; Lovernage and Mok, 1961). People living in lower-income areas of the city may sound like an artifact of bygone days, an activity left behind in America's early industrial days with the Ford Model T. A thorough research of scientific social-

sociologists and labor historians concludes that formal economic activity is quite invisible. It was assumed to have existed only in an "earlier, harder stage of capi-
talism; when nakedly exploited unorgan-
ized and defenseless workers (Leidner, 1987)."
The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 which prohibited the most common forms of home work was thought to have succeeded permanently in eradicating homework in the United States.

That does not seem to be the case. Starting in the 1970s, the popular press once again began exposing the resurgence of "illegal sweatshops" and cottage indus-

tories in the older industry of garment-making, and in the newer industries, such as carpet backing in Cau-
sen, 1985; Ibor, 1986; Leidner, 1987). Today, as in earlier periods in the United States, homework is paid for by the piece or unit of production, and is characterized by an absence of fringe benefits or job security. Home-

work is defined as income-generating activity done in

The focus is on sex and race discrimination and the disproportionate location of women and racial and ethnic groups in the residual sector.

and other informal activities are not the result of random choices of persons or groups of one industrial era, but are a response to a more fundamental and global process.

Informal economy is defined as a dynamic process, rather than mere activity, which is characterized by the following: "it is unregulated by the institutionally established, collective environment in which similar activities are regulated (Castells and Portes, 1986)." While the product of this relationship is usually legitimate or illegal in the market, the success of the relationship may not be gained, and usually in-
volves lack of protection, underpayment, insecurity and dependence for the worker. Homework is one type of informal activity, as are sweatshops.

Proponents argue that the resurgence of informal economic activity is a response to global restructuring intended to overcome the structural crisis in capitalism occurring during the 1970s (Sassen-Koo, 1986; Fernandez-Kelly, 1983; Castells and Portes, 1986; Portes, 1985; Portes and Ruggiero, 1983; Castells and Castells, 1989). There are several underlying causes for the increase in informalization on the international level, which apply as well to urban and rural informal activity. Most often mentioned is industry's reluctance to grow working-class strength during the 1960s. Unions im-
pose capital accumulation by organizing workers' de-

For example, unions and strikes. However, in the 1980s and early 1990s, unions in the United States have weakened, and the relationship between the informal sector and the traditional sector is not as strong. In addition, the informal sector is not as visible as it was in the past, and it is not clear if it is growing or declining. It is clear, however, that the informal sector is an important part of the economy, and it is important to understand its role in the global economy.

The informal sector is an important part of the economy, and it is important to understand its role in the global economy. The informal sector is important because it provides income and employment opportunities for a large portion of the population. However, the informal sector is not regulated and it is not subject to the same regulations and protections as the formal sector. This lack of regulation and protection can lead to exploitation of workers and to the development of poor working conditions. It is important to understand the role of the informal sector in the global economy and to work towards improving the conditions of workers in the informal sector.
Industrial homesteading is an indicator of industry's efforts to implement restructuring in response to fiscal crises of the preceding decade. Homesteading in the U.S. is increasing precisely when unionization is diminishing, and, in parts of the U.S., the declining potential for unionization, contributes to the growth of contracting and sub-contracting, and undermines full-time factory jobs. If the trends of industrial homesteading are important, then the informal sector is not isolated or marginalized relative to the formal sector, but is an integrated and significant component. Italy's economic recovery has been credited, in large part, to the increasing use of informal labor in the last decade. Second, the informal sector tends to develop and flourish under the knowledge and tolerance of the government — the encroachment — of the state. In Latin America, "governments tolerate or even stimulate informal economic activities as a way to keep potential social conflicts and demonstrations to a minimum." While in Europe, the governments of developed industrial nations have come to depend on informalization as a means of reducing the tax burden and stimulating economic growth and recovery out of recessionsary periods. In some rural areas of the U.S. the local governments are actively pursuing companies whose work is informal, and encourage their use of local labor as part of the overall economic development strategy (Grinker, 1989). That informal labor relations are "at home" in rural areas could come as little surprise, given the trends discussed earlier. The greater prevalence of routine manufacturing jobs, and the documented growth in low-wage and lower-level employment, and greater disparity between metro and non-metro household income all point to the potential for growth of informal activities. The depressed agricultural economy in many rural areas, in conjunction with the potential for working in exchange for a somewhat increased household cash flow, make more significant elements in local economics, and the conditions to which they are exposed, are dominated by agricultural practices. They must be considered as being more sensitive to macroeconomic policy, business cycles, and governmental policies. The growing importance of broader labor market theories of sociological and economic geographies, and the increasing understanding of the conditions and performance of rural labor markets and rural labor market areas. For example, the study of factory labor in rural areas is more timely than ever. The shift in manufacturing linked labor markets are more open to the consequences of shifts in production technology. Similarly, rural labor markets are more linked to national and international labor markets than ever, and are thus more sensitive to macroeconomic policy, business cycles and global competition.

The Agricultural Labor Market and the Diversity of Rural Economies

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The Agricultural Labor Market and the Diversity of Rural Economies

The unvanished truth is that neither labor economics nor sociologists have turned their attention to the task of explaining the rural labor market trends outlined above; especially with reference to these theoretical perspectives. The exception is a relatively small body of literature dealing with the agricultural labor market which has been summarized recently by commodities, followed by labor (1989). Historically, there have been studies of farm labor, the division of workers from agriculture to non-agricultural pursuits, the movement of rural workers, and the expansion of the informal sector. But these studies were designed primarily to describe conditions apparent in earlier decades; primarily those of rural life. And the research is of World War II until the mid-1970s. When attention was given to rural labor markets, not just farm labor markets, the focus was on human resource development, employment and income. The recognition of the importance of the informal sector in rural areas is not new, but the growing importance of the informal sector in rural areas is now clear. The informal sector in rural areas is increasingly interrelated with each other and with the Nation as a whole. The specific economic development efforts appear to be increasingly appropriate in tomorrow's rural America. (46)

Acknowledgments

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Rural development strategies often depend upon industrial relocation to boost local economies, create jobs, and relieve unemployment (Summers & Branch, 1984; Summers et al, 1976). Recently, much emphasis in rural development has been on the creation of non-agricultural wage labor as a means of stemming the decline of "the family farm."

In turn, industry has often looked to rural areas as fertile fields of surplus, low-wage labor, in the same way that it has chosen to relocate from North to South, or to off-shore locations, or to increase the proportion of subcontracted labor in order to remain competitive in the world market (Sassen-Koo, 1986; Truelove, 1987). In some cases, industry employs more than one strategy simultaneously; for example, increasing subcontracted labor in rural areas, much of which may take place at the worker's residence, rather than in a factory or office. As economically depressed rural areas seek to attract industry to their communities, one possible strategy is the development of industrial homework jobs, in which industry acts as a distant employer of rural families in home-based assembly work (Fink, 1986; Christensen, 1985; Kraut & Grambsch, 1987).

This study examines how industrial homework has become an integral part of economic development in two rural Midwestern communities. The factors which

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The homeworkers in this study are what some researchers would call "disguised wage laborers". The homeworkers who are informally employed essentially shares all the risks of self-employment with few or none of the benefits. Work. Unlike the self-employed, the informally employed homeworker does not control the means of production or the distribution of the surplus. The informally employed homeworkers are generally delineated by the type of work, the hours, and the earnings. These distinctions also carry over into the self-employment status homeworkers are generally delineated during the interviews when the workers described conditions related to the work, the household, and the community. The labor market is the key concept in understanding homework as worker-subordinated work. For the purposes of this paper, I am going to focus on two major themes, the nature of the work and the work conditions and the nature of the flexibility, in order to illustrate my understanding of industrial homework as worker-subordinated work. In the following discussion, the names of places and people have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Working Conditions
The general working conditions of industrial homework
illustrate in part the material subsidies all workers contribute to this kind of industrial development through specific aspects of their jobs. The employer, the Company, and the homeworkers. The Company defines these workers as "independent contractors," because they are contracted to work for only one company, they are legally considered wage employed in the home. Their weekly contract with The Company distinguishes them from the truly independent worker-contractor. These homeworkers have no control over their working conditions, including workload, pay and other benefits, and they are paid a piece rate per task. The Company, or independent contractor, return of completed work, determines the piece rate for each type of bolt on the weekly contract, and sets the quantity and availability of work for each driver. The homeworkers in this study are what some researchers would call "disguised wage laborers" or informal sector workers (Truelove, 1987). They share attributes of the labor relations of both employers and of self-employed workers. Similar to the work conditions of employers, there are external controls on the hours, quantity, quality and regularity of work for the homeworkers. Like the self-employed, these homeworkers are responsible for Social Security and other social insurance benefits. Many of the informal sector resources in the household are used to accomplish the work.

The homeworkers who are informally employed essentially shares all the risks of self-employment with few or none of the benefits.
Social Security was handled differently for Riverton workers. At first, no deductions were made, and the money was returned to the workers. But after some public pressure, the company decided to deduct Social Security "just to keep the government off my back." After a year, the Company deducted Social Security at the self-employed rate from the workers who had invested in it. It is unclear how this is justified, since self-employed workers are responsible for their own contributions. However, it is stated that the reduced rate was never deducted in Riverton, whereas workers in Prairie Hills were consistently and fairly treated.

The work of the company was to take responsibility for their own safety and well-being on the job. Hourly pay was determined by the number of hours worked, and deductions for bonuses were based on the rate at which the work was completed. The pay was never changed in Riverton, though there was an increase of $1.20 per hour for the first three months of the year, which was then reduced to $1.00 per hour for the rest of the year. The overall pay rate was significantly lower than the minimum wage.

The company paid an hourly wage for their training periods, which ranged from as little as one dollar to as much as $4.60. Riverton workers were paid less than $2.00 for their work, but Prairie Hills workers were paid $1.75 per hour.

The company paid a small percentage of the employees' salaries to Social Security, and this percentage was the same for all employees. However, the workers in Prairie Hills were paid at a rate of $1.50 per hour, while the workers in Riverton were paid at a rate of $1.00 per hour. This was a clear indication of the company's ability to change the pay structure at will.

The workers had a say in the company's policies, as they were allowed to participate in the decision-making process. However, the workers in Riverton had less of a say in the company's policies, as they were not involved in the decision-making process.

The company paid for all expenses related to the work, including meals and transportation. However, the workers in Riverton did not receive any benefits or compensation for their work.

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Company. What the worker contributes is far in excess of labor covered by the piece rate when one considers the physical work, change to the productive process of production, added labor for rush work and rejected work, disproportionate contribution to Social Security, and the absorption of lower pay rates for training and adjustment periods, and the lack of security and benefits.

Flexibility

The theme of flexibility enters the discussion of the individual worker in various ways. Home-based work, in the eyes of some, is made possible for the worker by the increased production which increases profits because overhead costs associated with labor are reduced greatly. These reduced costs include any fringe benefits for the workers, the costs of maintaining facilities and equipment, the costs associated with changing equipment to meet varied production needs, and generally lower wages for workers. Home-based work is often seen as a flexible job arrangement because it offers the worker the possibility of working around other responsibilities. Workers tend to see working at home as an autonomy in the sense of setting work hours and determining the pace and method of production, and the ability to share the work within and between households.

Flexibility as the autonomy to set one's schedule is limited by The Company's production schedule. The worker could not be expected to know the whole schedule and cycle, which is a predetermined amount of the assembly work. Within that week, the workers' freedom to determine a work schedule is much dependent on what else has to be done. As one worker said, I think if it just comes up as to you do want to go do something else, you go, it's not like I can't. It's that you can, but you know you're gonna hafta make up the time later.

The reality of the homeworkers is that "the bolts have to get done," or as one woman said, "You can only do so much else. The bolts have to be done and that's it."

The weekly schedule of production for the entire company tends to govern the worker's schedule and activities. Other activities become a tradeoff in terms of the time needed to complete a kit. Molly is a young woman with six young children who assembles bolts in Riverston. She expressed the time tradeoff as:

"Your kit has to be done. Sometimes I'll take a day off, and I do, I don't do the bolts at all. I don't do anything to make up the day. I just know if I have to get it done and if I have to get it done unless I just think my tomorrow I'll just hafta push the whole thing off and do it in the morning."

Most workers express the time flexibility as an advantage because they see it as a matter of their choice. They see the homework as an assembly work and do something else, recognizing that later they will have to make up for it. It appears that the advantage found in the autonomy to set one's schedule lies in this factor of flexible choice on the part of the worker, rather than the observed experience of choice circumscribed within The Company limits on time. Another aspect of the flexibility of time is that there are no boundaries to the work schedule, which may be done at any time of the work hours, she may also find that there are no two "good" work hours.

Homework is always there for the worker, regardless of what tasks or activities took time during the day. One worker said, "I didn't even need the homework because it was about five hours per day in her case, but that when those hours were added to her other responsibilities, making meals, doing laundry and attending to the children, she was putting in much longer days."

The flexibility of the work time often gives the homeworker's family the impression that she can be easily interrupted.

My husband thinks I should get the bolts done somehow, but I don't know when he thinks I'm supposed to do it. I haven't figured out that yet, because no, he doesn't treat it [as a job]. I'm supposed to do it, yes, 'cause I'm home and at night, ya know, if I'm home and it's a good time, that's fine, but for the most part it's it's my own face, I don't get up 'til this is my work time, ya know. But none of 'em can understand that if you try to set times, they can't, ya know. They'll call me up, 'I'm heaven, I'm heaven, I've done it before,' and I have done it before, I said, 'I don't know. This is my job, I'm supposed to do this,' but I don't get up 'til it's my work time, ya know. I have done that to 'em before, and I'll sit down in the evening and work, and they won't wanna see me like that. They don't like it when I stay back them and work, and they don't like it when I don't help 'em out, but once in awhile, ya know, just hafta do it once in awhile you can't do itodule. Because I don't know otherwise how, some weeks it is hard to get it done. The work went and you've you've done this and that and all, ya don't ya don't get it done."

The flexibility of one's homework schedule becomes dependent upon several aspects of the household: how much one can set working hours apart from family needs and desires, how to accomplish the work while still attending to child-related choices and tasks, and the extent to which the worker in homeworking is getting other family members to contribute to the assembly work or the household tasks.

The above worker, Rita Kelly, points to the difficulty of not having her work hours recognized within her family setting: informal labor done in the home means the worker is recognized for setting boundaries which are customarily set by the outside market which allows her to accomplish one's work relatively unilaterally interrupted by the needs and concerns of family. Whereas the formal work market is characterized by a continuous cycle to which they respond throughout the day and evening.

Homework provides the opportunity for women to engage in household labor while remaining in the workforce, which is supposedly resolving the conflict between outside wage labor and attending to family needs. Yet the conflict remains to be unresolved for many of the women. Homework accounts for the worker into the home adds to their work, extending the workday. The other needs and tasks do not disappear, and usually are considered by the women as being of a lower priority than the piecework. This flexibility in the piecework can come to mean that the homeworker's own needs, especially as a paid worker, take precedence."

Families often assume that all will continue as usual, and women homeworkers find themselves dealing with the same situation, homework, which lacks the security and benefits. The double: the day job, or double sets of expectations about work.

Women become flexible in the context of homework, and then recommit to the work. Women's workspaces become flexible as families request she work beyond their vision and hearing. Flexibility goes well beyond the autonomy to set one's schedule. In other words, what extent this autonomy exists. In many of these households, women homeworkers become flexible to the multiple demands of family, home and paid work.

Men who do homework do not usually experience flexibility in the same way as do the women. Homework as a job is appreciated because it is flexible with farm work or other remunerative labor, not because it allows them to remain at home with their children, nor because they lower their need for a lead hand on the work of the bolts. One male homeworker reflected on the advantages of the assembly work as "it works out good in connection with the farm. Because where I'm working here at home, I can work nights or rainy days. I can fit this in with the rest of my schedule."

Men homeworkers also tend to "set up shop" outside one's house, close to the homestead, in order to be near to the homestead, creating the sense of separation between home work and at least, at putting distance between work and the activities and chores, for example, for men, was not embodied in household tasks, and thus taking on the homework did not create the same need to separate home and work as did it for the women homeworkers. Rather, the homestead was linked to other wage labor, and the male homeworker has less trouble defining the assembly work as the "real job" in addition to work on the homestead.

Between women and men, homeworkers, flexibility varied in quality as well. Men who did home assembly work were often the only ones to hire out to other people, or hire in to help with the farm work, but did not take on greater domestic or familial responsibilities. Men dealt with flexibility by using help, and maintaining the separation between work and home. Women experienced the flexibility of homework as an activity that absorbed all specific tasks and timing of the regular tasks of childcare, housework, farmwork, and outside wage labor, while men were able to define their own flexibility to incorporate and choose homework as part of their work.

In conclusion, the continuous supply of women workers is necessary to the success of industrial homeworking in these communities. As long as women are considered "sec-
An Emerging View of the Natural Environment: Implications for Rural Communities

John E. Ikerd

The emerging view of the natural environment in rural areas is but one element of an emerging view of the natural environment in the world in general. "Current perceptions of emerging rural environmental issues reflect an evolution. Over the decades, the key environmental questions asked by agricultural economists have rotated from those addressing the impact of natural resource use, price and policy on farmers' welfare to those addressing the impact of various human activities, including agriculture and forestry practices, on environmental quality and human health (Blake)."

Current economic problems of rural communities are in no small part a reflection of a past preoccupation of policy makers with increasing agricultural productivity to reduce food costs and to free rural resources for other uses. Negative side effects of production technology on the ecological and social environment of rural areas for the most part have been ignored.

However, changing public priorities, reflecting greater environmental and social concerns, may result in fundamental changes in agricultural policies. Contrary to conventional wisdom, changes in agricultural policies may still hold the key to regeneration of rural economic development.

References


Acknowledgments

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Home as its location? I have provided some material from the workers which points to the experience that paid work done in the home predominantly by women is not viewed as "real work," leaving the door open to low wages and other poor working conditions, including the reinforcement of those conditions in the home which make home work possible. Recomendations to decrease the risks of economic insecurity are important to improvement of basic working conditions, but I am acutely aware that such changes will not necessarily bring the recognition and status of "real work" upon the work women do, especially when that work is done in the home.

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The Environmental Agenda

Early Day 1990 was a tremendous public relations success with the interest of a wide range of individuals around the world. The first Environmental Agenda was conducted in 1970. That Environmental Agenda on the basic of a decade of questioning and discussion produced a set of economic values. Rachel Carson's book, Silent Spring, published in 1962, chronicled the effects of DDT on wildlife and provided an important perspective for the environmental community. Environmentalists concerned about the impacts of commercial pesticides on the environment. These environmental advocates initially were labeled as radicals, extremists, and extremists. However, the U.S. Congress eventually responded to growing public concerns in a number of bills designed to preserve wildlife areas, protect the environment, and control pollution of air and water. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies with similar responsibilities emerged from the environmental movement of the early 1970s.

The Federal environmental agenda was largely abandoned for a number of reasons. Problems of run-away inflation followed by a severe energy crisis mixed diversions and public attention to pressing short-run economic problems. However, a decade of environmental neglect at the federal level seems to have provided a stimulus for a more focused, better organized and better financed environmental movement as the decade begins.

Environmentalists have also realized that some phenomena such as acid rain, greenhouse gases, toxic waste, deforestation, pesticide poisoning, species extinction, and ozone layer and oil spills and accidents during the 1970s. As a consequence, the environment once again rose to the top of the political agenda. Both U.S. presidential candidates in the 1988 election ran on environmental platforms. The success of the Environmental Agenda 1990 seems to reflect an America that is ready for the "decade of the environment," a decade focused on the problems of sustainable development rather than short-run economic survival.

An Historical Perspective on Rural Economic Development

The fundamental purpose of economic development is to increase the living standards of the rural poor and to provide them with access to the benefits of modern technology, education and health care. In addition, economic development can lead to significant social benefits such as increased agricultural productivity, improved food security and reduced poverty. However, economic development must be planned and managed carefully to ensure its sustainability.

The rural poor are defined as those who lack access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water. They are often unable to participate in the formal labor market and have limited access to credit and financial services. Economic development programs aim to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for rural communities.

Agricultural development is a key component of economic development in rural areas. Agricultural development programs often focus on increasing crop yields and improving the quality of livestock. However, these programs must be carefully designed to ensure that they are sustainable and have long-term benefits.

Economic development programs also aim to increase access to basic services such as education and health care. This can be achieved through investments in infrastructure such as schools and clinics. Access to education and health care can have significant positive effects on economic development, increasing productivity and reducing poverty.

In conclusion, economic development in rural areas is a complex and multifaceted process that requires careful planning and management. Economic development programs should focus on increasing agricultural productivity, improving access to basic services, and promoting sustainable development.

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booming years of the 1970s. Fewer people are needed on farms with conventional farming technologies. Not only have large farm inputs been reduced, but land and climate, but machines have been substituted for labor, the unemployed. The unemployed have been squeezed out of agriculture as a natural agricultural environment. Technological advances reduce the need for labor. The result has been a chronic depressed labor market. There is a growing concern that the view that farming is no longer a major factor in rural life, and that it should be considered an economic activity. What level of economic activity will the de-agrarianized fixed resources of most rural communities support?

Towards Sustainable Rural Economic Development

Sustainable rural economic development must be based on the potential of a significant and diversified geographical fixed resources in ways that conserve and meet the physical and social environmental needs of those who work and live in rural communities. Many communities may be overlooking the economic potential of a significant and diversified geographical fixed resources. It is only one element in a diversified, sustainable farm resource management. Off-farm income, for example, can be increased by diversifying and sustaining an otherwise vulnerable farming operation. The geographical fixed resources of rural communities can be integrated with other industries and other economic enterprises to develop sustainable rural communities. Equality is important. A new vision of community must be more knowledgeable, more creative, and more skilled to sustain rural communities with limited, geographically fixed resources.

Options for the Future

Rural America is changing, and Hyman contends that rural communities are caught in a gridlock between two outmoded visions of rural development. One, he calls the agrarian perspective that rural areas are still farm areas and that agriculture is the driving force in rural areas. The other is the notion that rural areas are a mixture of farms and urban areas. Farming as a way of life still exists, but the composition is changing. Urbanization perspective that rural areas can re-

... there are costs associated with this migration out of agriculture. [including] the specter of a permanent underclass in the cities.
services, health care and education. Provision is made for the arts, culture, and recreation." He goes on to point out that "this vision remains to be developed as a viable option for policies and action." Could such a vision possibly be made a reality, through any conceivable set of policies and actions?

Any policy or action designed to restore and sustain rural communities should address the causes rather than the symptoms of rural economic decay. Rural communities are economically depressed because of basic economic forces which have continually deviated the human and natural resources of rural areas.

Income levels are depressed in rural areas because of the continuing economic pressure to force rural people into other jobs and resources out of agriculture into other uses. Education levels are low in rural areas because there are few realistic employment opportunities for highly educated, creative managers or skilled workers.

Conventional farms and agribusinesses require a significant degree of competence and some hard work. But they are not knowledge-based industries. The principal returns in modern agriculture are returns to land and capital, not returns to labor and management. Other rural occupations tend to be those attracted by depressed labor markets and are even less intellectually demanding than farming. The supply of educated people in rural areas is small because the demand for education is equally small.

Health and nutrition levels are low because income and education levels are low. Community services are lacking because a chronically depressed, underedu-

A sustainable agriculture must be capable of maintaining its productivity and usefulness to society indefinitely.

The resource and environmental consequences of specialized large scale farming are causing the public to question the past preoccupation of agricultural policies with production efficiency. The social consequences of conventional agriculture on rural people should raise additional questions regarding past policies.

A sustainable agriculture may well be the key to rebuilding sustainable rural communities. The most important policy for future rural economic development could well be policies which address the ecological and social dimensions of a sustainable agriculture. The emerging view of the natural environment in rural areas is one of stewardship or caretakers of the resources which ultimately must sustain life on this planet. The sustainability of rural communities and ultimately of world society, however, still depend on the sustainability of agriculture.

References


bers, urban professionals very early gained control of the leadership of American public education, leadership which fell completely to address the "racial school problem." By the 1980s, the National Education Association Committee of Twelve prescribed. . ., the solutions which can be applied in rural schools, pupils, expert supervision by county superintendents, taking the schools out of politics, and professionally trained teach-
era. But the years are running out.

because the rural school is today in a state of apparent development, heightened by education traditions, lacking in effective or positive leadership. The people, who, too, often, do not realize either their own needs or the possibilities of rural education, and taught by teachers who, generally speaking, have but little comprehension of the rural-life problems...the task of organizing and retool-ing rural education is difficult and will be slow (Clutterbuck, 1914).

The urbanization of the public schools into what David Tyack has called a "one-class system" brought with it a mission and a set of quality standards which were much more appropriate for urban than rural settings (Tyack, 1974). This curriculum was designed to prepare an industrial labor force, for jobs primarily in urban areas. Quantity was synonymous with quality. Input characteristics of schools, which were easily quantifi-
able, were thought to reflect output quality. The nation offered courses, the more books in the library, the greater number of specialized teachers, the better the school. This was in fact, the input of quality that school quality continues to dominate public policy, driving much of the recent reform legislation which has swept the coun-
try. More courses are being loaded into math, science, and foreign language. There are pressures for a longer school day and school year.

While this system of school has served the larger society reasonably well. As the last analysis, it has been the expense of rural schools and rural communities in at least five ways. First, because bigger is considered to be better, by the criteria for "second best." Even with school consolidation, which was and in many places continues to be the solution to the rural problem, rural schools were not considered to be as good as urban schools because there was no way that they could become equally as large. Second, because the importance of school success was how well students were prepared to continue their education and . . . public school has become one of the biggest economic drains on the resources of rural communities.

or fail work in larger urban areas, rural schools served to "export" rural talent and high ability rural schools have become one of the biggest economic drains on the resources of rural communities.

The question then is different depend-
ing on one's perspective. If viewed from the per-
spective of the education profession, the problem is perceived to be one of inadequate quality, an appra-
ix which we will examine in more detail a bit later. If viewed from the perspective of the local community, the problem is one of being a severe drain on local re-
sources, both human and economic, an issue which also will be examined in more detail later. First, a few general statements are made about the relationship which exists between rural schools and the com-

rural school has fewer specialized teachers, who in general have less formal education. Teachers often have three, four, or five years of experience, some of which are assignments in areas where they are only minimally qualified. In a study of rural districts Schmuck and Schmuck (1980) found that over 10 per-
cent of the administrators and 90 percent of the teachers interviewed had grown up very close to where they are now teaching. There are both positive and negative aspects of an employment process that results in these figures. On the one hand, an effective school is one that has a coherence around values and mission. Growing up in the area helps insures this coherence. However, a school staffed only with "home-town" type people is sure to be limiting in the exposure to new ideas, result-
ing in a more rigid and traditional experience. Rural schools will offer fewer courses at the secondary level, and provide fewer options for special need students at the elementary level.

While the above characteristics which accompany small size have over the years been used as reasons to consolidate rural schools, recent research suggests that further consolidation makes little sense. Monk and Haller, at the request of the New York State Legislature, conducted an extensive study of school size and class offerings. Their study, Organization Alternatives for Small Rural High Schools, (1986) not only considered the school size/number of class offerings issue, but looked at the number of teacher preparation and avail-
ability of courses and classes offered more than one period a day, thus reducing schedule conflicts. The study confirmed the fact that numbers of class offerings does decrease, the decreased in size from 100 in high school up to 3000. It concludes:

...the curricular offerings of the very smallest secondary schools in New York are seriously deficient. These deficiencies are most evident at the most proficient levels in grades 9-12 to fall below 400 and become even more serious as enrollments fall further. Several of the deficiencies, most notably the availability of courses, accessibility to the offerings, and the types of courses which teachers can specialize, became especially acute when the grade 9-12 enrollment drops below 100. It follows, then that there is very little in the way of the attempts by the State, or anyone else, to increase enrollment levels in grades 9-12, for schools would be able to identify is the fact that variety of course offerings continue to grow beyond the 400 pupil level. But this growth of course offerings is not sustainable and does not lead system-
ixally to the offering of a coherent, widely agreed upon curriculum.

Educational critics such as Goodlad (1984) and Boyer (1983) are being joined by others such as the National Conference on Technology in Secondary Mathematics and the American Board of Advancement of Science in their questioning of the notion that more is better.

They point out that the structure of the curriculum which packages knowledge into discrete disconnected courses, taught in 55 minute classes, may not be education-
ally sound if we are to educate students for the 21st century. This factory model of education is fine for the industrial society, but not for the emerging information age. Just acquiring the basic skills and facts is now not sufficient. Problem solving and higher order thinking skills are needed. Their recommendations include teach-
ing fewer, more integrated courses, in longer time peri-
ods. Recurrent use of the same patterns, courses and because teachers often teach in more than one content area, are of necessity closer to realizing these recommendations than large schools.

At the elementary level, experts in the field are also questioning whether specialization has gone too far.

. . . as enrollment size increased, the percentage of students actually taking such courses as chemistry, physics, or business management decreased.

Schools are now being encouraged to mainstream spe-
cial need students, placing them back into regular classes in so far as possible. Teaching strategies such as cooperative learning techniques that are an integral part of multi-grade teaching assignments of the one-room school, are being recognized as good instructional practices, particularly for students who tend to be at-risk.

Process Indicators

There is a growing consensus of what constitutes effective school characteristics in terms of the educa-
tional process. From the work of such notable researchers as Ron Taggart, Diana Ford, Scott, Ernst Boyer, Sara Lightfoot and Michael Rutter, the consis-
tent elements of educational excellence revolve around such interrelated and critical factors: (1) positive leadership; (2) high expectations of student and teacher achievement; (3) respectful relationships among students, teachers, and students, and parents; (4) individualized instruc-
tion and attention; (5) an emphasis on the academic basics; (6) parental/community involvement and support; (7) allowing for both students and teachers on their performance (emphasizing positive reinforcement and success); (8) a friendly, but businesslike, classroom and school cli-

era; (9) a tolerance of educational differences in intellectual, physical, emotional, and social develop-
ment of students; and (10) a tolerance for individual initiatives and for trying new approaches to learning (Boyer, 1978; Goodlad, 1984; Edmonds, 1974; Light-
foot, 1983; Rutter, 1979).

While all of the above process indicators are well "rural" but the presence of process indicators is very much related to the community context rather than appearing generally in all rural schools.
study of fifty-two high schools in Eastern Kansas ranging in size from 35 to 2287, found that larger high schools produced more of the top graduates as measured by the ACT test results. This study found that as enrollment size increased, the percentage of students taking such courses as chemistry, physics or business increased, while student achievement decreased. Why is this so when large schools offer many more courses than small schools? In small schools the lack of class offerings may lead to a greater variety of courses and more basic subjects, they just have to take what is offered. In large schools, however, such as they like art, there are many art courses to take, often at the expense of exploring other areas or taking more years of math or science. A healthy balance of activities, Students who are actively engaged in the total process of schooling, including participation in extra-curricular activities are also likely to improve their academic achievement levels. The Kansas study mentioned above found that such participation "reached a peak in high schools with enrollments between 200 and 150. The proportion of participants was 2.0 at 20 times greater in the small schools as the largest schools in the group (Barker and Gump, 1964).

Performance Indicators

Given that rural schools have both strengths and weaknesses, it is important to develop the performance criteria, what is the evidence about how well rural schools perform and the students attending those schools perform? How adequately are student prepared when they leave rural schools? Unfortunately, the answer to these questions are not readily available for a number of reasons. Haas (1990) suggests a couple of reasons for the thin rural education knowledge base. First, the rural education knowledge base is not precisely defined, there is no useful definition of what is rural. Second, knowledge is not neutral, it is value laden. The rural education knowledge base is created in a context that reflects the prevailing view that is at best, invisible and more realistically, unvalued.

The usual education knowledge base is created in a context that reflects the prevailing view that is at best, invisible and more realistically, unvalued.

standardized math and reading tests administered to 102 school districts in Colorado to grades 5, 6, 11, and 12 from 1979 to 1982. (Turner, 1985) The most significant correlation was a high negative correlation between student achievement test scores and the size of the student population of the district, with the larger districts obtaining only 1.3 percent less achievement than the smaller districts. A study by Edington and Gardner (1984), conducted in cooperation with the Montana Office of Public Instruction, resulted in a series of standardized tests given to Montana students in grades 6 and 11 from 1975-1980. The researchers computed Pearson Product Moment coefficients. While the significant relationships they found did not account for large amounts of the variance, there are trends throughout the data which lead us to believe that the the students in these schools, both the academic and secondary levels, have higher scores in the cognitive domain than those in the larger schools."

Morse, Hio, and Smith (1985) conducted an extensive survey of one-room schools in the states of Nebraska, South Dakota, and Montana. The researchers followed students into high school after eighth grade graduation, and with cooperation of the one-room school districts, they assessed the educational experiences of those students at the rural high school and the rural home school. The survey confirmed that the students from one-room schools were as well prepared for entrance into high school both academically and socially as were students from the larger towns and city elementary schools.

Wolberg (1988), in an "everyone and size efficiency" study of the small schools, concludes that "Generally, it appears that the smaller the district, the higher the achievement when the SES and per-student costs are low. Small districts should small districts do well? Superintendent and central staff awareness of citizens and parent preferences, the absence of bureaucratic layers and administrative complexity, teacher involvement in decision making, and close home-school relations may account for the apparent efficiency of small districts."

College Success

The Beyond High School study concludes that most students were better educated by 1986; 73 percent conformed their formal education after high school, compared with only 64 percent of nonmetro seniors. One should note, however, that this study assumes that adequacy of preparation is the priority determinant of a student's vocational education. Clearly, financial and other considerations enter into this decision. Furthermore, the study does not take into account persistence to graduation or the fact that the line of fourths of higher education students do not enter directly from high school nor do they complete their degree in the traditional time frame.

The achievement test scores presented from the state data are generally limited to the basic subjects. One could argue that students in schools that do not offer advanced mathematics, foreign language, or years of foreign language would not be as well prepared for college work as those who had access to such courses. In specific instances, however, if scores on the ACT tests are any measure of college preparedness, this appears to generally not be the case. The study did account for the racial composition of students from districts of 300 or less with those between 301 and 900, found that student performance on the ACT Exam was significantly higher in the small districts.

Stee (1988) in examining the distribution of ACT scores, found the distribution of the scores given by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the autumn of 1985 (the most recent year for which these data are available) found that those high school graduates of the three smallest groups of schools. The 282 freshmen from the smallest high schools (with 24 or fewer) performed better on the SAT exam than the equal number of students from larger schools (with 150-199in their class) recorded 20.8 average score. The
UNL freshmen at the largest high schools (with 250 or more in their class) had annual dropout rates only 20.7 on the ACT.

In a Montana study to determine if there is a relation-

ship between the rate of college graduation and the size of high school from which students graduate, and the rate of decrease in the number of students versus large

schools in relation to the adequacy of academic prepara-
tion for college, Clark, 1989 concluded that size of high

school attendance in Montana does not appear to
determine students' subsequent success in college. Ac-

ademically, students from the smallest high schools did

just as well as those that did not and sometimes better, than students from the largest high schools.

Attending a small high school in Montana is not a

handicap. It appears that students in smaller high

schools obtain a more personalized education with a

stronger basic skills background which enables them to

graduate and go on to college in four years.

The Schools and Rural Development

Existing data on the quality of rural schools is both

conflicting and inadequate. What is certain, however, is

that education whether rural or urban is not good enough

for the future. An education designed for an industrial

society will not serve the nation in good stead as we

move into the information/service society. The changes

that need to take place are not only academically connected. If

schooling is to be relevant for rural areas, then the rural

society must change as well. In the rural community, the

characteristics of the age group may have an impact on the

educational process, but just what is needed to bring about a

more viable situation for rural America.

The small school community is characterized by

specialization, standardization, and centralization. It is in this set of

characteristics which, when played out in the education

system, result in the belief that bigger is better. More

specialized courses are being taught, and thus more

specialized teachers are better than fewer teachers who are

generalists. Specialization has even found its way into

the elementary school. Traditional classroom struc-
tures replaced the multi-grade structure of the one-room

country school. Now the gifted, compensatory, and

special need students are removed from the classroom

for special programs and an increasing array of special

needs continue to appear. Standardization has resulted

in a curriculum which, to a large extent, is dictated by

statewide standard adoption. Centralized administration has resulted in a continued push for

school consolidation, removing schools from rural communities.

We are now moving into a new paradigm. The

characteristics of an information society are quite dif-

ferent. Instead of generalists for the assembly line,

generalists are needed that can interpret the big picture

for problem solving. Standardization is giving way to

diversity; centralization to decentralization. Such char-

acteristics are much more in tune with the inherent

**Characteristics of Small Scale and Rural Society where...

entrepreneurs and farmers are common, not excep-

tions.**

Preparing students for an information society will

require a different approach to learning which is much more experimental, one that involves students in information gathering, data analysis, and problem solutions. Textbooks and workbooks, while useful, if used exclusively provide only a symbolic medium which is defined by the teacher. As a result of the relevance of learning, a style of schooling and classroom organiza-
tion that is engaged students for more actively with the natural and human world around them—not just in the context of science or social studies, but as fresh

subject matter for artistic expression, mathematical analysis, astronomy, history, and for reading and writ-
ing. Because of their small scale and ready access to the

environment, rural schools are able to implement such a program more easily than large urban schools. Rural schools could lead the way in the restructuring of educa-

tion. With this redesign, education on a small scale would be seen as the best possible education, not sec-

condary.

The information society holds promise for rural

communities in another very significant way. In

an information society, what one does for a living and where one lives are no longer closely connected. If

one has access to the information infrastructure, one has a

choice of lifestyle. For those who enjoy the rural lifestyle and want the option of employment will be available, and particularly since the majority of new jobs will be created by small entrepreneurs rather than the Fortune

500.

Given this changing context, the Rural Institute of the

Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory has been piloting a program, Rural Schools and Commu-
nity Development. The program has four component parts, 1) exposing the school to the concept of com-

munity development, 2) using the commu-
nity as the focus of study, 3) entrepreneurship education, and 4) using resources of the school as an incubator for new enterprises.

Expanding the Mission of the School

The public school is often the largest single enter-

prise in rural communities. It is the last

viable social service agency. There are ways to use the

resources of the school to make a greater contribution to

the ongoing health of the rural community. Involving

school and community leadership in a discussion of ways

that this might happen is the first step in restructur-

ing the school community relationship. Expanding the

mission of the school to include community develop-

ment means the nature of the student body is redefined.

The school of the future is likely to include students from early childhood to senior citizens.

COMMUNITY As the focus of study

The kind of "thinking curriculum" needed for the

21st Century will actively connect the subject matter

being studied to the background of the learners. Such a

curriculum must be relevant to the experiences and interests in the lives of students. The conduct of economic sur-

veys, writing feature length stories on local businesses which might include a school-wide collecting data for an FinHa low cost housing loan for retired person may make the learning process more powerful while increasing students' understanding of how the local economy works. Providing opportunities for young people to become participating/ contributing members of the community contributes to self esteem. What students learn to know they learn to love. This understanding opens up career possibilities that did not formerly exist. For at least some "getting out of town as soon as possible" is not the only option, and returning to raise families is a new possi-

bility.

Entrepreneurial Education

Traditionally, schools have been much more effect-

ive at teaching students to find jobs than at creating jobs. Students need entrepreneurial skills to enable them to fill the niches in the local economy identified by community studies. Conducting market surveys, develop-

ing business plans, and learning about information

resources are good learning experiences and skills that

will last a lifetime.

Schools as Incubators

New enterprises are most vulnerable during the first two or three years of operation. Most rural communities do not have ready access to the technical assistance and resources that have been found to be useful to fledgling businesses. The resources of the school could be used to provide that assistance.

There are the differences between another community or eco-

nomic development around which the restructuring of the rural community may begin. Economic development, however, represents the most easily understood and therefore the most salable. The future of rural commu-

nities depends on rural students being provided an education that is relevant to the present and the future of their communities.

In summary, rural schools may have been maligned unfairly throughout the years. The evidence suggests that indeed the exception of rare students with very particular special needs, rural children have been served quite well. With a renewed focus on the information soci-

ety, rural schools have the opportunity to be the leaders in redesigning schools for the future. And, if we are wise enough, not only will the education of rural chil-

dren be improved, the future for rural communities will be brighter as well.

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The Standardization of Rural Schools

The four largest schools of the state had an annual dropout rate of 9 percent while the one hundred smallest
districts had a rate of 17.7 percent or approxi-
mately 7 percent for the four year period (compared to 25 percent nationally).

Similar figures are available from Nebraska where the

district dropout rate is 7.7 percent. The two largest

districts, Lincoln and Omaha account for 26 percent

of all 112,600 secondary school students enrolled in
districts with a public, K-12 school in that grade level. However, these two school systems accounted for 52 percent of all dropouts in Nebraska's K-12 districts. More students in the two largest districts dropped out last year than in all the other 279 K-12 districts combined.

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The Response of Public Institutions to the Changing Educational Needs of Rural Areas

Glen C. Pulver*

The quality of life in much of rural America is now declining when compared to that in urban areas. Symptoms of deteriorating conditions include higher priority rates, increasing unemployment, a growing spread in the level of per capita income, and poorer health and education. Absent meaningful public intervention, rural economic conditions seem destined to lag those in urban areas for some time to come. Citizens and policymakers alike are asking what can be done to revitalise rural America (Brown et al., 1988; Congressional Research Service, 1989).

The great economic diversity of rural America complicates public intervention strategies. It was once thought that effective farm policy which bettered farm income conditions would improve immediate income prospects for most rural citizens. But farming, which once dominated rural economies, is now only one of a number of basic rural income sources. Nonfarm employment in manufacturing and services is much more important to local economic health in most situations. Once reliant on the natural resource base, rural Americans find their future increasingly dependent on their capacity to stimulate the growth of high technology manufacturing, producer services, tourism and retirement-based industries. The cause of the rural decline and any solution is clearly broader than shifts in the structure of agriculture (Heary et al., 1987).

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A strong case is made that the root cause of the relative decline in rural regions is that they are simply at an efficiency disadvantage in attracting contemporary growth industries. Except in the case of some rural resource-based businesses, the farther communities are located from metropolitan centers, the weaker their economic position. The fact that the more remote rural regions are generally economically worse off provides some support for that argument (Deaver and Long, 1988; Ebel, 1986). Other economic indicators are becoming poorer because of chronic underinvestment in public infrastructure. Highways and bridges are deteriorating rapidly and the historic failure to adequately invest in public education has resulted in a work force ill-prepared to meet current job requirements (Bawden and Brown, 1988; Dean and Koyha, 1988).

Today, many argue that the level of local economic success is greatly affected by the quality of community leadership. Proponents of this position suggest that rural economic growth is possible in spite of other detrimental conditions, if community leaders are willing to take risks, are committed to sustained effort over time, seek external technical assistance and make wise investments in their future. The great variation in income among rural communities with otherwise similar resource conditions offers some support to this argument (John et al., 1988; Economic Policy Council, 1990).

The Status of Policy Education

It seems clear that the economic revitalization of most of rural America will require comprehensive development policy. The residents of rural communities have a host of complicating problems. Some may be anxious to encourage employment growth in order to provide jobs for their maturing children. Others may opt for the retention of rural employment without job growth. The opportunities are not all the same. High technology manufacturing may be a realistic opportunity for one region while tourism is a more likely objective for another.

A wide range of policy options may be available, but they are of little use unless policymakers are aware of the problem and know how to get traction for effective policies. Historical experiences with external economic and political institutions differ. Many communities have received strong emphasis efforts and new ones—efforts that are often less than satisfactory—while others have been neglected. In any event, no single strategy or plan fits all rural circumstances. As a result, public policy for rural development requires careful articulation at the national, state and local levels. The presence of high quality leadership, capable of energizing and focusing national, state and community action, along with technical and other assistance, is requisite to rural development. This is a special problem at the local level in rural areas. While urbanized urban areas, rural communities are at a leadership disadvantage—because citizens are less intelligent or unable to provide leadership, but because in rural areas there are fewer people to distribute the leadership load; they have a narrower knowledge base because their local economic base is less varied; they have fewer financial resources for employing a well-trained policy specialist; and they are frequently at a greater distance from urban centers and thus have less technical assistance in both the private and public sectors. As a result many rural development leaders do not have the training or the knowledge or the skills that are needed to address the problem.

Perhaps, the most important initiative which could be taken to stop decay in rural America would be to train the rural leaders who are necessary to provide continuing education and technical assistance regarding development to rural leaders and officials. This would help local leaders make better choices and take those actions with the highest probability that their development goals would be met.

To date, the response of public institutions to this need has been scattered and disorganized. High level conferences have been supported by state development departments, some community colleges, a few four year universities, a limited number of business associations, and a handful of corporate foundations. As a result, it has been difficult to understand the impact of rural development including policy objectives, mechanisms, and opportunities. Although academicians are not responsible for generating funding and political leadership necessary to deal with the decline in rural areas, they do have the challenge of providing clearer insight regarding prospective routes to development. The role of the Small Business Administration, for example, is an attempt to offer one such rationalized perspective for rural economic development policy.

Rural Development Policy Overview

As indicated earlier, to be effective, rural development policy must be comprehensive and sufficiently flexible to allow for unique design at the local level. The entire policy mechanism might be viewed as being made up of four major components which may be manipulated by policymakers at national, state and local levels.

Policy Objectives

The starting point for all manipulations of the rural development policy mechanism should be a clear delineation of objectives. Unfortunately, rural development policy is best characterized as a collection of programs, expanded or reduced over time, which have been aimed at remarkably defined goals in an attempt to address the multitude of problems facing rural areas. This has been largely at the federal level. The federal government has set certain programs that are aimed at reducing income disparities and providing assistance to rural development in order to meet social and economic needs. Various federal programs have been aimed at providing assistance to rural areas in order to improve economic conditions and provide quality of life for the people living there. These programs include such things as rural housing, rural health, and rural education. The most frequently stated development objectives is the most jobs—jobs for the nation, state and commun-

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nition. A clear articulation of wealth, employment, income, sustainability, stability, vitality, quality of life, and distribution can be achieved in a variety of environments. Thus, the attention to attraction strategies focused on manufacturing which were quite effective in the 1960s and 1970s (firms of rapid growth in manufacturing employment ["growth sector"] or business incubators) which are being proposed understanding entrepreneurship — the growth sector of the future. This lack of an effective policy is apt to prove disastrous in highly fragile growth areas.

Sources of Economic Growth

There is increasing recognition among policymakers that the economic well-being of any region depends on a wide range of industries, sizes of firms and sources of income. Changes in the region's level of economic well-being can come from any of five interconnected sources: 1) the change in employment in numbers of firms already located in the region, 2) the birth or death of firms, 3) the migration of employers either by moving the entire business or by opening or closing branch plants, 4) the location of new business expenditures, and 5) public expenditure patterns. Public interventions, to have an effect, must ultimately influence one or more of these sources of change. It is important therefore, that national, state and local leaders have a grasp of the relative importance of each source of change under varying resource conditions.

Expanding firms are the largest source of economic growth in most regions. In recent years, many communities in economic development strategies have focused on business retention and expansion programs. The 1980s were heralded by some as the age of the entrepreneur. It is often argued that start-ups are the only true source of regional growth. There isn't complete agreement as to which mechanisms encourage expansion of entrepreneurism in a specific region.

U.S. firms rarely move their entire operations. The migration of employment opportunities generally takes the form of closing plants, offices or other facilities. New branches remain almost entirely in the same geographical area. In growth. Local employment and income is also improved by any mechanism that retails more of the purchases of local citizens to the larger cities, or community outside the community. Government funds which are expended in a region, either as payments to individuals (e.g. social security, farm payments), for direct government purchases, for the maintenance of government facilities (e.g. military bases, parks) or as grants, also have a positive effect on the economic well-being.

There is considerable evidence that without rural areas' ability to compete for jobs, income or other policy objectives through any of these means. Some argue that rural areas are at a serious economic disadvantage in attracting high technology manufacturing and producing services (Deaver and Long, 1988; Miller and Bluestone, 1985). Others see no major impediments to rural areas effectively competing in many of these industries (Smith and Barley, 1989; Potterfield and Palter, 1988). They argue that the industrial mix of rural communities close to major urban areas is likely to be different from those in urban areas, and that the difference is blurred between suburban and rural areas. Thus, development opportunities differ. It is vital that policymakers understand the differences and choose those policy mechanisms which will have the desired effect.

Critical Location Variables

Differences in the level of development among rural communities appears directly related to levels of access to specific infrastructure. Most studies of the infrastructure requirements and economic development have focused on traditional goods-producing sectors. Recently, some insights have been gained regarding the services-producing sectors and high technology manufacturing (Ayd, 1986; Perrenus, 1986; Smith and Barkley, 1989). Most critical among the vital location factors are access to transportation, telecommunications, and a high quality living environment. It is the degree of access to these variables which most directly controls the nature of changes within a regional economy.

Labor continues as a primary factor in most business location decisions. In the 1950s and 1960s, firms sought employees willing to work at relatively low wages. Today, much greater emphasis is placed on a well-trained work force. Higher levels of technology and more sophisticated production and organization demand better educated employees with technical skills who can adapt to changes in the workplace. Continuing technical skills are in demand. Global economic changes place even greater pressure on knowledge infrastructure requiring elementary, secondary and higher education systems producing technically advanced students and workers.

Conditions of employment vary significantly in different regions of the world. In many rural regions the primary need is not improved physical facilities, but serious improvements in public education, community and social support services. Access to continuing education is also important. If rural areas, especially more remote regions, are to compete for employment and income opportunities in the future, investments are necessary in job training, entrepreneurship, business management, and technical education.

Capital is important to economic growth. The development prospects of any region depend upon the competitiveness of its applications of capital and the administrative efficiency of capital investment. If such investment has not appeared to be a universal problem in rural areas. Instead, capital access problems appear to be specific to firms on the margins of local markets. They are frequently of a type new to a region, smaller businesses with small loan requests, preventures or start-ups. High risk firms without linkage to equity providers and rapid expansion firms. These are the kind of firms often on the leading edge of development. Slow, low-cost communications links will be fundamental to competitiveness. High technology industries such as high technology manufacturers, producer services and some consumer services are major information technology. High technology industries. Others with ready access to high quality telecommunications systems will have a competitive advantage.

Two critical transportation networks will influence rural areas' development prospects. First is the maintenance of interstate highways, bridges, roads and airports; easy access to interstate highways and airports is a critical location variable. The second is deregulation. As transportation deregulation has seriously raised the comparative cost of operating transportation services. Today, much higher proportion of economic growth occurs in relatively fertile industries and small businesses which may be high technology. Not all Americans expect to be able to live in communities which offer a high quality living environment. Although the definition of quality varies, most people agree on good schools, safe environment and secure, recreational and cultural opportunities, satisfactory housing, public amenities, clean air and water and pleasant aesthetics. These can be influenced by public policy manipulation.

Conclusions

The four components of the rural development policy mechanisms with which national, state and local policies interact, are: 1) economic conditions (employment, income, bankruptcy, etc.); 2) sources of economic growth (creative location variables) are in a constant state of flux. As the global environment changes (e.g. technology, political institutions, social institutions, knowledge) so too do the size and shape of the components. Technology shifts, such as those in biotechnology, electronics, and ceramics, and other political and social institutions that are redefined. Social institutions include the introduction of trade barriers and financing incentives such as junk bonds. Drought and other weather phenomena are also important. Consequences and limitations of new knowledge and sciences also shift perspectives. Policymakers attempting intervention aimed at specific policy objectives must use the policy mechanisms at their disposal to create an environment (e.g., influence critical location variables) which will nurture the desired changes in the economy within existing resource constraints. Clearly, there is a need for policymakers to consider the limits of policy actions and how they may change in response to constant variations in their environment and act accordingly.
If all the elements of rural development policy were more clearly rationalized at all political levels it is likely that existing efforts would be more successful. It would encourage greater respect for the roles of all concerned institutions and raise the level of enthusiasm for rural development programs now lacking among the leadership of rural agencies and organizations. In addition, it would make increased public expenditure on rural development more politically interesting. Absent this, public institutional responses to the changing educational needs of rural America will continue to be scattered and ineffective.

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Tomorrow’s Leaders Today: Redefining the Rural Community

Timothy O. Borich and Mary E. Foley

The economic and social problems of the rural Midwest resulting from the agricultural economic crisis of the 1980s have been discussed thoroughly in both the professional and popular literature. Rural Iowa found itself in the middle of this crisis unprepared in many ways. Its economy has traditionally been heavily dependent upon both agriculture and the production of agricultural inputs.

The past decade saw declining farm land values and a reduction in the number of family farms. Communities outside the primary influence of urban growth centers generally lost patronage and retail trade, and experienced a continuing depreciation of public infrastructure. Housing prices paralleled the decline in farm land prices in most rural Iowa communities. The capacity for service provision of rural governments also was reduced.

The ability of most rural Iowa towns to cope with drastic changes in their social and economic environment is limited. Declining/depleted human and financial resources inhibit an adequate response to larger structural or environmental forces. Even in cases where, collectively, the community may seek positive change to...
deal with complex economic trends, their size con-
strain the potential to meet local development goals. The capacity of small towns to "go it alone" in their
decision-making and in managing the growing num-
bers of external or vertical linkages affecting local deci-

Rural development depends upon volunteers for leadership in their development efforts (Somersen, 1987 and Kauf-
man, 1985). Traditional adult leadership educational efforts are normally focused on individual issues, and are subdivided into distinct areas of expertise. The rural community is frequently ignored (Wilkinson, 1986). Volunteers are often subsidized at the expense of collective action. Thus, Wilkinson (1986) states that leadership development without community develop-
ment can be harmful in small towns.

It is within this context that the Iowa State Univer-

sity Cooperative Extension Service faced the task of
designing an adult education program that not only
develops leaders for the future, but also helps to increase the potential for their rural communities to adapt successfully to a changing environment.

Defining "leadership" avoids, making the concept difficult to measure (Hoggart and Butler, 1987:13).
The word "leadership" has been in the English lan-
guage since the two centuries (Rosenthal and Taylor, 1984) and is subject to ambiguity and numerous inter-
pretations (Pfeffer, 1978). The sociologist, George
c Hillery (1955), came up with more than 90 different
definitions of leadership.

For the sake of clarity in this paper, some opera-
tional definitions are required. A community will be
defined as a group of people for whom place or territory
has significance. This place has organizational features
separating it from the surrounding environment, and
allowing its members to act collectively (Kaufman, 1959). One should be able to distinguish a community from other communities and a community should be able to act collectively toward common goals.

In the working of collective action, leadership in the community becomes critical. By using the term "community leadership," we are referring to the organizational structure of groups of individuals to sustain action in the community. This can include num-
rous traits, skills, vision, power, and other character-
istics involved with leading others toward a common goal (Terry, 1984). Leaders may also influence others through a variety of means, including the use of rewards, threats, or verbal suggestions. Leaders may also influence others by setting goals or expectations for the group.

The Environment of Iowa's Rural Leadership

During the 1960s, agriculturally-dependent cur-
rent and resource-dependent sections of rural America faced
economic problems of poverty, out-migration, a declining
tax base, and a lack of necessary infrastructure. Some researchers question whether these patterns can be reversed, given the power of economic and political events surrounding rural communities. (Humphrey, 1983). Others contend that existing incentives for communities will make it difficult for weaker rural communities to make important improvements in their more stable urban neighbors (Logan, 1978). All agree, however, that external conditions are a primary force contributing to the problems of rural America.

The organizational feasibility of rural communities mirror the economic crisis existing in agriculturally-
dominated regions. When agriculture is threatened, the entire community and the organizations or per-
spective, major gaps appear in community infrastruc-
ture. When residents can no longer depend on the local
territory to sustain basic competition, the community, and needs, some form of adaptation is required. Residents may seek alternative to their present communities through the process of creating new communities, by relying on the organizational structure of larger neighbor-
communities. In either case, further decline in the community's infrastructure are expected.

Alternatively, residents may attempt to restore the organizational structure of the community through col-
lective action. However, limited resources available in these communities, cultivated by an agricultural or natural resource-based economy, have limited the suc-
cess of this form of adaptation. Furthermore, better educated rural residents are frequently among those

All too often leadership development training has
ignored the situation or context in which rural commu-

nity leaders operate (Wilkinson, 1986). Rural commu-
nities are not monolithic, but are instead made up of
vast and complex organizations that may the in-
fluence to a corporation with offices outside of the
community. Federal and state regulations affect the way
local communities develop. The local store/mall managemen-

keeper of the commercial club, but the decisions made as president may be strongly influ-
enced by the connections to a central office located
in a nearby city.

In such an open environment, leadership develop-
ment as an educational process presents a number of
complex issues. Emphasis needs to be placed on the
environment or context in which leaders operate (Vandenbroek, et al., 1987). Just as it is difficult to teach someone how to avoid oil of water, or to lecture to
someone about riding a bike, leadership development
programs must allow participants to actually experience leadership part of the process. This is best accomplished within the environment in which future leadership is expected to take place.

Tomorrow's Leaders Today . . . An Example

Rural community is isolated from global circumstances. Warren (1988) has called for a multi-paradigmatic approach to community theory, a "kit of good tools," from which the community sociol-
mist and developer may choose. The Tomorrow's Lead-

ers Today (TLL) curriculum is eclectic in its theoretical base as an adult educational program. It addresses community leadership and decision-making for the purpose of pursuing common activities to satisfy common needs or interests. This form of voluntary inter-community alliance is most frequently found on a much smaller scale and may range from a state- or region, thus allowing for greater local influence.

From the classical human ecological perspective, the "core of the issue of leadership is competition and organization for survival" (Miley, 1980). Commu-
nities compete with one another for space, resources and social survival. As communities seek the best way of having control over other communities in their environments.

Competition is a natural process in the sense that growth and change results from competition. Organization of collective action is frequently seen as a means through which communities adapt to their collective environment (Duncan, 1959 and Hawley, 1971).

In this program, leaders learn to lead by doing, by engaging individu-
als in community leadership roles. The program, while voluntary, requires a community to work with other communities to receive training.
Another goal is to achieve new organizational patterns of cooperation among participating communities. Motivation for involvement in a program frequently comes from existing leaders who perceive their communities as a relative disadvantage compared to more urban centers. The experience of out-migration of young adults has also led the perception of a growing void of new leadership in these communities.

Existing community leaders interested in TLT want to provide leadership to a new generation of individuals in the community—who will "take over" responsibilities for the community. Other emerging leaders who participate in the program as a way of strengthening their new organization by involving more people, bringing them together over time to be able to function more efficiently, and developing a cadre of leaders committed to development of the cluster and its member communities.

People selected to participate in the training tend to be "emerging leaders," people seen within the community as not yet within a position of power, yet with a high potential for either formal or informal position of influence in the near future. Program participants brainstorm a list of potential program participants from their own communities. In many cases this is a slow and difficult process because existing leaders often tend to look from within their own community to other, often nontraditional, groups of people who may be interested.

Receiving acceptance for an expanding community leadership pool is in itself part of the educational process. Invitations and encouragement to participate come from cluster-activating initiators. This method gives two messages. First, the program is locally based, and second, the existing and emerging leaders will continue working together. Participants come from many different perspectives and occuping different leadership roles. The leadership skills are made to include individuals from the rural areas within the cluster. Over 40 percent of the participants selected are women. The typical profile of participants is white, aged 35, with one or two years of college education.

Extension uses the following methods to reach TLT objectives (Bogetti, 1989):

1) Personal development: Participants explore their personal leadership styles and build the leadership skills they need to better work with others to achieve community goals.

2) Experiential learning: People learn to lead by doing. Along with basic instruction, participants are involved in an action project. Through this experience, their confidence in their abilities grows.

3) Networking: Successful leaders know who to talk to. TLT participants interact with leaders from their communities, nearby cooperating communities, and outside locations. Skills to maintain an internal and external communications are developed.

4) Community involvement: TLT involving exists involving in community projects. Local leaders are invited to teach and to participate in panel discussions, and advisory committees.

5) Knowledge of community: Participants learn more about their own and neighboring communities. Community resources—financial, physical and human—are identified.

6) Larger sense of community: TLT promotes cooperation among clusters of communities to address shared problems or opportunities. The advantage of sharing resources and speaking with a unified voice to state agencies, funders, or economic development programs is emphasized.

7) Capacity for action: The curriculum incorporates a step-by-step process for taking action on shared issues. It is called a "cluster action plan." This process directs human and financial resources toward cluster goals.

8) New leadership roles: TLT participants will fill new leadership roles within their communities or clusters. A cluster action plan is presented as one option to sustain cluster development and assist graduates in finding leadership roles in community organizations, boards, and committees.

9) Continuing education: Program graduates are offered continued leadership development opportunities in exchange for a return of service to their own communities.

The objectives of TLT tend to blend community field theory as a method of community adaptation to its ecology through an educational effort. Kaufman (1959) argues that the identity of the community to a community field, it should cover a wide range of issues, have significant reference or identity with the community's culture, and have a range in the community's institutional structure. Kaufman calls for the development of theory to support social research that contributes effectively to community development. In this vein, the Tomorrows Leaders Today (TLT) program applies theory within a redefined community field.

The TLT curriculum includes 10 sessions held over nine months (Appendix A). Following together over this length of time allows participants to build relationships which are later transferred to the larger community and cluster areas. The first three sessions are standard for all classes. As mentioned earlier, the curriculum emphasizes leadership-by-doing. The first activity is for participants from each community to develop a slide show presentation of their community. Very little direction is provided to the group with the intent of observing how leadership and process emerge from the group. The objectives of the community slide show assignment are to develop a statement from six perspectives: learn about the other communities; develop a common group activity from which to draw throughout the curriculum; and to develop the emergence of various personal leadership styles. The slide show assignment has proved to be an effective method of reaching the stated objectives. Participants learned both the positive and negative aspects of undertaking a task with very little direction provided. They are now more aware of assets and detractions in their community and the other communities in their cluster. As the curriculum progresses, participants are able to apply to this experience what they learn about their own personality and leadership style, and about group processes.

The next step is blending the individual presentations into one slide show which represents the entire cluster's activity. As the dynamics of creating a new context of community—each community becomes part of a new whole while still maintaining its own identity and uniqueness. While participants are in the process of building their community presentations, the curriculum focuses on personality and leadership styles. Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), participants rate their own identity and personality type. They apply this to their own leadership style and learn to recognize individual leadership strengths and weaknesses.

From this stage of personal development, the next step is building effective working relationships based on similarities and differences in personality types and leadership styles. The slide show serves as a common experience for applying MBTI results. Participants have been immediately able to apply MBTI results to their roles within the TLT program, but also in their families, at work, and in the larger community.

Participants seem to feel good about learning something from one another related to their own personal development. This in turn builds self-confidence—knowing its "okay to be different" and a greater willingness to cooperate. A result from this is that in the TLT program, participants refer to the impact that differences in personality and leadership style have on their personal relationships and community interactions.

Midway through the TLT program, participants are asked to consider the relationship between their TLT learning and the role they play in their community. Participants are asked to consider their own role in the cluster from which they came. This allows for exchanging ideas, comparing situations, and reaffirming their belief in the need for taking a leadership role in their communities and clusters. Appreciation for a variety of perspectives is applied to the community decision making process. The emphasis on leadership-by-doing now moves from class projects to community action within the cluster. Participants use multiple methods to assess community needs and gather ideas for possible cluster projects. These possibilities are then analyzed in the cluster meeting so that the projects selected are beneficial to the communities in the cluster, and the participants have determined the potential they have the capacity for resource action. These projects are often the first community action experiences in the new multi-community context. Working in small groups, project ideas are developed following a "cluster action plan."

The stated TLT objectives are further met through the process of planning and implementing the multi-community projects. Participants network with community leaders and resource people from other agencies and organizations. Resources are identified and utilized for this project, and are kept in mind for use in future projects. Again, the ups and downs of group processes are experienced, especially in relation to the new context of working with other communities. Again, participants, planning for successful community action is a new experience.

Sessions six through ten are customized to reflect local needs and specific projects. Altogether, TLT programs involve more than 40 hours of instruction. Most sessions last three hours but session five is a two-day workshop. Clear and precise communication is maintained through the combined efforts of Extension staff serving as facilitators and participating individuals and communities.

Thus far eight clusters of communities have completed the year long program—three during the first year of the program and five during the second year. Eight new clusters have been included in this, the third year of the program. With one exception, these communities are under 5,000 in population; most are under 1,000. Clusters range from rural communities; the number of participants per cluster averages around 25. Clusters initiated during the TLT program or following thereafter include:

- an inter-community celebration of the 50th birthday of Mickey Mouse that was co-sponsored by the Walt Disney Company
- developing a cluster business directory
- producing a cluster promotional videotape
- sponsoring a career night for high school seniors that promotes local employers
- raising funds for other scholarships for multi-community residents
- recruiting small industries to locate within the cluster
- hiring a paid staff person to coordinate cluster activities
- developing a bike ride between cluster communities
Some of the communities that have recently completed the TLT projects are not fully developed. The community organizations through intergovernmental agreements or non-profit corporations. Other graduates of the course are in the process of forming cluster organizations, or have assisted in expanding existing organizations to more fully develop the cluster concept in the area. It is much too early to claim "success" for the TLT approach. Pre-test/post-test evaluation of participants in the program show more activity in local organizations upon completing the course. A number have gone on to run for political office. The long-lasting benefits the communities might receive from the TLT program or clustering are yet to be identified.

Conclusion

A realistic approach to leadership development must recognize its complexity. The TLT program strives to increase the knowledge and skills community leaders need to lead effectively. All community leaders, regardless of position or level, must be committed to exploring how working with other communities may benefit their own organizational leadership and collaboration. In considering the local human ecology in which rural community leaders must function, the TLT leadership program is somewhat unique. The TLT program emphasizes the experiential value of learning about leadership and a redefinition of the context in which leadership must take place. Thus, TLT addresses rural community development by attempting to expand its leadership base through training while expanding the local resource base through grassroots regionalism.

In this endeavor, the TLT program has experienced some early success, as well as failure. The program itself is less than 30 months old. Personal skill development and the community activity levels of participants appear to increase as the community develops, communicates, and the future of rural communities. Each cluster presents its slide show. Participants review and assess the feasibility of the project ideas generated in session four. They commit themselves to a a cluster project, and identify additional community leaders to be involved in the project.

Session 6: Action planning (February) Objective: to begin working on projects. Participants will be introduced to an action model to be used for project planning. The model is based on identifying local examples as shared by local leaders.

Session 7: Perspectives (March) Objective: to show participants an outsider’s perspective of their cluster. Participants will work together to use local examples to help promote their project.

Session 8: Implementing action (April) Objective: Participants will involve other community leaders in their cluster projects. Teams will prepare to present their ideas to the public. Leadership needs will work with participatory projects.

Session 9: To be or not to be (May) Objective: to explore options for continued cluster organization. This may include a new organization or involvement in existing organizations. The basics of organizational effectiveness will be discussed.

Session 10: Celebrate (June) Objective: to identify newly trained leaders to the community, to mark the official end of the course, and to motivate for continued action. The session includes a review of the participants’ plans for cluster action and organization.

References


