

List of MRD students and defence titles with abstracts

Thesis Presentation

By Matt Grills

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **“Social Field Theory: An Interactional Approach to Community and Community Action”**

Date: July 4, 2013
Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant
Committee Members: Dr. Doug Ramsey, Dr. Elizabeth Graham

Abstract:

This thesis examines the relevance of field-interactional theory for the study of community action and, more specifically, community development. Field theory derives from the work of Kaufman (1959) and Wilkinson (1991), as well as the contributions of those researchers who have followed in their intellectual footsteps. A literature review of pertinent research regarding community development, and the implications of field theory for our understanding of community development as an emergent process is discussed. The thesis investigates field theory based on a qualitative research method of inquiry. The findings are examined and articulated with particular attention paid to the interactions within the community that impact community development. The two communities involved in the research are described, and the processes and interactions of participants are discussed regarding the degree to which they represent the processes outlined in Wilkinson’s field theory. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research, and conclusions pertaining to field-theoretic concepts and our understanding of community action processes. Future research opportunities are discussed, as well as the results and implications of this thesis for applying field theory to the study of community development as a whole. This thesis concludes that the field–interactional perspective is applicable to the action processes examined in the two study communities and provides a framework for understanding the interactional processes that form the foundation of the community field and community development efforts.

Thesis Defence

By Amanda McGregor

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **Training and Development: A Needs Assessment for Community Development Corporation Boards in Manitoba”**

Date: May 2, 2013
Committee
Dr. Doug Ramsey (Advisor) Department of Rural Development

Dr. Kenneth Bessant (Committee) Department of Rural Development
Dr. Derek Eberts (Examiner) Department of Geography

Abstract:

Community Development Corporations have an important role to play in economic development in rural communities but little research has been done to determine what can be done to ensure these organizations thrive. This research applies the Instructional System Design model of training and development to Community Development Corporations. A needs assessment asks volunteer board members for their perceptions on the need for training and development and for suggestions for best design of training. The result of the study is a starting point for those designing training for volunteer board members.

Thesis Defence

By Paige McDougall

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **The Influence Of Community Supported Agriculture Within Communities in Southern Manitoba**

Date: January 30, 2013

Committee

Dr. Kenneth Beesley (Advisor) Department of Rural Development

Dr. Kenneth Bessant (Committee) Department of Rural Development

Dr. Doug Ramsey (Examiner) Department of Rural Development

Abstract:

Society has come to realize that conventional forms of agriculture although efficient, come with their own set of drawbacks. The growing distance between the producer and consumer, environmental concerns and a desire to consume foods grown locally, has led some to look to alternative agriculture methods. One of these methods is community supported agriculture; a food system which Lyson (2004) defined as “a group of individuals or families who commit resources to a farmer and become in essence, shareholders of the farm. In return for the shareholders’ investment in the farm; the shareholder receives part of what the farm produces within the growing season” (87) A greater understanding of community supported agriculture will assist in providing producers and consumers with knowledge in alternative agricultural techniques and provide a base from which they may be able to start up a sustainable form of agriculture for their community.

An extensive literature review was completed to gain a better understanding of the concept and history of community supported agriculture (CSA); as well as the broader concept of civic agriculture and sustainability. The review identified several definitions and concepts around the topic of CSAs and provided a platform for the development of a question set for participant interviews. Participant interviews were conducted either face to face or over the phone with eight CSA producers and sixteen CSA shareholders, all from southern Manitoba. The interviews

allowed respondents to answer questions relating to the overall functionality of CSAs, successes and barriers, and the sustainability of the community supported agriculture concept.

The overall social sustainability of community supported agriculture was noted by the majority of participants and proved to be the leading factor for participation by both producers and shareholders. The concepts of ‘community’ and ‘local’ proved to dominate in conversations around the reasons for participation. The overall connection between producer and shareholder was viewed as a significant benefit of participating in a CSA and allowed shareholders the opportunity to learn about growing food and trying foods that they otherwise may not have purchased at the store. The greatest challenge producers face was noted when participants were asked about economic sustainability. Many producers noted the monetary challenges that come along with growing a small quantity of a large variety of crops.

The opportunity for community supported agriculture to have a larger presence within Manitoba was noted as a possibility by many of the participants, although education and promotion around the concept was noted as essential to this growth. It was also suggested by several shareholders that a greater variety of products could assist in attracting more shareholders. Further research around education and promotion may lead to tangible options for growth of CSAs within southern Manitoba.

Thesis Defence
By Jenny Rocket
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **Change Islands and Fogo Island: A Community Analysis of Rural Revitalization Through Tourism Development**

Date: November 14, 2012

Committee:
Dr. Doug Ramsey (Advisor), Department of Rural Development
Dr. Derek Eberts (Committee), Department of Geography
Dr. Daniel Olsen (Examiner), Department of Geography

Abstract

Thesis Defence
By Ian S. Shanghvi
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **Operative Environment of Micro-Finance: A Call for a Holistic Research Approach, The case of Rural and Urban Tanzania**

Date: October 16, 2012

Committee:
Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley (Advisor), Department of Rural Development

Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant (Committee), Department of Rural Development
Dr. Balfour Spence (Examiner), Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies

Abstract

Micro-finance is globally respected and critically acclaimed for providing poor people with the opportunity to generate income and address their plight. Alas, many studies on the impact of micro-finance on poverty alleviation have largely tended to examine the role that micro-finance plays while condoning the influence of other factors on this impact. These factors, in their totality, make up what this thesis terms the operative environment of micro-finance, which dictates how micro-finance performs. This study was primarily driven by the goal of understanding the environment within which micro-finance is operated in rural and urban Tanzania with two objectives: (1) to investigate the various factors forming the operative environment of micro-finance and their impact on the performance of micro-finance and (2) to assess the need for a holistic research approach in studying the impact of micro-finance. The study adopted a quantitative research method, whereby personal interviews were administered to rural and urban micro-entrepreneurs. Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOS) functioned as a conduit for recruiting research participants. A total of 269 micro-entrepreneurs were interviewed in seven regions: Pwani (n=38), Kilimanjaro (n=40), Morogoro (n=40), Mwanza (n=38), Shinyanga (n=37), Dodoma (n=36), and Mbeya (n=40). They totalled up to 135 (50%) and 134 (50%) interviewees from rural and urban areas, respectively. The study found that the businesses of these micro-entrepreneurs, regardless of their rurality and urbanity, are too constrained by their internal and external operative environments to warrant them momentous success, if any. Therefore, this study calls for researchers to take a holistic research approach in consideration of the significant role that the operative environment plays towards the impact of micro-finance on poverty alleviation. They must do so with an understanding that micro-finance is not a panacea and, therefore, it cannot function solitarily to address poverty.

Thesis Defence
By Janielle Brooks Smith
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **Rural Lenders' Perceptions of Small Business Financing in Manitoba**

Date: August 23, 2012

Committee Members:

Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley (Advisor), Department of Rural Development
Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant (Committee), Department of Rural Development
Dr. Wm. Ashton (Examiner), Rural Development Institute

Abstract:

In Manitoba, a number of programs were created for the purpose of providing loans to support and increase entrepreneurship rurally - as there seems to be a renewed interest in rural finance over the past few years. This study focuses on lenders to rural small businesses to learn about their views regarding the availability of financing programs, the accessibility of funds and the impediments faced by borrowers trying to attain them.

The study employed a questionnaire completed by lenders in rural Manitoba, using quantitative and quantitative questions. The findings indicate a positive picture regarding the supportive attitude of lenders and the programs and measures in place to assist rural business owners. The results also reveal that the major challenge for small rural businesses in Manitoba is not so much the availability of credit but the issue of qualifying and meeting lending criteria for receiving a loan or grant.

I argue that it is important for lenders to thoroughly evaluate the challenges they face and hone their ability to adapt their programs contextually and accordingly to their lending clientele and environment.

Thesis Presentation
By Allister Cucksey,
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis Title: **Manitoba Hemp Production as a Rural Development Tool**

Date: March 14, 2012

Abstract:

This thesis was a look at the potential economic impacts of cultivating cannabis sativa, the industrial variety of hemp, in Manitoba for processing into food, fibre, and other industrial

products. The majority of the thesis was a secondary analysis of the literature, news, and relevant books and texts on the matter. There was a short survey completed in the province of Manitoba to assess the relevance of cannabis sativa to the local economy, and the experiences of the producers and processors relative to cultivation and use of the product.

The reason this subject was chosen for the thesis was the fact that it is an alternative crop with the largest potential market, and is the least utilized. Also, this alternative crop has far ranging environmental implications, a topic of some importance to the author. The economic impacts were the focus of this thesis because in today's economic and political climate, if it is not more profitable than the status quo, it is either ignored or marginalized, as this crop has been.

The findings of this thesis were that cannabis sativa is more profitable than other, currently more popular crops, but is more difficult to work with and cultivate. This crop can be used for more varied product lines than most plants and can do so all from one crop rather than multiple crops over a span of 4 or so years. Contrary to what the author expected there the producers who responded found no issues with the community regarding the local cultivation of cannabis sativa, showing a wide cultural acceptance of the industrial variety of the cannabis plant. The most significant finding was the magnitude of the potential economic impact; \$710 million annually for the processing companies (primary processing for fibre, grocery store ready for seed products) and \$167.1 million annually for the farmers.

Thesis Presentation

by Mr. Sean Irwin

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: Creating Access to Opportunities: The Case of the Toledo Cacao Growers' Association Belize

Date: December 19, 2011

Supervisor: Dr. Doug Ramsey

Committee Members: Dr. Kenneth Bessant, Dr. John Everitt

Abstract

The overarching objective of this research is to demonstrate the importance and benefits of creating access to opportunities. Creating access to opportunities is a two pronged development tool. It is effective in measuring development success and is a target for development planning. When applied to the case of the Toledo Cacao Growers' Association (TCGA), Belize, it is demonstrated to be a strong tool in promoting and ensuring pro-poor benefits. The secondary objective of this research is to better understand the impact the TCGA has had on its members and community. It is also to outline successes, failures, and points that the TCGA should work on to have an even greater impact on the livelihoods of its members. From this we can gain insight into how other development projects can develop and adjust.

Thesis Presentation

By Betty Kelly

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **“Strengthening Communities by Strengthening Social Service Boards: A Study of Third Sector Governance in Rural Manitoba”**

Date: April 20, 2010

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Susan Prentice, Professor Karen Rempel

Abstract:

This thesis explores third sector governance specific to the oversight and delivery of social services in rural Manitoba. The non-profit sector is often described as the third pillar of a society's service delivery system. There is growing awareness of the important role that the third sector plays in providing services to rural communities, as well as in supporting community economic development and sustainability. However, there is limited research on the capacity and effectiveness of this segment of the voluntary or third sector in rural Manitoba. The research used a combination of surveys, focus groups, and key informant questionnaires to investigate the composition of social service non-profit boards and their governance challenges. The study participants' responses were divided into two subgroups, specifically child care programs and adult support services. The comparison of the two subsets provided information on basic descriptive profiles, business and budget structures, as well as board governance practices. The analysis indicates that over half of the organizations are not able to meet the need for service in their communities. More child care programs exist in smaller communities than adult services, while more adult service than child care boards oversee multiple sites. Overall, the results indicate that board members are in need of greater capacity, resources and consultant supports. Research recommendations call for regionally based resource consultants and the development of regional hub models of service delivery in order to strengthen the governance of rural Manitoba's third sector organizations, and the economic and social capacity of rural communities.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Lynn Ferguson
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **Main Street: A Comparative Study of Development in Carberry and Plum Coulee, Manitoba**

Date: May 19, 2009

Supervisor: Dr. Doug Ramsey, Rural Development

Committee Member: Dr. Daniel Olsen, Geography

Examiner: Dr. Ken Bessant, Rural Development

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine whether heritage revitalization can enhance community economic development (CED) in rural communities. Five objectives were identified. The first objective was to determine the role of voluntary associations in fostering CED. The second objective was to determine whether it is possible for CED initiatives to create sustainable tourism. The third objective was to determine the role of cultural heritage tourism and to decide if it is of any importance to the community projects being studied. The fourth objective was to investigate the successfulness of a government-funded initiative such as Carberry, and to evaluate whether it would be any more effective and sustainable than that of a privately funded initiative such as Plum Coulee. Two models were developed as part of the fifth objective, which developed the models to add to the conceptual framework for examining tourism and CED. The first model focused on conceptual factors, while the second specifically addressed the communities studied.

Data was collected using key informant interviews with face-to-face interviews (n=17) with residents of Carberry (n=8) and Plum Coulee (n=9). Significant research findings include: recognition of the barriers in retaining youth in Rural Manitoba, the challenges posed by rural depopulation, including financial concerns and a declining volunteer base. There were also challenges in identifying how to create a tourism product.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Ruth Mealy
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **“An Investigation of Linkages Between Community Economic Development Practices and Economic Indicators”**

Date: April 30, 2009

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Robert Annis, Professor Karen Rempel

Abstract:

Community economic development (CED) researchers and practitioners suggest that any community can have a positive impact on its economic success and growth by utilizing CED practices. The purpose of this research is twofold: (1) to explore the extent to which rural communities in Manitoba, that are situated outside of strong urban influence zones, adhere to the

principles and practices of CED and (2) to examine the relationship between CED practices and indicators of community economic growth. This study hopes to inform CED practices in rural Manitoba communities and to provide new ways of assessing CED outcomes. Surveys were mailed out to key informants in 30 communities. The questions addressed issues such as how/whether communities are organized to carry out CED, the nature of CED goals, and perceptions of success and capacity concerning economic development strategies and activities. The study findings indicate that there is a strong relationship between perceived adherence to CED principles and estimations of success and capacity around economic activities. A noteworthy association was also identified between the age of the local CED organization (i.e., number of years since incorporation) and a composite economic index. The study suggests that CED constitutes a potentially valuable development approach that communities can adopt in order to pursue economic growth but cautions that consideration needs to be given to regional approaches for successful CED and economic outcomes.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Abayomi Oredgebe
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: Diversification into Farm Tourism: A Study of Manitoba Farm Tourism Operators

Date: April 24, 2009

Supervisor: Dr. Doug Ramsey, Rural Development

Committee Members: Dr. Derrek Eberts, Geography, Dr. Dan Olsen, Geography

Abstract:

The purpose of this thesis is to examine why farmers in Manitoba are diversifying into farm tourism. The study was conducted in order to find out the constraints of farm tourism development and to present ideas that can help mitigate these constraints. The research identifies how households are using their farm resources alternatively so as to maintain or augment their income. The decision to diversify into tourism is premised on the effects (i.e. financial, political, social, and environmental) of restructuring of agriculture. This research thus examines the factors influencing farm operators' diversification decision and the challenges they face before, during, and after diversifying into farm tourism. The thesis suggests that the Government of Manitoba should recognize the issues facing farmers by offering financial, marketing, and business planning assistance available to farm operators trying to diversify. While this agenda is being carried out through Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiative (MAFRI) and other non-government and non-profit organizations such as Community Economic Development (CED) organizations (e.g. Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF), Women Enterprise Network (WEN)), to help farm household diversity their farm income. In spite of these actions, the number of farms and farm operators continue to decrease so is their income, thus suggesting a need for a new approach to helping farm tourism operators succeed. The research concluded with recommendations that can help farm tourism operators succeed.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Lonnie Patterson
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: "**Regional Development Corporations in Manitoba: Past, Present and Future**"

Date: April 24, 2009

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Scott Grills, Professor Karen Rempel

Abstract:

Since their creation in the late 1960s, the Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) were intended to be vehicles through which coordinated, multi-community economic development activities were to take place in the remote and rural areas of the province. This thesis explores the historical and current role that Manitoba's seven RDCs have played in regional economic development in the province. The overall goal is to gain insight with which to support and improve the regional approach to economic development and, ultimately, to support those living in remote and rural Manitoba to maintain and enhance economic activity in their communities. Information about the RDCs' purpose, funding, organizational structure and accountability, boundary definition and linkages with other organizations was gathered through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews from individuals involved directly with the RDCs and Members of the Legislative Assembly. Six broad themes emerged from information gathered during the research process: (1) purpose, (2) funding, (3) board structure and staff, (4) interaction with communities, (5) interaction with other organizations and (6) need for redefinition. The study findings indicated that there was still broad support for regional economic development in general; however, a process of redefinition is needed to better define the vision for regional economic development in Manitoba and the role that regional economic development organizations will play in implementing that vision.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Aldin Foy
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: "**Urban Reserve Process in Saskatchewan: How We Got to Get to Go Where We Are**"

Date: April 9, 2008

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Joseph Sawchuk, Dr. Robert C. Annis

Abstract:

For those individuals who have close ties to First Nations communities in Manitoba, the question arises of why there are fewer Urban Reserves here than in Saskatchewan. This research investigated how First Nations in Saskatchewan succeeded in the development of Urban Reserve Status in non-Aboriginal communities. This research investigated how the First Nations were able to create partnerships with the municipalities and to take the steps required to turn lands into Reserves and then to Urban Reserve Status. This qualitative research used a snowball effect to identify and interview eight Aboriginal and three non-Aboriginal people who had been primarily involved in the establishment of Urban Reserves. The researcher gathered data from Sakimay Cree First Nation about their Urban Reserve in Yorkton, Star Blanket First Nation about Le Bret, Fort Qu'Appelle and Regina Urban Reserves, Ochapawace First Nation about their proposed development near Regina and Muskeg Lake First Nation and their Urban Reserve at Saskatoon. The researcher also interviewed non-Aboriginal community leaders from Yorkton and Fort Qu'Appelle as well as workers at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The findings provide a model of how Saskatchewan First Nations used their Aboriginal worldview to frame the discussions and development of Urban Reserves. This model can provide First Nations in other jurisdictions a model of how to move towards self-determination and self-governance through the formation of Urban Reserves

MRD Thesis Defense

By Wayne Kelly

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: **Knowledge Planning: Community Development in the Knowledge-Based Economy**

Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2009

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee members: Dr. Doug Ramsey and Ms Karen Rempel

Abstract

The knowledge-based economy (KBE) is increasing in its role and impact in our economy. Knowledge is becoming a driving economic force for many communities, and rural communities in Canada are faced with both challenges and opportunities in the KBE. To better meet the challenges of the KBE and to take advantage of new opportunities, development planning needs to evolve along with the economy. Knowledge planning is a new planning approach that enhances and builds on existing development approaches to make decision-making more effective within the KBE. This thesis explores knowledge planning and examines how knowledge planning can be integrated into the existing development planning framework to improve community leader and practitioner decision-making within the KBE. A case study of a community assessment tool, named the E-Index, is used to provide a specific example of knowledge planning in action. The results yielded by the E-Index, for a rural Manitoba community, are provided to illustrate how knowledge planning can impact each of the development planning stages and enable more effective community decision-making for participating in the KBE.

MRD Thesis Defense

By Clive Lovett
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: **The Residential Preferences of Canada's Future Creative Class: Can Rural Areas Compete for Talent?**

Date: **Wednesday, August 22, 2007**

Supervisor: **Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley**

Committee Members: **Dr. Derrek Eberts, Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant**

Abstract:

It is argued that creativity is the key to local and regional economic success. It is also suggested that the ability to attract creative people is a new form of competitive advantage with cities better placed because they have the variety of lifestyle and recreational opportunities that this Creative Class desires. Despite this urban focus, the idea of a Creative Class has impacted communities of all sizes. Many rural communities have shifted emphasis toward economic strategies that attract creative people. Literature on residential preferences, urban to rural migration, counterurbanization and amenity migration indicates that quality of life concerns are a major pull factor for people moving down the urban-rural hierarchy. Therefore, to determine whether smaller centres can compete in a new Creative Economy, this research identifies the residential preferences of the Creative Class.

University students enrolled in programs that lead to employment in creative occupations are surveyed to determine their residential preferences by size of community and the factors that drive their residential preference decision-making process. The results give insight into the ability of rural areas to compete in a new Creative Economy, while also determining the variables that make rural areas more attractive than urban areas to those respondents that indicated a desire to live in a smaller centre. In addition, factor analysis is used to determine whether there are new factors at work in the residential preference decision-making process.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Brad McKenzie
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: "**Community Economic Development and Neo-Liberalism: A Study in Rural Governance**"

Date: April 5, 2007

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Erasmus D. Monu, Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley

Abstract:

This thesis represents an exploration of the relationship between an approach to local economic development known as community economic development (CED) and a political economy perspective referred to as neo-liberalism. The thesis seeks to gain an understanding of how CED, and the political and economic hegemony of neo-liberalism, may be utilized, in concert, for the practice of rural development. Through an exploration of CED and neo-liberalism, linkages begin to emerge between the approaches. The local approach of CED compliments certain instruments of the neo-liberal policy package. Namely, Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) and Decentralization provide opportunities for a greater role for CED organizations and approaches at the community level. They do so by sharing governance functions with actors at the local level including social economy and private sector organizations and groups. Decentralization transfers power down toward the municipal level which, in turn, must rely on community input into the governance process in order to provide appropriate levels of service. The analysis culminates in a discussion of the evolution of neo-liberalism into a phase of creative governance making. These 'new governance' arrangements are characterized by greater collaboration and partnering among a variety of stakeholders including the private sector and social economy actors. New governance also integrates various sectors in the process, including economic, social, and environmental, in the place-based application of policy. The neo-liberal practice of governance continues to present compelling possibilities for an increased role of the CED approach at the community level for rural and small town development.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Alison Moss
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: **Understanding Change and Impact Associated with Tourism: A Qualitative Study of Churchill, Manitoba**

Date: **April 4, 2007**

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley/ Dr. Doug Ramsey

Committee Members: Dr. Chris Malcolm, Dr. Robert Annis

Abstract:

Rural and remote tourism development can provide communities and local residents with the opportunity to capitalize on existing resources in creative ways, encouraging economic

diversification, and serving as a viable economic development strategy in northern communities. Tourism development can offer local residents the unique opportunity to share and promote their culture, heritage and landscape with visitors. It is an opportunity for the rural community to learn about local history and pass on that knowledge. While tourism is not always the best remedy for economic problems faced by all communities, if a market exists and local residents are in favour, such a venture can provide improved economic and social opportunities.

The objectives of this research are to explore perceptions of local residents, service providers and community leaders of Churchill, Manitoba, concerning the impact of tourism on their community and how the industry has changed over time. A series of 30 interviews were completed in August 2006. Findings are shared in the form of a collective story. A common theme that emerged was the local acceptance and appreciation for the local tourism industry. There is an appreciation for the added amenities and services that are available locally owing in large part to the abundance of tourists for part of the year. The vibrant and diverse nature of the community is intrinsically linked with tourism and seasonal workers. Community collaboration is critical to the success of tourism as an economic development strategy, and the creation of innovation tourism products in rural and remote communities such as Churchill, Manitoba.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Keith Edmunds
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: **Collating Research on Community and Capital: Developing Comprehensive Model of Community Development for Application by Practitioners**

Date: April 2, 2007

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley, Dr. Robert Annis

Abstract:

Community development is becoming an increasingly popular field. Despite this growing popularity, however, there is not a single comprehensive model in existence that lends itself to immediate application. By collating the relevant concepts, this thesis develops a model that identifies the five main areas of concern: foundations, security/maintenance, communication and linkages, identity/constituent growth, and sustainability. Identifying the relationships between each of these areas, this model aims to provide community development workers with a map, allowing for more effective planning of projects, policies and initiatives.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Martina Polo
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: **Housing, Safety and Educational Needs of Low-Income Single Women of Southwest Manitoba**

Date: December 14, 2006

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley

Committee Members: Dr. Ken Bessant, Dr. Bob Annis

Abstract:

This needs assessment attempts to identify low-income single women's needs in southwest Manitoba to help support program development for the YWCA of Brandon and other interested organizations. The study's objectives focus on finding the housing, safety and educational needs of unattached women and single-parent mothers with low-incomes in Brandon and comparing them to the needs of those living in rural areas within southwest Manitoba. Data were gathered using service provider surveys ($n = 69$) and interviews with low-income single women ($n = 8$). Research findings were prioritized into main housing, safety and educational needs. Some of these priorities in Brandon included more affordable housing, safe affordable housing, access to public transportation, access to telephones, vocational counseling and life-skill programs. Some priorities in rural areas in southwestern Manitoba consisted of more affordable housing, help locating affordable housing, access to public transportation, access to safe transportation for appointments that may take them out of home communities, re-entry job training and transportation to/from educational programs. Program and service recommendations were suggested to meet the main housing, safety and educational needs.

MRD Thesis Defense

By Margaret Tarleton

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of thesis: **Risk, Opportunity and Adaptation in Agriculture in the Parkland Area of Manitoba: A Climate Change Perspective**

Date: October 19, 2006

Supervisor: Dr. Doug Ramsey

Committee Members: Dr. Ken Beesley, Dr. Sterling Evans

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to examine the adaptations made by farmers in the Parkland region of Manitoba to the opportunities and risks presented by various stimuli, most particularly, climate change. The specific objectives of the study included: 1) determining whether farmers believe that climate change is the process that affects the stimuli that create situations of risk and opportunity at farm-level or do they regard climate change as just one of many forces that creates a situation to be adapted to in any number of ways; 2) discovering if Parkland farmers adapt to risk and/or opportunity; 3) learning what adaptations are made in the Parkland to the risks and opportunities presented by the forces of change on agriculture including: government policies, economic and market conditions, technology, environmental factors including weather, and social and cultural factors, and; 4) comparing the adaptations made by farmers in the North area of the study area to those in the South area.

Study results indicate that farmers in the Parkland believe that climate change is just one of many stimuli that creates risk or opportunity at the farm-level. Farmers initiated many adaptations to situations presented in good years (opportunities) and bad years (risks) but their adaptations to risk were more varied. The farmers in the more bio-physically sensitive South area practice

more adaptation strategies than those in the North. The vulnerable nature of their region has caused them to develop a greater adaptive capacity than the North area farmers.

MRD Thesis Defense

By Anisa Zehtab-Martin

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: Exploring the Gap: Examining Immigrant Settlement Needs, Service Needs, and Service Provision in Brandon, Manitoba

Date: September 14, 2006

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley

Committee Members: Dr. Robert Annis, Dr. John Everitt

Abstract:

The purpose of this thesis is to examine perceptions of immigrants and service providers related to immigrant service provision in Brandon, Manitoba. Immigrant service provision is examined because there is a gap in service provision for immigrants, related to accessing services as well as the different level of services available. The objectives of this thesis are to: identify strengths and weaknesses in current service provision, identify the current service needs of different classes of immigrants (family, economic class, and refugee), and determine what factors are important in retaining immigrants in Brandon Manitoba.

Data were gathered using key informant interviews with service providers (n=20), focus group (n=7) and face-to-face interviews (n=15) with immigrants in Brandon. Significant research findings include: recognition of the barriers in retaining immigrants in Brandon and the difference in perception between service providers and immigrants regarding services working well and the gaps and challenges in service provision.

MRD Thesis Defense

By Lidia van Zyl, B. Town and Regional Planning, B.Com Honours (Economics)

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: Smart Growth as a Solution to Urban Sprawl: A Case Study

Date: September 13, 2006

Supervisor: Dr. Gabe Ferrazzi

Committee Members: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley, Dr. Meir Serfaty

Abstract

The way many Canadian cities have grown and developed in recent years is reason for concern. One of the main criticisms against current growth patterns is low density development at the urban boundary, commonly referred to as urban sprawl. Urban sprawl is often accompanied by the loss of agricultural land. Southern Ontario is no exception, and the problem of sprawl is particularly evident in the province's fast growing towns and cities. In spite of numerous efforts over the years to address the problem of urban sprawl current planning practices in Ontario are viewed by many as inadequate to ensure sustainable or smart growth. The central feature of this research is the case study method using the city of Barrie and its surrounding jurisdictions. Although not exclusively the focus is on qualitative data, and multiple

sources were used in obtaining these. Primary data were obtained from purposeful semi-structured interviews while secondary data sources included maps, documents, archival records and own reconnaissance of the area. Barrie is growing at a rapid rate and its current residential supply of land is again near capacity. Without a regional body overseeing the planning process, this problem will most likely result in more sprawl and the consequent loss of farmland. It is proposed in this study that consideration be given to the “regionalization” of Barrie/Simcoe County to address cross-boundary problems at a regional level. For the protection of farmland it is suggested that a variety of initiatives are needed for maintaining a growth pattern that is consistent with smart growth, including local government action and collaboration, voluntary or stakeholder action and provincial policies.

MRD Thesis Defense

By K. Laine Mosset

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: **Manitoba Community Schools: New Models for Community Economic Development**

Date: **September 1, 2006**

Supervisor: **Dr. Doug Ramsey**

Committee Members: **Dr. John Everitt, Dr. Ken Bessant**

Abstract:

To give students the best educational experience possible, schools have changed the ways in which they use their time, money and space. This thesis is about a new model for schools and their role in fostering community economic development (CED). CED principles and community school mandates share a common interest as they aim to improve social and economic conditions in communities. The aim of this study is to investigate community schools in Manitoba by exploring the role they play in enhancing student, family, and community opportunities.

This thesis develops a conceptual framework for applying the community school model to seven core aspects of CED: community building; community capacity building; community participation; holistic approach to development; leadership development; partnerships, collaboration, and networks; and program planning, implementation and review. The research, including interviews with people associated with two community schools in Manitoba, illustrates how the seven core aspects of CED are reflected in the goals and achievements of Manitoba community schools.

MRD Thesis Defense

By Alex G. Martin

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of Thesis: **Attitude, Perception, and Practice: Examining Decision-Making on Farm Pest-Management Systems in Southwestern Manitoba**

Date: **August 22, 2006**

Supervisor: **Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley**

Committee Members: **Dr. Doug Ramsey, Dr. Sterling Evans**

Abstract:

The purpose of this thesis is to examine farm-level decision-making related to pest-management systems. Pest-management decision-making is examined because there is a gap in the literature related to farm operator motivations for adopting different pest-management control methods. The objectives of this thesis are to: examine the internal and external factors associated with on-farm pest-management systems, identify the barriers associated with alternative pest-control methods, and to assess the current state of pest-management systems on farms in Southwestern Manitoba.

Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire, distributed to farm operators throughout 18 rural municipalities in Southwestern Manitoba (n = 60). Significant research findings include: identification of the barriers and incentives associated with different pest control methods and a glimpse at the nature of farm-level pest-management system formulation. These findings are important as little literature exists that identifies attitudes and perceptions associated with different pest-control methods. Research findings also give insight into farmer rationale behind pest-management system formulation.

MRD Thesis Defence

By Brian A Kayes, B.Sc. (honors)

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Title of thesis: "**The Expectation Gap: Citizen and Emergency Manager Expectations of Flood Response**"

Date: May 24, 2006

Supervisors: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley and Prof. John Lindsay

Committee Member: Dr. Doug Ramsey

Abstract:

Citizens and emergency managers have expectations of how each other will respond to an emergency situation as well as what their own response will be. Gaps in these expectations being met can lead to strain between the groups that can increase tension and potentially lead to a less effective emergency response. A major rain event and flash flood that occurred in Brandon, Manitoba in July 2005 prompted this research as it appeared to cause social strain that was exemplified by frustrated citizens and public officials alike. Literature on gap analysis of emergency preparedness issues is very limited so an existing model of gap analysis from marketing was adapted for this study. This research used two quantitative surveys to collect data: one from citizens living in Brandon and another from emergency managers working within Manitoba. A gap analysis was then used to compare data. The results of this research revealed several gaps that upon analysis point to the usefulness of employing community development principles in emergency preparedness programs as a means to close the gap by more directly involving the community in planning activities.

MRD Thesis Defense

By Ms. Osayanmo Idehen: B.Sc. (honors)

Master of Rural Development Candidate.

Thesis topic: "**Rural and Northern Youth Migration in Manitoba**"

Date: May 15, 2006

Supervisor: Dr. Doug Ramsey

Committee members: Dr. Kenneth Bessant and Dr. John Everitt.

Abstract:

Rural and northern communities in Manitoba have experienced loss in their youth populations because of declining resource-based economies and other change factors. Many scholars have suggested that young people leave rural and northern communities in search of better economic, education and social opportunities.

In reaction to these migration factors, rural and northern communities, in partnership with the governments and private sectors, have implemented initiatives for rural revitalization and economic development. Community-based organizations (CBOs), such as Community Development Corporations (CDCs), Community Future Development Corporations (CFDCs) and Community Economic Development Corporation (CEDCs), provide guidance and direction in the process of community development in distressed areas and also make plans for the future. This research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis (a) to carry out an inventory of community-based organizations providing youth-related programs in Manitoba and (b) to examine the focus of these youth programs as to whether they directly address the factors impacting youth-out migration. The results of this research provide insights into the nature of youth programs and recommendations for youth retention and return migration for policy makers and CBOs in Manitoba

Masters Thesis Defense

By Robert Walberg, B.Sc. 4yr. Specialist

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: "**A Transtheoretical Model for Assessing Community Change: Three Case Studies of Multi-Community Collaboration in Economic Development**"

Date: August 30, 2005

Supervisors: Dr. Robert C. Annis and Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Scott Grills, Dr. Meir Serfaty

Abstract:

One of the challenges for community practitioners, policy makers, and community leaders involved in rural development has been that of promoting and managing planned change at the community level. This research focused on the critical issue of how community leaders intentionally change, with a special emphasis on the emerging practice of multi-community collaboration for the purpose of regional economic development. This study examined how well a popular model of planned change, the transtheoretical model (TTM), can be used to explain the dynamics of planned change within three cases of multi-community collaboration in Manitoba. Specific research questions addressed were:

1. does change occur in communities in a series of stages?

2. is there a systematic relationship between the pros and cons of change and the stages of change?
3. are certain processes of change emphasized more in particular stages of change?

The three case studies were:

1. Pelly Trail Economic Development group—including the Town of Russell, Village of Binscarth, and RMs of Russell, Silver Creek and Shellmouth-Boulton
2. Portage la Prairie—including the Town of Portage la Prairie and RM of Portage la Prairie
3. Turtle Mountain Sustainable Ventures group—including the Towns of Killarney, and Boissevain, and the RMs of Turtle Mountain, Morton, Whitewater, and Riverside.

The research was conducted in two phases over a two month period during the summer of 2004. The first phase reviewed documents pertaining to events surrounding the change phenomena. This included newspaper articles, reports, group minutes and council minutes. This information served two purposes: it provided documented evidence of relevant events, and it prepared the researcher for phase 2—the interviews. In the second phase, twenty-three key informants were interviewed with the average interview lasting 90 minutes. The interviews used a narrative inquiry approach, that is, respondents were asked to tell their story beginning with a time prior to any mention or thought of collaborating with neighbouring municipalities, and ending with the present. The researcher then probed key milestones for further information. Finally, the researcher asked pointed questions relating to specific components of the TTM model to make sure all aspects were covered and clearly understood. The information was categorized by stage, decisional balance, and process using definitions and criteria established prior to the data collection. This was the first time the TTM model had been applied in an economic development context. There was sufficient support to conclude that changing to a multi-community collaboration strategy for regional economic development occurs in a series of stages, and that there is a systematic relationship between the pros and cons of change (i.e., decisional balance) and the stages. Evidence also suggests that certain processes of change are emphasized more in particular stages, although there were several anomalies between the three cases. Findings are consistent with the documented association between the TTM model and organizational change, and suggest the appropriateness of building community development interventions based on the TTM model of change for use in assisting communities wishing to adopt a multi-community collaboration strategy for economic development within a region.

Thesis Presentation Defense

By: Yan Cong, BAMHT

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: "Promoting Tourism In Brandon: A Tourist Market Assessment"

Date: May, 2005

Supervisor: Dr. D. Ramsey

Committee Members: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant, Dr. John Everitt

Abstract:

Like many communities in Manitoba, tourism is not a well-developed industry in Brandon. However, because Brandon is a regional centre, it plays a very important role in organizing, planning, and promoting tourism in the Westman region. One gap for Brandon is the lack of tourism research, marketing and development. The purpose of this research was to bridge this gap. The main purpose of the study was to analyze Brandon's present tourist market through an overnight visitor survey to provide a useful snapshot of visitors overnighing at paid accommodations in Brandon in the summer 2004. Information collected from tourists includes demographic profiles, travel companions, place of origin, transportation used, length of stay, sources of information about tourism in Brandon, travel purpose, tourist expenditures, possibilities for return visitation, activities while in Brandon, perceptions of Brandon's services and infrastructure, and recommendations for improving the tourism situation. The opportunities and constraints facing tourism development in Brandon were also identified by reviewing the tourism literature and through conversations with hospitality business owners and managers in the city.

Thesis Presentation Defense

By: Lori A. Gould, B.Sc. (Honours)

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: "Resident and Tourist Perceptions of Rural Areas: Case Studies from Ireland and Canada"

Date: April 29, 2005

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley

Committee Members: Dr. D. Ramsey, Dr. C. Malcolm

Abstract:

The purpose of this research was to examine rural tourism and the perceptions of residents and tourists in two international locations. The objectives of the study were to: uncover general features of tourists in rural Ireland and Canada; explore how tourist perceptions differ between Ireland and Canada; identify the characteristics of the residents and evaluate if their perceptions of rural tourism differ between Ireland and Canada; and examine if there are differences in how visitors and residents perceive rural areas. Results from the study indicate that the characteristics of tourists in rural Ireland differ significantly from tourists in rural Canada. In Ireland, visitors expressed concern with the weather, and in Canada, visitors indicated that lack of services and accommodations were the main concern with tourism. Residents viewed infrastructure as a current tourism concerns in all of the study areas, and more residents than tourists indicated that something would be unsatisfactory when visiting the community. This study is important because it compares tourist and resident perceptions of tourism in rural areas, an area lacking in current tourism literature.

Thesis Defense

By: Ryan Gibson, B.A. (Honours)

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: "Choosing to Create Their Own Future: Co-operatives, Community Economic Development and the Future of Rural Manitoba"

Date: April 26, 2005

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Committee Members: Dr. Erasmus D. Monu, Dr. Robert C. Annis

Abstract:

Rural residents, communities and governments of all levels are promoting community economic development (CED) as a vehicle for achieving sustainability. Although there are various types of community-based organizations, some academics describe co-operatives as an alternative mechanism that can serve as an agent of CED. Co-operatives are community-oriented, democratic, flexible, participatory and, as such, well suited to community development. Further, co-operatives assist in the provision of needed services and employment, and the enhancement of community or social cohesion.

This research undertook an exploratory study designed to provide a better understanding of the role of co-operatives as agents of CED. Through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, the study examined the knowledge and perceptions of community residents involved in co-operative activities and representatives of co-operative organizations in rural Manitoba. The similarities between the underlying principles of co-operatives and CED suggest that co-operatives can act as agents of community development and sustainability. This conceptual affinity was documented through telephone surveys with representatives of co-operative organizations (n=31) and key informant interviews (n=26). Co-operatives offer the potential to address community needs in the 21st century, and the results of this research are important for understanding how co-operatives can assist communities in becoming sustainable, revitalized places in the new rural economy.

Thesis Defense

By Stuart Douglas Harvey

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **Reframing The Diagonal Trajectory: An Interactive Solution For The Polarized Protestant Church**

Date: May 11, 2004

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley

Committee Members: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant, Dr. Rosanne Gasse

Abstract

Institutions such as churches function as community animating systems, but are themselves in need of continual renewal. The Protestant Church's vitality as a community animating system on the Canadian Prairies is inhibited by a dichotomy between liberal and conservative religious perspectives at every level from intra-personal to inter-group. This study contributes to the bridging of this gap, and the possible revitalization thereby of this community animating system. Two insights by Andrew Murray into the teaching of Jesus, present the possibility of reframing the nature of our relationship with God as being interactive rather than active or passive, the two "voice" options available in the English language. Through a hermeneutical text analysis of the four Gospels, the concept is explored and its current utility considered. Extensive background to

the development of this solution is provided so as to contextualize the significance of the research in rural community development terms. Four research questions frame these results: that Jesus' thought, action, and teaching do reflect an interactive relationship with God and that he saw this as being of use to people of any culture. Interactivity with God is framed on an angle matrix, presenting it as a diagonal trajectory, reflecting both liberal and conservative concerns, rather than using the traditional modeling of the issue on a zero-sum, left-right line graph.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Lyndenn Behm
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis Title: **Modest Farming on the Eastern Prairies**

Date: May 2004

Supervisor: Dr. Doug Ramsey

Committee Members:

Abstract

The primary purpose of this thesis is definitional: It is to promote, through description and definition, the concept of "modest farming" as part of the vocabulary of agricultural discussion and analysis. To a large extent the study of agriculture – especially the economic examination of farming – has looked at farming as a financial endeavour with lifestyle seen as secondary, the byproduct of a farm's financial buoyancy. This study profiles seven modest farm families on the eastern Canadian Prairies and considers family lifestyle and agricultural production as being of equitable importance. The study is qualitative and achieves its objective through description and analysis. The seven families provide diverse examples of modest farming on the eastern Prairies. Modest farming is characterized by modest use of resources, both in farm living and agricultural production.

MRD Thesis Defense
By Deatra Walsh, B.A.
Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis Title: **Reopening Twillingate's Fish Plant: Agency in a Rural Newfoundland Community**

Date: April 7, 2004

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley

Committee Members: Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant, Dr. Scott Grills

Abstract

Rural Canadian resource communities are ever-changing. Environmental, economic, and political shifts at varying scales and intensities affect rural life and are, in some instances, so significant that they completely alter a pre-established socio-economic community structure. At times like these, it is crucial to understand how rural residents respond to and prepare for change. Twillingate, a rural fishing community on the North Central coast of Newfoundland populated by over 2600 people, has experienced such change. The aftermath of the 1992 Northern Cod Moratorium and the inability to rely on the province's main economic activity led to employment change, rising unemployment, out-migration and in particular, the complete closure of

Twillingate's fish processing plant, which employed over 500 community residents at its peak. Ten years later, the fish plant reopened as a modern shrimp processing facility. Using a multi-modal approach, this research is a case study of community resident agency or action in the reopening process. Research conducted in 2002, including household surveys (n=149), semi-structured key informant interviews (n=9) and media data analysis, indicates that while community resident agency was instrumental, particularly through a small group of fish plant workers, business owners and local council members known as the Twillingate Fish Plant Action Committee (FPAC), the reopening of the plant was not the result of resident action alone. The conduit of action existed within political power and will, and a strategic linkage with provincial government representatives in key power positions. This, along with a myriad of other factors including favourable fish processing legislation for dormant licenses, an ability to alter the fish processing license conditions, a willing private investor and the actual sale of the plant by the previous owners, all contributed to the end goal of reopening the plant. Through these findings, three sectors of action: civic, private and public are identified, and an agency triad highlighting the role of motivation, power and resources within and among the three is proposed to explain the reopening.

MRD Thesis Defense

By Mark J. Matiasek

Master of Rural Development Candidate

Thesis title: **Board Governance and Accountability capacity gaps in Northwestern Ontario Community Futures corporations**

April 2003

Supervisor: Dr. Kenneth B. Beesley

Committee members: Dr. Robert C. Annis and Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant

Abstract:

This study uses selected nonprofit volunteer board governance and accountability dimensions, drawn from different streams of literature, to explore for capacity gaps among Northwestern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporations' volunteer board members. The research questions asked are: (1) what are the perceptions of board governance and accountability held by Northwestern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporations board members, and how were they formed? (2) how do perceptions impact the decision-making processes generally followed by boards? And (3) how can Northwestern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporations board member capacity be strengthened?

In preparing volunteers for their roles and responsibilities on a Community Futures Development Corporation board, the research found that approximately half of all respondents received an orientation when they joined the board. Respondents that received an orientation were asked to rate its effectiveness. While chi-square analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in respondents' propensity to read the bylaws, articles of incorporation and development agreement between those who received an orientation and those who had not, more respondents who received an orientation did in fact read the bylaws, articles of incorporation and development agreement than the number of respondents who did not received an orientation. The majority of respondents serving one year or less on their board did not read or do not know/remember

reading the three documents, while the majority of respondents serving more than one year had done so.

Building board governance and accountability capacity can most effectively and efficiently be accomplished by designing a training delivery method where relevant and needed training is delivered to, and is accessible by, board members whom are motivated and see the need for it in their home community. At the same time, it is clear that Northwestern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporations are in, large part, in good, caring and capable hands.

Michael Pellicciotti Practicum

Title Tourism Policy Development: How the Province of Manitoba is Addressing Rural Tourism to Support Economic Development

Date: 2003