Coping with Social Change in an Economic Crisis: A case study of Huntingdon, Quebec

Sarah Rennie

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ABSTRACT

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Research into community resilience reflects an ongoing interest in defining how some single industry communities survive an economic crisis while others do not. Studies have linked high levels of social capital in communities to the creation of positive socio-economic outcomes, but few have sought to understand the development of localized social systems and structures following an economic crisis. In this context, there is a need to investigate the relationship between coping strategies, community identity and social capital in the foundation of social structures and systems in response to change.

The closure of two major textile mills in the rural town of Huntingdon, Quebec presented an opportunity to study a community's initial reactions, coping facilities and strategies as they developed over the course of a year. The 'developing crisis' in Huntingdon served as a useful entry point for exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the underlying social infrastructure of the community.

Three analytical themes; (1) individual and community level coping strategies, (2) local identity formation, and (3) the proliferation of social networks, were extracted from the social capital literature and were explored within the context of socio-economic change and community development in Huntingdon. From these observations, a series of suggestions are put forward which provide insight into accessing stores of social capital and increasing community cohesiveness to improve possible outcomes for single industry towns faced with a similar loss of a major employer in the future.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conceptual Framework

Research focusing on deindustrialization in single industry towns and the subsequent need for regional or local development has tended to focus on either the importance of economic restructuring or on the localized impacts of deindustrializing processes within the affected community. As such, the topic of deindustrialization is generally approached from one of two perspectives; on the one hand, are those who argue the crucial element in responding to economic shocks is based in economics and employment strategies. On the other hand, it is argued that the most important factor is social in nature, revolving around the quality of life experienced by individuals affected by an economic crisis.

Current research into social sustainability and community resilience reflects an ongoing interest in defining how some single industry communities are able to respond to, and survive an economic crisis while others are not (Johnston, 2004). According to Mayer and Greenberg (2001) a majority of communities faced with the loss of industry exhibit a lag-time of 10 to 30 years between the closure of a plant and a concerted response by cities in the form of a viable redevelopment plan, at which point the city has likely experienced significant losses of both population and jobs for those remaining (Mayer, Greenberg, 2001).

A key factor in the sustainability of communities has proven to be the adaptability and flexibility of a population's attitude towards change, whereas the presence of denial and feelings of helplessness can inhibit a timely response to crisis. The emergence of coping strategies can be observed in the ways that a community is able to resist, accept or

1

challenge the everyday social situations in which they find themselves (Johannesson, Skaptadóttir, Benediktsson, 2003). Johannesson, Skaptadóttir and Benediktsson (2003:4) suggest that foremost in determining an individual's ability to cope with an economic crisis are the proliferation of social networks, a capacity for innovation, and a strong sense of both individual and community identity, or in other words, social capital.

The literature on social capital is abounding with complex and detailed definitions. At its most basic, however social capital can be described as an individual's ability to organize their resources and assets to achieve their objectives (Reimer, 2002). At the scale of community, this translates into the "norms and networks, which enable people to act collectively" (Narayan, Woolcock, 2000). Numerous studies have linked high levels of social capital in communities to the successful creation of positive socio-economic outcomes, but very few have actively sought to understand the development of localized social systems and structures in the face of an economic crisis (Falk, Kilpatrick, 2000). In this context, there is a need to investigate the relationship between coping strategies, community identity and social capital in the foundation of new social structures and systems in response to socio-economic instability, deindustrialization and local restructuring.

The closure of two major textile mills in the rural town of Huntingdon, situated in the Municipal Regional County (MRC) of Haut-Saint-Laurent in the province of Quebec, in December 2004, presents an opportunity to monitor and study a community's initial reactions, coping facilities and strategies as they develop over the course of a year. From these observations, a series of suggestions or guidelines are put forward which could provide valuable insight into accessing stores of social capital and increasing community

2

cohesiveness to improve the response time and improve the outcomes for single industry towns faced with a similar loss of a major employer in the future.

1.2 Research Design

This research provided me with an excellent opportunity to extend my interest in socio-cultural change located in rural areas undergoing economic development while simultaneously allowing me to merge my previous training and experience as a geographer and community freelance journalist. I have always been drawn to a story and was seeking through my Master's degree to combine the narrative aspects of journalistic accounts with human geography's more theoretical interest in localized social responses to global economic change.

The simultaneous closure of Cleyn and Tinker and the Huntingdon Mills Ltd. in my hometown of Huntingdon, Quebec, in December, 2004, resulted in the loss of over 700 jobs, and left seventy percent of the active labour force in the community out of work.[1] By limiting my study to the first twelve months after the initial announcement of the mill closures, I was able to frame the macro realities of deindustrialization within the micro context of local economic crises. The 'developing crisis' in Huntingdon served as a useful entry point for exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the underlying social infrastructure of the community. From this perspective, I was able to observe what emerged as major concerns and minor issues through the various responses and reactions of community members to the perceived crisis, and how the community responded to those.

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[1] Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent, Action Plan, April 2005.

1.3 Research Objectives

The deindustrialization and restructuring of communities has long been regarded as an economic issue; as a result the potential social ramifications and the necessary socio-cultural responses to development initiatives have often been relegated to after thoughts in the process. Suggestions for future single industry towns which emphasize the importance of not undermining accessible social capital and community cohesion as the primary agents in local development capacity could be of great benefit in the production of local policies to maintain, and increase community sustainability. After preliminary discussions with various members of the Huntingdon community, the following three key questions were designed to guide my research.

1. What are the social-psychological processes that allow people to assess their situation in relation to community and their own personal objectives?

2. How does social capital influence the ways in which individuals interpret, interact and identify with both their personal communities and their geographical community at large in an economic crisis?

3. What concepts, theories and methodologies from past studies on local community development have potential application to the Huntingdon case study?

The research was conducted between December 2004 and December 2005, and included weekly visits to Huntingdon over the weekends. In order to limit my research to including only the initial year after the mill closures in my research, I chose to remove myself entirely from the community for the duration of 5 months in order to organize my results without the influence of events happening within the community in my absence.

The research combined an extensive theoretical review with interior research. Several literatures were consulted: (1) current research relating to the concepts of social capital, coping strategies and community identity, (2) local newspaper articles, websites and historical journals on the community itself, and (3) case studies pertaining to the restructuring experiences of single industry communities across Canada and throughout the world, in particular Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. In the field, the research methodology relied heavily on semi-structured and unstructured interviews as well as participant observation. A survey was conducted at the regional scale, since Huntingdon has always served as a service center for the surrounding area.

1.4 Thesis Structure

Chapter two provides a review of the theoretical literature relevant to the themes of social capital and the social development of communities facing socio-economic instability due to deindustrialization. The relationship between individual and community based coping strategies, social capital, and the social capacity of a community to respond to change is also examined.

Chapter three provides a brief background of the town of Huntingdon and the Regional County Municipality (MRC) of the Haut-Saint-Laurent within which Huntingdon is situated. It presents a brief history of the settlement and cultural evolution of the area along with an introduction to the Town of Huntingdon and its dependence on the textile industry and its collapse.

Chapter four involves a detailed description of the ethnographic methodology that was used in this research. The analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data is discussed and situated within the context of the research project.

Chapter five details the perceived effects of deindustrialization with reference to the potential short and long-term impacts of restructuring in Huntingdon in the context of a review of past case studies of communities faced with similar challenges. The contemporary debate over economic versus community development will also be discussed with reference to the theory considering both sides in the case.

Chapter six details the role of social relationships, social support and coping strategies in both initiating and mitigating social responses to deindustrialization and development initiatives.

Chapter seven highlights the potential complications that may result from locally inspired coping strategies in the creation of localized identities, a pervasive sense of community and attachment to place. The advantages and potential disadvantages of strong local dependence within a community are summarized and assessed in relation to the experience of community members in the Haut-St-Laurent.

Chapter eight emphasizes the role of accessible social capital in the adaptability and capacity of a community to respond to the social pressures brought on by socio-economic uncertainty. It is suggested that a new approach to social capital that emphasizes the initial stages in creating and accessing capital through the creation and development of social networks is more relevant in community development research than attempts to quantitatively measure the amount of social capital possessed by a community.

Finally, chapter nine outlines some of the challenges and opportunities that are associated with translating levels of accessible social capital into positive social development initiatives. The relevance of bottom-up action research focusing on the dynamic role of local social systems and structures in community responses to an economic crisis is then suggested as presenting a viable alternative to development strategies that are strictly economic in nature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the context of today's globalized economy, the social and economic pressures associated with deindustrialization and restructuring are resonating through small peripheral communities as researchers seek new answers to the enduring dilemma of local development. While economists see the answers in terms of resource and industry development, social scientists have begun to suggest that social relationships and various socio-cultural aspects of communities may have a larger role to play than economic-based restructuring in determining how a locality copes with the challenges associated with late modernity (Johannesson, Skaptadóttir, Benediktsson, 2003:3).

This renewed interest in social relationships as key determinants of a community's health has led to a surge in research relating to the somewhat controversial, and elusive, theory of social capital, which denotes the "intangible collective benefit people experience by acting in concert for mutual benefit" (Barrett, 2001). For Barrett (2001:5), social capital has the potential to mediate between the dynamics of social exclusion and the transformative potential of communities to collectively seize opportunity in the face of a crisis.

2.1 Social Capital

The first definitions of social capital have manly been attributed to Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. Bourdieu (1986), in his work on the forms of capital, expanded the notion of capital beyond the general economic conception to include cultural and social capital. Coleman (1988) then incorporated the concept of social capital into the creation of human capital through his work on how the performance levels of

school children was tied to the existence of local social networks of encouragement. Putnam (1993), in researching the potential influence of social capital on institutions and democracy expanded the concept so that it could be applied to different social and geographical scales. The notion of social capital has since been widely taken up by researchers in various social science fields, and has subsequently come to be regarded by some as "something of a cure all" (Portes, 1998) for all of society's woes. That said the concept represents a useful way of entering into discussions on civil society and the social structures that underpin its evolution.

Reimer (2002) describes social capital as the organization of resources and assets by individuals to realize certain objectives, which depending on their desired outcome may be either reactive, or innovative (Reimer, 2002:2). Reactive objectives are most common to those facing a challenge, while innovative objectives are likely to be pursued by those looking for a change (Reimer, 2002:2). Social capital then becomes a relational rather than an individual characteristic. He suggests that social capital can be regarded as either the product of 'stock', which includes individuals' personal networks and institutions, or the sum of 'flow' components that are bound up in social participation and collective action (Reimer, 2002:2).

Reimer (2002:2) points out however, that there are many kinds of social capital, with a myriad of possible distinctions that work to differentiate between them. At the same time, he suggests these distinctions are only useful in particular instances and remain limited as they are not connected to any one general framework that provides a basis to understand the processes involved in generating social capital (Reimer, 2002:3). As such, it is difficult to qualify the study of social capital with a single definition, or

approach, as the concept is perpetually subject to change depending on the approach of the researcher.

2.2 Viewpoints

Narayan and Woolcock (2000) trace the evolution of social capital research as it pertains to development and identify four main approaches; the communitarian view; networks view, institutional view, and the synergy view. The communitarian viewpoint associates social capital with local organizations and suggests that social capital is inherently good and that more is better (Narayan, Woolcock, 2000:6). This approach, while stressing the importance of social ties in managing risk and vulnerability, may prove especially relevant in areas dealing with high levels of poverty it also implies that communities are homogenous entities which automatically include all members and are equally beneficial to all.

The network viewpoint cautions that social capital can be a 'double edged sword' in that some social ties can effectively place claims on members' sense of obligation and commitment that can result in negative consequences (Narayan, Woolcock, 2000:7). Thus, the authors claim there should be two dimensions of social capital at the community level including strong intra-community bonds and weaker extra-community associations that bridge between communities (Narayan, Woolcock, 2000:7).

Middleton, Murie and Groves (2005) note how the World Bank reduces the concept to a more manageable formulation of local social ties by defining social capital as the ability of individuals to acquire benefits through membership in social networks or social structures. Three typologies of networks are put forward which differentiate on the basis of the nature of social ties that act to bond, bridge or link individuals (Middleton,

Murie, Groves, 2005:1716). Bonding networks encompass the deep connections that exist between family, friends, and neighbours, while bridging networks emphasize the weaker, horizontal ties that connect individuals with similar socio-economic status but significantly different backgrounds (Middleton, Murie, Groves, 2005:1716). The vertical ties which link people with organizations within a community make up the third dimension of social capital. Networks that allow citizens to link upwards are often associated with levels of social exclusion however, in that formal organizations are not universally accessible (Middleton, Murie Groves, 2005:1716).

The challenge of social capital then becomes identifying the conditions under which the positive aspects of bonding capital can be harnessed and retained while simultaneously helping communities gain access to official institutions and diversified stocks of bridging capital (Narayan, Woolcock, 2000:10). A broader message to come out of social capital research at the community level, according to Woolcock (1998), is that how people associate with one another, and on what terms, has enormous implications for their well being. The ways in which communities manage both opportunity and risk are therefore dependent on the quality of the social infrastructure under which they exist.

Barrett (2001:19) contends however that researchers investigating social capital are pre-disposed to over-emphasizing the role of social structures, networks and social norms in predicting how people respond to socio-economic change within their communities. For Barrett (2001:19), the tendency to view social capital exclusively as a product of "bounded, normative-based networks" reflects a static interpretation of the concept that virtually ignores the interactional and transformative dynamic that human agency adds to both social capital and community. The result is a body of literature that

greatly underestimates the adaptive resilience of communities while under-appreciating social capital's emancipatory potential as well.

Johannesson, Skaptadóttir, and Benediktsson, (2003:14) suggest that while social capital may constitute a resource, it is a form of capital that is only realized in interactive social network exchanges and as such is best used "as an analytic tool when viewed in an interactionist manner" (Johannesson, Skaptadóttir, Benediktsson, 2003:14). In this sense, the benefits of qualitative studies which examine the creation of social capital through the formation of coping strategies in times of crisis far outweigh attempts to quantitatively measure the extent of social capital at the local community level (Johannesson, Skaptadóttir, Benediktsson, 2003:14).

2.3 Coping Strategies

Baerenholdt and Aarsæther, (2002) in their work on the intersection of social and spatial factors in local and regional development, suggest that while social capital can be regarded as an asset, the coping strategies a community employs in response to economic uncertainty are 'socio-spatial practices' that simultaneously produce and exploit stores of social capital. Kelly and Steed (2004) have noted that a common theme to emerge in research on coping strategies and community resources is the general classification of coping strategies as either problem focused or emotion focused. Problem focused strategies will be oriented towards the stress causing event and managing the situation externally, while emotion focused strategies will relate more to individual or community acceptance and dealing with the internal psychological effects of the event.

An alternate approach to coping strategies would be Hobfall's (1989) Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, in which it is suggested that individuals will

strive to minimize the loss of resources during stressful events. The psychological stress experienced by the individual then becomes a response to a perceived threat of a loss of resources (Hobfall, 1989). Hobfall (1989:516) suggests that individuals possess four broad types of resources in their physical objects, personal characteristics, conditions and energies, which can include property, mastery, self-esteem, status, employment, time, knowledge and resourcefulness. An individual's resources are then of personal value, but can also be used as a means of attainment of resources (Hobfall, 1989:516).

A further source of resources can be found in the networks of social ties that bind individuals and communities. Kelly and Steed (2004:202) suggest that in relation to the change process brought on by a stressor or event, emotional, practical and informational social support can be accessed or transmitted through social networks. The authors also note however that research into coping strategies has demonstrated a lack of clarity in defining the role of strategies as either a moderating or mediating variable in a community's response to change. In most cases, the role of social support and social networks has tended to be viewed as an emotion focused coping strategy (Kelly and Steed, 2004: 202).

While social capital is a way of understanding networks as a stock of resources and empowering capacities that actors can benefit from, coping strategies put emphasis on the practices that both draw on and produce social capital. This suggests a need to differentiate between what social capital actually is, and what it does (Woolcock, 1998 Johannesson 2003, Portes 1998, Baerenholdt and Aarsæther 2002,). As such, the bonding and bridging elements of networks that numerous authors cite as components of social capital (Narayan, Woolcock, 2000), may in fact be better understood as dimensions

of coping strategies (Baerenholdt and Aarsæther, 2002). That said, Baerenholdt and Aarsæther (2002) reiterate the significance of social networks by suggesting that coping strategies that do not incorporate or rely on networking of some sort rarely work to the benefit of individual or community objectives.

Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) emphasize the importance of networks as avenues for interaction, which they suggest occurs within specific socio-cultural contexts wherein knowledge and identity resources are employed in a manner that both draw on and produce social capital. Knowledge resources are those that incorporate a common understanding of the knowledge, skills, and social qualities attributable to community members as well as those resources relating to place, local precedents and values. Identity resources involve individual and collective identities and their capacity to change as they relate to place attachment, participation and agency.

As such, the exact nature of the social capital is dependent upon the "various qualitative dimensions of the interactions in which it is produced, such as the quality of the internal-external interactions, the historicity, futuricity, reciprocity, trust and the shared values and norms" within a community (Falk, Kilpatrick, 2000:103).

2.4 Local Dependence

The social capital that is created and consumed in the construction of coping strategies or resources has the capacity to either benefit or disadvantage a community. Cox and Mair (1988) assert that personal social interactions usually take place in "a localized spatio-temporal context" that acts to situate everyday life. Once settled into an area, people's everyday practices tend to become routinized which leads to the creation of a personalized world of predictability and confidence. Cox and Mair (1988:312) assert

that under certain circumstances relationships and contact with other people may provide the basis of a strong local identity, but also might result in a strong identification with a particular locality as well.

In single industry communities, a select few interaction sites become the major contexts in which knowledge and experience of the outside world is gathered, where common awareness is engendered and everyday meanings assumed (Cox, Mair, 1988:312). As such, a resistance to change is instilled unconsciously in community members, which includes spatio-temporal change that may have become inbuilt into the society (Cox, Mair, 1988:312).

The authors differentiate between two forms of local dependence. 'Traditional' local dependence revolves so heavily on important matters such as identity and self-understanding to the extent that any change in location is experienced as a threat to the individual's self (Cox, Mair, 1988:312). 'Modern' local dependence involves a direct identification with a specific location that is then maintained over space and time barriers that act to physically remove an individual from the area for reasons of employment, or the pursuit of higher social status (Cox, Mair, 1988:312).

In examining the ways in which small communities balance the tension between social cohesion and development by formulating local coping strategies, geographers Gatrell and Reid (2002) explore how locality promotes local dependence through shared history and traditions. The authors suggest repositioning the concept of local dependence within a cultural framework, as opposed to the exclusively economic framework that has been used in the past. In doing so, an expanded vision of locality that includes culture as

a determinant of local dependence can be formulated to produce a symbolic infrastructure and framework that transcends economic determinism (Gatrell, Reid, 2002).

Gatrell and Reid (2002) suggest then that the concept of local dependence can be enriched to investigate the many local variations on production that co-exist and empower small communities and locations to maintain or even expand local systems. The authors assert that local cultures of production enable people, firms and governments to create and sustain a sense of place through adopting cultural practices which allow locally dependent organizations, structures and individuals to transcend the exclusive nature of global-local, space-place, or even capital-labour divides (Gatrell, Reid, 2002).

2.5 Sense of Community

Community Psychologists Pooley, Cohen and Pike (2005) attempt to demonstrate that social capital may be related to a psychological construct or 'sense' of Community. Having analyzed numerous definitions of social capital, the authors arrive at their own concept of community that features three integrated themes including relationships, networks, and competencies or personal resources (Pooley, Cohen, Pike, 2005:73). Furthermore, the authors adopt McMillan and Chavis's (1986) definition of sense of community as being comprised of four necessary components; membership, which can be perceived as a sense of belonging; influence, which involves a two-way relationship between community and a member; integration; and the fulfillment of needs, which, the authors emphasize, revolves around shared emotional connections (Pooley, Cohen, Pike, 2005: 73).

Therefore, from the aspect of community psychology, a sense of community provides for a language and a framework which can then be used to develop knowledge

and understanding about the way in which individuals operate within groups and communities (Pooley, Cohen, Pike, 2005:78). The degree to which a geographical place achieves a sense of community through the proliferation of shared values, cooperation, and interaction can be interpreted as social cohesion.

2.6 Social Cohesion

According to Reimer (2002), social cohesion also represents the degree to which people in a community are able to respond collectively to achieve valued outcomes and their ability to handle any economic, social, political, or environmental stresses that might affect them. While conceptually different from social capital, which is situated in the networks and interactions between individuals and groups, social cohesion is a more holistic construct concerned with the overall condition of society (Chan, To, Chan. 2006). For Chan, To and Chan (2006:298), social cohesion concerns the vertical and horizontal interactions among community members that can be "characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help."

Jenson (2002), in her work on the concepts of social cohesion and culture, cautions that while social cohesion is a critical concept it cannot be regarded as a perpetually 'forward-looking' concept. She notes how social cohesion can be used in an attempt to establish a link to lost or forgotten moments of social harmony, or it can even present as nostalgia for something that never existed in the first place. In contrast, social cohesion can also be employed as a vehicle for visualizing a more positive future within a community as well (Jenson, 2002:142).

Jenson (2002:149) alludes to the potential for high levels of social cohesion to become elevated to the point where it becomes a threat to the community. If social cohesion depends on the establishment of boundaries between members of the community and those who are not members, as some researchers conclude, then the potential for contacts and relationships to be established and maintained outside one's community could become frowned upon (Jenson, 2002:149). Social isolation might then become an issue for cohesive communities if they suffer from too much local bonding, or dependence.

2.7 Social Capacity and Security

While much of the discourse surrounding deindustrialization, and its effects on small communities, individuals, and economies is one of deficits, a definite virtue of the social capital perspective is that it allows for an approach that recognizes the value inherent in small communities. According to Gibson, Cameron and Veno (1999), the traditional assumption of a positive relationship between economic growth, regional employment, social well-being and the viability of regional communities has begun to come under scrutiny as researchers attempt to identify new, untapped resources and innovative local responses to socio-economic change.

The potential for social capacity comes straight out of the grassroots organizations and social structures that form the foundation of small town existence. When faced with an economic crisis, these foundations may either remain strong or crumble under the pressure of outside forces. Further investigation into coping strategies at both the individual and community level, and their role in the creation of social capital, cohesion and sustainable community responses to crisis is necessary.

CHAPTER 3. DEINDUSTRIALIZATION, THE TOWN OF HUNTINGDON AND THE HAUT-SAINT-LAURENT

The regional county municipality (MRC) of the Haut-Saint-Laurent consists of thirteen municipalities spread over 1,148 kilometers of the southwestern tip of the province of Quebec. Bordering on the south shore of the Saint-Lawrence River, about fifty kilometers southwest of Montreal, the region shares a common border with the province of Ontario to the west, and New York State of the United States of America to the south. The total population for the predominantly agricultural region at the time of the last census in 2001 was 21,851, with an average population growth rate of three percent over five years. The MRC Haut-Saint-Laurent is part of the larger Monteregie west region of Quebec.

Regional County Municipalities of Southwestern Quebec (Figure 1)
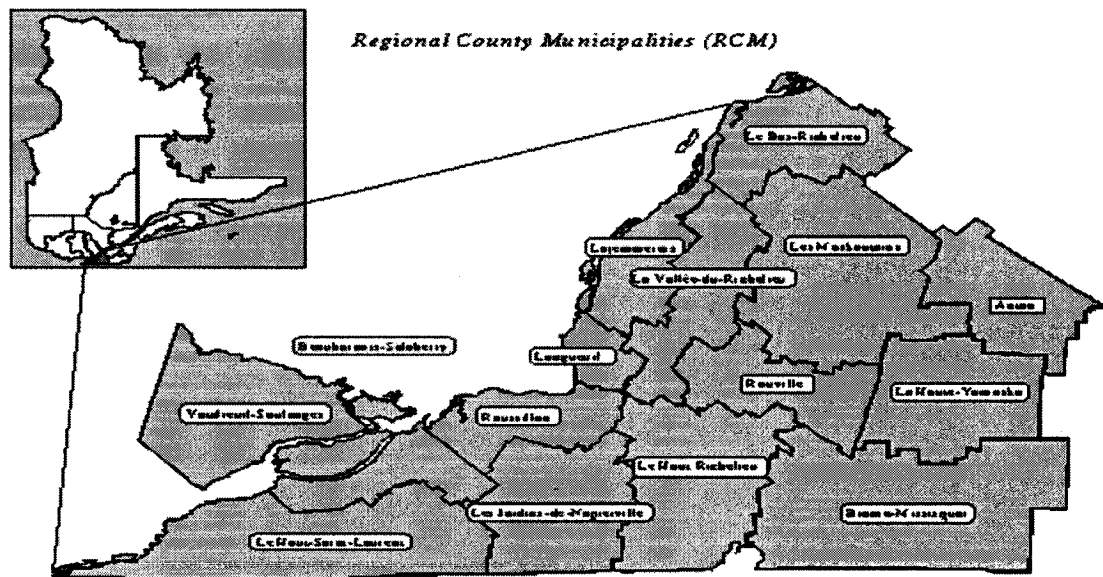
Source: Socio-economic Profile: Monteregie, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, 2005
http://www.dec-ced.gc.ca/complements/ProgrammesServices/profilsEN/profil-monteregie-an/profil-monteregie-an.htm

3.1 Settlement of Southwestern Quebec

British soldiers originally settled the Southwest corner of Quebec after the War of 1812 where the fertile land of what is known today as the Chateauguay Valley led to the early establishment of a successful farming economy. It was only once tensions along the American border began to mollify that a number of small pioneer industries, including lumber and gristmills, began to be established on the banks of the Chateauguay River. By the early 1820s, a surge of immigration from the British Isles following the Napoleonic Wars led to the formation of many of the rural municipalities that made up the original Huntingdon County and today make up the Haut-Saint-Laurent MRC (Hill, 2004). At the time, the original county of Huntingdon touched both the Seigniory of Beauharnois and the St Lawrence Seigniories, and included the newly surveyed townships along the upper banks of the Chateauguay River, which were never included as part of any seigniory. As such, the new settlers were able to own their own lots without the worry of feudal rent.[2]

It was during the decade following the British immigration boom of the 1820s that the general demographic patterns that continue to this day would be established. The French-Canadians concentrated in parishes, on seigniorial land along the south banks of the St Lawrence and lower Chateauguay Rivers, while the English settlers primarily occupied the township lands, in this case producing a settlement pattern very distinct from the long narrow lots of the Seigniorial system (Harris and Warkentin, 1974). As a result, Southwest Quebec remains one of roughly eight regions across the province with a significant English linguistic minority population and community.

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[2] Under "the British system of free and common soccage introduced on nonfief soil by the Quebec Act of 1774" (Hill, 2004:33)

In 1830, a surge in French nationalism resulted in numerous name changes from English to French, the most significant being the renaming of Huntingdon County as Beauharnois County. However in 1853, the County of Beauharnois was divided into the three smaller counties of Beauharnois, Chateauguay and Huntingdon. The majority of Southwestern Quebec's English-speaking population fell within the boundary of the new Huntingdon County.

The 1861 census lists the population of Huntingdon County at 17,491, of which only 4,060 were of French origin (Hill, 2004). By 1871 however, the population began to show the first signs of stagnation. Ten years later, the population in general had begun to decline, and it was apparent that the decline of the English population was much more advanced than that of the French-Canadians. Some local historians have speculated that the reasons behind the English 'exodus' from southwestern Quebec can be traced back to the opening of good, cheap land in the prairie areas to the west, while others have suggested it was the lure of the larger cities that pulled residents from their rural roots. Still others have charged that farmers were being put out of business by Canada's tariffs meant to stimulate growth in urban industry while others speculate that industrialization drew French-Canadians into the more English areas.

Whatever the cause, since the late 1880's, the decline of the English population and the growth of the French population have continued into the present. Most of what was Huntingdon County has become part of the Regional County Municipality of the Haut-Saint-Laurent. According to the last national census, the population of the region in 2001 was 21,851, of which only 6,360 individuals spoke English as their first language learned, while 14,160 spoke French (Table A). Only 470 people listed themselves as

being bilingual and a further 600 individuals learned another language prior to learning English or French (Statistics Canada, 2001). Of the thirteen municipalities that make up the Haut-Saint-Laurent MRC, Elgin and Godmanchester are the only two remaining with an overall English-speaking majority.

Municipal Regional County of the Haut-Saint-Laurent (Figure 2)
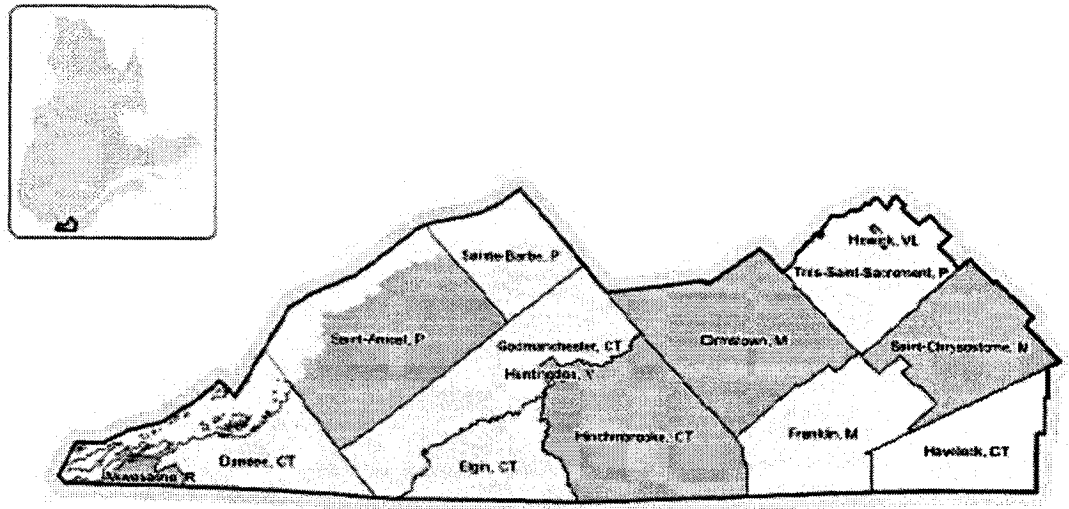
Source: Ministere des Affaires Municipales et des Regions, Direction de L'inforoute Municipale et de la Geomatique, Region 16: Monteregie, Gouvernment de Quebec, 2005.

3.2 The town of Huntingdon and Early Industry

The town of Huntingdon was first established in 1825 and has historically been considered as the service centre for the surrounding agricultural community and municipalities. The town was initially built up around the site of a sawmill and general store, and this somewhat trivial fact marks the genesis of the town's role as a commercial and industrial hub.

History of Industry in Huntingdon (Figure 3)	
1820s:	Settlement of Southwestern Quebec leads to the establishment of grist and sawmills along the Chateauguay River
1860s:	US Civil War and demand for agricultural products leads to a grain market
1870s:	The creation of a dairy industry leads to the expansion of agriculture
1930s:	The arrival of textiles from the UK
1940s:	Leach Textiles, Fawcett and Grant, the Huntingdon Woolen Mills, and numerous related industries are established,
1960s:	The Cleyn and Tinker families buy Fawcett and Grant, Leach Textiles and four associate companies to establish Cleyn and Tinker Ltd.
1980s:	Market instability leads to boom bust cycles of employment
2004:	In December, Huntingdon Mills declares bankruptcy. Cleyn and Tinker announces it has been bought by a US company and will close production
2005:	The municipal council buys the Cleyn and Tinker and Huntingdon Mills' properties to form a 1.1 million sq. ft. industrial park.

Grist and sawmills were the primary economic activity in the town until the American Civil War began to increase demand for agricultural products. This led to the creation of a grain market and the introduction of a dairy-factory system and subsequent dairy industry.

The province's first cheese factory was opened just outside Huntingdon in Dewittville, and purportedly Canada's first butter factory began operating out of Athelstan in the early 1870s (Rogers, 1975). In 1874, there were five cheese factories and two creameries operating in and around Huntingdon (Hill, 2004:38). In the following few

years, farms began to expand along with the dairy industry.[3] In less than a decade, the dairy industry in Huntingdon expanded to include 22 cheese factories, seven creameries and two combination factories by 1882 (Hill, 2004:38). The industry, which accounted for "$280,000 of an estimated $300,000 realized in the county from the sale of dairy products," outstripped both the Chateauguay and Beauharnois counties combined and dwarfed the rest of the province's dairy production capacity as well (Hill, 2004:38). By the turn of the century however, the British export trade was failing and local farmers began to focus less on dairy production for export and more on the demand for fluid milk coming out of the more urban areas and cities. The Montreal Milkshippers Association was founded in 1901, and the dairy factory system was quickly replaced by the business of milkshipping (Hill, 2004:38). In many ways, the milch cow has remained key to the general prosperity and viability of the areas surrounding the town, and Huntingdon has maintained its traditional role in meeting the service needs of the outlying communities.

In 1883, a railway connecting Huntingdon with Montreal and the United States was established, making transport between major urban centers and the outlying rural area economically feasible. The main industries in the town continued to be oriented towards agriculture, however brickyards, manufacturing plants and an organ factory sprung up as the economy began to develop in order to support a growth in population, and a demand for jobs off the farm. With the railway, local industries began to expand at an even greater pace, and with the introduction of a woolen mill in the early 1930s, the town of Huntingdon was on its way to finding a niche in the Canadian textiles industry.

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[3] As farmers began increasing their cattle from one to three cows per farm up to ten or more such that milch cows now exceeded 12,000 in the area (Hill, 2004: 38)

3.3 The Textile Industry

By the 1940s Huntingdon was booming with two major textile companies having settled in the town, spinning off numerous associate enterprises and creating hundreds of low-skill, yet well-paying jobs. The Second World War brought even greater prosperity to the region as the Canadian Armed Forces commissioned the mills to produce material for uniforms and blankets for soldiers. The mills began garnering attention after the war for their fine woolens and worsteds and on the eve of Huntingdon's 125th Anniversary in the summer of 1950, the local textile industry announced that its payroll had reached $11 million compared to the $20,000 with which it began in 1930 (Fawcett-Blake, 2001).

By the 1970s, the town was home to Huntingdon Mills Ltd., which was one of the largest pile fabric producers in Canada, and the monolithic Cleyn and Tinker Ltd., which took over five local associate companies to become one of the leading producers of worsted wool fabrics in North America. With all six Cleyn and Tinker Ltd. plants running out of Huntingdon, the town began to epitomize the classic 'company town' moniker, and unfortunate 'single industry' syndrome where specializing in one industry can stall the development of a diversified economy which could result in a region becoming especially vulnerable and prone to crisis (Randall and Ironside, 1996).

3.4 The Beginning of the End

The variability of the market in the 1980s led to a substantial drop in demand resulting in reduced production, initiating talk of shutting down Cleyn and Tinker Ltd. The company resolved instead to close a facility in Sherbrooke, however this was the town's first taste of the heightened job insecurity that would accompany the volatile boom-bust cycles that plague the textile industry. Since the 1990s, the industry, which is

concentrated mainly in Quebec and eastern Ontario, has been struggling to adapt to an ever-evolving global trade environment as imports from developing countries have penetrated the Canadian market with the result that domestic mills now supply less than half the country's textile consumption. In 2005, the Canadian market saw the total elimination of quotas and tariffs as, after over 40 years of protection against foreign imports, textiles became subject to the World Trade Organization's (WTO) General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

The GATT was created during the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, and was signed in 1948 by 23 countries as part of a larger plan for economic recovery after the Second World War. The agreement essentially ensured market access to all countries through fair and equitable trade, and was designed to protect against discrimination towards foreign imports from developing countries. However, the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA), a special regime outside of normal GATT regulations, was created which allowed for textile and clothing exports from developing countries to be subjected to quotas in order to protect the industry of the importing countries. In 1995, during the Uruguay Round, which saw the creation of the WTO, the MFA was replaced by the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), which established a ten-year transitional process for the ultimate removal of all quotas on trade in textiles and clothing.

A further issue compounding the pressure on Canadian textile companies in recent history has been the steady increase in the value of the Canadian dollar, which has greatly influenced exporting companies. A decrease in export demand due to the inflated dollar combined with increased global competition has meant disaster for many of the

small communities playing host to textiles production which have already seen the loss of over 8,700 jobs in the last five years.[4] For Cleyn and Tinker Ltd. the American market represented 80 percent of its sales, and this along with the impending flood of cheap imports from developing countries, especially China, led to an air of apprehension in Huntingdon (Rennie, 2005).

As such, the textile workers in the area were by no means oblivious to the difficult position that the industry was facing. A four man delegation of area textile workers met with the Federal Industry Minister Lucienne Robillard and Luc Desbiens from Economic Development Canada's Quebec office in March, 2004, to discuss their concerns over the future of the textiles industry in Huntingdon. A petition was launched at the same time by a local Cleyn and Tinker employee that called on Ottawa to protect the industry by investing in job training for younger textile workers in other sectors, and an early pension payment agreement for older workers in the event that their job was lost. The document also specifically called for changes to the Kananaskis Agreement that would force imported textile products from developing countries to include Canadian made materials; the inclusion in negotiations of reciprocal clauses that would permit Canadians goods access to Latin American as well as American markets; and the implementation of protective measures that had been laid out when China joined the international trading community (Taylor, 2004). In November, a group of textile workers presented the petition with a list bearing the names of at least 2,845 residents of Huntingdon and the surrounding MRC to Federal MP Alain Boire in the hope this would stimulate some interest in the tumultuous situation of the industry (Laflamme, 2004).

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[4] Government of Canada/Industry Canada: Canadian Textiles
http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/intextiles-textiles.nsf/en/Home

It was not enough. In December 2004, the town was struck with a sudden blow as the owners of Huntingdon Mills Ltd. filed for bankruptcy protection without warning and left 125 people out of work. Within the same week, news that Cleyn and Tinker Ltd. had been sold to an American textiles giant and would be closing down its operations in Huntingdon left the town reeling as a further 500 people would be unemployed by the following spring.[5] According to Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent, a community action group, the total number of people left unemployed in the community of Huntingdon and the surrounding MRC was expected to climb to 800 workers after part-time, seasonal and indirect employment between the two companies was factored.

3.5 The Aftermath

With a population of 2693[6] individuals, the closure of the mills left an immediate mark on the community as it struggled first to overcome the immediate shock, and then to fully grasp the significance of the event. From a strictly economic standpoint, the region lost $25 million in salaries per year and the municipality has lost $600,000 in taxes annually from the textile companies that have closed their doors.[7] According to Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent, seventy percent of the active labour force in Huntingdon worked in the mills, and those who lost their jobs make up forty percent of the manufacturing employees in the region. Complicating matters further, thirty percent of the residents in Huntingdon were already living below the poverty line when the mills closed (Brown, 2005a).

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[5] Principal Document, Huntingdon Economic Summit, February 12-13, 2005
[6] Institut de la Statistique du Quebec, Direction de la Methodologie, de la Demographie et des Enquetes Speciales
[7] Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent, Action Plan, April 2005.

Socio-Economic Profile of Huntingdon and the Haut-Saint-Laurent (Table 1)		
	Huntingdon	Haut-St-Laurent
Demographic Characteristics		
Population 2001:	2,693	21,851
Population 1996:	2,746	22,007
% change:	-2.90%	-0.70%
Median Age:	41.8	40.9
Language Characteristics		
English Only:	975	6,360
French Only:	1,440	14,160
Bilingual:	100	470
Economic Characteristics		
Median Total Income:	$16,089	$16,495
Median Family Income:	$34,995	$43,286
Education Characteristics		
% of Pop (20-64) without		
a Highschool Diploma:	41.80%	37.60%
Source: Statistics Canada, Community Profiles, 2001		

Immediately after the announcement of the departure of both Huntingdon Mills and Cleyn and Tinker, the town became the focus of concerted media attention as the town was represented as a martyr to international trade regulations and a sluggish government response in structuring concrete measures to safeguard the Canadian textiles industry. Some within the community saw the media exposure as benefiting the town, however, the depiction of Huntingdon as a low-income neighbourhood with an undereducated and poorly skilled workforce was regarded by many as insensitive, degrading and fallacious. The municipal council responded with a media marketing campaign to attract new businesses that highlighted the towns prime location and the availability of a mature, experienced and motivated labor force.

3.6 Selling the Community

Within two months of the first announcements of the plant closures the municipal council organized an Economic Summit, during which citizens were consulted on possible strategies the town could adopt in response to the perceived economic crisis. The summit was a first step on the part of the town council at encouraging the participation of residents in helping to determine the town's future. Unfortunately, what followed was a series of unmet promises and gross expenditures in a drive to bring industry back to the community that excluded to a great extent the involvement of local social organizations, community groups and residents in general. In March, the town council took out a $1.5 million loan, guaranteed by the Quebec government, in order to purchase the six Cleyn and Tinker properties to create a 1.1 million square foot industrial park (Brown, 2005b). The loan payment schedule is based over thirty years at a fixed interest rate of six percent, costing the town over $123,000 a year in interest alone (Brown, 2005b). The council however, applied for a $1 million subsidy under the Federal Infrastructure program that would reduce the annual payments on the loan, but did not wait for a response before purchasing the industrial park (Brown, 2005b).

The mayor announced that at least 200 investment projects had been submitted to his office, and in an attempt to attract foreign interest to the area, he made a two-week business trip to Europe where he met with potential investors. Upon his return, talk began circulating of a French pillow factory opening, and of an Italian pasta company's plans to invest in the construction of a new factory on the outskirts of the town. The pasta plant represented an opportunity for the area to capitalize on the natural advantage of the surrounding farming communities and the potential for expanding value added

production in the processing industry. However, neither of the two foreign investment plans was successfully negotiated.

By early spring, just as the final spools of cloth were rolling out of Cleyn and Tinker, the majority of the industrial park had been promised to a diverse group of small companies, including a potato manufacturing company and medical supplies firm. Unfortunately, the municipal council concentrated solely on attracting industry to what many community activists believed to be the detriment of the community. In many cases, the involvement of both the social and community sectors were kept outside of development initiatives sponsored by the municipality. As a result, the community began to respond to the municipal council and less to the situation itself. The desperation that was exhibited by the government in attracting industry and economic investments from wherever, and whomever, was perceived by some as encouraging, but other residents found it discouraging enough that a balancing response began to emerge from the grassroots.

3.7 The Community Responds

A concerted effort was made by the occasionally incompatible education, religious and social sectors to work together. In February, a community consultation committee representing the Corporation de Developpement Communautaire du Haut-Saint-Laurent (CDC), the Southwest Quebec Community Economic Development and Employability Committee (CEDEC), the Haut-Saint-Laurent Health and Social Services Center (HSSC), and the New Frontiers School Board called for a meeting. Over 50 representatives from federal, provincial, regional, municipal and community organizations came together in order to discuss how to actively develop the region in the

short, medium and long term, and in the best interests of the community (Brown, 2005c). The meeting resulted in the creation of Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent, an umbrella group designed to provide effective assistance to the textile employees; to coordinate the dissemination of information regarding services and general awareness to the community; to draw on the inventory of the programs and services available to identify the needs of the community; and to establish a central information line allowing workers and the general population access to the numerous services available through a single telephone number.

Throughout the year, the benefits of increased economic development echoed continuously from the mayor's office and the municipal council, while mounting concerns began to be voiced by citizens in favour of a new, community developed, response.

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Ethnography and Ethnomethodology

The objective of my research in the field was to develop a better understanding of how people related to, and interacted with, other members of the same community in light of sudden socio-economic change. I decided to approach my work from an ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic perspective. According to Herbert (2000), ethnography revolves around interpreting the locally specific "processes and meanings that sustain and motivate social groups" which are central to the construction of community and individual identity (Herbert, 2000). The practice of ethnomethodology centers on the methods people use in their everyday lives to make sense of the world and their place within it (Maynard, Clayman, 2003).

Based on the work of sociologist Harold Garfinkel, ethnomethodology incorporates a distinct perspective of the concept of social organization wherein "the intelligible features of society are locally produced by members themselves for one another, with methods that are reflexively embedded in concrete social situations" (Maynard, Clayman 2003: p. 175). To do this, ethnomethodologists seek out situations in which the 'normal' routine of daily social life in a location is spontaneously disrupted. In the event of a socio-economic crisis, the social framework of society can be momentarily suspended and it is in this instance that it becomes possible to observe the "actual, real-time, moment-to-moment production" of the social order (Lynch, 2002). In this sense, the mundane realities of everyday life can become key indicators of a population's capacity to react and adapt to change.

4.2 Limitations

One of the most obvious and crucial factors contributing to the underlying social dynamic of Huntingdon is the co-existence of two distinct cultures built upon the French and English languages. The significance of the dual linguistic nature of Huntingdon is a key factor in how the population, town, and geography of the region in general, is organized into two distinct yet collective communities. As the brief history of the region suggests, the French and English communities of Huntingdon have evolved together over decades of entrenched political, religious, educational and cultural influences to become a culturally mixed society. As a result, it was anticipated that the different languages and cultures would play a key role in informing a community's response to change, and would therefore require that the two communities be analyzed separately. While this distinctive social cultural divide is crucial to the nature of social capital and social cohesion/exclusion in Huntingdon, it would in fact constitute a study of its own. I decided instead to focus solely on the English community of Huntingdon and the surrounding MRC in order to focus exclusively on the coping processes and social structures that a community develops when faced with socio-economic change.

4.3 Participant Observation

The majority of my time in Huntingdon was spent attending community events, social gatherings and making general observations at numerous areas of concentrated social interaction within the town. As an accepted member of the community already, I was able to observe and become involved with social activities without arousing any suspicion or awkward behavior, which has been my experience as a journalist covering events in different communities other than my own. My presence at local events greatly

contributed to the accessibility of the community, as I was able to observe people in their daily routines while interacting with different social groups in a casual manner. This frequently provided valuable insight into topics of concern within the community, which were then elaborated on in a more formal interview setting.

4.4 Interviews

The impact of an economic crisis affects everyone within a community, and is prone to ripple effects such that the shock is not absorbed by only the epicenter. My objective therefore was not to conduct as many interviews as possible but to speak with certain key members of the Huntingdon community, as well as individuals from the surrounding municipalities that make up the Haut-Saint-Laurent region. While participant observation greatly accentuated my awareness of various responses to the plant closures, the information gleaned from a series of semi-structured and unstructured interviews with former mill employees, local business owners, community activists, clergy and ordinary citizens proved invaluable to my research.

A total of 23 interviews were conducted; eighteen of these were individual interviews while two were conducted with married couples. A further four interviews were conducted as focus group discussions with groups of three individuals with common concerns or backgrounds, including former Cleyn and Tinker employees, long-time community residents, grassroots community activists, and the directors of three government funded local community organizations.

The interviews were conducted at a time and place based on the availability and preference of the informant. The interviews were conducted in English, however informants were encouraged to speak in whichever language they felt most comfortable,

and many of the interviews reflect the dual linguistic nature of the Haut-Saint-Laurent. Each interview was recorded with the player in plain sight and participants were informed that at any point in the interview the recorder could be stopped at their request.

I began each interview by describing the objectives of my research and the type of information that I was interested in. An effort was made to keep each interview as formal as possible while maintaining the sense of structured interplay between the interviewer and informant at a minimum to allow the conversation to flow more naturally. This allowed for greater leeway with the timing of questions and opened the discussion such that the participant felt comfortable enough with the exchange to veer off topic with interesting tangents and personal anecdotes. A list of topics, themes and key questions was prepared before each interview and the conversation was guided accordingly to ensure that each topic was suitably covered before the end of the interview. A variant of the same list of key questions was used in all of the interviews to allow for the comparison and validation of information.

The information gathered from the interviews was used to inform certain qualitative aspects that contributed to a narrative account of the social organization of the Haut-Saint-Laurent and Huntingdon communities. A detailed analysis of the transcripts from interviews allowed for the material to be indexed according to relevant themes and categories. These were then used in the detection of patterns, connections and relationships that allowed for the interpretation and attachment of meaning of the data (Brewer, 2000).

At all times during the fieldwork I was very aware of my many relationships within the community, as a researcher, journalist and former resident. As such, the utmost

care went into remaining honest about my research intentions while striking a sometimes-delicate balance between my job as a reporter and role as a researcher engaged in participant observation. At all times, the community members with whom I interacted regarding my research project were aware of my objectives. Furthermore, this research project was approved by the Concordia University Department of Geography, Planning and Environment Departmental Ethics Committee for Student Research with Human Subjects.

4.5 Survey

A total of 750 surveys (Appendix A) were disseminated to the English speaking population of the Haut-Saint-Laurent through the Ormstown, Franklin and Huntingdon elementary schools and the regional English secondary school and vocational centre. Surveys were also placed in public places such as churches and the local Legion. Furthermore an electronic version of the survey was created along with an accompanying website which included a description of the objectives of the research project. An advertisement was included in the community newspaper, *The Gleaner/La Source,* which ran for a total of 6 weeks. 125 surveys were reclaimed, for a return rate of 16.6%. The information from the survey was used to assess trends with regard to certain social characteristics of the community as well as various demographic statistics.

Participants interested in completing the survey were made aware that they would remain anonymous, that their participation was voluntary and that any questions they were not comfortable answering could be left blank. Similarly, the electronic version of the questionnaire featured a contract, which meant that the respondent had to agree to

understanding the conditions mentioned above before access to the web-survey was granted. In total, six electronic surveys were completed.

4.6 Interpreting the Data

As mentioned above, the main objectives of this research relate to a community's capacity to respond to an economic crisis that disrupts the underlying social systems at work in everyday life. Having lived the majority of my life in Huntingdon, the various structures, cultures and values that are woven together to make up the social fabric of the community only became obvious to me after I moved out of the town eight years ago. In returning to Huntingdon as a journalist and also as a researcher, it has been crucial for me to redefine my role and position within the community. As noted by Brewer (2000), the establishment and maintenance of a balance between 'insider' and 'outsider' status is crucial for critical reflection in the field. The time away allowed me to develop a perspective that is simultaneously removed from the small town nature of the community yet still aware of the subtle nuances that make up the Haut-Saint-Laurent. As a result, one of the more challenging aspects of my research was limiting my focus to the socio-cultural elements of community response to economic crisis and the foundation of sustainable community development.

The decision to focus on my hometown was not one that I approached without reservation. In light of this, I decided to present the data used in my interpretation of the community's response to the economic crisis from the perspective of the community. The use of verbatim text taken directly from interviews allows for the voices of the community to be represented more completely in the analysis. This method was also used to ensure that the multiple interpretations of the event were captured. Individual's

recollections were then checked against both what other people had said and what I had observed and experienced in the field. The use of individual's voices also allowed for the data taken from interview transcripts to be kept in context with both the location of the study and the circumstances in which the research was done. Brewer (2000) suggests that because of limiting factors like situational context and location, any attribution of meaning to data collected involves concerted reflection on any social processes that may have impinged upon or influenced data. Reflexivity then affects both the representation of the data and its legitimacy as ethnographic representations; by their very nature are "partial, partisan, and selective" (Brewer, 2000: 127). As such, I have made every effort to ground my data in established social theory and research.

The essence of ethnographic research, according to Brewer (2000), lies in the abandonment of scientific models of research practice in "favour of understanding naturally occurring behavior in its own terms." In keeping with this maxim, I decided that instead of analyzing the policies that come into play in the event of an economic crisis and their effects on local residents, I would focus on the informal policies and coping strategies that emerge from below as a community recovers from, and adapts to, sudden socio-economic change (Baerenholdt, 2002). My interests therefore are not in the specific effects of these strategies but in the underlying social structures and networks that allowed for the production of these responses in the first place. The focal point of my research then becomes the initial reactions and perceptions of residents, and the dimensions of local networking systems wherein local identities are both formed and changed. In other words, this thesis attempts to understand the dynamics that lie behind

the social innovations that may become crucial in sustaining local and regional community inspired socio-economic development.

The traditional belief that the restructuring of economic activity in the formal economy represents the only way of defining a region and interpreting regional change is misleading (Gibson, Cameron and Veno, 1999:5). The importance of community, local innovation and the social economy in the pursuit of an alternate vision of community economic development cannot be undermined. Locally produced and managed responses to change, positive coping strategies and regional networking are the key to mobilizing for a new, and distinctive community-based awareness of local and regional change.

CHAPTER 5. DEINDUSTRIALIZATION, ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

The town of Huntingdon represents one of many small communities across Quebec and the country now facing the somewhat daunting realities of deindustrialization, restructuring and socio-economic change. It has been a long-standing belief that the answer to economic decline in areas that have lost a significant employer is simply to invest in developing the economy. However decades of research into economic development has failed to produce any concrete solutions. Consequently, researchers in recent years have begun to look elsewhere, and in doing so have found themselves asking a new set of questions relating to economic change and the nature of community responses to stress. It would seem that the answer might not lie in transplanting economic based solutions after all, but instead on encouraging them to grow from the grassroots.

The role of social structures, local initiatives and community coping strategies are especially important to restructuring in a small community setting with a limited economic base. The short-term fixes and Band-Aid solutions professed by investments in economic growth that would replace a single industry with yet another at the expense of community are not sustainable over the long-term. The loss of a major employer can be considered as a significant cause of stress within a community, and how a population responds may be crucial to the long-term sustainability of the community. A focus that undermines community in concentrating on economic development could result in the erosion of a community's social support systems. Any depletion in community resources may lead to a deterioration of social ties and increase conflict between individuals and groups as competition for available resources increases (Kelly and Steed, 2004). In contrast, the role of coping strategies and social support networks in stimulating a locally

based, community-structured response may lead towards a more positive outcome. A community-based initiative that encourages the development of a diversified economy based on local knowledge and values will be more likely to produce a sustainable response and cohesive community in the end.

5.1 Deindustrialization

It can easily be said that the major impact of deindustrializing trends in small communities stems from historic circumstances that include the fact that single industry communities were often established because of the presence of a low skilled, low wage workforce. Norris (2003) asserts that in many instances, manufacturers in rural communities actually play an active role in blocking other industries from settling in the region as a diversified local economy could result in demands for higher wages as competing industries tap into the available labour market.

In Huntingdon, the dominant ideology for decades has been that the mills would always be there to guarantee jobs and prosperity within the region. The very presence of the mills instilled a sense of faith within the community that created a seemingly impenetrable barrier to new businesses, industry and the outside world. As one participant observed:

> This has been a one horse town for over 50 years, and if you go back to when Cleyn first came, they did not want any other industry to come and I think that feeling has continued. They did not want anything new to move in, even up to five or ten years ago when companies wanted to come. They weren't welcome here, and now they have created a monster where the one industry that they did have is gone.
> (Local Business owner)

Sociologists Brady and Wallace (2001), in their work on the relationship between poverty and deindustrialization, have noted how plant closings in a single industry community can initiate a wave of effects that swells as it flows through the local economy. A rise in unemployment can mean that remaining jobs are in higher demand, which has the effect of driving down wages and heightening job insecurity. The pressure on other area businesses is magnified while the tax base erodes and this can lead to an eventual undermining of the quality of essential services (Brady, Wallace, 2001). Unfortunately, the majority of studies that have been conducted on the economic fallout of deindustrialization in company towns have tended to focus solely on the long-term perspective of socio-economic decline within the region.

Mayer and Greenberg (2001) have suggested that communities face three major hurdles to stopping decline due to deindustrialization. The first being poor location and existing infrastructure; the second incorporates a history of externalities, including environmental damage and inflated salaries; and finally, the third obstacle revolves around a sense of dependence on the part of the community on a single industry. (Mayer, Greenberg, 2001). In Huntingdon, residents have realized all of these issues.

5.2 Location

The issue of location and the relative isolation of the community was reflected on, and puzzled over, in many of the focus group discussions and individual interviews, as one business owner commented:

> We are kind of isolated. Huntingdon has always been that way. It's like we are at the end of everything, the bus stops here, the train stops here... we are at the end of the line. We didn't exist to the outside world and the outside world doesn't exist to us.
> (Local business Owner)

Similarly, a local community activist noted:

> Huntingdon is isolated in terms of distance. People just can't hop on a bus or a subway every twenty minutes to commute. I think in terms of the politics of the province we have often been the forgotten part of Quebec, and I think that's not new, it's existed for years, decades, from last century into this as well, There's so much to offer. We are close to the American border so why wouldn't the government's want to invest and try to keep other industry in? It is a long way. We have needed an autoroute and we've needed another bridge to connect us for quite some time.
> (Community Activist[8])

It should be noted that this sense of isolation is not universally looked upon as a negative attribute to the community. Nor is the town's location as numerous participants pointed out:

> We have huge benefits in Huntingdon. We have this beautiful rural area with the rivers and trees. Students from McGill visiting the area once mentioned that this corner in Quebec is the last area that is as pure in every sense of the word.
> (Community Activist)

> I think that some people enjoy the isolation. They move here because it's quiet and peaceful and natural and the cost of living is low. In some sense there's the geographic isolation but we have waterways and mountainous regions and there is a lot of advantage in the natural environment here. We are near the city (Montreal). We are also near Ontario, New York and the Adirondacks.
> (Community Psychologist)

One of the main advantages Huntingdon offered to the textile mills was the location of the town, which sits nestled along the Chateauguay River, with reasonable access to both the larger market in Montreal and across the American border. The river was also used for dyeing/finishing processes, and many participants recalled the days where the river would flow with a definite tint before environmental regulations limited the draining of dyes into the water. Beyond a history of pollution however, the mills

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[8] Community leaders and organizers from various community and government organizations were interviewed for this thesis and in order to maintain some degree of anonymity for participants it was decided to refer to all those involved in organized community work simply as community activists.

leave behind a population of aging, low-skilled and poorly educated workers. The average age of employees between the two mills was 44 years with roughly 18 years seniority. At least 55 percent of those employed at Huntingdon Mills Ltd. did not have a high school diploma, and the average education level of those employed at Cleyn and Tinker was secondary IV.[9] As one participant suggests however, the educational level of the employees is in many ways a direct product of company town culture where the mills offered a tempting alternative to staying in school:

> It is not the person's problem; it's the community's because everyone was working in the mill. We were a mono industry town for 70 years. Everyone said, "well I'm working at the Mill, I don't need to have a high school education. I can work there with a grade 9. I don't need to have a college degree and this and this. I can go in there, they'll train me and I can work there for ten maybe fifteen years. My grandfather started there when he was nine and he retired. My fathers been working there 25 years, I can still start there. I'll work for a few years and then maybe finish my schooling..."
> (Former Employee Huntingdon Mills)

5.3 Externalities

In economic terminology, an externality occurs when a decision produces positive or negative effects for stakeholders other than those involved directly in the decision making process. In Huntingdon, the spillover from the shutting down of the textile industry could literally be described as having had a 'neighbourhood effect.' Along with the sense of security inherent in the belief that the mills would always be a mainstay in the community, a majority of the employees enjoyed inflated salaries and benefits, including a group insurance and pension plan that was lost when the mills closed. As such, the accessibility of new employment opportunities is extremely limited, and the

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[9] Principal Document, Huntingdon Economic Summit, February 12-13, 2005

alternatives of going back to school or retraining are equally problematic as one participant explained:

> You can retrain a person who is 20, but you can't retrain a person who is 45 very easily because they might not have finished high school. They have been doing one thing for so long and then you bring them into a classroom and they're going, "I didn't like it when I was 9…"
> I've been told by a couple of people that when they were young they didn't listen to the teacher because they didn't think they knew what they were talking about and now they are older than some of the teachers who will be teaching them and do you think they are going to listen to them.
> (Former Employee, Huntingdon Mills)

At the same time, the local career and adult education centre worked to increase awareness about their programs, while simultaneously dealing with psychological barriers established in the minds of the employees now faced with a career change.

> Knowing the clientele, it's not easy for them. It's not easy to admit to it. Its not easy for them to accept the fact that they have got to do this because they have in their mind that they finished school in grade 7 or 8 and they'll have to do 4 years or 3 years. Its not like that anymore, there are ways around it but they are not listening because they are scared stiff of this. The message isn't getting out and its not being understood either.
> (Director, Local Career Center)

Denial can also be a very strong factor in the individual ability of workers to respond to their personal situations as the director of the Chateauguay Valley Career Centre pointed out:

> One girl was supposed to get into the cabinet making program, and the people from Emploi Quebec were encouraging her saying they would pay for her course and everything else and she just refused saying no, no, no, Cleyn is coming back.
> (Director, Local Career Center)

5.4 Dependence

At a community level, the most difficult of all hurdles to cross is the social-psychological dependence that pervades much of the local structures and networks within a single industry community. Even, as was pointed out by numerous participants, when

the dependence is perceived by some to be dangerous and not in the best interests of the community:

> The writing was on the wall, and I think that it has been clearly acknowledged in many sectors of the community. It points to something that I think has been a weakness in this community, and in some others as well, and that is that rather than embracing change, or looking forward to it and trying to manage it before it gets there and before it gets to be a crisis, there's a tendency to pull in, either to say I don't see it, to put the blinders on, or to sense it and be fearful of it. And I think that even if you talk about the relationship between here and the whole MRC HSL that is a concept that has been there now for 25 years and that has largely been resisted.
> (Community Activist)

With the departure of the textile mills, the sense of dependence experienced by the community very quickly transformed into a very powerful and persistent expression of denial. Studies conducted on reactions to job loss have suggested that patterns of intense emotional reactions, similar to a grief response, including "denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance" are part of a "stage-like process of adjustment" which occurs after the event (Smith, 1991). The employees from Cleyn and Tinker benefited from an early notice in December of the plants closure, and they were provided with severance packages and support from the company. As Huntingdon Mills filed for bankruptcy, the employees were less fortunate in that there was absolutely no warning or severance pay. Talk of reopening the Huntingdon Mill plant as a worker run Co-op quickly faded and the greater part of the employees simply fell back on the crutch of unemployment insurance. On average, the workers from both companies were insured for up to forty weeks of unemployment benefits, however in many ways this served merely to extend the dependent mind-set and heighten denial. Numerous participants spoke of the dependence of the region on the provincial government, of the hopelessness and

47

denial engendered in the people, and of the community's capacity to cope with the consequences:

> It was a sad day for everyone. We've all done business together, we've all worked together. In my situation I've worked for Cleyn and Tinker for 32 years and I always dreamt that I'd retire there but you know, unfortunately things didn't work out that way, and it has nothing to do with the company itself its just the situation of the economy, you know. We have no control.
> (Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

> Once the initial shock wore off people went oh well we've got severance packages, vacation pay, unemployment insurance the whole works so we're good for now. Our sense is that people are still in denial to the fact that their job is gone and not coming back and they are going to have to step outside their little circle and do something different. I have a hard time thinking that people are still believing that and yet I know they are.
> (Local Business Owner)

> I think to help us move out of denial first of all you have to face what you have lost. I mean it is grief. And you have lost something huge and I don't know, now that I think about it maybe the churches should have had a funeral. Maybe we should have had a great big funeral for all we have lost. Maybe its not too late, nobody has accepted it yet, but probably nobody would show up.
> (Presbyterian Minister)

> There are a lot of people who are sitting back waiting. "We're just going to wait and see what happens," well, life is not delivered on a silver platter. I think the real go getters will go out and find something. It may not be what they had, or what they want, but it's enough to survive. Unfortunately, there are those who are not going to do that and they are at risk of slipping through the cracks because their unemployment is going to run out and they are going to have nothing.
> (Local Business Owner)

5.5 Re-employment

Leach and Winson (1995) suggest that for the most part, studies focused on corporate restructuring have consistently shown that deindustrialization entails "occupational skidding" and a general deterioration in the livelihood of workers. Considerable evidence implies that for most people re-employment will involve inferior "job conditions as compared to their previous work, and/or extra stresses entailed in

securing the new job, as with the addition of a commuting burden to their lives" (Leach and Winson, 1995). Furthermore, Beneria and Santiago (2001) note how the loss of returns from tenure have a particularly negative impact on wages, even though starting salaries tend to depend on experience and levels of education. Unfortunately, the benefits of tenure previously held are likely never to be recovered. The authors suggest that this trend is particularly common in small communities when a major employer decides to relocate (Beneria and Santiago, 2001). Discouraged and frustrated participants spoke very openly about the personal disruptions that resulted from losing their job, and the sense of anxiety that starting over in a new work environment caused:

> I had Monday to Friday 8 to 4:30, no weekends no nights and going out and starting some place else it will be hard if you have to go out on shift and work weekends. I was up to 5 weeks holidays and now, you know you're starting all over again, back to 2 weeks. It's going to be hard.
> (Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

> It has changed my life. I had security where I was working, I had a good health plan I had a good family coverage, things like that I had a steady job but I found new employment and I have the same benefits which is nice. I was looking elsewhere such as Cornwall, Montreal and that's an hour and a half traveling everyday and it wasn't something that I really wanted to do but I said you know at my age you get into a phase where everything is so secure that you don't even think of something like this.
> (Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

While many of the effects of deindustrialization are similar across the rural and urban divide, a unique aspect to rural or small community restructuring is a significantly harsh impact on women employees. Leach and Winson (1995) highlight how employment opportunities are often more limited for women in small communities where the extra weight of domestic responsibilities can act to restrict women's abilities to look for, and secure, replacement jobs outside the community.

5.6 Leadership

Another recurring theme running throughout the literature involving case studies of company towns facing a similar situation to that of Huntingdon is the significance of the reactions of both local officials and community leaders in determining the community's response to the crisis. Mayer and Greenberg, (2001) assert that the nature of a community's reaction to the loss of jobs, incomes, and economic foundation provides a clue to the "complex personal and community dynamics" at play in society. Local reactions are also key in determining the extent to which any underlying social systems have grown to rely on the industry, which could, presumably, affect the feasibility of a transition towards a more sustainable economic base. As such, a swift response would likely be to the benefit of the community, however as Mayer and Greenberg (2001) point out, a response beyond attempts to force companies to stay or the rudimentary locating of replacement companies to fill vacated buildings, is far from the exception. The importance of sound leadership was brought up in many discussions, as one participant commented:

> Communities also have to have a couple of positive leaders who are looking at what can be done as opposed to what they don't have. A lot of times the complainers have the biggest voice and everybody else rallies around them, and starts thinking, "ok now we are victims and we can't do anything and the government has to save us." And the minute you get a couple of leaders who are respected talking about possibilities and putting them out there, you know, seeking information from people who are not in that big group which is negative, it changes.
> (Community Activist)

> There is this strong inventive past that is there if people are reminded of it and can tap into it. That's part of our heritage. There are examples of people who have been resourceful and positive and have tapped into something in the community and have made a go of it, so I think all those things are there but I think we need some leadership that is going to help us engage and reach into those things.
> (Presbyterian Minister)

50

Huntingdon in many ways exemplifies the point that the well-being of a community over a long-term recovery process requires that local leadership and community involvement extend beyond merely replacing one dominant company with another (Mayer and Greenberg, 2001). Unfortunately, as Meyer and Burayidi (1991) suggest, the economic ethos that currently drives rural and small community development initiatives can be summarized as promoting development in terms of short-term prosperity that potentially undermines the long-term sustainability of the local economy while underestimating the significance of non-material resources and value systems to the sustainability of a community (Meyer, Burayidi, 1991).

5.7 Economic Growth vs. Community

A distinction between the meaning of growth and development is critical to understanding the necessary involvement of residents in responding to socio-economic change at the community level. According to Mayer and Greenberg (2001), growth implies increasing economic activity, while development entails "an increase in local economic control." The importance of local control to the sustainability of Huntingdon and the Haut-Saint-Laurent MRC was evident as many participants elaborated on the significance of community-based initiatives:

> People are looking at what else Huntingdon can do besides go and get a pasta plant and fill up the old buildings sitting here. I think we are going to have to come together as a larger community to start looking at many issues, which affect our economy. And we are going to realize more and more community based economic initiatives that have value for the community, whether they have value for the social economy or not, you are going to find that the community wants to drive it and not leave it to a few individuals.
> (Community Activist)

That's why community economic development is so important because economic development is in a separate universe and it doesn't impact in the same way. It doesn't build community or deal with all the other values that exist. You have got to make a weave that includes the whole spectrum of local values.
(Community Activist)

I am more on the fact that you need your local people to create from the ground up, and if it's a small business that will only hire five people, well at least it's something that will be sustainable. I would rather see a community approach working from within. You know, with local people doing things locally that will stay here and provide for the future. We are in a poor position to be an industrial town.
(Local Business Owner)

5.8 Community Economic Development

In light of growing concerns over local development, it becomes imperative that the potential for community inspired development processes to mediate between the conflicting nature of economic well-being, which characteristically sacrifices locality, and the unique value systems and social structures of a given society be further investigated (Meyer and Buurayidi, 1991). Stofferahn, Fontaine, McDonald, Spletto, and Jeanotte, (1991) have suggested that the keys to small community and rural development are empowerment, education and entrepreneurship where local relationships and interaction serve to increase local knowledge while engendering feelings of empowerment such that a community will be capable of taking on a development process. Gibson, Cameron and Veno (1999:5) suggest that an untapped potential for new and creative responses to rapid change can be initiated by highlighting the "powerful role that representations of a region as either a victim or an active agent in the face of change can play." In this light, the tired assumption that economic growth is universally beneficial may be abandoned as new, community-minded responses emphasizing the capabilities and strengths of people begin to surface. As one participant observed:

Citizens are coming together to help move forward in a positive way and I don't know that it would have happened so fast if we didn't have a negative council. It is a positive spin-off. If we didn't have someone saying "I'm going to fix your problems" and looking like a preacher I don't know that everybody would have banded together. Because you hear of a lot of communities where three-four even twenty years down the road they are still in the same spot as when the textiles closed, and they are not any further ahead. So I'm not sure what it is, but there is something different happening here.
(Community Activist)

The notion of observing a community through the lens of an economic crisis becomes much more valuable when the layers of rhetoric surrounding deindustrialization, development and community decline are removed so that the root of the problem can be exposed. In Huntingdon, the lens of a crisis allowed for many of the issues that had been buried just beneath the surface for so long to suddenly rise up. However it was not the economics of the crisis that brought about the social upheaval that followed in the wake of the mills departure. Instead, it was the community's reaction to change and the perceived ramifications of change that determined how individuals responded to the crisis. Upon removing the chaotic nature of a crisis from a situation, the reactions and responses to change can be broken down and internalized, thus allowing for an individual or community to cope with issues as they arise, as opposed to the often confused, frenzied and disorganized reactions that prevail when only the surface layer of a crisis is exposed.

Quintessential to the formation of a sustained and sustainable community response to change are sound coping strategies that incorporate local values and identities while broadening social networks and the widespread accessibility of social capital. As such, a more detailed analysis of what constitutes social capital and a community's ability to access stores of social capital in the face of change is necessary.

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│  │     Three Analytical Themes of Social Capital (Figure 4)│  │
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│              │    SOCIAL CAPITAL         │                    │
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│  │   COPING     │ │   IDENTITY   │ │   SOCIAL     │          │
│  │  STRATEGIES  │ │  FORMATION   │ │  NETWORKS    │          │
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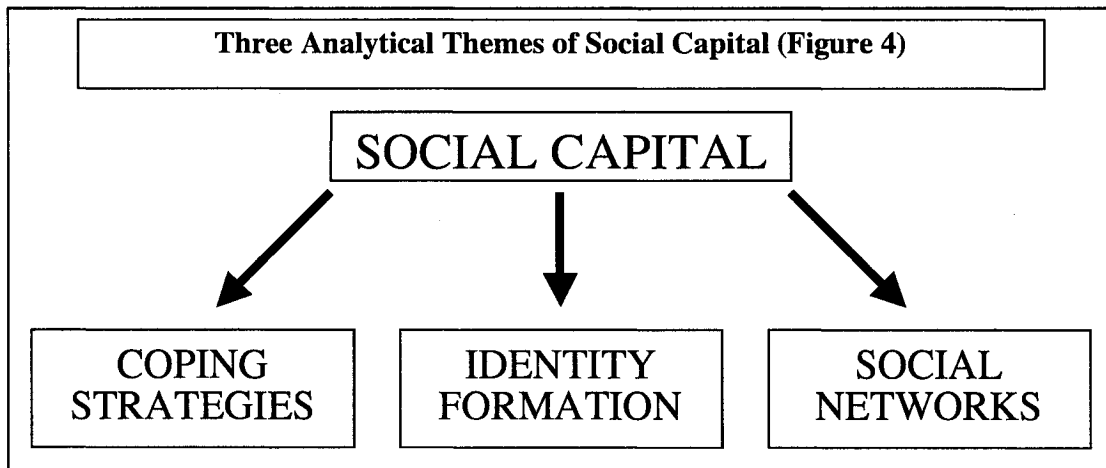
In order to do this, three analytical themes have been extracted from the social capital literature and will be explored within the context of social economic change and community development in Huntingdon in the following chapters. Individual and community level coping strategies, local identity formation, and the proliferation of social networks, all factor heavily in the creation of social capital. Despite the fact that individually these are not distinct concepts, their significance is magnified at the micro level of community organization.

CHAPTER 6. COPING WITH CHANGE

A feature of the theory surrounding social capital is the wide range of literature that can link elements of economics, political science, psychology, anthropology, sociology and geography to form a cohesive conceptualization of a population's role in determining the social, political and economic structure of their community. According to Reimer (2002), stores of social capital may exist in rural areas that go unused, and for that reason community development programs have strived to first identify and then learn to use such unrecognized resources to the community's benefit. In the face of a crisis, the capacity of a community to access and build upon reserves of social capital can be initiated through the formulation of locally specific coping strategies.

Johannesson, Skaptadottir, and Benediktsson, (2003:4) merge their research in the fields of geography and anthropology to define a coping strategy as the "integration of innovations, networks and identity construction for understanding local transformations."

Coping Strategies (Figure 5)

COPING STRATEGIES

IDENTITY   NETWORKS   INNOVATION
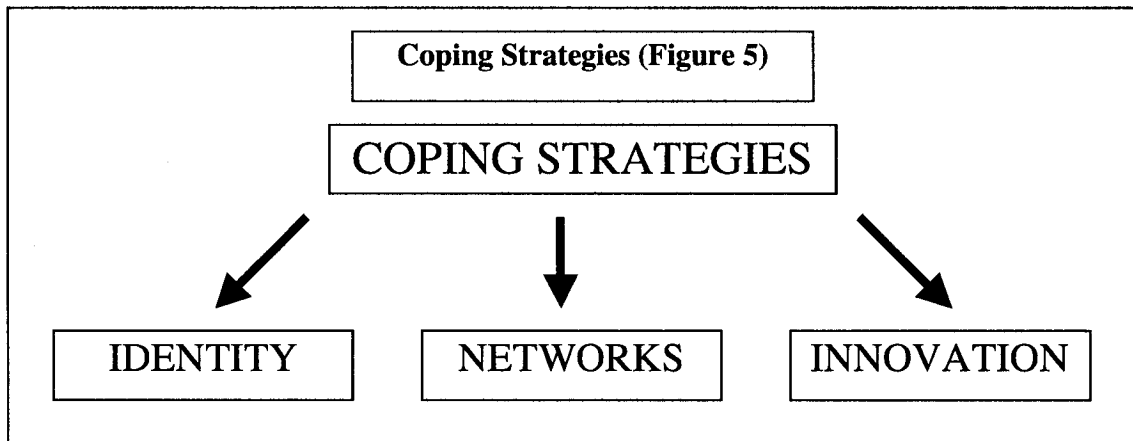
The proliferation of social networks, interactive relationships and the formation of local identities can influence a community's potential for finding innovative solutions to local problems. Therefore, both social structure and local support networks are essential

components of coping mechanisms, however the people within a community, and the ways in which their identity is affected by socio-economic change, are what determines the efficacy of coping strategies.

6.1 Social Economic Crises and Stress

The immediate and sometimes intensely emotional reactions of individuals to job loss have often been compared to a grief response in that a stage-like process of adjustment typically follows soon after the event (Smith, 1991:36). According to Smith (1991:36), researchers have tended to seek out role transition and stress models that attempt to measure how individuals respond to a stressful event and how they manage the "subsequent adoption of new roles, behaviors and ways of thinking" (Smith, 1991:36) As a result, attention has focused mainly on how intervening variables such as an individual's perception of stress, the availability of social support, their sense of security and control, general health, and economic condition, are able to influence a person's capacity to respond to the stressor (Smith, 1991: 36).

While stress may initially be brought on by the occurrence of an event, in many cases it is the anxiety over change as a direct result of the event that generates even greater levels of stress and concern. Change, according to Kelly and Steed (2004), can be conceptualized in terms of the stress process, and as such the underpinning psychological theories of stress and coping can be used as a basis from which the process of change within individuals and a community can be examined.

Any change or stressful event can have an impact on both a community and individuals within the community, however the magnitude and breadth of the change event is likely to resonate differently between the two levels (Jerusalem, J., Kanaisty, K.,

Lehman, D., Ritter, C. Turnbull, G., 1995). Therefore, the total numbers of people affected by a stress event, along with the nature of a community's response are two key factors in differentiating between an individual and community level event (Kelly and Steed, 2004: 203). In Huntingdon and the surrounding Haut-Saint-Laurent region, change came all too suddenly for the 800 people left unemployed by the closure of the two textile mills, and the disquieting effects of the two companies leaving the area quickly rippled through the local business, health and service sectors. The case of Huntingdon exemplifies a community level stress event, however the diversity of responses to stress and change that occurred depending on individuals' level of association with the mills began to inform how the community perceived the event in general. As such, it is imperative to first look at how individuals react and adapt to change before scaling up to community level models of adaptation.

Psychologists Lazarus and Folkman (1984), in their model of psychological response to stress in individuals, suggest that the event or source of the stress, how the event is perceived or evaluated (as a threat, as constructive or beneficial or as irrelevant) and the availability of coping resources are three main elements affecting how an individual understands and manages stress. How the event is appraised and the coping mechanisms at hand can mediate between the event and any outcomes, while an individual's personal level of commitment to change, expectation and confidence serves to moderate the change process (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

6.2 Individual Coping Responses and Strategies

Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub (1989) incorporate Lazarus and Folkman's categorization of coping responses to change into their own multidisciplinary coping

inventory, which introduces ways of measuring individuals' coping facilities. The authors suggest that people cope with change either by focusing more on managing the tangibles of the problem, or with their deeper emotional reactions to stress. In general, problem focused responses involve aspects of planning, social support and assistance, and local action (Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub, 1989:268). Strategies that incorporate the above responses are deemed 'active' coping strategies by Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub (1989:268), in that individuals involve themselves directly in the coping process through their actions. The importance of actively engaging in a coping process to manage the stress brought on by the departure of the mills while trying to circumvent the perceived effects of the closures resonated with participants:

> You go through so many different kinds of emotions at the beginning so that it just hits you and so when you finally come back down and go ok well life goes on now how do we deal with it, so you learn different ways. You call people, look on the internet, in the newspapers, and hopefully you find something else.
> (Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

> Losing a job is a major life change and when you don't know what the future holds that creates worry and fear and more stress, but you have to learn to move on. It's a difficult step for everyone to have to take. A lot of people have been there for 30 years so how do you start over after that many years, but you have to learn to get through it.
> (Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

> You do have to accept it before you can move on. There's a certain period of time where its not like you're in mourning, it's more like an anger that it was something that was out of your control. I found that I wasn't ready to go for interviews because I was afraid it would come across that I was a little bit bitter and I wasn't ready to take on a new job even though you are pushed to go out and get something right away so that you are not relying on the system to support you.
> (Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

> Now is an opportunity to reflect. It's a chance to sit back and think about where do I want to take my life. It's the chance to do what I've always wanted to do, whether it's go back to school or change my career.
> (Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

Unfortunately, not all coping mechanisms are positive or beneficial for the individual. Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub (1989:269) describe dysfunctional mechanisms as those strategies that involve focusing on emotions, venting and either the mental or behavioral disengagement from the event. These types of maladaptive reactions detract from a person's ability to actively cope with the problem by effectively encouraging denial and ignorance.

In stark contrast to those former employees who were able to actively cope with their situation after the mills closed, some chose simply not to adapt at all but to deny the fact that the mills had closed and were not going to reopen. For some, denial can be useful to a degree in minimizing distress, however it paradoxically intensifies the response to the event by making the adjustments that must eventually occur that much more difficult (Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub, 1989: 270). Denial was one of the most common topics discussed with participants, as many struggled to understand the potent nature of the psychological response while others were simply caught in its grasp:

> I was talking to a few people in the homecare course and they were saying that they know people that they were working with that are just sitting back at home on their unemployment. They are not looking for jobs or even taking courses. I said that this is the ideal time for them to be doing that. The opportunity is there then why not take advantage of it.
> (Coordinator, Local Foodbank)

> Some people are dealing with it in their own way. I just went day by day, and the first month I was on holiday. But by July first I was starting to think ok, this is it. I'm just sort of enjoying my retirement now, but I think if I don't get something by this winter maybe I'll try something new.
> (Former Cleyn and Tinker Employee)

Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub (1989: 281) have observed that people tend to cope better when they are easily able to rely upon familiar or comfortable coping strategies than when those habitual resources are no longer available or have become unworkable. In

Huntingdon, one of the more significant legacies of the single-industry or 'company town' culture is the routine experience of unemployment. As a result, people in Huntingdon immediately turned to the available government services after the closure of the Mills, as this was the customary response in the past when the Mills would hire, then let people go, and then rehire with the swing of the textiles market:

> Now it is final, but for a lot of these people its not the first time they have been unemployed, and they have faced this crisis before. You know, where things were great they hired everyone on and then six months later they were laid off and they might be off for two years, so you kind of find ways around that.
> (Local Business Owner)

> When I worked at the Caisse Populaire we would see people who had worked twenty years getting laid off every year but it was a normal thing because we saw this every year and so we thought, ah well they'll get called back and sure enough they always were.
> (Coordinator, Local Foodbank)

The availability of employment insurance for a majority of the former employees of the mills has in many ways created an opportunistic situation where it has not only become socially acceptable to rely on the provincial government system as a coping mechanism, but preferable as well. As one participant observed:

> What I am seeing is that they are depending on the unemployment so they don't really want to go and find a job. It's like, well, I've got my unemployment why would I want to go and work at 10$ an hour?
> There are people whose unemployment is even greater than the ten bucks an hour and the way they look at it is "well I'm just as well to sit at home, I'm getting $11 to sit at home, why should I go?" But that's not the way to look at it. Unemployment is there as a crutch not as a support system, and eventually there may not be those jobs.
> (Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

Employment benefits provide a major source of income for the former employees of the mills, and by extension they maintain the viability of the community's businesses and services. Many participants noted during interviews how local businesses, restaurants and especially real estate markets had not been affected by the layoffs. However a

cautionary 'yet' was often tagged onto the end of answers to questions regarding coping

strategies and how participants perceived the town to be handling the crisis:

> I may be wrong, but I've talked to local business people and they say they see a slight change but everyday life goes on. If you drive by the local restaurants the parking lots are still full in the mornings. So I think the impact hasn't really hit yet. But if these new places open up, maybe it'll go through very well. But the future I can't tell.
> (Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

> My business is very stable so far. There again I'm thinking we might see a difference come Christmas as that shift begins for a lot of the workers as their unemployment runs out...
> (Local Business Owner)

A sense of foreboding underscored a majority of interviews as participants

grappled with the benefits and consequences of the availability of government services in

the area, and whether or not these should be considered as viable coping mechanisms. As

one participant commented:

> There was a lot gained by programs like unemployment insurance, but there was a lot lost too. I think a lot of those government programs took away from communities their sense of their own direction or creating it. You know, when you fall into a pattern, and then you repeat the pattern so there are communities out there that are just into that rhythm of time off, time on, time off... and you don't break the mold and you're not responsible, but you are limited while you are on UI. You can't develop something else or get too involved somewhere so you just stay cool, you bowl or whatever, and I think that takes away some of the initiative that traditionally has been within community.
> You don't want to see people have acute need but on the other hand, there should be more flexibility in a system to be able to develop something and there certainly isn't. While you are on UI you have to abide by the restrictions they put on you. There is no grey area that has developed, and we need to create those grey areas so that people are not trained to be unproductive, which is in fact what unemployment is doing. It is an incentive to be unproductive.
> (Community Activist)

6.3 Community Coping Responses

According to community analysts Kelly and Steed (2004:202), the role of

perception, and especially the way in which an event is perceived, has largely been

underestimated in studies examining change at the community level. The authors contend that while a great deal of work relating to community level stress and change has concentrated on the task of developing intervention programs, the complex dynamics of how a community actually responds to change, and the nature of the coping strategies used to mediate between a change event and its impacts, have been for the most part overlooked (Kelly and Steed, 2004:205).

A recurrent suggestion in the literature exploring the nature of coping strategies is that the sum of responses to change at the individual level can be used to represent coping mechanisms at the community level. Unfortunately, theorizations of community within the literature on coping are often very ambiguous in differentiating between an individual's and a community's assessment of change. As a result, it is unclear what exactly constitutes a community level response. For the purposes of this research, two classifications of community have been distinguished in order to differentiate between types of responses where; (1) community is the aggregate of individual perceptions and responses, and (2) community is regarded as a coherent, organized body. The key factor that differentiates between the two becomes the degree of involvement on the part of individuals within the community in formulating a response to change.

6.3.1 Individual Perceptions of the Event

For Scandinavian geographers Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (1998), the practice of coping with a problem can be defined as the way in which individuals and communities engage in strategies that make sense to themselves (Baerenholdt and Aarsaether, 1998). The mobilization of strategies within a community therefore is dependent upon "the assessment of the change event, the nature of the event, its duration and rate of

development and the characteristics of the community" (Kelly and Steed, 2004:203). In this sense, the ways in which change is represented and understood by individuals within a community will have a significant impact on how the community responds and relates to the event and to any developments that may occur during the change process (Gibson, Cameron and Veno, 1999: 15). The representation of change as being the result of natural or unnatural causes, abnormal or normal processes, or as being imposed from the outside rather than from within will often determine the immediacy of the response and how it is structured (Gibson, Cameron and Veno, 1999:15).

During the interview process, a frequent comparison was made by participants between the current economic crisis in the region and the crisis that resulted from the ice storm of 1998, which saw over 100 millimeters of freezing rain coat much of Eastern Canada (Abley, 1998). Nearly two million homes and over five million people were left in complete darkness, which lasted in parts of the Haut-Saint-Laurent region for over a month. The Ice Storm brought about such an instantaneous response from the community that it has become a lasting testament to the resiliency of the MRC, however it has also led some to question whether this economic crisis is enough to wake this dormant capacity:

> I think of things, and this goes back to another disaster, the Ice Storm, and I know at that point in time Athelstan really rallied, they fed over 300 people up at the Herdman town Hall, they had generators running and I remember they had their generators running at home so they could make food, and they had their wood stoves going and they brought in all kinds of food for 300 people.
> One of the positives is that that is a resource and if it can be mobilized it is a huge strength in this community, you know, that we will stand by and be for each other. Accessing into that at this point in time will be trickier but it is there and so I would name that as a real strength in the community. The trick now is how to mobilize it, but I think its there.
> (Presbyterian Minister)

There is a difference in the response to a natural disaster, which is widespread and all-affecting, and that of a 'man-made' economic crisis, which affects community members differently and therefore may not be met with the same spontaneous and generalized response of collective support. Kelly and Steed (2004:201) assert that of the few existing community-level models of response to change, the majority of them greatly underestimate the role of collective perception. In Huntingdon, the closure of the mills was generally perceived to have been beyond the control of the town. For some participants who were employed at Cleyn and Tinker Ltd., the decision to close the mills was a direct consequence of the world market and was therefore beyond their control:

> We were doing well until things like imports, the American dollar and the economies of North America competing with the Asian markets happened and its just not compatible. If you look at the unions and the costs of producing here and the labour over there, where it costs a fraction compared with here and no benefits... It made it difficult for us to survive.
> (Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

> I've worked for Cleyn and Tinker for 32 years and I always dreamt that I'd retire there but you know, unfortunately things didn't work out that way, and it has nothing to do with the company itself, its just the situation of the economy, you know, we have no control. So it was a sad day but it was predictable. It was also unpreventable the way the economy is today.
> (Former manager Cleyn and Tinker)

Other participants were quick to suggest that the closures were due to the carelessness of the CEO of the company. In this sense, the perception was that the community was completely disconnected from the world, and the former employees were simply casualties of mismanagement. As one participant commented:

One of the things that I hear more and more, and it's filtered down from family members, is that the biggest problem is all the cheap labour. They can get stuff done elsewhere and that was the problem with the guys at the mill, they outsourced all of this stuff and so now we don't have a job. It was like the direct consequence of the people at the mill not on a global scale at all its just they screwed up so we got screwed over. Its nothing they did, it's the fault of the person's running the mill and they screwed up and so we are the victims.
(Teacher, Local Career Center)

In many ways, the perspective of community members changed according to their level of connection to the mills. The most striking difference in the way the crisis was perceived came from members of the farming community. As one participant noted, the initial reaction of some farmers to the situation of those left unemployed was uncharacteristically cold:

The farmers were opposed to helping because they said "when times are tough we always banded together and supported each other and we managed, we don't need to be giving hand-outs," and someone pointed out to them, yeah but if you live on a farm you know, there's always a cow you could put in the freezer, there's a garden that's going to help get you through a winter, and you have got some things that other people don't have that will help you survive. You have resources that perhaps you take for granted but other people can't and so that was a shock to me that people would say well pull up your socks. On the other hand, there was a real willingness to jump in and say yes, we will be there for people, and we will stand by them and we will support them.
(Presbyterian Minister)

Resiliency is bred into the very nature of farming, and the small-scale family farms in the region have a strong tradition of independence which is clearly demonstrated in their perception of the event as being manageable and therefore not necessarily the crisis that others have perceived it to be. Therefore, the role of individual's perceptions in conditioning a community's reaction becomes key in determining how it will respond.

6.3.2 Community Positioning

According to environmental planners Gibson, Cameron and Veno (1999), another significant factor in determining how a community responds to change is inherent in the ways in which individuals both represent and position themselves in the face of major

changes. The authors suggest communities can position themselves as being strong, resilient and capable of responding to the challenges that managing the effects of change themselves will involve. Conversely, communities may position themselves as victims, where the population's ability to respond is completely diminished by the impact of the crisis (Gibson, Cameron and Veno:15).

In their work on perception and competence in dealing with the effects of abuse, family therapists Durrant and Kowalski (1990) establish that a relationship exists between the types of coping mechanisms and strategies that a community might employ and the way that community members represent themselves as either competent or as victims. Within a victim setting, the crisis has damaged or broken the community to the extent that it has become reliant on the intervention of outside organizations or services who are brought in to establish what is missing before structuring a response to the change event.

A sense of helplessness and loss of control can often be associated with victimhood, and in Huntingdon, the description of Durrant and Kowalski's (1990:67) attributes of a victim community rang true for many of the participants:

> People talk about the mill being closed and their lost job but not their reactions or fears or whatever, nothing. I cannot explain that psychological reaction. Maybe it is science, or biology... or maybe it is les pensees magiques (wishful thinking). That is a hypothesis actually. They are waiting for a messiah. They always had one, Cleyn and Tinker was a messiah, you were 13, you didn't like the school and you walked across the street and worked at the mill. The big brother was the company. They make gods and they expect solutions from their gods.
> (Catholic Priest)

Emploi Quebec has helped a lot and the company (Cleyn and Tinker) had a firm come in to take people and counsel them and show them how to do resumes and show them what they should be looking at and what is available what is not available.
Right from day one they have been very resourceful and very helpful, and if there is anything that you do need, or think that you can have, they'll certainly inform or check it out if there's something available from Emploi Quebec.
(Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

In the case of a victim position, Durrant and Kowalski (1990:67) suggest that a "cathartic or corrective experience is necessary to produce community change." In other words, a victim community will remain stagnant unless someone from outside brings in a solution. This is typical of a community response that is the sum of its member's attitudes towards change. The lack of a concerted effort by the community to act as a consolidated whole often results in short-term universal solutions (stop-gap measures) that are typically handed from the top-down and are neither sensitive to locality or locally controlled.

A competent community however, exhibits obvious signs of struggling with the effects of a crisis. Durrant and Kowalski (1990:67) suggest that a competent community has the capacity to determine its own strategies and approach, and that these are likely to build on the existing strengths and resources of the population. Coping strategies will tend to be oriented towards increasing the level of community control over the situation where adaptation and acceptance can be achieved simply through "getting on with life in a way which best suits the community" (Durrant and Kowalski, 1990:67).

A sense of helplessness and feelings of victimhood were expressed by some participants during interviews, however the rallying cry that would erupt during discussions on the future of Huntingdon and the Haut-Saint-Laurent MRC could hardly be considered hopeless:

Huntingdon is going to survive. Huntingdon might change, it will have to change, but it will survive. It's not going to be a ghost town. It is going to take time. Even if industry comes in, it's going to take time. And cultural changes are going to be gradual. But I think when it comes down to it, people are going to be resilient. It's going to be hard to accept, maybe more than some can handle, but I think in the long run that it will be better.
(Local Business Owner)

I guess it depends on where we look for help in hard times. Do you look for someone else to rescue you, do you sit and wait for someone on high to say here's the answer, or do you start looking within, and start dealing with it. It doesn't matter whether the answer comes from the top or the bottom we still have to choose how to deal with it and if we are not prepared to deal with that and are just going to sit and wait for something to fall out of the sky, well... no-one can just say here I am just going to fix your life for you.
There are examples of people who have been resourceful and positive and have tapped into something in the community and have made a go of it, so I think all those things are there but I think we need to seriously engage in this and reach into those things.
(Presbyterian Minister)

I think that for a while through every crisis there is opportunity and I think one of the greatest things to happen to the town is the crisis. As much as the outside is looking at Huntingdon as a dying town, I always believed there is a certain pride about Huntingdon, something that can be taken a step higher.
(Community Social Worker)

The position of competency during a crisis is highly reflective of a cohesive community that is working as a whole in response to change. This type of community response is favorable to local community development in that it engenders local control over the situation while empowering residents to look for long-term, sustainable solutions from the bottom-up. A key feature in the development of a competent position, beyond the willingness of a community to collectively work together, is the availability of social support at the individual, community, and regional level.

6.4 Social Support

According to sociologists Mawhiney and Lewis (1997), people in the midst of an economic crisis are especially likely to rely on personal networks of support which can range from immediate and extended family members, to friends, neighbours and even recreational or work-related groups and associations. The accessibility, availability and organization of social support networks within an area can have a significant impact on a community's ability to respond collectively to a crisis as these act to "mitigate against the negative effects of the layoffs so that people's capacities remain at a level which maintains their well-being" (Mawhiney, Lewis, 1997). There is a long tradition of social support in Huntingdon and as one participant pointed out, where certain community members are not only aware that support networks exist, they play an active role in maintaining them:

> There has been a lot of hope since the closing of the factories and I think that people felt that the community would support them, that the government would support them and that their families would support them and that they would support themselves. There is an organization among the workers, a sort of sentimental type of program, that is trying to keep the pulse of fellow workers to make sure that if there are people not showing up for meetings, or if they sense distress in people, or if they hear of someone saying it's not going well, they can reach out to those people to see if they need help or if they can accompany them to the places where they can get services. That's the benefit of living in a close community.
> (Community Psychologist)

At the local level, Kelly and Steed (2004:205) suggest that the typical social support resources found in communities include group counseling and mediation, compensation for the closure of any industry, the provision of funds for retraining, education programs, and the dissemination of information regarding community services. In Huntingdon, the social support organizations were quick to respond. Within six

months of the closure of the Huntingdon Mills and less than a month after the last Cleyn and Tinker plant was shut down, the Haut-Saint-Laurent Health and Social Services Centre (HSSC) had established a central information line which would allow residents in need of help to be referred to the services they needed with a single telephone number.

The Huntingdon Branch of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security was actively involved in the organization of a reclassification committee to help the laid-off workers redefine their experience and skills to speed their re-entry in the workforce as fast as possible. Over 500 of the former employees made use of the reclassification assistance being offered, and of those at least 150 signed up for high school equivalency exams (Brown, 2005d).

In a joint effort, and in collaboration with Emploi-Québec, both the English and French School Boards, the Valleyfield Cegep, the Local Development Center (CLD), the Community Futures Development Corporation du Suroît-Sud (CFDC) and the Valleyfield farmer's union published "The Haut-Saint-Laurent has Opportunities for You," a bilingual brochure that outlined the various employment services available in the region. In addition, the local community newspaper, *The Gleaner/La Source* published a series of a dozen articles offering advice to help people manage an array of potential complications that might arise from the textile crisis.

As an area already considered one of the more economically deprived regions in the province, there is no shortage in the social, economic, and community support systems of the Haut-Saint-Laurent, except that, as one participant pointed out, very few citizens actually know they exist. As the economic crisis began to develop, it became obvious that even the municipal council was unaware of the number of local community

organizations working within the region. This simple realization became the impetus for a revolutionary community response in the collective creation of Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent. In February, over 50 different education, religious and social groups came together to discuss how best to develop the region in light of the closure of the mills. As one participant recounts:

> What was happening at first was all these economic sectors were meeting and saying, "Oh what kind of grants can we get," and all that stuff which has to be done, but at all those meetings the education and health sector were invited, and not the community sector. Quite quickly those two sectors realized that they were there just for show, you know their issues were put at the end of the agenda and they never got to them so I said lets organize a meeting of everyone together as much as possible. The idea was to organize to meet the immediate needs, immediate being over the next year and a half because as long as their unemployment was lasting it didn't really hit them, you know, what they would be facing. So we wanted to set up some things that would meet some of the needs that would be coming out over the next year. But we also thought about how to get people mobilized and working together in each municipality to say what we want the municipality to look like in 20 years, and what can we be doing now to ensure that that's the way its going to look.
> (Community Activist)

While local organizations have a long tradition of working independently on behalf of the population, Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent represents the first collaborative effort involving the social, economic, and community sectors. With a more public presence, Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent is also one way of exposing the residents of the region to the vast network of accessible and diverse groups that are there to support the community. The collaborative effort by the local organizations was brought up numerous times during the course of interviews as an example of a community coping response that was immediate and effective:

71

I have seen people willing to work together more. I have seen a lot of people really willing to sit down and try and do something about it. I keep going back to Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent but it is the first table that I was sitting at where there were workers expressing exactly what they want or what they are feeling. The union representative for Cleyn and Tinker said, "you know, I never knew there were so many people and so many services out there to help," He never knew because he never needed them before and there are still a number of people like him who still do not know and who don't want to know. But you have got all these people working together now opening all the doors.
(Director, Local Career Center)

6.5 Coping Strategies

Community psychologists Veno and Thomas (1992), stress that the significance of community development organizations is their ability to create and execute problem-focused strategies designed specifically to initiate positive changes at the local level. In researching community change, urban planner Checkoway (1995) established a typology of six strategies that a community might employ in the implementation of a change process: mass mobilization, social action, citizen participation, public advocacy, popular education and local service development. Through the initiation of a variety of responses, some more successful than others, the community in Huntingdon has attempted, to some extent, all six of Checkoway's strategies.

Coping Strategies and Community Response in Huntingdon (Table 2)		
Strategy	**Description**	**Action**
Mass Mobilization	Attracts attention to a community issue in a public and visible way	Textile employees barricaded the main access road into Huntingdon
Social Action	Creates social organizations at the grass-roots level	Coming together of 50 local organizations to form Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent
Citizen Participation	Involves community members in policy planning and decision making processes	An economic summit was organized where citizens discussed strategies the town might adopt
Public Advocacy	Gives the relevant groups a voice at the institutional level	Letter writing and phone campaigns by textile workers to both federal and provincial governments
Popular Education	Raises the awareness of an issue amongst community members	Creation of a central information line, brochure outlining job services, the publication of articles offering coping advice
Local Service Development	Community members provide services out of belief that local issues have local solutions	The Catholic, Presbyterian, United and Anglican church communities opened the 'Hope Center'

Over the course of the year, numerous attempts were made to rally local residents to the cause of the former textile workers in attempts to sway the provincial and federal governments to reinstate the Program for Older Worker Adjustment (POWA) agreement, which would offer financial assistance to older textile workers. The original program allowed workers who were 55-years and older to qualify for a small pension once their age plus seniority added up to 80 (Brown, 2005e). It was abolished in 1997, and through the mass mobilization of the former textile employees and the community, the provincial government proposed the creation of a new program, and the federal government voted in favour of its creation as well.

In many ways, the object of mass mobilization is to attract attention to a cause, and in May 2005, just prior to the official closure of Cleyn and Tinker, the former textile employees barricaded the main access road into the town of Huntingdon. With the words 'mesures d'urgence' (emergency measures) written in large bold letters across picket signs, the town's economy was symbolically brought to a stop by the workers in an attempt to press for more support from the governments. One problem associated with this type of mobilization however is that the commotion caused by some social protests can lead people to turn away from a cause. Some people may also interpret mass mobilization in the form of a protest as a chaotic, attention-seeking stunt that causes more harm than good. As one participant explained, what the community needed instead of a desperate plea for attention was a concrete plan that people could rally around:

> The community out here is a good community, which will pull together in need, but they need to have a project to set and work on and we don't have a project now. If you know you have to do something you will try your hardest at it, but if you know one guy that is going one way, and another guy in another and you're going well who do I believe... There's no belief right now, there's hope but there is no belief.
> (Former Union Representative Huntingdon Mills)

Another participant suggested that the municipal council, in promoting such mobilization, was merely heightening the crisis situation while maintaining an atmosphere of panic that was, if anything, misinforming and misrepresenting the community:

> It seems like there have been various public consultations about how to respond to this, but its always done, from my perspective, on this level of hype instead of calm.
> It always sounds so green and wonderful, and yet I sense that what's going on is sort of haphazard, like "ok, lets grab at this, and lets do that, and there has to be something we can do." Maybe if there had been leadership that instead of looking panicky and staging protests, or placing ads in the paper saying we need money, it would be different. Yes, $10,000 came in at Christmas and cheques for $50 were handed out to all the workers. Well woop-te-doo. What did that accomplish? There is no sense of a strategy or confidant leadership, its just panic.
> (Presbyterian Minister)

74

It is clear that the lack of strong leadership at the municipal level is a major issue in Huntingdon and the Haut-Saint-Laurent. In many ways, coping initiatives that are based in social action can act to balance a lack of organization at the more formal level by generating community organizations at the grassroots. These organizations also rely on strong community leadership to initiate projects or strategies, but the long-term sustainability of social action groups depends on the level of community involvement. In the case of Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent it was the community sector that rose up and initiated the first of the meetings that brought together the spectrum of support that the organization now offers. As one participant noted however, social action takes more than just leadership, it also requires the sustained interest and participation of citizens:

> When the plants closed, we sort of immediately got the community organization sector together and wanted to see how we would be able to get the rest of the sectors involved in trying to do some more long-term thinking and planning. You know, how to get people to become involved and promote awareness of the issues facing the region. The problem right now is that there are too many people from the establishments and institutions and not enough local people in various organizations or just individual people. So we'll see if there's any broader interest because it takes energy to get involved in things and people already have their own things and so we are now looking at how to move forward and it is a big challenge.
> (Community Activist)

Increasing the overall involvement and participation of community members in developing coping responses is in many ways itself a productive mechanism for inspiring positive change. However increasing participation rates within a community has been the bane of many community organizations within the area. Of the 125 survey respondents, less than 35 percent said they actively participated in a community organization, and only 36 percent of respondents would be interested in becoming more involved with their community.

Coping strategies promoting public advocacy attempt to give people a voice at the

75

institutional level, however as one participant pointed out, this type of strategy requires that there be someone willing to listen in order for it to be successful:

> The problem with the mill workers is that their voices are being heard but they are more or less being ignored. We tried getting a system to help the elderly workers, and we get the royal run around, from both sides of the coin. The mill workers themselves are trying to make a voice for themselves but who's going to listen. They have been writing and phoning to both governments and their voices are more or less getting the aides signature. "Yes, I am the deputy aid to so and so and thank you for your phone call but she is too busy to personally take care of it." We are trying to get as much done as possible but that's another battle that is not going to happen.
> (Former Union Representative Huntingdon Mills)

Numerous attempts at raising the population's awareness of the issue through popular education strategies have also occurred during the course of the last year however these have been met with little response from the community. During the course of interviews participants suggested that it was too early in the development of the crisis to be implementing strategies that targeted needs that had yet to surface:

> With my limited experience with communities that are mono industrial based, the effects of a shut down are usually more evident towards the end of the second, and in the third year after the UI has run out. That is when those people who have not got a job yet or have not gone through retraining or made some personal choices might really begin to feel the downward trend, They don't have the disposable income, they have spent some of their severance pay, or all of it, and that's when people become a little more frantic.
> (Community Activist)

> The community rose up yes, they rose up and yet I don't think the need has really been there yet. My sense is that the worst is still to come in the fact of what these people are going to need. I think the community made a response, I think it made a good response, everybody pitched in and figured well we'll do what we can, then my sense was that things kind of died down and that it's almost forgotten at the moment but I think that need is going to come again and I think the community will respond.
> (Local Business Owner)

In many ways, people were simply not interested in acknowledging that their lifestyles might change once their employment insurance ran out. Local groups provided

services for needs that might be expected to occur with a decrease in standard of living and these were highly underused by the workers, and the community in general in the months immediately following the mill closures.

One way of countering this resistance to popular education strategies may be to encourage the development of community initiated responses. Local service development involves a concerted effort on the part of community members in mobilizing to generate their own response to change in providing their own services as part of a commitment to the efficacy of locally based solutions. In Huntingdon, the communities of the Catholic, Presbyterian, United and Anglican churches all came together and opened 'The Hope Center.' As one participant explained, it had been the hope of the churches that the former workers would be able to use the Center as a meeting place where they could talk to each other while enjoying a coffee in a safe environment:

> When we heard that the woolen mill and then Cleyn and Tinker was closing we thought we have to do something in response but it can't be just anything, it has to be something that is going to meet a perceived need. Then representatives from all the churches began to talk, and we flew past our proposal for the Hope Centre at the February meeting and asked "in light of everything that is being done how does that sound to you," and the union leaders thought it was a wonderful response. They endorsed it wholeheartedly and they said they would back us and so they put posters up in the mills describing what it was. There were various local groups that said ok we're going to hold fundraisers and pour money into this, and there was a woman from St Andrews, and her face was just glowing when she heard what we were going to do, and she said I will coordinate for the Presbyterians and eventually she wound up coordinating for all of the churches.
> We sent a team out to hunt or locate a spot or location and right across from the drug store was a perfect spot and rent was about right and we had a psychologist come and train the people who were going to work there. And we didn't expect this to fix problems it was just to be a caring presence and it didn't happen like that. And maybe it didn't flourish the way we had hoped but there are a handful of stories of people who came in at their lowest who found somebody there the moment they walked in who was able to offer them some of the support they needed and get them moving on another track. So it's not like it did nothing, some good things happened, but just not everything that we'd hoped for.
> (Presbyterian Minister)

The Hope Center may have been a short-lived realization, but the response mobilized by the churches made a considerable impression within the community, and as one participant noted, the Hope Center now serves as an important reminder of a response that was initiated by the community:

> A lot of people may not be going into the Hope Center, but they are going by it and it's significant to them because it is all the churches together, and it's not just one contingency in the population. Those kinds of bringing together of people are one of the more positive directions. A lot of it comes by modeling, you know the more they see it in the community the more they see it working.
> (Community Activist)

In developing a community-based response to change, it may not necessarily be how successful a strategy is that determines its worth in a community. The potential for future strategies to be built on the existing foundation of previous attempts by the community to respond to change can be considered as a resource. Of the six strategies proposed by Checkoway, the most appropriate for Huntingdon to pursue are those that emphasize the creation of local identities and growth of social networks. Therefore, the most advantageous strategies for implementing positive community change are those advocating social action, citizen participation and local service development. Within the Haut-Saint-Laurent, numerous coping strategies were implemented throughout the year and many of them met with some measure of success. That said, the lack of a perceived collective response at the regional level was cause for concern:

There have been some developments. There are outplacement committees going on, and there are assessments of people's needs and capacities to find out how they might be oriented or helped. The CLSC and other community organizations, both government and local, are working to get together with Huntingdon's economic approach to solve problems and keep communications flowing. So I think that there has been a coming together. That said, people still have their specificity. If they are talking about the CLD it's a local development approach that is obviously going to look more at the economics. The social development groups will look more at the life of the community with respect to people, but if they can come together then there's a kind of cohesive thing rather than at some points where they could be working at odds which wouldn't be beneficial to anyone.
(Community Psychologist)

The community has to start working as a community and you can't just say that it's not my problem because it's not in my community. You can't say that anymore. It's not your community fine, but it affects your community indirectly. You look at it and you keep on trying to say how can we all work on it together and that is the problem.
There are 13 communities in this MRC and they should work as a consolidated group. If we all got together and found common ground and worked at common ground it would be better, but if everyone goes in thirteen direction there is nothing going to be happening in the middle. But the problem is that noone wants to work together.
(Former Union Representative Huntingdon Mills)

In determining which type of coping strategies will best benefit a community Kelly and Steed (2004:203) suggest that while individual and community level variables, such as the perception and representation of the change event should not be ignored, it is the unique set of community characteristics "that can act to moderate a collective response to change" (Kelly, Steed, 2004: 203). That said, Checkoway (1995) stresses the need for communities to initiate only those coping strategies that best fit their situation while cautioning that communities may become dependent on particular strategies and will therefore come to rely on those responses irregardless of the change event. In effect, a learned response mechanism may become absorbed into the culture of the community

to become either a resource or liability in determining how change is managed (Kelly, Steed, 2004:206).

6.6 Coping Strategies and Identity

According to anthropologists Skaptadottir and Proppe, (2005), the strategies that a community uses to cope with change rely upon agency, or "the ability of people to change, resist, accept or challenge the social framework in which they find themselves." Successful coping strategies will become intertwined with everyday life in a community, and will therefore be influenced by both the identities of individuals and groups and any social-spatial structures they may be a part of (Johannesson, Skaptadottir, Benediktsson, 2003:4). In the instance that the mills closed, the collective group of former employees was plunged into a reality where the identity they knew and understood for themselves no longer existed. Numerous participants explained how the sudden change was experienced:

> I've changed my life because I'm into a new career that's new to me, here I am at 50 some odd years trying to learn something new which before it came to me through habit. You know, if you took a farmer and sent him into town and set him up working in a grocery store he's going to be lost but he'll be able to do it. I thought if you listen to a few people like the town was going to go into a depression and I don't think that's happened and I don't think its happened. (Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

> You have seen a lot of the people finding work, and a lot of them are taking retraining, I was talking to a guy the other day he's worked at the Woolen mill all his life and now he's getting through the government, Emploi Québec, they're sending him on a course to learn how to drive a truck. They pay his gas to get there, they have paid for his course, and once he's done he'll have a license and he's always wanted to drive a truck but he never did it because he was in the Woolen mill and he had a steady income and he never needed to have to change. (Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

80

I know of one woman who is working in the local grocery store bakery. She's always worked at Cleyn and Tinker, she told me she has a much lower salary but she feels she has a better quality of life. She feels she sees people, she likes the environment she's learning about food and nutrition and her and her husband don't have the shift problems they used to have and so she has found that the quality of life has improved. If you hear cases like that its quite promising.
(Community Psychologist)

Gibson, Cameron and Veno (1999:18) contend that in some cases, the perceived effects of change can be so widespread that they become "damaging to the very nature of the culture of the community." Both Cleyn and Tinker and the Huntingdon Mills had been a fixture in Huntingdon for over 70 years, or three generations. The nature of Huntingdon's culture was indeed shaken when the mills closed, as one participant put it simply, "its in the blood." In discussing the plant closures, participants expressed how the mills had in many ways become part of the character of the town:

I can remember starting in the mill and everybody's dream was to go get a job and buy your first car and then after that you got married and bought a house. You know, everybody had the essentials that worked at Cleyn, and they all lived well and I mean they have lived a very modest life but everybody had the necessities, and I think if you talk to most people or even look around the town everybody's quite content.
(Former Employee Cleyn and Tinker)

It won't be the same because Huntingdon was always known for Cleyn and Tinker and the Woolen Mills and you know you drive down the 202 and you see the empty parking lots, and it used to be you saw that on holidays and it was a good thing, you know everybody is happy and having a good time on holiday, or its Christmas. Now you drive by and it is always empty and it's not the same.
(Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

The two mills have become such a symbol of prosperity within the town that the mere presence of the buildings has contributed to the 'company town' conviction that the mills, and re-employment, will once again be back. In Huntingdon, the unperturbed attitude that began to settle in the town after the initial shock of the textile crisis has been abetted by visual cues throughout the town that the mills are not in fact closed. The bright

81

red lettering of the Cleyn and Tinker sign on one of the former plants still glows at night and the company signs at all six of the Cleyn and Tinker plants and the Huntingdon Mills factory have yet to be removed and replaced. Throughout the year, the lights were kept on in almost all the mill buildings, and a scattering of cars could always be found in the parking lots. As one participant pointed out, there was a huge amount of energy imparted for maintaining the status quo:

> I think to help us move out of denial first of all you've got to face what you have lost. I mean it is grief. And you have lost something huge. Now that I think about it, maybe the churches should have had a funeral. Maybe we should have had a great big funeral for all we have lost. Maybe its not too late, nobody has accepted it yet, but probably nobody would show up, right?
> People cannot let this die. From the perspective of the churches this is a huge tragedy because we believe that new life only comes out of death, and you have to let go and you have to let things die so that something new can be born. So until we let go, nothing else can happen and we are locked in this, and that's where we are going to stay and we are just going to sink.
> I think before the mayor ran around saying "its ok, don't worry we'll put back what was," you have to acknowledge what we have lost and that has not happened. There has been no acknowledgement that there has been this huge loss, except for the churches which said "come, here is a place (the Hope Center) to sit and be together and be supportive of one another," and isn't that what we do? That's kind of like the wake, in a sense, but nobody even wants to come to the wake.
> (Presbyterian Minister)

Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:154), suggest that communities which have been subjected to heavy investments in a single economic sector, such as textiles, may come to define themselves as being both materially and symbolically places of mining, forestry, or in this case manufacturing. The authors contend that if circumstances change for the worse in these areas, it may be extremely difficult for people to deal with the situation because the economic, social and cultural investments that had for so long supported a single industry can hardly be replaced overnight (Baerenholdt, Aarsaether, 2002:154). Unfortunately, this leaves the community locked in a position of dependence

wherein fundamental changes, such as the redefinition of a community's identity, needs to occur in order for the community to move beyond the familiar 'company town' lifestyle.

According to Johannesson, Skaptadottir, and Bendiktsson (2003:4), the local formulation of coping strategies offers a chance to explore the interconnections that occur between members of the community and the social structures in which they interact. The coping strategies that a community implements are "to a large extent about creating local identities and images, or reinventing old ones" in such a way that people are able to adapt to change through defining a new identity or role for themselves within society (Johannesson, Skaptadottir, and Bendiktsson, 2003:9). Of course, it is impossible to redefine oneself without the influence of interpersonal relationships. It is equally as difficult to initiate coping strategies that are not easily assimilated into the framework of the social institutions in which local interactions and connections occur. In this sense, creating and sustaining identities that are sensitive to the locality without being symbolically fixed to the area becomes a key factor in determining the appropriate coping strategies for a community to employ. As such, the relationship between coping strategies and identification in the formation of accessible social capital will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7. COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The literature on coping strategies, and specifically research focusing on social capital as being a component of coping strategies that can be mobilized to the benefit of a community frequently stresses the importance of simultaneously redefining and sustaining local identities in the face of social economic change. Unfortunately, the literature is less explicit in defining how local identities are formed and maintained within communities. Taking this into consideration, the theories of place identity, attachment and dependence can be combined with the notion of social coping strategies to better explore how local identities are structured and contextualized within an atmosphere of change.

Geographers, and particularly those who defined the humanistic turn in geography during the 1970s, such as Yi Fu Tuan, have played a significant role in defining the research focusing on the importance of place in the production of local identity and attachment. Tuan (1977) maintains that place must be conceptualized subjectively and defined as a largely individualistic, emotionally bounded area. In this sense place has no scale as the boundaries of a place are created and maintained by people's emotional attachment and sense of commitment to a location. More recently Scandinavian and Nordic geographers have begun to insert the concept of place and the association of place attachment with local identities and feelings of safety and security or confinement and isolation into regional studies of communities coping with social and economic change.[10]

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[10] Coping strategies and identity have a particular relevance to Scandinavia and the Nordic countries as an economic collapse resulting from the dissolution of the USSR led to an economic crisis in the early 1990s, which accompanied by the transition in many Nordic countries from resource-based to knowledge economies, left many resource and industry dependent towns to redefine themselves.

Strong local identity comes with both positive and negative effects, but in the context of community development, Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002) maintain that coping strategies that incorporate the formation of local identities, social interaction and innovation can act to balance the benefits and consequences of strong local identification within a community.

7.1 Defining Community

Skaptadottir and Proppe (2005:161), in their work on localities, gender identities and change in Icelandic fisheries, have suggested that the process of coping with deindustrialization at the local level will inevitably affect both individuals' identities and the ways in which they identify with their community. In the context of social change, the authors note how an individual's identity can no longer be regarded as a fixed and personal characteristic. Identity, in the instance of change within a community, becomes something that is both flexible and public, and also socially constructed and multiple (Skaptadottir and Proppe, 2005:161). According to Howarth (2001) communities are the sites where local identity, a sense of belonging and or difference and exclusion are negotiated, and as Sarason (1974) points out, they are also "one of the major bases for self-definition. Therefore, in order to better understand the formation of local identity, both the general concept and local framework of a community must first be considered.

The vast amount of literature and theory that exists on the concept of 'community' has practically rendered the word meaningless in that it has taken on so many different meanings that discerning a single definition is virtually impossible. The connotation of the term, however, still holds great meaning for many individuals as it relates to geography and identity. As one participant explained:

Community still has significance. I think that it represents a link by choice, and when it's a link by choice, it's identification. Community has an emotional attachment to it but I think it may be confusing to people because there are so many different kinds of communities now. I think it still has a sense of ownership and belonging to it.
(Community Activist)

Instead of relying on a standard definition of community taken from any of the texts available in the voluminous literature, an attempt was made to create a definition for community that was specific to the English-speaking population of the Haut-Saint-Laurent region by incorporating the impressions of participants. During the course of the interview process, each meeting began with the simple question; how would you define your community? A sample of the responses provides a clear indication of the multifaceted and complex nature of the concept:

The community in which I live is small in size and number. It has a common set of values. I would say language is also a factor, so a common means of communication and a common interest. I would also say a shared sense of tradition. Tradition is something important. I think tradition binds a community, and it defines it as well.
(Teacher, Local Career Center)

A community is a social group in which people are not individual persons, but are people who communicate. In my mind, an individual is someone who thinks of himself. When I go to a horse race I am an individual, if I go with my family I am a person. A community involves relationships between people otherwise it's just a crowd.
(Catholic Priest)

A community is always changing because there are so many different people that live within, and make up a community. A community is not newcomers vs. people who have been here a long time, and it would be very boring if everyone were the same. When we say the word community we should automatically be thinking that this involves people from all areas of life and that it's just really interesting to keep an open mind. Friendship is a whole other level of community because you need to feel bonds. You have your home, and then your community, but in all senses of the word you are thinking of someone other than yourself. Its something that I find missing in larger urban areas. Certainly there are communities there, but you need to be connected to care.
(Community Activist)

A community is limits. A community can be defined as a picture where everyone who lives there has their own color and way in which they would like to live. The people want peace and quiet. They have their own little thing... they don't know their neighbour necessarily but if they need help they can knock on the door. For me it's very territorial,
(Former Mayor of the Municipality of Elgin)

In their work on human development and family studies, Small and Supple (1998) have observed that communities are actually complicated systems "comprised of smaller interacting subsystems that are organized in unique ways." The authors note, however, that within the theoretical models or research strategies of most research dealing with communities, this observation is rarely incorporated (Small, Supple, 1998:3). Rather, communities have tended to be represented as either homogenous entities, with little differentiation existing between members, or as the sum of independent and isolated groups within a specific area. This greatly underestimates the dynamics of a community, which are socially constituted yet critical to the basic functioning of society (Dixon, Durrheim, 2000).

In searching for an accurate definition of the Haut-Saint-Laurent community, it became imperative to look behind the traditional façade of community (as simply being attributed to commonalities), at the real-life social frameworks within which people identified, and saw themselves as being a part of:

Huntingdon and the area is a very different community, you know, for me being a native here I'm welcomed but for someone coming in here it's a hard town to break into. You know, they can still be a stranger or an outsider twenty years later.
(Local Business Owner)

I go back to when I was a youngster and your community was where you lived, and through globalization and communication the community has grown. I am a resident of Hinchinbrooke, but I identify with Huntingdon, I identify with the English minority and the Francophone majority. Communaute d'appartenance, you know, we are a community of belonging... So community means many communities and not just one, whereas when I was growing up it meant just where you lived and that was it and everybody was isolated.
(Community Activist)

I think there are a lot of levels of community, one is geography, others include shared workplace or shared values, and those would be the primary ones that I would see. Communities can also be subsets of other communities. We, the English speaking community within Huntingdon are a subset of the Huntingdon community, which is also a subset of the English-speaking minority community of Quebec. We are a subset of a number of communities of value such as community economic development, and we link out often like that.
(Community Activist)

We are an English speaking community, but we recognize that we are part of a broader community that is a majority Francophone at this point. I think we live this phenomenon throughout Quebec where we are part of the larger provincial community as well. I see myself as being part of a national initiative as well, so I am always connected in a larger community.
(Community Activist)

All the written material about the MRC claims that there is such harmony between the French and English, but for someone coming in from the outside what you immediately see is the assimilation of the Francophones by the Anglophone community. This happens to a certain extent, and then you get the reaction of the Anglo community to what they perceive as being drowned out by the French, when in fact, the Francophones speak better English than they do French. But I don't think the Anglophone communities see it at all like that. And the Francophones are usually subservient and don't want to mix up this perceived harmony which supposedly exists, and which does exist because they don't do anything.
(Community Activist)

By acknowledging the complexity of a community, and the social realities that go into the organization and daily maintenance of society, attention can be directed towards the processes occurring at different levels within a community (Small, Supple. 1998). In order to form an appropriate explanation of the Haut-Saint-Laurent community, recurrent key words were extracted from the transcripts of participant's descriptions of their community, and these were then merged to form a compound definition.

88

Thus, the Haut-Saint-Laurent community can be defined as:

A geographically and socially isolated group of interdependent people with a similar, if somewhat conservative, set of values who are linked by social and family ties in a shared sense of tradition that includes communication and participation across linguistic and cultural divides.

From this definition, it becomes obvious that the region is layered in complexities, and consequently, the local identities of individuals are intrinsically linked in an even more elaborate network of social relations and structures that combine to produce the everyday realities that people learn to consider as their community.

7.2 The Characteristics of Community

According to Howarth (2001:228), the theoretical concept of community can be broken down into four basic aspects; a source of social knowledge, the basis of community identity, a means of marginalization and social exclusion, and a resource for empowerment. The community of Huntingdon and the surrounding MRC will be analyzed according to the four principles set out by Howarth (2001:228), in order to better understand how local identities are produced, and to explore the positive and negative effects of such identification in light of the encompassing atmosphere of social change in the region.

As a source of social knowledge, Howarth (2001:230), suggests that knowledge must be nurtured and built in accordance with the realities that have become socially accepted and embedded within the community. In their research into social capital and rural communities, Falk and Kilpatrick (2000), establish that both knowledge resources and identity resources can be drawn upon by individuals in attempting to make sense of what is common between themselves and their community. Knowledge resources "draw on common understandings related to knowledge of community, personal, individual and

collective information" which can come either from within the community or from the outside (Falk, Kilpatrick, 2000:99). These resources both create and use knowledge, which is transmitted during interactions revolving around local history and nostalgia, reciprocity, trust, and common values or norms.

As a foundation for local knowledge and identity formation, the concept of municipal schools can be regarded as metaphors for Falk and Kilpatrick's knowledge resources. As participants explained, the six, small municipal English elementary schools and larger regional English secondary school in the Haut-Saint-Laurent have traditionally represented a network of institutions wherein local values, norms and skills are transmitted both intergenerationally, and within the broader community through school related functions:

> One of the big draws for us in moving to this area was the Franklin elementary school. That building is so much a centre of this community for our age group (30-39). You know, you can go in anytime you want and sit down with the principal and chat, and the teachers are all very open. They take the kids on fieldtrips to local farms, so for us that school really defines what community is. And the fundraisers that go on with the school are a community activity.
> (Local Journalist/Photographer)

> Education is what holds the community. A school is a training camp to become a citizen to me, and all the ingredients to become a citizen are there. 2 + 2 = 4 is not enough for me anymore because there is so much more to school. So some of the answers to our problems are in the school system because everybody is in school. The kids are there and they bring their parents into the schools as well.
> (Community Social Worker)

The local schools also exemplify in many ways the importance of identity resources, where "interactions draw on internal and external resources of common understanding related to personal, individual and collective identities" (Falk, Kilpatrick, 2000: 100). According to Falk and Kilpatrick (2000:100), identity resources encourage

the development of a sense of belonging among people while allowing individuals to shape or change their identities by re-orienting their perception of themselves and others.

The Chateauguay Valley Regional High School (CVR) in Ormstown plays a significant role in the formation of young peoples' identities, as this is a center of interaction and influence for most students away from the home. Within the region there are very few activities for young people between the ages of 12 and 17 beyond the extra-curricular programs that are run through the local schools. In this sense, it is during the school year that the vast majority of social interaction, influence and exchange between peers are able to occur.

Schools can foster a sense of belonging, participation, and in rural areas they can create or sustain links with the community, local traditions and values. The importance of CVR to the MRC was brought up in numerous discussions, however what came out was a concern amongst participants that the school was losing its connection with the community, and as a result, so too were the students:

> At CVR there used to be close connections with the community. A lot of the teachers came from the community and a lot of them invested enormous amounts of time and energy not just in curricula, but in balancing that with extra curricular activities and personal interaction with students. I know a lot of the teachers feel that there is a lot of that that doesn't exist anymore. You can watch the parking lot vacate at 3:15 because there are so many teachers that are not from the area. There is not that same engagement with the school community that was there for many years, and I think those are important things.
> We as a community have to make sure that there are links there, you know if its not being generated from the school outward then its up to us to generate some from the outside going in. There is not a new generation of the teachers who have traditionally come from the Valley. A lot of the people teaching there now are not community based and they bring a more urban attitude to the profession.
> (Community Activist)

The connections back to the community are not there anymore because the teachers from outside the area do not know them, and this is because they are bringing in so many teachers from the cities. The after school programs are not the same, the influence that the new teachers bring from the city has an effect on students. We have lost our balance, there are other influences as well, but we don't have the same connection with students anymore, and the new teachers are not investing in the community like they used to.
(Teacher, Local Career Center)

As an institution of local knowledge transmission, the significance of the schools within the MRC is evident in the inclusion of the school board in the initial creation of Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent. It was recognized that not only were 800 people left jobless when the mills closed, but the future employment opportunities for young people in the area disenchanted with the high school education system were far fewer without the traditional option to leave school for a job in the plants. As a result, it was speculated that the schools, and especially the Career Center would now have an even greater role in the community. For this reason, many of the coping initiatives that were initiated within the Haut-Saint-Laurent involved promoting the training opportunities available at the Career Center because the trades are no longer being taught at CVR. As such, it was quickly acknowledged when the mills closed in Huntingdon that the local knowledge and skills endemic to the region were being undermined as resources in an education system, which promotes higher education as the viable option when compared with the trades and vocational schools. As a significant contributor to local identity however, successful coping strategies will recognize the need to include and draw upon local knowledge in promoting sustainable local responses to change.

Howarth's (2001:228) second aspect of communities suggests they act as the basis of group identification, wherein a community's identity is influenced "by larger exterior forces, like an individuals identity is a product or influenced in relation to a

92

larger group." Individuals are also able to identify with community members and distinguish between others, or outsiders, within the community. That said, in some ways the sense of identity that may be acquired can be forced upon a community from outside the region, and in many ways is more reflective of how the community is represented beyond its borders. As one participant explained:

> I think that whether through circumstance or choice a lot of people here have different lifestyles, very different from an urban area, and I think this gets replicated in most of the western world, in which rural areas are overlooked or undervalued. I think that people from this area, whether they articulate it or not, sense this in terms of isolation. An isolation of values, and even a judgment of values because people who come from rural areas, from more traditional livelihood areas, do not receive the recognition for the importance for their roles within modern society. We have gone so far down the electronic route, down the industrial route that those things, while they are crucially important to the continuation of society, they are not recognized as such in many urban settings.
> (Community Activist)

The reverse is also possible, in that a strong local identity can have consequences that are produced from the inside, and are entirely attributable to living within a small community:

> People have pedigrees here, and they live up or down to people's expectation of them strictly because of what their name is. I noticed that the young people that I work with are extremely sensitive to and aware of this, and it's one of the obstacles that I have to overcome with them. Sometimes I can, but often times I can't and its one of the worst parts about being in this kind of community. People don't see you as anything other than what you have always been in the community. You go away and you come back, like I did, and it doesn't matter what you have become. You are still what you were when you left. And if you are different they will trace it back to some eccentric member of your family, like "oh I remember, they had this aunt and she was a little off." There will be a reason for it.
> (Teacher, Local Career Center)

Howarth's (2001:228) third aspect implies that communities can become a catalyst for marginalization and exclusion. Consequently, social identities are implicated in shaping the insider/outsider divisions that are present throughout

various socio-spatial levels within a region (Dixon, Durrheim, 2000). The majority of research into communities has generally represented strong identification with a community as having associative benefits, however the exclusive nature of local identification often goes unnoticed by residents. As one participant recounts:

> I was walking down the street in Ormstown a while ago and I noticed there was three generations of a family walking down the street. They were all dressed up in suits and ties and I am thinking to myself that there is no wedding in town, so somebody must have died. There has got to be a funeral going on. Then I stopped myself and I realized, my God, I am staring at them. I had stopped in the middle of the sidewalk and I had watched them cross the street and get into a car. I was standing there staring at them, and that was awful, but then I drove down the road past the funeral parlour to see who was dead.
> I think I looked at them, and in my mind I was just going through the thought process, but if they had looked at me, they would have thought I was staring. I'm sure it would have felt cold to them because I was gawking at them, but they just didn't belong. They just didn't fit, so I had to try and process them and slot them in somehow.
> (Teacher, Local Career Center)

Even within the Haut-Saint-Laurent, there is a tradition of differentiating between the thirteen municipalities, where each area represents a unique subset of the larger community. It was brought up in interviews that this mentality was starting to change, however a number of comments made during interviews suggested that the municipalities were at one time highly exclusive:

> Years ago, before the CLSC was set up, I was visiting different groups and getting ready for the set up of it and there was somebody in this community (Huntingdon) that said to me, referring to another woman, something about her being from away. I said, "well, I thought she was from here," and she said, "oh no, she was born in Ormstown." To me, here was anywhere in the valley. I had just come out from the city, so it was a wake up for me to realize how my sense of space and belonging was different from hers. You know, even though my roots are small, I don't recall it ever being as small as that. You know, distinguishing between those twelve miles.
> (Community Activist)

I used to read the old Gleaners, and you're getting onto 40 years ago now, and it would be Huntingdon writing our town and their town. You knew it was Ormstown. But I think there is more of an alliance now. The MRC has helped with the regional alliance, and all the mayors know each other and get together at least now.
(Local Journalist/Photographer)

Unfortunately, the closure of the mills brought out the older traditions of exclusion, in that for a number of residents in Huntingdon, the economic crisis was perceived by some mill employees and community members as involving only the town itself, and not the surrounding municipalities. This mentality was somewhat encouraged by the town council's actions to bring new industry as fast as possible to the town, and some participants voiced serious concerns about the exclusive attitude expressed by the municipal council's actions in Huntingdon:

All the mayors should get together and talk about what they all want to do, and work on a solution. You cannot just say it's my problem, and I'm going to get the magic solution, like what's happening now in Huntingdon. The mills didn't hire just from Huntingdon. We had people from all the surrounding communities, and you can't just throw those people out into the cold, and say well it's a Huntingdon problem, and only Huntingdon people can work here. That doesn't help you in any way.
(Former Union Representative Huntingdon Mills)

In the face of social change, the coping strategies that work to expand local identities based on the principle of inclusion will have greater significance in community development. Increasing social inclusion by working to involve all sectors and groups within the community in planning and decision-making processes can empower individuals, which Howarth (2001:228) suggests is the fourth aspect of communities. As a resource for empowerment, a community is at a minimum "united through the shared experience of being regarded by others as a community" (Howarth, 2001: 233).

In this regard, the English-speaking community of the Haut-Saint-Laurent has attempted through various local, provincial and even national institutions to establish

itself as a recognized community within the majority Francophone area. As one

participant explained, the English community in the Haut-Saint-Laurent is much more

than a minority group of people with a common language living in close proximity, but

an inclusive community that is part of a larger population:

> There are two solitudes here. We pretty much revolve within the English
> community, and the French is going on around us. I mean we mix or bump into
> one another here and there but it is still two worlds. Out here it's more equivalent.
> When we lived in Chateauguay it was probably 28% English, and you sensed that
> you were not in the mainstream. Even the media, all the issues were French, and
> the people talking at city hall were always French, and you almost felt like you
> didn't have a voice or matter. If it was English the newspaper didn't seem to care,
> and a lot of the time the publicity was in French only, so you did not feel there
> was a community. Here you really feel it. Everything is bilingual pretty much, the
> flyers are always flip-side English and so you feel like it's a community. I guess
> to me community is that interaction, interdependence, you know, like you have a
> voice or you have a purpose or something to offer.
> (Local Journalist/Photographer)

In support of sustaining the English communities across Quebec, the Human

Resources Development Committee for the English Linguistic Minority (NHRDC)

initiated the concept of a Community Table in 1999. As a federally sponsored program,

the Community Table supports the development of strong, sustainable English-speaking

communities across the province of Quebec.[11] The secretariat is located in Huntingdon,

and it provides professional development support for 11 Community Economic

Development Employability Committees (CEDEC) across Quebec. The Haut-Saint-

Laurent CEDEC is a volunteer committee that links the national initiative of the NHRDC

with the provincial Community Table and the local efforts of the community. The

CEDEC acts as a catalyst for positive change within the community by striving to

motivate people to take ownership of their communities by engaging citizens in

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[11] http:// www.buildingcommunities.ca/ct/en/main.htm

coordinated activities, facilitating the creation of local action groups and developing partnerships and local networks.[12]

At the regional level, the Chateauguay Valley English Speaking People's Association (CVESPA), which is organized through Canadian Heritage and the Development of Official Languages Committees Program, was established originally to represent and defend the rights of the English community in the area. In recent years however, the organization has turned their focus towards "community building and partnershipping" within the larger community.[13] The group is maintained and driven by community support and input, and endeavors to strengthen the cultural identity and heritage of the English population through encouraging an open dialogue with the French speaking community. A number of citizens also work to ensure that the English community is represented on the committees of most local organizations and groups, however, certain concerns surfaced in interviews about the representation of the English within the MRC:

> I think we have to accept that we are not going to have our strength as an English community by ourselves. We are going to have to participate with the bigger francophone community. That's something that has come out of the Community Table process. I think that basically all the English can do is get on the boards of these political groups, conservation groups or social groups and just make those committees know that we exist. We need representation on all those committees and in politics too, not to control them, but just to be recognized. But how do you do that in a concerted way? It comes down to individuals who are willing to commit to this, and its got to be voluntary. But who wants to be on the MRC, or to sit on a committee and listen to French at all these meetings. I mean that's what I do, I go to all of these meetings and I'm the token English, but at least they know I am there and I am representing the English community.
> (Local Journalist/Photographer)

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[12] http://www.buildingcommunities.ca/ct/en/region_sou.htm
[13] http://www.cvespa.org

McMillan and Chavis (1986), suggest that a sense of community is comprised of four elements; membership or a feeling of belonging, influence or a sense of making a difference within a group, the integration and fulfillment of needs and a shared emotional connection. The authors contend that a sense of community has become a powerful force in determining how people relate to their communities, and it can be suggested that for many residents of the Haut-Saint-Laurent these elements are a facet of everyday life. However, just as important to the formation of local identities are the concept of place identity and the experience of place attachment.

7.3 Place Identity

Yi-Fu Tuan (1975) defines place as "a center of meaning constructed by experience." As a philosophical concept grounded in geography, Dixon and Durrheim (2000), have suggested that the experience of place as a theoretical concept conveys "the collective nature of relations between persons, identities and material settings." Accordingly, community psychologists Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston (2003:274) define place identity as "a cognitive structure, which contributes to global self-categorization and social identity processes." They suggest that identities are developed when individuals locate themselves within local contexts, or places, wherein the experiences associated with the mundane routines of everyday existence can come to represent a "symbolic extension of the self" (Pretty, Chipuer, Bramston, 2003:275).

For Skaptadottir and Proppe (2005:159), meaning is attributed to both action and agency in the practice of everyday life, and it is in these customary practices that links between the social framework of society and agency are created. The authors maintain that within a community there is limited space for difference and or individual agency,

and as a result, "the scope to construct and play out one's individual identity and agency is more limited in small villages than in cities" (Skaptadottir, Proppe, 2005:159). The realities of living in a small town with a limited resource base for employment, and the ease with which people contented themselves with a job at either of the textile mills was commented on by one participant:

> And maybe the mills made it possible for people to never have to grow up. You absorbed the identity that the community gave you. Which is that of a mill worker, and your identity became your job, and whom you married and your home and all the family activities associated with that. But where were you in all of this, where was your identity? Because when people see their identity as the path they have chosen or carved out for their life, well that's not you. If you can figure out who you are, then the things you do may change radically.
> (Presbyterian Minister)

In this sense, the effects of local place identification on an individual have most often been associated with the internal struggle that ensues when the decision to stay or leave a community arises. In Huntingdon, it was speculated by many participants that the decision to move would be one that more and more mill employees would be faced with as time progressed, however the consensus was that among the workers, moving would be considered as a last resort.

> There are pretty strong ties here, and I guess you see that with the mill and people not wanting to leave even though they don't know what's going to happen and they don't have jobs, Huntingdon is still home. I think there is a very strong sense of belonging here. I'm kind of the same way, I think about doing something else and it's like well, this place is home.
> (Local Business Owner)

For other participants, place identity was something that was experienced strongest within the farming communities, where homestead farms have traditionally remained in families through generations. For many participants, the significance of place

99

identity within the community was especially obvious in the excruciating decision that today's young farmers are faced with in deciding whether to stay or leave the farm:

> I live on a farm that's been in the family name since 1828. Look what they have been through since 1828; two World Wars, famines, the Spanish Flu in 1919, and everything else. So are we going to move just because the mill closes? No way, we're staying believe you me. Its like Gone With the Wind and Tara, you know, where everything is ok if she just goes back to Tara, No way are we moving, this has got to on for a few more generations. This is what cements them, the old natives to the community.
> (Farmer's Wife and Former Huntingdon Mills Employee)

> There is a deep rootedness here, and you just can't tear people out. I mean metaphorically, these big storms come and they take branches off and start ripping at our trunk but somehow it has held firm and it has got to be that agricultural tie. I mean people are locked here really by their land. You know, why do people stay in Saskatchewan? It's because of the heritage and you don't want to be the generation that gave up the farm after everybody went through the dustbowl and the depression and whatever else.
> (Local Journalist/Photographer)

According to Fried (2000), place identity allows for the creation of identity between people and place. In Huntingdon, and especially the surrounding rural areas, there is a common association between people and their environment, as the adage and numerous participants suggest, people in the Haut-Saint-Laurent are of the land:

> Locally there's a sense of the community and a sense of belonging and integration in a social group but I think its also some rootedness in the land that brings on the sense of community and home for people, like it's a community of people that belong to the land as much as they belong to each other or to a place.
> (Community Psychologist)

In contrast to the sense of community concept, which emphasizes only the social environment of a place, Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston (2003:276), suggest that place identity calls attention to the "meanings of place common amongst its inhabitants, including affective, cognitive and behavioural components of shared experiences." Thus,

100

it is possible to conceive of individuals within a stable and enclosed community developing a psychological attachment to their environment, or place.

7.4 Place Attachment

Pretty, Chipuer and Bramston (2003:275) tend to associate attachment to a geographic locale with the degree to which an individual practices neighbouring behaviour, their level of social involvement, and his or her commitment of personal resources to their community. In this regard, community attachment is a subjective feeling that can be understood as the "deeper meaning of experiencing close, local relationships with people and, by extension, to places of relational interaction" (Pretty, Chipuer, Bramston, 2003:275).

For Fried (2000:195), the social image associated with place and community attachment can be linked with feelings of security, in that a sense of attachment involves an effort on the part of individuals to remain within the perceived range of a familiar place. A sense of security is fostered to such an extent that people begin to feel confident and comfortable within, but not outside, the boundaries of their community (Fried, 2000:195).

> The people are afraid to identify with something different than what they are. If they went to Montreal they would have a tendency to repeat there what they are doing here. They would rather go as a family than as an individual. They won't be eager to try something new.
> (Catholic Priest)

I remember being shocked to learn that there were people who would go into Montreal for a doctor's appointment but would not eat in the city. In the first place, a doctor is the only reason they will go, because they are ill and this is where help lies and so they make that trip to Montreal, but I'll say there are some wonderful restaurants in the city, and suggest somewhere for them to go and they'll say, "oh no, no, I'll cross the Mercier bridge into Chateauguay or even beyond that and I'll find a little place to eat. But I won't eat in Montreal." People here can't imagine sleeping in a bed that is not their own every night. It is very closed here.
(Presbyterian Minister)

An intense attachment to place can "conjure up the desire for unconditional and inviolable 'familial' enclosure," which then develops into a form of personal dependence on a fixed, or stable environment (Fried, 2000:195). However, as Fried (2000:193) suggests, people and communities are constantly in transition and, discontinuities within a place are inevitable.

7.5 Local Dependence

Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston (2003:275) contend that while place attachment is concerned with behavioural and emotional bonding, or commitment to a location, place dependence "considers the goal-oriented behavioural components of residents' sense of place." Therefore, the degree of dependence experienced by an individual will depend on the extent to which the physical and social resources available in a location are capable of supporting his or her lifestyle, and on the quality of life within the community compared to other areas (Pretty, Chipuer, Bramston 2003:275). When the mills closed in Huntingdon, the former employees had the option of relocating away from the town for employment purposes. It was anticipated by some that houses would immediately be put up for sale and a flood of workers would follow the mills in leaving the community, but the expected rush to move has yet to occur. As one participant speculated, however, it may be that the mill workers are both emotionally and physically tied to the area:

I have been looking at the housing markets and Huntingdon has more or less maintained stability while some of the other municipalities are going up. It is interesting because Huntingdon is home to between 48 and 52 percent of the employees of both plants that closed and yet it seems to be holding. My theory is that many of the workers, (we know that their average age was in their 40s if not 50s), might have their homes already paid for. So for them to move somewhere else, even to an apartment, would cost more than staying put. For most people, unless they have families, the largest outlay for necessities would be housing, and if that is stable here, and costs don't really exist other than fuel and utilities, maybe that has added some stability to the housing market because the cost of living is lower here compared to other places that you could go.
(Community Psychologist)

Johnston, Lorch and Challen (2004) have reasoned that a form of "locational inertia consisting of strong family ties, a degree of personal economic stability, and a breadth of local experience" can act to condition residents of a single industry community to accept isolation as a fact of life. In the event of a closure, this inertia may act to override the economic realities of the situation that might suggest relocating would be the more favorable solution (Johnston, Lorch, Challen, 2004:4). For this reason, Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston (2003:275) maintain that "while place attachment and identity can contribute to a sense of well-being, it can also result in entrapment and drudgery," leading to an isolated and locally dependent mentality.

Cox and Mair (1988) contend that in single industry communities, a select few interaction sites become the major contexts in which knowledge and experience of the outside world is gathered, where common awareness is engendered and everyday meanings assumed (Cox, Mair, 1988:312). As such, a resistance to change is instilled unconsciously in community members, which includes any spatio-temporal change that may have become inbuilt into the society (Cox, Mair, 1988:312). Numerous participants suggested that the prevalent resistance to change in the Haut-Saint-Laurent has kept the

community from evolving along the same lines as the rest of the outside world to the extent that this disconnection was endangering the community.

> I have always said too in some ways that what has preserved this area, the sort of old fashioned landscapes and the like is that very thing that keeps it from moving ahead. It's town councils that don't want to raise taxes, or people that complain about the tiniest change. We say that we love our old stonewalls and our big trees and things, and it's not their intention but that's what's preserved it old and poor. Of course, that's what gives it the attraction too, and you've got to somehow find a way to bring it into the modern paradigm.
> (Local Journalist/Photographer)

In Huntingdon, the sudden experience of unemployment brought the mill employees face to face simultaneously with change and the realities of a post-industrial society, and as one participant explained, it was not something that was easily received:

> We haven't kept up with the world and I think a lot of the former employees are finding that they don't have the skills, not just in language, but they don't have the skills to move into something else. In a sense I have also let the world go by, you know, it's revolved around me, and I didn't keep up because I didn't need to. There's a real sense of security in what you have and you don't look beyond that. I think a lot of these people are discovering that now.
> (Local Business Owner)

In their work on localities and community in local economic development, Cox and Mair (1988:312) differentiate between two forms of local dependence. 'Traditional' local dependence revolves so heavily on important matters such as identity and self-understanding that any change in location is experienced as a threat to the individual's self (Cox, Mair, 1988:312). For example, over 71 percent of the respondents to the survey live within a thirty-minute commute to their place of work. Less than fifteen percent traveled over thirty minutes to work, and an equal percentage worked from home. 'Modern' local dependence involves a direct identification with a specific location that is then maintained over space and time barriers that act to physically remove an individual

from the area for reasons of employment, or the pursuit of higher social status (Cox, Mair, 1988:312).

The potential severity of the effects of traditional local dependence are clearly evident in Huntingdon and in the Haut-Saint-Laurent where it seems former workers would sooner rely on formal support systems in resistance to change than on their own resilience. Modern local dependence is also evident throughout the region, and is personified in the exodus of young people at the start of every school year. The closest institutions for post-secondary education in English, besides the Career Center in Ormstown, are located in Montreal. For this reason, students wishing to go on in school after graduating from CVR traditionally move into the city. For many students the move is a result of practical necessity, however the bus from Montreal on a Friday afternoon will be transporting a number of young people returning home for the weekend. As one participant commented, it takes a long time to get the Chateauguay Valley out of the system:

> Look how long it takes when we move. You always have a foot in Huntingdon, even if you are in Montreal. We vacillate between the two communities, but you have your set of references in Montreal and you always have them out here and you have to learn to feel comfortable with both.
> (Community Activist)

There is an inherent irony in the concept of local dependence. The resistance to change and reluctance to let go of all things familiar in a community tends to push younger generations away. At the same, time small-town roots are often strong enough that people return in search of the familiarity and comfort they may not have been able to locate in the outside world. In Huntingdon, the lack of opportunity may in fact create a greater push for young people to leave, however community development initiatives may

help to keep the borders open to allow younger people to feel they can settle in the area.

As one participant explained, local dependence does not have to condemn people, or the

area:

> I think for many generations, people haven't necessarily had any option but to accept the place and values of their parents and perhaps for six or seven generations. I think we were one of the first generations that didn't have that. I had the chance to travel and poke and eventually come to my own, and I think that's incredibly important and I don't look at the youth in the area in the sense that we have to keep them or build up fences or anything. I get the sense that there are people who would really like to tie a ball and chain on the feet of young people and keep them in the community. I don't think that is the exercise at all. The exercise is the demographic. We want to be sure that there is actually some flow back, whether it be the people who grew up here or like me who were not from here but were seeking a return to some kind of value from our childhood. (Community Activist)

In many ways it is an awareness of, and appreciation for, local values and traditions

that both draws and holds people to an area. Muscara (2005) refers to local values,

traditions and ideas as symbols of local iconography. The significance of iconography lies

in its opposition to non-conformity, and role as a self-defense mechanism as a community

will act to reinforce its iconography if threatened by change (Muscara, 2005:38). It is

suggested that historically, communities that have "preferred security and preservation of

their iconography to the possibility of expansion" are more inclined to fold in upon

themselves in isolation (Muscara, 2005:39). In a number of interviews participants

conceived of Huntingdon as an isolated community, and some expressed concern that the

closure of the mills would only serve to increase the secluded nature of the community:

> I'm afraid of it becoming a closed in community, but that kind of goes with this world here. We used to be sure of everything with the mills here, and now we are sure of nothing, not even the aftermath. We also don't want to be able to choose, or change and we don't want to see reality. In Greek philosophy there is a famous story where people are living in a cavern and they see the light through the door in the wall and they think that this is reality. When they are taken outside, they want to go back to their cave because they think that what is outside can't be reality. (Catholic Priest)

It was brought up in discussions that the resistance to change and the very real sense of isolation that exists within the region was brought upon the community by itself. However as one participant observed, the isolation may have been kept at an unconscious level, and the sudden realization of this disconnection among the mill employees has resulted in a pervasive sense of fear:

> There is a self-imposed isolation here in that you can live and work here, and have your kids in daycare, and shop here. So people just stay here. And for the people who were born here, and raised here, who went and worked at the mills, who walked to work, and walked to school when they were kids, it's easy to become isolated and it's easy to build a fear.
> When the textiles closed these people got scared. They are scared of traveling to a new job. A lot of them are at school in Ormstown, and they have to get stages and it becomes, "well how am I going to get the stage, and where is it going to be, and I've worked in Huntingdon all my life and now I'm going to have to travel to Franklin, and oh my God. "
> It's a scary thing. And I don't think they know that it was a self-imposed isolation, and now people are starting to realize it. There are a lot of people who are open to the changes, but there are a lot of people who are not open to the change. So right now in this area, because of the industry closing, you can see the isolation, whereas before people either didn't want to see it, weren't aware of it, or just didn't care.
> (Community Activist)

In order to overcome isolation and the resulting anxiety that stems from a reluctance to face change, community level coping strategies can help individuals to straddle the line between dependence and attachment by encouraging a dialogue of openness towards new ideas and people through the positive use of local iconography in reference to both regional history and potential future directions for the region. Falk and Kilpatrick (2000:106) have noted how historical instances are constantly being integrated into 'meaning-making processes' which act to compare, contrast, and reconcile present-day circumstances with past experiences and memories to create a potential vision of the future. For people in the Haut-Saint-Laurent, the local response to the Ice Storm in 1998

was mentioned numerous times during interviews as a reference point to highlight strengths within the community. The fact that residents can remember how the traditional community barriers came down in order for the community to respond collectively in the way it did allows for people to believe and trust in the capacity of the community to cope with the current situation, and with any others that may lie ahead in the future.

Coping strategies that focus on openness can broaden local identities by reminding individuals of the commonalities that exist between people in their relationships to place, as opposed to accenting the differences, through the use of common history and iconography. In creating an open environment, the need for a community to defend and protect itself against change through isolation and dependence will no longer be as necessary to the preservation of identity.

7.5 Traditions and History

As a significant contributory to local identity formation, the role of an area's history in the sustainability of a community identity cannot be ignored. In Huntingdon, the innovative heritage of the town and surrounding region could be used as an inspiration for positive changes while serving as a reminder that people have traditionally overcome shifts in industry due to the global market, as both a timber-trade and dairy product industry collapsed before the mills were even established. The potential for historical events and their outcomes to act as a beacon in the present was highlighted during interviews:

Someone with the right twist on things can take this whole issue of isolation and local independence and twist it so that it is not inward but outward looking. Our biggest weaknesses on the flipside turn into our biggest strengths and we have this strong inventive past that is there if people are reminded of it and can tap into it. That's part of our heritage, and I would say that's a huge strength.
(Presbyterian Minister)

Garcia, Giuliani and Wiesenfeld (1999), have noted how the significance of history has been excluded from the definitions of community put forward in much of the theoretical research into community identity. It is intimated that as a "conscious part of meaning generation in a local community," a sense of history is crucial for understanding the origins, development and past transformations of a community (Garcia, Giuliani, Wiesenfeld, 1999:732). The author's assert that when regarded as a collective memory, a community's history can strengthen identification and local sense of belonging while serving to maintain a record of various phases, processes and events, which not only influence, but maintain a relation with the present.

Garcia, Giuliani and Wiesenfeld (1999:733) note how a historical dimension does not only find relevance in moments of struggle or threats to the community. Rather, a community's history establishes a basic knowledge of the situations and settings that make up everyday life (Garcia, Giuliani, Wiesenfeld, 1999:733). Meaning is then generated from "the events and problems that people in a community encounter and the way they interpret them in the light of historical consciousness" (Garcia, Giuliani, Wiesenfeld, 1999:733).

The role of local history in establishing the cultural layout of the Haut-Saint-Laurent was briefly described in chapter three, however the regional history has also played a significant role in determining the present day socio-economic characteristics of the community as well. The dual linguistic culture of the Haut-Saint-Laurent, and the

relationships, attitudes and impressions that have evolved between the French and English within the community are largely a product of local history. The most common conception of the English-French relationship within the area to emerge during interviews was that the English had settled the area first and the Francophone population started to move into the town when the textile mills were established. Perhaps as a result of this belief, the impression among the long-term Anglophone resident participants that the English were more creative and community oriented was often articulated:

> English in this community have always been grassroots whereas the French have been more industry, or job oriented. They have come for the jobs, and I hate to split it that way too. But you know, a lot of the small businesses and community-based organizations are basically English. Even if you just walk up and down the street here, English people are running most of the businesses.
> The people who are really just getting in at the bottom and taking a chance and trying to improve the economic situation from the ground up are basically English. I think if anything is going to happen here it is going to happen from the English population. The English response is going to be 'lets create,' they are going to be more creative, while the French want their jobs back, and fast.
> (Local Business Owner)

Other participants were careful to condition their responses in discussions revolving around local culture and language. In this sense, it was noted how the traditions regarding work within each linguistic community may have been informed by a regional history that saw a great gap in the availability of formal education between the Francophone and Anglophone populations to the early 1960s. As a result of this, it was speculated that the French did not have the educational opportunities and so took advantage of the chance to work in the mills. One participant recounts:

Up until they brought in the Education Act in '64, the opportunities were not there even for high school. There wasn't even a high school for the francophone population in the area until the late 60's. Before that you had to go to private or church run schools, so you had to go to Valleyfield. So there was a large segment of the population that worked on the family farm, or that worked in the mills because those were available jobs for unskilled workers and you could work your way up through that. Graduating from high school was not necessarily as big and issue because you could live very nicely and work your way up through the mills and the same with a lot of the trades, and that system is gone now.
(Teacher, Local Career Center)

The presence of the two linguistic cultures has shaped the community, and in many ways the history between the two groups has become a burden that neither community can erase entirely. Thus, for many participants, the Haut-Saint-Laurent is home to two distinct communities, one French and the other English:

I'll have students who are fluently bilingual, and have a parent from one of each language and throughout their lives they have been exposed to the two cultures and they will still identify with one or the other. They will consider themselves Francophone or Anglophone and they will keep just one as an identity.
(Teacher, Local Career Center)

I see that there are differences and I find that this should be a plus for our entire community. I think in general there are some openings and slowly people are learning that they want to speak the other language whether it be French or English.
And this is where it becomes interesting because if we can really learn to know each other and appreciate each other's strengths, then I believe that we have some treasures in bulk in the communities. But will it ever be one community? I don't know if that's possible.
(Community Activist)

An element of the present day relationship between the English and French communities that was often brought up in interviews was the amount of interaction that was starting to develop between the two groups, and this was highlighted by all the participants as a positive direction for the community as a whole:

111

I think there has been a great awakening in the English speaking population to a
lot of great things happening on the Francophone side, There is a dynamic force
there, and where people have tended to live separate lives, I think we are
discovering how wonderful both cultures are, and that we can work together and
that it is our community, and not just one group's, and even though they may be a
majority in terms of language, I don't think they want it to be reflected in their
community.
(Community Activist)

Returning to Howarth's (2001:228) theory of community aspects, the role of

history and local perceptions of history are an essential component in the creation of both

individual and community identity. The significance of history can have both beneficial

and damaging effects on a community's capacity to initiate coping strategies that build

social capital. In Huntingdon, cultural and linguistic divides have been drawn according

to the region's historical background, however, recent attempts to unite both cultures

through coping strategies that stimulate interaction may work to strengthen local

networks, and effectively increase social capital within both communities.

7.6 Local Interaction and Identity

Falk and Kilpatrick, (2000:99) state that social capital, when conceived of as the

combination of knowledge and identity resources and local interaction, can be built and

used depending on the quality and quantity of interactions within a community. An

interactive society is also one that can benefit from the creation and reinforcement of

positive local identities and healthy levels of attachment to place. As one participant

suggested, interaction is an essential component of a sense of community and belonging,

and even more so in an isolated rural area:

You need places that people can come out an interact, you know I make a joke that to go out and down the lane to get the mail I have to put on a good shirt, comb my hair and shave but I don't have much other contact on a day-to-day basis and I'm sure there is a lot of other people like that, so give them a chance to meet each other, and a lot of times it could just be the town hall or the schools having events. And I know there would be a lot of people who would be against that, they'd see it as the outsiders, and bringing outsiders into our nice little community but hey its not going to be a nice little community much longer if we don't let some people in.
(Local Journalist/Photographer)

Social capital is built in interactions, and as Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) maintain, "a precondition to building social capital is the existence of sufficient numbers of interactions of a particular quality." Likewise, Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, and Shucksmith (2005:269), suggest that while identity can be considered a fundamental aspect of social capital, both identity and social capital stem from solid social relationships. Therefore, a focus on the social networks within a community setting is necessary in order to better understand the dynamic relationship between local identity formation and social capital and their combined role in community development (Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith, 2005:269).

The following chapter considers the local social processes and frameworks that allow for the establishment and expansion of social networks within a community while emphasizing the role of networks in the creation of coping strategies and community-based social capital.

CHAPTER 8. NETWORKS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

A strong sense of identity at the community and individual level is a key aspect of social capital, however both identity and social capital are developed through social relationships, interaction and the formation of local networks at the local, community, and regional level. The interactional dynamics of social networks are a key aspect of social capital, and yet a trend in the literature has been to portray social capital only in "structural terms as bounded, normative based networks, which build mutual benefit through solidarity and trust" (Barrett, 2001).

According to Barrett (2001:19), such a static definition works fine from the economic perspective of networking ('flexible specialization' networks) but fails to capture the creative energy and vitality that social relationships infuse into the concept of networks and social capital from a community development perspective. As a result, social capital is sometimes portrayed as static, or as existing best in a situation that does not change thereby assuring the level of capital is not subject to fluctuation. In essence, some politically and economically inclined researchers choose to regard social capital as being comparable with economic capital in that it works best in stable conditions where there are often guaranteed returns from investments. Consequently, the tendency to link social capital with economic development has often times led researchers to underestimate both the emancipatory potential of social networks and social capital and the resilient nature of communities (Barrett, 2001:19).

8.1 Social Networks

As the lines of communication that extend between individuals within a community, social relationships are conduits which cross paths to form a complex set of

connections that unite individuals, and by extension groups of individuals, in networks that not only foster trust, but influence social norms, empower individuals and encourage participation along with cooperation (Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith, 2005). As a product of social interaction and relationships, the amount of social capital produced is directly related to the quality and quantity of interactions between individuals and networks of individuals (Falk, Kilpatrick, 2000:101). Likewise, the only way that social capital can be accessed and mobilized by individuals, or groups, is through interaction.

Through their experience with the Restructuring in Marginal Rural Areas (RESTRIM) study on the role of social capital in rural development in Western Europe and Scandinavia, rural planners Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, and Shucksmith (2005:271) contend that the role of networks and social capital in community development is steeped in complexity, in that social networks are highly exclusive in nature. Therefore, the "very definition of who is within a particular community or network, and thus who has access to the social capital located there," is crucial to understanding the dynamics of community structures, institutions and potential social capacity in responding to change (Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith, 2005:271). The authors suggest that focusing specifically on local social networks, (excluding the rhetoric surrounding economic and political networking that concentrates on linking between economic scales), allows for the associational practices between people to be addressed specifically in reference to the production of social capital and the benefits that accrue from these relationships to local development initiatives (Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith, 2005:271). Good networks, therefore, are those that maintain a permeable or socially inclusive perspective,

while "facilitating collective learning, allowing sharing of success and generating wider social acceptance" (Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith, 2005:281).

Social networks exist at all levels of society, and can be planned or inadvertent creations resulting from circumstance or chance. Networks are family, friends and acquaintances. They can also be based on voluntary, professional, and leisure associational activities. Whatever the connection between individuals, all networks involve relationships, provide opportunity for interaction and make a valuable contribution to people's social life on a daily basis. Therefore, networks are a crucial element of the local social structures and institutions within a community, and as such, have a crucial role to play in determining the success of local coping strategies in the event of a community crisis.

Lee, Arnason, Nightingale and Shucksmith, (2005:278) suggest that most networks are not created in the event of a crisis or as a response to social change. Rather, the existence of networks within a society prior to the change event or crisis may play a critical role in the capacity of a community to respond to change. Within the literature on development however, theorizations of social networks are often "vague on the relationship between existing social structures and the ability to create new patterns of action" (Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith, 2005:278). The authors maintain that the existence of networks prior to a crisis may in fact impede development as people are predisposed to a sense of identity that finds its meaning through interactions with other members of the network who may not be willing to risk their existing way of life.

Consequently, members of established networks may be more resistant to change than members of a network created as part of a response to a crisis. The extent to which

social networks, relationships and activities are embedded within a local community context suggests that any coping initiatives or development strategies employed will have to mimic the impromptu yet interdependent nature of local social networks. A significant issue then becomes finding opportunities within the community for interaction between individuals to encourage the creation of new networks. (Lee, Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith, 2005:278). As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the opportunity for interaction in the Haut-Saint-Laurent is sometimes difficult, and more so the further away from a town center a person lives. The most striking comments from participants regarding the level of interaction within the area suggested that within the community there are now far fewer opportunities for people to come together than in the past:

> I think one thing for the community here was all the open receptions after weddings and stuff like that, which brought a lot of people in. Everyone was welcomed to come to the parties afterwards in Huntingdon, whereas it wasn't like that where we come from in Ontario. To me there was more of a community here than where we were in the sense that more people went to these things, and everybody was invited, and whether you really knew the people or not it was the thing you did on Saturday night. There wasn't much else going on, and that was how you met people.
> (Local Resident)

> We used to have the sports centre, with lots of activities and now its kind of just disappeared. We all used to play hockey or broomball on the outdoor rink, or down at Dewittville, and people don't do that anymore. They have to have an indoor rink, and it has to be the best and well we made do with what we had and we never considered to think any differently. I mean it was fun. You had your hand-me-downs but everybody was the same so it didn't really matter. The whole community kind of lived that way.
> (Former Manager Cleyn and Tinker)

For many of the participants, discussing community interaction and networks was an invitation for nostalgic recollections:

117

Well, you went to Paul's Barn dance. Well that was the thing to do. There was a theatre here and we used to go to the shows and as I say Paul's Barn Dance on Friday night was a must, but everyone went to Paul's Barn Dance, and if you didn't, well that was a terrible thing.
(Local Resident)

There used to be dances to go to. They used to clear the seats out of the O'Conner building sometimes and have dances in there, and there used to be an orchestra that came around. I can remember being there at a dance and I can remember dancing to Darling Nelly Gray. But mostly that building was for movies.
(Husband, Local Resident Couple)

There was more going on in the church even, we had what they called the Couple's Club at night in the church and in the winter time there were skating parties. It was like a dance you know, you'd dance with other people, you'd skate with other people a round or two. It was quite fun but we were more the younger couples in those days. Nowadays the big thing is the card parties, but it's the seniors. What is there for the group in between here? As far as we were concerned there was far more going on for us when we were younger than there is now? There is nothing much, not even church. There isn't anything really.
(Wife, Local Resident Couple)

As focal points of activity within communities, many participants brought up schools during interviews as a venue for interaction, as these can incorporate up to three generations within a community:

Even when my kids were in elementary school in French I would always take them to CVR for Talent Fest (Talent Show) and I'd be driving into the parking lot and would have that sense that the community from all over, from Hemmingford to Dundee was going to be coming here. And my son, he would have been in grade 5, would look at me and say "dad this is fun to see all the people coming in like this" and I knew what he was talking about. There's something magic about the community coming out like that and being part of it.
(Community Social Worker)

In discussing the mobilization of social networks within a community facing change, the role of those social ties that pre-exist the change event must be considered, as well as the networks that once existed and still play a significant role in how people identify with the locality. The ways that new and old networks are incorporated into the coping process is an important issue in determining the appropriate strategies for a

118

community. Lee, Arnason, Nightingale and Shucksmith (2005:278) contend that in light of the socially embedded nature of networks, determining whether people engage in exclusive bonding networks or more open bridging networks may provide some insight into defining how people communicate within a community.

8.1.1 Bonding Networks

Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002) have conceptualized the notion of embeddedness as incorporating a spatial element into community, which then acts as a means of defining and controlling the geographical extent within which networks function. Essentially, networking is believed to occur within certain boundaries of a community, and within these borders "certain rules and norms are applied, and the social organization has strong associative and also reciprocal elements" (Baerenholdt, Aarsaether, 2002:161). According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), networks that function closely within the borders of a community, or 'social fields of insiders,' can be considered bonding networks. Woolcock and Narayan (2000), in their work on social capital and development suggest that in depicting both the benefits and consequences of networks, it is essential to distinguish between the "vertical as well as horizontal associations between people, and relations within and among other organizational entities or communities." The authors establish that strong intra-community ties allow for a sense of common identity and purpose to develop which provide a measure of security and comfort for individuals within the group. However, bonding networks can also impose a sense of obligation and commitment on members, which can lead to negative

outcomes for an individual as group loyalty can effectively isolate members from information or opportunity outside of the network (Narayan, Woolcock, 2000).

Robinson and Flora (2003), concur that networks serve an important purpose in both defining and maintaining sets of values, rules and norms within groups, which can balance between individual and community objectives or preferences. Bonds also restrict innovation and can trigger negative reactions in certain circumstances out of a refusal to accept change (Robinson, Flora, 2003). The theory of defensive differentiation describes the inability of members of a group to pursue independent talents or proficiencies as a result of feeling obliged to preserve their 'in-group' identity (Dixon, Durrheim, 2000). Numerous participants spoke of the closeness between members of local networks in the region, and many noted how change and innovation was stifled in the Haut-Saint-Laurent:

> I understand that peer pressure from being from a certain place because where I grew up I was a fourth generation in the community and everybody knew me and I knew everybody and its hard to stick your neck out when everyone knows who you were, and who you are supposed to be.
> I think it is probably a big factor in why people don't go and do something or take a risk and do something different, you know, they have to conform. There is definitely a certain conformity going on. In fact, when we tried to do this article for CV Magazine (local student written magazine) and get some interviews with people, they were like, "oh no, no, I don't want to look like I am promoting myself, and I don't want to do an interview," and its all about their peers.
> (Local Journalist/Photographer)

> Anytime people in the community try something new people look at the weak side. We like the thought of other people having weak sides. See we see the university students who live here and we know they are there because they are going to make money afterward and leave, and that's why they are there.
> When I first came here people asked where I was from, I said I was from Valleyfield, and then they told me that I wouldn't stay here. I said "why?" and they said, "well we're all only from Huntingdon here."
> (Catholic Priest)

I don't necessarily think people here like it when someone makes a success of it. You know, its like they want to keep everyone down to their level and they don't want anyone crawling out of the barrel. That's too bad because I do think that this does put a stick in the spokes, and often people are sort of happy when things don't go well for this promoter, or somebody that appears to be high on himself a little bit, and that's sort of what it is to be an entrepreneur.
(Local Journalist/Photographer)

The three essential components of successful coping strategies, according to Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:163), are networking, the formation of identity and innovation. Thus, the consequences of bonded networks are that the crucial innovative elements of a positive response to change can be quashed within a community, which significantly limits the effectiveness of any given coping strategy or response to change. In Huntingdon, the resistance to potentially innovative solutions was evident in that some of the mill employees opted not to return to school, seek re-training or even interview for jobs after the mills closures, preferring instead to draw employment insurance and wait for industry, and their original job to return. This mentality can again be attributed to the 'company town syndrome' alluded to in previous chapters, however as Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:159) suggest, the almost systematic refusal to accept change is characteristic of many communities like Huntingdon, where tensions surface between the integrated and formal relations (such as government services) at one extreme and the innovative practices (coping strategies) on the other.

Bonded communities have in some ways come to represent a paradox in the literature dedicated to both coping and development. It is accepted that integrated communities can be beneficial for those members who are included to the extent that stability and consistency in established practices and interests are maintained at all costs. However, the success of innovative strategies at the local level is thoroughly dependent

on the support or social backing of the same groups that actively thwart innovation (Baerenholdt, Aarsaether, 2002:160). The search for a balancing or middle ground between the bonded networks that suppress innovation and those that aspire to create innovative solutions can be considered one of the main objectives of community development in the presence of social change. For Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:160), the answer lies in coping strategies that "strike a balance between relations re-producing trust and integration, and relations that are open-ended and potentially innovative, but also disruptive."

In Huntingdon, and the surrounding region, the mill workers who opted to wait for solutions while relying on government services as a coping mechanism are in many ways functioning within a bonded network that is extremely restrictive of innovation. Unfortunately, in the case of those workers living off employment insurance payments, it is not only the local network that is suppressing creativity and innovation, but the government services they are so reliant on as well. Numerous participants brought up the negative impacts on an individual's resourcefulness that can be associated with government employment benefits, specifically its potential to exclude community participation and broadening social networks:

> I have seen people on unemployment hassled because they have done volunteer work during the day. Volunteer work, and I maintain that this is one of the most creative ways of opening up doors. You are getting to know your community better and understanding it's resources... It is really of a closed mindset to limit people from participating within their community because that is the most likely way for them to make connections that will lead them somewhere.
> (Community Activist)

You are supposed to be looking for a job on unemployment, but if you go and take training, they will cut you off because you are not available to look for work. I mean you can't do volunteer work, and that's a good way to work your way into something, to volunteer. If you go to Emploi Quebec and you want to do this job and need these courses, and depending on where they are in their budget year you might get funding or you might not. And sometimes they will not fund because there are already too many in the area in that trade, but it doesn't make sense because if you are really wanting to get into the field of office technology, or something, you might wind up running your own business, maybe you know of a small family business where you could have a job, and yet the area is saturated according to the government statistics and so you get no funding for it. It feels like it punishes initiative.
(Teacher, Local Career Center)

They say if you are home and not talking or participating in the community for a couple of months, the likelihood of finding a job or being successful diminishes, but if you are volunteering, you are still involved with the community, you are most likely networking, and meeting people.
(Community Activist)

It would seem that in Huntingdon, a potential source of balance between bonded networks and innovative coping strategies may be the encouragement of volunteerism and participation on the part of former mill employees and people in general. Volunteer work and participation have been shown to break down some of the barriers that different groups have established towards change within the community. That said the significance of borders and the permeability of these boundaries should not be underestimated in exploring the social structure of a community. In many ways, networks are fostered and managed according to differences, which can generally be separated along cultural and economic lines, however it is not necessarily these categorizations that build up walls. The interconnectivity of networks works through exclusion in many ways as opposed to the principle of inclusion, and social distinctions can be found at every level of society, and within each community. In Huntingdon, the Mills functioned very much on the basis of an exclusive network that maintained tight bonds on their employees:

123

I heard many stories of people saying when they would go and apply at the mill it was, "well, who do you know working here?" They really would be asked that, and it's not even something you can ask legally, but they would be.
(Teacher, Local Career Center)

The mill workers will have a hard time adapting to a change just because they have been at one place for so many years and that's the only place they know, and the only place where they know how to work. Some of them are working in a plant in Valleyfield at Gildan (textiles manufacturer), and there is a conflict between the ex-Cleyn workers and the established workers at Gildan. The guys at Cleyn are saying, "we are better than they are, we are more productive than they are." There is an expectation that things should happen, like it was unjust what happened, so everything else has to fall into place like it had been at Cleyn, and they will do anything for it.
(Director, Local Career Center)

Their community was work. People have worked with the same people, some of them for 30 or 40 years, and that was what they had outside of home, and sometimes that was more important than home.
(Local Business Owner)

In order to counteract the inward-looking nature and isolating effects of bounded local social networks, Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:162) suggest that there must be two basic dimensions of networking in operation at the community level; the strong intra-community ties, and extra-community or weak ties that reach outside the established comfort zones affiliated with bonding networks. As one participant brought up, the dimension of extra community interaction plays an important yet often discounted role in people's lives within the Haut-Saint-Laurent:

I think some of that community becomes a comfort zone, and as soon as you go beyond the boundaries you are not comfortable anymore because you don't know it as well. But when you stop and think about it, people probably don't know their own community that well. The people they see, the merchants, the churches, we have built in support systems and those support systems have to reach outside the boundaries of the perceived community for us to feel secure.
(Community Activist)

124

From the perspective of community development, Robinson and Flora (2003) have noted how the prospects for coping strategies that optimize both bonding networks and bridging networks are far greater than for those strategies that involve only the local bonded community. Ultimately, the significance of strong ties lies in the creation and preservation of common identities and objectives, whereas bridging networks encourage participation between "diverse groups with complimentary capabilities and foster residents reaching out to acquire information, knowledge and resources from diverse sources outside the community (Robinson, Flora, 2003). Within most communities, including Huntingdon, the trend is for bonding networks to be more prevalent. However, Johannesson, Skaptadottir and Benediktsson (2003:14) assert that the success of community-level coping strategies relies on bridging beyond the locality in order to avoid falling back on 'localist' strategies that impede development by prolonging the existing social routines without acknowledging social changes.

8.1.2 Bridging Networks

The significance of establishing connections between networks through bridging practices that unite individuals from different cultural, linguistic, economic and ethnic backgrounds is the influx of new ideas and solutions that flows into each network. As a result of this, the most important element of bridging networks stems from the individuality that each network possesses as embodied in its members (Baerenholdt, Aarsaether, 2002:161). The involvement of individuals and ideas that come from outside the immediate network of a local community are key factors in the formation of coping strategies aimed at stimulating local development initiatives. Baerenholdt (2002), in his work on coping strategies and regional policies in the Nordic peripheries, states that

coping strategies are very seldom successful unless communities incorporate new partners, innovation, and identifications that have been created elsewhere into their own projects.

The majority of regional government services offices (CLSC, HSSC, CEDEC) and local community organizations (CLD, CDC, CFDC) are located in Huntingdon, however in the interest of linking out with other communities and local groups, the directors of many local organizations are not from within the local community of Huntingdon. In many ways, this was interpreted as a good thing for the town as it allowed the outside perspective to become incorporated in local actions by the organizations, however participants were also wary of the equally important issue of locality and certain concerns were voiced about bringing outsiders into the community. As one participant commented:

> There have been some important changes in our community because the CDC has a new director, and the new coordinator of the CLD are both new and both from the outside, so how do they identify with Huntingdon, I don't believe they do? (Community Activist)

In researching community attachment, coping strategies and local development within the different sets of literature it became apparent that the role of local community organizations as an active and stabilizing force within a community adapting to social change was greatly underestimated. In Huntingdon and throughout the Haut-Saint-Laurent, the ability of the local organizations and community service providers to network within the community and link with outside groups has been hugely beneficial. As one participant commented:

The community groups in the Haut-Saint-Laurent have been pulling together for a long time now. First there was the Co-op Everton, which started giving services to different groups and helping other groups get set. The Co-op set up the CDC and the CDC has taken over the action of pulling groups together so this has been going on for a few years now. This didn't just happen with the closings as they were already meeting together often. There were also courses given to the different groups to help them function better and the CDC has helped some groups to get back up on their feet so they have been very active in that way also.
(Coordinator Haut-Saint-Laurent)

Along with the acknowledgement of long standing traditions of cooperation and integration on the part of local community organizations, the majority of participants recognized the amalgamation and creation of Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent as a significant achievement in bridging community organization networks within the region:

I find it really interesting to watch Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent evolve. You know, where we are sitting at a table with people that come from a lot of different socio-economic backgrounds but also geographical ones as we have people who come from outside the area but are here because their work has a focus on this area.
I often use the analogy of a weave to describe community groups, but instead of just having a lot of threads going in one direction but not touching one another, we're really beginning to get a warp going. There's also more interest and more solidity now, and that to me is very encouraging.
(Community Activist)

It takes a long time to figure out how do we work together. There's a lot of turf still, but all the people around the table are people who are open personally to things. It makes it easier because if you have close-minded people sitting around a table it blocks off possibilities. I think we are fortunate that all the people see that there is a need and a benefit in partnering, in developing, and in working together. I think that this area is very lucky to have this.
(Community Activist)

In discussions surrounding the local community organizations, it was often suggested that what was so remarkable about the founding of Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent was not just the coming together of most of the social, local development, and community organizations in the region, but the mutual involvement of all the organizations within the area irrespective of their cultural or linguistic background.

8.2 Culture and Networks

Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:153) have stressed that an important facet of community and regional development lies in the socially embedded character of social networks in that if they can be united "they have the potential to overcome barriers between sectors and agendas that are otherwise difficult to combine." In Huntingdon, the traditional division between the French and English speaking populations has been carried over through generations such that many people within the community believe the linguistic divide to be impenetrable. In one interview, the question of whether it was possible for citizens' identities to be simultaneously manifold was brought up, but never successfully answered. Instead, a debate ensued over whether it would be more advantageous as a coping mechanism to (a) encourage openness towards cultural and linguistic differences, or (b) to increase the awareness and acceptance of differences within the community. For many participants the answer lay somewhere in the middle, however nearly all agreed that there was movement within each linguistic community towards increasing levels of cooperation, participation and integration between the two populations:

> I like the idea of interlinking communities now. We can no longer put off, or
> regress, by putting walls up and saying this is our community and it will remain
> our community because there is an inter dependency to communities with each
> other. I like that, I think it's good. I hear often of people who identify with the
> English-speaking community say to me that what we're doing can't be done in
> isolation. It has to be done with our Francophone colleagues.
> (Community Activist)

You notice the integration more now that you used to for sure. But back then if you were French you went to the Catholic Church and heaven forbid if anyone ever saw you in a protestant church. That has changed now, but I mean I know at one time, if there was a funeral, well you went to that but you didn't go to anything else.
(Local Resident)

I believe when you are engaged with a community group, you are a little more open to the community whether it be French or English. What I find though is that something is closed there, like there's a barrier and it's hard to go across that barrier. I believe this is a big issue in the MRC. I believe it has changed to a certain degree but I'll say there is a lot of conservatism here.
(Community Activist)

According to Fukuyama (2002), the fact that networks tend to exist on a plane of shared values and norms, which promote interaction, cooperation, and participation in social relationships, suggests that social capital and networks represent a practical way of looking at culture within a society. Culture can be looked upon as a form of creative expression or considered as an end in itself, however its role within a community often defines the "means by which groups of individuals communicate and cooperate in a wide variety of activities" (Fukuyama, 2002).

The relevance of both language and religion are very seldom brought into discussions of social capital at the local level where these elements have not lost the meaning and cultural worth that they may have in larger urban areas where a wider variety of cultural settings are more common. Culture, as influenced by language, religion and occupation, is inescapable in Huntingdon and the Haut-Saint-Laurent, however references to local cultures within the literature on development tends to associate culture and local values with the economic potential of transforming localities into cultural economies established for tourism purposes. Unfortunately, what is missed in this interpretation of cultural values is that the heart of a rural community is the

proliferation of a way of life that in many ways transcends economics. As one participant explained, not all societies have to reflect a profit driven economic mindset, and in fact, societies based on open social networks of reciprocity and trust may be more sustainable in the long-term:

> There are two ways of having a society. There's this totally volunteer based society, which has always just been the rule out here, you know where everybody just does everything for nothing. You know, the Historical Society members do their work for free and fairs are all run for through volunteers for free, whereas if you go up to Chateauguay, everything is commercial based. So what we need is a place where the community can support entrepreneurship that gives back to the community. I believe that that is the way to go.
> (Local Journalist/Photographer)

Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) suggest that individuals within cultural networks interpret and understand their role within a community by drawing on shared intellectual, epistemological, ethical and social beliefs. These values are both constructed and reproduced through interactions that can equally produce greater bonds within the network, or bridge between groups. The authors contend that creating opportunities for interaction to occur between members of different networks or groups is the only way to initiate changes in local attitudes, knowledge, or behaviour (Falk, Kilpatrick, 2000). Therefore the quality, quantity and context within which interaction occurs greatly affects the potential for local cultural networks to bridge. It was speculated by numerous participants within the Huntingdon and Haut-Saint-Laurent community that interaction between the two linguistic cultures, which in many ways encompasses religion as well, was not something brought about with the closures of the mill. Rather, the level of interaction was heightened by the crisis and as such became much more visible, prominent and influential within the community as a whole:

I had a feeling of the community coming together. There was no hold out as far as I know. I have been to groups where Anglophones and francophone were together speaking. I really had a sense in some ways of even the different ages coming together to make a community that would really work and I thought that that was really positive.

I had a sense that when people are facing adversity like that, the perceived differences that they have were diminished rather than accentuated. It seemed to me that people had the sense of all being in this together and that they would be stronger together than if they fractionated.
(Community Psychologist)

One of the big advantages in the last little while is that there has been much more coming together. For example, take the dynamic that is happening between the churches. They were all isolated mammoth institutions that did not communicate...now they parade together on good Friday and hold services, which are ecumenical. I think that has served to broaden people's perspectives, not to take away from their sense of belonging within their own church, but to set it in a larger context.
(Community Activist)

In many respects, the role of coping strategies in structuring a community's response to social change revolve around introducing individuals to the broader social framework and context that their own social relationships are a part of. Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002) highlight the fact that networks are capable of nurturing bonds within a group while simultaneously establishing bridges between individuals and groups. Therefore, the decisive factor in determining a network's ability to bond or bridge is the resiliency of the individual cultural identities of network members. Individuals who are not open to cultural change or acceptance will be less likely to bridge with members of a different network if they perceive a threat to their own identity. As Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:163) point out, the capacity for a network to bridge has significant implications for the social inclusion of its members. Bonded networks that are incapable of linking with other networks may subject members to a higher risk of becoming socially excluded which greatly reduces individuals ability to access opportunities.

Social capital has long been assumed to be a product of local coping strategies that incorporate local innovation, networking and the formation of identities into mechanisms designed to help a community respond to change by encouraging the proliferation of ties between social networks. However, as Johannesson, Skaptadottir and Benediktsson (2003) maintain, it is not possible to distinguish between types of social capital or the source (bonding or bridging) as it is not a quantifiable 'thing' in itself, but the result of a process or an effect of a practice between social actors or networks. For much the same reason, Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:163) assert that the practice of bonding and/or bridging social networks are in fact coping strategies as opposed to the more widely held belief that networking constitutes an asset of social capital.

8.3 Social Capital and Cohesion

Johannesson, Skaptadottir and Benediktsson (2003:14) virtually flip the academic convention of social capital on its head by relegating social capital to a type of rhetorical expression that is not representative of a "thing in itself, but a metaphor which directs attention once again to social relations and interaction when dealing with local development." Incidentally, the debate over the academic merit of attempting to quantitatively measure the supply or stock of social capital within a community has been rendered somewhat moot by the authors' suggestion.

According to Bourdieu (1986), individuals may possess a volume of social capital that is formed through social interaction and relationships. However social capital, as an available resource, is bound by context, and once the interactions responsible for its production stop, the 'capital' simply disappears (Bourdieu, 1986). For this reason, Johannesson, Skaptadottir and Benediktsson (2003:8) believe that it is impossible to

conceive of social capital as an "integrated or essential part of individuals," as the use of social capital is tied to, and limited by, the interaction of actors within a network or social relationship.

Therefore, when considering social capital and the benefits that accrue from the concept as a resource, the focus should be broadened from traditional emphases on individual interaction to the relationships that exist between groups, social networks and communities. By stressing the significance of social relationships within a community to the creation of social capital, it also becomes possible to address the issue of social cohesion, and the important distinctions between the two analogous concepts.

Within the literature dealing with social relationships and community the terms social capital and social cohesion are at time used interchangeably as both are often associated with the general well being of individuals. Analytically however, social capital generally concentrates on the well being of individuals and groups, most often considered to be part of social networks, while social cohesion is a more holistic concept that is concerned primarily with the over-all condition of society (Chan, To, Chan, 2006). Rather than deem the two concepts as exchangeable, a more accurate representation of social capital and cohesion may be to imagine the two as running parallel at different levels within a community. In this sense, it is possible to conceive of circumstances where both capital and cohesion could potentially benefit the other, however as Chan, To and Chan (2006) point out, a high volume of social capital does not guarantee equally high levels of cohesion within a community.

Researchers habitually make the distinction between social capital and cohesion by referring to the high stock of capital that exists within gangs, and other types of

criminal organizations and the negative effects that these organizations tend to have on local communities. The difference between levels of social capital and the community's general sense of cohesion can also be made in Huntingdon, however not in relation to organized crime. The very divisive issue of government support severely affects the level of social cohesion in the Haut-Saint-Laurent, as there are a large number of low-income families that have traditionally depended on monthly welfare support for their livelihood. There exists a tremendous amount of social capital built up between these families, and they have a significant impact on both the social structures and local economy of the region, however their presence has a way of dichotomizing the population. As numerous participants explained, the existence of social cohesion within the community tends to exclude the population on welfare:

> We decided over the summer months to open the Hope Center as a drop in centre for anyone who needed it. At that point volunteers got furious and began dropping out. So I spoke to our coordinator and I said that my hunch is that the people felt as long as they were doing this for the right people, or the 'good' people who worked in the mills then its ok, we'll help responsible people who we label as good. But as soon as anyone in the community can just walk in that means people with mental illnesses, people on welfare can come in, and well why would we help them? Why would we have them come in for a cup of coffee?
> (Presbyterian Minister)

> There is such a very strong feeling amongst, I would say a very large portion of the population, that there is something wrong with being on welfare because all we have seen are people who have abused the system. We see people that have for generations depended on welfare to get by, and yet there are many people that are going to be forced into that situation. There are statistics that say the average amount of time that the majority of people use welfare is for two years. It's not long but it is a safety net and it is necessary. But people here don't see that, they see it as being a 'good for nothing welfare bum. People don't want to see that, and they think that if you are on welfare then you are just lazy because that is all they have seen, and that is not a fair statement either.
> (Teacher, Local Career Center)

The levels of trust and reciprocity that are commonly associated with a high stock of social capital and social cohesion are obviously not extended towards the population in Huntingdon that for whatever reason are reliant on welfare support. Unfortunately, the tendency amongst the community to disregard the less fortunate population has begun to extend into people's sense of place and security. As one participant explained, the population of under-privileged families has been growing, and this has brought on suspicion and greater feelings of mistrust within the community:

> I feel that some people come to the area because they feel that we have more help to offer because of the lack of jobs. With social assistance they are kind of harassed, especially in some areas, to go out and look for jobs and they have to bring in their cards every month so the government is after them to get out and look for jobs, but I think people are saying that if they come here there is probably more help. There are all these organizations, and people get extra help and the government is not going to bother us to look for jobs, and it's cheaper to live so why not head out to Huntingdon. You know, there are those that are looking for jobs that want to work but we have a lot of people that are incapable of working and its not just lack of education, its normal everyday things and they just can't cope or function and are not really employable. I mean you couldn't even hire them to work in a depanneur or to pump gas.
> (Community Activist)

Some participants voiced concerns that the area's reputation as an economically depressed area, compounded by the high unemployment rate due to the closures of the mills and the high proportion of the population using government support, would lead the region into a downward spiral.

> It's not easy for welfare people to get out of that situation. I know for some people it's a problem and they are born into, but there are programs and ways to work around this, but that doesn't seem to be happening here and there are a lot of people falling through the cracks and it's from generation to generation. These people, if they have had no direction at home to begin with when they were kids then they are not going to offer any direction to their own children so it's a vicious circle and so its hard to get people out of that, and when times get tough some choose to steal over getting a job.
> (Community Activist)

Such concerns, while obviously discriminatory are representative of a social bias that percolates throughout the Haut-Saint-Laurent, and is especially pronounced in Huntingdon. However, the suggestion that increased levels of unemployment and poverty within a region can lead to a decrease in social capital and cohesion and increased levels of abuse within a community is not unfounded. In his research on mass unemployment in the Argentine shantytowns, Auyero (2000) has suggested that violence within communities can be perceived as an interrelated expression of broader socio-economic and institutional changes. He indicates how high and constant levels of unemployment have the effect of crippling reservoirs of contacts while also exhausting existing networks of reciprocal help that traditionally work to ameliorate the effects of economic hardship (Auyero, 2000:106).

Poverty and unemployment also jeopardize the organizational networks that have served in the past to improve people's physical and social environments (Auyero, 2000:99). Auyero (2000:99) notes how the spread of long-term unemployment or low-wage unstable jobs can lead to the erosion of primary support networks and their ability to deal with difficult circumstances, while organizational support networks become more difficult to sustain due to a lack of resources. As such, individuals and communities are rendered more vulnerable. This is not to predict the future of the Haut-Saint-Laurent. However, the above potential scenario clearly reflects the importance an early response by a community to socio-economic change. Coping strategies that consider the active role of the population in structuring a response have the potential to transcend some of the negative effects of socio-economic change by encouraging the community to consider ways of increasing their social cohesion.

Forrest and Kearns (2001) caution that there is a tendency amongst researchers exploring social cohesion to suggest "the social cement of a previous era is crumbling and that we are being collectively cast adrift in a world in which the previous rules of social interaction and social integration no longer apply." Such broad-based assertions underestimate the lived experiences of small town existence and the significant role that everyday life plays in sustaining the social relations that make up the institutions and structures of society. Social cohesion, the authors contend, "is about getting by and getting on at the more mundane level of everyday life (Forrest, Kearns, 2001).

Chan, To and Chan (2006:289) assert that social cohesion reflects a common state of mind shared amongst community members that manifests itself in high levels of trust, a sense of belonging and collective identity. More important to the continuation of cohesive relationships, however, is the materialization of certain behaviors such as cooperation and participation, which serve to objectify feelings of trust and belonging within the community (Chan, To, Chan, 2006:289). Without denying the importance of cohesion, the authors are careful to note how it is merely an attribute of communities, unlike social capital which is a product of practice and theoretically bankable. Therefore, there exists no limit to the social cohesion that a community can possess. Likewise, there is also no minimum. Rather social cohesion can be visualized as existing along a continuum, which a community can control so that the degree of cohesion within society varies according to the community's preferences. Chan, To and Chan (2006:293) assert that a community's recognition of their ability to manage levels of cohesion "is the first step towards a normative analysis of when or under what conditions it is morally justified to trade off social cohesion with other values or goods."

The notion of weighing different aspects of a community against one another is something that was recognized by some participants as a crucial starting point in establishing a community-based response to change:

> We are always talking about trade offs, and I think that the juggling that we want to do is identify what's good that we want to hold onto and not compromise those while finding what are the things that are limiting that we would be more inclined to let go of. Its that sorting process as a community that we are trying to stimulate people to actively think about as opposed to just accepting.
> (Community Activist)

The literature on community development emphasizes the significance of high levels of participation by members of the community. Finnish geographer Lehto (2002) suggests that there is a tendency in small communities for people and organizations to be members of numerous networks simultaneously. The fact that people join more than one network or group virtually guarantees a continuous flow of information and bridging between local groups. Social capital and cohesion are dependent on both the scope and extent of networks as the more intricate and intertwined the links become, the greater the level of interaction between individuals becomes, which heightens the potential for innovation and the creation of unique solutions to local problems. It is through participating in social networks and local development efforts that a community can redefine its borders, change local identities and increase its level of social capacity (Lehto, 2002).

8.4 Social Capacity

In their work exploring the impacts of local development initiatives in small-town Queensland, Australia, researchers Simpson, Wood and Daws (2003) have defined community capacity as "the set of assets or strengths that residents individually and

collectively bring to the cause of improving local quality of life." The dimensions of capacity as defined by the authors (trust, reciprocity and belonging) include characteristics of both social capital and social cohesion, however the difference lies in the ability of social capacity to instill a sense of self-worth and empowerment within a community. By building on the foundation of existing capacities, local knowledge, and skills, people and groups may begin to take on the responsibility of developing their community according to their own community-based vision of the future (Simpson, Wood and Daws, 2003).

As the underlying theme of this thesis, empowerment underscores coping strategies, identity, network formation and an individual's ability to access stores of social capital in achieving a sense of belonging, personal capacity and self worth. According to Wilson (1996) researchers are becoming more aware of the pivotal role individuals play as the subjects, as opposed to the objects, of social change and community development.

In order to successfully respond to social change in a manner that is sustainable in the long term, community economic development endeavors to empower people by "building community from the inside out," or at least, from the bottom up (Wilson, 1996:617). The conclusion summarizes the role of coping strategies, identity and networks in the formation of social capital as it manifests in socially cohesive norms of reciprocity and belonging, along with increased levels of individual participation and empowerment.

CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Over the past twenty-five years social capital has emerged as one of the more salient concepts within the social sciences (Lin, 1999). However the concept's popularity has also become charged with controversy as divergent views, perspectives and expectations have raised important questions over the validity of the concept, and how to best measure it. Nevertheless, geographers, sociologists, and economists concerned with community development have increasingly recognized social capital as a crucial concept for understanding the ways in which individuals identify and relate to the social structures and institutions that moderate everyday life. In today's dialogue, social capital is considered by many to be a main contributor to successful socio-economic development. Unfortunately, at the local level there seems to be some disconnect between the conceptualization of social capital, economic development and the social structure of local networks and communities.

The relationship between community development and social capital is complex, especially within the context of deindustrialization and social change. The town of Huntingdon, and the Haut-Saint-Laurent MRC presents an opportunity to observe and interpret a community's initial response to crisis and the coping facilities or strategies that developed over the immediate short-term in response to social change.

The abrupt announcement of the departure of both the Huntingdon Mills and Cleyn Tinker textile plants in December, 2004 plunged the community into a state of shock. Hundreds of residents of the town and surrounding Haut-Saint-Laurent region lost their jobs and livelihoods while the rest of the area struggled to come to terms with the devastating loss of what was once a reputable and profitable textile industry.

In framing the research for this thesis, the sudden experience of social and economic change within the region became an opening for exploring the underlying social systems and structures at work in maintaining the local community. In analyzing the local responses to the collapse of the economic foundation of a single industry town in a culturally and economically diverse region, it became possible to question the significance of social capital in fostering sustainable community economic development. This brought out the importance of looking below the surface of a community's social structure in order to better understand how people interact and relate to one another. In doing so, a number of questions arose. Namely, what role do coping strategies play in reconciling the social relationships of different groups within a community in the wake of social and economic crisis? Which coping strategies are the most beneficial for encouraging positive responses to change in individuals and communities? Finally, how do coping strategies and local identity help to understand the mediating relationship between social capital and community development?

Coping strategies can be linked with social capital through the creation of local identities, networks and innovation at the local level. The production of a local identity encourages a sense of belonging and attachment to place in individuals, which leads to the formation of relationships and social networks. Once formed, social networks produce bonds within groups and can bridge across social divides through the connections individuals have with members of other networks. Membership in networks that share links with other networks can broaden local identities and empower people by exposing them to new ideas, skills and resources. Social capital is produced during

interactions and can be used as a resource to create or exchange innovative solutions to locally based problems.

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│            ┌───────────────────────────────────────┐             │
│            │    Social Capital as Agency (Figure 6) │             │
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│                 ┌─────────────────────────────┐                  │
│                 │       SOCIAL CAPITAL         │                  │
│                 └─────────────────────────────┘                  │
│        ↗↙                                          ↖↘            │
│  ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐       │
│  │   COPING     │ ↔  │    LOCAL     │ ↔  │    SOCIAL    │       │
│  │  STRATEGIES  │    │   IDENTITY   │    │   NETWORKS   │       │
│  └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘       │
│           ↖↘                                 ↗↖                  │
│              ┌─────────────────────────────┐                     │
│              │        EMPOWERMENT           │                     │
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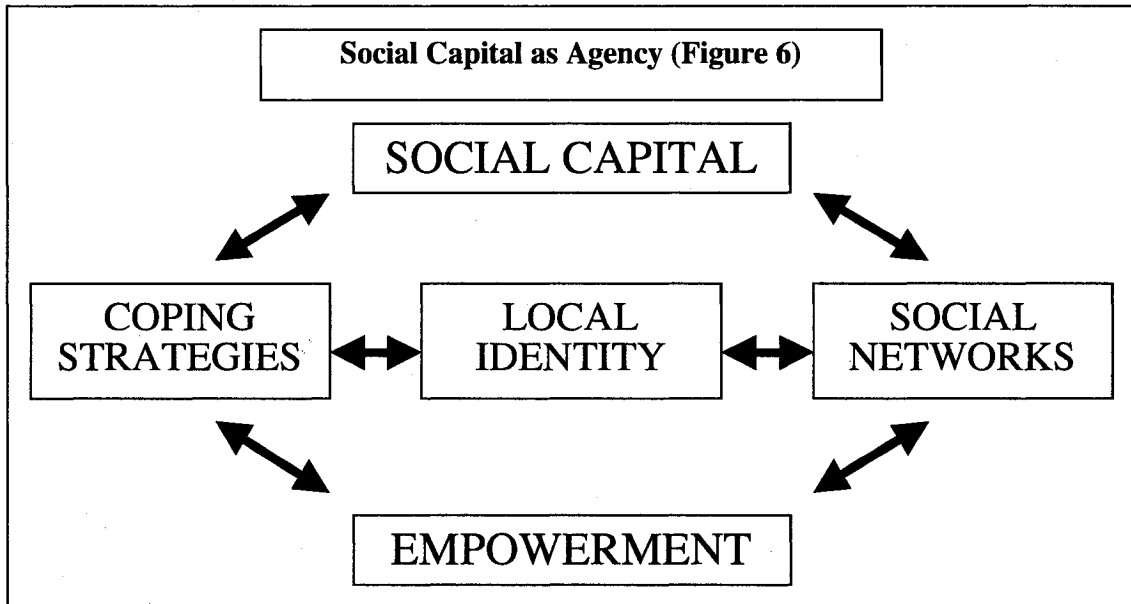
In Huntingdon, however, cultural barriers have gone up along linguistic lines that trace back to the early settlement of the region. As a result, determining how to access stores of social capital trapped in the walls and divisions that separate groups and limit interaction between people has become a major hurdle for local organizations to overcome within the community. As such, it was imperative that the crisis in Huntingdon be placed within the context of a community-wide problem that affected everyone within the region. In doing so, it was possible for community groups to reinforce the commonalities between individuals and groups, rather than accent their differences, which effectively allowed people to come together. For example, the economic crisis impelled over fifty social, economic, education, and community groups from the grassroots to federal levels of organization to come together to form what became Actions Haut-Saint-Laurent. The groups set aside language divides and turf to create an

integrated and inclusive response that would be accessible to the entire community. By removing the divisive aspects of relationships, in this case language and jurisdiction, the community groups were able to combine the expertise of each member to produce an innovative solution that has been hugely influential in encouraging the development of socially inclusive coping strategies within the Haut-Saint-Laurent that similarly break down cultural barriers. The link between the successful creation of social capital and coping strategies therefore lies in people's ability to cope with social change by expanding the boundaries of their personal community.

The connections between social capital and community development can appear convoluted, unless we focus on a generalized concept of 'community' itself. McClenaghan (2000) stresses the importance of moving beyond the abstract notion of community traditionally used in social capital research that sees community as a static, homogenous system based on common values, norms and practices (McClenaghan, 2000:571). In reality, a community develops from within a group of individuals defined by the degree of social interaction within the group, the formation of identity and a shared sense of belonging, and common values that are specific to the area. To be successful, community development must be able to reflect the diverse combinations of norms, values and relationships that make each community unique.

The mismatch between the ethos of economic-driven development and sustainable community development has long been deliberated upon in the economic and community development literature. In terms of economic development, the embedded local cultures in small or rural communities can be problematic, as economic development initiatives tend to emphasize growth, which often runs contrary to the traditional values within communities. Barrett (2001:10) suggests that the principles of economic development have at their core a 'future discounting bias' wherein current or

143

immediate economic goals and benefits are favoured in decision-making processes over 'future oriented,' long term considerations. A short-term bias typically leads to unsustainable actions, which can have the insidious effect of subjecting rural and small communities to a livelihood based on the market cycles where booms mean a bonus, and busts lead to unemployment (Barrett, 2001:16). For Barrett (2001:16), the sense of dependency that defines the company town syndrome can lead to the formation of an 'addictive economy' where adopting 'a defensive posture' designed to regain the lifestyles once enjoyed by residents is pursued at any cost.

In Huntingdon, the council took out a series of long-term loans and bought the industrial areas left vacant by the departing mills, turning them into a massive industrial park at a huge cost to the town in interest payments. The decision to create the industrial park also places the town in a precarious situation where the ability to pay back the loans is dependent on companies bound to the community only in terms of the duration of a contract. Once the contract has expired the option is there for a company to move, leaving the town to once again cope with lost jobs and the need to find a replacement company.

In his work on sustainable community development, Roseland (2000:95) notes how any critique of economic growth is inherently a criticism of capitalism and global market economy. The author suggests the alternative to the present-day dominance of world markets in determining local livelihoods lies in creating non-market based solutions that decrease the present day level of social dependence on economic growth (Roseland, 2000:95). On paper it seems plausible, but as history can attest, societal change is no easy task. Some of the answers, however, may lie in reframing the concept

of resources to include those outside the value of the market so that communities are better able to "consider their own creative wisdom, skills and culture as resources" (Wilson, 1996:621).

According to Wilson (1996:618), adapting to social change often requires a change in perspective on the part of individuals, at which point individual change can "act as a bridge to community solidarity and change." In this instance, the fusion of positive individual and collective transformation can be referred to as empowerment (Wilson, 1996:618). The author contends that literature on transformational politics has emphasized the existence of a definite link between levels of individual empowerment and positive social transformations (Wilson, 1996:622). It is suggested that in the face of social change, empowerment can develop a greater sense of local awareness and activism that can translate into a desire to participate that is not rooted in "self-interest or a victim consciousness but a larger sense of community and responsibility" (Wilson, 1996:622). An increase in the level of public participation and involvement in local institutions and organizations will however result in changes within the local institutions as well since these organizations will have to adapt to the changing beliefs and sentiments within the community.

The severity of the crisis in Huntingdon prompted the four church institutions to set aside traditional religious divisions to create the Hope Center. The religious institutions were changed by this action of coming together, however it was not the church that had changed but the people who make up the church who had become empowered through their membership to open themselves to the idea of bridging a cultural divide for the benefit of a more cohesive community. In this sense, people empower local institutions through their participation, which creates a positive feedback loop by further increasing the individuals'

sense of empowerment as well. That said, it is also the individuals who limit the activities of local institutions, which can lead to negative feedback as closemindedness and resistance to change can result in social exclusion and dysfunctional reactions to change such as denial.

Baerenholdt and Aarsaether (2002:163) warn that in local restructuring scenarios where residents' identities and basic capabilities are oriented towards a particular industry that no longer exists, residents tend to be 'locked-in' to depending on unproductive coping strategies that are socially exclusive and isolating. The experience of 'lock-in' easily becomes a state of 'lock-out' from beneficial practices and positive coping strategies (Baerenholdt, Aarsaether, 2002:163).

In Huntingdon one of the most commonly used coping strategies for the former employees of the mills was to draw on employment payments and wait for a job opportunity to emerge that matched the security of the well-paid yet low skilled employment that the mills had provided. In effect, this strategy tended to deny the reality as evidenced also by such disassociating practices as referring to a period of unemployment as a vacation.

Unfortunately, negative coping strategies can reinforce the existing social dependence on a dominant employer, which can have damaging effects in the long-term by rendering the coping process that much more difficult when reality begins to seep through the walls built up by denial. Unproductive coping strategies, such as government funded welfare or employment benefits in the case of Huntingdon, can encourage complacency, and discourage innovation and individual productivity by limiting a person's ability to interact and participate voluntarily in social events. Government services may also be used productively in supplying individuals with an income over the course of retraining programs or while people look for work. However, in some cases such strategies damage coping processes by prolonging local dependence and social exclusion by transferring the sense of security and trust once imparted by the mills onto government services, which are intrinsically disempowering.

Fundamentally then, a positive coping strategy involves the creation or rejuvenation

of local identities in such a way that people are able to respond to change favorably by redefining their role within their own social networks and the community as a whole (Johannesson, Skaptadottir, Benediktsson, 2003). For Finnish geographer Lehto (2002), the key to successful coping strategies lie in their ability to build local innovations on the foundation of pre-existing skills, values and traditions so that any new skills, knowledge or identities that emerge from a coping response to change will be compatible with the locality. Therefore, the creation of identities, innovation, and networks that are locally specific but not exclusive is a crucial factor in deciding which type of coping strategy best suits the community. A sustained community response to change will rely to a large extent on coping strategies that transcend social exclusion and isolation by broadening local networks and boosting social interaction, and which therefore increase both the accessibility and reserves of social capital available to individuals and the community.

9.1 Implications of Social Capital for Local Economic Policy

Within the community development literature regarding social capital, the significance of social relationships and networks to the well-being of individuals has enabled a fresh set of questions to be asked regarding the traditionally accepted models of economic production (Kay, 2005). By focusing on the interdependent nature of people and communities, it is now assumed that economic development, which places short-term individual gains above those of the community, is unsustainable.

From a policy perspective, focusing on social capital, and the influential role of social relationships, allows for the integration of long term perspectives at the local level that go beyond the traditional short-term bias of economic development (Schuller, 2001). Social capital, as produced through positive coping strategies, could potentially balance

the highs and lows of the boom-bust cycle typical of economies based on primary manufacturing or a single resource. In general, company towns facing the loss of a dominant employer have tended to attempt to attract similar industries to support a local workforce that is traditionally older, undereducated, with skills specific to the former industry that are not easily transferable. Attempts to attract any industries through tax breaks and economic incentives are somewhat defeatist and short-term solutions only, since the companies will have no connection to the community or the strengths of its population and the characteristics of the area. Once the incentives offered by the town begin to dry up, the company has only to shop around for a better offer from another community.

In Huntingdon, a possible solution would be to build on the rural aspect of the community rather than attempting to attract whichever companies are willing to relocate to a rural area by short-term tax incentives. A huge potential for local economic development exists in the natural advantage of the Haut-Saint-Laurent that remains unrealized and under appreciated in the hundreds of farms that dot the landscape. According to Ormstown native Hugh Maynard, a consulting specialist in agricultural communications and rural development, every farm within the MRC represents a potential ten off-farm jobs (technicians, truckers, accountants), and given that approximately 1,500 farms are run within the area, this represents a possibility of 15,000 jobs for the region (Maynard, 2005). Yet the largest untapped potential exists in the processing sector where both added value and job creation opportunities for local residents abound.

Attempts were made to start a pasta factory in Huntingdon, which would process locally grown produce, however plans have since been put aside to focus more on attracting companies to fill the industrial park that the town now owns. Unfortunately, companies that do agree to relocate however are bound only to short-term agreements that really only benefit the few who find work within these companies, as there is no long-term commitment established within the community to the company, or vice versa. Economic policy that encourages the start-up of locally based companies that incorporate local advantages would be to the long-term benefit of both workers, farmers and the community in general as establishing locally-based initiatives leads to feelings of shared ownership and control over the economy on the part of the community.

Schuller, (2001:20) contends that another policy implication that social capital brings to community development is the introduction of a moral dimension into the dynamics of the local economy. Social capital situates the economy within a social context where it can no longer exist as "a machine to be engineered, tuned and repaired at a technical level" that undermines the role of social interaction in the organization of communities (Schuller, 2001:20). In response to the closure of the mills in Huntingdon, the municipal council pledged to replace the jobs that were lost and on numerous occasions made promises to the community that jobs were forthcoming. A majority of the promises involved heavy speculation on the part of the council regarding the numbers of jobs that would be created by a given date, which was outside the abilities of anyone at that time to foresee. Such promises showed a disregard for the social aspect of economics within a small community. The social strains that the constant emotional turmoil of a rising and falling sense of hope creates is damaging to both the self esteem and coping

capacities of individuals caught up in the rhetoric of a council concerned with attracting income over the health of its population. In this sense, it becomes imperative that community politics be grounded in creating an atmosphere of trust and instilling confidence in the community. The council's habit of setting people up with false hopes and empty promises by refusing to divulge any concrete information to the public tended to have the result of reducing levels of trust and increasing levels of frustration and helplessness within the community in Huntingdon.

The importance of increasing the transparency of local governments while incorporating the public more into the political dimension of the community were two suggestions that came up repeatedly in the course of interviews. Increasing levels of trust with more transparent governance is a key aspect in empowering a community to take more interest and become more involved in the economic future of the area.

9.2 Implications of Social Capital in Local Social Policy

Social capital also brings the significance of a cohesive society to the forefront of local policy considerations as the simple increase in jobs and economic activity within a community in no way guarantees socio-economic prosperity (Schuller, 2001:20). In fact the reverse may occur as new economic opportunities may be above the skill or education level of many people which leads to social exclusion, isolation and could increase the number of residents forced to rely on welfare programs. Interaction and networking is one way to promote social inclusion, therefore creating more occasions for community wide gatherings and celebrations would encourage both community cohesion and individual empowerment. Increasing the number of local interaction sites, such as the

creation of a local farmers market, could also help to break down cultural barriers that may exist within the community.

Cultural divides along language lines prevail in the Haut-Saint-Laurent which can contribute to the degree of exclusion experienced by some people, such as the Anglophone community. Maintaining sensitivity to cultural differences such as language is imperative to encouraging local cohesion, and local policies that promote bilingualism are crucial to the level of social cohesion in the MRC. An awareness of Huntingdon being part of a larger region is crucial for policy as well in that Huntingdon and the surrounding municipalities are interdependent and so should focus on community development as a consolidated group rather than compete against one another for economic projects.

Effective local policy initiatives in response to economic and social change will incorporate the role of social capital, as the product of community identity formation, social networks, and individual empowerment, in such a way that the potential for locally-based innovative solutions is accented in place of externally oriented economic development that is foreign to the community.

The deindustrialization of the textile industry in Huntingdon brought out numerous issues that had for years lain dormant within the social structures and institutions that moderated everyday life within the community. The sudden loss of jobs and economic foundation for hundreds of people quickly attuned some within the community to the unsustainability of the lifestyle that the mills had propagated for several generations in the town and surrounding area. In response to the reality of social change within the community, two distinct paths began to emerge. The municipal council spearheaded an economic-based approach in an attempt to replace the departed textile

mills with new companies and industries as quickly as possible. The quality of the new jobs became less important than quantity, and numerous desperate measures were exhausted in the process of attracting companies to the community. A second path emerged in many ways as a community response to the municipal council which supported taking a step back from the situation, allowing the former employees to come to terms with the closures by offering support for the community while promoting a development approach based on local coping and empowerment strategies.

Coping strategies can build shared identities, bridge differences through networking and promote local innovation in many ways by rendering the social capital within a community accessible. Both the commitment and creativity of community members are key resources that can be drawn upon in considering the most beneficial strategies and responses to change. The long-term realization of sustainable jobs, local businesses, investments and economic productivity created through community development initiatives "comprise the visible tip of a very deep iceberg comprised of individual change and community building (Wilson, 1996:628).

A first step in the coping process involves creating an atmosphere of positive change, openness and acceptance to new ideas and people by promoting local interaction and participation in social events. Once this has been established, both individual and community empowerment can be encouraged by building cross-cultural partnerships and inter-regional networks that work to remove the isolation and sense of powerlessness that individual's personal reactions to change may incur (Pepperdine, 2000). According to Wilson (1996:628) people who have become empowered are able to conquer inner obscurities such as fear, isolation, and denial by reframing a perceived loss as opportunity

for change. Empowerment equips individuals with the necessary emotional qualities and skills to communicate effectively during interactions, which can lead to the creation of a shared vision of community-based economics between local groups, thus inspiring a willingness to act collectively on this vision (Wilson, 1996:628).

Social change is both an empowered and empowering development, and the sooner a community realizes its intrinsic power to redefine economic development through the use of positive coping strategies, the more accessible social capital becomes to the benefit of society.

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APPENDIX A

Concordia
U N I V E R S I T Y

This research project is about how people in Huntingdon County have been affected by the closure of Huntingdon Mills Ltd. and Cleyn and Tinker, and their responses to economic change. The purpose of this survey is to get an understanding of the communities that make up the Chateauguay Valley, and to investigate the impact the closure of the two textile mills in Huntingdon has had on families, individuals and community relations.

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age: ☐ 20 and under ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-65 ☐ 65 and above

3. Marital Status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow

4. Number of children: ☐ None ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 or more

5. Where do you live: (Huntingdon, Ormstown, Elgin) _____

6. How long have you lived there: ☐ All my life ☐ 1 – 5 years ☐ 6 – 15 years ☐ 16 years or more

7. Employment Status: ☐ full time ☐ part time ☐ seasonal ☐ Unemployed

8. Have you, or anyone in your family ever been employed at Huntingdon Mills Ltd or Cleyn and Tinker
☐ NO ☐ YES For how many years _____

9. Gross Household Income: ☐ Less than $14 999 ☐ $15 000 - $29 999 ☐ $30 000 - $49 999
☐ $50 000 - $59 999 ☐ $60 000 - $79000 ☐ $80 000 or more

10. Location of job: ☐ In the home ☐ Within a 30 min. drive ☐ More than 30 min. away
☐ In (community name, please specify) _____

11. Type of job: ☐ Services ☐ Retail ☐ Self employed ☐ Manufacturing ☐ Agriculture
☐ Other (please specify) _____

12. Are you involved in a community organization(s) ie: Sports association, Parent-Teacher Association, Local Awareness groups: ☐ NO ☐ YES (please specify) _____

13. Would you be interested in becoming more involved in your community: ☐ NO ☐ YES

14. If YES, what is stopping you: ☐ Not enough time ☐ Cost ☐ No groups that interest me
☐ Transportation ☐ Language ☐ Other (specify) _____

15. What are your hopes/fears for the economic future of your community: _____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you very much for your help. If you would be interested in further participating in the study please include your telephone number or email address in the space provided and we will contact you about organizing an interview. _____